

# Book Review

*by Wally Olson*

**ALASKA: High Roads to Adventure.** Special Publications Division, National Geographic Society. Photographed by George Mobley. 1976 Price \$4.75.

With its usual brilliance and professional approach, the National Geographic Society has produced a beautiful new book on Alaska. Beginning with a tour up the Alaska Highway, the book goes on to explore the State by regions—Southeastern, Anchorage and the Aleutians, Interior and Coastal. The final chapter, "The Northern Giant Comes of Age", sums up the present conditions and looks to the future. The impact of early exploitation, the Gold Rush, discovery of oil and the Land Claims Settlement are interwoven to give a concise background to contemporary Alaska.

Although it is the magnificent photos that first capture the reader's attention, the text is equally attractive. In the first place it is extremely readable. It is the sort of book you hate to put down. Secondly, the writers have done their homework. This reviewer could not find one major error in facts, dates, names or places. But above all, they have remained objective. They are able to see the big picture and put things in their proper perspective without many value judgements or simple explanations that may be misleading. And for a change, it is the Natives who are seen in business suits and it is not a Native shown passed-out in the bar on page 174! In fact, the entire treatment of their cultures, the Land Claims Settlement, village and urban conditions—seems to this reviewer to be done in a fair and understanding manner.

It may be too late to order this book for a Christmas gift, but it would be a welcome anytime. It is the kind of book that any Alaskan would be proud to own and to give to others. Our hats are off, and we say "Well done, National Geographic!"

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