

NOTES FROM THE DIRECTOR

By *William W. Fitzhugh*

The year 2020, I am sure, will remain etched in our memories even more clearly than other recent decadal anniversaries like Y2K and 2010, not because of astronomical calendrics, but for the pain, widespread suffering, and strangeness of the COVID-19 pandemic experience across the globe. The Smithsonian has been closed to staff and the public since March; office files, collections, and research materials have been unavailable to scholars, curators, and visitors; borders have been closed to fieldwork and conferencing; and we have lost direct contact with our friends and colleagues—some permanently.

2020 is also likely to be remembered as a watershed for the changes it brought to our lives. Our explosive entry into the “zoom” era is revolutionizing how we work and interact with colleagues in both our professional and personal lives. While personally distant, we are electronically only a finger stroke away from multitudes, and we are more connected than ever to distant families and friends. Zoom meetings and

webinars have crowded our calendars and competed with normal work and personal schedules. Physical isolating, the muffled voices of masked communicating, and the unending uncertainty of ‘where we go from here’ have left lives in limbo and futures uncertain. More broadly, COVID is forcing momentous changes in societies worldwide, with unknown outcomes. Gone is the future we expected. Change is everywhere.

Despite ‘these strange times,’ life at the ASC, Museum, and Smithsonian moved forward. At the Natural History Museum we welcomed Dr. **Rebecca Johnson** as NMNH Assistant Director for Science, bringing outstanding credentials in conservation biology and genetics from the Australian Museum. **Ian Owens** announced his departure from Deputy Director to head the Ornithological Laboratory at Cornell University. At the SI Castle, SI Secretary **Lonnie Bunch** settled his leadership team and initiated a broad set of Smithsonian policies promoting social justice and reflection on how the Smithsonian can improve itself and strengthen its role as a morally tuned educational institution. With the rise of the ‘Black Lives Matter’ movement, the urgency to address the continuing inequity, social injustice,



The ASC virtual meeting on April 9, 2021, left to right: Nancy Shorey, Igor Chechushkov, John Cloud, Dawn Biddison, Fiona Steiwer, Bernadette Engelstad, Stephen Loring, Aron Crowell, William Fitzhugh, Igor Krupnik, and Schuyler Litten

and racism in science and society has put these issues prominently on the Smithsonian and NMNH agenda.

One thing is certain: the pandemic has shown that we must upgrade our digital and remote outreach capabilities. One has to ask: why have such a huge institution, such huge collections, if we can't open our storerooms, cannot exhibit objects for lack of exhibit space, and cannot make collections available digitally? With truth, social justice, and democracy at stake, the Smithsonian mission is needed more than ever to reach the broad public audiences nationally and world-wide who cannot visit Washington?

At first, this newsletter seemed like it would be smaller than usual because of COVID restrictions on research and travel. So I decided to add a feature: "COVID-19 and the Arctic". What happened was unexpected; stories have rolled in from every direction—some that had been destined for delivery at our cancelled panel, "COVID-19: The Smithsonian Response" from Iceland's Arctic Circle Forum in October. We are also featuring the talk given by our 2020 Ernest S. Burch Lecturer, **Brendan Griebel**, "The Language of Inuinnait Heritage Research" describing a renewed brand of collaboration being conducted by researchers, museums, and the community of Cambridge Bay, Nunavut, Canada.

This year has brought other milestones. **Igor Krupnik**, navigating the Anthropology Department through troubled COVID waters, has, with **Aron Crowell**, seen publication of their 555p edited *Arctic Crashes* volume—a certain future prize-winner. He and Aron also completed editing, with the assistance of **Kenn Harper**, a set of papers from the special session in Nome, Alaska, in February 2019, commemorating the centennial of the Danish Fifth Thule Expedition (1921–24) led by Danish explorer-folklorist, **Knud Rasmussen**. **Dawn Biddison** has produced a new multi-media educational website with the Smithsonian's Learning Lab/SCLDA that provides nationwide access to SI Arctic materials in collaboration with Indigenous scholars. The Alaska office is funded largely by grants and donations. Along with Anthropology's Repatriation and Recovering Voices Programs, the Alaska office has been a model showing how Smithsonian resources can reach beyond D.C. masonry to communities regionally, nationally, and globally.

While **Stephen Loring** and I have not been able to pursue fieldwork, we have been active planning exhibits. Stephen assisted the NMNH "Dark Sky" exhibit, and he and I have helped develop "Visions of the Boreal Forest," being produced by SITES, the Smithsonian's Traveling Exhibit Service, which is now touring our

former narwhal show. I continued work on Quebec, Labrador, and Mongolia manuscripts and saw my book co-authored with **Harri Luukkanen**, *The Bark Canoes and Skin Boats of Northern Eurasia* published by Smithsonian Books. With **David Nordlander** and **Nana Naisbitt**, I submitted a collaborative proposal to the National Science Foundation with Dartmouth College for "Polar Explorer: Connecting Science and People through an Arctic Digital Library," requesting funds to test a prototype multi-institution digital network of Arctic research and educational materials.

Our growing cadre of ASC Associates have also been busy. **Amy Chan**, Director of the Carrie McLean Museum in Nome, Alaska, put the finishing touches on her Alaska drill-bow book, *Our Stories Etched in Ivory / Qulip'yugut Iksiaqtuumaruat Tuugaami*, designed by **Igor Chechushkov**. **Ann Fienup-Riordan** published books on Yup'ik relations with animals and with fish; **John Cloud** submitted a paper for a Sorbonne publication analyzing the Chesapeake battles of the U.S. Revolutionary War; **Kenneth Pratt** wrote on oral history records of ecosystem change in the Yukon Delta; **Bernadette Engelstad** published articles and prepared exhibit proposals featuring Inuit clothing; and **Theodore Timreck** completed his magnum film opus, *Ancient Sea Peoples of the North Atlantic* that documents five decades of ASC collaboration.

While 2020 has been surprising in many ways, we have not been surprised by our many friends and supporters, whom we thank for their spirit and generosity. When earthquakes, fires, and upheavals struck we often heard from abroad. This year the pandemic brought kind communications from **Koji Deriha**, **Elisa Palomino**, and many others. When the January 6, 2021 uprising took place at the U.S. Capitol, **Jean-Loup Rousselot** wrote from Tallinn, Estonia: "We were almost crying, watching those pictures... [Europeans] go hand in hand [with the U.S.] in the same direction, even if we have arguments once in a while."

In this year of human rights and equity issues, I close with a note of thanks to our colleague, **Noel Broadbent**. Noel has been an ASC Research Associate for many years. He and I met in 1971 in Uppsala when he was 'politically isolating' in Sweden during the Vietnam conflict; later he became a professor and created an Arctic Center at Umeå University in Umeå, Sweden. In 1989 he moved back to the U.S. to become the first Arctic Social Science program director at NSF/Polar Programs. Retiring 1997, he returned to Umeå, for a few years before returning to DC in 2004 to join the ASC. There he wrote *Lapps and Labyrinths* and became a cherished member of SI Anthropology. We begin this year's NL with Noel's brief account of his NSF tenure.

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STAFF

William Fitzhugh, ASC Director, and N. America Arch. Curator: *fitzhugh@si.edu*
Aron Crowell, Alaska Director and Arctic Archaeologist: *crowella@si.edu*
Igor Krupnik, Curator and Ethnologist: *krupniki@si.edu*
Stephen Loring, Museum Anthropologist, and Arctic Archaeologist: *lorings@si.edu*
Dawn Biddison, ASC Alaska, Museum Specialist: *biddison@si.edu*
Nancy Shorey, Program Specialist: *shoreyn@si.edu*
Fiona Steiwer, Research Assist.: *fsteiwer@gmail.com*

RESEARCH ASSOCIATES AND COLLABORATORS

Bruce Bradley, Cortez, CO: *primtech@yahoo.com*
Judith Varney Burch, Charlottesville, VA: *judithvarneyburch@gmail.com*
John Cloud, Washington, D.C.: *cloudj@si.edu*
Bernadette Driscoll Engelstad, Kensington, MD: *bdengelstad@gmail.com*
Ann Fienup-Riordan, Anchorage, AK: *riordan@alaska.net*
Norman Hallendy, Carp, Ontario, Canada, *tukilik@icloud.com*
Scott Heyes, Australia: *sheyes@hotmail.com*
William Honeychurch, Yale University: *william.honeychurch@yale.edu*
Kenneth Pratt, BIA, Anchorage, AK: *kenneth.pratt@bia.gov*
Wilfred E. Richard, Maine: *34pondroad@gmail.com*
Ted Timreck, New York, NY: *ttimreck@gmail.com*
Cristopher B. Wolff, SUNY, Plattsburgh, NY: *cwolff@albany.edu*

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POLAR DREAMS: THE BIRTH OF INTERDISCIPLINARY ARCTIC SOCIAL SCIENCE, RESEARCH ETHICS, AND ITS GLOBAL VISION. NOTES FROM THE 1990S

By Noel Broadbent

“Polar Dreams” is a homage to *Arctic Dreams: Imagination and Desire in a Northern Landscape* by the late **Barry Lopez**.

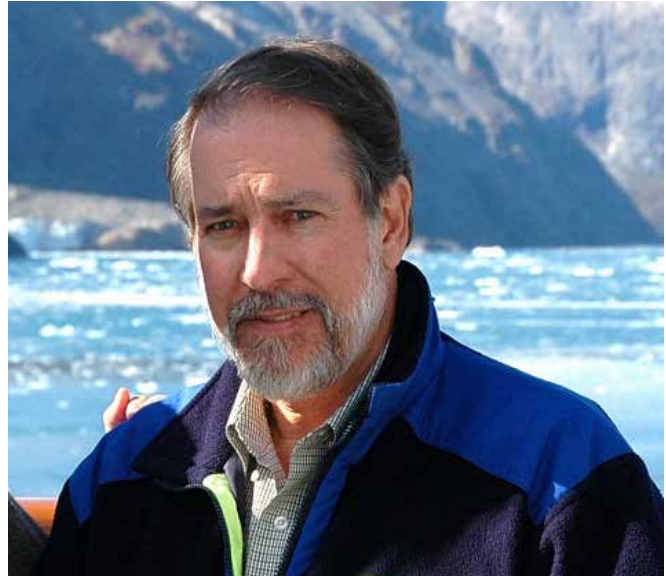
During the pandemic I found myself going through old files and notes relating to the first years of the Arctic Social Science Program at NSF, three program directors and 30 years ago. I want to revisit some of the issues I experienced during my tenure, 1989-1997, and some of the lessons learned from the program. I think it is important to remind people of these things. First, is the significance of the “Principles for the Conduct of Research in the Arctic” statement and its close connection with health issues that harken back to the Nuremberg war crime trials. Second, the continued significance of interdisciplinary science as it relates to global change.

I was a northern (Nordic) archaeologist by training in Sweden and had been the director of the Center for Arctic Cultural Research in Umea for seven years before starting at NSF. I had been involved in circumpolar health issues through the International Union for Circumpolar Health (IUCH) and had also worked in Zimbabwe through the Swedish International Development Agency; my research perspective was decidedly international.

The Global Perspective

Three events set the stage for the Arctic social sciences program: the Exxon Valdez oil spill in Alaska, the Chernobyl nuclear disaster in Ukraine and northwestern Europe, and the collapse of the Soviet Union. The Arctic Council was being put together at about the same time and, following the Arctic research conference in Leningrad (St Petersburg) in 1988, the international social sciences community came together to create the International Arctic Social Sciences Association (IASSA), whose bylaws were approved in Fairbanks in 1990. IASSA was directly inspired by the International Union for Circumpolar Health (IUCH). One element, the formulation of research ethics, would have lasting significance, not only concerning indigenous involvement in research, but the legal and moral significance of informed consent, the foundational concept at Nuremberg.

I was charged with initiating and operating the Arctic social sciences program at NSF starting in 1989. The guide was the PRB Report “Arctic Social Sciences:



Noel Broadbent. Photo by www.pbs.org

an Agenda for Action.” I had a small budget to work with, and I was to produce a program announcement, assemble a proposal review committee, and formulate an ethics statement for the Interagency Arctic Research Policy Committee. I was the only social scientist in the Division of Polar Programs, which was in the Geosciences Division at that time.

The working environment at the Division of Polar Programs was far from unproblematic; there was a good deal of antagonism toward “social” scientists by some, and also between the Antarctic and Arctic (read Alaska) programs in general. My new program announcement was “welcomed” by having it torn in half and dropped at my feet by a senior executive of the Antarctic program. The antagonism decreased somewhat, however, when I found myself coordinating an archaeological clean-up of East Base, the first U.S. research station in Antarctica in 1939; published in *National Geographic* (March 1993). Although the later separation of the Arctic and Antarctic programs was understandable for political reasons I am not sure if this served global science.

Joint Funding: a strategy to increase funds and also a stimulus for interdisciplinary research

Funding was still a problem although I managed to get more through joint funding with non-polar programs. I got extra money from other directorates, especially informal science education, archaeology, cultural anthropology, and linguistics programs, etc., and I established a dissertation improvement grant program in Polar Programs. I also put together a human factors program jointly with NASA and funded research at the

South Pole looking into the effects of isolation, small group interactions, and gender. Active indigenous participation in science was enhanced when I made it possible for Native communities to receive grants directly, thus avoiding university overheads (up to 90%). The creation of an Alaska Native Science Commission was also intended to encourage Native science.

Ethics and the *Picou et al.* Case

Grants were going out and the program was doing well in 1991 when the director of geosciences passed along a letter from Exxon to the NSF Director demanding the termination of a university project involving “secondary disasters” (economic, social, psychological) of the Valdez oil spill. This was a peer-reviewed project that had conducted interviews and promised anonymity of respondents in accordance with our “Principles for the Conduct of Research in the Arctic.”

We wrote back, explained the peer review process, and suggested Exxon contact the principal investigators directly. I also provided an affidavit regarding the “Principles” statement and the ethical rules expected of the P.I. Exxon responded by suing the P.I.s, and demanding copies of all project data, including interviews, and the P.I.’s personal financial records. Exxon had previously won their legal challenges to social scientists in Alaska and had been given access to the respondents’ interviews. The *Picou et al.* case went on for a year. But for the first time in U.S. jurisprudence the case was won by social scientists. Their data and subjects were protected because of the “Principles” document which had been part of their contract. This was a monumental achievement, established a legal precedent under U.S. law, and has protected researchers and the public for three decades. IASSA later endorsed its own statement as did other organizations around the world.

Special thanks to **Oran Young** who was so influential in convincing the NSF to start the Arctic social sciences program, and to **Jerry Brown, Peter Wilkniss, and Bob Corell** at NSF for their wisdom and guidance through the first years of the program and, last but not least, **Bill Fitzhugh** at the Smithsonian, for 40 years of inspiration, opportunity and friendship.

[Editor’s Note: As the first director of NSF’s social science program, Noel Broadbent pioneered a niche for social science that has continued to expand to this day. His promotion of research ethics and indigenous collaboration turned a hard science approach toward recognition of social responsibilities of science, provided funding for indigenous organizations, and paved the way for similar policy changes throughout the U.S. government.]

PANDEMICS 1918 AND TODAY

HOW IS ALASKA LEADING THE NATION IN VACCINATING RESIDENTS? WITH BOATS, FERRIES, PLANES AND SNOWBOBILES

By Cathy Free

With permission from The Washington Post 2 Feb, 2021

Alaska, the state with the largest land mass in the nation, is leading the country in a critical coronavirus measure: per capita vaccinations. About 13 percent of the people who live in Alaska have already gotten a shot. That’s higher than states such as West Virginia, which has received a lot of attention for a successful vaccine rollout and has inoculated 11 percent of its people. But the challenge for Alaska has been how to get vaccines to people across difficult, frigid terrain—often in remote slivers of the state? “Boats, ferries, planes, snowmobiles—Alaskans will find a way to get it there,” said the state’s chief medical officer, **Anne Zink**, 43.

Alaskans are being vaccinated on fishing boats, inside 10-seater planes and on frozen landing strips. Doctors and nurses are taking white-knuckle trips to towns and villages across the state to ensure residents are protected from the coronavirus. Contributing to Alaska’s quick speed in getting the vaccine to its residents is a federal partnership that allows the state, which has more than 200 indigenous tribes, to receive additional vaccines to distribute through the Indian Health Service.

Other reasons include the state’s small population of 732,000, as well as a high number of veterans, Zink said. The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs is working with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to ensure that high-risk veterans receive priority for the vaccine. But one big reason is the state is practiced in delivering precious cargo by transport not often used in the Lower 48. Sometimes that even means adventures by sled. One all-female medical crew of four in December used a sled pulled by a snowmobile to deliver vaccine to the village of Shungnak in the state’s remote Northwest Arctic Borough. “It’s just an easier way to get around when you don’t have a lot of roads,” said **Kelli Shroyer**, public communications director for the Maniilaq Health Center in Kotzebue, Alaska, where the crew started their journey. Shroyer added that people sometimes get picked up from the airport in a sled, and high school sports teams will at times travel to one another’s gyms by sled, too.

Zink was so impressed by the sled crew’s delivery in December that she posted about it on her Facebook page. “I love the pictures of vaccination distribution in

Alaska,” she wrote. “Recipients expressed how grateful they were that even though they are so remote, they are getting this vaccine. They are not forgotten.”

Elders from some tribes recall stories about the 1918 flu pandemic, which decimated entire villages, she said. “The stories have lived on,” Zink said. “One chief told me how his grandmother took his mother out to the wilderness for a year so that she would be safe. When they returned, they learned that most of their village had died... We are stronger as a state because of that history... For me, the way that villages were able to recover from that trauma speaks to what we need to do to keep moving forward.” Thousands of Alaskans are playing a role in getting people vaccinated, Zink said.

Curt Jackson used to employ his water taxi, Orca, to shuttle tourists from the small city of Homer to villages across Kachemak Bay that aren’t accessible by roads. In late December, Jackson received a request to take three nurses across the bay to Seldovia, a town with about 450 residents, including members of the Seldovia Village Tribe. Planes couldn’t fly that morning because of weather, and the water was rough. When the women climbed aboard his 32-foot aluminum landing craft and took seats in the windy darkness, Jackson said, he noticed that the woman in the middle, Candace Kreger, was clutching a bright blue cooler. That was when he realized that the women were traveling with the precious doses.

“With a strict time frame [for the Pfizer vaccine], there was no option for us to postpone vaccinations,” said Kreger, 40, a licensed nurse care coordinator from Homer. “On any other day, the rough ride would not have been as nerve-racking if [the] vaccine hadn’t been involved,” she said.

For **Ellen Hodges**, a doctor from Bethel, Alaska, the coronavirus vaccination effort is the most rewarding project in which she has been involved, she said. Hodges, 46, has flown to several villages in a six-seater plane to vaccinate medical workers and elders, who meet her on the runway. “We land in the isolated tundra, and they’ll be lined up waiting,” she said. “Some places have up to 30 people, and some have only one.” Even if there’s just one person, the trip is worth it. When the weather is especially cold, said Hodges, medical crews often upgrade to 10-seater planes so people can climb aboard and get inoculated inside. “If you turn around the last two seats in the plane, it works out perfectly,” she said.

Tribal leaders say they are appreciative of the creative approach the state has taken—resorting to planes, sleds and snowmobiles. “You have to be resilient and self-sufficient to live in Alaska,” said **Crystal Collier**, president and CEO of the Seldovia Village Tribe.

“We have a lot of multifamily households, so we’re extremely grateful to see these vaccines arrive.”

Collier, 61, was not at all surprised to learn that Jackson had piloted his boat through heavy seas to get the first vaccines to her village. “People here look out for each other,” she said. Jackson has a new nickname since his turbulent voyage across the bay, he said. Some of his friends are now calling him “Captain Balto.” Balto was a lead sled dog for a team in 1925 that made a heroic transport of diphtheria vaccine across nearly 700 miles of Alaska, from Nenana to Nome. The Iditarod Trail was the only accessible route at the time during winter. “I was glad I didn’t have to go that far,” Jackson said. “But when we made it across [the bay], I got a little choked up, happy that I helped play a part in it.”

A 1925 EPIDEMIC IN THE LOWER YUKON, ALASKA

By Kenneth L. Pratt

Over the past 45 years, research performed pursuant to Section 14(h)(1) of the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (ANCSA) has produced a massive, diverse and unparalleled collection of data about Alaska’s indigenous history (see Pratt 2009). Managed by the Bureau of Indian Affairs, Alaska Region, it is known as the “ANCSA 14(h)(1) Collection.” This article provides an example of its rich content by briefly discussing selected details about two sites in Alaska’s Lower Yukon region: Tupicuar and Putukulek. They occupy a flat, marshy and mostly treeless landscape—dominated by an intricate maze of rivers, sloughs, lakes and ponds—inland from the south bank of the Yukon River (Kuigpak). Neither site is described in the historical literature so the only source of data about them is indigenous oral history. Yup’ik elders **Noel Polty** (*Kumkaq*, 1919–1991) and **Wassilie Evan** (*Anguyagpak*, 1907–1993) provided the majority of ethnographic information summarized below (e.g., Polty and Evan 1985). Quotes in English from these elders were translated from Yup’ik by interpreter **Ben Fitka** (*Ussukcaq*, 1921–1993).

Tupicuar and *Putukulek* were affiliated with the former winter village of Cuqartalek and, later, modern Pilot Station (Tuutalgaq) and Pitkas Point (Negeqliim Painga). Used primarily as spring, fall and winter camps for fishing (blackfish, whitefish, lush, pike) and hunting (mink, muskrat), both sites were described as “very old.” They were certainly in use prior to ca. 1900.

Tupicuar

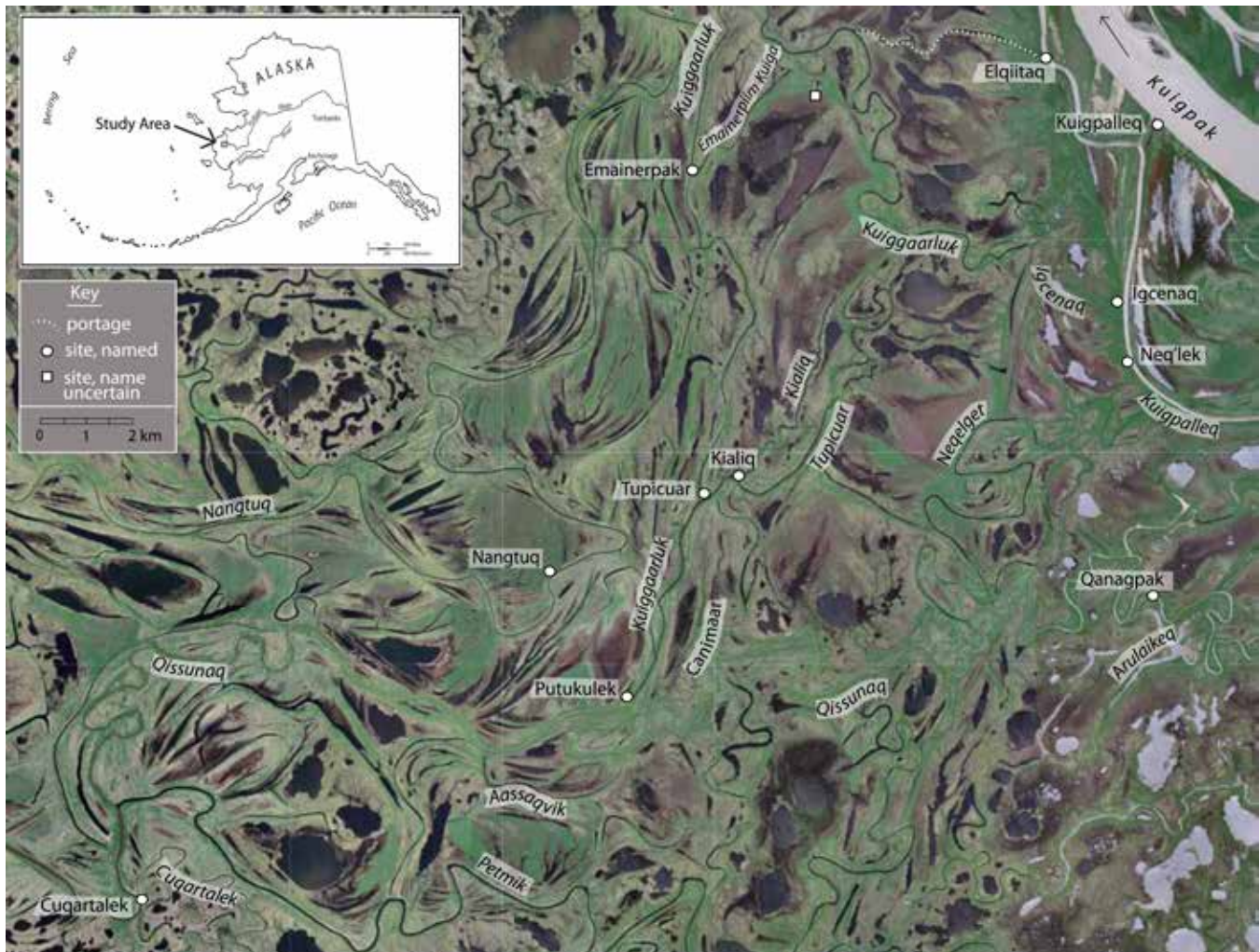
Tupicuar is located at the confluence of the Kuiggaarluk and Tupicuar rivers, about 14 km northeast of Cuqartalek. One of Tupicuar’s former occupants was a

female shaman named **Tut'angaq**, who was originally from a site near Qagan, a large lake some 20 km west of Cuqartalek. Her power reportedly came from a parka made out of seal intestines: by shaking the parka a voice would speak to Tut'angaq and instruct her on how to cure a sick or injured person. It was also said that her bodily movements were similar to those of a river otter, evidently due to someone having placed an otter on her mother's stomach before Tut'angaq was born.

In the winter of ca. 1925 a "big flu" struck the Lower Yukon region and lasted for six or more months. When the flu first appeared, Tut'angaq was living at Tupicuar with her husband **Aviraulqutaq** (who also was from the Qagan area), son **Uutuuk**, sister **Al'aller**, brother-in-law **Pistu'rluq** and another man named **Tan'gurralleq**. All of these individuals had wintered at Putukulek before moving to Tupicuar (Polty and Evan

1985). Not long after the flu appeared Aviraulqutaq and Pistu'rluq fell ill and died. Tut'angaq and Al'aller "buried" them by placing the bodies in kayaks, which were then folded in half. Uutuuk and Tan'gurralleq were also sick with the flu. The boy was capable of traveling but Tan'gurralleq was not; so the women and boy left Tupicuar, heading downriver to Putukulek to seek help for Tan'gurralleq. (Al'aller later moved to Kuigglualler, a site near the Kuigpak where her relatives lived [Polty and Evan 1985]).

By late winter the flu had grown to epidemic proportions. Individuals who were uninfected and still capable of traveling were afraid of contracting the flu, so most stayed put in their villages. As a result, Tan'gurralleq was not seen again until spring, when a young man named **Nung'aq** passed Tupicuar on his way to the Kuigpak and found Tan'gurralleq alive



*Study area showing its complex geography and associated Yup'ik place names. Local people used the portage at Elqiitaq as a short-cut (via the Kuiggaarluk) to the Qissunaq, which was reached at Putukulek. Using that route to Putukulek saved miles of paddling compared to traveling to the site by way of the Qissunaq's extremely sinuous, uppermost stretches. Map created by **Robert Drozda** (base satellite imagery courtesy of Earthstar Geographics and ESRI)*

but seriously ill. When **Nung'aq** reached **Neq'lek** he told Tan'gurralleq's nephew, **Yugissaq**, of his uncle's condition. Yugissaq instructed Nung'aq to stay at *Neq'lek* because many people in the Kuigpak area were sick (Polty and Evan 1985). Yugissaq left for Tupicuar soon thereafter but he arrived too late: Tan'gurralleq was found lying dead inside a house with his head resting on a 50-pound sack of flour. His body could not be handled because it had begun to decompose, so Yugissaq buried Tan'gurralleq by collapsing the walls of the sod house on him. Tan'gurralleq had lost his wife, **Qivcauq**, to the flu the previous winter; she died at Elqिताq and was either buried there or at Negeqliim Painga, where her relatives lived (Polty 1985).

Tupicuar fell out of regular use as a result of the epidemic. But Yugissaq's son and daughter-in-law (**Noel** and **Agnese Polty**) subsequently spring camped at the site on numerous occasions into the 1970s. In 1985, ANCSA researchers recorded the remains of four semisubterranean dwellings at Tupicuar—one of which was confirmed (Polty 1985) as the house in which **Tan'gurralleq** was buried. No physical evidence of other reported graves was found. Along with the three people who died at *Tupicuar* in ca. 1925-1926, two more individuals were known to have been buried at the site: **Matvii** and **Kumkaq** (another uncle of Yugissaq) (Polty 1985).

Putukulek

Putukulek is located at the confluence of the *Qissunaq* and *Kuiggaarluk* rivers, about 5 km downstream on the *Kuiggaarluk* from Tupicuar and 10 km northeast of Cuqartalek. Most people who camped at the site returned to Cuqartalek for the winter but some stayed at Putukulek from early fall until the arrival of summer (when they moved to the Kuigpak for salmon fishing). So, Putukulek can also accurately be called a former winter village.

Elders knew of two graves (both marked with crosses) at the site, but its comparatively large size and antiquity suggest others probably exist. One grave was that of a man named **Pugleralria** who died of influenza (*quseq* [Polty 1985]) in ca. 1925-1926 (Evan and Polty 1984); another was **Sugcuq**, who also died of influenza... but in the spring of ca. 1939. At the time of his death, Sugcuq was staying in the cabin of the female shaman **Tut'angaq**, who had moved back to *Putukulek* with her son **Uutuuk** in ca. 1926 following the death of her husband at Tupicuar. After Sugcuq died Tut'angaq and Uutuuk "covered his body with a canoe, since they had nothing else [to use as a coffin]" and moved him to another part of the site (Polty 1985). When news of **Sugcuq's** death reached Noel Polty and **Selapaq (Dick Nick)**—who were then living at Negeqliim Painga—

they traveled to Putukulek to bury the man. As **Noel** explained:

[Tut'angaq and Uutuuk] left his body [on the ground] folded in a canoe. It was there all that summer. When I learned of how his body was placed I went to the site in the fall [with Selapaq] and the two of us buried him. [Even though] flies had laid eggs on his body (Polty 1985).

The body and canoe were covered with sod (Polty and Evan 1985) then a wooden fence was built around the grave (Polty 1985).

Elder **Wassillie Tinker (Uass'uk)** recalled that he and his father had formerly hunted mink at *Putukulek* during the fall and winter months (Tinker 1985). They also netted whitefish in the fall and, after freeze-up, set blackfish traps in the *Qissunaq*. He stated that *Putukulek* is haunted by its many dead and he stopped using the site for that reason. *Putukulek's* ghosts reportedly made many strange noises. Sometimes in winter the loud sounds of someone approaching by dogsled were heard, but the ever-approaching person never arrived (Tinker 1985). The site apparently was not used after ca. 1959 because people had become too frightened to live there.

In 1985, ANCSA researchers recorded the remains of up to 18 semisubterranean dwellings at *Putukulek*, along with physical evidence of one grave, a fallen cross. It is unknown if the grave was that of *Sugcuq* because the fence that once surrounded it had disappeared by 1985, most likely carried away by floodwaters (Polty 1985).

Closing Remarks

In a nod to the current COVID-19 pandemic, this discussion about Tupicuar and Putukulek was framed around the impacts of epidemics that struck residents of those two sites nearly a century ago. The objective was to show how indigenous people in one part of the Lower Yukon region dealt with such events; but the approach also highlights the traditional, kin-based composition of site populations.

Another point worth making is that little, if any, information about the 1925–1926 epidemic discussed here exists in the published literature concerning the epidemiology of Alaska (e.g., see Fortuine 1989): this makes the related oral history accounts *Yup'ik* elders provided to ANCSA researchers even more important. Noel Polty and Wassillie Evan both lost family members to the epidemic; they dated the event by estimating their respective ages at the time it occurred. During the epidemic, Wassillie was living with his parents at Cuqartalek; his father died there from the flu. Noel was

living at Neq'lek with his parents and siblings, as well as his father's younger sister and her husband. The husband began to get sick soon after the epidemic appeared, so he and Noel's aunt were taken to Negeqliim Painga (the husband's family home), where he then died (Polty and Evan 1985). The Polty family also lost Yugissaq's uncle, aunt and brother-in-law to the epidemic.

Noel concluded his remarks about the epidemic as follows:

They say not many people hunted that spring [ca. 1926] because people were sick all over the [region]... Very many, many people had died (Polty and Evan 1985).

The relative method used to date the event, together with the remoteness of the study area and consequent lack of medical services available to its residents, raises the possibility that the 1925–1926 epidemic may have been a continuation of the 1918–1919 Spanish flu.

Finally, two tables were created to further emphasize the value of the information contained in the ANCSA 14(h)(1) Collection. Table 1 correlates Yup'ik place names mentioned in elders' accounts about Tupicuar and Putukulek with any known variants. The study area map accurately identifies the locations of the named features with their Yup'ik names (e.g., Kuigpak rather than "Yukon River"). Table 2 correlates the *Yup'ik* names of individuals mentioned in those same accounts with any variant Yup'ik and/or English names; it also indicates known kin relationships between the individuals. As such, the table could be useful to contemporary Lower Yukon region residents who are interested in family genealogical research.

Table 1: Place Names

Feature Type	Yup'ik Name	Variant Name	ANCSA 14(h)(1) Serial Number(s)
Lake	Arulaikeq		
Oxbow Lake	Aassaqvik		
Old Channel	Canimaar		
River	Cuqartalek	Chakaktolik Creek	
Site	Cuqartalek	Chakaktolik	
Site	Elqिताq		AA-9749
River	Kuiga		
Site	Emainerpak		AA-9748
Slough	Igcenaq		
Site	Igcenaq		AA-9757

Feature Type	Yup'ik Name	Variant Name	ANCSA 14(h)(1) Serial Number(s)
River	Kialiq		
Site	Kialiq		AA-10079
River	Kuiggaarluk	Big River	
Site	Kuigglualler*	Kwikloaklok	AA-10044
River	Kuigpak	Yukon River	
River	Kuigpalleq	Driftwood Slough; Kashunuk River; Kashunuk Slough; Deadwood River	
Site	Kuigpalleq		
River	Nangtuq	Nantok River	
Site	Nangtuq		AA-10077
Site	Negeqliim Painga*	Pikas Point	
River	Neqelget		
Site	Neq'lek	Old Man Polty's Camp	AA-9427
River	Petmik	Pitmik	
Site	Putukulek	Kwigorlak	AA-9428, AA-9752, AA-11237
Lake	Qagan*	Kgun Lake	
Site	Qanagpak	Kanapak	AA-9755
River	Qissunaq	Kashunuk River; Driftwood Slough	
River	Tupicuar		
Site	Tupicuar		AA-9750, AA-10078, AA-11287
Site	Tuutalgaq*	Pilot Station	

Note: An asterisk (*) next to a Yup'ik place name means the associated feature is not shown on Figure 1 because it lies outside the boundaries of the map.

Table 2: Personal Names

Yup'ik Name	Other Names	Key Kin Relationships
Al'aller	Al'airtell'er	Sister of Tut'angaq; wife of Pistu'rluq
Anguyagpak	Wassilie Evan	
Apa'liq	Agnes Polty	Wife of Kumkaq (Noel Polty)
Aviraulqutaq		Husband of Tut'angaq; father of Uutuuk; brother-in-law of Yugissaq
Kumkaq		Uncle of Yugissaq; person Noel Polty is named after
Kumkaq	Noel Polty	Son of Yugissaq; husband of Apa'liq
Matvii		
Nung'aq	Nick Elia	Step-father of Ussukcaq
Pistu'rluq		Husband of Al'aller; brother-in-law of Tut'angaq
Pugleralria	Pavila	
Qivcuaq		Wife of Tan'gurralleq; aunt of Yugissaq
Selapaq	Dick Nick	
Sugcuq	Elluqcuk; Maqiyunqeggli	
Tan'gurralleq		Husband of Qivcuaq; uncle of Yugissaq
Tut'angaq		Wife of Aviraulqutaq; sister-in-law of Yugissaq; sister of Al'aller; mother of Uutuuk
Uass'uk	Wassuuk; Wassillie Tinker	
Ussukcaq	Ben Fitka	Step-son of Nung'aq
Uutuuk		Son of Tut'angaq and Aviraulqutaq

Yup'ik Name	Other Names	Key Kin Relationships
Yugissaq	Jacob Tunucuq/ Polty	Nephew of Tan'gurralleq, Qivcuaq and Kumkaq; cousin of Aviraulqutaq; father of Noel Polty (Kumkaq)

References

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Polty, Noel. 1985. Oral history interview. Ken Pratt, interviewer; Ben Fitka, interpreter; Agnes Polty also present. 28 June, Pilot Station, AK. Translated and transcribed by Alice Fredson and Monica Shelden, May 2010. Tape 85STM006. Bureau of Indian Affairs, ANCSA Office, Anchorage.

Polty, Noel, and Wassilie Evan. 1985. Oral history interview. Ken Pratt and Michael Elder, interviewers; Ben Fitka, interpreter. 23 August, Pilot Station, AK. Translated and transcribed by Sophie Manutoli Shield and Irene Reed, December 1985—January 1986. Tape 85STM048. Bureau of Indian Affairs, ANCSA Office, Anchorage.

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Tinker, Wassillie. 1985. Oral history interview. Michael Elder, interviewer; John Tinker, interpreter. Pitkas Point, AK. Translated and transcribed by Barbara Nick, September 1985. Tape 85STM064. Bureau of Indian Affairs, ANCSA Office, Anchorage.

Postscript: Readers interested in learning more about the content of the ANCSA 14(h)(1) Collection are encouraged to watch for a forthcoming book (Pratt and Heyes n.d.) scheduled for publication in 2021 by Athabasca University Press. Three of its chapters are based on records from the collection.

PANDEMICS IN LABRADOR: 1918 AND 2020–21

By Ann Budgell

For the past year, I've been comparing our world now with COVID-19 to events during the influenza pandemic in 1918 in Labrador, Canada where 70% of the Inuit inhabitants died in two communities, Okak and Hebron. I have spent considerable time researching the 1918 flu. **Nigel Markham** and I interviewed survivors for a documentary film, *The Last Days of Okak*, (National Film Board of Canada, 1985). I knew there was much more to the story, and in 2018 my book, *We All Expected To Die, Spanish Influenza in Labrador, 1918–1919*, was published. The title comes from an interview with survivor **John Pardy** of Sandwich Bay. He said, "It was wonderful frightening because we all expected to die, you know."

Influenza arrived in north Labrador in October 1918, the second wave worldwide. The first wave of flu in winter caused some deaths but was an unremarkable occurrence. Researchers believe exposure to the first wave likely prevented deaths from the more deadly second wave. On the ice-locked north coast, however, no ships arrived until July, between the first and second waves. The first wave missed them completely.

