

During the Richard Byrd expeditions, dogs may not have been eaten, but their fate was far from secure. At the end of Byrd's first expedition, insufficient space on board the expedition vessel necessitated the shooting of 17 dogs. A far worse fate awaited dogs used during Byrd's 1939–41 United States Antarctic Service Expedition, when a hasty retreat by air from the base left no room for dogs. A timing device linking three 50-pound cases of dynamite set in a triangle with the dogs staked down in the centre was set to detonate following lift-off of the expedition members. However, according to the author of this book, something apparently went wrong, because a visit to the site five years later revealed dogs scattered about, some hastily shot and some that had apparently escaped and subsequently starved to death.

The third section is a very brief afterword by the author, entitled "A Salute to the Superdogs." In light of the treatment of dogs during Admiral Byrd's expeditions, it seems paradoxical that this final section is accompanied by the photo of a memorial plaque dedicated by Admiral Byrd on October 8, 1938 to "All Noble Dogs whose lives were given on dog treks during the two expeditions to Little America, Antarctica to further science and discovery."

A more encompassing work about the use of dogs during polar explorations could have been wished for. However, as the author remarks, this is a brief introduction to the subject and as such is a good addition to any polar exploration library.

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*QALUYAARMIUNI NUNAMTENEK QANEMCIPUT OUR NELSON ISLAND STORIES: MEANINGS OF PLACE ON THE BERING SEA COAST.* Transcribed and translated by ALICE REARDEN; edited by ANN FIENUP-RIORDAN. Seattle: Calista Elders Council in association with the University of Washington Press, 2011. ISBN 978-0-295-99135-1. liv + 441 p., maps, b&w and colour illus. Softbound. US\$50.00.

This edited collection of Nelson Island place names and stories is a contribution to the literature that is beautiful in both content and form. The authors, editors, and storytellers present an important addition to the growing collection of recorded Alaska Native wisdom, history, and geography presented through place names and the stories associated with them. Moving through the landscape, the text offers readers Yupik place names, each followed by descriptions of important events that transpired in that place, why the place received a particular name, and the significance of that place for subsistence practices and traditions, as told by Yupik elders and other Nelson Island residents.

The book consists almost exclusively of transcriptions and translations of oral histories and stories told by a select group of Nelson Island people (listed on p. liii and liv), without standard academic analysis. The original Yupik stories are transcribed on the lefthand pages of the book and the English translations on the right. These stories were collected during a three-week circumnavigation of Qaluyaat (Nelson Island), in sessions featuring hands-on experiential learning and oral history lessons. As Fienup-Riordan writes, "We did not set out to document place names. Rather, the places, their names, and their stories were what elders thought we needed to know" (p. xxx).

Through these transcriptions, place names and associated stories emerge as an embedded and embodied collection of wisdom that includes metaphysical descriptions of Raven; haunting stories of the non-human people, *ircenrraat*; and insights into the changing patterns of subsistence practices over time. From a non-Yupik perspective, to read through these histories is to be immersed in a complex and mysterious philosophy. Unlike many anthropological or linguistic texts on Alaska Native place names, Rearden and Fienup-Riordan do not present a linguistic analysis or categorical taxonomy of the names. There is no summary of what Yupik place names can tell us or analytic description of Yupik ways of knowing. Rather, the nuances of stories and the wisdom therein accumulate for readers as they become accustomed to the pace, linguistic structure, and subject matter of the stories themselves. For a Yupik reader, these stories will no doubt present further nuances of meaning, depth, and detail.

This book likewise represents an operational paradigm of anthropological research that is new, though it has often received lip service: that is, a serious effort at the co-creation of knowledge by academic researchers and Alaska Native research participants and communities. The research methods, presentation of content, and authorship, and publication itself (by the Calista Elders Council), all speak to this partnership. In this way, this book provides an important example of how Alaska Native communities can take the lead in research projects and how academic researchers can act as important facilitators for these projects. A great compliment to Fienup-Riordan, throughout this book, is her ability to do what must have been significant amounts of work and then get out of the way.

The audience for *Our Nelson Island Stories*, therefore, is likely to be Nelson Island residents themselves, social scientists interested in place naming, subsistence use, and mythology, and to a lesser extent, a general audience interested in Native Alaskan and Yupik history and worldview, as told by Yupik people. Geographers and natural scientists will appreciate the detailed maps of place names and associated descriptions of landscape and subsistence practices. Through some inference, a researcher could piece together changes that have taken place over time in the landscape and in species availability. With some additional analysis, this collection could be valuable as a contribution to

documenting ecological shift, though this may also require additional research.

I recommend this book, but acknowledge that the lack of analysis will be surprising to some researchers. Content and form are intertwined so that it is difficult to critique either. The introduction acknowledges difficulties inherent in translation, which is a critical aspect of this book. I cannot comment on the accuracy of translation, but the English is easy to read, while maintaining a style of storytelling that feels non-Western and highlights ontological distinctions. All in all, this book is a pleasure to read and offers a profound insight into the lives and living histories of the people of Nelson Island.

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