

A Book Review— **Yoogha Dona**

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"Yoogha Dona" by G. Henry, C. Sommer, C. Grant, C. Erhart, D. George, P. Joseph, L. Joseph, N. Guthrie et. al. Room 7, Tanana Elementary School, Tanana, Alaska. Limited Edition.

These young authors are new on the Alaska cultural-historical scene, but have produced an historical and anthropological study of the village of Tanana, Alaska.

It is very well organized, even if on an introductory level. Pre-contact culture deals with the archaeology/ethnography of the Tanana Indians. The historical period explains the developments such as Fort Gibbons, the Mission, and the decline of Tanana after 1922.

A few startling facts emerge such as the fact that the Yukon Press was the first Interior newspaper and that the Fort Gibbons compound was 10 miles long and five miles deep and only the military were allowed within its boundaries.

The final section deals with the recent history and the final settlement in the Alaska Native Land Claims issue. Brought up to date, the study explains the choices being made today in light of the past and present conditions.

As a 20-page research report, this is a fine work by the Seventh Grade. There have been many general studies of Alaska and its history. The need today is for more local histories even if they are done by the school people; accurate, well-prepared studies are useful, no matter the level of sophistication.

This reviewer has seen many similar reports of villages by students in several levels. Perhaps it's time the Department of Education compile such studies into a one-volume work for future reference.

If young scholars are to be encouraged in their efforts at good research and publication, then, seeing their names in print and being given due credit may be the motivating touch for their future careers.

In spite of a few shortcomings, and several lacunae, certain portions stand out for careful consideration. For examples, who has summed-up Tanana (Indian) philosophy any better than this:

"Never destroy (tear up) anything. Try to help everyone. Be nice to old people; they are smart and know a lot, be good-natured, don't fight with people. Share things you have."

From such a work, even those of us who make anthropology a career, may have a few things to learn.