On October 20, the Moravian mission ship *Harmony* sailed directly north to Hebron from flu-infested St. John's, Newfoundland. The ship received a warm welcome on Sunday, 27 October. People rushed out of church to help unload freight. *Harmony* stayed until 4 November, then sailed south for Okak. The first deaths in Hebron were recorded on 7 November, and thereafter it was a waking nightmare. The few adults who were not sick struggled to keep houses warm and at least supply water for sufferers. Neglected sled dogs rampaged, attacking the sick and the dead. Moravian records show that 140 people died from a population of 222 on that part of the coast.

Harmony arrived in Okak hours after leaving Hebron and stayed until November 8. Accounts say people began to be sick on the 10th and 11th, and in two weeks, 184 people died. When it was all over, the death toll was 207

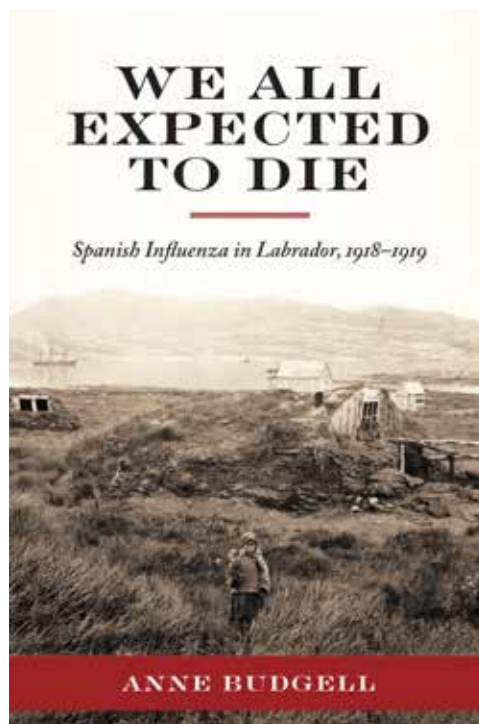
from a population of 263. Everyone was sick. People died not only from influenza, but also from exposure and dehydration. Some sick people were killed by dogs. In Okak, bodies were buried in early January in a common grave that took a month to dig. In Hebron, shrouded bodies were slipped through a hole in the ocean ice.

It happened a hundred years ago, but these stories are known in Labrador and also by those responsible for pandemic preparedness. Dr. **Theresa Tam**, Canada's Chief Public Health Officer, recalled viewing *The Last Days of Okak*. At an event in Ottawa in September 2018, she said, "One of my most striking memories was watching the film on the last days of Okak, and that stayed with me for the rest of my life, and my career really, and partly inspired me to work in this area... Public health in its most holistic terms has to take into account the underlying factors... the poverty, the overcrowding, the impact of culture, history, trauma on a population that can differentially strike those populations." On the federal government website Tam writes, "I will champion the reduction of health disparities in key populations in Canada so that the poorest and most marginalized among us have a chance to lead healthy lives, both physically and mentally."

The north coast of Labrador is now administered by the Nunatsiavut Government (NG), an Inuit regional government with authority over health. In November 2018, special events commemorated those who died

in 1918. When my book was launched in Labrador, the Minister of Health, **Gerald Asivak**, a descendant of flu survivors, was one of the speakers. I was welcomed into schools and public meetings in Nain, Hopedale, and Makkovik, and met others with family stories of the flu.

Awareness of the earlier pandemic has influenced actions taken since COVID-19 emerged. NG President Johannes Lampe knows keeping the virus out is the best strategy for fly-in communities with limited health care. The nearest hospital is an hour away by air. On March 27, NG required people who planned to fly north to first isolate for 14 days. Special programs have been established to assist people with food and heating subsidies. Only one COVID-19 case has occurred in the Nunatsiavut area and that person recovered months ago.



Ann Budgell's book, published in 2018



Group photo in Okak, Labrador, in 1908. Most of these people would have died in 1918. Moravian missionary Berthold Lenz is in front left, with Harmony Captain J.C. Jackson behind with dark mustache and pipe. Photo courtesy of Them Days from the Alice Perrault collection

Labrador Inuit have been among the first Canadians to receive vaccinations. The Newfoundland government designated remote or isolated Indigenous communities as a priority. As of January 21, public health nurses have inoculated 71% of the residents over age 18 in Nain, Makkovik, Hopedale, Postville, and Rigolet. An unexpected, but welcome outcome of these precautions has been a near complete absence of influenza, as people are social distancing and masked.

Dr. **Theresa Tam** interview: *Public Record*, www.cpac.ca/en/cpac-in-focus/unmasking-influenza

[Editor's note: Ann Budgell is a former CBC journalist living in St. John's Newfoundland]

GREENLAND AND COVID-19

By *René Kristensen*

Greenland, like the rest of the world, has been experiencing difficulties and challenges caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. Being an island state in the Arctic with a population of only 56,000 and few connections to the rest of the world, has made it possible to isolate Greenland from the COVID-19 pandemic.

In the early spring of 2020 when the first cases of COVID-19 were spreading in Iceland and Denmark, the Government of Greenland applied strict regulations on flights from Copenhagen and Iceland. For a period, all flights, both international and domestic, were grounded—international flights to keep the virus out and domestic flights to prevent the virus from spreading within Greenland if it already had slipped into the country. Domestic flights were grounded for about a month and

international flights for about two months. International flights were reopened in late spring when the pandemic in Europe was declining. Greenland established strict rules of quarantine and testing for all passengers entering Greenland, and those rules are still in place.

Before leaving Denmark, all passengers must submit information on their travels and destinations to the COVID-19 task force to have their travel plan approved. A negative test result is needed for boarding the flight in Copenhagen. Upon arrival in Greenland, all passengers are quarantined for a minimum five days before a re-test can be conducted. No passengers traveling to Greenland may leave the quarantine site until a re-test is negative. The Greenland Government advises that all unnecessary travel be avoided. If travelers choose to circumvent COVID-19 directives, they will be held personally accountable for any additional cost to their travels. The number of passengers on international flights are limited to about half the capacity of the plane.

Since December 2020, it has not been possible to purchase a ticket for flights to Greenland. Since the beginning of 2021, all international flights are controlled by the Government. This situation will continue until at least the beginning of March 2021. Only travelers, such as police, doctors, and specialists with special exemption are allowed to enter Greenland.

These procedures limiting the number of people traveling to Greenland, along with the rules for testing and quarantine, have prevented the spread of COVID-19 in Greenland. Only 30 people have tested positive in the re-tests after their quarantine. So far there has been no spread of the virus within Greenland, and at this moment Greenland is COVID-19 free. We continue to live our daily lives almost as we did before the epidemic spread around the globe. We have experienced few limitations. Schools were closed during the first month of global spread, but since April, all educational facilities are open and operate near normal.

But the downside of isolation has been no tourism, which is the second largest industry in Greenland and has suffered immensely during the past year. Many tourist operators have been forced to either close or shut down. In addition, restaurants and other businesses associated with tourism have suffered. And the fishing industry, which is the most important source of income in Greenland, has experienced difficulties. The closure of restaurants in most of the world has decreased seafood demand. Large stocks of fish and shrimp are piling up in Greenland's industrial freezers, and the price of fish products has declined.

Still, Greenland remains extremely vulnerable to a pandemic like COVID-19 because of its limited medical



Ann Andreasen (right), Will Richard (left), René Kristensen (2nd from left), and residents of Ummannaq Children's Home. Photo by Will Richard

facilities. Most hospitals do not have the equipment or staff to handle and treat the virus. Denmark initially offered to assist, but the recent pandemic surge in Denmark in November and December, it could no longer guarantee support for Greenland.

The vaccination program in Greenland began in early 2021, with the first batch of vaccines administered in Nuuk and Ilulissat for health care staff. So far, only a few Greenlanders have received the vaccine. The latest news is that the smaller communities should not expect the vaccine to be available for another three or four months. Therefore, the best option for Greenland is keep the country isolated, to ride it out, and to get the general population vaccinated as soon as possible.

SMITHSONIAN EDUCATORS RESPOND IN THE COVID ERA

By Tracie Spinale

When the majority of schools across America closed their physical buildings in March 2020 and moved to virtual instruction due to COVID-19 threats, the Smithsonian convened the Smithsonian Education Response Team. Led by the Smithsonian Office of the Undersecretary for Education (OUSE), and supported by the Smithsonian Center for Learning and Digital Access (SCLDA), a dozen educators representing Smithsonian museums, the zoo, and offices, assisted schools facing the immense challenge to shift curriculum to digital delivery. The Smithsonian's decades-long investment in digitization and the web allowed the team to adapt and add a Distance Learning page to the Smithsonian's existing digital education portal, *Smithsonian Learning Lab*.

Smithsonian digital resources for grades PreK-12 covering core curriculum areas—English Language Arts, Social Studies/History, Science, and

Spanish Language—populated a series of Google spreadsheets easily accessible and shared by *national educators, caregivers, teens, and lifelong learners*. Currently, the *Distant Learning* page provides links to over 1,200 high-quality Smithsonian Education (#SmithsonianEdu) resources.

Locally in Washington, D.C., OUSE and the Learning Lab team responded to a request from the District of Columbia Public Schools (DCPS) Chancellor to provide digital education resources which aligned to DCPS K-8 curriculum for the first semester of the pandemic; and later to support the DCPS Cornerstones curriculum, *Living Through History*—addressing the dual pandemics of COVID-19 and social justice; and *DCPS Family Cornerstones curriculum*. These initial successes evolved into a new initiative called Learn with Smithsonian DC—with increased collaboration to follow into 2021 and beyond.

Early in conversations, Smithsonian educators understood the need not only to provide high-quality, hi-tech resources for schools to supplement and address digital content, but also the need for low-tech resources that do not require computers for learning. OUSE partnered with nationally syndicated *USA Today* to provide educational inserts for the newspaper's weekend circulation that subscribers across urban and rural America received—*Summer Road Trip*, and most recently—*Winter at Home*. Packed with word puzzles and games, DIY activities, and a focus on Smithsonian objects that spark creativity and exploration, the guides reach people without having to access the internet and are bilingual (English/Spanish).

With all Smithsonian museums currently closed, educators across the Smithsonian radically shifted how they deliver content. Before the pandemic, Smithsonian museums like the National Museum of Natural History, National Air and Space Museum, National Museum of American History, and Smithsonian American Art Museum collaborated with teachers to educate students through distance learning webcasts and online content; Award-winning programs like *Smithsonian Science How*, *STEM in 30*, *Smithsonian's History Explorer*, and classroom video conferences.

However, museums and offices which formally relied upon in-person workshops were challenged to reimagine how their content might shift online, have greater relevance, or meet people where they are. The American History Museum expanded their social studies training to include live webinar programs—*Social Studies Online* with the Smithsonian and *Smithsonian Estudios Sociales en Línea* (in Spanish)—which can be viewed on YouTube. The National Museum of African American History and Culture developed outreach programs

Smithsonian Distance Learning Resources. Training. Support.



using the Zoom platform, including *Artists at Home: School Outreach*—which educators adapted from an in-person interactive summer arts program for teachers and students in grades 3-8. The National Museum of the American Indian developed virtual *fieldtrips* through Microsoft Teams and Zoom and developed a *Youth in Action* series on YouTube which addresses social justice.

The Smithsonian Science Education Center created education materials in multiple languages, *COVID-19! How can I protect myself and others?* with the World Health Organization. To further teacher professional development, the Smithsonian Center for Learning and Digital Access and its education network created a webinar series and supporting materials called *Easy-PZ* with the Smithsonian which presents thinking routines and strategies for teachers to use digitized museum objects in the online classroom. These are just some of the highlights of the digital programs which the Smithsonian reimaged or created during the pandemic; the schedule for real-time events is posted on the *Distance Learning page calendar*.

As educators and students shift back to the in-person classroom, the Smithsonian education community is forever changed by the impact of the pandemic and distance learning during the COVID Era. *Smithsonian education programs* recorded an increase in the number of pageviews and visitors accessing online content. This impact indicator will drive the type of programs the Smithsonian delivers in the future. Smithsonian educators anticipate the day when students can safely return to museums.

While nothing virtual can replace the experience of physical proximity to collections and exhibitions, or live attendance at a workshop, pandemics revealed that Smithsonian educators can reach a virtual audience using Smithsonian web education platforms and through webinar outreach to teachers and students using media platforms like YouTube, Zoom, and Teams. Whether in-person, virtually, or a hybrid-mix, Smithsonian educators learned that we can impact a far greater audience as a knowledge partner if we are responsive to the needs of the national and local PreK-12 ecosystem. By collaborating with educators to help students make sense of the world we live in, Smithsonian Education strives to become a household name associated with learning and inquiry during the COVID Era and beyond.

The list of web-sites in the same order as they are mentioned in the text:

Smithsonian Education Response Team: www.si.edu/newsdesk/releases/smithsonian-offers-distance-learning-resources-during-school-closures
Distance Learning page: learninglab.si.edu/distancelearning
Smithsonian Learning Lab: learninglab.si.edu
English Language Arts: s.si.edu/national-ela
Social Studies/History: s.si.edu/national-socialstudieshistory
Science: s.si.edu/national-science
Spanish Language: s.si.edu/national-spanishlanguage
Caregivers: s.si.edu/national-caregivers
Teens: s.si.edu/national-tweensteens
Lifelong learners: s.si.edu/national-lifelonglearners
DCPS K-8 curriculum: s.si.edu/dcps-kindergarten
DCPS Cornerstones curriculum: learninglab.si.edu/dcps
Living Through History: docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1a_snAWsi37qP8bL4u6FkIIaMc-LtFMUZkAiqsnt7jrU/edit#gid=0
DCPS Family Cornerstones curriculum: dcps.dc.gov/page/family-cornerstones-dcps-family-activity-tool
Summer Road Trip: s.si.edu/SummerRoadtrip
Winter at Home: s.si.edu/WinterAtHome
Smithsonian Educators: www.si.edu/educators
Smithsonian Science How: naturalhistory.si.edu/education/distance-learning/smithsonian-science-how-webcast-archives
STEM in 30: airandspace.si.edu/node/71551/
Smithsonian's History Explorer: historyexplorer.si.edu
Classroom video conferences: americanart.si.edu/education/k-12/videoconferences
Social Studies Online with the Smithsonian: www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLFGZwzyPnxTs4p0TWY4FtqmRLIk1eAM1y
Smithsonian Estudios Sociales en Línea: www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLFGZwzyPnxTu7E4NFnqBAGAZBNg59T0uc
Artists at Home: School Outreach: nmaahc.si.edu/learn/educators/artists-home-school-outreach
Youth in Action: www.youtube.com/watch?v=29YmT1N1fk&list=PLS6nSmuURFJCsZkMbIYU0IKyXLL67fhtF
COVID-19! How can I protect myself and others?: ssec.si.edu/covid-19
Easy-PZ: learninglab.si.edu/org/selda
Distance Learning page calendar: learninglab.si.edu/distancelearning

(See also links in D. Biddison Learning Lab piece in the Alaska section, and in the Griebel-Burch report.)

A VIRTUAL ALUTIIQ FISH SKIN WORKSHOP DURING COVID-19 TIMES

By *Elisa Palomino and June Pardue*

With a subsistence economy largely dependent on the marine environment and its animal resources, the island and coastal regions of southwest Alaska provide access to a broad range of fish used in the past for clothing production. The traditional Alutiiq wardrobe includes garments made from animal skins, including fish. These garments were expertly sewn by women from Kodiak Island. Traditionally, Alutiiq education consisted of acquiring survival skills: how to navigate the seas in all weathers; hunting and fishing skills; tanning animal skins; and how to repair your fish skin parka while out in the Arctic wilderness. Today, many Alutiiq people continue to provide for their families by subsistence hunting, fishing and plant gathering. They continue to live in the same territories, using the same resources as they did centuries ago, living in harmony with each other, honoring the ocean and all of its bounties. Through their traditional Indigenous practices and respect for nature and the animal kingdom, they live in harmony with nature and with each other to navigate the hardest of times by listening to their collective wisdom.

In the midst of the COVID-19 isolation, **June Pardue**, an Alutiiq and Inupiaq artist from Kodiak Island, Alaska, and I conducted a virtual fish skin tanning workshop from her kitchen table in Anchorage in April 2020. June passed down not only the endangered Arctic fish skin craft, but also how her people were coping with the crisis by tapping into their knowledge of the natural world, its resourcefulness, story-telling abilities and creative skills. The workshop taught, through an online platform, new fish skin tanning technologies and skills, giving students the opportunity to engage with remote Arctic communities, bringing an awareness of indigenous traditions and traditional knowledge addressing and responding to health crises such the COVID pandemic through collaboration and connection with nature.

Since then, June conducted nearly twenty virtual fish skin workshops among different Alaska Village Tribes and communities. The workshops focused on what fish skin heritage means to different Arctic Indigenous groups and how they value fish skin heritage differently. The workshops engaged cultural diversity and audiences with different abilities, from museum curators to amateur tanners and young Indigenous students. Fish skin craft practices have the potential to offer opportunities for greater access to cultural heritage. In particular, it provides new opportunities for re-connecting Arctic communities with common cultural heritage. In the digital age, workshops can make new and sustainable connections between the virtual world and craftspeople.



Linda Hobson (left) and Seth Hobson preparing willow bark. Photo by Renae Zackar



From left: Seth Hobson, Sea Hobson, and Renae Zackar scraping fish skins. Photo by Ida Nelson

To navigate perilous times, ancient shamans drew inspiration from nature, harmonising the fire, water, earth, and air elements. In times of disorientation, distress, and challenge like the COVID pandemic, it is crucial for reinstating balance to reconnect with nature. The fish skin tanning workshops

have offered a way to help us through these challenging times, strengthening our connection with nature while also benefiting the wider community. The increase of communication and availability of different individuals across the planet during the COVID lockdown has provided a closer relationship with each other and with nature. The crisis has brought a shift in perception of nature and the role of humanity towards nature as keeper. The idea of traditional Indigenous knowledge and resilience comes from paying attention and being a part of your environment and having experience and learning from it collectively (Clement 2020).

The Alutiiq Indigenous fish skin tanning workshops have challenged and merged the digital environment with that of crafts during the pandemic. Reintroducing knowledge of ancestral tanning practices has involved participation of multigenerational community members. The activities around the tanning workshops,

such as storytelling and people gathering together, have created opportunities for young people to learn from elders, the backbone of Native communities.

Traditional education involving survival skills was and still is necessary for cultural continuity in the Arctic. Young generations must be equipped both with traditional skills to thrive culturally and with digitalization skills needed for success in the modern world. The workshop has proposed taking the best both worlds have to offer but remembering always the values taught by the ancestors.

Through these virtual workshops, students have built on the knowledge, skills and traditions of Fish skin tanning technology, engaged in learning activities based on traditional ways of knowing and learning, demonstrated awareness and appreciation of natural resources, and understood how humans and nature interact. The workshops follow the methods of the *Sharing Knowledge* project at the Arctic Studies Center's Anchorage Office, where discussions with Alaska Native fish skin makers have been previously recorded. Our fish skin project hopes to expand in the future by creating a fish skin digital platform based on Arctic Indigenous people's knowledge, documenting traditional Alaskan fish skin processing technologies.

Our gratitude goes to **William Fitzhugh**, director of the Arctic Studies Center, and his team: **Stephen Loring, John Cloud, Nancy Shorey, Bernadette Driscoll, Dawn Biddison and Aron Crowell**. We are grateful to the Alaska Native heritage programs, student participants in the workshops, museum curators, fish skin tanners, and elders and youths of Alaska Native tribes and communities.

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AWARD FOR FISH SKIN TRADITION

By Elisa Palomino

The film, *Preservation of Hezhen Fish Skin Tradition through Fashion Higher Education* has won the Best Green Fashion Film award at the Milan Fashion Film Festival. The film identifies the historical, cultural, environmental, and socio-economic importance of fish skin as an innovative sustainable material. Secondly, it proposes a vision of sustainability as an anthropological study of the resourcefulness and resilience of the Hezhen indigenous peoples, their lifestyles and fish skin practices; and third, it can help to preserve them. The application of the craft to fashion has been tested through a participatory workshop with fashion students from Central Saint Martins taught by Hezhen craftspeople to investigate how this material and the transmission of fish skin skills can contribute to sustainability practices in fashion. The Hezhen are one of China's smallest ethnic

minorities, living in northeastern China in the Amur river basin with a traditional economy based on hunting and fishing. In 2006, the Hezhen method of making clothes with fish skin was listed as intangible cultural heritage, and **Wenfeng You**—our main craftspeople during the workshop—was appointed its principal guardian.

Foning Bao participated in the Hezhen fish skin workshop. The experience of working with the Hezhen ethnic minority was invaluable for her. She collaborated with the Hezhen community to source the fish skin raw material, learned from their ancestral

techniques and was inspired by their resourcefulness to create in her final year the CSM BA Knitwear collection. As a sustainable knitwear designer, she restricted herself to the use fish skin and 'full fashion' knit skills to build her entire final collection. Zero fabric, zero cut, and zero waste were the key points of her work. She used the fish skins in combination with crochet both in garments and accessories. The very humble material became fun, playful, and full of color.

The film, accessed at <https://fashionfilmfestivalmilano.com/project/preservation-of-hezhen-fish-skin-tradition-through-fashion-higher-education/> features **Wenfeng You** and **Sun Yulin** (Hezhen Indigenous fish skin craft inheritors) and **Foning Bao** (CSM BA Fashion Knit graduate). Art Directors are **Elisa Palomino, Zhongjin Zhang** (CSM BA Performance Design and Practice), and **Joseph Boon** (CSM BA Womenswear).



Film Title: *Preservation of Hezhen Fish Skin Tradition*

ASC ALASKA OFFICE

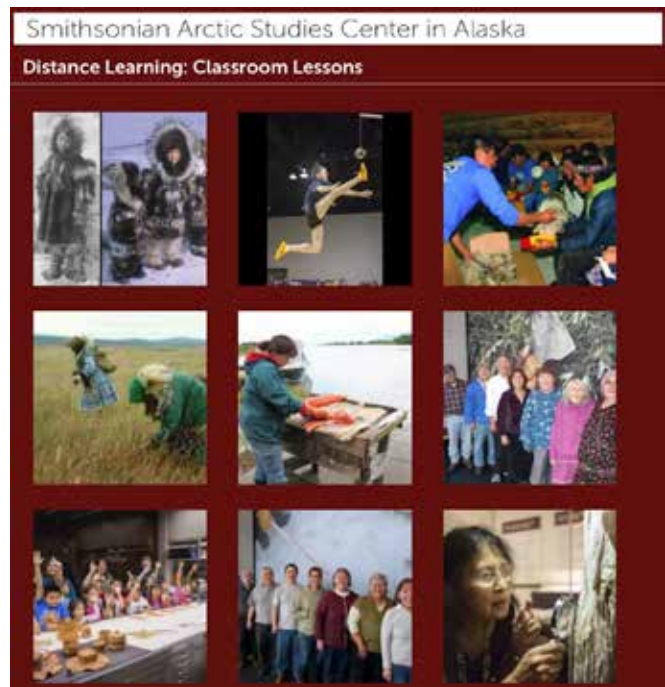
SMITHSONIAN LEARNING LAB: NEW ASC SITE COMPLETED

By Dawn Biddison

In the fall of 2019, the Alaska office of the Arctic Studies Center (ASC), in partnership with the Smithsonian Center for Learning and Digital Access (SCLDA), received internal Smithsonian Institution funds from the Youth Access Grant Program for the project “Digital Access to Community Knowledge and Smithsonian Collections for Alaska Native Education.” This funding was matched, as required for the award, by The CIRI Foundation and generous private donors in Alaska. To learn more about the development of the project, see Smithsonian Funds ASC Learning Lab Site for Alaska Schools, *ASC Newsletter 26*: 12-13, 2019. The project’s goal was to build a site on the SCLDA platform Learning Lab with educational resources created by ASC Alaska staff in collaboration with Alaska Native partners over nearly twenty years of work and through new work. ASC Museum Specialist **Dawn Biddison**, completed the project in December, with assistance from **Tracie Spinale** at SCLDA. The goal of creating a single location for ASC Alaska exhibition related resources and ongoing public programs was met, and the project exceeded its goals by creating three new educational units in addition to the six educational units built from five existing and one new set of resources. The new site was extensively promoted to educators, and a new section of content is already underdevelopment.

The ASC-AK Learning Lab site “Smithsonian Arctic Studies Center in Alaska” (<https://learninglab.si.edu/org/sasc-ak>) features three categories of content—plus one work in progress section—all with connections to objects from the Smithsonian collections. The first section presents information about the Native cultures of Alaska, with content edited and expanded from the Sharing Knowledge website and the Living Our Cultures exhibition, as well as new content and writing. Each cultural collection contains a combination of text and images: a cultural overview written by an Alaska Native scholar; contemporary and archival photographs linked to in-depth captions, and Smithsonian objects from the region linked with collections information, knowledge from community experts and a curator-written historical summary.

The Distance Learning section presents nine education units for teaching and learning at home or in a classroom. Five units were drawn from past projects—“Salmon Give Life: Learning from Alaska’s First



Distance Learning section of the “Smithsonian Arctic Studies Center in Alaska” site on Learning Lab.

Image by Dawn Biddison

Peoples”; “Gifts from the Land: Lifeways and Quill Art of the Athabascan Peoples”; “Inupiaq Lessons: Language and Culture”; “Tsimshian Bilingual Guide: Twining Cedar”; and “St. Lawrence Island Yupik Lessons: Language and Culture”. Four new units were completed working collaboratively—and virtually due to COVID-19—with Alaska Native educators—“Alaska Native Designs: Parkas”; “Fun with a Purpose: Alaska Native Games”; “Athabascan Potlatch Values”; and “Yup’ik Ingenuity: Local Materials”. Each unit has a lesson, complete with all materials, answers and activities. Materials for the lesson consist of new essays, archival and contemporary photographs with in-depth captions, and Smithsonian collections objects with detailed Indigenous and historical information. There are also links to additional related resources. The unit on parkas was completed through additional funding from a new program with The CIRI Foundation. To learn more about this program, please see the article “Alaska Native Museum Fellowships” in this issue.

The Community Videos section provides eleven collections for learning about and practicing Alaska Native arts and languages from collaborative programs with Alaska Native Elders, scholars, artists and culture-bearers. Each program was extensively filmed and carefully edited to include insights from Alaska Natives, cultural context, historical photographs and

film footage, with additional detailed information provided in lower-third and intertitle texts. A twelfth collection presents videos from research, talks and events from Living Our Cultures exhibition events.

The fourth and final section “Work in Progress” is a placeholder to let people know that more resources are on the way. It currently contains the start of a new program “Conversations,” which will be a series of moderated virtual discussions, including audience participation, with Alaska Native and Canadian Inuit artists providing insights and information on current issues. Conversations will be recorded and posted on Learning Lab with additional resources. The program will be joined and supported by the Inuit Arts Foundation. A pre-program talk “Land Acknowledgement: How to Honor Alaska Native Peoples” will be held in January featuring Ahtna Athabascan artist **Melissa Shaginoff**. Six Conversations are in the planning stages for every other month starting in February, 2021.

CIRCUMPOLAR EXCHANGES: INUK ARTIST GLENN GEAR

By Dawn Biddison

In the fall of 2019, a new partnership began between the Alaska office of the Arctic Studies Center (ASC) and the Inuit Arts Foundation (IAF) led by ASC Museum Specialist **Dawn Biddison** and by IAF Executive Director and Publisher **Alysa Procida** and IAF Editorial Director **Britt Gallpen**. The plans were to bring Canadian Inuit artists to Alaska and Alaska Inuit artists to Canada for individual and collaborative work, and for opportunities to foster new relationships between Inuit artists, organizations and communities. The first “Circumpolar Exchanges” residency in Anchorage was with Inuk artist **Glen Gear** from Montreal in January, 2020. The next artists scheduled with travel booked for April were Inuvialuk



*Inuk artist Glenn Gear at Turnagain Arm.
Photo by Dawn Biddison*

artist **Maureen Gruben** from *Tuktoyaktuk*, Northwest Territories, and Inupiaq **Sonya Kelliher-Combs** from Anchorage, but this was cancelled due to COVID-19 and substituted with work from home (see *Shorelines, Inuit Art Quarterly*, Fall 2020: 40-47).

Glenn Gear arrived in Anchorage to very cold January weather and with great enthusiasm about his time in Alaska. Glenn is an animator, filmmaker and visual artist, originally from Newfoundland, who finds inspiration by exploring his identity as an urban Inuk with ancestral ties to Nunatsiavut. For his animated short films, Glen utilizes collage and archival materials to explore issues of “individual and collective history, the exchange between Indigenous and settler populations, folklore, gender, and archival material.” A selection of his films played in the ASC exhibition space throughout January. During his residency, Glenn studied the Smithsonian and Anchorage Museum collections and gave an artist talk. He turned the ASC archaeology lab into an animation studio, where he also hosted open studio hours for Alaska Native artists and for museum staff and visitors. Glen made community connections by meeting staff at the Alaska Native Heritage Center and Cook Inlet Tribal Council, and shared the goal that he return to teach animation workshops. There was time for a weekend winter road trip with views of the mountains and ice-clad mudflats of Turnagain Arm, and the muskox and wood bison of the Alaska Wildlife Conservation Center.

The Inuit Arts Foundation and Arctic Studies Center plan to restart the Circumpolar Exchanges program in 2021. Meetings will begin in January. Look for program updates in the next *ASC Newsletter*.

ALASKA NATIVE MUSEUM FELLOWSHIPS: A NEW PROGRAM WITH THE CIRI FOUNDATION

By Dawn Biddison

In the fall of 2019, **Nadia Sethi** at The CIRI Foundation (TCF) contacted **Aron Crowell** and **Dawn Biddison** to meet with their staff about a new initiative in support of Alaska Native museum opportunities through the new grant program *Alaska Native Cultural Heritage and Artistic Sovereignty in Museums Project*. The Alaska office of the Arctic Studies Center was asked to host the first program, which was co-developed with and funded by TCF over the winter of 2019–2020. The Museum Sovereignty fellowship was planned as a paid, intensive, in-person mentorship with Dawn over eight-weeks in the spring of 2020, and was reorganized into a fourteen-week virtual mentorship in the fall/winter of 2020 due to COVID-19.

The fellowship focused on creating a free online educational resource about Alaska Native heritage utilizing new research and writing with museum and archival collections. The mentorship also addressed larger themes regarding museum practices, including decolonization. The fellowship recipient was **Amelia “Amy” Ahnaughuq Topkok**, an Iñupiaq from Kotzebue who lives in Fairbanks and whose parents are from Shishmaref and Noatak. Amy has worked at University of Alaska Fairbanks (UAF) since 1994 and is the Biomedical Learning and Student Training program Reporting and Outreach Coordinator. In addition, she teaches courses at UAF on Alaska Native dance and performance. Since the subject of her MA work at UAF was Iñupiaq parkas, which she plans to build on when she pursues her Ph.D., the selected subject for the educational resource was Alaska Native parkas with a focus on the Iñupiaq *atigi* (fur parka).

Amy’s fellowship provided her the opportunity to conduct new interviews and write essays on the subject of her academic interest and to learn about creating educational materials. She studied the *Distance Learning units* on the Smithsonian Arctic Studies Center in Alaska Learning Lab site and co-developed a framework for a new education unit. Amy learned about selecting museum objects, archival images and contemporary photographs, and about writing in-depth captions. Grant funding gave honorarium to three Iñupiaq culture-bearers for her to conduct extensive interviews about the Iñupiaq *atigi*, developing her knowledge base and providing content for her writing.

Amy spoke with Elder **Mary Sue Anderson**, her aunt, whose memories included how her grandmother **Emily Paizuzraq Kiyutelluk Barr** trapped and tanned squirrels at Ublasaun, a former winter reindeer herding camp northeast of Shishmaref, and how her grandmother made an *atigi* with them. Amy also spoke with skin-sewers Mary Lou Sours of Noatak and Nasugraq Lane, originally from Point Hope. In writing three essays for the project, Amy worked with Dawn over drafts to brush up on her writing skills and to increase the role of Indigenous knowledge in her writing. The resulting education unit *Alaska Native Design: Parkas* presents nineteen photographs of people and museum objects with detailed captions, three essays and a lesson. There are also three additional resources, including a guide for making a *qaspeq/atiktuk*—the Yup’ik and Iñupiaq word for a summer shirt or dress, similar to an *atigi* but made from fabric—written by Amy for a past workshop and now improved with additional information and editing, which she can utilize in the future along with all of her research and writing.

Before the first *Alaska Native Cultural Heritage and Artistic Sovereignty in Museums Project* was completed, The CIRI Foundation asked the Arctic Studies Center to provide the next one, which was gladly accepted. ASC looks forward to partnering again with TCF to mentor an Alaska Native in museum-related work.

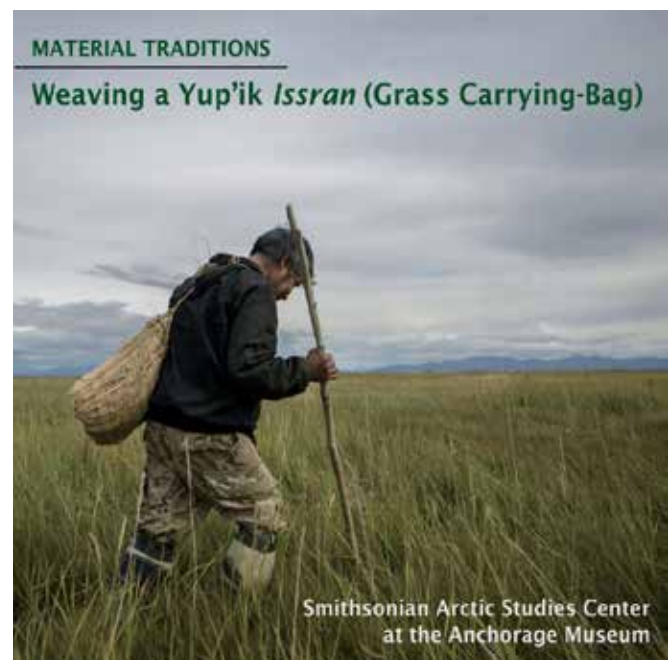
The list of web-sites in the same order as they are mentioned in the text:

Center in Alaska Learning Lab site: <https://learninglab.si.edu/org/sasc-ak>
Alaska Native Design: Parkas: <https://learninglab.si.edu/q/ll-c/W4o8K4pBDVcFswN2#r/30467>

NEW MEDIA: WEAVING A YUP’IK ISSRAN (GRASS CARRYING BAG)

By Dawn Biddison

In 2019, the Alaska office of the Arctic Studies Center partnered with Qanirtuuq Inc., the local tribal organization for the village of Quinhagak, Alaska, to research and document the Yup’ik tradition of weaving an *issran* (grass carrying-bag) in their community. Local artist **Grace Anaver** joined the team as lead artist, under the guidance of her older sister **Pauline Beebe** and assisted by her younger sister **Sarah Brown**. Locally harvested *taperrnaq* (coarse seashore grass) was gathered and processed for drying and curing in July, and grass from the previous fall was dyed. In August, Grace



Cover of the DVD set “Material Traditions: Weaving a Yup’ik Issran (Grass Carrying-Bag).” Image by Dawn Biddison; photo of Lance Anaver by Erika Larsen, 2015

taught Yup'ik grass weavers and learners how to twine an issran in the Nunalleq Culture & Archaeology Center. To learn more about the field research in Quinhagak, see *Yup'ik Twined Grass Bags: Renewing an Ancestral Art*, *ASC Newsletter* 26:6-8, 2019. The collaborative project was managed, filmed and edited by Museum Specialist Dawn Biddison, who produced a DVD set with eleven videos, *Material Traditions: Weaving a Yup'ik Issran (Grass Carrying-Bag)*.

In the videos, viewers meet Grace in an extended interview and learn about the cultural context of Yup'ik grass-weaving, supplemented with archival photographs and photographs of woven grass objects from the Smithsonian and Anchorage Museum collections. Additional videos provide detailed information, instructions, patterns and demonstrations from when and how to harvest grass—including how to accommodate practices for the changing climate—to all of the techniques needed to complete an issran. Viewers learn directly from Grace and along with students. The videos are posted on YouTube at the *Smithsonian Arctic Studies Center Alaska channel* and on the Smithsonian Learning Lab platform at the *Smithsonian Arctic Studies Center in Alaska* site with links to issran examples from the Smithsonian collections. The Learning Lab site also offers a related educational unit *Yup'ik Ingenuity: Local Materials* with a lesson, activities and materials, including archival and contemporary photographs and museum object photographs, all with in-depth information. DVD sets were widely distributed to project participants, to Alaska Native organizations and schools, and to libraries, archives, and museums in Alaska and nationally.

The list of web-sites in the same order as they are mentioned in the text

Smithsonian Arctic Studies Center Alaska channel:

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCNpC1tX-kqJaSU7ZSxUWafA>

Smithsonian Arctic Studies Center in Alaska site:

<https://learninglab.si.edu/q/ll-c/sbmuMYcg9n5Gv0QC#r/38039>

Yup'ik Ingenuity: Local Materials: <https://learninglab.si.edu/q/ll-c/y3BDj0z5n87sBu0N#r/30376>

CENTENNIAL PUBLICATION ON THE DANISH FIFTH THULE EXPEDITION (1921–1924)

By Aron L. Crowell

Since 2018 the Arctic Studies Center has collaborated with the Danish National Museum, the Danish Arctic Institute, and a team of international and Indigenous scholars to commemorate the centennial of the Fifth

Thule Expedition (FTE) from Greenland to Chukotka in 1921–1924, led by Danish-Greenlandic ethnographer **Knud Rasmussen**. The FTE retrospective, organized by **Igor Krupnik** and **Aron Crowell**, has generated new historical assessments of the expedition and its results, innovative research based on its voluminous records and collections, and increased understanding of the FTE's enduring value for community-based cultural heritage. The project began with planning meetings and archival research in Copenhagen and Washington DC, leading up to an all-day session of research papers at the 2019 meeting of the Alaska Anthropological Association in Nome, the endpoint of the expedition's Arctic journey (see *ASC Newsletters* 25:38-42 and 26:38-42). An exciting recent outcome was **Brendan Griebel's** 2020 ASC Burch Lecture, which presented work by the Inuinnait (Copper Inuit) organization *Pitquhirnikkut Ilihautiniq / Kitikmeot Heritage Society* to access, restore, and mobilize Inuit knowledge documented during the FTE (Griebel, this issue).

The FTE project will reach a new milestone later this year (2021) with the publication of 18 articles and essays by Danish, Russian, Canadian, and American authors in a double issue of the *Alaska Journal of Anthropology*. Crowell and Krupnik are the co-editors of the volume, which leads off with a foreword by **Bernadette Miqqusaaq Dean** of Rankin Inlet, Nunavut, who participated in the Nome conference and whose grandparents hosted Rasmussen at their snow home on Southampton Island in 1922.

