Alaska Native Artifacts; Eskimos and Aleuts of the Bering Sea Rhythm of the Sea Collection

Marcia Sue Taylor

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ALASKA NATIVE ARTIFACTS; ESKIMOS AND ALEUTS OF THE BERING SEA
RHYTHM OF THE SEA COLLECTION

by

Marcia Sue Taylor

A thesis submitted to the Graduate College
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of Master of Arts
Anthropology
Western Michigan University
April 2017

Thesis Committee:

Bilinda Straight, Ph.D., Chair
Vincent Lyon-Callo, Ph.D.
José António Brandão, Ph.D.
“Only his artifacts provide his earthly testimony” (Thiry 1977, p. 5).

The purpose of the research is to catalogue Eskimo and Aleut artifacts that comprise an unprovenienced (anonymous) collection in the Anthropology Department at Western Michigan University, and provide a corresponding ethnography. This will be accomplished in two ways: (1) a museum curation project, and (2) an ethnographic study that will focus on cultural synthesis within the parameters of artistic styles of harpoon head artifacts and geography as these pertain to the artifacts and their distribution. Analysis of the collection’s harpoon heads will provide both artistic and inventive evidence of a prehistoric Eskaleut correlation of Northern Maritime tradition (Eskimo) and Aleut cultures. All artifacts will henceforth be identified as the Rhythm of the Sea Collection.
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to express my heartfelt gratitude to my Thesis Committee Chair, Professor Bilinda Straight for planting the seed for my thesis topic, and her faithful encouragement during the research and writing process.

In addition, I would like to thank the rest of my committee: Professor Vincent Lyon-Callo and Professor José Brandão for agreeing to be part of this journey, and their support by offering advice on various research perspectives.

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Further, I want to thank my support system: Ken Baker, Trish Cavanaugh, Liana DiNunzio, Frank and Jan Gibes, Jane Lockwood, Teresa Stannard, and Cyndee Viel.

Finally, I would like to thank my family: my understanding husband Ron, son Brian, and sister Kary Devereaux. The support I received from them during the last four years was overwhelming. I am grateful to Brian for introducing and leading the way to achieve a degree from Western Michigan University. Go Broncos!

Thank you Mom and Dad for your spiritual love …

Marcia Sue Taylor
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INTRODUCTION: ENTRY POINT

The contemporary philosophical approach of Marxist dialectics provided the “concrete” materiality praxis for the museum curation project and ethnographic research of the Rhythm of the Sea Collection, with specific concentration given to the harpoon head artifacts (Ollman 2003, p. 42).¹ The dualistic correlation of the two thesis parts denotes their dialectical relationship. Marx regarded “the internal nature of the tie between the parts (whatever parts) and not the function of the whole qua whole in clarifying these ties” (p. 42). Therefore, artistic styles of harpoon head artifacts, and geography as these pertain to the artifacts and their distribution or provenience are the ties between the two thesis parts, as listed in Figure 1.²

<table>
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<th>Museum Curation Project (part)</th>
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<td>primitive materials distribution</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Eskimo and Aleut comparison</td>
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Figure 1. Thesis Parts and Ties. Source: Marcia S. Taylor 2015.

¹ Per Bertell Ollman (2003) “concrete” is a Hegelian term used by Marx “to mark some aspect of the whole in the part” (p. 42). Marx maintained, “The real concrete is simply the world in which we live, in all its complexity” (p. 60). Ollman (b. 1935) was a Professor of Politics at New York University. In 2001, he was the first recipient of the Charles McCoy Lifetime Achievement Award for Scholarship from the New Politics Section of the American Political Science Association (sec.). Ollman authored many books dedicated to Marxism, including Alienation: Marx’s Conception of Man in Capitalistic Society (1971), and Dialectical Investigations (1993) (sec.).

² Figure 1 was used as an outline for the thesis proposal “Alaska Native Artifacts; Eskimos and Aleuts of the Bering Sea, Rhythm of the Sea Collection,” dated and presented November 10, 2015.
Each thesis part, whether the museum curation project or ethnographic research has “relational equality,’ where the entity in question is considered identical with the whole that it relationally expresses” (Ollman 2003, p. 41). Marxist Bertell Ollman used the algebraic equation “(1 = 1)” to demonstrate “relational equality” (p. 40–41). Therefore, if the museum curation project = x and ethnographic research = y, then (x = y) and their dualistic correlation is equal. Furthermore, as x and y represent a side of the thesis they subsequently support the other side. In terms of the dialectic, the equation [(x = y) = (y = x)] = Σ represents the parts that determine the “whole,” as epitomized by the thesis summation, which states analysis of the harpoon head artifacts proved both artistic and inventive evidence of a prehistoric correlation of Eskimo and Aleut cultures (P. 42). Similarly, the thesis summation itself contains two parts – Eskimo culture and Aleut culture; when added together they become the respective cultural materialism correlation or whole. “Our commonsense conceptions of ‘whole’ and ‘part’ are derived from a view of the world in which the whole (any whole) is the sum of its parts, themselves separate and distinct units that have simply been added together (an external relation)” (p. 54–55). The relational equality of the parts for the thesis and the thesis summation define the purpose of ethnographic research in a mathematical context, as diagramed in Figure 2.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Thesis Equation</th>
<th>Thesis Summation Equation</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>x = museum curation project (part)</td>
<td>Σ = prehistoric correlation of Eskimo and Aleut cultures (whole)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>y = ethnographic research (part)</td>
<td>a = Eskimo culture (part)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Σ = prehistoric correlation of Eskimo and Aleut cultures (whole)</td>
<td>b = Aleut culture (part)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[(x = y) = (y = x)] = Σ</td>
<td>Σ = (a + b)</td>
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*Figure 2. Thesis Parts and Summation. Source: Marcia S. Taylor 2016.*

Ollman (2003) utilized the overall conceptual process of “dialectical research” as a system, “Given an approach that proceeds from the whole to the part, from the system inward,
dialectical research is primarily directed to finding and tracing four kinds of relations: identity/difference, interpretation of opposites, quantity/quality, and contradiction” (p. 15). This interactive system is a whole. It provided the complete “circulation” for the entire thesis (p. 85). As with any system there exists a circulatory flow between the two defined thesis parts, and an entry point where the ties defined in the parts formulate a synthesis or abstraction (p. 60). In other words, a dialectic has an entry point where a synergy reaction begins the process to prove its ontological hypothesis, as explained in Figure 3.

Reversal of the circulation of the dialectical research system resulted in the locus supporting the thesis parts; thereby corroborating the hypothesis, as previously defined in the Thesis Summation Equation. In research praxis Ollman (2003) acknowledged, “The two

---

3 Ollman (2003) described “circulation” as a “metamorphosis” when money is exchanged for commodity (p. 85). He wrote, “… the contradictions in commodity and money, which develop in circulation, are said to ‘reproduce themselves’ in capital” (qtd. in K. Marx 1968, p. 512). Contradictions are evident in “dialectical research” (p. 85). Their mere existence causes circulatory “metamorphosis” as the thesis progresses toward proving the hypothesis (p. 85). As an interactive system, “circulation” appropriately described all the various relationships (thesis parts and ties) that constitute “dialectical research” (p. 85).

4 Marx used the term “abstraction” in four philosophical “senses” (Ollman 2003, p. 61). The first three “senses” or abstractions are applicable to “dialectical research” (p. 62, 85). Ollman clarified, “In these abstractions, certain spatial and temporal boundaries and connections stand out, just as others are obscure and even invisible, making what is in practice inseparable appear separate and the historically specific features of things disappear behind their more general forms” (p. 62). “Marx’s abstractions taken as a group, is that they focus on and incorporate both change and interaction (or system)” in the particular forms in which these occur in the capitalistic era” (p. 64). Within the whole “dialectical research” system, “abstractions” motivate and are motivated by “circulation” (p. 85).
outstanding features of Marx’s use of the dialectic for presentation are, first, that each subject is dealt with from many different vantage points, and second, that each subject is followed out of and in the particular forms it assumes at different times and in different contexts” (p. 131). One of the “vantage points” of the dialectical method exposed the non-homogeneous paradigm that exists between the museum curation project and American society (p. 131). Edmund Gaither (1992) stated:

This view grows from two important observations: the recognition that many cultural groupings that previously have been rendered invisible in our population no longer accept that status, and the fact that recent immigration from other parts of the Western Hemisphere as well as distant areas has altered the makeup of many communities – large and small, urban and semirural. (p. 56)5

He further maintained, “The traditional dominance with the United States by whites of European ancestry will inevitably give way as a more pluralistic view of who is American takes firmer root” (p. 57). The dialectical method proved beneficial while conducting ethnographic research of Eskimo and Aleut peoples. As a system, the methodology provided an organizational schema of the thesis parts and ties or discourse themes for the ethnographic research. Finally, Ollman (2003) knowledgeably depicted the historical complexion of the dialectic as a research system:

Dialectics in one form or another, has existed for as long as there have been human beings on this planet. This is because our lives have always involved important elements of change and interaction; our environment, taken as a whole, has always had a decisive limiting and determining effect on whatever went on inside it; and “today,” whenever it occurs, always emerges out of what existed yesterday, including the possibilities contained therein, and always lead (and will lead), in the very same ways that it has, to what can and will take place tomorrow. (p. 2–3)

5 Edmund Barry Gaither (b. 1944) founded and was the curator/director of the Museum of the National Center of Afro-American Artists from 1969-2012. Currently, he is a special consultant for the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston. Gaither co-founded and was the first president of the Association for African American Museums, previously known as the African American Museums Association. Biographical information was retrieved from the Museum of the National Center of Afro-American Artists, accessed March 26, 2016, http://www.ncaaa.org.
Each section was structured by a dialectic. The first section, Affective Weight and Political Weight Dialectic introduced the Rhythm of the Sea Collection as artifacts, to be unpacked literally and figuratively like a box of puzzle pieces for the museum curation project. Archaeologist Rodney Harrison (2013) used the analogy of “unpacking” as he “discussed the usefulness of thinking about museum collections simultaneously as material and social assemblages” (p. xii). Gaither (1992) firmly asserted museums had two responsibilities, “First, museums must serve an ever-broader public in ever-broader ways. And second, museums must honor America’s diversity without paternalism and condescension” (p. 58). To accomplish both objectives the museum curation project drew from the ethnographic research that was unpacked in the subsequent sections. The underpinning for the museum curation project through the “cultural-historical dialectic” conceptualized by Walter Benjamin (Ferris 2005, p. 19) was provided in the subsequent section.

Furthermore, the section explored the cultural and historical Eskimo and Aleut ethnographies described as the ties that coexist between the thesis parts such as artistic styles of the harpoon head artifacts, and provenience. The political and poetic dialectic of the following section clearly identified the conundrum of early archaeological practices.

---

6 Rodney Harrison is a professor at the University College London Institute of Archaeology. He received his doctorate in archaeology from the University of Western Australia in 2003. His research interests include history and philosophy of museums, anthropology and archaeology; museum and critical heritage studies; and historical archaeology. Harrison (2013) co-edited the book Reassembling the Collection: Ethnographic Museums and Indigenous Agency (2013), and stated it was the product of a collaborative effort by co-organizers of the School for Advanced Research seminar held in Santa Fe, New Mexico during September 26-30, 2010 (p. xii). The seminar focused on “issues that arise from the ‘weight’ of objects and a sense of curatorial responsibility to them and their source communities” (xii). In addition, he co-edited Unpacking the Collection (2011) the prequel to Reassembling the Collection. Biographical information was retrieved from the University College London, accessed January 24, 2016. [http://www.ucl.ac.uk](http://www.ucl.ac.uk).

7 David Ferris wrote “The Shortness of History, or Photography in Nuce: Benjamin’s Attenuation of the Negative.” Historically conceptualized by Walter Benjamin the essay described the use of a photographic negative. This concept is incorporated in the museum curation project as negative space to provide an imageless frame for a harpoon head artifact, as if suspended in time (Ferris 2005, p. 25–26). Dr. Walter Benjamin (1892–1940) was a scholar who grew up in Weimer, Germany during the time of the First World War, and later encountered the injustices of a second war. He became interested in the “theory of history” a counter-cultural ideology from German Romanticism. His own interpretation of Marxism was considered “unorthodox, heretical even” (Wilding 1996, p. 164).
conducted in the Bering Strait region at the expense of cultural integrity. The political partner in this dialectic provided historical evidence about how the Rhythm of the Sea Collection arrived at the Anthropology Department of Western Michigan University, which the poetic partner substantiated as well as the prehistoric narrative of the harpoon head artifacts conveyed by the cultural and historical dialectic. It also reintroduced the poetic nature of the Rhythm of the Sea Collection as artifacts from maritime cultures.

Due to the lack of access to Alaska Native peoples the interpretation of artistic styles of the harpoon head artifacts served in the capacity of “keepers of the tradition” (Gaither 1992, p. 61). This element of “poetic license” critically analyzed their functionality and common Eskaleut maritime history. The political and poetic dialectic solidifies the previous dialectics, and therefore progresses into the thesis conclusion, as summarized in Figure 4.

---

8 Dr. Patrick T. Houlihan addressed the issue of poetics and politics of museum displays in his essay “The Poetic Image and Native American Art (1988).” He stated politics is not limited to government but includes museums, and their contents of material artifacts. Houlihan received his doctorate from the University of Wisconsin. He served as director of the Heard Museum in Phoenix, the New York State Museum in Albany, and the Southwest Museum in Los Angeles. At the time of his essay publication, Houlihan was the director of the Millicent Rogers Museum in Taos, New Mexico (Karp 1991, p. 465).
All three dialectics clearly represent the complex norms of our society. Represented by their artifacts, the historical narratives of unfamiliar or exotic cultures have the propensity to become framed in the present. Art historian Susan Vogel (1991) was correct when she stated, “Almost nothing displayed in museums was made to be seen in them” (p. 191).9 She added, “Museums provide an experience of most of the world’s art and artifacts that does not bear even the remotest resemblance to what their makers intended” (p. 191). The framework of the dialectics acted as a conscientious plumb line for the museum curation project to respect the corresponding ethnographical research. In that, both parts have to define and support each other. For example, certain artifacts in the Rhythm of the Sea Collection lack context, as shown in Figure 5.

![Artifact #66](image)

**Figure 5.** Artifact #66. Date unknown, location unknown, Human Figure, ivory, 8.0 x 1.5 cm. **Source:** Rhythm of the Sea Collection, Western Michigan University, Kalamazoo, Michigan.

The ivory carving resembles a human figure. Its purpose is unknown. Quoting words from Vogel (1991), is the figure “art? craft? sacra?” (p. 192). Artifacts are prone to cultural

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9 Susan Vogel received her Ph.D. from the Institute of Fine Arts. She is an art historian concentrating on African Art that included fieldwork on the Baule in Ivory Coast. For ten years, Vogel served as associate curator at the Metropolitan Museum of Art (Karp 1991, p. 468).
misinterpretation when unearthed and exposed to the public. However, descriptors or artistic design elements help to determine their cultural significance or prehistory.

Artistic design elements of the human figure:

1. round head
2. round face
3. circular eyes
4. protruding nose
5. small mouth hole
6. chest depression (darkened area)
7. lack of articulated genitalia
8. symmetrical arms
9. symmetrical legs

The darkened area on the chest is a depression. Due to the lack of finding identically styled human figures, a similar figure with a small hole in the clavicle area was used for comparison. The figure was found near Nome, and was thought to be a “charm or amulet” (Linn 2006, p. 6). Anthropologist Angela Linn further noted, “This depression [hole] is known as the spirit access point, the place where a spirit would enter the object and endow the wearer with its protection. Through this hole, the figure would be ritually fed” (p. 6). Historical records suggested:

… in the early contact period Alaska Native groups used human figurines in three general ways: (1) miniatures were attached to the body or clothing of children and adults as charms or amulets, (2) larger figurines were made either for use in more formalized ritual and ceremony, and (3) children’s playthings. (p. 8, 10)

The notable feature of a hole provides an entry point for a spirit. This allows the spirit by way of the hole to circulate within the amulet wearer. Similarly, every dialectic has an entry point where a synergy reaction begins so a process can occur to substantiate the theory presented in the thesis abstract.

10 Angela J. Linn received her M.A. in Anthropology from the University of Alaska – Fairbanks in 1999. Currently, she is the Collections Manager, Ethnology and History at the University of Alaska Museum of the North. Her thesis titled “Not Just a Pretty Face: Dolls and Human Figurines in Alaska Native Cultures” was published as a book in 2006, edited by Molly Lee. Biographical information was retrieved from the University of Alaska - Fairbanks, accessed March 27, 2016, https://www.uaf.edu (linncv_master_2008pdf).
AFFECTIVE WEIGHT AND POLITICAL WEIGHT DIALECTIC

Museum Curation Project (Part)

Cultural Materialism: Emic and Etic Perspectives

The anthropological vestige of cultural materialism is apparent in acknowledging the Northern Maritime tradition among the artifacts themselves and their Alaska Native agency. Developed by anthropologist Marvin Harris this theory superseded the ethnographically defined anthropological methodology of historical particularism with a more scientific explanation for sociocultural evolution.\(^\text{11}\) Harris (1968) stated:

This principle [cultural materialism] holds that similar technologies applied to similar environments tend to produce similar arrangements of labor in production and distribution, and that these in turn call forth similar kinds of social groupings, which justify and co-ordinate their activities by means of similar systems of values and beliefs. Translated into a research strategy, the principle of techno-environmental, techno-economic determinism assigns priority to the study of the material conditions of sociocultural life, much as the principle of natural selection assigns priority to the study of differential reproductive success. (p. 4)

This scientific approach offered a logistical coordination when studying the harpoon head artifacts anthropologically, because it ultimately provided the epistemological “infrastructure” to establish the correlation of Eskimo and Aleut cultures (Harris 1979, p. 57). “Infrastructure, in other words, is the principal interface between culture and nature, the boundary across which the

\(^{11}\) Marvin Harris (1927–2001) was chairperson of the Anthropology Department at Columbia University from 1963–1966. Published in 1968 the book *The Rise of Anthropological Theory: A History of Theories of Culture* addressed his position on “the fragmented theories being produced by anthropological ideas” (Harris 1979, sec.). “Harris showed that anthropologists had systematically neglected the practical and mundane aspects of social life. His advocacy of this viewpoint to which he gave the name “cultural materialism” (sec). Other notable books include *Cows, Pigs, Wars and Witches* (1974) and *Cannibals and Kings: The Origins of Culture* (1977).
ecological, chemical, and physical restraints to which human action is subject interact with the principal sociocultural practices aimed at overcoming or modifying those restraints” (p. 57).

Harris added, “Furthermore, the recurrence of such inventions as ceramics and metallurgy independently in different parts of the world under similar infrastructural conditions suggests that not even the most original ideas happen only once” (p. 59). “Technological change” according to Harris is “vital to the evolution of culture” (p. 59). He indicated, “…that when the infrastructural conditions are ripe, the appropriate thoughts will occur, not once but again and again” (p. 59).

The acceptance of new goods by a group has evolutionary cultural implications. This became more evident as the ethnographical research part of the dialectical research system unfolds. For example, the coast-dwelling Eskimos used toggle harpoon heads primarily made of ivory; whereas, the peoples of the Aleutian Islands preferred various forms of long barbed harpoon heads made from bone, as depicted in Figure 6.  

![Artifact](image_url)

**Figure 6.** Artifact #59. Birnirk to Early Thule Periods, Location unknown, Harpoon Head, bone, 10.0 cm.  
*Source:* Rhythm of the Sea Collection, Western Michigan University, Kalamazoo, Michigan.

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12 Anthropologist George I. Quimby (1946) wrote, “The toggle type of harpoon head does not seem to have been important in the Aleutian Islands, where various styles of long barbed harpoon heads of bone were much more numerous” (23). Quimby (1913-2003) studied prehistoric Aleutian artifacts excavated from Amaknak Island (Collins [1973] 1977, 15). From 1968-1983 Quimby served as the director of the Burke Museum of Natural History. Obituary information was retrieved from the “University of Washington Magazine,” accessed October 10, 2015, [http://www.washington.edu/alumni/columns/june03/extras_quimby.html](http://www.washington.edu/alumni/columns/june03/extras_quimby.html).
Harris preferred to discuss cultural materialism through two distinctions, “First, the distinction between mental and behavioral events, and second, between emic and etic events” (Moore 2012, o. 188–89). As a dialectical discourse, Harris (1968) explained:

Emic statements refer to logico-empirical systems whose phenomenal distinctions or “things” are built up out of contrasts and discriminations significant, meaningful, real, accurate, or in some other fashion regarded as appropriate by the actors themselves. An emic statement can be falsified if it can be shown that it contradicts the cognitive calculus by which relevant actor’s judge that entities are similar or different, real, meaningful, significant, or in some other sense “appropriate” or “acceptable.” (p. 571)

Etic statements depend upon phenomenal distinctions judged appropriate by the community of scientific observers. Etic statements cannot be falsified if they do not conform to the actor’s notion of what is significant, real, meaningful, or appropriate. Etic statements are verified when independent observers using similar operations agree that a given event has occurred. An ethnography carried out according to etic principles is thus a corpus of predictions about the behavior of classes of people. Predictive failures in that corpus require the reformulation of the probabilities or the description as a whole. (p. 575)

He cited anthropologist Kenneth Pike to clarify, “Emic study ‘helps’ one to appreciate not only the culture or language as an ordered whole, but it helps one to understand the individual actors in such a life-drama-their attitudes, motives, interests, responses, conflicts, and personality development” (qtd. in K. Pike 1954, 11). The “etic perspectives are from an observer’s point of view” (Moore 2012, p. 189). Harris (1979) wrote:

Etic operations have as their hallmark the elevation of observers to the status of ultimate judges of the categories and concepts used in descriptions and analysis. The test of the adequacy of etic accounts is simply their ability to generate scientifically productive theories about the causes of sociocultural differences and similarities. Rather than employ concepts that are necessarily real, meaningful, and appropriate from the native point of view, the observer is free to use alien categories and rules derived from the data language of science. Frequently, etic operations involve the measurement and juxtaposition of activities and events that native informants may find inappropriate or meaningless. (p. 32)

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13 Harris (1968) credited anthropologist and linguist Kenneth L. Pike (1912–2000) with the origin of the terminology “emic” and “etic” (p. 569). Metaphorically, Pike referenced “‘emic’ in phonemic and the ‘etic’ in phonetic” (p. 569). Harris acknowledged how emic and etic were used linguistically; however, he recognized their significance in “nonlinguistic phenomena” (p. 570).
The harpoon head artifacts of the Rhythm of the Sea Collection serve as “informants for ethnographic information” (Harris 1968, p. 576). In that, they express the emic “point of view” from the Alaska Native or “actor” (p. 571–72). Harris (1979) stated, “In carrying out research in the emic mode, the observer attempts to acquire a knowledge of the categories and rules one must know in order to think and act as a native” (p. 32). Conversely, from an etic perspective the harpoon head artifacts act as the “ethnographer’s assistant, part of a team which can produce more information in less time than one man working alone” (p. 576). When the recognition of artifacts as not being “inert but play an active role in social relations” then this latter perspective becomes more relevant when addressing the museum curation project (Harrison 2013, p. 14).

Harrison assertively questioned, “If objects can behave in ways that are person-like, should they also be treated as persons” (p. 14)? The emic and etic tenets of cultural materialism provided ethnographic perspectives required to address the museum curation project, and research the array of harpoon head artifacts. Alaska Native artifact collectors Paul and Mary Thiry (1977) envisioned, “To possess an ability to recognize and to identify works of various cultures, is to broaden one’s range of human knowledge and perspective” (p. 8).

Indigenous Agency: Art and Cold Cash Collective Exhibition Model

“The idea that ‘things’ have agency, although increasingly discussed across the social sciences and humanities, perhaps still carries with it a sense of surprise” (Harrison 2013, p. 15). According to Harrison, agency is important to understand because it gives artifacts a fluid discourse beyond their organic nature. Harrison stated, “Agency is thus contingent upon and emergent within social collectives, involving both human and nonhuman actors and taking many different forms” (p. 16). Referencing their “person-like” quality artifacts can converse and tell
their unique cultural stories through the affirmation of agency (p. 14). “Indigenous agency” is a dialectic term (p. 6). It brings to the forefront the profoundly complex relationship artifacts have with postcolonial disciplines such as, anthropology, archaeology, and museum anthropology. Harrison wrote, “Thinking about indigenous agency in this way raises questions of how it is manifested by, interpreted by, mediated by, distributed by, and entangled with museum collections” (p. 6). Therefore, in the context of the museum curation project Harrison referenced those who contributed to the book *Reassembling the Collection: Ethnographic Museums and Indigenous Agency*:

Clearly, in light of the historical roles that each of the disciplines represented by the contributors has played in attempts to subjugate indigenous people, there is a need not only to be humble and listen to the points of view of indigenous people themselves, but also to speak from within our disciplines and respond to issues raised by external agency, and, in the process, to reformulate the questions and nature of our disciplines and their relationship to governmental processes in the museum. (p. 7)

The word indigenous has always provoked a gamut of paradigm shifts within the museum community. Harrison addressed this issue and recalled when museums adjusted their views on ethnographic collections. He described nineteenth century museums as places that “came to form the spaces in which subsequent understandings of indigeneity (by way of discourses of ‘primitiveness’ and ‘savageness’) were defined, drawing on ethnographic collections that were perceived as the materializations of Otherness” (Harrison 2013, p. 8). Since the mid-1970s, museums have responded to global pressures to eradicate such perceptions (p. 9). Harrison coined this museum renaissance as “indigenous modernity” (p. 9). This involvement extends to indigenous groups striving to maintain their cultural identities and survival, which is still a politically charged reality. This activism has therefore moved beyond museums displaying curios from Western labeled primitive societies to active participation with indigenous groups.
The bold innovative Art and Cold Cash Collective served as a model for the museum curation project and display because of its intentional relationship with indigenous artists. In April 2004, the collective was created as a response to the “relationship between art and capitalism” in the Inuit community of Baker Lake in the Canadian Arctic Territory of Nunavut (Butler 2009, p. 11). Three artists Jack Butler and Sheila Butler from Toronto, and Patrick Mahon from London, Ontario collaborated with Inuit writer Ruby Arngna’naaq and artist William Noah, both from Baker Lake to “investigate contemporary art and discourses surrounding money” (p. 12). Contracting local Inuit artists who used art forms such as, mixed media on paper, photographs, audio interviews, and recycled trash, the collective could reintroduce indigenous art back into mainstream museums, galleries, and events. Clearly, the collective recognized the dialectic significance of the production of cultural objects d’art within this encroaching economic and political system and exposed “the vexing twins of colonialism and capitalism” (p. 11):

The ostensibly costless exchange of photographs with things that have personal meaning may signal a volitional shift from a gift economy to a commodity economy, an unfettered, as it were, dialogue between the domestic and the foreign, but it also dramatizes, unwittingly, the artful cunning embedded in virtually all gestures of exchange initiated by hegemonic societies toward their constructed “others.” (p. 11)

As previously described by Ollman, the metamorphic relationship that occurs when money is exchanged for commodity has circulated into the museum by way of the artifacts themselves, and has subsequently given them a burden of “political weight” (Harrison 2013, p. 5). Harrison defined political weight “in the sense that they [artifacts] come to symbolize or stand in for various imperial and colonial processes, which underlie their presence in museum collections” (p. 5). The collective compiled a written anthology of their work titled Art and Cold Cash (2009). Sheila Butler (2009) explained:
Art and Cold Cash [Collective] foregrounds a certain politicization of contemporary Inuit art within the broader context of a politics of interpretation by southern Canadian cultural workers. This political field is intrinsically linked to issues that determine conditions for presentation in urban North American and European art galleries. It is clear that in southern Canada as well as in the Arctic, in the wake of European nineteenth and twentieth century art history, art works as commodities occupy troubled ground. Within the European/North American system, the presence of the museum as an institution that houses and validates art serves to give currency to objects and activities whose relationships to society are often unclear or are in some way abstracted. (p. 19–22)

The use of contemporary media in the Art and Cold Cash Collective exemplifies the controversial political weight of indigenous art post World War II. This weight extends to prehistoric cultural artifacts such as the Rhythm of the Sea Collection, more specifically the harpoon head artifacts displayed in the museum curation project. In a “Museum Anthropology” journal article professor Mary Katherine Scott (2012) wrote about the political weight issues involved with displaying indigenous artifacts and recognized, “contemporary museum practice, and specifically, the challenges of exhibiting the ‘past’ in the ‘present’ while doing justice to the peoples and cultures represented in exhibitions” (p. 1). The museum curation project is an opportunity to “exhibit traditional Native Alaskan material in the present” (p. 1). To accept this responsibility those involved in the project must acknowledge the lives which existed behind the artifacts. Scott referenced author James Clifford for his viewpoint on “how anthropology and museum displays tend to freeze the history of indigenous peoples in timeless past or present” (p. 1).
The museum curation project allows the various collaborators to generate both “instructive and productive outcomes” without sacrificing the cultural significance of the artifacts (p. 4).

Interactive Rhythm Inside and Outside the Display

Scott (2012) introduced new “trends” in museology that broke from earlier established conventions (p. 3). The changes involved the “decentralization of authority and power sharing and efforts to move toward dialogue with communities” (p. 3). The takeaway of her research is ‘how empathetic engagement with collaborators” can “include diverse voices” to develop “museological strategies guiding design and organization, and the fundamental goals” for the museum curation project (p. 4). Coincidently, Scott wrote about an Alaska Native exhibition that never materialized due to political issues. The project was the vision of anthropologist Nelson Graburn who conducted decades of fieldwork among Alaska Native peoples. Scott stated, “Although never exhibited, planning for the exhibit involved local Native Alaska artists and scholars in the process of making an exhibition and put them in contact with cultural artifacts long held in museum storerooms” (p. 6). The unavailability of Alaska Native representation led to the etic determination from the University of Alaska Museum of the North-Fairbanks for artistic periods of the harpoon head artifacts, which was made possible by electronically sent digital photographs. Future museum studies and anthropology students could contact Alaska Native artists for their cultural narrative contribution to the museum curation project and

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16 James Clifford (b. 1945) is Professor Emeritus, History of Consciousness Department and Distinguished Professor in the Humanities at the University of California, Santa Cruz. He received his Ph.D. in History from Harvard University in 1977. Biographical information was retrieved from the University of California, Santa Cruz, accessed February 26, 2016, http://www.people.ucsc.edu.

physical display of the harpoon head artifacts. Scott used the term “multivocal” to describe “the discourse” used to “explore social relationships and stimulate consciousness regarding the ethnography of representation” (p. 4).

Anthropologist Christina Kreps (2015) maintained, “Since the 1990s, however, museum anthropology and material culture studies have been making a comeback” (p. 96). This means the time to introduce the harpoon head artifacts in Rhythm of the Sea Collection to a greater audience could not be better timed. The Anthropology Department at Western Michigan University could offer an innovative methodology “of animating the agency of both objects and exhibitions through experimentation with participatory, interactive, multisensory, and dialogical approaches” (p. 98). Through this methodology, the artifacts in the collection will shed outdated terminology and static presentation that seem counterproductive to the process of them having a rhythm inside and outside the framework of the display. Kreps stated:

For some time now, scholars and members of originating communities have critically examined how the meanings, values, and functions of objects change when they are reframed within the epistemological paradigms of Western museums. It is now widely recognized that Western museology has rested almost exclusively on one knowledge system, or epistemology, that has dictated why and how non-Western cultural materials have been collected as well as the ways in which they have been perceived, curated, and represented museums. (p. 100)

This rhythm will engage the senses beyond the “do not touch environment” that museum displays project, where the only sensory emotion achieved is when fingertips touch the glass separating the viewer from the artifacts (p. 100). Through identifiable tactile objects such as the

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18 Christina F. Kreps is an Associate Professor of Anthropology at the University of Denver. She is also Director of Museum and Heritage Studies at the University of Denver Museum of Anthropology. Kreps received her Ph.D. in Anthropology from the University of Oregon in 1994. Her dissertation titled “On Becoming 'Museum-Minded': Museum Development and the Politics of Culture in Indonesia” and thesis titled “Decolonizing Anthropology Museums: The Dutch Example” are relevant cases for discussion about the political treatment of cultural displays. Biographical information was retrieved from the University of Denver, accessed April 29, 2016, http://www.du.edu.
grinding stones from the collection, the viewer can experience the context of the harpoon head artifacts, as exhibited in Figure 7.

*Figure 7. Artifact #79. Thule Period Location unknown; Harpoon Head, bone, 6.0 cm. Artifact #107, Location unknown; Grinding Stone (duplicated), 11.0 x 9.5 cm. Source: Rhythm of the Sea Collection, Western Michigan University, Kalamazoo, Michigan.*

The grinding stones provide both a physical and visual relevance for the harpoon head artifact. The use of different primitive materials as bone and stone illustrate their combined purpose for hunting and food preparation. The materials and food sources originated in the sea. This correlation is historically relevant for the survival of Alaska Native peoples and their cultures. The use of more innovative displays will change the viewpoint of “anthropology museum as stuffy, boring places about the past of just repositories of ‘stones and bones’” (p. 109).

