Arctic Studies Center Newsletter

Smithsonian Institution National Museum of Natural History

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NOTES FROM THE DIRECTOR

By William W. Fitzhugh

This *Newsletter* issue brings a prospective pause to a non-stop run of 32 Arctic Studies Center annual newsletters that began in July 1992, with the following statement: "The Arctic Studies Center was established by Congress in 1988 to create a permanent national program of arctic research and education within the Smithsonian Institution. Dramatic changes in the world have brought new challenges to arctic regions—problems of human-environment relationships, effects of industrialization and urbanism, threats of global climatic and environmental change, loss of traditional knowledge and language, and destruction of archaeological sites. At the same time, political turmoil in the former Soviet Union and the increasing clamor for self-determination by northern Native peoples is transforming geopolitical boundaries throughout the North. Recognition of the importance of arctic regions has triggered a renaissance in Arctic Studies. Scholars, Native peoples, and politicians leading this rebirth have called for research and education responsive to northern interests. The Arctic Studies Center is one answer to these emerging needs."

Aron Crowell at Apatiki camp on St. Lawrence Island, with Sivuqaq Corporation, on his first project in Alaska, August 1984. Photo courtesy A. Crowell

Today, in 2025, we may feel that not much has changed in this assessment of the importance of the Arctic to the world penned more than 30 years ago. Most of the conditions described in 1992—environmental damage, climate change, political unrest, language and cultural loss—are still with us, and perhaps are becoming even more intractable. Plus, many more issues have been added—shrinking Arctic ice, national security, the Indigenous drive for self-governance, food sovereignty, cultural sustainability, and more.

And yet there have been numerous improvements. Indigenous rights have advanced; conservation policies have helped preserve endangered species; restraints are beginning to curb rising CO_2; and recognition is growing that the Arctic is destined to play a larger role in world affairs than ever before. The ASC is proud to have made substantial contributions to many of these developments. Our museum exhibits in Anchorage and Washington, D.C. and a stream of traveling exhibitions, have educated the public and brought Indigenous arts and cultures to wider audiences in the US, Canada, Germany, and other countries, as well as to distant communities in rural Alaska and Canada. ASC research and publications have generated new knowledge and shared the wealth of Smithsonian collections with the world. Educational media has spread awareness of the vibrancy of Northern peoples and cultures and awakened interest in Indigenous arts and craft. And our decades of mentorship of students, early career researchers, and Indigenous community scholars have introduced new cohorts to museum anthropology and cultural studies.

And yet, after bringing 'crossroads' concepts to the circumpolar Arctic, the ASC now finds itself at its own crossroads as staff begin to retire and a new future is to be envisioned for the Center and the Smithsonian's role in the Arctic. **Aron Crowell**, Director of the ASC Anchorage Office and the architect of more than three decades (since 1993) of its research, exhibits, and educational programs, retired from the Smithsonian at the end of December 2024. **Dawn Biddison**, Aron's partner in Anchorage and the creator of that office's highly successful outreach, research, documentation, and education programs in collaboration with Alaska Native communities, received a promotion and a new title of Community Outreach and Engagement Specialist.

And **Melissa Shaginoff** (Ahtna/Paiute) was hired in December 2024 by NMAI as the Alaska Specialist of the Outreach and Engagement Planning Office, positioned in the ASC Anchorage office. Despite these developments, the exit of a scientific director for ASC Anchorage will limit its capabilities until a replacement is appointed.

Changes are also coming to the ASC on the National Mall. Yours truly has entered a phased retirement program and will formally retire from Smithsonian at the end of 2026 to join his wife, **Lynne Fitzhugh**, in Fairlee Vt. During phased retirement, and afterwards, I will continue research and publication work but will transfer most operational activities to **Igor Krupnik**, **Stephen Loring**, and **Nancy Shorey**. I will reside half-time in our old family hub on Capitol Hill where we will keep hosting gatherings of our international colleagues and friends that have been a hallmark of ASC social life. I expect to continue a modest field program and plan to complete Labrador work and other publications postponed years ago.

What the future may bring for the ASC now remains in the hands of the SI and its National Museum of Natural History, that have been staunch ASC supporters through decades of leadership rotations since the 1980s.

And now for the usual round-up of staff activities and achievements, I begin with Aron Crowell's phenomenal monograph, *Laaxaayík, Near the Glacier: Indigenous History and Ecology at Yakutat Fiord, Alaska*. Published on-line by Smithsonian Scholarly Press in 2024, this monumental work received more than 1,000 downloads before the hardcover edition appeared in January 2025. The result of a ten-year NSF-funded collaboration with scores of anthropologists, natural scientists, and members of the Yakutat Tlingit community, *Laaxaayik* takes its place alongside another epic Smithsonian contribution from the same region, **Frederica deLaguna**'s 3-volume 1972 *Under Mount St. Elias: History and Culture of the Yakutat Tlingit*. Aron's study stands as one of the finest scientific contributions in the ASC legacy.

A major event of the year was the Annual 'Tiger' Burch Lecture given on 3 December, 2024, by **Ann Fienup-Riordan**, highlighting her amazing career with a talk, *From Eskimo Essays to Tengautuli Atkuk: the Changing Face of Doing Anthropology in Alaska*, which attracted a large audience and reached many viewers in Alaska.

Igor's main 2024 achievement was a project funded by the Smithsonian's *'Repressed Cultures Preservation Fund'* to produce an overview of Siberian ethnographic collections in museums across North America and Europe. This newsletter issue also features stories about his exploration of collections in museums in Oslo and Paris, the unfunded ASC "Arctic Fashion" proposal, and about the new *'A Fractured North'* series he launched with colleagues to give voice to the international concerns about the war in Ukraine and its impact on collaborative Arctic research and individual life trajectories.

John Cloud was awarded a Lee Phillips Society Fellowship at the Library of Congress to develop the project *'Cracks in the Ice: The Cartography of 1,200 Years of Climate Change.'* **Elisa Palomino** secured postdoctoral fellowships at the Kunsthistorisches Institut in Florenz and Max-Planck-Institute, as well as a research grant at Università Ca' Foscari Venezia for the publication of her doctoral thesis within the Marco Polo Research Center book series. **Bernadette Engelstad** has been researching a monograph on the Inuinnait graphic artist, **Helen Kalvak** (1901–1984) from Ulukhaktok (formerly Holman), based on the artist's prints, drawings and personal narratives created over a thirty-year period, from the early 1960s until the artist's passing in 1984.

My contributions for 2024 include publication of a monograph co-authored with **Richard Kortum** documenting our rock art and archaeology in the Mongolian Altai. This work brings together scholarly disciplines that rarely find common ground but do so with spectacular results in the ritualized cultural landscape of Central Asia. New fieldwork included the restoration of 'Early Archaic Brador Mounds' excavated by **René Lévesque** in 1972 and progress on a monograph on 17th c. Basque-Inuit archaeology on the Quebec Lower North Shore. ASC exhibits *Narwhal: Revealing an Arctic Legend* and *Knowing Nature: Stories of the Boreal Forest* continue to circulate in North America courtesy of the Smithsonian Traveling Exhibits Service. This year I was assisted in office work by intern **Ethan Kane**, who with **Stephen Loring** and I, prepared a report on the **Henry Collins** legacy excavation at the Sadlermiut site on Coats Island, northern Hudson Bay. Ethan also worked with Igor on his Siberian collections project.

The ASC may be entering uncharted waters, and we are left now without our trusted expedition boat, *Pitsiulak*, that was retired and scrapped in Newfoundland last year. But our journey through and for the Arctic world is not over. As you read our stories from 2024, please remember that our many activities will continue with new wind in our sails for years to come. The ASC has been through many storms, and we are a weathered bunch. Stay tuned.

FLASH: As we go to press, the announcement appeared that the 931-page *Handbook of American Indians, Volume 1: Introduction* (2022) edited by Igor Krupnik has been awarded the 2025 Smithsonian Secretary's Research Prize. Congratulations, Igor, and the team of associate editors and volume authors.

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ANNUAL BURCH LECTURE

BURCH ENDOWMENT SUPPORT FOR ASC ACTIVITIES IN 2024

By Igor Krupnik

The Ernest S. ('Tiger') Burch Endowment was established with the NMNH Arctic Studies Center (ASC) in 2012 by a generous gift of the family of our late colleague and long-term research associate, **Ernest S. ('Tiger') Burch, Jr.**, "...to support, promote, and interpret the study of Arctic Indigenous peoples and their cultures". The fund remains the prime source of the ASC operational budget, particularly for public and collective activities, besides individual grants by the ASC staff and collaborators. It also ensures that our work and the legacy of Tiger's many decades of collaboration with the Smithsonian and ASC continues.

In 2024, the Burch Endowment continued to provide a critical lifeline to the ASC. It was a key source of travel funds for many conference travels, including those covered in this Newsletter, like Krupnik's trips for museum work in Oslo and Copenhagen and Dawn Biddison's participation in the annual meeting of the Association of Tribal Archives, Libraries, and Museums (ATALM) in Palm Springs, CA, in November 2024.

As during the past ten years, the Endowment supported our main public event, "Tiger Burch Annual Lecture" that helps promote our activities at the broader NMNH, Smithsonian, and outside professional arenas. The annual Burch Lectures began in 2015 to bring recent achievements in Arctic anthropological research to wider audiences and to our colleagues worldwide. We now have an impressive pool of 'Burch alumni' that include academic and Indigenous scholars from US/Alaska, Canada, and Greenland. Collectively, their lectures covered advances in circumpolar archaeology, ethnology, Arctic resource management, biology, history, collection and Indigenous heritage, women's studies, and more.

Our 2024 Speaker for the tenth Burch 'jubilee' on December 3 was our friend, colleague, and long-time associate, Dr. **Ann Fienup-Riordan**, from Anchorage, AK. Ann has lived and worked in Alaska since 1973. For over 25 years, she has partnered with the Calista Elders Council, now called "Calista Education and Culture" (CEC), the primary heritage organization in Southwest Alaska, documenting Yup'ik traditional knowledge. Located in Anchorage, the CEC is a nonprofit 501c3 organization, governed by a Board of Directors and providing cultural preservation,

The flyer of the annual Burch series lecture featuring Dr. Ann Fienup-Riordan

educational empowerment, and cultural guidance to the Yup'ik people of all generations. Ann has been collaborating with the CEC for over 30 years; she has written and edited more than thirty books, many in collaboration with Yup'ik colleagues and partners. In 2000, she received the Alaska Federation of Natives Denali Award for her work with Alaska Natives, and in 2001, the Governor's Award for Distinguished Humanist Educator. An edited version of Ann's Burch lecture 2024 is presented below.

Besides the annual lecture, the Endowment continued to provide funds for many ASC public-focused activities, such as the production, printing, and shipping of the annual *Newsletter*, of which issue no. 31 was produced and mailed/posted online in summer 2024. It supported contracts for graphic and collection work for the ASC staff, ASC membership in the Arctic Consortium of the United States (ARCUS), research work on other ASC-based projects, and staff needs throughout the calendar year. We allocated

a substantial amount of endowment funds as ASC 'matching' contributions to support 2024 research and the online exhibit proposal, "Arctic Fashion: Sustainability, Healing and Women's Advocacy," submitted in November 2024. Its main goal was to build a *StoryMap* website themed on "Arctic Fashion" to serve as a public forum for a conversation among museum specialists, contemporary artists, seamstresses, Elders, and cultural heritage leaders from northern communities. The online/web path would cover a broad range of topics under the "Fashion" concept, including environmental and cultural change, identity, and the role of women in preserving Indigenous heritage. Three Indigenous co-curators—**Nadia Jackinsky-Sethi** from Alaska, **Krista Ulujuk Zawadski** from Canada, and **Nivi Christensen** from Greenland agreed to lead the project in collaboration with Smithsonian/ASC team members in Washington and Anchorage AK. **Stephen Loring** and **Elisa Palomino Perez** played major role in developing the proposal, together with **Bill Fitzhugh**, **Bernadette Engelstad**, **Aron Crowell**, and **Dawn Biddison**. Regretfully, the proposal was not funded, but we consider developing these ideas in the future, perhaps in collaboration with our colleagues from the University of Pennsylvania Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology in Philadelphia.

We will continue using the Burch Endowment to advance our research and public programs, for museum travel and fieldwork, and to promote Tiger Burch's work via publications, public programs and presentations, the ASC Newsletter, and professional exchanges. We are deeply grateful to the **Burch Family** for providing this ASC lifeline.

FROM *ESKIMO ESSAYS TO TENGAUTULI ATKUK / THE FLYING PARKA*: THE CHANGING FACE OF ANTHROPOLOGY IN ALASKA

By Ann Fienup-Riordan

I am deeply honored by the invitation to speak in memory of our friend and colleague, Tiger Burch. He was a dedicated scholar and an inspiration throughout his long career, and I stand on his shoulders. He taught me that a transcribed tape is priceless while an untranscribed one is useless, a lesson I have never forgotten. My home is in Anchorage, Alaska's largest Native village. I've lived and worked in Alaska since 1973, and I've been writing about and with Yup'ik people of the Yukon-Kuskokwim delta ever since. I am not Yup'ik, but a *kassaq* (a white person).

Both anthropology as a discipline, and anthropology in Alaska have changed during those five decades. One of the most important changes is the degree to which anthropologists and others, including museum professionals, work in partnership with their local companions, both in the field and in the way their joint productions are shared and acknowledged. I'll use the trajectory of my life and the ways in which these publications have been shaped and used over the years as an example of larger transformations.

Early Writing

When asked to describe my work in Alaska, I often say that it can be divided into two parts. During the first twenty years, between 1974 and the early 1990s, I worked on a series of projects of my own invention, including a published dissertation, a harvest disruption study, an essay collection, a missionary history, and a history of Alaska Natives in the movies. All my work was funded by research grants. I carried it out with the knowledge and support of Yup'ik friends in local communities, but my book projects were guided by my own interests and enthusiasms rather than community needs. On each book's cover, I was the acknowledged author. I used English titles, and I anticipated a largely English-speaking audience. Living in Alaska, I certainly hoped that Yup'ik men and women would someday read what I wrote.

Beginning in 1992, however, my work took a marked turn, as all the major projects that I was involved in began to be directly guided by Yup'ik hearts and minds. In most cases, I took these projects on because Yup'ik friends and colleagues asked me to do so. Sometimes I say that what I've been doing for thirty years is following orders, and that's not far from the truth. What is presently termed "co-production" began in earnest in southwest Alaska in the 1990s and continues to flourish in wonderful ways.

In 1983, I published a slightly revised version of my Ph.D. dissertation as *The Nelson Island Eskimo: Social Structure and Ritual Distribution*. I was in my twenties then, fired by a combination of academic admiration for French structuralism and disdain for environmental determinism. Following in the footsteps of my esteemed predecessors, **Margaret Lantis** and **Edward Nelson**, I used the singular "Eskimo" in my title. Although this would raise eyebrows today, in 1983 it was acceptable, even standard, as the self-identifier "Yup'ik" was relatively new and not yet widely used in print. In 1982, **Bill Fitzhugh** and **Susan Kaplan** were already using the title "Inua" in their reexamination of Nelson's work—among the earliest books to use Inuit in its title.

In 1990 I produced another book with "Eskimo" in the title: *Eskimo Essays: Yup'ik Lives and How We See Them*. My focus remained the people, history, and traditions of southwest Alaska. I wrote as a young, independent scholar, seeking to join the debates of my chosen field—cultural anthropology—at a particularly exciting time when all the old rules were being scrutinized and turned on their heads.

In 1995 I published a third book with "Eskimo" in the title: *Freeze Frame: Alaska Eskimos in the Movies*. When I began work in southwest Alaska in 1974, Yup'ik people and their history were poorly understood by non-Natives. Fired by this misfit, I conceived the idea of a book on the Eskimo image with chapters covering children's stories, fiction, scholarly and exploration literature, and the movies. I started with this last chapter, and *Freeze Frame* was the result. For the book cover, the designer chose a photo of Inupiaq actor **Ray Mala**, Alaska's first and still most prolific Hollywood star, rubbing noses with his smiling co-star, demonstrating the famous *Eskimo kiss*. A Dena'ina friend once confided to me how offended he was by this cover photograph but that, when he read my book, he loved it. A sobering compliment indeed.

My life and work took a turn toward co-production in the early 1990s, when **Andy Paukan** and **Tim Troll** (mayor and administrator for the city of St. Mary's on the lower Yukon River) asked me to help them locate Yup'ik masks in museums and bring them back to southwest Alaska for Yup'ik young people to see. The experiences of working with Andy, Tim, and others in the creation of our Yup'ik mask exhibit changed my life, and have shaped my work ever since.

First, although I was technically the exhibit's curator, I took direction from a dedicated group of Yup'ik men and women—our Yup'ik steering committee. I had never had such direct Yup'ik input on any previous project, and I have been fortunate to have had this same support ever since. We met for several one- and two-day meetings in Anchorage and Bethel. Our conversations were entirely in Yup'ik, and these discussions guided everything I did. It was the Yup'ik steering committee that named the exhibition *Agayuliyararput / Our Way of Making Prayer* to reflect the original intent of masks used in past ceremonies to request abundance in the future. The introduction of Christianity changed the original meaning of *agayu* (in Yup'ik: requesting abundance through masked dancing) to Christian prayer. Although I feared that devout Christians would be offended by the steering committee's choice of a title, they knew better. Instead of alienating people, the idea of "prayer" forged an important link between the Yup'ik past and present and encouraged widespread support. I learned then, and I've never forgotten, how valuable working together can be.

The second transformative feature of our exhibit-making process was my close relationship with Yup'ik language expert **Marie Meade**. Marie and I interviewed elders, Marie then providing detailed Yup'ik transcriptions of what they shared. This partnership continues to this day.

The third key feature was how the catalog's title was handled. Although I had assumed *Agayuliyararput* was an acceptable book title, the University of Washington Press said no. Instead, they insisted on an English title and Yup'ik subtitle, *The Living Tradition of Yup'ik Masks: Agayuliyararput / Our Way of Making Prayer*. They maintained that the English title would be more accessible to readers. The Press also cut the bilingual text from the draft catalog, wanting the full-color book to emphasize the mask's dramatic beauty. The Press, however, agreed to print a smaller black-and-white bilingual book including these stories, with Marie Meade as first author. This two-for-one solution has been a good thing, allowing our work to reach diverse audiences.

Since 1996, my Yup'ik partners and I have produced four similar sets of "paired" books—one English for general and scholarly audiences and a bilingual companion volume for community use—setting new standards for academic publications resulting from collaborative projects (see references at the end—*eds*.) In each case, I constructed the text of an English book based on translations by Marie and, more recently,

Fig. 1 Elders at the Ethnologisches Museum Berlin, September 1997. From left to right: Catherine Moore, Wassilie Berlin, Paul John, Annie Blue, Marie Meade, Andy Paukan, and Ann Fienup-Riordan. Photo by Dietrich Graf, Ethnologisches Museum Berlin

by **Alice Rearden**, and identifying the many Yup'ik contributors by name. In the bilingual books, I provided the English introduction followed by detailed Yup'ik transcriptions with facing page English translations, showcasing Yup'ik oratory.

While visiting museums in search of Yup'ik masks in the 1990s, I'd stumbled on a trove of Yup'ik objects at the Berlin Ethnographic Museum in Germany. Andy Paukan and others were enthusiastic about visiting the Berlin Museum, which we did in September 1997, thanks to funding from the National Science Foundation. The desire to explore these collections for the benefit of younger generations was that of the elders themselves, especially of **Paul John** and Andy Paukan. Two books—one in English and one bilingual—grew out of that trip.

Fig. 2 The CEC team who have worked together on many projects over the years, including Mark John, Ann Fienup-Riordan, Marie Meade, and Alice Rearden. The photo was taken with Alice's smart phone after a talk at the University of Alaska Anchorage bookstore, September 2019

The elders' "fieldwork" in collections was revolutionary. None of us had enough previous experience in museums to know that spending three weeks examining Yup'ik patrimony in collections was out of the ordinary (Fig.1). The rewards were rich. During our time in Berlin, elders examined and discussed over 2,000 museum pieces. Back in Alaska, Marie translated everything they shared. My job was to weave their stories together. They were the experts, while my role was to organize their stories, providing background and letting their voices shine.

The same year we traveled to Berlin, Paul John's son, **Mark John**, took charge of the regional nonprofit, the Calista Elders Council (CEC). After our return, Mark asked if I would work with him to help find support for continued work with elders, which I gladly agreed to do. Under Mark's leadership, CEC became the primary heritage organization in the Yukon-Kuskokwim delta region, an area the size of Kansas and homeland for more than 26,000 Yup'ik people, 14,000 of whom speak the Yup'ik language. Alice Rearden came to work as a translator for CEC in 2000. My partnership with Mark, Alice, Marie, and others has continued for more than twenty years (Fig.2), Together our team has taken on a variety of projects, all of which were initiated by CEC's board of elders.

CEC's primary information-gathering tool has been the topic-specific gathering. We pioneered this format while working with elders between 2000 and 2005 during a major Yup'ik knowledge project, also funded by NSF. We found that meeting with small groups of three to five elder experts, accompanied by younger community members, for two- and three-day gatherings devoted to a specific set of questions was an effective and rewarding way of addressing topics.

Our gatherings always take place in Yup'ik, which Mark says I speak "well enough to beg for food." Alice and Marie then create detailed transcripts of each gathering, and we work together to turn these into bilingual publications and accompanying English texts. Over the past twenty years, CEC has hosted dozens of gatherings, resulting in more than 1,500 hours of recordings and 22,000 pages of transcripts. In these gatherings, elders teach not just facts but how to learn. They share not only what they know but how they know it and why they believe it is important to remember, so that such gatherings are not just as documentation tools but contexts of cultural transmission.

Tengautuli Atkuk/The Flying Parka

With this background, I will turn to CEC's most recent book. Although each of our books are unique, "Tengautuli Atkuk" serves as a good example of how our team works together. The seeds for the book were planted two decades ago, during work with women documenting sewing techniques as part of another museum exhibit, *Yuungnaqpiallerput / The Way We Genuinely Live: Masterworks of Yup'ik Science and Survival*. Once again, a Yup'ik steering committee met regularly to guide our work. This time, however, both the exhibit and the catalog bore the Yup'ik title, Yuungnaqpiallerput, from the beginning. During preparation for the exhibit, we held two small sewing gatherings. We were also able to commission **Lena**

Atti of Kwigillingok to make a fish skin parka, and **Neva Rivers** to make a gut skin parka, both of which were included in the exhibit. Although Yup'ik women had shared a great deal in preparation for our Yup'ik science exhibit, parkas were not a focus of conversation, and fur parkas were barely discussed.

Fast forward a decade to another NSF-funded project on the relations between humans and animals in southwest Alaska. During one of our gatherings on birds, **Albertina Dull** (then 99-years-old) mentioned a garment we had never seen in museum collections—an *atasuarek*, a one-piece birdskin suit that she had used to clothe her infant son, something that had not been made in her homeland for close to a century. All the coastal women of her generation sewed birdskin clothing, and we set to work organizing a small gathering in Toksook Bay to learn the process firsthand (Fig.3).

Fig. 3 The team that made the atasuarek, with Martina John, Ruth Jimmie, and Nellie Jimmie in front and Ann Riordan and Albertina Dull sitting behind them. Photo by Simeon John

In spring 2019, I traveled to Toksook with Mark John, where we worked with Albertina, Mark's mother **Martina** (then 84), and her sister B to tan king eider and long-tailed duck skins and start the process. Together with Ruth's niece, **Nellie Jimmie**, we succeeded in creating a "practice piece" which the women subsequently gave as a gift to display at the new regional hospital in Bethel. We wanted to try again to make a more finished *atasuarek*, and planned to get together in spring 2020. Unfortunately, COVID intervened. Ironically, COVID gave both Alice and me the time to think about parkas, and *Tengautuli Atkuk* was the result.

Fig. 4 Martina John, Albertina Dull, and Elsie Tommy looking at a birdskin parka at the Museum Support Center. E48336, Department of Anthropology, Smithsonian Institution. Photo by Ann Fienup-Riordan

While meeting with elders was impossible, I thought about what they had shared in the past, and the story of the flying parka came to mind. I'd first heard it from Paul John in 2000, during a culture camp at Umkumiut. Paul told how a *nukalpiaq* (great hunter) had declared that his beautiful daughter would only marry the young man who was able to capture the fancy parka that flew around their village at night. Many young men tried, but only the poor orphan boy succeeded. One moonlit night, when he went outside the men's house to defecate, he saw the parka's shadow behind him and reached back and grabbed it. He then went to the home of the nukalpiaq to claim his bride. The next morning, wearing the beautiful parka, she served him in the men's house and in so doing announced that they were man and wife.

It was fun to recall all the other stories in which parkas played a part. It was said that the great warrior **Apanuugpak**, when he was still an infant, was saved during a raid when he was thrown into the water wearing a one-piece coverall. He had held onto the grass along the shore, where his mother later found him, his tiny fur outfit keeping him buoyant and saving his life. *Ircenrraat* (other-than-human persons) were also said to be recognizable by their distinctive parkas—some wearing squirrel parkas made from a single pelt. Another story recounts how mischievous *ircenrraat* wanted to take a young boy into their world.

As in the story of the *Flying Parka*, marriage was signified by the bride's acceptance of a parka, the variety of furs and workmanship attesting to the wealth and skills of her new in-laws. Her parka would be her *paitaq*, her heirloom and inheritance. The placement of tassels and beads on such a parka was far from random. Many designs recalled specific events, like the underarm tassels shown here, representing the arrow shot through the side of the warrior Apanuugpak as he ran from his enemies.

As these stories make clear, "parka-making" conversations touch on every aspect of Yup'ik life—marriage partnerships, oral instruction, history, and more. Parkas were also used to cloth the dead and as grave markers in the past, on grave boards still found on the tundra in the 1930s. In the past, everyone could "read" a parka: one's parka revealed one's poverty as well as wealth. Those who lost their mothers, they said, were like orphans with no one to sew their clothing.

During a 2012 trip to Washington, supported by the Smithsonian's Recovering Voices program, the same group of women—Albertina, Martina, and Ruth, along with **Elsie Tommy**—had an opportunity to look at pieces of clothing in the collections of both the National Museum of the American Indian and the National Museum of Natural History. Our trip to D.C. coincided with the arrival of Hurricane Sandy, and two of our five days in collections were canceled. We spent our time gathered in one room at the Holiday Inn, eating dry fish, telling stories, and watching Martina sewing seal gut and finishing a pair of wolf-skin boots. It was there that the women shared personal stories of learning to sew—how they watched their mothers, then practiced using her leftovers, making clothing for their dolls. Martina especially spoke of her strong desire to learn to sew, from the beginning. When she got a husband, she was extremely happy and took care of his catches, finally able to have material of her own.

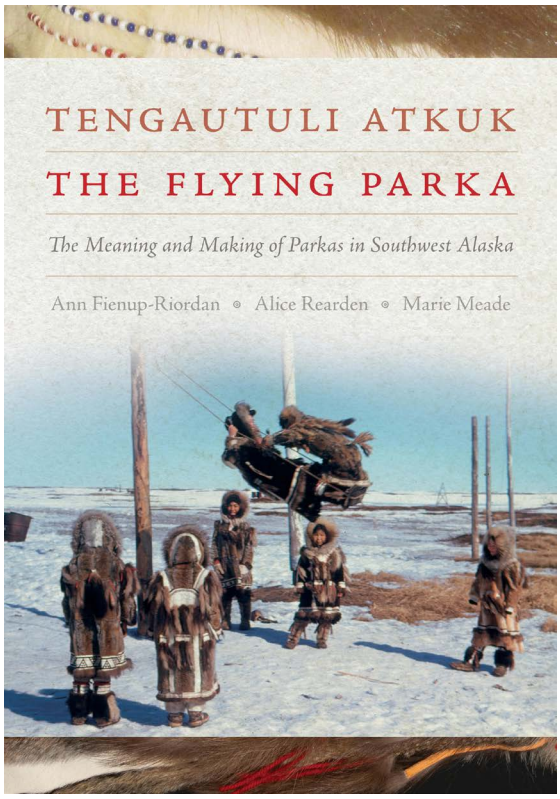

Fig. 5 Cover of Tengautuli Atkuk / The Flying Parka: The Meaning and Making of Parkas in Southwest Alaska. *University of Washington Press*

Our time in collections was short, but thanks to the help of museum staff, we were able to look at and enjoy dozens of items, including many beautiful parkas. I should say that while we were funded to travel and found funds for Alice to do full transcriptions, we'd never had time to write up what we'd learned. Thanks to COVID we had the time, and to spare, and we revisited those days with renewed appreciation for what it meant to work together in person.

There is another special aspect of this book-making project. I had the text drafted before we began to think about book illustrations. First was a CD given to us by the then-NMAI photo archivist **Donna Rose** during an earlier museum visit. The CD included more than 300 tinted lantern slides taken by dental surgeon Dr. **Leuman Waugh** during his travels in southwest Alaska in 1935 and 1937—the first color photographs known for the region. **Igor Krupnik** and **Stephen Loring** first brought this collection to our attention in 2002. In Alaska, CEC staff made a photo a week printed in the Bethel newspaper, *The Delta Discovery*, so that people throughout the region could enjoy them. Many called, identifying the men and women pictured and requesting copies of photos of their parents and grandparents. Many of the caption details we included in our parka book come from their comments.

I also found CDs of photos shared by **Warren Petersen's** family during our work on the Yup'ik science exhibit, including the lovely photo of children swinging in the BIA school playground in Kwigillingok, where the Petersens had taught school in the 1940s, when fancy fur parkas were a routine part of life (Fig.5). Many examples of parka styles were among the hundreds of photos that **Harley** and **Mabel McKeague** made while conducting health surveys in southwest Alaska in the 1960s. When they passed away, they willed their collection to the University of Delaware Museum, and the Museum has generously shared them with CEC.

Thirty years after the *Eskimo Essays* I still write, but not primarily to be part of conversations in the field of anthropology, although I do think that the way Mark, Alice, Marie, and I work together has lessons for younger scholars. These lessons are captured in an African proverb: "If you want to go fast, go alone. If you want to go far go together". These deep collaborations go beyond consultation and cooperation to the true co-conceptualization of knowledge. My advice to young anthropologists and museum

professionals as well is to begin to work with a community and, if you can, stay with them and follow their lead. You will be richly rewarded.

Today I write for Yup'ik people, partly because I've been asked to do so, but also because I think that this is important work. Most writers have an audience in mind. In the work we do together, Alice Rearden has been my first and best reader, and she is also the audience I aim for. If Alice finds what I write accurate and useful, I know I am on the right track. Working for CEC over the last twenty years, Marie, Mark, Alice, and I have had opportunities to listen and learn that have filled us all with gratitude—not just for particular facts and stories but for the generous way in which they have been shared. I was young when I wrote *Eskimo Essays*, and I thought I knew something; now I realize that I only know what I have been given.

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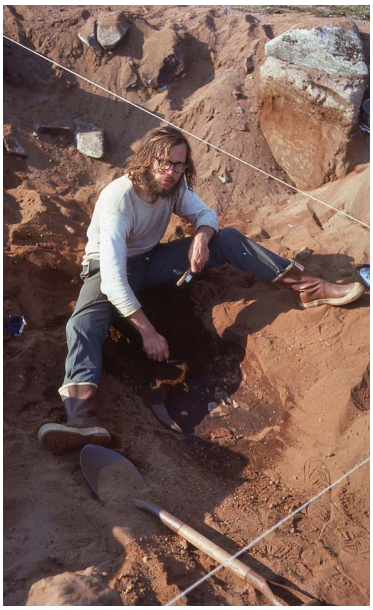
ASC ANCHORAGE OFFICE

ARON LINCOLN CROWELL RETIRES FROM THE SMITHSONIAN

By William Fitzhugh

On 1 January 2025 **Aron Lincoln Crowell** left the employ of the Smithsonian, having spent thirty years nurturing the ASC's Alaska office at the Anchorage Museum from embryonic status to a full-fledged Smithsonian research and education enterprise. Over that time, ASC/Alaska became an important partner in the cultural life of the Nation's 49th State, home to the largest U.S. indigenous population (nearly 150,000), whose cultural heritage is tied to nearly 175 years of Smithsonian research and collections.



Left: Excavating a Maritime Archaic feature at Rattlers Bight, Labrador, 1975. Photo by W. Fitzhugh. Righ: Ballybrack, 1977: "What do you suppose this is?" Photo by S. Loring

Aron's announcement at the end of October 2024 was a surprise. [How could he leave the Smithsonian after only thirty years? Lots of military people see thirty as the golden door, but Smithsonian researchers are often just getting warmed up at that point, I mused.] I did not have a magic wand to entice him to stay just a little bit longer. "What are you going to do?" "Not sure, but I'll stay in Anchorage." With that, I saw a glimmer of hope. We had unfinished work from our 1970s Labrador Torngat Project, including reports Aron drafted that never got into print. "Sure, that would be fun." So, ASC is losing its Anchorage director, but not a colleague. We wish Aron the best wherever his path leads. At the end of this piece, I include notes from Aron's colleagues.

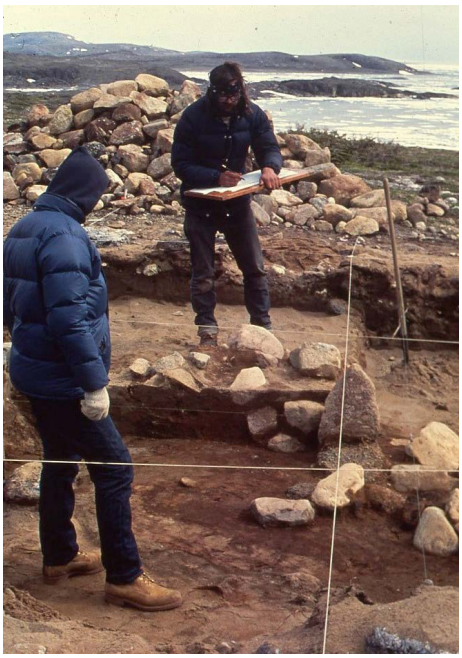
Early Days

Boilerplate on the web describes Aron's profile in a nutshell: "an Arctic anthropologist and Alaska Director of the Smithsonian Institution's Arctic Studies Center. His research and publications in cultural anthropology, archaeology, and oral history reflect collaborations with indigenous communities of the north and with major museums and research institutions…He directs archaeological research around the Gulf of Alaska from the Katmai coast to Glacier Bay and recently led National Science Foundation-funded research on the human and environmental history of Yakutat Bay. Crowell has a BA and MA from George Washington University and a PhD in anthropology from the University of California, Berkeley."

Aron's scientific bent was expressed early on as a youthful fossil collector. He played trombone (me too!) and grew up helping his father with everything from construction jobs to inspecting underwater bridge foundations. Boats became part of his life, and for part of his student days he lived on a barge in the Potomac River. Our association began in 1975 when Aron crewed on a dig at Rattlers Bight on the central Labrador coast. He showed great enthusiasm for sending back-dirt flying, but soon learned more delicate technique. In 1976–77 he joined **Alison Brooks'** (GWU) and **John Yellen's** (NSF) Kalahari project in Botswana, where he gained ethno-archaeological skills and life-long sensitivity to indigenous knowledge and peoples. When **Richard Jordan** and I organized the Northern Labrador Torngat Archaeological Project in 1977–78, Aron signed on, earning the moniker, "Count Cruel", for his tendency to slip into Carpathian dialect. Cooking was another skill, and rounding Cape Mugford in heavy seas he demonstrated a hands-free technique for flipping eggs and 'Newfi steak' (baloney). Returning to D.C. in 1981, he joined **Susan Kaplan**, **Chris Nagle**, and **Stephen Loring** researching the Torngat collections. He was especially skilled at analyzing large sets of computerized settlement pattern data using cluster and nearest-neighbor techniques.

The Smithsonian environment primed him for more education, and in 1987 he applied to University of

Michigan and Berkeley Ph.D. programs. My recommendation letters began: "Aron Crowell is the finest student/assistant/colleague I have ever had the privilege of working with". In addition to his Torngat and African work, he had assisted our exhibition, *Inua: Spirit World of the Bering Sea Eskimo* (1982) and then became my co-curator/author for *Crossroads: Cultures of Siberia and Alaska* (1988). My recommendation concluded: "Aron has been active at the full professional level in anthropology and museum studies for several years. He writes extremely easily and well and cuts through to core issues rapidly. His background is amazingly varied, and he maintains wide interests. All he needs is his doctorate; he already has most of the qualifications of new PhDs." He chose Berkeley.



Left: Aron and Chris Nagle recording a 6,000-year-old burial mound feature at Ballybrack, near Nain, Labrador, 1977. Photo by S. Loring).
Upper right: Relaxing on board Tunuyak. Photo by W. Fitzhugh.
Lower right: Crowell's Ph.D. excavation at a Russian promyshlennik site at Three Saints Harbor in 1991 with Alec Heminway and Phillip McCormick, 1991.
Photo by A.L. Crowell

Alaska Beckons

With momentum from *Crossroads* and support from Senator **Ted Stevens** and Smithsonian Secretary **Robert Adams**, federal funds became available to create the Arctic Studies Center in 1988. Simultaneously, I began planning for an Alaska ASC regional office at the Anchorage Museum with director **Patricia Wolf**, Senator **Ted Stevens**, the town of Anchorage, and the Park Service (thanks, **Ted Birkedal**!). By 1993, we were ready to make Smithsonian collections, resources, and programs more accessible to the state's diverse communities. Aron soon discovered the joys and frustrations of being an independent office director (then) five time zones and thousands of miles from D.C. The Anchorage Museum provided office facilities and research space, but Aron was confronted with the challenge of learning the SI bureaucracy—time-cards, personnel, contracting, grants and proposals, travel authorizations, vouchers, etc.—with only a bit of coaching from the ASC-central. Over time, in addition to conducting cutting edge research, he learned survival skills and established the Alaska office as a vital NMNH/SI branch, smaller to be sure, but similar to NMNH facilities in Fort Pierce and Panama.

Public response to the *Inua* and *Crossroads* tours in Alaska demonstrated that SI collections and archives could play a major role strengthening indigenous culture. Why keep them locked up in storage? Education and advancing cultural heritage and language were the key reasons for establishing a Smithsonian Alaska office, and Aron quickly dived into a series of projects moving in this direction. Over his career, he curated four major exhibitions. He co-curated *Crossroads of Continents: Cultures of Siberia and Alaska* (1988). Upon arriving in Anchorage, between 1995–2001 he produced *Looking Both Ways: Heritage and Identity of the Alutiiq People*, joining SI ethnographic and archaeological collections with oral history and knowledge from Alutiiq elders and scholars like **Gordon Pullar**. The project received a rave *Current Anthropology* review by **James Clifford** (*Current Anthropology* 45(1), 2004), who hailed the exhibit and its catalog for breaking new ground in museum anthropology by 'looking both ways'.

While this work was proceeding, Aron had the herculean task of creating a permanent Smithsonian gallery in the Anchorage Museum, whose recent expansion had been justified partly by the arrival of Smithsonian loan collections. Opening in 2010. *Living Our Cultures, Sharing Our Heritage: First Peoples of*

Crowell presents the Living Our Cultures *Exhibit opening to Secretary G. Wayne Clough and Elizabeth Dugal in 2010. Photo by D. Hurlbert*

Aron introduces SI Secretary Wayne Clough to Tsimshian artist David Boxley at the Living Our Cultures opening, 2010. Photo by D. Hurlbert

Alaska required bringing Alaska Native tribal groups to Washington D.C. to research and select objects from NMNH and NMAI collections. 'Herculean' is not too strong a term for the huge 10-year undertaking that involved scores of curators, conservators, exhibit and web designers, artists, funders, and politicians—all requiring close coordination with indigenous and Anchorage Museum directors **Patricia Wolf**, **James Pepper Henry**, and **Julie Decker**

From its inception, *Living Our Cultures* was part of the larger ASC plan of returning collections to Alaska; it was also a cornerstone in Pat Wolf**'s** plan to double the size of the museum, whose expansion budget funded nearly the entire exhibition. A customized display system and special loan provisions allows *Living Our Cultures* to serve simultaneously as a study collection for researchers, elders, artists, and educators through hands-on access in an on-site consultation and media studio. The education component is globally connected through the award-winning **website** *Alaska Native Collections: Sharing Knowledge*. These outreach and education programs have since become the major focus of ASC/Alaska with the development of new media and public programs following the arrival of **Dawn Biddison** as the ASC's public programs developer. Toward the end of this period, Aron helped co-curate an exhibition of ancient Old Bering Sea art with **Julie Hallowell** and myself at the Princeton University Museum, opening in 2009.

As these outreach and communication efforts were unfolding, Aron maintained a strong archaeological research program. Following early explorations on St. Lawrence Island (1984), cultural resource surveys in Uyak Bay (1985), South Alaskan Exxon CRM surveys (1989–1992), his Ph.D. thesis was based on Russian contact era fieldwork (1989–1991) in Three Saints Harbor, Kodiak Island. Published as *Archaeology and the Capitalist World System: A Study from Russian America* (1997), his research provided

Left: Visiting the NMNH Inupiaq collections in the NMNH Museum Support Center in 2007 with Jane Brower (seated with sealskin pants), Kenneth Toovak, Doreen Simmonds, and Ron Brower from Utqiagvik. Right: Navigating upriver to Spoon Lake 3 archaeological site, Yakutat, 2014. Photos by Mark Luttrell



Left: Visiting the Keik'uliyaa sealing camp site with George, Judy, and David Ramos from Yakutat; anthropologist Steve Langdon far left. Disenchantment Bay, 2011. Photo by M. Luttrell.
Center: Gloria Wolf and Aron display the Living Our Cultures *book at a Yakutat event in 2017. Photo by J.D. Ramos*
Right: Aron conducting a review of the Pratt Museum with Simeon Kvasnikoff (on-screen) and Natalie Kvasnikof, 2002. Photo by J. Clifford

an historical foundation for his *Looking Both Ways* (2001) exhibition and catalog. Following this, with data from CRM surveys in the Gulf of Alaska, Aron and several natural science colleagues began a series of regional archaeological, settlement pattern studies, paleoecology, geology, and climate studies published in leading science journals, exploring the cultural effects earthquakes, climate change, and glacier dynamics in South and Southeast Alaska. These papers are remarkable contributions to the understanding human-environmental interactions over time in one of the most complex regions of North America.

At the same time these studies were advancing, Aron became increasingly focused on social linkages between culture and environmental history as represented in a ten-year, NSF-supported project in Yakutat Bay. *Laaxaayík, Near the Glacier: Indigenous History and Ecology at Yakutat Fiord, Alaska* (2024) explored a 1,100-year history of Eyak, Ahtna, and Tlingit settlement and adaptation to Yakutat fiord based on four seasons of archaeology, ecological studies, and oral history interviews with 60 Yakutat community members. A unique feature was the project's co-design and implementation with the Yakutat Tlingit Tribe, notably **Judy** and **George Ramos**, **Elaine Abraham**, Sealaska Heritage Institute's **Rosita Worl**, and other Indigenous scholars.

