

Book Review

By WALLY OLSON

ALASKA'S NATIVE PEOPLE Alaska Geographic, Vol. 6 No. 3 1979, Lael Morgan, Chief Editor. Alaska Geographic Society, Anchorage, Alaska. \$19.95 302 pages.

Lael Morgan, notebook in one hand, camera in the other, has spent nearly twenty years traveling to Alaska's bush villages. In the meantime she has worked with the TUNDRA TIMES, published a book, written articles for national magazines and made the State her adopted homeland.

Out of this wealth of experience, she has pulled together one of the finest books of photographs and essays on modern Alaska. To help present the Native point of view, she called on a broad cross-section of Native writers to discuss their traditional ways and the changes they have seen. As Robert Henning, publisher and President of the Alaska Geographic Society, points out, the book was not meant to be scholarly or definitive--just a book about the Native People.

The first two chapters by Dorothy Jean Ray and Lael Morgan, give a brief background to the prehistory and the effects of historic change since 1741. Old sketches from the earliest historical records are used for illustration. Following this portion, there are six chapters--each describing various People of Alaska. The final chapter depicts something of the life of Indians and Eskimos living in the city. At the end is a fine section listing important dates in Native history.

Like the many other works published through the Alaska Geographic Society, this book is literally loaded with beautiful color photographs. They might be part of the reason for the rather high price of the paperback book...\$19.95. But to a large extent, they make the volume what it is--a picture of Alaska today. After each article by a Native writer, there are long sections of photographs and explanations from that part of the Great Land.

This is the kind of book that most people will take down and thumb through many times. Knowing something of Alaska^{ans}, you'll probably do as this reviewer did--start looking for familiar faces and places. And you're almost guaranteed to see someone you know if you've been around Alaska for very long!

This is the sort of book that will entrance a lot of different types of readers. Young Alaskans will enjoy the pictures and views from around the State. Older readers will be able to reminisce about the good old days and the changes that they see today. Newcomers can get a much better picture of life in the bush across the entire state than perhaps from any other book.

I hate to say this, but it is not too early to start thinking about Christmas presents, and for friends both inside and outside Alaska, this would make a very informative and enjoyable present.

All in all, it is what it was intended to be--a nice picture and story about the Native People of Alaska.