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in formal educational institutions. He states that the "basic mission of American Indian studies is to enlighten and educate all students about the diverse and rich cultures that make up American Indian life" (p. 104).

The book is written for general readers who want to learn about contemporary Indians. It could also be used for supplemental reading in introductory college or high school courses on contemporary Indians. In such introductory courses, students often ask, "What are Indian people of today like?" These essays, taken together, begin to answer this complex question.

As Donald Fixico states, "People need a cultural past." These essays speak of the past and, at the same time, express the vitality of American Indian cultures in the present.

For further reading on matters relating to Indian identity, I would recommend *Being and Becoming Indian*, edited by James A. Clinton, Chicago: The Dorsey Press (1989).

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**Oil Age Eskimos.** By Joseph G. Jorgensen. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1990. 401 pages. \$40.00 Cloth.

This is a painful book to read. The appalling treatment of Arctic peoples over the past centuries, their exploitation at the hands of such interlopers as early Russian mercantilists and myriad Euro-American opportunists, and the recent theft of their land and resources by means of the 1971 Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (ANCSA) are described here in ways that make it impossible not to feel sickened and enraged by the injustices heaped upon Alaskan Eskimos.

Jorgensen concentrates on the changes experienced by Eskimo families and communities in the two decades since the passage of ANCSA, which "extinguished Eskimo and Indian claims to aboriginal hunting, fishing, and land rights on the 400 million acres that comprise Alaska and on the territorial waters off its shoreline" (p. 7). In "exchange" for their aboriginal resources, Alaska Natives received smaller amounts of land, \$962 million in development funds, and a system of capitalist corporations

that supposedly would generate jobs and dividends to replace traditional subsistence resources.

The author makes clear that the main impetus behind ANCSA and its ludicrous provisions was the oil industry and its ally, the United States government (at that time in the hands of the Nixon administration). ANCSA freed the Alaskan coastline and continental shelf for oil exploration and extraction. Furthermore, it contained the provision that all for-profit native corporations could sell shares to the general public in 1991, thus revealing another motive behind this cynical piece of legislation: eventually to remove Alaska's resources from the hands of native people entirely. To this aim, ANCSA resembles the Allotment Act of a century before. In addition, as Jorgensen points out, neither act made provisions for future generations.

*Oil Age Eskimos* examines the ways in which three specific Alaska communities have been affected by and have adapted to life after ANCSA, and makes contrasts and comparisons among them where possible. These communities are Wainwright, on the northern coast near Barrow; Unalakleet, across Norton Sound from Nome; and Gambell, on the northern tip of St. Lawrence Island. The latter village was featured in an educational film a few years back called "On the Spring Ice," documenting a walrus hunt and other aspects of Eskimo life in the Bering Strait.

The book examines several areas of family and community life, including kinship relations, community political structure, education, and religious and cultural beliefs. But its main focus is on the complex economic relations that have developed over the past two decades, and on the nature of Eskimo subsistence activities and resource extraction within the constraints now imposed by ANCSA. This is not to say, of course, that kinship relations, religion, and so forth, are separate from the economic sphere of life; Jorgensen repeatedly emphasizes how family, clan, and community obligations, and religious and ideological concepts, are intricately tied into the modes and relations of production that guide the modern Eskimo way of life.

Eskimos in the age of fossil fuels have fallen into a dependency trap deeper and more complex than anything they have experienced before. As the author points out, the forced abandonment of much of their former way of life, coupled with the commodification of almost all aspects of existence—food, fuel, transportation, clothing, labor—have rendered families and communities

dependent on not only wage labor and a market economy, but also on various types of government welfare payments and monetary transfers subject to the whims of Congress and the Oval Office.

And yet, astonishingly, the people included in Jorgensen's study have managed to retain and even expand many of their traditional ways of living and thinking. This has surprised many researchers, who predicted two or three decades ago that the upheavals created by "modernization" and by ANCSA would spell the end of subsistence hunting and fishing, and would seriously undermine or destroy communal and familial relationships. Instead, the hardships wrought by the expansion of the market economy and the welfare state often have forced the people to continue harvesting not only their preferred marine resources, but also such underutilized resources as invertebrates and certain types of birds, and thus expand their use of the natural environment.

Precarious economic conditions also can serve to solidify family structures as people pool their scarce resources. Cash income frequently is used "to purchase the technology that will enhance subsistence harvest activities, which, in turn, render family and community life more predictable" (p. 311). Also, native communities have been able to use certain provisions of ANCSA and United States tax laws in unexpected ways to enhance their economic situation. Another encouraging development is a renewed involvement in traditional and modern Eskimo arts, songs, and crafts, a cultural renaissance like that emerging among Indian tribes in the "lower forty-eight" and in Canada. Despite all odds, Arctic peoples have managed to retain a degree of separateness in their lifeways and identities.

Jorgensen writes from a pro-environmental perspective that credits native people with knowing how best to extract and manage their own natural resources. The villagers, he writes, "care that animals are in the habitats in which they belong, that those animals can be harvested in the future, and that they, the hunters, played no role in severely depleting them" (p. 280). The author contrasts these attitudes with the arrogance, greed, and ignorance of non-natives, the United States government, and corporate entities whose basic mission is to exploit the environment to the point of exhaustion. The twelve million gallons of oil spewn forth by the Exxon Valdez in 1989 confirm earlier Eskimo

testimony that the oil industry would be unlikely and unable to keep its promises of a pristine, unspoiled environment.

The epilogue of the book provides updated information on the economic and legal circumstances affecting Eskimo communities, including some of the changes made in the ANCSA legislation since 1971. These changes include amendments designed to protect Eskimo interests when their corporate stock goes public in 1991. However, legal and judicial interpretations of the law still can prove harmful to native communities. As an example, Jorgensen cites a recent case where the residents of Gambell, fearing adverse effects on their marine resources, tried to stop oil exploration and drilling in Norton Sound. After a series of appeals, some of which favored the natives, the United States Supreme Court held that the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act (ANILCA) literally concerned land and not water. The act thus stripped Gambell residents, "almost all of whom gain almost all of their daily sustenance from the resources of the sea" (p. 295), of any environmental protection whatsoever. The future is, indeed, uncertain.

*Oil Age Eskimos* would be an excellent book to use in a course focusing on Arctic peoples, or on Alaska history and contemporary issues. I also would recommend it for environmentalists who want (and need) to understand better how native peoples are affected by ecological changes and crises, and how they, in turn, exert their own influence on the environment, particularly how they try to manage natural resources in productive but sustainable fashion. And finally, would it be too much to hope that legislators and policymakers, corporations, and the president of the United States might read this book to enlighten themselves about the severe impacts their behavior has had on the ecology and native peoples in the northern wilderness?

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**The Western Abenakis of Vermont, 1600–1800: War, Migration, and the Survival of an Indian People.** By Colin G. Calloway. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1990. 346 pages. \$29.95 Cloth.