

THE DISCOVERY OF THE NORTH-WEST PASSAGE. BY H.M.S. "INVESTIGATOR", CAPT. R. M'CLURE 1850, 1851, 1852, 1853, 1854. Edited by Commander Sherard Osborn. Preface by William C. Wonders. *Edmonton: M. G. Hurtig Ltd., 1969. 5½ x 7¾ inches, 405 pages, map, illustrated. \$5.75.*

With our reawakened interest in the navigability of the North Passage, it is most appropriate that Commander Sherard Osborn's "The Discovery of the North-West Passage by H.M.S. Investigator" should be reissued.

Bill Wonders of the University of Alberta, in his preface to the new edition, has done an honest job of pointing out that there were, and probably still are, conflicting views of M'Clure's character and integrity. The sleeping dogs have not been awakened, nor should they be. Irrespective of the nature of M'Clure's qualities, he was the first white man to cross the top of North America from ice-free waters to ice-free waters and, by so doing, bring to an end the search which started on the fifth of March, 1496, when Henry the Seventh of England gave to John Cabot and his son Sebastian, the grant of a patent to search out a passage by the North West to the lands of Cathia.

I would commend North-West Passage, along with the diaries, accounts and records of other searchers for the Passage, to all who are now engaged in the new search for the treasures which are so abundant in these northern lands, for it is by this Passage that many of them will be brought to the consuming world.

From their reading they can learn much, not the least of which will be a respect for the brave men in the little ships who pioneered the way.

O. C. S. Robertson

ESKIMOS OF THE NUSHAGAK RIVER: AN ETHNOGRAPHIC HISTORY. BY JAMES W. VANSTONE. *Seattle and London: University of Washington Press, 1967. 9 x 5¾ inches, 192 pages, illustrated. \$6.95.*

This book is a pleasure to recommend to persons interested in Eskimos and in the methodology of behavioural studies. At the same time it is a difficult book to review. The sources of information, Russian and American historical documents, ethnographic materials and archaeological researches, are employed in a new kind of organization reflected in the bipartite division of chapters:

Part One: Agents of Change, and Part Two: Emerging Socioeconomic Patterns. The objectives set forth by the author, a thoroughly experienced researcher, describe the contents most accurately. First, to outline the history of Russian and American Exploration of the Nushagak River; second, to record activities of the various agents of change; third, to reconstruct population groupings, settlement patterns, and the yearly cycle of subsistence activities in the nineteenth century, and fourth, to describe contemporary subsistence activities and settlement patterns. These objectives are achieved, primarily by following a historical concatenation of events in both divisions of the book. Interestingly, the author achieves more than he claims, some in the field of theory. It will surely exalt the memory of J. L. Giddings to whom it is dedicated.

The people under examination are the Kiatagmiut Eskimos, occupying the Nushagak River and the area to the west including Wood House Lakes and Tikchik Lakes, but not including the mouth of the Nushagak River which was inhabited by Aglemiut Eskimos. They numbered some 400 persons with an area of ninety-seven square miles. They practised an inland economy, with major dependence upon fish, and maintained close contact with the coastal Aglemiut. It is of considerable interest to the general area of population dynamics and history that this small number of persons could maintain a population system distinct from that of the contiguous Eskimos.

Though Captain Cook described the Nushagak River region and the Bristol Bay area in 1778 he did not enter the Nushagak. The exact date of Russian penetration cannot be determined with precision, it may have been as early as 1791. An 1818 expedition resulted in the establishment of the Alexandrovski redoubt on the east bank of the Nushagak River about eight miles below the actual river mouth. It is of interest that the Russian Orthodox Priest Ivan Veniaminov, who earlier had been based ten years on Unalaska in the Fox Island district of the Aleutian Islands, visited this redoubt in the summer of 1829. The concern of the Russian-American Company lay in exploration and development of the fur trade. The intertwining of missionary activity with the fur trade is handled adeptly by the author. He gives the twenty-three instructions directed by Veniaminov, after he had become Metropolitan of Moscow, to Hieromonk Theophil at Nushagak. Three of these instructions (page 32) are as valuable today as they were over a century ago and are applicable to scientists,

administrators, schoolteachers and business men:

17) Journeys should be undertaken at times when they will not interfere with the subsistence activities of the people, nor with earnings of the Company.

