

(Appropriately, I started reading it on the train between Whitehorse and Skagway while several young people, who were planning to walk the trail, peered over my shoulder.) With detailed information about the trail, and the clothing, equipment and behaviour needed for traversing it, the book can be helpful to every new Chilkoot hiker; and for its concise and entertainingly-written historical background it merits a place in any collection of books on Alaska and the Yukon.

Richard S. Finnie

AN INTERPRETATIVE HISTORY OF ALASKAN STATEHOOD. BY CLAUS-M. NASKE. *Anchorage, Alaska: Northwest Publishing Co., 1973. 6¼ x 9½ inches, 192 pages. \$5.20 hardbound, \$3.20 softbound.*

Alaska has unquestionably benefited from statehood. The population and economy show most satisfactory progress; the Cook Inlet and Prudhoe Bay oil and gas discoveries rank Alaska with Texas and California in these contributions to the economy of the U.S.A.; lumber and pulp are established industries; Native Claims were adjusted on a fair, generous basis, highways expanded, and tourism is flourishing.

The title of this book is misleading; it is an exposition of the preparation for statehood — how it was achieved rather than how it has worked. Publishing the work over a decade after Alaska became a state it is unfortunate that the author did not seize the opportunity to make an appraisal of the impact of statehood on the life and development of Alaska.

The author pays well deserved tribute to Bob Bartlett and Ernest Gruening as the leading proponents of statehood, along with the great pioneer work of Delegates Wickersham and Dimond. He has saluted the publishers Bob Atwood and Bill Snedden for their loyal yeoman labours. Finally he is fair to Bert Faulkner and Judge Arnold who so ably represented the out-of-state opponents. His detailed report on the history, activities and byplay of the progress of the various statehood bills through the U.S. Administration and Congress is excellent. That alone makes the book well deserving of a place in the saga of Alaskan history.

In my opinion, he disregards other forces that may have militated against Alaska becoming a state in favour of re-echoing without closer examination the smear tactics and charges of politicians and radical journalists

against so-called absentee exploiters of shipping, fishing and mining.

Take the example of shipping. This has always been regulated by the Maritime Administration of the U.S. Department of Commerce, where any proposed change of rate is subject to hearings at which all complaints and justifications must be heard, with the owner and operator on the defensive. Over twenty companies have come and gone in Alaska shipping. Because of the high cost of labour and materials, plus the low volume of industrial activity and a sparse population, companies are unable to generate enough revenue the rest of the year to tide them over the winter season when there are no cargoes to the Bering Sea and only sparse cargoes elsewhere. Passenger service by water was abandoned in 1954, and self-propelled ships, unable to break even while paying high crew wages, room and board, have all ceased to operate except one which survives by reducing cargo handling costs to a minimum. The trade is thus left to tugs and barges which operate with minimum labour and maximum delay.

Fishing was bitterly criticized in pre-statehood days as a creator of absentee millionaires who ruthlessly depleted salmon stocks by over-fishing. Traps were bad, so all combined to abolish them. Yet salmon are scarcer today than at any time before or since the coming of statehood. Ten or twenty years ago fishermen, packers and owners made thousands of dollars in a few weeks in Bristol Bay. This year the season was curtailed, yet salmon were so scarce that the Bay may be closed entirely next year. Fishing has reached its nadir all over Alaska.

The real culprit is international competition. The Russians operate large floating canneries out near the International Date Line that follow the ice pack and act as mother ships for trawlers. These catch the immature salmon in huge trawls and bring them to the canneries for processing. The Japanese trawlers operate all over the North Pacific, even so close to the shores of Alaska that they are seized and fined. They nevertheless return to action. Similar operators prey on Alaskan king crab and bottom fish with giant nets.

Instead of railing at absentee owners, the critics would do well to observe attorney and author Ed Allen of Seattle who collaborated with Canadians and Japanese to conclude a treaty that has stabilized the halibut industry in the North Pacific. The failure of the European, American and Canadian fisheries to do the same in the North Atlantic has ruined the halibut industry there and jeopardizes cod.