The museum curation project addresses the unconventional accumulation of the Rhythm of the Sea Collection and its eventual mysterious exportation to Western Michigan University. The significance of these observations is relevant to the “critical analysis of the relationship
among colonialism, museums, anthropology…” (Kreps 2015, p. 101). The exposure of this narrative will give students and viewers evidence of the mistreatment of cultural artifacts and sacred burial sites that ultimately led to distrust of ethnographers, anthropologists, and archaeologists by indigenous peoples. Many groups can benefit from the museum curation project and Alaska Native – Eskaleut ethnographic research. The interactive potential of the Rhythm of the Sea Collection is recognized by its affective weight and political weight. In that, the artifacts initiate constructive dialogue among institutions, various groups, individuals, and agencies. All of them are endowed with the responsibility of being stewards of past and present cultures.

*Political Weight: Unpacking the Rhythm of the Sea Collection*

The unpacking of the Rhythm of the Sea Collection is a process for the anthropologist as curator to determine its affective and political weight. Unpacking and reassembling the artifacts does not grant the curator of the museum curation project permission to create its own order where “anomalies” exist, and in so doing rid the messiness of working with the extensions of peoples’ lives and cultures (Harrison 2013, p. 13). Instead, importance is given to the intention of “conceptualizing the relationship between persons and things, which require a sharing of curatorial expertise and authority” (p. 14). Ultimately, the museum curation project creates a space for the artifacts to regain attachment to their indigenous agency. This is extremely relevant because the initial unpacking exposed the lack of supporting documentation, which subsequently led the artifacts to be culturally identified as Inuit and categorized simply as “arctic” or “prehistoric” (Ray 1961, p. 157). The undocumented Rhythm of the Sea Collection is an assemblage of objects or things that could not be described as a “heterogeneous grouping in
which the grouping itself could be distinguished as a whole from the sum of its parts” (Harrison 2013, p. 20). The collection could not be classified “as a group of artifacts found in association with one another” due to its lack of “anthropological conception” (p. 18). Since the assortment of artifacts in the collection lack a basic cohesion based on assembly context they resemble the undisciplined approach on how Arctic artifacts were historically handled.

Anthropologist Dorothy Jean Ray acknowledged the less than proficient treatment of Eskimo artifacts during excavations prior to the definition of professional standards for the conduct of archaeological research as stated by the Register of Professional Archeologists. Ray stated, “Before the beginning of scientific archaeological excavations in the Artic…, objects were dug up helter-skelter, here and there, usually with not so much as a word as to provenience or age…” (p. 157). Harrison (2013) introduced the word “assemblage” to add the archaeological context to a museum collection (p. 18). In an archaeology textbook, *The Human Past* (2005) the author Chris Scarre defined assemblage as “a group of artifacts occurring together at a particular time and place, representing the sum of human activities in that respect” (qtd. in R. Harrison 2013, p. 18). In the process of unpacking, archaeologists are the first to inspect and recognize the assemblage and its affective weight. Harrison defined affective weight in reference to “charismatic or enchanting qualities” (p. 5). However, to curate and display the Rhythm of the Sea Collection, reference could be made of what Harrison suggested “thinking of the museum as an archaeological field site” (p. 19). This notion seems straightforward, although if an archaeologist views the artifacts as a “heterogeneous jumble of things that have come together in

19 Dorothy Jean Ray (1919–2007) received honorary doctoral degrees from the University of Alaska–Fairbanks and University of Northern Iowa for recognition of her work on the ethnohistory and art of the Inupiaq and Yup’ik Alaska Natives. Ray donated a large collection of Alaska Native artifacts to the University of Alaska–Fairbanks. Biographical information was retrieved from the RODLibrary at the University of Northern Iowa, accessed October 10, 2015, [http://www.library.uni.edu/collections/special-collections/biographical-sketches/dorothy-jean-tostlebe-ray](http://www.library.uni.edu/collections/special-collections/biographical-sketches/dorothy-jean-tostlebe-ray).
complicated ways” it would prove a daunting task for the curator to reassemble them for a museum, especially when considering indigenous agency (p. 19). Harrison noted, “It is not only the curator or consultant or source community member who interacts with the objects in collections and determine the ways in which they are managed and displayed, but a whole range of museum staff, visitors, and other agents within the museum meshwork” (p. 33).

The harpoon head artifacts were chosen for the museum curation project because of their “combinability” of identifiable artistic styles to define periods and provenience (Bennett 2013, p. 39). Sociologist Tony Bennett wrote, “It is through their pliable ‘combinability’ that such texts and objects can be assembled into new networks that, although produced at a distance—spatial and temporal—from their points of origin, may nonetheless make possible varied forms of action back on those points of origin, and elsewhere” (p. 39). In other words, the ties between the thesis parts (museum curation project and ethnographic study) function as an interchangeable system that concludes the prehistoric correlation of Eskimo and Aleut cultures, as illustrated by the diagram adapted from an Okvik design consisting of “gashlike marks,” and depicted in Figure 8 (Ray 1961, p. 15).

The relevance of the affective weight and political weight dialectic becomes apparent when the Rhythm of Sea Collection is unpacked for the museum curation project. To

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Tony Bennett received his Ph.D. in Sociology from the University of Sussex, United Kingdom in 1972. He became Research Professor in Social and Cultural Theory at the Institute for Culture and Society at Western Sydney University in 2009.

His work in museum studies has contributed to the development of the 'new museology' particularly in the light it has thrown on the role of museums as instruments of social governance. The common thread running through his interests across these areas concerns the ways in which culture is tangled up in the exercise of power. This continues to inform his current research focused on the ways in which the knowledge practices of aesthetics and anthropology have informed modern processes of cultural governance from the 19th century through to the present. This work includes a significant focus on the part played by the early fieldwork phase in Australian, British, French and American anthropology in the development of new practices of colonial governance. It also includes a concern with the varying social uses of aesthetic discourses, and the role of aesthetics in the history of social theory. (http://www.uws.edu). Biographical information was retrieved from Western Sydney University, Institute for Culture and Society, accessed May 1, 2016, http://www.uws.edu.
comprehend the significance of the dialectic a brief historical overview of museums, material cultures, and their association with anthropology is required. Anthropologist George Stocking, Jr. (1985) wrote, “Despite its implicit nominal assertion of generalized human relevance, anthropology through most of its history has been primarily a discourse of the culturally or racially despised” (p. 112). Stocking was Professor of Anthropology and Director of the Morris Fishbein Center for the History of Science and Medicine at the University of Chicago when this proclamation was penned (p. 112). The unpleasant truth of this statement still holds the discipline hostage to its own ambiguous future. Stocking did not overlook the ideologies of the

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founding fathers of anthropology. Instead, he offered reasons why their work was inhibited by economic and political factors during this early period, and consequently the need for philanthropoids or individuals who could offer financial assistance. Notable philanthropoids such as John D. Rockefeller, Jr. served as conduits to fuel anthropology toward academic recognition.

In the late 1800s and early 1900s, when the field of anthropology was gaining ground in universities as an academic discipline, funding proved difficult for research. Stocking (1985) referenced several wealthy philanthropoids who used their own money to fund anthropological research. However, benefactors had the fickle prerogative to choose the scope of research based on their own personal interests, which was heavily “influenced by racialist and evolutionist assumption” (p. 117). In the Rockefeller “philanthropic circles” topics included social reform, “immigration and crime to public health and mental hygiene to fertility and child development” (p. 117). The litany of philanthropist-funded research seemed synonymous to the “eugenics movement” (p. 121). For serious anthropologists, a benefactor or “cultural institution—the museum” were hopeful sources for funding (p. 113). Stocking quipped, “Such attempts to build bridges of enlightened self-interest were always problematic; try as he might, Boas [Franz] could not raise money from Andrew Carnegie and others for a museum of Afro-American culture” (p. 113). For Boas and other “founders” of anthropology—Émile Durkheim, Lewis Henry Morgan, Edward Tylor, the shift from a study of “human nature encompassing physiology and psychology” to a study of “humankind” proved to be as an impediment for funding (Moore 2012, p. 1–2). The need for anthropological research funding and the role of museums were associated with “tribal cultures… on the point of extinction in North America from which information can be obtained only by questioning…” (Stocking 1985, p. 138). The seriousness and perplexity of
their academic relationship had a systemic Anglo-American underpinning considered as political weight. Stocking addressed “Rockefeller funding and museum anthropology” and stated, “… the funding of anthropological research was before the first [sic] World War channeled largely to (or through) museum collections” (p. 138, 140). Therefore, it was apparent and expected that research be conducted through the association with museums. The anthropological relationship with museums was fundamental for its sustainability as a discipline in various causes and venues. In addition, within this ‘institutional framework” anthropology was considered a means to study “the human past” as presented by material artifacts (p. 140). Although, Stocking admitted even in this context the importance of study was placed on “biological sciences” over “social sciences (p. 140–41).

According to an article “Trade Beads from Reese Bay, Unalaska Island: Spatial and Temporal Patterns” in Arctic Anthropology, “Glass trade beads are one of the most ubiquitous and useful artifacts in historic North American sites” (Bundy, McCartney and Veltre 2003, p. 44). The purpose of glass trade beads was not limited for trade or barter, but also for “personal ornamentation” as jewelry or on clothing (p. 38, 45). The Rhythm of the Sea Collection includes several small glass trade beads, as shown in Figure 9.

![Image of glass trade beads](image)

**Figure 9.** Artifact #53. Date unknown, Location unknown; Trade Beads, glass, 1.0 – 1.5 cm. **Source:** Rhythm of the Sea Collection, Western Michigan University, Kalamazoo, Michigan.
The original use(s) of glass trade beads by the people of Unalaska is relevant to how Stocking regarded the evolution and disenfranchisement of material culture. As “material objects” they still function within an exchange economy, and their use evolved into a commodity economy (Stocking 1985, p. 113). Stocking observed:

From the perspective of donors whose beneficence was sustained by success in the world of commodity production, palpable and visible objects could be seen as a return on investment, even if their aesthetic or utilitarian value was minimal by conventional cultural standards. From the perspective of anthropologists, the collection of objects for sale to museums was an important if somewhat tenuous means of capitalizing research on less marketable topics. (p. 113–14)

The same duplicity held true for the indigenous people. Stocking noted the “movements of past cultures or racial development” temperament into the objectification of indigenous peoples (p. 114). Therefore, both the material artifacts and indigenous people became the products of an “object orientation” anthropological ideology (p. 114). The glass trade beads and other artifacts had their human properties of creative form and expression removed for the enticement of political and monetary gain. Once the bounty proved marketable the “cultural institution—the museum” connection was promoted for further research funding (p. 113). An anthropological paradigm occurred after World War II as Stocking noted, “But although an historical ‘ethnology’ remained a viable form of anthropological inquiry, its use as the name for dominant anthropological subdiscipline was passing in favor of ‘cultural anthropology’—a category which, like its British analogue, was oriented toward the study of human behavior in the present” (p. 142). As the history of this relationship developed, its relevance would prove as a reminder for the future of anthropology within universities. He further observed, “Its [anthropology] practitioners were, for the most part, interested in objects primarily as personal keepsakes of transcultural experience, brought back to decorate the walls of their homes, or to distinguish their offices from those of other social scientists down the hall. Creating a pontificating atmosphere of
mini-museums of philanthropist studies” (p. 142). Through the etic and emic perspectives, the relevance of indigenous agency, and the museum model represented by the Art and Cold Cash Collective demonstrated “the end of museum era in Anglo-American anthropology” was official (p. 112). The museum curation project demonstrates the contextual shift represented by the affective weight and political weight dialectic, as indicated in Figure 10.

![Figure 10. Affective Weight and Political Weight Dialectic. Source: Marcia S. Taylor 2016.](Museum Curation Project)

**Affective Weight: Curation**

The Rhythm of the Sea Collection is stored in four boxes in the Anthropology Department at Western Michigan University. The collection consists of artifacts made of ivory, bone, wood, stone, and glass. The solitary document provided by the Anthropology Department referencing the artifacts is a handwritten inventory list compiled by Elizabeth Garland (E. B. Garland) in September 1994, titled “Inuit Collection.”

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22 In 1964, Elizabeth B. Garland became a faculty member in the Department of Anthropology. She was the former wife of anthropologist William Garland, who began his career as faculty at Western Michigan University in 1962. Faculty records were retrieved via Western Michigan University 25 Year Club Retirees file, accessed September 27, 2015, [http://www.wmich.edu/sites/default/files/attachments/u368/2014/hr-25yearclub-](http://www.wmich.edu/sites/default/files/attachments/u368/2014/hr-25yearclub-)
was anonymous, and most or all of the collection originated from Alaska. Garland documented 139 artifacts. If known, she provided a brief interpretation of artifact cultural identification.

These interpretations denoted maritime ethnogeographic provenience. The term “Inuit Collection” was misleading because it excluded relevant Alaska Native groups such as the Aleuts. In fact, the Yupiit in southwestern Alaska “never refer to themselves as Inuit, a word that does not even exist in their language” (Dorais 2010, p. 3).

The working inventory list or catalog was the primary document to facilitate the several phases of the museum curation project. First, the entire collection was digitally photographed, measured, and primitive material identified. If possible, period identification was determined for each artifact. Second, the digital photographs were placed on the Anthropology Department’s collections archival website. As the ethnohistorical research unfolds for the Rhythm of the Sea Collection new findings will accompany the physical data previously determined for each artifact and be added to the website. This part of the second phase is ongoing, which includes research of the harpoon head artifacts. Each artistic style proved as a catalyst for the other ties of the museum curation project to form an archaeological record that solidifies the prehistoric correlation of Eskimo and Aleut cultures.

The handwritten inventory list stated 17 artifacts were unaccounted for in September 1994. A final inventory of the entire collection was conducted on June 19, 2015. It was determined at that time 13 artifacts were missing; concluding four artifacts were found and ten of the same artifacts were still unaccounted for as in 1994. A curatorial protocol is imperative to ensure the overall protection of the harpoon head artifacts as well as the entire Rhythm of the Sea Collection. The curatorial protocol is phase three of the museum curation project. The actual

volume of space required for storage, display, and research accessibility became apparent through the physical process of unpacking the Rhythm of the Sea Collection. This phase includes two documents: (1) the Artifact Catalogue Intake Record, and (2) the Artifact Removal and Handling Record. Both documents must be signed and dated by the person who has faculty permission to access the artifacts. The Artifact Catalogue Intake Record, and Artifact Removal and Handling Record templates are outlined in Figures 11 and 12.23

Collections Archival Website: Language of Photography

Digital photographs were taken of the Rhythm of the Sea Collection for the first phase of the museum curation project. These photographic sessions consisted of a tactile process. Removed from a storage box, each artifact was unwrapped, measured, and placed on textured paper for a photography backdrop. Captured on film was an intimacy that developed due to the sensuousness of physically touching the artifacts. The ivory artifacts were cool and smooth; whereas, those made of bone felt porous. These characteristics were essential to capture on film along with their artistic styles, color formations, and shapes. These features represent the historical text for each artifact, which explains when the artifacts were manufactured. This physicality is like the prehistoric and contemporary carver, who would choose available raw organic resources for durability and a means to display their craft. As Ray (1961) explained:

There is no doubt that the carving of ivory into pleasing shapes has been carried on uninterruptedly from the earliest known Eskimo culture to the present. The high percentage of decorated tools and other objects in archeological sites reveal that artistic motivation has been an important thread running through the entire history of the Eskimo. (p. 13)

23 Artifact record templates were based on curatorial documents from the University of Michigan Ruthven Museum. Eskaleut research was conducted under the guidance of Dr. Henry T. Wright, Curator of Archaeology, Museum of Anthropology at the University of Michigan, on February 17, 2016.
Figure 11. Artifact Catalogue Record. Source: Marcia S. Taylor 2016.

29
Figure 12. Artifact Removal and Handling Record. Source: Marcia S. Taylor 2016.
During an interview conducted by the Art and Cold Cash Collective (2009), Inuit carver Rosa Kingilik spoke of her early experience with carving:

> When Dominic [her husband] made sculptures out of soapstone I would go along with him to the Craft Officer and to the store. This gave me more opportunities to continue studying art works under the guise of helping him. The carvings that I liked - the way a bear was made or a musk ox, or the way another carver made human beings – I would attempt to learn from them. I found animals and birds hard to make because I didn’t get to observe them. It was easier for me to make human beings by studying their bodies in various positions. But the face was always hard to make, for instance. That’s how I learned to make sculptures. (p. 73-75)

After initial analysis, the digital photographs were placed on the Anthropology Department’s collections archival website. Visual and historical anthropologist Elizabeth Edwards (2001) stated, “Photographs present a leveling of equivalence of information, with the trivial and the significant intertwined and shifting places” (p. 5). In an essay “The Shortness of

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24 According to Research Professor in Photographic History and Director of Photographic History Research Centre in the School of Humanities at De Montfort University in Leicester, UK Elizabeth Edwards (2001) wrote:

> However, my primary interests have also come from another direction, from many years working as a curator of photographs within an anthropological museum and teaching critical history and theory of still photography within visual anthropology to students in anthropology, history, art history, contemporary arts practices and museum studies. During the hours, days and months spent in many places, working with photographs, looking at photographs, talking about photographs, thinking about photographs and thinking about their relationship with history, I have talked to people looking for ‘history’. This history has been both the actuality of evidential inscription, and their own particular ‘realities’. They are looking for their own history or someone else’s history, for the history of their discipline, or confronting the nature of their colonial past, both the colonized and the colonisers [sic]; people looking for their ancestors, people making, re-making or even imagining histories. Such experiences are of eradicable subjectivity. Photography here cannot be reduced to a totalizing abstract practice, but instead comprises photographs, real visual objects engaged within social space and real time. In such contexts, the analysis of photographs cannot be restricted only to sorting out structures of signification, but must take into account that signifying role of photography in relation to the whole nature of the object and its social biography. (p. 1–2)

Her dynamic portrayal of photography in the realm of anthropology is particularly poignant to the museum curation project for several reasons: (1) the digital photographs were placed on the Anthropology Department’s collections archival website; (2) the digital photographs were electronically sent to the University of Alaska Museum of the North for the purpose of artistic period identification; and (3) the digital photographs proved instrumental in the curation process of the harpoon head artifacts. Edwards further noted, “Photographs, those visual incisions through time and space, constitute such ‘little narratives’, yet at the same time are constituted by and are constitutive of the ‘grand’, or at least ‘larger’, narratives” (p. 3).

Edwards served as Vice-President of the Royal Anthropological Institute 2009-12, and in 2012 held a Fellowship at the Institute of Advanced Study at the University of Durham. She has published numerous journal articles, including “Absent Histories and Absent Images: Photographs, Museum and the Colonial Past” (2013),
History, or Photography in Nuce: Benjamin’s Attentuation of the Negative” in *Walter Benjamin and History* (2005), David Ferris (2005) wrote:

Since photography is what allows the past to be captured for the first time in an image that also belongs to the moment of the time captured, what then appears with photography is an image that no longer simply belongs to the domain of art – it not makes an historical claim. (p. 20)\(^{25}\)

Ferris was referencing a “cultural-historical dialectic” conceptualized by Walter Benjamin (p. 19).\(^{26}\) Edwards (2001) explained, “Benjamin famously conceived of history itself in the

\(^{25}\) David Ferris is Professor of Comparative Literature and Humanities at the University of Colorado at Boulder. He held positions at Queens College of the City University of New York, Yale University, and Haverford College. His academic work focuses on comparative and modern literature and critical theory. Ferris has written journal articles and books referencing Walter Benjamin, including “Politics of the Useless: the Art of Work in Heideggar and Benjamin” (2015), *The Cambridge Introduction to Walter Benjamin* (2008), and *Walter Benjamin: Theoretical Questions* (1996). Recently, Ferris was awarded a Leverhulme Trust Visiting Professorship in the School of Literature, Drama, and Creative Writing at the University of East Anglia, UK. Biographical information was retrieved from the University of Colorado at Boulder, accessed May 20, 2016, [http://www.colorado.edu/humanities/ferris/](http://www.colorado.edu/humanities/ferris/).

\(^{26}\) The juxtaposition of photography to museum display is relevant to the cultural-historical dialectic rendered by Benjamin. As Professor of Philosophy at Manchester Metropolitan University, UK Joanna Hodge (2005) stated:

There is an evolving relation between these genres of writings, [‘hybrid of art criticism, aesthetic theory, conceptual analysis, and history of philosophy’] which will now be construed in terms of the emergence of this strong aesthetics. This style of aesthetics combines a thinking of the changing nature and status of artworks and a meditation on the changing nature and significance of time and temporality, by grounding both in an interaction between cultural activity and a transformation of human sensibility: the crossover from natural history to artistic activity and back. (p. 24)

In other words, the cultural-historical dialectic is a bridge between the cultural artistic styles and their Eskaleut history. Hodge explained further, “… Benjamin proposes a critical writing which performs a momentary retrieval of the past, in a ‘now’ of recognizability [sic], on which he places an explicit temporal restriction:

The dialectical image is a lightning flash. The Then must be held fast as it flashes its lightning image in the Now of recognisability [sic]. The rescue that is thus – and only thus – effected, can take place only for that which in the next moment is irretrievably lost. (qtd. in N9, 7*)

*Note: The author determined this quote to be from the “N” convolute titled “Theory of Knowledge, Theory of Progress” of *The Arcades Project* (2002) written by Walter Benjamin during the late 1920s to 1940, accessed May 27, 2016 through “Method and time: Benjamin’s dialectical images” by Max Pensky ([https://www.binghamton.edu/.../docs/pensky-method-time.pdf](https://www.binghamton.edu/.../docs/pensky-method-time.pdf)). Hodge continued, “Benjamin’s achievement is to have formulated a kind of judgement, subordinating the formal analysis of time and of the concept to the temporal determinacy and finitude of the occasion for the singular judgement concerning specific aesthetic phenomena” (p. 29).
language of photography, and constantly employed photography as a metaphor and allegory for history and memory, which breaks down into images not stories” (p. 10). Anthropologically, the artifacts have authentic human stories to communicate through the different visual mediums. Edwards established profound similarities between photographs and displays and stated, “It is especially pertinent in that both photographic and display forms work to transform objects and construct meanings through their presentation as visual spectacles” (p. 63). Edwards wrote, “Photography brings the expectancy of the real, the truthful. The immediacy and intimacy offered by the photograph also suggest ‘truth’, for intimacy and truth are perceived as largely contingent on one another: this, after all, is a guiding tenet of field anthropology” (p. 9).

Harrison (2013) viewed the display of artifacts in a museum “as an archaeological field site” and the same perception could include photography and photographs (p. 19). In that, the responsibility of these displays and photographs is to distill the “myopia to fantasy” representation of Western culture from their true cultural representation (Edwards 2001, p. 7). “For Benjamin, the historian and the photographer had a similar task: ‘to set in focus’ both the fragment and the materiality of the past as manifestations of unique experience” (p. 10). In other words, the anthropologist acts as the dark room and lifts the cultural histories from the negative plate, as depicted in Figure 13.

Edwards (2001) wrote about the arrangement of objects in the “frame” of a photograph or display case (p. 63). Obviously, the photograph is a flattened surface, whereas the display could incorporate multiple levels or suspended objects. The delicate balance of artistic creativity and historical content must be carefully managed or curated. The truth of the artifact cannot become diluted by means of professional orchestration and interference. Moreover, comparable to a
photograph a display requires negative space for the artifact to develop. The cultural and historical dialectic conceptualized by Benjamin targets this negative space, as Ferris (2005) explained:

Since the print developed later from a negative reveals what could not be brought to light at the time of its exposure, the negative does not negate or prevent what the future can develop. Because the image brings to light what was already there but could not be seen either in the time of its capture or in the time that has elapsed since that moment (the time of the past), then these images – both the negative and what is produced from it – necessarily vary in the amount of detail they exhibit. (p. 26)

Simply, the negative is a foreshadowed image formed within the dialectic (p. 26). Its future develops concurrently with the present to expose the past. This negative to image process serves as the entry point to the cultural and historical dialectic. This second phase of the museum curation project served as a seamless precursor for the display of the harpoon head artifacts, where the photographs themselves were the negatives for the emerging museum display, as shown in Figure 14, where the same harpoon head was photographed for Figure 13.

To enhance the rich brown hues of the ivory, a background of a carefully chosen textured colored filled the negative space. Both photographs worked with darkness and light to provide dimension and artistic clarity. Lifted from the negative, as presented in Figure 13, the harpoon
Figure 14. Artifact #83. Old Bering Sea Type II; Location unknown, Harpoon Head, ivory, 8.5 cm. Source: Rhythm of the Sea Collection, Western Michigan University, Kalamazoo, Michigan.

The harpoon head artifact became a three-dimensional display. The harpoon head artifacts should not be exhibited as what Edwards (2001) classified as “trophy-style arrays” (p. 66). She further clarified, “Rather the choice of the trophy as the compositional form invites a more complex reading as a colonial document of containment and appropriation” (p. 67). Hence, the view of the harpoon head artifacts should extend beyond the near-sightedness of a Western frame to a panoramic vista that includes indigenous cultural significance explained within the ethnographic narrative of the cultural and historical dialectic.
CULTURAL AND HISTORICAL DIALECTIC

Ethnographic Study (Part)

Development of the Negative—Entry Point into the Dialectic: Artistic Styles

The illustration of artistic design elements and motifs on Eskimo and Aleut harpoon head artifacts ascribe to the migration of circumpolar peoples. Artistic trait distribution on the raw organic resources such as walrus tusks, caribou antlers, bone, and stone provided mapping of where people had to migrate seasonally or settle permanently for food or lithic resources. The artistic styles directly correspond with periods and cultures, as previously diagrammed in Figure 1, Thesis Part and Ties, and referenced in Figure 15.

Figure 15. Thesis Parts and Ties (artistic styles). Source: Marcia S. Taylor 2015.

The Bering Land Bridge theory explained the route prehistoric peoples travelled, which allowed them to eventually settle along the Canadian Central Arctic and Greenland.\(^{27}\) Masters of Arts Degree candidate Marcia S. Taylor (2015) wrote:

\(^{27}\) Based on archaeological evidence in the Canadian Arctic the earliest artifacts are called the Arctic Small Tool tradition (ASTt), which references the (a) Independence I (to ca. 700 B.C.), (b) Independence II (to 200 B.C.) and (c) Pre-Dorset (to ca. 700 B.C.) prehistoric cultural periods (Auger 2005, 22). The Pre-Dorset culture evolved into the Dorset culture around 800 B.C. (Crandall 2000, p. 14). Identified by Canadian anthropologist Diamond Jenness (1886–1969) in 1925, the Dorset culture was named after Cape Dorset on Baffin Island where some of their
Anthropologically, in a biological context [behavioral adaptation due to environmental factors] ... will explain the behavioral adaptation process demonstrated culturally by the prehistoric ancestors of the Inuit of the Canadian Central Arctic in their development and essential engagement in the creation of art; a pursuit that became a cultural tradition in historic and contemporary Inuit life. Art was defined as objects of various forms and functions with aesthetic qualities made from raw organic resources such as bone, ivory, and stone. [published article abstract (sec.)]

Anthropologist Henry B. Collins, Jr. (1977) maintained:

The prehistoric north Alaskan cultures of the past 2000 years were the source from which the modern Eskimo cultures of Alaska, Canada, and Greenland were derived. These earlier Alaskan people exhibited the same basic pattern of life as that followed in later times. They were hunters, mainly sea mammals, living in permanent villages along the coast; their houses were partly underground with floors of stone slabs and walls of driftwood timbers and whale bones. Blubber-burning lamps of pottery were used for heating, lighting, and cooking; skin boats – kayaks and umiaks – were used for hunting and traveling, but the dog sled was not known; they subsisted mainly on seals, walrus, whales, caribou, birds, and fish, captured in the same manner and with the same devices – harpoons, darts and the throwing board, bow and arrow, fish spears, lines and sinkers – as those employed by later Eskimos. Their weapons, implements, and utensils, though similar in function and in general type to those used by later Eskimos, were fashioned in more elaborate form and were more frequently decorated. (p. 2)28

first artifacts were discovered (p. 14). The arrival of the Thule culture (A.D. 1000) was a factor in the eventual disappearance of the Dorset culture (p. 14).

