

realize a saving in printing costs. One wonders, however, whether a book costing \$27.60 ought not to be free from such economies — especially when the translation costs have been underwritten by the Danish government's Rask-Ørsted Fund. The book's cost will undoubtedly limit its distribution to library shelves. At a somewhat lower price, the individual northern scholar could have had the pleasure of including this splendid volume among his reference works.

Finn Gad is to be lauded for his continuing efforts to produce the first large and comprehensive history of Greenland. Praise must also go to the translator, Gordon C. Bowden, and to the English publishers, C. Hurst & Company, for undertaking a project which will benefit all non-Danish-speaking persons with a northern interest.

*William G. Mattox*

**ATHAPASKAN ADAPTATIONS: HUNTERS AND FISHERMEN OF THE SUBARCTIC FORESTS.** BY JAMES W. VANSTONE. *Chicago: Aldine, 1974. 5½ x 8¼ inches, 145 pages, maps, tables, and illustrations. \$7.50 cloth, \$2.95 paper.*

As James VanStone points out in the appendix to his excellent little book *Athapaskan Adaptations*, the past fifteen years have witnessed a great upsurge of interest in the cultures of hunters, fishers and gatherers, and a consequent rediscovery of the Athapaskans of the American Subarctic. In part this seems to reflect anthropology's present emphasis on cultural ecology and cultural evolution, as well as the problems inherent in rapid social change. Quite possibly, also, as this reviewer suspects, it results from the great increase in numbers of graduate students which occurred in the nineteen fifties and sixties, and the increasing accessibility of the North as an area for field work. In any event a new generation of Athapaskanists has already published the results of a variety of specialized studies and more are still in manuscript form.

Although most students of the Northern Athapaskans have felt that a certain unity pervaded the cultures of the various groups, this has been more of a gut feeling than a demonstrable reality. The great environmental contrasts within the Athapaskan area and the adaptability of the various groups to their respective ecological niches make any general cultural synthesis difficult. As a result few scholars have attempted it, and then only at a fairly superficial level. Fortunately

VanStone brings to this task wide acquaintance with the literature, both old and new, combined with field experience in both Alaska and Canada. His book is intended as an introduction to Athapaskan ethnography for the beginning student, both undergraduate and graduate, and consequently its emphasis is on general patterns rather than extensive ethnographic detail.

After a brief introduction the author analyses Athapaskan culture under eight chapter headings followed by an appendix, "The Ethnographic Literature and Future Research Needs," together with selected references and suggested future readings, the latter annotated. An index, maps, and a carefully selected group of illustrations — some old, some recent — complete the volume. In Chapter 1, "Natural Environment and Human Populations," he points out that since the Athapaskans lacked any tribal organization and resultant tribal consciousness, what emerges is "a cultural continuum carried on by a series of interlocking groups whose individual lifeways differed in only minor details from those of their immediate neighbors." Following McClellan, he then attempts to resolve the difficulties inherent in contrasting environments by dividing the territory into five physiographic units: Arctic Drainage Lowlands, Cordilleran, Yukon and Kuskokwim River Basins, Cook Inlet-Susitna River Basin, and Copper River Basin. The exploitation of the varying food resources of these areas is discussed in Chapter 2, "The Subsistence Base and Settlement Patterns." In this connection VanStone makes a point, sometimes overlooked by anthropologists, that throughout the boreal forest almost every food resource is subject to marked fluctuations in abundance, both regular and irregular. Using the typology devised by Beardsley *et al.*, the author classifies the community pattern of the "typical" Northern Athapaskans, those of the northern cordilleran and northern arctic drainage lowlands, as "Restricted Wandering" while the Cook Inlet-Susitna River and Yukon-Kuskokwim groups, including the Ingalik, Koyukon and Tanana, are considered to be "Central Based Wandering." In the opinion of this reviewer, VanStone errs in including the aboriginal Koyukon and Tanana in the latter category. "Social Institutions," the subject of Chapter 3, permits a greater degree of generalization. VanStone believes that June Helm's concepts of "regional band," "local band," and "task group" (the two latter often indistinguishable) are applicable throughout the area, although the development of the fur trade tended to obliterate pre-contact group-

