

FIVE SEASONS WITH THE LATE KACHEMAK

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ABSTRACT

Over a number of seasons the Afognak Native Corporation and the Native Village of Afognak have undertaken archaeological excavations at Afognak Bay on Afognak Island in the Kodiak Archipelago. Here are summarized the results of work at three sites of the Kachemak tradition directed by the author in 1999 through 2003. Flaked stone implements at two sites at the mouth of the Afognak River were more numerous than had been expected. Some degree of relationship to the Norton tradition appears to be indicated.

KEYWORDS: Archaeology, Kachemak tradition, Kodiak, Afognak Island, Norton culture

INTRODUCTION

Single house excavations allow prehistory to be approached on the basis of households rather than an amalgamation of village or tribal data, as often is the case with trench excavations in deep midden sites. This allows a sharper, more precisely defined view of the events of prehistory, even without recognition of what went on outside the houses. This approach was brought to Kodiak Island to the Karluk sites KAR-0001 and Nunakhnak KAR-037 by Richard Jordan and Richard Knecht (Knecht and Jordan 1985), and was continued by the excavations of Amy Steffian at the Late Kachemak Uyak Site (1992) and of Patrick Saltonstall at the Koniag Settlement Point Site (1997).

Further pursuit of precontact Kodiak household archaeology was made possible by the work of the “Dig Afognak” program, excavating sites on Afognak Bay on Afognak Island of the Kodiak Archipelago (Figs. 1–2). Participating archaeologists during the 1990s were Richard Knecht, Patrick G. Saltonstall, and Katharine Woodhouse-Beyer. For six years, through 2004, the author made additional, small-scale excavations at Afognak Village and the mouth of the Afognak River (Fig. 2).

Work was at four sites, three of them late Kachemak in age. Here the focus is on the late Kachemak sites excavated over the course of five seasons. Two were located at

the mouth of the Afognak River (Figs. 1–2). The other late Kachemak site was “Aleut Town” at Afognak village. Both inner bay and exposed coastal settlement locations are involved. The attraction of the inner location is a multispecies series of salmon runs. The outer coastal location is free of the winter constraints experienced at the river mouth (deep snow and river ice), and has access to whales, a seal haulout, sea otters, shellfish, and a halibut hole. The sites should thus show a likely contrast between main or winter villages and summer settlements.

ALEUT TOWN SITE

For two seasons one paid assistant and the author, and at times other staff of Dig Afognak and visitors, conducted small-scale excavations of the part of old Afognak Village called “Aleut Town” (Fig. 3). Identification of the Aleut Town site as late Kachemak in age is based on both artifact styles and radiocarbon dating. Aleut Town (local usage, on maps as “Aleut Village”) was reported in a 1795 census of Kodiak attributed to Baranov and was not totally vacated until 1961. Its Alutiiq name is recalled by former Afognak residents essentially as it was recorded 210 years ago: “Nashkukhalik” or “Nashqualuk” (in a

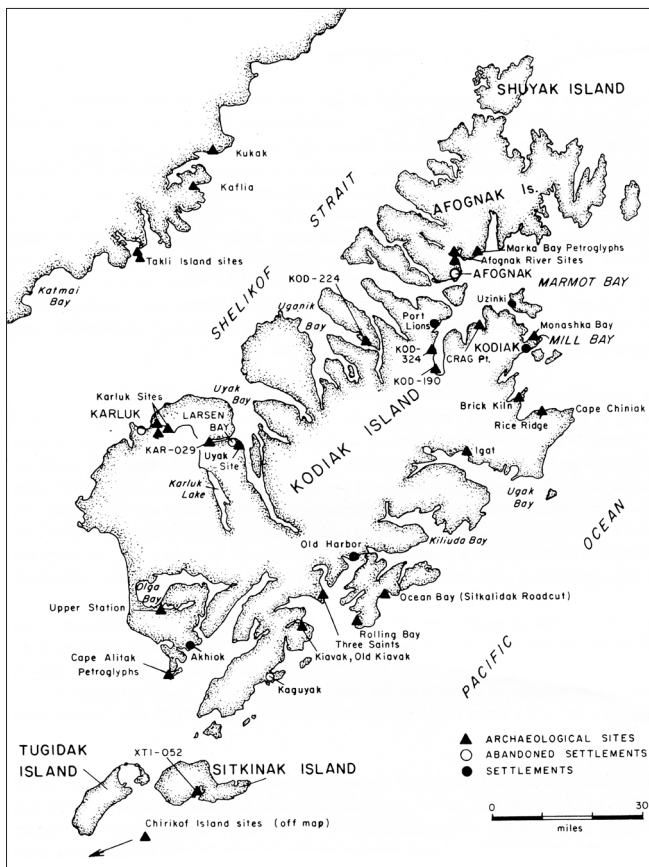


Figure 1. Map of Kodiak Island.

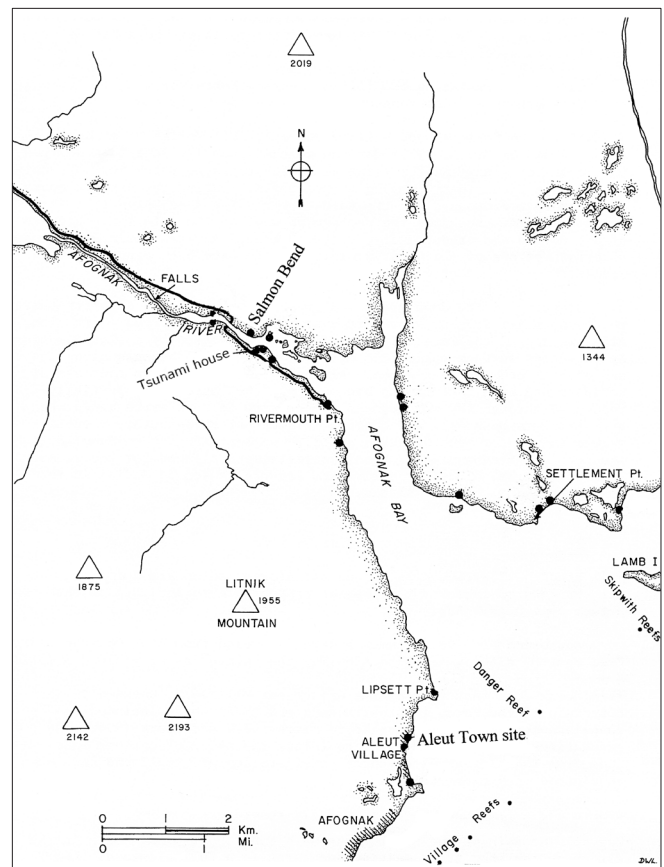


Figure 2. Map of Mouth of the Afognak River.