28 Henry Bascom Collins, Jr. (b. 1899) received a Master’s of Arts Degree from George Washington University. In 1940, he was given an honorary Doctorate of Science by Millsaps College. For a publication, Dr. William W. Fitzhugh (1984) wrote:

Nearly fifty years ago Henry B. Collins completed his now-classic study on the last 2000 years of Eskimo prehistory in the Bering Strait region of Alaska (Collins 1937). Excavating stratified middens on St. Lawrence Island, Collins discovered highly ornamented bone and ivory artifacts in the deepest parts of the middens. Above them were levels containing similar but less decorated objects, enabling Collins to define a 2000-year sequence beginning with highly ornate implements representing the Old Bering Sea and Okvik Eskimo cultures, and leading to the ethnographic period. However, the sequence did not illustrate the usual gradual elaboration of form and style, it was one of gradual streamlining and simplification… (p. 24)

Collins conducted fieldwork on Punuk Island in 1928. He later classified artifacts from the island as those from a distinct prehistoric Eskimo culture identified as Punuk. Per his monograph, “Prehistoric Art of the Alaskan Eskimo” (1929), Collins used the artistic styles of harpoon head artifacts to research and establish Eskimo art periods. In a bibliography published by the Dartmouth College Library the author Margaret Lantis wrote:

In considering the implied question regarding diffusion of separate elements of culture, apart from the migrations of peoples bearing distinctive cultures, Collins sensibly considered each on its own merits instead of trying to fit it into a hypothetical system of culture stages (kulturkreise). This freedom in accepting implications of relationship, given by the geographic distribution of artifacts, led him to suggest that there had been contacts between Aleuts and Kamchadal [native people of Katchatka, Russia] before the Russian conquest. Moreover, not all the cultural impetus had come from the supposedly higher cultural development on the west side of the Pacific… At a time when anthropologists generally doubted such relationships, assuming Bering Strait to be the only avenue of contact between Asia and America, Collin’s
According to anthropologist George I. Quimby (1948), “The most obvious criteria for the establishment of a tentative time perspective in Aleutian archaeology are art styles—designs and elements of designs appearing on different classes of objects” (p. 78). Unlike his predecessors who offered cultural and period classifications based on varying criteria, Quimby used a dialectic approach for analytical determination. He maintained:

The prehistory of the Aleutian Islands remains somewhat of an enigma despite the archaeological investigations of the past three-quarters of a century. During this time interpretations of the evidence have differed radically. For instance, Dall (1877) concluded that there have been three distinct, successive periods of culture, each based on a different economy: (1) shellfish gathering, (2) fishing, and (3) hunting. Jochelson (1925) decided that there had been no temporal changes in Aleutian culture. Hrdlička (1945) concluded that there had been two distinct and separate cultures associated with two distinct and separate physical types: Aleut and pre-Aleut. (p. 77)

In my opinion none of these interpretations is correct. From a review of the published reports and a survey of recent collections in Chicago Natural History Museum and the American Museum of Natural History I would hypothecate a gradual change in both culture and physical type from the time of first occupancy of the Aleutians to the arrival of the Russians in 1741. (p. 77)

Based on a previous article, “Periods of prehistoric art in the Aleutian Islands” (1945), Quimby (1948) acknowledged, “… I tentatively formulated only two periods of Aleut art styles, an early period and a late period. I now wish to replace this earlier concept of two periods with a hypothesis of three periods” (p. 78). These periods will be referred to as the Quimby Early assumption was courageous. (https://www.collections.dartmouth.edu/published-derivatives/arctica/large/Vol_III-0021.jpg)

He conducted archaeological excavations on St. Lawrence Island. Collins, through analysis of middens and the ruins on the island, “recognized objects lightly engraved with parallel lines enclosing open spaces and human figural sculpture with characteristic narrow faces, long thin nasal bridges, and angular body decoration” (Hurst 1998, p. 8). Credit was given to Collins as the “first archaeologist to recognize OBS I, or Okvik, as a distinctly separate style” (p. 8). Collins wrote numerous publications on Alaska Native art and cultures including, “The Eskimo of Western Alaska” (1927), “The Ancient Eskimo Culture of Northwestern Alaska” (1928), Archaeology of the Bering Sea Region” (1934 1935), “Culture Migrations and Contacts in the Bering Sea Region” (1937), and “Prehistoric Eskimo Harpoon Heads from Bering Strait” (1941). Biographical information was retrieved from Dartmouth College, accessed June 17, 2016, https://www.collections.dartmouth.edu/published-derivatives/arctica/large/Vol_III-0021.jpg.
Period, Quimby Middle Period, and Quimby Late Period or QEP, QMP, and QLP respectively. He termed the periods as the “Aleutian cultural continuum” (p. 78). Aleutian artistic style formulation for each Quimby period was identified within the parameters later established by Ray, who cited specific “components” and “typical designs” for Okvik, Old Bering Sea, Ipiutak, Punuk and contemporary Eskimo art periods, as referenced in Figure 16 (Ray 1961, p. 88–93).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Period</th>
<th>Dates</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Early Okvik</td>
<td>500 B.C.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Old Bering Sea I</td>
<td>300 B.C.*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Old Bering Sea–Okvik</td>
<td>100 B.C.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Old Bering Sea</td>
<td>A.D. 100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Late (Classic) Old Bering Sea</td>
<td>A.D. 300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Birnirk</td>
<td>A.D. 500–A.D. 800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Panuk</td>
<td>A.D. 500 – A.D. 1100**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thule and Early Prehistoric</td>
<td>A.D. 1100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Late Prehistoric</td>
<td>A.D. 1500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Historic</td>
<td>A.D. 1750</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contemporary</td>
<td>A.D. 1890</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Quimby qualified the addition of a third period as a hypothesis. At the end of his journal article, he wrote “Critique of Hypothesis” (Quimby 1948, 92). He stated:

The rationalization for commenting on his hypothesis was as Quimby summed:

Middle period art, then according to the available evidence, seems to have been confined to middens or levels of middens in the eastern half of the Aleutian Island chain, specifically on Amaknak, Umnak, and Unalaska. The apparent absence of middle period and early period art as far west as Attu, Agatu [sic], and Semichi may have temporal significance. (p. 89)

The objective of this thesis is not to prove or disprove the three-period hypothesis. However, the design characteristics described by Quimby in the middle period display time and space significance to the Eskimo and Aleut correlation, and therefore was used in an interlocking schema.
The purpose of the date and period layout shown in Figure 16 is twofold. First, the Eskimo art periods chart produced by Ray provided an outline for artistic styling developments, as evidenced through research compiled by other notable archaeologists and anthropologists, such as Quimby. Second, this layout is the beginning step in establishing the direct correlation of Eskimo and Aleut cultures evidenced by the artistic styles of the harpoon head artifacts. In addition, the combination of what Quimby defined as art styles in the three periods of the Aleutian cultural continuum, and the broader research conducted by Collins on other maritime areas provided an interlocking schema to culturally identify the harpoon head artifacts. The importance of the schema is evident because it weaves together Alaska Native artistic styles that lack a greater representation from the Aleutian Islands, as explained by Quimby (1978):

Another limitation to the study of culture change is the lack of objects in quantities sufficient for classification and comparison by site or levels within a site. Particularly is this true in the Aleutian Islands. Elsewhere sherds, harpoon points, or other objects have been found in sufficient quantities so that the stylistic changes of classes of these objects in space or time or both have provided some insight into the changes of the cultures of which the objects where once a part. But archaeological sites in the Aleutian Islands have not produced classes of artifacts in quantities. Therefore, it is difficult to inject a time perspective into Aleutian prehistory by either seriation or stratigraphy. (p. 78)

The artifacts referenced by Quimby (1945) were “salvaged and excavated” from the “D” site on the southwestern coast of Amaknak Island (p. 76). Quimby described the site:

The “D” site, missed by Jochelson, is a large midden about 24 feet thick, 125 feet wide, and 300 feet long. A roadbed cut through the middle of the site is about sixteen feet beneath the top of the midden and about eight feet above the bottom. Lt. Cahn salvaged and excavated specimens from the road and has dug pits from the level of the roadbed to the bottom of the midden. Thus, he established two lots of materials: Those from the bottom one-third and those from the upper two-thirds of the midden. Consequently, his

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30 The harpoon head artifacts from the Rhythm of the Sea Collection were used to contextualize Quimby Aleutian art time periods.
31 Quimby (1945) acknowledged, “These artifacts are part of a large collection donated to the Chicago Natural History Museum by Lt. Alvin R. Cahn, U.S.N.R.” (p. 76).
collection from the “D” site is suitable for stratigraphic analysis, a rare phenomenon in Aleut archaeology. (p. 76)  

In his first article on prehistoric art in the Aleutian Islands, Quimby rightfully acknowledged the assistance of Collins, who added archaeological context to the Quimby periods, which subsequently affirmed the Eskimo art periods developed by Ray. Collins (1977) wrote, “Through a series of transitional stages, one art style succeeded another in prehistoric times, but the basic motifs, in varying form, continued throughout and still remain as the fundamental themes of modern Eskimo art” (p. 3). Identification of the Eskimo artistic periods, connected the Museum Curation Project (part) to the Ethnographic Study (part), or simply to cultures, as previously shown in Figure 15 stated:

On St. Lawrence Island, the Diomedes, and the east and west coast of Bering Strait the culture stages that have been recognized are the Okvik, Old Bering Sea, Punuk, protohistoric, and modern—one stage leading gradually into another. At Point Barrow on the Arctic coast of Alaska the Birnirk culture, an outgrowth of Okvik—Old Bering Sea, became established and, around 1000 years ago, gave rise to the Thule culture. This was a crucial event in Eskimo prehistory, for it was the Thule culture which spread eastward to Canada and Greenland to form the principal basis of modern Eskimo culture in these regions. The sequence of related cultures leading from Okvik to recent Eskimo has been

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32 The churning of soil and subsequent disruption of archaeological sites was due to the building of roadways and other military infrastructure during the Battle of Attu and the Aleutian Island Campaign of World War II. In his monograph for a Master’s Degree in the School of Advanced Military Studies, Major Matthew Scott Metcalf (2014) wrote, “The Battle of Attu occurred between the United States and the Japanese Empire, from May 11-30, 1943, on the Aleutian Island of Attu. It was one of the first uses of amphibious forces in World War II” (p. 2). Military operations extended beyond Attu, “General Brown knew he needed depth on the Island of Attu. The establishment of bases throughout the length of the Aleutian Island chain enabled the ability to build depth” (p. 30). “Due to basing, the Americans had extended operational reach from the west coast of the United States to the Island of Attu and completely dominated the entirety of the Aleutian Islands” (33). Metcalf concluded:

American warplanes began to bomb Kiska but could not bomb Attu because they did not have the range to attack it. Eventually, the Americans established a new airfield on Adak Island, giving American warplanes the ability to attack the entire length of the Aleutian chain, including Attu. The campaign quickly demonstrated the advantages of basing warplanes close to the fight. Aircraft were able to attack enemy forces along the entire length of the island chain as well as prevent the Japanese from establishing a single airstrip anywhere within the Aleutians. Aircraft were also able to ferry soldiers, equipment, and supplies quickly throughout the Aleutians. The Americans had achieved operational reach. Using basing to increase operational reach, the Americans had successfully built into the campaign to retake the Aleutians. (p. 37)

During this period artifacts were removed, scattered or disregarded; therefore, resulting in confusion or negligence about their provenience. This issue will become more apparent as the history of the harpoon head artifacts from the Rhythm of the Sea Collection is discussed.
called the Northern Maritime tradition. These are not the oldest Eskimo cultures in the Arctic but they are the ones that provide the most complete record of cultural continuity. With the exception of Ipiutak they are the prehistoric Eskimo cultures most advanced in art. (p. 3)

These Eskimo art periods described by Collins provide a Northern Maritime tradition overlay for the components and typical designs for specific periods detailed by Ray. She categorized and provided meticulous drawings of the motifs that were incorporated into larger design elements for the Eskimo art periods. For example, the Old Bering Sea periods consisted of birdlike beaks, simple circular eyes, and dashes. Collins (1977) organized sub-styles A, B, and C under the Okvik period. Each sub-style has simple or ornate decorative features, which some may signify “hunting magic” (p. 3). The Eskimo art periods categorized by Collins and Ray are combined and summarized in Figure 17.33

33 A distinction was made of a South Alaska art period by Collins (1977):

South Alaska, the most densely populated area of the far north in historic times, is also the area where prehistoric cultures extend deepest into the past. People who could have been proto-Aleut lived on Anangula Island in the Aleutians 8000 years ago, and archaeological sites on Kodiak Island and the Alaska Peninsula which could have been those of proto-Eskimo people have been found dating from 3500 to 2000 B.C. But these very early sites have yielded nothing more than stone implements. Important as they are for showing continuities, changes, and relationships in stone typologies, they tell us little of the way of life and cultures of these early peoples. For this we must rely on excavations at later sites which reveal stages of culture demonstrably ancestral to those of the present Eskimos and Aleuts. (p. 13)

Prehistoric Eskimo and Aleut culture in South Alaska is basically similar but in many ways very different from that of the north. The way of life was the same—that of a hunting people utilizing the varied resources of its environment, primarily those of the sea but also of the land. Yet in their hunting practices, arts, and manufacturers the southern Eskimos and Aleuts developed their own distinctive patterns. Harpoon heads and some other implement types were generally like those of the north but fundamental differences appear in such features as killing whales with a poisoned lance, the prevalence of barbed darts over toggle harpoon heads, composite fish hooks and grooved stone sinkers, composite harpoon heads and sockets, specialized forms of slate blades, and large round or oval lamps. On the whole, there are greater differences between South Alaska and Bering Strait than between Bering Strait and Greenland. In contrast to this sharp distinction between South Alaskan cultures and those of the Northern Maritime tradition at Bering Strait and the Arctic coast, the southern cultures had distinct affinities with the Norton-Near Ipiutak tradition of western and northern Alaska. (p. 13)

Interestingly, the Eskimo and Aleut correlation can be proven by way of the Pre-Dorset and Dorset, and Thule cultures:

Present day Alaska has been continuously inhabited for nearly 10,000 years. Beginning in the first millennium [B.C.], several waves of migrant peoples from what is now Siberia introduced a distinctly maritime life-way, almost entirely dependent upon sea mammal hunting. The Northern Maritime, or Thule Tradition, includes the Old Bering Sea, the Punuk, and Western Thule cultures. (Hurst 1998, p. 6)

The two overlays are indicative of the cultural and historical dialectic. Given that history explained by the anthropology-archaeological record has constant momentum, which allows for a better understanding of cultural processes through time. Author and artist Valérie Chaussonnet (1995) wrote:

Okvik, Old Bering Sea, and Ipiutak peoples overlapped in time and must have known each other. These early cultures each had distinctive artistic designs and styles of harpoons, which must have developed in part to mark hunting territories and social space. When elaborately decorated artifacts were buried as grave goods these identities were also conveyed to the afterworld. (p. 44)

Whereas, Collins (1937) maintained:

The recent excavations in northern Alaska have thrown considerable light on the problems of Eskimo prehistory, but they have by no means provided the final solutions thereto. They have revealed an ancient Eskimo culture which is seen to have been ancestral to the existing phases, and yet, paradoxically enough, this Old Bering Sea culture is in many respects a more highly developed, a more specialized Eskimo culture than any other known. This can only mean that we must extend our search still farther into the past if we are to find the simple beginnings of this old culture and presumably, therefore, of Eskimo culture generally. (p. 383)

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34 Valérie Chaussonnet (b. 1960) worked for 10 years at the Smithsonian’s Arctic Studies Center. She was a member of a group involved with a joint Russian-American touring exhibition the “Crossroads of Continents: Cultures of Alaska and Siberia” (http://www.valeriechaussonnet.com). Biographical information was retrieved from her webpage, accessed August 27, 2016, http://www. valeriechaussonnet.com.
This theoretical determination was exemplified by an adjustment in the Eskimo anthropology-archaeological record. As research progressed, it became apparent that art periods defined new cultures outside the realm of the Northern Maritime tradition. The Ipiutak [Iñupiaq] culture was such an adjustment or branch of the Okvik and Old Bering Sea cultures (Fitzhugh, 1984, p. 24). An Iñupiaq language teacher Beverly Faye Hugo (2010) described traditional seal hunting practices, and wrote:

Ringed seals swim under the sea ice and come up for air at breathing holes. In the past, hunters with harpoons waited at the holes, standing silently and motionlessly on small stools, which elevated their feet, protecting them from the frozen surface.\(^{35}\) A feather mounted on a T-shaped ivory pin that was placed in the hole revealed the seal’s first exhalation, which was the signal to strike. (p. 49)\(^{36,37}\)

She added:

This harpoon has a ‘toggling’ head made of caribou antler embedded with a copper blade. The wedge-shaped head was designed to slip off the harpoon’s long ivory foreshaft and turn sideways inside the seal. It is attached to a line that the hunter used for pulling the seal out of the water, after he first enlarged its hole with a pick on the harpoon’s upper end. A tern’s bill is tucked into the lashings for luck. (p. 49)\(^{38}\)

Anthropologist William W. Fitzhugh, IV (1984) determined, “… prehistoric Eskimo cultures are divided into two traditions—Palaeoeskimo and Neoeskimo. In addition, the Arctic region inhabited by Eskimos is separated into the western Arctic (eastern Siberia and Alaska east to the Mackenzie River) and the eastern Arctic (the Mackenzie River east across Arctic Canada and encompassing Greenland)” (p. 24).\(^{39}\) He stated:

\(^{35}\) Hugo cited John Murdoch, *Ethnological Results of the Point Barrow Expedition* (1892).
\(^{37}\) Beverly Faye Hugo teaches at North Slope Borough School District, and was the former facility director for the Iñupiaq Heritage Center in Barrow, Alaska (Crowell 2010, p. 292).
\(^{38}\) Hugo cited John Murdoch, *Ethnological Results of the Point Barrow Expedition* (1892).
\(^{39}\) William W. Fitzhugh, IV is the Curator of Archaeology and Director, Arctic Studies Center (Smithsonian National Museum of Natural History). He received his M.A. and Ph.D. from Harvard University. His research interests include circumpolar archaeology, and history of northern cultures and environments. Fitzhugh wrote for the Arctic Studies Center Publications Series that included contributions to circumpolar anthropology. Among the
The western Palaeoeskimo tradition is tentatively dated between 4000 and 1000 years ago and is represented by six cultures: Denbigh, Choris, Norton, Okvik, Old Bering Sea, and Ipiutak. Denbigh, Choris, and Norton remains consist largely of stone and some ceramic materials; few organic implements have been preserved. Old Bering Sea, Okvik, and Ipiutak implements include quantities of organic remains as well as stone tools. Their bone and ivory hunting weapons and utensils are frequently decorated with elaborate carvings and engravings of animals and fanciful beasts. Many of these are shown with lifelines and skeletal motifs, and are in the act of capturing or devouring prey, or being transformed from some real or imaginary creature into another. (p. 24–25)

The eastern Arctic was first occupied by Palaeoeskimo peoples approximately 4000 years ago. Two major cultures, Pre-Dorset and Dorset, have been identified in Canada and Greenland. Few organic Pre-Dorset tools have been found… Dorset implements dating between 2500 and 1000 years ago share many attributes with tools made in the western Arctic during that time. Small bone, ivory, and soapstone carvings, including maskettes (miniature masks), and stylized and realistic polar bears, seals, and falcons have been recovered. These pieces often carry skeletal or x-ray designs that may be variants of the western Arctic lifeline or spiritline motif. Despite many differences Palaeoeskimo traditions, there are common threads in subject matter, in style, and in artifact function suggesting a common ancestry. (p. 25)

The more recent cultural tradition has been called Neoeskimo because of its close connection to modern cultures and ways of life. The nature of the origins and evolution of Neoeskimo traditions in the western Arctic remain frustratingly unclear. For the purpose of this paper, the Neoeskimo tradition in Alaska begins about 1500 years ago, represented by the bone, ivory, and stone implements of the Punuk and Birnirk cultures. Thule Eskimos, descendants of Punuk and Birnirk Eskimos, swept east across north Alaska to Canada and Greenland approximately 1000 years ago. (p. 25)

Throughout most regions of north Alaska, Canada, and Greenland many aspects of Palaeoeskimo art and technology disappeared or became of little importance during the Neoeskimo period. Neoeskimo hunting implements are not as intricately decorated as Palaeoeskimo weapons, and animal figures do not occur as functional parts of the hunting magic system but rather are stock figures. Engraved decorations—primarily geometric motifs composed of dashed lines, Y-motifs, nucleated circles, and ticking—are used to outline and ornament artifacts rather than to create lifelike beings that serve as the carriers of an object’s function. In comparison with Palaeoeskimo art, Neoeskimo work appears lifeless and stiff. In the more recent periods, Neoeskimo artifacts display little decoration and are quite simplified following the sequence noted by Collins. These changes in style and in the relationship between art and material culture undoubtedly

reflect important changes in economy, society, and religion; they should not be viewed simply as functionally isolated trends in the history of Eskimo art. (p. 25–26)

Fitzhugh determined, “The artistic elements of this 19th century complex are reminiscent of the Alaskan Palaeoeskimo tradition. Among the Bering Sea people, and perhaps the Aleuts and Pacific Eskimos, these traditions apparently have continued… (p. 26). The anthropological record must allow for research discoveries and make adjustments, so does the Northern Maritime tradition cultural continuum, which is evident amongst the Western Arctic—Bering Sea, Bering Strait, and Eastern Arctic cultures (p. 25). The eventual modern-day shaping of Alaska Native peoples was based on culture, language, and geographical recognition depicted by the colored shapes on the map, as diagramed in Figure 18.

![Figure 18. Peoples of Alaska and Northeast Siberia, 614 x 390. Source: http://www.alaska.si.edu (accessed October 21, 2015).](image)

**Aleutian Early Artistic Period: Químby Early Period**

The artifacts collected from the “D” site (southwestern coast of Amaknak Island) represented designs from the early period, as Quimby (1945) described:
With one exception the designs of the early period are linear, simple and rather deeply cut. The composition is longitudinal and gives the impression of symmetry or balanced asymmetry. Unlike Thule art, for instance, there is no attempt to confine the decoration to the border of an object, nor is there the impression of formality and precision which is characteristic of some Thule design. (p. 76)

Quimby (1948) later acknowledged additional early period artistic evidence taken from the site and stated:

Presumably, stratigraphic excavation of the upper sixteen feet of the D Midden would provide the data to make a separation of the middle and late periods at this site. But until such stratigraphic excavations are undertaken, one can only recognize that the middle and late period decorative complexes both occur in the upper sixteen feet and neither occurs in the lowermost eight feet, which contained decorative material representative of the early period. (p. 90–91)

Quimby (1945) artistically defined, “The elements of early period Aleut design are straight lines, paired lines, traverse lines in groups, short isolated lines, spurred lines, [X’s], and zigzags” (p. 76). The linear hatch markings described by Quimby (1948), of which he commented, “the execution of the design is crude” (p. 79–80). The noted artifacts Quimby studied with this style “generally” consisted of “large lance-heads or barbed harpoon heads of bone” (p. 80). This QEP artistic style appeared to be “reminiscent of the Dorset art in the eastern Arctic” (p. 80). In addition, he commented on a second early art style that was “simple, curvilinear, and precise” (p. 80). Quimby clarified, “The available evidence indicates that his art is as early as any cultural manifestation in the Aleutian Islands. Although somewhat related styles appear in later periods, this style as defined and illustrated here is confined entirely to the early period” (p. 80).

Furthermore, he indicated:

The composition generally emphasizes the decorated border of the objects. The elements of design are large, compass-drawn dot and circles; compass-drawn dots and arcs; hachured [X’s]; and rows of dots closely spaced. This art so far is confined to ivory ornaments, most of which are cylindrical. . . . The designs seem to have been engraved on the ivory with metal tools, at least one of which obviously was similar to the modern compass used in mechanical drawing. (p. 80)
Certain linear motifs of the QEP are featured on an Early Paleoeskimo (Pre-Dorset) mask, as shown in Figure 19.\(^{40}\)

![Image of a mask](image)

**Figure 19.** Early Paleoeskimo (Pre-Dorset) Period (ca. 1700 BC). Devin Island (True Love Lowlands), Miniature Mask, ivory, 5.4 cm x 2 x 0.8 cm; Canadian Museum of Civilization. *Source:* Ingo Hessel 1998.

This example of Pre-Dorset art from the Canadian Central Arctic provided evidence of a migration or map of “connections” between their culture and that of the “southern part of western Alaska” (Quimby 1945, p. 79). Quimby stated, “Dr. Frederica de Laguna is another who believed the Dorset culture was derived from the ancient north Pacific cultural continuum” (p. 79).\(^{41}\) In a biographical memoir, Fitzhugh (2013) wrote:

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\(^{40}\) The line pattern could represent facial tattooing or advanced age. This maskette is the oldest known depiction of a human from the Canadian Arctic (Hessel 1998, p. 12).

\(^{41}\) Frederica de Laguna (1906–2004) was the William R. Kenan, Jr. professor emeritus of anthropology of Bryn Mawr College. It was there that she founded an Anthropology Department, and taught from 1938 until her retirement in 1975. De Laguna received her doctorate in anthropology from Columbia University at which time she was a student of anthropologist Dr. Franz Boas. Her research focused on Arctic cultures from Alaska to Greenland. De Laguna wrote several books on the prehistory of circumpolar peoples including, *The Archaeology of Cook Inlet* (1934), *The Prehistory of Northern North America as Seen from the Yukon* (1947), and *Chugach Prehistory: The Archaeology of Prince William Sound, Alaska* (1956). Considered as a pioneering woman anthropologist, de Laguna however remained a staunch advocate of archaeological and research practices deemed outdated and illegal by today’s standards. Biographical information was retrieved from her obituary dated November 28, 2004, accessed June 17, 2016, [http://www.nytimes.com/2004/11/28/obituaries/frederica-de-laguna-98-arctic-anthropologist-dies.html?_r=0](http://www.nytimes.com/2004/11/28/obituaries/frederica-de-laguna-98-arctic-anthropologist-dies.html?_r=0).
Never a fan of Bryn Mawr’s and the University of Pennsylvania Museum’s classical archaeology campaigns, Freddy [Frederica de Laguna] was convinced that the best scholarship came from well-focused small-scale research. That kind of practice served her, and early-phase North American archaeology, well. Her method for the Yukon project used detailed distributional studies of carefully defined artifact types to build cultural complexes up from these components… Reacting against the diffusionist excesses of the day, her analysis required ferreting out independent look-alikes from artifacts or complexes that revealed solid evidence of contact and influence between neighboring and more distant cultures. The result was a tour de force, but because its results were largely negative, her monograph (de Laguna 1947) had relatively little impact (other than affirming prior beliefs about the eastward Thule migration and pan-Eastern Arctic Dorset connections). Archaeological evidence was still too spotty, the definition and dating of complexes too loose, and the influence of ethnography too dominant to allow for a revolutionary synthesis. Even today, the cultural history of Northeastern Asia is too fragmentary for convincing cultural reconstructions, except for the last 2,000 years around the Bering Strait. (p. 10–11)\(^42\)

Quimby (1945) acknowledged:

> Like that of early period Aleut, Dorset art is linear, the composition is frequently longitudinal, and there is a tendency to avoid border designs. Also like early period Aleut, the Dorset culture has not produced very many decorated artifacts; thus comparative studies are limited and their conclusions are subject to doubts. (p. 77)

He further indicated archaeological stratigraphy evidence proved “Dorset-like designs in Aleut are early” (p. 78). Therefore, reinforcing the actual similarities between periods where geography was a factor as to the distribution of artifacts.

\(^{42}\) Fitzhugh wrote about de Laguna when she was a student of Dr. Franz Boaz. He remarked on her thesis topic that Boas had suggested which was “to evaluate similarities between Paleolithic and Eskimo technology and art” (Fitzhugh 2013, p. 7). Fitzhugh further stated:

> Her topic was important to Boas, who had long sided with the Central Canadian theory of Eskimo origins. Boas had just finished publishing *Primitive Art*, with Northwest Coast art as its core, and was curious what a careful study of Paleolithic and circumpolar art might reveal. His reconstruction of Eskimo history called for a migration into the Bering Strait from the Central Canadian Arctic, thereby creating a wedge of Eskimo peoples who interrupted the arc of similar cultures from Siberia to the Columbia River – a hypothesis he had deduced from his leadership of the Jesup Expedition (Dumond 2003). If this theory was correct, Eskimo culture (and especially its art) should have no historic connection with Paleolithic and early Holocene cultures of northern Europe. (p. 8)

The importance of this theory suggests a reverse migration, and its relevance to artistic styles of northern Alaskan cultures such as, the Birnirk and Punuk.
The Aleut and Dorset connection is evident through notable artistic design elements and motifs. This connection is further exemplified through the Arctic Small Tool tradition (ASTt) and subsequent Northern Maritime tradition. Artistic trait identifications followed migratory patterns as the Pre-Dorset developed into the Norton Tradition (Choris, Norton, and Ipiutak cultures) in Alaska and Dorset to Thule in Canada (Megginson 2000, p. 7). Therefore, the Thesis Summation Equation can incorporate another integer or part to demonstrate the development from an algebraic equation to a calculation (calculus) of cultural change, as explained in Figure 20.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Thesis Summation Equation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>$\Sigma$ = prehistoric correlation of Eskimo and Aleut cultures (whole)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$a$ = Eskimo culture (part) – Northern Maritime tradition cultural continuum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$b$ = Aleut culture (part) – Aleutian cultural continuum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$c$ = Pre-Dorset culture (part and correlation bridge): Dorset-Birnirk/Thule cultures</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

$\Sigma = [(a + b) + (b + c) + (a + c)]$

*Figure 20. Thesis Parts and Summation. Source: Marcia S. Taylor 2016.*

Providing a with similar migratory logistics and dates as Fitzhugh theorized helps visualize the concept of the Thesis Summation Equation, which includes the Pre-Dorset (Early Paleoeskimo) dispersal toward Canada, as depicted in Figure 21.

Outlined in purple is an additional arrow to demonstrate Early Paleoeskimo dispersal that extended from the coast of Alaska and the Bering Sea islands to the Aleutian Islands. The arrow signifies the migratory break from other Early Paleoeskimo peoples. Moreover, it correlates the Eskimo or Northern Maritime tradition cultural continuum with the Aleutian cultural continuum through their connection with the Pre-Dorset. This delineation is important when assigning artistic periods to the harpoon head artifacts from the Rhythm of the Sea Collection because cultural continuums are aligned through artistic design elements and motifs.
Dorset and Thule Cultures

Archaeological evidence determined the Dorset culture (800 B.C. to A.D. 1450) migrated eastward; however, it was named after Cape Dorset in the Nunavut Territory where some of the first artifacts were found (Crandall 2000).\textsuperscript{43} Given the limited diversity of resources in the Arctic, the Dorset developed a lithic technology that comprised of a more sophisticated adaptive “toolkit” (Landry 2013, p. 20).\textsuperscript{44} This was evident in how they produced and fashioned artifacts, which included three-dimensional carvings (Crandall 2000). The raw organic resources used were bone, antler, ivory, soapstone, and occasionally wood. As Early Paleoeskimo people, the

\textsuperscript{43} Dr. Richard Crandall reconstructed the evolution of Inuit art from its prehistoric origin. Artifacts discovered and regarded as art by archaeologists were placed in cultural artistic time periods beginning with the Pre-Dorset, Dorset and Thule cultures. Careful artistic distinctions were made designating the prehistoric cultures. His research placed raw organic resources in the hands of these early artists. Crandall received his Ph.D. from the University of Michigan in 1974, and is currently a professor in the Department of the School of Humanities, Arts and Social Sciences at Lake Superior State University. Biographical information was retrieved from Lake Superior State University, accessed September 4, \textit{2016}, \url{http://www.lssu.edu}.

\textsuperscript{44} The ancestral Pre-Dorset and Dorset cultures produced lithic artifacts found in the Canadian Central Arctic. Anthropology graduate student David Landry studied the artifacts to generate conclusions about prehistoric lithic technologies and the cultural relationship with the physical environment.
Dorset did contribute artistically to the Thule culture (Auger 2005). Archaeologists speculated the Thule arrived via Alaska to the Canadian Central Arctic. They were sea mammal hunters as identified by their functional artifacts such as, hunting weapons largely made of ivory, and their Alaskan heritage depictions (Hessel 1998). Thule art is more functional, and is considered as “rudimentary” when compared with the Dorset (Crandall 2000, p. 19). However, as they settled in the Canadian Arctic and Greenland their art demonstrated more skilled craftsmanship, as proven in Figure 22.

![Figure 22. Thule Period, Baffin Island (near Arctic Bay) Bow-drill Handle. Ivory, 42.9 cm x 5.1 x 0.4 cm; Canadian Museum of Civilization. Source: Ingo Hessel 1998.](image)

The data of Aleutian anthropologists Waldemar Jochelson and Aleš Hrdlička confirmed the presence of early cultures in the eastern part of the island chain. Quimby (1948) stated,
“On Umnak at the Nikolskoye site early period design was found deep in the midden” (p. 91).

He recognized that ivory spool specimens taken from the “bottom level” of the midden on

... One of the chief difficulties under which – without being aware of it – all previous visitors to the region labored, is the fact, only now clear, that the islands had not had only one, unique, Aleut, population, as was assumed. More extended excavations, and the ample skeletal remains that were recovered, showed that the Aleuts were only the last comers to the islands; that before them the whole archipelago was settled by a distinct people, the “Pre-Aleuts”; and that from the island of Umnak westward remnants or even whole communities of the older stock were still living when the Russians came and mixed with the Aleuts. Thus there were an older and later culture on the islands, with extensive fusions of the two, a serious complication. Everything archeological that is on record as “Aleut” must, therefore, be regarded reservedly, until there will be accumulated such a knowledge of the pre-Aleut that clear distinctions of the industrial remains of the two peoples may be possible. (p. 2)

Known for his anthropometry research throughout the Aleutian Islands, especially in 1936 on Kagamil Island where Hrdlička excavated human bones, skulls, and mummies from the burial Cold Cave located on the coast. His methodology was noted:

It was Dr. Ales Hrdlicka [sic] who first made an anthropometric study of Aleut skeletal remains, following his excavations during the summers of 1936 to 1938. His most significant finding was the existence of two distinct populations in the Aleutians characterized by quite different headform; this had first been observed by von Baer but ignored by later workers. Hrdlicka [sic] noted that the earlier population was oblongheaded and was possibly related to the Sioux Indians, and the later population roundheaded and resembled the brachycranic variety of Siberian Tungus. Unfortunately, Hrdlicka [sic] divided the skulls from all the islands into Pre-Aleuts and Aleuts on the basis of morphology, regardless of excavated depth or geographical distribution. As a consequence he was not able to secure a clear picture of when in time, or where in the Aleutian chain, the newer population supplanted the older population, nor of the relative numbers, or extent of the mixture between the two populations. (Laughlin 1951, p. 77)

The research conducted by Hrdlička provided physical evidence that the Aleuts did not comprise “a single, homogenous population” (p. 79). Anthropologist William S. Laughlin wrote:

In retrospect we see in the Aleuts a population of the same stock as the Eskimo with the oldest dated prehistory and longest continual residence in the area of their occupation. Their history is that of two successive Mongoloid peoples pushing out into the Aleutian Islands from the Alaskan mainland, bring with them all the traits and implements of an extensive open-sea economy. The first wave of migration must have started over 4,000 years ago, while the second was well within the last 1,000 years and was continuing at the time of Russian discovery [1741]. (p. 87)

Russian born anthropologist Waldemar Jochelson (1855-1937) was requested by Dr. Franz Boas to accompany him on the Jessup North Expedition to North Asia because of his knowledge of eastern Siberia (Brandišauskas 2009). The expedition was formed to gather ethnographic information for the American Museum of Natural History. In 1909-10, Jochelson joined a Russian expedition “to collect zoological, botanical and geological specimens and to conduct climatologic and ethnological research in Kamchatka and the Aleutian Islands” (p. 175). In an article, Brandišauskas wrote:

He studied their dialects and compiled their folklore in the Russian and the American part of their territories. Jochelson (1909, 304–5) believed that scientific results belonged to all people, and therefore they were not owned by any particular nation. In addition, he did meteorological observations and archaeological excavations of villages and caves used for the dead. He also made audio recordings of indigenous storytellers and even made a film recording. After this fieldwork, Jochelson had an even larger and more impressive collection of field data. Later all this research was published in two monographs dedicated to the archaeology of the Aleutian Islands (Jochelson 1925) and to the ethnography and language of the islands (Jochelson 1933). (p. 175)
Amaknak Island were indicative of the early period, and “somewhat related styles appear in later periods” (p. 81). These related styles identified from the Okvik (Old Bering Sea I) period are illustrated on a toggle harpoon head from the Rhythm of the Sea Collection, as shown in Figure 23.

Crafted onto the harpoon head artifact are examples of the typical motifs of this early period. The motifs such as small nucleated circles, delicate spurs, and radiating lines expanded throughout the entire surface. The design format is linear, which is also characteristic of the Pre-Dorset culture and the QEP, as stated previously. Quimby acknowledged these motifs in his middle period, which as he noted, does grant an argument for its rationality. A summary of the QEP is illustrated in Figure 24 (Quimby 1948, p. 91).

