

## RESEARCH NOTES

**Anne M. Jensen, editor**

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### CENTRAL ALASKA

#### ARCHAEOLOGICAL SURVEY OF THE TANANA STATE FOREST

Submitted by Charles Holmes,  
University of Alaska Fairbanks

Archaeological survey and testing (sponsored by the Alaska Office of History and Archaeology) was conducted in the Tanana Valley State Forest where the 19,000-acre Gilles Creek forest fire burned in May and June 2010. Charles Holmes (UAF) and Randy Tedor (UAA) recorded three new sites. Although pedestrian navigation across the burned landscape was difficult, areas where ground vegetation was completely burned away made it easier to identify surface depressions. One of the sites contains both prehistoric and historic artifacts. Two of the sites have multiple components and may contain house pit features.

#### EXCAVATIONS AT SWAN POINT AND NEARBY SITES

Submitted by Charles Holmes,  
University of Alaska Fairbanks

Barbara Crass (University of Wisconsin–Oshkosh) and Charles Holmes (UAF) continued to test the spatial extent of the Mead site and found that the site may be twice as large as previously believed. New areas of the site will be explored when collaborative excavations resume with Ben Potter (UAF) in 2011. A new site on private property in the middle Tanana Valley near the Gerstle River was discovered and tested by Charles Holmes (UAF) and Randy Tedor (UAA). The site has multiple components in about 2 m of stratified loess. A single test pit produced lithic artifacts of chert, rhyolite, basalt, and obsidian.

Well-preserved faunal remains are associated with artifacts in the deeper sediments. Of note are a bison maxilla fragment in Early Holocene context and numerous eggshell fragments in the oldest components.

### EASTERN ALEUTIANS

#### AKUN ISLAND

Submitted by Jason Rogers

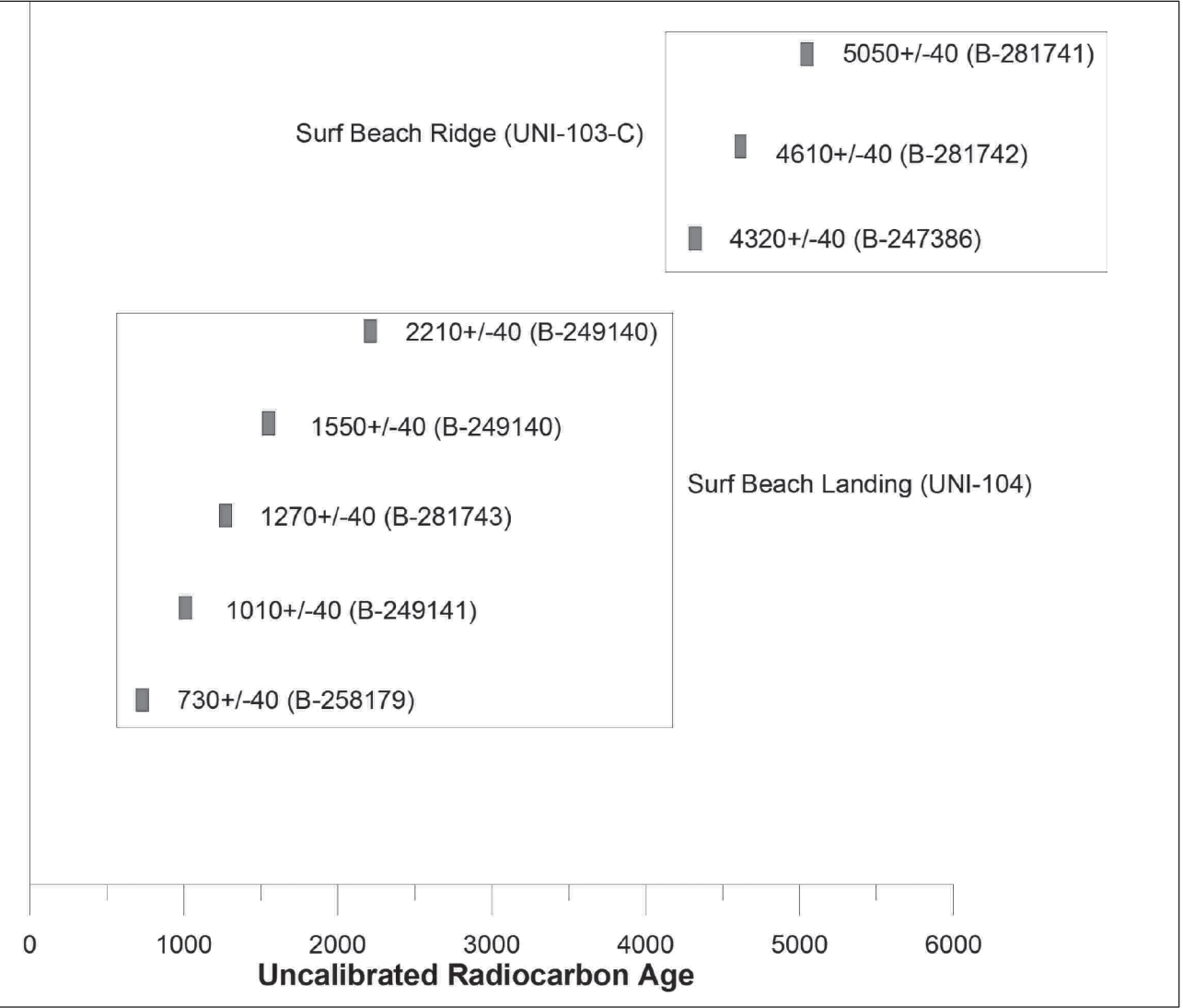
Excavations in 2008 and 2010 at two sites on Akun Island have produced several radiocarbon dates. Both sites consist of deeply stratified middens. One site (UNI-104) is located on a gently sloping backshore beach, while the other (UNI-103-C) is on a higher ridge or saddle overlooking the ocean. The project, conducted by Cultural Resource Consultants, LLC, also produced extensive collections of faunal material, lithics, and other artifacts. The collections are currently under analysis. Radiocarbon dates are provided in Table 1 and Figure 1.

