

RECENT POTTERY FROM THE BERING STRAIT REGION

WENDELL OSWALT

This study of ceramics from the Bering Strait region embodies approximately 7000 sherds and is intended to define the recent Eskimo pottery styles for the general area. The ware under consideration has been divided into two categories, the pottery from St. Lawrence Island and that from Seward Peninsula.

ST. LAWRENCE ISLAND COLLECTIONS

The collections are primarily those from the Kukulik mound and were assembled by Mr. Otto Geist in 1934 and 1935 and by the writer in 1948.¹ The St. Lawrence Island and adjacent Punuk Island archaeological sequence has been well defined by Collins (1937) for Old Bering Sea styles II and III and Punuk and by Rainey (1941) for Old Bering Sea style I (Okvik). Most subsequent developments are set forth by Geist and Rainey (1936). In the analysis of the aforementioned collections most emphasis has been placed on typological changes reflected in harpoon heads, tools and decorative styles; as a result, the pottery sequence was seriously considered only by Collins. Since the bulk of Collins' material is relatively early, the later pottery has not been carefully analyzed. One purpose of this paper, therefore, is to delineate the post Punuk ceramic sequence on St. Lawrence Island.

KUKULIK COLLECTIONS FROM 1948

First to be considered is the 1948 collection of pottery from three test cuts in the main mound at Kukulik (see map in Geist and Rainey, 1936, p. 54). The largest test cut (A) measures 80 by 10 feet and is located approximately 30 feet west of Geist's 1931 to 1933 excavation. The west end of the mound beyond the 1931-33 cut had not been disturbed previously by Geist. The other two test cuts made in 1948 are at the east end of the main mound (cuts B and C) and measure 30 by 10 feet each. This area had been cleared of approximately 18 inches of cultural debris in 1934 (Geist and Rainey, 1936, p. 85) and an additional 18 to 24 inches in 1935; therefore, an adjustment of approximately 36 inches was made in order to equate cuts B and C at the east end of the mound with cut A at the west end. The maximum

¹The 1948 excavations at Kukulik were made in conjunction with a Bering Sea coast archaeological survey under the direction of Dr. J. L. Giddings, Jr., then of the University of Alaska, and financed in part by the Arctic Institute of North America. The writer wishes to express his appreciation to Dr. Giddings for permission to publish this material and at the same time exonerate him from any of the opinions expressed. The writer also wishes to thank Dr. Ivar Skarland of the University of Alaska for making the time available for this study while on the Museum staff and Mr. Walter Arron for his valuable field assistance while on St. Lawrence Island.

depth attained was 9 feet in B and C and 7 feet in A cut. That the Punuk horizon had been encountered at the bottom of the excavation in A cut was indicated by the Punuk type harpoon shaft weight (winged object), harpoon head, and socketpiece recovered. In B and C cuts it is probable that the Punuk layer was slightly below the lowest excavated level. The sherds from these three excavations clearly cross compare in type and have been treated as a unit dating from the end of the Punuk period to about 1880 A.D., when the mound was abandoned.

The 344 cooking pot fragments in the 1948 collection are predominately sand tempered (318 sherds). This type of temper is found in all represented levels. The tempering agents in the balance of the ware are sand and feathers (8), pebbles (5), grass and sand (5), gravel (4), grass (1), grass and pebbles (1) and no visible temper (2). These latter forms of temper occur so sporadically that their stratigraphic position is obscure.

The texture of most sherds is coarse, and they tend to exfoliate. The ware ranges in color from black through grey to a few buff and reddish sherds. A few specimens were noted to have a black core but buff colored outer surface. That the tempering material usually does not protrude through the outer surface of the ware indicates some surface smoothing. The sherds were measured for thickness and found to range from 3 mm. to 20 mm. with an average of approximately 8 mm.