The use of the cultural and historical dialectic confirms the connection of artistic styles to define periods and cultures. Quimby (1945) acknowledged:

… it seems reasonable to believe that there is some kind of cultural relationship between early Aleut and Dorset. This hypothesis is suggested by the evidence of design similarities, not only between early Aleut and Dorset, but also between Prince William Sound-Kachemak Bay and Dorset and Old Bering Sea 1 [sic] and Dorset, as well as the probability (proof in some instances) that all of these cultures are old. (p. 78–79)
The “scale of craftsmanship” and aesthetic designs seem to offer both cultural significance than mere coincidence that the Aleut and Dorset are historically related (p. 78).

*ALEUTIAN MIDDLE ARTISTIC PERIOD: QUIMBY MIDDLE PERIOD*

Quimby used several motifs to compose this period. After review, they are similar to that of the early period; however, their arrangement, and the addition of triangles and diamonds on artifacts are more multifaceted. Quimby (1948) articulated:

One of these [motif] consists of formal, longitudinal designs confined to the middle of the object that was decorated. The motifs employed were straight lines; lines with short, triangular spurs; lines with semicircular spurs; and free-hand dot and circles. The free-hand dot and circles are always placed between two parallel lines and in some cases the circles tend to be square with rounded corners” (p. 81).

He added, “Another style consists of formal, longitudinal designs using diamond and triangular hachures, sometimes in combination with dots or very short spurs” (p. 81). Other artistic elements included, “spirals; zig-zags; rectangular hachuring; short transverse lines in groups of three; and long triangular spurs in alternate opposition” (p. 81). Examples of compound collars for harpoons or lances have “effigy faces carved near their bases” (p. 81). The description of one
face, “seems to represent a long-snouted animal similar to one represented in Old Bering Sea Style 1 [sic] and Ipiutak art” (p. 82–83). Unconvinced about his theory of introducing the middle period to the Aleutian artistic styles Quimby stated:

The concept of the middle period has been derived from a number of different assumptions and sources of evidence. Most of the decorated material which in this paper has been tentatively assigned to the middle Aleut period came from the B site on western Amaknak Island. The B site was a large prehistoric midden from eight to ten feet thick. (p. 84)

Per all the physical evidence collected during the time of Jochelson, Hrdlička, and Quimby the artistic styles of the middle and early periods are consistent, and confined to the eastern Aleutian Islands, “specifically on Amaknak [depicted as Dutch Harbor on the map], Umnak, and Unalaska,” as indicated in Figure 25 (p. 89).

Figure 25. Battle of the Aleutians Islands, 500 x 285. Source: http://www.museum-mm.org (accessed July 4, 2016).

Quimby used archaeological weaponry specimens extracted by Hrdlička from a midden near Nikolskoye on Umnak Island to generate further enthusiasm for the middle period. Quimby stated, “The decoration consists of parallel lines in groups and short spurs. A similar object from Cernovski on Unalaska Island also exhibits middle period artistic design elements and motifs—
parallel lines in groups and diamond shaped hachure” (p. 89). A summary of the QMP is illustrated in Figure 26 (Quimby 1948, p. 91).

The artistic style components developed in complexity, and were less “algebraic” in character than the QEP. The QMP expanded the hachures and linear motifs to incorporate customized designs that resembled effigies. Some examples of harpoon or lance heads with the diamond or grid patterns are reminiscent of fish scales and nautical rhythmic themes. The artifacts of the QMP represent life forms on bone and ivory, and reflect the personality of their carvers.

Figure 26. Quimby Middle Period. Source: George I. Quimby 1948 and Marcia S. Taylor 2016.

Aleutian Late Artistic Period: Quimby Late Period

Quimby (1948) described the artistic style of late period as containing “several design styles and a number of motifs” (p. 83). He further identified, “Prominent among these is the small compass-drawn dot and circle or elaborations of this motif such as the dot and concentric circles or the spurred dot and circle” (p. 83). In addition, “Aleut art of the late period is quite different from that of the early period” (Quimby 1945, p. 76). Quimby (1948) described, “...off-
center, parallel lines in groups; median parallel lines in groups; and lines bordering a row of pricked or gouged dots” (p. 83). Again, the “D” Midden proved beneficial as archaeological attestation of the QLP, which he explained:

In the eastern Aleutians there are the following occurrences of artifacts with late period designs: The upper sixteen feet of midden at the D site contained three artifacts exhibiting design characteristics of the late period. These artifacts are a bone lance-head with a blade slot (a late period characteristic) and decorated sparsely with a linear design an ivory ornament engraved with lines and a row of gouged dots; and a toggle harpoon head with a design containing the compass-drawn dot and circle motif. (p. 89)

Quimby (1945) suggested the “circle and dot design” on a toggle harpoon head was indicative of “fully developed Punuk and modern Eskimo art” (p. 77). He specified:

Another Punuk and Post-Punuk design element is the drilled dot, which also is at home in Aleut art of the late period. Thus the evidence, such as it is, suggests that Aleut design of the late period is partly analogous to Punuk and modern Alaskan Eskimo art, which was stipulated by de Laguna and Collins. (p. 77)\(^{49,50}\)

Found on a toggle harpoon head from the Rhythm of the Sea Collection is an example of this drilled dot motif with borderlines, as shown in Figure 27.

\[\text{Figure 27. Artifact #55. Punuk Period Type III Location unknown, Harpoon Head, ivory, 10.0 cm. Source: Rhythm of the Sea Collection, Western Michigan University, Kalamazoo, Michigan.}\]

\(^{49}\) Quimby cited Frederica de Laguna, \textit{The Archaeology of Cook Inlet, Alaska} (1934).  
\(^{50}\) Quimby cited Henry B. Collins, “Archeology of St. Lawrence Island, Alaska” (1937).
The drilled dot motif is displayed on another example from the Rhythm of the Sea Collection, as exhibited in Figure 28.

Figure 28. Artifact #48. (Possible) Aleutian Late Period (Quimby Late Period), Location unknown, Animal Figure, ivory, 2.5 cm. Source: Rhythm of the Sea Collection, Western Michigan University, Kalamazoo, Michigan.

According to Quimby (1945), “In de Laguna’s third period and later period Aleut this motif [transverse lines in groups of three] is associated with Punuk-like designs. Thus, there seems to be a relationship between the art of Cook Inlet and that of Amaknak Island in the Aleutians” (p. 78). Artifacts illustrated by Jochelson and Hrdlička from the western Aleutians, also confirm late period styles, as Quimby (1948) suggested:

The late period design engraved upon this object [from Agattu] uses the small, compass-drawn dot and circle motif. A toggle type harpoon head from a midden on Attu in Chicago Natural History Museum also has late period decoration using the small compass-drawn dot and circle motif. Jochelson… illustrates another example of the small, compass-drawn dot and circle as a motif in the decoration of a sewing implement from Attu. (p. 89)51

This discovery is important in recognizing the Aleutian cultural continuum as it spanned along the eastern and western islands. Quimby stated:

Thus late period design styles are present in archaeological sites that are prehistoric as well as in ethnological collections made in the nineteenth century. Moreover, late period design styles seem to have been distributed throughout the Aleutian Islands, whereas early and middle period design styles seem to have been lacking in the far western islands of the chain. (p. 90)

He further added:

The late period design styles can be anchored at the top of the cultural continuum by virtue of the fact that they persisted into historic times. But neither early nor middle period design styles persisted into historic times. When the late period motifs are eliminated from the upper sixteen feet of midden at the D site the residuum consists of middle period styles. (p. 91)

The importance of analyzing the QLP and its perseverance into the historic period provides insight when considering how and when migrating people dispersed throughout the Aleutian Island chain. Migration allows for subsequent cultural significance that is demonstrated by the production of artifacts, such as the harpoon heads.

A summary of the QLP is illustrated in Figure 29 (Quimby 1948, p. 91).

![Image](image_url)

**Figure 29.** Quimby Late Period. *Source:* George I. Quimby 1948 and Marcia S. Taylor 2016.
The linear design components are reminiscent of the QEP. Their use with other motifs and similar groupings indicate not only an east to west migration, but suggest people advocating for the Thule style and prolonging its use toward the west. The plausibility of this theory exists in the lack of more complex motifs on artifacts discovered on the western islands, which would logically occur with migrating populations. The movement of the Dorset and Thule cultures toward Canada and Greenland provided further artistic evidence of more simplistic designs. Historically, sedentary people or communities tend to develop complex societies that their artifacts substantiate. Furthermore, per the migratory developments of the Northern Maritime tradition, the artistic components of the Dorset and Thule cultures in time “came full circle.” Then again, the Pre-Dorset culture migration provided the correlation between the Northern Maritime tradition and the eventual settlements along the Aleutian Island chain. The Thesis Summation Equation (Figure 20) explains the relationship among the three parts—Eskimo, Aleut, and Pre-Dorset.

The artistic styles cultures relationship, in terms of the fluid progression for the Aleutian periods within the Bering Sea region, along with the developments of the Dorset and Thule cultures is diagramed in Figure 30.

Connecting the Artistic Arrows: The Arctic Small Tool Tradition—Northern Maritime Tradition

The Northern Maritime tradition defined by Collins refers to the “last 2000 years of the Eskimo prehistoric record (Ackerman 1998, 247). The tradition was actually a cultural

\[ \text{Equation} \]
progression due to the ASTt. Arctic and Siberian anthropologist Robert E. Ackerman (1998) explained, “While Arctic Small Tool tradition sites have been found in the interior as well as on the coast, it is during this temporal span that we have the earliest expression of a maritime adaptation in the prehistoric record of the Bering and Chukchi seas” (p. 248). Lithic technology is beyond the scope of this paper; however, it presents another strategic development in the cultural significance narrative of the Paleoeskimos as they migrated, established settlements, and

Chukchi Sea, interior caribou hunters with an Arctic Small Tool tradition (Denbigh Flint complex – 4700-3500 BP) tool kit came to the coast to hunt seal in the near-shore zone during the spring to early summer months. By 3200 BP there is stronger evidence for a maritime adaption (hunting of walrus, polar bears, seals, and possibly whales) from the Devil’s Gorge site on Wrangel Island and the Old Whaling complex on beach ridge 53 at Cape Krusenstern. The following Choris and Norton phases (3000-2000 BP) reflect a return to mixed maritime and terrestrial subsistence with heavy emphasis on caribou and near-shore hunting of seal and walrus. During Norton times large villages arose as a consequence of abundant fish harvests from the rivers of southwestern Alaska. Cultural intensification during the Norton phase set the stage for development of a full-scale maritime adaptation in the Bering-Chukchi-East Siberian seas as reflected in the Old Bering Sea/Okvik, Punuk/Birmirk, and Thule phases of Eskimo prehistory. (p. 247)

Recent evidence from a site on Zhokov Island in the East Siberian Sea indicates greater time depth for maritime adaptation than recorded archaeologically for the Bering and Chukchi seas. Around 8000 BP, hunters with a Mesolithic tool kit lived along the edge of the Arctic Ocean, pursuing reindeer, polar bears, and the occasional seal and walrus (p. 247).
changed their hunting practices due to available food sources. The populating of the Aleutian Islands provided archaeological evidence of the adjustments that needed to occur due to an environment that lacked a substantial terrestrial food source, such as herds of caribou. Ackerman concluded:

The earliest use of marine resources (seals) in the northern region of the Bering Sea and along the shores of the Chukchi Sea occurred during Arctic Small Tool tradition times, as reflected by the Denbigh Flint complex in Norton and Kotzebue sounds. The maritime adaptation appears to have been modest, as the greater number of interior sites of this complex suggests that the subsistence strategy was oriented more to terrestrial resources. A somewhat more extensive reliance on marine resources is documented by the assemblage from the Devil’s Gorge site on Wrangle Island and to a somewhat lesser degree by the Old Whaling complex of Cape Krusenstern, both of which date between 3200 and 2800 years ago. These two assemblages may belong to an early High Arctic adaptation reflected by the Independence I and II complexes of northern Greenland. In Alaska reliance on terrestrial resources with limited use of marine mammals (seal and possible walrus) continued during the time of the Choris complex, roughly 3000–2500 years ago. During the Norton cultural period, beginning about 2500 years ago, came an important part of the diet together with caribou, walrus, and seal. From the Norton cultural complex arose the Okvik/Old Bering Sea cultures of the Bering Strait region whose subsistence strategy included hunting of the largest sea mammals (whales) as well as walrus, seal, birds, and (where present) caribou. During the Punuk-Birmirk-Thule cultural phases an increased preoccupation with whaling led to or was the result of population increases. (p. 258–59)

The Paleoeskimo migratory patterns are in alignment with Arctic Small Tool tradition research conducted on the Aleutian Islands by archaeologist Virginia L. Hatfield.\(^{53}\) Hatfield (2010) stated:

\(^{53}\) Virginia L. Hatfield received her Ph.D. in archaeology from the Department of Anthropology from the University of Kansas – Lawrence in 2006. Throughout her academic career, Hatfield performed extensive lithic research along the Aleutian Islands. Her publications include, “Western Aleutian Chipped Stone Technology and the Colonization of the Aleutian Archipelago” (2011), and with Elizabeth Wilmerding, “Six Thousand Years of Lithic Technology on Adak in a Broader Aleutian Context” (2012). Currently, she owns Hatfield Archaeological Services, L.L.C. in Lubbock, Texas. Biographical information was retrieved from Hatfield Archaeological Services, L.L.C., accessed July 17, 2016, http://www.hatfieldarch.com. Hatfield (2010) wrote an article abstract for the journal “Human Biology” that stated:

The material evidence from sites across the Aleutian Islands reflects colonization events, subsequent adaptations, and influxes of ideas and/or people from the east. The occurrence in the eastern Aleutians of bifacial technology around 7000 BP, of artifacts similar to the Arctic Small Tool tradition between 4000 and 3500 BP, and of slate and jet objects around 1000 BP reflects repeated surges of influence or movement of peoples from further east into the eastern end of the chain. In the central and western
Following the initial settlement, subsequent colonization occurred that included movement of people, with bifacial technology, into the central Aleutians by 6500 BP. This event probably originated from the eastern Aleutians; however, the appearance of bifacial technology in both the eastern and central Aleutians around the same time suggests a much more complicated process involving influence from east of the Aleutians and resulting in the colonization of the central Aleutians. (p. 550)

She further identified:

As the sea levels stabilized around 4000-3000 BP, a new influx from the east occurred; the Arctic Small Tool tradition was incorporated into select areas but was not adopted large scale across the Aleutians. The ASTt in the eastern Aleutians at best reflects a number of traits that were adopted into an existing cultural manifestation, and this influence was limited and of short duration. (qtd. in V. Hatfield 2010, p. 550–51)

The ASTt “influx” probably arrived into the eastern Aleutians from the Alaska Peninsula (p. 551). Hatfield determined, “A number of similarly adapted cultures are found on both sides of the Bering Strait. Possibly trade and other interactions across the strait maintained these similarities following a common origin, most likely in northeastern Asia, and variations between these cultures reflect changes over time following a divergence” (p. 533).

The lithic research conducted by Hatfield provided inventive evidence of a prehistoric correlation of Eskimo and Aleut cultures through their “similar technological strategies for hunting and fishing” (p. 551). A picture comparing a non-toggling harpoon head with a toggle harpoon head from an article, “Old Bering Sea Harpoon” written by Fitzhugh, is shown in Figure 

Hatfield acknowledged, “The Aleutian material evidence from across the chain reflects a complex history of population movements from east to west, with continuity maintained by trade and interactions, resulting in localized variations enveloped within similar technological strategies” (p. 551).

and the construction of a complete Old Bering Sea style harpoon featuring the toggle head is displayed in Figure 32.

Figure 31. Arctic Studies Center—Ivory Harpoon Point, 238 x 291. 

A website article for the Arctic Studies Center written by William W. Fitzhugh and edited by J. Prusinski (2004 copyright date of website) contains the following text:

The origin of harpoon technology, which is the basis for hunting sea mammals and for the entire North Bering Sea adaptation, is complex, and many details of its development remain unknown. Two types of harpoon heads developed, the barbed non-toggling form, which probably originated from the old paleolithic fish harpoon that predates man's arrival in the Bering Strait by thousands of years, and the toggling form, which toggles beneath the skin and blubber where it cannot be broken off by ice and holds heavier prey like whales and walrus.

The origin of the toggling harpoon is more recent and more obscure. Primarily a North Pacific and North American arctic implement, early toggling harpoons have been found in Old Whaling and Wrangel Island Chertov Ovrag sites at 1500 B.C. However, earlier prototypes are known from Maritime Archaic Indian sites in Newfoundland and Labrador as early as 5500 B.C. Could it be that this early "Eskimo" implement was actually introduced to the Western Arctic by central Arctic Pre-Dorset peoples who we have reason to believe acquired toggling harpoons from the Northeastern Indians 4,000 years ago, 500 years before the appearance of toggling harpoons in the Chukchi Sea? Alternatively, did they reach the North Pacific from Jomon cultures in Japan where toggling harpoons as early as 5,000 B.C. have been found?

Following the introduction of the toggling harpoon into the North Pacific, harpoon distribution takes on an interesting pattern. Rarely are barbed, non-toggling harpoons found in the Bering Strait, whereas they remain common farther south. In fact, it has been noted that the boundary between the two forms closely followed the southern limit of the winter pack ice. From this comes the suggestion that toggling harpoons are advantageous in regions where floating ice is abundant because they do not protrude outside of the wound and cannot be broken off when the animal strikes the ice, either accidentally or purposefully, whereas in iceless waters this refinement is unnecessary.

Carvings of spirit helpers on the harpoon further strengthened the power of the weapon; feathers and wings transformed the harpoon head into swift birds of prey. Stylistic diversity and the absence of identical designs suggest Old Bering Sea art was produced by individual hunters, rather than by designated craft specialists. Yup'ik Eskimo hunters of Southwest Alaska continued the traditions of Old Bering Sea hunters into the 20th century. (http://www.naturalhistory.si.edu/article/features/croads/ekven10.html)
Fitted components for the harpoon include blade, head, socket, and main shaft. The addition of a *tunghak* spirit controller or winged object could be placed on the butt of the main shaft as a counterweight. Using artifacts from the Rhythm of the Sea Collection, if available, an unassembled harpoon of various artistic styles is displayed in Figures 33, 34, 35, 36, 37.

*Figure 33. Artifact #28. Location unknown Blade, stone, 6.0 cm x 2.5 cm. Source: Rhythm of the Sea Collection, Western Michigan University, Kalamazoo, Michigan.*
Figure 34. Artifact #55. Punuk Period Type III Location unknown, Harpoon Head, ivory, 10.0 cm. Source: Rhythm of the Sea Collection, Western Michigan University, Kalamazoo, Michigan.
The socket piece was designed to fit between the mid and main shaft. Old Bering Sea socket pieces commonly had engravings that signified magic for hunting. http://www.mnh.si.edu (accessed September 17, 2016). Arutiunov (2009b) described the socket piece as, “The jaws of a predator clasp the foreshaft socket, while a zoomorph on the other end grips the harpoon shaft. The empty holes once held ornamental plugs that may have represented joint-marks” (p. 53).

*Figure 35. Harpoon Socket, Old Bering Sea Style II. St. Lawrence Island, Alaska Harpoon Socket, ivory (walrus), H-1 x W-1 x L-9 in. Source: Eugene and Clare Thaw Collection of American Indian Art (http://www.fenimoreartmuseum.com) (accessed September 17, 2016).*
The sea provided the main sustenance for economic and cultural potential. Yet, it was the manufacture of the toggle head harpoon that enabled people to adapt, survive, and thrive in the Bering Sea environment. Collins (1937) wrote:

Of the many ingenious devices which have enabled the Eskimo to meet the needs of their exacting environment, none is of more importance than the harpoon. Without such an effective means of capturing the sea mammals on which they so largely depend, the Eskimo could hardly have adapted themselves to a life on the Arctic coasts. Fortunately for our present purpose, the harpoon is a complex implement, which differs from one
*The distinctive winged objects were both aesthetic and functional in the Punuk period. Collins (1977) stated, “All have a socket in the base for a wooden shaft (some have been found with part of the shaft in place) and a small notch or pit at the upper end of the projecting central element. This notch has nothing to do with decoration but does provide a clue to the function of the winged objects” (p. 8).


locality to another; furthermore, archeological investigations have shown that throughout the course of its history it has been undergoing constant modification. Regional varietal changes may be observed in various parts of the harpoon—in the ice pick at the butt end, the bone or ivory finger rest, the socket piece, the foreshaft, but most particularly in the detachable bone or ivory head. (p. 97)

The harpoon assemblage is comparable to the human body - when in balance both work well in their respective environment. Each appendage, tendon, and engraving has a unique function – whether physical or spiritual, and all work collectively within the cultural and historic dialectic. However, the harpoon head artifacts seem to inspire the historical dilemma within the cultural context as to the purpose of their functional design and artistry. Ackerman and Hatfield
explained functional design and aesthetic developments occurred during Paleoeskimo migration and eventual Aleutian chain settlements. Therefore, various factors such as climate and environment entered the dialectic and could explain the emic and etic perspectives of the systematic changes, which historically occurred to produce cultural changes that were representative on the harpoon head artifacts.

**Aleutian Islands’ Toggle Harpoon Heads**

The Rhythm of the Sea Collection contains 12 toggle harpoon head artifacts, made of ivory or bone. Quimby (1946) described toggle harpoon heads from the Aleutian Islands:

The Eskimo harpoon with toggling head is a complicated weapon used in the hunting of sea mammals. The harpoon consists of a wooden shaft, a socketed collar of bone or ivory, a foreshaft of bone or ivory, and a detachable head of bone or ivory. This detachable head is so constituted that, after penetrating an animal, it toggles (turns sidewise) in the wound when pressure is applied to the harpoon line. This toggling action fastens the harpoon head securely within the wound and prevents the animal from freeing itself from the harpoon head and line. This type of harpoon was known to all coast-dwelling Eskimos, including the Aleut, who live in the Aleutian Islands. (p. 15)

Previously stated, the toggle style of harpoon head was not as popular in the Aleutian Islands, “where the barbed head of bone used on a harpoon without a movable foreshaft is much more common” (p. 15). However, Quimby acknowledged:

Like other Eskimo harpoon heads, those of the Aleut are complex structures. Each is equipped with a socket at the base into which was fitted the outer end of the foreshaft; a spur; a line-hole through which the harpoon head was fastened to a line; and, at the outer end of the harpoon head, either a slot or a bed into which was fastened a stone blade. (p. 15)

Quimby analyzed eight Aleutian toggle harpoon heads made of bone, which were given to the Chicago Natural History Museum (Field Museum of Natural History) by Aleutian “surrogate
archaeologist” Alvin R. Cahn (McCartney 1998, 1). He stated, “Consequently, eight toggle harpoon heads, six of which came from a stratified site, are of greater importance than their number would at first indicate” (Quimby 1946, 15). For reference, the harpoon heads were excavated from middens located on Amaknak Island. An aerial map illustrates the topography of Amaknak Island, as shown in Figure 38.

*Figure 38. Arctic Expedition Launches from Dutch Harbor, Alaska, 720 x 720. Source: http://www.earthobservatory.nasa.gov (accessed September 24, 2016).*

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56 Alvin R. Cahn was a biology professor and naturalist prior to World War II. His zoological contributions included research on birds in specific counties in Texas and Wisconsin (Cahn 1913, p. 1921). He also studied the ecological impact of carp on a small lake located in southern Wisconsin (Cahn 1929). According to author Allen P. McCartney (1998), “With a knack for natural history collecting, Cahn ‘researched’ his way through three and a half years of his Amaknak deployment…” (1). McCartney wrote about Cahn for a journal article for “Arctic Anthropology.” The abstract identified the provenience of the toggle harpoon head artifacts that Quimby later studied, which comprise the compilation chart, Figure 30:

Dr. Alvin R. Cahn, a professional biologist, was stationed at Dutch Harbor during World War II for three and a half years and assembled significant archaeological collections during that period. His collections came primarily from four sites on Amaknak Island, where Dutch Harbor Naval Operating Base was located. He focused primarily on site D (he assigned letter designations to 19 Unalaska Bay sites). Cahn’s collections were sent to the Field Museum of Natural History and the American Museum of Natural History between 1943 and 1945. At Cahn’s urging, Dr. Helge Larsen, visiting archaeologist at the American Museum during the war years and a person with prior Alaskan archaeological experience, visited Amaknak Island for several weeks in 1945 in order to conduct a careful test of Site D and several other sites of the area. While not a trained archaeologist, Dr. Cahn must be credited with saving many artifacts from military disturbance during the intense occupation of Amaknak and the adjacent larger island of Unalaska. (p. 1)
A compilation chart of harpoon head descriptive characteristics is provided in Table 1.

Table 1

*Aleutian Toggle Harpoon Heads (Provenience: Amaknak Island)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Bone Harpoon Head</th>
<th>Dimensions (cm)</th>
<th>Spur (cm)</th>
<th>Line-Hole/Socket</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cat. No. 179308 (DLL)</td>
<td>13.8</td>
<td>short, pointed (1.5)</td>
<td>oval/shallow, closed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cat. No. 179309 (DLL)</td>
<td>12.1</td>
<td>short, pointed (1.6)</td>
<td>round/shallow, closed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cat. No. 179310 (DUL)</td>
<td>11.3</td>
<td>short, pointed (0.0)</td>
<td>round/closed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cat. No. 179311 (DLL)</td>
<td>10.2</td>
<td>short, pointed (0.0)</td>
<td>elliptical/shallow, closed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cat. No. 179312 (DLL)</td>
<td>9.7</td>
<td>short, pointed (0.0)</td>
<td>elliptical/shallow, closed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cat. No. 179313 (A)</td>
<td>5.9</td>
<td>short, pointed (0.0)</td>
<td>elliptical/closed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cat. No. 179314 (B)</td>
<td>7.5</td>
<td>long, pointed (0.0)</td>
<td>round/shallow, closed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cat. No. 179091 (DUL)</td>
<td>6.5</td>
<td>long, pointed (0.0)</td>
<td>triangular/incipient, closed</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Key:  A = A Midden; B = B Midden (southwestern - 8 to 10 feet thick); D = D Midden (southwestern - 24 feet thick, 125 feet wide, and 300 feet long); LL = Lower Level; UL = Upper Level.

Source: George I. Quimby 1946 and Marcia S. Taylor 2016.

A compilation chart of descriptive motifs to determine cultural period is provided in Table 2.
Table 2

**Aleutian Toggle Harpoon Heads (Provenience: Amaknak Island)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Bone Harpoon Head</th>
<th>Blade Slot/Blade Bed</th>
<th>Motifs</th>
<th>Cultural Period</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cat. No. 179308</td>
<td>spoon-shaped bed</td>
<td>shallow grooves on each side</td>
<td>QEP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cat. No. 179309</td>
<td>spoon-shaped bed</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>QEP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cat. No. 179310</td>
<td>slot</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>QLP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cat. No. 179311</td>
<td>spoon-shaped bed</td>
<td>groove from line-hole to socket</td>
<td>QEP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cat. No. 179312</td>
<td>spoon-shaped bed</td>
<td>unfinished</td>
<td>QEP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cat. No. 179313</td>
<td>slot</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>QLP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cat. No. 179314</td>
<td>spoon-shaped bed</td>
<td>narrow grooves on each side</td>
<td>QEP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cat. No. 179091</td>
<td>slot</td>
<td>grooves from line-hole to socket; compass-drawn dot; circle or dot; concentric circles w/spurs</td>
<td>QLP (Punuk)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Key:  
QEP = Quimby Early Period  
QLP; Quimby Late Period.


Quimby (1946) fittingly provided a summary for the two descriptive charts when he wrote:

The specific styles of Aleut harpoon heads are unique, but on a more abstract level of comparison they could be included in a southern Alaskan type along with some harpoon heads from Kodiak Island and Kachemak Bay. With the possible exception of a style
represented by one ancient harpoon head from Punuk Island, the Aleut harpoon heads of the early period do not seem to be related (except remotely) to northern Alaskan styles. (p. 22–23)

The toggle harpoon heads represent two sides of the cultural and historic dialectic. As the northern Eskimo peoples migrated south, and dispersal to the Aleutian Islands they brought their cultures and cultural significance in the form of hunting implements, such as the toggle harpoon heads. However, due to the environment with its absence of ice flows and abundance of volcanic stone materials, the use of bone barbed harpoon heads proved more successful when hunting sea mammals. The excavated middens along the Aleutian chain provided stratified evidence of early Aleutian harpoon styles, which could offer a conclusion that there were not distinct larger migrations that occurred later from the north. This deduction is further evidenced by the “prehistoric patterns of the Aleut culture” (Collins 1977, p. 15). Collins indicated:

The early Aleuts, unlike the northern Eskimos, rarely decorated their bone and ivory artifacts. Almost every harpoon head and hundreds of other artifacts made by the Okvik, Old Bering Sea, and Ipiutak Eskimos were decorated in their respective styles of engraving. But of the thousands of bone and ivory artifacts that have been excavated in the Aleutians only a very small percentage are decorated. This is true of South Alaska in general. The early Aleuts and southern Eskimos, like those of later times, applied their artistic skills mainly of wood carving and painting, weaving, and basketry: Perishable materials which except in dry burial caves in the Aleutians, have not been preserved. (p. 15)

The establishment of various cultures along the Northern Maritime tradition, Aleutian Islands, and southern Alaska would encourage trade and a melding of traditions, yet certain cultural aspects remained insulated exemplified by the harpoon head styles and motifs. Collins stated:

To understand the background of modern Eskimo art we must turn to some of the later prehistoric Alaskan cultures – to those of the Northern Maritime tradition where art held a prominent place in an unbroken culture sequence that can be traced over the past 2000 years, to the Ipiutak culture at Point Hope on the Arctic coast, and to the prehistoric cultures of Kodiak and the Aleutian Islands, Cook Inlet, and Prince William Sound. (p. 3)
Eskimo Artistic Periods of the Rhythm of the Sea Collection Harpoon Head Artifacts

The Rhythm of the Sea Collection contains 14 harpoon head artifacts. Digital pictures of each harpoon head were e-mailed to Joshua D. Reuther, Curator of Archaeology and Assistant Professor of Anthropology at the University of Alaska Museum of the North in Fairbanks, Alaska. Per a collaborative effort, design styles, characteristics, and motifs were noted to identify cultural periods. Reuther stated most of the harpoon heads are “indicative of styles from St. Lawrence Island and the Bering Strait region” (Joshua D. Reuther, e-mail message to author, March 20, 2016). He mentioned the bone material used to manufacture many of the harpoon heads could be caribou antler because its historic propensity had been identified for other harpoon heads outside of the Rhythm of the Sea Collection. The relevance from what species of bone was used for the harpoon head artifacts is significant because it supports the determination of their provenience.

Zoologist Richard S. Peterson (1967) wrote a journal article on the “terrestrial mammals of one of the largest Aleutian Islands, Unalaska, and compares them with those on the mainland and nearby islands” (p. 119). He recorded:

Richard S. Peterson (1967) hypothesized, “Reviews of early records and recent field studies suggest that only three native mammals, excepting man, occur on Unalaska Island, Alaska. The impoverished mammalian fauna is evidence that the Aleutian Islands west of Unimak Pass have been isolated from the mainland since the end of the last Würm-Wisconsin glaciation” (119). Interestingly, like Boas, Peterson suggested a migration from the west to the east along the Aleutian chain:

It appears that several genera of small mammals inhabited the Bering-Chukchi platform during the Würm-Wisconsin, yet only a single genus has survived to the present on many insular refugia: Microtus on St. Matthew Island, Sorex on St. Paul Island, Lemmus on St. George Island, and Dicrostonyx on Unmak-Unalaska. Restricted variety of habitat or area may have been responsible for the reduction of these faunas to a single genus. On St. Lawrence Island four genera persist, by area and habitat variety may have been greater than on the small refugia, there is a mixture of relict and immigrant distribution patterns. Unalaska Island, which probably was covered by ice during the last glaciation, appears to have been colonized from two directions: from a refugium to the west by Dicrostonyx and man, and from the mainland to the east by Microtus and Vulpes. (p. 126-27)

Key: Würm-Wisconsin Glaciation (Alpine-North America); Bering-Chukchi Platform (Bering Land Bridge); Dicrostonyx (lemming); Microtus (vole); Vulpes (fox).
In July and August of 1964, with the support from the National Museum of Canada, I spent 32 days on Unalaska and made a concerted attempt to collect small mammals and information about them. The areas trapped included a selection of all botanic associations, at as many different parts of the island as possible. The terrain and weather limited travel. Much of the northeastern end of the island was surveyed. Amaknak (Dutch Harbor) and Hog Islands, in Unalaska Bay, were also examined. I traveled around the island by open dory, and inland by foot, since the former military roads are now impassible to vehicles. In most places, snap traps were used (approximately 4500 trap-days) but live traps (790 trap-days) and pitfalls (1730 trap-days) also were tried.