Over his career, Aron received numerous awards in addition to Clifford's *Currant Anthropology* feature which had been an early indication of his reflective culture/community approach to everything anthropological. Awards include 2022 and 2010 NMNH Science Achievement Awards, the 2014 Smithsonian Education Achievement Award, and the NMNH Outreach Achievement Award (2010). His Yakutat monograph is a likely candidate for future awards. Since 1995 he was adjunct professor at the University of Alaska (Anchorage), teaching and mentoring students in classroom, lab, and fieldwork. He served on scores of NMNH and SI committees, on NSF grant review panels, NSF's Office of Polar Programs advisory board, on journal and press editorial boards, represented the ASC at ARCUS, and was President of the Alaska Anthropological Association (2007–2012) and Museums Alaska (2006–2012).

Aron reports being inspired by more than 160 years of Smithsonian exploration and engagement in Alaska. In a *Smithsonian Global* interview, he noted, "everywhere I work there have been Smithsonian predecessors, including **William Nelson**, **Frederica de Laguna**, and **Henry Collins**. Since the earliest days of the National Museum, we've been here. Rebuilding the connection between Smithsonian research and the people of Alaska has been one of the joys of this job." Aron's research accomplishments and his role as founding director and 30-year stewardship of the Arctic Studies Center Anchorage Office more than qualifies his name as an addition to this list of illustrious Smithsonian Alaskan researchers.

> *"In my work as an archaeologist," says Crowell, "I find it fascinating to work with historians, Alaska Native residents, and natural scientists to see coastal landscapes through many different eyes—as places for living, as dynamic zones of glaciation and geological change, as biological environments, and as cultural landscapes where myths, place names, legends, and history tell about 10,000 years of human occupation." (Credit: PBS interview)*

REMARKS ON ARON CROWELL'S RETIREMENT

By Amy Phillips-Chan

The retirement of Dr. **Aron L. Crowell** comes as the end of a great tome in which he played a pivotal role in advancing the field of community-centered anthropology, archaeology, and museum studies in Alaska. I first met Aron through a graduate internship in 2009 for *Living Our Cultures, Sharing Our Heritage: The First Peoples of Alaska.* This seminal exhibition, publication, and website brought together curators, scientists and Indigenous knowledge experts in multi-vocal discussions of material culture objects that have since been shared with countless visitors in the Smithsonian Arctic Studies Center gallery at the Anchorage Museum. A strong supporter of students, Aron encouraged me to apply for the James W. VanStone Graduate Scholarship Award in 2012, which allowed me to participate in the 39th Annual Meeting of the Alaska Anthropological Association. Our family moved to Nome in 2015 where I began work as director for the new Carrie M. McLain Memorial Museum. I recall reaching out to Aron several times during development of the museum and found Aron always ready to provide insight from his own experience, ranging from artifact mounts to maps of Alaska.

In 2019, the Carrie M. McLain Memorial Museum and City of Nome had the pleasure of hosting the 46th Annual Meeting of the Alaska Anthropological Association. During this meeting, **Igor Krupnik** and Aron Crowell organized the session *The Centennial of the Fifth Thule Expedition, 1921–1924,* which brought together participants from across the Circumpolar North. The meeting passed in a blur, but the memory remains of my delight in having mentors from the Smithsonian Arctic Studies Center there in Nome. 2020 was the year of COVID-19 but also of publications, including *Arctic Crashes: People and Animals in the Changing North*, in which editors Igor Krupnik and Aron Crowell had invited me to contribute a paper, and a special volume of the *Alaska Journal of Anthropology* 18(1) dedicated to museum anthropology in which my co-editor **Amy Steffian** and I had invited Aron to contribute a paper. Aron's article titled, *"Living Our Cultures, Sharing Our Heritage: An Alaska Native Exhibition as Indigenous Knowledge Nexus,"* looks back at co-development of the landmark exhibition as well as the innovative educational programs it has since fostered under the able guidance of Dawn Biddison. Most recently, Aron encouraged my transition to Juneau and the Alaska State Libraries, Archives and Museums, where I have served as director since 2022. Looking back over the past 15+ years of knowing Aron, I am incredibly grateful for the support, direction, and

Igor Krupnik, Aron Crowell, and Kenneth Pratt share lighthearted conversation at Old St. Joe's Hall in Nome, Alaska during the 2019 Alaska Anthropological Association Meeting. Photo by Amy Phillips-Chan

invaluable example he has set in pursuing excellence in research, writing, and Indigenous-museum collaborations. Although this book of a decades-long career is drawing to a close, in Alaska we look forward to continuing our work with Dr. Aron L. Crowell as he begins a new volume of life in the field of Arctic studies.

A ROAD LESS TRAVELED: WORKING WITH ARON CROWELL IN ALASKA

By Dawn Biddison

I first met **Aron Crowell** in 2002 while I was working on my M.A. research in Anchorage, where I volunteered for the summer at the Arctic Studies Center (ASC) helping with Smithsonian collections research. The timing was perhaps luck, perhaps kismet, but the kind of progressive and truly collaborative work with Alaska Natives that Aron was doing drew me to the ASC in Alaska and has kept me here for over twenty years. Aron met the annual challenge of finding funding for my position, and I have greatly appreciated his stalwart support in this and in allowing me to develop my work. Aron retired at the end of December 2024 and will hopefully continue his presence at ASC-AK as a Smithsonian Research Associate.

I began my Trust position in 2003 at ASC-AK by assisting Aron on the research, writing and curation of the *'Sharing Knowledge'* website and the exhibition *Living Our Cultures, Sharing Our Heritage: The First Peoples of Alaska*, which opened at the Anchorage Museum in 2010. This team effort involved numerous colleagues at NMNH and NMAI and Alaska Native experts, and we met the challenges of our work together with patience, perseverance, and humor, along with very high standards out of respect for the

Indigenous communities of Alaska. After the exhibition opened and my work shifted to community outreach and engagement on Alaska Native heritage projects, Aron made sure that my experience and responsibilities grew with each project, until I was proficient enough to work independently, which was made possible by the supportive environment he provided.

As I walk through the *Living Our Cultures* exhibition each day to get to my office, I am often reminded about the many ways this project was cutting edge for a museum exhibition and how Aron's enlightened approach to museum work prepared the way for ASC-AK to make active use of Smithsonian collections and of staff skills for the benefit of Alaska communities and beyond. This is something I continue to appreciate and honor.

Aron Crowell with Alaska Native Elders and exhibition contributors Claire Swan and Mary Bourdukofsky at the Living Our Cultures *exhibition opening at the Anchorage Museum. Photo by Brian Adams, 2010*

ARON CROWELL—AN APPRECIATION

By Ben Fitzhugh

Congratulations to Aron as he moves into the next phase of his consequential career! He has been a pioneer and pathsetter in Alaskan archaeology and museum anthropology since the 1980s, and, in so many ways, I have looked up to, followed, and grown from Aron's seminal research and community-engaged approach over the years. Our careers have proceeded largely in parallel (though mine started a decade later), mentored by **Bill Fitzhugh** and by the happenstance of having served as crew members (in different years) in **Richard Jordan'**s 1980's research on Kodiak, Alaska, that contributed to a transformational cultural revolution in cultural revitalization there (Pullar 1992). Aron's interests in human-environmental interactions and historical ecology as well as his commitment to indigenous archaeology preceded and paved the way for many of my own, and in some of the same regions and communities.

When I first arrived on Kodiak in 1987 as a rising university junior to participate in the Bryn Mawr excavations at Karluk 1 led by Jordan, I participate in an archaeological survey and midden sampling project in Larson and Uyak Bays. Making use of the same small Smithsonian research vessel, the Becky I, and with at least one of the same crew members (**Phillip McCormick**), we revisited, sampled and refined maps of sites previously reported by Aron from a survey he led two years before (Crowell 1986). A few years later, I wrote my dissertation proposal, in part, to evaluate interpretations Aron and his collaborators generated from the 1989 Exxon Valdez Cultural Resource Program (Mobley et al. 1990; Erlandson et al. 1992), and starting in 1993, two years after he completed his dissertation fieldwork at the pioneering Russian-American settlement of Three-Saints Bay (Crowell 1997), I started my own dissertation research surveying Sitkalidak Island and the Straits adjacent to Three Saints Bay, working with many of the same partners from the Native community of Old Harbor.

It took me longer to embrace historic or colonial-era archaeology in my own work, but since 2019 partnering with former Ph.D. student, now colleague, **Hollis Miller**, I have been excavating an Alutiiq/Sugpiaq village site on Sitkalidak that was directly affected by the Russian conquest in 1784. Residents of Ing'yuq village (KOD 114) would have witnessed (and been victims of) **Gregorii Shelikov**'s attack on the Awa'uq Refuge Rock (five miles away), and they lived through the subsequent imposition of expanding Russian control emanating initially from Three-Saints Bay and later the Russian American Company's Kodiak and later Sitka strongholds (Miller, Pestrikoff-Botz and Swenson, in press). Through the years, running the Alaska Arctic Studies Center, Aron has supported countless opportunities for Native elders, artists, and scholars to work with archaeological and ethnographic collections, repatriate knowledge and inspire cultural revitalization, and support regional community institutions like the Alutiiq Museum on Kodiak (Crowell et al. 2001). Most recently we have both—in somewhat different ways—sought to understand the effects of climate change and geological hazards on communities and their subsistence harvesting practices around the Gulf of Alaska and broader North Pacific Rim (Crowell and Arimitsu 2023; Fitzhugh et al. 2020, 2022). Aron, I wish you well and selfishly hope retirement does not diminish your collaborations or

publications in the coming years. Either way, thank you, for the inspiration of your work over the past 40 years!

ARON CROWELL: A GLIMPSE FROM THE SIDELINES

By Bernadette Driscoll Engelstad

Unlike many friends and colleagues who have contributed richly detailed memories of working with Aron, my own experience has been glimpses from the sidelines—momentary views over time that have filled me with deep admiration and respect. As a graduate student in the summer of 1987, I first witnessed Aron's intense intellectual focus as he and Bill worked out the final details for the Crossroads exhibition, readied the catalogue for publication, then planned and hosted a landmark seminar of international scholars. Aron's move to Anchorage demanded the same level of intensity as he oversaw the transfer and planned the installation of the Smithsonian's Alaska collection at the Anchorage Museum. His collaborative spirit has been clearly evident in numerous exhibitions and catalogues, including *Looking Both Ways: Heritage and Identity of the Alutiiq People and Living Our Cultures, Sharing Our Heritage: The First Peoples of Alaska*. As a co-editor of *Animal Crashes* and the Alaska Anthropological Association journal issue dedicated to the Fifth Thule Expedition, I came to appreciate his editorial skill first-hand. For over 40 years, Aron's professional skills and personal qualities have been a lifeline for the Smithsonian's Arctic Studies program and to Arctic research more broadly. His thoughtfulness, professional insight, attention to detail, and readiness—no, insistence—to work closely with collaborators, ensuring a positive and rewarding experience for all, comprise the unique constellation of professional strengths and personal qualities that has made Aron critical to the success of the Smithsonian's Arctic Studies program. Aron will not only be deeply missed, but impossible to replace.

MEMORIES FROM AN AKAA PARTNER

By Kenneth Pratt

I am grateful for the experiences I had working with my friend and colleague **Aron Crowell**, several of which involved our respective services to the Alaska Anthropological Association (AkAA), an organization for which Aron previously served as President and a member of its Board of Directors. Aron and I served as Co-Chairs of the 2013 Annual Meeting of the AkAA, organizing all aspects of the meeting (e.g. contracting for meeting space, developing the agenda and program)—a demanding and time-consuming task that was performed apart from the duties of our individual jobs. I gained great respect for Aron's attention to detail, ability to effectively juggle lots of moving parts without dropping anything, and his considerable "people skills." We joined forces again for the 2017 AkAA meeting, co-chairing a symposium titled, *Reconstructing Alaska Native Histories through Oral Tradition and Archaeology.* As it happens, the symposium title aptly describes a primary interest Aron has pursued throughout his career and emphasized in numerous of his publications. I also worked closely with Aron on a special volume of the *Alaska Journal of Anthropology* (2021) titled, *"From Greenland to the Pacific: Centennial of the Fifth Thule Expedition, 1921–1924,"* guest-edited for the journal by Aron Crowell and **Igor Krupnik**. Aron proved enormously helpful on this project by volunteering to review every article in the volume to ensure their conformance with the journal's style guide. The international diversity of the contributing authors made this a huge task, which Aron performed superbly and without losing his well-developed sense of humor. Thank you, Aron, for your many contributions to the study of Northern Indigenous peoples and your continuing friendship. Happy Trails!

ARON CROWELL IN BOTSWANA

By John Yellen

My friendship with **Aron** is not through the snows of Alaska but rather the sands of the Kalahari Desert. It was 49 years ago when **Alison Brooks**, my wife, and I directed an archaeology project on the border between Botswana and what then was "Southwest Africa", today Namibia. Aron and another student agreed to come with us to excavate a Middle and Later Stone Age site. We were two days hard drive from the nearest town, and one of the day's drive was essentially across almost trackless sand—a set of tire tracks over dunes and valleys. We lived and worked with "Bushmen". The women still wore only animal skins and the men hunted with poisoned arrows. We built a camp of traditional southern African huts and drove to our site six days a week.

I have three strong memories of Aron. The first is that unfortunately he did not wear shoes and treating his axe cut between his first and second toes was not easy. Shoes do serve a purpose. The second is the smile on his face when he and the other student walked into camp with a long pole between their shoulders and a dead kudu hanging from it. One could see clearly the bite marks on its throat, and although they in fact didn't realize it—they had followed a noise—they had chased a leopard off its kill. Finally, there was Aron's trip to the Tsodilo Hills which had rock paintings and

were ca. 80 completely trackless kilometers from our camp. Because Alison's father was ill—a plane had flown over and dropped a note—Alison and I returned for a month to the US. We left one student in a town, but Aron insisted to remain alone with no vehicle or contact with the outside world in our camp. (Alison and I thought it a terrible idea and made him sign a "release.") Shortly after our return Aron walked into camp (with shoes I think) deeply tanned. He had walked with Bushmen for weeks across the desert with no vehicle tracks at all, to Tsodilo and back again, living largely on what Bushmen culled from the bush. He looked so happy and proud, it is something I wish I had had the courage to do.

PARTNERS FOR 'TOGETHER WE THRIVE'

By Margaret Benson

With deep appreciation and gratitude, I wish **Aron Crowell** a happy and well-deserved retirement from the Smithsonian Arctic Studies Center. Over the past several years, a project team from the National Museum of Natural History (Departments of Education & Anthropology) and the National Zoo collaborated with Aron as a Co-PI on a Together We Thrive education grant. The project produced new frameworks to provide culturally relevant and community-based museum, science, and education experiences and resources to communities. Aron generously and consistently contributed his experience, strategic know-how, and wisdom in measured and thoughtful ways to support our collective achievements. He played a pivotal role in guiding the work to create community-based ways for the Smithsonian to engage with communities in meaningful ways. The project will have a lasting impact. Thank you, Aron, for your partnership and collaboration in helping us weave science, education, and communities together.

NMNH BOARD VISITS ALASKA

By Aron Crowell

Kirk Johnson led a trip to Alaska this past summer (August 4–9, 2024) by the National Museum of Natural History Advisory Board, including a morning in Anchorage to visit the Arctic Studies Center, tour its *Living Our Cultures, Sharing Our Heritage: The First Peoples of Alaska* exhibition, learn about our cultural and archaeological research, and meet Alaska Native educators, community leaders, and artists who are collaborating with the ASC on its *'Together We Thrive'* culturally responsive science education grant from the Smithsonian's Office of the Undersecretary for Education. NMNH leadership including **Allison Willcox** (Deputy Director), **Rebecca Johnson** (Associate Director for Science and Chief Scientist), **Virginia Kromm** (Chief Advancement Officer), and **Chun-Hsi Wong** (Associate Director for Operations), accompanied the group.

NMNH Board gathered at Brooks River Falls. Photo by Chun-Hsi Wong

Melissa Shaginoff (NMAI) and Aron Crowell discussing with the Board members how oral historical knowledge complements archaeological data and artifacts

Kirk Johnson's remarks to the board at lunch graciously focused on the history and accomplishments of the ASC since its founding in 1988 under director **William Fitzhugh** and opening of the Alaska office in 1993 under Alaska director **Aron Crowell**. Following the morning at ASC, the Board visited the Alaska Native Heritage Center, hosted by ANHC CEO and director **Emily Edenshaw**, followed by an evening reception to meet ASC Alaska supporters including **Jo** and **Peter Michalski**, **Heather Flynn**, **Diane Kaplan** (Rasmuson Foundation), **Gretchen Guess** (Rasmuson Foundation), **Jim Torgerson**, the Honorable **Morgan Christen**, **Tim Troll**, and **Phillip** and **Lauren Blanchett**. The next

day the Board and NMNH delegation took wing to the village of Igiugig in western Alaska to commemorate the NMNH repatriation of ancestral remains led by NMNH Board member and President of the Tribal Village of Igiugig, **AlexAnna Salmon**.

INDIGENOUS ART AND SCIENCE: THE WOVEN TOGETHER PROJECT

By Dawn Bddison

> *"The workshop allowed me to understand more about Alaska Native resilience, science and community. In the process of weaving, I got to connect with everyone around me and learn valuable cultural knowledge."* — **Jacob Belleque (Yup'ik)**

The Woven Together: Taperrnat Research and Art Project brought together forty three Alaskans across ages and seasons for teaching, learning, and sharing time together through researching, harvesting, processing, and weaving *taperrnaq*, the singular form for beach wild rye in Yugtun, the Yup'ik language. Its name is tl'egh in Dena'ina Qenaga, the Dena'ina language, and tapernaq in Sugt'stun, the Sugpiaq language. It's scientific name is *Leymus mollis*, and it is commonly called beach rye grass in Alaska. Six grass fieldwork outings focused on beach rye grass took place across one year in three locations: Anchorage, Naknek and Homer, which are the traditional and present-day lands of the Dena'ina, Yup'ik and Sugpiaq peoples. Grass harvesting and weaving workshops were convened in Anchorage/Hope, Naknek and Homer. The thirty-four Alaska Native participants represented Ahtna, Cup'ig, Dena'ina, Iñupiaq, Sugpiaq, Tlingit, Unangax̂, Upper Tanana and Yup'ik heritage. A new **Learning Lab site** was created for the the project, featuring information about and photographs of participants, grass items in the Smithsonian collections and archival images, interview and instructional videos, and curriculum for three grade levels.

> *"Connecting with others through this experience provided me with confidence, healing, knowledge, and joy. This project showed me ways where Indigenous Knowledge, traditional ecological knowledge, and Western science are braided, or woven, together. As an Indigenous student, it's common to see IK and TEK utilized as "proof" or "evidence" to support Western science and not validated as scientific knowledge on its own. Higher education can feel extremely isolating due to this. This experience gave me guidance on how both sciences can be used in support of each other while still remaining validated in their own way. I feel more confident as an Indigenous student pursuing a field of study that commonly questions and compares IK and TEK to Western science. Rather than viewing it as limiting, as I once did, I now feel empowered to carve spaces for my research to fit. The grass outings contributed to my education, art and connection to the weaving community I'm a part of."* — **Taytum X̂aniх̂ Robinson (Unangax̂)**

Fieldwork outing in Homer. Left: Wanda Reams, Sadie Sam, Carly Garay and Yarrow Hinnant. Right: Krystalynn Scott harvests an herbarium sample at Kincaid Park, Anchorage. Photos by Matt Reams and Dawn Biddison, 2024

During winter days in March 2024, *Woven Together* participants began fieldwork outings to spend time with beach rye grass in Naknek, Anchorage, and Homer. They noted information about Tribal lands, Alaska Native names, weather conditions, site descriptions, sounds, measurements and plant descriptions. They took grass samples and photographs of the site and blades. They continued their outings across the seasons, for a total of six that concluded in December. Participants on travel

Left: Workshop participants in Anchorage: Lucy Andrews, Emily Johnston (row 1 left to right); Savanna Cillqaq VonScheele, Mercedes Chix̂tax̂ Kashatok, Laura Zimin, Emily Maurveluviiluq Brockman, Taytum X̂anix̂ Robinson, Stevi Rae Angasan, Megan Donhauser (row 2); (not pictured) Jacob Belleque, Rebecca Sedor, Anfesia Idigax Tutiakoff. Right: Workshop participants in Homer: Jennifer Robinette, Yarrow Hinnant, Sadie Sam, Wanda Reams, Melissa Shaginoff, Lorita Van Sky, Lucy Kuhns, Shawn Jackinsky, June Simeonoff Pardue, Jenny Irene Miller, Krystalynn Scott. Photos by Maggy Benson and Dawn Biddison, 2024

in other locations where rye grass grows conducted fieldwork there: Kasilof, Quinhagak and Unalaska. Two additional outings were organized for Hope and Platinum. But before any fieldwork began, participants met online with Knowledge-Keepers **Lucy Andrews** (Yup'ik), **Lucy Kuhns** (Yup'ik), and **June Simeonoff Pardue** (Sugpiaq/Iñupiaq) to learn about Alaska Native values, protocols, and knowledge about rye grass.

As an extension of the fieldwork outings, Alaska Native participants harvested beach rye grass samples in July to October for the U.S. National Herbarium in Washington, D.C., and the University of Alaska Museum Herbarium in Fairbanks, AK. In contrast to existing Smithsonian records for Leymus mollis in Alaska, documentation for these new records include content about the context of the plant: the Alaska Native names of the plant and its location, the name of the Tribe for the land where the sample was harvested, observations about the harvesting location, and photos of where the plant came from and who harvested it. Samples were collected in Anchorage, Homer, Hope, Kasilof, Naknek and Platinum, and they include samples of the renowned "purple" grass. Requests were made for analysis to learn why some plants have this rare coloring.

> *"The first day is the hardest. The first day was the most sore my fingers were. It was the most nervous I was. A lot of it, being a Native person, is like 'Oh, I don't know these things.' And there's feeling that—a little bit of shame, and I think apprehension of, 'Oh, I'm learning.' But then as you start to do the second one, the joy and the excitement of, 'Oh, I'm starting to know the medium' and 'we're getting close to being finished,' is so rewarding. Even as we were talking about being able to bring this to culture camp, and if we had the chance to teach teachers, and teach Elders, and teach community members, you know, the younger kids being able to see it and be exposed to it, is going to help with that process, so that the learning becomes a joy and less about shame."* — **Emily Maurveluviiluq Brockman (Yup'ik)**

Workshops were convened for fieldwork participants and additional community members to learn from Knowledge-Keepers about sustainably harvesting beach rye grass, curing it for future use, and weaving with it. The first weaving workshop was held in Anchorage, bringing together Knowledge-Keepers **Emily Johnston** (Cup'ig) and Lucy Andrews (Yup'ik) who taught students how to process and weave taperrnat into tegumiat (dance fans). These students were invited to come together again in September for a one-day workshop with Emily in Hope on how to harvest beach rye grass. Two workshops were held in Homer. Emily taught students how to harvest taperrnat and the curing process of braiding, drying and sun-bleaching it. A month later June Simeonoff Pardue (Sugpiaq/Iñupiaq) taught students how to weave a grass mat with the grass they harvested. The final workshop was held in Naknek, where Lucy taught students about harvesting, processing and weaving taperrnat into mats and earrings. Another element was added to the project that seven of the project participants had time to join: a free, eight-part, online narrative photography workshop led by professional photographer and educator **Jenny Irene Miller** (Iñupiaq). It was provided as another source of learning skills and as an opportunity to reflect on their project experiences.

Left: Workshop participants in Naknek: Brandi Johnson, Lucy Andrews, Lydia Emory, Ester Pepin, Michele Frank, Laura Zimin, Kendra Holstrom, Shanyce Pacheco (row 1, left to right); Maura Donnelly, Sheila Ring, Shirley Zimin, Verna Adams, Stevi Angasan. Right: Fieldwork outing in Platinum: Laura Zimin and Stevi Angasan. Photos by Dawn Biddison, 2024

The group activities for the *Woven Together* project concluded in February of 2025 with a three-day gathering in Anchorage. The event brought together eight Washington, D.C. School District teachers and twelve Anchorage School District teachers for professional learning and cultural immersion experiences. Highlights included presentations by **Ben Jacuk** (Dena'ina/Unangax̂; Indigenous Researcher, Alaska Native Heritage Center) on Alaska Natives and boarding schools and by **Panigkaq Agatha John-Shields** (Yup'ik; Assistant Professor, University of Alaska Anchorage) on Alaska Native education. *Woven Together* fieldwork and workshop participants provided in a panel discussion. Artist and graduate student **Taytum X̂anix̂ Robinson** taught a weaving experience for the D.C. teachers. Smithsonian staff from D.C. also traveled north for the events: project partners **Maggy Benson** (PI), Learning Manager, Office of Education, NMNH, and **Laura Klopfer**, Head of Learning and Visitor Education, Smithsonian's National Zoo and Conservation Biology Institute; and grant partners **Monique Chism**, Under Secretary for Education, Smithsonian Institution, **Karen Garrett**, Senior Program Officer, Office of the Under Secretary for Education and **Colleen Popson**, Grants Manager, Office of the Under Secretary for Education.

> *"If you don't document it, and you don't share it, you'll lose it. As an Alaska Native who is actively involved with the preservation of our traditional ways, I believe it is important to share widely what we learn so that this information can be passed down through the generations."* — **Laura Zimin, Sugpiaq**

Documentation outcomes from the *Woven Together* project are featured on a *Learning Lab* site with multi-media educational resources, including curriculum for three grades. Photographs introduce project participants and activities, share grass items from the Smithsonian collections and show archival images from communities. A series of videos provide interviews with Knowledge- Keepers and instruction within a cultural context for harvesting, processing and weaving taperrnat. The curriculua "Woven Connections: Exploring Science, Sustainability, and Culture Through Grasses" shares science, arts, and cultural values of grasses and weaving in Alaska. Through a series of ten interconnected lessons for three different grade levels, each curriculum bridges Indigenous ecological knowledge and scientific inquiry, fostering a deeper understanding of cultural practices and their connection to the natural world. By combining hands-on activities with cultural learning, Woven Connections equips students with knowledge, skills and respect for the heritage of Alaska Native communities and by extension all communities.

> *"All my life I have been craving connection with Indigenous Knowledge-Keepers in a safe and peaceful environment. These workshops were a dream come true. Learing how to respectfully harvest a crafting material directly from the land felt empowering. To learn alongside other Alaska Natives was very healing. To experience trial and error, playfulness and joy together made my heart sing!"* — **Sadie Sam (Upper Tanana)**

The *Woven Together* project was co-developed by **Dawn Biddison** at the Alaska office of the Arctic

Studies Center in collaboration with Alaska Native community partners: **Kay Larson Blair** and **Aleesha Towns-Bain**, Bristol Bay Foundation, and **Laura Zimin** (Sugpiaq), University of Fairbanks, Bristol Bay Campus. The Alaska Native Museum Sovereignty Advisory Circle reviewed the project, provided feedback that was implemented and was approved by the group. Tribal representatives were met and corresponded with in advance from areas where the work took place: the Native Village of Eklutna, representing Indigenous peoples in the Anchorage area, the King Salmon Tribal Council, Naknek Village Council, Ninilchik Village Tribe, Platinum Traditional Village and the Traditional Village of Togiak. Dawn met with staff from additional community organizations during the project, including the Alaska Humanities Forum, Alaska Plant Materials Center, Anchorage School District, University of Alaska Anchorage School of Education and the University of Alaska Fairbanks College for Community and Rural Development.

The *Woven Together* project is part of a Smithsonian *'Together We Thrive'* project, A Community-Based Approach to Culturally Responsive Sustaining Education. The project was carried out in Alaska and Washington, D.C., in collaboration with the Smithsonian project team members from the National Museum of Natural History (Arctic Studies Center—Alaska, Department of Anthropology, and the Office of Education, Outreach & Visitor Services) and the National Zoo and Conservation Biology Institute. The D.C. and AK-based projects, together, are an effort to co-create and situate more place-based education experiences and resources that are specific to science and local communities. Woven Together has received grant support from two Alaska Native non-profit organizations, the Bristol Bay Foundation and The CIRI Foundation, and from the *Our Shared Future, Reckoning with our Racial Past Initiative* at Smithsonian Institution. To learn more about the TWT project, please read the article by **Aron Crowell** in the 2022 and Dawn Biddison in the 2023 *ASC Newsletters*.

NEW MEDIA

By Dawn Biddison

The new collection **Woven Together: Taperrnaq Research & Art** has been added to the *Learning Lab* site **Smithsonian Arctic Studies in Alaska** and features photographs, curricula and videos. The photographs share images and information from the community fieldwork outings and the harvesting and weaving workshops about teaching and learning with taperrnat, beach wildrye in the Yup'ik language. There are also photographs of woven grass items from the

Grass socks E260721-0 in the National Museum of Natural History collection. Photo by NMNH, Smithsonian Institution

Smithsonian collections, as well as contemporary and archival images that link these historic items to Alaska Native communities. In addition, there is a set of narrative photographs made by **Jenny Irene Miller**, who participated in the project and taught an online class about this medium, and a set made by her students. A series of videos provide interviews with Knowledge-Keepers who shared their expertise with project participants and who are featured in instructional videos about harvesting and weaving. In this collection and in the "Distance Learning" section are three sets of 10 lessons with additional readings for teachers and students that share science, art and cultural values of grasses and weaving in Alaska. To learn more about the *Woven Together* project, please see the "Indigenous Art and Science" article in this issue.

EXPLORING THE HISTORY OF "NUNIVAK-STYLE" WHOLE-TUSK IVORY CARVINGS

By Ken Pratt and Dennis Griffin

Early in 2024, Arctic Studies Center curator **Stephen Loring** requested the authors' assistance in identifying the Nunivak Island artist(s) who made several whole-tusk, walrus ivory carvings in the Smithsonian Institution collections. Both authors have extensive research experience on the island and close relationships with Nunivak community members. Loring explained that the Smithsonian hopes to include the whole-tusk carving shown here in a planned National Museum of Natural History exhibition titled, *"Linking Nature and Culture: Walrus Ivory,"* which will be part of a celebration of the 250th anniversary of the United States. The Smithsonian seeks to have community engagement with any object placed on display, specifically requiring attribution of the artist (when possible) and formal permission for the display from the relevant tribe. After providing Loring with

Abraham Anghik Ruben holding a Nunivak-style whole-tusk carving with a group of fish at its base (NMNH 394454). The tusk is approximately 83.8cm long x 7.62 cm diameter. Photo by S. Loring

Detail of NMNH 394454 tusk showing a carnivorous walrus attacking a seal. Photo by S. Loring

contact information for the appropriate Nunivak tribal official, the authors began researching the history of whole-tusk ivory carving on the island, a topic neither had previously investigated.

The three-dimensional, "Nunivak-style" whole-tusk ivory carvings, many of which incorporate cribbage boards, are shrouded in mystery. They are collectively believed to date from ca. 1920 to the mid-1950s. **Dorothy Jean Ray** (1980:121–122) reported that they were made only on Nunivak Island and the style—which "was the invention of one carver" (unidentified)—was not imitated by carvers from other areas of Alaska. However, accession information on several tusk-carvings of similar style (one of which lacks an attribution to Nunivak Island) suggest they may have been made prior to 1920. Furthermore, only one whole-tusk carving has been definitively correlated with the Nunivak artist who made it (see below). A film made on Nunivak by **Amos Burg** for *Encyclopedia Brittanica* in 1941 shows a whole-tusk being carved, and the carver's name is known; but no image of the finished carving has been found, nor has the carving itself.

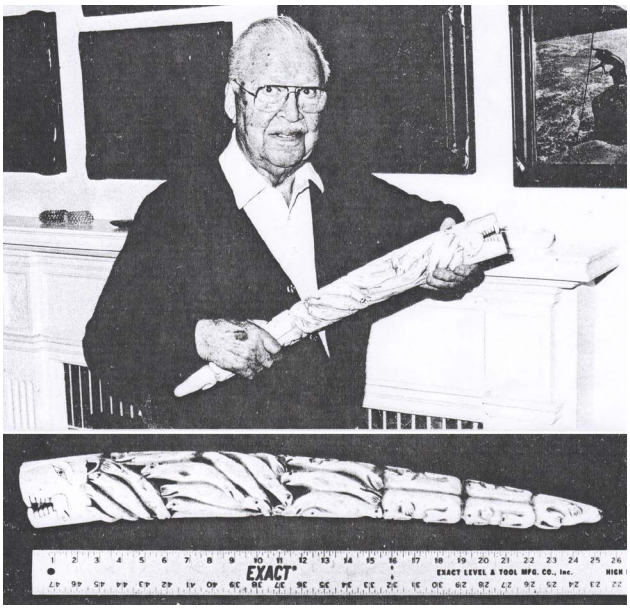
Most of these carvings were produced as part of a business venture of the Nome-based Lomen Brothers Company, which had a company agent (**Paul Ivanoff**) stationed on Nunivak who oversaw the work. The company provided Nunivak carvers with raw ivory from which craft items were made for sale within the region (e.g., to ships crews, visiting officials, storekeepers [Lantis 1984:211]), or to be peddled in larger markets outside Alaska. The ivory crafts market was well-established in Nome when the Lomens started the Nunivak carving program. Objects made in both areas were oriented toward the souvenir market through at least the mid-1950s, so were essentially "anonymous art" (Ray 1980: v-vi): i.e., artists typically did not "sign" their carvings in any way. In the case of carvings from Nunivak Island, it is also presently unknown if carvers and any of the specific objects they produced were linked in Lomen Company records. Thus, only artists with unique styles (and whose names were documented) might eventually be confidently matched with objects they carved.

Just as Ray did not name the carver who reportedly invented the Nunivak-style of tusk carving, or cite a source for that information, museum accession records for similar Nunivak tusks located to date lack attributions to the artists who carved them. The difficulty of connecting a specific carver to a specific Nunivak tusk carved before ca. 1950 is further increased by the fact that all the potential tusk carvers have now been deceased for at least 50–70 years. Nunivak elders **Nakaar Howard Amos** and **Nussaalar Muriel Amos** (personal email communication with **Ken Pratt**, 07/13/2024) recently summarized the problem by stating: "Whomever has carved any whole tusk(s) is our guess. They were not identified by our ancestors as to who carved each of those tusks."

The implication is that tying their personal identities to the whole-tusk carvings they created was not important to the Nunivak carvers. Collectors/purchasers of those carvings might have been indifferent to knowing which artist created which carving: i.e., during the period in question, the ivory craft trade was driven by capitalistic objectives, not the production of "art" or showcasing the incredible artistic skills of Alaska Natives.

A well-known photograph showing a Nunivak whole-tusk ivory carving was taken in 1927 by **Edward S. Curtis** (1930: facing p. 86). It shows the carver, whose

"The Ivory Carver, Nunivak" by Edward S. Curtis



Manford E. Magnuson, son-in-law of Edward S. Curtis, holding the tusk carved by Nayirer, who gifted it to Curtis in 1927. Courtesy J. Graybill

name was confirmed as **Nayirer** by Nunivak elders (Amos 2018:68), holding a finished tusk carving. The carver gifted the tusk to Curtis, whose family evidently sold it to a California museum sometime after Curtis' death.

A combination of historical, ethnographic and oral history accounts has identified four Nunivak men as former whole-ivory tusk carvers. Subsequent research of Nunivak genealogies compiled by **Margaret Lantis** (1960) and Nussaalar Muriel Amos (2018) led to confirmation of their Cup'ig names and various family relationships. Neither genealogy set provides estimated dates of birth and/or death for individuals represented therein; however, in the Lantis genealogies a "Solid triangle or circle indicates that the person was deceased as of January 1, 1956" (Lantis 1960:203). But since "Nunivak-style" tusk carvings probably were not made after the mid-1950s, this does not limit the field in terms of linking one of the four known carvers to any given tusk. More recently, whole-tusk carvings have also been made by several other Nunivak ivory carvers, but they vary significantly from the earlier "original" style.

The authors have located records on over 60 carved Nunivak tusks, to date, and anticipate documenting many more as their research continues. The style of all identified Nunivak tusk carvings will be compared to see what inferences can be made regarding their attribution or linkage to individual carvers. The research effort will continue to include collaboration with the Nunivak community to, hopefully, flesh out the history of this unique carving style and the artists associated with it.

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FIFTH THULE CENTENNIAL

THE 5TH THULE EXPEDITION CENTENNIAL: A DANISH MILESTONE

By Bent Nielsen

100 years ago, Danish **King Christian X** (1870–1947) assumed the role as patron of the Fifth Thule Expedition (FTE) led by **Knud Rasmussen** in 1921–1924 and provided the royal support for this famous Arctic venture. In the footsteps of his grandfather, and with a view of achieving the best possible conditions for the celebration, his grandson, **Crown Prince Frederik**, became patron of the FTE centennial anniversary in 2021–2024. The Expedition had a point of departure in Denmark as well as in Greenland. With the Thule trade station in Northwest Greenland as his starting point, Rasmussen had completed four earlier expeditions between 1912–1920 prior to FTE (and two more in 1931–1933). Simultaneously he had a grand vision of his ultimate 'master' journey: "*The 5th Thule expedition is like a happy continuation of my childhood and youth. It is difficult to say when I got the plan for it, because it has grown up with me.*" By 1921, the FTE was a well-defined and financed three-year project that Rasmussen planned to carry out in cooperation with several participants from Greenland and Denmark. These included both the Inughuit hunters and their wives from around the Thule area—**Iggiánguaq** and **Arnarulúnguaq**, **Arqioq** and **Arnánguaq**, **Nasaítordluarsuk** and **Aqatsaq**, **Qaavigarsuaq Miteq**, and the Danish manager of the Thule Trade-station, **Peter Freuchen** and his Inughuit wife, **Navarana**—as well as the Danish crew of **Marius Ib Nyeboe** as the FTE manager and back-up in Copenhagen, ethnographer **Kai Birket-Smith**, archaeologist **Therkel Mathiassen**, journalist **Helge Bangsted**, and photographer **Leo Hansen**. In addition, Greenlander **Jakob Olsen** from Ilulissat participated as an interpreter and field assistant.

Since the FTE had its starting points in Denmark as well as in Greenland, a group of Danish scholars took the initiative in 2019 to celebrate the expedition's 100th anniversary in 2021–2024 (as a part of the international centennial activities—eds., see A*SC NSL* 25/2018, 26/2019, 29/2022, and this issue). The following people eventually were involved in the preparation for the anniversary: **Anne Mette Randrup Jørgensen**, then at the Danish National Museum in Copenhagen, **Søren la Cour Jensen**, director of the House of Knud Rasmussen in Hundested, and **Bent Nielsen**, then-director of the Danish Arctic Institute, Copenhagen.

After a few planning meetings with many ideas and visions exchanged, the general framework was established for several joint and individual initiatives for the Danish FTE anniversary. First, a joint public website **5thule100.dk** was created where all activities were gradually presented. The website is bilingual Danish/English, and it is open to everyone. Along with the original partners and institutions, many people with knowledge of the FTE applied with their proposals to complement the overall program.

Left: "Northern Light" Festival at Danish National Museum in Copenhagen. Photo courtesy Anne Mette Randrup Jørgensen
Right: FTE Working Group in Canada filming A.M.R. Jørgensen and an Inuk in conversation. Photo courtesy Bent Nielsen

The team's first major joint project was a spectacular photo exhibit, *The 5th Thule Expedition 100 Years*, produced in 2021 by **A.M.R. Jørgensen** and the company, Graphiosity Design (**5thule100.dk/bestil-udstilling/)**. The 12-panel exhibit, with images, historical photos, and text was offered free of charge for visiting and download via the website. During the anniversary years, the exhibition was shown at the Danish representations in Berlin, Algiers, Cairo, and Ottawa, as well as at the large number of museums, schools, and cultural institutions in Canada, Greenland, and Denmark.

Another important joint project was the educational film, *"Those who live far away"* (in Danish, *"Dem, som bor langt borte"*), which is aimed, in Danish and English, at high-school students. The film was produced by Cando Film in close collaboration with the FTE working group after travelling 2021–2022 in Greenland, Canada, and Alaska in the footsteps of FTE. The film can be viewed at **5thule100.dk/paa-opdagelse-efter-nye-mennesker-2** . The film is supplemented by teaching material for 5th and 6th graders, titled "In the Footsteps of the 5th Thule Expedition" to engage the students and encourage them to relate to the drawings and descriptions.

The Danish National Museum (Nationalmuseet) in Copenhagen, the institution that received the most comprehensive collection of ethnographic, archaeological, and documentary items from the FTE, initiated its anniversary celebrations on September 17–19, 2021, with the launch of the *Northern Lights Festival*. It was officially opened by **Crown Prince Frederik**, Canada's ambassador to Denmark **Dennis Robert**, head of Greenland's representation **Jens Heinrich**, and **Rane Willerslev**, director of the museum. The festival involved artists and researchers from Greenland and Denmark and included both the tangible and intangible heritage of the FTE, like three concerts with Greenlandic artists (rap, dance and soft rock), a spectacular picture-light-sound show projected on the outside walls of the museum, a tattoo workshop, preparation of traditional Greenlandic food, opening of the exhibit 5th Thule Expedition 100 years, a recently produced theater play, as well as numerous lectures, presentations, and professional discussions. The festival was exceptionally well attended and featured in numerous media outlets in both Greenland and Denmark. Initially, it was planned to involve Canadian actors and other participants; but unfortunately, this had to be canceled due to the COVID-19 restrictions, even though some FTE-related filming was made in Arctic Canada.

In 1917, a house was built for Knud Rasmussen in Hundested in North Zealand, where he used to live and work for long periods. In 1939, the house was donated to the Hundested Municipality and converted into a museum. In addition to being a museum, **The Knud Rasmussen House** ("Knud Rasmussens Hus," see *ASC NSL*26, 2019) hosts an impressive archive that includes important documents and photos related to the FTE. In 2021, Knud Rasmussen House created an FTE anniversary exhibit that remained open under various titles until 2024 (in 2021, *The Road to the Bellows*; in 2022, the Danish Island; in 2023, *The Great Sledge Journey*; and in 2024, *A Life's Work*).