Figure 3. Erecting a Weatherport shelter over part of the Aleut Town site.

Gedeon manuscript published with highly variant spellings by Langsdorff [1993]) (see also Luehrmann 2008:30). A substantial Koniag (ancestral Alutiiq) occupation was expected at this site, but instead there was a late Kachemak midden and only two distinctive Koniag tools were found on the surface. A major part of the site had been lost to erosion, which might account for the paucity of Koniag

tradition material dating from after AD 1200. Two radiocarbon dates placed the occupation at about AD 1000 (Table 1). Although the site was occupied until 1961, most of the remains probably dated close to the time of the radiocarbon dates.

A grid of 1 m squares was laid out over the excavation area for 1999 and 2000 (Fig. 4). It was almost impossible to maintain the grid stakes because of the large number of slate slabs located close to the surface. Consequently, grid corner positions were marked on planks strung along each side of the excavation. For vertical control there were several line level substations keyed to a master datum.

Excavation at the Aleut Town site revealed part of a historic bathhouse (banya) and an array of Kachemak features including two proximal housepits, stone slab hearths, slate slab-covered subfloor pits, additional slate flagstones, and postholes. The last had cobble and small slab props to hold the posts in place during installation. Excavation did not extend to the inner (landward) end of either housepit, in part because of the location of a U.S. Coast and Geodetic Survey monument. Thus, it is uncertain whether or not they were connected by a passage.

The house floors were well defined, but they were almost devoid of artifacts; the occupants seem to have kept their floors free of debris.

The late Kachemak was a time of small notched pebbles of uniform size and shape, most probably fishnet weights. Distributional evidence favors the salmon fishery, but not exclusively. There were no notched pebbles at the Aleut Town site. The people who lived there may have kept their salmon fishing gear elsewhere, perhaps at netting sites on the Afognak River. There was also a striking paucity of flaked chert artifacts. There were only two chert tools and a spearhead, flaked but not made of chert. Even in slate-grinding Koniag tradition sites there is relatively more

flaked chert, and most late Kachemak sites have a modest amount of chert and other flaked stone including basalt. Barbed dart heads were common and a disproportionately large number of toggle heads of simple “self-armed” unbarbed format were recovered. Styles of harpoon heads (Fig. 5) and labrets and other ornamental items (Fig. 6) are in keeping with distinctive Kachemak modes, lateness of the radiocarbon dates notwithstanding. Late Kachemak labrets, unlike those of the Koniag tradition, usually have flaring flanges. One widely distributed style, represented by slate and “jet” (coal) examples from Aleut Town, has the shape of a pulley.

Table 1. Radiocarbon Dates

Site	Date (¹⁴ Cyr)	Lab Number	Calibrated Range*	Context
Aleut Town	950±50 BP	Beta-150810	AD 1010–AD 1230	N/A
Aleut Town	1090±80 BP	Beta-150811	AD 770–AD 860	N/A
Tsunami	880±40 BP	Beta 165141	AD 1030–AD 1250	Above tsunami sand
Tsunami	1320±80 BP	Beta 165139	AD 600–AD 890	Under tsunami sand
Tsunami	1750±60 BP	Beta 165140	AD 130–AD 420	Tsunami house floor
Salmon Bend	1420±80 BP	Beta-170060	AD 530–AD 780	“Annex” area
Salmon Bend	1330±60 BP	Beta-170061	AD 620–AD 790	Main room, not floor

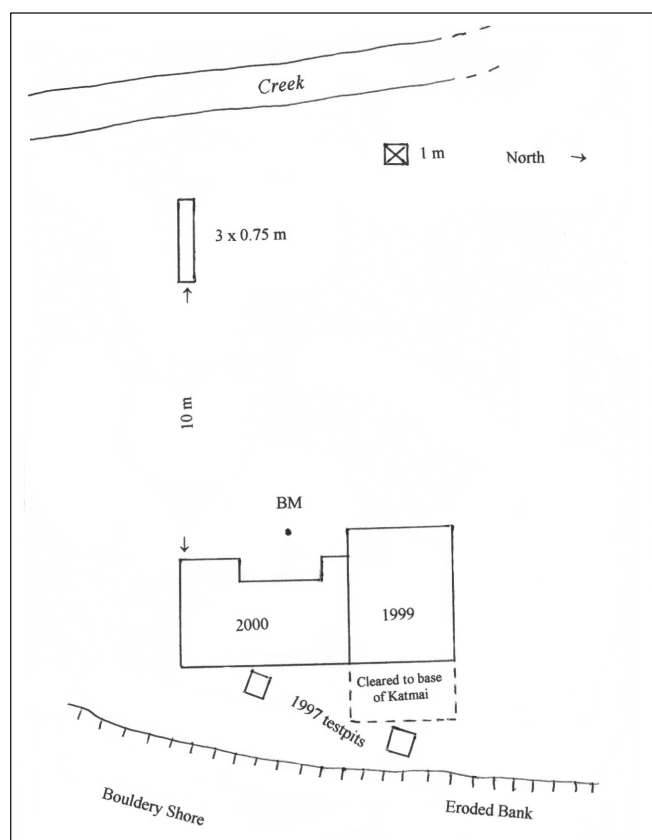


Figure 4. Excavation layout at Aleut Town site.