Specimens obtained were deposited at the national Museum of Canada, Ottawa. (p. 122)

He created a table, “Terrestrial mammals of the Alaska Peninsula and eastern Aleutian Islands (omitting man, murid rodents, and domestic mammals)” (p. 125). The table lists three native faunas for Unalaska Island (1) *Vulpes vulpes* (fulva)—red fox; (2) *Dicrostonyx torquatus*—collared lemming; and (3) *Microtus oeconomus*—tundra vole (p. 125). *Rangifer tarandus*—caribou is native to the Western Alaska Peninsula and Unimak Island, an island off the Alaskan peninsula. Therefore, the harpoon heads from the Rhythm of the Sea Collection, identified as styles from areas that could harvest caribou and use their antlers as bone material, are indicative of the Eskimo Birnirk, Thule, and Punuk periods, as featured in Tables 3 and 4.

Several artistic and design factors determined the cultural periods, as noted in the tables. Since the harpoon head artifacts of the Rhythm of the Sea Collection are unprovenienced, these factors distinguish styles and are considered the first indicators for cultural period identification. Additional design components serve as markers that illustrate the development of the harpoon head, whether aesthetically or functionally within the style, and henceforth be known as types.\(^{58}\) The Rhythm of the Sea Collection includes different

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\(^{58}\) Curator of Archaeology and Assistant Professor of Anthropology at the University of Alaska Museum of the North Dr. Joshua D. Reuther determined the Type, when applicable, of the style of harpoon head artifacts. (Joshua D. Reuther, e-mail message to author, March 20, 2016). His analysis was based on “‘The Multiplication of Forms:’ Bering Strait Harpoon Heads as a Demic and Macroevolutionary Proxy” (2009) by Owen K. Mason.
Table 3

*Rhythm of the Sea Collection Harpoon Head Artifacts*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Harpoon Head/ Bone or Ivory</th>
<th>Dimensions (cm)</th>
<th>Spur (cm)</th>
<th>Line-Hole/ Socket</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Artifact #54/ivory</td>
<td>10.5</td>
<td>single long, pointed (4.0)</td>
<td>none/ open</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Artifact #55/ivory</td>
<td>10.0</td>
<td>single long, pointed (4.25)</td>
<td>round/ closed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Artifact #56/ivory</td>
<td>5.5</td>
<td>single short, pointed (1.75)</td>
<td>none/ closed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Artifact #57/ivory</td>
<td>9.0</td>
<td>single long, pointed (3.50)</td>
<td>round/ open</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Artifact #58/ivory</td>
<td>11.5</td>
<td>multiple long, pointed (5.0)</td>
<td>round/ open</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Artifact #59/bone</td>
<td>10.0</td>
<td>two long, pointed (4.0)</td>
<td>round/ open</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Artifact #61/ivory</td>
<td>15.0</td>
<td>single long, pointed (4.0)</td>
<td>oval/ closed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Artifact #73/ivory</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>single short, pointed (1.75)</td>
<td>round/ closed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Artifact #74/bone</td>
<td>6.0</td>
<td>two-pronged short, pointed (2.0)</td>
<td>none/ open</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Artifact #78/ivory</td>
<td>10.0</td>
<td>multiple long, pointed (5.50)</td>
<td>round/ open</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Artifact #79/bone</td>
<td>6.0</td>
<td>single short, pointed (1.25)</td>
<td>round/ closed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Artifact #83/ivory</td>
<td>8.5</td>
<td>multiple medium, pointed (2.75)</td>
<td>round/ open</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Artifact #130/bone</td>
<td>10.0</td>
<td>single spur long, pointed (3.0)</td>
<td>round/ open</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table 4

**Rhythm of the Sea Collection Harpoon Head Artifacts**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Bone Harpoon Head</th>
<th>Blade Slot/Blade Bed (cm)</th>
<th>Motifs</th>
<th>Cultural Period</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Artifact #54</td>
<td>(2.5)</td>
<td>lashing slots/lack of design elements</td>
<td>Late Punuk to Thule Type III</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Artifact #55</td>
<td>(2.5)</td>
<td>simple dot and line motifs</td>
<td>Punuk Type III</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Artifact #56</td>
<td>(1.75)</td>
<td>lack of design elements</td>
<td>Late Prehistoric to Historic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Artifact #57</td>
<td>(2.5)</td>
<td>lashing slots/lack of design elements</td>
<td>Punuk Type III</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Artifact #58</td>
<td>(4.5)</td>
<td>lashing notch/slots/simple lines elements</td>
<td>Old Bering Sea Type III</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Artifact #59</td>
<td>(self-blade 4.5)</td>
<td>lashing slots/simple line and hatching elements</td>
<td>Birnirk to Early Thule</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Artifact #61</td>
<td>(3.5)</td>
<td>lack of design elements</td>
<td>Thule to Late Prehistoric</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Artifact #73</td>
<td>(1.25)</td>
<td>lack of design elements</td>
<td>Thule to Late Prehistoric</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Artifact #74</td>
<td>(self-blade 3.0)</td>
<td>lack of design elements</td>
<td>(possible fish dart – undetermined period)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Artifact #78</td>
<td>(3.25)</td>
<td>circular and line motifs</td>
<td>Okvik (Old Bering Sea I) Type III</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Artifact #79</td>
<td>(2.0)</td>
<td>simple line and hatching elements</td>
<td>Thule</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Artifact #83</td>
<td>(2.0)</td>
<td>lashing slots/lack of design elements</td>
<td>Old Bering Sea Type II</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Artifact #130</td>
<td>(2.0)</td>
<td>lack of design elements</td>
<td>Punuk Type III</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: Marcia S. Taylor 2016.*

types of Thule cultural period or artistic style harpoon head artifacts, as shown in Figures 39 and 40.
Figure 39. Artifact #54. Late Punuk to Thule Type III Location unknown, Harpoon Head, ivory, 10.5 cm. Source: Rhythm of the Sea Collection, Western Michigan University, Kalamazoo, Michigan.

Figure 40. Artifact #79. Thule Period Location unknown, Harpoon Head, bone, 6.0 cm. Source: Rhythm of the Sea Collection, Western Michigan University, Kalamazoo, Michigan.

Based on artistic changes perhaps partially due to technological advances, these two harpoon head artifacts demonstrate cultural change. Identified from the Thule culture both
harpoon heads have a simplistic style, and the dimension of a more elongated spur was depicted as type III. Collins (1937) wrote:

The toggle harpoon head is the most dependable criterion of cultural change at our disposal, and as such it is destined to bear the main weight of the chronology that must be established if we are to have a clear understanding of the stages of development in Eskimo culture. As a “time indicator”, the harpoon head occupies a position in Eskimo culture analogous to that of pottery in the Southwest. (p. 97)

Ph.D. candidate Michael A. Lewis (1995) expressed in his dissertation that there existed a “loop in a tautological classification scheme” (p. 99). In his research, Lewis described types as “classes” (p. 99). He further indicated:

Collins divided all harpoon heads into two categories of open and closed sockets. Open sockets are carved so that one side of the socket is open and the foreshaft is held in place with baleen lashing. Closed sockets are drilled into the solid ivory at the spur end of the harpoon head and do not require lashing to hold the foreshaft in place. (p. 51)

Interestingly, Collins (1937) further specified:

The harpoon head is complex in structure, possessing at least six features that often exhibit a wide range of variability: (1) the shaft socket at the lower or proximal end for engaging the end of the foreshaft; (2) the lashing slots or other means whereby (in those with open sockets) the foreshaft is held in the socket; (3) the pointed lower end, or spur; (4) the central perforation, or line hole, by means of which the harpoon head is attached to the line; (5) the presence or absence of lateral barbs or inset stone blades; (6) the anterior end which may or may not be slit for the purpose of holding an end blade. In addition, there are certain combinations of these features to be noted and other characters such as size, proportion of parts, and technique, all of which may and often do have a diagnostic value. (p. 98)

An open socket harpoon head with multiple spurs (trifurcate) is shown in Figure 41.
According to Collins (1977), “Okvik, the oldest of the Northern Maritime cultures (300 B.C.), takes its name from a site on Punuk Island, off the east end of St. Lawrence Island, discovered by Otto W. Geist in 1931” (p. 3). Ray (1961) placed Okvik in two periods (1) Early Okvik, and (2) Old Bering Sea – Okvik (p. 93). She acknowledged, “Although Okvik has been recognized separately, some regard it as merely an early stage of another Eskimo culture known as Old Bering Sea” (p. 15). Collins (1977) categorized Okvik artifacts as “(Old Bering Sea I)” and assigned the corresponding sub-style [A,B,C] (p. 3). He stated:

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60 The rationale of labeling Okvik as an Old Bering Sea style (I) was an aid in the determination of the artistic and cultural sequencing of the Northern Maritime tradition. Refer to Figure 17. *Eskimo Art Periods: Overlay II*.
The engraved designs on ivory harpoon heads and other implements from Okvik sites seem to represent three more or less distinct sub-styles of different age. In sub-style A, assumed to be the oldest, the decoration consisted mainly of thick, deeply cut, straight or slightly curved lines to which long slanting spurs were attached. This decoration was applied consistently to a particular type of harpoon head that was very thick, almost square in cross section. Sub-style B, a more delicate style, was applied with equal consistency to two other types of harpoon heads that were very thin in cross section. Its most typical motifs were lightly incised, straight, rather short slanting lines, three of more of which often converged to form a tentlike figure; longer single or double lines with tiny spurs attached; broken lines; combinations of heavy and light lines, the heavier line being flanked by one or two light lines and/or broken lines; small circles with central dot set between two or three pairs of lightly incised lines forming long sharp spurs; plug inlays in circular pits representing eyes. (p. 3–4)

Another very simple motif of styles A and B consists of pairs of short parallel lines often placed above the line hole or on the basal spur of harpoon heads. Despite its extreme simplicity this design may have a special significance as hunting magic. Human figurines from Okvik sites have similar pairs of short parallel lines on the cheeks to indicate tattooing. In placing the identical design on harpoon heads, sometimes as the decoration, the Okvik Eskimos may have been trying to give their hunting weapons the magical power believed to be inherent in tattooing. (p. 4)

Style C, the most elaborate of the Okvik sub-styles, was characterized by a profusion of long, straight, single or double lines to which tiny triangular spurs, often in pairs, were attached at carefully spaced intervals. The narrow space between such lines often contained tiny spurs, small hatched areas, or straight cross lines forming a kind of ladder design. These spurred lines of Okvik style C were usually arranged in converging fashion to form a tentlike design, with a small circle at the apex. It is an elaboration of the simpler converging line motifs of styles A and B, and it contained as one of the most common designs of later Old Bering Sea and Punuk art. (p. 4)

Ray (1961) wrote:

The Okvik artist seemed compelled to decorate even the simplest of his objects in such a spirit of breathlessness that it is as though he was in a hurry to get it done. The most used element was the spurred line, which can be made hurriedly but produces a highly decorative effect. Another speedy device was the making of short gashlike marks placed in a row or radiating from a central area. (p. 15)

The Okvik artist decorated numerous harpoon heads and unidentified objects, and, except for one class of harpoon heads, the incisions are light, shallow, and “lacy.” The entire object was used for one integrated design with usually only one central point of interest. (p. 158)

The principal components used were long and short parallel lines, spurred lines, disconnected lines, wedges, and the Y figure. Occasionally used were a ladderlike figure
(hereafter called a ladder line), rows of dots circles, and the circle-dot (also called the nucleated circle). The disconnected lines in a row were not used in close conjunction with solid lines as in the Old Bering Sea period that followed, but were spaced equidistant between them. (p. 159)

As described by Collins (1977), the Okvik (Old Bering Sea I) components sub-style C is evident on a harpoon head artifact from the Rhythm of the Sea Collection, as listed below, and depicted in Figure 42:

*Figure 42. Artifact #78. Okvik (Old Bering Sea I) Type III (Collins’ Sub-style C) Location unknown, Harpoon Head, ivory, 10.0 cm. Source: Rhythm of the Sea Collection, Western Michigan University, Kalamazoo, Michigan.*
1. Harpoon head has “single or double lines” and “tiny triangular spurs” (p. 4).
2. Harpoon head has “straight cross lines forming a kind of ladder design” (p. 4).
3. Harpoon head has a “tentlike figure” (p. 4).
4. Harpoon head has “small circles with central dot set between two or three pairs of lightly incised lines forming long sharp spurs” (p. 4).

Ray listed in her diagram of Okvik components the small circles with central dot; slanted lines; curved lines; and spurred lines. She furnished an Okvik harpoon head that displayed both the quick marking technique and quietly planned incised lines. The blade slot and shape of the head is identical to artifact #78 in Figure 40. Then again, these two Okvik components are evident in another harpoon head example determined by Ray to be Old Bering Sea style. Ray cited Collins on Okvik art styles. Nevertheless, she consistently separated Okvik and Old Bering Sea into two styles, which was contrary to the designation recognized by Collins. Ray (1966) wrote, “On the basis of design there is every reason to believe that the Okvik from Punuk Island and Siberia was contemporaneous with so-called Old Bering Sea I from the mainland of St. Lawrence Island, especially from the Hillside site” (16).²¹ This hypothesis would be better

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²¹ Dorothy Jean Ray cited Henry B. Collins, *Archaeology of St. Lawrence Island* (Smithsonian Miscellaneous Collections, Vol. XCVI, No. 1, 1937), p. 40. In a peer reviewed article on “Archaeology of St. Lawrence Island” Frederica de Laguna (1938) wrote:

His theory of the development of Eskimo culture, perhaps too briefly summarized as follows. The Old Bering Sea culture, with its elaborate art and specialized typology, is as yet the oldest Eskimo culture found. On St Lawrence Island it gave rise to the Punuk, a culture enriched by acquisitions from Siberia. Farther north in Alaska, the Birnirk culture developed as a peripheral outgrowth of the Old Bering Sea culture, in part contemporaneous with it, in part with the Punuk. From the Birnirk stage emerged that culture which was carried east into Arctic Canada where it appears as Mathiassen’s Thule culture and where it stamped out the earlier Dorset culture. (Collins’ suggestion that the Dorset were primarily an Indian group who became Eskimoized does not seem very plausible, since their most striking types could not have been acquired from any known Indian culture nor from the Thule invaders. I would regard them as real Eskimo, who had perhaps been Indianized.) The Canadian Thule culture and the fully developed Punuk culture may be equated in many ways. Northwest Coast influences have not been felt in northern Alaska until very late and have played no part in this development. While some of the Canadian Thule Eskimo continued east into Greenland, others pushed back again into Alaska, arriving at the end of the Punuk period and inaugurating the proto-historic period. This return migration, affecting chiefly the Eskimo north of Bering Strait, explains the present uniformity of culture, language, folk-lore, etc., from Alaska to Greenland, and this hypothesis is supported by physical resemblances between the Canadian Thule Eskimo and the modern Eskimo at Point Barrow. This return migration may in part explain the cultural break between the Northwest Coast and Siberia, which led Boas to assume that the Eskimo had only recently entered Alaska from the east. In addition, some of the similarities which Boas and the Jesup Expedition found on both sides of the North Pacific and which I also found when comparing ancient Aleut and south western Alaskan
served in regard to the Northern Maritime tradition and Aleutian cultures where simultaneous developments occurred due to cultural factors impacted by the environment, including climate and food sources.

In his description of Old Bering Sea Style II, Collins (1977) stated, “This style (300 A.D.) has the same distribution as Okvik, and occurs at the same sites” (p. 5). He further remarked, “Okvik style C and OBS style II are closely linked” (p. 6). However, Collins admitted, “One of the most diagnostic OBS implements, a harpoon head with two side blades, two line holes, and a three-pronged basal spur, is usually decorated in OBS style II but sometimes in Okvik style C” (p. 6). The ornate designing or “horror vacui” became less apparent in the OBC style II, and eventually gave way to design free zones in OBS style III (p.

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Eskimo material with archaeological remains from Kamchatka and Japan, Collins would explain by a cultural movement from the American mainland to Siberia, via the Aleutian Islands. I would differ with him only in suggesting that this borrowing might have gone in both directions. The Old Bering Sea culture is not the primary ancestral stage from which all Eskimo culture developed, and Collins would seek that ancestral culture in northern Eurasia, where widely scattered finds lead one to expect that there formerly existed cultures of a generalized Eskimo character, though each probably bore a localized and special stamp, just as does the Old Bering Sea culture.

These hypothetical old coastal cultures represented the ice-hunting stage, while the Punuk has been slightly tinged by the later snowshoe stage. Collins’ conception of the ice hunting stage is thus closer to Hatt’s than to that of Birket-Smith, who saw among the inland-dwelling Caribou Eskimo the survival of the original Eskimo culture. Collins recognizes the difficulty of reconciling Birket-Smith’s theory with our present archaeological evidence, and wisely leaves this problem open. Collins’ position is so plausible that I must agree with him in the main, even though his arguments run counter to certain ideas that I formerly advanced. He points out that I should have described the earliest culture on Cook Inlet (Kachemak Bay I) as containing simple, generalized Eskimo types, and should not have referred these specifically to the Thule culture, nor on the basis of these types, have suggested that one should find traces in Alaska of a proto-Thule stage, earlier than or contemporaneous with the Old Bering Sea culture. At the time The Archaeology of Cook Inlet was written it was not possible to make detailed comparisons of the earliest Kachemak Bay material with Old Bering Sea and Dorset types. Had such comparisons been possible, I could have made a different evaluation of these Kachemak Bay elements. On the other hand, those features of southern Alaskan Eskimo culture which Collins lists to show its extreme divergence from northern patterns are, with few exceptions, all recent traits in the south and do not affect the relationships of Kachemak Bay I. It is possible, too, that somewhere in the north there may have been a simpler, less specialized stage than the Old Bering Sea culture (which I was too specific in calling proto-Thule) which perhaps did have affinities with Kachemak Bay I and did influence the development of the Birnirk-Thule series. Collins and I would probably both agree in a rephrasing of the whole problem which implies that the original Eskimo culture, wherever it existed, must have contained that common fund from which specialized out the Old Bering Sea, Kachemak Bay I, and the Dorset, even though, as he puts it, the last two are not Eskimo in the same sense as the first. And to the solution of this problem, Collins has made a thoroughly important and valuable contribution. (p. 302–04)
He explained, “The circles and ellipses, besides being elevated, are larger than those of style II. They often have a small plug or ivory or baleen at the center and, on harpoon heads especially, they are usually arranged in pairs so as to suggest the eyes of an animal” (p. 6). Therefore, the harpoon head had a “more balanced and harmonious arrangement of the overall design, with bilateral symmetry the primary aim” (p. 6).

Archaeologist Owen K. Mason (2009) developed tables on the overall cultural and historical dialectic on the “archaeological culture” of Bering Sea harpoon heads. His first table describes the OBS period, as summarized in Table 5 (p. 76).

The middens on St. Lawrence Island produced archaeological evidence of the Eskimo prehistoric record. Its prime location in the Bering Sea was a natural epicenter for migratory peoples and subsequent permanent settlements. Collins (1937) wrote, “In 1930, at the

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62 Owen K. Mason received his Ph.D. from the University of Alaska – Fairbanks in Quaternary Science. He currently serves as an affiliate for the Institute of Arctic and Alpine Research. His specialties include coastal geomorphology, geoarchaeology, and northwest Alaska prehistory. Biographical information was retrieved from INSTAAR (Institute of Arctic and Alpine Research, accessed July 10, 2016, https://www.instaar.colorado.edu. Mason (2009) developed tables that diagramed “Cultural Complexes in Northwest Alaska from 1000 B.C. to A.D. 1300” (p. 74). Referenced in the tables are the following columns: Archaeological culture; Age range calibrated B.C./A.D.; Geographic distribution; Diagnostic tools, motifs; Subsistence base; Social space; and Ritual space (p. 74–79). The tables proved helpful in the period determination of the harpoon head artifacts from the Rhythm of the Sea Collection.

63 In his geographical description of St. Lawrence Island, Collins (1937) wrote:

St. Lawrence Island, the largest in the Bering Sea, lies 150 miles below Bering Strait, 100 miles from the mainland of Alaska and 40 miles from Siberia. It is about 100 miles long, extending in a general northwest to southeast direction, and has an average width of about 20 miles. The island, which has never been accurately charted or explored geologically, is mainly of volcanic origin though occasional sedimentary deposits of Tertiary age also occur. The interior is for the most part rugged and mountainous, but there are also extensive stretches of marshy tundra covered with innumerable lakes and a network of small streams. Some of the peaks and plateaus in the central and eastern sections of the island reach a height of 1,500 feet or more, and remain snow-capped throughout the year; at the western end the highest elevations are along the coasts. The coast line is bleak and forbidding in appearance with bold cliffs of basalt descending steeply to the rocky beach or to low forelands of gravel which often extend for a considerable distance seaward. For the greater part of the year the island is locked in ice, which does not finally leave its shores until late in June or July. (p. 13)

Vegetation is of the usual Arctic variety, that in the higher parts being restricted almost entirely to mosses and lichens, while lower down there is an abundant growth of dwarf willows, mosses, grasses, and flower plants. (p. 13–14)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Archaological culture</th>
<th>Geographic distribution</th>
<th>Diagnostic tools, method</th>
<th>Subsistence base</th>
<th>Ritual space</th>
<th>Social space</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Old Bering Sea (defined by James and Collins 1992)</td>
<td>St. Lawrence Island, Alaska</td>
<td>knives, needles, and tools used for hunting</td>
<td>hunting</td>
<td>museum</td>
<td>community</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The indigenous mammalian fauna on St. Lawrence Island includes very few species: the Arctic fox, *Alopex lagopus*; ground squirrel, *Citellus lyratus*; meadow mouse, *Microtus innitus innitus*; red-backed mouse, *Clethrionomys albiventer*; shrew, *Sorex jacksoni*; and lemming, *Dicrostonyx exsul*. (p. 15)

The environment directly affects culture and its role in survival. Knowledge about the flora and fauna of St. Lawrence Island is important because it determines the style(s) of harpoon heads used by the Eskimo inhabitants. Comparing the environment of Aleutian Islands to that of St. Lawrence Island offers clues as to the similarities and differences of the harpoon heads used by the Aleuts.
northwestern end of St. Lawrence Island, I had the good fortune finally to discover a pure site of the Old Bering Sea culture” (p. 13). Nonetheless, Collins was mindful of “the significance of the Old Bering Sea culture and its relationship to other phases of Eskimo, Indian, and Asiatic culture” (p. 13). He referenced an expedition conducted by Hrdlička:

The most interesting archeological specimens from the region of the western Eskimo… are some of those in “fossil ivory,” the term being applied to walrus ivory that through long lying in the ground has assumed more or less of a pearly yellow, variegated, sepia-brown or black color. These objects are known as yet very imperfectly. They are scarce at and especially north of Point Hope, and again along the west coast south of Norton sound. Their center of frequency comprises seemingly the St. Lawrence Island, some parts of the Asiatic coast, the Diomedes, and parts of the Seward Peninsula. But they occur at least up to Point Hope, while west of Bering Strait they are said to appear as far as the river Kolyma. (qtd. in A. Hrdlička 1930, p. 173)64

Some of the objects in fossilized ivory show the well-known Eskimo art, with geometrical design. But besides these there occur here and there beautiful specimens, harpoon heads, figures, needle cases, etc., which are of the finest workmanship and which both in form and design differ from the prevailing Eskimo types. They are examples of high aboriginal art; and their engraved decorative lines are not geometrical but beautifully curvilinear. (qtd. in A. Hrdlička 1930, p. 173–74)

This is the geographical entry point into the cultural and historical dialectic. The archaeological findings on St. Lawrence Island stirred the mix of various theories of the development of artistic styles. During this period of Northern Maritime tradition discovery, some anthropologists originally assumed artistic progression evolved alongside human and

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64 Collins (1937) provided background information about the Hrdlička expedition:

During the summer of 1926 Dr. Hrdlička made an anthropological survey of parts of the Alaskan coast from Norton Sound to Point Barrow on the Revenue Cutter Bear. A brief stop was made at Savunga, on the north coast of St. Lawrence Island, and although Dr. Hrdlička had no opportunity to examine any of the old sites, he purchased a number of decorated ivory objects which the Eskimos had excavated at Kukuliak, a large abandoned site 3 miles east of Savunga. He also learned of the existence of a large kitchen midden on Punuk Island, 4 miles off the eastern end of the island (Hrdlička, 1930, 93). The archeological material which Dr. Hrdlička obtained at Savunga was of particular significance because some of the specimens bore the same elaborate curvilinear ornamentation as others which he and Dr. Diamond Jenness obtained also at Little Diomede Island. This was a style of art which Jenness, on the basis of systematic excavations conducted at Cape Prince of Wales and the Diomede Islands in the same year, had found to be characteristic of a previously unknown, early stage of Eskimo culture, which he designated the Bering Sea culture. (p. 25)
societal growth such as, from simplistic-savage to more decorative-primitive to finally distinct ornamentation-advanced. However, due to the noted motifs and their skilled application the earlier Eskimos created artifacts that were more decorative. Artistry when applied to the harpoon head artifacts categorized the cultural periods and solidified the migratory trajectories taken as people advanced across the Arctic and Subarctic. Emphasis was given to terms such as, Paleoeskimo and Neo-Eskimo when describing cultures based on artistry, as specified later by Fitzhugh. Archaeologically, St. Lawrence Island yielded an enormous cache of Northern Maritime tradition artifacts, and unknowingly disclosed the Eskaleut corroboration by way of its location in the Bering Sea. The island dispatched Northern Maritime tradition people eastward to Greenland (Thule), northward to the Arctic (Birnirk), and southward toward the Aleutian Islands. Confronted by the challenges that new environments posed, hunting implements were adopted, improved, or stylistically changed. Evidence of style and design changes were found on artifacts from the Punuk Islands located off the eastern coast of St. Lawrence Island. The relationship between the Punuk Islands and St. Lawrence Island can be explained geographically, as shown in Figure 43.

Punuk artistic styles developed from the Old Bering Sea culture originating on St. Lawrence Island. Mason (2009) recognized, “… Punuk also records a shift in social organization, the intensification of subsistence practices (especially bird hunting and whaling), and the adoption of various military technologies…” (p. 95). Recognition of this cultural significance is not lost on the artistic motifs, which in comparison with the Old Bering Sea periods, is considered “less intricate” (p. 95). Collins (1977) stated, “The Punuk was in all essential respects a stone age culture, for its knives, scrapers, adzes, harpoon and arrows were provided with stone blades, which are found in great numbers in the middens. However, the
Punuk Eskimo knew the use of metal” (p. 7). This conclusion was made due to “the deeply incised precise lines and mechanically perfect circles of Punk art” that could only be made with metal implements (p. 7). Collins and Ray recognized the distinctive design of “nucleated spurred circles” that were completed with a compass and not hand drawn (p. 8). Ray (1961) wrote, “The Punuk artists used a decisive hand; they were precise and particular craftsmen” (p. 160). Nonetheless, Ray also indicated, “Their art has sometimes been called degenerative because of its simplicity as compared with its predecessors [Okvik, Old Bering Sea and Iñupiaq], and stiff because of the clean and spacious use of simple elements” (p. 18). She further explained:

Yet, strangely enough, essentially the same elements are used as in previous periods. Punuk art is not so ornate as late Old Bering Sea and is better planned than Okvik. The design is well balanced, and the thoughtful arrangements of a few slightly curved and straight lines on the length of all four planes of a harpoon head is as pleasing as the laciness of Okvik ornamentation or the ponderous ornateness of Old Bering Sea. The placement of the design is done with as much regard to the shape of the object as in the Old Bering Sea style but in a more uncluttered and linear manner. It is as if the Punuk
artist was more concerned with directional spacing of elements than climax, and with creating space rather than seeking to fill it. (p. 18)

Collins (1977) used a similar system to classify Punuk harpoon heads as Quimby did to determine the stages of Aleutian harpoon head periods that included sockets, spurs, and motifs:

In Early Punuk, stylistic changes in art were closely correlated with changes in the forms of harpoon heads, just as in Okvik and Old Bering Sea. The earliest Punuk harpoon heads at Miyowagh [Gambell region], though smaller, had retained the structural features of Old Bering Sea, except for the basal spur. In OBS heads the basal spur (the lower end of the harpoon head) was complex and elaborate. Beginning with Early Punuk the spur became smaller and increasingly simple in form. Surface ornamentation followed the same pattern of simplification. On OBS harpoon heads the deeply incised lines that descended from the upper end, dividing the rich surface decoration into panels, became the simple lines of Early Punuk which, following precisely the same path, constituted the whole design. Accompanying the lines were dots, small drilled pits at the center of two rounded elevations to right and left of the line hold in exactly the same position as the elevated circles and ellipses, with central dot, on the harpoon heads of the Old Bering Sea period. In later stages of Punuk the incised lines on harpoon heads ceased to be a direct reflection of Old Bering Sea; instead, they become more numerous and angular and less adapted to the surface contours they decorated. (p. 7–8)

In the latest stages of Punuk art the decoration consisted of repetitive arrangements of the same design element, in contrast to earlier Punuk where they were usually incorporated into an overall connected design. Later even this simplified art disappeared and for the past few centuries Eskimo culture on St. Lawrence Island has been devoid of art. (p. 8–9)

He further indicated the “several styles and sub-styles of Punuk art can be recognized from the harpoon heads and other decorated artifacts at the Gambell sites” (p. 8).65 Collins (1937) admitted:

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65 Collins excavated the Gambell region of St. Lawrence Island, where he collected “nearly 400” artifacts (Mason 2009, p. 87). From this “sample size” Mason wrote, “The two Punuk types encompass the most stylistic variability in types II and III. All four types undergo a simplification through time, as functional attributes gain ascendance over decorative elements such as vestigial barbs or spurs” (p. 87). Collins (1937) recorded, “The writer’s investigations on St. Lawrence Island were conducted in the summers of 1928, 1929, and 1930; they have included excavations at old sites on the eastern and western ends of the island, anthropometrical and ethnological studies of the Eskimos, and the collection of skeletal and other material” (p. 25). He further referenced:

At Gambell, within a radius of three-quarters of a mile from the present village, are five abandoned sites. It was here that the Smithsonian excavations of 1930 and 1931 were conducted, the results of which form the principal basis of the present paper [Collins 1937]. Briefer accounts of the Gambell excavations, with an outline of the chronology as indicated principally by changing styles in art and harpoon heads were published by the writer in 1931, 1932, and 1935. (p. 26)
When we began to excavate at Punuk, I had hopes of finding further evidence of the mysterious “fossil ivory” or Bering Sea culture which had been discovered by Jenness and Hrdlička in 1926, particularly since most of the beautifully decorated objects of this type which Hrdlička had bought from the Eskimos had come from St. Lawrence. The work had not progressed very far, however, before it became apparent that the Punuk midden belonged to a different, and presumably later, stage of culture. True, the artifacts which we were excavating were for the most part very different from those of the modern St. Lawrence Eskimos, and the most important group, the harpoon heads, resembled in form some of those which had been obtained by Jenness and Hrdlička. But the ornamentation was strikingly different. Instead of the elaborate designs composed of flowing curving lines and elevated concentric circles and ellipses characteristic of the Bering Sea culture, we found a much simpler style of art. The lines were fewer in number and were either straight or only slightly curved; they were also deeply and evenly incised, as if with metal tools; the circles were flat and perfectly round, having been inscribed with a bit or compasses, whereas the Bering sea circles were all somewhat irregular, having been made free hand; dots were also used, either detached or placed at the end of straight lines. More than a hundred artifacts decorated in this simplified form of art, which I called the Punuk style, were excavated from the midden, as compared with three decorated in the Old Bering Sea style, but it was significant that the latter were all found at considerable depths. (p. 28–29)

The work Collins conducted on Punuk Island produced numerous artifacts that “illustrated in considerable detail a prehistoric phase of Eskimo culture which intervened between the Old Bering Sea culture and the modern” (p. 29).

The St. Lawrence and Punuk Islands provenience for Punuk artistic styles provide a credible connection to what Quimby described as the Aleutian late period. Accumulated from the

Additional research placed Collins on the Punuk Islands:

One of the largest of the old sites is that on Punuk, one of three small islands of that name, 4 miles off the eastern end of St. Lawrence. Here I excavated for 2 months in 1928, assisted by Harry Manca and several Eskimos from Gambell and Savunga (Savoonga). It will be sufficient at this time to mention only the most outstanding results of the Punuk excavations and to state that the tentative chronology established on the basis of the Punuk finds received ample confirmation and elaboration, through the more comprehensive excavations at Gambell in 1930. (p. 27–28)

The kitchen midden marking the site of the old village on Punuk Island has a surface area of 400 by 130 feet and a visible height of about 10 feet, but on digging through the sand and gravel at the base, we found that refuse extended for another 6 feet beneath the surface of the present beach. At the bottom were found the whale bone and timber remains of several old house entrances…. The large collection of artifacts obtained from these recent houses and the shallow midden deposits around them provided a fairly comprehensive picture of modern St. Lawrence culture and afforded a valuable basis for comparison with the much larger body of material excavated from the old midden. (p. 28)

An ivory harpoon head artifact identified as #2000.7.79 from the Michigan State University Cultural Collections consists of the light-colored ivory from the Punuk period.
Rhythm of the Sea Collection and Michigan State University are examples of harpoon head artifacts from the Punuk period, as shown in Figures 44, 45, 46, 46a, 47, 47a, 48, 48a.

