

mary of the characteristics of the glaciers.

Two location maps of the area, on a scale of about 1:13,000,000, are provided. One shows the positions of the Antarctic Oceanic Islands and the other pinpoints the glaciers on the continent. The two remaining maps are of the Oceanic Islands on scales large enough to observe the extent of glaciation.

The accompanying text by Mercer is extremely well done and is thoroughly documented. Two tables in the article present, in condensed form, some of the features of the glaciers under such column headings as morphology, glacier type and observed movement. Glaciologists will appreciate the useful source material provided in the exhaustive list of more than 150 references to studies in this area.

The American Geographical Society has produced a very attractive Folio. It is of a convenient size so that the maps which unfold to roughly twice its dimensions are still manageable. The print in the text is large and extremely easy to read.

M. P. Langleben

DICTIONARY OF ALASKA PLACE NAMES. BY DONALD J. ORTH. *U.S. Geological Survey, Professional Paper 567. Washington: United States Government Printing Office, 1967. 9½ x 11¾ inches, 1084 pages, 12 multicolor sectional maps. \$8.50.*

Most present-day students of Alaskan subjects have repeatedly used the *Geographic Dictionary of Alaska* (U.S. Geological Survey Bulletin 187, by Marcus Baker, 1902) or the second edition (U.S. Geological Survey Bulletin 299, by James McCormick, 1906) and have found them valuable tools, but seriously dulled by being so long out of date. Welcome indeed is this worthy successor to those earlier volumes.

The main part of the publication—the section called “Alaska Place Names”—starts with “A, Peak” on p. 45 and extends through 1026 three-column pages to “8900, Peak” on p. 1071—a mammoth and painstaking work. That section is preceded by a Foreword, a Glossary of Terms used, a list of Abbreviations used, a Transliteration System for Russian recommended by the U.S. Board on Geographic Names, and a list of Russian Generic Terms.

The Glossary of Terms is useful, but some of the definitions leave one in some doubt. For example, a “Village” is defined as “A Place having 1 to 1,000 inhabitants.” It would seem that one inhabitant scarcely

makes a village in the usual sense. A “Winter crossing” is “A place where a person may cross a major stream during the freezeup.” Most travellers would prefer to cross after the freezeup and before the breakup. Furthermore, some rare typographical errors might have been caught before printing but then the reader would be spared noting that in the Abbreviations an “Adm.—Admiral” is the only military title that rates a capital, a “Gen.” being merely a “general.”

“Alaska” and “Alaskan” appear to be used indiscriminately as adjectives, e.g. “Alaska landscapes” but “Alaskan files,” both on page 1. This is not important and probably would not be noticed except in a work otherwise distinguished for its meticulous attention to detail.

The Introduction needs to be read with care for the reader to understand the carefully worked out and faithfully followed pattern of the name descriptions and the reasons therefor. The author properly points out that: “Native names presented the largest problem in compiling this dictionary. The native languages do not have established written forms, and the transcription of names from Eskimo, Aleut, or Indian into our Roman alphabet (some by way of the Russian Cyrillic alphabet), by nonlinguists, is extremely difficult.”

The part of the Introduction on the Origin of Names is most informative and describes the six major sources of names—Russian names, Spanish names, British names, French names, American names, and native names. The author places native names in especially appropriate perspective: “Eskimo, Aleut, and Indian names, like those of the Europeans, are generally commonplace and descriptive. Native naming habits, however, have two characteristic differences. The natives tend to name many small, even minute, landmark features and ignore those that are large. Few mountains were named unless they stood alone and had some peculiar characteristic. For foot, boat, or sled travel, there was no need to name large and vague features. In addition, the natives commonly applied several names to one feature, based on the characteristics of its particular parts. Many streams, even short ones, had various names along their lengths. Many of the native names now appearing on published maps are long and unpronounceable by the average English-speaking person.

“Geographic names evolve historically, their origins and forms being closely associated with the languages of the peoples who successively occupy the area. Thus, many native names are changed or altered

in form as a result of adjusting to the new language — English. This is a universal process. However altered, many of these names have become or will become firmly established as part of the native heritage of the Alaska landscape."

