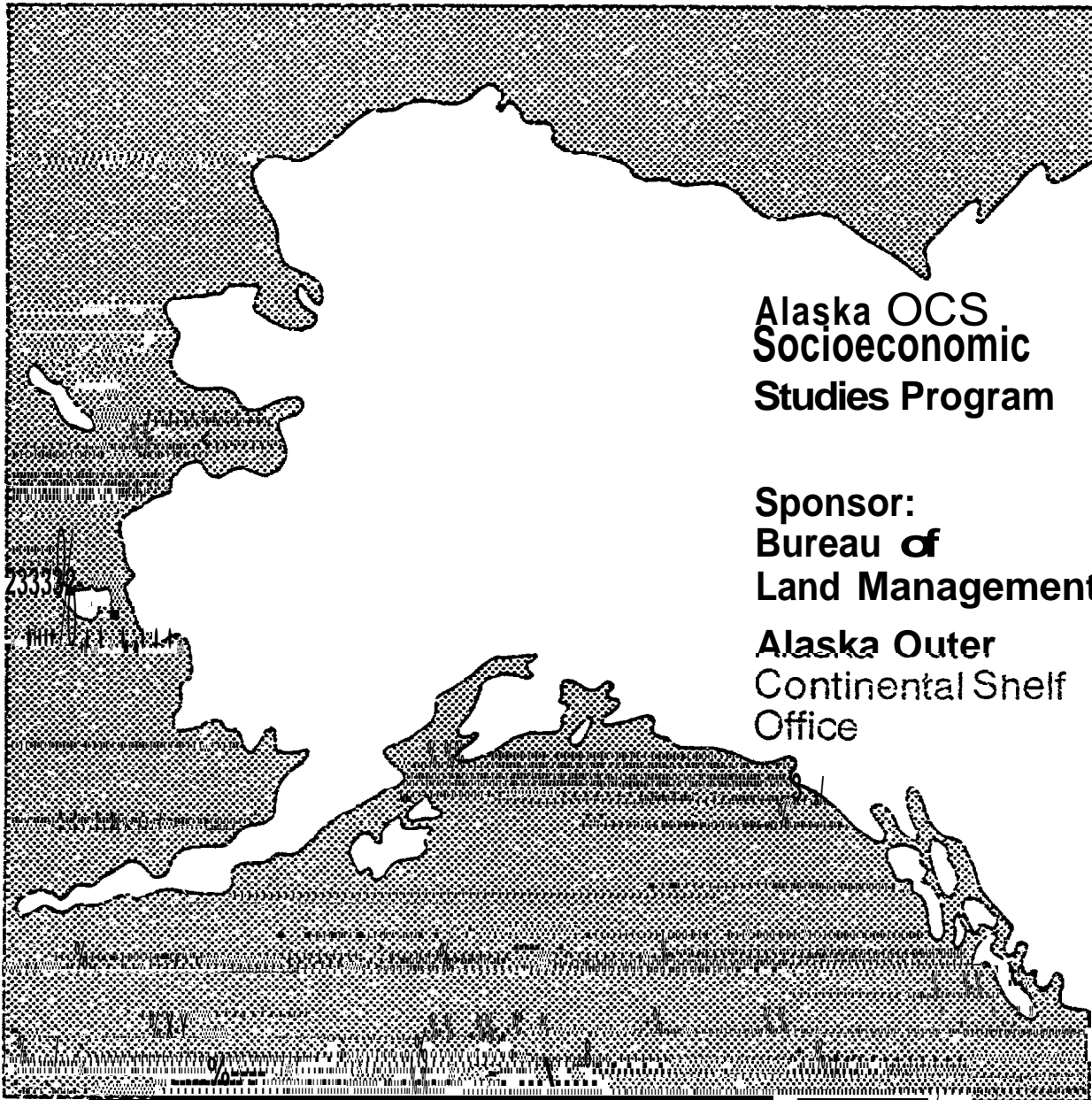


Technical Repro
Number 15a



Alaska OCS
Socioeconomic
Studies Program

Sponsor:
Bureau of
Land Management

Alaska Outer
Continental Shelf
Office

Historical Indicators of Alaska
Native Culture Change
Executive Summary

The United States Department of the Interior was designated by the Outer Continental Shelf (OCS) Lands Act of 1953 to carry out the majority of the Act's provisions for administering the mineral leasing and development of offshore areas of the United States under federal jurisdiction. Within the Department, the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) has the responsibility to meet requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA) as well as other legislation and regulations dealing with the effects of offshore development. In Alaska, unique cultural differences and climatic conditions create a need for developing additional socioeconomic and environmental information to improve OCS decision making at all governmental levels. In fulfillment of its federal responsibilities and with an awareness of these additional information needs, the BLM has initiated several investigative programs, one of which is the Alaska OCS Socioeconomic Studies Program.

The Alaska OCS Socioeconomic Studies Program is a multi-year research effort which attempts to predict and evaluate the effects of Alaska OCS Petroleum Development upon the physical, social, and economic environments within the state. The analysis addresses the differing effects among various geographic units: the State of Alaska as a whole, the several regions within which oil and gas development is likely to take place, and within these regions, the various communities.

The overall research method is multidisciplinary in nature and is based on the preparation of three research components. In the first research component, the internal nature, structure, and essential processes of these various geographic units and interactions among them are documented. In the second research component, alternative sets of assumptions regarding the location, nature, and timing of future OCS petroleum development events and related activities are prepared. In the third research component, future oil and gas development events are translated into quantities and forces acting on the various geographic units. The predicted consequences of these events are evaluated in relation to present goals, values, and expectations.

