



Article: Collaborative Study and Preservation of Coastal Alaskan Native Material Culture with Museum Staff, Alutiiq Scholars and Artists, University Students, and the Visiting Public

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Source: *Objects Specialty Group Postprints, Volume Twenty-One, 2014*

Pages: 1-20

Editor: Suzanne Davis, with Kari Dodson and Emily Hamilton

ISSN (print version) 2169-379X

ISSN (online version) 2169-1290

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www.conservation-us.org

Objects Specialty Group Postprints is published annually by the Objects Specialty Group (OSG) of the American Institute for Conservation of Historic & Artistic Works (AIC). It is a conference proceedings volume consisting of papers presented in the OSG sessions at AIC Annual Meetings.

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This paper is published in the *Objects Specialty Group Postprints, Volume Twenty-One, 2014*. It has been edited for clarity and content. The paper was peer-reviewed by two content area specialists and was revised based on these anonymous reviews. Responsibility for the methods and materials presented herein, however, rests solely with the author(s), whose article should not be considered an official statement of the OSG or the AIC.

COLLABORATIVE STUDY AND PRESERVATION OF COASTAL ALASKAN NATIVE MATERIAL CULTURE WITH MUSEUM STAFF, ALUTIIQ SCHOLARS AND ARTISTS, UNIVERSITY STUDENTS, AND THE VISITING PUBLIC

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ABSTRACT

The Alutiiq Museum and Archaeological Repository in Kodiak, Alaska, and the Peabody Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology, Cambridge MA, partnered together to study and preserve endangered Alaska Native material culture and traditional knowledge. The project stemmed from 2003 consultations and grew through collaborative design and implementation. Staff at both museums along with other consultants worked collaboratively to meet our respective and collective needs and goals. This article shares the working process to achieve the study, preservation, educational exchange, and accessibility of historically significant Alutiiq material culture and knowledge. Results of the project's activities including university and community engagement, and the two museums' current and ongoing partnership are highlighted.

1. INTRODUCTION

The Peabody Museum hosts numerous visits each year from indigenous peoples who come to engage with the collections in various ways. These engagements relate to a core aspect of the Museum's mission: to create links among past and present peoples and local and global cultures whose cultural collections are under the museum's care and stewardship.

During a 2003 consultation, Alutiiq tribal members Sven Haakanson, then director of the Alutiiq Museum, and Ronnie Lind, tribal elder, recognized a watercraft in the Peabody collections as most likely the world's only remaining Alutiiq warrior-whaler kayak. The wood-framed, skin-covered, 15 foot kayak was collected in 1867 and had been in the Peabody's collections since 1869. Because of the early and profoundly disruptive period of Western conquest, historic material from the Alutiiq culture is rare, and less has been published about it than other Alaska Native cultures. The warrior-whaler kayak is likely one of the last of this type to have been traditionally manufactured (fig. 1).

With US expansion and purchase of Alaska, just as this kayak was collected, Alaska Native cultures engaged in a new world order; the lifeway represented by the Alutiiq kayak was immediately in advance of this cusp. The Alutiiq kayak exemplified a turning point in American history. As such the story of this kayak is iconic both of the Peabody Museum's kayak-related collections and of the collection's national significance.

As a result of the 2003 consultation, the Peabody and Alutiiq museums in 2007 began discussing how to support increasing knowledge and preservation of this significant cultural object and related collections of traditional kayaking technology. The Alutiiq Museum focused on material culture and language in their cultural revitalization goals. They had identified kayaks as being among the types of objects that could be instrumental in fostering intergenerational community dialogue around Alutiiq language, arts, and science as building blocks of revitalization. The Peabody Museum was aware that the kayak required physical care, and, in dialogue with the Alutiiq Museum, came to further understand the



Fig. 1. Warrior-whaler kayak, unknown Alutiiq kayakmaker, mid-19th century, wood, Phocini sealskin, humpback whale sinew, hair, wool yarn, plant fiber cordage, 444.5 cm × 71.1 cm × 35.5 cm, © President and Fellows of Harvard College, Peabody Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology, PM# 69-30-10/1619 (digital file# 75530098).

kayak's unique relevance for world heritage, Alaska Native culture, and Alutiiq culture. Kayaks and their accessories embody a chain of traditional technological knowledge, craftsmanship, and spiritual beliefs passed down through generations. When the kayak was made, Alaska natives manufactured traditional items in traditional ways and learned manufacturing skills through apprenticeship. Many of these items in the Peabody, each of which holds significance today, are over 140 years old and evoke an era of complex ocean-going travel, trade, and warfare among Alaska Native cultures. Carefully crafted and well-maintained kayaks were a lifeline and supported both everyday economic functions as well as social and spiritual activities. This central means of transportation was tied to all aspects of Alutiiq life. For modern Alutiiq people, the kayak is a symbol of ingenuity. Creating a partnership fueled by diverse (and in some cases threatened) expertise allowed us to most effectively preserve the kayak, to become better stewards for all collections, and to further our goals as educational and research institutions.

