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BOOK REVIEW

And The Land Shall Provide: Alaska Natives in a Year of Transition, by Lael Morgan. Doubleday. 1974. \$10.00.

And The Land Shall Provide by Lael Morgan contributes to an unusual perception of the natives of Alaska, themselves an unusual and perceptive people who occupied this land before domination by Western civilization. The book was prompted by a major change in the power structure and economy of Alaska and seeks to capture some measure of the natives as they moved into a year of major transition. The book is thus subtitled "Alaskan Natives in a Year of Transition."

In December of 1971, the Congress passed the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act, granting to the Alaska natives \$465 million in federal funds, \$500 million in state mineral rights, and 40 million acres of land. Lael Morgan, a longtime resident of Alaska and a reporter for the *Tundra Times*, the leading native newspaper, took on the assignment of living with the native people, eating as they ate, and living as they lived, all toward the idea of achieving a perceptive approach to what the natives of Alaska were in 1972, and would be after the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act began to have an impact.

This book describes the series of stays that she made with various native groups, together with a summarization of the history of the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act and of the Alaska native people. Lael Morgan is a good reporter, a perceptive writer, and an engaging individual. Willing to take chances, involving danger as well as personal "put downs," she appears to have succeeded time after time to work her way into the hearts of the native people with whom she was staying. Her sympathetic and gently humorous views help explain why the villagers finally did accept her. In addition, her cheerful participation in the life of the natives, including the dangers of the harsh environment, the strikingly peculiar diets, and the living conditions of the villagers, took her far beyond normal reporting requirements and brought her into the hearts of the people she was reporting about.

Ms. Morgan notes that the anthropomorphism typical of any culture closely tied to its environment is present in the remote settlements about which she reports. For example, the playful sea otters were once humans, according to Aleut legend. Aleut trappers even today are impressed with the otters' humanistic conduct, particularly

in lovemaking—and the Aleut legend of their ancestors quietly continues.

Some wise if irreverent soul once noted that there has never been a statue erected in honor of someone who left well-enough alone. But even if there had been, it is unlikely such a totem would ever mark a point of contact between whites and natives in Alaska. Some of the results of not leaving well-enough alone are chronicled by Ms. Morgan.

In many ways, the most pressing problems faced by the natives of Alaska derive from the welfare aspect of today's society. Pressed by the white man's material goods, social pressures and, ultimately, laws, many natives have moved out of their traditional intimate relationship with their environment. The change has, however, not been successful for all. Too many natives have fallen afoul of the welfare state mentality in switching from dependence on the "old ways" of hunting, trapping, and fishing to new ways of living on the dole (a change made all too easy for some by alcohol).

Ms. Morgan writes in a unpretentious, easy style and does not purport to offer novel sociological, economic, or cultural insights. Indeed, it is the easy charm of her story that gives the reader a fresh appreciation of the natives of Alaska. In avoiding the obvious, she implies the subtle: ancient customs adapting to new cultures and new mass-produced products being adapted to ancient cultures.

From Ms. Morgan's writings, one does not derive a definitive history, a complete anthropological report, nor a cultural or legal analysis of the current state of the natives. Rather, and perhaps more important than any of these for her purposes, one is given a personal, subjective amalgam of experiences which justify the numerous implicit conclusions she reaches concerning the Alaskan native life and culture.

For lawyers, particularly those representing natives of Alaska—or indeed any Indian client—the principal value of this book may well consist of the insights it gives into the problems and psychology of clients who still live close to a land that is intolerant of mistakes but which can provide adequately to those hardy and knowledgeable enough to function on its terms. Certainly the book cannot be proffered as a legal reference in any normal sense. That is not, however, to denigrate its value to lawyers. Indeed, this very Law Review provides a unique service in combining such knowledge with the more traditional legal analyses found within its covers. For those who have the gratifications of representing Indian groups, the imperative of such representation is careful understanding of our clients' unique history, motivations, and objectives. In the case of Alaskan natives,

some of whom I have the pleasure of representing, motivations and objectives are complex, often unarticulated, and of overriding importance in guiding the lawyer seeking to serve his client's interest.

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