Portion of the exhibition dedicated to the FTE in Knud Rasmussen's House in Hundested, 2021. Photo courtesy Søren la Cour Jensen

At the **Danish Arctic Institute** that houses extensive collections of documents and historical photos related to the FTE, another anniversary exhibit was opened in June–December 2023. The exhibit was titled *Cultural Encounters in the Arctic—Inuit and the 5th Thule Expedition*, and contained maps, photos, drawings, objects, and diaries, providing insight to the Inuit world that the FTE traveled through and the people it met. In addition, the institute published an overview of the Danish archives related to the FTE—see: **arktiskinstitut.dk/en/knowledge-database/records-from-the-5th-thule-expedition**. In November 2023, the institute co-organized the Arctic Festival, where several lectures focused on the FTE legacy were given by **Anne Mette Randrup Jørgensen** (The amulet boy's nephew—Inuit in Canada and archives after the 5th Thule Expedition), **Jørgen Trondhjem** (Expeditions—cartography, local knowledge, and incomplete maps), and **Bent Nielsen** (The 5th Thule Expedition in Russia in 1924—and Chukotka nowadays).

In addition to the official anniversary activities, several books were published, public lectures were given, articles were written, and numerous FTE-featuring podcasts were produced.

Several new books were produced documenting the FTE, including:

- **Knud Michelsen**: *Rejsen til det oprindelige folk. Knud Rasmussens 5. Thule-ekspedition (The Journey to the First People. Knud Rasmussen's 5th Thule Expedition).* Aarhus Universitetsforlag, 2021 (see *ASC NSL* 29, 2022) .
- **Anne Mette Randrup Joergensen**: De arktiske folk er ét. 5. Thule Ekspedition 1921-24 (The Arctic peoples are one. 5th Thule Expedition 1921–1924). In: *Dansk Ekspeditionshistorie (Danish Expedition History)*, Vol. 2. Gads Forlag, 2021.
- **Bent Nielsen**: *Til det yderste. 5. Thule ekspedition i Rusland (To the Utmost. 5th Thule Expedition in Russia).* Lindhardt og Ringhof Forlag, 2023 (see this issue).
- **Dorte Roerbeck Mathiassen**: *Rejsen til nordlysets land. Therkel Mathiassens dagbøger fra 5. Thule-ekspedition (The Journey to the Land of the Northern Lights. Therkel Mathiassen's Diaries from the 5th Thule Expedition).* Aarhus Universitetsforlag, 2024 (see this issue).

Major media presentations:

- Radio 4/podcast: I Knud Rasmussens kølvand med Bent Nielsen (In Knud Rasmussen's wake), with Bent Nielsen. 2023. **radio4.dk/podcasts/mellem-linjerne/i-knud-rasmussens-k-lvand-med-bent-nielsen/**
- **Katja Kvaale**: Amuletdrengens skæbne (The Fate of the Amulet Boy). In: *Weekendavisen*, 13th of January 2023.
- During the anniversary years, the Danish National Museum produced several podcasts related to FTE, such as **https://natmus.dk/historisk-viden/verden/arktis/5-thule-ekspeditionen/slaedesporet-podcast/; https://natmus.dk/historisk-viden/forskning/forskningsprojekter/tumisiut-i-5-thule-ekspeditionens-fodspor/5-thule-podcast; https://natmus.dk/vorestid/podcast-den-yderste-graense**, and other.
- **LaCour, S, Jørgensen**, AMR, & B. Nielsen, 2020: 5 Thule Ekspedition 100 års jubilæum (A Centennial of the 5th Thule Expedition)—see **www.5thule100.dk** (web presentation).

Many thanks to **Søren la Cour Jensen**, **A.M.R. Jørgensen**, and **Martin Appelt** for cooperation during the FTE anniversary years and for several contributions to this overview.

COMPLETING 'ANOTHER CENTENNIAL': CELEBRATING KNUD RASMUSSEN AND THE FIFTH THULE EXPEDITION, 1921–1924

By Igor Krupnik

The multi-year effort to celebrate one-hundredth anniversary of the Fifth Thule Expedition (FTE) of 1921–1924 led by **Knud Rasmussen** from Greenland through Canada to Alaska and Russian Chukotka was the "second centennial" in ASC history. Papers in this issue including several reviews of the recently published books, continue a string of updates on the activities related to the FTE that we shared with our readers over the past years (see *ASC NSL* 25: 38–42; *ASC NSL* 26:38–42; *ASC NSL* 28:21–22; *ASC NSL* 29:9–15). The FTE effort differed substantially from the earlier centennial of the Jesup North Pacific Expedition of 1897–1902 ("Jesup-2") that we launched and coordinated twenty-five years prior. In the FTE venture, we played a more modest role beyond its first planning years. Also, unlike the Jesup-2 initiative that developed during the peak of the post-Cold War spirit of collaboration and partnership in the North, the FTE celebration occurred mainly in the atmosphere of closures and fractured relations.

On top, the FTE effort was hit in its early stage by the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. Travel restrictions, closing of museum and campus offices, and the ensured lull in electronic communication were hard to overcome. Like Rasmussen's original venture that was repeatedly delayed, first by WWI and then by the Spanish flu epidemic of 1918–1919 (that made Rasmussen himself gravely sick in 1920), we fell victims to global politics and the higher forces. By the time the world walked out of the post-COVID-19 lull, it was too late to plan for large international conferences, joint field trips, major public events, or exhibits. These venues often take months, even years to plan and fundraise for, even longer to accomplish.

What was left to the FTE centennial enthusiasts were mainly local events and publications, both national and international. We were very lucky to start the program running with a full-day FTE-focused session at the 46th annual meeting of the Alaska Anthropological Association held in February 2019 in Nome, Alaska (see *ASC NSL* 26), and the subsequent publication of its papers in a special double-issue of the Alaska Journal of Anthropology in 2021 (ASC NSL 28). We followed on with a special 'Tiger Burch Lecture' of 2021 delivered by Dr. **Mari Kleist**, then a professor at the Ilisimatusarfik/University of Greenland in Nuuk, who has been recently appointed as Chair of the Greenland Research Council by the Government of Greenland/ Naalakkersuisut (see *ASC NSL* 29). We continued

to publish updates on the national FTE efforts—in Denmark, by **Bent Nielsen**, then the-director of the Danish Arctic Institute, and in Canada, by **Kenn Harper**, historian and author from Ottawa (*ASC NSL* 28:23). Another major update on the Danish FTE operations in 2022–2024 by Bent Nielsen, including public events, exhibits, web-based efforts, and more is published above.

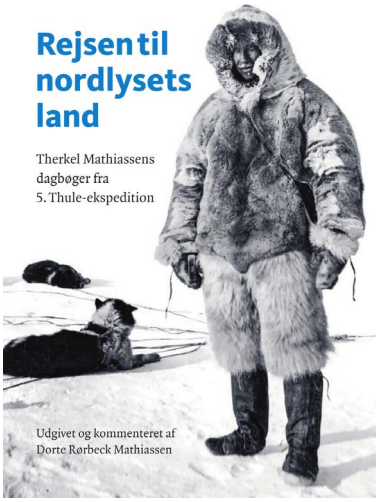
This issue also contains reviews of three recent books related to the FTE written by Nielsen, Harper, and by **Dorte Rørbeck Mathiassen**, granddaughter of **Therkel Mathiassen**, one of the key members of the famous expedition. Altogether, it brings the current FTE 'centennial shelf' to six publications, including the proceedings of the Nome session of 2019, and two books by Knud Michelsen, historian from Copenhagen and a grand-nephew of Rasmussen. Over the past decade, Michelsen authored a series of biographical treaties dedicated to Rasmussen's life, crowned by his latest and the most detailed 400-page tome, *Rejsen til det oprindelige folk: Knud Rasmussens 5. Thuleekspedition* ("Travel to the Original People: Knud Rasmussen's 5th Thule Expedition," 2021). A more detailed list of the FTE centennial publications is provided in Nielsen's paper below and on the Danish **FTE site**.

Even if the exact FTE 'centennial' period (2021–2024) concluded last year, a lesson from 'another' centennial, our Jesup-2 initiative of the 1990s, is clear. Research and heritage programs, books, even papers take long time to mature, so that many efforts easily outlive the original centennial dates. We continued to receive news on the Jesup-2 contributions years after the sunset of the main program activities. So, stay tuned, as we will keep you abreast about the FTE-related outcomes by our friends and partners across the North.

In preparation for the Fifth Thule Expedition (Photographer: Hellwig F. Rimmen. Courtesy of the Danish Arctic Institute. Photo ID p48934; resource ID 200824)

REJSEN TIL NORDLYSETS LAND. THERKEL MATHIASSENS DAGBØGER FRA 5. THULE-EKSPEDITION. DORTE RØRBECK MATHIASSEN (ED.). AARHUS UNIVERSITY PRESS: Aarhus 2024 (in Danish)

Review by Anne Mette Randrup Jørgensen



While **Knud Rasmussen** reworked and published his diaries from the Fifth Thule Expedition (FTE) of 1921–1924 just a few years after traversing the North American Arctic, it would take nearly a century before the diary of the lead FTE archaeologist, **Therkel Mathiassen** (1892–1967), was published. Now, **Dorte Rørbeck Mathiassen**, his granddaughter has edited and released Mathiessen's FTE journals in Danish, under the title, Rejsen til nordlysets land (*The Journey to the Land of the Northern Lights. Therkel Mathiassen's Diaries from the 5th Thule Expedition*).

The Fifth Thule Expedition was primarily a sled-based journey across Arctic America, yet Mathiassen took a different approach. He was a walker, immersing himself in distant landscapes, making archaeological, geological, botanical, and zoological observations by traveling on foot. The large expedition eventually split into smaller teams with their separate routes, and Mathiassen would start his day walking long before the rest of his team set out on their sleds. By the end of the day, they would catch up with him, and while they were setting up camp and building snowhouses for the night, he would again roam the mountains alone. His rigorous observations eventually allowed him to analyze the ways of life of past Inuit populations.

Mathiassen participated in the first phase of the expedition, from September 1921 to September 1923, before returning to Denmark to publish his masterpiece, *The Archaeology of the Central Eskimos: Reports of the Fifth Thule Expedition 1921–1924* in 1927. Like Rasmussen, **Kaj Birket-Smith**, and **Peter Freuchen**, the FTE played a critical role in consolidating Mathiassen's professional career. Based on the data from his

famous joint excavations with **Jacob Olsen**, FTE Greenlandic interpreter at the Naujan site, along with other digs on the Southampton and Baffin Islands, Mathiassen eventually concluded, contrary to Rasmussen and Birket-Smith, that the ancestors of present-day Inuit had originally migrated from the Bering Strait. In just a few generations, they had populated the American and Canadian Arctic before reaching Greenland. A wide range of further archaeological research on the origins of Inuit migrations would later support his theory.

In his diary, Mathiassen also described everyday expedition life. Systematic daily routines helped sustain people and dogs when travelling under harsh condition, often falling ill, and occasionally lacking food. Hence, every meal gets a mention: pancake, caribou, seal, pancake, pemmican when nothing else is left, half a pancake with a sardine... He writes about longing for home. About the importance of hunting, mending tents, building snowhouses, scraping fur, walking, sledding, and navigating the barren landscapes. He highlights the significance of maintaining good relationships with local communities, and we shudder when these bonds were tested to the extreme when Mathiassen and Olsen became trapped by sea ice for six months on Southampton Island. During this time, disease and starvation began to threaten their previously warm relations with their local Inuit hosts.

Richly illustrated and meticulously edited, Mathiassen's FTE diaries are both intriguing, adventurous and, at times, monotonous. The editor, Dorte Rørbeck Mathiassen, a Ph.D. geologist, has skillfully transformed both academic research and private insights into clear and engaging explanations (like the historical importance of whaling to the Inuit in the Repulse Bay/Naujan area) and relevant elaborations, including an excerpt from Mathiassen's scientific report on his excavations. English-speaking readers may lament the language barrier, but they will appreciate the well-chosen selection of historical photographs from the expedition era and beyond. Some of Mathiassen's photos of the Inuit from northwesternmost regions of Nunavut are already well-known, yet Rørbeck-Mathiassen carefully selected images to portray as many of those Inuit whom her grandfather interacted with. Some one hundred years later, the book may be seen as a tribute to them as much as to the 'friendly Danish man,' whom they called *Tikilik*.

NEWS

A PROPOSAL FOR SDG 18: INTEGRATING INDIGENOUS KNOWLEDGE

By Martin Nweeia and Pamela Peeters

Introduction

After 24 years of active engagement with the Inuit of the Eastern Canadian high Arctic and Inughuit of the Western Greenlandic high Arctic, the tapestry of insights, knowledge, and understanding of how we can better live in balance with Mother Earth, has come into focus for our research team. The Inuit way of knowing, Inuit Qaujimajimajatuqangit (IQ), Isuma (Inuit wisdom) can help guide the pathway to a more sustainable Arctic. Indigenous peoples around the globe have additional invaluable lessons for the world's scientific community as they address sustainability through the United Nations current program of 17 SDGs and 168 target goals which are failing and arguably misguided. Therefore, we are leading a worldwide campaign that is announced below, and to be presented by indigenous leaders around the world at the next COP 30 in Brazil, 2025. Join us and let indigenous leaders from our network of Arctic circumpolar communities reach out and join us.

Fifty-three years have passed since the 1972 United Nations Stockholm Conference on the Human Environment that led to the establishment of the United Nations Environment Program (UNEP). Yet a recent UN report describes the global efforts to meet the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) created to articulate aims and track progress over the past decade as "alarmingly insufficient." While progress has been made over the last five decades, the international community continues down an unsustainable path. Much of the world's population still lacks access to adequate food, education, or health services. Pollution of rivers, oceans and atmosphere is accompanied by mountains of trash that accumulate faster than humans can recycle, reuse—or even find a place to store.

UNEP's *Global Resources Outlook 2024* **report** warns that "the world is in the midst of a triple planetary crisis of climate change, biodiversity loss, and pollution and

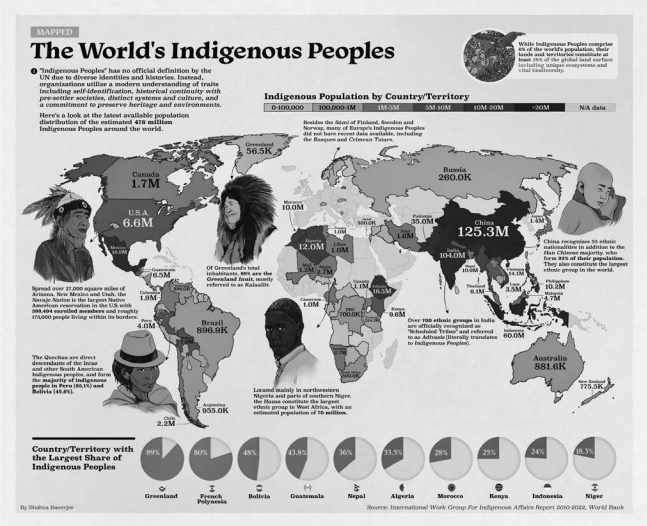
waste. The global economy is consuming ever more natural resources, while the world is not on track to meet the Sustainable Development Goals, better known as SDG's."

The SDGs were launched in 2015 as part of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, with **17 goals** and 169 targets ranging from clean water to quality education. But **The Sustainable Development Goals Report 2024** published by the UN finds that only 17 percent of the SDG targets are on track, and more than a third of the targets have actually seen reversals in progress. What might restore the role of SDGs as a blueprint for a sustainable 21st century? Humanity could turn to knowledge that has been accumulated for thousands of years by Indigenous communities around the globe. A formal step toward doing so would be to make what's known as "Indigenous Knowledge" an 18th Goal in the SDG constellation.

Indigenous Knowledge as a Much-Needed Catalyst

Indigenous communities offer essential guideposts for a more sustainable pathway because they have long been leaders in sustainable practices and environmental stewardship. Principles such as reciprocity with and connection to the land and environment are woven into the practices of these communities. In his opening **address** on April 17, 2023 Secretary General Antonio Guterres stated that "Indigenous Peoples hold many of the solutions to the climate crisis and are guardians of the world's biodiversity. The so-called "green economy" is not a new concept for Indigenous Peoples. It is a way of life — stretching back millennia. We have so much to learn from their wisdom, knowledge, leadership, experience and example.

Indigenous Knowledge is found within myriad disciplines, including plant-based medicines that have led to the discovery of the active ingredient of aspirin, environmental practices that contribute to better sustainable harvesting of plants and animals, as well as **climate predictions** that are rooted in certain Indigenous cultures' ability to read cloud formations, and assess the effects of snow-flake size and consistency and rain drops.



Bhabna Banerjee, with data from the Indigenous World 2022 report showing the population distribution of an estimated 476 million Indigenous peoples around the world

A better integration of Indigenous Knowledge into development agendas could bring new perspectives and balance to established Western-designed models—and inform the exploration of new pathways to a more sustainable planet.

Making Indigenous Knowledge an SDG

Past attempts to integrate Indigenous perspectives into development agendas have fallen short and have continued to go largely unrecognized. And although the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, created in 2000, has been a channel for expert advice to the UN on Indigenous issues, these topics have focused on a Western perspective of needs. Existing SDGs place an emphasis on Indigenous groups as the **beneficiaries of Western paradigms** of progress and development. Adopting Indigenous Knowledge as a new SDG, however, will bring Indigenous peoples to the decision-making table as equal partners.

The feather would be an apt symbol for a new SDG#18. For many indigenous peoples, the **feather** is a symbol of knowledge, honor and freedom. It represents the deep connection of people to the creator and spiritual world, and the interconnectedness of all living things.

Connecting SDG #18 to The Other Goals

Creating a new SDG also would advance a formal and complete integration of Indigenous Knowledge into datasets currently guiding policy decisions. It is a vital step in the continued discussions about (and usage of) the 17 current SDGs. For example, "Quality Education" (SDG 4) might benefit from weaving Indigenous values of experiential learning from nature and **context-based observations** into pedagogical practices. These principles are essential to arriving at a more holistic way of seeing, experiencing, and addressing environmental issues. And "Responsible Consumption and Production" (SDG 12) would benefit from further exposure to Indigenous worldviews and practices that emphasize harmony with nature, such as the Inuit practice of collecting bird eggs and always leaving one egg in the nest for the anxious mother. "Climate

Action" (SDG 13) would benefit from the **inclusion of voices** who understand the causes of climate change on a different level, and therefore formulate different predictions and solutions. The creation of SDG 18 would help make this a reality by recognizing the value that Indigenous knowledge brings to the sustainable development goals. This step is a pathway to share insights, wisdom, and perceptions around sustainability based on thousands of years of Indigenous People's connection to their land and to each other.

Dr. ***Martin Nweeia*** *is a Global Fellow at the Polar Institute of the Wilson Center and Research Scientist at Harvard, Case Western Reserve, and the Canadian Museum of Nature.*

Pamela Peeters*, is Director of the Institute for a Sustainable Planet and the "Eco Hero Lab" for kids, and a Former Fellow at Columbia University.*

INUINNAQTUN PITIKSILIURNIQ (INUINNAQTUN) TRADITIONS OF BOW-MAKING WORKSHOP

By Brendan Griebel

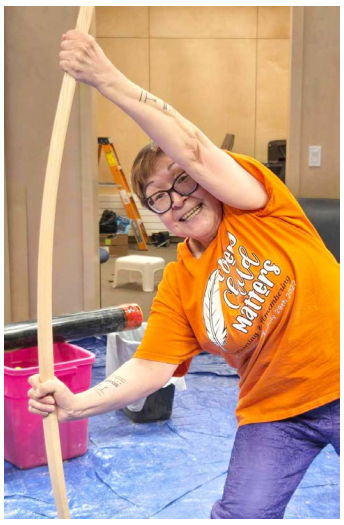
In December 2024, participants from across the Inuinnait region of the Canadian Arctic gathered in Cambridge Bay to re-awaken the practice of sinew-backed bow making. For two weeks, eight participants led by **Adam Kudlak** of Ulukhaktok and **Charlie Ikkutisluk** of Gjoa Haven worked through intricate strategies for transforming raw materials—wood, caribou sinew, and seal skin—into the final product of *Inuin'ngaqtaq*, one of three bow types historically manufactured in that part of the world. "These days," noted instructor Adam Kudlak, "you can almost only see these in museums…it shows how much is lost, and I'm thankful for all the people who are helping try to bring them back."

The workshop, part of the *Inuinnaqtun pitiksiliurniq* (Inuinnaqtun traditions of bow making) program, was the second phase of a multi-year initiative by the Kitikmeot Heritage Society (KHS) and Smithsonian Arctic Studies Center to reconnect Inuit Elders, artists and knowledge holders with Smithsonian-based collections and research expertise critical to reviving the technology. In May of 2023, five representatives of the KHS were sponsored by the US Embassy of Ottawa to travel to Washington, DC and engage firsthand with Inuinnait bows, arrows, and related technologies in storage at the National Museum of Natural History and the National Museum of the American Indian. Working alongside Smithsonian staff and **Coline Lemaitre**—a Ph.D. Candidate at University Paris Panthéon-Sorbonne who has spent years studying the bows and arrows of

Adam Kudlak reviews historical bow drawings as templates for his new bow. Credit: Kitikmeot Heritage Society

Western Alaska—the team was able to visually inspect, interpret and document dozens of examples of bow technology originating in the Central Canadian Arctic. One visiting Elder, **Mabel Etegik**, remembers seeing her father make and use such bows, but the practice had all but died out by the time of her adulthood, replaced by more readily available and reliable rifles and ammunition. Inuinnait bows are distinct from those once used by other Inuit groups, often incorporating a sinew-backed design (*ihualik*) constructed from three bent pieces of wood or muskox horn joined by splices glued with caribou blood, and splinted with seal skin. A lack of wood in the region necessitated the intricate combination of smaller structural pieces, and their subsequent strengthening through copious lengths of braided sinew.

With this documentation in hand, the bow team reached out to other Inuinnait communities, seeking any remaining expertise and practical experience in the technology. The call was answered by **Adam Kudlak**. A participant in one of the KHS's earlier collection research projects at the British Museum (2012), Adam had since deepened his commitment to not only manufacturing traditional Inuit technologies, but also "the tools required to



Eva Ayalik bending her bow into shape. Credit: Kitikmeot Heritage Society

Eva Ayalik interviews Adam Kudlak about bow making. Credit: Kitikmeot Heritage Society

make and fix those tools." Under the guidance of Adam, and **Charlie Ikkutisluk**—a participant in the 2023 Washington workshop—the revitalization program gradually took shape. Preparations began well in advance of December, with the harvest of caribou, muskox and seal for the bows' raw materials. Months were dedicated to braiding lengths of sinew—sourced exclusively from the backstraps of adult male caribou—which would ensure structural integrity of the bows under high amounts of tensile pressure. The only material imported was the oak that was to form the bow itself—the upwards-bending, tree-line spruce (*itkiq*) traditionally used for this purpose being too difficult to locate. Given the general lack of experience in bow-making, it was decided that the Inuin'ngaqtaq design of bow—a D-shaped model without splicing or extensive recurve—would be the most appropriate to reconstruct.

As the first workshop to be held at the KHS's newly constructed Kuugalaaq Cultural Campus—a language-immersive environment—the December bow making program was conducted primarily in Inuinnaqtun, ensuring that the recovery of terminology held equal weight to the material traditions being revived. Eight participants, consisting of Cambridge Bay-based men and women, used hand tools to reduce the wood and an improvised steamer (a kettle and tinfoil) to manipulate its bends. While trial and error, the construction process was negotiated with patience and good humour by all—qualities Kudlak stated were essential to traditional craftsmanship. Over the space of 10 days, each participant was able to complete their own bow.

While important for ensuring the collective memory of a technology once critical to Inuinnait culture, this workshop served an additional role of healing for its primarily male participants. Bows—their manufacture and use—were once a critical component of male identity, noted Kudlak, and the fact that many adult men are no longer hunting or engaged in traditional roles has left them feeling lost. "When they come to courses like this and make things," he noted, "it gives them something positive to do that is tied into their Inuk heritage…their ancestry. It's their soul connecting with who they are, and where they are in life."

Plans for another round of workshops are already underway, this time focusing on the more challenging *ihualik* model of a bow. With a similar revitalization of sinew-backed bows beginning to develop in Alaska, it is the project's hope that the ongoing research and refinement of the technology can one day be guided by strong partnerships—and healthy competition through archery contests—bridging these two parts of the North.

REUNION OF THE PITSIULAK JEDII—A COLLAGE

By William W. Fitzhugh

Summer 2024 combined archaeological fieldwork with project clean-up and reunions with the families of **Lena Sharp** and **Christie Leece** in Lushes Bight, and visits to L'Anse aux Meadows Viking site in northern Newfoundland. We left Fairlee Vt. on 7 July with **Ann Vick** and **Michael Westgate** in tow, heading for an evening dinner in St. John's, New Brunswick. The next day brought us to Louisbourg Fortress where we met Basque re-enactors before taking the midnight ferry to Newfoundland.

Christie and Lena arrived at the Colbournes on the 1 pm ferry. I had not seen Christie or Lena since 2008; both looked and sounded exactly the same as back then. Christie, living in Shaker Heights, Cleveland, had married **Phil Hughes**, who I met earlier in D.C.; he continues work in the computer programming field. They have three kids, **Minke** (8), **Eider** (6), and **Pika** (2). Lena lives near Burlington VT, married **Matt Gordon**, and has two children: **Cyrus** (7), and **Arcadia** (4). The kids erupted from the confinement of their rental cars and were soon getting into everything. Perry's workshop was an immediate attraction for the boys, who delighted in exploring its trove of gear, equipment, tools, and spare parts. Dinner was a lobster feast for fourteen, ten adults around the table, and five kids on the sofa eating and watching TV. In addition, **Kay**, **Jane**, her husband **Lee**, and **Cassie** and **Cami** were all present. The latter arrivals added another level of activity to the huge gang. Everyone had to be mindful of the mosquitos that began their rampage at dusk.

After lots of breakfast-eating, a big safari was organized to visit the *Pitsiulak* at the Mid-Coast Marine center in Triton. Other than visiting Perry and Louise, this was the highlight of the reunion—seeing the boat that Christie and Lena had spent several summers aboard. The kids



Left: Departure from Fairlee, VT, with Lynne Fitzhugh, Michael Westgate, and Ann Vick. Center: Luna Sola Goienetxe and Tao Perez-Ihidoy, Basque presenters at Louisbourg Fortress. Right: Lena's and Christie's families aboard the retired Pitsiulak *at the Triton Mid-Coast Marine Center: (l-r) Arcadia, Lena, Christie, Pika, Minke, Phil, Cyrus, Eider, and Matt.*



Left: Christie, Arcadia, and Lena. Center: 'prop-art with Pika'. Right: Arcadia and Camie explore wharf creatures. Photos by L. Gordon, C. Leece, L. Gordon



Left and center: "It happens around here:" bumping heads in Perry's fancy foc'sle. Right: Lushes Bight excursion with Perry in the old speedboat. Photos by C. Leece



Left: A young apprentice at the Norstead forge. Photo by L. Gordon. Center: Quirpon excursion group with Boyce Roberts. Photo by C. Leece. Right: Lobsters galore! Photo by M. Westgate

scrambled up the ladder and immediately dove into the chart table drawers and the bank of spare and not-so-spare parts drawers. It was all I could do to monitor the grabbing and stashing of all sorts of stuff into the boys' tote bags. Unbeknownst to me, they had a plan—to build robots when they got back to Perry's. Everything was grist for the robot mill—bolts, wire, electronic gadgets, Frobisher tile, soapstone and Ramah chert, and more. They had been told everything on board was 'junk'—even an old foghorn was captured.

We had a big send-off from the Colbourne parking lot this morning—cars packed, kids rounded up, kisses and hugs all around—as we ran for the 11 am ferry, on our way to various destinations on the Great Northern Peninsula. Christie and Lena had reservations at the Mountain Water Resort north of St. Paul River, a fancy salmon fisherman's place with an amazing view of the Gros Morne Mountains and Western Brook Pond.

We met Lena and Christie's gang at the Parks Canada L'Anse aux Meadows Viking Visitor Center at midday and toured the museum and the reconstructed site, which they enjoyed more, because of its recreators, weapons, and ambience. The staff gave us free admission, having remembered our yearly *Pitsiulak* visits. Boyce's daughter, **Jamie Roberts**, is now a regular Parks staffer and gives a great guided tour. This year our guide was the Parks' blacksmith, **Mark**, who rotates with Jamie. We spent most of the afternoon at the site and rendezvoused at Northern Delight for a massive dinner for 18, including **Boyce**, **Jamie** and her sons **Nick** and **Nash**, **Ann** and **Michael**, and Lena's and Christie's families. We spent the rest of the evening at Boyce's sharing stories and watching a 2007 video I made of the crew fixing up the Pits for the summer, some funny takes of the gang being 'screeched in' at Skipper Hot's bar.

Christie provided the following description of their cod-fishing and whale-watching escapade with **Boyce Roberts** around Quirpon Island, where they encountered a pod of orcas:

We went over to Boyce's place thinking it was maybe a bit windy for a ride, but he assured us we'd get out. He hadn't seen any whales that morning when he was out fishing, so he asked the kids if they'd like to do a bit of jigging for cod. Of course that was met with enthusiasm. Minke and Cyrus couldn't wait to do some fishing. We let out what seemed like a hundred feet of line straight down and the kids did maybe three jigs before Boyce told them they'd caught something. They hauled in the line, and we had a nice codfish. Everyone was hollering and so excited to catch something. We plunked the line back in the water and sure enough, another. And another…. We caught seven codfish and one unlucky sculpin in probably a half an hour.

Captain Perry and his First Mate. Photo by C. Leece

The longest part was hauling the line back in. It reminded me of some of the old references to the Gulf of St. Lawrence from early whalers and fishermen where men spoke of dropping a bucket in the water and hauling up a pail of fish like it was nothing. It was really incredible to see Boyce's mastery of fishing too—he knew exactly where to drop the line and could tell just by the faintest vibration whether they had caught a fish, or when it got loose. I've been jigging for squid before, but never codfish, so that was exciting for all of us.

We were thinking this was a great success and Boyce was passing around a bottle of moonshine when Lena spotted something in the distance. It was hard to see, but she thought it was a dorsal fin. Boyce took off in that direction and then slowed down as we realized we were approaching an entire pod of orcas! As we slowed, the orcas decided to check us out up-close and personal. It was thrilling, and also terrifying to some (namely, Eider). One was swimming upside down under the boat, while two flanked us and more were behind us. It was wild—the shaky video can attest that we were all barely able to contain ourselves and our kids in the boat. The orcas followed us around for a good while-you could smell their breath and probably could have touched them had anyone dared.

After a few minutes the whales took off, and while we sat grinning, thinking we had seen it all, a huge group of porpoises came to play! When the ocean delivers, it delivers big! There were probably twenty of them cruising up alongside the boat and in the near distance. We tootled around a minute more, and then made our way back to Boyce's place. He made quick work of a few of the codfish we had caught so we could cook them for supper. Again, he knows what he's doing. None of us could look away as he filleted them in seconds a-piece. I heard Eider describing his trip to someone, "first we were chased by an entire pod of orcas and then my mom's fisherman friend cut up the fish we caught, and we got to use a huge hose to blow the guts through a hole in the floor." All true! Suffice to say, it was one hell of a boat ride! Boyce was saying the orcas only come through a few days a year, so we were just very lucky.

And so, it was for the reunion of the *Pitsiulak* Jeddi!

DELMARVA PADDLER RETREAT 2024

By William W. Fitzhugh

Last year I had the good fortune to get acquainted with **Mike Hamilton**, volunteer administrator of the Delmarva Paddler Retreat, an event sanctioned by Qajaq USA. In turn, Qajaq USA is the American branch of *Qaannat Kattuffiat*, the Greenland *Qajaqing* Association. Mike came to the Natural History Museum with **Paninnguaq Korneliussen**, a Greenlander he had invited to the 2023 retreat, and while in the area he wanted her to check out the Smithsonian's Greenland qajaqs, in which she had a vested interest. Her Grandfather, **Emmanuel Korneliussen**, built the *qajaq* that, without his knowledge, became the model for the Anas Acuta (Northern Pintail) *qajaq*, a craft that has become one of the most popular sporting sea kayaks in the world. Mike was helping Paninnguaq get recognition for her grandfather's creation. Their visit to the Smithsonian resulted in two stories in last year's *Newsletter*, one by Hamilton (2024:31–32) and a second by Paninnguaq (2024:32–34).

Their visit to the museum resulted in a return invitation for me to present a talk at the 2024 Delmarva Paddler Retreat on October 12. I arrived Friday afternoon at the retreat location at Camp Arrowhead, on Rehoboth Bay in Lewes, Delaware, and the shallow waters of the bay were full of home-made Greenland-style *qajaqs*. More than 100 people had gathered from across the Mid-Atlantic coast (and several from Europe) to learn how to build Greenland *qajaqs*, learn the Greenland qajaq roll (*kinngusaqattaarneq*), how to do rope **gymnastics** as instructed by internationally-renown **Dubside**, or make your own Greenland paddle with paddle-master **Don Beale**. The retreat brings together an amazing group of enthusiasts from all walks of life, young and old, for whom learning the skills of Greenland qajaqing—and a good dose of Greenlandic culture—and gathering with friends old and new, has become an annual passion. Nevermind that Rehoboth bay in October is incredibly beautiful, water is warm, and Camp Arrowhead (with its Episcopal traditions and campish pinewoods) offers rustic setting for educational activities.

My purpose there, besides enjoyment and meeting fellow paddlers, was to give a dinner talk about small boats from a very distant region, northern Eurasia. The rationale behind **Harri Luukannen** and my 2016 Smithsonian Books volume, *The Bark Canoes and Skin Boats of Northern Eurasia* was to describe the boating traditions of more than 50 ethnic groups from Scandinavia to Bering Strait—an encyclopedic task that had never been done before. We patterned the project as a complement to the famous work by **Tappan Adney** and **Howard Chapelle**, published by the Smithsonian

Qajaq *fleet at Camp Arrowhead, Rehoboth Bay. Photo by W. Fitzhugh*

in 1964, titled *The Bark Canoes and Skin Boats of North America*. Adney's and Chapelle's book has stood the test of time and is still in print (we should be so lucky!). I daresay many people at the retreat have their own copies, and some will have built canoes or kayaks from Adney's technical drawings. Despite the task of slogging thru 10,000 years of boat prehistory and ethnography after a long day on the water, I managed to kept most everyone awake, and checking up on them over breakfast showed a moderate level of retention! Not everyone grooves on the intricacies of a Tunguska semi-decked bark canoe and whether it gave birth 1,000 years ago to the Eskimo *qajaq*!

I had great admiration for the retreaters—all inspiring, wonderful, energetic people, many in their 80s. Mike did a marvelous job masterminding the retreat and convinced me to give it a whirl next year, perhaps with **Lynne** and our Swedish double kayak from Vastervik. And of course, just to be impish, I made a tongue-in-cheek invitation to all 100+ 'retreatees' to visit Natural History next fall for one of **Stephen Loring**'s great qajaq collection tours!

*[Note: You may visit the **video** of the 2024 Delmarva Padder Retreat produced by Peter Gengler]*

Left: Mike Hamilton made this Greenland-style qajaq. Right: Paddle-maker Don Beale. Photos by W. Fitzhugh

SERENDIPITOUS ENCOUNTERS AND INDIGENOUS PERSPECTIVES ON MARINE MAMMALS: REFLECTIONS ON A RECENT TRIP TO AUSTRALIA

By Kathy Aputiarjuk, Jacob Seguin, Mathilde Lapointe St-Pierre, and Scott Heyes

Scott's Reflections: I spent the early 2000s in Kangiqsualujjuaq, Nunavik, conducting ethnographic research for my Ph.D. The relationships I built there with the Kangiqsualujjuamiut were lifelong, though I never imagined that more than two decades later, a chance encounter would rekindle those ties—this time, on the other side of the world, in Perth, Australia, where I live. It began with a simple message. **Kathy Aputiarjuk**, an Inuk researcher from Kangiqsualujjuaq, was planning a trip to Perth. My friend **Mary-Sam Annanack** from Kangiqsualujjuaq saw Kathy's plans on Facebook and reached out to me. Her message was brief: "Brother from another country, my cousin is going to be in Perth. Look her up." With that, our worlds were about to reconnect in the most unexpected way.

Kathy was traveling with her colleagues, **Jacob** and **Mathilde**, both biologists and Ph.D. students working on research projects in Nunavik. Their work focused on the region's ecology and wildlife, contributing to a broader understanding of the Arctic environment. But beyond the research, this meeting became something much more personal. We welcomed them into our home, where stories, laughter, and memories flowed freely. I pulled out photo albums from my time in Kangiqsualujjuaq, sharing images of the village as it was two decades ago, and to Kathy's delight, familiar faces—her own relatives, though she hadn't even been born at the time these moments were captured. As we flipped through the pages, she pointed out how much her family, friends, and the community had changed. Seeing those photos was a time-traveling experience for all of us, bridging past and present in a single evening.

That night, I cooked up an Australian meal—Kangaroo curry! Sitting around the table, my wife (Canadian born and bred) and sons listening in, we exchanged stories not just about Nunavik, Canada, and Australia but about the larger concept of home. I recalled the words of an Inuk elder from years ago: "I feel at home anywhere in the world where I hear Inuktitut spoken." And in that moment, as Kathy spoke in her mother tongue, it felt as though Kangiqsualujjuaq and Perth had merged into one.

Kathy's Reflections: Being from small town Kangiqsualujjuaq, in Nunavik, I was ecstatic to go to Perth to present the work that we are doing on Inuit-led beluga research. Arriving there, I was so astonished to see the world downunder that I didn't feel jetlagged. My family member reached out to tell me that **Scott Heyes** lives there and that I should reach out to him. Scott invited us for supper and told us about his time in Kangiqsualujjuaq, which was tremendous for me.

The day after, we attended a workshop about communities partnering with researchers. We presented our *Marralik-Ungunniavik Beluga Project* that Kuujjuaq and Kangiqsualujjuaq had requested to be done. **Lloyd Pigram**, an Indigenous researcher from Broome, also presented with his team about their dugong project. Not having learned about dugongs, I couldn't focus on them since I had an adrenaline rush from our presentation IN AUSTRALIA! Until they started talking about their challenges about the dugong research which related to our project very similarly.

I got the chance to talk to Lloyd regarding our issues dealing with self management and sensitive topics we have in our communities as aboriginal people. Realizing the resemblance in our livelihoods, Lloyd suggested we meet him in Broome, where his family and culture thrives. The honor to be welcomed with a smoking ceremony at the beach right before sundown was delightful; even the fish agreed. We then got a welcoming supper from Lloyd's family, eating dugong! Just a few days ago, I had not known what dugongs were, but now I was eating some! While in Broome, we met the rangers from the Yawuru environmental service unit. We talked about the beluga research we are doing, and they told us about their responsibilities as rangers. Lloyd then took us to a traditional fishing spot with all kinds of country food like wild oysters! The experience we had in Broome has changed and sharpened my vision about aboriginal similarities and challenges. I would not have asked for the trip to Australia to be any different!

Left to right, Jenna Hounslow (Murdoch University, Perth), Mathilde Lapointe St-Pierre (Makivvik, McGill University), Jacob Seguin (Anguvigaq, McGill University), Lloyd Pigram (Nulungu Institute, Broome), Kathy Aputiarjuk (Anguvigaq) having a lunch meeting outside the SMM conference to discuss common goals and themes among our partnerships. November 2024. Photo by Scott Heyes

Mathilde's Reflections: I'm a Wildlife Biologist at the Nunavik Research Centre, which is managed by Makivvik, an Inuit rights organization created by the 1975 James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement (JBNQA). It is one of the only Inuit-led and Inuit-owned research centres in Canada. Our research projects are designed in partnership with communities, to address the wildlife priorities of Nunavimmiut.

One of my projects is on Atlantic walrus, a culturally important species in Nunavik. Part of this project included interviews to gather Inuit knowledge of this species. For several years, I wanted to participate in the Biennial Conference on the Biology of Marine Mammals, but since it only happens every two years, this was my first opportunity. I presented my work at this conference in Perth on Inuit knowledge of Atlantic walrus ecology. Attending this conference not only allowed me to showcase the Nunavik Research Centre on an international stage, but also provided an opportunity to meet Scott. He shared important ideas and gave me access to valuable walrus distribution data from the 1970s to the 1990s in Nunavik, which will greatly enrich my project.

Meeting Lloyd also helped me realize how much research issues faced by aboriginal and Inuit peoples are similar. There is a strong need for self-determination, recognition, and acknowledgment of the negative impacts of colonization. I am very proud to be a biologist representing Inuit. Being involved in gathering Inuit knowledge to ensure this information is preserved is incredibly important for Inuit culture. This role is not just about research—it's about cultural preservation, community empowerment, and contributing to a legacy that respects and values Inuit perspectives. I realized that these challenges transcend boundaries and are, in a way, matters of fundamental values.

Jacob's Reflections: I started my PhD after being invited by Anguvigaq (an Inuit rights organization created by the Nunavik Inuit Land Claims Agreement) to support an Inuit-led beluga monitoring program in Nunavik. I met my friend and colleague Mathilde because we share the same academic supervisor, and I heard about the Biennial Conference on the Biology of Marine Mammals from her. After registering, I was contacted by a workshop organizer to present about Indigenous partnerships with scientists, and I knew I had to talk about that topic with my Anguvigaq Team. My friend and colleague Kathy was keen to come, and since I'm a terrible traveller I was really happy to have a travel buddy. We got the tickets booked, and it was the same price to fly from Nunavik to southern Canada as it was to fly from Canada to Australia! It was an interesting early lesson in the challenges related to community connection.

Kathy Aputiarjuk of Kangiqsualujjuaq and Scott Heyes (ASC Research Associate) connecting in Perth, Western Australia. November 2024. Photo by Scott Heyes

I was so happy to have my Nunavik friends with me so far from home, but I also got to meet new friends and colleagues. Scott's Ph.D. work in Nunavik contains a lot of Inuit Knowledge of beluga from people I never got to speak to and gives me insight into the past work that has been done on the topic before me.

One of the biggest impacts for me was when Kathy and I watched a presentation by Lloyd Pigrim and **Dean Matthews** from Nyamba Buru Yawuru in the Broome region of Australia. Kathy, Lloyd, and Dean connected intensely because our project on beluga was very similar to their project on dugong, both are community initiatives focused on traditional knowledge of marine mammals that have historically been managed exclusively from top-down government agencies that stem from the same colonial source. I was struck by the similarities between our teams, and by the welcome and positivity I have experienced from both sides of the planet.

Taking it back home: As we all parted ways, we took bits of each other's homes with us. Kathy left behind Inuktitut words with speakers of Nyamba Buru Yawuru, and in a reciprocal relationship of gratitude, Lloyd gifted Yawuru phrases to Kathy that she could bring back to speak in Nunavik. Scott gave Mathilde and Jacob his stories of genuine research partnership with Nunavik communities, contributing to the next generation of scientists trying to learn about the world with both eyes open. Jacob returned to Hammond, Kathy to Kangiqsualujjuaq, Mathilde to Kuujjuaq, Lloyd to Broome, and Scott to Perth, but none of these places are the same as they were before we met. The oceans are connected without barriers around the planet, and through our work on marine mammals, our group just became connected too. We saw through each other's eyes, heard in each other's languages, and learned from each other.