2. PROJECT PLANNING

The Peabody and the Alutiiq museums jointly prepared a funding proposal in 2010 to Save America's Treasures, a federal grant program administered by the U. S. Institute of Museum and Library Services (Peabody Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology 2010). The project scope came to involve four kayaks and 125 kayak-related objects from Alaska, all of which are in the Peabody Museum collection. The project prioritized collaborative documentation, research, conservation, and educational exchange through museum and traditional Native approaches. A publicly visible workspace was envisioned to carry out the project activities at the Peabody Museum. In alignment was a Harvard University anthropology course focused on the project, which provided hands-on educational opportunities for undergraduate students and concurrently extended the Alutiiq Museum's goals as described later. A timeline of the entire project is included in the Appendix.

The Alutiiq Museum preserves and shares the cultural traditions of the Alutiiq people through exhibits, educational programs, publications, anthropological research, and the care of traditional objects. The Alutiiq Museum grew from the Kodiak Area Native Association's Culture and Heritage Program, which determined that exploration and celebration of Alutiiq heritage was essential to the health of Alutiiq communities. The Alutiiq Museum, now an award-winning museum nationally and internationally, offers programs designed to promote awareness of Alutiiq history, language, and arts. The layered traditions associated with kayaks and related topics such as subsistence, hunting, and warfare facilitate sharing oral tradition and indigenous language development, which have been successful dimensions of the Museum's educational and heritage building efforts.

The Peabody Museum, as part of Harvard University, has both teaching and research directives serving Harvard students and faculty, outside researchers, and indigenous communities. The museum's mission emphasizes our commitment to an inclusive approach in research, teaching, and public programs development. The Peabody thrives as a gateway for scholars from other institutions, as well as the general public, to engage with the university and its cultural collections. Through this project, Alutiiq consultations would directly contribute to conservation efforts. The project would co-develop and disseminate knowledge for continuing cultural revitalization and for the museums' visiting public.

To ensure the project's participatory and collaborative model, several physical or logistical challenges had to be addressed in the design and planning phase. Regular communication among partners was essential to the project's design. To address the 3,380 mile geographical distance between the kayak collection held at the Peabody and Alutiiq partners living in Alaska, a combined communication structure was developed. At the outset from the planning phase, video-conferencing (via Skype), e-mail, and phone conversations, as well as traditional mail via US Postal Service, served to meet our needs. Incorporated in the grant project design were two on-site week-long visits from three Alutiiq experts who had agreed to participate in this partnership: Sven Haakanson, previously executive director of the Alutiiq Museum, Susan Malutin, a traditional skin sewer, and Alfred Naumoff, a traditionally trained kayak maker (fig. 2). While director at the Alutiiq Museum, Sven had initiated successful youth enrichment



Fig. 2. Alutiiq consultants (left to right, Susan Malutin, Sven Haakanson, Alfred Naumoff) discussing the Alutiiq warrior-whaler kayak © President and Fellows of Harvard College, Peabody Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology, PM# 2010.0.26 (digital file# 66030024).

and community engagement programs and developed the Alutiiq Museum's Traveling Heritage Program. At the Peabody Museum, the project was initiated between the curatorial and conservation departments, each with many years of experience consulting and collaborating on museum and indigenous material culture initiatives.

A proper work space in the Peabody Museum was identified to accommodate the longest kayak and to support activities that aligned with project goals: access, engagement with project consultants, students, researchers, and the visiting public. A first-floor gallery in the Hall of the Native American Indians was modestly renovated with two sets of double-locking doors at opposite ends, fully opened during specified work hours each week (three afternoons) with a simple waist-high stanchion. This design allowed the general public to easily interact with conservation and curatorial staff, students, and consultants in the room and to foster conservation and teaching activities simultaneously.

2.1 PROJECT COMPONENTS

2.1.1 Collaborative Documentation

A project coordinator was responsible for overseeing the overall management of the two-year project. The coordinator, Sandra Dong, has worked extensively with tribal visitors and the museum's departments as part of her ongoing repatriation responsibilities.

Given the size and duration of the project, the number of participants, and the distance between the partner museums, the capture and management of information was designed to support contributions and accessibility. A shared folder on the university's secured research computer server grew to contain a range of documentary information: meeting minutes, Skype conversation notes, transcriptions of consultant interviews, and drafts of project documents that were circulated among team members and between museums for review of content accuracy, sensitivity/specialized knowledge, and voice. These documents included interpretations intended for public or student audiences, such as exhibition information, Harvard course materials, and social media offerings. The folder also contained schedules, financial and time reporting details, public relation activities, scale drawings, and project documentary images and video. Video documentation of project activities included collaborative discussions, student participation, conservation activities (cleaning and stabilization), and interactions among project collaborators.

The museum's collection management database, *The Museum System* (TMS), serves as a crucial tool for documenting objects. Oral commentary, provided by the Alutiiq consultants during their visits to Cambridge or in the course of Skype conversations, was transcribed into the relevant object's record. Conservation staff used a separate but linked conservation module in TMS to record object description notes as new information was gathered, including condition issues discussed with Alutiiq consultants before, during, and after treatment. Object treatment proposals were generated subsequent to discussions with the conservation team and consultants, and detailed photography and material sampling and analysis were also recorded in the object's TMS record.

