

Cape Nome, Alaska excavation records

1155

Finding aid prepared by Elizabeth Kelly.

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University of Pennsylvania, Penn Museum Archives

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Summary Information

Repository	University of Pennsylvania: Penn Museum Archives
Creator	John R. Bockstoce, b. Aug 10, 1944
Title	Cape Nome, Alaska excavation records
Call number	1155
Date [bulk]	1970-1971
Date [inclusive]	1969-1976
Extent	0.8 linear foot
Language	English
Abstract	<p>The Cape Nome expedition collection was donated to the University Museum by the author himself, John Bockstoce. The collection documents Bockstoce's records and analysis of his archeological findings in Cape Nome fom 1969-1974. It consists of five series: field notes, drawings, photographs, reports and publications, and oversized documents. The expedition was conducted by Bockstoce for the purpose writing a dissertation on the cultures of the Arctic and obtaining a Doctor of Philosophy degree from the University of Oxford, which he achieved in 1974. This expedition was advised by Dr. Froelich Rainey of the University Museum, University of Pennsylvania, Dr. Douglas Anderson of the Haffenreffer Museum of Brown University, and Dr. Derek Roe of Oxford University.</p>

Biography/History

In the spring of 1969, John R. Bockstoce, Arctic historian and archeologist, decided to excavate an apparently Norton site near Cape Nome under the advice of Dr. Froelich Rainey and Dr. Douglas Anderson. He hoped that this site would expand knowledge about regional adaptations of the Norton Culture and help gain knowledge about the decline of Norton Cultures. John Bockstoce had been traveling and working in the North since 1962. In preparation for his expedition to Cape Nome, he studied under Dr. Froelich Rainey at the University Museum, University of Pennsylvania for two and one-half years. Bockstoce was the Assistant to the Director during this time at the University Museum from 1970-1971. He also studied under Dr. Douglas Anderson at the Haffenreffer Museum of Brown University for half a year. By the time Bockstoce had embarked on this expedition, he had received a B.A. from Yale University and both a diploma in Ethnology and Prehistory and a B.Litt from the University of Oxford.

Cape Nome lies on the ecological boundary between the Bering Strait and the Norton Sound which made it an ideal location for researching how geography affected Norton habitations. It was estimated that the research should be conducted over a period of two summers each with a nine-week season due to weather constrictions. Bockstoce began test excavations the summer of 1969 and identified twelve houses for excavation. He started his official research on July 1, 1970 with a team of eight assistants. He also received help from native Eskimo, who were easily able to identify bone material, and was able to arrange for free labor supported by a government program. Excavations began on the western side of the site and moved eastward. Towards the end of the season, excavations were moved closer to the Norton Sound (House 16). These artifacts were distinct from previously found Norton artifacts. The expedition was forced to conclude on September 1, 1970.

The following spring, Bockstoce spent two months researching bowhead whale hunting at Point Hope to gain knowledge for the 1971 excavation of Point Hope that lasted from June 15th until August 25th. Initially, houses 203, 325, and 326 were excavated to gain information about the Birnick and Norton sub-phase B assemblage. The team found mixed results at these sights: Houses 203 and 325 contained artifacts that belong to the Cape Nome phase while House 326 contained twentieth century artifacts. Excavations were moved eastward and Houses 300 and 284 were found to contain artifacts that were congruent with other Norton sub-phase B finds. While excavating House 300, a layer of chert chips was noticed below the surface of the land. These chips were of the Denbigh Flint Complex culture which is estimated to have been active ca 2000 BC.

During the remainder of the summer, Bockstoce devoted his attention to observing the native birds and fauna and took time to map areas of the beach. The University of Oxford awarded Bockstoce his D. Phil in 1974 for his dissertation on Cape Nome. During his time at Oxford, he also worked as a visiting tutor in the Department of Ethnology and Prehistory. He spent the next twelve years of his life working as a curator of Ethnology and the New Bedford Whaling Museum. In 2000, Bockstoce was awarded an honorary Doctor of Science degree by the University of Alaska for his large contribution to Arctic history. Over his years, Bockstoce has authored numerous articles, books, and monographs. John Bockstoce is currently the president of the Thalassa Corporation.