RESEARCH

DOCUMENTING RENÉ LÉVESQUE'S EARLY ARCHAIC BRADOR MOUND EXCAVATIONS

By William W. Fitzhugh and Treena Beaudoin

In 1970 and 1971 **René Lévesque** and a group of students and local volunteers excavated two stone mounds near Blanc Sablon, Quebec. The sites (EiBg-59, 60) are on a raised terrace a few hundred meters from shore, a kilometer southeast of the Brador River mouth. During these years, Lévesque was surveying archaeological sites in the Brador-Blanc Sablon area. Most of his work involved collecting artifacts from surface exposures of ancient shoreside habitation sites. However, two stone-capped mounds known to Brador residents **Clifford** and **Florence Hart** became full-scale excavations. After completing the excavation and back-filling Tumulus I, the group excavated Tumulus II, a similar mound on the same terrace. When that was completed, Lévesque left without filling the excavation or replacing its cap-rocks, and the site remained in a state of disarray for the next 63 years (Fig. 1).

Both mounds (hereafter, Mounds 1 and 2) produced similar tools—triangular and nipple-base points, full-channel gouges, and other implements resembling finds from the L'Anse Amour Mound in Forteau Bay, which is radiocarbon-dated 7,600 B.P. Although the Brador mounds produced younger radiocarbon dates on samples Lévesque sent to **Fitzhugh** in the mid-1970s (Mound 1, SI-1325, 1745±130 BP; Mound 2, SI-1326, 3230±80 BP, and SI-1327, 3450±115 BP), the artifacts left little doubt that the mounds were created during the Early Archaic period 7–8,000 years ago (Figs. 2, 3).

When the Arctic Studies Center began surveys on the Quebec Lower North shore in 2001, Lévesque introduced Fitzhugh to Clifford Hart, a Brador fisherman who had been on Lévesque's field crew. Hart soon developed a 'green thumb' for archaeology and worked with Lévesque for several years around 1970. Clifford and his wife, Florence, soon became local sponsors for the Smithsonian's Gateways project. For many years they encouraged our work on a 17th century Inuit winter village site at their chalet near the Brador River. Clifford, who had found a Maritime Archaic tool cache when he was digging the basement of his house in Brador, also introduced me to the Brador mounds. I was shocked to see the sites existed as gaping holes, having been abandoned without re-filling. Over the years as we passed through Brador, often excavating at the Hart Chalet Inuit site, I was constantly reminded that the open scar on the hill behind the Hart residence needed attention.

Figure 1. Brador Mound 2 in 2024, abandoned without refilling by Lévesque in 1971. Photo by W. Fitzhugh

Left: Figure 2. One of several full-channel gouges from Mound 2.
Right: Figure 3. One of several nipple-base points from Mound 2. Photos by R. Lévesque

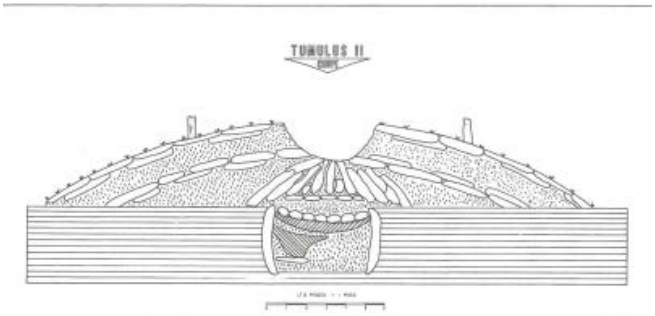


Figure 4. Mound 2 cross-section. Graphic by R. Lévesque

Figure 5. Brador Mound I during excavation. Photo by J. Cormier

Figure 6. Brador Mound 2 excavation in 1971. Photo by J. Cormier

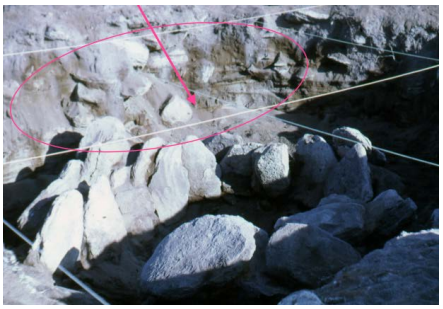


Figure 7. Mound 2 burial chamber in 1971. Photo by J. Cormier

Opportunity came when, as a tribute to Clifford Hart and his work with Lévesque, Florence Hart lobbied the Lower North Shore MRC (Regional County Municipality) to return the open mound to its original appearance as part of a tourism and historic trails development plan. Recognizing that the reconstruction of the L'Anse Amour Amerindian burial on the north side of Forteau Bay was a popular tourist destination, the Town of Blanc Sablon believed that with appropriate signage and publicity, the Brador mounds could make a similar historical and economic contribution. Doing so would also recognize the community's role in the original excavations and Florence Hart's efforts to see Indigenous heritage officially recognized.

The Lévesque Excavations

Lévesque left a detailed account of the excavations of Mounds 1 and 2 (Fig. 4). He described the mounds, their geographical location, the excavation process, internal mound stratigraphy, find locations, and the artifacts and materials encountered. The maps and plans he prepared are schematic, but they present a clear picture of the internal structure and the locations of artifacts. Unlike L'Anse Amour, no skeletal remains were preserved. Photos of the excavations taken by **Jocelyne Cormier**, **James Wright** who was a member of Lévesque's team, provide context and help document the excavation (Figs. 5, 6). The present location of the artifact collection is unknown. In the early 1970s Lévesque sent the collection to the National Museum of Canada in Ottawa, where it was inspected by James V. Wright, an expert in boreal forest archaeology. Wright, and Robert McGhee and James A. Tuck (who excavated the L'Anse mound in 1974), confirmed the site's nipple base points and full-channel gouges were among the earliest artifacts known from the region.

Mound 2 Reconstruction

In July 2024, we were engaged by the Town of Blanc Sablon to reconstruct Mound 2. Supported by a grant from the Quebec Lower North Shore MRC facilitated by MRC board member **Vicky Driscoll**, **Perry Colbourne**, local archaeological enthusiast **Treena Beaudoin**, and I spent several days at the mound. The project began with a meeting between Mayor **Colin Shattler**, **Treena Benoit**, and Fitzhugh on 15 July. We began archaeological work that afternoon and re-excavated the central portion of Mound 2 to make sure Lévesque recovered all the burial remains. Standing rock slabs bordering the east side of the burial chamber guided the location of our test pit (Fig. 7). The soil in the upper part of the pit was back-fill from Lévesque's time. Ninety-five cms below the top of the vertical slabs and 1.5 m below the original ground surface we reached sterile sand below the burial chamber. No tools, red ocher stains, or other cultural evidence were found, and our hopes for a valid ^{14}C date fell when a few curious dark lumps turned out to have no organic content.

On 16 July a truck-load of sand was dumped into the open pit, creating a low mound (Fig. 8). Then, on 17 July, the town provided an excavator machine which Perry Colbourne used to gather up and replace the cap-rocks Lévesque removed. We considered trying to return Lévesque's partially filled Mound I excavation pit to its original state but did not have enough rocks to make a cover pavement.

Before leaving Brador, we brought Florence Hart back to show her the result of her multi-year lobbying effort (Figures 9, 10). Finally, the eye-sore that discredited Lévesque's and Clifford's work to actualize local prehistory and Indigenous heritage had been set right. Next year we plan to produce signage documenting one of the oldest Amerindian mortuary monuments in Northeastern North America.

Credits: We thank René Lévesque (excavator/recorder); Clifford and Florence Hart (excavation, heritage preservation); Perry Colbourne and Treena Beaudoin (site reconstruction, ccordination); MRC (financial support), Jocelyne Cormier (1971 photos and identifications); Vicky Driscoll, **Serena Etheridge,**

and **J. Y. Pintal** (images and documentation); and the Municipality of Blanc Sablon (coordination, logistic support).

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Left: Figure 8. Perry Colbourne and Treena Beaudoin re-filling the Mound 2 pit. Photo by W. Fitzhugh
Right: Figure 9. Florence Hart (center) with Jocelyne Cormier and Denis Dagenais. Photo by J. Cormier

Figure 10. Mound 2 reconstructed with caprocks. Photo by T Beaudoin

INNU ARCHAEOLOGY IN SHESHATSHIT 2024 FIELDWORK

By Anthony Jenkinson

*[Note by **Stephen Loring**:] Perhaps the most rewarding aspect of nearly fifty years (!) of archaeological research in Labrador is to witness its transition from an esoteric pursuit by a small, dedicated band of professional archaeologists 'from away' to a practice anchored in the descendant communities of the peoples (cultures) whose traces–mostly made of stone and fireplaces now centuries cold—were derived. An awareness and appreciation of archaeology among the Innu evolved slowly. In 1993, seeking to address pressing inadequacies in educational services and economic opportunities, the Arctic Studies Center partnered with Innu Nation to offer an archaeological field school for Innu young people conducted at Amatshuatakan, a site situated at a portage trail that figured significantly in Innu travel routes leading across a vast swath of the Quebec-Labrador interior. The "Pathways Project" figured prominently in ushering in a new era in archaeological practice with Innu leadership instigating archaeological research (**Daniel Ashini**'s direction of a survey in the Smallwood Reservoir) and Innu participation in cultural heritage surveys mandated by large-scale economic developments (at Voisey's Bay, Romaine River, and the Lower Churchill) and community infrastructure projects (e.g. at Sheshatshit.) But most significantly it has been the Tshikapisk initiative, an Innu experiential education program that sought, among other things, to provide opportunities for Innu young people to gain country-based experiences and knowledge that has–gradually—fostered and brought about the current state of Innu engagement in archaeology.]*

For the first time in many years no archaeological fieldwork took place at Kamestastin. It, and the region in which it is set, has witnessed Tshikapisk research projects every year from 1999 to 2023, and produced an impressive body of new information relating to early occupations in that interior region. Though not entirely limited to the oldest known occupations, the work increasingly focussed on a suite of caribou ambush sites radiocarbon-dated to 6500 to 7400 calibrated years BP and positioned around the outflow narrows of this meteorite impact-created waterbody. The location continued to be an important caribou migration crossing point right up until the early years of Tshikapisk archaeological research, until the caribou population crash which began shortly after we began our work.

In 2024, the quickening pace of house-building in Sheshatshit brought to the fore difficult questions relating to the fact that the modern, rapidly expanding Innu community of Sheshatshit was being established on land with a history of human occupation dating from the present to at least 5000 years BP. A possibility exists that there are or were (much disturbance has taken place on some of the higher elevation locations) older occupations of whose existence only stray finds now provide hints. From as early as **Bill Fitzhugh**'s work at North West River in 1968–70 there has been speculation as to what archaeological sites might exist on the south side of the narrows. Answers to questions along these lines are slowly emerging as more and more ground disturbance occurs from expanding community infrastructure.

Intentionally destroyed bifaces from the high elevation Papanatshish Site north of North West River, where projectile points and ground stone tools were apparently "sacrificed". Photo by A. Jenkinson

The largest chunk of archaeological work undertaken in Sheshatshit in 2024 related to a large forested area bounded by the North West Point Road/Matshateu Street, the water treatment lagoons' access road and the Sheshatshit community firebreak. This large, wooded area is known as "Sheshatshit Areas 10 and 11". Apart from one notable site north of today's settler village of North West River (see below) all of this year's archaeological work was undertaken in Sheshatshit. The one remaining heavily forested area in the community has escaped the damage to archaeological sites suffered in other parts of Sheshatshit and preserves a large part of the terrace series on which ancestral Innu groups established seasonal camps for almost five thousand years. With isostatic rebound, the shoreline receeded and new terraces emerged, and Ancestral Innu occupations continued to be established close to the water's edge. These terraces range in elevation from 35 meters above sea level to 7 m.a.s.l, with occupations on the highest terrace radiocarbon dated ca. 5000 calibrated years BP. Unlike in the sister community of North West River, the sites in Sheshatshit representing those occupations in the forested area are mostly undisturbed.

Sheshatshit archaeological crew the excavated the linear hearth at the Upau Nakutshash site in Sheshatshit (L-R: Curtis Gregoire, Sarah Nuna, Uatshatshish Pukue, Jason Nuna, Frank Pukue). Photo by A. Jenkinson

FjCa-81 The Papanatshish Site

Perhaps the most remarkable site investigated in 2024 is located on what is today the Settler side of Sheshatshit narrows, north of North West River's Sunday Hill. Papanatshish lies at an elevation of 27 m.a.s.l. and is close to what is today a gravel and sand quarry. Here, around a large pit stained with red ochre, lay evidence of the sacrificial destruction of finely made bifaces and ground stone tools. Some pieces showed evidence of heat treatment by fire, but most of the fragments (even those with refitting burnt segments) had not. The implication is that some artefact fragments were placed in fire after the original objects had been broken. Furthermore, the sacrificed biface fragments exhibited radial fracturing typical of points which have been placed on an anvil stone and then destroyed by a facial blow. Although some fragments had been placed in a fire, breakage itself did not occur from heat shattering. The bifaces were fashioned from a wide variety of different materials. All but two had been deliberately broken. The two exceptions (one of Ramah, the other of a dark mottled opaque material) were both projectile points that had apparently been stabbed into the ground (closely mirroring a similar ritual documented at the White Point Maritime Archaic site near Saglek over 500 kms to the north). Though only one remained standing near vertically by the firepit, the other lay close beside it with its distal portion in ochre-stained ground. The prone biface was angled down in a manner which suggested it, too, had been driven into the surface. The latter biface lay on the southeast side of the fire pit. Although three of the bifaces at Papanatshish were of Ramah Chert, there were few flakes of this material or any others at the site.

The other category of tools at Papanatshish site was ground stone. Although nowhere near as abundant as the bifaces, excavation of the western portion of the site produced pieces of what were well-finished celts and perhaps gouges, and the grinding tools to create and maintain them. All were broken and seem to have been deliberately destroyed. The only other formal tools were four endscrapers, three of which were of glossy black chert. A radiocarbon date ca. 300 BP on charcoal found near the broken bifaces is attributed to a forest fire event. Excavation of this site, almost certainly the oldest yet found in Western Lake Melville, is not complete, and we look forward to it revealing more of its story in the coming year.

Testing Sheshatshit Areas 10 and 11

Frank Pukue and a quartzite point from the Upau Nakutshash site. Photo by A. Jenkinson

In advance of planned expansion of housing into the last major forested area of Sheshatshit, we were asked to survey the land in Areas 10 and 11. These terraces were created by the combination of post- glacial rebound interacting with sediment deposition and marine/lacustrine erosion. Radiocarbon dates from anthropogenic features confirm the sequence expected, with the oldest sites on the high terraces and the youngest on the lowest. This has created the difficult task of reconciling the need for housing with responsible management of Innu heritage. The development on a kilometer-long terrace slope would destroy the ground surfaces on these terraces. What was required was both the identification of archaeological sites and their excavation. Planning was facilitated by LIDAR images allowing us to 'see through' the tree cover. The portion of the Sheshatshit firebreak that forms the kilometer-long western border of Areas SSS 10 and 11 has a bull-dozed cut exposing a stratigraphic section from the highest 35-meter elevation terrace to one ca. 16 meters asl, creating a sort of enormous test pit revealing archaeological. We located five archaeological sites, one of which was adjacent to previously identified features on the top "Shukapesh" terrace, and four of which were new finds. Excavations inside allowed us to do more than merely record the contents of the odd positive test pit. Nevertheless, none of the five identified have yet been excavated in a way that permits clearance for housing development.

Mitunishan

Mitunishan was discovered while surveying a location adjacent to the Sheshatshit Northern Store that is slated for a new office building. Although the lot has been disturbed, a portion still survives. Here we found evidence of a precontact occupation 27 m.a.s.l. Apart from a concentration of quartzite shatter and fire-cracked rock, a handful of small beige chert flakes and spalls of light-coloured slate, the only anthropogenic objects were an oblong cobble used as a pestle with heavy battering at both ends, and a slab of sandstone possibly used as a hearth slab, similar to ones found in other hearths at this elevation. Similar hearth slabs have been found at the late Maritime Archaic site at Rattler's Bight, and at Sheshatshit FjCa-60 Locus 2 dated at around 5000 cal. BP, and at FjCa-79 with its linear hearth, firepit, and calcined seal bone deposits. Interviews that we conducted in Sheshatshit attest to use of the same material for cooking surfaces persisting into the very recent past. Residue analysis may provide clues about the practice of cooking on sandstone slabs used by Innu ancestors at least until the 1950s.

For more information on Smithsonian and Tshikapisk collaboration, see the **Newfoundland Provincial Archaeology Office Annual Reports**.

ROCK ART AND ARCHAEOLOGY IN THE MONGOLIAN ALTAI

By William W. Fitzhugh, Richard D. Kortum, and Daniel G. Cole

Since 2001, East Tennessee State University and the Smithsonian Institution have researched rock art and archaeology in far western Mongolia, the High Altai where the borders of Mongolia, China, Kazakhstan, and Russia converge. There are reasons for convergence. Mountainous terrain, active glaciers, constricted travel routes, unpredictable weather, short growing seasons, poor soil, and low animal and human populations define this region. These conditions also helped make the territory a cultural frontier; its sparce human populations have been independent but susceptible to external influences. These same conditions influenced Mongolian Altai culture history and rock art research. Little work had been done in Bayan Ulgii other than **Esther Jacobson**'s rock art studies with **Kubarov** and **Tseveendorj** on the Russian border. **Richard Kortum**'s surveillance commenced in 2002. Smithsonian interest began in 2007, initially to clarify the chronology and relationships of deer stone art.

Turk rider and horse. Graphic y R. Kortum

In 2004, Kortum discovered a major rock art complex incorporating hundreds of archaeological sites, making it ideal for integrated research. The Biluut Rock Art and Archaeology Project (BRAAP) primary goals were to: (1) develop a regional culture history; (2) document, chronicle, and analyze Biluut rock art; and (3) combine the two disciplines to produce a more complete picture of the region's prehistory than either discipline could do independently. Ritual landscape was our central research theme.

Environment

Previous studies documented Khoton Nuur geology and environmental history. Deglaciation began ca. 20,000 BP, several millennia earlier than other areas of the Northern Hemisphere. Khoton Nuur was free of ice by 10–12,000 BP. Boreal woodland replaced tundra ca. 10,000 BP, coincident with lake ecology reaching near modern conditions. Warm and dry conditions prevailed until ca. 6,000 BP, when cooler weather arrived and domesticated animals appeared and began transforming the landscape into the mountain steppe ecology of today.

Altai Mountains and horses viewed toward China. Photo by W. Fitzhugh

Rock Art

Kortum's rock art surveys from 2002–2008 covered a wide area of southern and western Bayan Ulgii, where he discovered large numbers of archaeological and petroglyphic sites. This is a rich, unexplored area with khirigsuurs, deer stones, standing stones, stone men, rock art, stone alignments, and other prehistoric features that hold clues to Mongolia connections to Xinjiang on the other side of the Altai divide.

However, it was the Biluut petroglyph complex it Khoton Nuur investigated annually by Kortum between 2004–2017 that provided evidence for more than 18,000 years with 12,000 discrete images of pictorial history. Hundreds of these survive from Late Paleolithic times. The succeeding Archaic images include human figures and shamans, spirit figures such as horned horses, and female birthing figures. The oldest are deeply engraved, heavily patinated large fauna like bovids, deer, argali sheep, and ostriches that date to the Neolithic period ca. 8,000–4,000 BP.

Early Bronze Age figures are generally smaller and less patinated, engraved with metal tools and more precision. They include many of the same animals, but also camels, flocks of antelopes, wild horses, archers and hunt scenes with mounted archers, dogs, and wolves. In the DSK Late Bronze Age, horse-drawn chariots and caravans appear.

Chariot with rider and horses in perspective view. Photo by R. Kortum

Iron Age Pazyryk and subsequent Turkic rock art commonly display distinct Saka-style horses, deer, moose, and deer-camel hybrids. The lone image of a racing chariot depicted in profile perspective is extremely rare. Turkic rock art typically features large, decorated horses and riders with stirrups and elaborate costumes and headgear, along with armed warriors and combat scenes.

Archaeology and Rock Art

Previous field research identified Pazyryk sites around Khoton Nuur; deer stones, khirigsuur burials, Turkic stone men, and other burial features were practically everywhere. Our work expanded this history. In 2011 and 2012 we excavated 40 archaeological sites and documented nearly 5,000 surface features, including graves, standing stones, dwellings, ovoos, ritual markers, caches, microblades, cores, and iron arrowheads. From archaeological evidence we identified nine distinct cultural periods. Five of these designated cultures of a local indigenous Altai

Tradition, while three—DSK, Pazyryk, and Turkic—were intrusive cultures.

Below are a few results linking rock art and archaeology:

Paleolithic. Late Paleolithic tools and cores were present as surface finds. In addition, Paleolithic rock art is present on each of the three main hills (Biluut 1, 2, and 3); scientific varnish microlamination analysis (VML) dated some images greater than 18,000 BP. We did not find petroglyphs depicting extinct Ice Age megafauna, except for aurochs, or wild bulls.

Period 1. Pre-4000 BP Mesolithic and Neolithic hunters, gatherers, and fishermen appear around 8,000 years ago, evinced by a child's grave, microliths, and a domestic site associated with a petroglyph of a 'birthing woman'.

Excavation of a 4-trough metal-related structure. Photo by W. Fitzhugh

Period 2. Altai I: 4500–3200 BP Early-to-Middle Bronze Age pastoralists associated with grazing stock animals, copper metallurgy, large, double-walled rectangular structures with trough-like features, stone box graves, and a Mongun Taiga cemetery. Large-scale animal figures—finely carved and less deeply patinated—and shamanic and spiritualized anthropomorphic figures are located near these sites.

Period 3. 3500–2700 BP Late Bronze Age Deer Stone-Khirigsuur (DSK) sites have circular grave mounds surrounding boulder 'fences' with radials and deer stones embedded in burial mounds. Associated rock art was carved with metal tools, and the stylized Mongolian Deer—symbol of a possibly centralized religion or cosmology—became the dominant cultural icon. Horses were being ridden and powered chariots.

Period 4. Altai II: 2700–2200 BP Early Iron Age pastoralists. Scattered box burials with grave goods, and horse and dog images appear. Figures are smaller and more finely carved, commonly using iron tools. Sites are few; this may be a low population period due to severe climate conditions. At this time, Pazyryk sites appear in Russia but not yet in Bayan Ulgii.

Period 5. 2200–1900 BP Early Iron Age Pazyryk warrior-traders appear. Linear north-south strings of deep, log-crypt burial mounds announce Pazyryk arrivals, and graves of riders and their mounts contain valuable goods including gold-foil ornaments. Petroglyphs include Scythian Early Nomadic 'Animal Style' art and scenes of conflict.

Late Bronze Age Khirigsuur at Khuiten Gol Delta. Photo by W. Fitzhugh

Period 6. Altai III. 1900–1400 BP. This period sees a resurgence of local Late Iron Age pastoralists using stone box graves and food offerings, and petroglyphs of hunting, horse-mounted warriors, and combat.

Period 7. 1450–1100 BP Turkic warrior pastoralists appear with memorials featuring 'figure stones' with balbals, large oval earthworks, irrigation, and ritual ovoos. Large-scale petroglyphs display details of costumes, horse tack, and social pomp and circumstance.

Period 8. Altai IV 1100–500 BP Medieval warrior-herders. This is another low population period. Mongols appear at Khoton Lake as seen in a warrior grave, while ritual ovoo chains and small stone box rituals may reflect a resident Altaian population.

Period 9. 500–0 BP Altai V (Kazakh) recent ethnographic pastoralists are evidenced by ger tents, log cabins, and open, raised cemeteries characteristic of Kazakh culture.

Adding rock art to archeological description was like shining a searchlight into the past, illuminating the cultures and lives of ancient Altaians in ways archaeology alone could never do. The major distinctive landscape signatures are Late Bronze Age DSK, Iron Age Pazyryk, and Turkic cultures, all intrusive from neighboring regions. We interpret other periods as segments of a continuous local 'indigenous Altai tradition. Altai groups share dispersed stone box graves, burial with food remains but few artifacts, ovoo chains, and rock art illustrating animals and hunting scenes. A major surprise was the complete absence of Xiongnu sites (200 BC–AD 200), which are found in adjacent Khovd but not Bayan Ulgii aimag. Xiongnu-Pazyryk interactions may explain the late appearance of Pazyryk from Russia and the absence of Xiongnu in a possible Pazyryk-Xiongnu tension zone.

Summary

BRAAP produced new understandings about DSK cosmology and cultural geography. Altaian deer stones have few classic Mongolian deer images and conform mainly to the 'animal-less' Altai Deer Stone style. Unlike Central Mongolia, many Altai khirigsuurs have radials; deer stones are sometimes embedded in the east sides of mounds; and khirigsuurs lack horse sacrifices, despite dating to the Central Mongolian DSK period, ca. 3400–2700 BP. One way of looking at Altai khirigsuurs views the deceased as the deer stone driver of the symbolic 'chariot wheel' burial mound, which provides the deceased a chariot ride into an afterlife.

Dating is crucial to linking rock art and archaeology. An experimental method tested at Biluut (in 2015 and 2017) was varnish microlamination (VML) analysis. The technique involves taking a tiny core, smaller than a pencil eraser, from a petroglyph groove and analyzing the varnish microstratigraphy for high- and low concentrations of manganese, which can be correlated with independently dated wet and dry climatic periods.

The BRAAP project amassed an enormous body of data that demonstrate the value of integrated studies of rock art and archaeology, where these disciplines overlap geographically and where both sites and images can be dated. But even without scientific dating, rock art can be stylistically correlated with archaeological cultures. Rock art from the Biluut hills adds immeasurably—in both human and cultural terms—to what we learned from archaeological evidence.

Ritual Landscape

Our final contribution relates to ritual landscape. Because nomadic hunters and herders leave few remains, most BRAAP archaeology involved the more visible products of ritual and ceremonial activity. Given the attention archaeologists place on material culture, it was sobering to discover the huge investment made by the succession of Altaian groups to non-material and presumably 'spiritual' culture—like honoring ancestors and deceased, propitiating gods and spirits, and ritualizing metallurgical technology and weaponry. Rituals touched every corner of daily life. One of the most visible and unstudied ritual features is the large number of geographic alignments of rocks and half-buried boulders pointing toward sacred peaks and other cardinal targets. Clearly, a great deal of attention throughout prehistory was devoted to relations to ritualized landscapes, celestial bodies, and cosmological events. Unfortunately, such constructions could not—so far—be directly associated with datable rock art or cultural periods.

Conclusion

BRAAP established an 18,500-year culture history for western Mongolia. This history reveals the Mongolian Atai to have been a geographical and cultural frontier bordered by regions with larger populations and more powerful cultures. At times, these external groups, such as DSK, Pazyryk, and Turkic, left distinctive traces. Despite these mostly short-lived intrusions, local Altaian populations persisted and sustained a longue durée adaptation to the region's mountain and lacustrine ecology, while maintaining core traditions of ritual and ceremonial life still very much in evidence among today's intertwined Kazakh and Mongol peoples.

During this region's prehistory, there were times when Altai climate imposed harsh realities, creating gaps in occupation history, while in others, cultures flourished. Future global warming will bring new sustainability challenges, as will the growth of tourism and modernization. Hopefully the new knowledge and attention that archaeology and rock art studies have brought to Bayan Ulgii will encourage leaders to promote research and to protect cultural resources and heritage.

[*Ed. note:* This report was presented at the Mongolian Studies Conference, Washington, D.C., February 14–15, 2025. The full report: *Ritual Landscape: Rock Art and Archaeology in the Mongolian Altai*, by William W. Fitzhugh and Richard D. Kortum, with Jamsranjav Bayarsaikhan, Daniel G. Cole, Jean-Luc Houle, and Yadmaa Tserendagva. Washington D.C.: Smithsonian Arctic Studies Center and International Polar Institute Press, 444 pp. 2025. In color, with references and appendices.]

THE MONGOLIAN EMPIRE AND MORTUARY LANDSCAPES OF THE EASTERN STEPPE, DORNOD PROVINCE

By William Honeychurch, Chunag Amartuvshin, Batdalai Byambatseren, and Gideon Shelach-Lavi

The Wall Project, conducted by the Mongolian-Israeli-American Archaeological team, has systematically surveyed and excavated along the a number of mysterious 'long-wall' structures in northeast, southeast, and southern Mongolia from 2018 to 2024. These are wall and ditch features that stretch across the Mongolian steppe for hundreds of kilometers and have rarely been studied by archaeologists. The most impressive of these is known as 'Chinggisiin Dalan' or the great wall of Chinggis Khan (Genghis Khan) in northeastern Mongolia. The entire length of the wall is approximately 737 km and fortress-like settlements appear at intervals of about 20–30 km from its origin in eastern Inner Mongolia, into southern Siberia, and then across northeastern Mongolia (Fig. 1). Our primary research focus has been on determining the dates, function, and affiliations of the builders and inhabitants along this impressive wall that for centuries was believed to have been built by armies of the Mongolian Empire.

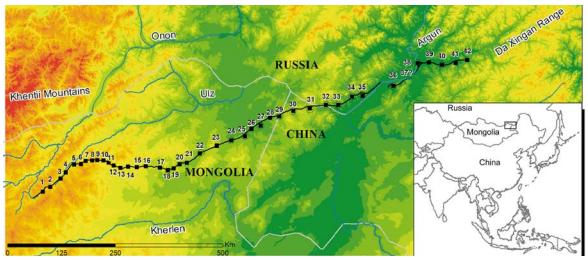

Fig. 1. Map showing the 'Chinggisiin Dalan' Kitan period wall system with fortified settlements numbered. (credit: adapted from Shelach-Lavi et al. 2024)

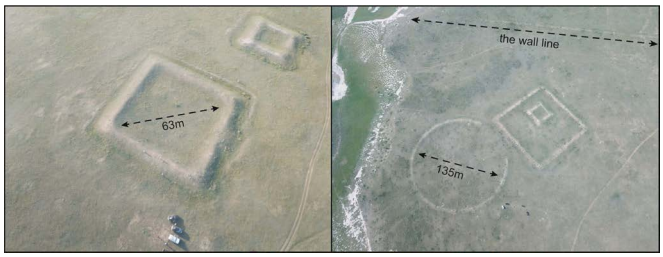

Fig. 2. Complex 23 and 24 near Gurvanzagal township, Dornod province(Credit: adapted from Shelach-Lavi et al. 2024)

Our field teams carried out excavations at three of the fortress-like settlements in Dornod province of Mongolia in the vicinity of Khar Nuur (Complex 27) and two others in the vicinity of the Gurvanzagal township (Complex 23 and 24) (Fig. 2). Our discoveries follow upon two prior archaeological field projects by Mongolian, Russian, and Japanese teams and confirm that the wall was not constructed during the age of Chinggis Khan but instead during the prior empire of the Kitan-Liao Dynasty (916–1125 AD). All three of the settlement sites have material remains, including pottery and metal items that corroborate our radiocarbon dates on wood and animal bone.

The Kitan Empire was centered in southeastern Inner Mongolia and occupied a large swathe of eastern and central Mongolia as well as northern China. Histories report that the empire's northern frontier defended against a number of pastoral nomadic groups known collectively by the name Zubu. The northeastern wall system was part of this imperial frontier; however, the exact purpose of the wall and the identity of the people inhabiting these fortress-like settlements are still the subject of hypothesis and research.

Interestingly, the dating of materials from Complex 27 and 23 suggest their occupations continued past the fall of the Kitan Empire in 1125 AD. These sites may have experienced continuous occupation as the empire dissolved or they may have been re-occupied after the initial inhabitants departed. What transpired across these northeastern regions between 1125 and 1206 AD, the period preceding the consolidation of the Mongolian Empire under Chinggis Khan, is still a fascinating mystery that our research team has just begun to study. This short time period between the fall of the reigning Kitan power, the rise of the eastern Jin state in Manchuria and eastern Inner Mongolia (1115–1234 AD), and Chinggis Khaan's appearance is discussed in a number of historical documents including most notably the *Secret History of the Mongols*. Although historical documents are important, they often leave out places and peoples that are not central to the leaderships of a given empire. By its nature, archaeology speaks more directly to the everyday lives of common and local elite peoples by recovering the material evidence they left behind and offers important insights about events and communities that historical texts overlook. Our results from Complex 27 and 23 raise interesting questions about who manned the Kitan frontier and the relationship between the Kitan wall and the indigenous peoples of these steppe regions.

Two of our major discoveries are mortuary in nature. The first is a burial of an older woman at Complex 27 and an early Mongolian period cemetery neighboring the Kitan fortress at Complex 23. The woman's burial was unusual in that it contained a great deal of wealth while her burial pit was dug into the wall of the fortress at Complex 27 (Fig. 3). The dating of her burial post-

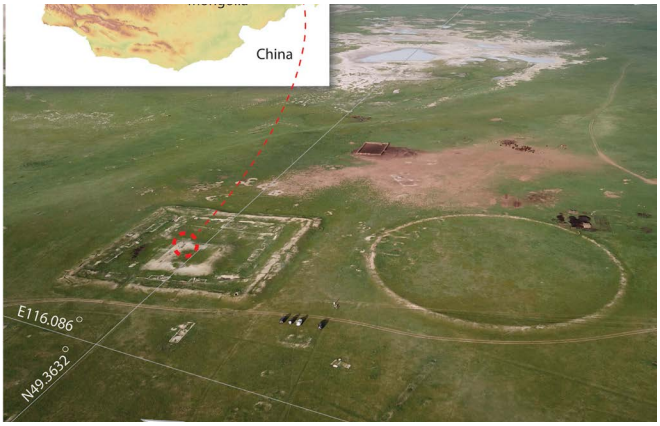

Fig. 3. Complex 27 as seen from the air. The red circle marks the location of the excavated burial. (credit: Amartuvshin et al. 2024)

dates the Kitan Empire and predates the rise of the Mongol state. Therefore, who she was, her status and affiliation, and why she was buried in the wall of a frontier post built by a distant imperial power are all questions to ponder.

Given the silks, gold, and precious stones in her grave, we believe this woman probably belonged to a prestigious lineage of some political standing, and her community was on the receiving end of wealth transfers made through trade networks (Fig. 4). Our working hypothesis draws on the historical fact that a major part of Kitan frontier strategy relied on coopting steppe groups to manage their western and northern frontiers. Plausibly, the wall sections and fortress at Complex 27 may have been defended by local people as opposed to Kitan military forces. If so, the burial of a high-status woman within the fortress precinct could be understood as a funerary event conducted by a local

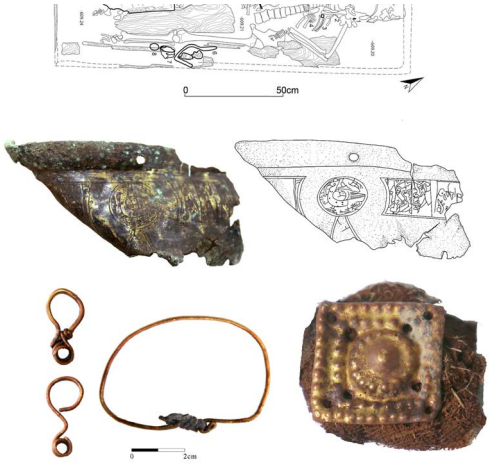

Fig. 4. Burial from the wall of Complex 27 with artifacts including an inscribed brass cup, golden earrings and bracelet, and a gold glass ornament attached to silk. (credit: Amartuvshin et al. 2024)

Fig. 5. Excavating the burial chamber of a Mongol period burial at the Tsagaan Chuluut cemetery, 2024. Photo by Batdalai Byambatseren

steppe community within a structure they had recently manned and understood to be part of their own history and indigenous territory.

Seventy kilometers to the southwest, the fortress at Complex 23 also had occupants after the fall of the Kitan and prior to the Mongol rise, but no burials were discovered within the walls or the habitation area. Ten kilometers to the west, however, is the Tsagaan Chuluut granite peak where our surface survey re-located a cemetery of 43 Mongol period burials which were initially discovered by Mongolian archaeologists in the 1960s and then again in 2009–10. Excavations of a sample of these burials in 2009 and 2010 revealed richly furnished burials of males and females in wooden coffins, oriented to the north, and displaying mortuary practices in keeping with those typical of the Mongol Empire. A radiocarbon date from the burial of a male individual (Burial 3) dates to 1175–1267 AD (95%).

This result post-dates the woman's burial at Complex 27 even though there are clear artifact parallels between her furnishings and those found at Tsagaan Chuluut, including similar engraved silver cups, golden earrings, silk materials, glass beads, and similar worked bone items. In 2024, our team mapped the entire cemetery and excavated an additional five burials (Fig. 5). Our analysis and new radiocarbon dates are still in progress but the initial date from Tsagaan Chuluut, its material similarities with Complex 27, and the site location within the immediate vicinity of a Kitan fortress and wall, once again raise interesting questions. What was the relationship between the Kitan frontier, its massive wall and fortress settlements, and the indigenous peoples in this eastern steppe region? Were these the same people who manned a section of the Kitan frontier but as the empire collapsed, turned to participating in the earliest making of the Mongol Empire? Our ongoing research hopes to resolve this interesting historical question.

EARLY AGRICULTURE ON THE MONGOLIAN STEPPE: EXCAVATIONS AT KHAIRT SUURYN, A XIONGNU SITE IN NORTHEASTERN MONGOLIA

By Asa Cameron, Christina Carolus, and Bukchuluun Dashzeveg; Emily Eklund, and Aspen Greaves; and Byambatseren Batdalai, and Chunag Amartuvshin

The vast steppes of Mongolia have deep and well-known cultural ties to nomadic pastoralism that trace back to the end of the 4th millennium BCE, when cattle herding Yamnaya groups spread out across Eurasia and settled along the fringes of the Altai Mountains. This Bronze Age (c.3100–1000 BCE) phenomenon and the subsequent nomadic empires that followed have long been subjects of historic and archaeological inquiry. Scholars often focused exclusively on the regional emergence of pastoralism and connected the adoption of this new lifeway to fundamental changes in social organization, political complexity, and mortuary customs among far-flung populations. However, a growing body of research suggests the key role of a previously unrecognized component of this longue durée socioeconomic process: adoption of agriculture.

Figure 1. Drone Photo of Khairt Suuryn Pithouse Features and the Kherlen River floodplain

Research from Carolus et al. (*in prep*), Honeychurch et al. (2023) and Miller (2024) demonstrates for the first time that by the start of the Xiongnu Empire (c.250 BC–200 AD), indigenous agriculture was present in the boreal forest-steppe and that production and control of crops was an important aspect of early nomadic statecraft. Settlement site investigations by Ramseyer et al. (2013, Miller et al. (2019, and Galdan (2022) have added to the work of previous scholars (Perlee 1961, Davydova 1995, Davydova and Miniaev 2003) showing that these developments coincide with the appearance of permanent and semi-permanent settlements—in some cases with agricultural links—in certain regions of Mongolia and nearby Transbaikalia.

Only three habitation sites with crop remains have been studied in prehistoric Mongolia, and only one has been examined using traditional archaeobotanical methods (Carolus 2025). Continued investigation at comparable sites using specialized methods is crucial for disentangling broader phenomenon. Ancient steppe agricultural research can only move forward through regionally comparable characterizations of crop species diversity and agronomic strategies. Such data will provide a foundation to understand whether agricultural practices and knowledge were fairly standardized by the Xiongnu Period, or whether the widespread appearance of farming was a regionally, temporally, and culturally modular phenomenon. The joint Mongolian-American Khulunbuir Archaeology Project was established to address these questions.

We present results from the first season at Khairt Suuryn, a recently discovered Xiongnu subterranean pithouse village site. Khairt Suuryn is located in eastern Mongolia (Khulunbuir, Dornod Aimag) along an exposed terrace above the banks of the Kherlen River (Fig. 1). Our initial objectives centered on documenting features and artifacts present on the surface and determining the site's spatial and temporal boundaries. We began by measuring and recording exposed features using a total station, a commercial drone, handheld GPS, and camera. Our team also recorded and collected ceramic sherds present on the surface. We quickly identified Xiongnu Period artifacts based on unique ceramic designs. Focusing on the northeastern portion of the exposed terrace, we recorded four highly visible pithouses and six likely midden deposits, with an additional 25 visible possible pithouse features spread across the 20,000 m² terrace.

The field season also included a test excavation along the edge of a pithouse to clarify its construction and collect radiocarbon samples. At Level 4, 40 cm below the surface, floors were almost completely black due to carbonized organic content from a burnt feature. A north-south aligned stone wall was also revealed at the pithouse edge, marking the western pithouse boundary. In Unit 1 we encountered layers of burnt ceramic sherds and sediments. These conditions are consistent with the presence of a collapsed ceramic-lined Khanz heating system (Fig. 2) similar to ones recorded at Xiongnu settlement sites such as Ivolga and Boroo Gol (Ramseyer et al. 2013) in nearly identical configurations. This finding is also consistent with the predominance of Xiongnu artifacts on the pithouse surface and the surrounding area.

C. Carolus oversaw all sediment sampling and flotation. This process yielded domesticated cereals (Fig. 3), fish (pike, *Esox sp.*), microfauna (including small mammals and mollusks), possible amphibian remains

Figure 2. Bottom of Unit 1 Level 4 with ceramic-lined Khanz heating system

(Fig. 4), and wild plant seeds, including *Cyperaceae* and members of the *Chenopodium* and *Amaranthus* genuses. The seed assemblage is dominated by domesticated cereals supplemented by wild plant species. Nearly 50 grains of two types of millet were recovered: broomcorn millet (*Panicum miliaceum*) and foxtail millet (*Setaria italica*). Fragments of large cereals that may represent wheat (*Triticum spp.*) and barley (*Hordeum vulgare*) were also present.

This discovery represents the first foxtail millet (*Setaria italica*) documented at a Mongolian habitation site prior to the Medieval Period. This is also only the third time that broomcorn millet (*Panicum miliaceum*) has been reported from a Xiongnu site in Mongolia. Previously, it has been recovered at Egiin Gol and Boroo Gol, but in very limited quantities (Ramseyer et al. 2013; Honeychurch et al. 2023). The assemblage from EX.02 currently represents the largest number of broomcorn millet grains found at a Xiongnu site and suggests that full-scale investigation may yield the largest recovery of economic crop remains at an archaeological site in Mongolia.

Clusters of heated grain materials (see Fig. 3) were found in both excavation units and in sediment samples taken closer to the wall of the pithouse. Experimental research has shown that cereal aggregates tend to form when heated above 250 C° in oxidizing or reducing conditions, especially as wet or porridge-like food preparations (e.g. Valamoti et al. 2021; Teira-Brión et al. 2024), providing inference about the nature of culinary preparations at Khairt Suuryn.