2.1.2 Material Sampling and Analysis

Through the study of materials and technologies, we have been able to mutually support our different and parallel purposes. The materials of the kayaks and kayak accessories were part of ongoing discussions between the project team members in Cambridge and Kodiak. More specific questions about materials naturally arose during our conversations leading us to seek out additional resources for materials analysis. Some of the foremost questions for the Alutiiq and some likewise directly important to the conservation interventions included: What is the mammalian source of the sinew used for the stitching on the single-man Alutiiq kayak? Are there any traces of pigment, such as the commonly-used red ochre, on the kayak's surface? Was seal oil used to waterproof the skin? What type of wood has been used for the

framework? What is the source of gut or inner membrane on parkas worn while kayaking or the skin used on specific kayak models? Decisions were made jointly among the partners about which items to sample and which questions were most important to answer.

Our mutual study of the Alaska objects was supported by university, local and regional museum laboratories, and specialists. For the sinew stitching identification, we collaborated with a Harvard Art Museums' conservation scientist, Daniel P. Kirby, who had been applying a biotechnology technique in protein identification of cultural objects. Peptide mass fingerprinting (PMF) allows for the accurate identification of mammalian materials through the analysis of collagen samples. Although the technique requires destructive sampling, the amount of material taken from objects is less than a square millimeter, which is consistent with micro-destructive sampling sizes routinely used in conservation. Compared with DNA analysis, it offers a better chance of success when looking at aged or degraded samples. Once collected, samples are subjected to an extraction/digestion protocol that cleaves the protein sample, producing a mixture of peptides that is then analyzed by matrix-assisted laser desorption/ionization time-of-flight mass spectrometry (MALDI-TOF MS). This analysis produces a mass spectrum containing characteristic marker peptides (or a "peptide mass fingerprint") that can be compared to reference spectra from known materials for species identification as reported in the work of Kirby et al. (2013) and Promise et al. (2014).

For our application, the first batch of samples was taken from the sinew stitching and the skin covering of the Alutiiq warrior-whaler single-man kayak as well as the sinew and skin of the Yup'ik kayak. Results both confirmed and refined traditional insights. The samples taken from the Alutiiq kayak were identified as sinew from a humpback whale and skin from a type of common seal of the family, Phocidae (fig. 3). The Yup'ik kayak materials were identified as bearded seal skin sewn with caribou sinew.

