

NORTH ALASKA CHRONICLE: NOTES FROM THE END OF TIME.

By John Martin Campbell. Museum of New Mexico Press, Sante Fe, 1998. ix + 147 p., maps, b&w and color illus., bib. Softbound. US\$29.95. ISBN: 0890133530

IN A HUNGRY COUNTRY: ESSAYS BY SIMON PANEAK.

EDITED BY JOHN MARTIN CAMPBELL, WITH CONTRIBUTIONS BY GRANT SPEARMAN, ROBERT L. RAUSCH, AND STEPHEN C. PORTER. UNIVERSITY OF ALASKA PRESS, FAIRBANKS, 2004. xxiii + 125 p., maps, B&W AND COLOR ILLUS., APPENDICES, NOTES, BIB., INDEX. CLOTH. US\$59.95; SOFTBOUND. US\$27.95. ISBN: 1889963607

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Simon Paneak was an Iñupiaq Eskimo who lived almost his entire life (1900-1975) on Alaska's North Slope. He traveled widely within that region, and, to a degree unusual even for an Iñupiaq, he systematically studied the history of his people and the environment in which they lived. He learned to read and write English, and he had a remarkable memory. This combination of talents led virtually every scientist and adventurer who got anywhere near Anaktuvuk Pass from about 1948 on to seek him out to draw on his impressive store of knowledge. John Martin ("Jack") Campbell was one of them.

Campbell established a particularly close relationship with Paneak over the course of nine summers of archaeological research in the central Brooks Range. With Campbell's encouragement, Paneak produced a number of sketches and stories depicting the life and history of his Nunamiut ("inland Eskimo") people. The two volumes under review reproduce Paneak's work, with editorial and substantive contributions by Campbell and others.

The first volume to appear, *North Alaskan Chronicle* (1998), features a selection of 62 of the 97 sketches Paneak prepared in 1967-68. Each drawing is accompanied by a brief introduction by Campbell, and occasionally by a photograph as well. The sketches portray a wide variety of subjects. Most deal with subsistence pursuits or items of material culture, but some depict other activities or legends. The sketches also reproduce Paneak's original hand-written comments about the subject matter of each picture. Paneak's sketches will never appear in a collection of artistic masterworks, but they are very clear in portraying what their originator in-

tended to show. Together with the artist's and the editor's comments, they convey an impressive amount of information.

The second volume, *In a Hungry Country*, features Paneak's stories, which were recorded on tape in 1970-71 and subsequently transcribed. There are 27 of them, divided into five categories: the supernatural, the hunting trail, trade, war and hunger, and a story about traveling in 1940. Each major section is preceded by a brief introduction by the editor. There are two versions of each story. One is Paneak's original account expressed in "village English." The other is Campbell's translation of the original into standard English. Some stories are legends, others are historical accounts, and still others recount Paneak's personal experiences (some of which were quite dramatic). Many of the stories are accompanied by more of Paneak's annotated sketches or maps, and some by photographs. The collection is interesting and informative.

Both volumes contain introductions by Campbell. The one in *Chronicle* is the more substantial of the two, introducing the reader to Paneak's life and times, to Campbell's own research in the north, to the geographic setting of northern Alaska, and to the social history of the Nunamiut Eskimos. Campbell's introduction to *In a Hungry Country* is briefer, and more focused on the specific contents of the book. His remarks in this book are supplemented by an interesting forward by Anaktuvuk Pass's resident scholar Grant Spearman, and by appendices listing the plants and animals Paneak knew (by Robert Rausch) and an Anaktuvuk genealogy as of 1959 (by Stephen Porter).

The temporal focus of both volumes is probably best characterized as being early-contact or early post-contact, although Paneak added the notation “18th century” to some of the sketches, and the stories of Paneak’s personal experiences date to as recently as 1940. As far as I can tell, it was Paneak himself who made the original decision as to what subjects to sketch and talk about; Campbell then chose a sample of Paneak’s submissions for publication. It would be interesting to know the criteria on which both men based their selections. As one who supposedly knows all this material I was a bit taken aback by how much I learned from reading these two books. More particularly, I learned from Paneak’s contributions to them. There are interesting tidbits on every page. Many of them are recorded here for the first time, making these volumes useful additions to the literature on northern Alaska.

The editor’s remarks are intended primarily to provide context for the uninitiated, and for the most part they should be successful in that regard. The only weakness with either book is that Campbell is about thirty years out of date with regard to what is known about the social history of north central Alaska; but this should not be a problem for most readers. The main point is that we should be grateful to Campbell for persuading Paneak to record this material, and for making it available to the rest of us.