In 2025, we will return for further excavation at Khairt Suuryn with a focus on geophysical survey and large-scale systematic sampling and flotation to recover archaeobotanical, ichthyological, microfaunal, and other eco-factual remains. This research design is aimed explicitly at clarifying the poorly understood role of agricultural and aquatic resources for northern Mongolian steppe communities during the Xiongnu Period.

Long term future work will include a more comprehensive micro-regional survey and investigation of other pithouse settlements previously identified. Given the exposure of multiple pithouse habitation sites within kilometers of each other, we see potential for a broad study of Xiongnu Period settlement networks and associated mortuary complexes.

[Editor's note: space does not permit listing the author's references]

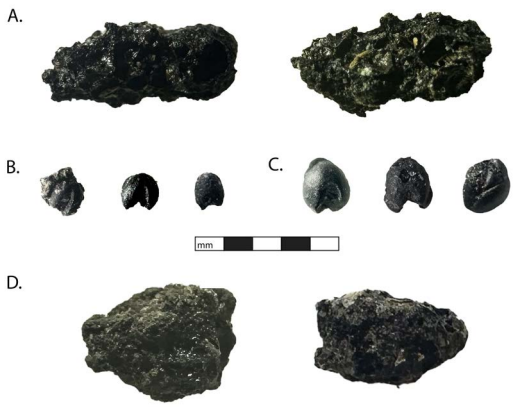

*Figure 3. A. Highly heated cereal agglomerations. B. Examples of foxtail millet (*Setaria italica*) grains from EX.02. C. Examples of Broomcorn (*Panicum miliaceum*) from EX.02. D. Fragments of large cereal grains.*

Figure 4. Examples of fish and microfaunal remains recovered during sediment flotation

REVISITING THE COATS ISLAND SADLERMIUT: A HENRY B. COLLINS 1954 LEGACY COLLECTION

By Ethan Kane

In the summer of 2024, the NMNH announced the STUFF Initiative, an effort to clear the storage units lining the corridors outside the museum's office spaces. These units have proven a headache for the museum and the Smithsonian Institution more broadly, as occasionally they've been discovered to contain ethically challenging material, human remains most problematic of all. Earlier in the year, Anthropology staff were looking through some of these units that belonged to a recently deceased curator and found a Canadian archaeological collection excavated in 1954 by **Henry B. Collins**, a member of the Anthropology Department specializing in the people of the Arctic. Collins died in 1987, and the orphaned collection sat untouched for 45 years along with some notes by **Susan Rowley**, who had helped Collins describe some of the Sadlermiut collections. It turned out that the ASC recognized that Collins had collected this material from Coats Island in the northern Hudson Bay, Canada, in the summer of 1954. The manifest significance of this material, collected 70 years prior to its rediscovery, made a convincing case for revisiting the collection.

Left: Two wooden knife handles, one with an ivory foreshaft and iron blade
Center: (a) Ivory harpoon foreshaft or ice pick and (b-e) bow drills
Right: Scrapers made from (a) young seal/walrus scapula (?) and (b) young polar bear mandible

I joined the ASC in June 2024 to write a report on the collection Collins brought back from Coats Island. Collins had organized an expedition to Southampton Island, just north of Coats, to solve a puzzle that loomed large in Arctic archaeology: the origins of the Inuit. Collins was an expert in the Dorset culture and wanted to make sense of the cultural transition between the Dorset and the Inuit culture that arrived after A.D. 1300. Collins had been excavating Dorset sites on Southampton Island, homeland of the Inuit known as Sadlermiut. Were the Sadlermiut Inuit? Dorset? Or some mixture of both?

The Sadlermiut were a somewhat enigmatic people who were wiped out by a whaler-introduced epidemic in the winter of 1902–1903, before anthropologists could study them in life. They were materially poor, geographically isolated, and culturally (perhaps even linguistically) distinct from their Inuit neighbors. Some Inuit who lived in other parts of Hudson Bay believed the Sadlermiut were the legendary Tuniit, ancestors of the Inuit. This myth, in addition to various other distinct features of the Sadlermiut (such as their use of flaked stone tools) have led some archaeologists and anthropologists to posit that the Sadlermiut were the last remnants of the Dorset people.

Collins spent most of his time that summer on Southampton Island, but he made a quick trip on July 19th to Coats. He was probably led there by his Inuit skipper **Sandy Santiana**, who, along with

Henry Collins on Southampton Island preserving floral samples

A probable glass or crystal deck prism, flaked by the Sadlermiut

Sadlermiut flaked chert assemblage

other Inuit members of the team, offered knowledge about the location of ruins in the region. On Coats, Collins rapidly excavated two houses whose roofs had collapsed sometime during the prior half century. Within these houses he found skeletons of the Sadlermiut who had died of an unknown illness with no one left to bury them.

Among about 200 objects, the more interesting are a number of ivory-handled ulus with iron blades, flaked chert knives, ivory and whale bone bow drills, and a scraper made from a young polar bear's mandible. There is also a curious chunk of glass which has clearly been worked. We hypothesize that it was a deck prism from a whaling ship that somehow ended up in the hands of the Sadlermiut, who flaked it. The objects reflect the isolation of the Sadlermiut. They clearly had only a limited ability to obtain iron, which could not be acquired in large enough quantities to replace stone. Common object types that often are decorated by other Hudson Bay people, such as combs and tingmiujiang dice, remained largely unornamented by the Sadlermiut. Collins collected a couple of wooden knife handles that seem to be unique to the Sadlermiut. One knife has a vaguely human-shaped handle with a slot carved in its distal end that perfectly fits an ivory foreshaft with an iron blade pinned in it. The foreshaft would have been lashed to the handle with sinew, perhaps allowing it to be detached and then reattached to a longer shaft to serve as a lance head.

Collins' collection reveals a number of salient differences between Dorset and Sadlermiut cultures. The stone knives from Coats Island show a different flaking technique from Dorset knives. We believe the Sadlermiut may have encountered Dorset remains and copied them. That is, the Sadlermiut emulated these techniques but did not inherit them. The physical anthropologist **Charles Merbs** has described the polar bear mandible scraper as a tool unique to the Sadlermiut. It is significant that Collins found one. Coats Island suffers a lack of soapstone, which the Sadlermiut evidently could not easily obtain through trade. Instead, they assembled lamps and cooking pots from slabs of local limestone that was plentiful on the island. A number of pot fragments demonstrate that when these limestone slabs were lashed together to form a complete pot, the pots' sides flared outward. The Dorset also had flared pots, so perhaps the Sadlermiut followed the examples they found in the nearby Dorset sites.

The Coats collection suggests that the Sadlermiut were neither identical with the Dorset nor with their Inuit neighbors. Susan Rowley, in her 1994 article "The Sadlermiut: Mysterious or Misunderstood?", makes a convincing case regarding the aberrant features of Sadlermiut culture. Rowley argues that the rise of the European whaling industry in the second half of the 19th century caused disruptions in the traditional Inuit economy of northern Hudson Bay. With trade routes realigning around the whalers' outposts, the Sadlermiut, on their islands, became isolated. Thus, rather than being

Slabs from a rectangular limestone cooking pot

a Dorset remnant, the Sadlermiut, by the time of their demise, had only recently been forced on a different trajectory from their fellow Thule-descended neighbors.

This project brought me to the American Museum of Natural History, where **George Comer**'s Southampton Island material proved illuminating for our understanding of Sadlermiut lithic technology, and into the Smithsonian's archival material on Collins. I have completed a longer analysis of this fascinating collection that will be submitted for publication. For more information on what Henry Collins discovered on Coats Island, on the history of the expedition, and on the enigmatic Sadlermiut, please be on the lookout for it!

UNCOVERING A PAN-REGIONAL MOTIF FROM ARCHAEOLOGY OF ST. LAWRENCE ISLAND

By Owen K. Mason

The legacy of **Henry B. Collins** is inestimable (Fitzhugh 2016). Largely unappreciated is the fact that his magisterial *St. Lawrence Island* monograph contains only partial results, focusing on only five sites near Northwest Cape. In a few seasons, by the late 1930s, Collins (1937:47, 82) had established the essential framework for Old Bering Sea culture (cf. Fitzhugh 2016), defining its art style in two published illustrations identifying 43 esthetic motifs. In the decades since, no one has added to or even annotated that corpus, although at least one skeptical graduate student (Lewis 1995) sought, unsuccessfully, to deconstruct the entire construct on the basis of new chrono-stratigraphic evidence. While my own acceptance of the taxonomy was not unquestioning, only in the last few years have I been able to offer annotations to Collins' schemata. In this note I focus on one particular motif not specifically previously seen as part of the greater Old Bering Sea aesthetic. Collins did notice the motif in his evolutionary sequence of St. Lawrence Island winged objects (Collins 1951). The motif was engraved on a winged object now recognized as an atlatl counterweight. I had noticed an identical motif on the Ipiutak 'mask' from distant Point Hope Burial 64, now kept in the collection of the American Museum of Natural History.

Since 1937, archaeologists rarely have questioned the complexities of Collins' synthesis. **Froelich Rainey** mused in Fairbanks in a public lecture in 1982 that Collins would be proven right (**O.K. Mason**, pers. recollection), about the wider implications of Old Bering Sea culture as represented in Eurasia. This was remarkable praise from one of Collins' chief professional rivals of the 1950s, who confided in a letter to his

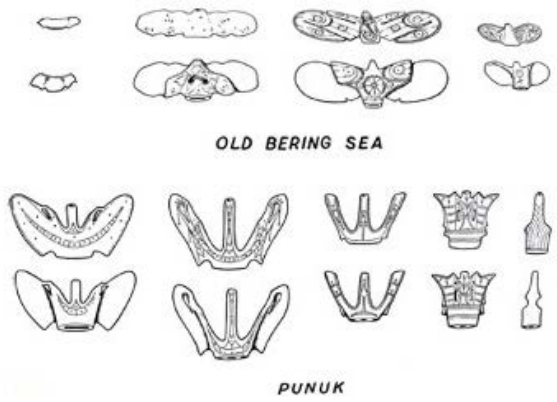

Figure 1. Image first published by Collins (1951:430) revealing the diagonal in circle motif on an Old Bering Sea counterweight (upper right).

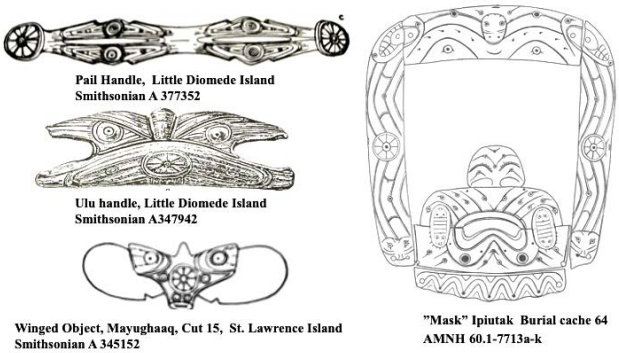

Figure 2. Hexagonal "Wheel" Motif, Little Diomede Island, St. Lawrence Island and Point Hope. (from upper left: Collins 1961:10;1937:pl. 14:6; 1961:10); Larsen and Rainey 1948:138)

colleague, **Helge Larsen**, "We don't have to worry about the 'old fuddy-duddies' like Collins" (letter, Danish National Museum Archives). The arguments between the three men over the genesis, dating, and relationships of Ipiutak and Old Bering Sea cultures might well have influenced the failure of each side to recognize the shared use of a distinctive motif. Both sides recognized the motif but did not comprehend that knowledge. Let us not forget that all three lived into the 1980s and had much time to notice the linkages.

The motif is a dual circle subdivided into six parts and served as an iconic type for Old Bering Sea winged objects illustrated by Collins. This figure was first presented in Collins (1951:430) and served twice again as an exemplar of evolutionary typology reproduced in Collins (1961:10; 1964:98). The winged object was recovered in the upper level of Cut 15, 71 cm bs (=28 in) into the Mayughaaq mound adjacent and above House 4 (Collins 1937:65–66, pls. 20, 21). The

Figure 3. Old Bering Sea winged object (A354148) from Cut 15, Mayughaaq, 70 cm bs adjacent to House 4 entry. Photo by Stephen Loring

motif was not without notice (Collins (1937:88), who mentioned its "ornamentation is to be classed as Style 3 that is based primarily on its use of circles," but its unique quality was not further addressed. The motif was later noted on a pail handle from Little Diomede Island described in a paragraph in an encyclopedia contribution (Collins 1961:10) that mentioned "a medallion-like ornament *composed of a large outer circle and straight lines extending from center to periphery*" [italics for emphasis]. Collins further classified this occurrence as OBS 2, due to its 'symmetrical' character, but with considerable similarity to Okvik (OBS 1), which dates a bit earlier than the Mayughaaq winged object. The function of the piece remains equivocal; the caption in Hollowell suggests it served as part of a mask, an interesting proposition considering its similarity to the Point Hope finds.

The significance of the motif became apparent in my analyses of Ipiutak iconography, especially at Point Hope. Both side pieces of the Burial 64 'mask' bear the identical motif (Fig. 2); Larsen and Rainey (1948:140) mention its 'wheel-like' appearance but did not link it to Old Bering Sea—just as Collins (1961, 1964) did not link the design with Ipiutak. When I attempted to compare the engraved 'wheel' on the Mayughaaq counterweight, I found no full description or line drawing in the monograph, only a low resolution black and white image (catalog 354,148, Collins 1937: pl. 20, 21), with its provenience listed in the notes (ibid., p. 398). I enlarged the image but could not definitively confirm the motif as drawn. Dr. **Stephen Loring** generously volunteered to unearth the object and provided several detailed photographs (Fig. 3).

The motif occurs in several locations across the Chukchi Sea and is most prominent in two cemeteries: Ipiutak at Point Hope, Alaska, and at Ekven in Chukotka on Bering Strait. A variety of objects are engraved with the motif, or slightly differing versions of it, ranging from a spatulate object of "unknown function" in Ipiutak House 7 (Larsen and Rainey 1948:140–141) and as grave goods at Ekven (Mason n.d.). The ivory 'pail' handle purchased in 1936 at Little Diomede (Collins 1951:430) has been reproduced in catalog and exhibit venues since the late 1980s (Wardwell 1986:76), in the Princeton *Gifts for the Ancestors* volume (Hollowell et al. 2009:Fig. 7), and recently at the Smithsonian exhibits in Anchorage (Crowell 2024, pers. comm.). Another remarkable Diomede object showing a hexagonal pattern within circles is seen on a two-horned ulu handle (Collins 1937:54, pl.14:6).

The hexagon-in-circle motif tracks a pathway of long distance interactions south from Ipiutak to Sivuqaq on St. Lawrence Island's Northwest Cape, passing through the Diomedes to Ekven. While the occupation on the Diomedes was attributed to Old Bering Sea 2, only a handful of objects purchased there by Collins or Jenness delineate the Diomede role in the OBS *oikoumene*. The occurrence of the motif at the Diomedes and Ipiutak was apparent in a 1950s illustration by Collins (1951:Pl. 2e), but he did not grasp its significance. In conclusion, on-going research clarifying the broad contours of the diagonal-in-circle motif will be part of a wider discussion of iconography across the Bering Strait currently in preparation (Mason, n.d.)

[Ed. note: Readers interested in the references may contact O. Mason at geoarch85@gmail.com]

MARINE CLIMATE HISTORY FROM A DEEPSEA CLAM

By John Cloud

Some years back, a cold ocean clam, of the species *Arctica islandica*, was dredged from a depth of 80 meters, north of Iceland. It became belatedly celebrated when the count of its annual growth lines revealed that clam was the oldest known animal ever found by humans. Retrospectively, it was named "Hafrun" (Icelandic for "ocean mystery"). How could the life of Hafrun illuminate the present processes of global climate change?

The chemical signature laid down in Hafrun's growth lines are prime data documenting the current and future states of AMOC, the Atlantic Meridional Overturning Circulation. Some background: "Atlantic" is the ocean arena; "Meridional", from the geographic term "meridian" refers to currents of water in the Atlantic running largely north to south, and south to north. "Overturning circulation" takes some work. At the southern end of the system, warm, salty waters flow north towards the near convergence of Greenland/

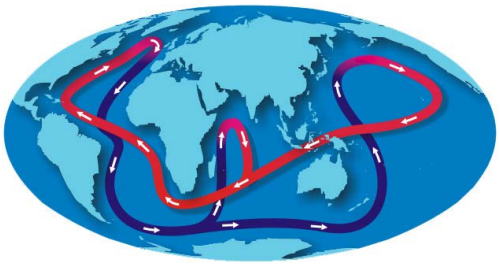

Figure 1. The Global Ocean Conveyor Belt. Credit: https://www.noaa.gov/jetstream/ocean/circulations

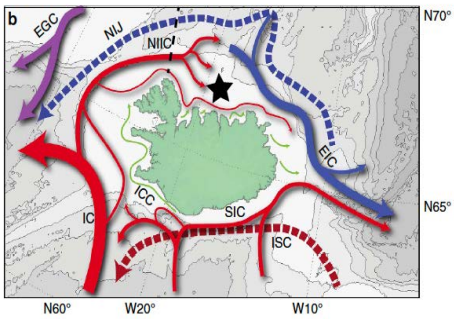

Figure 2. The local sea around Iceland and location of hafrun (Credit: Reynolds et al. 2016)

Iceland, on the west, and northwestern Europe, on the east. As the southern waters move north, they retain their salt, but lose their heat, and eventually they sink to the bottom of the Atlantic, and flow back down towards the tropics. Hence: "overturning circulation". When the AMOC is working well, tropical water warms the North Atlantic and return flow of chilled waters cool off the tropics. The processes of the water transfers are quite complex; by human cartographic convention, they are reduced to undulating colored ribbons, red and blue, running north and south (Fig. 1).

The major hinge point of the AMOC is in northern Atlantic waters, where Greenland, Iceland, and the continent and associated islands of northwestern Europe are closest together (Fig. 2). The star on the graphic is the site where deep sea clams, including Hafrun, have been dredged.

Hafrun was discovered to have lived for 507 years, because its annual growth lines were counted, and then the top half of its shell was cut to reveal cross sections. These were drilled, to provide tiny surfaces that could be sampled, to reveal tiny cores of the annual lines. The cores revealed different ratios of ^{16}O and ^{18}O, and other chemical ratios, which correlate complexly with the temperature and chemical regimes of the North Atlantic for each year of Hafrun's life (Wanamaker et al. 2008).

These regimes have, at times, shifted rapidly. The most recent major shift was the transition between the Medieval Climate Anomaly (ca. 850–1250 CE) and the Little Ice Age (ca. 1350–1850 CE), which had major impacts on planetary life. It is theorized that the shift resulted from a major slowdown in the AMOC system. If the Icelandic clams may be considered an instrument array, there is evidence that at the beginning of the big transition, there was a sea ice anomaly, resulting from rapidly increased melting of continental glacier ice, which melted to a layer of fresh water sitting on top of the regular AMOC layering, which derailed the system, possibly triggering the Little Ice Age (Fig. 3).

Now the Greenland ice sheets are melting rapidly again, in response to current global warming. Could this outflow of fresh water, layered over the AMOC, trigger another Little Ice Age, accompanied by a rapid increase in tropical heat at the southern end? The stakes are high, and, as always, much of the critical data is being acquired by very long-lived sea clams north of Iceland.

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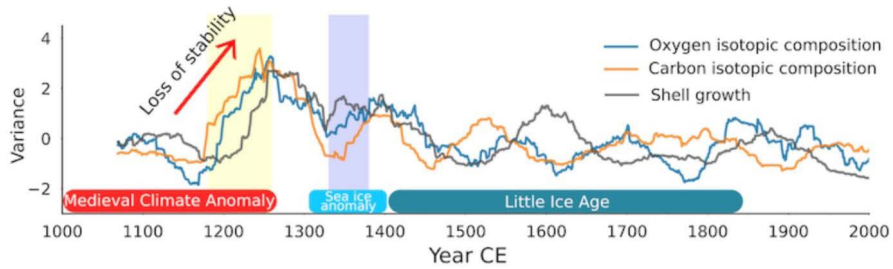

Figure 3. Major climate shifts at the Hafrun site (Credit: Arellano-Nava et al. 2022)

COLLECTIONS

THE NICHOLAS GONDATTI CHUKCHI COLLECTION IN PARIS

By Daria Cevoli, Igor Krupnik, and Virginie Vaté

Fig.1 Nicholas Gondatti (Nikolai Lvovich Gondatti, 1860–1946), ca. 1882

The search for historical Arctic ethnographic collections commonly leads to the national museums of Arctic countries, such as those in Copenhagen, St. Petersburg, Washington, Stockholm, Ottawa, Oslo, and Helsinki. Due, however, to general scientific interest in polar regions, significant ethnographic collections from the north may also be found in London, Berlin, Paris, and elsewhere. In Paris, the Musée du quai Branly—Jacques Chirac (hereafter MQB–JC), which opened in 2006 in a modern building on the bank of the river Seine, is dedicated to the arts and cultures of the peoples of Africa, Oceania, Asia, and the Americas. The museum inherited its collections from two major French institutions: the National Museum of Arts of Africa and Oceania (1991–2003, successor of the Museum of African and Oceanic Arts, 1960–1991) and the Musée de l'Homme, which opened in 1938 and still exists as a branch of the National Museum of Natural History, now focusing on human prehistory, physical anthropology, and human-environment interactions. The Musée de l'Homme had inherited most of its early objects from its predecessor, the Musée d'Ethnographie du Trocadéro (1878–1935).

As was the case at the Musée de l'Homme in the past, the Arctic ethnographic collections of the MQB-JC are divided, according to the geographic origin of the various items, between the Department of the Americas and the Department of Asia. The Arctic collections of the Department of the Americas contain almost 7,500 items, while the Siberian collections of the Department of Asia have about 2,000 items, including about 150 photographs and 390 ethnographic artifacts from Chukotka and neighboring territories.

Almost the entire Chukotka collection was donated to France by Nicholas Gondatti and registered at the Musée d'Ethnographie du Trocadéro in 1911.

Nicholas Gondatti

Nikolai Lvovich Gondatti (1860–1946—see *ASC NSL* 28:69–70, Fig.1.) was a Moscow-born, university-trained naturalist with a strong interest in the ethnography of Siberian Indigenous people. He entered Russian government service in 1894 to become the chief administrator of the vast Anadyr District that included the Chukchi Peninsula and the areas along the Bering and Chukchi Seas, that is, the larger region currently known as 'Chukotka.' It was the most distant and isolated administrative unit of the Russian Empire and was frequented at that time by American whalers, traders, and members of exploring expeditions that brought people like **William Dall**, **Edward Nelson**, **William De Long**, and **George Kennan** to its shores.

Gondatti's main mission was to establish some official Russian administration in the area. During his three-year service, he crisscrossed the region, surveyed local trade activities and communities, befriended many residents, and kept detailed diaries that were unpublished until 2020 (Kolomiets and Krupnik 2020). He also assembled massive ethnographic and natural history collections. Upon his return to central Russia, he donated the bulk of his collections to the Museum of Anthropology and Ethnography (*Kunstkamera*) in St. Petersburg and produced four papers based on his sojourn in Chukotka. Gondatti never returned to his earlier ethnographic pursuits. Instead, he re-entered the government service and enjoyed a successful administrative career. Between 1906 and 1917, he served as Governor of three Siberian provinces, including the one that covered his former district in Chukotka. After the Russian revolution of 1917, he emigrated to northern China and died in 1946 in the city of Harbin, an impoverished and mostly forgotten elderly man.

Before taking his second assignment in Khabarovsk in 1899, Gondatti reportedly traveled to Western Europe. In 1898, Gondatti donated more than 1000 ethnographic items to the *Kunstkamera* and a number of others to the Grodekov Museum in Khabarovsk. According to **Jean-Loup Rousselot**, one portion of his collections was most certainly purchased by the German artist and collector **Eugen Wolf** and ended up at the Museum für Völkerkunde (today's Museum Fünf Kontinente/Museum of Five Continents) in Munich, Germany. The same year, Gondatti also donated another portion of his collection to France "…as a sign of my deepest sympathy for your beautiful country and your hospitable nation" (Beffa and Delaby 1999, 15–16; translation VV).

The Gondatti Collection at the MQB-JC

The Gondatti collection in Paris is remarkably diverse and illustrates various aspects of Chukchi traditional life and culture. It includes paraphernalia used in reindeer-herding and in coastal maritime hunting and fishing, household items and tools, as well as purchased or manufactured equipment. The largest portion of the collection (77 items or about 20% of the total) consists of small carved ivories, mostly bird and animal figurines, along with some small sculptures of human figures. The MQB-JC's Gondatti set is relatively short on clothing items (10 pieces, including boots, gloves, and hats) and on musical instruments (one drum and one model of drum). The most remarkable feature of the collection is the large number of items that are listed in the museum catalog as 'models' or that may be assumed to be models, based on their small size. These include models of boats, sleds, household implements, ritual objects, reindeer and dog harnesses, harpoons and other hunting tools, and even a drum. This predominance of small objects that may be assumed to be models may indicate that Gondatti actively engaged local people in a commercial production of objects for sale or for scientific purposes, that is, for display in an ethnographic museum. This was, after all, already an established practice, even in remote Chukotka, as evidenced by many historical Arctic collections (see *ASC NSL* 28, 2021, this issue). As the chief district officer, Gondatti had the financial and administrative means to engage Indigenous counterparts in his collecting operations.

Fig.2. Pipe collected by Gondatti (71.1911.20.241), Top: 'inland/reindeer' side. Bottom: 'coastal/maritime' side Credit: Musée du quai Branly-Jacques Chirac—Claude Germain

Among the objects of the Parisian collection that were examined by the authors of this text in November 2023, two types of objects attracted our attention based on our former fieldwork in Chukotka: an ivory pipe and two ritual strings.

A Walrus Ivory Pipe

Items that Gondatti collected in Chukotka include a decorated smoking pipe (MQB-JC no. 71.1911.20.241 / Fig.2). This object, which is 25 cm long and made entirely of walrus tusk ivory, has a richly engraved stem with pictographic etchings on three sides, an attached bowl, and a mouthpiece. In describing similar engraved ivory pipes from the Alaskan side of the Bering Sea, Edward Nelson called them "handsomely ornamented with etched scenes, illustrating native customs and life, similar in general style to the etchings on drill bows" (1898:281, also Plate LXXXIX). He also noted that these were not numerous, compared to the more common pipes with stems made of wood, metal (pewter), or other materials (there are nine pipes of this latter kind in the Gondatti collection). In its form and decoration, this pipe is comparable to the engraved pipes of the same era from St. Lawrence Island, especially the ones collected by **Riley Moore** in 1912 (NMNH, E280599) and by **Sheldon Jackson** in the late 1800s (NMNH, E316794), as well as a pipe from Wales, Alaska, at the Carrie McLain Museum in Nome. All listed pipes are within 23 to 32 cm in length, so that the MQB-JC pipe is at the shorter end of the scale.

The pipe's origin is shrouded in mystery. In the register of the collection of the Musée de l'Homme, this pipe is said to have been made by Eskimo of the Chukchi Peninsula. However, a descriptive note, written by the Siberian collection's curators in the Musée de l'Homme identifies the object as 'Eskimo' and the provenance as 'Ratmanov Island in the Bering Strait.' In January 2003, this information was reviewed by the anthropologists working on the MQB-JC topological database, who recorded this information as 'Yupik from Big Diomede Island ('île Grande Diomède')'—instead of the island's Russian name, 'Ratmanov Island.' Actually, Gondatti never set foot on that island, as is known from his travel report of 1895; rather, he collected data about its residents on the nearby mainland (Kolomiets and Krupnik, 2020). Thus, he either obtained the pipe from someone whom he met during his travels, or he received it as a gift.

The residents of Big Diomede, which belongs to Russia, used to be Inupiat Eskimo, closely related to

the people of nearby Little Diomede and King Island, which are part of Alaska. Yet the ornamented images on the pipe are starkly different from those on similar Inupiat and St. Lawrence Island Yupik pipes. The decorations are thematically 'split,' following Chukotka indigenous ornamental tradition (per **Michael Bronshtein**, Russian specialist on Chukotka Native arts). Images on one side of the pipe show scenes from the life of reindeer-herders, with domestic reindeer pulling sleds and Chukchi-style domed houses covered with reindeer skins; while the images on the other side of the pipe all depict scenes from the life of marine hunters: hunters harpooning whales and walruses from skin-boats, dogs pulling sleds, and people sailing in large boats to meet European-style ships. None of the known Alaskan and St. Lawrence pipes displayed a similar dichotomy, which means that the artist who decorated the pipe was clearly familiar with both lifestyles. The pipe illustrates a strong connection between the island and the Chukotka mainland; it could have been produced by a person from a mainland community or by a regular visitor to Chukotka from Big Diomede.

Two *tain'ykvyt* (ritual strings)

In the MQB-JC collection, there are three Chukchi *tain'ykvyt* or ritual strings, two of which are from the Gondatti collection (no. 71.1911.20.189.1-5 and no. 71.1911.20.143 1-16 (Fig.3) and one of which had been acquired by the Musée de l'Homme in 1995 (MQB-JC n° 71.1995.27.1.1-12, for more about ritual strings see Vaté 2021). The first artifact from the Gondatti collection, a string with five wooden pieces, is unusually small, compared to contemporary strings observed in the field: displayed, it is 4 x 9 cm, and the largest wood piece is 3 x 1 cm. The other ritual string, with 16 pieces, fits within the normal range in size (30 x 36 cm—the biggest wood piece is 14 x 9 cm). The Chukchi term *tain'ykvyt* literally means "that on which misfortune breaks" or "that which protects from misfortune". Ritual strings are intriguing objects and are composed of several pieces, each reflecting an important event in the life of the household to which it belongs. In this sense, the *tain'ykvyt* may be seen as both a mnemonic device and a religious artifact (see Vaté 2021).

Each ritual string is specifically attached to one tent or yaranga, and to its household. No ritual string is the same as any other. It consists of a selection of items that are strung together in various ways; and each piece on the string is linked to a story that is known only to the members of the family to which it belongs. Thus, the elements that compose a *tain'ykvyt* are symbols of the relations that people have or have had with a variety of entities, including ancestors, reindeer, non-domesticated animals, and various spirits. To understand the artifact, one needs to examine each constituent part closely and, if possible, consult with family members to know the story of each piece.

These two ritual objects in the Gondatti collection consist mainly of wooden pieces that are tied together by a string of reindeer leather. As is usual for this type of object, the most numerous items—eight pieces on the larger ritual string of 16 pieces—are anthropomorphic figures in the shape of two-pronged forks. Russian ethnographer **Waldemar Bogoras** referred to them as "wooden spirits" or "wooden people." The smaller string has only one such wooden figure. Both strings also include a small anthropomorphic fireboard. These anthropomorphic fireboards are flat, carved pieces of wood with a rounded end, representing its 'head', and a rectangular 'body'. Fireboards are used together with a drill and a bow to make fire during rituals. Old fireboards that are no longer in use are usually attached to the ritual string. The rectangular part of the fireboard where the drill is applied for making fire is then cut off, so that only the 'head' and a small part of the 'body' remain.

The strings collected by Gondatti also include two wooden heads of animals: one of a raven and one of a bear. Chukchi family tents are usually connected spiritually to one or more animal species; among them,

Figure 3. Left: Tain'ykvyt, family ritual string 71.1911.20.189.1-5 Right: Tain'ykvyt, family ritual string 71.1911.20.143.1-16 Credit: Musée du quai Branly-Jacques Chirac—Claude Germain

the raven is particularly important, as it plays a central role in Chukchi mythology. The animal attached to the string may be a wooden figure, as in this case, but it may also be a true skull or a piece of bone, a beak, or a claw.

Most importantly, both ritual strings in the Gondatti collection may be understood to be 'models' insofar as neither of them has ever been used in any ritual activity. Both are noticeably clean, which indicates that they have never been 'fed' with bone marrow, as would be the case if they had been used in family rituals. Perhaps, Gondatti could not secure objects that had actually been in use in family life, as one was not supposed to sell them. Such sale might have triggered negative events for family members, even death. Most probably, the artifacts in question were made on demand to illustrate what a ritual string looked like. The diminutive artifact linking five pieces (Fig 3, left) is particularly intriguing because of its size. Was it made unusually small so that Gondatti could transport it more easily? Or did the construction of a diminutive set require skills that were then reflected in the price of the object? At this stage, the question remains open and requires further investigation.

Documenting the collection—contemporary approaches

For a historical and documentary study that would make evident the value of the Gondatti collection at the Musée du quai Branly-Jacques Chirac, it will, undoubtedly, be essential to compare this collection with much larger sets of objects that are located in other museums in Europe and Russia, including the *Kunstkamera* in St. Petersburg, the Grodekov Museum in Khabarovsk, and, presumably, the Museum Fünf Kontinente in Munich. The total estimated number of ethnographic objects secured by Gondatti during his stay in Chukotka may be close to 2,000, which would make him one of the most prolific collectors of objects coming from Chukotka Indigenous people.

In order to document, examine, and understand Gondatti's collection in its entirety, it is critical to advance it as a pan-institutional collaborative study. The curator responsible for the collection in Paris has already started to study the collection and the archival data to validate the inventory and the registration of each item in the collection biography. This process will be enriched by analysis of the material and technical aspects of each object and by restoration, where necessary.

Following an earlier study and restoration of Alaskan anoraks at the MQB-JC in 2011, the first phase in the study and restoration of objects from the Gondatti collection by the museum team will deploy and restore three *parkas* (anoraks) and four painted skins. Tools and other daily objects will make a second group that will be studied in its technological aspect. For this project, collaboration with anthropologists with the corresponding local expertise and with Indigenous experts will be crucial.

Even if some of Gondatti's objects represent a lifestyle that had disappeared or were produced as gifts or for commercial sales, local people today still hold precious knowledge about their use and cultural/symbolic meaning of many of them. As many community-based museum efforts illustrate, re-connecting Indigenous experts with heritage ethnographic collections, and adding their insight help to increase the value of the objects many times, to communities and museums alike. Sadly, however, consultation with Indigenous experts has largely been put 'on hold,' due to the ongoing Russian war against Ukraine and the resulting difficulties in communicating across borders.

[Ed. note: Daria Cevoli is curator of Asia collections at Musée du quai Branly-Jacques Chirac in Paris and Virginie Vaté is a tenured research fellow at the Centre national de la recherche scientifique (CNRS), Group 'Societies, Religions, Secularisms' in Paris.]

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PRESERVING ACCESS TO SIBERIAN HERITAGE COLLECTIONS ACROSS WARTIME DIVIDES

By Igor Krupnik and Ethan Kane

Since the time of the Smithsonian *Crossroads of Continents* and the *Crossroads Alaska–Siberia* exhibits of the 1980s and 1990s, the history of the Arctic Studies Center has been inextricably linked to Siberian ethnographic collections and to collaboration with colleagues working with these collections at ethnographic museums across Russia and in the West. Sadly, these collaborative networks are currently put on hold, due to the geopolitical realities, mainly the ongoing war in Ukraine. Meanwhile, the value of Siberian heritage collections, particularly for Indigenous people, keeps growing—within Russia, but even more so outside its borders. These collections now have a new audience, the growing Indigenous Siberian diaspora living outside Russia, and a new urgent meaning, namely, connecting these people to their cultural heritage many time zones away. New digital tools and the capacity to explore and exhibit collections online help expand the value and reach of distant heritage objects many times.

The study of the Siberian ethnographic collections initiated for the "Crossroads" project at the Smithsonian and, particularly, at the American Museum of Natural History (AMNH) in New York introduced the immense potential of such collections residing at Western museums. It was further promoted by our many partners from the "Crossroads" and "Jesup-2" era, like our late colleagues **Jim VanStone**, **Tatiana Roon**, **Vladimir Ivanov-Unarov**, and more recently by **Vera Solovyeva**, **Tom Miller**, **Gudrun Bucher**, **Jean-Loup Rousselot**, **Bill Wierzbowski**, **Daria Cevoli**, **Erich Kasten**, **Eduard** and **Lilia Zdor**, and many others worldwide (Fig.1). It was moved to the highest level recently by the teams led by our colleagues from the Sakha Republic, Drs. **Zinaida Ivanova-Unarova**, **Asia Gabysheva**, **Aleksandr Zhirkov**, and others who launched a multi-year survey of objects belonging to Indigenous groups of Sakha/Yakutia in museums in the U.S. and Germany (Fig.2). The results were published in three massively illustrated volumes (see *ASC NSL* 31, 2024), reminiscent of the work of the Japanese team for the *Ainu Overseas Collections* project of the 1990s, under **Yoshinobu Kotani** and **Shinko Ogihara**. Again, these efforts have been suspended lately, while thousands of precious heritage objects continue to reside in obscurity in museum storage spaces under catalog-assigned names and numbers. Many exist firmly 'beyond Siberia,' geographically, intellectually, and emotionally.

A Call and the Project

In May 2024, the office of **Kevin Gover**, the Smithsonian Undersecretary for Museums and Culture announced an expedited request for proposals for 'Repressed Cultures Preservation Funding' with the goal "…to enhance Smithsonian efforts to preserve cultural and linguistic heritage threatened by conflict and repressive regimes through direct on-the-ground projects, as well as research, exhibition and/or educational programming." It was a remarkable step by the Institution in line with its initial charter but driven primarily by the concerns of today, in a world rife with conflicts and wonton destruction. As the Undersecretary's statement specified, "…Global conflicts and repressive regimes continue to threaten cultural and linguistic heritage across the world. The (House Appropriation) Committees appreciate the ongoing and longstanding in-person and digital efforts the Smithsonian has made to preserve aspects of threatened cultures that, once lost, cannot be restored."

It was a call that could not be left unanswered. A week later, Igor submitted a proposal on behalf of the ASC titled *Preserving Access to Indigenous Heritage across Wartime Divides*. The proposal argued that:

> *"Following Russian aggression against Ukraine in February 2022, an international effort is underway to preserve access for Indigenous Siberians to heritage ethnographic, audio-visual, and linguistic collections in North American and European museums that is threatened by new wartime divides, travel and access bans…The proposal goal is to secure the Smithsonian contribution to, and critical role in, these activities for the next 12–15 months, including bringing together Indigenous diaspora experts, cultural activists, and museum professionals. The project will be implemented via rapid museum surveys; collaborative work with Indigenous diaspora specialists; series of collection overview reports; workshops and webinars with Indigenous knowledge holders and museum professionals; steps to improve access to, and knowledge of online collection resources; publications and training. The Smithsonian-led input would be a key driver in the emerging international network engaging museums, archives, other heritage/research institutions, and resident Indigenous experts in the U.S, Germany, Poland, France, Norway, Sweden, and other nations."*

It was an ambitious program that, although based on certain past and ongoing efforts at the ASC and elsewhere, required rapid mobilization and additional resources. In July 2024, the proposal was granted,

Figure 1. Vera (left) and Zhangar Solovyev examine Sakha objects in NMNH collections, together with Igor and Kim Cullen Cobb, then-Anthro contract conservator, December 2008. Photo courtesy: NMNH Anthro Collections

Figure 2. Sakha museum specialists, Zinaida Ivanova-Unarova (right) and Evgenia Ivanova-Unarova (center) examine Sakha objects in the NMNH ethnographic collections during their visit in October 2014, while Igor takes notes. Photo by Maxim Ivanov-Unarov (see ASC NSL 22, 2015)

and the work on the project *Across Wartime Divides* began. In August, **Ethan Kane**, the ASC research contractor, joined the team, while Igor was reaching out to his partners and colleagues worldwide. Soon, a group of colleagues, including **Vera Solovyeva**, ASC/SI fellow (Indigenous Sakha scholar, see *ASC NSL* 31, 2024), **Martin Schultz**, formerly at the Museum of World Cultures in Stockholm, Sweden (see *ASC NSL* 28, 2021), **Dmitriy Arzyutov** (Ohio State University), **Veronika Trotter** (University of Indiana Bloomington), **Igor Chechushkov**, ASC fellow, and **Stefania Skowron Markowska** (University of Wrocław, Poland) and **Joanna Dolinska** (University of Warsaw, Poland), Igor's partners on the *Stanisław Poniatowski collection* project (see *ASC NSL* 30, 2023; 31, 2024), and others, agreed to contribute to the international effort. In the following months, we received more assistance from other people, including from the team led by **Erich Kasten** in Germany.

Template

Our first goal was to start building a list of world museums with substantial Siberian collections. This was accomplished relatively quickly, based on Igor's prior knowledge of Siberian ethnographic holdings, tips from colleagues, earlier museum surveys, and the (unfinished) joint effort, together with **Nicholas Parlato**, to map Arctic ethnographic collections under the "Arctic Digital Library" initiative (see *ASC NSL* 24, 2017). The preliminary list included over 40 museums in 16 nations 'beyond Russia'—in Europe, North America, and Japan. A tentative goal was to learn about, and to put on the map the museums that house at least 100 ethnographic objects from Siberia that may be researched online. Ethan inserted all selected museums into a specially created online database that he has kept expanding since late 2024.

In the tight project time (till September 2025), we held no illusion to personally visit all 40-some identified museums for on-site surveys, even if we were to put all SI funding into travel for ourselves or our partners. Our prime goal was (and remains) to explore how the collections may be accessed and researched by an interested online visitor, not via insiders' connections, particularly across today's political divides that limit travel by Indigenous experts.

We settled on a standard template for museum description. We wanted it to be short—usually a page of text plus necessary site links—but also informative and compatible, so that we would have tools to compare individual museums along several parameters. All general information (founding date, brief history, general profile, size of the collections, etc.) was usually taken from museum public websites or other electronic sources. Such information is commonly available to a competent online 'visitor,' after some short initial research. We also noted the portion of museum collections accessible from online databases.

The core of each museum description is the middle section dedicated to Siberian collections. Very few museums in our sample offer an overview, an overall count, and/or direct access to objects under the search term 'Siberia.' In most sampled databases, the total number of 'Siberian' objects was received (or estimated) as a sum of individual tallies per major Siberian ethnic groups and/or geographic regions. Both paths turned out to be time-consuming; and they are also commonly incomplete, as many objects are registered under other search terms (besides not being listed at all). Time and again, we were forced to realize that an online search could never be a substitute

Figure 3. Many objects continue to live in museum drawers waiting to be reconnected to their home communities across the 'new divides.' Photo by Igor Krupnik, NMNH Amur River collections at MSC

for an on-site collection survey, for which we have no adequate time and our hoped-for Siberian users may have no opportunity, as long as the war and the sanctions against Russia and Russian visitors continue. In several cases, we were assisted by some prior publications or by insider' information provided by colleagues in respective museums (or colleagues of our colleagues). Only in a few instances do we consider the information on the total counts of individual museum Siberian collections—by region and by major ethnic groups—comprehensive enough; many more remain works in progress.