Figure 44. Artifact #130. Punuk Type III Location unknown, Harpoon Head, bone, 10.0 cm. Source: Rhythm of the Sea Collection, Western Michigan University, Kalamazoo, Michigan.

Figure 45. Artifact #57. Punuk Type III Location unknown, Harpoon Head, ivory and sinew, 9.0 cm. Source: Rhythm of the Sea Collection, Western Michigan University, Kalamazoo, Michigan.
Figure 46. Artifact #2000.7.4. Punuk Type I Location unknown, Harpoon head, ivory and slate, 23.0-25.0 cm (including blade).
*Source:* Michigan State University Museum Cultural Collections, Michigan State University, East Lansing, Michigan.

Figure 46a. Artifact #2000.7.4. Punuk Type I Location unknown, Harpoon head, ivory and slate, 23.0-25.0 cm (including blade). *Source:* Michigan State University Museum Cultural Collections, Michigan State University, East Lansing, Michigan.
Figure 47. Artifact #2000.7.79. Punuk Type II Location unknown, Harpoon Head, ivory, 15.0 cm. Source: Michigan State University Museum Cultural Collections, Michigan State University, East Lansing, Michigan.

Figure 47a. Artifact #2000.7.79. Punuk Type II Location unknown, Harpoon Head, ivory, 15.0 cm. Source: Michigan State University Museum Cultural Collections, Michigan State University, East Lansing, Michigan.
Figure 48. Artifact #2000.8.50. Punuk Type III Location unknown, Harpoon Head, ivory, 9.5 cm. Source: Michigan State University Museum Cultural Collections, Michigan State University, East Lansing, Michigan.

Figure 48a. Artifact #2000.8.50. Punuk Type III Location unknown, Harpoon Head, ivory, 9.5 cm. Source: Michigan State University Museum Cultural Collections, Michigan State University, East Lansing, Michigan.

Mason (2009) summarized the Punuk period in Table 6 (p. 77).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Archaeological culture</th>
<th>Age range calibrated B.C./A.D.</th>
<th>Geographic distribution</th>
<th>Diagnostic tools, motifs</th>
<th>Subsistence base</th>
<th>Social space</th>
<th>Ritual space</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
The identification of Punuk types was an effort that involved several resources.\(^\text{67}\) This identification process exposed a conundrum of artistic and style migration possibilities, which can be explained through an analogy as sinew lashes the harpoon together so do artistic periods to cultures. Based on cultural traits Collins (1937) suggested the possibility of a “return migration of Thule peoples to northern Alaska within the past few centuries” (289). This theory could explain the evolution of the OBS and Punuk periods toward a more simplistic overall design. Taking this thought further could offer another “backdoor” approach for the Pre-Dorset–Punuk–Aleutian correlation. Hence, using the same purple arrow that demonstrated the migration of peoples from the St. Lawrence Island area to the Aleutian Islands, the Aleutian Artistic Progression can be redefined, as shown in Figure 49.

Perhaps this reentry of Thule culture and its earlier connection with the Punuk period could explain the simplicity of the harpoon heads used by the Aleut, and the fact that this relates to their later styles, as evidenced by the QLP. Collins stated:

The harpoon heads on Nunivak Island and the adjoining mainland represent a continuation of this tradition from Old Bering Sea times. The harpoon heads from the Aleutian Islands figured by Jochelson probably do not include any very old types. They have closed sockets and apparently an end blade at right angles to the line hole. The systematic excavations of de Laguna have shown that at Cook Inlet this form of harpoon head is later than the bladeless form with open socket. (p. 316)

As Collins proceeded to summarize and compare the basic elements of the Northern Maritime tradition cultures, he provided more evidence of Thule cultural influence. Collins (1937) concluded, “From this comparison it appears that the Thule culture is much more closely related to the Punuk and even to modern St. Lawrence culture than it is to the Old Bering Sea culture”

\(^{67}\) Identification of harpoon heads from the Rhythm of the Sea Collection was made with the assistance of Dr. Joshua D. Reuther, Curator of Archaeology and Assistant Professor of Anthropology at the University of Alaska Museum of the North. The harpoon heads from the Michigan State University Museum Cultural Collections were identified with the aid of Technological Development and Culture Change on St. Lawrence Island: A Functional typology of Toggle Harpoon Heads, a dissertation by Michael A. Lewis, B.A., who cited
In his comparison of “Thule types” that exist in Punuk but not in OBS culture, several harpoon styles and types were listed:

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68 Danish archaeologist and ethnographer Therkel Mathiassen (1892–1967) conducted extensive research on Thule culture. Mathiassen was introduced by Collins (1937) when he wrote:

> The past decade has witnessed a greatly increased interest in the problem of the Eskimo. This has been due in large part to the investigations into the ethnography, archeology, language, and folklore of the Central Eskimos inaugurated by the late Dr. Knud Rasmussen and carried out by himself and his colleagues, Kaj Birket-Smith and Therkel Mathiassen. Among the noteworthy results of the Fifth Thule Expedition are the reports by Birket-Smith on the Caribou Eskimos and by Mathiassen on the archeology of the Central Eskimos. Both of these works are landmarks in Eskimo research, not only for the mass of factual material they embody, but also because the opposing theories therein expressed have served as the center of discussion in recent years on the question of the origin of Eskimo culture. (p. 8)

M.A. candidate Mary Jo Megginson provided a straightforward review of Mathiassen’s classifications of Thule harpoon heads. Megginson (2000) stated, “Thule culture was first defined in 1927 by Therkel Mathiassen. Having undertaken an excavation of Naujan, perhaps the most famous Thule site investigated to date, located at Repulse Bay, just north of Southampton Island - he concluded that the remains he had found differed sufficiently from the more modern populations of the region to justify calling it a separate culture” (p. 6). She indicated Mathiassen classified Thule harpoon heads into types I, II, III, IV and V. Megginson wrote, “At its most basic level, his typology breaks down all harpoon heads into five ‘types’ based on the following attributes: position and alignment of...
1. Thule type I harpoon heads
2. Thule type II harpoon heads
3. Thule type III harpoon heads
4. socket piece with knobbed end
5. whaling harpoon heads
6. finger rests with constricted sides (p. 362–63)

Collins recapped:

Examining the list of elements which are common to the Thule and both of the prehistoric culture stages on St. Lawrence Island, we see that these are for the most part simple, fundamental elements of wide distribution, most of which are also characteristic of the modern St. Lawrence Eskimos. This list could be extended considerably if we were to disregard specific differences and include such general features as open socket harpoon heads, socket pieces, finger rests, the bow, throwing board, adzes, etc. But these, added to the last as given, would be only a further indication of the fundamental, general relationship between the Thule culture and Western Eskimo culture as a whole. On the other hand, when we take into account the specific aspects of those features which exhibit variability, we see that in almost every instance the immediate resemblances are between the Thule culture and the Punuk or modern phases of St. Lawrence culture. The fact that most of the Thule features at Gambell appear suddenly, with no indication of connection with earlier forms, points to their having been introduced. For this reason the St. Lawrence finds themselves throw no direct light on the problem of the origin of the

Thule Type I harpoon heads are defined as being very thin, with the line hole positioned straight through from one face to the other, one aslant dorsal spur, an open shaft socket, and no barbs or separately inserted blade (Mathiassen 1927a: 24). Thule Type II harpoon heads are described as being similar to Type I, but with two powerful, opposite barbs (Ibid.). Thule Type III harpoon heads are again very similar to Type I, but differ in having a slot for blade insertion positioned parallel to the plane of the line hole (Ibid.: p. 25). Thule Type IV harpoon heads are described as being thin, with a line hole going direct from one face to the other, with a closed socket and a blade slot positioned perpendicular to the plane of the line hole (Ibid.). Finally, Thule Type V harpoon heads have a more rounded cross-section than the above types, have two dorsal spurs, no barbs, and a blade slit parallel to the plane of the line hole (Ibid.: p. 26). The Type V specimens also generally have a curved line hole, with both openings on one face of the specimen. (p. 43–44)

It should be noted, University of Helsinki professor Dr. Jarmo Kankaanpää (1998) wrote an interesting publication that revealed:

Danish archaeologist Therkel Mathiassen discovered the Thule culture while excavating in the Hudson Bay area in 1921–1923. Though he immediately recognized the culture's affinities with earlier finds from northern Alaska, Mathiassen never took the next obvious step of excavating in that potential source area. Previously unpublished correspondence between Mathiassen and Canadian anthropologist Diamond Jenness indicates that Mathiassen did in fact plan to work in Alaska but was discouraged by Jenness, who advised him that foreign researchers were not welcome there. However, Jenness’ other correspondence suggests that he may have had motives of his own for keeping Mathiassen out of Alaska, and that what was at stake was much more than the origin of the Thule culture. (p. 1)
In seeking the solution of this problem, we must turn to the Arctic coast, as Mathiassen has pointed out. (p. 363–64)

The fact that Thule styled artifacts were discovered on St. Lawrence Island could indicate an incidental “introduction” as Collins suggested, or were remnants of a reverse Thule migration (p. 364). This theory does not propose that the Thule migrated from the east to eventually settle on St. Lawrence Island or further south. Instead, this whale hunting culture returned to northern Alaska and re-introduced harpoon heads with unique features, such as “drilled lashing holes” and “rivet holes” for the blade (p. 366). Thus, to bring the Thule back into the Pre-Dorset-Punuk-Aleutian correlation would mean the Pre-Dorset should be excluded because their assimilation had previously occurred. In other words, the first wave of artistic progression had evolved only to be impacted by another wave. However, there has been no credible archaeological evidence to suggest the Aleutian Islands were ever directly affected by the Thule. Collins mentioned, “De Laguna lists a large number of Thule elements occurring in the Kachemak Bay culture, which leads her to believe that a basic Thule or proto-Thule culture will eventually be found in Alaska” (p. 374). He discredited her theory, and stated:

It must be observed, however, that almost all of the Thule elements assigned to the Kachemak Bay culture are simple, widely distributed types that would be included in a comprehensive collection from almost any Eskimo site. Practically all of them are found on St. Lawrence Island, in either or both the Old Bering Sea or the Punuk material, and with hardly an exception they occur also among the modern Alaskan Eskimos. In other words, the Kachemak Bay culture appears to be no closer to the Thule culture than to that of the intervening sections of Alaska. (p. 374)

Quimby referenced research conducted by de Laguna on Kachemak Bay in Cook Inlet, where toggle harpoon heads were found. He described, “The Kachemak Bay styles are different from those of Amaknak Island. The late Kachemak Bay style, however, is characterized by the closed socket and elegant silhouette somewhat similar to that of the early period Aleut type on Amaknak Island” (Quimby 1946, p. 22). However, Quimby acknowledged, “Although the Aleut
harpoon heads, especially those of the early period, are different from the types of harpoon heads characteristic of the culture stages in norther Alaska, one ancient harpoon head from Punuk Island shares a few characteristics with the early Aleut type... The harpoon head has a shallow, closed socket (but triangular, rather than round or oval) and a bed for the end blade” (p. 22). An example of a closed socket Thule whaling harpoon head from the Rhythm of the Sea Collection is shown in Figure 50.

Figure 50. Artifact #61. Thule to Late Prehistoric Location unknown, Harpoon Head, ivory, 15.0 cm. Source: Rhythm of the Sea Collection, Western Michigan University, Kalamazoo, Michigan.

Mason (2009) summarized the Thule period in Table 7 (p. 79).

Punuk and Aleutian Cultural Synthesis

The plausibility of direct Thule influence, even considering the second migration, is not a factor in the [Pre-Dorset]-Punuk-Aleutian correlation. Therefore, attention was given to the Punuk cultural period harpoon head artifacts of the Rhythm of the Sea Collection, which were compared with the eight Aleut harpoon heads from Amaknak Island previously identified by Quimby (Table 1 and Table 2). First, in order to establish the relationship between Punuk and Aleut cultures, and acknowledge the latter in terms of a Northern Maritime tradition of the
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Archaeological culture</th>
<th>Age range</th>
<th>Geographic distribution</th>
<th>Diagnostic tools, motifs</th>
<th>subsistence base</th>
<th>Social space</th>
<th>Ritual space</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Old Bering Sea Archaeological Culture</td>
<td>Possibly as early as A.D. 3000; definition of age range still controversial, especially as far south as Alaska and Bering Strait</td>
<td>Bering Strait to Greenland, southern extent ambiguous, possibly as far south as Alaska and Bering Strait</td>
<td>Wide range of harpoon head types, Thule types I, II, and III, bow hunters, use of domesticated dogs leads to intensified salmon harvesting</td>
<td>Seal, Walrus, Whaling, Caribou, Hunting, Use of Dogs leads to intensified salmon harvesting</td>
<td>Multiround houses w/ long entry ways, corrals, specialized areas</td>
<td>Large communal architecture at Point Hope, Bering Sea region, likely other, St. Lawrence Island, East Cape, evidence of status differences</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 7

Source: Owen K. Mason 2009 (used with permission).
Bering Sea, a basic understanding of Alaska prehistoric artistic periods and cultures in the form of a timeline is beneficial, as shown in Figure 51.

**Prehistoric Artistic Periods and Cultures Timeline**

ASTt: Paleoeskimo Cultures (Pre-Dorset to Dorset)

Norton Tradition Cultures

- Choris (800-500 B.C.)
- Norton (500 B.C.)
- Ipiutak (A.D. 350)

(ASTt to NMt)

Okvik/Old Bering Sea I (300 B.C.)

Old Bering Sea II (A.D. 300)

NMt: Neoeskimo Cultures

Northwestern Alaska Cultures

- Birnirk (A.D. 500-1000)
- QMP) Punuk (A.D. 900)
- Pre-Thule to Thule (A.D. 1000)

Aleutian (QEP, QMP) Aleutian (QLP)


Second, a cultural synthesis model using a similar typology system developed by Mathiassen to define variations in Thule harpoon heads was created to summarize the likenesses of Punuk and Aleut artistry. The model or Table 8 consists of variables or numerators that defined similarities among the harpoon head artifacts or denominator, and served as the summation.

Notations were added to the variables to explain historical and cultural significance.
### Table 8

**Variables of Punuk and Aleutian Harpoon Heads**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Artistic Periods and Culture</th>
<th>Dates and Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Punuk                        | A.D. 900 (Collins 1977, p. 7), (Mason 2009, p. 95)  
A.D. 650-900 (Mason 2009, p. 100)  
A.D. 500-1100 (Ray 1966, p. 93)  
“The Punuk culture takes its name from an old site, a sixteen-foot-high midden on Punuk Island, off the east end of St. Lawrence. The midden, containing Punuk material from top to bottom, had no connection with the much older Okvik site only a few hundred yards away, discovered later by Otto W. Geist. The Punuk culture centered on St. Lawrence and the Diomede Islands and occurred on both sides of Bering Strait and at a single site near Point Barrow. Punuk sites are larger and more numerous than Old Bering Sea, indicating a larger population, especially on St. Lawrence island, during this period” (Collins 1977, p. 7). |
“The fourteen large and fifty-five smaller islands of the Aleutian chain, extending some 900 miles westward from the Alaska Peninsula, had a dense population, estimated at around 20,000, when discovered by the Russians in 1741. Almost every island was inhabited, with thirty-one villages reported on Agattu, thirteen on Unalaska and many more on the other islands. Judging from the large number of old village sites the Aleut population was equally dense in prehistoric times. In an area as large as this, some degree of cultural diversity is to be expected. The prehistoric Aleutian sites cover a time span of over 3500 years” (Collins 1977, p. 15). |

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Raw Material</th>
<th>Bone or Ivory and Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Punuk #54 Rhythm of Sea Collection</td>
<td>ivory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Punuk #55 Rhythm of the Sea Collection</td>
<td>ivory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Punuk #57 Rhythm of the Sea Collection</td>
<td>ivory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Punuk #130 Rhythm of the Sea Collection</td>
<td>bone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aleut #179308 (Amaknak Island)</td>
<td>bone</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Table 8—Continued

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Raw Material</th>
<th>Bone or Ivory and Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aleut #179309 (Amaknak Island)</td>
<td>bone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“The intensity of decoration co-occurs with high walrus exploitation and is inversely related to success in whaling on the broadest scale, communities with a surplus of whale bone were less likely to engrave elaborate designs. Very likely, relatively porous whale bone offered a less attractive palette for aesthetic design” (Mason 2009, p. 99). Dwellers of the Aleutian Islands were seal hunters, and used their bone for harpoon heads, which lacked ornate decoration.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aleut #179310 (Amaknak Island)</td>
<td>bone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“Ivory, either mammoth or walrus, was not native to the islands” (Hrdlička 1945, p. 96).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“The Aleutian Islands were poor in the larger shellfish, and had no walrus ivory of their own, for which reasons beads of these substances were almost absent” (Hrdlička 1945, p. 89).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Veniaminov (1840) wrote, “The local Aleuts are particularly apt in making things out of bone” (I, 237 qtd. in Hrdlička 1945, p. 96).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Veniaminov (1840) wrote, “the Aleuts of the eastern parts of the Unalaska district nearly all know how to make various things from bone, and that sometimes quite nicely” (Hrdlička 1945, p. 96).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aleut #179311 (Amaknak Island)</td>
<td>bone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aleut #179312 (Amaknak Island)</td>
<td>bone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aleut #179313 (Amaknak Island)</td>
<td>bone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aleut #179314 (Amaknak Island)</td>
<td>bone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aleut #179091 (Amaknak Island)</td>
<td>bone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motifs</td>
<td>Descriptions and Notes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Punuk #54 Rhythm of Sea Collection</td>
<td>Late Punuk to Thule Type III (Joshua D. Reuther, e-mail message to author, March 20, 2016). Lack of design elements; several short even lines in a semi-ladder design toward the socket end; groove extending from end blade slot; carver’s mark; “In the latest stages of Punuk art the decoration consisted of repetitive arrangements of the same design element, in contrast to earlier Punuk where they were usually incorporated into an overall connected design. Later, even this simplified art disappeared and for the past few centuries Eskimo culture on St. Lawrence Island has been devoid of art” (Collins 1977, p. 8–9).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Punuk #55 Rhythm of the Sea Collection</td>
<td>Punuk Type III (Joshua D. Reuther, e-mail message to author, March 20, 2016). Simple dot and line design; ladder design on the underside; “single line and dots at ends of lines – Punuk Style 1 Phase 2” (Lewis 1995, p. 56); “Later Punuk designs consisted of more deeply incised lines; small nucleated spurred circles made with bit or compass; long very deep lines, usually in pairs…” (Collins 1977, p. 8).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Punuk #2000.7.79 Michigan State University Museum Cultural Collections</td>
<td>“Punuk played an important role in the development of modern Alaskan Eskimo art. The primary basis of Eskimo culture in the Bering Sea area, from Norton Sound to Bristol Bay, was the Norton-Near Ipiutak culture of the Alaska mainland, but the greater part of its engraved art was derived from Punuk. This was the source of the designs so characteristic of the area - the circle and dot, dot at the end of a line, the spurred line, Y figures, alternative spur design, and bands of encircling lines, seen on so many of their ivory ornaments, implements and utensils” (Collins 1977, p. 9).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Punuk #57 Rhythm of the Sea Collection</td>
<td>Punuk Type III (Joshua D. Reuther, e-mail message to author, March 20, 2016). Lack of design elements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Punuk #130 Rhythm of the Sea Collection</td>
<td>Punuk Type III (Joshua D. Reuther, e-mail message to author, March 20, 2016). Lack of design elements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aleut #179308 (Amaknak Island)</td>
<td>QEP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aleut #179309 (Amaknak Island)</td>
<td>QEP</td>
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Table 8—Continued

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Motifs</th>
<th>Descriptions and Notes</th>
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<tr>
<td>Aleut #179310 (Amaknak Island)</td>
<td>QLP narrow grooves on each side</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aleut #179311 (Amaknak Island)</td>
<td>QEP groove from line-hole to socket; single block design - stamp</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aleut #179312 (Amaknak Island)</td>
<td>QEP slight linear hatching; unfinished block U design</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aleut #179313 (Amaknak Island)</td>
<td>QLP slight linear hatching; line under the line-hole</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aleut #179314 (Amaknak Island)</td>
<td>QEP slight linear hatching</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aleut #179091 (Amaknak Island)</td>
<td>QLP (Punuk) “This harpoon head is decorated with a design that includes such motifs as the compass-drawn dot and circle or dot concentric circles with spurs. The design is suggestive of Punuk and post-Punuk Eskimo art in northern Alaska” (Quimby 1946, p. 19).</td>
</tr>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Blade Slot/Blade Bed</th>
<th>Slot or Bed and Notes</th>
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</thead>
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<tr>
<td>Punuk #54 Rhythm of Sea Collection</td>
<td>end blade slot for end blade</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Punuk #55 Rhythm of the Sea Collection</td>
<td>end blade slot for end blade</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Punuk #57 Rhythm of the Sea Collection</td>
<td>end blade slot for end blade</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Punuk #130 Rhythm of the Sea Collection</td>
<td>end blade slot for end blade</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aleut #179308 (Amaknak Island)</td>
<td>spoon-shaped bed; “At the outer end of the harpoon head there is a spoon-shaped bed into which was once lashed a blade of chipped stone” (Quimby 1946, p. 15-16).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aleut #179309 (Amaknak Island)</td>
<td>spoon-shaped bed</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Table 8—Continued

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<tr>
<th>Blade Slot/Blade Bed</th>
<th>Slot or Bed and Notes</th>
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<tr>
<td>Aleut #179310 (Amaknak Island)</td>
<td>end blade slot for end blade</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aleut #179311 (Amaknak Island)</td>
<td>spoon-shaped bed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aleut #179312 (Amaknak Island)</td>
<td>spoon-shaped bed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aleut #179313 (Amaknak Island)</td>
<td>end blade slot for end blade</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aleut #179314 (Amaknak Island)</td>
<td>spoon-shaped bed</td>
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<td>Aleut #179091 (Amaknak Island)</td>
<td>end blade slot for end blade</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Line-Hole/Socket</th>
<th>Shape of Line-Hole and Closed or Open Socket and Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Punuk #54 Rhythm of Sea Collection</td>
<td>no line-hole/open socket; “Collins divided all harpoon heads into two categories of open and closed sockets. Open sockets are carved so that one side of the socket is open and the foreshaft is held in place with baleen lashing. Closed sockets are drilled into the solid ivory at the spur end of the harpoon head and do not require lashing to hold the foreshaft in place (Lewis 1995, p. 51).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Punuk #55 Rhythm of the Sea Collection</td>
<td>round line-hole/closed socket; drilled line-hole</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Punuk #57 Rhythm of the Sea Collection</td>
<td>round line-hole/open socket</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Punuk #130 Rhythm of the Sea Collection</td>
<td>round line-hole/open socket</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aleut #179308 (Amaknak Island)</td>
<td>oval line-hole/closed socket</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aleut #179309 (Amaknak Island)</td>
<td>round line-hole/closed socket</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aleut #179310 (Amaknak Island)</td>
<td>round line-hole/closed socket</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aleut #179311 (Amaknak Island)</td>
<td>elliptical line-hole/closed socket</td>
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Table 8—Continued

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<th>Spur(s)/Barbs</th>
<th>Number of Spur(s) or Barbs and Notes</th>
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<tr>
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<td>single spur</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Punuk #55 Rhythm of the Sea Collection</td>
<td>single spur</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Punuk #57 Rhythm of the Sea Collection</td>
<td>single spur</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Punuk #130 Rhythm of the Sea Collection</td>
<td>single spur</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aleut #179308 (Amaknak Island)</td>
<td>single spur</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aleut #179309 (Amaknak Island)</td>
<td>single spur</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aleut #179310 (Amaknak Island)</td>
<td>single spur</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aleut #179311 (Amaknak Island)</td>
<td>single spur</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aleut #179312 (Amaknak Island)</td>
<td>single spur</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aleut #179313 (Amaknak Island)</td>
<td>single spur</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aleut #179314 (Amaknak Island)</td>
<td>single spur</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aleut #179091 (Amaknak Island)</td>
<td>single spur</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Preferred by the Punuk and Aleuts were minimalistic artistry and style simplicity, as evidenced by linear motifs and the single basal spur. However, their harpoon heads were aesthetically more elaborate than the Birnirk and Thule. Cultural synthesis influenced by
migratory forces, such as assimilation and environmental factors can produce change in harpoon head manufacture. Mason (2009) stated, “The various adaptive strategies embodied in technological systems reflect structural/psychological changes in how stress and status were managed in the face of shifting resource conditions” (p. 101). The harpoon heads from Amaknak Island used for research comparison are shown in Figure 52.

![Image of harpoon heads](image_url)

The top row of Aleut harpoon heads are from the late period. The bottom row of Aleut harpoon heads are from the early period (Quimby 1946, p. 21)

Top row from left to right: #179313, #179091, #179310  
Bottom row from left to right: #179309, #179311, #179314

*Figure 52. Aleutian Harpoon Heads. Source:* George I. Quimby (1946).
Quimby (1945) acknowledged:

Although the Aleut harpoon heads, especially those of the early period, are different from the types of harpoon heads characteristically of the culture stages in northern Alaska, one ancient harpoon had from Punuk Island shares a few characteristics with the early Aleut... the harpoon head has a shallow, closed socket (but triangular, rather than round or oval) and a bed for the end blade. In other respects, however, the form of this harpoon head does not resemble the early period type from Amaknak Island. The harpoon head described by Collins was decorated with a simple geometric pattern engraved upon both sides. The design is somewhat suggestive both of early Aleut design and Dorset. (p. 22)

Interestingly, harpoon head #179091 from Amaknak Island has a closed socket. It is decorated with “a design that includes such motifs as the compass-drawn dot and circle or dot and concentric circles with spurs” (p. 19). Quimby classified this harpoon head from the Aleutian late period. The same harpoon head also has a triangular line-hole, as opposed to the more prevalent round or oval shapes, and was artistically described as Punuk or post-Punk. Collins (1977) suggested, “Just as in Late Punuk, these design elements appear as separate units or, if connected, are repetitive, whereas in Early Punuk they had formed part of a connected design.

Modern Eskimo engraving in the Bering Sea area may be regarded as essentially a disintegrated form of Punuk art” (p. 9). This observation is pivotal to the Eskimo and Aleut cultural correlation, because as people migrated north, east, and south they took their sea mammal hunting kits and practices and re-tooled them to fit new environments. Such people included the Birnirk and later the Thule. Collins stated, “Birnirk and Thule were not represented as distinct cultural stages on St. Lawrence Island but harpoon heads of these periods occur at Punuk sites, Birnirk in association with Early Punuk and Thule with later Punuk” (p. 9). Russian archaeologist Dr. S. A. Arutyunov (1979) wrote:

A statistical analysis of the distribution of various forms of harpoon heads in various sites helps to shed some light on the reasons for their polymorphy. Thus both at Uelen [Chukotsky District, Russia] and Ekven [Chukotka Autonomous Okrug, Russia] among almost every type of harpoon had we find both the x and y variants (according to Collins’
This can be explained by the fact that pack ice, at all seasons, is heavier and open water more scarce in Uelen than in Ekven. For several reasons of technical character, the x variants are more suitable for the heavier winter harpoons designed to be thrown a short distance, and y variants are more suitable for large areas of open water.

The same correlation can be observed among the various types of socket pieces, various special harpoon heads designed for the hunting of specific animals, and so on. Such a situation can be defined as “balanced polymorphism,” which serves as means of adaptation and maintenance of ecological stability, both in biological and cultural evolution. In their later stages, the cultures of Bering Strait Eskimos became less polymorphic and much more narrowly specialized. The Punuk culture with its orientation to whale hunting and Birnirk’s to seal hunting, manifest the two main directions of this process of specialization. (p. 30)

The Eskimo and Aleut correlation is based on the theory that as the Birnirk culture developed from the OBS and expanded toward the east a similar cultural synthesis occurred.

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71 Collins developed a typology for harpoon heads. Lewis (1995) stated, “Collins distinguished two additional categories of harpoon heads independent of socket design, based on the orientation of the side blade, barb or end blade to the line hole. Harpoon heads with the blades set parallel to the axis of the line hole are designated x…, while harpoon heads with the blades set at right angles to the axis of the line hole are designated y…” (p. 51).

72 Associate Professor Pet Whitridge in the Department of Archaeology of Memorial University located in St. John’s Newfoundland and Labrador, Canada received his Ph.D. from Arizona State University in 1999. Biographical information was retrieved from Memorial University, accessed November 12, 2016, https://www.mun.ca. Whitridge (1999) stated:

The apparent colonization at this time of St. Lawrence Island and smaller islands in the Bering Strait region, and the Chukchi Peninsula coast itself, with their severely impoverished terrestrial faunas, indicates that Okvik-OBS groups were able to focus their harvesting energies almost entirely on sea mammals, due in part to these improvements in maritime hunting technology [float gear, umiak design, or seafaring techniques] and, perhaps, associated organizational modes based upon the cooperative umiak crew. Likely also important at this juncture was the establishment of secure exchange relationships with caribou-producing groups on the mainland (as suggested by abundant caribou antler artifacts). (p. 123–24)

The small size of most settlements [Birnirk], and emphasis on non-cetacean resources, means that any such heritage from Okvik-OBS may not have been well-expressed. Nevertheless, supplementing a harvest of smaller sea mammals, terrestrial game birds, and fish with consistent low level whaling was a successful pioneering strategy that resulted in a major northward extension of Neoeskimo settlement. (p. 124)

Punuk represents a significant new threshold in the level of whaling activity in the northern Bering Sea… While some researchers remain doubtful of the extent of Okvik-OBS whaling, there is virtually unaminous [sic] agreement that Punuk groups harvested large numbers of bowhead (and sometimes gray) whales. This is reflected in the abundance of whale bone in Punuk houses and middens, and the increasing occurrence of whaling equipment (harpoon heads, foreshafts, float gear, etc.), and material culture and architecture associated with whaling ritual. (p. 125)

The archaeological evidence discovered in villages, houses, and middens provided Whitridge to endorse the theory that the Punuk culture was sustained by whale hunting. Whereas, the Birnirk resorted predominately to what food resources the coastline and mainland offered.
while migrating and settling on the Aleutian Islands. The Birnirk “stage of culture” was “directly ancestral to Thule, which formed the principal basis of all modern Eskimo culture from northern Alaska to Greenland” (Collins 1977, p. 9). Whereas, the Aleutian Islands were “peopled from the Alaskan mainland” (Collins 1937, p. 377). Harpoon head types signified cultural developments within the Punuk period. The Punuk “undergo a simplification through time, as functional attributes gain ascendance over decorative elements such as vestigial bars or spurs” (Mason 2009, p. 87).

Historically, the change in harpoon head styles and artistry were results of migratory peoples adapting to the availability to raw resource materials and food sources. Arutyunov noted, “The OBS-Okvik and Punuk cultures both are based on walrus and whale hunting, though the role of whales in Punuk was obviously greater. In contrast, the Birnirk economy was based entirely on seals and its formation took place most probably north of Bering Strait, where whales and walrus could not serve as the base for subsistence” (p. 28).

The Rhythm of the Sea Collection provides an example of a Birnirk period bone harpoon head, which is barbed self-bladed. This style demonstrates the cultural change in hunting practices from walrus and whale to seal. The use of seal bone also signifies the shift from walrus ivory. Quimby identified the popularity of bone barbed harpoon heads among the Aleuts; however, the barbless end-bladed harpoon head was employed, as well. Mason (2009)

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Collins (1937) referenced:

As was pointed out previously, the presence of pottery in Kamchatka and its absence in the Aleutians is in itself an argument against a west to east movement, for if such had occurred, it would seem that pottery would have been introduced into the Aleutians.

When we consider, on the other hand, that the early Aleuts must have been expert navigators to have settled and maintained contacts between the widely separated islands, it would have been by no means an insuperable feat for them to have pushed on and reached the Commander islands and then the Kamchatka peninsula. (p. 377)
concluded, “In evolutionary terms, change in harpoon styles was dependent upon broader processes of macroevolutionary change, co-occurring with innovation in walrus hunting initially and in whaling as well. This implies that evolutionary archaeologists working on stylistic change elsewhere would be wise to consider broader context in generating explanatory models” (p. 101). A Birnirk to early Thule period harpoon head from the Rhythm of the Sea Collection is shown in Figure 53.

Figure 53. Artifact #59. Birnirk to Early Thule Period Location unknown, Harpoon Head, bone, 10.0 cm. Source: Rhythm of the Sea Collection, Western Michigan University, Kalamazoo, Michigan.