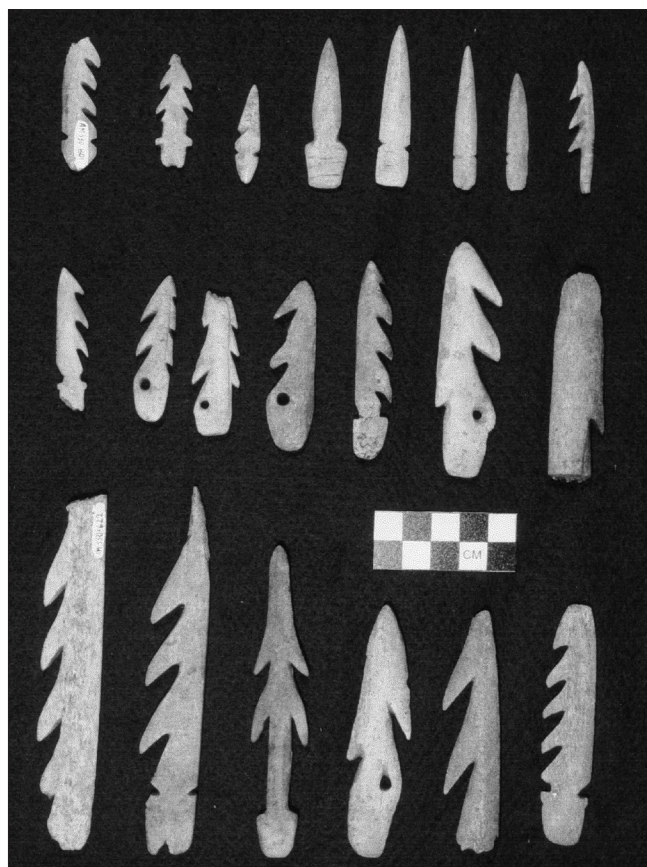


Figure 5. Harpoon heads, Aleut Town site.

This site has good preservation of bone artifacts (Fig. 7) and faunal remains, unlike the next two discussed. The two small spindle-shaped objects in bone (Fig. 6), probably nose pins, are of interest inasmuch as an identical specimen comes from a site at Dutch Harbor on Amaknak



Figure 6. Ornamental and small objects from Aleut Town, including two Koniag/Aleut-style ornaments (top row, spindle-shaped, sometimes identified as nose pin), a doll arm (middle left), and the bone core of a raptor claw. Two discs are from halibut vertebrae and are shaped, not break outs. At the top right are two miniature harpoon heads.

Top row (L to R): Item cut from tooth AM330:1006; 2 "nose pins" 589, 607; grooved bone ball 691; 3 bone tube beads 682–657–741; miniature harpoon heads 923, 651. Second row: doll arm? 750; pin (end missing) 929; ornament? 792; head of pin (end missing) 788; pendant bead; halibut vertebra discs 787–783; miniature mask (walrus?). Bottom row: bear molar; eagle claw core J.L6; grooved pin (broken) 888; miniature spear 939; labret 689.

Island near Unalaska (McCartney 1984:Fig. 9n). Two lamps, one a fragment, show rounding and smoothing of edges that evidently occurred as the lamps were being rolled about in the surf. They illustrate a trait of the ancient Kodiak Islanders to recycle implements washed out of sites. Evidently, even a thousand years ago Afognak sites were being destroyed by the sea. Three incised slate tablets (Fig. 8) appear to be from an antecedent to the incised slate figurine tablets that appeared on Kodiak in great numbers during early and middle Koniag tradition times (Clark 1964). They, however, do little to explain the origins of the presumed ritual for which these figurines were made.

Finally, among the faunal remains were scattered human bones, a condition typical of Kachemak culture. These included two short segments cut out of the dental arcade with the surfaces of the incisor teeth ground flat. Hrdlička (1944) commented nearly fifty times on Kachemak treatment of the dead and human remains but did not mention this specific artifact. The human skeletal material was reburied on the site. The fauna is in storage and has not been analyzed. Some midden layers consisted of densely packed deposits of fish bones. Sea otter, fox, and especially dog bones also were recovered.

TSUNAMI SITE

The second set of excavations was conducted in the Afognak River estuary where there is a progression of sites extending up the river, beginning with Ocean Bay I, Ocean Bay II, then early Kachemak that largely overlaps the OB II zone, followed by late Kachemak. Above this, but still within the tidal zone, are Koniag tradition houses and deposits (Workman and Clark 1979). Finally, at the head of tidewater there are Russian-period Alutiiq houses and a fish trap or *zapor* (Moser 1902:Pl. XX).

During three seasons two houses were excavated, one on either side of the river. Each had noteworthy features. A grid of 1 m squares was placed over the Tsunami excavation, set (imperfectly) to encompass the very disturbed edges of a house structure (Fig. 9).

A band of tidal wave-deposited sand directly overlaid the main occupation. This layer served importantly for stratigraphic control. Geologist Gary Carver ran a soil probe into a nearby sediment trap and found as many as nine tidal wave deposits. Funnel-shaped, shallow inner Afognak Bay undoubtedly caught and intensified every tidal disturbance that came along. There is also a date (Beta-165140) of AD 250 for the structure floor.



Figure 7. Awls, beaver tooth gouge, fish hook barbs, and shanks, Aleut Town site. Left column: bird bone awls 1456, 1512, 751; needle (eyed end missing) 604; pointed sawn bird bone strip 1087; bird bone with strip for needle blanks cut out 941; awl on mammal bone chip 1623; mammal bone awl 1427; bird bone awls 756, 1163, 649. Right side: beaver tooth gouge bit 864; fish-hook barbs 630, 917, 915, 1519; fishhook shanks 638, 856; kayak joint bearing? 704.

There were many stone slabs in this house used for hearth boxes, to cover crypts in the floor, and for other undetermined purposes (Fig. 10). In the 7-m-long, 4-m-wide house there also were many clay-lined pits, some of them old and filled in, others voids covered with stone slabs (Fig. 11). There were no noteworthy pit contents, but a small lamp had been pressed into the clay lining of one pit. Another depression, located next to the hearth, contained a larger lamp encrusted with a red-orange substance (not the usual red ochre). In four corners there were clusters of small-to-medium-sized boulders that may have supported