The last and, perhaps, the most critical section in each museum's entry provides our assessment of a collection's accessibility and of the 'user-friendliness' of the online collection search tools to an external visitor. Here, the scope of variations is enormous: from sites that offer easy search and access to objects, with images and provenance data, to those that provide no information to online visitors and, instead, suggest connecting to a responsible staff person. European collection databases are, naturally, built in the respective national languages (French, German, Norwegian, Swedish, Finnish, etc.). Most online databases and general museum sites offer some form of English interface, but an English option may feature limited information or is hard to discern. Application of Google translation tools often requires multi-step operations, and are not entirely reliable. Most databases require substantial familiarity or hours of stressful practice for those not fluent in the national language. The list of our struggles goes on and on…

Of course, it is unfair to judge an online database's 'friendliness' by the amount of information it provides in English; but to a Siberian Indigenous expert or museum professional, English interface may be the only available path. Only one European museum in our sample, the Ethnographic Museum of Kraków in Cracow, Poland (*Muzeum Etnograficzne im. Seweryna Udzieli w Krakowie,* MEK), with its Siberian collection of some 350 historical objects, offers Russian interface, in addition to Polish and English. But access to individual objects is possible only from the Polish version that offers search by ethnic groups via their Polish names only ('Aleuci' for the Aleut, 'Czukcze' for Chukchi, 'Ewenkowie' for Evenki, 'Nieńcy' for Nenets, etc.). Online search tools are merciless to typos or improper spelling that is often counter-intuitive for a non-native speaker (think of 'Tschuktsche' for the 'Chukchi'), particularly if the old ethnic names are also used, like 'Gilyak' for the Nivkh, 'Goldi' for Nanai, and the like.

As of this writing... and beyond

Despite these and other difficulties, as of January 2025, we have completed such descriptions for almost 30 museums in 11 European nations (Austria, Estonia, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Norway, Poland, Sweden, Switzerland, UK), as well as in the U.S. and Japan. We have about 10–15 more institutions to write about, hopefully by the beginning of spring 2025. We will continue reaching out to colleagues in the respective museums seeking their insight, corrections, and additions to what we learned about their Siberian holdings from online databases. The expected 40+ entries will be compiled alphabetically by each nation in a summary report that will be prepared at the conclusion of the project. It will be followed by a more analytical paper for one of the northern academic and/or museum journals.

As for the rest of the project time, we will do our best to expand the scope of knowing more about the distribution and status of Siberian heritage collections 'beyond Russia,' in museums in Europe, North America, and Japan. With much of this information in hand, in writing and in the database, we will move to the next phase, namely, to assessing/analyzing the geographic, historical, and ethnic 'layout' of Siberian heritage resources that may be accessed from museum online databases. It is already obvious that the distribution of, and the knowledge about Siberian ethnographic collections is quite uneven. Many museums have initiated or supported efforts to open their collections to Siberian heritage experts and professionals worldwide way before the Covid era (like AMNH in New York, MEK in Krakow, Ethnological Museum in Berlin, and others cited above). Again, the remarkable effort by our Sakha colleagues to inventory and publish collections from their home area in Sakha/Yakutia now at 15 European and American museums

remains the only standing achievement of such magnitude.

Scores of institutions are at the beginning of this path, mostly by posting their objects online or researching individual components of their Siberian holdings and showcasing them in papers, catalogs, and temporary displays. But for many more museums, including in Russia itself, such a journey has not even started. The task that we all face is sharing the information of what is being held and where, also how easy the objects may be accessed, and what is known about them in places they now reside, as well as in the areas and communities where they originated. As our effort illustrates, much (most?) of this work may partly be completed across the 'wartime divides,' even while our access to local expertise in Siberia/Russia is greatly constrained.

Yet our prime goal, *reconnecting* collections and their home communities and enriching our shared knowledge by Indigenous insight, remains mostly beyond reach as long as Russia's war against Ukraine continues and contacts are on hold. The path to build the bridges home for objects living in western museums 'beyond Siberia' may be long; it certainly will be expensive. We cannot physically change today's geography, but we may strive to revive the connections via sharing, online access, publications, visits, and encouraging people's input. Even if professional contacts and personal trips are now stalled, the doors for objects and photographs should stay widely open. Whatever it takes to bring them out of museum drawers and enrich their lives via new meaning is worth undertaking. Our preliminary overview is the first step to make it happen.

A STURGEON SKIN POUCH: NIVKH AND NANAI INDIGENOUS COSMOLOGIES

By Elisa Palomino and John Cloud

In December 2022, ASC research associates Elisa Palomino and John Cloud visited Philadelphia at the invitation of **William Wierzbowski**, Keeper of the Collections of the Americas at the UPenn Museum. Among the treasures in his custody is an exceptional collection of fish skin artifacts from the Amur River. In January 2023, a second delegation from the Arctic Studies Centre team, led by **Bill Fitzhugh** and **Igor Krupnik**, met to examine these collections. Later, Wierzbowski paid a visit to the Smithsonian's Arctic collections, which were beautifully presented by **Stephen Loring**. This collaboration has since evolved into the creation of a UPenn Deep Dig course of four live virtual classes led by ASC and Penn scholars,

Figure 1. Japan from Siberia. Richard E. Harrison, 1944. Library of Congress, Geography and Map division. Washington, D.C.

as well as Native experts in the field, to be held in spring 2025 on the topic of Arctic Fashion. The report presented here originates from these visits and is complemented by **John Cloud**'s research on **Richard E. Harrison**'s self-curated graphic archives now in the Geography and Map Room of the Library of Congress, which he accessed during his recent LOC Kluge fellowship. Harrison paid especial attention to the strategic importance of boreal and Arctic lands and seas.

The Amur River basin (Fig. 1), home to Indigenous Nivkh, Nanai, Ulchi, Orok, Orochi, Udege, and Negidal, has long been a cultural and ecological hub, functioning as a corridor connecting the interior of Asia to the Pacific. These groups maintained interactions, both among themselves and with neighboring cultures like the Hezhe, Manchus, Ainu, and Koreans. Shared cultural practices included hunting and fishing, crafting garments from fish skin, and spiritual systems rooted in animism, shamanism, and ancestor worship. This cultural exchange and shared environmental knowledge illustrates that it was an interconnected region engaging in extensive trade and cultural networks. Despite the challenges of colonialism and political upheavals, these Indigenous communities have preserved their ancestral traditions, a legacy of sea and land worship and heritage. These narrative challenges the stereotype of the Arctic and Subarctic as barren and inhospitable, revealing instead a thriving ecosystem rich in material culture and Indigenous ingenuity.

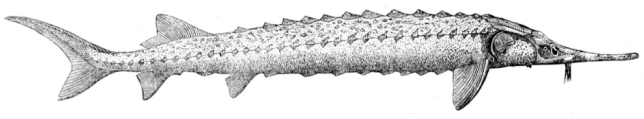


Figure 2. Stellate Sturgeon (Acipenser stellatus).

For the Nanai and Nivkh Peoples of Siberia, fish are sacred beings, and fish skin plays a central role in rituals and traditional attire. Shamans of the Amur River, guided by water spirits, performed sacred ceremonies by playing fish skin drums, clad with fish skin garments and protected with fish skin lucky charms. These ceremonies facilitated communication with the spirit realm, heightened spiritual awareness, and supported transformative personal experiences. Until the mid-20th century, the Nivkh and Nanai practiced shamanism, with rituals addressing the souls of the living and the dead. Funeral rites persisted until the 1970s, facilitating the journey of the deceased into the afterlife and preventing spiritual upheavals for the living. Elaborate fish skin robes were crafted for burials to facilitate the journey of the deceased into the afterlife, symbolizing the interconnection between life and death. Hunting belts with tools such as axes, tobacco and fire utensil pouches were laid in the men's coffins, while the women's coffins were packed with their sewing materials. In addition, these hunting and sewing implements were ritually broken and arranged in the coffins to ensure their spiritual integrity in the afterlife. These practices symbolized the transition from life to death and reflected family lineage and identity.

During the visit to the UPenn Museum, a Nivkh sturgeon skin fire implement pouch (Fig. 4) stood out. Drawing on traditional knowledge, ethnographic research and artifact analysis, this item is contextualized as an essential component of a Nivkh hunter's attire. The study also compiles technical details and insights from collaboration with Nanai Native Elder **Anatoly Donkan**.

Fishing has long been central to the Native Peoples of the Amur River, fulfilling both economic and cultural functions. Traditionally, it was a communal activity, with men and women sharing the tasks of catching and processing the fish. Although many Nivkh and Nanai have abandoned fishing as their primary livelihood, these traditions remain culturally significant, marked by rituals and events that honor their connection to the river. Fish species such as salmon, Amur carp and Amur and Sakhalin sturgeon have historically been staples of their diet and cultural practices.

The pouch in question has been crafted from a Stellate sturgeon (Acipenser stellatus) (Fig.2). One of the most distinctive characteristics of this species is its elongated snout, which varies considerably in length and width among specimens of the same population. This variety is also prized for its skin, which retains its scale pattern even after tanning. Histological studies reveal a unique alignment of collagen fibers and dermal plates, which gives the skin strength and an intricate stellate appearance. The sturgeon's black skin, creamy white belly and prominent bony plates make it a valuable

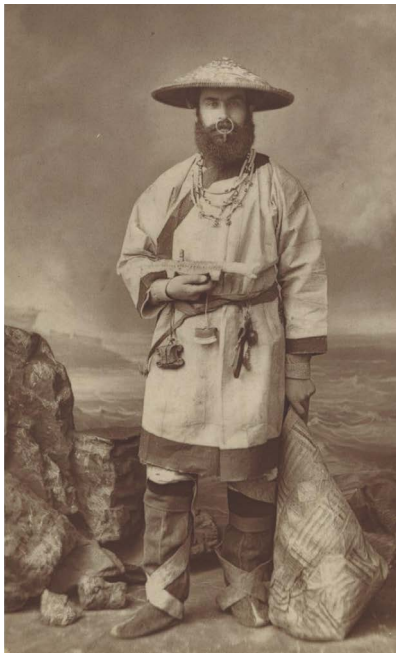


Figure 3. Henry Lansdell, British explorer, dressed in a Nivkh fish skin costume. Stockholm Ethnography Museum, Sweden

Figure 4. Nivkh fire implement pouch. Sturgeon skin. Amur River. UPenn Museum. Philadelphia, USA. Photo by UPenn Museum

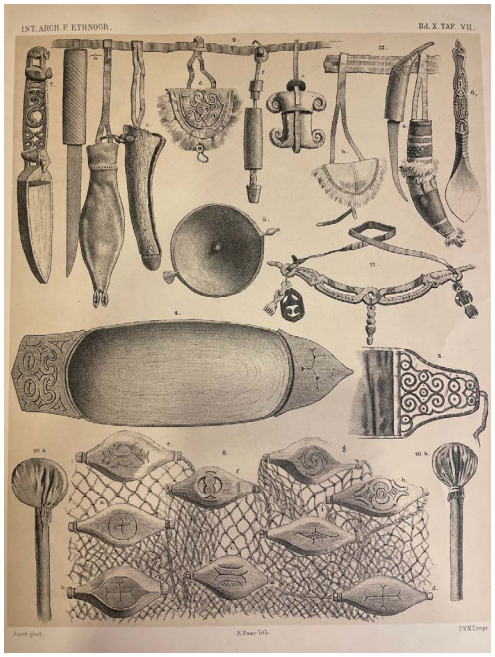


Figure 5. Grabowsky, F. (1897). A collection of ethnographic artefacts from the Nivkh of Sakhalin Island. Leiden International Archive for Ethnography

material for the manufacture of objects such as this hunter's fire implement bag.

The pouch is made of two sections that encased each other, with the corners of the pouch folded inwards via the tip of the sturgeon's snout, cleverly curved to create spiral ends. The pouch was designed to keep flint lighters and other fire-starting tools in a dry environment. Hunters often wore these pouches on their belts during expeditions, accompanied by other tools such as a knife, a needle case, a tobacco pouch, a pipe cleaner and good luck charms. The hunters' accessories served both as practical tools and as amulets during hunting journeys. These objects were linked to the spirits, as they either housed them or used them to relate to them, depending on the nature of the spirits involved. Often these spirits were represented in various forms, and props acted as vessels for warrior spirits that attracted fish or carnivorous animals.
In fieldwork conducted in 2023 at the Stockholm Ethnographic Museum, Elisa identified a photograph of **Henry Lansdell** (Fig. 3), a British explorer, missionary and geographer, dressed in a Nivkh fish skin coat and equipped with a hunting belt and a sturgeon skin pouch. The International Ethnographic Archive in Leiden also holds Grabowsky's illustrations of a Nivkh hunting belt with all the above-mentioned objects from a collection of ethnographic artifacts of the Nivkh people of Sakhalin Island (Fig. 5).

Ethnographic collections from the 19th and 20th centuries amassed numerous fish skin artifacts, enriching museum collections and highlighting the vibrant aquatic cultures of the Amur River. In 2003, the Penn Museum acquired a major collection of 305 objects from the Amur River delta, originally exhibited at the 1900 Paris Exposition Universelle. These artifacts, along with raw materials, were displayed in the Russian pavilion in an immersive panorama that simulated travel on the Trans-Siberian railway. The Khabarovsk Regional Museum sent these objects, representing the rich cultural heritage of the region, to Paris. The collection, which was later installed at the Commercial Museum in Philadelphia, became part of the holdings of the UPenn Museum.

Nanai and Nivkh communities have long relied on their environmental knowledge for food, medicine, spirituality, and material crafts. These practices, often marginalized by dominant cultures, are now being reclaimed, with Indigenous communities increasingly recognized as stewards of scientific and ecological wisdom. By building bridges between historical belongings and Indigenous communities, collaborative provenance research can repair historical legacies, centre Traditional Knowledge systems, making collections more representative of community histories.

FROM THE NORTHEAST PASSAGE TO OSLO: ETHNOGRAPHIC COLLECTIONS FROM CHUKOTKA AT KHM

By Igor Krupnik

In July 1918, a Norwegian crew under the command of **Roald Amundsen**, left Vardø in northern Norway on board a specially built polar vessel, the *Maud*. Amundsen, the hero of an earlier Northwest Passage traverse along the arctic shores of North America in 1903–1906 and the victor in the daring race for the South Pole in 1911, aspired to repeat the earlier drift of **Fritjof Nansen**'s boat, the *Fram*, in 1893–1896 across the Arctic Ocean. He planned to reach the Bering Strait from the west, get the *Maud* frozen in the pack ice, and let it drift with the ice movement towards the North Pole. He and his crew set out on an epic journey that eventually lasted until 1925, even though the aspired drift to the North Pole was not completed.

In the course of their journey through the "Northeast Passage" along the shores of Siberia, Amundsen and his crew interacted with the Indigenous residents of the region—the Chukchi, the Even, and the Yupik, or Siberian Eskimo. Besides various geophysical observations, the *Maud* team collected ethnographic and archaeological specimens. These objects were brought to Oslo and donated to the University of Oslo Ethnographic Museum (Etnografisk Museum) in two portions: one in 1922, and the rest in 1926–1927. The objects are now in the collections of the Kulturhistorisk Museum (KHM) in Oslo, inherited from the former Etnografisk Museum.

In fall 2020, after surveying another collection from this area at the Etnografiska Museet in Stockholm (see *ASC NSL* 27:51–55), we received an email from a colleague in Oslo, retired KHM arctic curator, **Tom G. Svensson**. Tom alerted us that a portion of the same collection was held at the KHM and that the KHM had many more ethnographic objects from Chukotka, acquired on Amundsen's expedition of 1918–1925. That message initiated my correspondence with colleagues at KHM—Asian and Pacific curator, **Arne A. Perminow** and Arctic curator, **Gro Birgit Ween**. It was Arne, who shared the list of the *Maud* objects and invited me to visit Oslo to see the collections "when the Covid-era restrictions are over."

It took three years for me to finally set foot in Oslo in January 2024. I was welcomed by **Anna Mossolova**, KHM postdoctoral fellow, with strong Arctic interests in Alaska. Together with Anna, we spent a full day at the KHM storage facility exploring the collection. In June 2024, I had another chance to visit Oslo and spent two more days in the KHM collections and archives.

Figure 1. Ivory carvings from the Hovgaard collection: left – birds, center – marine mammals, right – land mammals (foxes, dogs?)

This paper offers a brief overview of what we learned about the history and status of the objects that had traveled from the Northeast Passage to Oslo more than a century ago.

Overview of the collections

The KHM collection from Northeast Siberia ("Northeast Passage") is a combination of several acquisitions from three donors ("collectors") that were processed at different times. Altogether, they contain at least 441 catalog numbers, though the actual count may be slightly larger, close to 480–500 objects. The museum database identifies at least five individual accessions with non-sequential numbers; they are reviewed below in a chronological order.

Lt. Hovgaard's collection. 37 objects in this acquisition were donated to the Etnografisk Museum in 1911, by Mrs. **Sophie Christiane Nielsen** (Hovgaard), following the passing of her husband, **Andreas Peter Hovgaard** (1853–1910), an officer in the Danish Royal Navy. In 1878–1879, then a young lieutenant, he took part in the *Vega* expedition along the shores of Siberia under **Adolf Nils (Erik) Nordensköld**. A few dozen objects from Hovgaard's donation constitute a small subset of the much larger *Vega* collection that we studied earlier at the Etnografiska Museet in Stockholm (*ASC NSL* 28), mostly small-size carved sculptures of birds (17), sea and land mammals (Figs. 1a,1b,1c). They must be treated as "souvenirs" that Hovgaard brought from his *Vega* trip.

Amundsen-Sverdrup's "Lamut" collection. The set of 6 related objects representing items of man's costume was donated to the Etnografisk Museum by Amundsen in 1922 (?). The objects are listed as "Lamuter," that is, belonging to the "Lamut" (old name of the Even people). The six-piece set includes a man's skin coat, an apron, two pairs of skin boots, trousers of reindeer skin, and a large cap. They were most certainly collected by **Harald Sverdrup**, Swedish scientist on the *Maud* crew, during his stay in winter 1919/20 with the Chukchi people of the Kolyma District, where he encountered some local Even families. Amundsen brought the objects to Oslo in fall 1921, on his short return to Norway, while the *Maud* was docked in Seattle for repairs.

Sverdrup-Amundsen Chukchi collection, 1922. The large set of 146 objects is listed in the KHM records as "collected during the *Maud* expedition wintering in 1920 by Dr. Phil. H Sverdrup, donated …by Roald Amundsen." Its main portion was most certainly collected during Sverdrup' sojourn among the Reindeer Chukchi in winter 1919/20 (Fig.2). Another group is the presence of some 20 objects listed as "Lamuter" (that is, from the Lamut/Even) among the mostly Chukchi cultural specimens. The collection is mixed and includes sets of unworn (new!) winter fur clothing (coats, pants, boots), family and household items, herding and hunting equipment. It also contains several objects belonging to the Coastal Chukchi and Siberian Eskimo (Yupik) people recorded as "obtained by Roald

Figure 2. Harald Sverdrup with a Reindeer Chukchi family in front of its nomadic tent. NPRAA 497/NPRA 2002. Date and photographer unknown

Amundsen." Some are commercial items for sale, like ornamented cribbage boards or paper knives carved of walrus ivory, hardly products of "traditional culture." (Fig. 3). This mixed collection was evidently assembled by both Sverdrup and Amundsen during the *Maud's* two winterings off Chukotka in 1919/20 and 1920/21.

Sverdrup's dogsled journey collection is the largest set of 204 catalog numbers identified in the KHM records as "collected in 1921 by HU Sverdrup …on a sledge journey on the Chukchi Peninsula. They have belonged to the coastal population." If the description is accurate, all items have been acquired by Sverdrup on his sled journey with **Oscar Wisting** across the Chukchi Peninsula, from January 31 to April 7, 1921. Unfortunately, neither the exact dates nor locations of individual acquisitions have been recorded; with a few exceptions, most are listed as coming "from the Chukchi Peninsula ("Tsjuktsjerhalvøen"). The provenience is generally poor, considering the length of Sverdrup's 800-mi journey from the Arctic coast to the Gulf of Anadyr, and back. The most impressive feature of this collection is a large share of archaeological specimens of stone (about 90) and ivory/bone (ca.100 catalog numbers). Since Sverdrup traveled in winter and could not conduct any excavations, he obviously purchased the objects from local Russian/Euro-American traders or from Native residents who were digging them from old abandoned dwellings, as Sverdrup reported. Several carved objects made of ancient walrus ivory (Fig.4) are true masterpieces and can be dated to the Old Bering Sea-II phase from 1500–1800 BP (according to **Bill Fitzhugh**'s and **Michael Bronshtein**'s preliminary examination). Other highlights include three models of Chukchi tents covered with reindeer skins.

Figure 3. Commercial ivory carvings ('souvenir art') from Chukotka, 1921 (UEM27654, 27656). Photo by Igor Krupnik

Figure 4. "Ancient" ivories in the KHM Northeast Passage collections. Photo by Igor Krupnik

Sverdrup's 1927 donation. The last group of 48 catalog numbers is listed as "handed over on 24 May 1927, by Prof. Sverdrup," after his return from the *Maud* drift in the Arctic Ocean. It consists predominately of ancient ivory, bone, and stone objects, including harpoon heads and arrowheads, pottery sherds, and small carved objects. The objects are listed as from the "Chukchi Peninsula," with no locality or date, but at least six items are recorded as coming from the "Four Pillar Island" (Firsøileøen), from June 1925," almost certainly collected by Sverdrup himself. It confirms that Sverdrup was interested in acquiring ancient stone and ivory/bone specimens. His findings, never explored by archaeologists, may constitute one of the earliest large archaeological collections from this area, unfortunately, with poor provenience.

Other sources

Together with colleagues from the KHM, **Anna Mossolova** and **Anette Nymann Lindhom**, we surveyed other sources that offer details on the objects from the Northeast Passage and on the general condition of local Indigenous people. Our starting point was the KHM collection documentation, including the museum online (public) collection **database**. It has a Norwegian interface and provides data on 450+ objects, including some 350 items with images. Unfortunately, the provenience information is rather sketchy. We surveyed other records, all in Norwegian (like old ledger books, correspondence from 1922–1927, etc.), with little success.

We had more luck with the original accession (catalog) cards from the 1920s, also in handwritten Norwegian. They were evidently filled in by a museum registrar or a curator (?); many featured accompanying pencil drawings of objects or object sets, like the card for man's "Lamoot" (Even) clothing (Fig.5). A few dozen cards list specific locations (like *Ajon*, *Serdze-Kamen*, *Ostkap* or *Kangeskon*, the trade post where items were acquired). A handful of cards even provide Chukchi names for the objects, in a very corrupted transliteration, evidently provided by Sverdrup himself. Unfortunately, we could not locate the original inventory of donated objects that was probably prepared by Sverdrup. If such a document

exists, it should preserve the most detailed first-hand information pertaining to individual objects.

Bits of information regarding at least some KHM objects may be obtained from the *published* accounts of the *Maud* expedition. Sverdrup's popular travelog covering the years of ice drift in the Arctic Ocean (1922–1925) and a dogsled journey in winter–spring 1921 (Sverdrup 1926b, 1930) remains the main source of information. It cites dates for his major stopovers and names of certain coastal communities. The book also features five ancient ivory objects, now in the KHM collections, accompanied with a caption "Decorated objects found in ancient dwellings near the Bering Strait." Sverdrup's descriptions of Indigenous people's daily life, particularly of the Reindeer Chukchi may serve as a good general source for the area he encountered. But they are too popular and too general to provide clues on individual objects; they also lack illustrations.

More informative are Sverdrup's personal diaries, now at the Norwegian Polar Institute (Norsk Polarinstitutt) in Tromsø. The diaries have been digitized and individual journals are accessible online. Sverdrup kept detailed daily records throughout the entire *Maud* expedition; the diaries offer much more extensive coverage of the events, daily movements, and stopovers on route from the *Maud* wintering site at Cape Serdtse-Kamen to the Kresta Bay. **Anette Nymann Lindhom**, heritage specialist with the Akershus Municipality, has kindly searched the diaries in penciled Norwegian handwriting for information related to the objects in KHM collection.

We already retrieved some references that may boost the provenience records for individual objects. Like, an entry from February 9, 1921, from the village of 'Laare' (*Llugren, Lorino* on today's maps) reads: "Yesterday I (Sverdrup—IK) also got several old things, "lighters/firewood-pieces" of …, an axe of walrus and parts of a stone axe etc. An increase of the collection" (translation by Anette Nymann Lindhom). "Lighters/firewood-pieces" most certainly referred to the Chukchi fireboards used to make fire with a drill-bow (Fig. 6). In the same diary, on February 5, 1921, there is another entry: "Got from C. (Charlie Carpendale, white trader in the village of Kengisqun—*IK*) a hoe to dig up roots. Not sharp," with a small accompanying pencil drawing of the object (translation by Anette Nymann Lindhom).

The *Maud* crew had a camera (or several cameras?) on board to document daily life, scientific activities, frozen icescapes, and more. At this time, we do not know of the type of the equipment they had and whether images were made on glass plates or on film. 400 pictures taken during the *Maud* journey were surveyed by Anna Mossolova at the National Library (Nasjonalbiblioteket) in Oslo, a short walk from the KHM. They have been digitized and are accessible online, with the English translation for the captions and the option to be sorted by date, title, and content. Most represent the *Maud* crew and its observational routine, with less than 80 pictures showing cultural or local content. Of these, 22 images can be associated with Sverdrup and Wisting's trip in January–April 1921. Most are landscape photos or images of local people in front of their houses or skin tents. All are listed with the photographer "unknown." The main problem is not the scarcity of images with Indigenous or cultural content, but the brevity of captions. Nevertheless, the pictures documented the cultural environment encountered by the *Maud* expedition, people's clothing, sleds, boats, and houses that were represented in collection objects.

Future steps?

The KHM Northeast Siberian collections have a lot to offer to our knowledge of the era and to today's audience. Currently, a lot of accompanying information is either lost or has not been retrieved from the original sources. We are to learn so much more about the objects in KHM storage when these sources—like catalog cards, letters, diaries, etc.—are fully processed and digitized for open access. Dates, locations, names of sellers or makers would enrich our understanding of local interactions, social environment in which the *Maud* crew operated, and of the heritage value of objects now stored thousands of miles away from their home area.

We will know much more about the objects when we receive an insight from local Indigenous experts, a common practice in today's museum protocols. In 100+ years, since the *Maud* collections were delivered to Oslo, they have never been examined by the descendants of people who produced the objects acquired by the visiting crew. Indigenous insight would provide names in local languages; details on materials and tools used to make them; ways of storing, wearing, and disposing of the used pieces; and, most importantly, of family, spiritual, and identity meanings. Unfortunately, for collections from Chukotka, which is a part of Russia, such knowledge may be added only when Russia's war against Ukraine ends and normal relations resume, or when we engage the few Chukchi cultural experts living in the West.

Some objects from the *Maud* expedition have been on and off the Etnografisk Museum/KHM public displays after they were brought to Oslo, as in the recently closed exhibit, *Arctic: Populations of the Arctic and Subarctic Areas*. But most specimens from the

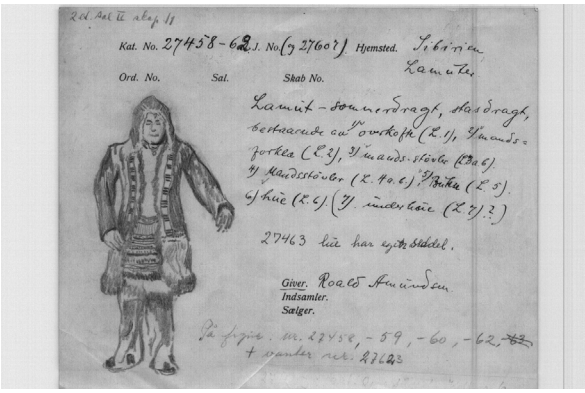


Figure 5. KHM catalog card for objects UEM 27458–27463 (Even man's costume). Photo by Igor Krupnik

Figure 6. Chukchi fireboard with the bow drill, collected by Sverdrup (UEM 27564). Photo from the KHM online database

Northeast Passage have not been researched, published, or exhibited together to make a compelling story. Many of these objects have high public value and a strong appeal to museum audience, particularly when good provenience, Indigenous insight, and easy access are available. The beautiful pieces of ornamented ivories at KHM have never been displayed and are unknown in the world of ancient Indigenous arts from Bering Strait. A small temporary exhibit display, combined with a catalog and/or web exhibit would go a long way to introduce this portion of the KHM Northeast Passage collection to the public, indigenous artists, and interested professionals.

Even though the KHM Northeast Passage collections are much smaller than an impressive acquisition from Amundsen's Northwest Passage expedition of 1903–1906, the two make a complementary story. In today's museum and public environment, an attractive option would be to feature the matching stories about Indigenous peoples of the "two Arctic Passages"—East and West—and their cultural perseverance under the globalizing impacts of the past centuries.

This preliminary overview of the KHM "Northeast Passage" collections is hopefully a beginning of a long process. The collections have a lot to offer. They are testaments to their time and their unique history. They represent a particular moment in the long narrative of cultural interactions in the remote northern region that kept connect it to the larger world. They offer invaluable window to the era when the Siberian North was not yet "Red" and was open to foreign scholars and explorers, traders, and commercial networks of the North Pacific and markets in nearby Nome, Alaska. Woven together, they create a fascinating narrative of Indigenous cultural persistence, ingenuity, museum heritage stewardship, and the heroic actions of polar explorers. When such integrated story is created, it is certain to find many interested listeners—home communities, Indigenous cultural experts, museum professionals, and broad audiences, particularly across the Nordic countries. We may only hope that sharing the story of the KHM Siberian collections will help "virtually reconnect" old objects from museum storage with their home area in Siberia and its modern residents.

This story could not have been written without the assistance and knowledge shared by many people—**Martin Schultz**, my partner in the study of the *Vega* collection at the Etnografiska Museet in Stockholm; Tom G. Svensson, Arne Aleksey Perminow, Gro Birgite Ween, Anna Mossolova, conservator **Sophie Rowe**, and **Ralfs Znotins**, anthropology collection manager at KHM in Oslo. They, as well as **Anette Nymann Lindhom** provided insight, support, fact-checking, and additional research related to the collections. William W. Fitzhugh at the Smithsonian in Washington and Michael M. Bronshtein at the Museum of Oriental Arts in Moscow did preliminary assessment of some of Sverdrup's archaeological findings. To all of you, my warmest "thank you."

OUTREACH

GREENLAND SINGERS PERFORM AT NMNH

By William W. Fitzhugh

NMNH's Q?rius education center became a concert hall for two hours on the afternoon of 5 November, U.S. Election Day. Despite the electoral distraction, a small group of staff and museum visitors assembled to witness the performance of a Greenland Choir in traditional Greenland National Dress, costumes that hark back to the earlier Danish colonial days with men wearing white anoraks and women in colorful beaded shoulder pieces. The choir consisted of eleven Greenlandic men and women from the town of Qaqortoq in southwest Greenland with the population of only 3,050 people.

The Greenland Choir at NMNH. Photo by William Fitzhugh

The occasion was a celebration of the establishment of a regular scheduled United Airlines connection between Newark Airport in New Jersey and Nuuk, Greenland, beginning 14 June, 2025. Such a connection had been attempted two decades earlier but failed for lack of traffic. Today, the growth of the Greenland economy and rising popularity of Greenland tourism has resulted in a stronger business model. The inauguration of the air connection was celebrated by the Greenland Choir in D.C. and New York City. The D.C. performance was sponsored by the Arctic Studies Center and the Greenland Representation headed by **Kenneth Hoegh**, whose wife participated as part of the choir. Following the NMNH venue the choir travelled to New York City where they performed again.

DOCUMENTING THE PAST FOR THE FUTURE

by Ted Timreck

Ancient Sea Peoples of the North Atlantic is a chronicle spanning nearly half a century of research and discovery by scientists and tribal representatives exploring a profound and little-known chapter in Northeastern Native history. The idea of an Algonquin Atlantic places early, Indigenous America within the context of one of the world's great technological and cultural advances going back to the last Ice Age—The Paleolithic Maritime Revolution. Without the close partnership I've had with the Smithsonian's Arctic Studies Center over the last several decades, the work on the North Atlantic along with the *Hidden Landscapes* video series could never have been accomplished.

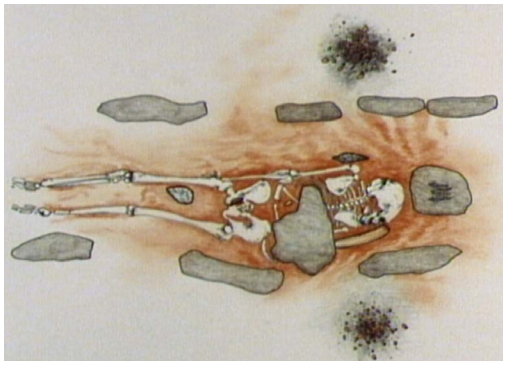
In 1976, I had just won the Peabody Award for a PBS television special on the American composer, **Charles Ives**, and I was looking for another film project. As the movie business goes, I knew I probably would have offers to direct other artist portraits, but alongside that career path I was looking for a subject that could prove even more challenging.

The banner of Ancient sea peoples of the North Atlantic

It was also in 1976, that **Barry Fell** published his book, *America B.C.: Ancient Settlers in the New World (Quadrangle Books).* He took the little-known discoveries of a number of American antiquarians who had been researching mysterious stone ruins of the Northeast and imagined a theory of hyper-diffusion—the idea that Old World cultures, Phoenicians, Irish Monks—came to America long before Columbus and left their ritual sites and stone constructions scattered through the backwoods of New England. The bitter controversy between professional archeologists and amateur antiquarians about the origin of these sites continues to this day. But any scientific/cultural argument as emotional and vitriolic as this one has to be about something more important lurking just under the surface.

I sought out the colorful characters, the antiquarians who had made the original discoveries and began documenting the as yet undisturbed sites. I worked with a motto that has always seemed to make anthropological sense, "Never get in between a person and their creation myth".

In the exact same time frame, (1974–76) Canadian archeologists **James Tuck** and **Robert McGhee** excavated and published the L'Anse Amour Burial Mound on the Southern Labrador coast near the entrance to the Gulf of Saint Lawrence. This site consisted of a circular stone mound covering the remains of an indigenous, perhaps sacrificed, child around 12 or 13 years old. The burial, part of the famous "Red Paint Ceremonial Tradition" dated around 8,000 years ago. The burial also contained a bird-bone flute and a toggling harpoon used for hunting sea mammals. The early age, the unique harpoon design and the orientation of the site to the ocean contributed to Dr. Tuck's idea that the "Red Paint" culture needed a new scientific name—the Maritime Archaic.



L'Anse Amour Burial.
Graphic by T. Timreck

Paleo point over10,000 years old
Photo by S. Loring

The origin of the mysterious, ceremonial stone landscapes eventually began to be recognized, by some, as Native. But this had to have been a very different, early Indian culture than our academic textbooks described. During the same decade of the 70s, scientific discoveries about the "Red Paint" sea adapted, Native cultures also progressed. **Bill Fitzhugh** and research teams from the Smithsonian's Arctic Studies Center proved that these people were deep ocean navigators with large watercraft capable of voyaging up the Atlantic Coast to the Arctic Circle. They also ritualized their far Northern landscapes, building sophisticated ceremonial stone burial structures thousands of years before mid-western Mound-builders. **Stephen Loring**, following research he began in the early 70s in Vermont, was able to demonstrate that the advanced, seafaring capabilities of these indigenous, Northeastern cultures extended back into the time of the Paleo-American 'fluted point' tradition 10,000–12,000 years ago.

Nothing could have been further from the long-accepted hypothesis for the origin and cultural model of indigenous life in Northeastern North America.

It has always been wise to accept that change—radical change—would be a part of our understanding of the 'New World'. Around the turn of the 20th century, it was believed that Native Peoples had only been in the Americas for 3,000–4,000 years. Since that first discovery in the 1920s of human projectile points in the bones of extinct, Ice Age animals, the time-depth of Native culture in the Western Hemisphere has constantly broken through the different levels of 'glass basement' that our textbooks maintained.

Our theories need both a scientific perspective and a popular perspective to be generally accepted as history that will then get re-imagined by future generations. This is a case for understanding how communication, both scientific and popular, shapes our vision of the past. For a quick example, back in the 1920s when the King Tut tomb was discovered, the Western world was enthralled with an enthusiasm for archeology that led to changes in our society's vision of the past. The Egyptian pyramids, social hierarchies and agriculture eventually changed the public's ideas about the mound-building cultures of North America. Ritual architecture, the imagined social structures, and above all, farming shaped the scientific and popular vision of ancient Native life. Fifty years later, America put men on the moon, Outer Space captured the public's imagination and coincidentally, one of the great steps in anthropological realization—archaeoastronomy—became a significant focus of scientific and popular attention. Currently, as scientists and the public become more aware of how environmental conditions affect societies today, anthropologists are shaping their research initiatives to better reflect the importance of climate change on the civilizations of the past. These changes in scientific and popular perception are radically altering our outlook. The profession has come to realize that critical evidence for the ancient, Northeastern maritime chapter in Native history will be discovered on the ocean's floor along the now submerged, Atlantic continental shelf. Such ideas will remain scientifically controversial until they are gradually reshaped by social forces—above all, by the next generation of young scientists. These are the trends of communication that derive from scientific discoveries but evolve into unexpected future visions of the past.

I once shot an interview with **Claude Levi-Strauss** talking about the "Father" of American Anthropology, **Franz Boas**. We discussed the death of Boas which occurred during a faculty luncheon they both attended

at Columbia University. I got the sense that Levi-Straus might have thought that toward the end of his life, Boas despaired of certain aspects of their discipline. Boas was never sure whether a culture he studied was advancing through time or experiencing a decline. Also, we might never be free from interpreting ancient cultures except through the lens of the modern one we were living through. In relation to the scientific/popular trends listed above, over time, with further scientific investigation, we will continue to study entirely new fields of human endeavor, and that in turn, will allow and encourage us to redefine the capabilities that we both see and project onto humans in the past. As we advance, so do the ancient cultures we study. The better we understand the oceans and their changing geographies, the better we will understand past peoples and cultures. This process makes both the present and the past richer.

Since those surprising discoveries of the 1970s, it's been my great good fortune to be able to work for decades with both the Smithsonian's Arctic Studies Center and a number of tribal representatives documenting the ongoing scientific research and the Native revelations that have helped put this puzzle together. As our knowledge progressed from the mysterious, stone ruins on land to the search for ancient, indigenous remains on the ocean floor, those synchronous discoveries—though initially not thought to be related—turned out to become signposts that led to the deeper realization of just how much we have yet to learn about Northeastern Native history.

This is a story of the evolution of these two simultaneous discoveries in both scientific and popular perceptions. It is a narrative of the slow recognition of the significant place in world history that the cultures and environment of Atlantic North America hold for the Circumpolar World.

TOURING "NARWHAL: REVEALING AN ARCTIC LEGEND"

By Carol Bossert and Janey Winchell

In 2020, the Smithsonian Institution Traveling Exhibition Service (SITES) launched its traveling exhibition Narwhal: Revealing an Arctic Legend, based on a larger one presented at the National Museum of Natural History from 2017–2019. The exhibition dives deep into the narwhal's Arctic world to explore what makes this mysterious animal and its changing ecosystem so important. Through first-hand accounts from scientists and Inuit community members, the exhibition reveals how traditional knowledge and experience, coupled with scientific research, heighten our understanding of these animals—and our changing global climate.

Visitors explore props about the narwhal's tusk with intern Shellby Falco at PEM's "Get to Know Narwhal" exploratory cart.
Photo by K. Indresano

The exhibition includes a 16-foot fiberglass model of an adult male narwhal accompanied by an audio soundtrack of recorded vocalizations. A video entitled *What Inuit Know* was produced with hunters from the village of Pond Inlet in northern Baffin Island who have known this animal over generations. The exhibition appeals to people of all ages and diverse interests. Children can measure their height against a replica of a narwhal tusk and read the Inuit legend of how the narwhal got its tusk. There is information on narwhal genetics and a whimsical collection of pop culture objects. SITES created a tactile model of a narwhal for visitors who are blind or have low vision.

Hosting one of SITES' traveling exhibitions gives museums across the country the opportunity to tailor the exhibition to meet the needs of their local audiences. For instance, the Peabody Essex Museum (PEM) in Salem, Massachusetts, displayed the exhibition from September 28, 2024, to June 15, 2025. During that time, they hosted a variety of programs, including a lecture by Dr. **Martin Nweeia** who provided recent research findings. In addition, PEM added content from their collections, including three Inuit artworks and an 1837 volume with a narwhal engraving. PEM also developed new interactives for the show, including the "Narwhal Puzzler," based on fun facts about narwhal, the "What's for Dinner?" activity station with foods narwhal eat (and don't eat!), and a very popular artmaking station where visitors made Arctic marine animals and plants and added them to a "Narwhal Eco-Zone" installation. The exhibition will continue traveling through August 2026.

SITES thank Dr. **William Fitzhugh**, Director of the Arctic Studies Center, Dr. Martin T. Nweeia, Harvard University, and Dr. **Marianne Marcoux**, Fisheries and Oceans Canada, for advice and support in developing the traveling exhibition.

THE ROLE OF 3D/XR AND DIGITAL TECHNOLOGIES IN MUSEUM AND MARINE RESEARCH AND EDUCATION

By Alex Jansen

My recent work at the ASC focused on 3D/XR and digital technologies for my Ph.D. project at Notre Dame of Maryland University. I am looking at coastal archaeological sites from Canada to the Chesapeake Bay to tell a story about how artifacts from past human lifeways can help us understand contemporary ocean issues. For this project, I worked with Dr. **Stephen Loring** to obtain scans of artifacts recovered from various sites throughout eastern North America, which I will use to create a 3D/XR immersive experience that can teach people about ocean conservation. I am also looking at the role that Ramah chert played in past cultures, including the Pre-Dorset, Dorset, and Maritime Archaic cultures, and how it was traded as far south as the Chesapeake Bay, demonstrating ancient people's deep connection to coastal and marine environments through time (Loring 2002, 2017). This project will demonstrate how digital technologies can be used to extend museum collections to the public, tell a story about past histories and sustainability, and create interactive experiences that can enhance our understanding of ocean conservation.

The project looks at the role that trade played in prehistoric Eastern North America. Throughout these time periods, coastal groups traded Ramah chert and other artifacts native to Canada with other peoples who lived further south. At the same time, other types of objects have been found along the coast that were part of these networks, including several different lithic materials, ceramics, historical artifacts, and marine objects. Ramah chert artifacts have been found at sites throughout New England and the Middle Atlantic and other types of materials have also been found at similar locations, including cherts, jasper, and copper from various places (Loring 2002). These early trade and exchange networks will be utilized to look at our collective history with the ocean and how this can get us to better care for these environments today.