The author does well to key each name to the map on page 2 (Fig. 1), Physical Regions of Alaska, for this helps to identify the name and the feature with the proper environment. Also of help is Fig. 2 that makes it possible to locate each named feature on one of the standard quarter-million scale topographic maps of the Geological Survey, of which there are 153.

Overall, Mr. Orth has accomplished an outstanding and much needed task. The product will be extensively used by students and researchers. It is a scholarly treatise that not only accomplished its objective in regard to names but contains also a large amount of most interesting historical information. Both Mr. Orth and the Geological Survey are to be congratulated.

*J. C. Reed*

**THE KOMAROV BOTANICAL INSTITUTE: 250 YEARS OF RUSSIAN RESEARCH.** BY STANWYN G. SHETLER. *Smithsonian Publication 4687. Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1967. 8¾ x 6¼ inches. xlv + 240 pages, 29 halftone plates and 2 insert maps. \$5.95.*

In May 1964 Soviet botanists celebrated the 250th anniversary of the Komarov Botanical Institute of the Academy of Sciences of the U.S.S.R., created in 1931 following the merger of the Botanical Museum and the Botanical Garden in Leningrad, and renamed in 1940 in honour of Vladimir L. Komarov, grand "old man" of Russian botany (1869-1945), President of the Soviet Academy of Sciences in Moscow, and the principal initiator and editor-in-chief of the monumental Flora of the U.S.S.R.

Stanwyn Shetler is Associate Curator of Phanerogams with the Smithsonian Institution's Museum of Natural History, commonly known as the United States National Herbarium, in Washington, D.C.; in July 1964 he made a brief visit to Leningrad. So well did he use his time there for background studies that he has now written a book, with the aid of numerous contacts made in 1964 and later for which full credit is given. This volume can well be described as a short history in English of Russian botany and botanical exploration, culminating with the

completion in 1964 of the 30th and final volume of the Flora of U.S.S.R. which is surely one of the largest and most heroic and ambitious undertakings in the history of botany. Commenced in 1934, the completed flora fills 22,000 pages of text and covers nearly 17,500 species of plants native to the U.S.S.R. of which some 1,500 are described for the first time. The early part of the Flora project was completed under incredibly difficult circumstances, during World War II. At least one Institute botanist actually starved to death and another was killed by shell fragments during the German 900-day blockade and siege of Leningrad.

Shetler has given us an excellent description of the physical setting and intellectual climate of the Komarov Institute with its vast resources, including a staff of some 700 botanists and technicians, five departments and 24 laboratories, greenhouses and gardens, an arboretum, several experimental farms, a library containing 450,000 volumes, and herbaria rich in historic collections and types and with a total said to be of well over 5 millions specimens.

In the first two chapters of his book Shetler tells how Tzar Peter I (The Great), planned and built the city which he, later, named for himself; in the second he describes the modern city of Leningrad.

In chapters 3 to 5, as a background for the emerging Komarov Botanical Institute, short accounts are given of the history of (1) the Imperial Garden of St. Petersburg, 1823-1931 (2) the Botanical Museum of the Academy of Sciences, 1835-1931, and (3) the Botanical Garden of the Academy of Sciences, 1735-1812.

The sixth chapter deals with the Komarov Institute and, appropriately, forms the core of the book. It starts with the biographies of the seven first directors and a list of the principal botanists attached to the institute at the time of the merger. Next follows a description of the growth and activities of its five departments, of which the largest and most important is that dealing with vascular plants. In the remainder of the chapter Shetler deals with the Institute's (1) national role, (2) its share in the U.S.S.R. Flora project, (3) its serial publications, (4) its international role, (5) its intellectual environment, and (6) its future. Pages 205 to 212 give references to Soviet and foreign publications consulted in the preparation of the book, followed by 26 pages of a most useful subject index in which are included the names and brief vitae of all Soviet and foreign botanists named in the text. Illustrations are indicated by boldface type. In all, 42 botanists and