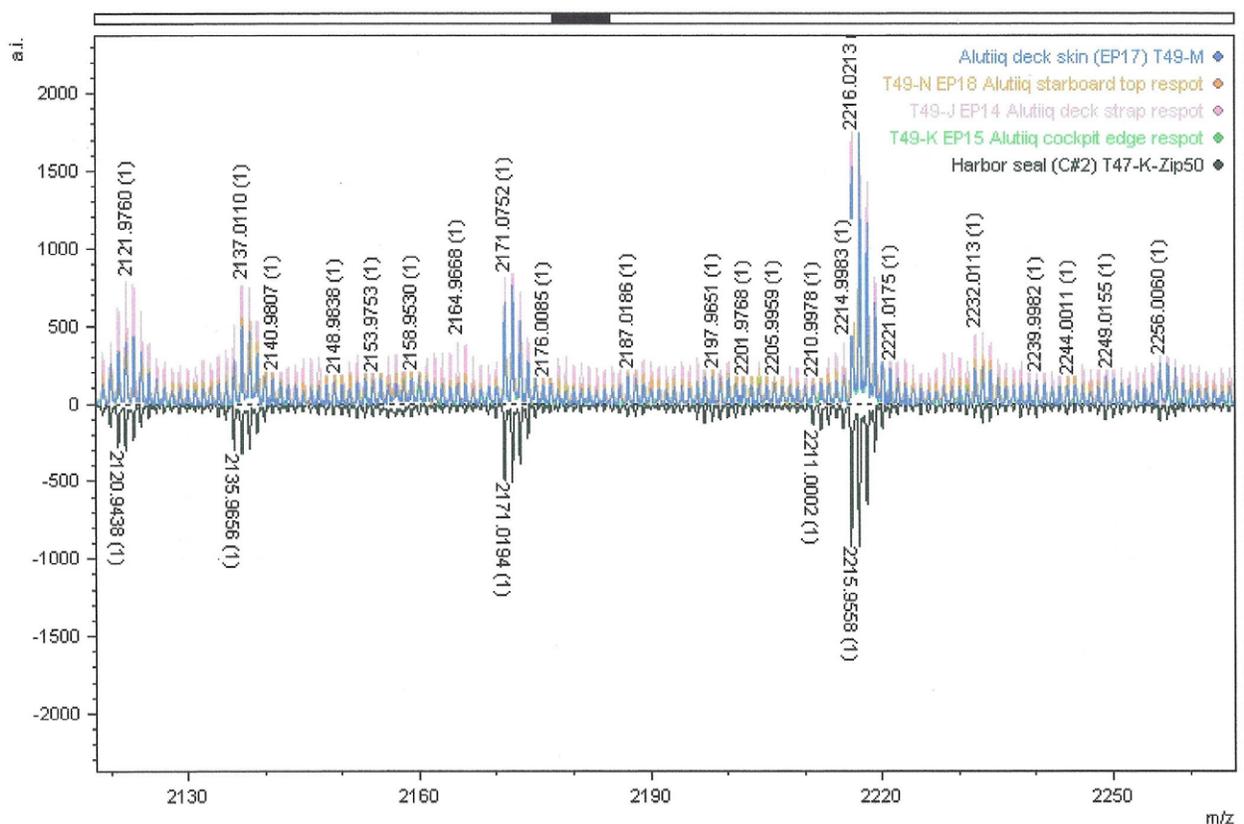


Fig. 3. Comparison of a portion of the peptide mass fingerprints from the Alutiiq kayak covering and deck strap (top, colors) and harbor seal reference (lower in black) a representative member of the Phocini tribe, family Phocidae (Courtesy of Ellen Promise, 2012)

These results were so promising that additional PMF was carried out on samples from the group of objects that the Alutiiq had prioritized during their visits, ranging from gut clothing to harpoons. The PMF technique proved especially invaluable when studying internal tissues such as gut and sinew, which lack the distinguishing features, such as grain pattern or extant hair, often present on external skin. No other existing laboratory method allowed this level of identification.

To address Alutiiq consultants' questions about surface applications or coatings on the skin of the kayaks in relation to better understanding the roles of hunting and warfare as well as the general technology of the kayaks, we consulted the Scientific Research Lab of the Boston-Museum of Fine Arts. Thirty-five samples were collected from the four kayaks and examined by transmitted infrared micro-spectroscopy and gas chromatography/mass spectroscopy (GC/MS). Many samples were found to contain a mixture of oil or oil/wax oil with resulting compounds signaling vegetable oils or oils with some drying character. The type of fat or oil (vegetable and/or seal, whale, or other mammal) may have cultural as well as technological significance. Two samples from the warrior-whaler kayak while showing elevated levels of myristic acid relative to stearic acid, the ratio would be much higher for marine oils (e.g., seal, herring, or whale); thus, it can be stated that the results of the two Alutiiq kayak samples are not consistent with whale oil or seal blubber. The resulting ratios may include a source from sheep, goat, or beef fats and butter fats; however, conclusions are tentative given the limited sampling set. Of the samples taken, no pigment particles were identified on the Alutiiq warrior-whaler kayak.

To identify or corroborate the source(s) of the wood framework of the Alutiiq single-man kayak would require a rather large sample for successful analysis. A Skype conversation among the collaborators confirmed that the information was important enough to proceed. A 1/8 in. × 1/4 in. sample of wood from a broken separated rib on the Alutiiq kayak was sent out to the Forest Products Laboratory in Madison, Wisconsin, which confirmed (to the genus level) that the wood is spruce, as understood from traditional knowledge.

In summary, working closely with research staff at the previously mentioned museum laboratories along with our Alutiiq collaborators made it possible to assess the information provided through oral history and traditions about the animal species harvested for kayak manufacture and other materials in use for related objects. The results from the analyses corroborated traditional knowledge and enhanced existing object information. In several cases, the analytical data provided new information where none existed prior and thus now serves to expand understanding and interpretation of the collections. This knowledge contributes to community understandings about earlier technological traditions and working practices and positively impacts the living art of kayak making and other related art forms. The information likewise serves in the conservation treatment decision-making process.

2.1.3 Collaborative Conservation Treatment Approaches

Engagement with descendant communities was built into the collaborative structure for the project as knowledge, goals, and lines of inquiry were developed. Collaborative conservation between the museums took several forms. Preservation issues were identified in consultation together by the two teams. Decisions about the most appropriate treatment for the objects were developed collaboratively. Questions such as “who decides what treatments are carried out; what is the appropriate extent of conservation; and what methods and materials should be used” were discussed, and decisions were reached on a case-by-case basis. Conservators, for example, early on in the project, prepared prototypes of different types of repair materials and adhesives as options for addressing tears in the skin coverings, and mailed them out to Kodiak Island for the consultants' examination and perspectives. Follow-up

discussions on a range of proposed conservation interventions occurred throughout the on-site Alutiiq visits and were further shaped with agreed upon measures for the work process. The level of surface cleaning was informed by analytical results and with Alutiiq consultation. Cleaning for the most part was limited to surface vacuuming with isolated use of solvents.

Outside these Peabody Museum visits, six or seven Skype conversations (scheduled as needed) included close-up visuals of the kayaks and other objects through the use of a tethered portable camera transmitting images to Kodiak from Cambridge. While our Alutiiq colleagues were available via Skype and e-mail, the face-to-face interactions allowed us to study and examine the objects more closely and to work out treatment options in a direct, positive way. Figure 4 illustrates a case study in this collaborative working process as noted by Fran Ritchie, serving at the time as a conservation intern.