In general, program products are sequentially arranged in accordance with BLM's proposed OCS lease sale schedule, so that information is timely to decision making. In addition to making reports available through the National Technical Information Service, the BLM is providing an information service through the Alaska OCS Office. Inquiries for information should be directed to: Program Coordinator (COAR), Socioeconomic Studies Program, Alaska OCS Office, P. O. Box 1159, Anchorage, Alaska 99510.

ALASKA OCS SOCIOECONOMIC STUDIES PROGRAM

HISTORICAL INDICATORS OF ALASKA NATIVE CULTURE CHANGE

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

PREPARED BY

NANCY YAW DAVIS
CULTURAL DYNAMICS

PREPARED FOR

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
ALASKA OUTER CONTINENTAL SHELF OFFICE

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ALASKA OCS SOCIOECONOMIC STUDIES PROGRAM
HISTORICAL INDICATORS OF ALASKA NATIVE CULTURE CHANGE

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I. INTRODUCTION

Approximately 120 Native communities are located along Alaska's coast. They belong to ten Native Regions, and include many distinct ethnic groups, such as the **Tsimshian**, Haida and **Tlingit** in southeast Alaska, the **Chugach** of Prince William Sound, **Sugcestun** and **Tanaina** of Cook Inlet, **Koniag** of Kodiak, **Aleuts** on the Aleutian Chain, many **Yupik** groups (Southern Eskimo) from Bristol Bay to Bering Strait, and Inupiat (Northern Eskimo) from Bering Strait to the Canadian border. The object of this paper was to identify **sociocultural** aspects of Alaska Native communities that are susceptible to change induced by OCS and other activity, based on a search of the anthropological literature.

The original request for a comparative analysis of selected case studies was not possible because the literature was found to be inadequate; descriptive information amenable to constructive comparison was available for only three communities, based on work accomplished in the 1950's. However, many other kinds of anthropological literature are available and provide a historical perspective for understanding the ethnically distinct coastal communities. The resulting analysis and the body of the report are based primarily, though not exclusively, on eleven book-length studies selected for the comprehensive perspective they provide. The combined input of these various works covers a period of thirty years of fieldwork (1940-1970), includes three generations of anthropologists from many different university settings, and reflects a general shifting of emphasis from comprehensive whole **ethnographies** to more topically limited research. In addition, the author contributes observations about directions of changes

which are not documented in the literature, but may be important for the Program to consider.

II. SOCIAL ORGANIZATION

This chapter addresses a series of topics, beginning first with the family, especially the meaning of kinship and changes in household organization, then addressing the significance of two relatively new institutions: the church and school. Brief reference to traditional and changing social stratification reveals both the endurance of kinship and the increasing social complexity of small communities.

Secondly, a series of topics especially related to impact concerns is considered. They include homogeneity of the villages, historical and current patterns of migration, reference group identification, and social horizons. Examples of racial conflict and of satisfactions with tradeoffs of advances and losses found in the literature are discussed next. A review of the role of language and the other arts closes the chapter, which seeks an understanding of the special people-to-people relationships of small Native communities.

111. ECONOMIC ORGANIZATION

This chapter is concerned with the relation of people to their resources, both as these resources are found on the land and in the sea, and in the form of jobs and cash. Subsistence activities and associated division of labor are addressed first, highlighting the traditional and the seasonal

aspects of those efforts. Secondly, a cursory outline of the history of some sources of jobs begins with the exploration of Alaska and notes a series of industries which came and, often, went: trading, mining and commercial fishing. The implications of military installations and construction since World War II are briefly mentioned as one kind of experience with external influences. The emerging pattern of **seasonality** and fluctuation is discussed. Finally, the role of new technologies in rural life calls attention to the ways these pieces of modernity have modified and sometimes strengthened the Native way of life.

IV. POLITICAL ORGANIZATION

This chapter concerns a few selected subjects: traditional political institutions, old tribes and new tribes, and one relatively new institution: the council. The informal methods of social control and alcohol consumption are discussed as a part of this search for understanding the difficulties confronting small **communities** as they endeavor to keep up with new political stratification and authority.

V. SOCIOCULTURAL CHANGE

A constant, dynamic characteristic of human communities is change. **What** varies is the rate, the intensity, the source, the response and the permanent ramifications of change. The analysis of the literature suggests that change in the coastal communities has been sporadic, often intensive over short periods, and has been followed by a slower process of adjustment which has resulted in permanently altered communities. Concepts of **accul-**

uration and modernization are discussed for the implications they have for future developments. The strengths and limitations of the anthropological literature is reviewed.

V. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

The following is a brief selection from the main report of those discoveries which appear to the author to be of particular interest and value to the Socioeconomic Studies Program:

- The anthropological literature published to date does not provide precise indicators of change which would be useful for the exact projection of future directions.
- The literature does, however, provide a background for understanding the cultural distinctions, and some limited information about responses to changes in the past.
- Considering the extensiveness of the coast, and the number of communities located on it, we have extremely few published accounts of the special cultural configurations of individual communities, and none are contemporary.

The following is the author's beginning identification of those aspects of small Native Alaskan communities which appear least susceptible to change:

- We can anticipate that the family **will** continue to be one of the most resilient aspects of Native culture.
- A strong sense of village identity **will** continue.
- Established, traditional **seasonality** of yearly activities will also likely continue.

Next is the author's identification of those aspects of village culture which appear most susceptible to change:

- Relationships of cash-generating and subsistence activities will continue to fluctuate according

to what is available and when it can be obtained.

- o Pieces of modern technology are likely to continue to accrue to **the current** technical kit.
- The physical mobility of people in and out of villages is likely to increase.
- Reference group identification is shifting away from a former tendency toward White orientation to a re-valuing and identification of Native affiliation.
- The rate of acculturation may be slowing down. Perhaps many of the **sociocultural** changes which had to be made, have been.