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*Table 1: Akun Island radiocarbon dates, calibrated using INTCAL04 (Reimer et al. 2004).*

Site	<sup>14</sup> C Years BP	Calibrated Years BP	Lab Number
UNI-103-C	5050 ± 40	5910–5670	Beta-281741
UNI-103-C	4610 ± 40	5460–5380, 5330–5290	Beta-281742
UNI-103-C	4340 ± 40	5030–5010, 4980–4840	Beta-247386
UNI-104	2210 ± 40	2340–2120	Beta-249140
UNI-104	1550 ± 40	1530–1350	Beta-281744
UNI-104	1270 ± 40	1290–1080	Beta-281743
UNI-104	1010 ± 40	970–990, 860–820	Beta-249141
UNI-104	730 ± 40	720–650	Beta-258179



*Figure 1. Akun Island radiocarbon dates*

## **SOUTHCENTRAL ALASKA**

### **ETHNOHISTORY IN SEWARD**

Submitted by Kerry D. Feldman,  
University of Alaska Anchorage

Kerry Feldman is reexamining his 2007–08 ethnohistorical study, completed with the assistance of Rachel Mason at the request of the Qutekcak Native Tribe of Seward, Alaska, for its anthropologically relevant information. The study was part of Qutekcak Native Tribe's effort to secure tribal recognition under the Indian Reorganization Act of 1934 as applied to Alaska in 1936. Their petition is still under review, so only general comments on the nature of my current research derived from that study are given here.

This research continues the discussion of Native American identity and essentialist constructions in anthropology. Of anthropological interest is the nature of identity over time of the primarily mixed-descent Native people residing in Seward since the 1890s, most of whom had a Euro-American father, grandfather, or great-grandfather. From the time of contact with Russian fur traders up through the U.S. purchase of Alaska from Russia after 1867, the Prince William Sound region was a diverse cultural mixing area with no indigenous group dominating the region politically or culturally.

Four Native groups whose ancestral villages were located in Alaska towns and cities that today are dominated by non-Native inhabitants received recognition as indigenous "Named City Corporations" as a result of the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (ANCSA) of 1971. With that recognition the indigenous populations in Juneau, Kenai, Kodiak, and Sitka were recognized as Native tribes. Natives in the town of Seward were not listed among these ANCSA indigenous city corporations. Why not? Seward's history as a town (incorporated in 1912) actually begins with a mixed-descent Alaska Native woman and her white fur-trader husband as early as 1884. What kinds of bonds of association did Native people residing in Seward have from the early 1900s until the enactment of the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act of 1971? How did Natives in Seward maintain a Native identity when it was personally, financially, and socially dangerous to openly display such an identity and bonds? This study will examine how their Native identity was affected by the coming to Seward of the Jesse Lee Home orphanage in 1925, World War II, the 1964 Alaska earthquake and tsunami, the establishment of a tuberculosis sanitarium, and ANCSA in 1971.

## **NORTHERN ALASKA**

### **HOMESTEADING IN NORTHERN ALASKA**

Submitted by Robert King, Bureau of Land Management, Anchorage

Robert King continues his research on the privatization of certain federal lands to individuals in northern Alaska, including cases on the Seward Peninsula and a few locales in the Brooks Range and on the North Slope. The rationale was to find examples of the Homestead Laws and related Alaska land conveyance laws in the Far North. This research is connected to King's overarching interest in the history of homesteading in the United States, due in part to the upcoming 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2012 of President Lincoln's signature of the 1862 Homestead Act. The BLM will mark that anniversary with a website, for which King is researching homesteading in Alaska, including the question of how homesteading could occur north of the Arctic Circle.

### **CAPE ESPENBERG THULE ORIGINS PROJECT**

Submitted by John F. Hoffecker and Owen K. Mason,  
Institute of Arctic and Alpine Research (INSTAAR),  
University of Colorado at Boulder