The Fifth Thule Expedition was many things—a bold adventure in Arctic travel and fieldwork, a crowning achievement of Danish polar exploration, a cooperative research program that relied heavily on Inughuit and Inuit knowledge and support, and an early example of “insider ethnography” conducted by Rasmussen, who was part Greenlandic Inuit and a fluent speaker of Kalaallisut and Inuktitut. Rasmussen's overriding interests were in oral traditions, spiritual beliefs, and mythology, which he recorded for the Iglulingmiut, Nattilingmiut, Qairnirmiut, Inuinnait, Inuvialuit, Inupiat, and Cup'ig peoples of Canada and Alaska. Cultural studies by Rasmussen and **Kaj Birket-Smith** were complemented by **Therkel Mathiassen's** archaeological research in the Central Arctic, which uncovered evidence of the ancestral Thule culture and of the Thule migration from Bering Strait to Greenland. In the frame of polar scientific history the FTE stands out as an audacious and unequalled attempt to survey the entire geographical and historical continuum of Inuit cultures across the polar regions of three continents, and to resolve theoretical debates about their origin and development. Not all of these aims were achieved at the time, yet as the scholars to commemorate the centennial project demonstrates,

the FTE continues to generate new scholarship and meaningful understandings of Arctic cultures.

Records of the FTE include its massive Final Report, a series of 35 monographs by **Rasmussen, Birket-Smith**, and **Mathiassen** that fill entire shelves in Arctic libraries; extensive object collections at the Danish National Museum in Copenhagen; 4,000 still photographs in various repositories, many posted online by the Danish Arctic Institute; 25,000 meters of movie film shot by expedition photographer; and a plethora of FTE correspondence, diaries, maps, and field reports in the Knud Rasmussen Archive, Royal Danish Archive, and Greenland National Museum and Archive.

Papers in the upcoming volume of the *Alaska Journal of Anthropology* draw on these resources and reveal their rich potential for new discoveries, interpretations, and applications. The authors and titles (with “Fifth Thule Expedition” abbreviated) give a quick preview of the

and by schooner from Nome to Cape Dezhnev (East Cape) on the Russian side of Bering Strait. The papers are: “Whaling and Whale Spirits in the Western Arctic: Notes from the FTE (**Aron Crowell**); “Spirits across the Arctic: Selected Drawings Collected by Knud Rasmussen in Nome, 1924” (**Birgitte Sonne**); “Tracking Nayagnir: A Shaman’s Encounters with Murder, Western Law, the Lomen Brothers Company, and Knud Rasmussen” (**Kenneth Pratt**); “The FTE’s Siberian Legacy” (**Daria Schwalbe, Anne Lisbeth Schmidt, and Kristofer Schmidt**); and “Dezhnev (*Kengisqun*): The Westernmost Point of the FTE” (**Sergei Shokarev**).

Part Three, Fifth Thule Expedition Resources Today, highlights research and resources in museums, archives, and private collections: “Inuit Pencil Drawings and Co-Creation: Rediscovering the Artwork Made During the FTE” (**Martin Appelt, Bjarne Grønnow, and Anne Mette Randrup Jørgensen**);



Utqiagvik whalers and umiat at the ice edge.
Courtesy of Danish Arctic Institute. Photo by Leo Hansen

scope and diversity of the *AJA* collection. Appearing in the Introduction are the “Foreword” (**Bernadette Makusak Dean**); “The FTE: A Western Arctic Perspective” (**Aron Crowell**); and “From Greenland to the Pacific: Celebrating the Centennial of the FTE, 1921–1924” (**Kenn Harper and Igor Krupnik**). Part One, Intellectual History, includes: “Plans for the FTE and the Great Sled Journey across Canada and Alaska” (**Knud Michelsen**); “The FTE and the Indigenous Participants Who Made It Possible” (**Marie Kleist**); “Assessing the Significance of the FTE for Inuinnait and Inuit Knowledge” (**Brendan Griebel, Darren Keith, and Pamela Gross**); “Inuit Cultural Heritage: Museum Collecting before the FTE” (**Bernadette Driscoll Engelstad**); and “Competing Arctic Pasts: Cohort Assessment of the FTE Legacy” (**Igor Krupnik**).

Part Two, Alaska-Chukotka Crossroads, emphasizes Rasmussen’s observations and interactions during the final leg of the expedition when he and a small Inughuit team traveled by dogsled and skin boat along the Alaska coast from Utqiagvik to Kotzebue,

“Records of the FTE in Danish Archives” (**Bent Nielsen**); “Tracing the Lost Films of the Fifth Thule Expedition in Alaska” (**Scott MacKenzie and Anna Westerstahl Stenport**); “Menadelook: An Iñupiat Teacher’s Photographs of Wales, Diomedea, and Nome during the FTE Years” (**Eileen Norbert**); “Rasmussen’s Engraved Walrus Tusks from Chukotka” (**Mikhail Bronshtein**); and “Epilogue: Reflections on the FTE Centennial” (**William Fitzhugh**).

As guest editors of the special FTE issue of the *Alaska Journal of Anthropology*, Igor Krupnik and I are grateful to the authors who co-created this exceptional collection of FTE papers; to dozens of peer reviewers (you know who you are!) who gave their time and attention to improving the texts; to Kenneth Pratt and **Brian Wygal**, editors at the journal; and to the Danish National Museum, Danish Arctic Institute, Smithsonian Institution Archives, Peabody Museum, and other repositories that made their collections available for study and publication. We all look forward to the publication, anticipated this fall.

CANADIAN PLANS TO CELEBRATE THE FIFTH THULE EXPEDITION

Reviewed by Kenn Harper

Some of the initiatives underway in Canada to celebrate the centennial of the Fifth Thule Expedition are being made by Danes residents in Canada.

The Federation of Danish Associations in Canada will shortly publish a book by **Knud Michelsen** (a relative of **Knud Rasmussen**) geared to a Danish-Canadian audience, in a limited edition expected to be 500 copies. It will be titled *Ambassador on a Dog Sled*. In December, the Federation of Danish Associations in Canada published an article by **Kenn Harper**, “*It is the Eskimos that Own My Heart’: Knud Rasmussen and the Fifth Thule Expedition*,” as the lead title in its 2020 Heritage Book (Ottawa, pp. 22-31).

Harper will also be writing a brief article for the publication “Danes,” published by Danes Worldwide for the Danish diaspora and distributed in 114 countries. Inhabit Media, an Inuit-owned publishing company based in Iqaluit and Toronto, plans to publish another version of Knud Michelsen’s book edited and geared specifically to the interests of their primary readership, Canadian Inuit. Their books also appeal to a general Canadian readership, and this volume will be targeted to young adult readers.

In 1976, the Government of the Northwest Territories, Department of Education, published an oversized three-volume set of books called simply *Fifth Thule Expedition*. The books were thin, ranging from 19 to 32 pages, and published bilingually in English and Inuktitut using the syllabic orthography. They were also unique in that they were written in the first person, in Knud Rasmussen’s voice. They were illustrated with photographs from the expedition and drawings by the well-known Inuit artist **Germaine Arnaktauyok**. Inhabit Media is also considering republishing these volumes to celebrate the centennial.

A presentation on the Fifth Thule Expedition was expected to be a part of Nordic Bridges, a year-long cultural initiative between the Nordic countries and Canada, to be co-ordinated by the Harbourfront Centre in Toronto, but with exhibitions to appear in many venues across Canada. Unfortunately, the entire initiative has been postponed until 2022 because of COVID-19. Similarly, there will be a Fifth Thule Expedition component to the next Inuit Studies Conference. The next conference will be held in Winnipeg, but the date is as yet unknown because of the pandemic. There is still time for other initiatives to be brought forward as the FTE centennial spans three years.

NEWS

ORAL HISTORY, ORAL PRESENT, ORAL FUTURE: THE LANGUAGE OF INUINNAIT HERITAGE RESEARCH

By Brendan Griebel

[*Editor’s note:* Dr. **Griebel** adapted his 2020 Ernest S. Burch Memorial Lecture for the presentation below. The event was given virtually because of COVID-19 travel restrictions and was followed by a panel discussion reported in the article follow this one. There one can find Dr. Griebel’s and the panelists’ bios.]

I wanted to start this talk by recognizing the man to whom this speaker series is dedicated. As a researcher, **Ernest S. Burch, Jr.** was keenly interested in questions about the Inuit past and understood the key to exploring this history was Inuit themselves. He carefully constructed arguments for how and why Inuit ethnography—or the gathering of firsthand accounts and oral histories—was needed to qualify the Arctic past. Burch became attuned to Inuit stories through extensive fieldwork among the Inupiat of Northern Alaska and the Caribou Inuit along the western shores of Hudson’s Bay. He listened to what Inuit had to say, and in doing so he was richly rewarded with a storied past rarely granted to those outside the culture.

In light of Burch’s work, I want to focus my talk on his conviction that the inclusion of Inuit orality holds the key to the successful reconstruction—and hence a fuller understanding—of the Inuit past. I would like to forward a second argument: that the Inuit past—or more precisely Inuit orality about the Inuit past—also holds the key to supporting a future for Inuit language and traditional knowledge. Across the Arctic, Inuit communities are using language as a key for building greater understanding about their history, but also for strengthening the collective body of cultural knowledge being transferred to future generations.

I would specifically like to describe what the intersection of Inuit history and language looks like through the perspective of Inuit directed research. For over a decade, I have been an employee of a research facility called Pitquhirmikkut Ilihautiniq, or the Kitikmeot Heritage Society, located in the western Nunavut community of Cambridge Bay. *Pitquhirmikkut Ilihautiniq* is led by an *Inuinnaq* Executive Director and a board of twelve local Elders. Unlike many research institutions, its emphasis is not only on generating new data, but making sure that existing knowledge—deeply embedded in Inuinnaik culture—continues to inform present and future ways of being in the world.

Inuinait are a regional group of Inuit who live in the Central Canadian Arctic. For hundreds of years, this group has lived in a specific landscape and become highly attuned to its environment. Prior to initial contact with western civilization and its material culture, Inuinait lived a purely land-based existence, relying on their immediate surroundings for the tools they made, the clothes they wore, the food they ate, in short... for everything. The term Inuinait quite literally means ‘the people’ in their language. Over the last several decades, its use as a collective name has emerged to replace ‘Copper Inuit,’ or ‘Copper Eskimos,’ terms attributed to them by early explorers due to their distinct use of the naturally sourced copper as metal for their tools.

Beyond their geographic territory and use of copper, Inuinait define themselves from other Inuit groups through their clothing styles, social practices, and material technologies, but perhaps most importantly through their language called Inuinnaqtun. Inuinnaqtun has an estimated 600 speakers distributed across the four communities of Ulukhaktok, Kugluktuk, Cambridge Bay, and Gjoa Haven. Most of these speakers are Elders. The disappearance of a language precipitates the loss of culturally unique knowledge. Inuinnaqtun not only means to speak, but also to create, to practice, to do, to think—to be—like an *Inuinnaq* (*Inuinnaq*, meaning a human being); a larger cycle in which language allows people to both name their world and properly function within it.

While knowledge and awareness of Inuinnaqtun continues to be embedded in the memories, skills, and technology of modern populations, it is increasingly based on experience with urban as opposed to land-based living. The transition from land to town happened quickly among the Inuinait. They were among the last Inuit groups to be contacted by western culture, most families not encountering non-Inuit explorers and traders until the mid-to-late 1910s. By the mid-1950s, Inuinait life was shifted into towns and a system of residential schooling further removing children from their families, language, and land. As Inuinait life adjusted to the realities of settlement, practices associated with living

on the land became less used. This in turn, brought about the gradual disappearance of highly customized technology, terminology, and social relationships that accompanied these activities.

Pitquhirmikkut Ilihautiniq’s Inuinait heritage programming is grounded in the blunt reality that the Inuinnaqtun language and contexts of oral history are disappearing from popular use. Inuinnaqtun and its supporting knowledge is described by many to be ‘sleeping’—its absence qualified as dormancy rather than loss. But how to ease the language into a more wakeful state? Our solution lay in making Inuinnaqtun—both the language and the greater ecosystem it implies—the specific focus of our heritage research.

I wanted to start my description of the Inuinait heritage program by thinking about the past and the language



The geographic distribution of Inuit languages. Note the Inuinnaqtun language positioned in the Central Canadian Arctic.

Source: noahedits/wikipedia.org

we use to describe it. I am, by trade, an archaeologist. This profession encourages a certain way of thinking and talking about old objects and locations as though they truly belong to a different era. They are ‘artifacts,’ ‘remains,’ material testaments to a past event. When I first began my work as an archaeologist in Cambridge Bay, I was specifically

there to research Inuit stories about archaeological artifacts and sites. Like Ernest Burch, I was mostly seeking correlation, this idea that Inuit narratives could be recorded to better position archaeologists’ own stories or theories about what, exactly, happened. Over the course of multiple archaeological excavations with local Elders, it quickly became clear that they were speaking a different language of archaeology. Conversations about the objects or sites being excavated were not always anchored in the past. They were often not even about the past or even the materials being discussed. Rather, they provided much more subjective narratives, ones that included personal memories and experiences; descriptions of technologies and social practices; place and seasonality; people, their relationships and their regional names; and, perhaps most importantly, a highly focused Inuinnaqtun terminology for all of these phenomena.

Rather than sifting through these narratives for information that helped to support archaeological questions at hand—the specific age of sites visited, for

example, the functions of old tools, or possible diets of past people—we began to ask how Inuinnait stories could be used to access and communicate a more comprehensive Inuinnait perspective. The most obvious way for our team to approach this work was to redirect storytelling and language about history into the present community by creating opportunities for experiential learning about historical practices, technologies, and places. The resulting workshops—which typically focus on the revival of traditional technologies, hunting practices, and cultural skills—use the firsthand memories of Elders to transfer skills and language in a setting where people are engaging with each other, deepening knowledge of landscape, and can actually feel the meaning of new words they’re learning.

While ideal for bringing *Inuinnait* back to communities, these workshops have their limitations. Sometimes collective memory of the past has gaps. Perhaps no one remembers the name of an old tool. Or the name is remembered, but the details of how to make it, forgotten. Both the strength and the weakness of an oral culture, is that its entire knowledge resides in people. Where does one go when these people can’t be found, or no longer exist? How does one re-cover intangible knowledge about the past? For some of our projects, we had to start looking for information outside the culture.

As generations grow more distant from traditional lifeways, there is an increasing reliance on secondary sources for the recovery of traditional knowledge. This brings the issue of knowledge access to the forefront. The reality for many northern communities is that a great number of historical sources lie beyond collective memory, and beyond the Arctic itself. Museums, archives and memory institutions, both in North America and around the world, hold a significant portion of existing Inuinnait knowledge. Beginning around 1910, anthropologists, traders, and explorers began to travel throughout the Inuinnait region, receiving information directly from knowledge holders and recording them in the relative permanence of photographs and fieldnotes. Numerous objects were collected. As time and social change reduced the number of these resources made, used and owned by Inuinnait, exported collections have remained intact and are full of potential to guide contemporary efforts for cultural revival. But how to get at them? Most often, by going to museums. Our team has worked with multiple museums over the years to visit collections and begin the process of reclaiming Inuit knowledge from them. For the purposes of this paper, I will describe one specific case study.

2021 marks the 100th anniversary of the Fifth Thule Expedition. Between 1921 and 1924, the Danish-

Greenlandic ethnographer **Knud Rasmussen** led a research team across the whole of the North American Arctic—from Greenland to Siberia, acquiring detailed observations, collections, and documentation about the Inuit cultures they encountered. The linguistic and cultural fluency of Knud Rasmussen—resulting in part from his mixed European and Greenlandic Inuit heritage—allowed him to communicate with Inuit in their own tongue and earn their trust as an insider. Rasmussen spent a total of three months specifically documenting Inuinnait life.

In 2015, we began to consider the meaning and utility of Rasmussen’s work for contemporary Inuinnait. We partnered with the National Museum of Denmark—the recipient of many of Rasmussen’s collections—and over the years made several trips with Elders and staff to view and interpret their object and archival collections. Elders **Bessie Pihok** and **Omilgoetok** and **Joseph Tikhak**, both descendants of Inuinnait who met with the Fifth Thule Expedition, spent days in the museum’s collection rooms telling stories and gathering information about the items, including identifying their uses, social context, and terminology. Despite being almost 100 years old, many of the objects were familiar to the Elders from their childhood and opened gateways to related stories from that time.

Rasmussen’s writings about Inuinnait society are a wealth of linguistic information. In some cases, they are the only source material for Inuinnait terms: names of tools, songs, and people. These recorded words quite literally define whole new ways of thinking about Inuinnait history. But getting at these terms is not so easy. While fluent in the West Greenlandic language, Rasmussen used a very unusual script for his writing, which he adopted from German Moravian missionaries. Because of its orthography, this script is particularly difficult to read for translation purposes. Luckily, Rasmussen provided a phonetic key, a guideline to the specific sounds accompanying each letter. This key frustratingly diverted the text through four other languages: English, French, German and Scottish. A team of language experts across the Inuinnait communities was organized, with each team overseeing the transcription of Inuinnait songs, stories, and terminology from these writings. Each word of Rasmussen’s text was carefully eased back to orality, Inuinnait experts combining their existing knowledge of available sounds within the language and finding closest equivalents within the foreign languages Rasmussen set as keys.

Once translated into contemporary Inuinnait orthography, translation of meaning still had to occur.

The songs and spiritual chants of Inuinnait are their own form of poetry, riddled with metaphors, allegory and narrative devices. The song of a hunter waiting for seal, for example, might never make a mention of the animal as it would be a sign of disrespect. Another word might be used to reference the animal without naming it outright. To understand the meanings of the song, one has to draw on this larger Inuinnait body of cultural association and context.

The case studies described focused on bringing the past into the present. But for Inuinnait-directed research, there is also a further requirement of knowledge transmission: in other words, ensuring that the past, and the present's engagement with the past, is brought into the future. Our team decided at an early stage that this future would be digital. I like to think that this was prompted, in part, by the fact that the Inuinnait word for computer is the same word as for brain: qaritaq. What, we asked ourselves, would a digital version of an Inuinnait story-teller's brain even look like? How would it function? We worked with this concept of digital memory to begin mapping out the ways that history resided in both the individual and collective mind. We determined three key points about oral history that would guide our work: (1) it relies first and foremost on orality and spoken language; (2) it encourages connectivity, bringing together the many parts of an Inuinnait ecology including language, people and land; and (3) it is the product of an individual's life experience. What they heard, what they saw, what they remembered. In figuring out how a digital format could accommodate these qualities, we came up with the idea of a knowledge bank. A knowledge bank, as we saw it, would be an enduring repository of everything a community believed was important about its heritage. While it would never replace firsthand experiences with historical content, it could serve as a way to remember and continue telling them, not as a single event or unique object, but as a larger atmospheric cloud of conversation and association.

We understood early that a knowledge bank would have to be custom built. In 2006, we partnered with the Geomatics and Cartographic Research Centre at Carleton University in Ottawa, Canada to develop our own solution to storing, organizing and preserving Inuinnait knowledge. At the time, the Geomatics Centre was pioneering a cybercartography framework called Nunaliit. There were several qualities about this framework that immediately struck a chord: (1) It was open source. All its code is publicly available and non-proprietary. Nobody owns it, nobody profits from it. (2) It is what's referred to as a distributed network, meaning that it connects multiple users through the same underlying system. A benefit of this is that as

these users shape the framework to their specific needs, any new functions, features, or upgrades developed by one user is immediately available to anyone else using the framework. The costs of maintaining the system over time are also distributed, making it more sustainable. (3) It is a relational database, which means that each piece of information entered into a Nunaliit database is a discrete document. A museum record of an Inuinnait parka, for example, would be its own document. A photo of that parka, a separate document. A photo of someone wearing the parka a separate document, a comment that someone makes about the person wearing the parka, a separate document. And so on. This allows for a system in which data is a cloud of free-floating documents with no prescribed structure. As documents become increasingly related through use, they form ever-changing pathways of interconnection and association.

Using Nunaliit as its foundation, the first Inuinnait heritage platform was developed in 2007 to visualize and explore place name research conducted by our organization. Called the Kitikmeot Place Names Atlas (atlas.kitikmeotheritage.ca), the platform was designed to enhance western cybercartography with Inuinnait language and understandings of land. The platform features a continuous, zoomable map that allows users to navigate the Inuinnait region and select specific place names for further investigate. As a language-focused map, it also provides users with the pronunciation of each place name by a fluent Inuinnait speaker. Places can be linked to multimedia files of Elders and land user interviews about activities and traditions associated with the specific landscape. In some cases, specific places were enhanced by 3D panospheres, allowing users to virtually view the described environment. To date, roughly 1500 Inuinnait place names have been entered into the system.

As we became better acquainted with developing these platforms, we began to map out new ways of engaging with Inuinnait knowledge and orality. In partnership with the Danish National Museum, we created a new model for sharing digital Inuinnait knowledge. In 2017, the National Museum transferred all its digital records of Inuinnait photos, objects, stories, songs, and place names to Pitquhirmikkut Ilihautiniq under a creative commons license. We used this digital collection to create a platform called the Fifth Thule Atlas (www.thuleatlas.org), specifically designed to provide access to all Inuinnait knowledge gathered by Rasmussen's expedition.

The Fifth Thule Atlas allows for Inuit knowledge to be accessed in three different ways. Firstly, users can locate

knowledge in a spatial manner through a geographic map tracing out the Fifth Thule Expedition's travel routes and encounters with Inuit camps. Each location can be clicked to access Inuit information related to that place: photos of Inuit encountered, transcribed songs and stories collected at a particular site. The second form of interface is an interactive PDF version of the Expedition's reports. These can be navigated much like a traditional book, but have added features of keyword searchability and allows users to access and comment on each reference to Inuit knowledge. Comments can take the form of audio, video or text. The Atlas' final interface allows users to directly access categories of content such as place names, people, oral traditions, photographs, or maps.

The Fifth Thule Atlas was our first foray into thinking about how material collections in particular can benefit from this digital approach. Last year, we developed a prototype collections management software that we call the Inuinnait Knowledge Bank. The Inuinnait Knowledge Bank holds digitized records from a growing number of museums and archives in addition to its own digitized archival collection. The ultimate goal for the Inuinnait Knowledge Bank is to have a centralized and searchable record for every digitally available Inuinnait object, photo, and archives document around the world.

The Inuinnait Knowledge Bank is specifically designed to foster new opportunities for documenting the Inuinnait language. Inuinnait terminology can be layered over objects, photos, and audiovisual media within the digital collection. We have simplified the process for Inuit to write, speak or video record Inuinnait descriptions of collections. Users can re-structure the relationship of existing records, creating a web of related documents to better illustrate their Inuinnait context. We are exploring improvements such as content tagging to allow an even broader audience to describe, categorize, 'like', and share new language and information with one another.

The Inuinnait Knowledge Bank currently lives at the May Hakongak Cultural Centre in Cambridge Bay.

An early priority for our digital work was to ensure that virtual forms of knowledge remained anchored in the physical world. We wanted the ability to point to a location when asked by the community where their knowledge is being stored. To accomplish this, we installed a local server to house our entire dataset. Controlling the physical location of digital knowledge comes with multiple benefits. A server linked to a WiFi network can give local people faster and easier access to its content. It can also prevent information from leaving the community, building the community's capacity as decision makers regarding who can access what information.

To close my talk, I wanted to go full circle and bring it back to the work of Ernest Burch, Jr. Burch had a critical stance on storytelling, and a very strong opinion of what a good story about history entailed. Among the many criteria he lists for such stories are

accuracy, reliability, and consistency. A good story, he believed, is one that provides a firm handle on history; a statement about the past that so tightly and convincingly braids available threads of evidence that one has no choice but to grab hold, and hang on.

But what stories are lost through this process? What is silenced? I've spent a lot of time thinking about how Burch's criteria for storytelling applies to the Inuinnait heritage

program that we've created. My first impulse is to say it doesn't, that their respective goals to define the past, and to shape the future, are just too far apart. But deeper consideration shows there are elements of overlap. Inuinnait oral history has its own culturally internal processes for determining fact from fiction, for weeding out the tall tales. Getting it right in Inuinnait oral histories is found in expansiveness rather than a narrowing down to key truths. Truth is not found in the most reasonable conclusion, but in the accuracy of the many details that bring it together. But sometimes the truth of stories resides simply in the fact that they are told between people to deepen their sense of belonging in a language, in a culture, in a way of life. It is this sense of truth that gives a culture the foundation to understand, on their own terms, where they've been and where they are, and where they want to be.



*Figure 2. A successful seal hunt at a knowledge transfer land camp outside of Cambridge Bay in 2014.
Photo by Brendan Griebel*

CELEBRATING *QAUMAJUQ*: INUIT ART CENTRE OF THE WINNIPEG ART GALLERY

By Bernadette Driscoll Engelstad

For over 60 years the Winnipeg Art Gallery (WAG) has been a pivotal center for the exhibition, research, and publication of contemporary Inuit art. During this period, the WAG has developed an internationally renowned collection now comprising almost 12,000 sculptures, prints, drawings, weavings, and embroidered and appliqué textiles by Inuit artists from across the Canadian Arctic. Under the inspired leadership of Director **Stephen Borys**, the WAG will soon open *Qaumajuq*, a world-class center of Inuit art, to celebrate this collection. *Qaumajuq* is the Inuktitut name chosen by Inuit, First Nations, and Metis elders and language-keepers working with the WAG's Indigenous Advisory Circle. Pronounced KOW-ma-yourq or HOW-ma-yourq (depending on the regional dialect), *Qaumajuq* translates as 'it is bright, it is lit'.

Given the exquisite nuance of the Inuktitut language, the process of naming offers a meaningful insight into Inuit cultural philosophy.

Qaumajuq, for example, is directly linked to the stem word 'qau' meaning light, daylight, dawn (Dorais 2020:294). However, beyond describing the physical aspects of light (e.g., *qaummalak*, lightning; *qauppat*, tomorrow—when there will be light), *qau* also embraces the intellectual concepts of knowledge and enlightenment. As recorded by linguist **Louis Jacques Dorais**, *qaujimaniq* refers to the acquisition of knowledge, i.e. the fact of having become aware. The term *qaumaniq* describes the *angakkuq*'s attainment of esoteric (shamanic) knowledge—a process detailed by **Knud Rasmussen** based on discussions with the Iglulik shaman, **Aua** (Rasmussen 1929:112-119). Therefore, *Qaumajuq* not only reflects the brilliant physical light of its new home but the complex, often enigmatic, even metaphysical layers of human knowledge and cultural insight embodied in the skilled artwork and creative vision of Inuit artists.



View of *Qaumajuq* with Northern Lights Display, Winnipeg Art Gallery



Designed by Michael Maltzan Architecture of Los Angeles—and constructed in association with Winnipeg's Cibinel Architecture Ltd.—*Qaumajuq* is a stunning four-story edifice of 40,000 sq. ft. Inspired by monolithic forms of drifting ice—a familiar sight to Inuit—these colossal shapes seeded the architectural vision of **Michael Maltzan** on a design expedition to Nunavut. In contrast to its undulating white stone exterior, *Qaumajuq* incorporates a curved glass street-front encouraging views into the ground floor at all hours of day and night, underscoring the architect's vision of light and accessibility. On each level, bridges connect *Qaumajuq* to the Gallery's original building, a landmark structure with sharp geometric lines designed by Winnipeg architect **Gustavo da Roza**, soon to celebrate its 50th Anniversary. Over twenty skylights in the ceiling of the third-floor gallery illuminate the 8,000 sq. ft exhibit space. Monumental commissions

by Inuvialuit sculptor, **Abraham Anghik Ruben** (b. Paulatuk/Salt Spring Island, BC) and Manitoba-based artist

Glass-enclosed Visual Vault, Qaumajuq. Courtesy of Winnipeg Art Gallery

Goota Ashoona (b. Kinngait/Cape Dorset) highlight *Qaumajuq*'s exterior plaza, named *Nutaag Tummaqtuyuq*, Inuvialuktun for "big steps forward". In anticipation of its formal opening in early 2021, a spectacular display of the Northern Lights has been projected onto the exterior façade of *Qaumajuq*, brightening the dark winter evenings.

The foyer is anchored by a multi-storied, glass-enclosed visual vault displaying over 4,500 sculptures from the WAG and the Government of Nunavut Fine Arts collection, on long-term loan to the WAG. Organized by WAG senior curator, Dr. **Darlene Wight** and Inuit assistant curator, **Jocelyn Piirainen**, this expansive presentation of Inuit sculpture in stone provides an unparalleled opportunity to witness the remarkable breadth of work created by Inuit sculptors from the early 1950s to the present. Individually and in their totality, these carvings provide striking evidence of the creative imagination, distinctive artistic styles, variety of subject matter, and ingenious use of natural materials by Inuit artists in communities across the North as well as in more southern locales.

The name Illavut (“our relatives”), adopted by the Indigenous Advisory Circle for the visual vault, aptly describes the intimate and often familial relationship of Inuit to the works on display as well as to their creators, reflecting the multi-generational dedication of Inuit men and women to art production, not only as a conduit of creative expression but perhaps more critically as a vital means of supporting one’s family in a time with few economic opportunities. Indeed, many younger artists today recall childhood memories of watching their parents, grandparents, siblings and community members engaged in carving, drawing, and printmaking.

In addition to the prominent display of sculpture in the visual vault, Qaumajuq opens with a challenging, thought-provoking exhibition entitled Inua, sure to



Tuniigusiiia/The Gift, 2020, by Goota Ashoona (Kinngait/Cape Dorset; Elie, Manitoba). Gift of the Manitoba Teachers Society

unsettle preconceived notions of Inuit art production. Entitled Inua (spirit, force)—elaborated in the acronym *INUA: Inuit Nunangat Ungammuktut Atautikkut* (“Inuit Moving Forward Together”)—the inaugural exhibition brings together over 100 works of art by 40 sculptors, graphic artists, filmmakers, and innovative clothing designers. Curated by a talented team of Inuit artists and scholars representing the four regions of Inuit Nunangat—Dr. **Heather Iglorliorte** (Nunatsiavut), **Krista Ulujuk Zawadski** (Nunavut), **Assinajaq** (Nunavik), and **Kablusiak** (Inuvialuit

Settlement Region)—Inua features works by long-established, mid-career, and emerging artists, including many newly-commissioned works. The list of artists on the WAG website (<https://wag.ca/event/inua>) invites one to search out images, websites, and YouTube videos of the featured artists and their works, providing a captivating introduction to the Inua exhibit while awaiting the much-anticipated opening of *Qaumajuq*.

It is noteworthy to add that in addition to Inuktitut names conferred on *Qaumajuq*, the elders and language-keepers working with the Indigenous Advisory Circle have bequeathed formal names in Michif (Metis), Ojibway, Cree, and Dakota to physical spaces throughout the WAG (<https://wag.ca/qaumajuq/indigenous-naming-wag>). In this way, the Winnipeg Art Gallery signals a renewed relationship not only with Inuit artists and the North, but with all Indigenous communities. As Stephen Borys states, “We understand that the history of our Inuit art collection is tied to colonialism. We see these names as steps along our path to integrating and honouring indigenous knowledge.” In this way, the Winnipeg Art Gallery’s long-standing history with Inuit art has begun to forge an even broader path to a fuller, more respectful recognition and acknowledgement of Indigenous art, artists, and societies across Canada (Fig. 3).

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BURCH ENDOWMENT SUPPORT FOR ASC ACTIVITIES IN 2020

By Igor Krupnik

The Ernest S. (“Tiger”) Burch Endowment with the NMNH was established in 2012 by the family of our late colleague and long-term research associate, **Ernest S. (“Tiger”) Burch, Jr.**, with the aim to support, promote, and interpret the study of Arctic Indigenous peoples and their cultures. The fund ensures that our work and the legacy of Tiger’s many decades of collaboration with the Smithsonian continues. As in previous years, the Burch Endowment remained the prime source of funding for various ASC operations in 2020.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic restrictions, many regular activities of the Arctic Studies Center (ASC) staff supported by the Endowment were put on hold.

There was hardly any conference travel, no summer fieldwork, no visiting scholars, interns, and fellows to support. Since March 2020, all operations were conducted via teleworking, online conferencing, and other electronic channels. That, in turn, allowed the ASC to re-direct some of the Burch funds to support online outreach programs conducted out of its Anchorage office (primarily by **Dawn Biddison**) and online work by two Anthropology contractors, **Sadie Colebank** and **Sara Babouri**, on the joint collection project with the Oberlin College (see “Nelson in the Cloud” in this issue).

The Endowment supported the ASC annual public event, the “Tiger Burch annual lecture” that helps promote the impact of Arctic anthropological research to wider audiences and colleagues across the globe. Begun in 2014, the “Tiger Burch Lecture” has emerged as one of the key events that ASC hosts every year for the Museum community and the public. The 2020 annual ‘Burch Lecture’ was delivered on October 27, 2020, by Canadian anthropologist, Dr. **Brendan Griebel** (see below). In addition to Dr. Griebel’s lecture, the 2020 ‘Burch Event’ included a two-hour webinar (panel) with six in-house and invited speakers on the topic of Museums and Anthropologists working with Indigenous communities to facilitate the use of museum collections as heritage, language, knowledge, and artistic resources (see below). The Burch Endowment paid the speaker’s award; it was agreed that a portion of the unused 2020 travel funds would be reserved for Dr. Griebel’s research visit to NMNH in 2021.

As in the previous years, the Endowment provided much-needed support for the production of the recently published ASC volume, *Arctic Crashes. People and Animals in the Changing North* (Krupnik and Crowell, eds., 2020—see this issue). It paid for graphic work for the next major ASC publication, the proceedings of a special session organized by the ASC in Nome, Alaska in 2019 dedicated to the centennial of the 5th Thule Expedition of 1921–24, led by Danish-Greenlandic explorer, **Knud Rasmussen**. This collection is to appear as a special issue of the *Alaska Journal of Anthropology* in summer 2021 (see Crowell, this issue). The endowment continued to provide funds for other ASC operations, such as the production of the *ASC Newsletter*, the ASC membership in the Arctic Consortium of the United States (ARCUS), and research travel in the first two months of 2020. As our post-COVID life resumes, we plan to continue using Burch Endowment to advance our research and public programs, in conference travel and fieldwork, and to promote our research and Burch’s legacy to the international Arctic research community via publications, conferences, and professional exchanges.

THE 2020 ERNEST S. BURCH MEMORIAL LECTURE PROGRAM

By Igor Krupnik and William W. Fitzhugh

On October 27th, the Arctic Studies Center hosted the 2020 Annual “Ernest S. Burch Lecture” and a follow-up Zoom webinar organized jointly with the Department of Anthropology. The focus of the event was on museums and anthropologists working with Indigenous communities in facilitating the use of collections as heritage, language, knowledge, and artistic resources. The event began with a lecture by our invited speaker, Dr. **Brendan Griebel**, who presented a talk titled “Oral History, Oral Present, Oral Future: The Language of Inuinnait Heritage Research.” His talk featured activities of the Kitikmeot Heritage Society (www.kitikmeotheritage.ca) of Cambridge Bay, Nunavut.

Brendan Griebel is a Canadian researcher of Inuit material culture and the relationships between Arctic history, materiality, and collective identity. He holds a Ph.D. in Anthropology from the University of Toronto and has spent two decades engaged in land-based and experiential research with Inuit scholars and knowledge holders in the Canadian Arctic. He is a long-term employee and the former Executive Director of *Pitquhirnikkut Ilihautiniq* (Kitikmeot Heritage Society) in the Inuit community of Cambridge Bay in Nunavut, also a member of Carleton University’s Geomatics and Cartographic Research Centre, and Co-Founder and Director of The Museum of Fear and Wonder, a private museum located approximately one hour north of Calgary, Alberta in Canada. Dr. Griebel’s talk is provided in this issue.

Following Dr. Griebel’s talk, we screened four YouTube videos on heritage and knowledge documentation programs with Indigenous communities that had been prepared by **Dawn Biddison** in our Anchorage Office. The first of these was extracted from “Weaving a Yup’ik *Issran*/Grass Carrying-Bag”; the second was on “Material Traditions: Athabaskan Moosehide Tanning and Sewing”; the third was from “Sculpting Ivory”; and the fourth from “Twining Cedar: Annette Island Tsimshian Basket Weaving” (see the links below):

- (1) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aNADxHHCnPU&list=PL3wBN-dh9DMSCNafPQaxFpWPG456yKWH0&index=1&t=24s>
- (2) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yTPWADw6OI8&list=PL3wBN-dh9DMQOB7AvbKb2NLHQ9NtbG55K&index=1>
- (3) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_NMJ7n7-loo&list=PL3wBN-dh9DMRrXiXA10N3mOsiKzvN2Hiy&index=1&t=11s

(4) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YrFOFxfByQ&list=PL3wBN-dh9DMT-043en5-6YYpTuLogAwkU&index=1&t=746s>

This video ‘intermission’ was followed by a two-hour discussion panel, “Museums, Communities, and collections: Current Practice and Future Horizons,” moderated by Dr. **William Fitzhugh** and featuring six invited panelists: **Bernadette (Yaayuk) Alvanna-Stimpfle** from Nome, Alaska; our own **Joshua Bell, Gwyneira Isaac**, and Dawn Biddison, a former SIMA student of 2014, **Krista Zawadski**, now in Rankin Inlet, Nunavut Canada, and the event speaker, Brendan Griebel. Each panelist shared their experience in community collection sharing projects by providing insights on their experiences with these projects. This was followed by another Q&A session. The bio-statements of this year’s speaker and panelists are shown below. and the discussion panel is available at: https://smithsonian.zoom.us/rec/play/f6UFZUPdRT-f9IRyfMfwHf1cIaSSnHys1JRvFK1uNxvHFGI QjQmuwrchHt3KOqPTKugkU2yCc2pwjUtk._qD2rUUzWILTy rz0

Our experience with our virtual Burch event revealed both the power and limitations on public communications (such as Zoom ‘fatigue’ and time zone differences) in the COVID-19 era. We were indebted to **Nancy Shorey** for administrative support and **Katherine Barca** for organization, assistance, and masterminding the virtual environment.

SOUNDS FROM THE NORTH: LOCATION TIME ART

By *Charlie Morrow*

Days get longer here in Helsinki now that it's February. A 97-year-old local just said, “summer's coming!” Further south in the U.S. state of Maine, locals boast two seasons, “wintaaaaa” and “the 4th of Julyyyyyyy.”

The past twelve months, Year One in this time of COVID-19, has been very surprising for me. Spring 2020, a Russian painter could not take himself or his paintings to Helsinki's Kohta Taidehalli for his scheduled show. To fill the slot, director curator, **Anders Kreuger**, created retrospective, *Charlie Morrow: A Gathering*, October 20 to December 21, Winter Solstice.