Ultimately, Quimby (1945) summed prehistoric Aleut art consisted of two “discernable periods” (p. 76). The early period comprised of motifs like the “Dorset Eskimo in the East” (p. 76). The late period was reminiscent of the “Punuk Eskimo in northern Alaska” (p. 76). Quimby wrote:

Both early Aleut and Dorset designs are extremely simple and poorly executed. Judged by our standards, they are lower in the scale of artistic craftsmanship than the designs of any other Eskimo culture, although aesthetically they might be better. With such simplicity and poor execution, it seems quite possible that even two groups of Eskimos could independently develop somewhat similar art styles. (p. 78)

On the other hand, it seems reasonable to believe that there is some kind of cultural relationship between early Aleut and Dorset. This hypothesis is suggested by the evidence of design similarities, not only between early Aleut and Dorset, but also between Prince William Sound-Kachemak Bay and Dorset and Old Bering Sea style 1 and Dorset, as well as the probability (proof in some instances) that all of these cultures are old. (p. 78–79)
Theoretically, the Eskimo and Aleut correlation resulted due to the inevitable Birnirk branch from the OBS period, which spread eastward and south toward the Aleutian Islands. Associate professor Peter Whitridge (1999) determined, “Once Okvik-OBS populations in the Bering Strait region had reached some critical density, Birnirk seems to have developed as groups spilled over into largely uninhabited coastal frontier, maintaining contacts with the homeland but following a separate cultural trajectory” (p. 124–25). The similarity of harpoon heads used for seal hunting and their simplistic design elements are just a few pieces of archaeological evidence to complete the anthropological record for prehistoric cultural assimilation and eventual maturation of the modern Eskaleut.
POLITICAL AND POETIC DIALECTIC

Political Partner

Complexity of Anthropological and Archaeological Politics

“Man ever tries to peer backward into his shadowy past. Unlike other animals, he is curious about relating whatever knowledge he finds there, to planning his future” (Bank 1962, sec.). The quote from Theodore Bank describes his passion for exploration, which is evidenced by his lengthy résumé and several expeditions throughout the world. It also illuminates the perplexing metaphysical rationale for the acquisition of cultural artifacts. Responding to his own question, “Why do we feel there are philosophical problems specific to artifacts?” Philosopher Richard E. Grandy (2007) stated, “One reason which is close to a common-sense philosophical

74 Documents obtained from the Archives and Special Collection Department of the University of Alaska in Anchorage stated:

Theodore (Ted) Bank, II was born on August 31, 1923, in Patterson, Louisiana. He studied human biology at Harvard (1941–1943), leaving to serve as a naval weather observer in the Aleutians and the North Pacific during World War II. After the war he resumed his studies, obtaining a B.S. in forestry at the University of Michigan (1946 or 1947). He obtained his M.S. in ethnobotany from the University of Michigan (1950), and also did postgraduate work in anthropology there (1947–1953). He led and participated in numerous scientific expeditions to the Aleutian Islands as well as expeditions to Japan (1955–1956), Argentina, West Africa, Mexico, Southeast Asia, and the South Pacific. Bank’s professional positions included village teacher in Atka, Alaska (1948–1949); executive director, American Institute for Exploration (1954–1981); visiting lecturer, University of Hokkaido (1955–1956); research associate, University of Michigan Museum of Anthropology (1956–1957); assistant professor of anthropology, Chicago Teachers College North (1961–1963); social research anthropologist, Agnews State Hospital (1965–1966); visiting lecturer, College of San Mateo (1965–1966); assistant professor of anthropology, Chapman College, Seven Seas Division (1967); professor of social science, Western Michigan University (1967–1981); and director, Aleutian-Bering Sea Institutes Program (1969–1981). He was a member of many professional organizations, including the American Anthropological Association (fellow), the Society of American Archaeology (fellow), the Polar Society, and the Pacific Science Association. He was also a fellow of the Explorers Club, a frequent contributor to their journal (The Explorers Journal), and the proud carrier of Explorers Club Flag #159. (“Ted Bank Papers.” Archives and Special Collections, Consortium Library, University of Alaska Anchorage.)
intuition, is that artifacts - their existence and their features – depend on human interests” (p. 21). Both Bank and Grandy could have been referring to the museum curation project. Author Kenneth Hudson (1991) raised questions on the purpose of a museum – “any museum” (p. 458). He queried:

Is it [museum] primarily didactic, existing in order to reach and convey information to the audience? Or is its main purpose to change attitudes, perhaps to crusade on behalf of a cause? It is there in the first place to collect, conserve, and study objects, and only incidentally to display its possessions to the public? Does it see its exhibitions as the icing of the cake, a necessary nuisance, a smokescreen behind which scholars can follow their own specialist pursuits – a license to exist? (p. 458)

In the Bering Sea region, previous notable anthropologists either demonstrated their own purpose or accounted for “any museum.” In his book, anthropologist William S. Laughlin (1980) stated:

In the eastern and central Aleutians, the Aleuts frequently made mummies of some of their dead people and stored these mortuary packages in caves or in rock shelters. Along with the mummies they often included the kayaks and hunting equipment of the men, armor, shields, knives, drums, masks, and with the women various dishes of wood, knives, basketry, mats, and other utensils. All in all, these mummy caves are actually museums showing much of the material cultures of the people and of the people themselves, for their skeletons and much of their bodies are preserved; at the same time they reflect much of the religious beliefs. The Kagamil mummies, numbering about 234 in all, constitute an excellent demographic sample of the Kagamil community. (p. 96)

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75 Richard E. Grandy received his Ph.D. in history and philosophy of science from Princeton University in 1968. Grandy is a philosophy professor at Rice University. His research areas included philosophy of logic, metaphysics, philosophy of cognitive sciences, and philosophy of science. He co-authored the book *Teaching Scientific Inquiry: Recommendations for Research and Applications* (2008).


77 Editors George and Louise Spindler wrote:

William S. Laughlin was born in Canton, Missouri, and raised in Salem, Oregon, where he attended Willamette University. He first visited the Aleutian and Commander Islands in 1938 as a student member of a Smithsonian Field Expedition under the direction of Dr. Aleš Hrdlička. He subsequently studied at Haverford College and Bryn Mawr College before receiving his Ph.D. degree from Harvard University in 1949. He has done fieldwork in Siberia, Alaska, Canada, and Greenland, as well as in the continental United States. Many of the field studies made by Dr. Laughlin were multidisciplinary and included students and scholars from other nations. He taught at the University of Oregon and the University of Wisconsin before moving to the University of Connecticut. (Laughlin 1980, p. iii)
The archaeological richness of these caves cannot be separated from how their artifacts were accumulated; thereby, exposing the political and poetic dialectic. This dynamic of the dialectic embodies the “politics of representation” for Alaska Native cultures (Houlihan 1991, p. 205).

Laughlin (1980) wrote, “Occasionally, a hunter was mummified and placed in his kayak, harpoon in hand, ready to resume the hunt. We found some beautifully made kayak frames in the warm cave on Kagamil Island. Well over 50 mummies were taken from this cave” (p. 99). Hrdlička was infamous for removing mummies and their artifacts from the burial caves located on Kagamil Island. This archaeological practice in the name of cultural and physical anthropology became politically charged, and likely to remain so if museums exist. The Smithsonian Institute Repatriation Office reported:

The Repatriation Office of the National Museum of Natural History, Smithsonian Institution, has distributed summary reports about the objects in the National Museum of Natural History's ethnological collections to all federally recognized Native American tribes, Native Alaskan Villages and Corporations, and Native Hawaiian organizations. These reports provide listings of objects and information about their acquisition by the Museum. Separate reports were prepared for each culture listed in the Museum's collection database. The ethnographic summaries enable Native tribes and organizations to begin their review of the National Museum of Natural History's collections and identify those objects that may be of concern to them.

The reports were sent to all federally recognized tribes that have members identified with the culture in a particular report. The information in the summaries provides a basis for tribes to consult with the museum and to identify possible sacred objects and objects of cultural patrimony. We do not attempt to identify which, if any, of these objects may be defined as funerary objects, sacred objects, or objects of cultural patrimony under the repatriation law. Identification of sacred objects and objects of cultural patrimony can only be done in consultation with the culturally affiliated Native American group. Other objects in the Museum's anthropology collections, including archeological objects and human remains, are reported elsewhere. A table listing these reports, organized by culture name, is available online.

The reports are shown in Tables 9, 9a, and 9b.78

78 The Ethnographic Summary Reports Grouped by Region was retrieved from the Smithsonian Institute Repatriation Office, accessed October 16, 2016, http://www.anthropology.si.edu/repatriation office.
### Table 9

**Ethnographic Summary Reports Grouped by Region**

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<thead>
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<th>Region</th>
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<td>CALIFORNIA</td>
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**Source:** Smithsonian Institution National Museum of Natural History Repatriation Office (accessed October 16, 2016).
Table 9a

*Ethnographic Summary Reports Grouped by Region*

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<th>Region: ALASKA</th>
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<td>Han (5), Ingalik (88), Koyukon (16), Kutchin (41),</td>
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<td>Tanana</td>
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<td>Tlingit</td>
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<td>Bannock</td>
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<tr>
<td>Goslute</td>
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<td>Kitanemuk</td>
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<td>Shoshone</td>
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<td>Waksachi</td>
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<td>Washo</td>
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Table 9b

*Ethnographic Summary Reports Grouped by Region*

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Region: SOUTHWEST PUEBLO, continued</th>
<th>Number of CATALOG ENTRIES</th>
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<tr>
<td>Sandia</td>
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<td>Santa Clara</td>
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<td>Santo Domingo</td>
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<table>
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<th>CULTURALLY UNIDENTIFIED OBJECTS</th>
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<td>Subarctic</td>
<td>319</td>
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The unorthodox archaeological praxis committed by Hrdlička was accompanied by the lack of protocol about data collection. He ignored the anthropological historicism and cultural relativism tenets when gathering archaeological specimens. Laughlin (1951) explained:

Hrdlička’s [sic] excavations in 1936 to 1938 in various islands of eastern, central, and western parts of the chain are the only other work preceding our own investigations begun in 1948. He unfortunately did not keep accurate records of the artifacts removed, nor of the depths at which they were found, and he consistently separated the cultural remains from the skeletons with which they were associated. Thus, while he first demonstrated the presence of two distinct physical variants, he made no reliable observations on the history of Aleutian culture. The few sites excavated by Jochelson which we have been able to revisit indicate that he excavated primarily in sites of the later period and consequently did not secure enough of the Paleo-Aleut skeletons or artifacts to permit recognition. (p. 80)

Clearly, archaeological excavations conducted by Hrdlička presented challenges and extensive negative discourse for future anthropologists researching indigenous peoples. The exploitation of graves produced political ramifications that extended beyond the inanimate funerary and other artifacts to include the disruption of cultural intimacy between the sacred and the Aleut. The interment of the dead has been a testament to belief systems. Any external factors causing interference within the system can produce long-term effects for a culture. In other words, through oral tradition the animate of future Aleut generations would know of the disregard of their ancestors brought about by the appropriation of burial sites. This juncture pits the political partner with its strong conviction for knowledge against the poetic partner struggling to hold onto its indigenous agency. Faced with these terms, the representation of Alaska Natives is vital in order to sustain the anthropology-archaeological discourse. In fact, documentation from Western Michigan University indicated that the Rhythm of the Sea Collection was not immune to repatriation scrutiny. It is through this unexpected dialectic entry point the journey of how the collection arrived at Western Michigan University can be theorized, and the possibility of its future determined.
The Theodore Paul Bank, II: University of Michigan Aleutian Expedition I (1948–1949)—Political Partner

The Aleutian Islands became a place for study and adventure for the young ethnobotanist Bank. After serving as a naval weather observer stationed on Adak Island during World War II he decided to return to do his “doctoral research on the prehistoric migrations of plants and man between Asia and North America” (Bank 1956, p. 9). Bank enthusiastically wrote:

Strange that I was leading an expedition to the very island that two years before I thought I would never want to see again. Even though I had planned and trained myself since boyhood to be an explorer, World War II had convinced me that the Aleutians were not among the places I wanted to explore. Like many other [GI’s], I had been set down on the lonely, bleak islands far from the main activities of the war; and there, amid violent storms, I waited out my time until I could escape from them. When escape finally came after the war, I would have laughed at the suggestion that I would voluntarily return to them again. Yet, here I was, two years later, peering out of a plane that was taking me back to Adak, and I was looking forward to it eagerly! (p. 2)

The objective of the expedition was for Bank to collect plant specimens for the University of Michigan Botanical Gardens.79 In the spring of 1948, he presented this ambitious undertaking to

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79 Bank explained the intents of the expedition:

Meanwhile the scope and objectives of the project were examined critically and enlarged. It seemed evident that the Aleutian Islands, although a part of territorial Alaska, had been mostly neglected as an area of scientific study by American botanists and ethnobotanists despite the fact that there are important and unproved distributional hypotheses concerned with this region. Previous investigations, predominately by Russian, Swedish, and Japanese scientists, needed to be extended and confirmed. Large portions of the flora and fauna as well as a great deal of the ethnobotany had been conspicuously overlooked. For instance, most of the cryptogamic groups had been very insufficiently studied, and some had hardly been touched. The higher plants, on the contrary, had been the subject of an excellent work. Dr. Eric Hultén, representing the Swedish Academy of Science, studied portions of the Aleutian flora in 1932, and much of the evidence for his broad hypotheses concerning the origin and distribution of arctic and boreal biota was based upon these investigations. Because of the far-reaching implications of his conclusions as well as because of his extensive use of negative evidence of distribution, Dr. Hultén’s work needed thorough checking by additional field collections.

Likewise, there remained many islands upon which he was unable to collect. These might or might not yield important new data for distributional hypotheses, but it seemed worth-while to try to get all the additional data possible, even though Hultén’s Flora represented an admirable accomplishment.

Despite the magnitude of investigations in Aleutian anthropology by Dall, Jochelson, and Hrdlicka [sic], continued study of the Aleut culture was and is clearly needed. Additional archaeological sites must be
faculty and students in the Botany Department. Bank informed professor Harley Bartlett and stated:

Adak is a must; that should be our base of operations. Then there are the Aleut (pronounced as if it were spelled Al-ee-oot) villages at Atka, Umnak, and Unalaska; I want to visit them. There could be burial caves and ancient village sites on all of the islands; no one knows for sure. (p. 10)

As plans were being finalized and transportation secured through naval operations stationed on the Aleutian Islands, Bank was notified of another expedition from Harvard University led by Laughlin. However, this joint effort never materialized probably due to as a letter from the Department of Anthropology at the University of Arkansas dated November 30, 1992 suggested:

excavated to untangle some of the problems brought into focus by Hrdlicka [sic], and the process of acculturation among the living Aleut population is still in need of intensive study. Until 1948, the ethnobotany of the Aleut people, past and present, was largely overlooked by anthropologists. It was believed that microscopical study and identification of the organic debris from various levels of the archeological sites would provide much hitherto unknown data about the utilization of plants and other economic resources by the Aleuts in olden times. Their present habits would give a clue to much of it.

During the spring of 1948 a great amount of time was spent in defining such objectives for the proposed expedition as could be accomplished by prospective personnel and funds. In general, our aims were to study the following:

a. The flora, including lower plants such as marine and terrestrial algae, fungi, and mosses by collections ranging across the Aleutian Chain. Nothing would be neglected which would facilitate interpretation of the material culture of the old Aleuts.
b. Floristic patterns in and around ancient village areas in an effort to correlate, if possible, these patterns with the distribution, extent, and relative age of the archaeological sites and their recognition from the air.
c. Phyto-ecology of the Islands by assembling descriptions and collections, supplemented with photographs and sketches, of the flora from major plant communities and habitats, especially from the standpoint of adaptability to human use or occupancy.
d. Pollen studies of stratigraphically collected soil and past samples from all archaeological excavations and natural areas, with supplementary collections of present day pollens for facilitating identification of the ones isolated from sites. Pollen identification may throw light upon post-Glacial or even earlier climatic cycles.
e. Diatom, sponge, and hard animal remains from soil and peat samples secured and identified (so far as possible) at all archaeological sites excavated.
f. Ethnobotanical materials uncovered during archaeological excavations, to be correlated with modern.
g. Ethnobotany and ethnology of the living Aleut and of the ancient Aleut by recording from living natives the present and past uses for local plants, as well as all songs and myths (which have all but disappeared from the Aleut culture) dealing with Aleut culture.
h. Ancient village sites by archaeological excavation if sufficient funds were available for such work and if a competent archaeologist could be secured as a member of the Expedition.
i. Soils and soil microbiology.

(“Ted Bank Papers.” Department of Anthropology, University of Michigan.)
Starting about 1948 (then in graduate school at Michigan), he [Bank] took off (with a few accomplices) to do botanical work on some Aleutian midden sites, which led to more of an interest in archaeology. This was the same year that Laughlin started his own Aleutian work (from Harvard, where he was a student) and the two of them, being a lot alike, did not get along at all well, and spend the next several decades ignoring one another. (“Ted Bank Papers.” Department of Anthropology, Western Michigan University.)

Bank eventually received funds from various donors including the Botanical Gardens of the University of Michigan to begin his botanical research on the Aleutian Islands.

Post-World War II protocol and procedures caused initial deterrents for entry into the once military occupied Aleutian areas. Bank (1956) wrote:

We would have to get permission from the commanding officers of each base before entering the Aleutian defense zone. The Department of the Interior would have to approve our plans for studying the burial caves. Permission would have to be obtained from the Alaska Native Service before we could work in the Aleut villages. Send plants back to the University? Impossible without a permit from the Department of Agriculture. The list of permits and authorizations we would need grew longer than the list of things we wanted to do once we reached the Aleutians! (p. 19)

Nonetheless, these political measures implemented by the United States government offered no safeguards for the contents of sacred burial caves or burial pits. In fact, Bank was not instructed or skilled in archaeology, which explained his incompetence in fieldwork recordkeeping. On Umnak Island, Bank and his assistant Robert E. Dorsett discovered “several distinctive grass-covered, circular depressions which were nearby, and a thought hit me: we were standing on an ancient village site” (p. 30). Bank unapologetically acknowledged:

Without explaining this to Bob, I dropped to my knees excitedly and began digging with my knife. In a minute some shells appeared, then some compacted fishbones, then more shell-lots of it. Bob got the idea and was beside me now, digging with enthusiasm, too. Soon we were able to clear away a section of sod about three feet square. Just below it was a thick bed of broken shells and fishbone, and under this we uncovered a pocket of greenish sea urchin and a few larger bones, probably sea lion or seal. (p. 30)

What a wonderful find! A few more pieces of stone, chipped by man, showed up among the sea urchin shells. We dug a little more, and several longer bones-unmistakably human-came to light. (p. 30)
Bank provided references to other burial caves excavated earlier by Hrdlička, and his desire to explore them. He noted, “Voyages of August 1-5, 1948, in search of the reported burial caves on Tanaga and Ilak” (p. 154). The poetic partner was apparent when Bank expressed a reflective ethnogeographical perception:

I watched the small mysterious island fade in the distance to become lost again in a fog bank, and I thought about the days long ago when Aleuts had paddled their skin boats from nearby Tanaga to bring their dead to this lonely place. Strangely, Ilak reminded me of what I had always pictured as an island of the dead-silent, hidden, steepsided, flat-topped, and surrounded by fogs and mystery. (p. 144)

However, as Hrdlička previously demonstrated, Bank continued to disrupt these cultural places in the name of scientific research, or more specifically ethnobotanical research. Bank stated:

Burial caves offer the archaeologist his most important insight into some of the least-known customs of the prehistoric Aleuts. Yet, despite the work of Hrdlička and others before him, we really don’t know a great deal about such places; we don’t know how they were used, when they were used, and by what Aleut groups. The caves contain well-preserved remains which would have decomposed anywhere else—such things as human bodies, wooden utensils, baskets, matting and other materials of woven grass, skin clothing, foods, and plants. (p. 173)

A letter from the Department of Anthropology at the University of Arkansas served as verification to the lack of archaeological professionalism on the part of Bank that indicated:

… several of us [archaeologists] were concerned about his collections and notes that might be of some use…about sites that others of us knew about or worked on. I think he had deposited some/most of his artifacts (which he used to cart about in old footlockers from one home base to the next) to the Anthro. Museum at Michigan. Upon his death, the Ounalashaka Corporation of Unalaska got their lawyers to go after these collections in order to get them back to Alaska. The corporation worked out an arrangement with the Univ. of Alaska Museum to curate the collections (Unalaska, Atka, and a few other islands represented) until such time that a museum might be built at Unalaska to house this and other collections. (“Ted Bank Papers.” Department of Anthropology, Western Michigan University.)

This political conundrum was brought to the forefront in a letter (Documents on Aleutian documents copied for Ms. Marcia Taylor, Department of Anthropology, Western Michigan
University, Kalamazoo, MI) from Wright on behalf of the Museum of Anthropology of the University of Michigan (UMMA) dated March 6, 2015 that stated:

Records for Accession 87-48, Prepared by Collections Manager David Kennedy, filed in the Ethnobotany records. Theodore Bank collected material personally in [1948] 1950, and 1951, and in a Museum Expedition led by Spaulding with a permit from the Department of the Navy in 1949. The UMMA was forced to de-accession the 1948-1952 Aleutian collections, return them to the Department of Interior, which we are told has returned then to the museum of the Aleut People. The material was found in a duffel bag left in UMMA storage by Bank in 1957, and rediscovered and accessioned in 1987.

There were some notes with the items so Kennedy was able to divide them into Aleut versus Ainu items. They appear to be mostly mat and basket fragment [sic], and is my understanding the Department of the Interior gave permission for us to keep them in the Ethnobotony [sic] [collections] (“Ted Bank Papers.” Department of Anthropology, University of Michigan.)

Further examination of the accession records provided descriptions and remarks relevant to the inconsistent curation practices performed by Bank, and procurement of artifacts. The records were catalogued and dated by Collections Manger David S. Kennedy (September 4, 1987):

1.  #87-48: Collection of specimens collected by T.P. Bank in the [1950s] Specimens were discovered in a duffel bag in a hall cabinet and in a box in the Wind Tunnel. Hall material was Ainu and Japanese cultural material (also Alaskan soil and organic samples from archaeological sites) and the Wind Tunnel material was from Alaska. This material was probably originally part of the collection accessioned under numbers 2019 and 2300. No documentation or provenance data is available other then [sic] the labels on the duffel bag (in file), and on some of the specimens. (“Ted Bank Papers.” Department of Anthropology, University of Michigan.)

2.  #87-48-23-a thru –v: Set of 22 Ulu knives. Crude, tourist pieces. Carved wood handles in form of face? All but two are stained or painted red. Blades are generally very rusty. Found with material attributed to Bank collection.

3.  Small hand-broom. Wood handle with plant fibre bristles tied to shaft with cotton cord. Some bristles are falling out. Found with material attributed to Bank collection. Label of “Nikolski August 28, [1948]”

The importance of these accession records is apparent because they contribute proof to the premise that Bank brought the Rhythm of Sea Collection to Western Michigan University, as an
unprovenienced and undocumented assemblage of artifacts - similar to what occurred at the University of Michigan.

During this expedition, Bank continued to follow the route previously explored by Hrdlička to Kagamil Island where the Cold Cave is located. Bank (1956) wrote:

The Isles of the Four Mountains are also known as the mummy islands. The most famous mummy caves in the Aleutians were discovered on Kagamil. The Aleuts have legends about these islands. They tell of great villages of ages past, which have disappeared, and of powerful tribes which one inhabited them. One legend names Chuginadak as the place of origin of the whole Aleut race. (p. 195)

However, when Bank acknowledged the cave excavations performed by Hrdlička, he affirmed:

Primarily a physical anthropologist, not an archaeologist, Hrdlička’s methods left much to be desired, however: and, in his rush to collect a great number of skeletons from as many sites as he could find, he often failed to work carefully. But he did discover some important caves, and from them he took scores of mummies. (p. 230–31)

Yet, based on the accounts written by Bank, he too, became entangled with careless artifact management. Bank noted the presence of burial artifacts such as, “bone harpoon heads, a broken stone knife blade, obsidian arrow points, a bone harpoon foreshaft, and fragments of carved wood with attached bits of thong and cordage” (p. 234–44). He wrote:

It became impossible to distinguish the parts of various burials lying one upon the other, for they were so close together as to be intermingled. In one place, we found too many lower jawbones for the number of skulls. It was a mystery, until I realized they had probably fallen from above when the cave was filled with mummies, filtering down through tiers of burials to rest finally near the bottom. (p. 244)

There were bladder plugs; bone digging tools; bird bone awls; tangles masses of human hair; bone buttons; ivory harpoon toggleheads; and carved pieces of wood, some of it painted a strange, iridescent green. (p. 244)

Strangely, Bank drew a floor plan of the cave, and the outline gave the appearance of a sitting bird. The entrance of the cave is the rump; the belly, side, and breast contain human remains,

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80 According to Bank (1956), the Cold Cave was named by Hrdlička due to the distinction that the “volcanic gasses no longer swept through it” (p. 236). The cave housed the remains of generations of Aleut peoples, which were interred in layers to provide the illusion of false floors. Personal belongings accompanied the dead.
rocks, and skin boat parts; the nape and neck are the tunnel to the rear room or crest and beak.

The usefulness of caves is an example of the Aleut working with his environment for cultural significance like using raw organic resources to fashion harpoon heads. Both examples demonstrated the “behavioral and transformational processes” represented in the anthropology-archaeological record (Sharer [1987,1993] 2003, p. 127). Powerful imagery resonated with Bank (1956) as he described his departure from the cave on August 30, 1948:

… the island of Kagamil loomed like a huge black shadow. The waters beneath us were inky, and only the curved, thick strands of kelp showed up as lighter streaks in the dim light of early morning. We had just drawn our first breath of relief when from the cave behind us there came a long, anguished wail. It rose to a high, unnatural pitch, stopped abruptly, and began again. Then there was silence-utter, absolute, terrifying silence. (p. 254)

On August 31, 1948, Bank would return to Kagamil Island to explore additional mortuary caves.

Bank was interested in numerous plant-based products manufactured throughout the Aleutian Islands. Wright stated:

Catalogue of twilled fabrics from the Kagamil Island. Many entries in the catalogue have 5 digit UMMA catalogue numbers and – as demonstrated by the following photocopies from UMMA catalogue books – these scraps were collected by Banks, many from “Cold Cave” already excavated by Ale Hrdlicka [sic], the Smithsonian’s eminent biological anthropologist” (“Ted Bank Papers.” Department of Anthropology, University of Michigan.).

During this expedition, Bank collected matting, cordage, grass pads, and stuffing moss from the burial caves. However, according to the UMMA accession records, Bank extended his scope to include wood objects, wood masks, stone chips and flakes, human and animal bones, bidarka skins, clothing remains, hair, shells, weaponry, and personal items. Most botanical and other artifacts were taken from the caves on Kagamil Island, which exposed the lack of protective measures enforced by the United States Government.
The disturbances within these caves have had lasting ethical consequences in the field of archaeology, and most importantly for the Alaska Native peoples. In that, the desecration and looting in the name of research formed the political partner of the dialectic. Bank would lead a second Aleutian expedition in 1969, which would account for the arrival of the Rhythm of the Sea Collection to Western Michigan University—the poetic partner.

Poetic Partner

Dialogue with Artifacts

“The sea is not an inert liquid that fills low spots in the earth’s surface, nor is it a stable surface on which landlubbers can walk dependably. It is a living being. It is constantly shrugging its shoulders, flexing its muscles, heaving and rising, slacking and running, breaking into cliff-shattering waves or rarely and deceptively assuming a calm surface” (Laughlin 1980, p. 43). The prehistoric Eskaleut correlation of Northern Maritime tradition (Eskimo) and Aleut cultures is evident in the manner of drawing life from the rhythm of the sea. Women gathered beach grass for weaving, collected eggs, crabs, and clams, and caught marine birds for food.

Men hunted larger sea mammals such as whales, seals, sea lions and sea otters. Each task required proficiency and were essential for survival. These skills were taught for generations—long before the arrival of Russian and American people. Laughlin wrote:

The most famous method of sea otter hunting employed a surround. Usually six kayaks or more went out together. They formed a generally straight line as they scanned an area. The man who sighted a sea otter immediately raised his paddle vertically above his head and remained stationary. The other five then formed a circle about him. If the sea otter dived again, the nearest man remained by it. Again, the others formed a circle. The animal seldom remained underwater more than six minutes, less on each successive dive. A light harpoon with a detachable ivory point was cast with the throwing board. The multibarbed point remained in the animal, but the harpoon floated back to serve as a drag. The point was attached to the harpoon shaft by a 15-foot (4.6 meters) sinew line in two places, first, on the lower wood shaft portion and second, near the juncture of the wood.
shaft and single-piece whalebone socket. These two attaching arms of the line formed a “Y,” or martingale. Since the bone sock-piece was heavy, the harpoon floated vertically in the water with the fore-end down, thus serving as a drag on the sea otter and a marker for the pursuing hunter. Once the harpoon was set, the sea otter never escaped.

Interestingly, the man whose harpoon point entered closer to the tail received ownership of the animal. Although one harpoon was sufficient, the hunters were in competition with each other and several men might cast at the same time. (p. 42)

Bank remarked that none of what the Aleut hunted went to waste. He commented:

When a dead whale was brought ashore, the Aleuts carved up its meat and fat for food. They burned its fat for heat and light. They used its ribs and jawbones for building; turned its shoulder blades into tables or seats, its small vertebrae into chairs and its bone ends into plates; fashioned other bones into harpoon heads and daggers; converted the intestines to rain parkas, waterproof bags and translucent windows for their semi-subterranean houses; used the sinews for thread and cord; and carved the teeth and dense pieces of bone into ornaments, needles and arrowheads. (“Ted Bank Papers.” Department of Anthropology, Western Michigan University.).

The Aleut shared many cultural practices with the Eskimo as evidenced by their usage of “skin boats [bidarkas], toggle harpoon heads, and stone lamps” (“Ted Bank Papers.” Department of Anthropology, University of Michigan.).

Theodore Paul Bank, II: Western Michigan University
Aleutian Expedition II (1969)—Poetic Partner

In the summer of 1969, Bank was granted permission to conduct scientific research at Unalaska Island and nearby areas. This second expedition for Bank was supported by Western Michigan University, the Explorers Club of New York City, and the American Institute for Exploration. In a letter dated June 20, 1969, Vice-President for Academic Affairs for Western Michigan University Russell H. Seibert wrote:

Professor Bank, together with Dr. Albert Jackman who is accompanying him, is also representing this University in a study of the feasibility of establishing, at some future date, a program of summer institutes in southwestern Alaska for faculty and students. They plan to visit various institutions, agencies and individuals in Alaska to seek advice
and cooperation. This portion of the expedition is sponsored by the Kalamazoo Civic Fund. (“Ted Bank Papers.” Department of Anthropology, Western Michigan University.)

A paper submitted from the American Institute for Exploration [located at 1809 Nichols Road, Kalamazoo, Michigan] explained the overall interdisciplinary project:

The primary aims of the 1969 investigation are: 1) to locate and map hitherto unstudied village sites and burial caves at Unalaska; 2) to gather data, supplementary to previous field studies of Ted Bank and others, for a reconstruction of the prehistoric cultural sequences in the eastern Aleutians; 3) to delineate the ecological factors that have affected Aleut-Eskimo culture and population; 4) to collect representatives of the island biota, particularly vertebrates, from a part of Unalaska never before visited by biologists; and to lay the groundwork for broader ecological studies in southwestern Alaska.

The 1969 field study will concentrate on the relatively unknown (biologically and archaeologically) southern coast of Unalaska Island, the second largest in the Aleutians. In addition to an extensive archaeological reconnaissance and attest-trenching at selected sites, there will be correlated biological and ecological studies, including studies of soil-ash profiles adjacent to archaeological sites, collection of humic samples for pollen analyses, and phytoecological studies at old village sites. Two advanced biology students from the University of California at Santa Cruz will concentrate on studies of small land vertebrates.

Data gathered on the expedition will be published in various scientific journals. Expected new information from Unalaska will form part of a major monograph on Aleutian archaeology and human ecology which is nearing completion. (“Ted Bank Papers.” Department of Anthropology, Western Michigan University.)

The paper was part of a news bulletin that was released to the media under the heading “ON THE TRAIL OF ANCIENT MAN: SCIENTISTS WILL EXPLORE ALEUTIAN ISLANDS AND BERING SEA,” which stated:

Kalamazoo, Michigan – The American Institute for Exploration here, in collaboration with Western Michigan University, will send an expedition to the Aleutian Islands this coming summer, the initial phase of a five-year scientific project that will include, in subsequent summers, undersea exploration of the ancient Bering landbridge [sic] which has been submerged for at least ten thousand years. The object is to locate sites inhabited by ancestors of the American Indians and Eskimos, and to trace their migration routes back to their homeland in Asia.