ings. Like this reviewer, he believes matrilineal sibs to be an ancient Athapaskan institution, at least in the West, together with the potlatch. Two minor strictures: (1) According to both Hosley and Krauss who have worked with these people, the McGrath group is Koyukon not Ingalik (p. 47); (2) the aboriginal Koyukon were not bilateral (p. 52) but instead had a tripartite, matrilineal subsystem according to this reviewer's Koyukon informants as well as the unpublished manuscripts of both Jetté and McFadyen. Chapter 4, "Religion and the Supernatural," likewise reveals certain general features in the native belief system, notably the reciprocal relationship between men and animals, the universality of shamanism, a widespread fear of "Brush Indians" or bogey-men, and an emphasis on individualistic rather than community rituals. No mention is made of the fact that many shamans also served as political leaders as well as religious ones. Chapter 5, "The Individual and His Culture," again stresses general similarities throughout the area, particularly the tabus and practices surrounding birth, menstruation and death, most of which have been either altered or discontinued as the result of white contact.

In Chapter 6, "The History of European Contact," VanStone uses two time frames. "The Early Contact Period" (1700-1850) brought more efficient tools and utensils and the beginning of the fur trade which encouraged individualistic trapping rather than communal hunting of big-game animals and exploitation of the total environment. "The Stabilized Fur Trade and Mission Period" (1850-1940) witnessed the intensification of these changes. Firearms and, later, steel traps became increasingly important in subsistence activities. Semipermanent settlements grew up around the trading posts and missions with consequent changes in band organization and settlement patterns. Chapter 7, "Northern Athapaskans and the Modern World," continues this analysis under the rubric, "The Government-Industrial Period" (1940 to the present). While the settlement pattern has remained much the same, welfare payments have replaced furs as the major source of cash income and the federal governments of the United States and Canada have largely replaced the missions as caretakers of the Indians. The author illustrates the various periods with a brief history of Old Crow, a Kutchin settlement on the Porcupine River. Chapter 8, "Athapaskan Adaptive Strategy," recapitulates the basic themes outlined in the previous chapters: the variety of ecological niches and the flexibility of the Northern Athapaskans in exploiting them; the inter-

relationship of the social organization and religious beliefs with subsistence activities; the emphasis on individualism that stems from a hunting life; and the highly adaptive nature of the culture that, nevertheless, is characterized by underlying similarities.

Because so many of VanStone's conclusions coincide with those of the reviewer, it is hard to be objective about them. No doubt some specialists will cavil with certain interpretations and emphases, as this reviewer occasionally has done, but this is inevitable with a subject as broad as Northern Athapaskan culture where hard facts on many areas and topics are scanty. *Errata* are minimal, and even these few must irk as careful a scholar as VanStone. It is the Chandalar Kutchin, not the Upper Tanana (p. 21) who believe that the moose is a relative newcomer in their area. The first White missionary, Dr. Grafton Burke, visited Arctic Village in 1922, not 1933 (pp. 72, 99) although the brothers Robert and Kenneth McDonald, mixed bloods, had visited Chandalar Kutchin camps in the 1870s and native catechists had also proselytized among these people. Mikhailovsky Redoubt was established in 1833, not 1883 (p. 94), obviously a typo.

Although intended as an introduction to Northern Athapaskan culture for the beginning student, this pioneer study should be welcomed by a far larger audience, both lay and professional, for it compresses and synthesizes a great amount of material, and does it in a manner that is lucid, readable, and insightful.

Robert A. McKennan

THE SUBARCTIC ATHABASCANS: A SELECTED ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY. BY ARTHUR E. HIPPLER AND JOHN R. WOOD. Fairbanks, Alaska: Institute of Social, Economic and Government Research, University of Alaska, 1974. 8½ x 10¾ inches, c. 333 pages (paginated by sections only), maps. Paper, no price indicated.

This bibliography, selected and annotated by Arthur E. Hippler and John R. Wood, represents still another response to the current interest in Northern Athapaskans, and was compiled at the Institute of Social, Economic and Governmental Research at the University of Alaska in connection with its ongoing research program. The institute's anthropological interests have focused on problems of social change among the Alaskan natives, and consequently the bibliography is largely concerned with references of a general or