
In the spring of 1881, two Berlin teachers, the brothers Aurel and Arthur Krause, were selected by the Geographical Society of Bremen to conduct scientific studies on the Chukchi Peninsula. Later it was decided to expand the research to include a visit to the Tlingit Indians of southeastern Alaska.

After leaving Germany on 17 April 1881, they sailed to New York, traveled across country by train to San Francisco and then on by steamer to the Chukchi Peninsula. After spending 53 days along the coast of the Bering Strait, they returned to San Francisco and arrived there 5 November.

Three weeks later, they sailed to Sitka and continued on to Klukwan, Alaska, arriving there 23 December. After three and a half months, Aurel Krause returned to San Francisco, stopping off along the way at Hoonah and Sitka for a few weeks. Arthur continued his research until 6 September and made two trips into the interior of Canada via the Chilkoot and Chilkat trails.

Aurel and Arthur were "natural scientists," which at that time included such areas as biology, botany, chemistry, geology, geography and ethnology. With a truly catholic perspective, their reports incorporate a wide variety of data and explanation. It is surprising the amount of detailed information they were able to collect and synthesize in the short time they lived among the Tlingit. Aurel Krause's monograph Die Tlunket Indianer was later translated by Erna Gunther as The Tlingit Indians and remains to this day one of the better ethnographies of the Tlingit.

This present translation of their journals and letters, To the Chukchi Peninsula and to the Tlingit Indians, 1881/1882, should be read as a companion text to The Tlingit Indians. The latter work summarizes their observations and includes a lengthy section on the Tlingit language, with the scientific terms for the plants and animals listed. It also has many sketches and illustrations not found in this latest publication. Their journals and letters, on the other hand, contain details regarding their travels, mishaps and adventures that do not appear in their monograph and by themselves are informative descriptions and impressions of the people and places they visited. Of course, The Tlingit Indians excludes any information regarding their research on the Chukchi Peninsula.

To the Chukchi Peninsula and to the Tlingit Indians, 1881/1882 has other information not found in The Tlingit Indians, such as their charts and illustrations along with detailed information on the flora and fauna of the places visited by the Krauses. Their descriptions of New York and San Francisco and the difficulties they encountered on their voyages are fascinating vignettes of 19th-century America.

Technically, the printing, maps and illustrations are well done and the book is very readable. It is a good translation from the original edition, which was printed in Germany as Zur Tschuktschen-Halbinsel und zu den Tlingit-Indianern 1881/1882. Reisetagebucher und Briefe von Aurel und Arthur Krause. The editors of the original publication, Gerhard and Ingeborg Krause, did a commendable job of combining the letters and journals into a smoothly flowing narrative.

Although To the Chukchi Peninsula and to the Tlingit Indians, 1881/1882 can be read and appreciated on its own, I strongly recommend that readers also read The Tlingit Indians if they want a more complete picture of the scientific contributions of Aurel and Arthur Krause. If someone were to read the journals and letters in isolation, without seeing the monograph on the Tlingit, there would be a tendency to consider the journal as simply a fascinating report of a 19th-century journey to the northland. In trying to relocate some specific information, I wished that the journals and letters had been indexed, as was done for The Tlingit Indians. There is no mention of what happened to the many artifacts they collected. I know that a few items from their collection are at the Ubersee Museum in Bremen but understand that the items at the Berlin Museum were lost in the bombings of World War II.

I found the text and illustrations from the Chukchi region very engaging, since I had not seen this part of their journal before. Students and lay persons will enjoy reading about the problems of field work a century ago, while those familiar with the ethnographic studies on eastern Siberia and Alaska will welcome the book as a fine addition to the ethnographic literature.

Wallace M. Olson
Professor of Anthropology
University of Alaska Southeast
11120 Glacier Highway
Juneau, Alaska 99801
U.S.A.


When I first picked up Reflections of a Digger I was brought back to my years at the University of Pennsylvania working as a graduate assistant in the American Section of the University Museum and hearing within the confines of its marbled halls the jovial laughter of the director of the museum, Froelich ("Fro") Rainey. As the chair of my dissertation committee, Fro steered me towards St. Lawrence Island and the problem of the development of Eskimo culture. Later, through his contacts in Russia, he opened up the possibility of studying archaeological collections in Moscow and Leningrad that had been excavated in Chukotka. Along the way there were stories of field work in Alaska as told by Fro, J. Louis Giddings, Ivar Skarland, Henry Collins, Otto Geist, and Helge Larsen, to name but a few of the early pioneers in Alaskan archaeology.

Fortunately, Fro decided to tell his own story in Reflections of a Digger: Fifty Years of World Archaeology, not only