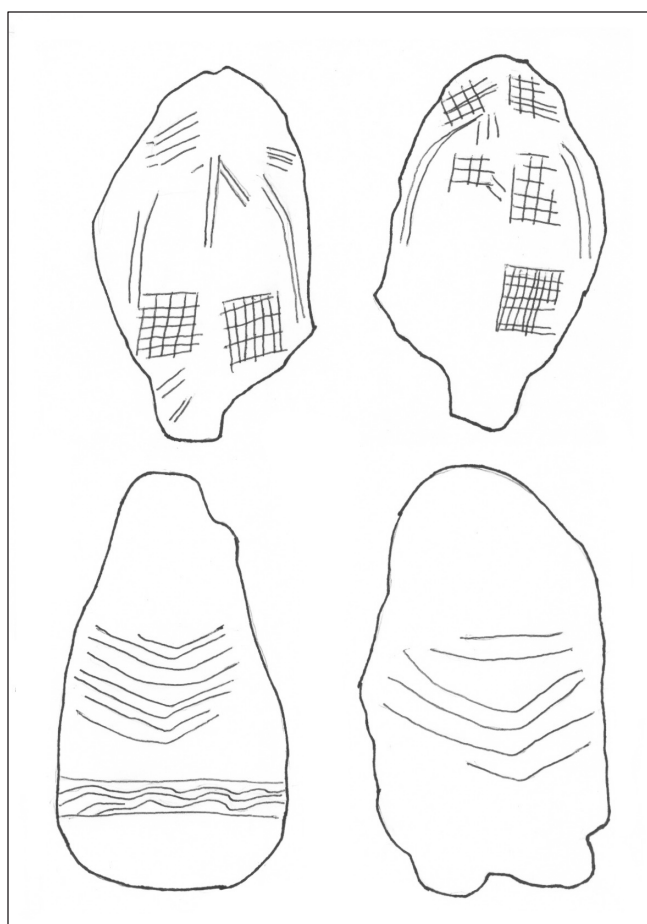


Figure 8. Drawing of three incised figurines on slate pebbles.

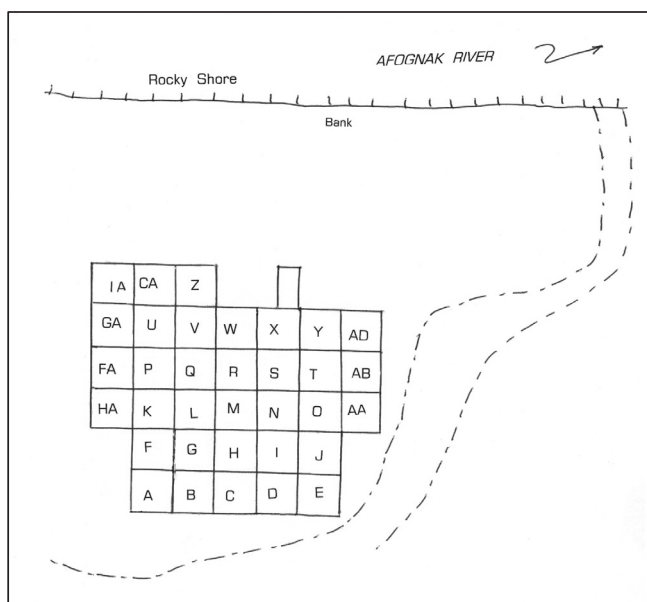


Figure 9. Excavation layout, Tsunami site

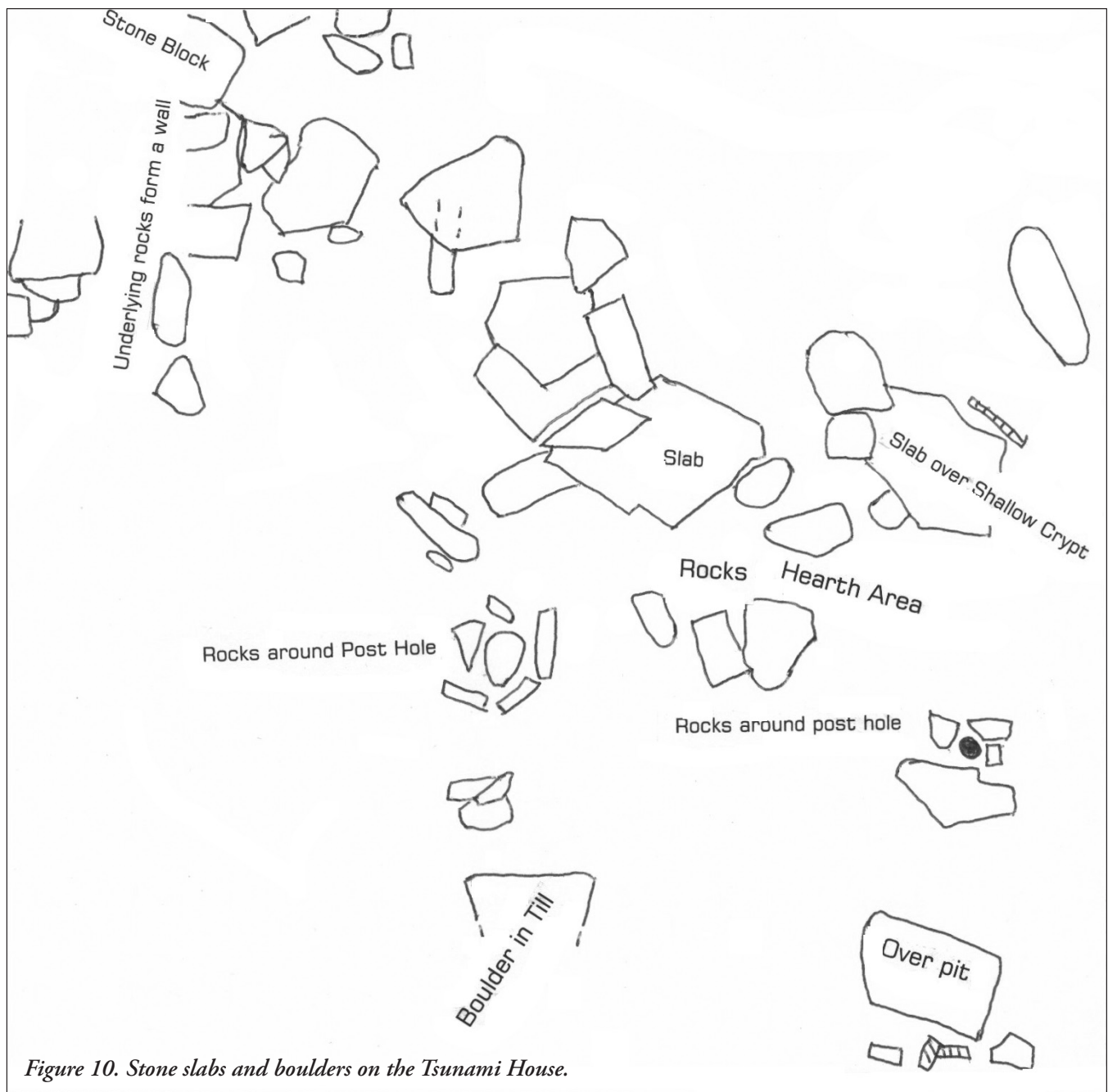


Figure 10. Stone slabs and boulders on the Tsunami House.