Furthermore, I will be using examples from my underwater photography and video work in the Chesapeake Bay and Baltimore Harbor, and photo-documentation work with the Arctic Studies Center's collections, to further show how technologies can bridge gaps and serve as teaching tools for ocean conservation through classroom lessons and workshops. These projects show the promise of technology to increase accessibility and develop resources that can teach people from a wide range of audiences about ocean conservation. I also have a series of underwater movies coming out on various aspects of the Chesapeake Bay to serve as a teaching tools on ocean issues, which highlights the promise of local engagement and technology to create resources and experiences that can serve as learning opportunities.

Ramah chert artifacts from the A.D. 500 Koliktalik Dorset site in Labrador, Canada. Photo by A. Jansen

CROSSROADS 2: BRIDGES TO THE FUTURE

By Igor Chechushkov

[Editor's note: This project was initiated in 2022 to promote democratic values and East-West scientific communication and collaboration. While successful in reaching large and generally appreciative audiences, this analysis also reveals that 'bridges to the future' with Russia are more uncertain than at any time since the Cold War.]

Crossroads 2: Bridges to the Future (2023–2024) was a social media-based initiative designed to bring world-class anthropological research to a Russian-speaking audience through a series of interviews hosted on the *Proshloe* YouTube channel. The project sought to foster scholarly exchanges between American and Russian researchers at a time when political tensions and anti-Western propaganda in Russia posed significant challenges to such collaborations. Over the course of a year, 22 videos were produced, accumulating almost 500,000 views, with individual videos receiving up to 90,000 views.

A journalist and historian, **Mikhail Rodin**, played a crucial role in the project as a key partner, leveraging his extensive experience as a professional TV and radio journalist with over 15 years in media production. As the founder and producer of the *Proshloe: The History Magazine* **YouTube channel**, he specializes in disseminating historical and archaeological knowledge through interviews with researchers. His

expertise extends beyond online content creation, as demonstrated in his work as scriptwriter and director of the documentary *The Tuzhy Tuvans: White Roads of the Tundra*, which has accumulated 3.2 million views on YouTube, and the *Paleosurface* series, featuring 33 short documentaries on archaeology and history in Russia, Armenia, Israel, and Iraq. Uniquely skilled in multiple aspects of media production, Mr. Rodin has served as a scriptwriter, director, cameraman, and post-production editor, as demonstrated in the *Paleosurface* series. Nowadays, Mr. Rodin continues his effort in disseminating scientific knowledge by creating English-language content for his *The Past* YouTube channel (@proshloethepast).

The project built on a historical precedent set by the *Crossroads of Continents* exhibition in the 1980s, a landmark collaboration between the Smithsonian Institution and the Soviet Academy of Sciences that facilitated significant scholarly interaction despite Cold War tensions. That exhibition underscored the deep historical and cultural connections between Siberia and Alaska, highlighting the shared heritage of indigenous peoples across the Bering Strait. *Crossroads 2* aimed to revive this spirit of cooperation, utilizing digital platforms to reach a broad audience. Unlike its predecessor, however, the project faced a hostile information environment in Russia, where government propaganda frequently depicted American scholars as biased and opportunistic.

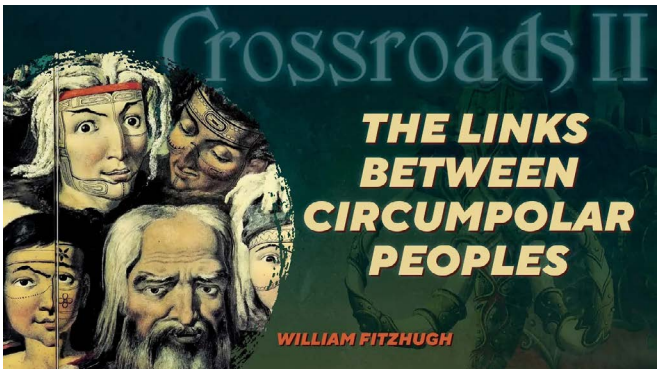
Interviews covered a wide range of topics, from early human migrations to the domestication of horses and the archaeology of Arctic and sub-Arctic regions. Each episode featured a U.S.-based scholar presenting their research, followed by commentary from a Russian-speaking expert. Audience reactions were mixed: while many viewers expressed appreciation for the opportunity to engage with international research, a significant portion of comments reflected nationalist and anti-American rhetoric. Some viewers accused American scholars of attempting to rewrite Russian history or advancing Western geopolitical agendas. Others dismissed established scientific methodologies, promoting pseudoscientific theories that framed Russian civilization as the progenitor of all major historical developments.

Challenges emerged throughout the project's execution. The political climate in Russia, including increasing restrictions on academic freedom and a wave of treason accusations against scientists, further discouraged collaboration. Additionally, technical issues arose when YouTube performance declined in Russia, possibly due to government interference. This led to a shift in content distribution to the VK.ru platform, which had a smaller audience base, impacting overall viewership.

Audience engagement metrics indicated that the project reached a segment of the Russian public interested in international scholarship, but also revealed the depth of anti-Western sentiment. Thus, despite the numbers of views demonstrated above, the median view count for Crossroads 2 videos was significantly lower than that of other Proshloe content featuring exclusively Russian-speaking researchers. This discrepancy suggests that strong anti-American sentiment influenced audience engagement. Analysis of comment sections highlighted four major themes: positive feedback supporting international collaboration, criticism of the project itself, accusations of American scholarly bias, and the promotion of anti-scientific myths. Despite a vocal minority expressing hostility, the like-to-dislike ratio for *Crossroads 2* videos averaged 97%, suggesting that the majority of engaged viewers found the content valuable.

The experience of *Crossroads 2* offers important insights into the challenges of conducting international academic outreach in an era of heightened geopolitical tensions. While the project successfully facilitated cross-cultural exchanges, it also underscored the pervasive influence of state propaganda in shaping public perceptions of foreign scholarship. Moving forward, similar initiatives will require innovative strategies to counteract misinformation and build trust among audiences subjected to state-controlled narratives. The findings of this project emphasize the necessity of continuing efforts to promote open scientific dialogue, even in the face of political adversity.

Ultimately, *Crossroads 2* demonstrated that digital platforms can serve as effective tools for bridging academic divides, but also highlighted the complexities of engaging with audiences in politically charged environments. The project's legacy will persist as long as its content remains accessible online, providing future researchers and the public with a valuable resource for understanding Arctic anthropology and the dynamics of international scholarly collaboration.



The banner of a Crossroads 2 program on an English-lanuage YouTube channel

INTERNS AND FELLOWS

COMMUNITY ADAPTATIONS FOR BUILDING ON THAWING PERMAFROST IN QUINHAGAK, ALASKA

By Vera Solovyeva

Last summer, the *Sustainable Planet Program* funded me, a postdoctoral fellow at the Arctic Studies Center, to travel to Quinhagak, Alaska, to study the impacts of climate change on the community and how Indigenous peoples adapt to this global process. Quinhagak is a small Yup'ik village with a population of around 700 people, situated in the delta of the Yukon and Kuskokwim rivers in Alaska. This region is underlain by discontinuous, ice-rich permafrost, which is prevalent in Northern Alaska. The ice-rich permafrost is vulnerable to rising temperatures and deteriorates rapidly.

These days, Quinhagak residents are experiencing significant challenges due to permafrost thawing. In some places, the permafrost has melted completely, turning into water under a thick layer of tundra vegetation, which sways underfoot like a swamp. One community member measured the water's depth beneath the vegetation with a pole last summer and said that the depth of water to the bottom ice was around 4.6 feet. In another place right by the village a lake appears in summer now and dries out in fall, showing fast permafrost degradation.

Ice-rich permafrost coast is also highly sensitive to erosion. In the Yukon and Kuskokwim delta, changes in temperature, rising sea level and storm intensity dramatically increased ocean bank erosion, posing a threat to the village and to the local ecosystem. An anctient Yup'ik settlement from 1300–1650 AD is washing away. Some modern coastal houses and fish racks are having to be abandoned. People have to build new houses further, away from the ocean, but still within the village territory to be close to the settlement's infrastructure and roads.

Construction on ice-rich permafrost is complicated and requires careful engineering. The problem arises from water. The capacity of ice-rich permafrost varies seasonally: in its frozen state, it has a high load-bearing capacity; when it thaws, its capacity reduces dramatically. Additionally, in winter, when frozen, water expands (up to 10% of its volume). In summer, ice-rich permafrost loses volume when ice melts, causing soil subsidence. This leads to structural instability for buildings.

As an adaptation to permafrost thaw, new homes in Quinhagak are being built with adjustable foundations designed by the National Renewable Energy Laboratory, specifically for regions with permafrost thawing issues. The main idea of this design is to keep the permafrost frozen by elevating the building above the ground on steel or wood piles.

Pile foundations are drilled deep into the ground and have adjustable screw jacks on top of all piles, allowing manual leveling of the building when soil conditions and land surface change (settle or heave). However, building houses with new technology is expensive, and there are not enough job opportunities in Quinhagak. Consequently, many people are poor, and some community members raise their houses using wood blocks to allow cold air to circulate under the house and keep the permafrost frozen. They also level the houses twice a year—in spring and before winter. In winter, the houses rise; in summer, they sink. Leveling houses standing on wooden blocks is a dangerous task. As one of the Quinhagak residents explained: "First, I raised one side using wood plates, secured it, then did the middle, secured it, and then worked on the other end." If you work on the end first, leaving the middle for later, the building can become unbalanced and may easily collapse under a wind of even 10 miles per hour, injuring people. He also added that before he used to level the house once a year. Now, adjustments need to be made twice. This indicates that permafrost degradation has intensified.

In sum, Indigenous people in Quinhagak are adapting to thawing permafrost by using new technologies for building their homes. However, the scale of changes could exceed their adaptation capacity, and the community may need to relocate in the future.

Left: Steel piles under houses in Quinhagak. Right: wood blocks under houses in Quinhagak. Photo by V. Solovyeva

INTERNING AT ARCTIC STUDIES

By Ethan Kane

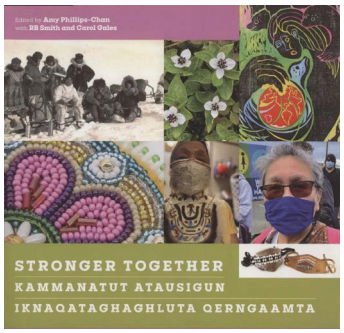
My work at the Arctic Studies Center began in June 2024, a month after I graduated from the University of Pennsylvania with a Masters in the History and Sociology of Science. As I was entering my last semester at Penn, I started looking for experience working at a museum. I was connected to **Bill Fitzhugh** through the Council of American Overseas Research Centers, where I had worked during the summer of 2018. Bill kindly took me on as an intern and I eventually "graduated" again to become a contract researcher. Not long before my arrival at the Smithsonian, Bill and others discovered an orphaned 1954 collection from Hudson Bay made by the pioneering Smithsonian archaeologist **Henry B. Collins**, which I began to work on immediately upon joining the ASC (see my article *Revisiting the Coats Island Sadlermiut: a Henry B. Collins 1954 Legacy Collection*, in this volume). Among my other projects has been beginning, under the direction of **Igor Krupnik**, an ambitious project to create a database of Siberian ethnographic collections in museums outside of Russia (see our *Preserving Access to Siberian Heritage Collections Across Wartime Divides*, in this volume). My research at the ASC has taken me into the collections at the Smithsonian's Museum Support Center as well as those of the American Museum of Natural History in New York City. The last ten months or so have served as an invaluable educational experience, and I can claim Bill, Igor, and **Stephen Loring**, as wonderful mentors.

BOOK REVIEWS

STRONGER TOGETHER/KAMMANATUT ATAUSIGUN/IKNAQATAGHAGHLUTA QERNGAAMTA. BERING STRAIT COMMUNITIES RESPOND TO THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC. Edited by Amy Phillips-Chan with R.B. Smith and Carol Gales. Fairbanks: University of Alaska Press

Review by Igor Krupnik

This beautifully illustrated 200-page book, with the title in English, Bering Strait Inupiaq, and St. Lawrence Island Yupik, is a true testament to community resilience in the face of a major threat to people's lives and to the social fabric of daily relations. This is what the COVID-19 pandemic meant to the world at large, but even more acutely to small and isolated rural communities in the Alaskan Bering Strait region. Unlike during the Spanish flu pandemic of a century earlier, the community response embodied by the book title, *Stronger Together*, was astounding. This is why this book differs so much from the known historical narratives of the Spanish flu impact that feature titles like *We All Expected to Die: Spanish Influenza in Labrador, 1918–1919* (by **Anne Budgell**, 2018) or *The Last Plague* (by **Mark Humphries**, 2013). One hundred years later, people in Alaska decided to fight the pandemic with community resilience, artistic creativity, communal efforts, and storytelling. This is why the book about this effort is so powerful and so uplifting.



Stronger Together is a collection of over 40 personal narratives, including poetry, written by, or recorded from local community members in the city of Nome (population 3,600), a local hub on the shore of Bering Sea, and in scores of nearby rural settlements, from larger ones, like Savoonga and Gambell on St. Lawrence Island, to a tiny Diomede on Little Diomede Island with less than 100 residents. The book contributors—health practitioners, office workers, teachers, hunters, artists, retirees, Elders, and youth—tell stories of how they managed to keep their lives together through hard times, while also enriching it by creative arts, subsistence activities, group meditation, spiritual work and, mainly, by supporting each other. They all have great stories to share and to keep for our common history of COVID-19.

The book is organized in four major sections: *Oral Histories 2020* (Part 1), *Artists Respond* (Part 2), *Oral Histories* 2021 (Part 3), and *Poems* (Part 4). The main narrative is preceded by the 45-page Introduction written by the book editor, **Amy Phillips-Chan**, then the-director of the Carrie M. McLain Memorial Museum in Nome, and a former doctoral fellow at the Arctic Studies Center. It meticulously documents the history and the devastating impact of the Spanish flu pandemic of 1918–1919 in the Nome area, as well as the frightening onslaught of COVID-19 in the same area one hundred years later. Very fortunately, COVID-19 did not have the same devastating impact as the Spanish flu (800+ local deaths, several communities completely wiped out); but it did not leave the region and its residents unscathed. The book features two appendices documenting detailed chronology of both events a full century apart,

a substantial bibliography, and a very helpful index (thanks to the professional work of the production team at the University of Alaska Press).

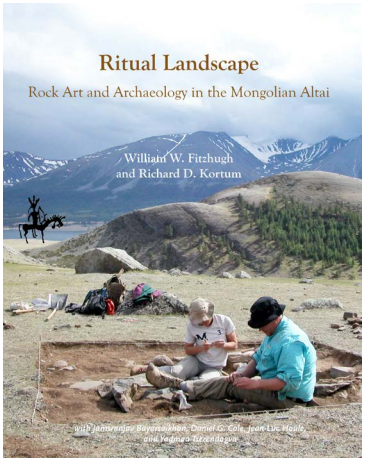
The volume was a product of collaboration of the staff of the Carrie McLain Museum and its many (52!) local partners, associates, and friends in Nome and the nearby communities. It is very rewarding to see how a local museum may become a hub of resilience and can successfully care for people's minds and souls apart from the local health agencies or a town's administration. In a certain way, museums as heritage centers could be powerful allies to the efforts of hospitals or town's offices in that they provide a public platform, engage people in searching for common roots, and may boost their decision to stick together. This is yet another COVID-19 story to remember.

This book is also exquisitely designed, printed, and illustrated by almost 150 large-size color photographs taken by the editorial team or supplied by contributors. Even looking over the (masked) faces of smiling people or the art objects they produced under the stress of pandemic makes readers feel uplifted. Culture does help to fight disasters, and community bonding does help make people stronger, as this book amply illustrates via narratives and images.

Besides messages of resilience and solidarity, the book praises the value of memory, which is yet another tool that museums, unlike hospitals and town offices, may readily apply in the time of stress and despair. By painstakingly recreating the record of the 1918–1919 flu pandemic in the Bering Strait area and by documenting the path of, and the community response to COVID-19 a century later, this book delivers a powerful lesson to a much larger audience. "Stronger Together" is more than just providing services or taking care of each other in a time of need. It is very much about boosting the public spirit—via creative arts, common roots, heritage and learning experiences, performances, documentation work, and much more. The team at the Carrie McLain Museum is commended for showing to the home community and to readers at large how it can be done. Thank you for your heroic effort and a great story!

RITUAL LANDSCAPE: ROCK ART AND ARCHAEOLOGY IN THE MONGOLIAN ALTAI, by William W. Fitzhugh and Richard Kortum, with J. Bayarsaikhan, D. G. Cole, J.-L. Houle, Y. Tserendagva. Smithsonian Arctic Studies Center and Inuit Polar Institute Press. 2025. 450 P.

Book announcement

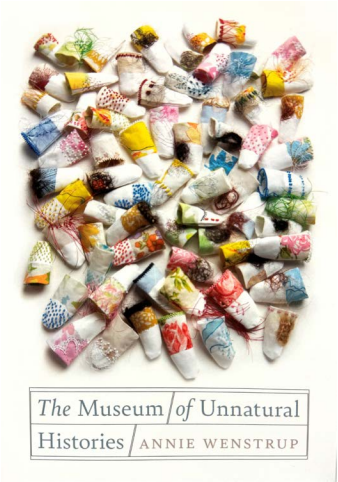


Long unrecognized as a cradle of civilization, Central Asia has in recent decades become an exciting frontier of archaeological research. For centuries scholars the world over dismissed its resilient steppe societies—known largely through biased literatures as barbarian—as a thorn in the side of burgeoning Asian and Eurasian civilizations. Today that view has been confronted with a cascade of evidence documenting the rise of nomadic communities, states, and even empires that changed the world by linking together vast tracts of Eurasia, from China to Eastern Europe. Central to these developments are lands encompassing the Altai Mountains, whose punishing climate and unforgiving, rugged landscapes until quite recently severely restricted archaeological inquiry. Birthplace of languages and human cultural and genetic diversity, glacially scoured Altaian slopes, undulating plains, and watered valleys have, as this volume shows, sustained hunting and herding since the Ice Ages. Its polished exposed bedrock panels carry 20,000 years of illustrated history that, combined with the evidence of archaeology, present a fuller picture than can be told by each discipline separately. Merged, these disciplines provide the first integrated historical window into the rich ceremonial and ritual life of prehistoric peoples who enlivened the heart of Eurasia.

THE MUSEUM OF UNNATURAL HISTORIES, BY ANNIE WENSTRUP. Wesleyan University Press, 2025

Review by Dawn Biddison

This extraordinary debut poetry collection by Dena'ina poet **Annie Wenstrup** delicately parses personal history in the space of an imagined museum. Outside the museum, Ggugguyni (the Dena'ina Raven) and The Museum Curator collect discarded French fries, earrings, and secrets—or as the curator explains, together they curate moments of cataclysm. Inside the museum, their collection is displayed in installations that depict the imagined Indigenous body. Into this "distance between the learning and the telling," Wenstrup inserts The Curator and her *sukdu'a*, her own interpretive text. At the heart of the *sukdu'a* is the desire to find a form that allows the speaker's story to be heard. Through love letters, received forms, and found text, the poems reclaim their right to interpret, reinvent, and even disregard artifacts of their own mythos. Meticulously



refined and delicately crafted, they encourage the reader to "decide/who you must become."

"Wenstrup's The Museum of Unnatural Histories investigates elusive, interstitial spaces—those that haunt lineages, bodies, aesthetics, and language. These conceptually deft and astonishingly original poems resonate with fierce intelligence, perceptive juxtapositions, and defiant lyricism. An electrifying and unforgettable debut."—**Katherine Larson**, author of *Radial Symmetry*

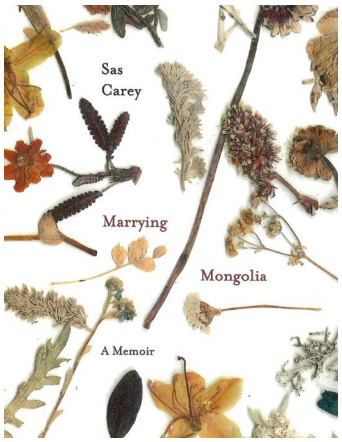
Annie Wenstrup held a Museum Sovereignty Fellowship with the Smithsonian Arctic Studies Center (Alaska office) supported through a 'Journey to What Matters' grant from The CIRI Foundation, and was an Indigenous Nations Poets Fellow in 2022 and 2023. Her poems have been published in *Alaska Quarterly Review*, *New England Review*, *Poetry*, and elsewhere.

MARRYING MONGOLIA: A MEMOIR, by Sas Carey. International Polar Institute Press. Distributed by Oxbow Books/Casemate. 2024

Review by William Fitzhugh

The overleaf for S**as Carey**'s book jacket describes Sas as having "climbed mountains, swum across lakes and rivers, and slept on the ground of three continents. She has ridden planes, trains, cars, bikes, boats, horses, camels, and reindeer. A Quaker, Sas is an award-winning documentary film director, author, spiritual healer, registered nurse, mother, and grandmother."

I came to know Sas while I was studying Bronze Age deer stones in the Khovsgul region of northern Mongolia. **Ed Nef** had made a connection with the Mongolian reindeer herders, known as Tsaatan to Mongolians and Dukha to their Russian neighbors to the North, and I was searching for deer stones to date what looked to me like the prototype for Scythian Animal/Nomadic Style Art. Cut adrift when Mongolia severed ties with the Soviet Union, this small remote population had no access to health services or supplies. Armed with basic aids, she began distributing health and sanitation materials, returning year-after-year to her home in Vermont to raise funds and garner new supplies. Eventually she shifted her attention from the reindeer forests of northern Mongolia to the Gobi Desert in the south, where she ministered to pregnant women who also found themselves outside the health services of modernizing central Mongolia.



Along the way, Sas began picking up skills as a videographer to assist her fund-raising and expand public awareness in North America. Her promotion of a worthy cause which she branded 'Nomadicare,' combined with energy, public outreach, and communication skills enabled her to turn a personal quest of more than twenty years into a model of selfless dedication to Mongolia's most remote citizens.

But Sas's memoir is much more than the story of an American health pioneer in a far-off land. She describes her life's evolution from a 1960s style home-steading Vermonter with unusual powers of fortitude and empathy, into an acolyte of a traditional Mongolian country medicine healer, Dr. **B. Boldsaikhan**, who opened her mind to an entirely new cultural system of health and personal awareness that originated and was being nurtured by an ancient tradition of shamans, and others.

SHUKÁ KÁA CAVE, SOUTHEAST ALASKA: ARCHEOLOGY, ECOLOGY, AND COMMUNITY, Edited by E. James Dixon, Aurora Alaska Anthropological Association Monograph Series, 2024

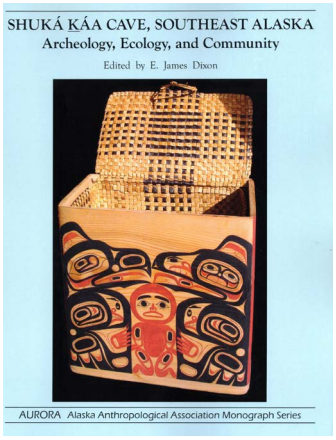
Review by William Fitzhugh

Two great works on Southeast Alaska archaeology appeared in 2024. In last year's *Newsletter* 31 we announced **Aron Crowell**'s monograph on the ecology and recent history of the Yakutat Tlingit (*Laaxaayik, Near the Glacier*). Here we review a second major work from Southeast that **E. James Dixon** shepherded for 25 years from discovery through publication: a 354-page, 14-chapter tome with more than 160 illustrations, 22 tables, a voluminous set of references, and a dedication to "Shuká Káa (the man before us) [who, anchored] in the Tlingit concept of *Haa Shagoon*, brought together people of the past, present, and the future so that they might better understand one another and bridge the boundaries of time and culture to guide them in the future."

These sentiments are everywhere apparent in the pages that follow. Alaska Natives and Indigenous peoples often do not make comfortable bedfellows

with archaeologists, scientists, and government land managers. Not so in this case, which began with immediate consultation between researchers, tribal entities, and government bodies. As noted by **Rosita Kaaháni Worl** of Sealaska Heritage Institute, the discovery of ca. 10,500-year-old human remains in a cave on an island in Southeast Alaska in 1996 set the stage for a remarkable collaborative encounter between Native people and scientists [that] prior to this time… were largely characterized by conflict."

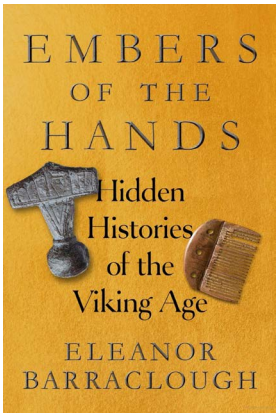
The complexity of the project is amply presaged by two pages of acronyms, four pages of acknowledgments packed with hundreds of names of people and organizations, a list of 23 authors, 12 pages of synthetic overview and introduction by Dixon, and a chapter by **Terrence Fifield** on 16 years of tribal relations and administrative history.



At this point a reader might be tempted to take a break, but doing so would be a disservice to the authors of the remaining 12 chapters on ecosystems history (Ager and Baichtal), Late Pleistocene and Holocene fauna (Heaton and Grady), excavation recording and lithic sourcing (Lee *et al.*), geoarchaeology (Sattler *et al.*), Shuká Káa the young man of 10,500 years ago whose remains were excavated and analyzed (Dixon *et al.*), spatial and functional analysis (Lee et al.), microblade assemblage (Lee), bifacial industry (Dixon), unifacial industry (Taylor), abraders and hammerstones (Williams), ephemeral cave use (Dixon and Heaton), and interpretive summary (Dixon). The book concludes with several appendices, photos of human osteological elements, maps of debitage distributions, and description of bear remains. This monograph is a tour-de-force—in every dimension: scholarship, community relations, fieldwork organization, research design, illustrations, book layout, editorial finesse, and printing—and above all, community relations. The book's cover illustrates the bentwood burial box created by **Jonathan Rowan** and a woven cedar liner by **Deborah Head** that was created to re-inter Shuká Káa's remains in 2008. The design depicts the Eagle (right) and Raven (left) motifs of the Tlingit moieties, beak-to-beak, forming a 'cave' that contains a human figure. Congratulations, Dr. Dixon et al.! The project represents a huge step forward from Kennewick in how archaeologists, managers, and Indigenous people can collaborate for science, heritage, and history.

EMBERS OF THE HANDS: HIDDEN HISTORIES OF THE VIKING AGE, by Eleanor Barraclough: Norton. 2024

Review by William Fitzhugh



Vikings are a popular topic for authors, publishers, museum curators, and film producers. Recently there have been several popular TV series on Viking/Norse history and entanglements with the Continent and British Isles. However, good books about the Norse—especially those written for a popular audience by an author who does not pander to the Viking stereotype—are rare.

Barraclough's Embers of the Hands is a notable exception. A historian and BBC broadcaster, Barraclough writes about the Viking world as an insider standing in its midst. Although the book is full of history, it is told through the daily lives of Viking/Norse people—individuals and groups—and their artifacts (many), sagas and poetry (lots), music (not much), and myriad other lines of evidence. There is less here about large-scale historical events of the Viking Age and more about the lives of individual people as read through their cast-off or buried belongings, hair styles, bathing habits, foodways, houses, clothing, kennings, mythology, and innumerable other categories organized 'ethnographic-style' in chapters titled "beginnings, love, travel, belief, bodies, home, play, unfreedom, and endings".

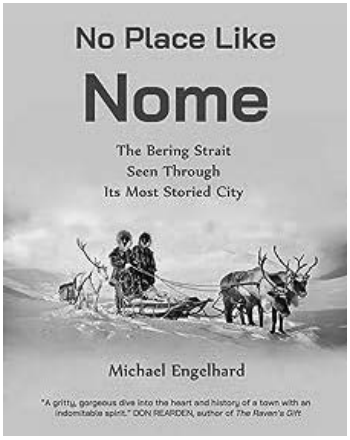
A prodigious amount of research into the full range of Viking scholarship brings chapters to life with scores of named historical and 'regular people' identified in runic inscriptions and artifacts, as well as gods and kings. Some things are missing; while Norse Iceland and Greenland are well-covered, Viking sites and finds in the Canadian Arctic and Newfoundland are barely mentioned; nor are Norse relations with Indigenous people explored. The book's gold dust-jacket and title, *Embers of the Hands*, are arcane and adrift. Technically, the book is strong, with detailed citations, footnotes, and reference materials, a large number of illustrations, and a writing style that draws the reader forward. The author's credo is summed up in her final paragraph:

…Over the years the past has a tendency to get boiled down to important dates when things happened to important people. But the personal, intimate parts of

people's lives matter every bit as much as the famous, dramatic, narrative-defining ones. It is through these little fragments of lives lived, the bits and pieces that fell between the cracks in the floorboards, that we are able to reach out through space and time, to the humans of the past. We listen to the brief flashes of their stories like blurred radio signals that cut out and pick up interference from other stations. Among the white noise, the vanished moments sucked into time, are lives lived, events experienced, emotions felt. And so we bear witness to those who came before us, gather them into our own stories, give them new meanings and new voices...

NO PLACE LIKE NOME: THE BERING STRAIT SEEN THROUGH ITS MOST STORIED CITY, BY MICHAEL ENGELHARD. 2025. KINDLE BOOKS.

Review by William Fitzhugh



Trained in anthropology, working as a wilderness guide, and living in Fairbanks, **Michael Engelhard** has written many books about Alaska and other wild places, and his most recent one, featuring Nome, joins a slew of books with similar rhyming titles. This, however, is the gem of the lot. The book blurb is a perfect entrée:

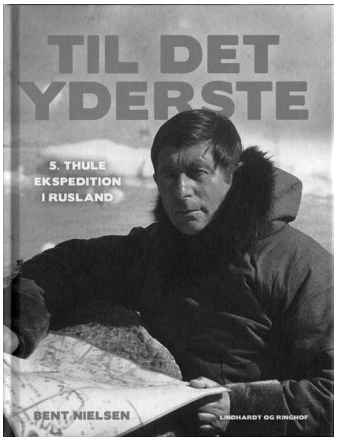
"Somewhere between myths and hard facts you find Nome, poised also between yesterday and tomorrow. Drawing on his background in anthropology and an equal passion for history, Michael Engelhard surveys the seam that links two neighboring continents through the lens of one pivotal city. The region's legacy of millennia shines on pages enriched by this writer's recollections—from mammoths to Cold War monuments, from a spa turned orphanage to cyclist miners and shaman hoards. Meet the explorers and adventurers, reindeer herders and hustlers, the dancers, drummers, dreamers, warriors, walrus-tusk carvers, and whalers, clergy, foragers, and photographers who shaped a place of conflicting visions as thoroughly as it shaped them."

Beginning with what everyone knows—about the 1898 gold rush and the 1918 Flu epidemic—Engelhard yanks us back 10,000 years to the archaeological relics of Trail Creek Cave, reminding us that the modern history of Nome, as artist **Joe Senungetuk** puts it, is just the last sixteenth of an inch of the football field of Nome's human history. Engelhard is familiar with this prehistory and tunes us into the ancient environment and megafauna, its first human arrivals, the complex connections with Siberia, and effects of climate change. But what shines are the stories he has gathered and presented about the historical era and the colorful characters and events that enliven Nome's history. Presented thematically in three parts (Place, Personalities, Art and Industry) we see this history roll out through stories described in intricate detail, humor, and sensibility, loaded with maps, diagrams, and archival photography. While some of the most colorful stories are from the Gold Rush era, it is the "Eskimo" (which he uses advisedly as the only suitable collective, while identifying specific groups by their self-identifications), that carry the stories forward, both in narratives and illustrations.

As Alaska's 'most storied city', Nome is no stranger to story-telling and tall tales. However, *No Place Like Nome* earns a special place among the many popular books about Alaska for its archival depth, for capturing a town and its peoples and cultures with accuracy and humor, and for centering its indigenous residents in that story.

TIL DET YDERSTE. 5. THULE EKSPEDITION I RUSLAND, by Bent Nielsen. Copenhagen: Lindhardt og Ringhof, 2023

Reviewed by Igor Krupnik



This nicely printed and richly illustrated Danish book focuses on one aspect of the Fifth Thule Expedition (FTE) legacy—Rasmussen's aborted visit to Chukotka, Russia, in September 1924. As is well known, it ended with Rasmussen's detention and his swift eviction from the Russian territory, after barely 30-some hours. Hence, the title of the book is a bit ironic: its English translation "To the End: Fifth Thule Expedition in Russia" may refer to both the end of the expedition and to it hitting the end (the barrier) in Russia that stopped its further movement, as actually occurred. No other TWO days of the three-year FTE venture ever attracted such attention, as Rasmussen's landing at Emmatown (Dezhnev) on the Russian shore

of the Bering Strait on September 17, 1924, and his departure on September 18, back to Alaska. We now have another informative account of those two days (and more)—at least for Danish readers.

Yet **Bent Nielsen**'s new book is much more than re-telling the story of Rasmussen's travel on the *Teddy Bear*, his detention, his visit to the local hub of Uwelen to seek permission to work from local Russian authorities, etc. We have read it in other sources many times, starting from Rasmussen's own account published barely few years after his venture. Three quarters of the book are dedicated to what took place in Chukotka after Rasmussen's aborted visit of 1924, including 100 pages telling the story of almost twenty years of work of the Danish Chukotka Expedition led by the author, then the Director of the Danish Arctic Institute in Copenhagen. Though the expedition was mostly interested in the documentation of contemporary life of the local Siberian Yupik and Chukchi people in post-Soviet Russia, its connection to Rasmussen's venture was obvious even in its early stages. By the end of the expedition's work in 2018 and, as the FTE centennial of 2021–2024 was quickly approaching, the link to FTE became another driver to document 100 years of change. So, this book is not so much about the old venture (though it is) but rather a saga of today's life in the area it once visited. In fact, it is the only book about contemporary life viewed through the FTE lenses produced during the expedition centennial years.

Nielsen and his team of Danish and Greenlandic partners made several trips to Chukotka over twenty years; they traveled widely to recreate Rasmussen's routes of 1924. The chapters in the book that are related to these journeys are arranged almost like a travelogue—with diary entries, field recordings, and direct citations from local people's messages and stories being woven into the main content. To someone who can read in Danish fluently (not this reviewer), it makes a fascinating entry to the land that has not been studied nor even visited by Danes for almost 100 years after Rasmussen. That land has changed—profoundly and irreversibly since his time—via deliberate pressure and many top-down policies imposed by the Soviet Communist state. Yet it is remarkable to see and to read in the book as well as in the earlier publications by the expedition team, how much of the traditional values, economic activities, food and lifestyle preferences, and people's relations are still influenced by the culture which Rasmussen got but a quick glimpse in September 1924.

The book contains several dozen illustrations, including historical photos from the FTE era (mostly known from other sources) but also numerous color pictures from contemporary Chukotka taken by the members of the field crew—primarily by the author, but also by **Daria Schwalbe**, **Anja Naja Raahauge**, and **Lena Anzimi.** Though most of contemporary photos were taken during earlier field trips in 2006, and even in 2001, with only scores coming from 2018, they offer a refreshing personal flavor to the book dedicated to the century-old expedition. They are also quite rare to find in print these days.

The only regret of a reader who can barely go through a Danish text is that the book contains hardly a word of English (or Russian or Yupik, for that matter). It would have been nice for the esteemed Danish publisher to add a short English summary and a table of contents, so that more people may reach out for the book as a source of unique information and personal experience. Almost twenty years of repeated visits and fieldwork in a few local communities made lasting impressions and built strong bonds. Even if no one in today's Chukotka remembers Knud Rasmussen, people obviously remember Bent Nielsen, Daria Schwalbe, and their Danish partners. These connections are currently on hold because of the Ukraine war. We hope our Danish colleagues will have a chance to return to the land that turned out to be "the end" for Rasmussen but a remarkable new start for them.

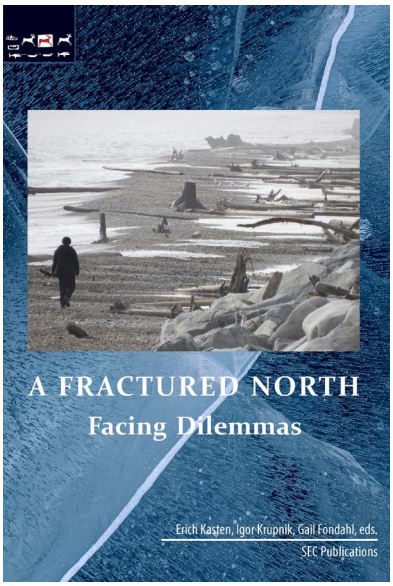
A FRACTURED NORTH: FACING DILEMMAS (VOL. 1). A FRACTURED NORTH: JOURNEYS ON HOLD (VOL. 2), by Erich Kasten, Igor Krupnik, and Gail Fondahl. Kulturstiftung Sibirien, 2024

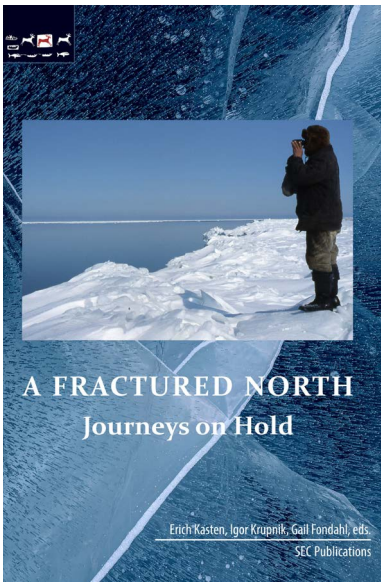
By Igor Krupnik

These two volumes, produced in 2024, are part of a 'trilogy' conceived by the three co-editors, **Erich Kasten** from the Foundation for Siberian Cultures in Fürstenberg/Havel, Germany, **Igor Krupnik** (ASC), and **Gail Fondahl** at the University of Northern British Columbia, Canada, to collect and disseminate the responses of the Arctic social science community to the war in Ukraine. The idea, briefly discussed in spring 2022, following Russia's attack on Ukraine, was revisited in spring 2023. Invitations were sent to almost 100 anthropologists, linguists, historians, human geographers, political scientists, and other social scientists who worked in the Russian North, inviting them to share their perspectives. Some 60 people responded with a pledge to submit papers; almost 30 papers have been published in Volumes 1 and 2, with thirteen more to appear in Volume 3 (in 2025). This represents a good 'chunk' of a professional community speaking out, loud and clear. We agreed to not solicit

papers from colleagues still in Russia, not being able to predict the risk it might entail for them.

The editors brought together voices from all corners of the world: from Ukraine and Russia (the latter mostly from diaspora scholars, including many who left the country after February 2022), also from Austria, Canada, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Japan, Sweden, the UK, and the USA. Contributors include senior scholars, some with decades of fieldwork in the Arctic (like **David Anderson**, **Stephan Dudeck**, **Bruce Forbes**, **Sergei Kan**, **Julia Lajus**, **Art Leete**, **Tero Mustonen**, **Peter Schweitzer**, **Florian Stammler**, **Hiroko Takakura**, and the three co-editors), as well as early career researchers, including from graduate and even undergraduate programs (**Nicholas Parlato**, **Mark Zdor**, **Natalia Naumova**, **Asya Karaseva**), whose plans were halted by the war. Several authors are Indigenous professionals, who suffer the additional agony of being separated from their homelands (**Pavel Suliandziga**, **Eduard** and **Lilia Zdor**, **Roza Laptander**, **Vera Solovyeva**). It is a diverse spectrum of voices sharing individual responses from within our multi-national community—except, justly, for those who supported this war.





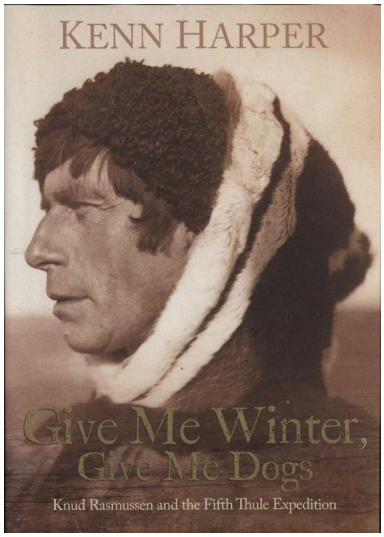
Each series volume, while sharing a common title, features an individual thematic focus and emotional 'zest.' Volume One (*"Facing Dilemmas"*) is primarily about the shock of watching the international (Circumpolar) North fracture once again, with the Russian North cut off from collaboration, foreign fieldwork, international research projects, and trans-border connections. This new 'fracture' is particularly painful to the northern scholarly community after almost 35 years of (relatively) open borders and free interaction. Dozens (hundreds?) of foreign scholars worked across the Russian North during these recent decades, and scores of their Russian colleagues joined western research teams in North America and northern Fennoscandia. Serious discoveries were made; books and papers published; major joint venues unfolded, like the International Polar Year 2007–2008 and the "BOREAS: Narratives from the North" multi-national programs. Institutions were created to spur Arctic scholarly collaboration. Losing this is a small pain compared to the suffering of people in the war zone and across nations affected by the war, but it is nevertheless a huge loss.

Chapters in Volume 2 (*"Journeys on Hold"*) present solemn reflections on many collective efforts suspended by the war and the long-term losses to our field, due to the current rifts in international collaboration. The longer this war continues, the deeper these will run, even to become the "ashes of the unfulfilled dreams," using the title of Vera Solovyeva's paper. Certain losses—human lives and Elders' knowledge—are irreplaceable. Some chapters in Volume 2 pointedly ask the question: "What went wrong?", including on the western end, as official policies and responses by western research institutions often produced confusing and damaging results (chapters by **Lukas Allemann**, **Martin Gross**, **Shinichiro Tabata**, and more in Vol. 3). Again, the lack of perspectives from within Russia hampers our collective understanding.

The chapters in the first volumes reflect different perspectives and different styles. Some are personal stories, often very emotional (by Ukrainian Ph.D. student, **Olexander Vasiukov** or by **Sveta Yamin-Pasternak** and **Igor Pasternak**); others present sad narratives of one's careers and life trajectories being halted by the events over which we had no control (papers by **Craig Cambell**, **Jaroslava Panakova**, **Vladislava Vladimirova**, and others). Different views on how 'to move forward' are expressed. Importantly, nothing similar has been produced so far for a broad audience of international readers to contemplate the Circumpolar North of our lifetime that is 'no more.' The ASC staff and our peer community with its decade-long commitment to international collaboration, feel this pain. The volume chapters are available for access and upload, **Volume 1** and **Volume 2**, respectively. Please stay tuned for the third volume in the series, *A Fractured North: Maintaining Connections*, coming in early 2025.