Anders in Helsinki and **Jay Walbert**, who manages my Barton, Vermont archive, toured archive assets digitally to inspire Anders to create a theme and workflow for the retrospective. COVID-19 restrictions shaped this show: paper posters from events and

projects 1964–2020 in the main gallery with MorrowSound spatialized music and soundscapes, and projected videos of performance works and of media with my music and sound 1975–2020 in the media room.

In October 2020, Recital Edition Los Angeles released *America Lament*, a vinyl album with a red cover. **Sean McCann** cut a thoughtful compilation of my music created over 60 years. Anders painted his main gallery red and his media room blue. He draped black audio cables like circus tent ropes in both rooms. You can visit the walkthrough of posters, the opening performance of *Serenade II* and closing event *Four Winds Winter Solstice* celebration at: <https://kohta.fi>.



America Lament, an album of 60 years of Charlie Morrow music

Solstice celebrations are a major part of my work, featuring a premier of a new Wave Music for a herd of like instruments, like 40 Cellos, 60 Clarinets, and a boat. Enjoy my 1975 first solstice event poster for New York Parks and Recreation. Here's a description of *Solstice24*, one hour in each of twenty-four time zones, co-produced with Smithsonian Institution Arctic Studies (<https://www.smithsonianmag.com/smithsonian-institution/its-global-solstice-party-and-youre-invited-180959462>).

Serenade II song cycle includes a north English tenor, **Ian Honeyman**, in kilts, French Horn soloist **Ville Hiilivirta**, and **Otso Pakarinen** playing keyboard soundscapes, electronics, and guitar. I begin *Serenade II* setting with the sad Keats poem with which **Benjamin Britten** ended his *Serenade* written around the time of my birth in the 1940s. *Four Winds – A Winter Solstice Concert* is a composition for four horns in Finland, USA, Australia and Japan, and

works of Phil Dadson in Auckland, New Zealand, **Phill Niblock** in New York, NY, and **Åsa Simma** in Kiruna, Sweden.

A Gathering of Healers, Anders' inspiration for the retrospective show title, is a small artist book for five workshops with texts by collaborators and me. It was created for our 1977 event in New York. A new edition will be issued by Kohta Taidehalli and Recital Edition, Los Angeles on Equinox, March 21, 2121.

Immerse!, a book and podcast, are in production containing my 40-plus interviews with collaborators in creating immersive experiences. **William Fitzhugh's** overview of cultural context is key for connecting the



*Charlie Morrow: A Gathering. Morrow at left.
Photo by Anders Kreuger*

human world over time with the research, collections, publications and shows of Arctic Studies. **Brian Katz**, who inspired my 3D sound work in the 1990s, shares how he mapped the acoustics of Cathedral of Notre Dame before the tragic fire. The data sets are valuable in themselves and for restoration. **Miya Masaoka** shares her work with sound, external and internal.

In this time of pandemic, I managed all from a flat in downtown Helsinki. I think of **Marcel Proust** in isolation as he fashioned a literature of memory. My isolation is purely physical. I have tools of modern communication and production and a network of collaborators.

[*Editor's note: Charlie Morrow* has provided ASC and SI with exhibit soundscapes and solstice programming. He is at www.morrowsound.com, an interview at toneglow.substack.com/p/0365-charlie-morrow]

ILLUSUAK CULTURAL CENTRE OPENS IN NAIN, LABRADOR

By Lena Onalik and Joan Dicker

The Illusuak Cultural Centre located in Nain, Nunatsiavut (Labrador), saw its grand opening take place on November 21, 2019. Elders and youth from each of the five Labrador Inuit communities, Labrador MP **Yvonne Jones**, and representatives from the Government of Canada, took part in the ceremony. Nunatsiavut President, **Johannes Lampe** stated, "Illusuak will help bridge the generation gap between elders and youth, encouraging open dialogue, the sharing of traditional knowledge, and the vision for the future. The stories that will be told in Illusuak will



*The new Illusuak Culture Center in Nain, Labrador.
Photo by Lena Onalik*

make Labrador Inuit proud. By understanding where we came from and how we survived as a people, Labrador Inuit will have a better appreciation of who we are as individuals and as a culture continuing to evolve in a modern world."

Illusuak is located in the center of Nain, on the shore facing the harbor. Designed by architect **Todd Saunders** to replicate a sod house, this is where the name "Illusuak" came from. The Centre consists of exhibit spaces, theatre, café, and the offices of some of Nunatsiavut Department of Language, Culture, and Tourism, as well as Parks Canada staff for the Torngat Mountain's National Park Reserve.

Entering Illusuak, one is presented with faces of Nunatsiavut—8x10 inch photographs which highlight people from each of the five Inuit communities. The Illusuak café and gift shop run by NGC, (Nunatsiavut Group of Companies) offers tea, coffee and delicious

baked goods, with meals offered three days a week. A large mural of caribou done by **Jason Jacques** of Postville is on the wall as you enter the exhibit space. The exhibit consists of artifacts from the region, storyboards, a life-size Igloo story nest, interactive stations where you can sing karaoke, and a large 3D map of the Labrador Inuit Land Claims region from its southern boundary at the mouth of Lake Melville to the northern tip of the Torngat Mountains. The multipurpose theatre supports audio/visual presentations, film screenings, lectures and live musical and dance performances. It has a seating capacity for 80 people.



*One of the Illusuak display halls.
Photo by Lena Onalik*

The coronavirus pandemic has impacted Nunatsiavut. Aside from the complete shutdown of research in the region, four months after opening the Centre it had to be shut down and did not open again until November 2020. Programming continues to be impacted due to COVID-19 restrictions. Under the new manager, **Joan Dicker**, programming includes after school student social visits, a Senior's tea social, and storytelling once per week. The café and exhibit space is open to the public weekdays from 8:30AM-4:30PM. Says Joan Dicker, "I really enjoy working here as Illusuak Manager. It is something that I wanted to do after I retired from teaching, to welcome people to a place of culture and tradition. I love welcoming visitors

and showing people what this building has to offer." Community member **Tracy Denniston** says, "I love how it represents our culture seeing the photographs as soon as we walk in. The lights are amazing for our sewing groups. The view is great. It's beautiful to see the site of Nain Harbour."

To date, the Illusuak Cultural Centre and café have hosted a wedding, graduation ceremony, a Residential School Survivor's event, a Young Men's Day Festival celebration, and a Nalujuit night event.

PITUL'KO WINS 2021 SCOPUS RESEARCH EXCELLENCE AWARD

By William Fitzhugh

On March 31, 2021 the science publishing giant Elsevier announced the winners of the annual Scopus Russian Research Excellence Awards given across a broad range of disciplines, based on citation indices. One of those chosen for work in the Humanities was the ASC's colleague, **Vladimir Pitul'ko**, an archaeologist who for forty years has researched the ancient cultures of the Russian High Arctic.



Best known for his excavations at the 8000-year old habitation site on Zhokhov Island and the 30,000-year old Yana River RHS site, Pitul'ko, a leading researcher at the St. Petersburg Institute of the History of Material Culture (Russian Academy of Sciences), is well-known in North America for research into cultures at the gateway to Beringia and the New World. His work has included large teams of environmental scientists together with his partner, **Elena Y. Pavlova**, and his multi-authored publications have appeared in leading journals and collections. Much of his work has been financed by grants from the NYC Rock Foundation via **Adelaide** and **Ted Carpenter**, and other organizations.

RESEARCH

“WUTE”: THE WESTERN UNION TELEGRAPH EXPEDITION AND VOYAGES OF THE ARCTIC NIGHTINGALE

By John Cloud

The Smithsonian Institution (SI) commonly recognizes the participation of various SI researchers in natural and ethnographical history associated with the Western Union Telegraph Expedition (WUTE) of 1865–67. WUTE’s foundational fieldwork and collection-building program created the model for subsequent SI programs and had a direct bearing on the US decision to buy Alaska from the Russian America Company in 1867. Research over many years, but especially connected to the Alaska Sesquicentennial in 2017, reveals a much more nuanced story.

To understand the truncated history of the WUTE, it should be recognized that, for all parties, what occurred was a response to major wars. The Russian American Company was a private profit-seeking enterprise which was owned by rich and powerful members of the royalty of the Russian Empire. In the 1850s, the Crimean War between Imperial Russia and Imperial Great Britain had gone disastrously for both empires, with mass slaughter, debt, and political stalemate. Meanwhile, the American transcontinental telegraph from New England to San Francisco was completed in 1861 when the country became engulfed in the Civil War. The Russians needed new revenues, and the Americans wanted a western telegraphic connection to Europe, because many expensive plans for an eastern telegraphic connection across the Atlantic Ocean had failed. A wealthy American entrepreneur, **Perry Collins**, approached the president of the Western Union Telegraph Company, **Hiram Sibley**, about a project to establish a telegraph system from San Francisco

up western North America, across Bering Strait by underwater cable to Siberia, to eventually connect to telegraph systems in Russian capitals and from there to western Europe.

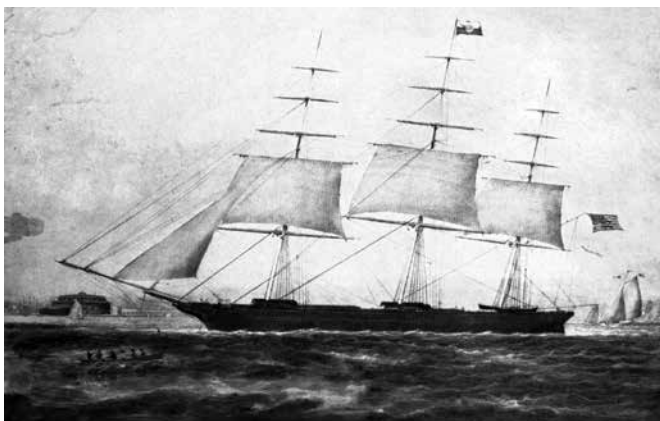
With support from powerful Russian nobles and imperial officials, the project began in 1865. Sections of the proposed route were delegated to specific major work parties in the U.S, British Columbia, Russian America, and Siberia. The project was directed by Colonel **Charles Bulkley**, a former Army Superintendent of Military Telegraphs, who organized the parties in military-style units. Hence, the SI researchers in natural history and ethnology were the Scientific Corps, while the unit responsible for getting researchers, engineers, and vast quantities of supplies to the shores of two continents was the Marine Division. The initial supply fleet proved inadequate to the task, so the Marine Division secured the flagship *Nightingale*, and its captain, **C. M. Scammon**, to lead the expeditions.



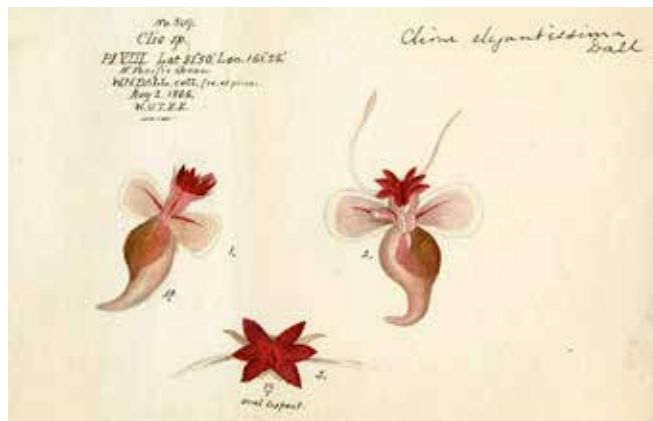
*The route of the proposed Telegraph System
(Robb, 1966)*



*Capt. C.M. Scammon, from the Overland Monthly magazine,
undated*



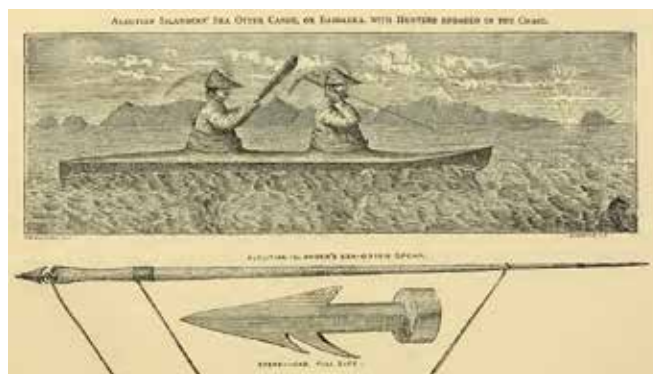
The Nightingale, built in England, 1851



*Pelagic mollusk, collected by Dall in the North Pacific Ocean from the Nightingale in 1866.
(Source: SI Archives)*



*Capt. Scammon's chromolithograph of the flags and pennants of the WUTE fleet.
(Source: Bancroft Library, UC Berkeley)*



Scammon's own illustration of sea otter hunting from a baidarka. (Source: SI Libraries)

Nightingale was a fast clipper ship, built for the lucrative Shanghai-to-London route carrying Chinese tea. In 1860, its owners converted it to an illegal slave ship to carry Africans to plantations in South America. In 1861, the U.S. Navy's slavery patrol seized the ship and sailed its enslaved cargo to freedom in Liberia, although many died of diseases on route. The U.S. Navy acquired the ship, refitted it to carry stores and coal, and made it part of the US Blockading Squadron to seal off the Confederacy during the Civil War. After the war, it was acquired by the Western Union Company as the flagship for the WUTE flotilla. The company hired Captain C.M. Scammon, a legendary mariner and whaler, to command *Nightingale*. In his new role for WUTE, Scammon abandoned whaling and was transitioning to becoming a marine biologist.

In addition to *Nightingale*, the WUTE fleet included various other sailing ships and two paddle-wheel steam ships to explore the Yukon River and other shallow rivers. Russian vessels were engaged for the work in Siberia.

Over many years, the Smithsonian has made much of the pioneering collections and observations made by members of the Scientific Corps before the WUTE project was abruptly terminated in 1867 when the trans-Atlantic telegraph cable was completed. But it is worth noting that the only way the Scientific Corps got to Alaska and Siberia in the first place was by sailing on the *Nightingale*. One participant in particular, **William Dall**, whose prolific work for the Smithsonian, the Coast Survey, the US Geological Survey, the National Academy of Sciences, etc. is well-known, became, amongst other distinctions, a major classifier of mollusks. And his foundational mollusk specimens were netted from the deck of the *Nightingale*.

The abrupt termination of the WUTE truncated much research. Nevertheless, Capt. Scammon synthesized his decades of work studying marine mammals, and, in 1874, at his expense, he published his masterpiece, *The Marine Mammals of the North-Western Pacific Coast, Described and Illustrated: Together with an Account of the American Whale Fishery*. The book includes an

appendix by William Dall, in which Dall “synthesized” Scammon’s and the SI’s classifications. The volume has voluminous ethnographic descriptions of human interactions with marine mammals.

The WUTE Scientific Corps did pioneering research, but it is past time to acknowledge that possibly the most productive platform for natural history in the history of the WUTE was the long, sleek deck of the *Nightingale*. (For more, see Fitzhugh and Selig, *The SI-Alaska Connection*, *Alaska Jour.* 1981: 193-208.)

SEARCHING FOR BASQUES ON THE QUEBEC LOWER NORTH SHORE: THE UNIVERSITÉ DE MONTRÉAL-SMITHSONIAN COLLABORATION

By Brad Loewen

It’s been a pleasure to collaborate with the Arctic Studies Center and Dr. **William Fitzhugh** over the years. Bill and I sat down for lunch at the Pointe-à-Callière Archaeology Museum in 2006 and worked on an archaeological partnership between the Smithsonian Institution and the Université de Montréal (UdeM). At the time, Bill was surveying and excavating sites on the Gulf of Saint Lawrence north shore. He had identified Basque and Inuit features on land, and a diver had discovered underwater features that Bill suspected had a relation to the land site. This site became a training ground for a steady stream of UdeM students in maritime archaeology. A key person in the partnership was **Erik Phaneuf**, an experienced underwater archaeologist—and UdeM graduate—who enjoyed working with the students and fit well into the routine of life on the *Pitsiulak*. With his unique abilities, cheer and professionalism, Erik made it all happen.

Hare Harbour—or Petit-Mécatina as Canadian archaeologists call it—opened our eyes to aspects of the Basque presence in the Gulf of Saint Lawrence that previous archaeologists had entirely missed. The first aspect was the Basque cultural chronology in the Gulf of Saint Lawrence. While previous researchers had simply pasted a 16th-century date on any Basque site, Petit-Mécatina showed a Basque timeline that extended into the late 17th century, and the wound glass beads even date to the early 18th century. The site forced us to rethink Basque material culture. Early Basque ceramics, including roofing tiles, are highly distinctive within North American historical archaeology, and previous analyses loosely ascribed them to France or Iberia. Studies that grew out of Petit-Mécatina, especially by Basque archaeologist **Sergio Escribano Ruiz** and UdeM graduate students **Saraí Barreiro Argüelles** and **Vincent Delmas**, showed that these



Petit Mecatina Basque-Inuit land and underwater site. Photo by Will Richard



UdeM and Smithsonian divers at Petit Mécatina Basque underwater site. Photo by Will Richard

early “Basque” ceramics were all Iberian in origin. Related historical studies confirmed that Basques in this region, known as Grande Baie, overwhelmingly came from Spain. As the 17th century wore on, Basque ceramics found at Petit-Mécatina evolved with the introduction of products from southwest France as well as new styles of Muel (Aragon) majolica and Bilbao coarse earthenware. We can now trace the gradual shift of Basque supply lines in Spain toward those in France, while maintaining a distinctive “Basque” character.

Before Bill’s work at Petit-Mécatina, many archaeologists thought that “Basque” sites were devoted to whaling. A lasting impression of our collaboration with Bill was his initial perplexity that Petit-Mécatina had none of the massive masonry features called tryworks that characterize whaling sites. For Canadian archaeologists, this site has become a reference for other Basque activities, notably the cod fishery. The underwater component is exceptionally informative about cod fishing, as fishermen threw the bones of thousands of fish into the water, as well as the

occasional tool, pot, or other artifact. UdeM students learned how to excavate an underwater site using stratigraphic methods developed on land sites. Petit-Mécatina's underwater sequence shows a lower level of brush cleared from the site and wood chips from construction activities, a middle level of cod bones mixed with other artifacts deposited during the period of fishing activities, and an upper level of roofing tiles that had fallen into the water as their supporting woodwork collapsed. Bill and I have long discussed the underwater features and their chronological relation to the land features. For UdeM students, the experience of an underwater stratigraphic excavation was unique, and Petit-Mécatina has become a reference for such an approach. We now know that other Basque sites have a comparable underwater sequence that show cod fishing, even at the specialized whaling station at Red Bay.

In partnering with the Smithsonian, Canadian eyes were opened to the juxtaposition of Basque and Inuit features in the terrestrial component of Petit-Mécatina. Previously, researchers considered Basque whaling and fishing crews in Canada as little autonomous islands of European culture, bringing all their supplies and eschewing contact with Indigenous peoples. Petit-Mécatina showed us not one, but two phases of Inuit occupation amidst the complex of Basque buildings that included a cookhouse and a smithy. The site also showed that the site's occupants prepared charcoal for use in the forge, using wood collected nearby and a charcoal pit. The Inuit likely produced this charcoal over winter, in order to supply the Basque blacksmith who arrived in summer. The Basque-Inuit "partnership" likely had many other aspects that archaeologists have not yet detected. The ideas that grew out of the Petit-Mécatina project—a long-term Basque presence from Spain, diversified activities, a gradual shift from Spain to France in Basque supply networks, Inuit year-round partnerships—have led to a re-evaluation of Basque-Indigenous relations throughout the Gulf of Saint Lawrence.



Chafing dish from Bonne Esperance Harbor found by a local fisherman. Photo by William Fitzhugh

The 2019 Field Program

In the summer of 2019, Bill asked me to organise an underwater survey of Bonne-Espérance harbour. Having finished the excavation at Petit-Mécatina, Bill had shifted his attention to this region where he was working on a couple of sites called Hart Chalet, Grand Island, and Kettle Head. He had heard that, about thirty years ago, a local scallop fisherman had dredged up a Saintonge chafing dish that was typical of 17th-century Basque material culture. The Université de Montréal task was to work with the fisherman to find the spot where the chafing dish had been found and look around for other signs of an early Basque site.

We proceeded in a counter-clockwise order around the harbour. Our first dives found only an old lawn mower. We struggled with tidal currents at the harbour's southern entrance. The fisherman came by to tell us we were getting warmer, and we soon found 18th and 19th-century ceramics from New England. We thought about the "schooner fleet" from Newburyport, Massachusetts that anchored in Bonne-Espérance for the Labrador fishery. Erik was getting impatient and doubled down on his student divers. He and Saraí were in two metres of water, near the rocky shore of Bonne-Espérance Island, when they came across heaps of Basque roofing tiles. It did not take long to understand that the tiles had tumbled from land, and we scrambled up to find a pristine site combining a Basque tryworks and a rudimentary Inuit-style winter house. Half an hour later, we had another, similar site.

In the days that followed, we returned to a couple of nearby sites where Bill had previously collected fragments of coarse redware that looked like roofing tiles. Both of these sites were reoccupied in the 19th and early 20th centuries, leaving abundant vestiges. We think they may have older Basque components that careful excavation may reveal. It now looks as



UdeM Students Serai Barriero-Arguelles, Emilie Teasdale, Marianne Dorais, and Erik Phaneuf preparing to dive at Old Salmon Bay. Brad Loewen at right. Photo by William Fitzhugh

though Bonne-Espérance harbour may hold the biggest concentration of Basque vestiges west of Red Bay. Known as Brest in the 16th and 17th centuries, this location has long remained mysterious, but ongoing research after the COVID-19 pandemic will doubtlessly shed light on this major site in Canadian history.

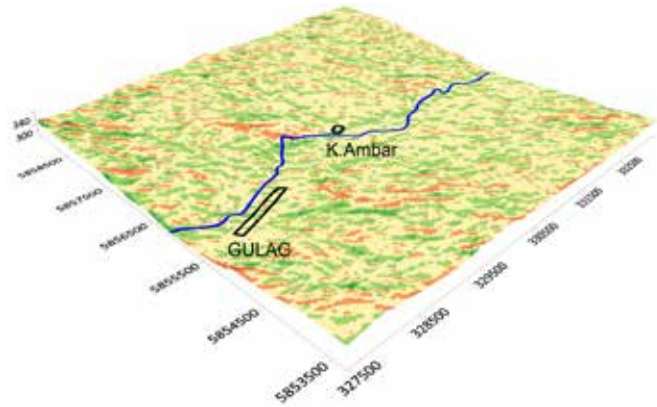
Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, we haven't returned to Québec's Lower North Shore, and the sites discovered in 2019 still await us. Since 2006, more than a dozen UdeM graduate students have trained with the Smithsonian in underwater archaeology, in some cases for several years. All remain in archaeology, and four have gone on to doctoral studies. I'd like to think UdeM has helped Bill achieve his scientific goals in Québec, both intellectually and pragmatically, while the Smithsonian Institution has certainly helped to train a generation of young Québec maritime archaeologists. We are all making sacrifices to control the sanitary crisis as part of the intense international effort, and we are hoping the pandemic will soon abate and let us get back into the field! In closing, I wish to thank the Whiteley Museum, **Garland Nadeau**, **Eileen Schofield**, and **Florence Hart** whose hospitality and support have made our project both productive and enjoyable.

ANALYSIS OF WIND REVEALS PATTERNS IN PREHISTORIC SETTLEMENT LOCATIONS

By Igor Chechushkov

A comparative approach is a long-standing feature of ASC research. A recent paper by **Igor Chechushkov**, **Iliya Valiakhmetov**, and **William Fitzhugh** published by the *Journal of Anthropological Archaeology* (61, 2021) implements this approach to northern prehistory. In this paper, we conducted a comparative analysis of site locations in the Quebec Lower North Shore, the southern Urals in Russia, and the steppes of Mongolia. Utilizing WindNinja computer models, our methodology incorporated intense field observation of local conditions, including gathering high-resolution topography and wind-speed data both in Canada and Russia.

As the first step, we analyzed published and unpublished data collected by Dr. **Jean-Luc Houle** in Mongolia during his dissertation research at the University of Pittsburgh. Using high-resolution satellite topographic data, regional wind averages gathered by local weather outposts, and WindNinja software, we mathematically tested Houle's hypothesis that winter campsites are located at foothills least exposed to the winter wind, as opposed to summer locations near the river. Our analysis agreed well with Houle's ethnographically supported conclusion



A wind model over a topography map near the Late Bronze Age settlement of Kamennyi Ambar and the 1930s GULAG village in Russia. The map predicts a relatively low winter wind speed, suggesting that in Bronze Age people purposefully chose the site location

and demonstrated the applicability of the proposed methodology to study archaeological landscapes.

During the 2019 Gateways Project fieldwork in Quebec, we created detailed topographic maps of the 17th–18th-century Inuit winter villages of Hart Chalet, Belles Amours, Grand Isle-2, and EiBh-9 (see *ASC Newsletter* 2017–2020 reports). At the same time, we conducted a wind survey, i.e., collected data on the wind speed and direction in various locations around the sites using a hand-held anemometer. Collected data was used to create high-resolution wind prediction maps which were compared with the actual daily wind speed. While the proximity to the sea was the most important factor, our models suggest that the Inuit could have chosen quieter locations.

Similar work was conducted in the southern Urals in partnership with the State Museum-Reserve “Arkaim” (Chelyabinsk, Russia). There, we collected landscape and wind data at twenty-two Sintashta Late Bronze Age walled settlements and enriched our sample by comparing it with unwalled Bronze Age settlements and a 1930s GULAG village. We found a tendency towards locating these sites at the least wind-exposed winter locations, even though other factors contributed to the decision-making process.

Our work allowed us to conclude that the studied ancient populations cared about their winter locations to at least some degree. The cold winter wind of the northern latitudes in Eurasia and Canada could be a factor in locating and protecting their winter villages. Further, in the southern Urals, the protection from extreme climate events could lead to the development of social complexity as societies had to aggregate to build their winter shelters.

Reference

Chechushkov, Igor V., Iliya A. Valiakhmetov, and William W. Fitzhugh. From adaptation to niche construction: Weather as a winter site selection factor in northern Mongolia, the Quebec Lower North Shore, and the southern Urals. *Journal of Anthropological Archaeology* 61 (2021): 101258.

CHILDREN AT THE NORSE 'FARM BENEATH THE SAND'(FBS)

By Joel Berglund

During the 1990s the Greenland National Museum and Archives researched the remains of a Norse farm from Greenland's medieval period. The excavation was presented in *Vikings: The North Atlantic Saga* published in 2000 by the Smithsonian Institution for the millennium exhibition on the Norse North Atlantic world. For a description of environment, excavation, and history see my chapter, "The Farm Beneath the Sand" (Berglund 2000).

Children were an important part of Norse Greenland population since they were the future of the society, but mostly their archaeological presence is not very distinct. We meet them in the excavations through their toys or in the graveyards as skeletons. As artifacts, their toys represent a special group because they held no practical meaning in the adult world.

The archaeological material concerning children at the Farm Beneath the Sand (FBS) is not extensive and can hardly represent the numbers of children who ran about the farm. No doubt bits and pieces of unidentified skin, wood, bones, and textiles might have been a toy, since anything can be anything in a children's world. A few things were made by adults and can be interpreted as articles for children's play and care for them. But most interesting are the few examples of toys made by children, things that represent something concrete.

The children's external world was their surrounding environment that enabled the farms to survive by animal husbandry, hunting, and fishing. Of most importance was production of enough hay to keep animals like sheep, goats, and a single horse alive through the winter. The inland ice that determined the farm's climate was only a few km away. During winter the temperature could drop to minus 50 degrees Celsius and in summer could climb to plus 26.

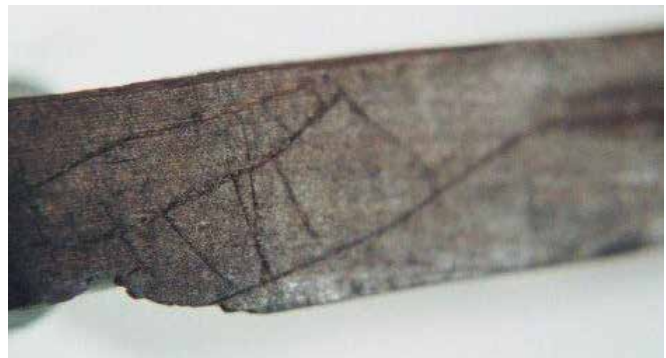
The children's internal world was the farmhouse with all its rooms, corners, animal sheds, and different hiding places. The house was a complex, and over its use for more than 300 years it constantly changed

form and extent, almost like a living organism. The excavation revealed 43 rooms from eight phases of occupation from year 1000 to about 1350. At times the site was unoccupied, and all the rooms were never occupied at the same time.

Most of the finds connected to children date to the later occupation period. Here it was possible to identify fixed places like fireplaces, walls, and door openings. One room could be identified as a weaving room because it contained implements for textile



*Excavation of the Farm Beneath The Sand showing walls and rooms of the farmhouse.
Photo by Joel Berglund*



*Wood carved by a child showing a horse tethered to the ground.
Photo by Erik Holm*



Steatite sherd carved by a child showing the gable view of a house. Photo by Joel Berglund

production. To this domestic context you can add dark places sparsely lit by fire sticks (torches), the smell of animals housed under the same roof, vermin, and sour smoke from peat fires and sheep excrement. Such was the internal environment children grew up in—if they survived their first critical years.

The world of the children reflect on a small scale the adult world they were born into, and their toys and plays were an imitation of this. Toys from FBS show this very clear, and can be divided into following categories: human, domesticated animal, fish, birds, tools and building.

Despite the reality that adults were central to their lives, deciding virtually everything that happened, only one toy was found to represent a human figure: a 5.8 cm long peg of wood carved with a crude head. The other end was pointed, perhaps so the figure could be placed standing during play. This is the nearest we come in seeing the image of a human inhabitant of FBS.

Research on the bones shows a varied animal husbandry involving sheep, goats, cows, horses, and dogs, all of which were naturally a great part of the children's everyday life. Among the toys was a crude

carving on a piece of wood showing a long-legged animal—probably a horse—tethered to the ground. What is interesting is that the child showed the horse tethered—that the child transformed the scene into physical form. We only know one other similar find, and this one was carved by an adult.

Another interesting piece is a steatite sherd with a carved figure looking like the Latin letter A with a round top. But since the farm's inhabitants used runes when writing, it has to be something else. I dare to believe the carving shows a house with a gable with saddleback roof! Unlike the previous find, this carving does not show an act, but just a house. If I am right, this is the first and only contemporary picture of a building in Norse Greenland.

Among the toys were two tools, namely a knife and a miniature wooden shoe last. The knife is probably the most common Norse implement found in sites, and adult shoe lasts are not uncommon. That a shoe last appears as a toy shows how important shoes were. Small miniature vessels of steatite point to play at producing food, even though we don't know who the cook was. Hunting and fishing was the second leg of the farm economy and is also represented among the toys. We have a wooden flatfish (probably a halibut), bones of which are known from the farm as are bones of different birds. Small bird figurines were also among the toys and can be interpreted as swimming birds.

The number and kinds of toys is probably not representative but generally seems to reflect the life at the farm. The toys must have been played on the floor or ground simulating the place where the scene shown took place. From this one can assume these toys were used by children between 2 and 5 years old. Childhood was over by seven, and until then children were part of the women's domain.

Finds of religious symbols at FBS underline that the inhabitants were Christian, and when people died they were buried in a church yard, which was about 20 km away, at Sandnes. This church was in use in the 1300s, and some of the buried people must have been from FBS. The oldest to be buried were around 50 years and the youngest were between zero and five. Child mortality was quite high, in line with Scandinavia at that time. Life was dangerous for the young ones. Apart from injuries from accidents there were diseases that left no mark on the skeletons. One thing could, however, be identified: inflammation of the middle ear. This seems to have been a frequent suffering, along with infection of the trachea/respiratory passage. Both probably caused many deaths resulting from the unhealthy conditions in cold, damp sod houses that also housed many domestic animals.



Miniature toys, steatite vessels, a bird, a shoe last, and a wooden knife. Photo by Erik Holm



Miniature halibut of wood. Photo by Erik Holm

After nearly 400 years, the Farm Beneath The Sand was left for good in the late 1300s. The reasons were various, but as long as a farmer's life was possible, they continued. When conditions in the Western Settlement became too bad, they moved south to the Eastern Settlement or maybe off to other parts of the Norse Atlantic World.

[*Editor's note: Joel Berglund* is former vice director of The Greenland National Museum and Archives. He is now retired and living in Sweden.]

“ARCTIC CRASHES” SAILS TO PUBLICATION

By Igor Krupnik

The 7-year *Arctic Crashes* Arctic Studies Center (ASC) project last reported in the 2017 (*ASC Newsletter* 24) was finally wrapped up in 2020. The project began in 2014 as a collaborative research effort with a team of anthropologists, archaeologists, biologists, and indigenous experts from the United States, Canada, Denmark, Greenland, and the Netherlands on what was then envisioned as two-year study titled, “Arctic People and Animal Crashes: Human, Climate and Habitat Agency in the Anthropocene.” The program was funded by a grant from the Smithsonian ‘Grand Challenges’ Consortia and by the ASC Ernest S. (Tiger) Burch endowment. The project goal was to explore the roles of people, climate, and ecosystem change in the historical dynamics of key Arctic wildlife species, such as seals, walrus, bowhead whale, beluga, narwhal, polar bear, caribou, and cod. In this context, “crashes” referred to rapid collapses of animal populations or of their ranges due to human impacts or natural cycles of population variation influenced by climate, predation, and disease.

Besides individual research ventures (on which we have reported in *ASC Newsletters* 21–23, 2014–2016), the project included two international symposia held in Anchorage in March 2015 and in Washington D.C. in February 2016, public lectures, a website, and outreach materials. A specific aim of the project was to give a prominent voice to Indigenous and local ecological knowledge and interpretations of human–animal–climate relations. Additional cross-disciplinary collaborations included scholars from the fields of population ecology, genomics, history, and climate research. All ASC staff and many of its associates participated as researchers, speakers, collaborators, and contributors on the project.

In 2017, we began working on a major publication volume to disseminate the results to the scholarly community and the public. Igor Krupnik and Aron Crowell spearheaded the effort as volume co-editors



Igor Krupnik celebrates the publication of the “Arctic Crashes” volume, August 2020

partnering with the Smithsonian Institution Scholarly Press (SISP), which had already published two books in the *ASC Contributions to Circumpolar Anthropology* series and the *Early Inuit Studies* volume in 2016.

The 570-page volume, *Arctic Crashes: People and Animals in the Changing North* was released in August 2020 in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic. SISP shipped copies to all individual authors and major international journals for reviews; but the bulk of the 500 print-run are still locked in the ASC offices in Washington and Anchorage, and in the press warehouse, waiting to be mailed to colleagues and readers worldwide.

Arctic Crashes was originally timed to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the publication of the seminal monograph by Danish zoologist Christian Vibe (1913–1998), *Arctic Animals in Relation Climatic Fluctuations* (1967), the first focused study of the role of climate and sea ice change on Arctic animals and people who hunted them. Vibe relied primarily on the Greenlandic hunting statistics from the early colonial era, but his more general outcomes were aimed to be circumpolar. Our goal was to revisit Vibe’s framework and his interpretation by using wider geography, modern data, and Indigenous knowledge.

The book includes 25 individual contributions organized in four major sections reflecting four specific approaches in studying animal population “crashes”: via archaeology, Indigenous people’s knowledge, population biology, and historical records. It opens by a general overview chapter by Igor Krupnik that introduces the past and present-day analytical framework in studying ‘Arctic Crashes’ (including Vibe’s approach) and the history of the

‘Crashes’ project. The next five chapters written by environmental archaeologists (**Morten Meldgaard, Ben Fitzhugh** with **William Brown** and **Nicole Masarti, Max Friesen, William Fitzhugh,** and **George Hambrecht**) cover a broad sweep of northern land- and sea-scapes, from the Kurile and Hokkaido Islands in the Pacific to Iceland, Greenland, Labrador, and the Faroes in the North Atlantic. The following eight chapters address ‘cultural synergies’ among Indigenous users, anthropologists, and resource managers who work with northern communities (**Ann Fienup-Riordan, Judith Ramos** (Daxootsú), **Merlin Koonooka** (Paapi), **Amy Phillips-Chan, Kenneth Pratt** with **Matt Ganley** and **Dale Slaughter, Brenda Parlee** and the Inuvialuit Game Council, **Martin Nweeia** with three Inuit and one Greenlandic contributors—the late **Cornelius Nutarak, Charlie Inuarak, Pavia Nielsen, Jayko Aooloo,** and **Bernadette Driscoll Engelstad**).

Today’s studies of animal fluctuation owe much to insight from population and molecular biologists (**G. Carleton Ray, Michael Etnier, Karen Mager, and Brenna Fraiser**) as well as from those who, like Vibe, dive into historical records (**Aron Crowell, Douglas Velte, Igor Krupnik, Moira McCaffrey, Hunter Snyder,** and **Frigga Kruse**). **Pitseolak Pfeifer**, originally from Iqaluit, Nunavut, and **Shari Fox**, who lived for 15 years in Clyde River, Nunavut co-authored an eloquent Foreword describing northern residents’ vision of human-animal relations. Historical archaeologist **Kent Lightfoot** provided a concluding overview of the “Crashes” stories from the perspective of the Anthropocene-era human-animal-environment relations.

The chapters written by 35 contributors range from the shores of Northeast Asia to Svalbard in the North Atlantic and collectively provide coverage of human relations with over a dozen key northern species. Of course, we could not reflect in one book on people’s interactions with all animal species critical to human sustenance in the North. Yet the emerging collective narrative produces a colorful tapestry of individual stories over space and time that reflects the multitude of changes at regional, community, and animal subpopulation levels. Our shared goal was to “weave” these local or species-wise stories into a common vision and to offer perspectives on today’s urgent concerns about the future of a warming Arctic, and its animals and people. **Stephen Loring** and **Carleton Ray** provided the beautiful photos for the jacket. We are grateful to our SISP partners, its director **Ginger Minkiewicz** and book copy editor, **Meredith McQuoid-Greaseon**, as well as to our ASC partners, **Chelsi Slotten** and **Dawn Biddison**, who helped convert the many voices of the “Crashes” team into a beautiful book.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL NOTES FROM MONGOLIA

By William Honeychurch

2020 was a challenging year for archaeological research in Mongolia since international expeditions could not work in the field with Mongolian colleagues due to the COVID crisis. While this was disappointing, it did not stop major advancements in scholarship on periods of Mongolian prehistory and history, from the Neolithic to the Mongolian Empire. I wrapped up an eight-year project in eastern Mongolia in the region of Delgerkhaan Uul where more than 2500 new archaeological sites have been discovered. Following several seasons of settlement and burial excavation, our fieldwork suggests how eastern communities of the Mongolian steppe were integrated into the first nomadic state more than 2,000 years ago. When we think of ancient states the despotic powers of Mesopotamia or Egypt come to mind, but our results indicate that the first Mongolian state was likely built by political consensus among aristocratic houses, one of which may have been centered at Delgerkhaan Uul.