wall stringers midway above the floor for the wall-roof construction. Adze bits were uncommon at this and other late Kachemak sites, so use of stone pylons would have reduced the necessity to laboriously cut wooden posts to length. But they did use posts in considerable numbers. Postholes often were ringed by small slate slabs. These slabs could have held the posts in place while the structural framework was being tied together with headers. The floor was formed from yellow-orange clay, which appears to have been residual from the volcanic ash soil that mantled the local glacial till. This so-called “butter clay” is very

plastic and slippery, as was discovered when we attempted to work atop it after a brief rainshower. Additional stripes of yellow-orange clay complicated the task of following and interpreting the stratigraphy. They probably are from tephra in soil attached to sods carried in for construction.

The house entrance was not identified. It appeared that excavation had not completely exposed one end of the structure. Two years later further excavation was done at that end of this structure, and it appeared that excavation actually had gone beyond the housepit into the fill of another house that had sliced off the end of

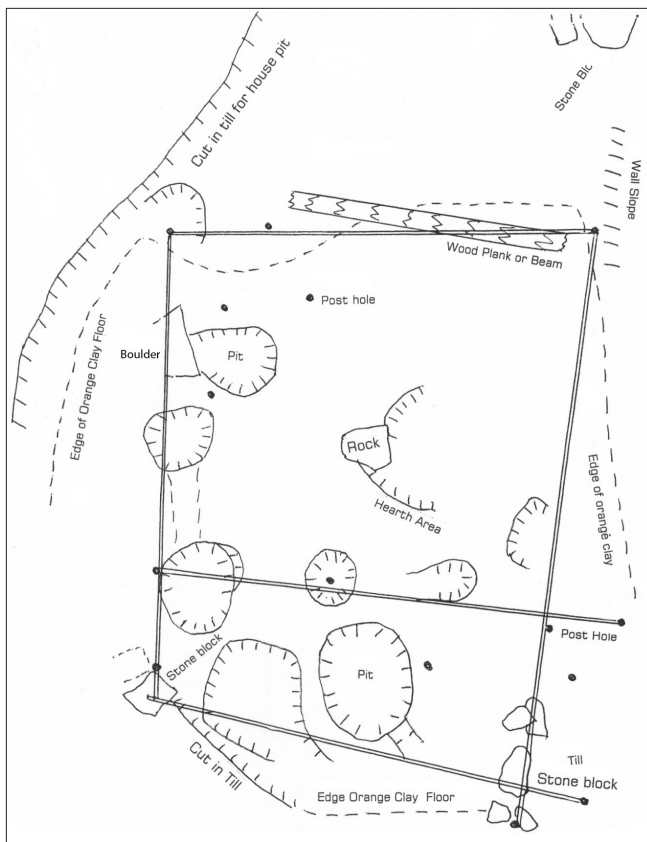


Figure 11. Subfloor pits and post holes in the Tsunami House, with one hypothesized arrangement of beams.

the Tsunami house deposit. In so doing it had destroyed the entrance. Thin archaeological deposits overlying the tsunami sand layer might have resulted from reuse of the housepit or could have been derived from other construction on the site.

Artifacts (Table 2) include fifty notched pebble weights, numerous slate ulu blades (mostly fragments), stone lamps, labrets, and flaked chert and ground slate projectile points in several styles, but lacking are the barbed slate points that usually are a hallmark of the late Kachemak tradition. Only stone artifacts were recovered. There was a large array of abraders and whetstones, which would have been used to finish ground stone, wood, and bone items. Compared with Hrdlička's (1944) late Kachemak at the Uyak site, which he called "pre-Koniag" (see Heizer 1956), and the author's excavations at Three Saints and Crag Point (Clark 1971), the main divergence seen in this assemblage is a considerably greater abundance of flaked stone items. Along with the occurrence of notched pebble sinkers, this sets the Tsunami house apart from the Aleut Town houses. Greater evidence of fishing with nets had been anticipated. Initially, it was thought that the frequency of flaked chert

indicated greater antiquity for the Tsunami site. That may be the case, as the Tsunami radiocarbon dates are older than the Aleut Town dates, but this is by only a few centuries. There was a certain time, though, near the beginning of the Koniag tradition, when there was a shift in lithic frequency to almost exclusive use of ground slate. The Tsunami site may precede this shift and Aleut Town may follow it. As is noted below, the Salmon Bend site also has a frequency of flaked lithics comparable to that of the Tsunami site. Dates for the two sites are also comparable.

SALMON BEND SITE

The succeeding year, 2002, after the Tsunami site excavation, the worksite was across the river at the Salmon Bend site (Fig. 12). Collections from the eroding beach indicated that again there would be a late Kachemak occupation (Fig. 13). Surface outlines showed the likely presence of a rectangular house with an attached structure. At the

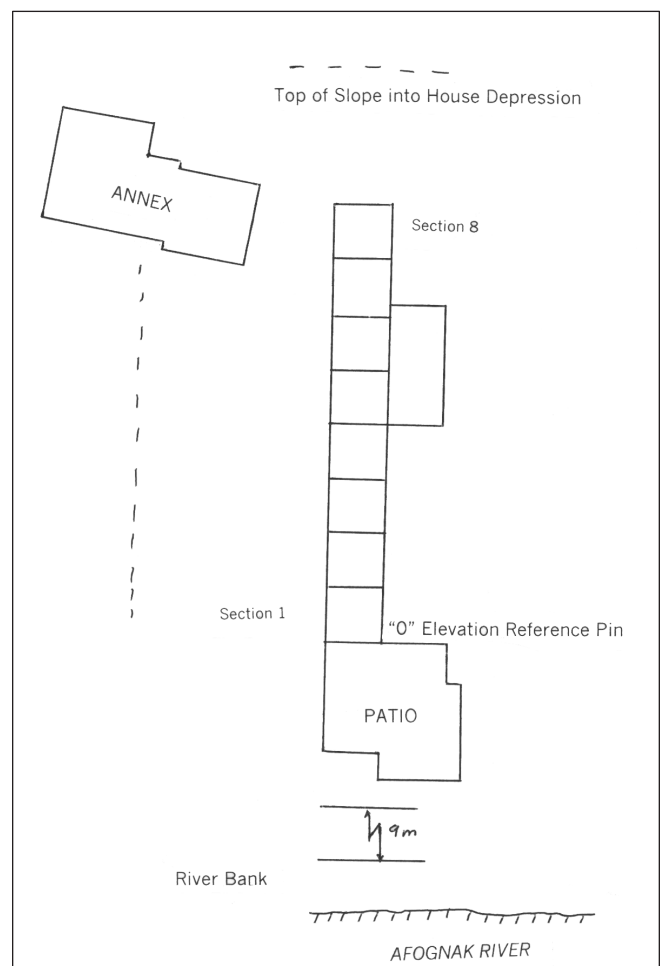


Figure 12. Excavation layout, Salmon Bend site.