Ten decorated sherds were recovered; of these, six were in the upper 66 inches and decorated with a single continuous horizontal line (3), a single discontinuous horizontal line (1) or two continuous horizontal lines (1). The latter motif is on a sherd that has a pierced suspension lug (Pl. 1, 11). Another small decorated sherd has a number of short incised lines running parallel to the rim. This design was probably applied with a comb similar to that illustrated by Geist and Rainey (1936, Pl. 54, 14) from Kukulik. One sherd from the 66 to 72 inch level appears to have been irregularly marked with the side of a slightly rounded stick which left impressions 5 mm. wide and of irregular length. Another specimen, found in the upper 66 inches, has corrugated impressions made with a line incised pottery paddle. The sherd is so small that the length of the corrugations may not be determined, but their width is 2 mm. each. The two remaining decorated sherds are unusual, since each has a distinctive zonal design near the rim. These designs on one sherd are obscure at the top but those on the second sherd are clearer. The latter has a line parallel to the rim and 18 mm. above a slight bulge marking the lowest extent of the decoration. Since the decorated section of the sherd is indented, this design appears as being slightly offset. The motif itself has a diagonal line joining the top and the bottom of the design and small short lines within this area (Pl. 1, 6; Fig. 1, 8).

This collection of sherds offers little evidence of the vessel forms employed except that the presence of 26 pierced suspension lugs distributed from the surface to a depth of 72 inches (only one example was found below 48 inches) indicates the use of rectangular flat-bottomed vessels with pierced outside corner lugs. One sherd from the 96 to 102 inch level has a suspension hole near the rim. There is considerable variety in rim form. The dominate type found in all levels is rounded (63), with the squared type second in frequency (32), followed by rims with an exterior projection (24), an interior projection (21), an angular sloping lip top (5), a Λ shaped lip top (3), flat oval thumb impressions at intervals (2) and a bulbous lip (1). See Figure 1, 1-7, 9 for profiles of these types. Among the basal sherds recovered are 10 flat-bottomed fragments and one with a rounded bottom.

Included in the collection are three sherds found as deep as 60 inches that are similar to the griddle previously reported from Kukulik (Geist and Rainey, 1936, p. 165). Also in the collection, from the 90 to 96 inch level is a small complete lamp with a handle, resembling one illustrated by Geist and Rainey (1936, Pl. 39, 5). Fragments of the large rectangular lamp type were found from the surface to a depth of 66 inches. These finds are represented by 23 sherds, each of which has a section of the wick ledge intact. There is an additional lamp form

present not previously reported from St. Lawrence Island. This type has knobs within the bowl a short distance from the rim and is from the 18 to 24 inch level; it will be considered more fully later.

PREVIOUS KUKULIK COLLECTIONS

The descriptions that follow are primarily of ware excavated from the upper three feet of the Kukulik midden by Geist during 1934 and 1935 (Geist and Rainey, 1936, pp. 47-9). These layers would, for the most part, date approximately from 1700 to 1880 A.D. Sherds in this category have been examined for evidence of surface treatment and vessel form. In this group of 6500 sherds were 60 which merit consideration. The balance of the sherds are like those just described from Kukulik.

Seven sherds bear paddled corrugations on the outer surface. These markings were probably made with a paddle similar to the one illustrated by Collins (1937, Pl. 47, 17) from an Old Bering Sea site at Gambell on St. Lawrence Island. All of these sherds are sand tempered and are black or buff and black throughout (Pl. 1, 8).