GIVE ME WINTER, GIVE ME DOGS. KNUD RASMUSSEN AND THE FIFTH THULE EXPEDITION, by Kenn Harper, Inhabit Media Inc.: Iqaluit and Toronto 2024

Review by Igor Krupnik



Kenn Harper's latest book makes a seminal contribution to the growing library of books and papers about **Knud Rasmussen** and the Fifth Thule Expedition (FTE) produced for its recent centennial (see above). It is also 'special,' because so far it has been the only materialized Canadian input to the FTE Centenniana even though the prime work of the expedition took place in Canada and among the Canadian Inuit. Its author, who has spent decades living in Iqaluit and who produced several best-seller books about the Arctic and the Inuit (*Give me My Father's Body* [1986] and the series *In Those Days* immediately come to mind) is also an accomplished writer and has a mighty pen.

Unlike many of the previous explorations of the FTE and Rasmussen (see *ASC NSL* 29), Harper's book has only a few opening pages dedicated to Rasmussen's life prior to the expedition, including his child years, establishing the Thule Station and the planning for his multi-year venture. The rest of its 150 pages of text, several maps, and almost 40 pages of historical photographs (see below) is all about the FTE many routes—from Greenland through Canada to Alaska and Siberia, and the members' return to Denmark and Greenland. Its two major sections titled "Danish Island" and "Across Arctic America," cover two major components of the FTE—its Canadian portion of 1921–1923 and Rasmussen's daring run to Alaska and the Pacific Ocean in 1923–1924, respectively.

Shorter chapters in each section are mostly framed around some of the most famous 'characters'—Inuit and not—that Rasmussen and his team met and interacted with during their journey. The book abounds in Inuit names and words; it even has a short accompanying glossary of the key Canadian Inuktitut words used in the text, a rare addition to the massive English-only literature on polar explorations. Relying on his great familiarity with Inuit issues, Harper adds sections on the Inughuit members of the expedition, prior to and after the FTE, again, a rare feature of the writings about Rasmussen and a much-welcome development of the FTE centennial effort (see Mari Kleist's paper in the *ASC NSL* 29).

The book is written for a non-specialist audience and is easy and pleasant to read. Harper has great skill in telling long stories in short digestible segments that are visually separated in the book by a special mark. It makes an arduous three-year venture look like a 'fast run'—which it was not—and is reminiscent of Rasmussen's own popular oeuvre on the FTE, Across Arctic America (1927, the original Danish version, *Fra Grønland til Stillehavet*, *Rejeser of Mennesker fra 5 Thule-Ekspedition* 1921–24, was published in 1925–1926). Yet, it is a scholarly book, even if popularly written, and it has 6 pages of references at the end and over 200 footnotes indicating the original sources.

To this reviewer, Harper's book finally puts to rest the issue of whether Rasmussen traveled to Siberia (Chukotka) alone or was accompanied by some of his trusted partners, in this case, by **Qaavigarsuaq** (Miteq). Harper uses Qaavigarsuaq's own memories recorded in his old age about his travel to Chukotka with Rasmussen that Harper himself translated with the help of **Aviaq Harper** from the original Greenlandic publication (p.130). Harper also adds his authority as an arctic historian to claim that Russian authorities' denial of Rasmussen's work in Chukotka and his swift expulsion back to Alaska was due to the troubles around Wrangel Island created earlier by his old nemesis, **Vilhjalmur Stefansson** (p.132), something we suspected all along. Yet independent confirmation is at the heart of good scholarship.

The book ends with a selection of 60-some illustrations—historical photos, pencil drawings, even memorial stamps and prints from many collections, including the Danish Arctic Institute, the Royal Library in Copenhagen, and photos from author's personal archive. Most are well known and the have been reprinted many times; others are not, and these additions to our visual 'library' from the FTE are extremely welcome. Overall, the book is solid, refreshing, and highly valuable as a tribute to this unparalleled venture in the history of polar scholarship and exploration. I may quote my own endorsement on the back cover noting that Harper's volume is "a compelling testimony to why Rasmussen's venture was so audacious, yet monumental, and why no one could ever beat the Fifth Thule team in its intimate knowledge of the Inuit people across Arctic America." Well done, Kenn!

TRANSITIONS

REMEMBERING NATALIA FEDOROVA, 1949–2024

By Igor Krupnik

With the untimely passing of Russian archaeologist, Dr. **Natalia V. Fedorova** on December 1, 2024, the ASC lost a dear and trusted friend, and the field of Siberian/Russian Arctic archaeology lost one of its internationally renowned figures and most accomplished practitioners. She was 75.

Natalya with flowers and mud. Photo by W. Fitzhugh

Natalya Fedorova and the "Living Yamal" team salvaging the remains of the Tiutey-Sale Iron Age walrus hunting site at Morzhovaya, 1994. Photo by W. Fitzhugh

Natalia was trained as an archaeologist/historian at the Ural University in Ekaterinburg, Russia (than called Sverdlovsk) and entered the Ph.D. Program in history at the Hermitage Museum in Leningrad (in 1979–1983), with her thesis on early medieval contacts between West Siberia and Central/Near Asia based on archaeological data defended in 1984. She returned to work as a researcher at the Institute of History and Archaeology in Ekaterinburg and became a reputable expert on medieval bronzes and, generally, on early aboriginal cultures of Western Siberia. She skillfully combined field archaeology with museum/collection studies by excavating sites, organizing exhibits of ancient bronzes, and publishing academic papers and exhibit catalogs. By the early 1990s, she had expanded her interests farther North, to the Lower Ob' River and the Yamal Peninsula, where our paths crossed exactly 30 years ago.

Natalia literally stormed into our life in October 1994 after we met in the city of Salekhard, the capital of the Yamal Area, where I have been searching local archives for historical records for the ASC *Living Yamal* program. That three-year venture (1994–1997) was conducted jointly with several colleagues from Russia. The fortuitous meeting created strong bonds of partnership and friendship. Next summer, Natalia was collaborating with **Bill Fitzhugh** on his first of his several Yamal trips that eventually evolved into a series of joint surveys and site excavations followed by co-authored papers and a collective monograph, *Ushedshie v kholmy* (*Gone to the Hills. Cultures of the Coastal Northwestern Yamal during the Iron Age*. (1998) by Fedorova N.V., **P.A. Kosintsev**, and W.W. Fitzhugh, see this issue). A year prior, Natalia served as our collaborator on the international exhibit *Arktis/Antarktis* in Bonn, Germany (1997–1998) and was a contributor to our bilingual exhibit catalog, *Zhivoi Yamal/Living Yamal* (Krupnik and Narinskaia, eds. 1998; see *ASC NSL* 6, 1998, 7, 1999). She was an ASC international fellow in 1998/99, a contributor to our collection for the National Park Service, *Northern Ethnographic Landscapes: Perspectives from Circumpolar Nations* (Krupnik et al. 2005, *ASC-5*), and a trusted partner on several other joint ventures. Her last contribution to our shared legacy was a short entry to the ASC special issue featuring Bill Fitzhugh that she produced in spring 2023 (*ASC 30sp*. 2023). By that time, she was already suffering from ill health.

Around 2000, Natalia moved her homebase from the academic institute in Ekaterinburg to a small local research unit called Museum and Exhibit Center in the town of Salekhard, the capital of Yamal, right at the Arctic Circle. There she led its small archaeological division and served briefly as the academic deputy director. She obviously felt at ease staying close to her beloved archaeological sites in Yamal, including the famous Iron Age Ust'-Polui site located literally within the city limits that she excavated over several decades. She transformed that local research unit into a world-connected space with broad circumpolar links. In 2012, she launched the series, *Arkheologia Arktiki* (*Archaeology of the Arctic*), a string

of international circumpolar collections that she edited, with the last no. 8 released in 2023. Bill and I served on the series' editorial board for several issues, together with our Russian partners, **Vladimir Pitul'ko** and **Andrei Golovnev**. Almost every issue between 2013 and 2020 featured papers by the ASC staff and associates, and other international colleagues. Using her diplomatic skills, administrative prowess, and oil monies from the Yamal administration, Natalia organized and hosted two international conferences on Arctic archaeology in 2017 and 2022 (see ASC Newsletter 25, 2018; this issue). She naturally combined excavations at remote northern sites with her elegant public performances, media interviews, podcasts, and international venues in Salekhard that local administrators generously supported prior to 2022. That stream of connections dried out after February 2022.

Natalia was a dear friend and a power to reckon with—locally, within the Russian archaeological community, and among her many friends worldwide. She produced (co-authored, co-edited) more than 170 publications, including several catalogs, collections, and books. Lively, graceful, warm, and generous, she could be firm and unwavering in matters of principle. She was a rare soul that will be deeply missed.

Natalia Fedorova (restraining Bill Fitzhugh) during aerial site surveys in Yamal, summer 1996.
Photo by Bruce C. Forbes

Natalia Fedorova, Bill Fitzhugh, Bruno Frohlich, and Kjell-Åke Aronsson examining public display cases in the Yamal Museum and Exhibit Center. Salekhard, 2017.
Photo by Bruce C. Forbes

Natalia and Judy Burch in Salekhard museum.
Photo by W. Fitzhugh

NATALYA FEDOROVA AND THE EDUCATION OF A CIRCUMPOLAR ARCHAEOLOGIST

By William Fitzhugh

Natalya Fedorova.
Photo by W. Fitzhugh

Not being able to say goodbye to **Natalya Fedorova** was collateral damage of Putin's Ukrainian war this past year, along with the estrangement of so many other Russian partners the ASC came to know following *Crossroads of Continents* and the *Living Yamal* projects of the 1980s and 1990s. Natalya and I spent several summers directing archaeological work in Yamal between 1994–1996 and produced some nice reports and publications. She became a dear friend and teacher and steered me gently into the labyrinths of Russian *arkeologiya* (archaeology).

I was a total neophyte about 'things Russian', but since early school days had been fascinated by Russian literature, music, and history. The possibility of actually conducting fieldwork there had frustrated Western anthropologists and archaeologists for decades—since

Knud Rasmussen's time in the 1920s; it was finally facilitated by **Igor Krupnik**'s arrival at the Smithsonian in 1991 and became, for me, the opportunity of a lifetime. When the ASC was approached by Amoco Eurasia to assist their public relations with the Russian Gazprom in Yamal in 1993, that dream came to life. Igor's connections with his former colleagues **Andrei Golovnev** and **Vladimir Pitulko** soon found us in Salekhard heading to Tiutey-Sale, Morzhovaya (Walrus) Bay on the west coast of Yamal in an MI-8 chopper.

Natalya already had an experienced team, and we set to work exploring the sites of the so-called (by **Gutorm Gjessing**, **Valerie Chernetsov**, and **Carl-Axel Moberg**) "ancient Eskimo-like" walrus hunters of the Kara Sea coast. I was there to explore their ideas of circumpolar connections: what exactly could we learn from Vassilii Adrianov's and Chernetsov's pioneering work here and at Ust-Polui, the Iron Age sacrificial site on the Ob River in Salekhard? My naievité about Russian field methods was soon disabused by the rigor of Natalya's team as they picked their way through permafrost ice wedges at the edge of crumbling sea-cliffs. Yes—lots of walrus bones—but these animals were being caught by reindeer hunters with no idea of toggling harpoons. Even more surprises came from our work at Ust-Polui, where I was tutored in the field of 'ritual archaeology'. Most of the amazing finds **Chernetsov** discovered in the 1940s—and Natalya was recovering fifty years later—were sacrificial materials created and deposited to honor gods and animal spirits, not to satisfy worldly needs. My education continued as we explored other sites like *Zelenii Yar* ('Green Creek'), where we found Iron Age mummies preserved with their clothing in copper shrouds. At other sites that I initially thought were ancient camp hearths, I was admonished by Natalya "Nyet, Beel [No, Bill]. Thees is place for sacrifice, not lunch!" The functionalist in me died hard.

Natalya was a task-master and hard-driver. She built an archaeological team and an enduring infrastructure in Salekhard that trained students, built collections and museums, and produced reams of art historical and archaeological literature. She was, herself, an archaeological treasure who took Chernetsov's genius and Adrianov sacrifice (he died, age 32 at the hands of the Soviet terror machine in 1936) to a new almost unimaginable level. She did so through skillful politics, management of government bureaucracy, fore-sighted Indigenous relations, pioneering international collaborations (of which I was an early beneficiary), perseverance, and grit. And as for Eskimos..., no—Yamal Iron Age folks managed to hunt walruses just fine on their own!

MICHAEL CHLENOV (1940–2024): CHANGE AND SURVIVAL

By Igor Krupnik

Michael Chlenov, 1981. Photo by Sergei Bogoslovsky

Michael Chlenov, Russian cultural anthropologist, who spent more than 30 years researching and writing on the Yupik people of Chukotka, passed away in Moscow, Russia in August 2024. He was 83. We first met in the summer of 1971 in the Yupik community of Sighineq (Sireniki) on the Russian Bering Sea shore, where we were both members of a field crew led by biological anthropologists **Valerii** and **Tatyana Alexeev**. Chlenov was invited to make family genealogies for the prospective genetic and morphological study of the Yupik; one month later, the Alexeevs placed me as his field assistant for this work. This is how our partnership of 53 years started. It lasted for two decades of joint field research in Chukotka, Commander Islands, and in the local communities along Russia's Black Sea coast, and of many more years of our joint analysis and publication of the results. It culminated in several dozen co-authored papers, a joint volume with **Sergei Arutyunov** about the 'Whale Alley' site (1982) and a major book on Siberian Yupik socio-cultural transitions in the 20th century (Krupnik and Chlenov 2013).

The subtitle of our Yupik book, *Change and Survival*, was very much a story of Chlenov himself. Born in Moscow at the onset of WWII, he spent his childhood years in the war-torn Soviet occupied zone in East Germany. He graduated from the Moscow Institute of Oriental Languages as a scholar of, and interpreter of Indonesian language, thus adding fluent Dutch and Malay to his almost native German and good English (and later, superb command of Hebrew). During his undergraduate studies, he spent a year and half on the Ambon Island in Eastern Indonesia as an interpreter at a Soviet construction site, while also documenting local languages of the nearby areas. He received a Ph.D. in anthropology at the Moscow Institute of Ethnography, where he was a staff member till the 1990s. He first went North in 1969 with ethnohistorian **Vladimir Vasil'ev to** survey local Nenets people along the Ob and Pur Rivers in West Siberia, to continue with the studies of the Siberian Yupik in Chukotka in the 1970s

and 1980s. In the late 1980s, prior to the collapse of the Soviet Union, he became active in politics and served as the head of many Jewish organizations in post-Soviet Russia. He also made his name as a scholar of Jewish heritage and history, and of the Jewish communities of the former USSR. While doing this, he continued his engagement with the Yupik people and Yupik ethnology.

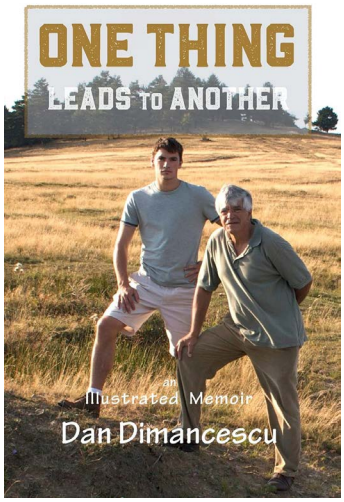
Chlenov enjoyed meticulous research and a lot of his writings remained a "work in progress" for years, even decades. His last published papers on Yupik placenames in Chukotka (2021) and on the Commander Island Aleut genealogies (2022) were based on his fieldwork in 1981 and 1983, respectively. This type of scholarship is uncommon today. He personally believed that his main contribution to "Eskimo studies" was the discovery of the Whale Alley site in 1976 (Arutyunov, Krupnik, and Chlenov 1982). In my view, his main legacy is his vision of the Siberian Yupik social system as a network of semi-autonomous patrilineal units, clans or *locuses* (Chlenov's own term). He developed it gradually in the 1970s, and we later added blood and bones to it from Elders' stories that we recorded in the 1970s and 1980s. It explained the life in Yupik communities of the 1800s and early 1900s much better than anything written about them. Other fine contributions included a reconstruction of the so-called "Uelenski" Yupik language (first and only recorded in a German manuscript of 1791), his massive documentation of traditional Yupik placenames, and his unique vision of inter-connected communities of the Bering Strait "cliff dwellers," the people of King Island, the two Diomede Islands, and of the East Cape in Siberia.

Chlenov, very much like Sergei Arutyunov, a close friend and a partner in the studies of the Whale Alley (see *ASC NSL* 31), was an international soul, a true "Crossroads man." He was also an inquisitive and independent scholar, free of any bearings of the former Soviet anthropology. He demonstrated his anthropology colors in his strong dedication to kinship, symbolic anthropology, and to studies of social structures in the very first paper about the Yupik written for the 1973 International Congress of Anthropological and Ethnological Sciences (ICAES) in Chicago that he was not allowed to attend.

To the Chukotka Yupik people, his style of research—personal, introspective, and focused on their own interpretations, not on social 'theories'—offered a path to a new vision of their history, free from once Marxist, now-Russian imperial overtones. He also accumulated a remarkable archive of their clan and family genealogies, personal names, other written records that was recently digitized and partly posted online at **"The memory of a village" site**. For that, the Yupik people of Chukotka would be forever grateful, as they expressed it in their many sympathy messages addressed to his family. With Chlenov's passing, his special type of anthropology will be gone, but its legacy is certain to influence new cohorts who will step into the same field. Chlenov's personal high marks—his intellectual freedom, inquisitiveness, superb scholarship, and his focus on people's social networks as clues to their past—remain hugely attractive today, very much as they were 53 years ago, when I first met him in Chukotka. He will be deeply missed.

DAN DIMANCESCU (1943–2025): ROMANIAN-AMERICAN PATRIOT, PUBLISHER, AND FRIEND

By William W. Fitzhugh



"Dan's gone." With these words **Katherine** and **Kate Dimancescu** announced on 1 February 2025 that Dan, our dear friend, Dartmouth'64 student colleague, and fellow Danube River Expedition paddler, was no longer with us. Only four days earlier he had written announcing the April 12 premier of another in his string of Kogainon film productions, this one about the history of his hometown in Concord, MA. Dan died of cancer after an eight-year struggle. Some of us knew he was sick, but until reading the last page of his book, *One Thing Leads to Another: an Illustrated Diary Memoir* (v. 2, 2024), I did not realize he had only weeks or months to live.

I first met him when he joined our sophomore class at Dartmouth. We hooked up through the Ledyard Canoe Club and paddled in the annual White River Races. Dan, whose family was forced to flee from Romania in WWII, suggested we organize a Ledyard canoe trip down the Danube River, most of which was then still behind the 'Iron Curtain'. We organized the trip with nine fellow students in 1964, raised funds, bought and shipped Old Town canoes to Ulm, Germany, and got National Geographic to publish our story. 'Dartmouth Down the Danube' launched us all on career paths—Dan in foreign affairs, business, and journalism; me in archaeology; **Chris Knight** and **Dick Durrance** in photography and journalism; **Bruce Irvine** in

medicine; **Slade Backer** and **David Donnelley** in education; **Mike Lewis** in law, and **Terry Fowler** in academics. Dan went on to publish 32 books, wrote NGS expedition articles, and produced documentary films. He suffered deeply—and recovered—from the loss of his son and protogée, **Nicholas**—who fell to his death while filming above a cave in the Carpathian Mountains.

Dan was armed with a drive to regain his family's pre-WWII stature. His father **Dimitrie** was a WWI hero, who founded the Boy Scouts of Romania and was a high-ranking diplomat in the government of **King Carol II**. Dan found opportunities everywhere. He was a gifted pen-and-ink illustrator, cartographer, and diarist. He received degrees in business and international relations (Fletcher), taught at universities (Dartmouth, Nantes, and Boston U.), and served on numerous boards. He was fearless in striking up relationships with powerful people (e.g. Bobby Kennedy). Dan was ever-grateful for his Dartmouth opportunities and education. He taught and lectured there and gave canoes and kayaks to the Ledyard Club. Enlisting support from New England Indian tribes, he tried (unsuccessfully) to defend the Club's Indian heritage when the College wrongly deemed its feathered logo inappropriate. On the family side, he married Katherine Kuhns, who helped produce and sponsored a **multi-volume** atlas of Romanian folk culture, while raising Nicholas and Kate in Romania and Concord.

Dan's love for Romania and its road to democracy and the West was the beacon that guided him throughout his life, and for many years he was Romania's Honorary Consul in Boston. After the communist government fell in Romania, he regained some of his family's expropriated property in Bucharest and built a country inn at Balaban in the Carpathians where he hosted a Danube River trip reunion in 2014. With his son, Nicholas, he started Kogainon Films and produced educational and historical documentaries about Romania. And in 2013 he co-founded Alianta to promote friendship and cooperation between the U.S.A. and Romania. When Russia invaded Ukraine, Dan helped organize a Dartmouth-led drive through Alianta that raised nearly $100,000 in financial aid for Ukrainian and Moldovan refugees.

Dan's was quite the life—one that inspired his friends and colleagues through his many publications, works, films, and connections, and will continue to expand our horizons for years to come. Google 'Dan Dimancescu' and read his memoir how 'one thing leads to another'—the story of a Romanian immigrant who rose to prominence in America. You will be amazed at his story.

HOMAGE TO NELSON GRABURN (1936–2025) AND BERNARD SALADIN D'ANGLURE (1936–2025)

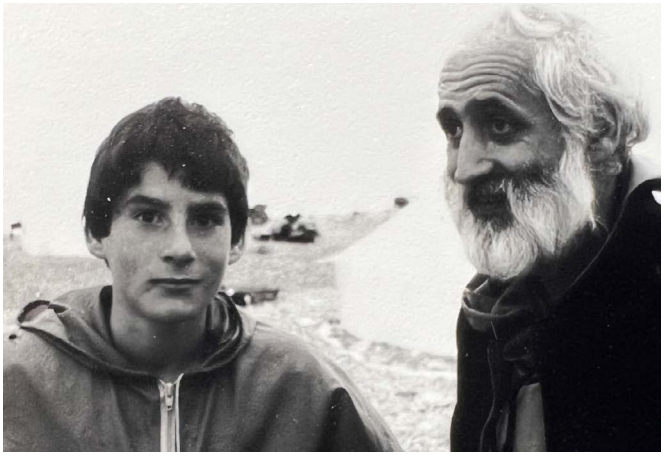
By Valérie Chaussonnet

The following remarks stem from my personal recollection of time spent in the classroom and in the Arctic about forty years ago with two of my mentors, subsequently colleagues and friends, **Nelson Graburn** and **Bernard Saladin d'Anglure**, whom we just lost this February 2025.

Nelson and Bernard, "the princes of Arctic Anthropology for decades", in **Bill Fitzhugh**'s words, and certainly two among the greatest anthropologists of the Canadian Arctic, were born a few months apart in 1936, and died a couple of weeks from one another, at the age of 88. They both spoke fluent Inuktitut and started conducting fieldwork in several Inuit communities of Nunavik and Nunavut in the 1950s and 60s. Both started with classic kinship research and became pioneers in very distinct fields which bear their marks to this day, Nelson as an Inuit art expert and a founder of the 'anthropology of tourism,' and Bernard with his visionary work on adoption, third gender, and shamanism. Both scholars got involved with Inuit films, Bernard as a consultant on, among others, the highly acclaimed (and winner of the Camera d'Or at the Cannes Festival,) *Atanarjuat, The Fast Runner*, in Inuktitut (2001), and Nelson as a co-producer on *Starting Fire with Gunpowder* (1991), a landmark documentary about the first Inuit television station. Both Nilisi and Pirnaq, as their Inuit friends called them, also counted numerous grateful anthropology students who, like me, became friends.

By an amazing stroke of luck, I did fieldwork with both anthropologists, one after the other, within one single year in my early twenties. For a start, I participated in Nelson's graduate "circumpolar" seminar in 1985 at UC Berkeley. In this very small class of five, including Nelson, we divided the Arctic into territories with the glee of mercenary politicians, Nelson taking Canada, **Molly Lee** Alaska, a Danish student Greenland, and I Siberia and the European North. Nelson would announce the following week's social, cultural, and anthropological "theme" for us to prepare, then to present in order, compare notes, and learn. Our conversations were incredibly fun and stimulating, just like the seminars remembered by Nelson's other former students. Many of these students describe Nelson, in his daughter **Eva**'s words, as "extraordinary, dedicated, patient, remarkable, an inspiring mentor and scholar who was passionate, generous, warm, kind, caring, funny and interested in their work, careers, and lives."

Nelson Graburn and Molly Lee at dinner with friends. Photo by Valérie Chaussonnet



Guillaume and Bernard, Igloolik summer camp. June 1987. Bernard was 50. Photo by Valérie Chaussonnet

Nelson changed my life too. One day, after our class, and after I had secured a scholarship to study the following academic year with Saladin d'Anglure, Nelson and Molly asked me to come to lunch with them. They sat me down and invited me to join them the next winter on Nelson's sabbatical revisit of the communities where he had worked. So, the next winter, now a student at Laval, I flew from Quebec to Iqaluit where I met them. We flew to ten communities for about a week each, including Nuuk in Greenland. Most planes landed on frozen fjords. In each place Nelson was gifting prints of the photos he had taken of people from the 1960s back to them or their families, asking about people he had known and updating his notes, and telling stories some had forgotten. We were mostly staying at the home of Inuit sculptors who were familiar to Nelson. In Kinngait (Cape Dorset), we stayed in **Terry Ryan**'s home and spent time at the famous cooperative print shop, which Ryan had managed since 1960. I was doing my own research, Molly and Nelson theirs. In Pangnirtung, I got very sick with high fever and was tended by a very kind and very worried Inuit woman named **Rosie Okpik** (1940–1997), who in 1988 founded an art coop in Pang; she had just collected funds from the village to send to a famine-plagued country in Africa. She told me the Inuit understood famine; I knew, I had seen **Richard Harrington**'s photographs in *The Inuit: The Life As It Was* (1981), as she explained. Nelson said, with relief, after the fact, that he had feared I was poisoned on raw seal meat I had for lunch and was going to die.

Nelson and Molly would sometimes enjoy jokes at the expense of the French in a way that was anthropologically interesting and amusing to me. They targeted French culture, French academia, and (Parisian) school of thought, although they used it; the Catholics (I wasn't one of them); the French in general; and, occasionally, the young Saladin of the 1950s, on which Nelson had a few unflattering, possibly apocryphal, stories that might have betrayed a bit of Nelson's sense of rivalry. I think Nelson was more aware of Saladin than Saladin of Nelson. Saladin, I found out later, was so intensely immersed in his own research, that there was not much place for comparison or concern. I never heard him say anything negative about Nelson; as a matter of fact he never mentioned him at all.

In Greenland, Nelson, Molly and I slept in a cold schoolhouse with no bathroom. Outside the schoolhouse, Molly and I tripped Nelson and rolled him in the snow one day when we found him a bit too bossy. It made him roar with laughter and delight. Nelson relished being surrounded by students and being the center of attention, a king and his court, even if it was just a court of two on that trip. As Eva wrote, "he was born an orphan, but he managed to create a huge family for himself stretching across continents." I would add that he was also incredibly loyal, generous and dedicated to us, his students. After this field season in 1986, he devoted a lot of his scholarship to the anthropology of tourism.

After returning to Quebec, besides flying to Washington to interview with Bill Fitzhugh for the *Crossroads of Continents* job, I resumed studying at the GETIC, the Arctic department that Saladin had started at Laval. I attended Saladin's "Orient-Occident" seminar, and he invited me to spend a month in Igloolik with him and his son **Guillaume** that summer, just a couple of months after the end of my winter field trip with Nelson. This was a different trip from my winter experience with Nelson: staying in one place for four weeks, and in the summer. It was light day and night, people would stay up till morning and get up at noon; and instead of a landscape of snow, it was dirt roads and ice-free ponds. We both stayed in a house in the built village and in

Bernard Saladin d'Anglure and his wife Françoise at the window of their Paris apartment in July 2023. Photo by Louis-Jacques Dorais

tents in the summer camps. The village seemed divided evenly between Catholic and Protestant parishes. I was interviewing Saladin's informants, who were mostly women from the Catholic population of the village, with the help of an Inuit translator. Saladin was gathering data on adoption and was at that time developing his "third gender" theory, which was so unique then and seems now incredibly current and visionary. The two of us spoke of shamanism at length, which interested me greatly as well.

I got along with Bernard. I had read many of the authors who were important to him, including, of course, his thesis supervisor **Claude Levi-Strauss**, and I was knowledgeable about Siberia, which was of interest to him. We spoke the same language, but more than that we had the same accent and expressions, which somewhat created a community between us, two "French from France". He had by then made a beautiful life for himself in Québec, but he was clearly glad to hear a recent perspective from "the old country". Bernard ended up moving back to France later in life and was able to reconcile his love for his two countries through his collaboration and life with his wife, anthropologist **Françoise Morin**.

My personal view is that Saladin, coming from a traditional, "Vieille France" (Old France) Catholic family, not only passionately wanted to understand shamanism, but really wished to be himself a shaman. I think he managed to reconcile these two seemingly opposite spiritualities as well as he reconciled his nationalities, if only by naming his son Guillaume Iktuksarjuat, after a relative of his informant Kupaaq, who was, in Saladin's words, "known as the 'King of the Igloolik'", because he was the best hunter in the region and was trained as a shaman.

In the middle of my month in Igloolik we took a boat, reached another small community close by, and stayed a few days with an important elder, **Rose Ijallijuq** (1905–2000), who was first described as a young girl in training to become a shaman by **Knut Rasmussen** during the 5th Thule expedition, and a major informant for Saladin. Ijallijuq became a devoted Christian. She prayed every morning in the next room for a very long time when we were there, in a way I never heard anyone pray. I loved visiting with her. We couldn't exchange words, but she observed me with a smile in her eyes. We would laugh. I am grateful for Bernard taking me to meet her, and grateful for many other encounters, including with a small girl, Amimiarjuq, who would come hang out when I was organizing my notes back at the house, playing, trying on my clothes, or drawing next to me. During this month of excellent non-verbal communication, we became friends, and I think of her often as well. The year 1986 changed me, and I am, like many, forever grateful to Nelson and Bernard for the adventures, intellectual exchanges, teachings, and friendship

BERNARD SALADIN D'ANGLURE (1936–2025): CHAMPION OF INUIT SPIRITUALITY AND CULTURAL RIGHTS

By Igor Krupnik

Bernard Saladin d'Anglure, French-born Canadian/French anthropologist and world-known expert in Inuit spiritual culture passed away on February 13, 2025, in Toulouse, France. He was 88. For over thirty years, Pirnaq (as he was known among the Inuit) was a professor of anthropology at Université Laval in Quebec, where he helped advance the study of the Inuit—their cultures, languages, and contemporary issues—to the forefront of Canadian and French research. The Université Laval site rightly called him "…the greatest French-speaking specialist on the Inuit and among the world's leading anthropologists studying shamanism," which pretty much summarizes his status among scholars of the North. It leaves aside his activist agenda that made his name well known among the Inuit, across Arctic Canada and the circumpolar world.

Pirnaq was born in France but spent most of his adult life in Canada which he first visited at the age of 19, spending time in the Inuit communities of Quaqtaq and, later on, Kangiqsujuaq in Northern Quebec, now Nunavik. He received his MA in Anthropology in

Bernard Saladin d'Anglure (to the right) at the Handbook's Arctic publication party at NMNH on January 24, 1985, with (left to right) Joanna Cohan Scherer, Judy Crawley Wojcik, Cesare Marino, Ives Goddard, James VanStone (seated), and David Damas, volume editor. Photo by Harold Dougherty, NAA (85-1136-17)

1964 at the Université de Montréal and his Ph.D. in Ethnology from the École pratique des hautes études in Paris in 1971, studying under **Claude Lévi-Strauss**. He was hired by Université Laval in 1971 and spent his entire academic career in Canada traveling widely across the Canadian Arctic and, in later years, also to Siberia and the Amazon. Geographically, his research was centered first on Nunavik, and then in Igloolik, Nunavut, whereas thematically it was dedicated to the studies of Inuit shamanism, cosmogony, kinship systems, beliefs in reincarnation, and other aspects of Inuit spiritual life. He was one of the last "mid-20th century" anthropologists who lived a long time among the Inuit, became fluent in Inuktitut, and was expert in many intimate aspects of Inuit worldview. He interviewed hundreds of Inuit Elders who remembered the 'olden days' and published their stories in Inuktitut, as well as in French and English.

Among his many contributions, was his use of audio-visual techniques to collect ethnographic data. He produced, helped launch, and consulted on over twenty films, both academic and for the general public, including the famous *Atanarjuat: The Fast Runner* by Inuit filmmaker **Zacharias Kunuk** (2001). He collaborated for decades with the Igloolik-based Isuma Productions/Isuma TV, an Inuit-owned TV, film, and broadcasting company established in 1990. His son, **Guillaume Saladin**, is one of the founding members of the Inuit circus troupe Artcirq, which is also an offshoot of *Isuma* (which means "to think," in Inuktitut).

As a young professor at Université Laval in the 1970s, Bernard supervised and mentored a cohort of students, who were sent to Inuit communities across Nunavik and Nunavut (then still called 'Quebec' and 'Northwest Territories,' respectively). Together with another young Laval professor, **Louis-Jacques Dorais**, he marshalled their enthusiasm into what became known as the Inuksiutiit Group (literally: "things or people having to do with the Inuit"). In 1974, they established a non-profit organization, Association Inuksiutiit Katimajiit co-founded by Saladin d'Anglure, Dorais, and **Jimmy Innaarulik Mark**, an Inuk from Ivujivik, with the aim to "promote, develop, and disseminate knowledge on Inuit culture, language, and society." Two of their accomplishments stood out: the launch of a bilingual academic journal, *Études Inuit Studies* (in 1977), and of the biennial "Inuit Studies Conferences" (since 1978). Bernard was instrumental in both initiatives which continue to thrive today. We hosted the 18th Inuit Studies Conference, *Arctic/Inuit Connections: Learning from the Top of the World* in Washington, D.C. in 2012 that brought some 600 participants to the Smithsonian, including Bernard.

Here, at the Smithsonian we also remember Bernard as one of the contributors to the "Arctic" volume of the seminal Handbook of North American Indians series published in 1984 under the editorship of David Damas. For that volume, Bernard wrote two chapters, *Inuit of Quebec* and *Contemporary Inuit of Quebec*. A photo of white-bearded Bernard at the Smithsonian reception for the Handbook's *Arctic* volume in January 1985 was recently published in the most recent volume of the Handbook series, its *Introduction* (2022, p.540).

In 1987, Saladin d'Anglure helped launch yet another research venture at Université Laval called the Groupe d'Études inuit et circumpolaires (GÉTIC). In 2004, he was instrumental in transforming it into a more robust Inter-university Centre for Indigenous Studies and Research (**CIERA**) dedicated to the studies of Indigenous peoples and their communities worldwide. This man was just unstoppable! He authored some one hundred and sixteen scholarly publications, including seventeen books and thematic journal issues, of which ten are texts written by the Inuit or collected from them. He was awarded Canada's Northern Science Award in 2001 and became Member of the Order of Canada in 2011. His knowledge, energy, and activism on behalf of the people of the Arctic will be greatly missed.

RHODA AKPALIAPIK KARETAK (1933–2024)

By Bernadette Driscoll Engelstad

Rhoda Akpaliapik Karetak of Arviat, Nunavut, was a gifted seamstress, knowledgeable cultural historian, and wise mentor to many within and beyond the North. Grieving the loss of Inuit cultural traditions

over the course of her lifetime, Rhoda worked with fierce determination to reclaim, preserve, and share the vital significance of Inuit knowledge and cultural practice across the Canadian Arctic. As close friends of my graduate supervisor, George Swinton, Rhoda and her husband, Johnny Karetak (1930–2017)—a Special Constable with the RCMP for twenty-five years—kindly offered to pick me up at the airport when I arrived in Arviat in 1978 to begin fieldwork on Inuit clothing design. It was the start of a cherished decades-long friendship with Rhoda and her exceptional family, and our paths continued to cross over the years in the North as well as in Winnipeg, New York, London, and Washington, D.C.

In 1980, the Winnipeg Art Gallery (WAG) organized the exhibition, *The Inuit Amautik: I like my hood to be full*. The exhibit gallery opened with a striking photograph of Rhoda's grandmother, Nivisannaq, dressed in a beaded parka, a portrait taken by **A. P. Low** at the whaling station at Qatikilik (Cape Fullerton) in 1903-04. In conjunction with the Amautik exhibit, the WAG hosted a series of workshops led by Rhoda's younger sister, **Annie Napayok**—also a gifted seamstress—and Rhoda's daughter, noted designer, **Charlotte St. John**. In 1985, the Amautik exhibition travelled to Belgium and the Netherlands as part of the 40th Anniversary celebration of the Canadian Forces' critical role in liberating these nations during the WWII Rhoda's daughters, **Charlotte St. John** and **Selma Eccles** attended the exhibit opening by **HRH Princess Margriet** at the Zonnhof Museum in Amersfoort, Netherlands.

In 1999, Rhoda and her niece, **Bernadette Miqqusaaq Dean**, searched out Nivisannaq's beaded parka, known in the North only by the photographs of **Nivisannaq** (widely known as 'shoofly') which had been taken by **A.P. Low** and Captain **George Comer** at Qatiktalik. Eventually locating the parka in the collection of the American Museum of Natural History, they travelled to New York to photograph and record detailed measurements. During this visit, they were also able to identify related components of Nivisannaq's outfit that had been displaced in the collection over time. In 2001, Rhoda and Bernadette joined the *Annuraaq: Arctic Clothing* symposium organized by curator **Jonathan King** at the British Museum. In addition to a showcase of traditional and contemporary clothing by Inuit designers from across the North, the symposium highlighted a series of drawings by Rhoda describing stylistic variations in women's parkas across Nunavut. The exhibit catalogue, *Arctic Clothing of North America—Alaska, Canada, and Greenland*, remains a vital source of information embracing personal narratives as well as insightful commentary on material production, regional clothing styles, material techniques, and the transformation in Arctic clothing design in response to outside influence.

Rhoda Akpaliapik Karetak and Bernadette Miqqusaaq Dean with Bert Dean and Laila Williamson at the American Museum of Natural History, 1999. Photo by B. D. Engelstad

The discovery of Nivisannaq's parka at the AMNH provided inspiration for the major documentary, *Inuit Piqutingit: What Belongs to Inuit*, co-produced by **Zacharias Kunuk** and Bernadette Miqqusaaq Dean in which Rhoda and a team of Inuit elders and educators researched the historical collections of Inuit cultural belongings at the American Museum of Natural History (New York, NY); the University of Pennsylvania Museum of Anthropology and Archaeology (Philadelphia, PA); the Smithsonian National Museum of the American Indian and National Museum of Natural History (Washington, D.C.); the Canadian Museum of History (Ottawa); and the Royal Ontario Museum (Toronto). In the closing minutes of Inuit Piqutingit, Rhoda voices deep regret that such an invaluable legacy of Inuit cultural heritage remains in museums so far distant from the North—yet tempers her distress by noting her relief that such an irreplaceable legacy has been preserved and cared for over time. As Nunavut moves forward to establish a state-of-the-art Inuit Heritage Centre within its own homeland, these far-spread collections will undoubtedly serve as a vital source for future collaboration as well as staff training, research, exhibitions, and educational programming.

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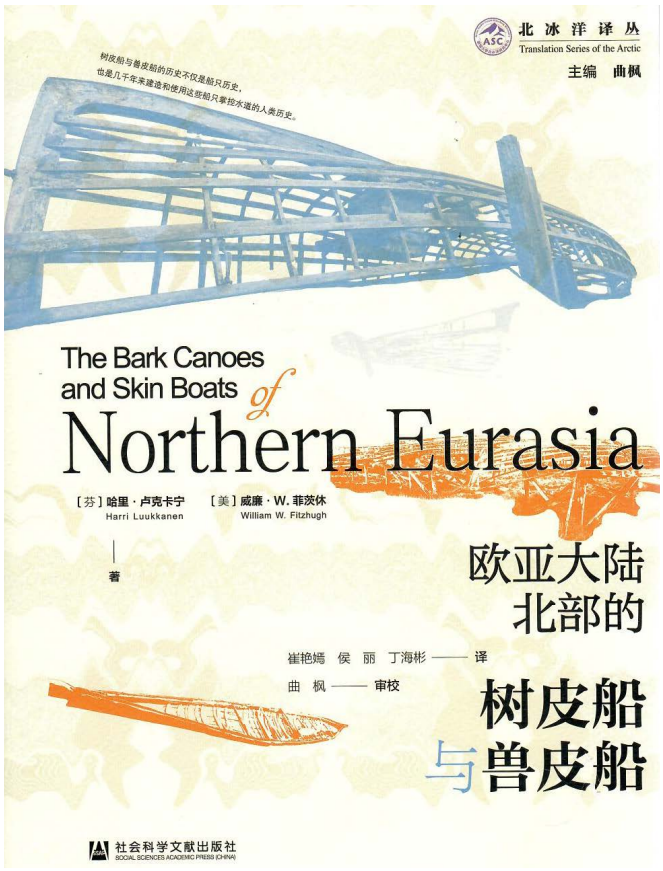

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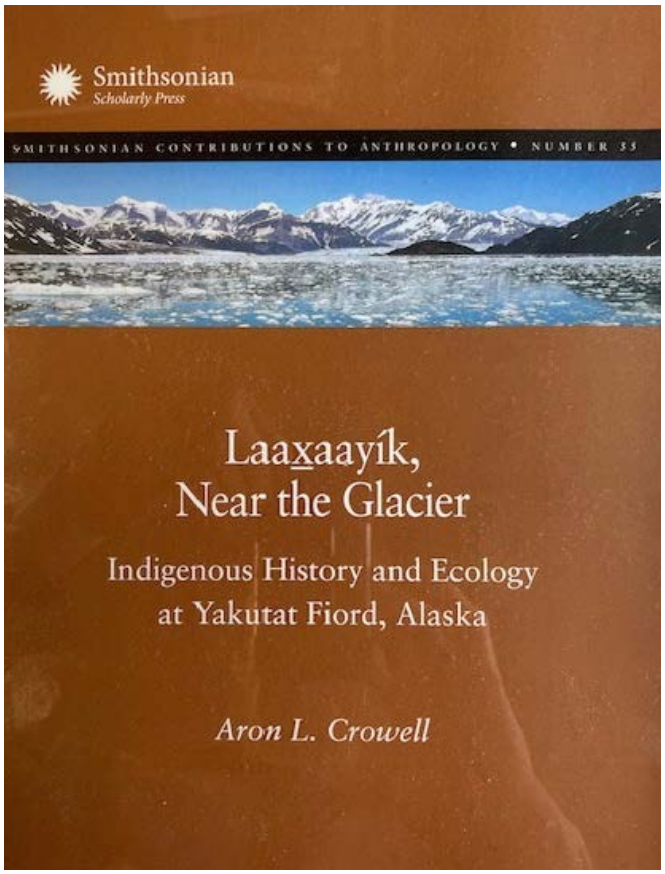

Laaxaayík: Near the Glacier: Indigenous History and Ecology at Yakutat Fiord, Alaska*, by Aron Crowell*

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