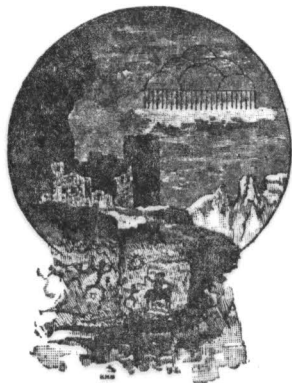


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ANTHROPOLOGICAL SURVEY IN ALASKA

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INTRODUCTION

Alaska and the opposite parts of Asia hold, in all probability, the key to the problem of the peopling of America. It is here, and here alone, where a land of another continent approaches so near to America that a passage of man with primitive means of navigation and provisioning was possible. All the affinities of the American native point toward the more eastern parts of Asia. In Siberia, Mongolia, Tibet, Manchuria, Formosa, and in some of the islands off southeastern Asia, living remnants of the same type of man as the American aborigines are to this day encountered, and it is here in the farthest northwest where actual passings of parties of natives between the Asiatic coast and the Bering Sea islands and between the latter and the American coasts have always, since these parts were known, been observed and are still of common occurrence.

With these facts before them, the students of the peopling of this continent were always drawn strongly to Alaska and the opposite parts of Asia; but the distances, the difficulties of communication, and the high costs of exploration in these far-off regions have proven a serious hindrance to actual investigation. As a result, but little direct, systematic, archeological or anthropological (somatological) research has ever been carried out in these regions; though since Bering's, Cook's, and Vancouver's opening voyages to these parts a large amount of general, cultural, and linguistic observations on the natives has accumulated.

For these observations, which are much in need of a compilation and critical analysis, science is indebted to the above-named captains; to the subsequent Russian explorers, and especially to the Russian clerics who were sent to Alaska as missionaries or priests to the natives; to various captains, traders, agents, miners, soldiers, and men in collateral branches of science, who came in contact with the aborigines; to special United States Government exploratory expeditions, with an occasional participation of the Biological Survey and the Smithsonian Institution, such as resulted in the fine "Corwin" reports and the highly valuable accounts of Leffingwell, Dall,

good bit recovered, and that bit is very striking. (See p. 156.) Also a cut bone (clean cut, as if by a sharp knife) in situ in the mud of the bank, and a little birch-bark basket still filled with mud from the bank, with later a larger basket of same nature in situ; could save but a piece. Conditions puzzling. Was there an older site under one more recent?

2 p. m. About 2 p. m. go to the cemetery. About a dozen burials recognizable. A pest of mosquitoes and gnats—Lawrence soon bleeds over face and neck, while I keep them off only by frequent smearing. He soon has to smear, too. Open five graves—placed above ground, wooden (split and no nails) boxes covered with earth and sod. Skeletons all in contracted position, head to the east and lying on right side. Some in poor condition. Three women, one man, one child. Gnats swarm in the moss and the graves, and with the smears, here and there a trickle of blood, the killed pests and the dust, we soon look lovely. But there is enough of interest. With each burial appears something—with the man two large blue Russian beads; first woman—a pottery lamp (or dish), iron knife; with the second two fire sticks, stone objects (sharpeners), partly decayed clay dish; with the third, a Russian bead and a birch-bark snuffbox; with the child a “killed” (?) glass bottle of old form and an iron flask; in the grave of an infant (bones gone) a Russian bead. A grave of a child—bones burned.

6.15 p. m. Rest must be left. Lawrence may be enabled to do some work in the fall. Leave 6.15; carry quite a lot—in sacks, gasoline cans, lard cans. Wonder how I shall be able to send things from Holy Cross, and what next. Cool, sky overcast whole day.

HOLY CROSS

Thursday, July 1. Slept on the floor of a little store last night at Ghost Creek. The Catholic mission at Holy Cross, with all sorts of room, about $1\frac{1}{2}$ miles down, and where, though late and tired, I visited Father Jules Jetté, a renowned student of the dialects of the Yukon Indians, did not offer to accommodate me, and the trader in their village could only offer me a “bunk” in one little room with three other people. So after 10 p. m. we went down to the “Ghost Creek,” where I was gladly given a little corner in the store of Alec Richardson. Of course there were whining dogs outside, right next to the store on both sides, and they sang at times (or howled) like wolves, whose blood they seem to carry. And a cat got closed in with me and was pulling dried fish about, which she chewed, most of the night it seemed. So there was not much sleep until from about 5 a. m. to 8.30, after the cat was chased out and the dogs got weary. Then no breakfast till near 9.30.

✓ Russian beads, especially those of the large blue variety, are occasionally encountered, usually singly or in small numbers, especially in some spots. ✓

A unique archeological specimen from the lower middle portion of the Yukon Valley is the large stone dish obtained by Mr. Müller, the trader at Kaltag. (See p. 34.)

Besides these random specimens, other cultural objects are found along the Yukon in connection with old burials. These consist of an occasional wooden dish, sharpening or polishing stones, rarely a figurine (doll?) in ivory, Russian snuffboxes, fire sticks, dishes of birch bark, etc. The cullings in this field are quite poor, but there has been no excavation of older burials that have been assimilated by the tundra and lie now in the earth beneath.

The archeology of the old habitation sites, on the other hand, particularly perhaps on the Shageluk and between Holy Cross and Marshall, is decidedly promising and invites careful excavation.

LOCATION OF VILLAGES AND SITES ON THE YUKON

Especial attention was given to the location of the numerous dead villages and older sites along the Yukon. This task was found, in most instances, fairly easy with villages that "died" since the Russo-American occupation, for mostly they still show plain traces and are generally remembered by the old Indians or even old white settlers. Their precise allocation on a map, however, is not always easy or certain. As to the prehistoric sites the search is much more difficult and depends largely on chance discoveries.

The villages still existing give only a partial clue, in many cases, to the old, even where these bore the same name, for on occasions a village changed its location, though remaining in the same general vicinity and retaining the same name. Thus there existed at different times apparently, between the earliest contacts with whites and the present, at least 2 Nuklukhayets, 2 Lowdens, 3 Nulatos, 3 Kaltags, 2 Anviks, etc.; besides which there were differences in recording the names and changes due to efforts at translation of the native term, or an application by the whites of a new name, often that of a trader or settler, to an old site.

In places even late village sites, in others burials, were witnessed being undermined by the river or the sea. Such sites with their contents will probably sooner or later be completely lost from this cause. Many doubtless have thus been lost previously.

The villages and sites located along the Yukon are here enumerated and as far as possible charted. Information about them was obtained from the older Indians or river Eskimo and from such whites as had direct knowledge in that line. Most of these sites were