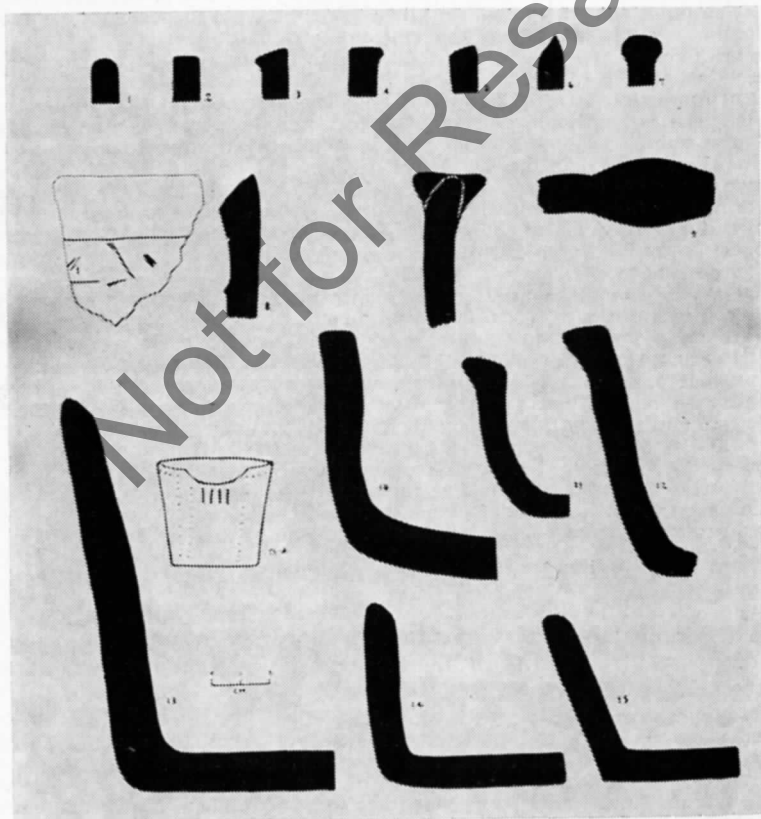


Figure 1: Kukulik Pottery Profiles

Three sherds in the upper levels of Kukulik and two others from Miyowagh (a Gambell, St. Lawrence Island, Old Bering Sea site which is much older than the ware under consideration) have been impressed with a flat stick. The markings on different sherds range from 5 to 10 mm. in width and have squared ends. Individual impressions are from 2.5 to 5 cm. in length and are sometimes confused, one mark being placed on top of another (Pl. 1, 9, 10).

The one comb marked sherd was impressed with a two-tined comb that was drawn parallel to the rim to form short lines. The designs appear to run in vertical series, but the smallness of the sherd makes this uncertain (Pl. 1, 7).

Four sherds have a horizontal line decoration near the vessel rim. Two of these have a single continuous line (Pl. 1, 2), one a pair of discontinuous lines, and a single sherd has a broad band, approximately 3 cm. wide, of very short, fine lines which are horizontal to the rim. One other sherd of this same general type has two horizontal lines, each 4 mm. wide, that are parallel to the rim (Pl. 1, 1).

Ten rim sherds have oval flattened impressions at intervals along the rim lip. These impressions were apparently made with the thumb and spread the lip outward and inward (Fig. 1, 9), except for one specimen which spreads only outward. Two other rim sherds have a row of dots on the top, one has a groove around the rim top, and another has a line around the top of the rim.

In addition to the hundreds of sherds with pierced suspension lugs, ten have suspension holes near the vessel rim; three others have a suspension hole running diagonally through the top of the rim and terminating on the outer surface. There are two pot appendages that look like lugs around which suspension cords could be lashed (Pl. 1, 3, 4).

An interesting form of lamp was noted repeatedly. It is the round, wide-mouthed, conical bottomed variety, but unfortunately most of the sherds are relatively small. Twelve sherds of this lamp form have knobs which are consistently near the rim on the inside of the lamp bowl (Pl. 1, 14), and in one case two knobs are present on a single sherd (Pl. 1, 13). Toward the center of the bowl of one sherd is a wick ledge; another has a wick ledge continuing from the knob. One aberrant specimen has a crescent-shaped wick ledge terminating in a knob (Pl. 1, 12). A lamp differing completely from the above form appears to be sad iron shaped.

Deserving comment are four complete or nearly complete vessels from Kukulik, no specific data having been noted. The first of these (Fig. 1, 10) has a rounded bottom and almost straight sides. The second random vessel is small (Fig. 1, 11) with a slightly rounded bottom and sides with a slight flare and pinched out rim. It is possible that these containers are older than the flat-bottomed pots. One vessel of unknown St. Lawrence Island origin has a flat-bottom and slightly flaring sides (Fig. 1, 15). Another random Kukulik vessel (Fig. 1, 12) has slightly flaring sides, probably a flat-bottom, and a row of dots around the top of the rim. A large drip pot from St. Lawrence is decorated with several series of dots and four flat-stick impressions (Fig. 1, 13). On the outer surface near the rim the row of dots continues around the pot while the vertical series of dots are found on the front to either side of the depressed rim.

SEWARD PENINSULA COLLECTIONS

The ceramic collections from eight locations on or adjacent to Seward Peninsula is comprised of 121 sherds.² Pottery was often the only diagnostic trait found in these sites. It appears that all of the ware is of relatively recent origin.