Table 2: Selected late Kachemak stone artifacts

Artifact	KOD-044 Crag Point ¹	AFG-004 Aleut Town	AFG-215 Tsunami ²	AFG-108 Salmon Bend ³	AFG-108 Beach ^{4,5}
Whole ulu	21/23% c	10/6.2%	19/5.3%	10/2.2%	
Ulu major frag.	17	c 15	31	27	
(Total above)	38	25/15.4%	58/13.9%	37/8.2%	18
Grooved cobble	4	3/1.9%	5/1.4%	5/1.1%	10
Notched pebble	578/64.5%	0/	50/13.9%	134/29.7%	322
Slate point, frag.	11/1.3%	17/10.5%	12/3.3%	14/3%	8
Flaked point	1	1/0.6%	11/3.1%	27/6.0%	1 frag.
(Total points)	12/1.3%	18/11%	23/6.4%	41/9.6%	8)
Other flaked chert	0?*	1/0.6%	10/2.8%	18/4%	6
All abraders	39/4.4%	52/32%	51/14.2%	27/6%	
Used cobble spall	30/3.3	some	6/1.6%	ca 6/1.3%	4
(All above)			26/7.2%	39/8.6%)	
Stone lamps	0	2/1.2%	3/0.8%	2/0.4%	3
Adze bits	1+beach	1/0.6%*	4/1.1%	2/0.4%	2
Beads	16/1.8%	8/4.9%	4/6.1%	3/0.7%	
Labrets	15/1.7%	5/3%	0/	5/1%	1
Other stone	151	52	105	91	15
(Total stone)	895	162	360	451	
Bone	462	ca 279	0	0	0

Notes:

- ¹ Some chert, not listed here, eroded out of Crag Point and was found on the beach there. This material may be derived mainly from the basal early Kachemak component, but some also may be from the Ocean Bay and late Kachemak components.
- ² Tsunami artifacts do not include the second year's excavation situated outside the house in the fill of another structure. That collection is small and also of late Kachemak age.
- ³ Artifacts collected or seen at the Salmon Bend site, AFG-108, in 1964 (132 items plus flakes) and 1971 are described by Workman and Clark (1979). Most of these items were discarded at the site.
- ⁴ Slender ground slate rods are counted as slate points. Six of these, one of them barbed, were found on the beach at AFG -108c.
- ⁵ In addition to the six chert implements from the beach, there were 224 flakes and chunks, mainly of red chert from AFG-108c. Clark also had visited the site in 1951 and found on the beach a large number of notched pebbles although the site was not being washed out at that time. There could have been historic disturbance here as this location is the outer terminus of the Litnik-Afognak hatchery tramway that preceded the gravel road to Afognak Lake. Over the years many artifacts also were picked up from the beach at AFG-108 and brought back to the Dig Afognak base camp. They are not counted here.

time, this was an unexpected feature for a Kachemak period house but is now known from the early Koniag period (Saltonstall and Steffian 2006). Excavation showed that the Salmon Bend house actually was a compound. The attached structure (Fig. 14) was not completely excavated, nor was the main room, but a relatively broad passage into the main house was fully exposed. Within this annex structure there were so many slate slabs at an intermediate elevation above the floor that it seems the roof had been covered with them. There were clay-lined pits in the floor and hearths. The so-called “annex” was apparently more than just a sleeping room.

An 8 m trench was run through the main room from front to back (Fig. 15). Due to crew limitations, the trench was only 1 m wide except locally where it was expanded to

2 m width. Clay-lined basins and stone-slab hearths were uncovered. There were distinct postholes, but not enough area was uncovered to define a post pattern. A large number of angular boulders had been dumped into the entry area inside the house, and there were stacked stone slabs along the sides of this apparent internal passage. As the excavation there was only 1 m wide, it was not determined to what extent, if any, the boulder fill extended across the front of the structure. The house evidently had been rebuilt, or the location reused. Strong evidence for this is offered by a “patio” or stone slab pavement outside the structure pit at the front (Fig. 16). The patio was buried under a modest amount of artifact-bearing soil. Below that there was substantially more cultural deposit. Other

than for these features, stratigraphy consisted of the various soil layers noted in Table 3.

Under the patio slabs was the outer end of a sunken entrance passage that had been filled in before the slabs had been laid down. When the passage stopped at its outer end, so did the excavation. Almost immediately slender lanceolate points were found. Additional points were later



Figure 13. Female lamp, Salmon Bend site, in hand and exposed at edge of eroded bank.

Table 3. Stratigraphy in main trench, face of sections 13, 14 And 15

Thickness of layer	Matrix
	Turf
25 cm	Secondary impure volcanic ash deposited by water in 1964
	Thin soil band from 1912–1964
Approx. 10 cm	1912 Katmai-Novarupta volcanic ash
2 cm	Black soil grades downward into variegated brown soil
Variable	Fine gravel (disappears in upriver direction)
Variable	Many thin bands of brown, dark brown, and black soil
	Traces of orange volcanic ash in some places
Beginning at 48 cm below 1912 Katmaiash	Glacial till/hardpan at base of site
volcanic ash	

recovered, making a total of eighteen. One point of the same format was also recovered from the “annex,” tying the annex to the main structure and showing that the occurrence of the point cache in the entry area was not an isolated event. These points are a Norton caribou-hunting arrow type, in the Kodiak area previously found only on Chirikof Island. They are out of place on Kodiak, but at home in the Bristol Bay–Bering Sea region, including the western Alaska Peninsula (cf. McCartney 1974:Fig. 6v).

