

manipulated with sophistication in what is one of the most elegant treatments ever made of arctic material. The result is impressive and convincing.

Don E. Dumond

MODERN ALASKAN NATIVE MATERIAL CULTURE. Edited by Wendell Oswalt. *University of Alaska Museum, 1972. 8¼ x 11 inches, 130 pages, map and tables. \$2.50.*

The research project on which this report is based was conceived in two phases. The first involved the collection and identification of artifacts and information illustrating the continuity of traditional elements in Alaskan native material culture, and the documentation of changes which have occurred since the beginning of historic contact. In the second, the University of Alaska Museum hoped to encourage interest and pride in the preservation of culture elements by returning material and information, obtained during phase 1, to the native villages in the form of interpretive packages. At the same time, the museum would circulate an exhibit dealing with acculturation to the various urban centres in Alaska.

The results of phase 1, supported by a grant from the National Foundation for the Humanities in 1970-71, are the subject of the five papers in this volume. Phase 2 was to be supported by the same federal agency in the following year and its effectiveness will presumably be evaluated in a future publication. The first phase was under the direction of Wendell Oswalt who also served as field investigator for the western Eskimo area. Four other field investigators were sent to nine northwestern Alaskan Eskimo villages, three Kutchin Athapaskan communities in the upper Yukon drainage, three Aleutian settlements, and two villages near the mouth of the Kuskokwim River. In addition to over 500 artifacts, information was collected on habitation patterns, household inventories, housing, the seasonal round, and crafts. A photo documentary series of people, objects and activities was also obtained.

In the introduction, L. J. Rowinski, Director of the University of Alaska Museum, explains that as the project was originally conceived, one investigator would have coordinated the collection of material and information in order to achieve comparability from one area to another. It is regrettable that this plan did not prove feasible since the quality of the papers produced by the field investigators varies considerably and virtually no coordination of the research effort is visible in the published results.

The most detailed and knowledgeable paper in the volume is by Wendell Oswalt, the senior investigator. His study, based on research in four western Eskimo communities, emphasizes historical background with special reference to the introduction of trade goods in the nineteenth century, and a description of contemporary material culture on the basis of a classification formulated prior to the field work. This classification involves the identification of four material culture clusters defined as follows: western Eskimo (Yuk) continuities are forms perpetuated from aboriginal times; Yuk-derived forms are those manufactured locally, often of exotic materials, and modeled after aboriginal types; western-derived forms are the locally made exotic counterparts of Yuk-derived forms; direct western imports constitute the fourth form.

This useful classification could have constituted an ideal research design to provide continuity and comparability for all the papers in this volume. And yet only one, Vera Lustig-Arecco's study of Kutchin material culture, follows it to even a limited extent. The others are either shallow and impressionistic or attempt to disguise paucity of relevant data with pseudo-theoretical rhetoric. The volume concludes with a collection inventory, but it is regrettable that a study dealing with material culture and based in part on photo documentary evidence contains no illustrations.

Unfortunately, this volume does not do justice to a stimulating and virtually unique research concept, the study of material culture in transitional situations. Nevertheless, anthropologists, educators, administrators, and indeed, anyone with even a peripheral interest in Alaskan Eskimo and Indian ethnology will await with interest the published results of the innovative second phase of this project. If the University of Alaska Museum can develop successful travelling exhibits, brochures, films, and other museum-oriented information outlets that will increase understanding of the acculturation process and help Alaskan natives achieve a greater understanding of their own adaptation, a significant break-through in material culture research and museum-community relations will have been achieved.

James W. VanStone

NUSHAGAK: AN HISTORIC TRADING CENTER IN SOUTHWESTERN ALASKA. BY JAMES W. VANSTONE. *Fieldiana: Anthropology, Volume 62. Chicago: Field Museum of Natural History, 1972. 6½ x 9¼ inches, 93 pages, illustrated. \$4.25.*