We also have discovered and excavated a Neolithic site from 4000 BC which sheds light on the way hunter-gatherers lived long before domesticated sheep, goat, and cattle were introduced to Mongolia from western Eurasia. Finally, our research on imposing stone-built burials from the Bronze Age reveals some of the earliest domestic horses from central and eastern Mongolia dating as early as 1440 BC. Our researchers believe that these horses were involved in the very first horse trade to Shang Dynasty China where they were used to drive chariots belonging to the Shang emperors at 1200 BC.

Another archaeological project, assisted by **Bruno Frohlich**, made discoveries related to the Mongolian



*Landscape of Delgerkhaan Uul.
Photo by Sarah Pleuger*

Empire of Genghis Khan. About 700 km northwest of the Delgerkhaan Uul project, the northern Mongolian Tarvagatai Valley has been explored since 2010. During a reconnaissance along a dry riverbed, we noticed a partial human burial eroding out of the river bank. We carefully extracted the burial remains and studied the complicated soil stratigraphy on either side of the burial feature which indicated the presence of an extensive settlement site. Mongolia is well known for its horse-riding nomads and herders who move seasonally with their herd animals, but excavations and analysis of what is now known as the Tsagaan Ereg settlement has revealed the importance of farming as well.

Tsagaan Ereg is a large settlement made up of several round pit-houses with wooden supports for roof coverings, hearths, and birch bark flooring dating to 1220 AD. These habitations were probably used as seasonal dwellings during the warmer months when the neighboring floodplain could be plowed and sown with grain. Analysis of plant remains from each pit-house yielded grains of wheat, barley, and millet and copious amounts of wheat pollen indicating a nearby farming plot. On the far edge of the settlement, a granite threshing stone was unearthed with organic materials dating to the Mongolian Empire. This evidence from Tsagaan Ereg supports historical accounts describing



Excavation of a Bronze Age stone-built burial made with large stones. Local herders arrived to assist! Photo by William Honeychurch



Mouth of the Tarvagatai Valley looking south. Photo by Patricia Glass

Genghis Khan's conquest of the region in order to secure its great agricultural potential for the expanding empire.

These results are now in the process of publication, but we already have our eye on a future project to take place in 2021. Our eastern archaeological team will begin work at the Gobi Desert site of Chandmani Khar Uul near the Mongolian border with China in order to further study the Bronze Age horse trade southwards. To complement our data collection, we will collaborate with another team of archaeologists working on the Inner Mongolian side of the border and compare results. This will be the first cross-border archaeological project between Mongolia and Inner Mongolia and should uncover important new information on the beginning of horse riding in East Asia.

A VIEW NORTH FROM THE TIBETAN PLATEAU

By John Vincent Bellezza

Why the topic of Tibet in a newsletter devoted to Arctic studies? This elevated landmass extends almost to the 27th parallel, the same latitude that circumscribes central Florida, Saudi Arabia and southern Pakistan. Aside from the spread of Buddhism as far north as Tuva and Buryat, isn't it a bit counterintuitive to speak of the Tibetan Plateau in the same breadth as the Arctic? After all, in myriad archaeological, ethnohistorical and ethnological studies carried out in the West and Russia (and erstwhile Soviet Union) over the last century, the southern bounds of the North European-Siberian realm are usually set no further south than greater Mongolia and the boreal fringe forests and steppes of Central Asia. As has been repeatedly demonstrated, in terms of their material culture assemblages, ethnologies, genomes, and linguistic affiliations, these northern territories share manifold links through time and space and are well



Excavations at the Tsagaan Ereg settlement looking north along the Tarvagatai Valley. Photo by William Honeychurch

suited to allied programs of research and publication fora. Tibet (shorthand for the Tibetan Plateau, which is divided among five modern states) has been the odd man out in this equation. However, as I shall show, this view of the areal extent of the far northern world may be neither warranted nor helpful in understanding the full historical scope of cold-adapted human culture.

This article reviews prospects for conducting archaeological and ethnohistorical study of the Tibetan Plateau in association with (but not limited to) Siberia, Central Asia, Mongolia, Xinjiang (East Turkestan), and the Northern Zone of the PRC. I will briefly describe avenues of research I have been pursuing for more than two decades, before noting some of the promising areas of inquiry awaiting the attention of archaeologists and ethnohistorians (those who have traditionally set the geographic boundary of their work north of the Tibetan Plateau). I hasten to add that botanists, biogeographers and others working in the natural sciences have seen things quite differently, clearly aware of hundreds of palearctic species of flora and fauna found in Tibet and concepts such as the ‘Himalayan third pole’ (where, incidentally, average annual temperature increases in the last two decades are as great as the Arctic).

While certain aspects of ancient cultures in Tibet find correspondence with those in the far north, this is not to insinuate that Tibet is arctic in anything but analogy. It is not. The Plateau squarely sits in the middle latitudes and is subject to that celestial geometry, making for more equable diurnal cycles, higher minimum winter temperatures, monsoonal effects, etc. If it were not

for its extreme altitude (averaging around 4,000 m), Tibet would be a warm temperate and subtropical land. In fact, in the southeastern region of Pemako, the Brahmaputra rivers cut a channel so deep that subtropical biomes exist north of the Himalayan crest. Farther east, in what is now northwestern Yunnan, grapes (and, yes, wine-making) prickly pears and pomegranates are cultivated in the Tibetan-speaking reaches of the Salween, Mekong and Yangtze river valleys in Mediterranean-like microclimates.

But this is only part of the picture; Tibet is also home to extremely high tablelands and valleys, where native inhabitants have biologically adapted and culturally adjusted to living permanently at elevations of up to 5200 m (with even higher seasonal habitation). Two-thirds of the Plateau is covered in montane steppe, alpine meadows and high altitude deserts, environments best suited to stockbreeding and hunting. These non-arable tracts of the Plateau have a frigid climate and are prone to snowfall even in the summer. The highest regions of Tibet are concentrated in the western half of what is now called the Tibet Autonomous Region (sometimes referred to as ‘Inner Tibet’) and the eastern half of Qinghai (traditionally, part of the Tibetan province of Amdo as well as



Two herders belonging to the Apha Hor tribe, Upper Tibet



An Apha Hor family



Weaving on a backstrap loom, Purang, Ngari, Upper Tibet

containing enclaves inhabited by people of Mongolian stock). It is in the former territory, which I call Upper Tibet (after traditional ascriptions), that is the focus of my research. So, let's zoom in there, beginning with a quick look at its ethnohistory.

Ever since the work of **Nebesky-Wojkowitz** and **Helmut Hoffman** in the mid-20th century, scholarship has been aware of uncanny similarities between Tibetan spirit-mediums and the shamans of central and north Asia. I follow a bit in the tracks of my predecessors in my book *Calling Down the Gods* (2005). Parallels between Tibetan and northern trance practitioners are manifold, embracing their worldview, healing ethos, bipartite or three-tiered cosmology, the composition and function of their helping spirits, as well as there being remarkable similarities in their material accoutrements (e.g., drums, arrows, use of feather and horned headdresses, animal horns, mirrors, etc.). For one thing, the resonance in mythologies regarding bear ancestors, cross-species marriage and ursine healing rites in Upper Tibet and northern Asia is most impressive.

Yet, before we get too carried away and start viewing Tibetans as long-lost cousins of hyperborean tribes, it is crucial to remember that abstract and material parallels between peoples are the result of many kinds of demographic, cultural and environmental forces, most of which do not signal direct spatio-temporal ties between far-flung societies. This observation is especially pertinent here, for genetic population histories conducted thus far indicate that Tibetans (speaking around 30 different languages) are most closely related to other Tibeto-Burman groups like the Tu and Nakhi, sharing in common far fewer haplogroups with Turco-Mongolian speaking peoples and others of north Asia. I will only mention in passing resemblances in the dress, coiffures, ornamentation, and comportment of Tibetan shepherds and northern groups. They are quite self-evident.

Again, this does not necessarily mean that any particular object or behavior was handed down from the taiga to the Plateau or vice versa. Maybe yes, maybe no. If you subscribe to shamanistic theory (seeing contemporary shamanism as a survival of Bronze Age or even Stone Age religions,) you will be more tempted to posit direct kinds of connections, perhaps as part of a Eurasian religious substrate. I am not so sanguine. The length and nature of historical continuities in shamanism are still questioned and there is dubious profit in lumping together the tribal religious traditions of boreal groups with Tibetan folk practices. There is a vast amount of specificity exhibited by contemporary cultures, let alone equate sophisticated religious traditions existing in ancient Tibet with household shamanism. One must be ever vigilant in attributing cause and effect.

The archaeological record (funerary, monumental, artifactual and artistic) is unambiguous: there were multiple cultural and technological congruences between Tibet and more northern territories, some of which were brought about through interregional exchanges (potentially comprising intellectual currents, religious trends, economic imperatives, political entanglements, demographic shifts, etc.). Before giving a bird's eye view of a few of these congruences, let us set our time parameters (modified to fit Tibetan archaeological evidence, a work still in progress). The Late Prehistoric era includes the Late Bronze Age (ca. 1200–700 BCE), [Early] Iron Age (ca. 700–100 BCE) and Protohistoric period (ca. 100 BCE to 600 CE). The Late Prehistoric era is followed by the Tibetan Early Historic period, which is made up of the Imperial period (c. 600–850 CE) and post-Imperial period (850–1000 CE). Later periods under Lamaist (Buddhist and Yungdrung Bon) domination need not concern us here (the role of the Mongols in the transmission of cultural and technological resources to and from Tibet is a story for another time). I refer readers to my website and works cited below. Here I will touch upon just a few areas vital for coming to grips with the full thrust of cross-cultural transmission in Late Prehistoric Inner Asia.

Funerary and monumental evidence—the erection of cognate unmarked menhirs (called long stones in Tibetan) in Upper Tibet, the Altai, and southern Siberia appears to have been part of an ongoing trans-cultural bequest of considerable proportions in the Late Prehistoric era. The main areas of correspondence are with the Deer Stone-Khrigsuur complex (Late Bronze Age), Tagar culture (Iron Age), and Turkic balbals (Protohistoric period). The orientation, geographic settings and funerary associations of menhirs and their complement of collateral monuments in the heart of Asia allude to the mutability of seminal ideals and technologies, those that cut across the bounds of sundry cultures. Although tombs of diverse types characterize Inner Asia in the Late Prehistoric era, there are certain widespread morphological commonalities, particularly among the burial structures of the Slab Grave culture of eastern Mongolia and Transbaikalia and the funerary slab enclosures of Upper Tibet belonging to a comparable time frame. More telling are parallels in grave goods with the remains of horses and caprids, equestrian gear, weapons, semi-precious stone beads (carnelians, agates, turquoise), and cowries diffusing far and wide in the north and in Tibet during the Late prehistoric era. An alternative point of reference are Tibetan archaic funerary ritual texts, which describe mortuary traditions with analogies in the burials of the so-called Scytho-Siberian cultures (e.g., horned headdresses, avian and cervid motifs, special treatment of the mane and tail of psychopomp horses, etc.).

Artifactual and rock art evidence: there is a growing body of copper alloy objects with zoomorphic and geometric motifs produced in Tibet in the Late Prehistoric era available for study, which can be compared stylistically to those produced elsewhere in Inner Asia. Research recently carried out by others has identified Central Asian traits in the ceramics of lower Ladakh (on the western margin of the Tibetan Plateau) dating to the Protohistoric period. Finally, there is rock art, the various geographic groupings of which bring to light many cognate themes and subjects. These include mascoids, chariots, big game hunting, dueling scenes, so-called ‘giants’, handprints, Eurasian animal style figures, etc. Through an abundance of evidence, Tibet might be best classified as ‘South Inner Asia’, while ‘North Inner Asia’ encompasses all territories typically seen as making up Inner Asia.

The foregoing discussion is just a glimpse into a field of study with great potential, but one that will demand many kinds of expertise going forward. A rigorous regimen of excavation and analysis in Tibetan regions, one that goes well beyond the glorified treasure hunting approach of many recent campaigns (where molecular, isotopic and botanical evidence is frequently discarded), is the order of the day. Of high priority is the sequencing of DNA extracted from ancient osteological materials, both human and animal. Analytical methods and chronometric technologies meeting international standards must be brought to bear on all parts of the Tibetan Plateau. This is essential if we are to secure the basis for a more refined investigation of the Tibetan legacy and its place in the Eurasian cultural mosaic of antiquity.

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[*Editor's note: John Bellezza is a Senior Fellow, Institute for the Science of Religion and Central Asian Studies, Bern University. See Book section for reviews of two recent Bellezza books. For the author's full bibliography, extensive series of articles and other information about his research work, see www.tibetarchaeology.com. All photos by John V. Bellezza, 1999–2005; all portraits were taken with the express permission of the subjects.*]

NUNAMIT WORKSHOP EXPLORED QUEBEC LNS INUIT HERITAGE

By William Fitzhugh

In January 2019, a conference of academics and community residents of the Quebec Lower North Shore (LNS) spent two days exploring Inuit culture and heritage in Quebec City. Hosted by Laval University and with support from an SSHRC grant, thirty participants presented papers on what is known and remains unknown about the Inuit who have lived on this coast and whose culture, language, and history have been overshadowed by European dominance and government neglect. **Nicolas Shattler** of St. Augustine led the Inuit delegation, which included several other Inuit from the LNS. Among the participants were historians, linguists, anthropologists, archaeologists, folklorists, genealogists, lawyers, and included a strong Laval student contingent.

Unlike the Inuit of Nunavut and Labrador, Quebec Inuit have not had formal land claims discussions with their governments. The purpose of the conference was to share information on what is known about Inuit history, culture, and life in the northeastern Gulf of St. Lawrence—a neglected part of the Inuit world—and make plans for future partnerships. Despite their many contributions to traditional European life here (dog sleds, harpoons, ulus, sea mammal hunting, etc.), Quebec Inuit have not received much attention from anthropologists or historians. Many aspects of their culture and history have not been recorded and exist only as oral history in today's Inuit population. Early historical reports are spotty and vague and emphasize confrontation and hostilities. And until recently, their history has been obscured by the absence of physical evidence in the form of documented archaeological sites. Recent archaeological work has confirmed Groswater and Dorset Paleo-Inuit occupations between 2500–2000 years ago, and Inuit winter villages during the 17–18th centuries. So while Inuit presence has been sporadic historically, their reappearance as a new



*Nicolas Shattler of St. Augustine, Quebec.
Photo by Will Richard 2011*

returning immigrant population in the 19th century and continued presence today is a demographic reality.

The conference took the form of a workshop more than an academic conference and provided opportunity for broad discussion between academic and community representatives. As described in the workshop's concluding report, "our objective was to mobilize knowledge on Inuit heritage from the LNS pertinent to the Nunamit Foundation's endeavor to obtain recognition of their distinctive way of life."

The report continued: "The event marked the beginning of the Nunamit Foundation's journey toward having a greater voice in the production of knowledge about their cultural heritage through oral tradition, archaeology, and archival research. In the spirit of the [Canada's] *Truth and Reconciliation Commission*, and as a means to fulfill SSHRC's objectives for Indigenous

Research Capacity and Reconciliation strategy, we used the opportunity of the grant to position knowledge about LNS Inuit history at the heart of present and future academic research, and to encourage dialogue between LNS Inuit and researchers about traditional Inuit knowledge and its place in scholarly research. Ultimately, the forum we held should enhance understanding and reconciliation and lay the foundation for a long-term research program for building LNS Inuit research capacity as a tool for education."

Part of the Nunamit program calls for sharing knowledge and information and participating in how that information is gathered, created, and used. The Nunamit Foundation is also seeking recognition of Inuit subsistence and other rights needed to sustain their culture and way of life. In addition to gathering information for an eventual land claims or other agreements with government entities, Inuit and others on the LNS are eager to develop resources that can provide educational materials documenting Inuit history and culture for schools and the public. Ultimately a research partnership between universities and LNS Inuit can create new economic benefits from eco- and heritage tourism when Route 138 is completed along this stretch of road-less coast. The Nunamit Foundation program seeks to promote a general awakening on the LNS of the importance played by Inuit culture in social, political, and economic development, as so amply demonstrated by the recent spectacular transformation in Labrador resulting from land claims coupled with Memorial University's recent SSHRC partnership project, "Tradition and Transition Among the Labrador Inuit". We thank **Nick Shattler**, **Lisa Rankin**, **Reginald Auger**, and **Brad Loewen** for their efforts organizing the conference and the SSHRC proposal that was submitted in early 2021.

A BRONZE AGE LOGBOAT FROM THE STARNBERGER SEE, BAVARIA, GERMANY

By *Timm Weski*

The Starnberger See is situated about 30 km south of Munich. In 1986 volunteers of the Bayerische Gesellschaft für Unterwasserarchäologie discovered the remains of a logboat in the shallow water near the shore of Roseninsel (Island) in the lake. Since 2011 the island has been part of the UNESCO World Heritage "Prehistoric Pile Dwellings in the Alps". The logboat had sunk on its starboard side, and the bow rested higher than the stern. Therefore, the portside, the bow, and about two-thirds of the upper parts of the starboard side are missing because they were not covered by sediment, like the rest of the hull.

The vessel was initially recorded underwater by the volunteers under leadership of Hubert Beer with financial help of the Bayerisches Landesamt für Denkmalpflege. After it was raised it was handed over to the Archäologische Staatssammlung München, where it was conserved with PEG, a process which took several years. Dendroarchaeological research, which produced a date of 900 BC, was conducted by **Sybille Bauer**, **Dendrolabor Trier**, and later by **Franz Herzig** from the Dendrolabor of the Bayerisches Landesamt für Denkmalpflege. Although a detailed drawing of the boat with sections of the hull had been made directly after it was raised, this documentation proved



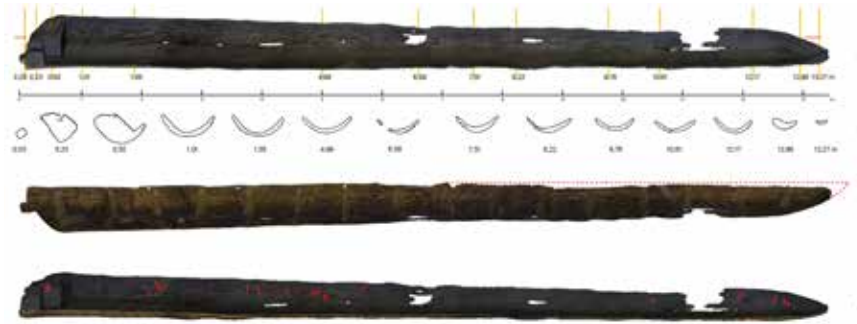
*Excavating the stern in 1988. Photo
BY Bayerische Gesellschaft für
Unterwasserarchäologie
(Weski 2020: Fig. 3.4)*

insufficient, in particular at the stern with its protruding balk and several auger holes. Further, it was discovered that the position on the lakebed was not identical with the original floating condition; instead the hull had to be turned about 45° anticlockwise from the present

position in the museum. A complete photometric and 3D-documentation was done in 2019 by Sven Gollub for his bachelor thesis under the supervision of **Jens Czaja** of the Fakultät für Geoinformation, Hochschule München / Munich University of Applied Sciences.

With the help of these data it was possible to ‘move’ the hull from its position on the lakebed into its original floating condition. This showed that the balk at the stern, which is carefully worked out of the starboard side, was originally above, or just below, the waterline. On the inside of the block which forms the “transom”, a step was cut on the starboard side. The balk makes the shape of the stern unique. Unfortunately, the center of the trunk at the bow could not be identified, so its original shape could not be reconstructed. The present length of the boat is 13.34 m, but it must originally have been slightly longer. The breadth of the hull about 1 m from the stern was 1.12 to 1.20 m and the depth 0.78 m. Further forward, about 5 m from the stern, the dimensions were 1.03 to 1.05 m and 0.63 m.

Inside the hull were toolmarks showing how it was hollowed out. Oblong grooves were carved into the inside of the trunk, and the wood between these cuts was removed. For some of these tasks a hatchet with a half-circle blade was used. Further, there are—particularly in the stern block—several auger holes whose function remains unknown. A thick, conical one runs straight through the transom, and, together with the square balk outside the hull and the step, may have been part of some superstructure. Another auger hole at the bow indicates it supported some kind of decoration. In the starboard side there are several large, oval holes of unknown function. There are no hints for the means of propulsion, but paddles are a likely answer. On the other hand, the holes noted, together with a rock carving in Brandskog, Sweden, suggests forward-facing or “push” rowing, although this technique has



Top view in position on the lakebed. 2: Sections in position on the lakebed. 3: Side view of the starboard side in reconstructed floating condition. 4: Top view in reconstructed floating condition. The red lines indicate the tool marks. Not to scale. Graphic by Sven Gollub (Weski 2020:Fig. 10.1-4)

not yet been recorded from prehistoric times in Central Europe.

This logboat is much longer than others known from the Starnberger See, which usually measure 5–7 m. Some were used as late as 1900 AD. The few small branch roots in the hull

imply that the original oak must have grown in a thick forest. Even at 900 BC trees of this quality must have been rare. Since there were no bulk goods like salt to be transported across the Starnberger See, the logboat could have been a warrior or ceremonial vessel. As the lake is too small for amphibious warfare, the latter is more likely, though many questions remain to be answered.

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REFLECTIONS FROM TALLINN

By Jean-Loup Rousselot

As is the practice in Europe, museum employees leave their posts at the age of 65 to make room for the younger generation of researchers. This forced retirement happened for me ten years ago. I chose to keep it simple for everyone, so I decided to get away from the anthropology museum in Munich where I had worked for almost 25 years as curator of the Arctic Collections and as Assistant Director of the museum. On the one hand, I did not want to interfere with those who had taken over my fields of activity; however, it is difficult to be silent when you are witnessing decisions you do not understand.

On the other hand, I was ready to start somewhere else, something new. That something new was to transmit the anthropological knowledge that I have acquired through fieldwork and the study of ethnographic collections. I wanted to pass it to the

European public as a continuation of the museum's work, and also to the Alaska Native students who had enrolled in the Arts Department at the University of Alaska in Fairbanks. I hoped to demonstrate the complexity and sophistication of Native technology, giving credit to the ingenuity of their ancestral technology and approach, to promote self-confidence and, hopefully, to make the young generation proud of their culture and ancestors.

So, I moved to the eastern end of Europe, to Estonia, where my wife is from. There, I had the opportunity to teach using the Russian America collections of the Estonia National Museum as an educational tool. This presented me with a unique opportunity to manipulate, touch, discover, and "read" materials collected by the early Russian navigators of the early 19th century. Another aspect of these early collections is that there was no systematic collecting, as would be the case fifty or seventy years later with the Bureau of American Ethnology. In this case the items were collected as rarities because of their unusual shape, designs, and materials.

When I moved to the Eastern Baltic, I was going to an area which was the cradle of Arctic anthropological research. During the Russian

America era, its explorers, navigators, and colonial administrators were often from the Baltic Provinces of the Russian Empire. Many sons of families of modest means, but who possessed strong technical skills and the knowledge of a naval officer, could make an exceptional career in the Imperial Russian Navy. In the storages of the old learned societies of the cities rimming the Baltic Sea there are not only ethnographic collections, but also diaries, maps, and correspondence of the explorers of the North Pacific regions that are primary sources central to historical research. A number of these Russian America collections made by Estonian naval officers serving in the Russian imperial navy are today in Tallinn.

A group of veteran Arctic Soviet researchers called Estonian Polar Club, of which I became a member, provided a way for me to established connections with the outside world through the group's monthly meetings of researchers from the Antarctic and Arctic.

Another reason to come to Estonia was to study the Finno-Ugric people, as I was invited by the Tallinn Academy of Arts to participate to seven summer expeditions to Central Russian, Karelia, Hungary, Siberian Estonians, and Saami.

To discover recent history is for anyone coming from Western Europe probably the most unusual experience that one can have because of the fifty year occupation (1939–1991) of the Baltic countries by the Soviet Union and by the Nazis (1941–1944). For Westerners this history is a major reason to visit the Baltics. So, I am giving tours and lectures on the Cold War period. After the destruction of society orchestrated by **Stalin** and his secret police, a more benign form of communism prevailed among the Baltics; no longer were there mass deportations to Siberian Gulags, but it still was a life without freedom. The silent majority

could live in peace as long they didn't raise their voice, while the life of single political protesters—the dissidents—was a living hell by the secret police.

As a result, Estonia is a kind of huge open air museum of Soviet architecture ruins, mostly of gigantic dimensions. Here too, a fieldwork situation is offered to historians since most of the actors are around, both the perpetrators and the victims, the freedom fighters, and the indifferent majority.

They are neighbors in the same apartment building or in the same village.

The picture of my wife, **Kadri** (Catherine in Estonian), and me in Alsace is also connected with recent Baltic history. We wanted to hear about people who have been forced by Nazi Germany to fight in German units against Communist Russia. This was the case of many young Alsacians, Moselans, and Luxembourgers, whose homelands had been annexed by the Third Reich. In Estonia it was more a general mobilization to avoid a Soviet occupation that made them serve with a Nazi uniform.

Besides writing articles and translations on the preceding subjects in Estonian journals, I have contributed to several books as noted below. And now I am writing a little book on a newly discovered Russian American collection of mostly Yupik ethnography, as well as an introduction to a book on polar bear mythology in Siberia and North America.



Kadri and Jean-Loup Rousselot visiting Alsace, Saarburg, Germany

COLLECTIONS

POLAR EXPLORER: THE ARCTIC DIGITAL LIBRARY

By William W. Fitzhugh and David Nordlander

For the past several years, **David Nordlander**, **William Fitzhugh**, and **Nana Naisbitt** have been laying the groundwork for developing an inter-institutional network of Arctic information similar to the Biodiversity Heritage Library (BHL) and the NMNH Encyclopedia of Life. Initiated by two National Science Foundation (NSF)-sponsored workshops in 2016 and 2017, plans for launching a prototype drawing upon collections from Dartmouth's Arctic collections (Stefansson Archives and others) and the Smithsonian's IPY (International Polar Year) 1882-3 and other collections have advanced to the proposal stage. If funded, work assembling digital materials to test the discovery and delivery process could begin in late 2021 and continue for the next three years.

Today the need for Arctic information is greater than ever. Arctic collections, widely dispersed among various institutions across the globe and often housed in remote locations, contain crucial historic information that is essentially hidden and difficult to access. The scientific community often expresses excitement and interest in these collections but fails to incorporate the data into their research because the data are currently very difficult to extract. There is an accessibility problem at a time when access to that information is critically needed.

Polar Explorer will amass and integrate four centuries of Arctic records into a highly-searchable portal that places data into the hands of scientists, Indigenous populations, researchers, educators, and the public who will be able to mine historic data readily using advanced modern protocols. These 'hidden' records contain data about Arctic climate, botany, zoology, glaciology, northern indigenous populations, health, education, land claims, land use, history of polar expeditions, mining, engineering, government and governance, and more. For the first time, Arctic scientists will be able to tap humanities collections for scientific purposes, pulling valuable scientific data from historical records for modern analysis and comparison across space and time. Polar Explorer can become a primary resource for Arctic information for all.

The proposed project is a collaborative partnership of Dartmouth College, Smithsonian Institution, Sealaska Heritage Institute, and the community of Cambridge Bay, Nunavut, Canada. Our intent is to test a model using collections encompassing the entire circumpolar

region. Once tested, the approach can be expanded by encouraging institutions to digitize their polar resources and contribute data to the PE network linking regions, environments, and peoples for the benefit of science and humanities around the globe. Although PE is a pilot, it is also the seed from which a vast new set of data can eventually grow and become available.

Some Arctic material from field notes and books has already been digitized for Harvard's Biodiversity Heritage Library, which the PE partners have identified as the best model or platform. Since 2005, the Biodiversity Heritage Library, now enhanced by Smithsonian Library participation, benefits natural science museums, libraries, and universities, in addition to institutions beyond the sciences. BHL's infrastructure will be adapted to begin building the Arctic Digital Library. This prototype project will plan overlay historic cultural data from the Arctic onto environmental data of the BHL to begin to erase the false separation of human culture and the natural world. A successful Polar Explorer launch will unlock the huge trove of cultural, historical, and human data currently held in myriad institutions needed for building more realistic predictive models by integrating people, earth, and biological sciences. A focus on the Arctic is timely given the urgent need for understanding this rapidly changing region, its human and environmental history, and its growing future importance to humanity.

THE VEGA COLLECTION PROJECT ADVANCES INTO COVID-19 'ALL-ELECTRONIC' ERA

By Igor Krupnik and Martin Schultz

The co-authors introduced initial steps in the 'Vega Collection project,' named after the *Vega* expedition ship (1878–1879) in the previous issue of the *ASC Newsletter*. Our project began in fall 2019 when the authors explored the massive collection of what eventually turned out to be 1,100 objects from the Swedish polar expedition under **Adolf Erik Nordenskiöld** (1832–1901) during its wintering off the Arctic shores of the Chukchi Peninsula. It marked the first successful sailing through the 'Northeast Passage' along the shores of northern Eurasia. One of many outcomes of that journey was an ethnographic collection acquired among the local Chukchi people now housed at the Etnografiska museet, a part of the Statens museer för världskultur (National Museums of World Culture), in Stockholm. We described our pilot effort to explore the history of the *Vega* Chukchi collection over its 140-year life and to virtually

‘reunite’ it with the descendants of Indigenous people who once interacted with the *Vega* crew.

The project advanced in 2020, in spite of the realities of the COVID-19 era. The proposed second study of the objects in museum storage was put on hold, as were our plans to seek funds to bring the team of Chukchi experts on a visit to Stockholm. All activities had to morph into online searches and communication. Even with these limitations, we managed to achieve some of the goals we set out in last-year’s overview.

Expanding *Vega* Collection Database

The first goal was a *physical* (or virtual) *reunion* of the objects. At the beginning of our survey, about 660 objects were identified as ‘Chukchi’ and attributed to the *Vega* collection in the museum database. Yet early ledger records from the 1880s and historical photographs from the *Vega* exhibit at the Royal Palace in 1880 revealed a somewhat larger set of objects, like 14 mattocks and hacks (picks) arranged in two wall displays. The current database lists only 10 such objects. One mattock may now be a part of the Smithsonian NMNH-Anthropology collection (*ASC Newsletter* 2020). In addition, many composite items displayed in 1880 in their entirety, such as harpoons, bow drills, fireboards, etc., were disassembled over the years, and their constituent pieces needed to be reunited. In some cases, as parts of composite objects, they never had numbers of their own. We also found objects that had missing parts which may have been lost on the way to Stockholm or later in museum storage. One example is a missing paddle from a kayak model with a hunter (1880.04.471). Wooden pegs clearly indicate he was once holding a paddle. Another challenge is that the collections were not fully inventoried until the 1950s, more than 70 years after the expedition returned, based on an object list produced by the Natural History Museum in the 1880s (see *ASC Newsletter* 2020).

As of early 2021, the number of Chukchi objects from the *Vega* collection surpassed 1,100, thanks to the addition of several formerly ‘unassociated’ objects and some 130+ archaeological specimens excavated at the old site of Ryrkaipyi (Jirkajpij). More items from the original *Vega* stock of 1878–79, including pencil drawings, photographs, archival documents, and other cultural resources are still to be added to the database from both the Etnografiska museet and other Swedish and foreign institutions that received portions of the collection. In winter 2020 a full list of *Vega* captain **Louis Palander**’s photographs became available, featuring nine dry plate and 76 wet plate photographs, some with short descriptions of the image subject, names of the individuals, and place names where photos were taken. This list is part of Palander’s

bequest in the archives of the Sjöhistoriska museet (Maritime Museum) in Stockholm (Inv. No. 1968:715). Etnografiska museet never showed much interest in these collections, apart from placing scores of Chukchi objects in its permanent exhibit display (since 2000) and making them available in the online database.

Connecting Objects to People

The second goal we identified was cultural reunion, the re-connection of objects with Indigenous knowledge holders from the home area. Local people never had access to any records originated from the Swedish expedition and to the collections held in a distant museum in Stockholm. Though the name “*Vega*” is familiar in Chukotka and recent reprints of the Russian translation of Nordenskiöld’s account of the *Vega* voyage are available, few people could relate it to the description of their ancestors’ life.

During our initial work in Stockholm in September 2019, we contacted **Eduard Zdor**, Chukchi environmental activist from Chukotka, Russia, now a Ph.D. candidate at the University of Alaska Fairbanks. He grew up in the community of Neshkan (Najtskaj in Nordenskiöld’s transliteration), some 30 km (18 mi) east of the *Vega* 1878–79 wintering site. His and his wife’s, **Lilya Tlecheivyn’e**, relatives still live there. These people are the ‘descendant community’ for the objects, photographs, and ethnographic descriptions generated by the *Vega* expedition.

In spring 2020, scores of images from the Etnografiska museet online database, <http://collections.smvk.se/carlotta-em/web> were shared with Eduard Zdor and Lilya Tlecheivyn’e, and through them, with local Chukchi experts residing in Neshkan. As people’s comments started to flow back, Lilya organized them, adding the Chukchi terms added for constituent



Martin Schultz and Igor Krupnik assembling the “Vega” Chukchi objects in the collection storage of the Etnografiska museet. Photo by Johan Jeppsson

elements, like in the following description of a wooden fireboard (*milghyn*—Fig.2, 1880.04.0332):

This object was used for lighting the fire or family hearth. Based on its condition, it was barely used [because of its light color—*IK*]. Often the family has several fireboards in its daily use. Unlike the family sacred [ritual] fireboards, this object does not have a roughly carved human head at its end. The ritual fireboards are always of dark-brown color covered in soot and grease from multiple ‘feeding’ ceremonies. During such feeding ceremony the board is rubbed with a combination of bone marrow and blubber [fat], usually at the place where the mouth would be on a human head. According to **Nina Kyttagina**, not all sacred fireboards have carved mouth, eyes, or nose. Each family commonly had its own fireboard and only members of that family could use it. It is forbidden to share fire from the family hearth with other dwellings in the camp. The fireboard set usually includes several objects, besides the fireboard (*milghyn*), including: *Ngileq*, a round wooden stick; *Tinguchgyn*, a small bow made of reindeer antler (another name is *gyrilgyn*) with a bowstring of bearded seal hide that is threaded through the holes at its ends and fixed with two knots; drill socket piece (arm protector, *gyrgychychochyn*) made of reindeer antler, kneecap, or any piece of large animal bone or walrus ivory.

Certain family fireboards eventually become sacred objects and are kept in special secluded places. During family ceremonies the boards are ‘fed’ together with other family sacred objects. For ritual feeding of family objects, people use a mixture of bone marrow from reindeer front legs (*qymilat*) and marrow from crushed reindeer bones with added seal blubber (*ypalgyn* or *palgyn*).

[This description is based on phone interviews with the Neshkan residents **Irina Nutetgivev** (46), **Nina**



Fireboard (milghyn), 1880.04.0332, assemblage with fire drill and bow. Photo by Johan Jeppsson

Kyttagina (68), and **Nikolai Ettyne** (56), in April 2020 (translated from Russian notes by *IK*). The two women have been long-living residents of reindeer herding camps and users of their respective family fireboards.]

Of the five fireboards listed in the *Vega* Chukchi collection, only one (no. 04.0334) has a carved human head, but it is a newly made model of a family ritual fireboard, with no traces of prior use and no sign of a carved mouth for feeding. The rest are common household fireboards, also with minimal use or produced specially for collectors. These and similar comments illustrate the continuous intimate knowledge of objects that has been retained in the home community for over 140 years. Such information can vastly enrich the museum records with specific information on object use, making process, symbolism, and other aspects missed by both the *Vega* crew and by later generations of registrars and curators.

Expanding knowledge about ethnographic collections by inviting Indigenous elders and experts to museums, engaging them in joint documentation projects and shared stewardship is an increasingly popular practice in today’s museum work (see ‘Nelson in the Cloud’ article in this issue). Yet each example of such ‘newly added knowledge’, thanks to insight by today’s Native experts, is something short of a miracle. Even if it takes place many decades later, it increases our understanding of the objects and reverses generations of knowledge loss. Such virtual reunion may be slow and painful, as details of former cultural expertise have been lost and not every object can be recognized by today’s experts 140+ years after the initial collecting.

Vega Collection within the Chukchi Museum ‘Universe’

The third goal was to place the *Vega* collection in proper cultural context by comparing it with major Chukchi ethnographic holdings in other museums. In early 2020, we estimated the total number of Chukchi ethnographic objects held in various museums worldwide to be around 7,000–8,000, not counting archaeological specimens, photographs, and Indigenous drawings. This estimate has been revised somewhat upward, as several significant historical collections were brought to our attention lately. Of this number, almost 40% belong to the three largest collections: at the American Museum of Natural History (AMNH) in New York (about 1,300 objects collected by **Waldemar Bogoras** in 1900–1901), the Russian Ethnographic Museum (REM) in St. Petersburg, Russia (at least 1,300 objects collected by **Nikolai Sokolnikov** in 1901–1909), and Peter the Great Museum of Anthropology and Ethnography (Kunstkamera) in St. Petersburg (over 1,000 objects collected by **Nikolai L.**

Gondatti in 1894–1897). This makes the *Vega* Chukchi collection of about 1,100 pieces, and counting, the world's fourth largest.

Smaller, but also significant Chukchi ethnographic collections are held by the Arseniev Museum in Vladivostok (ca. 250 objects, Chukchi and Yupik combined), the “Chukotka Heritage” Museum Center in Anadyr (about 500 objects, plus a similar number of pieces of Native souvenir art and carved ivories), the Magadan Regional Museum (ca. 160), and in some museums in Europe, like Kulturhistorisk Museum, University of Oslo (about 400 objects from 1920–1923), Museum Fünf Kontinente in Munich (330), Musée du Quai Branly in Paris (over 300, late 1800s), and Weltmuseum in Vienna (ca. 250). In addition, there is a 1,500-piece collection at the Sergiev-Posad Museum near Moscow, Russia, of Chukchi and Yupik carved and ornamented ivories from the 20th century.

Although we still lack the documentation on when and where individual objects in the *Vega* collection were obtained (likewise we do not know who produced them), all were procured at the ship's wintering site between October 1878 and July 1879 from people visiting the ship, also on the crew's visits to nearby camps. We assume that Nordenskiöld, a geologist with a prior experience in ethnographic collecting from his trips to Greenland and Arctic Russia was the prime collector, although we cannot exclude other crew members.