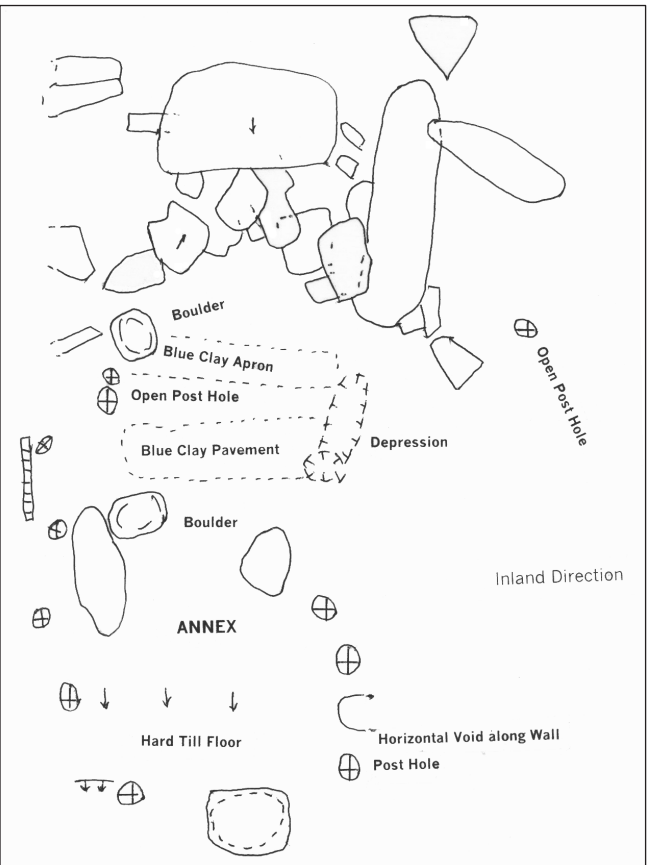


Figure 14. Annex features, Salmon Bend site. Arrows indicate slope. “Horizontal Void along Wall” appears to mark the juncture with the main room.

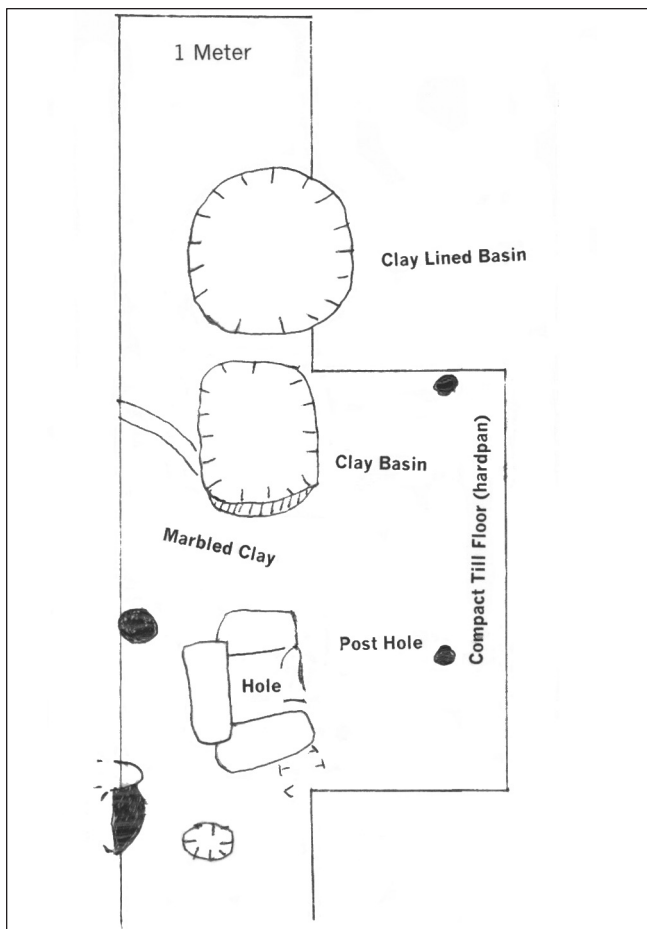


Figure 15. Main trench features at Salmon Bend site.

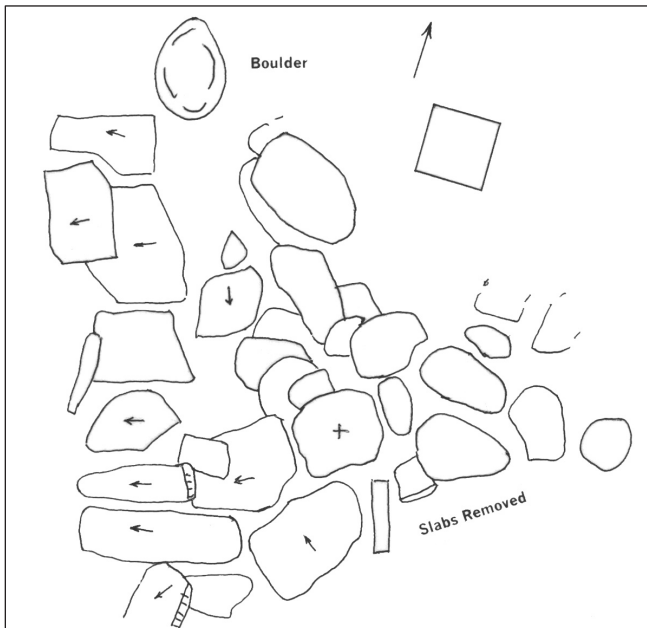


Figure 16. "Patio" flagstones, Salmon Bend site.

They are larger than Ipiutak arrow points of the same format (Clark 1977:Pl. 1) and could be dart tips. Concerning the possibility that they may be tips for war arrows (as they are identified in a display at the Alutiiq Museum), it has been said that preparation for war among Alaskan Eskimos consisted mainly of producing arrows. The inhabitants at Salmon Bend would have been able to put these arrows to good use during hunting expeditions to the Alaska Peninsula or for a stock of arms reserved for defense. However, the points were obviously brought in from elsewhere. The late Kachemak tradition is well enough known on Kodiak for it to be asserted that making this style of weapon was not part of the Kodiak Island technological repertoire. Moreover, none of the points was made of red chert whereas the abundant flaked industry waste found at eroded sites in the Afognak River area, including AFG-108, show an almost exclusive reliance on the local red chert.