The second field season of a three-year research project at Cape Espenberg on the northern shore of the Seward Peninsula (within Bering Land Bridge National Preserve) was completed June–August 2010. The project is funded by NSF and is focused on human responses to climate change during the critical period ~1000–500 years ago at a crucial locale in Northwest Alaska. The principal investigators are John F. Hoffecker and Owen K. Mason. During 2010, John Darwent (University of California Davis [UCD]) employed a total station to complete a high-resolution map of cultural features on the ten most recent dune ridges at Cape Espenberg, from the easternmost storm surge channel for ~2 km to the cape. With the exception of the youngest ridge (E-1), all the dunes contain evidence of settlement associated with eight newly recorded (KTZ-313–320) and two previously recorded sites (KTZ-101, 171), with more than forty house and cache pit features. In early August, Nancy Bigelow (University of Alaska Fairbanks) cored ponds and peat deposits for paleoclimatic proxy data to reconstruct local environmental history. During June through August 2010, three house features (21, 33, 68) were excavated in three sites on

successive dune ridges at Cape Espenberg, under the direction of Christyann Darwent (UCD), who was assisted by six UCD field school students, five NPS-mentored students, and two graduate students from the University of Paris. In total, 87 m<sup>2</sup> were uncovered to a depth of about 1 m. Excavations produced 4,300 artifacts, 47,200 faunal remains and more than 700 macrofossil and wood samples. Five newly run <sup>14</sup>C samples on caribou bone supplement the chronology for the three sites.

Feature 21, on Ridge E-6 in KTZ-304, represents the earliest phase of Inupiaq settlement at Cape Espenberg, with a date between AD 1270 and 1400 based on two caribou bone collagen samples (680 ± 40 BP, Beta-286168; 640 ± 40 BP, Beta-286169). Feature 21 was excavated by Jeremy Foin (UCD), assisted by Hans Lange (Greenland National Museum). In early August, human remains were encountered within the house floor, apparently marked by a whale bone; work was subsequently suspended, pending NAGPRA consultations with local communities. The entire 30 m<sup>2</sup> excavated in Feature 21 yielded 1,352 artifacts, more than 18,700 faunal remains, 670 pottery fragments, one ceramic lamp, ten amber beads, five antler arrow points, four leister prongs, an ivory fish lure, a walrus scapula shovel, two mattocks, two ivory sealing harpoons, a wound pin, twelve slate ulu blades, seven chert bifaces, two microblades, and 365 fragments of chert debitage. Exotic materials included nephrite, obsidian, iron pyrite, and five mammoth ivory fragments. Four whale bones, including two mandible fragments, were also recovered from Feature 21.

On Ridge E-5a, Chris Darwent directed the excavation within 26 m<sup>2</sup> of a multiroom house with an entry more than five meters long (Feature 68), part of the large site, KTZ-087. Feature 68 was occupied between AD 1440 and 1640, based on two caribou bone assays (250 ± 40 BP, Beta-286171; 360 ± 40 BP, Beta-286172). Feature 68 yielded 1,890 artifacts and about 14,000 faunal remains. Although the overwhelming number of artifacts were either chert debitage (n = 986) or potsherds (n = 479), diagnostic objects include a copper needle, six amber beads, four slate knives, four ulu blades, five sealing harpoons, nine antler arrow points, two knife handles of bone/antler, one piece of slat armor, three wrist guards, six awls (bone and ivory), a labret, and a substantial number of wooden artifacts (toy bow, arrow point, bowls, shafts, rods), including roughly 1,000 pieces of wood flaking debris. The

copper needle and slat armor are especially significant. In addition to whale bone elements from within Feature 68, which included a mandible and two vertebrae, seventeen pieces of baleen were found in the former house.

The most recent feature excavated in 2010 was located on Ridge E-4, where Frédéric Dussault (Laval University) excavated 31 m<sup>2</sup> of a north-facing two-room house with a long entry (Feature 33) that may date between either AD 1670 and 1780 or between 1790 and 1960 (120 ± 40 BP, Beta-286170). Feature 33 yielded substantial evidence of fishing in addition to bones of seal, caribou, walrus, and whale. Feature 33 produced about 14,500 faunal remains, 1,000 wood fragments, and about 1,000 artifacts, with over half either lithic debitage or potsherds. Other artifacts included one amber bead, four chert bifaces, four chert scrapers, two slate blades, an ulu blade, forty-two net sinkers, two antler arrow points, four sealing harpoons, one fishing harpoon, two knife handles, a marlin spike, two mesh gauges, one ceramic lamp, a fish lure, a labret, and two leister prongs. Wooden artifacts included four points, a rod, four shafts and five shaft fragments, and one wick trimmer.

The role of whaling in the Cape Espenberg economy, which is a major research focus of the project, remains problematic and subject to taphonomic studies by Chris Darwent. Another focus is wood, and during 2010, Claire Alix (UAF/University of Paris) conducted beach surveys and recorded archaeological features to examine the driftwood supply and its uses in architecture and in technology at Cape Espenberg. In early August, Scott Elias (Royal Holloway University of London) collected sediment samples to obtain beetle remains for paleoecological analysis and <sup>14</sup>C dating. In addition to participation of students from UCD and the University of Paris, high-school students from local communities assisted with the research during late July under the Student Mentorship Program of the National Park Service, managed by Becky Saleeby. Village elders from Shishmaref, including informant Clifford Weyiouanna, visited Cape Espenberg in late July, in association with Josh Wisniewski (UAF), postdoctoral researcher and cultural anthropologist. The research team will return in 2011 for the third and final season of the project.