According to Nordenskiöld's own writing (1881: 438–441), his main collecting strategy was bartering with his Chukchi visitors, primarily for small objects, in exchange for European goods. Money was of no value and Nordenskiöld was short of many of the usual trade objects (knives, needles, tools, firearms, metal buttons, etc.), and even tobacco, except for two boxes of Dutch clay pipes that he used as gifts or ‘souvenirs,’ and stock of Swedish silver coins. It perhaps explains why the *Vega* collection contains so many small ivory carvings

but does not account for the presence of truly large objects—two full-size Chukchi kayaks, fur clothing, hunting tools, and house utensils. The collection also includes several models of objects that were clearly ordered and made by the local people for the expedition.

To explore the composition of Nordenskiöld's Chukchi collection, we organized it by seven major object groups (categories), such as ‘equipment’ (17.3%), including hunting and fishing tools (10%), clothing and clothing tools (11.7%), ‘weapons and ammunition’ (18.4%, over 100 arrows, dozens of arrow points and shafts, several bows, and quivers); and the huge number of small ivory figurines often listed as ‘amulets’ (over

340 pieces, 38%). There are remarkably few objects related to children and child life, and only a small number of objects related to women's life, like clothing, sewing, housekeeping. Such gender skewing is typical for early collecting conducted primarily by male researchers and travelers. An additional factor could have been the Chukchi strategy to protect (prevent?) women and children from interaction with the *Vega* crew.

Nordenskiöld's collecting shortcomings are particularly visible in the very low share (2.2%) of *spiritual* and symbolic objects. Certain types of such objects are common in other historical Chukchi museum collections, like ritual fireboards (Chukchi *gyrgyrti*, see above), family wooden

guardians (*tain'ykvyt*), commonly made as strings of small objects; shaman drums (*varar*) and amulets, carved wooden figurines and dishes (*enanentytko'olgyt*), hereditary family lances (*poigyt*), and others. Such objects are rare or absent in the *Vega* collection; if present, they are mainly new objects with no traces of use and produced for sale (see above). One reason might be that the expedition had already made a large collection of wooden idols at a Nenets sacrificial pile on the Vaygatch Island.

The specific cultural ‘profile’ of the *Vega* collection may be properly understood only in comparison with



Small ivory carvings from the Vega collection: 3a – seal, 1880.04.0640-3; 3b – bird, 1880.04.0855-7; 3c – two-headed torso, 1880.040578. Photo by Rose-Marie Westling

other large Chukchi collections, even if from slightly later time, like **Waldemar Bogoras** collection at AMNH in New York and part of the Nikolai Sokolnikov collection at the Russian Ethnographic Museum (REM) in St. Petersburg. For the former, we used the AMNH Anthropology collections website (<https://anthro.amnh.org/collections>) for all counts; for the latter, we relied on the data kindly provided by **Natalya Kosyak**, REM Siberian collection manager, since REM Siberian/Arctic collections are not accessible online.

The comparison of three major collections supported our preliminary findings. First, Nordenskiöld had secured a remarkably diverse stock of Chukchi ivory carvings, even though carved and decorated ivory pieces had been popular with other collectors. Second, the share of women's and particularly children's objects in his collection is indeed smaller than in other major holdings. Third, the 'weapons and ammunition' category was popular among all early collectors and accounts for the large number of arrows, bows, and quivers: all had been out of daily use due to the introduction of firearms. Nordenskiöld obviously tried to collect objects that reflected all sides of Chukchi daily life. Yet he was less successful than other collectors, like Bogoras and Gondatti (also **Nelson** in Alaska), perhaps due to the latter's lengthy interactions with local people, fluency in their language, and active traveling across Native camps.

The *Vega* Chukchi collection also revealed that the practice of making object models for sale or barter, such as those of boats, fireboards, hunting tools, sleds, even tents was well established among the Chukchi by 1878. Nordenskiöld, the first reported collector in the area, skillfully relied on this practice to expand the coverage of indigenous culture, particularly when people were reluctant to part with their precious family objects.

Potentials

Our *Vega* collection study is still a 'work in progress.' The Etnografiska museet continues to populate the

collection site and more objects are retrieved in storage and reunited with the core collection. Detailed input on about a half dozen objects have been secured from the Chukchi experts in Neshkan, and this work will continue. Ethnographic objects of the *Vega* expedition have been organized in major categories to construe Nordenskiöld's collecting strategy and to compare it with those of Waldemar Bogoras in 1900–1901, Nikolai Gondatti in 1894–1897, and Nikolai Sokolnikov in 1901–1907, based on their collections at AMNH, MAE, and REM.



“Spinner” (Swedish, snurra), a sinew twister, though its lack of wear and elaborately decoration indicate it was probably made for collectors, 1880.04.0959. Photo by Johan Jeppsson

The sheer size of the collection, its level of documentation, and its respectable age of 140+ years make it a true 'heritage treasure.' No effort should be spared to help reunite the objects in Stockholm with descendants. Even if no memories of these interactions remain today, the objects carry enormous cultural and heritage value to local people. They could revive their interest in heritage, strengthen cultural pride, and inspire restoration of certain practices based on preserved museum specimens. It is now an established practice to open museum collections to Indigenous people and partner with communities anxious to connect to cultural treasures of their

ancestors.

As the *Vega* online collection database is filled with data and images from museum records and the added information from Chukchi experts, it has a great potential to become an international treasure. Today, it functions with the Swedish-language interface only, whereas its main audience in the home area in Russia needs search and reading options in Russian and Chukchi, plus an English interface for international users. We believe that the *Vega* collection has a potential to serve as a model in 'digital reunification,' akin to efforts undertaken by other large museums in Oslo, Copenhagen, and Helsinki using their objects from the Arctic areas.

Finally, the *Vega* collection—thanks to its size and early age—could serve as a starting point and a driver

to reunite the Chukchi collection ‘universe’ of some 8,000+ ethnographic objects dispersed across many museums in Russia, Europe, and North America. Our pilot study inspired some initial steps to compare three major holdings of Chukchi heritage objects in Stockholm, in New York, and in St. Petersburg. More could be achieved when other museums open their Chukchi collections for a shared online access, perhaps in the footsteps of the Reciprocal Research Network (RRN: <https://www.rrncommunity.org>), an online museum alliance built around the First Nations Northwest Coast ethnographic collections, or an earlier venture by the Japanese Ainu specialists, “The Overseas Ainu Collections,” a world catalog of Ainu collections. It may create an online platform and a meeting place for Chukchi heritage experts and museum professionals interested in Chukchi culture. Reconnecting historical museum collections with Indigenous experts and communities of origin is an increasingly popular path to move objects from museum drawers and to start their new life as a source of heritage knowledge, cultural pride, education, and community empowerment.

Acknowledgement. At the Etnografiska museet in Stockholm we are grateful to former and current staff members **Monika Sargren, Linda Wennbom, Johan Jeppsson, Magnus Johannson** and **Tony Sandin**. We owe our special gratitude to Eduard Zdor and Lilya Tlecheivyn’e and their partners in the community of Neshkan, Irina Nutetgivev, Nina Kyttagina (1952–2020), and **Nikolai ETTYNE**. At the Russian Ethnographic Museum in St. Petersburg, we received precious help from Natalya Kosyak, Siberian collection manager, and **Julia Kupina**, museum director. **Rachel Hand** at the Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology in Cambridge, UK, and **Elena Mikhailova** at the Museum of Anthropology and Ethnology in St. Petersburg, Russia offered critical insight on some of the earliest Chukchi objects in their respective institutions. A much larger version of this paper has been published in the Vienna-based museum journal, *Archiv Weltmuseum Wien*.

“NELSON IN THE CLOUD”: DIGITALLY REUNITING A HISTORICAL COLLECTION

By *Alaina Helm and Amy Margaris*

The “Nelson in the Cloud” project is a collaborative effort begun by Oberlin College and the Arctic Studies Center in September 2020 to digitally reunify the world’s largest collection of Alaskan ethnographic objects. The objects were obtained by naturalist **Edward William Nelson** on behalf of the Smithsonian in 1877–1881, and subsequently exchanged with many museums

across the country and internationally in the late 1800s and early 1900s. Our goal is to create an online portal to a user-friendly database through which information about all parts of Nelson’s Alaska collection can be accessed by anyone who is interested in learning more. As a joint effort between students, faculty, and staff at Oberlin College and the Smithsonian’s Department of Anthropology, we hope to create a platform that is beneficial to both the Alaska Native peoples whose cultures are represented in these ethnographic objects and to the many institutions who maintain the items today.

The project first took seed in April of 2016 when Arctic Studies Center curator **Igor Krupnik** flew to Oberlin College in northeast Ohio to participate in a panel on Alaska Native peoples and climate change. While there he viewed the College’s 36-item Alaska Native collection (part of the Oberlin College Ethnographic Collection) that includes fish skin bags, hunting and fishing gear, and ivory implements. Eighteen of the Alaskan items were obtained by the naturalist Edward William Nelson. During that visit Dr. Krupnik and Oberlin College anthropologist **Amy Margaris** began to envision what they playfully termed “Nelson in the Cloud,” a “sort of digital reunion where objects that are physically disseminated across many institutions, including Oberlin and the Smithsonian, could be reassembled for cohesive study” (see “Bark Blankets and ‘Esquimaux Implements from Alaska” in the *ASC Newsletter* 2017).

Why focus on the collections of Edward William Nelson, in particular? Nelson was a prominent figure in late 19th century Alaskan ethnology and collected an astonishing 10,000 or so cultural items from diverse Alaska Native communities. Many of those were everyday objects including toys, sewing supplies, and hunting tools. Nelson described his observations of Alaska and the items he collected in his 1899 ethnography *The Eskimo About Bering Strait*. Because Nelson was trained as a natural historian, he recorded these cultural items in a scientific manner similar to how one would record biological or geological specimens in that day. Yet we recognize that they are more than physical specimens: they are also reservoirs of cultural, spiritual, and ecological information that can be of tremendous benefit to Alaska Native as well as scientific communities today.

Over the next few years the “Nelson in the Cloud” seed began to germinate as Oberlin fully digitized its Alaska Native collection and consulting visits by **Rosemary Ahtuanguaruak** (Iñupiaq) and **Sven Haakanson Jr.** (Sugpiaq/Alutiiq) helped expand our understanding of these valuable objects. Current Oberlin College Senior **Alaina Helm**’s contributions to the project began as a student in Margaris’ 2019 course “Learning

with Indigenous Material Culture” which centered on Oberlin’s Alaska Native Collection. Generous support from the Oberlin College made it possible for Inupiaq Elder Rosemary Ahtuanguaruak and her granddaughter **Shanae Ahtuanguaruak** to make the journey from Alaska to Oberlin’s campus for an inspiring and transformative week-long Consulting Residency. **Rosemary Ahtuanguaruak**’s knowledge as an Inupiaq person enlightened us and enlivened the collection as a representation of cultures still living today. At (the elder) **Ahtuanguaruak**’s urging, students in the class recorded the consultation sessions; they incorporated the video into a digital book that showcases Oberlin’s entire Alaska Native collection as contextualized by **Ahtuanguaruak**’s observations, and includes Native village and object names whenever possible. **Helm** then took the lead when a number of students from the course were inspired to continue working with the Alaska collection and create a related, full-scale exhibition that was slated to be installed in the campus library in spring 2020. When COVID-19 intervened, these dedicated students spent their summer working with **Margaris** to convert the exhibition to a digital exhibit platform where it is now available for anyone to visit. (The exhibition can be experienced at <https://www.artsteps.com/view/5ec9415dfbf64b58219aa3e8>).

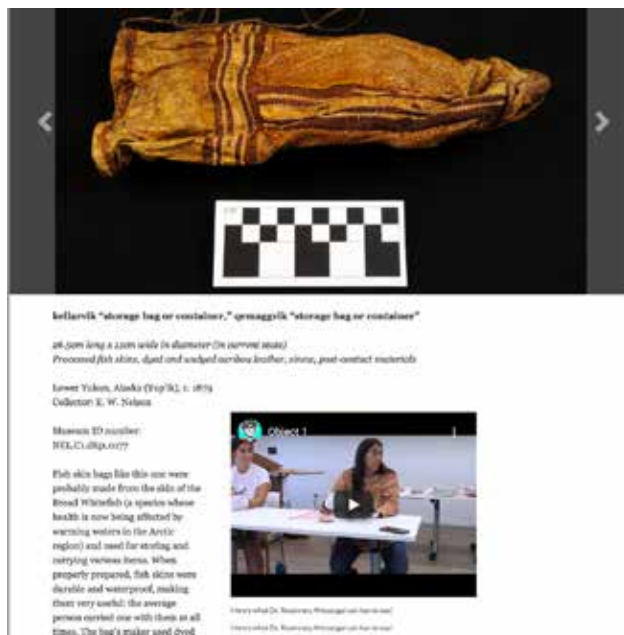
Through participation in these two projects, Helm became familiar with Oberlin’s Alaska Native Collection, the importance of Native collaboration, and some of the challenges of creating a digital resource. When Margaris proposed that Helm next pilot the “Nelson in the Cloud” project, Krupnik enthusiastically signed on as project collaborator. Our team has since grown as we have sought additional scholars to help refine our vision and pilot a database. Contributors now include **Megan Mitchell**, who is Oberlin’s Digital Initiatives Coordinator, and on the Arctic Studies Center side, Museum Specialist **Dawn Biddison**, anthropologists **Aron Crowell**, **Stephen Loring**, and **William Fitzhugh**, collections manager **David**

Rosenthal, and assistants **Sarah Baburi** and **Sadie Colebank**.

Currently, the project has several evolving components. A list of over 800 items exchanged by the Smithsonian with museums and educational institutions worldwide is systematically being evaluated and, through email communication with curators and caretakers, the items on it are being located. A few hundred items are now housed at the Harvard Peabody Museum, for example, and smaller numbers can be found at the American Museum of Natural History, the British Museum, and the

Cincinnati Art Museum. Many other items are less straightforward to track down. Some were sent to individual collectors, and these parts of the collection can sometimes be found in museums with which the individuals worked. Sometimes only a place name was provided, in which case the ease of locating an object depends on the city, as some cities are home to a single, obvious candidate museum or university while other cities may have dozens of possibilities. Language barriers present a further challenge in tracking down the whereabouts of specific objects, as not all items are located in English speaking parts of the world. Finally, some objects may prove impossible to identify

even if the correct institution is located because information is too vague, or records may have been lost. One potential example is a single “skull” sent to Prague. The record on this object does not provide a specific institution or date and offers no identifying features except for the original Smithsonian collection number. It does not even specify if the skull is human or animal. Despite these challenges, between 300-400 of the items that Nelson obtained have been already definitively located as of January, 2020, with many more leads still being followed. Additionally, over 6,000 ethnographic objects collected by Nelson are housed at the Department of Anthropology collections at the Smithsonian today. This brings the total number of ethnographic objects to be digitally reunited to nearly 7,000.



A page from the interactive book created by Oberlin students in collaboration with Rosemary Ahtuanguaruak.

The complete project can be explored at: [scalar.oberlincollegelibrary.org/arctic-ethnology/index](https://www.oberlincollegelibrary.org/arctic-ethnology/index)

As these items are being located, an interesting snapshot of the worldwide museum exchange network is developing. Alaskan ethnographic materials collected by Nelson have now dispersed across five continents and dozens of countries. Items can be found all over the eastern United States and Europe, and have made it to Oceania, Asia, and South America. An important observation about the whereabouts of this collection is that no objects were sent to anywhere in Africa and even more significantly, none made their way back to Alaska.

As we begin to get an idea of where these items are and what information exists about them, we are also working on a second project component: a pilot database housed at Oberlin College using a free, open-source digital platform called Omeka. Currently about 20 sample items from several different institutions have been added to the pilot, which has given rise to several questions about how best to proceed to make the best possible product. We want to ensure that each object is associated with all relevant metadata while also providing a means to access more information about an object from its home institution, when available. As a means for making the database searchable, we have discussed using techniques such as simplifying object names and including a range of possible ways an object can be referenced (such as with outdated or alternative names, like Yup'ik and Yupik). A complete and accessible database would allow objects to be searched by type, location, or culture and yield uniform results.

The final product of the “Nelson in the Cloud” project will require several key features that our team is still in the process of refining. The database needs to respect and meet the needs of Alaska Natives interested in learning about their own culture while also meeting the needs of researchers around the world. Our product needs to adhere to the copyright and data sharing standards of a variety of institutions, as we require the use of catalog data (and potentially images) from a variety of sources.

An additional challenge to organizing the database is network hosting and maintenance. Logistical obstacles

would make it difficult for the Smithsonian to host the database, yet Oberlin does not have sufficient funding or resources to commit to maintaining it in perpetuity. Additionally, we must ensure that the database can be kept up to date once it is created, a challenge because it will contain information from many institutions that may continuously be updating their own catalog records. One solution is to maintain two paired databases, one documenting the current Smithsonian collection only and the other documenting the extended collection across the globe. A set of mirrored databases could allow for uniformity of information and searchability while removing the challenges of incorporating the larger portion of the collection still at the Smithsonian into an external database.

What are the project's next steps? This spring Helm and two additional Oberlin undergraduates will continue to track down objects. All metadata are being collected into



*Present location of some of Nelson's scattered collections
(blue = known institutions, red = known cities)*

a single document which will be ready to upload into a database once its final structure has been agreed upon. Consultation with Alaska Native stakeholders along the way will also be key. Historically, many ethnographic and archaeological collections have been displayed and studied in an academic setting without input from the peoples who had originally

created these cultural items. Our team has begun investigating examples of other digital collections management projects that have been created by, or in collaboration with, Indigenous peoples, including Mukurtu, the Vanuatu Kaljoral Senta (VKS), and especially the Reciprocal Research Network (<https://www.rrncommunity.org>) which like our project collates cultural materials that are physical housed across institutions.

Ours is a major undertaking with potentially far-reaching results. The creation of a worldwide database that can unite institutions across borders and language barriers would serve as a model for dispersed collection of all sorts, from biological specimens to archaeological artifacts, in addition to the ethnographic objects our project was conceived. Most importantly, “Nelson in the Cloud” is envisioned to be a platform where digital representations of physical objects can act

as a means for growth. By connecting people around the world to the network of institutions that now act as stewards for this significant collection of Alaskan items, a “Nelson in the Cloud” database would allow Alaska Native communities to access and understand where and how their cultural items have been distributed across the globe. It would help stewarding institutions keep their records on the included items up to date, empower Indigenous stakeholders and scholars to connect and work together, and contribute to cultural revitalization efforts that are happening in Native communities across Alaska.

[*Editor's Note:* Readers might be interested to learn about the Ainu database project created by Japanese scholars that created a world-wide inventory of Ainu cultural items and led to the Smithsonian exhibition documented in the catalog, *Ainu: Spirit of a Northern People* (Fitzhugh and Dubreuil 2000. Smithsonian Institution Press. See also: Kyuzo Kato and Yoshinobu Kotani (eds.), 1987, *Bulletin of the National Museum of Ethnology Special Issue 5*.]

BERING SEA ART FROM NUNIVAK ISLAND: A CHRONICLE OF RICHARD D. TAKILNOK (CUP'IG, 1928–2007)

By Harald E. L. Prins

Arctic art has its casual vagrants, surfacing in distant places. This graphite-and-ink drawing found its way from Alaska to a small antique store in Maine, a halfway point between trash and minor treasure. That is where I spotted the kayak-faring walrus hunters scene framed behind dusty cracked glass. The unidentified piece was not dated, but I guessed it was made in the mid-1900s. The unique design of the kayaks caught my eye—a distinctive model typical for Nunivak Island in the Bering Sea. The faded signature was still visible: **Richard D. Takilnok**.

I rescued the large drawing (15" x 20") and imagined the Cup'ig artist might be interested in knowing his artwork was valued. I tracked him down with the help of anthropologist **Margaret Lantis**, who had done ethnographic fieldwork on Nunivak in 1939–1940 and later revisited the island a few more times. Commonly known as **Richard Davis**, he probably resided in *Mekoryuk*, the island's only still existing village (not counting seasonal encampment sites). So, I wrote to him there. On 15 October 1988, the 60-year old elder responded:

Very much surprised, rec'd a letter. And I'm thank you for thinking how I am doing at this time. I am, of course, doing fine with all my family. However, I'm not much doing anything now, but living as

the ways we used to be. I sure use to draw scatches arts before my eyes can see good, but now, failed, because of my poor near sights. I'm thank you, you have one of my work and you like it. Now a days, I'm doing slowly on Carving Ivories. All of that have living, such as Walrus, Seals, Wales, and fishes, foxes, Musk-oxen and some birds that interested. Thank you again for your letter and you love the art. Sincerely **Richard Davis** (Takilnok).

Born in *Tacirmiut*, a seasonal hamlet on a large bay at Nunivak's south coast, Richard was originally named **Tekrilngur**. Like many other Nuniwarmiut families, his spent the winter months in a sod-roofed semi-subterranean home at *Mekoryuk*, their main village on the island's north shore. In pursuit of seasonally-shifting resources, such as fish, seals, walrus, and sea fowl, they rotated to various spring, summer and fall encampments.

When Richard was about nine years old, an Iñupiat Protestant missionary moved from Hooper Bay to *Mekoryuk*, also site of the island's trading post. Soon, almost all Nuniwarmiut converted, including Richard and a young local shaman named **Kangleg**. The island's small school was relocated from the village of *Ellikarmiut* (Nash Harbor) to *Mekoryuk* in 1940. At the time, as Lantis recalled, 12-year old Richard “was a youth with almost no schooling.” The newly-arrived American husband-wife teaching team from Arkansas reported that Nunivakers still had “but few dealings with white men and therefore they speak only the Eskimo language. There are a dozen on the entire island who speak a little English, and only two of these go to school.”

Richard was still young when his father Atakuilngur died. His widowed mother **Apurin** invited **Kalirmiu**, a kinsman later renamed **Peter Smith**, to help provide for the household and mentor her son. Traditionally, when boys turned thirteen or fourteen, they were given a small kayak. In the next five years or so, most grew into capable seal hunters, equally adept with harpoon, atlatl, and rifle (typically 0.22 caliber). Once they had harvested a full-grown bearded seal, an animal that ritually outranked other seals (and even walrus), they were considered on top of their game.

Historically, *Nuniwarmiut* hunters preyed on bearded seals and walrus primarily in the spiritual ceremony-rich spring season. These sea mammals yielded plenty of leather and flesh, plus blubber (used for light and heat). Their large intestine provided the raw material for waterproof parkas. Moreover, seal and female walrus hides were greatly valued as kayak cover.

On their spring-time migration from wintering spots in the Bering Sea north to the thawing Chukchi Sea and

beyond, small herds of migratory walrus pass through *Nunivak's* coastal waters, usually for a few weeks in April and early May. Weighing twice as much as a walrus cow, a bull can grow to over 3.5 meters and weigh as much as two tons. Endowed with prominent tusks, up to 1 meter long and weighing over 5 kilos, walrus have long been prized because of unquenchable demand for raw ivory and ivory carvings.

Venturing out for a walrus hunt at dawn, Richard would have teamed up with two or three companions, each equipped with a one-bladed paddle, a rifle plus ammunition, and a harpoon tied with a long leather thong to an inflatable

sealskin float lashed on top of the wooden sled secured on the kayak's deck behind the cockpit. In his youth, these kayaks were painted with designs, usually representing "animals whose characteristics the owners hope will be transferred to their boats." The aforementioned shaman, noted German anthropologist **Hans Himmelheber** in 1937, had an orca "painted on his kayak to help him during storms. Others

depict fast-moving animals like seals or minks to speed up the kayak. [And] a painted human figure extending from the bow to the stern with arms and legs spread out may also be used to promote stability." Nuniwarmiut preferred to target walrus asleep on ice floats, but the adventure could be dangerous due to shifting ice, sudden winds and strong currents. Moreover, a wounded walrus, if not quickly killed, may charge a hunter and overturn his kayak. Even hardened Alaskan Natives don't survive very long in ice-cold seawater.

As shown in Takilnok's drawing, walrus hunters tried to paddle as quietly and close as possible without agitating the beasts and causing them to escape into water. A precision shot (behind the ear) from a kayak in open sea requires a sharp eye, as well as a good rifle and a steady boat. Away from the shoreline, hunters could not lash their kayaks together to provide the desired stability. Instead, two companions maneuvered their narrow skin boats into a close flanking position, tightly wedging the central kayak manned by the designated sharpshooter. After a successful kill, the hunters towed their catch back for butchering on the ice floe closer to their spring encampment or home village.

When a young hunter shot his first walrus, **Lantis** noted, the haul "was celebrated by distribution of the meat, a sweat bath, song, and dance. The walrus head was kept in the *qazgi* [men's house], for five days..."

During the first half of the 20th century, tuberculosis was rampant in Alaska's indigenous communities. This contagious disease claimed many lives among the Nuniwarmiut whose numbers fell to about 225 people. In 1941, one of the American teachers living in *Mekoryuk* reported: "About 75 percent have T.B. Many of them sit around with one foot in the grave and the other foot on the ice. I don't know how they live."



*Nunivak hunters approaching walrus by Richard Takilnok.
Photo by Harald Prins*

In the early 1950s, perhaps while serving as an "Eskimo scout" in the Alaskan National Guard, Richard was also infected. Diagnosed with T.B., he was transferred to the Alaska Native Services (ANS) hospital in Juneau. More than 1800 km from home, he made drawings of the traditional hunting life he had enjoyed and now longed for. His art work, stylistically informed by ivory engravings (*scrimshaw*), caught the attention of Alaska Native

Arts and Crafts manager **Don Burrus** who reported in 1952: "Richard Davis of *Mekoryuk*, no[w] confined to the tuberculosis ward of the ANS hospital in Juneau, has been producing a type of drawing that shows signs of becoming a consistently selling item."

The following year, Richard was transferred to the Mt. Edgecumbe Hospital on an island outside Sitka. Perhaps to distinguish himself as a Native Alaskan artist, he signed his work as Richard D. Takilnok—as he phonetically spelled his *Cup'ig* name (Tekrilngur). In 1954, he submitted a "black and white" drawing at the Sitka Community Fair and received a red ribbon for it. Next, he entered the 1954 American Indian Painting Competition in San Francisco with a graphite-and-ink drawing titled, "The Hunt's On," winning "first place." This was purchased by the Indian Defense Association of Northern California and gifted to the De Young Memorial Museum in San Francisco for its permanent collection. In 1955, still ailing, Richard was transferred to the ANS hospital in Anchorage. A year later, he was one of three "Alaskan Eskimo" artists represented in the 11th Annual Contemporary Indian Painting Exhibition in Tulsa, Oklahoma, with Southern Cheyenne artist **Dick West** serving on the three-men award jury.

Undoubtedly, Takilnok made quite a few fine drawings while hospitalized for T.B. But what happened to these minor treasures? Not yet identified to date is one of 40 Alaskan artworks selected from “hundreds submitted” by the Farthest North Art Guild for a traveling exhibit touring the United States in 1959–1960. The “original purpose of the exhibit was to promote statehood,” and, explained one of its organizers, “to let you see Alaska through the eyes and abilities of her artists.” Only one other Alaskan Native, a *Tlingit*, was included in this exhibit, which also showed at the U.S. Commerce Department in Washington D.C. After almost ten years in Alaskan hospitals, Richard was finally discharged and returned to his *Cup’ig* family and friends on *Nunivak* where the traditional way of life was rapidly changing. Very few hunters still used kayaks, for most now ventured out in motor-powered wooden boats.

Meanwhile, the island’s musk oxen herd, transplanted from Greenland in the mid-1930s, had multiplied. By the mid-1960s, they numbered about 500. Grazing on Nunivak territory reserved as a National Wildlife Refuge, these Ice-Age survivors were under strict protection by Alaska’s Fish and Wildlife Service. The department offered Richard a salaried position, initially part-time, as the island-based guardian of the thriving wild herd. Meanwhile, he had married and become a father who primarily relied on hunting and fishing to feed his family. He also built a new house and his own wooden boat, leaving him little opportunity or energy for drawing.

In 1968, the American Indian Museum-Heye Foundation in New York City published *American Indian Painters: A Biographical Dictionary*, featuring almost 1,200 individuals representing a few hundred tribes or nations. Included in this artistic multitude are Richard Davis Takilnok and thirteen other Alaskan “Eskimos.” When Davis died in 2007, few on the island knew this 79-year-old Nuniwarmiut elder had been a talented graphic artist. Nonetheless, his drawings remain distinctly valuable, not only because of their aesthetic appeal, but also as a Native Alaskan hunter’s representation of his own maritime culture in the Bering Sea.

Acknowledgements. Pioneering ethnographic research by Margaret Lantis (1939–1940) resulted in landmark publications on Nunivak consulted for this essay. Also informative are writings by Hans Himmelheber (1936–1937), translated and edited by **Ann Fienup-Riordan** in *Where the Echo Began*. Fairbanks: U Alaska Press, 2000. Anthropologists **Dennis Griffin** and **Kenneth Pratt**, specialists on Nunivak culture and history who authored multiple publications, provided much appreciated critical feedback. The map is courtesy of a **James VanStone** publication.

THE JOHN MARR COLLECTIONS FROM NUNAVIK AT THE UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO-BOULDER MUSEUM

By Madison T. King

When I first encountered the Marr Collection at the University of Colorado Museum of Natural History in Boulder there was not a well-developed understanding of the extent of the collection or the context through which it had come to be. So, as an undergraduate student participating in a practicum on collections research, I began studying the objects. What began as an initial attempt to reassemble the collection eventually transformed into an opportunity to learn about the process of sharing museum resources and archival material with descendent Inuit and First Nations (Eeyou/Innu/Northern Cree) communities in Northern Quebec.

Marr and the Collection

Dr. **John W. Marr** (1914–1989) was a well-known professor in the Biology Department at the University of Colorado in Boulder. In addition to making many important contributions to the scholarship of alpine ecological research in the tundra throughout the course of his career, Marr also established the Institute of Arctic and Alpine Research as part of the University of Colorado in 1951. While on research expeditions in the Arctic, Marr also collected ethnographic objects from the Inuit communities with whom he crossed paths. There are two expeditions of Marr’s that are of particular interest to the research presented in this article, as they resulted in the objects and photographs that now comprise the Marr Collection.

In 1939 Marr accompanied an expedition to the Great Whale River and Richmond Gulf area as a student of Professor **William S. Cooper** at the University of Minnesota. While carrying out ecological research on the forest-tundra ecotone, Marr also collected two pairs of mukluks that were later accessioned into the museum. During this expedition Marr also took several hundred photographs, which eventually came to be housed at the John W. Marr Papers Archive at the University of Colorado Special Collections and Archives Department in Norlin Library. The majority of the photographs consist of aerial shots of large stretches of alpine forest. About thirty photographs, however, depict Inuit or First Nations people and their villages. These photographs became closely associated with my research on the Marr Collection, as they relate directly to the communities from which the objects originate.

The second trip took place in 1948, under the title, “The University of Colorado Botanical Expedition.” Marr and his wife, **Johanna C.W.R. Marr**, traveled

to Ungava Bay area in Northern Quebec (Nunavik) with two graduate students from the university. Their purpose was to study vegetation growth at the northern tree limit near *Kuujuuaq*, along the Leaf River. It was during this trip that the rest of the objects within the Marr Collection were obtained. During the three-month expedition, the Marrs collected a variety of ethnographic objects from Inuit communities in the area. According to a letter from Marr to the museum during the accession process, many of the objects were personally made by Inuit community members as gifts for Johanna

to wear and use. Other objects were obtained by Johanna by trading with people she met during their stay.

The objects that were collected during these two trips were accessioned by the University of Colorado Museum of Natural History in three separate instances. The first accession occurred in 1939, when the museum purchased a single pair of mukluks from John W. Marr. The second accession occurred in 1948, when the museum purchased many of the 1948 expedition objects from Johanna. The third accession occurred in 1957, when John W. Marr donated the remaining objects to the museum after Johanna's passing in 1955. Today, the full collection consists of twenty-nine ethnographic objects, including mukluks, dolls, raw materials, and articles of clothing.

Reassembling the Collection

I assembled the information above regarding the context of the Marr Collection and the archival photographs over the course of a year, under the guidance and supervision of my mentor,

Dr. Jennifer Shannon. Everything that I learned during my attempt to reassemble the Marr Collection resulted in a final report which acts as a comprehensive guide to the collection, the photographs, and the associated



Inuit women at Richmond Gulf, 1939. Box 35, Folder 2, Photo 39-234, John W. Marr Papers, Norlin Library, University of Colorado, Boulder

documentation. The report includes an image of every object in the collection (along with a description of materials and history), a copy of each photograph from the archive, and my own written work which explain the context of the museum and of Marr.

My hope was that this report would not only supplement the museum records, but that it could also serve as a resource for the originating communities. In order to share the materials with the descendent communities, however, I had to first identify and locate

them. This was one of the most challenging parts of my research, as all documentation associated with the objects and photographs simply referred to the artists and subjects as "Eskimo." There was no record of specific Inuit or First Nations individuals or villages, so it was not clear with whom we should share the materials.



Dr. John W. Marr (1914-1989). Founder and inaugural director of the Institute of Arctic and Alpine Research. Photo courtesy Ecological Society of America

With the help and guidance of Dr. **Stephen Loring**, who provided valuable insight regarding the specific groups that occupy the areas

from which the objects and the photographs came, I was able to clarify both the communities from which the material originated and the appropriate classifications as either Inuit or First Nations.

Sharing the Material

Equipped with an approximate knowledge of who the originating communities may have been, and assistance from two cultural institutes in Quebec, I was able to connect these collections to their originating communities. Thanks to a few valuable introductions by Dr. Loring, I was put into contact with Sarah Gauntlett of the Avataq Cultural Institute, and Laura Phillips of the Aanischaaukamikw Cree Cultural Institute. To begin, both the Aanischaaukamikw Cree Cultural Institute and the Avataq Cultural Institute

were sent copies of my final research report. Both institutions expressed interest in retaining copies of the materials that had resulted from the research. With the assistance from staff at the University of Colorado Special Collections and Archives Department, both institutions received high-resolution, digital TIF copies of the thirty photographs from 1939 which feature Indigenous people and their villages in the Richmond Gulf and Great Whale River area.

I hope that these connections with the cultural institutions will help to fulfill two primary goals. The first aim is that Inuit and First Nations community members have easy access to these materials when they seek information from their own archival institutions and that these materials will contribute to the growing body of knowledge available to the contemporary Inuit and First Nations communities. The second aim is that the cultural institutions will be able to pass on to the University of Colorado Museum of Natural History any new information that is learned about the resources as they are circulated throughout the contemporary communities. As I learned from the Aanischaaukamikw Cree Cultural Institute, the flow in information is to occur in this way in accordance with The First Nations Principles of OCAP. By regulating the ownership, control, access and possession of the information in this way, the institutions can practice agency in how information pertaining to their community is used. Taking all of this into account, it would be wonderful to someday supplement the existing catalog records with the specific names of those who crafted the objects, and those who are the subjects in the archival photographs.

Reference

Marr, John. 1948. Ecology of the Forest-Tundra Ecotone on the East Coast of Hudson Bay. *Ecological Monographs* 18(1):117-144



Inuit mother and child dolls. University of Colorado Museum of Natural History Cat. #s 6827, 6828. Photo by Madison King

OUTREACH

FILMING FIFTY YEARS OF SMITHSONIAN ARCHAEOLOGY

By Theodore Timreck

My new film, *Ancient Sea Peoples of the North Atlantic*, argues for considering the entire North Atlantic coastal region as an integrated historical and archeological zone. This is based on the idea that the Maritime Revolution which occurred during the last Ice Age is an under-appreciated part of human history and that similar environmental adaptations can produce similar cultural traits in different regions of the earth. But underneath this argument lies a deeper question about the history of the indigenous peoples of North America who once lived along the Atlantic coastline. This topic is barely discussed in anthropological textbooks and has been somewhat of “black hole” in Eastern Native American history.

I was introduced to the problem by **William Fitzhugh** when I accompanied him with a film crew to Nulliak Cove, a 4,000 year old Maritime Archaic Indian settlement not far from the famous chert quarries of Ramah Bay in northernmost Labrador. Sitting along the ridge of a raised beach terrace overlooking the Labrador Sea, Bill asked, “the real question is, where did these people come from?”

The huge Nulliak site demonstrated that by 4,000 years ago ceremonial landscapes including mound burials already existed in the Far Northeast and that Indians who lived there and used Ramah chert for their implements had to navigate wide, ice choked ocean expanses and must have had large boats and a well-developed maritime-adapted lifestyle.

In the same decade that Fitzhugh and his crew discovered these quarries and settlements in Labrador, Canadian scientists had also identified Native burial mounds in southern Labrador that were more than 7,000 years old. These finds were so anomalous that they were almost never included in the academic timelines and descriptions of Native history—they didn't fit comfortably into the accepted Native history of the Western Hemisphere.

Now more than forty years ago, I found it an irresistible intellectual and artistic challenge to visually convey the story of this enormous disjunct in American and perhaps even the world's model of human cultural development. The 1970s was a time of controversy between the deeply entrenched scientific model of Native history and the seemingly inexplicable discoveries that were beginning to appear, and would continue to emerge in the following

decades. This became a narrative I wanted to create out of the beautiful Labrador land- and seascapes and the fascinating stories of the scientists searching—often by accident—for a Native civilization that wasn't supposed to exist.

As a filmmaker and later as a website producer, I joined the Arctic Studies Center as a Research Collaborator and worked with other scientists from the Smithsonian's Anthropology Department to document fieldwork in many places in North America and Europe, but especially in locations around the Circumpolar North.

In the process of recording the fieldwork of **William**

Fitzhugh, Stephen Loring, Dennis Stanford, Douglas Owsley, Noel Broadbent, Pegi Jodry, Chuck Smythe, Rosita Worl, Darrin Lowry, and others, I found them willing to help me develop my cinematic ideas about the unanswered questions in North American Native history. Their patience with my sometimes “fringy” notions has always been appreciated and helped inform my North Atlantic movie.

In my conversations with researchers, I emphasized that interviews on film or tape are not the same as peer-reviewed proclamations. The moving image offers the opportunity to safely stretch the imagination, to offer a more personal perspective in order to suggest where responsible thinking might be heading in the future based on the discoveries of the present. In hindsight, when reviewing these interviews of more than twenty years ago for this film, I recognized that the emotional honesty and scientific balance these researchers brought to their work often turned out to be quite prescient.

Another result of these years of film and video documentation is that the narrative represents a generation of Smithsonian scientists' perspectives on the process and vagaries of discovery. For example, Fitzhugh, Loring, and Stanford were laboratory neighbors at the National Museum of Natural History for decades. When they began working there, their research interests were easily defined by their Eastern vs. Western focus, as determined by the accepted

theories of indigenous history. But because of accidental discoveries, and above all, a passion for looking at the often surprising discoveries, and then being willing to change their theoretical frameworks, the rewards of the scientific method came to be validated. Over decades, following their own separate paths, those three scientists independently discovered pieces of a larger but connected puzzle that might forever change Native history.