“During this project we treated several objects constructed from common and important coastal Alaskan mammalian material—the membrane of internal organs, typically referred to as “gutskin.” Despite its diminutive size, a child’s waterproof parka was actually a larger project because of its condition and the need for consultation that informed both the cultural context and the extent of treatment in March 2013. The parka was made from strips of tan translucent mammalian intestine, sewn together using sinew. Susan pointed out that the stitch is a lace stitch and that the seams are



Fig. 4. Fran Ritchie consulting with Susan Malutin and Sven Haakanson about a late 19th century child’s gutskin parka
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PM# 2010.0.26 (digital file# 66030025).

folded in a particular way for waterproofing (the sinew stitching also swells when wet, thus closing off the sewn holes). Women from different regions in Alaska have particular ways of constructing the seams, making provenance identification possible. Sven also showed us that the bottom two strips of the body of the garment have side seams that are staggered (the bottom strip is on the proper left side, the next strip is on the proper right side). The staggering prevents having one full side of seams, which would be a weakness.

Blue and red wool yarns, as well as human hair, were stitched into the seams for the purpose of wicking away water, and for ceremonial garments there was often more elaborate fur and bird trim decorations. Susan noted that she had not seen a child's parka decorated with human hair. She surmised about the purpose of this added decoration in a garment that a child would quickly outgrow. Although waterproof seaming and stitching techniques were used, the decoration and lack of drawstrings suggested to her that, perhaps, this parka was used for a special ceremony, like a baptism. Susan recounted that Russian priests only were able to visit each village sporadically, so a child might not be baptized until older, and thus not an infant big enough to fit this parka. This child's parka, therefore, was most probably made to be both functional and formal.

The child's parka treatment involved conversations with Sven regarding the extent of treatment. Pliable and strong when wet, gutskin becomes stiff when dry. Earlier museum repairs included the sewing together of torn areas. The loose cotton thread repair stitches on the hood and proper right sleeve were removed for treatment because those areas were resulting in new gut tears (fig. 5). The splits were repaired using hog intestine/sausage casings and acrylic adhesive (a 3:1 mix of



Fig. 5. Detail of the child's gutskin parka showing earlier stitching repairs with cotton thread in process of being removed
 © President and Fellows of Harvard College, Peabody Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology,
 PM# 08-8-10/73025.1 (digital file# 75720084).

Lascaux 498HV:360HV). A repair on the back of the proper left sleeve and armpit, however, was not removed because that stitching was more secure. Sven agreed that the museum stitching in this region was in good enough condition to remain and that the manipulation required to remove it would likely result in more damage to the fragile surrounding gutskin. Working through this collaborative treatment process served our mutual goals.”

During the course of the warrior-whaler kayak’s stabilization, the initial impetus for the project, Alutiiq consultants indicated cultural perspectives regarding the broken state of the bow, which rendered the kayak incomplete in appearance and nonfunctional. The form of an Alaska kayak’s bow is the main feature that indicates its originating culture. The double-pronged bow of specific shape is characteristically Alutiiq as previously described. It has both stylistic and functional purposes. The consultants explained their sense that replacing the broken bow would be a culturally appropriate treatment to restore its Alutiiq identity and, by appearing more functional or whole, this would restore its potency as a symbol of Alutiiq lifeway. For the kayak’s intracultural significance to be most effectively renewed, the bow required replacement. We discussed current approaches in the field of conservation and that replacing the bow would require reconsideration and compromise of current minimal interventive practices. Also, we discussed the benefits of utilizing only reversible conservation treatments. Given the cultural benefits that would be gained by replacing the bow, the opportunity for collaboration it would present, and the great potential for replacement to be completed in a reversible manner, multiple factors outweighed the typical conservation approach, which would have left the broken appearance. Fascinating dialogue followed, which began to envision how a new bow might be traditionally carved, what materials might be used, and how to attach it in a reversible manner. All agreed that completing the bow restoration at the Alutiiq Museum as part of a future collections sharing process, with a native kayak-maker, skin sewer, and with a conservator, would foster expanded educational opportunity and learning for Alutiiq community members and ongoing museum partnership.

3. EDUCATION OPPORTUNITIES

3.1 DISSEMINATION: UNIVERSITY STUDENTS

Both museums’ missions emphasize education. The project design included two types of student experiences: an undergraduate seminar and internships for students of varying experience levels and interest.

The Peabody’s teaching and research mission and its responsibility to prioritize the interests of the Harvard community were addressed in part through the development of an undergraduate-level course offered through the Anthropology Department, titled *Museum Anthropology: Thinking with Objects*. The undergraduate seminar considered the kayaks and related Alaska collections in the context of exploring the history of anthropology and museum collecting. Students explored the various representations and interpretations of indigenous people in the field of museum exhibition and the modern conservation, care, and treatment of anthropology collections.