#### NUVUK ARCHAEOLOGICAL PROJECT, BARROW

Submitted by Anne Jensen, UIC Science LLC

The Nuvuk Archaeological Project, funded by NSF and the Department of Education ECHO program, completed the sixth large-scale field season in July 2010 at the eroding site at Point Barrow. Once again, the crew was composed largely of North Slope high school students, thirteen in all, with Anne Jensen as principal investigator, assisted by Laura Thomas (UIC) and Ron Mancil, a graduate student at University of Alaska Fairbanks. In 2010, the Nuvuk Project uncovered an additional seven graves, yielding a total of eighty graves from the Nuvuk cemetery, excavated since 2000. Physical anthropological observations on the human remains were completed by Shawn Miller of the University of Utah and the remains await reburial. To reconstruct the regional trends of Inupiaq genetic history, Dennis O'Rourke, as well as postdoctoral researcher Jennifer Raff and graduate student Justin Tackney, also from University of Utah, continue analyses on the aDNA samples obtained from burials within the Nuvuk cemetery, with a number of  $^{14}\text{C}$  samples in preparation for submission. For the remaining Nuvuk mortuary collections, cataloging and analysis is proceeding apace under the direction of Anne Jensen.

#### NAUTICAL SURVEY IN ST. MICHAEL AND STEBBINS

Submitted by Kate Worthington, Institute of Nautical Archaeology, Texas A&M University

Kate Worthington, M.A. candidate at Texas A&M's Nautical Archaeology program, and John Bean, Department of Geomatics, University of Alaska Anchorage, traveled to St. Michael in summer 2010 to complete an initial assessment and archaeological survey of abandoned Gold Rush-era Yukon River sternwheel steamers. This involved a week of surveying the steamer remains, which lie mostly in the intertidal zone; collecting total station and laser scan data; filming video records; describing and recording each wreck; and of course, enjoying the brilliant sunshine. Great thanks are owed to the villages of St. Michael and Stebbins for enabling survey of the historical steamboat wrecks. We hope to come back next summer, survey for additional wrecks, gather supplemental comparative data on the wrecks already recorded, and assess changes in the site formation processes.



## REVIEW

### *LIVING OUR CULTURES, SHARING OUR HERITAGE: THE FIRST PEOPLES OF ALASKA*

*Edited by Aron L. Crowell, Rosita Worl, Paul C. Ongtooguk, and Dawn D. Biddison, 2010, Smithsonian Books, Washington, D.C.*

*hardcover \$50, paperback \$29.95, 312 pages, color figures, ; ISBN 978-1588342706*

**Reviewed by Amy Steffian**

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It is almost possible to smell salmon smoking, to feel an Aleutian Island breeze, or to hear the beat of a skin drum as you turn the pages of *Living Our Cultures, Sharing Our Heritage: The First Peoples of Alaska*. This beautifully illustrated volume is literally overflowing with Native Alaska. From the voices of Native people to objects that document the ingenuity of ancestors and photos that capture the vibrant, living traditions of today's Native communities, *Living Our Cultures* is a celebration of Alaska's first peoples.

At the core of the volume are 200 ethnographic objects from the Smithsonian Institution's Alaska collections, most procured over a century ago and cared for in Washington, D.C. In partnership with the Anchorage Museum at Rasmuson Center, the Smithsonian's Arctic Studies Center worked to bring the objects home on extended loan and create opportunities for exhibition and exploration. Published in 2010 by Smithsonian Books, *Living Our Cultures* is one piece of this impressive effort at reconnection. Many of the items in the book are currently displayed or available for study at the Anchorage Museum.

To frame the historic objects, volume editors offer essays on nine Alaska Native cultures written by contemporary cultural leaders. Each essay considers themes of (1) sea, land, and rivers; (2) family and community; and (3) ceremony and celebration, to present a personal view of Native experience. The editors have carefully woven museum object photos and provenance throughout these essays. A complete set of Athabascan summer ceremonial regalia ca. 1926 appears amid Eliza Jones' description of a

Koyukon memorial potlatch (pp. 193–194). Nineteenth-century Sugpiaq hunting gear follows Gordon Pullar's discussion of the pressures felt by today's fishermen (pp. 151–156). The effect is a sense of timelessness. Western, linear notions of past and present are suspended in favor of a more fluid sense of time where ancestors' objects contribute to the broad, complicated landscape of contemporary life.

The chapters also include short topical essays by culture bearers, adding a chorus of voices to the presentation. Aaron Leggett writes about being a Native person from Alaska's urban center, Anchorage. Ricardo Worl discusses the challenges of learning clan knowledge and becoming a Tlingit leader in the modern world. Karla Booth explores her connections to Metlakatla and the wild foods that provide physical and spiritual sustenance. While tensions brought by increasing globalization are evident, the presentation is celebratory. A sense of cultural pride pervades the book and, like the title, reminds readers that Alaska's Native cultures are living cultures. Photographs that highlight the Alaska landscape and the work of Native peoples also capture this spirit, filling the book with color and activity.

Chapters on the larger Living Our Cultures Project (by Aron Crowell), Alaska Native history (by Paul Ongtooguk and Claudia Dybdahl), and Alaska Native self-determination (by Rosita Worl) introduce the culture-specific essays. These essays frame the discussion, providing a broader context for understanding current perspectives on material culture, heritage preservation, collaboration with museums, and issues of identity.



Importantly, *Living Our Cultures* is the first survey of Alaska Native cultures primarily written by Alaska Native peoples. Although it is one of a growing number of publications that reflect collaborations between Alaska Natives and anthropologists around the interpretations of collections (e.g., Crowell et al. 2001; Fienup-Riordan 1996, 2007; Haakanson and Steffian 2009), it is the first to tackle a statewide presentation.