John Bockstoce was born August 10, 1944 and grew up in Hartford Connecticut. He is a leading expert in Far Northern History.

Scope and Contents

The entire collection of Cape Nome excavation records was donated by the author, John Bockstoce, to the University Museum, University of Pennsylvania. The records consist of correspondence, field notes, drawings, photographs, the final thesis, and several larger oversized maps. Most of the handwritten parts of this collection were written during 1969-1971 while the preliminary surveys and excavations were taking place. However, Bockstoce did not finish his dissertation until 1974 and he was working on collections such as the plates for the final report up until this time. The field notes consist of field notebooks, artifact cards, artifact lists, and catalogued artifacts. There are a total of fifteen notebooks. Two of the notebooks are site surveys from 1970. In addition, there are three general notebooks from 1970 and nine general notebooks from 1971. There is also one notebook that dates 1974 and comments on the Ayasayuk Midden site. The notebooks are arranged in chronological order. The artifact cards were found to be organized by site number and then by object number within the site; this order has been preserved. Artifact cards are from the sites of 16C, 203, 271, 284, 300, 325, 326, 459, and PNH. Each card contains information about the site, date, excavator, object, location, association, and object number according to the museum. The artifact lists offer a consecutive record of artifacts by their museum object number. The folder of catalogued artifacts lists the object by site number, object number, artifact description, and page number. The drawings consist of two folders of house transects and locations, pottery drawings, and three folders of plates for the final report. The house transects and locations records give detailed descriptions of the coordinates of the houses, the overview of the sites, and geographical information about the land. The pottery drawings provide information about the object numbers of the artifacts and provide a basic outline of the artifacts. The folder of the plates for the final report contains prints that were used in his monograph and dissertation. They consist of maps of the area, transects, and charts that display cultural changes over time. Bockstoce used many of these in his final report. Additional materials were received from the creator in March 2013. These consisted of surveys from the Southern Seward Peninsula (Salmon House 2) and the Glacial Lake areas. Later in 2013, new drawings arrived from Dr. Bockstoce for the collection and in May 2014 a collection of mostly correspondence, surveys and reports were added. Most of the correspondence is with the United States Department of the Interior, various government agencies in Alaska, the University of Alaska and several native tribes of the region.

Administrative Information

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Related Materials

Related Archival Materials note

Correspondence related to the archeological expedition is found in the Director's Office records of Froelich Rainey, two folders, "Arctic (John Bockstoce)".

Controlled Access Headings

FORM/GENRE(S)

- Manuscripts for publication
- Maps
- Photographs

GEOGRAPHIC NAME(S)

- Alaska

PERSONAL NAME(S)

- Froelich Rainey, Director of the University Museum
- John R. Bockstoce, b. Aug 10, 1944

SUBJECT(S)

- Archaeological surveying
- Archaeology--Aerial photography in archaeology

- Archaeology--Architecture, ancient
- Ethnology--Indigenous peoples
- Plans and drawings

Collection Inventory

CORRESPONDENCE, 1970-1984.

	Box
United States Department of the Interior (1 of 2), 1970-1973.	1
United States Department of the Interior (2 of 2), 1974-1977.	1
Alaska Bureau of Land Management, 1971-1977.	1
Alaska Department of Natural Resources, 1972-1975.	1
Alaska Department of Highways, 1972-1976.	1
Bering Strait Native Corporation, 1971-1977.	1
Sitnasuak Native Corporation, 1975-1981.	1
Brevig Mission Native Corporation, 1975.	1
University of Alaska, 1975-1976.	1
Alaska Corps of Engineers/U.S. Coast Guard, 1975-1976.	1
Permits, 1970-1977.	1
Miscellaneous, 1971-1976.	1

FIELD NOTES, 1970-1976.