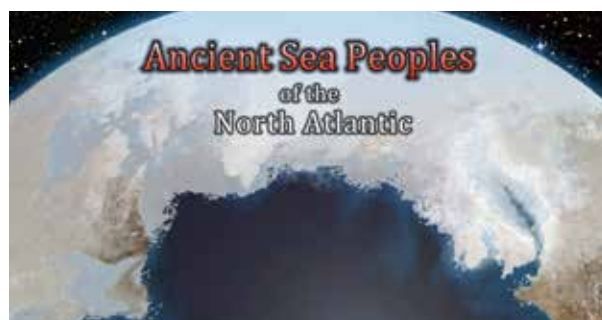
Perhaps the most important lesson I learned from my Smithsonian colleagues was best practices for collaborating with Native representatives in studies

of cultural research and representation. Over the following decades, these collaborations became worthy of study in themselves. What I learned was that best practices, when successful, turned out to be a completely individual and often unique process of collaboration between each scientist and each tribal representative. In my case, I was fortunate to team up with tribal representatives like **Rosita Worl** and **Doug Harris** whose lifetime work has been to forge a remarkable understanding of Native tradition, scientific method, and the business of anthropology.

In my recent movie, Doug Harris, the tribal preservation officer of the Narragansetts, helped me understand a way of balancing scientific thinking with tribal tradition

and contemporary politics. Harris, who appears throughout the video, represents the tribal voice that suggests the possibility of a future where archeological research and cultural preservation, working in partnership, may reveal an here-to-fore unimagined Native history that once existed as far back as the Ice Age on the submerged North Atlantic shelf. This may turn out to be the true, long term value of presenting forty years of research documentation and trying to put those discoveries into perspective for scholars, the public, Native Americans, and the future.

The movie illustrates some of the steps in our own short segment of a longer process that began with the Folsom discovery in the 1920s and will continue well



Ancient Sea Peoples of the North Atlantic. Courtesy of Theodore Timreck



Theodore Timreck in his New York City studio. Photo by Theodore Timreck

past our time as surprising discoveries continue to shatter the “glass basement” and expanding time frame of Native American history.

[*Editor’s note:* Since the mid-1970s **Ted Timreck** has documented ASC research, conferences, and public activities by producing documentary films, educational media, our original website (recently replaced by a generic profile), and exhibitions. His television works include “**Franz Boas**” for the PBS Odyssey series and “The Lost Red Paint People” and “Vikings in America” for PBS/NOVA. He is a recipient of the Peabody Award, and his television portraits of artists (PBS national specials and American Masters series) include Charles Ives, Thomas Eakins, Augustus Saint Gaudens, and Frederick Law Olmsted. Recently he completed a “Hidden Landscapes” series telling the story of the early Eastern Native American sea cultures that offers a new perspective on the ancient history of North America. This theme is further explored in a 110-minute film titled “Ancient Sea Peoples of the North Atlantic.” His website is www.twtimreck.com]

NARWHAL EXHIBITION ON THE ROAD AFTER COVID-19 BREATHER

By Carol Bossert

The narwhal, with its unique left spinning spiral tusk, has inspired legend in Inuit society and fascinated people across cultures for centuries. The exhibition *Narwhal: Revealing an Arctic Legend*, on view at the National Museum of Natural History from 2017–2019, is now a traveling exhibition circulated by Smithsonian Institution Traveling Exhibition Service (SITES). The exhibition digs 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.

The travel version contains many of the elements in the original show, including a 16-foot fiberglass model of an adult male narwhal suspended from the ceiling, an audio soundtrack of narwhals and other Arctic sounds, a video entitled “What the Inuit Know” produced by the National Museum of Natural History, and a NASA visualization of the changes in Arctic Sea ice over the past ten years. The exhibition includes a cast models of a narwhal skull and an extinct narwhal relative, *Bohaskaia monodontiodes* and pop culture objects from plush toys to clothing, coffee mugs, and even a corkscrew. To make the animal accessible to all populations, SITES created a touchable 3D print model for blind and low vision visitors. Interpretive panels were resized, and photo murals were reprinted on fabric.

Host venues may rent the 2,000 sq. ft. exhibition for a twelve-week period and will receive installation instructions, rigging equipment, promotion and education materials, digital resources, and access to SITES staff for help in developing exhibition programs.

The exhibition will open in May 22, 2021 at the Schiele Museum of Natural History in Gastonia, North Carolina, and will then travel to The Monte L. Bean Life Science Museum in Provo, Utah, and the Sam Noble Museum in Norman Oklahoma. SITES thanks Dr. **William Fitzhugh**, Director of the Smithsonian Arctic Studies program, Dr. **Martin T. Nweeia**, Harvard University, and Dr. **Marianne Marcoux**, Fisheries and Oceans Canada for advice and support. The exhibit was initially developed by the National Museum of Natural History and was redesigned for travel by SITES. For information about booking, contact **Carol Bossert**, SITES Project Director at bossertc@si.edu.



Narwhal: Revisiting an Arctic Legend as installed at the Smithsonian Natural History Museum, 2017–2019.
Photo by Jim Fernandez



SITES staff get the 16-foot narwhal model ready for travel.
Photo courtesy of ELY, Inc.

PARTNERS, FELLOWS AND INTERNS

CRUISING THE ASC, BEFORE AND DURING COVID-19*By Fiona Steiwer*

Little did I know when I walked through the halls of Smithsonian's National Museum of Natural History to meet with Dr. **William Fitzhugh** for the first time that I would be spending a majority of my time working with the lovely individuals of the Arctic Studies Center—in my studio apartment. Over a year ago in October of 2019 I began working at the ASC on digitizing transcripts of field notes written by one of the first Americans to visit Alaska from the 19th century and piecing together the 2019 *ASC Newsletter* with **Nancy Shorey** and William Fitzhugh. In addition to these projects I was quickly thrown into further work and activities across the museum's campus.



Some of my favorite memories include spending time at the Museum Storage Center with Dr. **Stephen Loring**, where we explored the Anthropology collection, picking out pieces that I had selected from the online index to highlight in the upcoming Night Sky exhibit. Later that same day I was also able to provide support for a tour for a class of students from Hampden-Sydney College. It was a great way to learn more about the collections while connecting with other archaeology students.

Another memorable experience was working with the ASC team the weekend of the Mongolia Conference. Through this experience I was able to learn so much about not only the archaeology of the region, but the art, food and local D.C. Mongolian community, while gaining experience in event logistics and planning.

The ASC team has been by my side through many milestones: my senior year of undergrad, my graduation from American University, and my first post-grad job opportunities. Thank you so much to everyone who has been there along the way. I hope that everyone in the ASC community is staying healthy and occupied during these times. Looking forward to getting back to work with all of you in person someday soon.

BUILDING A MONOGRAPH*By David Rubenstein*

As a junior history major at Middlebury College in Vermont, I have a deep-seated interest in uncovering historical narratives. While the fields of historical and archaeological research are markedly different, they both aim to reveal the details of humanity's past. This similarity drove me to pursue an internship at

the Arctic Studies Center during the summer of 2020, where I assisted Dr. **William Fitzhugh** in compiling data from the *Gateways Project* for publication.

The information that I gathered primarily dealt with the archaeological findings on Petit Mécatina in Northeastern Québec. I was particularly struck by the willingness of Basque whalers and fishermen to work together at this site with Inuit people who had recently arrived from the North during the 16th and 17th centuries. From my perspective, this behavior demonstrated a remarkable cultural flexibility by both groups, who were quick to overcome their differences and accommodate aspects of a foreign culture. While I am still unsure of my final career, I deeply appreciate the experience and guidance that I received while working for Dr. Fitzhugh. The internship taught me skills that I will undoubtedly use in whatever career I pursue. I look forward someday visiting the sites I researched this past summer.

COMPILING DATA FOR THE DEER STONE PROJECT*By Morgan Taylor*

Mongolia always held a certain fascination for me. When I was very young and enamored with dinosaurs and all things prehistoric, I knew it as a good place for finding fossils. Then as I grew older, I learned of the Mongolian art of throat singing and became more interested in learning the culture of its people and even a little of their language. That was perhaps what drew me most strongly to pursue an internship working with Dr. **William Fitzhugh** of the Arctic Studies Center in

the spring and early summer of 2020. A senior English major at George Mason University at the time, I had an interest in exploring a career as an editor, and to me there was no better opportunity than this. I had been surprised to find that an organization specializing in Arctic cultures would include Mongolia on its radar, but as I quickly learned from Dr. Fitzhugh's work, there was a tangible link between a number of early Mongolian societies and more recent Arctic societies, one which was especially prominent in the deer stones that were being studied and documented.

Prior to the internship, I had had only a vague idea of what archaeological work entailed. I was highly impressed by the level of precision that went into the documentation of every excavated site and every collected artifact.

Pictures too were among the data I worked with, and it was fascinating to see glimpses of not only the archaeologists themselves in their element, but also the Mongolian landscape, its people, and its archaeological treasure trove. One truly special opportunity I had while working at the internship was the chance to assist with the annual Mongolian Conference, held at the Smithsonian in early February of that year. My eyes were opened to an entire world dedicated to the documentation and preservation of Mongolian history and culture, from its archaeological artifacts to its historical art and its long song tradition.

In all respects, I am immensely grateful for my experience, and especially to Dr. Fitzhugh and Ms. **Shorey** for giving me the opportunity to begin with. I learned so much in such a brief period of time. My interest in Mongolia remains, and is now perhaps stronger than ever. Mongolian is now cemented as one of three languages I want to learn in the future, and, though for most of my life I had not seriously considered travelling, I would love to one day visit the land under the Eternal Blue Sky.

“MORE THAN MEETS THE EYE”

By Charlotte Bodenhausen

When I spent a summer at the Smithsonian Museum of Natural History, I was a rising senior in high school. I was about to begin a year filled with applying to college, which meant that I was coming to the point in my life

where I was expected to know what I wanted to do. This presented a problem for me because I have always seen myself following a multitude of career paths. I didn't know how I was ever going to be able to choose just one. With this looming over me, I arrived at the Arctic Studies Center.

When I arrived, I began working with Dr. **William Fitzhugh**. His extensive research has resulted in lots of collections from his trips to the Arctic. Most of these have found a home in the large floor to ceiling cabinets lining the hallways, called quarter-units. My job, along with another intern, was to get a feel for where everything was, and then find things that had missed being returned to Canada. For me, this task provided an opportunity to see what types of artifacts and samples

got collected. I got to look at soapstone lamps, Ramah Chert flakes, lumps of charcoal, soil samples, and bags and bags of animal bones.



I also spent time with Dr. **Igor Krupnik**, who had accumulated a similar volume of information but of a different kind—paper. Dr. Krupnik has written many books over the years

and keeps both digital and paper copies of all drafts, correspondence, and reviews. I organized some of the files in reverse chronological order and then arranged them into bins to be placed in his quarter-units. This task showed me what day to day work at the museum was like. The papers were a large part of the job. Being in a museum is of course all about the artifacts and the expeditions, but it also has a more public-facing side—using the collections and information to create exhibits, something to be shared with everyone.

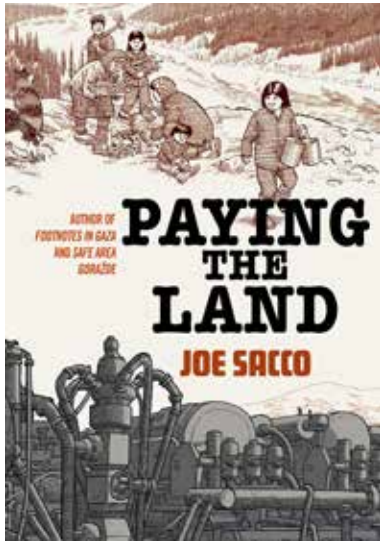
When my ten weeks came to a close, I was of course sad to be leaving but, I was also anxious to start my senior year because I finally had a sense of what I wanted to do. Over that summer, I had learned that there was so much more to a museum than meets the eye. The exhibits are truly just the tip of the iceberg; there are so many incredible things going on behind the scenes and so many incredible people like Dr. Fitzhugh, Dr. Krupnik, Dr. **Loring**, and Ms. **Shorey**, making it all possible. This year I am a freshman at college majoring in history. One day I hope to do something in a museum and help bring stories and information to the public. And wherever I end up, I know that the skills and insights learned that summer will be invaluable.

BOOK REVIEWS

PAYING THE LAND, BY JOE SACCO

Metropolitan Books/Henry Holt and Associates,
2020, 264 pp.

Reviewed by John Cloud



Joe Sacco draws “graphic novels” but none of them are fictional. He has made a career of going to difficult places—Bosnia during and after bloody wars there, Israeli-occupied Palestine—to illuminate the lives of people living through it all. In his most recent project, he spent years travelling through the vast area of the Canadian Northwest Territories

(NWT). His guide and expeditor was a non-indigenous woman, **Shauna Morgan**. How could that be? Ms. Morgan is not Dene, a speaker of a great branch of the Athabaskan language family, but she is a member of the City Council of Yellowknife, capitol of the NWT. NWT has an area larger than France and Spain combined, but a human population of less than 45,000 people. But at any given moment, between a third and a half of the territories’ humans are in Yellowknife, the seat of power and money, of courts and medical care, of jails and schools, multi-national energy companies, big box stores, snowmobile dealers, smoke shops and liquor stores—the fabric of modern Canadian life.

The original project of Mr. Sacco and Ms. Morgan was the story of NWT Dene First Nations and the histories of “resource extraction” that have driven life in the territories for centuries now—furs and meat and fish, later mining gold, diamonds, uranium, and still later, oil and gas extracted by fracking. The major process was talking, over cups of tea, with women and men who are truly Elders in their First Nations’ communities. But their stories ranged back in time to their childhoods, and the stories their grandparents told them, and the histories of treaties made—and broken—that go back to the foundations of what is now “Canada”.

Sacco has an incredibly detailed graphics style, like an **R. Crumb** who has spent his life in the struggling and

developing world. A single page might show an Elder as she or he is now, and with images from photographs of the same person half a century ago when she or he was a developing young indigenous radical, and vignettes from the childhood of the same person. The history of resource extractions is there, but as the book develops, an overwhelming theme is the horrors of the Canadian system of residential schools, in which entire generations of Dene children were taken from their parents and sent away to government supported schools run by Christian religious orders. Their explicit purpose was to strip away indigenous culture and language from the children, generally accompanied by horrendous physical and sexual abuse. Their stories are harrowing, but true.

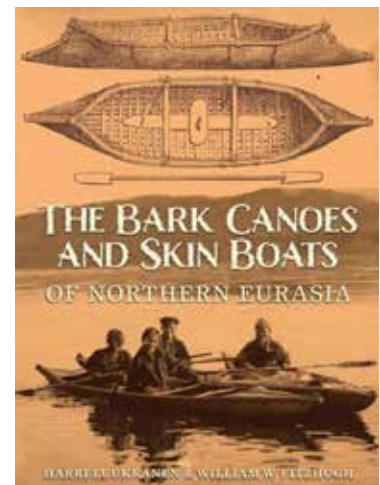
Nevertheless, Sacco has made a celebrated career out of going to difficult places and finding the good there, where it can be found. There are many remembrances of the quiet joys of summer life in fish camps, and the awesome responsibilities attendant on Dene people, who don’t believe they own the land but that the land owns them. One comes away from *Paying the Land* knowing a good deal more about NWT than one ever expected to learn, the hallmark of the best books.

THE BARK AND SKIN BOATS OF NORTHERN EURASIA, BY HARRI LUUKKANEN AND WILLIAM W. FITZHUGH, WITH CONTRIBUTIONS BY EVGUENIA ANICHTCHENKO

Smithsonian Books 2020, 276 pp.

Reflections by William W. Fitzhugh

Finally, the day came—15 September 2020—when our decade-long study of indigenous Eurasian boats saw the light of day! The ‘canoe book’ has been a 15-year epic of research, writing, illustrating, and publishing and for me, it was like completing three PhDs. For my colleague **Harri Luukkanen**, it has also been his longest research and publication journey, and even when most of the research and initial drafting had been completed,



we both endured multiple rounds of editing with three different editors before the manuscript was finally ready for press. **Evguenia Anichtchenko** assisted at many points along this journey, helping select illustrations, photographing boats and models in Russia, translating Russian literature, and writing a final chapter that carried the story into Alaska.

Throughout the project we had great support from **Carolyn Gleason** who saw the import of the work for “completing the circle” that began with the Smithsonian’s publication of *The Bark and Skin Boats of North America* by **Edwin Tappan Adney** and Smithsonian curator **Howard I. Chapelle**, in 1964. If truth be told, their publication odyssey was far longer than ours, at least for Adney, who spent much of this life with canoes and their American Indian makers, interviewing them, documenting their work in photographs and elegant line drawings, and preparing text for a monograph he never was able to complete. That task fell to **Howard Adney**, who assembled the pieces, wrote up what Adney had not finished, and completed the corpus for publication. Since 1964, their book has never been out of print—probably the longest run for any Smithsonian publication and the darling of sportsmen, small boat enthusiasts, and replica-builders.

Not being naval-scale architects and draftsmen, and not building on a lifetime of ethnographic and museum field studies, Harri and I could not create an ‘Adney and Chapelle’ for northern Eurasia; but we were able to create a parallel, if not a proper sequel. Our work has a more historical dimension since it is based largely on published sources, as well as—to a far more limited extent than we originally anticipated—archaeological information. For once you leave the well-documented and archaeologically explored field of European nautical archaeology and plank boats of the past 3,000 years for the history of indigenous crafts, you encounter Mother Nature’s penchant for re-cycling. Archaeological petroglyphs can take you back 6–8,000 years on the rocks of northern Eurasia, but physical remains are rare for bark and skin boats that were the stock-in-trade for the small-scale societies of this region. Only a few finds of paddles exist, because they are more easily recognized. Otherwise, remains of boats are truly ephemeral. Their skin covers may last only decades, and their light wooden frameworks, when they survive to be exposed by shovels and plows, are misidentified as birch logs or twigs. Few have ever been excavated scientifically, and the few remains that have been documented—barely more than a thousand years old—are little more than scraps that tell little about the original craft. The appearance of metal tools like axes and planes, and metal nails, resulted in the rapid spread of sturdier plank boats, and these craft quickly replaced bark and

skin boats, spreading first from Europe across Asia to the Far East and Bering Strait. Skin boats persisted only in Arctic regions because of their advantages in ice-infested waters, while bark canoes persisted hundreds of years longer—even into the 20th century—in the Far East, where rural, river-based hunting and fishing was not commercialized.

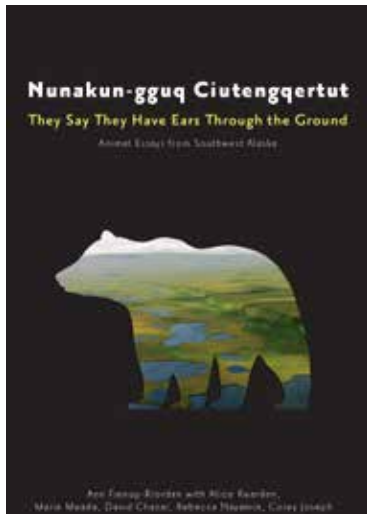
Having produced this book by digging into all the available written and museum resources, we readily acknowledge its deficiencies. You are not going to build yourself an historically accurate replica of a Ket Yenisei birchbark canoe or a Chukchi kayak with our book, and you will not be able to trace back the origin of the canoes or kayaks to their origins in the late Paleolithic. Even kayak origins are completely mysterious. We could not answer definitively whether skin boats had a parallel life alongside massive dugout canoes (or were they skin boats?) seen in the White Sea petroglyphs. There is still controversy over whether those rock art images are dugouts or skin boats. Was there a deep history of skin boat use by peoples of the Okhotsk Sea, stretching north from Japan to Bering Strait? We are not sure, although we believe it likely. We also know that many, many boats and boat remains eluded our search in small Russian and Far East museums where language barriers and internet access blocked us. We also know that much of the history of bark and skin boats still awaits chance discovery in bogs, lake bottoms, and other preserving environments. That is work for another and future day. But if we are lucky, our Eurasia ‘boat atlas’ may stimulate interest and new research that will eventually help answer the questions of a deeper history.

NEW PUBLICATIONS FROM CALISTA EDUCATION AND CULTURE

Reviewed by Ann Fienup-Riordan

Although CEC’s work with elders ground to halt during 2020, we used our time to put the finishing touches on three books, two now in print and the other on the way.

Our first book is *Nunakun-gguq Ciutengqertut/They Say They Have Ears Through the Ground: Animal Essays from Southwest Alaska* by **Ann Fienup-Riordan** with **Alice Rearden, Marie Meade, David Chanar, Rebecca Nayamin, and Corey Joseph**, published by University of Alaska Press. In southwest Alaska, Yup’ik people believe that all animals, even tiny insects, possess minds. Animals are not viewed as resources but as co-inhabitants of a sentient world and as nonhuman persons responsive to thoughts, words and deeds. These essays—based on information shared over twenty years at community meetings and regional gatherings with elders—focus on some of the



most important species (including moose, bears, seals, salmon, and birds) and how relations with these species have both changed and remained the same over the past two decades. In a place where hunting and fishing are still part of day-to-day life, these views of animals remain very much in action. Hunters are advised that if they are overconfident and brag, they will not catch; animals will hear them and they will get nothing. Conversely, what one gives away will be replaced. And if you are compassionate, others will wish for your future success.

Our second book, *Kusquqvagmiut Neqait/Fish and Food of the People of the Kuskokwim* by **Ann Fienup-Riordan, Alice Rearden, and Marie Meade**, was published by the Alaska Native Language Center. Based on conversations with Yup'ik men and women living in the Kuskokwim River communities of Napaskiak, Napakiak, and Oscarville, this bilingual book details traditional knowledge surrounding the harvest and use of the six species of whitefish, as well as salmon, pike, burbot, and blackfish, on which people relied so heavily in the past and continue to harvest to this day. For Kuskokwim residents, successful harvesting of fish requires practical skills, including knowledge of fish migrations, when and where to set nets, and how deep to set them. Men and women must also act appropriately, both in the village and in the wilderness, to ensure a successful harvest. Although much has changed in southwest Alaska over the years, this distinctly Yup'ik view of the world remains. Elders who we spoke with firmly believe that Yup'ik youth today--as well as non-Native fisheries managers--need to understand these essential truths.

Our third book, *Yungcautnguug Nunam Qaingam Tamarmi/All the Land's Surface is Medicine: Edible and Medicinal Plants of Southwest Alaska*, by **Ann Fienup-Riordan, Alice Rearden, Marie Meade,**

Kevin Jernigan, and Jacqueline Cleveland will be published this spring by University of Alaska Press. Close to one hundred men and women from all over southwest Alaska shared knowledge of their homeland and the plants that grow there. They speak eloquently about time spent gathering and storing plants and plant material during snow-free months, including gathering greens during spring, picking berries each summer, harvesting tubers from the caches of tundra voles, and gathering a variety of medicinal plants. The book is intended as a guide to the identification and use of edible and medicinal plants in southwest Alaska, but also as an enduring record of what Yup'ik men and women know and value about plants and the roles plants continue to play in Yup'ik lives.

PRIKLADNAYA ETNOLOGIJA CHUKOTKI (APPLIED ETHNOLOGY IN CHUKOTKA: INDIGENOUS KNOWLEDGE, MUSEUMS, COMMUNITY HERITAGE), BY OKSANA KOLOMIETS AND IGOR KRUPNIK, EDS.

Press Pass, Moscow and Anadyr, 2020

Reviewed by Igor Krupnik

This 470-page Russian collection celebrates a rare anniversary. In spring 1895, 125 years prior to its publication, a small crew led by the newly appointed 'chief' of the Anadyrskii district in northernmost Siberia, **Nikolai L. Gondatti** (1860–1946) started from the village of Markovo on the Anadyr River towards the Bering Strait. Gondatti, an educated colonial administrator and the former Secretary of the Russian Society of Lovers of Natural Science, Anthropology, and Ethnography in Moscow, was keen to explore his immense new domain and its Native residents. He made it all the way to Uelen on the Chukchi Sea shore (and back to Markovo eight months later), while

meticulously recording local population sites, economic production, cultural features, languages spoken in each village, and other notable details. This journey, the editors believe, was the beginning of the *scientific* investigation of Indigenous people of Chukotka, five years prior to **Waldemar Bogoras**' work in the same area for the Jesup North Pacific Expedition.

One hundred and twenty-five years later an international group of 18 contributors from Russia, U.S., and Denmark decided to return Gondatti's name back to where his scholarly and administrative career had started, by publishing a collection of 23 papers dedicated to his legacy. These papers evaluate his contribution to applied ethnographic research in the North and his impact on modern studies of Chukotka Indigenous people. The volume is a joint publication of two area research institutions, the History Lab of the North-Eastern Interdisciplinary Research Institute (SVKNII) and the "Chukotka Heritage" Museum, both located in Anadyr, as well as of a diverse group of outside contributors from Moscow, St. Petersburg, Provideniya, Copenhagen, and Washington, DC. All volume authors—anthropologists, historians, linguists, educators, museum educators, and heritage professionals, including a strong contingent of area's Indigenous researchers—have deep connections to Chukotka and are passionate about its history, local cultures, and languages.

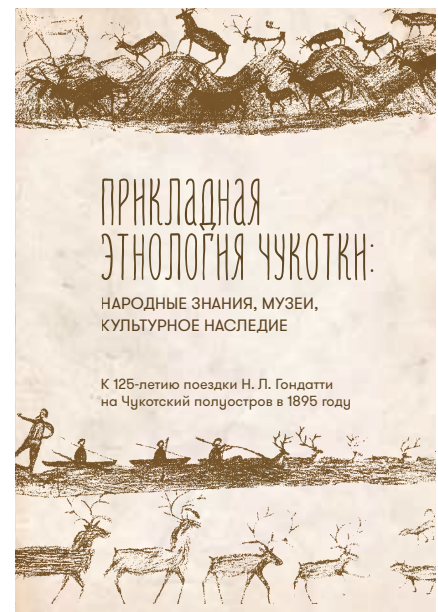
Gondatti should be justly credited as one of the pioneers who introduced 'applied' research in Chukotka in the 1890s. He was a meticulous student of Native life that he observed in the field and documented from people's memories and oral history. During his 1895 trip, he covered almost 3,500 km (1800 miles) traveling by dogsled, small boat, and steamer. The full story of his trip and its key scholarly outcomes are, for the first time, evaluated in the book's introduction by volume editors, **Igor Krupnik** and **Oksana Kolomiets**. By selecting Gondatti as the book's main 'hero,' the authors cover the fields that were key to his professional interests and legacy. Prime among them were Indigenous economies, traditional ecological knowledge, demography, and cultural history (seven papers in Part 1). Besides his administrative and research duties, Gondatti was also a trained museum collector as well as a thoughtful and committed documentor, as revealed in Part 2 (three papers) dedicated to contemporary Chukotka museum and collection resources and Gondatti's personal archival records, including unpublished diaries from his sojourns in Chukotka in 1896–1897.

The book also credits Gondatti as a pioneer of 'local-scale' (community-focused) research in aboriginal histories and local cultures in Chukotka. Part 3 (six papers) explores histories of specific Chukotkan

communities, such as Markovo, Uelen, Dezhnev, several once populated sites around Cape Dezhnev (East Cape) and Provideniya Bay. The book concludes with four short essays dedicated to the renown Chukotka 'heritage keepers'—Yupik educator and activist **Lyudmila Ainana (Aynganga)**, Chukchi writer **Valentina Itevtgina (Vek'et)**, the late **Michael Krauss** (1934–2019) who was the leading expert on aboriginal languages of Alaska and Chukotka, and Russian Yupik linguist, **Ekaterina Rubtsova** (1888–1970).

The volume published in Moscow in 300 copies features almost 200 historical and modern photographs and an extensive list of sources in chapter bibliographies.

It presents a useful collection of research, museum, and documentary resources for ethnologists, historians, preservation specialists, and Native heritage workers, as well as the wider ground of those interested in history, cultures, and contemporary life of Chukotka Indigenous people.



WHALE SNOW. IÑUPIAT, CLIMATE CHANGE AND MULTISPECIES RESILIENCE IN ARCTIC ALASKA, BY CHIE SAKAKIBARA

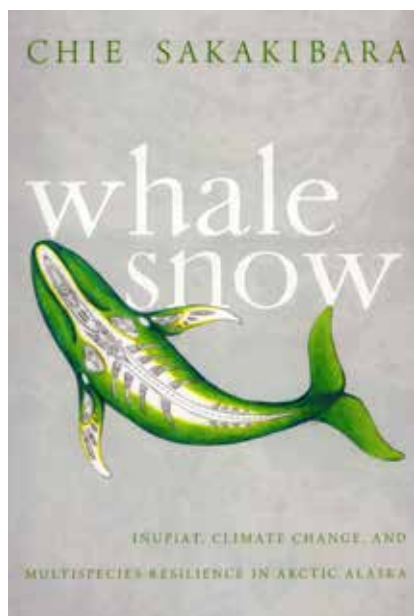
The University of Arizona Press, Tucson, 2020

Reviewed by Igor Krupnik

This moving book written by geographer-turned-anthropologist **Chie Sakakibara** from Oberlin College and illustrated by Iñupiaq educator and artist **Nasugraq Rainey Hopson** is a must-read addition to an extensive set of studies on the North Alaskan Iñupiat people and their whaling culture. The main reason is that it is a different kind of book—personal, emotional, and very vibrant. It is filled with stories about individual men, women, and youth from North Alaska, with whom the author built personal connections over years of her Alaskan fieldwork. Though based partly on Sakakibara's doctoral thesis she defended at the University of

Oklahoma (OU) in 2007, it morphs into a multi-layered narrative that combines history, contemporary anthropology, environmental science, dance and music, but first and foremost portraits and voices of Iñupiaq families, whaling crews, elders, knowledge experts, and environmental activists, primarily from Utqiagvik (Barrow) and Tikigaq (Point Hope).

The book's poetic title, *Whale Snow* came from an earlier children's book with a similar title, *Uqsruagnaq|Whale Snow* (2004) written by a whaler's wife and the former president of the North Slope Borough School Board **Debby Dahl Edwason**. Yet its constituent five chapters tell very serious stories



about various challenges that the Iñupiat whalers and communities face in today's world: supporting their economy and lifestyle ("Into the Whaling Cycle"); rapid climate change ("Our *Sila* Is Changing"); self-government and indigenous empowerment following Alaska Native Land Settlement Claims (ANCSA) and protracted negotiations regarding

whaling catch quotas ("The New Harpoon"); threats to Indigenous cultural heritage and home landscapes ("Our Home Is Drowning"); and the fundamental, if intricate, role that whaling continues to play in maintaining Iñupiat identity and cultural strength ("No Whale, No Music"). The book is illustrated with over 40 contemporary photos of whale hunting, daily family life, festivities, and other public events taken by the author and by **Bill Hess**, also by posters, pencil drawings, and Iñupiaq school materials.

Two features make this book special and useful to scholars and popular readers alike. First, Sakakibara has a detailed and intimate knowledge of today's North Alaskan whaling culture, which is uncommon for a visiting anthropologist. She succeeded not only in getting close to some very knowledgeable Elders (what many anthropologists do), including powerful senior women and men, but she also built strong relations to several Iñupiat extended families and whaling crews.

The Acknowledgments section in the book runs for 11 pages and contains literally dozens of names, including those who became Sakakibara's kin in two extended families that adopted her and let her hunt with them over several seasons. Second, the book is rich with data and personal narratives from two North Alaskan Iñupiaq communities—Utqiagvik (Barrow) and Tikigaq (Point Hope), with their distinctive histories and whaling traditions. Prior scholars usually focused on either the former (**Robert Spencer, Barbara Bodenhorn, Ann Jensen**) or the latter (**Froelich Rainey, Tiger Burch, John Bockstoe, Tom Lowenstein**), since it takes substantial effort to get versed in community's intricate social network and gain acceptance into it.

Sakakibara's new book weaves her many experiences into a powerful narrative. Yes, rapid climate change is happening in North Alaska, and it poses new challenges to both the bowhead whales and the people who live with them by *hunting* them. Nonetheless, the Iñupiat face the future by being strong, confident, and proud of their culture and of their deep connections to the Whale built by the generations of their ancestors. They survived epidemics, missionaries, traders, zealous government teachers and administrators very much like the Whale survived the assault of commercial whalers. People's strength is tied to their unbroken link to the sustainability of the Whale and, as Sakakibara argues, together they are certain to endure.

ART AS A MIRROR OF SCIENCE—THE MUSEUM CERNY INUIT COLLECTION, EDITED BY MARTHA AND PETER CERNY

Stämpfli AG. Bern. 2020

Reviewed by Igor Krupnik

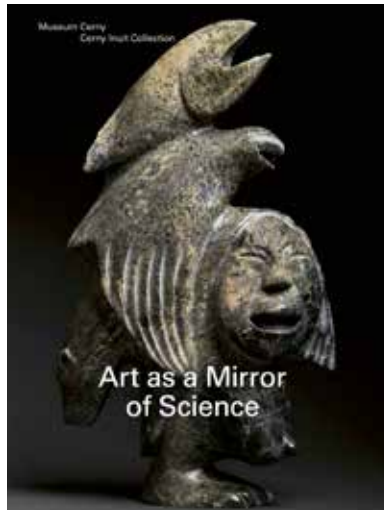
Museum Cerny (formerly *Cerny Inuit Collection*) in Bern, Switzerland has long been on the ASC contact and travel map. It is a private museum of the Arctic, primarily of Inuit art, located in the heart of Europe where one could hardly expect to find a first-class collection of modern Inuit artworks by renowned Indigenous artists from Canada and Greenland and now expanding into the Russian Arctic. We keep crossing with its Arctic displays run by its cheerful owner, **Martha Cerny**, at various Arctic meetings; in 2018, I had a chance to visit the museum in Bern and enjoyed touring its public space and collections (*ASC Newsletter* 2019).

In 2020, Museum Cerny, established by the collector-couple, Martha and **Peter Cerny**, published its second illustrated 104-page thematic catalog. This volume is focused on the ways Indigenous artists reflect on

their vision and knowledge of the Arctic lands, sea, animals, spirits, and rapid changes brought to the region by the global warming. The catalog is filled with beautiful photographs of art pieces from Arctic Canada, Greenland, Alaska, and Northern Russia taken by photographer **Severin Nowacki**, but it also contains several short essays that help put Indigenous Arctic art into a more scholarly context reminiscent of several catalogs produced for ASC exhibits. Begun in the early 1990s as a private collection of ca. 140 Inuit artworks from the Eastern Canadian Arctic, the Cerny collection has grown to more than 1400 objects. As it became circumpolar, thus more diverse over the past years, it enabled Museum Cerny to produce several thematic displays and travelling exhibits and to bring Indigenous art into the context of today's global issues, such as climate change, the future of the Arctic, and how art and science may jointly address it.

Besides Martha and Peter Cerny, the catalog contains familiar names of other partners and friends to the ASC. **Michael Bronshtein** from the Russian Museum of Oriental Art in Moscow explores in his essay how Indigenous art in Chukotka from ancient OBS (Old Bering Sea) and Punuk time to modern days reflects

people's relations to the changing natural world. **Yvon Csonka**, who hosted a panel at the 18th Inuit Studies Conference we organized in D.C. in 2012, addresses rapid climate change impact on other critical challenges that Arctic people—and their art—face today. Glaciologist **Konrad (Konnie) Steffen**, who tragically died last year on the Greenland icesheet, reviews scientific evidence of the dangerously accelerating Arctic meltdown that threatens ecosystems, animals, and people's sustenance in the North. **Martin Schultz**, now the Museum Cerny curator and my partner on the study of the "Vega" expedition ethnographic collection in Stockholm (see *ASC Newsletter 2020*), considers how Indigenous art serves as a window to Arctic history and to the history of Arctic museum collecting in particular. **Theresie Tungilik**, an artist from Rankin Inlet, Nunavut, also art advisor to the Government of Nunavut, offers an Inuit vision to how climate change is affecting Inuit livelihood and arts. **Thomas Stocker**, climate and environmental physicist at the University

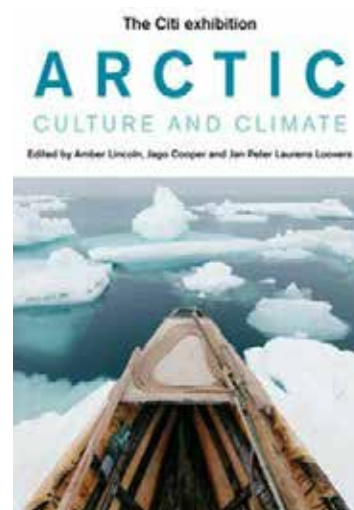


of Bern reviews actions and decisions needed to constructively address the new challenge of global Corona virus pandemic. This gamut of perspectives interspersed with beautiful photos of Indigenous artworks produces a powerful message: the Arctic climate is changing, and so are people's lives (and art), but the Arctic will endure—not the least because of the strength and creativity of its people. We salute Museum Cerny on putting this beautiful and thought-provoking catalog into the world.

ARCTIC CULTURE AND CLIMATE, EDITED BY AMBER LINCOLN, JAGO COOPER, AND JAN PETER LAURENS LOOVERS

Thames and Hudson and The British Museum, 2020

Reviewed by William W. Fitzhugh



An important exhibition at The British Museum opened in October, 2020, in the midst of the Coronavirus epidemic and closed five months later in February, 2021. For most of that time the museum was closed to visitors, its halls silent except for essential workers. The exhibit, full of wonders from the BM and other institutions, was in its own kind of deep freeze, and schedules

did not allow it to be extended to be available when the doors may open again, hopefully this spring.

What we have instead is the exhibition catalog—and a marvelous one at that! The editors and exhibition producers, conservators, designers, and authors have created a beautiful book that will do well to record the exhibition that few could see. Our *ASC Newsletter* production schedule does not permit the full review this book deserves. It is full of wonderful images and fine texts by noted scholars. The broad synthesis casts a sweeping net centering the circumpolar environment, the changing Arctic, and the cultures and peoples who have lived there for more than 30,000 years. Subsistence, climate, archaeology, history, art, and contemporary times and themes are woven into a panoramic view documented in essays and shorter pieces by scholars and Indigenous experts. While we lament the circumstance requiring the exhibit, like us,

to ‘socially isolate’, you will enjoy a publication that celebrates the Arctic, marking a time of momentous change. While looking back, around, and within, this book also leads us toward a new and exciting Arctic Future.