Like previous works, this book reflects a commitment to collaborative anthropology. Signs of this collaboration, and of a truly respectful engagement of multiple perspectives, appear in the details throughout the work. For example, *Living Our Cultures* represents each Alaska culture independently—as related yet unique societies. The Tlingit, Haida, and Tsimshian cultures, so often lumped in summaries, are considered individually, as are the Sugpiaq and Unanga. Similarly, the book ends with a chapter on collaborative conservation (by Landis Smith, Michele Austin-Dennehy, and Kelly McHugh), discussing the ways that partnership can extend beyond interpretation to the physical care of objects.

A number of the objects in this book have been published before. Some of the same ethnographic items can be found in *Inua* (Fitzhugh and Kaplan 1982), *Crossroads of Continents* (Fitzhugh and Crowell 1988), and *Looking Both Ways* (Crowell et al. 2001). However, the current presentation is unique. Showing collections from multiple cultures illustrates the breathtaking diversity of Native Alaska. It allows readers to contrast pieces with those from neighboring groups. The book offers an opportunity to study both the broad similarities and subtle differences between cultures and to consider their sources.

Another benefit of the presentation is that the object photographs are large and in color. *Living Our Cultures* shares 200 objects, each with a three-quarter page portrait. The objects are skillfully imaged on a white background. Although each is only pictured once, from one angle, it is possible to see fine details of constructions on many—to count stitches, to see how decorations were at-

tached or inlaid, and to examine graphic designs. This will please contemporary artists.

Beneath each object, readers find its Native and English names with size and provenance data. This is paired with a detailed caption that provides information on materials represented, a photo of the object in use, oral history information about the object, and a quote about object function. For example, we learn that a 14-cm-long *aangqaq*, or ball, from St. Lawrence Island is made of bleached sealskin and stuffed with reindeer hair (p. 95). Yupik people used the ball in a game that celebrated the first whale harvested each season. Men played against women, and a fair amount of flirtation was involved. This level of detail is one of the work's strengths. The authors have developed a rich context for understanding every object and interpreting the Smithsonian's Alaska collections far into the future. The object captions weave the material, social, and spiritual significance of each object together, providing a deeper, more holistic understanding. Editor Aron Crowell says it well: "Behind every object is a story about people and relationships" (p. 13).

The construction of the book also pays homage to its contents. Though just over 300 pages, the hardcover volume weighs nearly five pounds due to its thick, glossy paper. This and the use of rich colors—earthy brown, ice blue, salmon pink, wildflower yellow—give the publication a luxurious feeling. This is not a quick read, but a book meant to be revisited for years.

*Living Our Cultures* is a warm, lively introduction to Alaska's Native people and a valuable reference to Alaska Native material culture. It will appeal to both public and scholarly audiences. Anthropologists and museum professionals will find its multivocal presentation and rich contextual details on material culture valuable for interpreting related archaeological, ethnographic, and contemporary objects. This book belongs on your shelf between volumes of the *Handbook of North American Indians* and *Alaska Native Art* (Fair 2006). It will be an enduring reference.



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## REVIEW

### *BEFORE THE STORM: A YEAR IN THE PRIBILOF ISLANDS, 1941–1942*

By *Fredericka Martin*. Edited with supplemental material by *Raymond Hudson*. University of Alaska Press, Fairbanks, 2010.

Paperback; xiv + 385 pages, maps, photographs, notes, appendices, bibliography, index; ISBN 978-1-60223-076-7

#### Reviewed by Douglas W. Veltre

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Of all Alaska Native communities, it is likely that none has experienced a longer or harsher history of exploitation than the Pribilof Island villages of St. Paul and St. George. Known in precontact time to Aleuts (Unangan) of southwestern Alaska, the islands were uninhabited until Russian fur hunters located them in 1786 and 1787. Within a few years, competing companies had set up camps at several locations on each island to harvest northern fur seals, millions of which came to the islands each summer to haul ashore and give birth. Unlike the various species of hair seals, fur seals have an unusually dense and soft double layer of fur, giving them high value on the international marketplace. Russians first brought Aleuts to the Pribilofs as laborers for the sealing industry on a seasonal basis and later settled them into two permanent villages, one on St. Paul and one on St. George.

In 1799, the Russian-American Company took sole control of fur hunting and other business ventures in Alaska until the territory's sale to the United States in 1867. From then until the cessation of commercial fur sealing in 1984, the U.S. government directly or indirectly oversaw the sealing operations. During much of this Russian and American history, tens of thousands of fur seals were harvested each summer, although at times over-killing resulted in the suspension of commercial sealing for some years. Throughout this entire history, it was Aleuts who provided the bulk of the labor for harvesting and processing the fur seal skins as well as for many other island tasks. Unfortunately, most aspects of the Aleuts' lives were controlled by the businesses and governments in

charge, for whom the profits from sealing were always a far greater concern than was the welfare of the Aleuts.

It was in this context that Samuel Berenberg was hired in 1941 by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to serve for one year as the physician for St. Paul. His wife, Fredericka Martin, thirty-six and a trained nurse who had travelled widely, accompanied him. Although they had had only one month's notice that they would go to St. Paul, Martin arrived on the island enthusiastically determined to learn all she could about the geology, animal and plant life, weather, and, importantly, the people of the Pribilofs. As her narrative makes clear, she hit the ground running. Before she left the island in 1942, she had already begun writing an account of her stay, which she finished in the next year. *Before the Storm* is that manuscript.