The expedition, led by explorer-archaeologist Ted [Bank] II, will confine its activities during the coming summer to the eastern Aleutian Islands where the archaeologists will look for early Aleut-Eskimo village sites and burial caves. A fascinating secondary objective involves a remnant of early Russian-American history. The scientists will also
search for a legendary cave reported to contain the remains of an eighteenth century Russian ship and its murdered crew.

OTHER STUDIES INCLUDED. Also accompanying the 1969 expedition will be a linguist, biologists, geographers and medical personnel who will carry out ethno-biological research at Unalaska and nearby islands. Included will be a study of Aleut-Eskimo midwife practices. Medical personnel will expand their studies to other Eskimo villages at Atka, Nikolski, Unalaska, Akutan, and the Pribilofs, beginning in 1970. ("Ted Bank Papers." Department of Anthropology, Western Michigan University.)

These statements presented logistical and several anthropological issues. However, only those relevant to the Rhythm of the Sea Collection were addressed: (1) Bank described himself as an “explorer-archaeologist;” (2) discover “sites inhabited by ancestors of the American Indians and Eskimos;” (3) “archaeologists will look for early Aleut-Eskimo village sites and burial caves;” and (4) “to gather data, supplementary to previous field studies of Ted Bank and others, for a reconstruction of the prehistoric cultural sequences in the eastern Aleutians” ("Ted Bank Papers." Department of Anthropology, Western Michigan University.). Each point has a connection to the Theodore Paul Bank, II: University of Michigan Aleutian Expedition I (1948–1949) – Political Partner, yet provides the justification as to when Bank acquired the artifacts in Rhythm of the Sea Collection.

William Healy Dall had a similar beginning to that of Bank with his initial experience in the Aleutian Islands. As a “scientist specializing in the study of mollusk shells, Dall was employed from 1871 to 1874 by the U.S. Coast and Geodetic Survey to conduct hydrographic and geographic reconnaissance in the Aleutian Islands” (Veltre 2010, p. 492). Both men became interested in archaeological work during their service with the United States government in the Aleutian Islands. Dall would spend his free time exploring “archaeological sites throughout the islands, including “Atka, Attu, Agattu, Kiska, Little Kiska, Adak, Amlia, the Islands of Four Mountains, Umnak, Unalaska, Unimak, the Shumagin Islands, and the Alaska Peninsula (p. 492).
He was not trained as an archaeologist; however, knew of the “signification of stratigraphic analysis, and his excavations included, in part, trenching of midden deposits to ascertain the sequential deposits of cultural remains” (p. 492). Dall and Bank would also agree on two significant points - that the islands were populated via an eastward movement and it occurred thousands of years ago.  

Bank ascertained:

If the Aleuts are Eskimos, the question arises: Where did the Eskimos originate? It is generally agreed that they probably came from northwest Asia via the Bering Strait many centuries after the ancestors of the American Indian passed through this same gateway.

The ancestral Eskimos, or proto-Eskimos, probably followed the coast after crossing the Bering Strait, one wave of people wandering north and east along the Arctic Ocean and another wave going south along the Bering Sea. The southerly migration eventually reached the Aleutians and became the first Aleuts. (“Ted Bank Papers.” Department of Anthropology, Western Michigan University.)

Drawn to the poetic mysteries surrounding the Aleutian Islands, both Dall and Bank succumbed to middens and burial caves, respectively. Anthropologist Douglas W. Veltre (2010) stated:

Because Aleuts often used individual sites for many years (either year-round or seasonally), sites often contain many artifacts. Most archaeological excavations at midden sites produce thousands of items, most of bone and stone. These remains, however, are not predominantly tools per se but a combination of formal tools and the by-products of the manufacture of tools. (p. 490)

He continued:

Where middens occur, their low acidity and well-drained matrix is conducive to excellent preservation of certain organic materials, particularly bone, ivory, and shell from the most ancient, lowest levels to the recent uppermost ones. Preservation of shell and bone especially makes it possible to study aspects of past life that are not as easily studied elsewhere in Alaska, including detailed dietary analysis. (p. 490)

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81 William Healy Dall (1845–1927) proposed a unilinear three-phased cultural schema of the Aleuts - “Littoral Period,” “Fishing Period,” and “Hunting Period” (qtd. in Veltre 2010, p. 492). Each period progressed into the next, and were framed by the manufacture of hunting tools.

82 Anthropologist Dr. Douglas W. Veltre (2010) acknowledged William Laughlin as a physical anthropologist, “who began the era of modern archaeology” because of his inclusion with those involved in the anthropological disciplines such as linguists, physical-biology, and cultural (p. 494).
The result of their archaeological excavations could have produced and impounded artifacts beyond their initial stated research. Dall, known for the “first archaeological investigations in the state [prior to World War II]” would dig through the middens with tenaciousness and speed (p. 492). In regard to “modern archaeology [post World War II]” Veltre noted, “Although some small-scale archaeological work took place during World War II and shortly thereafter (notably, not by archaeologists; e.g. Bank….”) (p. 494). Therefore, as a self-proclaimed archaeologist, Bank used this moniker to excavate “sites inhabited by ancestors of the American Indians and Eskimos, and “early Aleut-Eskimo village sites and burial caves” (“Ted Bank Papers.”) Department of Anthropology, Western Michigan University.).

Western Michigan University Aleutian Expedition II was “to gather data, supplementary to previous field studies of Ted Bank and others, for a reconstruction of the prehistoric cultural sequences in the eastern Aleutians” (“Ted Bank Papers.”) Department of Anthropology, Western Michigan University.). Bank was authorized by the United States Department of the Interior to conduct archaeological excavations, as documented in Figures 54, 54a, 54b and 54c.

The permit clearly stated that artifacts collected under the agreement should be stored in the Department of Anthropology at Western Michigan University. Hence, when Bank conducted the University of Michigan Aleutian Expedition I, he deposited materials collected at the university; therefore, logically and logistically, Bank would have done the same after the second expedition was completed and stored the Rhythm of the Sea Collection at Western Michigan determined because there was no supporting documentation found. All curated materials referencing Bank at the University of Michigan was reviewed with the assistance of Wright, Botanical Gardens and Museum of Anthropology, and the Department of Anthropology.
June 3, 1969

Mr. Ted Bank II
Assistant Professor, Anthropology
Western Michigan University
Kalamazoo, Michigan 49001

Dear Professor Bank:

I should like to assure you of our approval for the contemplated studies in various Aleutian communities assuming, of course, that the necessary permit to undertake the archaeological excavations is obtained from the Department of the Interior. We would be most interested in the acculturation studies which you propose to undertake at the Aleut-Eskimo villages. Please let us know if we can be of assistance.

We no longer operate any of the schools on the Aleutian chain, inasmuch as Atka which was the last to be transferred to the Department of Education has been under their jurisdiction since July of 1967.

Sincerely yours,

[Signature]

Acting Area Director

Figure 54. Western Michigan University Aleutian Expedition II.  
Source: Department of Anthropology, Western Michigan University.
Figure 54a. Western Michigan University Aleutian Expedition II.
Source: Department of Anthropology, Western Michigan University.
7. (continued)*

a) This permit shall not be exclusive in character, and the United States reserves the right to use, lease or permit the use of said land or any part thereof for any purpose.

b) Other institutions may be engaged in archeological or paleontological research in the general area covered by this permit, and in case there should be conflict with respect to a site not specifically designated in a permit, the parties concerned shall reach agreement between themselves as to which shall work the site.

c) The Department of the Interior, including its bureaus and employees, shall be held blameless for any and all events, deeds or mishaps, regardless of whether or not they arise from operations under this permit.

d) Such guidance and protection as is consistent with the duties of the Department of the Interior official in charge of the area will be afforded the permit holder and his party.

e) Transportation in Department of the Interior vehicles cannot be furnished, except in cases where no extra expense to the Department is involved.

f) All costs shall be borne by the permittee.

g) The exploration or excavation of any Indian grave or burial ground on Indian lands and reservations under the jurisdiction of the Department of the Interior is restricted solely to qualified archeologists. No grave or burial ground abandoned less than 200 years may be investigated without permission of the governing council of the Indians concerned, which supplemental authority must be promptly recorded with the superintendent or other official in charge of the designated area.

h) All excavated areas shall be restored by filling in the excavations and otherwise leaving the area in as near to original condition as is practicable.

i) Before undertaking any work on Indian-owned or Indian reservation lands, clearance should be obtained from the Indian owners thereof, and from the Office of the Area Director at ________________________.

j) Before undertaking any work on lands administered by the Fish and Wildlife Service, clearance should be obtained from the Office of the Regional Director at ________________________.

k) Possession or use of firearms in such areas is prohibited.

Figure 54b. Western Michigan University Aleutian Expedition II.
Source: Department of Anthropology, Western Michigan University.
7. (continued)  

1) Before undertaking any work on lands administered by the National Park Service, clearance should be obtained from the superintendent in charge of the area.

2) Before undertaking any work on lands administered by the Bureau of Land Management, clearance should be obtained from the Office of the State Director at Anchorage, Alaska, and from the BLM District Officer in direct charge of the area concerned.

3) The permittee shall conduct all operations in such a manner as to prevent the erosion of the land, pollution of the water resources, and damage to the watershed, and to do all things necessary to prevent or reduce to the fullest extent the scouring of the lands.

4) Any findings of mined or processed precious metals or other treasure trove in the area covered by this permit are the exclusive property of the Federal Government, and shall not be disturbed or removed from the site without specific written permission from the Department of the Interior.

5) Materials collected under this permit shall be deposited for permanent preservation in the Department of Anthropology, Western Michigan University, Kalamazoo, Michigan 49001, or in other accredited institutions under suitable loan agreements.

* Special conditions are checked (X) as appropriate to this permit.

Figure 54c. Western Michigan University Aleutian Expedition II.  
Source: Department of Anthropology, Western Michigan University.
Located in the Archives and Special Collections, Consortium Library at the University of Alaska in Anchorage are the copious records of Bank. The archives consist of the following series:

1. personal papers; undated, 1947–1974
2. correspondence; 1939–1978
3. writing, reference, and research files; undated, 1917–1978
4. expedition and exploration files; 1948–1978
   subseries 4a: Alaskan expeditions records; 1948–1979
   records; 1968–1977
   subseries 4c: American Institute for Exploration records; 1948–1974
5. American-Japan Society of Hokkaido files; 1953–1959
6. photographs; 1882–1980
7. film; 1949–1954, 1977
8. objects; undated, 1949–1952

The guide to the “Ted Bank Papers” stated:

1. Related materials: University of Michigan has some records relating to Ted Bank and his expeditions.
2. Separated materials: All artifacts from Alaskan Excavations were transferred to the University of Alaska Museum in Fairbanks in 1992 [University of Alaska Museum of the North – Fairbanks]. Publications were removed from the collection and some were added to the Consortium Library’s Rare Books.

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The Historical Manuscripts Collections List referencing the “Ted Bank papers” in the Archives and Special Collections, Consortium Library at the University of Alaska – Anchorage references historical documents dated 1882–1980. Buried in the personal papers and research files are Christmas cards, hand-drawn maps, income tax returns, and newspaper clippings. The archives could include under the headings “News releases” or “News clippings” an article titled “Ancient Cave Dwellings Found on Aleutian Islet” published for The New York Times on September 23, 1950. The article read:

The homes of ancient cave dwellers have been found by University of Michigan scientists on an unnamed rock in the Aleutian Islands.

The discovery was reported to the naval operating base here today by Ted Bank, former University of Idaho football coach, who headed a University of Michigan expedition ending its second summer in the islands.

He said the tiny islet with the caves lies a quarter-mile off the southwestern tip of Tanaga Island. The scientists tentatively have named it Michigan Rock.

Specimens of the various earth layers, indicating successive occupations of the cave, will be analyzed this winter in laboratories in an effort to determine how long ago they were laid down by ancient man. (The Associated Press 1950)

This particular article confused Bank’s father—the football coach—with Bank, II.

4. Acquisition note: This collection was donated to Archives and Special Collections by William Woodhams in 1982, with additions given in 1984 and 1989. (“Ted Bank Papers.” Archives and Special Collections, Consortium Library, University of Alaska Anchorage.)

The only Western Michigan University citations or relevant dates to correspond with the expedition within the eight-collection series included:

   Box/Folder 1.5: World Explorations Program (Western Michigan Univ.); PR and development plans: 1971–1973
2. Series 2. Correspondence; 1939–1978
   Box/Folder 1/17: Aleutian Project, cooperation; 1968–1973
   Box/Folder 1/55: Alaska presentation notes: 1969
   Box/Folder 1/63: “Introduction to the Non-Western World” WMU-TV brochures: circa 1968
   Box/Folder 1/66: “WMU Prof Leads Aleutian Island Expedition”: circa 1973
   Box/Folder 1/67: *The Unalaska* – No. 5: July 1969
7. Series 4. Expedition and exploration fields; 1948–1979

Box 7: Miniature harpoon: 7 inches long: undated
Box 7: Miniature paddle: 10.5 inches long, labeled “No. 9”: undated
Box 7: Sand Dollar, 3 inches diameter: undated

This assortment of miniatures drew interest because Bank obviously collected artifacts that were either whimsical reproductions or toys. Their relevance is linked to a couple of artifacts in Rhythm of the Sea Collection, which had markings on them to indicate they were purchased, as shown in Figures 55, 56, and 57.
Note: written on the wound plug “plugs for spar wound Alaska Indians.”

*Figure 55.* Artifact #137. Location unknown, Wound Plug, wood and sinew, 8.0 x 5.0 cm. *Source:* Rhythm of the Sea Collection, Western Michigan University, Kalamazoo, Michigan.

Note: written on the wedge “ancient ivory wedge from Alaska Eskimo Otay #10 $2.00”

*Figure 56.* Artifact #77. Location unknown Wedge, ivory, 10.0 x 2.5 cm. *Source:* Rhythm of the Sea Collection, Western Michigan University, Kalamazoo, Michigan.
A review of the archives and collections at the University of Alaska Museum of the North–Fairbanks listed under the names of Theodore P. Bank and Theodore P. Bank, II contained 23 herbarium specimens and one textile specimen, respectively. There were no other artifacts catalogued.

**Artistry in Rhythmic Motion**

The eclectic nature of the Rhythm of the Sea Collection reflects both the political and poetic sides of Bank. His sense of adventure was mirrored by an exploratory determination, which eventually evolved from studies in botany and ethnobotany to cultural anthropology and social science. Bank lived among the Aleuts for many years, and much-admired their own rhythm with the sea, of which he wrote:

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84 The collections were accessed through Arctos Collaborative Collection Management Solution. The search identified under Theodore P. Bank, II a burial mat fragment between two pieces of glass from the Umak quad on Kagamil Island [UAM: Arc: UA82-051-0001].
Perhaps the Aleut’s highest attainment was their skill and prowess as seamen and navigators. In this respect, they surpassed all other Eskimos. It was not uncommon for Aleut hunters to rove the turbulent seas for hundreds of miles, paddling for days on end, resting seated erect in their skin boats when tired and lashing their small craft together to ride out storms. Russian explorers reported that Aleut hunters at sea “blazed a trail” with whitened sea-lion bladders, weighted with long ropes and stone sea anchors, which they set afloat at intervals to mark the route home through the fog.

The Aleuts put their faith in sunlight as the potent source of all life. They therefore habitually arose with the dawn to make the most of the daylight. Water, particularly sea water, was thought to be a great source of vitality. Before any special event or during some kind of crisis an Aleut took a ceremonial bath in the sea; to insure their stamina new born babies were dipped in the surf no matter what the time of year. (“Ted Bank Papers.” Department of Anthropology, Western Michigan University.)

Laughlin (1980) also noted, “The Aleutian Islands are treeless, windswept, foggy, and volcanic. They appear to be barren, especially where land for hunters or farmers is concerned. To the Aleuts, these lands appeared to be an especially desirable place to live because they provided access to vast marine resources” (p. 20). Laughlin, like his predecessor and contemporaries, looked at the harpoon heads in terms of Aleut artistic styles

Sea-mammal hunting was responsible for a fascinating array of harpoon heads with much decoration. A basic form of a large harpoon head was fluted, or channeled on its sides, with small barbs, and a large end slot to receive a chipped stone point. The blunt base is smaller than the barrel of the head, flat, and may have been inserted directly into a wood shaft with benefit of a bone socket-piece. This kind or class of harpoon head was used for large sea mammals such as the sea lion. One rare example of the chipped stone endpoint, embedded in the humerus (upper arm bone) of a sea lion shows the force with which these harpoons were cast. Small whales, yearlings and calves, were probably hunted with these harpoon heads. A second basic form was broad with two barbs, one larger than the other, and had a line hole in the base. This line hole provided the point of attachment for a braided sinew line that went either to the wood shaft or to a float. This type also used an inset stone endpoint. A few toggle harpoon heads were found at all levels [ancient village of Chaluka (circa 4000 years ago) at Nikolski, Umnak Island].

These had a slot for a stone point and a line hole. After penetrating the animal, the head responded to the line tension by turning at right angles to the line, and attached foreshaft dropped out of the socket piece to give it additional freedom. Northern Eskimo cultures
used many more toggle-head harpoons than the simple, detachable styles favored in the Aleutians. (p. 81)

The form of these harpoon heads in themselves constituted art styles. As a tendency, early harpoon heads more often were asymmetrical than later heads. The barbs were frequently larger on one side than the other, and commonly, the smaller barbs were thinner and more sharply delineated. A common incised decoration for harpoon heads was a circle and a dot, often with a line running through it. One charming Mongoloid face was carved on the base of a harpoon head, employing the line hold as its mouth. In late styles, the sides of harpoon heads were sometimes decorated with faces. (p. 81)

The artistic styles and designs of the harpoon heads determined Eskaleut cultural significance. Furthermore, these elements are indicative of their maritime environment. Their display on harpoon heads has positioned them as “keepers of the tradition” (Gaither 1992, p. 61). All the rituals, beliefs, and folklore derived from the sea were etched and carved onto the harpoon heads.

Ray (1961) acknowledged:

It is useless to speculate whether or not these engravings had symbolic or other special meaning, but an objective examination of some of these complicated designs reveals birdlike characteristics. These are most readily seen in many of the late Bering Sea harpoon heads, in which the spurs of the harpoon head resemble the wings and the blade slot is so related to ellipses and circles that there is no mistaking the design of mouth and eyes. (p. 16)

Nonetheless, since the sun was considered as the epicenter for all life to thrive above and below the sea, a keener understanding of some of the basic design elements and motifs could be formed. Using an Okvik harpoon head as an example, its motifs form design elements and together they depict a ritual involving a relationship amongst the hunter, sea mammal and spiritual Maker, as diagramed in Figure 58.

The focal point on the Okvik styled harpoon head would have been the nucleated circle. Emanating from the circle are rays. The Maker has taken the form of the sun; however, it is possible the Maker was also viewed as a bird of prey with a well-developed eyesight. Hence, either the sun or bird would offer power to the hunter to successfully locate and harpoon a sea
mammal. The spur and line carvings could signify where and how many sea mammals were
hunted when deploying the harpoon head. This elementary conjecture defines the artistic design
elements and motifs as informational symbols. Arutiunov (2009a) explained:

Some ornamental techniques, such as shaping the front of the socket-piece to look like an
animal muzzle with canines or forming the spur at the base of the harpoon head like the
rear fins or tail of an animal, were design schemes that carried both magical and
metaphorical meaning. Other distinctive ornamental and pictorial motifs served as signs
of personal, family, or clan ownership or may have had totemic significance. When such
motifs appeared on arrowheads or harpoon heads, they often identified the person who
struck—and therefore owned—the animal. (p. 133)

Mason (2009) credited Collins on his artistic discernment when describing the Old Bering Sea
motifs of “dots and dashes, arrows, chevrons, and circles” that they may have served as a
“spiritual language” (p. 112). Collins referred to the formulation of these motifs as a “second

On harpoons, nucleated circles appear as joint-marks at the junctions of lines that may
stand for animal ‘limbs’ or all-seeing eyes that guide the harpoon to its prey. Circles and
circle-dots are a fundamental organizing principal in the part of Okvik and OBS harpoon
heads, sockets, and winged objects and are often placed in anatomical positions that
suggest eyes” (p. 170).
The joint-mark seems analogous with the fascination certain Eskaleut cultures had with human and animal dismemberment. However, as laudable the poetic partner is in terms of cultural significance the political partner is still relevant. Mason noted:

Unrecorded digging and uncertainties in record-keeping have led to a lack of secure stratigraphic contexts, which, in turn, may conceal the possibility that some of these objects could have been kept for decades or centuries following their manufacture. Nonetheless, the easily recognizable designs could have conveniently marked social groups and their geographic boundaries. (p. 112).

Mason was describing the influx of decorative ivory and bone objects in the Bering Strait area “about 400-300 B.C.” or the Okvik period (p. 112). He reasoned that during this period there occurred an increase in a “sedentary lifestyle” among Bering Strait cultures (p. 112). Later, demonstrated by the migratory Thule culture, objects were less ornate by comparison as to when they settled into the Canadian Arctic. Based on arctic environmental factors Auger (2005) reasoned:

The settlement patterns of the historic and prehistoric Inuit were affected by similar environmental conditions, so it is not surprising that both were characterized by seasonal changes in location in accordance with the necessary changes in subsistence base. Settlement patterns, particularly the degree of sedentariness, have a significant impact on social structure and, in many cases, on artistic production. (p. 13)

Thereby, form ever follows function (reference Figure 22). To conclude, Arutiunov (2009b) wrote:

Eskimo folklore abounds with transformation motifs that feature wolf-killer whale, whale-human (man), walrus-she-walrus, walrus-mountain sheep, and especially man-bear. It is only natural that a hunter equates himself and his weapons with a polar bear,

85 Sergei Arutiunov [Arutyunov] (2009b) wrote:

Historic Eskimo groups considered joints to be residences of souls, of which animals and humans could possess several. Almost certainly the ancient Eskimos held similar beliefs. The location of the principal soul is believed to be the joint between the skull and the atlas vertebra. On wood or ivory carvings of whales, historic Bering Strait peoples often mark this spot with a bright blue glass bead, and when they hunt a walrus in the water, the first harpoon or bullet is always aimed at this point because such a wound immobilizes the animal, handicapping its breathing and diving. (p. 57)

86 Louis Sullivan an American architect is credited for coining the phrase.
since the main occupation of both is hunting pinnipeds. All of these transformations are exemplified by poly-iconic sculptures found at Uelen and Ekven [Russian sites], as well as elsewhere throughout the western Eskimo would. Within this context, the harpoon head can be regarded as an idealized predator or the materialization of a bite; its round ornamental details can often be interpreted as an animal’s eyes, and the shape and ornamentation of its basal spur as hind legs or flippers. (p. 52)

All artistic design elements and motifs served as a symbolic cypher. Anthropologists have employed all the sub-branches of the discipline to decode their supposed meanings. However, their actual significances may still be shrouded in the dense Aleutian Island fog.

Dialectic Partners

Theorizing Bank accumulated and brought the Rhythm of the Sea Collection to Western Michigan University, he would have done so knowing the relevance of function and aesthetic for each artifact. Yet, the dialectical dynamic on their provenience will always be unsettled. Likewise, as to why the collection arrived at the Anthropology Department, since Bank was at the time in the Social Science Department. His botanical research during the University of Michigan Aleutian Expedition I was extensively documented and curated. Unfortunately, Bank was also regarded with condescension for his archaeological efforts. It is through this dialectic entry point that the circumstantial evidence gathered supported the Bank theory, as shown in Figure 59.

![Dialectical Research System](image)

*Figure 59. Dialectical Research System. Source: Marcia S. Taylor 2016.*
In terms of lost and found, a duffel bag belonging to Bank was located inside a hall cabinet at the University of Michigan, and coincidentally Western Michigan University acquired four boxes from an anonymous donor—Bank.
CONCLUDING REMARKS

Western Michigan University has a unique opportunity to curate and display the Rhythm of the Sea Collection. Its role within the university could draw interest from art history to social science. Using this research, anthropology students in all disciplines (archaeology, physical, cultural, linguistics) have a curriculum mechanism in place to continue further study on the collection. Their ethnohistorical placement or significance within Eskaleut culture could be determined by focusing on the other artifacts or reexamination of the harpoon heads. The Ethno-“Relational Sustainability” Model would serve as a guide for conducting further studies, which could include Eskimo-Aleut language structures, as shown in Figure 60 (Fair 2006, p. 53).87

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87 Figure 60 was used as an outline for the thesis proposal “Alaska Native Artifacts; Eskimos and Aleuts of the Bering Sea, Rhythm of the Sea Collection,” dated and presented November 10, 2015.
The importance of further Eskaleut research in various areas was expressed by previous anthropologists and researchers. In his Summary of “The University of Michigan Expedition to the Aleutian Islands, 1948-1949: a preliminary report to the Office of Naval Research, Department of the Navy,” Bank wrote:

The economic problems of the Aleut seemed sufficiently cogent to this report so that they have been discussed in the preceding pages. These problems, of course, deserve more intensive treatment. We were especially interested in the local plants and animals which were at one time extensively used by the Aleut for food and which today could quite easily furnish more of his subsistence. Such a study is definitely important to an understanding of the present day plight of the Aleutian Islanders. (“Ted Bank Papers.” Department of Anthropology, University of Michigan.)

He realized Aleutian botany was impacted by hundreds of years of acculturation evidenced by “a greater dependence upon limited imported foods combined with less dependence upon former food items and the failure to provide for emergencies through planned accumulation of food stores in time of plenty” (“Ted Bank Papers.” Department of Anthropology, University of Michigan).

Laughlin (1980) also noted, “There has been a decline in quantity and use of natural resources, a loss of decision-making power with the village, and an increase in interagency ambiguity. The numbers of people have declined and their self-sufficiency has diminished” (p. 144–45). Laughlin (1951) perceived the deterioration of a robust culture, when he recorded:

Since the appearance of the Europeans the basis of the economy has been seriously affected through the slaughter of sea mammals, reduction in numbers of fish, and grazing off of the vegetation. In addition, diseases, together with the early massacres, reduced the population. The decline of the Aleut population is unfortunately continuing. Nikolski village [Umnak Island] at the turn of the century had some 125 inhabitants, 1938 only 85, and in 1950 but 59. Introduction of refined foods has resulted in much dental deterioration, most marked when the teeth of the present inhabitants are compared with the teeth of the skeletons, but also seen in the poorer teeth of the younger people as compared with the older living Aleuts. Dr. Alexander (1949) found tuberculosis, venereal diseases, scabies, refractive errors of the eyes, and trachoma the most prevalent diseases, but an interesting absence of hypertension. With proper attention, medical and social, the Aleuts could be made vigorous and enabled to make more extensive use of the
vast economic resources of the Aleutian Islands where were so successfully exploited by their ancestor. (p. 88)

These two similar viewpoints of Bank and Laughlin spanned between Alaskan pre and post-statehood (1959).

The undercurrent of these Aleut issues was historically connected to their identity as a people. Conflicting theories on how the Aleut found their way to the island chain has either identified their ancestors as more Asian, Eskimo or southern Native American. Laughlin (1980) called attention to a modern-day Aleut identify dispute:

*Ethnic identity: who are the Aleuts?*  This question arose in the 1960s with the proposition that if Aleut and Eskimos were not Indians, they therefore were not entitled to provisions made for Indians. Be letter and deposition, it was pointed out that the term *Indian* had been applied to all the original inhabitants of the New World, along with the belief that if you had seen one of them, you had seen them all. (p. 141)

Theorizing the Bering Land Bridge route and southward migration to the Aleutian Islands via the mainland, the prehistoric Aleut ethnic identity was forged with the Eskimo. Nonetheless, it is imperative to understand that the Aleuts residing throughout the island chain are diverse. The Ethno-Relational Sustainability Model could be a tool to further dissect not only the Eskimo-Aleut correlation, but the Aleut-Aleut correlation, as well. Laughlin noted:

The Attuans have accommodated to living with the Atka people, although they much prefer to return to their own village. Dialect identification is still a major factor in Aleut social life. Aleuts are proud to be Aleuts and they often return from great distances after long absences to resume residence. They do want to regain control over their land and their resources and participate in the larger American community with as many options as other American citizens. With their demonstrated skill in human adaptability, they may survive another 9000 years. (p. 145)

Indicative of the various correlations within the Bering Sea region is art—styles, design elements, and motifs. The harpoon artifacts displayed changes in manufacture to adapt to environmental factors such as, toggle-head or barbed styles. Frequently carved onto the harpoon heads found at St. Lawrence Island to the Aleutian Islands was the circle-dot motif. This artistic
component varied somewhat as it appeared on harpoon heads throughout the Bering Sea region and even from the east to west Aleutian Islands.

The three dialectics purposely brought to the forefront the contradictions and comparisons of how artistic styles interacted within Eskaleut cultures. The artistic styles then used design elements and motifs to establish prehistoric cultural timelines. Current Eskaleut sustenance issues much like those of the Central Canadian Arctic Inuit were exposed because artifacts changed roles from an exchange-economy to a commodity-economy. However, it is imperative to acknowledge and respect that all the artifacts are still “keepers of the tradition” and their origin was from the sea.
Appendix
From: Marcia Sue Taylor  
Sent: Sunday, November 20, 2016 11:08 AM  
To: Owen Mason  
Subject: Re: Thesis proposal

Howdy, too! Thank you for your kind reply and permission to use your table(s). I would be honored to share my progress with you. My thesis topic developed in the most unusual way, in that, it all started with four boxes each labeled "Inuit Collection" of arctic artifacts. The collection is stored in the Anthropology Department of WMU and has no provenience documentation. My research has led me from Canada to Alaska and back again - all from the comfort of my home office! I wanted to travel to the Aleutians, specifically Unalaska, however, I am an unconventional older student and work full-time. Hence, I was unable to afford the time for such an endeavor. A girl can dream...

Through telephone conversations I chanced upon the name of Ted Bank as a person of interest, who might have brought the collection to WMU. This piece of information put me in touch with the University of Michigan and the University of Alaska - Fairbanks. All in all, I have taken on the role of a private detective in tracing the steps of Ted Bank.

Corresponding with you and other anthropologists around the country has been "too marvelous for words." This aspect has been inspirational, which is much appreciated. Everyone has been extremely helpful.

Perhaps my research can add another dimension to arctic studies.

Sincerely, and best regards,

Marcia

Yep, it is still a cold and snowy day... I do like this season! I wish you a Happy Thanksgiving. In our home we thank and bless the turkey...
From: Owen Mason <geoarch85@gmail.com>
Sent: Saturday, November 19, 2016 8:26 PM
To: Marcia Sue Taylor
Subject: Re: Thesis proposal

Howdy, Marcia...

I'm very interested to hear more of your research, please keep me posted as to your progress.
And certainly, go ahead and use that table.
All the best,
Owen

Owen K. Mason
Research Affiliate, INSTAAR, Univ. of Colorado  <owen.mason@colorado.edu>
Geoarch Alaska <geoarch85@gmail.com>
Editorial Board, *Alaska Journal of Anthropology*

220 West Sky Drive
Boise, ID 83702-2923

Mobile: 907-441-5598
Land Line: 208-345-5374
On Sat, Nov 19, 2016 at 11:10 AM, Marcia Sue Taylor <marcia.s.taylor@wmich.edu> wrote:

Dear Dr. Mason,

Yes, I tried a couple of e-mail addresses in order to correspond with you, and am fortunate one actually landed in your inbox. So, thank you for your reply, and I apologize if I was not clear about why I contacted you.

I read "The Multiplications of Forms:” Bering Strait Harpoon Heads as a Demic and Macroevolutionary Proxy. In your chapter you compiled several tables to explain various Eskimo archaeological cultures such as Old Bering Sea, Punuk, Thule, and Birnirk. These tables are beneficial to provide context for the harpoon heads I researched. Therefore, I need your permission to directly scan these tables into my thesis.

For your reference:

*Macroevolution in Human Prehistory Evolutionary Theory and Processual Archaeology*

Chapter 3

"The Multiplication of Forms:" Bering Strait Harpoon Heads as a Demic and Macroevolutionary Proxy

Tables on pages 76, 77, 78, and 79

Again, thank you for your time and consideration. On a personal note, we are having our first snowy day of the season, which equates to the perfect setting for writing about Alaska Native harpoon heads.

Sincerely,

Marcia S. Taylor

Graduate Student

Department of Anthropology

Western Michigan University
From: Owen Mason <geoarch85@gmail.com>
Sent: Friday, November 18, 2016 1:14 PM
To: Marcia Sue Taylor
Subject: Thesis proposal

Dear Marcia:

I received your email indirectly, and, more or less, understand what you're up to, but I'm not sure what my role is in this.
Could you clarify further?
Many thanks,
Owen

Owen K. Mason
Research Affiliate, INSTAAR, Univ. of Colorado <owen.mason@colorado.edu>
Geoarch Alaska <geoarch85@gmail.com>
Editorial Board, Alaska Journal of Anthropology

220 West Sky Drive
Boise, ID 83702-2023

Mobile: 907-441-5596
Land Line: 208-345-5374
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