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**John R. Bockstoce**. *Furs and Frontiers in the Far North: The Contest among Native and Foreign Nations for the Bering Strait Fur Trade.* The Lamar Series in Western History. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2010. 496 pp. $26.00 (paper), ISBN 978-0-300-16799-3.

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**The Nineteenth-Century Bering Strait Fur Trade Network, Native People, and Global Commerce**

Over the years, historiography of the North American fur trade in regions from the Atlantic Coast, Great Lakes, Mississippi Valley, Rocky Mountain, and Northwest Pacific Coast and its Native, French, British, and Euroamerican participants has increased. From Washington Irving to Richard White, historians have analyzed the diplomatic alliances and commercial activities built on exchanges of pelts for manufactured goods between Native and non-Native peoples. However, fur trade historiography has neglected the northern tier region of the nineteenth-century fur trade located in the Bering Strait. Native, Russian, British, Euroamerican, and Chinese people participated as suppliers and middlemen in fur trade ventures. John R. Bockstoce remedies this oversight in his groundbreaking and meticulously researched book *Furs and Frontiers in the Far North.* Unfortunately, he neglects the Native peoples' perspective that could enable understanding of Native volition to participate in the fur trade and how Eskimo people felt about resulting consequences proffered from cultural changes. Bockstoce allows American, British, and Russian diaries and trade company records to tell the story about the nineteenth-century Bering Strait fur trade. Bockstoce's academic credentials provide him the expertise for this massive task. He obtained his Doctor of Philosophy degree from the University of Oxford in 1974. Additionally, he has earned a number of academic degrees; has held professional museum positions; and in 2000, received an honorary Doctor of Science degree from the University of Alaska for his decades of research in Alaska and the Bering Strait. Bockstoce has published a copious number of articles and books concerning subjects that include the Eskimos of northwest Alaska, whaling, trade in the Arctic, and relationships of Native peoples with Russians and Americans involved in struggles for control of the Bering Strait maritime fur trade.

In *Furs and Frontiers in the Far North*, Bockstoce asserts that it is significant that the Bering Strait was the center of a global trade network. He finds that at least fifty groups of Eskimo people acted as integral suppliers in the center of an impressive intercontinental maritime trade network. The network connected Great Britain, the United States, Russia, Hawaii, China, the Philippines, and Australia. Bockstoce describes Eskimo peoples' contact with Russians, Americans, and British as contributing to a "vigorous foreign maritime trade" developed "alongside the existing intercontinental native trade, a foreign trade that the Americans had initiated, a trade that the Russians would expand in competition with the British, and a trade that the Americans would dominate in the second half of the nineteenth century" (p. 40).

Bockstoce explains that trade increased among the Bering Strait Natives as a result of growing availability of manufactured goods. He emphasizes the great value the Bering Strait Eskimos gave to Chinese manufactured trade goods of glass beads, and iron goods in exchange for walrus ivory, whale bone, sea otter, beaver, caribou, and reindeer, and other furs. Additionally, tobacco, liquor, and firearms were highly desired trade goods by the Eskimo peoples involved in the trade network. Bockstoce finds that Native people also acquired manufactured goods from scavenging foreign trading company shipwrecked vessels. Bockstoce notes that "the belief that the native peoples were grossly exploited by foreign fur traders has long been current; yet the natives of the Bering Strait region willingly participated in these exchanges, and on both sides of the exchanges the participants thought they were receiving a favorable reward" (p. xviii).

Although in this book the Native perspective is missing, Bockstoce fills a void in the historiography of nineteenth-century fur trade literature. He provides de-

tailed ethnographic descriptions of Eskimo hunting, trapping, and trading practices. Most important, Bockstoce illuminates a dynamic intercontinental trade network of which Native people were primary players.

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