Following Hudson's helpful Introduction, which sets the stage for Berenberg's and Martin's sojourn on St. Paul, Martin's account is composed of forty-three short chapters, each focused mostly on a single topic or experience. Overall, they follow the course of Martin's year on the island, ending somewhat abruptly with her departure from the island in the company of the Pribilovians themselves, who were being removed to internment camps in southeast Alaska following Japanese incursions and bombings in the Aleutian Islands.

While Martin delighted in the natural environment of St. Paul—"our personal northern Eden" (p. 328)—it was the oppression of the Aleuts by the government that aroused her greatest passion. Housing, education, and health shortcomings on St. Paul are all confronted by

Martin, and time and again she underscores the ways in which the lives of the island's Aleut residents were manipulated by the government and how Aleut life "was far removed from the rarefied atmosphere of the [Fish and Wildlife] Service families" (p. 97).

Interspersed throughout the book Hudson has placed brief sidebars, most excerpts from Martin's own journals. These are nice additions, providing color and immediacy to the main text. In his Afterword, Hudson does an excellent job of outlining the essential elements of Pribilof history from the war years to the present, including, importantly, details of the internment experience of the Pribilovians and other Aleuts and of the Pribilovians' subsequent struggle for independence from government control.

Three appendices round out the book: the foreword written by Martin to her original manuscript of the book, excerpts of the medical report written by Samuel Berenberg of his year on St. Paul, and a list of men from St. Paul and St. George who served in the military during World War II. Of these supplements, Berenberg's report is an especially enlightening document in its own right, for, as Hudson notes, the concerns he raises are presented in a larger historical and social context and often mirror those brought up by Martin.

As it turned out, Martin's year on St. Paul came at the beginning of the end of seventy years of unbridled U.S. government oppression in the Pribilof Islands, what Dorothy Jones described in her account of the astonishing U.S. treatment of Pribilof Aleuts as "hidden, internal colonialism" (Jones 1980:84). With the World War II internment in southeast Alaska of Aleuts from the Pribilof Islands and elsewhere came military service, employment off of the islands, and increased contact with the outside world. Empowered in part by these experiences, Pribilof Aleuts began to seek greater control over their lives once the war was over.

Martin's interest in the Pribilof Islands was no passing fancy. Within two years after leaving, she had edited linguist Richard Geoghegan's *Aleut Language* (Geoghegan 1944), for which she wrote the introduction, and published *The Hunting of the Silver Fleece: Epic of the Fur Seal* and *Sea Bears: The Story of the Fur Seal* in 1946 and 1960,

respectively (Martin 1946a, 1960). She also remained a fierce advocate for the rights of the Pribilovians. As Hudson writes in his Afterword, Martin "called for the obliteration of 'social caste barriers' between islanders and white employees, for 'just cash wages for all their work,' and for 'the sealers' right to a voice in settling their own community problems and casting their votes as citizens'" (p. 322, quoting Martin 1946b).

Martin's account will certainly be of interest to a wide audience, including students of Alaska political and economic history, Native cultures, women's history, medical history, and the natural sciences. Particularly because so few books about the Pribilofs have focused on the people of the islands, *Before the Storm* offers an especially welcome perspective to our understanding of the unusual history of the Aleuts there. Hudson, an artist and writer who for several decades has contributed substantially to our appreciation of Aleut culture, is to be commended for doing such a fine job in bringing Martin's contribution to its long-awaited publication.

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## REVIEW

### ***CHASING THE DARK: PERSPECTIVES ON PLACE, HISTORY, AND ALASKA NATIVE LAND CLAIMS***

*Edited by Kenneth L. Pratt, 2009. Bureau of Indian Affairs, Alaska Region, ANCSA Office, Anchorage  
Paperback; xiv + 472 pages; color photos, maps, and drawings, three appendices, no index; ISBN 978-1-60725-740-0  
Available gratis by contacting the Bureau of Indian Affairs, ANCSA Office (907-271-3695); Kenneth.Pratt@bia.gov*

**Reviewed by Noel D. Broadbent**

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When I agreed to review this fascinating book, I figured it would be a fairly straightforward and familiar type of academic exercise. After all, I am a northern archaeologist, had been to many of these regions in Alaska, and know many of the authors. I even thought I was familiar with the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (ANCSA). But nothing prepared me for one of the most unusual books I have ever run across. I should have been forewarned when I picked up this ridiculously heavy 472-page tome. What I discovered was a beautifully illustrated mindscape of texts ranging from government lingo to poetry, self-examinations, and stern reminders of the colonial past to the challenges facing Alaska youth today. Section 14(h)(1) of ANCSA was a one-of-a-kind effort resulting in a vast, rich and diverse record of Alaska Native history and culture; but *Chasing the Dark* is certainly no ordinary academic treatise on the subject.