The course design aimed for seminar students to take an active participatory role in the class and consultations. Students utilized the knowledge gained through readings and demonstrations to achieve a baseline of knowledge from which they could lead class discussions and engage in the consultations (fig. 6). Selected readings explored through student exchanges highlighted historical context and issues of display, indigenous perspectives on museum representation and conservation, ethics of museum stewardship, and the anthropology of Alaska and the Northwest. Students deployed the knowledge gained through consultations in combination with their reference points in the



Fig. 6. University students engaging with Alfred Naumoff around the 3-person Alutiiq kayak
 © President and Fellows of Harvard College, Peabody Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology,
 PM# 2010.0.26 (digital file# 66030022).

literature and hands-on museum examples to contribute to the modern conservation of the project collections (fig. 7). Each student selected one of the museum objects for the focus of their research, and each researched primary documentation and relevant published literature in order to detail the provenience and provenance of the item. They situated each object within historical and cultural context, detailed the materials and techniques, and assessed the significance of the item. They assessed the physical condition and made preliminary recommendations regarding the conservation care and treatment and were mindful of any cultural considerations to be taken into account in the future care, treatment, and/or display of the object (Clavir 2002; Ogden 2004; Dignard et al. 2008; Richmond and Bracker 2009).

The seminar was offered twice during the project timetable. Project staff and Alutiiq consultants collaborated on the seminar teaching along with contributions from the museum and Harvard archives



Fig. 7. Judy Jungels, Peabody conservator, sharing condition and conservation issues of the kayak models with Harvard University students © President and Fellows of Harvard College, Peabody Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology, PM# 2010.0.26 (digital file# 66030028).

and local area conservation scientists. Conservation staff provided interactive modules on materials, construction technology, object condition assessment, report writing, and a survey of cleaning methods. Conservators discussed conservation methodologies and preventive conservation measures, and students shaped class discussions on conservation readings and case studies.

The project also provided an opportunity for preprogram and graduate students in professional conservation programs to receive culturally enriched specialist training (fig. 8). Conservation interns participated in the development of outreach opportunities with regional and national conservation communities, with the university community, and through teaching opportunities with Harvard students in the anthropology course. Conservation intern Ellen Promise, from the University of Delaware's art conservation program, was engaged in research at UMass-Dartmouth and with scientists at the Harvard Art Museums and the Boston Museum of Fine Arts. Her contributions included presentations at professional gatherings at Harvard, in California, and in Delaware and a filmed interview about the project for a regional magazine's website. Fran Ritchie, conservation intern from the Art Conservation program at the State University College at Buffalo, likewise contributed to the diversity of elements of the project during its second year, and one example is described earlier regarding the collaborative condition assessment and consultative conservation treatment process for the project's selected objects.



Fig. 8. Alutiiq consultants, Alfred Naumoff and Sven Haakanson, discuss with conservation interns, Ellen Promise and Fran Ritchie, details of hair appliqué in a hooded gutskin parka © President and Fellows of Harvard College, Peabody Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology, PM# 2010.0.26 (digital file# 66030023).

3.2 DISSEMINATION: PUBLIC EDUCATION AT THE PEABODY MUSEUM

The visually accessible kayak conservation work space had several features to support the project's goals. The room was designed with a series of inset exhibition cases that featured both objects to be conserved and examples of objects already conserved. In proximity were didactic tools used in communicating specific features of materials and how they were worked into functional objects. A flat-screen monitor mounted on the outside wall of the kayak space featured a montage of landscape and kayaking images from Kodiak Island, Alaska. Another tool used in sharing the context of the project's work was a large-sized moveable mounted map of Alaska.

The conservators working in the space were engaged to reach out to the public to illuminate the collaboration between the Peabody and the Alutiiq communities and to discuss the ways in which conservation bridged the interests of these two groups. Daily visits offered an enriching dialogue about preservation challenges and solutions, traditional/indigenous and contemporary museum preservation approaches, technologies of the constructed objects, and native kayak making. The public could observe and inquire about a range of activities from the cleaning and humidification of a gutskin garment, to a staff discussion about appropriate repair materials for skin and gutskin, to a presentation about new research findings (fig. 9).

Project staff members were equally informed by the knowledgeable and interested visiting public. Among the nearly 3000 museum visitors interested in the kayaks and work activities, recorded in the log



Fig. 9. Ellen Promise, conservation intern, inside the kayak workspace, talking with conservators and visitors about the history and preservation of gutskin bags © President and Fellows of Harvard College, Peabody Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology, PM# 2010.0.26 (digital file# 66030026).

book of visitors to the project space, were local professors with their students, families with children, kayaking enthusiasts, and international travelers. Many guests were familiar with Alaska native culture and had much to share with the project staff. One Alaska Native visitor recalled her grandmother using a gutskin bag, similar to an object being conserved in the work space, for gathering berries. Conversations covered all aspects of materials, construction, age, function, and gender roles in fabrication of the kayaks, as well as approaches to the cleaning and repair of the skin-based objects. Almost everyone enjoyed discovering the unique details of the kayaks' construction. A handheld mirror was used to reflect the interior of the kayak and give visitors a sense of the precise joining of ribs and stringers comprising the wood framework. A professor from a local community college brought students on several separate occasions over the two-year period and specifically chose to come to the museum during the open hours of the kayak space. She incorporated into her lectures, as an educational resource, the dialogue with conservators and other staff on the collaborative project between the two museums.