18) The missionary and his assistant should become familiar with the native language as quickly as possible.

19) The missionary should find out all about the culture of his parishioners in order to influence them more easily.

Number nineteen is of special interest for the questions it raises concerning control or manipulation of aboriginal and unacculturated peoples. Ignoring the complexities of who should influence whom for whatever goals, the premise is as sound as the degree to which its acceptance is generally ignored. The author points out that flexible rules such as these accounted for the success which the Orthodox Church achieved in the Nushagak region. Part of the success was of course measured in the competition with the Moravian Church.

In brief, the author establishes sensitive and documented bases for evaluating effectiveness, success or influence. The number of converts, church school attendance, their resistance to competing denominations, minimization of secular agencies of change in the form of traders or the commercial fishing industry, accommodation to population shifts, and many other aspects of relevant behaviour provide measures of adherence and change. The same kind of scholarship, searching the data for evidence for both persistence and change, characterizes the analysis of mining, reindeer herding, and educational and medical services. Though the author denies that a strong theoretical point of view runs through this study and expresses the hope that some form of historical pattern emerges that is meaningful beyond the immediate area under consideration, (viii), I think he has succeeded in providing a methodology for using documentary sources in combination with ethnographic information to find nuclei of persistence and change within a historical pattern provided by a population system.

The continuities presented in the Nushagak system are certainly excellent for comparative studies in other Eskimo and Aleut population systems. Using alphabets constructed for each language the Orthodox church prepared primers by which the pupils received instruction in both their own language and in Russian. The persistence of these primers on Kodiak Island and especially in the east-

ern Aleutians, together with the maintenance of diaries and correspondence in their own language with their own alphabet illustrates in concrete form the rich area Dr. VanStone has tapped and for which he has provided a method of evaluation. In the study of south-western Alaska generally, an area significantly influenced by the discovering Russians and by their system of education, the *Eskimos of the Nushagak River* will certainly stand forth as a study model as well as an excellent source of information.

Technically the book is flawed, sometimes humorously, by typographical errors which occur in prominent places. "Spirit" sails suggest a real typesetters devil. One can easily appreciate the difficulties of the first explorers if they had no more maps than those available in this book. Most readers will seek out the U.S. Coast Pilot and other maps and charts. The use of 'Aleut' is occasionally left in a limbo of ambiguity so that the unwary reader cannot be certain that it is used for Aleutian, Aleut-speaking Aleuts, or for Koniag Eskimos or Aglemiut Eskimos. The term was unfortunately used for different linguistic groups by the Russians. Though they often specified Kodiak Aleut as distinct from Fox Island Aleut, the U.S. census as well as many historical works have suffered in consequence.

The useful census-demographic analyses suggest another kind of problem area essential to all historical and process studies. The number of people that can derive a livelihood from an area and maintain cultural integration over a long period of time is of considerable significance in population dynamics. However, more and better data are required to estimate the turn-over rate or replenishment value. Viewed as structured containers a population system such as that of the Nushagak Eskimos can maintain itself with only 400 persons. This value does not indicate the recruitment values which depend upon mixture, in-migration, longevity, number of offspring and various other factors. The Anaktuvak Eskimos are a sample of coastal Eskimos with comparatively rapid turn-over, i.e., frequent recruitment from the larger population sources along the coast. To what extent the Nushagak Eskimos are a sample of Aglemiut and other Eskimos can only be determined when further studies are completed. The author has demonstrated the viability of the Nushagak system and we can look forward to more precise information on replenishment values as a consequence of the sound foundation he has established here.