

Question No. 10—

Questions, Answers on Land

QUESTION 10: Did Alaska Natives try to prevent the intrusion on the land by the whites as they began to penetrate the Interior?

The Alaska Natives, not recognizing personal and individual ownership of land themselves at that time, had no concept of possible conflict between white and Native use and occupancy. Except in the Aleutians and elsewhere where they were attacked and enslaved, the Alaskan people generally greeted early white

travelers with friendship, and in many instances took them in and showed them how to survive the rigors of northern winter and shared food with them.

Whites adopted many of the techniques of Native living and travel, and in turn Eskimos and Indians adopted white tools and techniques that fitted their own culture.

Just as when the whites first began to settle on the Eastern Seaboard of North America, the friendship and help of the Native made possible early settle-

ment and travel of the whites.

Early fur traders coming in from the East, such as those of Hudson's Bay Company set up trading posts and hired Natives, giving them goods in trade for furs. . . even though the bargains were one-sided at first, until the Natives got a little better acquainted.

The Aleuts and the Southeastern people felt the pressure sooner, but for most of the Interior, very few whites trickled in until the gold rushes.