The Peabody Museum sponsored evening and weekend events for Harvard students and the general public focused in the exhibit gallery. Artist workshops on skin sewing and kayak model making were unique opportunities during the on-site Alutiiq visits to learn further about materials and traditional

working processes. Informal engagement with the general public included social media (Facebook, Twitter, student blogs, e-journals) and dedicated kayak conservation project pages on the museum's website. Nontraditional print media platforms ranged from the child-friendly and family-oriented to more scholarly presentation. Students and conservators posted information on treatment and historical/cultural context, newly discovered object construction details, and treatment of project objects. Accompanying these written entries were photographs of the process and of consultation interactions. Visitors were encouraged to visit the Facebook sites for updates on the project.

3.3 DISSEMINATION: COMMUNITY EDUCATION IN ALASKA

For the Alutiiq Museum and its surrounding island village native communities, this project is furthering efforts to revitalize Alutiiq traditional knowledge focused around kayaking technology. As a traditionally trained kayak maker, Alfred had been reaching out to high school programs for several years sharing his knowledge through kayak model-making workshops administered by the Alutiiq Museum (fig. 10). Subsequent to Alfred's second Cambridge visit, he returned to Alaska and constructed a full-sized frame of a kayak incorporating knowledge he gained from first-hand study and collaborative discussions involving both of the Alutiiq kayaks—the single-person mid-19th century warrior-whaler kayak and the three-person kayak—held at the Peabody Museum (fig. 11).

Carvers also have taken inspiration from the paddles. The double-blade paddle, featured here in figure 12, is likely the only of its kind, and it is the subject of several new creations similarly carved by



Fig. 10. Alfred Naumoff teaching model making to high school students in Ouzinkie on Kodiak Island, Alaska (Courtesy of Jill H. H. Lipka, 2009)



Fig. 11. Alfred Naumoff with newly constructed full-sized kayak frame inspired by the Alutiiq kayak at the Peabody Museum (Courtesy of Sven Haakanson, 2013)



Fig. 12. Susan Malutin, Alfred Naumoff, Sven and Eilidh Haakanson featured with a rare double-blade paddle © President and Fellows of Harvard College, Peabody Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology, PM# 2010.0.26 (digital file# 66030027).

today's carvers. Sven and Susan expanded their prior work into the communities offering skin-sewing and other arts enrichment opportunities. As conveyed by Sven, "We can use these items to preserve our culture and to bring this knowledge into a living context that continues to be passed on from generation to generation, rather than tucked away in a book, archived or hidden in a museum collection."

4. SUMMARY: WHAT WAS LEARNED

The project goal was the preservation, exchange, and management of collaboratively created knowledge derived from the study of collections and their materials and the dissemination of that knowledge to a wider audience. The Peabody curatorial research and repatriation department focuses in part on identifying and developing projects that address meet the shared goals of the Museum and descendent communities such as the Alutiiq people.

As staffs of two museums, our combined years of experience and expertise have enabled us to forge a successful collaboration which built on a decade of previous communication and projects. This project's dimensions and the connections that have been possible have been inspiring for everyone. The development and sustainability of ongoing relationships with native communities and museum staff will continue to provide new experiences, ideas, and innovations.

The institutions mutually and individually benefitted through this project. The Peabody learned meaningfully through an improved understanding of object function, technology of manufacture, cultural context, and significance. All of these improve stewardship of the collection in the future. The partnership with the individual Alutiiq colleagues and with the Alutiiq Museum continues to bring benefits. The traditional knowledge revitalized by the Alutiiq consultants has been readily embraced into their communities as noted earlier. Furthermore, Alutiiq community members beyond the project participants already have engaged in creating new kayak-related items that are informed by information from the project.

Strengthening technical investigation of cultural material through broad inclusivity across physical, structural, and cultural differences has achieved greater synthesis creating a framework for focusing resources and perspective for continuing collaborations. The results from the analyses provided information where none existed prior and in many cases corrected misinformation reported in object records, adding to the historical understanding of the kayaks and related objects. The collaborative working process for the kayak project at the Peabody Museum has been captured in part through video documentation and is preserved for future purposes in shaping professional educational programs for traditional and community museums, for developing intercultural exchanges and for use in developing future collaborative conservation-curatorial-exhibition projects and in university seminars. The resulting documentation will further connect Native American community members, the university, the museum's visiting public and web-based participants, and will foster increased research and teaching opportunities and community collaborations.

The next phase of our sharing and partnership focuses on further increasing physical access to this kayak and related objects. The Peabody and Alutiiq museums are in discussion about the possibility of a collections loan. In coming to know more about the warrior-whaler kayak and other kayak-related objects, a methodology and process for their proper care and stabilization has developed that will include their safe transport if a loan were to take place. The bow restoration on the warrior-whaler kayak is being planned to take place at the Alutiiq Museum with a native carver and skin sewer along with a conservation consultant as previously mentioned. Also under discussion is development of the documentary film footage, which had been recorded at the Peabody for use by the Alutiiq Museum, to include a similar exchange of documentary footage of the proposed bow restoration process at the Alutiiq Museum.