	Box
Field Notebooks 1970-1976.	3
Artifact Cards 1970-1971.	4
Artifact Lists 1970-1971.	1
Catalogued Artifacts 1970-1971.	1

SURVEYS, 1970-1976.

	Box
Southern Seward Peninsula 1970-1976.	1
	Box
Field notes 1970 (1 of 2). 2 small notebooks .	1
Field notes 1976 (2 of 2). 1 hardback book.	1
Drawings 1976. Transects and objects..	1
Glacial Lake 1976.	1
	Box
Correspondence.	1
Photographs. 4 small color prints.	1
Land, Mineral, Management.	1

REPORTS AND PUBLICATIONS.

	Box
Aspects of the Archeology of Cape Nome, Alaska D. Phil Thesis, 1974.	2
Report on Damage and Destruction to Archaeological Sites at Cape Nome, Alaska: 1976.	1
Excavations at the Ayasayuk Village site, Cape Nome, Alaska: 1974.	1
Preliminary Assessment of Storm Damage to Archaeological Sites in the Vicinity of Nome, Alaska.	1
Preliminary Report on Antiquities Act, Permit #70-AK-031.	1
Preliminary Report on Antiquities Act, Permit #76-AK-051.	1

DRAWINGS, 1970-1976.

	Box
House Transects & Locations 1969-1971 (1 of 2).	1
House Transects & Locations 1969-1971 (2 of 2).	1
Pottery Drawings 1969-1971.	1
Plates for Final Report 1969-1971 (1 of 3).	1
Plates for Final Report 1969-1971 (2 of 3).	1
Plates for Final Report 1969-1971 (3 of 3).	1

PHOTOGRAPHS, 1970-1971.

	Box
Aerial Views 1969-1973.	2
Photographs of Beach at Site 1974.	2
Photographs of Site 1969-1974.	2
Photographs of Artifacts 1970 (1 of 5).	2
Photographs of Artifacts 1970 (2 of 5).	2
Photographs of Artifacts 1970-1974 (3 of 5).	2
Photographs of Artifacts 1970-1974 (4 of 5).	2
Photographs of Artifacts 1970-1974 (5 of 5).	2

	Drawer
MAPS AND PLANS, 1970-1976. .	M-58
	Drawer
Commercial map; Nome Sectional Aeronautical Chart; 20.5" by 55.5"; 1:500,000.	M-58
Publication map, Alaska and Siberia in the Vicinity if Bering Strait; Ink on paper, 23.25" by 29.25".	M-58
U.S. Dept. of Interior; Nome (D-2) Quadrangle; 18" by 21"; 1:63 360(2 copies).	M-58
Publication map, The Seward Peninsula in the Vicinity of Cape Nome; Ink on paper, 25.75" by 18.75".	M-58
House 285; Ink on paper, 16.75" by 27".	M-58

House 284; Ink on paper, 16.75" by 27".	M-58
House 300; Ink on paper, 16.75" by 27".	M-58
House 19; Ink on paper, 16.75" by 27".	M-58
House 11; Ink on paper, 16.75" by 27".	M-58
House 16; Ink on paper, 16.75" by 27".	M-58
House 322; Ink on paper, 16.75" by 27".	M-58
House 203; Ink on paper, 16.75" by 27".	M-58
315 Group; Ink on paper, 16.75" by 27".	M-58
House 325; Ink on paper, 16.75" by 27".	M-58
House 326; Ink on paper, 16.75" by 27".	M-58
Transect; Ink on paper, scale 1mm=1ft., 11.50" by 24.75".	M-58
	Drawer
Old Beach Site map (unsurveyed township 12S) Rolled; Ink on graph paper, 19" by 68.75". (Original and annotated copy) 1970.	Rolled
Unsurveyed Township 12 site; c. 1970, (from protraction diagram No. K13-12), ink on paper, 8.5 by 11.5 (in 2 pieces).	

REALIA.	Box
	1
	Box
Collection labeling rubber stamp.	1