Radiocarbon dating of both the annex and the main room is in accord with the accepted age of this artifact in western Alaska. These dates comfortably place the house several centuries before the end of the Kachemak tradition at about AD 1200–1250.

Additional flaked chert artifacts were recovered from the eroded shore at Salmon Bend, including many notched pebbles (Table 2). Again, only stone artifacts were recovered. Here, too, compared with the late Kachemak on Kodiak Island, this assemblage diverges by having a greater abundance of flaked stone tools. As at the Tsunami site, the occupation may come just before a period of rapid change away from the production of flaked stone artifacts.

We had hoped to find in these assemblages differences between permanent settlements and seasonal fishing camps. Interpretation involves some knowledge of Alutiiq seasonal activities. For instance, would a person make wooden equipment (correlated with small adzes and wood working tools) at the main settlement, or would this be done at a fishing camp during a lull between salmon runs? Obvious targets for interpretation are the frequency of fish net weights and fish processing tools such as slate ulu blades, as well as fish storage features. As anticipated, at the Afognak River there were numerous net sinkers, but elsewhere some late Kachemak sites that are not obviously salmon fishing stations also have notched pebbles. For nearly a century notched pebbles have been a subject of discussion among archaeologists who suggest that not all of them were used on salmon fishing nets.

Hearths at all sites were inside. Floors were sunken to some degree. Construction and roofs were substantial, judging from the abundant postholes. Subfloor pits, though numerous, were not large. These attributes should belong to substantial cold-season houses, not seasonal warm-season camps along a fishing stream. Concomitantly, this case is focused on houses in a circumscribed setting that should have dictated summer (May through October) occupation for the salmon fishery. While the absence of notched fish net weights at Aleut Town may have a correlated ecological basis, for instance in a shift to traps and weirs or exclusive curation of net gear at the fishing stream, numbers of such small weights usually are not found in Koniag-phase contexts. Aleut Town was occupied at the end of late Kachemak times. Possibly by that time Alutiiq people had stopped making these net weights, though they continued to use large notched and grooved cobble weights (related to deep sea fishing). Ulu blades were twice as numerous at the Tsunami site as at the outer location, Aleut Town, while stone projectile points of all types were roughly comparable in frequency and the number of abraders and hones (for making and sharpening ulu blades) also was about equal. Figures for the Salmon Bend site are less contrastive (Table 2). The conclusion is that one might not always be able to distinguish with confidence between fishing camps and main or winter villages on the basis of either artifact frequencies or structural remains.

DISCUSSION

The focus of the excavations described here has resulted in the recovery of information on house structures and artifactual contents making distinct activity sets. With caveats the results can be interpreted as household studies. The Aleut Town excavations encountered two buried structures. The Tsunami site excavations focused on a previously discovered house structure (there had been other occupation of the site, but most of the information and artifacts recovered appear to pertain to a single house). At Salmon Bend, work was confined to a single complex house. Large collections obtained from the shore in front of and immediately upstream from the Salmon Bend house apparently were derived from the same settlement occupation, though it is uncertain that the artifacts on the eroded beach were produced by the persons who had lived in the excavated house. They are mainly notched pebble sinkers (Table 2).

We have already considered the possibility that site differences, especially between Tsunami and Salmon Bend on one hand and Aleut Town on the other, might be due to a modest difference in their span of occupation within the late Kachemak period, especially as seen against the background of a period during which the frequency of flaked artifacts was changing regionally. An alternative explanation is that the incidence of flaking varied along a cline extending from Kodiak Island to Kachemak Bay, with greater emphasis on flaked stone towards Kachemak Bay (see Workman and Workman 1988). It might also be that vagaries of small sample size are involved, although the redundancy provided by the Tsunami and Salmon Bend site flaked stone collections lessens the possibility of significant sample variation.

Styles of certain flaked artifacts from the Kodiak archipelago discussed here suggest Norton culture influence. At about the time under discussion, and particularly from AD 600 to 800, there appeared in Kachemak Bay at the Yukon Island Bluff site an occupation that strongly reflects the Norton culture of the Alaska Peninsula. Workman and Workman (1988:348) consider the Yukon Island Bluff occupation to be intrusive. They note, too, that exotic lithic materials are commonplace in this assemblage. To some degree we also find exotic lithic material in the Afognak assemblages, even though ample local sources of red chert were available. By the time the Yukon Island Bluff occupation appeared, the Kachemak tradition had faded in Kachemak Bay. This does not prove that these people moved to Afognak—but they may have. It is perhaps no coincidence that when Kachemak people left Kachemak Bay—whether or not eased out by Norton people—Norton influence is manifested at Afognak Bay. This appears to have been a two-way situation, as Norton–Pacific Coast cross ties are so numerous (see Clark 1982) that Norton and Kachemak may be considered parts of a single archaeological co-tradition.

Considering the development of the Koniag tradition, we have already discussed some of the pertinent facts, such as the association of flaked chert and notched pebble sinkers with late Kachemak but not with the succeeding Koniags. The absence of notched pebbles and flaked chert at Aleut Town, the youngest of the three sites described here, points in the direction of the Koniag tradition, but not conclusively, since notched pebble distribution is erratic. However, there are other indicators that align Aleut Town with the Kachemak tradition. These include styles of harpoon heads, absence of flat-rimmed Koniag-style stone

lamps, absence of heavy splitting adzes, paucity of planing adze bits (which are exceptionally abundant at Koniag tradition sites at the mouth of the Afognak River), maintenance of the very precise “Three Saints” mode of forming barbed point bases, and the absence of a certain style of long faceted ground slate (often hollow-ground) projectile heads with medial ridges, said to be “transitional” Koniag (see Knecht 1995:Pl. 35 C-F) and much more. Hrdlička (1944) asserted that the Koniags ousted their predecessors, who were late Kachemak people, from the Uyak site, but many archaeologists consider this proposal to be unsubstantiated in the light of Hrdlička’s uncontrolled excavation methods. Instead, *in situ* cultural development and cumulative change are often considered to be the most likely explanation. However, Dumond finds that a strong case can be made for some migration to Kodiak between AD 1000 and 1500, resulting in a culture amalgam forming the historic Koniag (Dumond 1991:106–107). Evidence from the Aleut Town site suggests that such an amalgamation may have in fact occurred very rapidly.

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