The goal of the publication is very clear: to reveal the richness of the records of this now thirty-year-old program and, as pointed out by the editor, to rectify the fact that this program is largely unknown to the general public and even to many Alaska Natives. The starting point is ANCSA 14(h)(1) legislation (Public Law 92-203), passed in 1971. The act created twelve Alaska Native regional corporations, extinguished all claims of aboriginal rights in Alaska, and awarded title to 40 million acres of land. This was done for the simple reason that access was needed for the oil pipeline that was to be built from Prudhoe Bay to Valdez. Like many Native Americans in the Lower 48, Alaska Natives had been “bought” along with their terri-

tories in 1867, albeit after the Emancipation Proclamation of 1863 and the Thirteenth Amendment of 1865. This corporate model was again applied to Alaska Natives through ANCSA, and this is the curious backdrop for the whole enterprise. The Native corporations were to identify and apply for conveyance of historic and cultural sites and cemeteries which the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA), following agency research, was to then certify. This is the only place in ANCSA legislation where culture and history were central to the claims.

The book is divided into six sections, most with multiple chapters, and three appendices. Additional sidebars, photos, illustrations, maps, vignettes, and essays are interspersed throughout the chapters.

#### **BEGINNINGS**

In Section I, Kenneth L. Pratt, editor and a major contributor to the volume, provides a detailed description of the program, which he has managed since 1996. Pratt pulls no punches about the difficulties of making this thing work, the failures of government agencies, researchers, and conflicts within the Native communities themselves. One can hardly imagine a more daunting task.

#### **HISTORY AND CULTURE**

Section II illustrates the varied nature of the sources and the challenges of the ANCSA endeavor. The thirteen papers begin with a chapter by William L. Sheppard

on Siberian-Alaskan warfare, the history of battle sites, and the nature of these conflicts, a largely unknown aspect of Alaska Native history. Rita Miraglia documents Steller's landfall on Kayak Island in 1741, the first time a European set foot on Alaska soil. Alice J. Lynch and Pratt give an account of Neets'it Gwich'in caribou fences and caches, illustrated with drawings and photos of elders. William E. Simeone writes of the varied historical narratives relating to fishing on the Copper River, the Batzulnetas site in particular, and the Katie John case in which Ahtna fishing rights were contested and eventually won. Matthew O'Leary provides two Koniag place-name lists and maps of Kodiak Island and the Alaska Peninsula based on information provided by elders Anakenti Zeeder, Larry Matfay, and Nick Abalama. Miraglia writes of now-abandoned Chilkat Tlingit villages near Haines claimed under ANCSA and the difficulties of this conveyance. In "Vestiges of the Past," Francis Broderick and Pratt present a collage of artifacts from the Kuskokwim Bay area. Pratt writes of identity and change among the Dena'ina people of the Kenai through an interview with Peter Kalifornsky and Fedosia Sacaloff. He also writes of the story of Kapegualria, a shaman, and a unique Yup'ik memorial mask illustrating the story, along with a place-name analysis. David P. Staley presents fascinating material on settlement mobility in the Buckland region, a treasure to archaeologists trying to understand site remains. The story of a *tengmiarpak*, a giant eagle, is presented in a sidebar by Pratt. Miraglia follows with a great paper that describes the process of ANCSA documentation and research. In "Weaving History," she defines the eight "strands of evidence" involved: the application by the regional corporation, the physical setting, the cultural remains, the historical maps, the historical photos, the oral histories, the written histories, and finally, the interpretation of the material as a whole. The last chapter, by Pratt, presents toponyms, cultural geography, and a site inventory of the Kulukak Bay area of southwestern Alaska. This chapter lays a foundation for the subsequent discussions.

My main quibble is that the reader needs better overview maps of Alaska to follow the narrative. A map showing language areas, topography, vegetation, and climate would also have been helpful, especially for non-Alaskans. The individual maps in the various articles are colorful but needed insets showing the reader where these places are in Alaska, as well as north arrows and scales. The color pho-

tographs are spectacular and bring the places, accounts of elders, and the entire book to life.

## IMPLEMENTATION

O'Leary starts this section with a description of Edward W. Nelson's sledge journey through the Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta in 1878–1879. The Nelson collection is one of the finest in the Smithsonian Institution and is now part of the Arctic Studies exhibit at the Anchorage Museum. Miraglia writes of the hospitality and assistance of elders Pete and Ruth Koktelash of Nondalton—a tribute to their generosity and warm hearts towards hapless researchers. Matthew L. Ganley gives an account of the frustrating relocation of the Bear Rock Monument for the Bering Straits Native Corporation and the luck associated with the effort once earthquakes had done their work. Two sidebar texts on a grave at Chisana (Upper Tanana) and caves at Ikligurak, inhabited by invisible people, pop up before a chapter by O'Leary on prehistoric blowout sites at Dickey Lake in the Alaska Range. Miraglia examines Chugach "smokehouses," which functioned as dwellings of various kinds and actually have little to do with subsistence and the smoking of fish and game. Elder Frieda Roberts' retrospective on female menstruation restrictions is a sidebar narrative accompanied by the editor's comments on the sensitivity of such personal information.