This project supports the Peabody's exploration of its role as a twenty-first century museum through ongoing strategic partnerships with our constituent communities. The collections require cultural understanding, continued inclusive study, and the broadest accessibility possible. Within the Alutiiq community, the project will build from the skills gained enriching ongoing youth apprenticeship programs of Alfred in several native villages on Kodiak Island, and the participation of these well-trained Alutiiq youth will enhance their ability to steward the long-term care and preservation of their cultural heritage into the future. The project and ongoing partnership has created a process of collaboration that continues to serve our communities and mutual goals as educational and research institutions.

APPENDIX. PROJECT TIMELINE: HISTORIC ALASKA NATIVE KAYAKS AND RELATED OBJECTS

PROJECT PREPARATION AND MANAGEMENT

8/2011: Project staff review work plan. Consult Alutiiq colleagues via videoconferencing. Prepare kayak work space. Relocate conservation equipment/tools.

10/2011: Move two kayaks to work space with art handlers.

11/2011: Move first group of kayak-related objects to work space.

8/2011–10/2013: Document process with videographer/students throughout project period.

PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION: WARRIOR-WHALER KAYAK AND KAYAK-RELATED OBJECTS

10/2011: Consult Alutiiq colleagues via videoconferencing: assess kayak, discuss work process, condition and treatment options, repair materials, and bow restoration process.

11/2011–5/2012: Document, assess and conserve first group of objects. Sample/analyze material with conservation scientists. Consult Alutiiq colleagues via videoconferencing. Clean and stabilize warrior-whaler kayak. Registrar schedules packing.

1/2012–5/2012: Anthropology class student interaction with museum project staff and Alutiiq colleagues.

3/2012: On-site visit/consult with Alutiiq colleagues at Peabody. Offer public event with Alutiiq artist workshops.

4/2012–9/2012: Document, clean and stabilize second Alaska kayak. Supervise students and interns on kayak project. Continue to consult, document and conserve kayak-related objects.

9/2012: Pack/ship kayak to climate-controlled off-site storage (awaiting loan of the warrior-whaler kayak to Alutiiq Museum). Move three-person Alutiiq kayak to work space with art handlers. Sample/analyze material with conservation scientists.

10/2012–5/2013: Consult Alutiiq colleagues on third kayak and objects (via videoconferencing and on-site visit) as regards materials analysis, cleaning and stabilization of kayak and objects. Sample/analyze material with conservation scientists.

1/2013–5/2013: Anthropology class; student interaction with project staff and Alutiiq colleagues.

3/2013: On-site consult with Alutiiq colleagues at Peabody. Offer public event with Alutiiq artist workshops.

5/2013–10/2013: Pack/ship kayak to climate-controlled off-site storage. Move fourth kayak to work space. Continue to consult, document and conserve kayak-related objects.

10/2013: Move fourth kayak to storage. Project closes on first floor work space and exhibit area.

OTHER ONGOING PROJECT ACTIVITIES

4/2012: Install video loops of project in work space area.

5/2012–10/2013: Prepare interim and final reports to IMLS. Maintain public relations communications. Work with students on social media entries, oral and meeting note transcriptions to collections management database.

10/2013–2014: Dissemination of project results.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The museum gratefully acknowledges the partial support from a 2010 Save America's Treasures grant (Grant No. ST-03-10-0013.10) administered through the US Institute of Museum and Library Services to enable implementation of this collaborative project. We are most grateful to Daniel P. Kirby and Narayan Khandekar of the Harvard Art Museums, Sunia Trauger of the Harvard FAS Division of Science-Small Molecules Mass Spectrometry Facility, and to Richard Newman and Michele Derrick of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. We thank our many Harvard collaborators in particular Judy Chupasko and Mark Omura in the Mammalogy Department of the Natural History Museum, and Gustavo Romero at the Harvard Herbaria. We extend our sincere appreciation to Alutiiq colleagues, Susan Malutin, Alfred Naumoff, and Eilidh Haakanson, and to Peabody project staff, Sandra Dong, Scott Fulton, Julie Ribits, Ilisa Barbash, Sam Tager, Karen Crabtree, Stu Heebner, Faith Sutter, Steve Rothman, and Barbara H. Wiberg. We extend considerable gratitude to Genevieve Fisher, registrar at the Peabody Museum, for her contributions in distilling and sharing the project's concepts and results with varied museum audiences. We owe Dana Senge, Scott Carrlee, and Ellen Carrlee sincere thanks for sharing and consulting with us during our project design phase.

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SOURCES OF MATERIALS

Lauscaux 360 HV and Lauscaux 498 HV
 Talas
 330 Morgan Avenue
 Brooklyn, NY 11211
 212-219-0770
www.talasonline.com

Natural Hog Sausage Casings
 Available from specialty meat markets
 Our local supplier:
 Savenor’s Market, 92 Kirkland Street
 Cambridge, MA 02138
 617-576-6328

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