



NEW MAP OFF THE PRESS — Dr. Michael Krauss, director of the Alaska Native Language Center at the University of Alaska, Fairbanks, looks over a map recently produced for sale by the center. (UA Photo).

"15 Years Work on One Page"—

A Masterful Map

"Native Peoples and Languages of Alaska" produced by Dr. Michael Krauss, Alaska Native Language Center, University of Alaska, Fairbanks, Alaska.

Traditionally, the term "masterpiece" refers to a work produced by a highly skilled craftsman showing his great ability. This new map is truly a masterpiece of linguistic work by Dr. Michael Krauss.

"Mike", as he is respectfully known by many Native People has researched the Native Languages of our State for fifteen years. In introducing his work, he jokingly said, "It's not often a person can put fifteen years of work on one page!"

But both the map and Mike's comment are a little deceptive. Behind the finished work is a roomful of documents, maps, contributions by other linguists, and case after case of recordings and transcriptions of the Native languages. The map is so clear, precise, and colorful that at first the viewer might just think it was a simple task to put it together. The

truth and the facts are much different.

One hundred years ago the first map showing the linguistic divisions of Alaska was produced. Since that time, several others have modified the original divisions. But it was not until Mike gathered all the early reports, spent literally thousands of hours studying the languages and conferred with other linguists that the present map assumed its final form.

He divided the language divisions along the two ends of the color spectrum. Eskimo and Aleut are indicated by blue, green and purple. Athabascan, Eyak, Tlingit all fall along the red end of the spectrum. To indicate that they are distinct from all the others, Tsimshian is marked off in green and Haida in violet.

On the maps the viewer can determine major linguistic divisions both by the color code and the solid divisional lines. Dialects are marked off by broken lines. For those familiar with other maps of Alaska, they will notice that many towns or villages

do not appear on the map; only those places with 10 per cent or more Native population are indicated.

This means, for example, that the name "Cordova" does not appear, but the new designation "Eyak" does.

The map was designed for many practical purposes such as a guide for those working in bilingual education, a historical guide for those concerned with the location of groups when the first Euroamericans contacted them, and the linguistic relationships between different areas.

The table of language groups also indicates the numbers of each linguistic group and how many presently speak the language. The shading of each city or village indicates how many children in that place speak their Native tongue.

Hopefully, the map will hang in every school, every State office and many homes in Alaska. It's the type of work that reveals more and more information each time one looks at it.

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Masterful Map...

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The maps will be sold in most bookstores in Alaska and through other outlets as well. If a person cannot find one locally, they can be ordered directly from the Alaska Native Language Center at the University of Alaska, Fairbanks for \$3.50 plus postage and handling charges.

For years we have waited for such a work; it has been sort of a dream that someday the definitive work on the languages of our State would come from the hands of perhaps one of the finest linguists in our country.

Sometimes in reading a book or hearing a good lecture, a person might say, "It is great", "Fine work!", "Very enlightening", but with Mike's map all of these accolades are insufficient. Every time we look at it, many of us Alaskans will have to simply say, "Thank you, Mike!"

— Wally Olson
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