

# Anthropologist Says Villages Far from Disappearing

**COLLEGE**—A recent study by a University of Alaska anthropologist indicates that a popular notion that rural villages are disappearing is not true.

Evidence which shows that the villages, with some exceptions, are maintaining their present population and in some cases are growing, was published recently by Dr. Arthur E. Hippler, associate professor of anthropology at the Institute of Social, Economic, and Government Research.

His work entitled "Barrow and Kotzebue: An Exploratory Comparison of Acculturation and Education in Two Large Northwestern Alaska Villages" was published by the University of Minnesota.

Hippler said the birth rate and improvements in health to extend life-span have maintained population levels even though a substantial number of persons leave villages every year.

"Hooper Bay now has about 600 people, a lot for a rural village," Hippler said. "Emangak and Alakanuk have about 450 people. Pt. Hope still has about 350 people even though there is a tremendous out-migration from there."

He said both Barrow and Kotzebue have Native populations of about 2,000 and that continued in-migration from other villages has created some social problems.

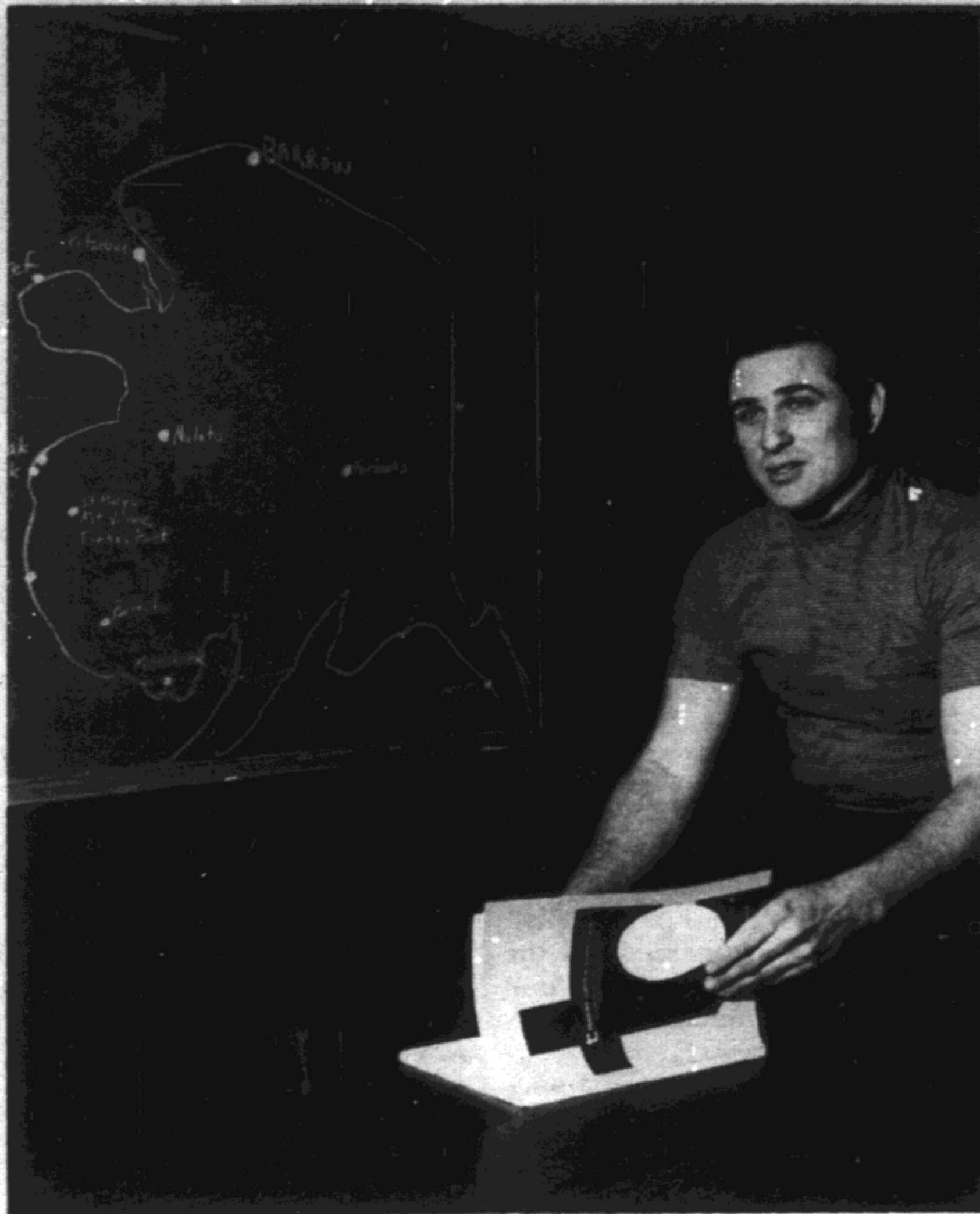
He said that often persons coming into a village such as Barrow and Kotzebue are not prepared to adapt from an essentially subsistence life to a cash economy and a foreign culture.

"This raises the issue of the quality of life," he said, "and it's inadequate in about every way you want to look at it."

"For example: For the last two or three generations the Natives have been told they were stupid and backward and that they should try to become like whites."

"This has created social pressures and pathologies. We know that a teacher's attitude determines what happens to a child. And there is no question that not all of the teachers who come to Alaska are suited for their jobs, and that some are basically prejudiced against natives."

"There is already an established aura of failure among Eskimos concerning what they can accomplish and it continues to grow because of white attitudes toward natives. Even though there is no overt racism apparent



**TALE OF TWO VILLAGES**—Dr. Arthur E. Hippler, associate professor of anthropology at the University of Alaska, discusses his work on a study of Barrow and Kotzebue published recently by the University of Minnesota.

in most cases whites continue to make natives feel uncomfortable and inadequate by patronizing them.

"These people have had to adopt a whole new set of values to try and integrate into the white way of life. Some of the older ones not only don't know how to explain to their kids how to prepare for the white world, but if they did it's not the custom for them to bully their kids. A generation conflict based on different perceptions is hard to avoid."

Hippler said there has been continual disagreement over the last few years about what should be done and who should do it but he does see some clear cut areas for improvements.

"We need to teach literacy in the Native tongue," he said. "This has both pedagogical and psychological advantages."

"There needs to be some coordination among the different agency programs to effect economic impact and stop the boom-bust cycles such as have always

persisted at Barrow.

"Education remains the central issue. What's terribly important is the way members of the dominant culture feel about natives, how they teach them and to what ends."