Mining was in a similar way portrayed as the victim of absentee millionaires by sensational writers, who chose as particular targets the Guggenheims as well as U.S. Smelting and Refining. The former operated for a generation a very successful mine near Cordova that returned a good profit, yet not one out of line with profits derived from similar operations in Utah as well as elsewhere in the U.S.A. and Latin America. They now have holdings in northwestern Alaska above the Arctic Circle that every Alaskan, Democrat or Republican, writer or statesman, hopes will get into operation soon. U.S. Smelting operated gold dredges at Nome and interior Alaska and there seems to be universal hope that the increased price of gold will permit them to resume operations. All this is a far cry from the former bitter attacks launched, as one pamphleteer put it, by "the sourpusses of the sourdough family."

There are a surprisingly few minor discrepancies, such as failure to credit Choquette with the first discovery of gold in the southeastern region on the Stikine River in 1861, as well as omission of George Carmack from the list of discoverers of gold in the Klondike that led to the "Rush of '98". Further, there were "few" — not "innumerable" — "expressions of dissatisfaction over the creation of National Forests in Alaska". Finally, there could never have been "millions" of fur seals on the Pribiloff Islands, for they cannot support such numbers. There again, the herd was restored by a Canadian-U.S.-Japanese treaty that all applaud.

The footnotes and bibliography are most thorough and extensive. I would have included A. H. Brooks, Hulley, Golder and De Armond.

Henry W. Clark

ONE MAN'S WILDERNESS: AN ALASKAN ODYSSEY: BY SAM KEITH, *from the journals and photograph collection of Richard Proenneke. Alaska Geographic, Volume 1, Number 2. Anchorage: The Alaska Geographic Society, 1973. 12 x 9 inches, 108 pages, illustrated. \$8.20.*

Dick Proenneke has done in real life something almost every urbanized and business-suited North American has envisioned in fantasy at one time or another but has never really tried. This beautifully prepared book brings his accomplishment to the easy chairs

of us less courageous souls, to stir our dreams of simple solitude, quiet beauty and dignified harmony with nature. With a single arm-load of basic hand tools and the strength of his own wit and arm, he made himself a home in southern Alaska and lived comfortably through the winter, miles from the next human; and with no smog, no mass media, crowds or politics to overload his mind, he took time to look at nature with himself a dependent part of it. Few of us ever get so privileged a view.

Proenneke's story is told in straightforward prose, chronologically arranged as pages from his diary. There is little suspense, and only two startling encounters with grizzly bears for excitement; yet I found the tale absorbing reading. Each step in the building of his cabin, each solitary fishing trip or photographic trek, the beauty of the changes of season, all blend into a quiet tale of elemental power and everyday drama. Seventy two beautifully-reproduced colour photographs of his unpeopled valley tell as much of the story as do his words. My one regret is that no map was included to enable one to follow the author's hikes in the woods and hills he describes so well.

The Alaska Geographic Society is to be congratulated for the high quality of this volume. I hope more of its kind will appear.

Sam G. Collins

HURONIA: A HISTORY AND GEOGRAPHY OF THE HURON INDIANS. 1600-1650. BY CONRAD HEIDENREICH. *Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1973. 6 1/8 x 9 5/16 inches, 337 pages, 21 tables, 13 figures, 24 maps. \$14.95.*

Written by a geographer, this book uses historical data to effect a rigorous, highly quantitative analysis of slash-and-burn agriculture as practised by a North American Indian group near the northern boundary at which native maize horticulture was possible. It represents a significant contribution to the understanding of swidden agriculture in temperate regions. In the first half of the seventeenth century the Huron Indians were the centre of a network of trading routes which each year carried Indian traders from southern Ontario as far north as the shores of James Bay.

B. G. Trigger