TIBETAN SILVER: GOLD AND BRONZE OBJECTS AND THE AESTHETICS OF ANIMALS IN THE ERA BEFORE EMPIRE, BY JOHN VINCENT BELLEZZA

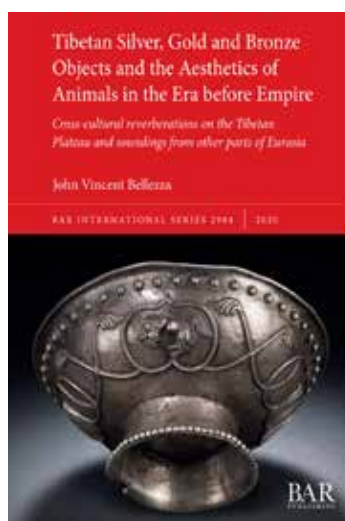
Bar publishing, 169 pp., 2020

Reviewed by William W. Fitzhugh

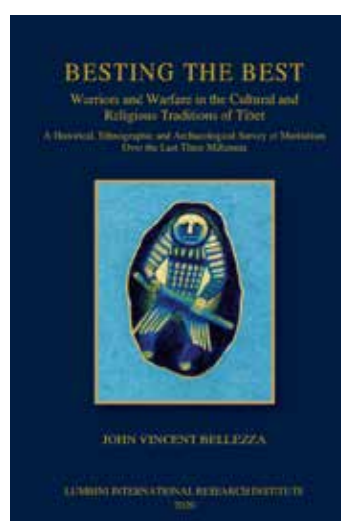
Earlier this year I asked **John Bellezza** to write a short piece on his historical and archaeological work in the Upper Tibetan Plateau. He began with the obvious question: “Why the topic of Tibet in a newsletter devoted to Arctic studies?”

Flip back a few pages and you can read his answer. His question reminded me of one I asked twenty years ago about Mongolia and the Arctic after first seeing Mongolia’s Bronze Age deer stones. My answer became the first chapter in a book (Fitzhugh et al. 2005). Mongolia’s Bronze Age deer stones and Early Eskimo art display similar beliefs and iconography about spirit transformation also found in Eurasian Animal Style (EAS) art of roughly the same or slightly later period: masking, multi-iconic forms, spirit-transformation, predator-prey symbolism, and shamanic ritual. Tibet’s links with Mongolia and northern Eurasia are not based just on geography and climate; they are also linked by Bronze Age ties to EAS art and burial ritual. Like Bellezza’s other books, *Tibetan Silver and Besting* are packed with literary, linguistic, historical, and philosophical discussion. I confine my comments to parts of each dealing with northern connections.

Tibetan Silver documents hundreds of animal figures seen in silver and gold objects (bowls, plaques, votive figures, and others) and in rock art. One day perhaps archaeological finds will allow inclusion of data from Tibetan perishables from dry caves or permafrost. Even so, it is difficult to move from gold and silver



objects (many from the private collection of **Jeremy Pine**) or bronze castings to rock art: the former from elite craftsperson and latter produced by hunters and herders and have suffered ravages of the elements that make interpretation of their form somewhat subjective. Bellezza is not insensitive to issues of looting, trafficking, private collecting, and museum acquisition that attend his objects. He draws on a wide variety of literature to support his thesis that pre-empire Tibet was not a geographically isolated cultural entity. Tibetan history and culture has always been open to trade and external connections, receptive to new styles, materials, inventions, especially so during its pre-empire history. His voluminous, highly documented, referenced, and



foot-noted study shows Tibet participated in and in some cases probably influenced, the cultural life of northern neighbors. But the stronger influence was from northern-derived EAS at least until the middle of the Iron Age when Tibetan insularity began, perhaps hastened by herding decline and cooling climate. It is reasonable that assimilation of northern ideas not cultural or demographic

replacement dominated culture change in the BCE era. Of particular interest to me was the existence of animal-themed trapezoidal openwork bronze plaques dating ca. 5th century BCE, reminiscent of shield-like ornaments on Mongolian deer stones. This volume represents a major step forward in studies of EAS art and its regional expression in Inner Asia and northern China.

BESTING THE BEST: WARRIORS AND WARFARE IN THE CULTURAL AND RELIGIOUS TRADITIONS OF TIBET, BY JOHN VINCENT BELLEZZA

Lumbini International Research Institute, Lumbini 2020

Reviewed by William W. Fitzhugh

Whereas *Tibetan Silver* by **John Bellezza** investigates Tibetan culture and belief through the lens of animal art, *Besting the Best* reconstructs Tibetan history from the pragmatics of politics and power, drawing on ancient traditions, religious literature, performance art, martial tradition, and material culture. Archaeological and rock

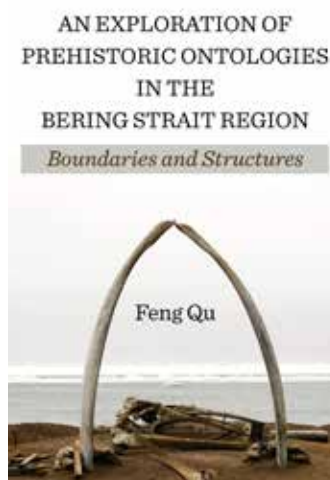
art evidence is used in the second half of the book to illustrate weapons, technology, and martial imagery in vessels and rock art. Disquisition on theories of war and archaeological seriation provide anthropological context for a work that is deeply invested in knowledge of Tibetan, Lamaist, and Buddhist thought, mythology, ritual, and literature. Too little is known of Tibetan archaeology (other than Aldenderfer research) to gain much understanding yet of northern connections other than EAS art. However, during the Bronze and Early Iron Age a megalithic complex called the ‘Long Stone Grid’ necropolis appears, known only from surface features and rare isolated finds and ¹⁴C dates. Its tall, square-walled tombs are flanked to the east with parallel lines of hundreds of unmarked vertical slabs. These structures bear no specific resemblance to the mound burial traditions of Inner Asia and Xinjiang but do remind one of 7th-8th century Turkic bal-bal memorial structures with square boxes, human figures, and lines of stone slabs. If ritual sites display few signs of northern connection, this is not the case with military hardware like horse gear, bows, arrows, and spears—all similar to Inner Asian forms. The other northern connection is found in rock art, for which Bellezza provides a fine sampling showing weapons, dress (including ‘mushroom’ headdress figures and bi-triangular bodies), chariots, combat scenes, and the central role of horses. Most of these images date to the Bronze and Iron Age. *Besting the Best* is a cornucopia of knowledge and together with its companion volume provide readers with an incomparable treasury of knowledge about a place still largely unknown to archaeology.

AN EXPLORATION OF PREHISTORIC ONTOLOGIES IN THE BERING STRAIT REGION, BY FENG QU

Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2021. 229 pp.

Previewed by William W. Fitzhugh

This book is a revision of the author’s PhD thesis at the University of Alaska investigating the arts, symbolism, and underlying religious and ritual frameworks of Bering Strait Eskimo cultures of the past 2000 years, drawing on archaeological and ethnographic data, and anthropological and social science theory. Available later in 2021.



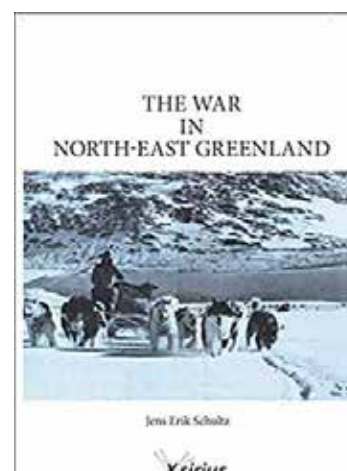
BOOKS ON NORTHEAST GREENLAND

Reviewed by William Fitzhugh

THE WAR IN NORTH-EAST GREENLAND, BY JENS ERIK SCHULTZ. 103 p. Xsirius Books. 2020. Rønde, Denmark. ISBN 978-87-994555-3-9.

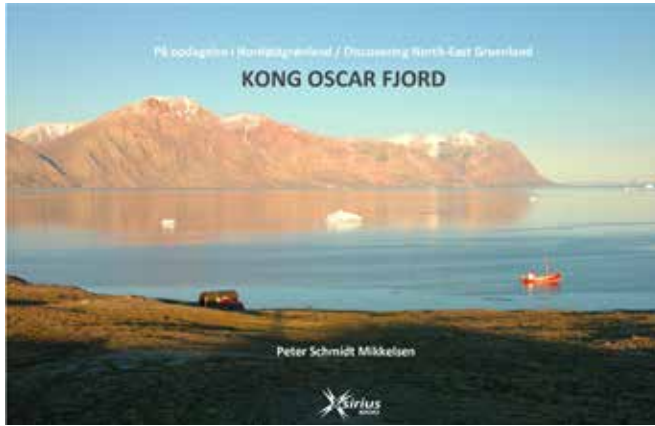
KONG OSCAR FJORD: PÅ PODAGELSE I NORDØSTGRØNLAND / DISCOVERING NORTH-EAST GREENLAND, by Peter Schmidt Mikkelsen. 151 p. Xsirius Books. 2020. Rønde, Denmark. In Danish and English. ISBN 978-87-994555-5-3. www.xsirius.dk

During a memorable cruise around Greenland several years ago I had the pleasure of meeting Peter Mikkelsen and learning about his experience as a member of the Danish North-East Greenland Sirius Sledge Patrol in 1977-79. Before reading Schultz’ *The War in North-East Greenland* I was familiar only with 20th century events from the 2005 biography of



Willie Knutsen, *Arctic Sun on My Path: The True Story of America's Last Great Polar Explorer*, written by his son, Will C. Knutsen, describing Willie’s attack on German weather stations by US Navy-recruited Boston fishermen. Unlike Knutsen’s American vantage point, Schultz describes the Germans’ repeated attempts—with some success—to install meteorological stations documented in German and American war archives for 1942-44. The main character in the story is Hermann Ritter, whose pacifist leanings caused him to make a futile attempt to avoid WWII by becoming a fur trapper in Svalbard and Northeast Greenland. Nevertheless, he ended up being put in charge the German ‘invasion’ of East Greenland in 1943. The conflict between Ritter’s personal views and his military duties becomes a major theme in the story of how war was conducted by ‘good’ and ‘bad’ individuals in a vast, remote, winterized land. Schultz’ personal knowledge of Northeast Greenland and his acquaintance with key players adds depth to the account. The book has some issues with English translation and storyline but is packed full of photos, illustrations of war records, letters, and maps. As far we can tell, there is no connection between the Eli Knutsen who was murdered by one of the German Nazis and the American Willie Knutsen who helped destroy the

Germans' first attempt to establish a weather station in southeast Greenland, other than their same (common) last names.



Kong Oscar Fjord is a very different production whose large format, coffee-table format introduces Northeast Greenland through Mikkelsen's personal travel, photographs, maps, and memories. Part diary, part gazetteer, and part historical atlas, the book is based on Mikkelsen's three years on the Sirius Sledge Patrol and subsequent visits over forty years. The story unrolls from place to place, documenting spectacular vistas, landforms, historical sites, and modern settlements. One of my favorite mini-chapters, "Nyhavn," includes Mikkelsen's 2007 photo of "Washburn House," which is seen strapped to the ground by heavy steel cables to avoid being blown away in violent storms. This house is where the American geologist A. Lincoln Washburn lived with his family studying "floating soil" and permafrost while on the Boyd Expedition of 1955 (see Morse-Washburn story in this NL). The book includes a brief history of Northeast Greenland, the geography of the King Oscar Fjord region, photo-essays on fjord locations, with special attention to historical sites like old Norwegian trapper huts of the 1920-30s, and the Sirius patrols cabins of the 1950s. This book is a photo-journal complement to Mikkelsen's more scholarly works on Northeast Greenland: *One Thousand Days with Sirius* (2005) and *North-East Greenland 1908-60: The Trapper Era* (2008).

TRANSITIONS

DR. STANISLAV CHLÁDEK (1937–2020): A BRIGHT-EYED MARINER

By Stephen Loring

"Believe me, my young friend, there is nothing—absolutely nothing—half so much worth doing as simply messing about in boats."

Water Rat's sage advice to Mole in **Kenneth Grahame's** *The Wind in The Willows* plays as a leitmotif of sorts for those of us in collections management catering over the years to the whims and inquiries of an eccentric—but passionately inspired—cadre of scholars, students, researchers,



technicians, artisans, paddlers, and river rats drawn to the Museum by the legacy of ancient canoes, umiaks, and kayaks sequestered in dark halls in defiance of the passage of time. I remember my own youthful wanderings in the attic of the Natural History Museum (NMNH), stumbling upon the "boat room" where birch-bark canoes and brittle Alaskan kayaks lounged in dust and obscurity. The dimly lit place had about it the air of an undiscovered tomb, no doubt enhanced by the presence of a huge linen-wrapped mummy of an ancient Egyptian bull that shared the attic eyrie. I remember it as a place that defied the logic of time and place and destiny, that of all their brethren—the thousands and thousands of their predecessors and kin—that these few watercraft should survive the depredations of neglect, the destruction of rapids, ice and storms—was something quite remarkable. Alas (maybe but not really) the otherworldly ambiance of the old "boat room" is no more. With renovations to the NMNH preceding the construction of the Ocean Hall, and with the building of the Museum Support Center, the old museum storage places in the attic have been emptied and the boat collection relocated to a state of the art conservation facility, each boat with its own custom-crafted aluminum cradle and brace.

Museum collection repositories attract all types of researchers, but boat people are a different sort all together. They have an attention to form and function that goes far beyond the measurements they take with calipers, tapes and cameras. Their thoughts seem attentive to different matters—resiliency, buoyancy, maneuverability, stability—to a reality far removed

from the pages of academic journals and books, they sense with a weather eye.

No one better epitomized this eccentric breed, nor brought a more finely honed appreciation of the museum's Aleutian collections, bidarkas included, than Dr. **Stanislav Chládek**, a singularly well informed, audacious, and indomitable sea-kayaker who passed away at his home in Colorado this past November. He was 83. A native of Czechoslovakia, Dr. Chládek conducted biochemical research at the Czechoslovak Academy of Science prior to moving to the United States in 1969 as a professor at Texas A&M University, and later as a researcher and a professor at the Michigan Cancer Foundation and Wayne State University.

A born adventurer and kayak enthusiast, Chládek was an accomplished whitewater racer, and with his wife **Emma** competed as part of the Czechoslovak National team. (One of their daughters—**Dana**—won the bronze medal in whitewater slalom in the 1992 Barcelona Olympics and the silver medal at the 1996 Atlanta Games.) As much a force of nature as a man, Chládek's enthusiasm for sea-kayaking took on ever increasing challenges with audacious-fearless trips to the North Sea, Antarctica, and the South Shetland Islands. In 1999 he and a companion became the first to circumnavigate Easter Island in the South Pacific in kayaks.

Beginning about twenty years ago, I along with my Anthropology Department colleagues **Bruno Frohlich** and **Dave Hunt**, began to entertain increasingly longer and more detailed telephone inquiries from Stan about all aspects of Aleutian (Unangan) history, culture, and archaeology. These conversations led to subsequent visits to the museum so that he could research and photograph the museum's singularly impressive Aleutian collections. Stan knew intuitively that the ancient Aleut were without doubt the most skillful and intrepid small boat watermen the world had ever known, as revealed by the practical aspects of their material culture—tools and clothing, bidarkas and paddles, as well as the sacred masks and mummies.

Stan's interest in the Aleutian collections was singularly informed by a series of boldaudacious sea-kayak expeditions he conducted to the eastern and central portion of the archipelago, including a trip to the Islands of the Four Mountains where he was able to visit and document the current conditions of some of the burial caves that had been previously collected—some would say looted—in 1936 by the Smithsonian's infamous "bone doctor," **Aleš Hrdlička**.

Stan's infatuation with the Aleutians, his explorations in museum archives and collections, as well as the encapsulation of his several kayak expeditions as told

in his 2016 publication *Po Stopách Lovců Velryb v Severním Pacifiku (In the footsteps of whalers in the North Pacific)*, published by **Pavel Mervart**: Červený Kostelec, Czech Republic, 2016), a stunningly beautiful book, sadly, for most of our readers only available in Czech. The volume revives discussions of Aleutian hunting prowess, mortuary practices, and shamanistic beliefs that are deeply informed by Chládek's immersive experiences in and about the 'birthplace of winds'.

I should mention as a quick aside that Stan's archaeological proclivities in extreme environments were not limited to northern seas. Working in close association with North and Central American archaeologists, Stan visited and photographed many of the ancient Mayan ritual caves in Mexico, Guatemala, and Belize which are documented in his *Exploring Maya Ritual Caves: Dark Secrets from the Maya Underworld* (AltaMira Press, 2011).

Stan was such a delight to talk with (true, exasperating some times) but his was a wonderful heart filled with unrestrained enthusiasm. I am sure Water Rat would agree. I find as we grow old(er) that for many of us life's dreams are exchanged for memories; Stan dreamed bigger than most, as are our memories of him. His wife Emma is fond of saying that life with him was not always easy, but it was never boring.

I thank **Emma Chládek** for assistance with biographical details.

REMEMBERING SELMA HUXLEY BARKHAM (1927–2020)

By Oriana and Serena Barkham

Published in *People*, 18 Jun, 2020 (edited and reprinted with permission)

Selma Huxley Barkham (March 8, 1927–May 3, 2020) was a historian and geographer of international standing in the fields of Basque and Canadian maritime history.

The yellow tent was up and straining on its guy ropes in the Labrador wind. The black flies were viciously biting. Rain poured down. They were cold and soaked to the bone. But Selma Huxley Barkham, with her two youngest children in tow, was ecstatically happy. She had found what she was looking



for: eroded pieces of red roofing tiles scattered on the shores, in vegetable patches and in gardens.

The locals of Red Bay, Labrador, called the red tile ‘red rock’, and some, as children, had used it to write on school slates. But Selma knew that the tiles had been brought in ships across the Atlantic from the Basque Country in the sixteenth century. On the way over to Terranova, the New Found Land, the tiles were used as ballast. On the return journey, the ships’ hulls were filled with barrels of whale oil, and sometimes with dried or green salted cod. The tiles were left in Terranova where they were used to construct roofs over shelters and the ovens where whalers rendered blubber into whale oil.

Selma’s excursion to Labrador in the summer of 1977, funded by the Royal Canadian Geographical Society, to identify Basque whaling sites in the 1500s and 1600s, was a great success. In each port she had so painstakingly identified as having been used by the Basques, she had found tiles. Years of interest, meticulous research, and grueling hours in archives had paid off. Selma had been told that most archives along the Spanish Basque coast had been burnt during the Napoleonic wars, but she soon discovered that for 400 years, *legajos* (books of notarial documents) from towns across the province of Gipuzkoa, had lain in the attics of the 1543 University of Oñati. Don **José María Aguirrebalzátegui**, one of the village priests, had rescued many over the years, filling three huge university rooms with *legajos*. Most of the documents had to do with local problems, but a few referred to The New Found Land, ‘*Terra Nova*’. When she presented her work to the Public Archives she was given contracts to collect and microfilm documents referring to Canada in archives throughout the Iberian Peninsula.

The information she gathered provided Selma with knowledge on individuals, families, homes, movements, ships, voyages, and towns along the Spanish Basque coast in the 16th and early 17th centuries. In parish records, Selma found records of births, deaths, marriages and baptisms. In insurance policies in Burgos, she found insurances of ships and their voyages; in notarial archives, she found contracts, wills (some written in ‘*Terra nova*’), powers of attorney, loans, donations, policies, proceedings, agreements. In lengthy lawsuits in other archives, she learned of disagreements between crew members, claims made by widows of fishermen who had died in ‘*Terra Nova*’, and ships that had sunk on the other side of the Atlantic.

Selma began to write articles on her discoveries. Given the breadth of her research, she wrote on various topics: women’s lives in the 16th century, merchants, trade routes, corsair activity, early Labrador ports,

toponymy, etc. In *People* magazine, in 1973, she wrote, “Mercantile community in inland Burgos.” v. 42(2): 106-113; in 1977, “First will and testament on the Labrador coast.” v. 49(9): 574-581.

The year after Selma’s 1977 excursion to Labrador, Parks Canada sent a team of underwater archaeologists to look at the places where she found ships had sunk in Chateau Bay, Red Bay, and other locations. Her research was so exact that a diver found one of the wrecks the first day of diving in Red Bay.

Selma’s research was groundbreaking in many ways. She received the gold medal from the *Royal Canadian Geographical Society* (1980), the first woman to receive this medal. Then followed the *Order of Canada* (1981), the *Lagun Onari* (2014) from the Basque Government, the *Order of Newfoundland and Labrador* (2015), various honorary doctorates, and the International Prize of the *Sociedad Geográfica Española* (2018), among other honors, for her exceptional work, which was described as ‘a classic piece of historical-geographical research’.

While the 16th and 17th centuries became alive for Selma because of her research, the present was also equally interesting to her. She started exchanges of Basques with Newfoundlanders, of Basques and Mi’kmaq, and groups of them began visiting each other’s countries. She worked up and down the coast of Labrador and Newfoundland with locals talking about their villages’ links with the Basques, about 16th century wills written on their shores, about contact between Basques and Inuit and Montagnais, and other First Nations, about shipwrecks. She helped them put up historical plaques in their villages. She organized conferences for eleven years on the Northern Peninsula of Newfoundland, bringing in experts in different fields to talk about local history, ecology, geology and cartography. She keenly felt her historical research could help the local economy—and it has. Historical tourism now brings many visitors to Newfoundland and Labrador because of her work. Red Bay is now a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

Selma Huxley Barkham’s work has been used by archivists, historians, cartographers, topographers, anthropologists, archaeologists, conservators, museographers, linguists, and more. Albaola is rebuilding the *San Juan*, which she located by piecing together information from documents from three different archives, and by working in different countries on early maps to find where the port of Buttus was, and then by looking at depths and prevailing winds to find where it had sunk. Selma’s work, her 50 publications in Spanish, English, French and Portuguese, her many lectures, and her generous sharing of her research, has

led to a wide variety of further work. Unfortunately, she has not always been duly credited.

Selma's work is seminal. As the citation for the gold medal of the Canadian Geographical Society states: 'This medal is an occasional award intended to recognize a particular achievement in the field of geography, also to recognize a significant national or international event. In this case, the Society felt Barkham deserved this recognition on both counts.

MEMORIES OF CHIAPAS AND ROBERT M. LAUGHLIN (1934–2020)

By John Cloud

I'm a relatively new Research Collaborator in Anthropology at NMNH, but I knew **Bob** and **Mimi Laughlin** since the early 1970s, when I first lived in the highlands of central Chiapas, "sikil osil" in Tzotzil Mayan, "cold country". Everyone converged in the original capital of Chiapas, now called San Cristobal



de Las Casas. San Cristobal, "Saint Christopher," was and is the patron saint of travelers, and everybody in Chiapas travels—for work, for love, to see the world, or at least Mexico City, whatever. The "de Las Casas" part references **Fray Bartolome de Las Casas**, who was a major Spanish defender of the Indigenous people in the early Spanish Empire. Even though the city is over half a millennium old, in Tzotzil, the bowl-like valley the city sits within is still called "Jobel", the genus-level name for tall perennial grasses in the genus *Muhlenbergia*. It was and is the best grass for thatching roofs.

Bob Laughlin (1934–2020) became a "Z", a functioning member of the Zinacantecos, one of the Tzotzil peoples of the highlands. Zinacanteco men wear cotton tunics (*pok'ku'u'ul*) and women wear cotton shawls (*pok'mocebal*) all woven by the women on backstrap looms, using very thin stripes of white and red mercerized cotton thread, rendering the cloth bright pink. Zinacanteco men wear broad hats with cascades of brightly colored ribbons, "the flowers of the hat". On trails in the mountains, even in fog and rain, one can spot Zinacantecos from hundreds of yards away.

Laughlin's great work was his Great Tzotzil Dictionary of San Lorenzo Zinacantan (<https://repository.si.edu/handle/10088/1360>). It was, and remains, a remarkable achievement, evoking the sheer poetry of Mayan

speech and song, and the astonishing vocabulary of Tzotzil-speaking people. There are precise words for the sound of a tortilla when it is flipped from its first cooked side to the other, and the various sounds of corn farts of dogs. And there are prayers and chants that bridge the Spanish peasant Christianity imposed on Mayans starting with "El Encuentro", back to classic Mayan cosmology and rituals. Tzotzil is the language of *Tzotzil Venik*, "the People of the Bat". To this day, the limestone landscape is dotted with sacred caves.

A memorial for Bob Laughlin, Chiapas-style, would involve pine needles scattered on the floor, candles, lots of copal incense smoke. In Tzotzil, the congealed resins of plants in the genus *Bursera*, closely related to incense plants in the Old World in the genus *Boswellia*; frankincense and myrrh, is called, amongst other names, pom riosh which translates as "god's honey". Plus, there would be lots of "posh", bootleg rum from up in the hills, but all the distilleries in Ivy City can suffice for that.

In Tzotzil, there's no "hello" or "goodbye". When one leaves, you say "*Ta shi bat*" which means "Now I'm going". The response: "*Batan!*" "Then go!" And so, Bob Laughlin: *Batan!* You have earned your rest.

BYRON MALLOTT (1944–2021)

By Mike Sfraga



As Alaska emerges from another long, snowy, yet aurora-filled Winter, into the sights and sounds of spring, it is with sadness that I write to share the news of a leader, friend, mentor, and former Lieutenant Governor of the State of Alaska, **Byron Mallott**. The scholars, staff, and fellows of the Polar

Institute send their deepest condolences to Byron's wife, **Toni**, their five children, ten grandchildren, and two great-grandchildren.

Byron was born and raised in the small Southeast Alaska village of Yakutat during World War II, where his early days were shaped by the peaks and glaciers of the St. Elias Range, and expansive waters of the Gulf of Alaska. In 1965, at the age of 22, he was elected Mayor of his hometown. Twenty-nine years later, in 1994, he was elected Mayor of Juneau, Alaska's capital city. His commitment to the people of Alaska went beyond twice serving as Mayor and included a host of important and influential roles such as aide to U.S. Senator **Mike Gravel**

(D-AK) on the path-breaking Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act, director of the Rural Alaska Community Action Program, and Alaska's first commissioner for the Department of Community and Regional Affairs.

Indeed, Byron's service to the state knew no bounds. He held positions as president and chief executive officer of First Alaskans Institute, executive director and then-chairman of the Alaska Permanent Fund Corporation, president, chairman, and chief executive officer of Sealaska Corporation, president of the Alaska Federation of Natives (one of the most consequential Indigenous peoples' organizations in the world), founding director of the Alaska Commercial Fisheries and Agriculture Bank, and long-term director of the Alaska Air Group.

Byron served the KwaashKiKwaan clan of the Raven tribe of Yakutat, as well as Indigenous peoples throughout Alaska, the Arctic, and beyond by simultaneously leading in two worlds; one committed to his people and traditional culture, and the other advancing governance and social justice policies and institutions. His unmatched gift of storytelling and oratory elevated every issue on which he chose to place a spotlight. In 2014, while running as a Democratic candidate for Governor, Byron partnered with Republican Gubernatorial candidate **Bill Walker** to form the "Unity Ticket," and he was elected Lieutenant Governor of Alaska.

Beyond the elected offices, board appointments, and executive positions, he was a man who welcomed all with open arms and a smile—if you offered an open mind and open heart. His commitment to Indigenous peoples everywhere is well known, celebrated, and irreplaceable. Those who worked with Byron remember his passion was fueled by a deep sense of justice and injustice, and a passion for Indigenous culture and rights. His commitment to the people of Alaska and the Arctic were inexhaustible; it's who he was and why many of us were drawn to him, learned from him, and will miss him.

Byron and I shared a number of interests including a passion and admiration for ancient Polynesian navigators. He would always greet me with a bear hug and then a handshake, in that order. And we departed company with the same hug and handshake. And in a nod to those Polynesian navigators we so admired, we would say—almost in unison—"sail on" and go our separate ways.

Byron was known to his people as *Dux da neik, K'oo ta'* in Tlingit: "a person who would lead us into the future." He has departed this earth but left a legacy of knowledge, compassion, leadership, mentorship, bear hugs, handshakes, and smiles. He has certainly led us into the future... Sail on, Byron.

DALE GERARD KENNEDY 1957–2017

By William W. Fitzhugh and Saltwire.com

Dale Kennedy, 60, a vocational archaeologist and historian of northwestern Newfoundland, Canada passed away July 28th, 2017, in St. Anthony, Newfoundland. In addition to being a gifted musician, he spent years documenting the history of his community. His interest in local archaeology led him to co-found the Bird Cove-Plum Point Archaeology Project which for many years was one of the most successful locally-run, community-based archaeological programs in Newfoundland. I got to know Dale when he asked me to confirm the identity of an unusual Maritime Archaic (MA) site he had found deep in the forest east of Plum Point. Previously, MA sites had always been found near the shore, in situations like Port au Choix.



But here was a settlement site with diagnostic Maritime Archaic chipped and ground stone tools on an old raised beach far from the shore. Dale assembled a mixed team local and professional archaeologists and investigated this and several Dorset sites at Bird Cove. He created a local history and archaeology museum and with **Selma Barkham** hosted an annual conference for several years that attracted a large and boisterous clientele of locals, professionals, and bureaucrats. For his outstanding community efforts and archaeological work, he was awarded the *James Pendergast Award*, the highest honor an avocational archaeologist can receive in Canada.

THE S. A. MORSE DIARIES: RECOLLECTING LINCOLN WASHBURN

By Stearns A. Morse

In August 2020 I received a remarkable letter from **Nuna (Washburn) MacDonald** in upstate New York, enclosing part of an old letter from me to her mother Tahoe Washburn, widow of the Polar scientist Lincoln Washburn, with a hand-written response to me from her just after his death, trailing off at the end and never sent. It had to do with a photo of their daughter **Nuna** and me on skis in the Ford Sayre Ski Program in Hanover not far from the Washburn home. This surprise brought forth a flood of remote connections about

our scientific and personal careers that were mostly divergent but that ended up in rejoiced contact. What I did not know at the time of the ski program was that their father, **Linc**, had been a member of the Dartmouth Ski Team, a major in geology (as was I), and member of the 1936 Olympic Ski Team, performing in Slalom and other events in Garmisch-Partenkirchen, Germany.

The ski program was the second effort I was greeted with on return from the Army. (I had been at language school in Oberammergow and worked and lived bilingually to some degree.)

When I returned to Hanover the Professor of German Language and Literature, Herr **Stephan Schlossmacher**, encountered my father downtown, and pronounced “Tony is back! He speaks Bavarian!”). The first was to fly to Labrador to measure the temperatures in the two major Labrador fjords—Hebron Fjord and Nain Bay—that were under study by the Blue Dolphin Labrador Expeditions. The Project directors, Cdr. **David Nutt** and **Larry Coachman**, had taught me how to do the sampling in previous summers in Labrador. The trip, supported by the Office of Naval Research, was successful and I guess qualified me to be an oceanographer.

Instead I became an igneous petrologist, one who studies old rocks crystallized from the molten condition—and in my case, relatively deep in the Earth and Moon. **Linc Washburn**, however, practiced his geology as a geomorphologist, with special interest in Arctic regions and ice. His first encounter with that science was in the remote fjords of East Greenland in the Boyd Expedition. With other Americans and Canadians, Link founded the binational Arctic Institute of North America, based in Montreal and became its first full-time Director. Out of this came the new journal *Arctic*. It was in that magazine years later that I published my obituary of **David Clark Nutt**, who with his wife **Barbara** made us part of their family and our strong connection to Labrador.

The second AINA Director was **Max Dunbar**. While I was doing my graduate work at McGill, we frequently had Friday beer and music at the Institute, and Max and

I traded folk songs with guitars. There also were **Don Foote** and eventually **Tony Williamson**. Don married **Berit Arnestad**, who on learning I was about to begin a NSF-supported study of the Kiglapait Layered Intrusion in Labrador, asked my wife, **Dorothy**, are you going too? And to my horror she replied “I don’t know. I haven’t been asked.” She was then asked and said “yes,” and we switched from tents to a house and began raising daughters in the wilds of Labrador.

Tony Williamson worked on McGill’s winter climate station in western Labrador, spent a winter in Nain, Labrador learning the Inuk language and hunting-fishing subsistence with the help of the Moravian minister, my close friend **Fred Grubb**, and went west to help Don Foote, Berit, **Les Viereck**, and many others shoot down the proposed making of an unwanted harbor in northwest Alaska with nuclear bombs. Tony returned to Newfoundland-Labrador for a career in enabling distant groups of native people communicate their desires and needs and became a rare, dear part of our family (his brother **Jed Williamson** married Dorothy’s sister **Perry**. Tony, like Fred and Don, died young, leaving great holes in our lives.)



*Lincoln and Tahoe Washburn in Yellowknife in 1936.
Photo from Nuna MacDonald*

Like **Tahoe** and **Link Washburn**, Dorothy and I raised children who knew the Arctic. A middle daughter has paddled seven of the far north Canadian rivers (and the Wild Ammonoosuc below our family’s farm). Long before that, with NSF help we built a 51-foot research vessel with greenheart sheathing for work in ice. Dorothy cooked and steered, called out the ice ahead, and took care of the daughters for several summers. We used this ship, named *Pitsiulak*, in Labrador for ten years and then gave it to the Smithsonian Institution for their Arctic archaeology studies under **William Fitzhugh**. Bill took the ship to Baffin Island where for several summers our youngest daughter Sophie served as Operations Officer.

Sophie eventually became Master of the famous Arctic and Cape Verde Island schooner *Ernestina-Morrissey*, the historic State Ship of Massachusetts, presently being rebuilt in Boothbay, Maine. This is the ship that took young David Nutt for four seasons with Captain **Bob Bartlett** in the Far North. That

experience qualified him to be a navy officer during WWII. He became the youngest Commander, retired from active service, bought the schooner *Blue Dolphin*, and sailed it to Labrador for many seasons studying oceanography. When the *Blue Dolphin* encountered big glacier ice off Labrador and dropped pieces into water, it sizzled. David Nutt told the polymath biologist **Pete Scholander** that the ice was getting rid of its captured atmosphere. Pete then measured it for CO₂ and showed that the Greenland ice retained a climate record many thousands of years old. That's where it started, offshore Labrador!

As young newlyweds Dorothy and I moved from Montreal to Hanover Center, New Hampshire, while I finished my Ph.D. thesis. To make ends meet, I became a member once again of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers charged with purchasing an X-ray diffractometer suitable for work at 40 degrees below zero, centigrade. The institution that hired me was the Cold Regions Research and Engineering Laboratory (CRREL) that gained its name from SIPRI (Snow, Ice & Permafrost Research Institute) when it moved from Illinois to Hanover. The whole deal was instigated by Linc Washburn and many others, including David Nutt, **John Sloan Dickey** (Dartmouth's President) and the Canadian Arctic professor, **Trevor Lloyd**.

Unfortunately, the lab space designated for that X-ray instrument burned up during construction. Instead of working at the Laboratory, my boss sent me to study and make experiments at Dartmouth. There I was welcomed to use the instruments in the Geology Department. With the skills of the Physics Machine Shop (a place of wonder and delight) we built a cold housing for the Geology X-ray diffractometer, placed a glass slide at liquid-nitrogen temperature with a coat of water, put it into the diffractometer, and made a conventional X-ray diffraction pattern.

A pleasure of being in the ice business at that time was acquaintance with **Wilford F. Weeks**, a practical student of ice at CRREL and adjunct professor at Dartmouth Earth Sciences. Among other things, he had spent parts of three winters in Hopedale, Labrador to determine the physical properties of sea ice. This

research was published in 1958 in Arctic. That same year he published "An experimental study of strength of young sea ice" in EOS, the Transactions of the American Geophysical Union, with his second author **Don L. Anderson**. In due course I became an officer of the American Geophysical Union, at a time when Don Anderson of Caltech was AGU President. We were good friends for a long time. He was a seismologist and wrote *The Theory of the Earth* and won seven medals.

Linc kept up research in Greenland, Canada, and Antarctica while I began teaching petrology and mineralogy at Franklin and Marshall College in Pennsylvania. The Department was first-class and greatly supportive; the Chair, **John Moss** and his wife **Margey**, rented us a house to live in on their farm, and in due course we built a TechBuilt house on another corner of their farm. While we were at our college, Linc and Tahoe moved to the University of Washington and built a model Quaternary Research Center where many groups of faculty could work together. While there, Linc also established another new journal, *Quaternary*

Research. He published his own research for 60 years, including a Geological Society of America *Memoir 22*, and another, *Memoir 90*. My own GSA *Memoir*, published eight years after my Ph.D. research on the Labrador Kiglapait Intrusion, was number *112* (1969).

In due course I became increasingly involved in annual meetings of the AGU and, to a lesser extent, the GSA. At their annual receptions I eventually found many old friends, including Linc and Tahoe Washburn. Well, never was there such a pleasant re-connection. Hence in the end there came the final correspondence that only reached us in the dry August 2020 of Swiftwater, New Hampshire, in the form of a letter from their daughter Nuna, which spurred this small memoir. Her memories enrich ours and extend the Linc Link.

Postscript: Glaciologist and Polar scientist **Lincoln Washburn** is particularly notable for working in Arctic winters and summers with the help of his remarkable wife, Tahoe. In the above I have generally spelled his common name as 'Linc', which is what his wife Tahoe wrote in later correspondence. But Tahoe also wrote a wonderful book about their early lives in Arctic Canada



*Lincoln and Tahoe in Resolute, with summer ice in the 1980s.
Photo from Nuna MacDonald*



Resolute, 1990s. Photo from Nuna MacDonald

in the 1930s to 1941, *Under Polaris: an Arctic Quest* (1999, University of Washington Press), in which she writes: “This book is dedicated to my husband, Link, in gratitude for sixty-three marvelous years, including our numerous travels in the lands of my childhood dreams; and also to all our beloved friends of the North.” In this book she wrote his name ‘Link’ throughout. Well, whether ‘Linc’ or ‘Link’, it’s all the same, and a wonderful man.

[Editor’s note: I too have a Linc-link, in my case, through my father’s association with him as a Dartmouth ’35 classmate. I met Linc first as a 13-year old visitor to their Hanover home with my father. I reconnected when planning my Labrador research and kept in touch with him over the years. One time I visited his home after he had moved to Yale and found him boning up—with some frustration—on new computational methods that were creeping into geology. And there’s more. My son Benjamin Fitzhugh joined the University of Washington and, like Linc, became director of its Quaternary Research Center. For more on “Link” see his obituary in Arctic: <https://journalhosting.ucalgary.ca/index.php/arctic/article/view/63315/47252>. This report is adapted from an original publication in the Littleton Courier, NH Oct-Dec 2020.]

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Contact Information

Arctic Studies Center
 Department of Anthropology
 Natural History Building, MRC 112
 Smithsonian Institution
 P.O. Box 37012
 10th and Constitution Ave. N.W.
 Washington, D.C. 20013-7012
 (202) 633-1887 (phone) (202) 357-2684 (fax)

ASC Anchorage Office
 Anchorage Museum
 625 C Street Anchorage, AK 99501
 (907) 929-9207

Arctic Studies Center homepage

<https://naturalhistory.si.edu/research/anthropology/programs/arctic-studies-center>

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Smithsonian Institution

Arctic Studies Center
Department of Anthropology
Natural History Building, MRC 112
Smithsonian Institution
P.O. Box 37012
10th and Constitution, NW
Washington, DC 20013-7012

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Designed and produced by
Nancy Shorey, Fiona Steiwer, and Igor Chechushkov