

# Eight Native Authors Published

By the end of 1975, AMU Press will have published eight Native authors. Three are already in print and five others soon will be.

Fred Bigjim's "Letters to Howard" is most recent. The book is a series of 22 letters by old Naugga Ciunerput (Bigjim), who raises many questions about the Land Claims Act.

For example, Naugga asks his friend Howard Rock: "Is a Native a Native, or is a Native someone the Secretary (of Interior) says is Native? How much Native blood does the Secretary need to be able to decide who is a Native? And who were the Natives who decided that the Secretary could decide who the Natives were?"

The old Eskimo later makes this general observation to his friend Howard: "We can all see how Natives have been integrated into the American Way of Life. First they take our land, water, game, and fish — then our children — and if there is anything left they will build a museum or make a movie to preserve it.

"Well, Howard, I guess we will have our monument if they have a nice big oil spill. Maybe they will be able to see it all the way from the Moon, or if there is enough oil maybe even from the top of one of the new office buildings in Anchorage."

Two of the letters to Howard Rock are from Naugga's VISTA-worker friend Wally Morton (Jim Ito-Adler). Also in the book at the end of many letters are pertinent excerpts from the Land Claims Act.

If "Letters to Howard" offers a Native view of contemporary Alaskan issues, two earlier AMU Press books present Native life up to the coming of the White man.

The late William Oquilluk's "People of Kauwerak" is according to anthropologist

Dorothy Jean Ray "a comprehensive version of his people's history" — "something no other Alaska Eskimo has done." In a big book of 242 pages, Oquilluk organizes his history around four successive disasters from the dawn of Eskimo civilization to the great flu epidemic of 1918. Critics agree that Oquilluk has fulfilled the same function for his people that Homer fulfilled for the ancient Greeks.

James K. Wells of Noorvik has published a month-by-month survival manual by telling how his Ipani ancestors lived off the land. Titled "The Ipani Eskimos," the book records the harmony of family and village life in the face of three fears — starvation, sickness, and supernatural powers of the shaman.

The five books now being published by AMU Press are Lela Kiana Oman's revised edition of "Eskimo Legends," Robert Koweluk's "Alaska Natives and their Careers," Maria Ackerman's "Tlingit Stories," Dolores Kawagley's "Yupik Stories," and Alice Brean's "Athabascan Stories."

Contracted for publication is Bertha Lowe's "Eskimo Stories and History."

These last works were selected for publication by the Parent Committee of the Indian Education Program of the Greater Anchorage School District. Arrangements with AMU Press were approved by Dr. William Demmert.

According to AMU Press Director Dr. Jack Frost, AMU Press is prepared to give continuing technical assistance upon request for the publication of book projects of Indian Education Programs in Alaska.