

RESEARCH NOTES

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Recent Research Notes is intended to be a useful venue for making colleagues aware of ongoing or recent research in any of the four fields of anthropology and for disseminating brief notes of new C¹⁴ dates or other interesting finds, particularly those which do not seem likely to lead to other publication. The editor welcomes submissions at any time for inclusion in the next volume of the journal. We do not limit coverage to research taking place in Alaska but rather include information on research anywhere in the circumpolar Arctic and subarctic.

ARCTIC ALASKA

RESEARCH IN PROGRESS: RADIOCARBON DATING OF BIRNIRK LEVELS AT WALAKPA, NORTH SLOPE, ALASKA

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This project has sampled well-provenienced items from the 2013–2017 excavations at Walakpa (Jensen 2019) for radiocarbon dating and isotopic studies. The new data will be used for chronological modeling to help assess tentative correlations between levels in the site's Harris matrix developed from these excavations and the stratigraphy recorded by Stanford in the late 1960s (Stanford 1976). The results of the chronological modeling will also assist in decision-making for future excavations and will contribute to the ongoing Redating Birnirk project, of which Jensen and Krus are members.

We are focusing on well-provenienced terrestrial bone samples, primarily from known Birnirk levels. Samples will undergo AMS radiocarbon dating and isotopic analysis using a subsample of bone collagen ($\delta^{13}\text{C}$, $\delta^{15}\text{N}$) at the Keck-Carbon Cycle AMS facility at UC Irvine. Dates will be calibrated in OxCal using the internationally recognized IntCal13 and Marine13 calibration curves and the marine reservoir correction for Point Barrow proposed in Krus et al. (2019). Bayesian chronological modeling will be applied with OxCal to produce realistic estimates for the Birnirk presence at Walakpa.

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THE POP-UP ALASKA MUSEUM

Submitted by Amy Phillips-Chan, PhD
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The pop-up ALASKA museum launched at the 2019 Museums Alaska–Alaska Historical Society conference in Kodiak from September 25 to 28. Organized and designed by Amy Phillips-Chan, director of the Carrie M. McLain Memorial Museum in Nome, and Sarah Asper-Smith,

owner of ExhibitAK in Juneau, the exhibit invited museums, cultural centers, and archives from across the state to select a meaningful object from their collection and share a short story using a label template. Labels were printed and mounted onto a large map of Alaska to visualize the diversity and strength of Alaska communities and foster shared meaning-making in the interpretation and celebration of Alaska history and culture (Fig. 1).

Twenty-eight organizations participated in the exhibit and contributed interpretive labels featuring objects and stories from their unique collections. Benjamin Charles, of the Association of Village Council Presidents, Yupiit Piciryarait Museum, in Bethel, described one aspect of the exhibit that encouraged them to participate: “As the doors prepare to open full-time again, AVCP’s YP Museum strategic plan involves external organizational involvement within the museum community and partners. The oil lamp submittal is significant as we light our beacon unveiling the beginning of a brighter future” (Fig. 2). Several participants chose items from their collections that spoke to them personally, such as Monica Shah, director of col-

lections and chief conservator of the Anchorage Museum, who contributed a mixed-media artwork by Rebecca Lyon. “I chose Counting on Liberty because it exemplifies the museum commitment to engage audiences through thought-provoking artwork. Collections and exhibitions can only be places of inclusion and equity through looking at our past and changing how we discuss and present difficult issues. Alaska Native’s rights, women’s rights, and the irony of who we honor (Andrew Jackson on the \$20 bill) are all reasons I chose this artwork for the pop-up exhibition.”

The pop-up ALASKA museum includes three taglines or themes: creativity, culture, and community. The themes spoke to Amanda Lancaster, collections and facilities manager, and her team at the Alutiiq Museum in Kodiak, who shared an image and story about a community-made parka from their collection. “We chose the caribou skin parka because it represented community effort and cultural revitalization, all in one object. From the initial visit by Alutiiq skin-sewers to Finland in 2013 to rediscover Alutiiq materials, to the



Figure 1. Attendees at the Museums Alaska–Alaska Historical Society conference in Kodiak check out the pop-up ALASKA museum, which offered a point of discourse for conversations about collections and communities.

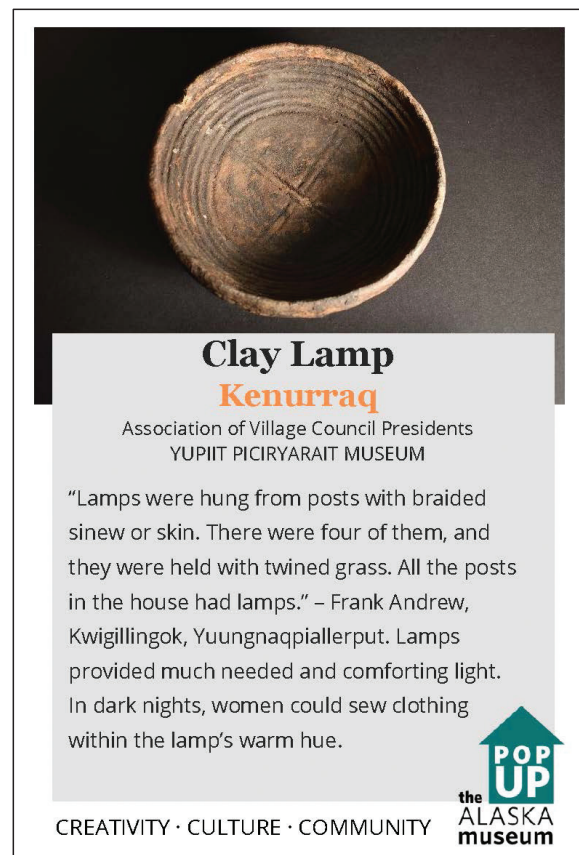


Figure 2. The Yupiit Piciryarait Museum shared an image and story about a clay lamp (kenurraq) in their collection for the opening of the pop-up exhibit.

shared work creating the replica, the parka represents cultural revitalization, the sharing of knowledge, and community effort.”

The pop-up ALASKA museum encourages critical conversations on changing modes of inquiry and community partnerships as cultural and historical organizations strive to bring multiple perspectives into the exhibitionary space. Sarah Asper-Smith reflected, “Living in this vast and diverse state, we are isolated in many ways, but we are connected by our stories and objects and unique sense of identity. This is a simple way for museums to share with each other, create awareness about what we do, and encourage people to visit their area. I think the goal for the future will be to include everyone in our map of Alaska’s museums.”