

KAL'UNEK—FROM KARLUK: KODIAK ALUTIIQ HISTORY AND THE ARCHAEOLOGY OF THE KARLUK ONE VILLAGE SITE. Edited by AMY STEFFIAN, MARNIE LEIST, SVEN HAAKANSON, JR. and PATRICK SALTONSTALL. Fairbanks: University of Alaska Press, 2015. ISBN 978-1-60223-244-0. xiv + 383 p., maps, b&w and colour illus., references, appendices, glossary, index. Hardbound, US\$50.00; £35.00; €41.30.

The Karluk One site has the potential to play a key role in the archaeological understanding of Kodiak occupation and the late prehistory of the Alaskan southeast. The site is relatively young, exhibiting continuous occupation over the last 600 years by Alutiiq Natives and short-term occupations by a variety of non-Native settlers. Karluk's waterlogged sediments have preserved the full range of cultural materials deposited there, including bone, wood, grass, leather, hair, fur, and even wood shavings, presenting one of the few complete archaeological assemblages in prehistoric Alaska.

Kal'unek is intended as a comprehensive and inclusive illustration of Karluk's history, from the first human settlements of the Karluk drainage, through discovery and excavation, to the final destruction of the site by storm-wrought erosion. This history is presented as an interwoven set of narratives. The overarching site story, based mainly on historic and ethnographic accounts and complemented by the results of archaeological study, is told in seven major chapters. Interspersed throughout the book are 28 standalone sections containing short essays from researchers, elders, and local volunteers which are intended to provide diverse voices and personal experiences on specific technical analyses, collection curation, excavation, and recent history of the modern Karluk village.

Chapter 1 serves as an introduction to Karluk One, providing background for the research and excavation project and the major stakeholders involved. Short essays here allow students, researchers, and volunteers to describe in detail their personal relationship to the site, providing a voice for the community as well as one of the few published descriptions of the physical experience of conducting research on a cold, rainy, and remote Arctic island. Chapter 2 provides the environmental context of the Karluk River drainage and a timeline of known Kodiak prehistory, beginning with settlement by people of the Ocean Bay tradition and ending with the late prehistoric period. Overall, the chapter synthesizes regional data on changing site size and structure of different cultural traditions in relation to changing environments.

Chapter 3 provides a comprehensively researched timeline of the 600-year occupation of the Karluk lagoon, focusing on the historic record as a background to the late prehistoric and protohistoric occupations documented by the archaeological collection presented in Chapters 5 to 7. Chapter 4 presents the archaeological collection, its overall composition and current condition, and the methods used over time to preserve and curate the materials. The authors present a refreshingly open discussion of the many

difficulties faced in managing a multi-year project with outdated methods of data storage. Archaeologists planning to tackle their first large-scale project would benefit greatly from reading this chapter, as would non-specialists interested in the archaeological process.

Kal'unek divides Alutiiq economics into Chapter 5, "Economic Life," and Chapter 6, "Household Life." Chapter 5 focuses mainly on hunting and fishing technologies, many of which are well known from sites throughout the Alaskan southeast. Chapter 6 describes both house structure and household furnishings and tools such as baskets, mats, knives, lamps, and utensils. Detailed ethnographic descriptions of when and how specific technologies were constructed and used should prove useful for any archaeologist of the region, as well as being interesting and informative for a general audience.

Chapter 7 presents the crowning portion of the Karluk collection, containing artifacts of social and spiritual significance, mostly organic, and rarely known from previous archaeological study. Along with a description of clothing, armor, jewelry, gaming pieces, and ceremonial artifacts, this chapter presents detailed historic and ethnographic descriptions of social structure, symbolism, warfare, recreation, and religion. Representing such diverse and significant aspects of Alutiiq life, this chapter provides an excellent representation of the volume and variety of artifacts usually invisible to archaeologists in less-well-preserved sites represented only by stone and antler. The artifact description, illustration, and photography here are outstanding, and a highlight of the book.

A few complaints presented here are intended not as criticisms, but as suggestions for future revisions and warning guidelines for readers to help them navigate the large volume. The loose, non-academic structure of the book may be frustrating to some, especially in cases where detail is sacrificed for repetition of a story from multiple viewpoints. A vague account of Karluk One's destruction, as the catalyst for the salvage project, is retold many times throughout the first three chapters, but it is not until the final pages of Chapter 3 that the actual geological processes and specific area of destruction are described. While regional geography is a vital introductory component, detailed maps are again buried in Chapter 3. A list of figures would be a most welcome addition. Those artifacts that are presented in the final chapters appear to be handpicked to illustrate the ethnographic and historical narrative, rather than a more systematic sample representing the entire collection. Finally, while the inclusion of historic and ethnographic data is one of the greatest strengths of the book, the sources of information are hidden in the reference section, so that without intentional searching, the reader does not know if information is based on archaeological study, interviews, or historical accounts, weakening the inclusive, multivocal intent.

The book itself is a large, hardcover volume of high quality. Nearly every page is artistically illustrated with historic photographs, high-resolution color artifact plates, maps, or tables. It is aimed at a wide range of readers and is neither

highly technical nor overly fanciful in its telling of the site excavation and reconstruction. The archaeological materials are collectively portrayed as a uniform representation of Alutiiq culture, and professional readers may be frustrated that the book glosses over site structure and chronology in this respect. Cultural materials are discussed within the context of detailed ethnographic information, as well as within the context of the many methodological difficulties necessarily faced during a decades-long salvage excavation in a remote location. Such reflexive approaches to analysis, which have played a large role throughout the Karluk excavation project, lend unique perspectives to the book. Overall, this book is recommended for both specialists and general readers, with the understanding that archaeologists will find relevant technical description and analyses in the reports and publications listed in the reference section, but not within this volume.

Angela M. Younie
Texas A&M University & Tanana Chiefs Conference
PO Box 73811
Fairbanks, Alaska 99707, USA
ayounie@tamu.edu