Dale C. Slaughter's "Aleutian Field Images" gives an engaging visual account of fieldwork experience. O'Leary's chapter on the reindeer villages of the Lower Mulchatna River, Bristol Bay, reflects on Sheldon Jackson's reindeer program and his 1892 social engineering experiment. Pratt's "Reflections on Russian River" casts light on the fishing of "reds" (sockeye salmon) on the Kenai and the multiple stakeholders involved in this "public fishing hole." The ethnography and archaeology of this region is presented in a sidebar article that makes it clear that the Dena'ina did more than catch salmon in this area. Fred Harden writes of the nineteenth-century caribou hunters of the Seward Peninsula. Clues about a winter village called "Under-the-Rocks" on the Anvik River are presented in a sidebar text. O'Leary discusses the marine reservoir age of shells from archaeological sites on Uyak Bay, Kodiak Island; modern shells give dates up to a millennium too old, with serious repercussions for archaeology. Pratt writes of a weird experience involving a haunted site in southwest Alaska that made people sick—which Pratt experienced first-hand.



This section includes sites, surveys, oral histories, policy dilemmas, and methods encountered by ANCSA fieldworkers and their local colleagues. The images and maps are stunning. The diversity of the content is almost overwhelming, but Section IV, Interpretation and Innovation, boils the subject down.

## INTERPRETATION AND INNOVATION

Robert M. Drozda's "An Agattu Island Journal" consists of notes and personal reflections on place, spontaneous thoughts, and memories of his time on this Aleutian island and, previously, on Nunivak Island. His wonderment captures the feeling of being there and "the mix of metaphor and logic that cannot be completely explained with linear language" in which the lines between "human consciousness and the physical world begin to blur" (p. 318). A sidebar on the Sawmill Bay site on Prince William Sound contains a quote by John Klashinoff from an ANCSA tape: "Don't destroy nothing." Gerald A. Bair and Pratt write of the Fish River Eskimos, the Omilak Mine, and the beautifully decorated Golovnin Bay drill bow from the Nelson collection. A sidebar describes Kokrines, an important abandoned Koyukon Athabascan village. Monica Sheldon's piece on the "dreadful" days of winter darkness and the power of the sun is a delightful essay on the story of a man named Akmalier, who captured daylight in a seal bladder, and the songs, dances, and masks connected with this festival. Michael Seyfert gives a personal narrative of his experience of coming north and the process of listening and understanding voice and memory in oral histories. A sidebar presents a text on traditional teaching by two Native elders. Marshall elder Ben Fitka speaks of learning how to live on the land, and Wrangell elder Dick Stokes tells a migration story. "The Last Harvest" by Gerald Bair is an elegant fictionalized reconstruction of the last blue fox harvest on Agattu Island, inspired by Parascovia Lokanin Wright and Innokenty Golodoff. This story takes place over eight months (August to March) and leads up to the Japanese invasion in 1942.

This "Interpretation" section is more essay than description and captures the essence of human experience, including that of researchers, in this part of the world.

## MOVING FORWARD

This section returns to the nuts and bolts of implementing ANCSA 14(h)(1) and opens with an overview of the

places and cemeteries in the vast Doyon region by Robert A. Sattler, who describes the administration of this investigative and legal process through the Tanana Chiefs Conference, the necessity for redoing documentation that proved inadequate, interagency coordination, consultation, management of allotments, and continuing work with the ANCSA archives. "Protecting the Past for the Future," by John F.C. Johnson of Chugach Alaska Corporation, gives Native voice to the loss of ancestral lands and the urgent need to preserve Native knowledge as world heritage. The work of the Sealaska Corporation, one of the twelve regional corporations, is presented by Sarah Demmert. Like Johnson, she describes the dilemmas of ANCSA and the conflicts between fulfilling government protocols and perpetuating Native culture. Carl M. Hild writes of the value of local and traditional knowledge and proposes that those who use the ANCSA materials deposit reports or summary materials in the collection in order to develop and sustain it.

The ANCSA staff lists in Appendix A are full of cartoons and photos and vivid testimony to the hard work that went into this program by so many people over the years. It closes with a powerful sidebar article by Howard T. (Nakaar) Amos, from Nunivak Island, on page 449. A polite and respectful acknowledgement of the efforts by ANCSA staff is tempered by the realities of the loss of Native culture, knowledge, and values. Appendix B, by O'Leary, Drozda, and Pratt, describes the content, organization, and disposition of the ANCSA 14(h)(1) records collection. Appendix C, by O'Leary, describes "Native Groups" and "Native Primary Places of Residence" (NPPR) claims under ANCSA. Two certified Native Groups are highlighted: Olsonville, Inc., an Aleut-Swedish community, and Tanalian, Inc., on Lake Clark. Two NPPRs are also described: New Kassigluq on the Holitna River and Dehsoon' Cheeg, an Ahtna village on the Nabesna River. This last section pulls together both the substance and the process of the ANCSA 14(h)(1) undertaking.

I like this book for many reasons. It has made ANCSA records more visible and accessible in a well-written, referenced, and beautifully designed format. I am certain it will become a valuable teaching tool and guide to Native Alaska and cultural research at the university level but, hopefully, also in school lesson plans. The thousands of tourists who visit Alaska for its natural wonders need to have a look at this book as well. But in the final analysis, this book is a legacy of Native culture and history

achieved through years of hard work and scholarship by numerous individuals through the ANCSA 14(h)(1) program. The faces and the landscapes merge into a whole through Native knowledge and voices. The series title “Shadowlands” is explained as the loss of knowledge today, and *Chasing the Dark* is the effort to shed light on these fragile traces of Native heritage. The shadows have been transformed into exquisite and vibrant images in this outstanding book.