Teller The 15 sherds constituting this collection are all plain. The types of temper are sand and feathers (6 sherds), sand (5), crushed quartz (2), crushed quartz and feathers (1), and sand and grass (1). Two of the sherds have hair impressions on the outside but no traces of hair on the exposed cross sections, which suggests that a hair pottery smoother was used. These sherds are black or grey-black except for one brown example. All are crumbly and appear to have been poorly fired. The average thickness of the ware is approximately 11 mm.

One sherd has a suspension hole and another a mending hole. All the specimens are quite small, and consequently no details of vessel size and shape are available. There are three rim forms: those with a squared lip (4), squared with an outward bulge (3) and squared with an outward sloping face (1). This ware was found in association with few other artifacts, none of which were very distinctive but are suggestively late.

Igloo Point This site on the north side of Seward Peninsula at the mouth of the Buckland River yielded a variety of notable ware. There are 92 sherds, most of which are sand and grass tempered (71), but there is some sand and feather tempering (16), and rarely sand, feathers and grass (3), or sand alone (2). The surface color ranges from buff to red to black and in many cases the buff sherds have black cores.

The varied styles of decoration include the following: one to four horizontal lines near the rim (5), a single horizontal line with a row of dots beneath (6), two to four horizontal lines with a row of dots beneath (7) (Pl. 2, 3, 4), two horizontal lines with a series of short horizontal lines in vertical series below (7) (Pl. 2, 2), one or five horizontal lines with groups of short vertical lines below (2) (Pl. 2, 5), horizontal comb marks in vertical series (7) (Pl. 2, 9), cord-wrapped stick impressed ware (4 plus 2 questionable) with horizontal impressions in vertical series (Pl. 2, 6), horizontal grooves in vertical series (13) and 16 others which are probably of this type but too small to classify with certainty (Pl. 2, 10).

Three sherds with bottom sections attached indicate that there were flat-bottomed vessels, and a fourth bottom sherd has a slightly concave base. Nine of the vessel rims are decorated with short diagonal impressions on the outer lip (Pl. 2, 1). The vessel rims themselves are Λ shaped (5), rounded (5), squared with an outward flaring lip (3) or with a rounded inward flaring lip (1).

Chamiso Island This island is slightly north of Seward Peninsula in Kotzebue Sound. The eight sherds recovered were in a shallow midden deposit and were probably from the same vessel since they are quite uniform. The temper is sand and grass and the sherds range in color from red-brown to black. The sherds tending to be red have black cores. All of the unexfoliated sherds are 7 mm. thick and four have outside and inside ridges and grooves. There are no rim sherds in the group, but four basal fragments are from a flat-bottomed pot.

Cape Wooley is located approximately 40 miles north of Nome. This ware falls into three types, each of which will be considered separately. The first type, represented by 18 sherds, is plain and tempered with sand and grass (8), feathers and crushed quartz (6), sand (3), and sand and feathers (1). This pottery ranges in color from grey to black and includes a few brown sherds. The average sherd thickness is approximately 10 mm. Rims are rounded (6), rounded with an outward hook (1), and rounded with an inward bulge (1).

The second type, represented by 8 sherds, is decorated with short horizontal grooves in vertical series. This ware is tempered with crushed quartz and feathers (4), sand and feathers (2), sand and grass (1), and sand alone (1). The color varies from buff to grey to black with black cores. The average sherd thickness is 8 mm.

The third type of ware is represented by a single sherd impressed with a cord-wrapped stick. The cord markings run parallel to the rim in short horizontal series (Like Pl. 2, 6). The color is grey to black and the sherd is tempered with grass and crushed quartz. It is 6 mm. thick.

All three types of ware are associated with other artifacts which are of relatively recent form. Two large limestone beads and numerous sled shoes are the most diagnostic traits present.

Glacial Lake in Kigluaiak Mountains. This collection of five associated sherds includes two forms. The first, represented by 3 sherds, has short horizontal grooves in vertical series and is tempered with feathers and crushed quartz or

²This pottery was collected by the following: Mr. Otto Geist, Mr. David Hopkins, Mr. Charles Lucier and Dr. Froelich Rainey. The writer wishes particularly to express his appreciation to Mr. Lucier for making available the Igloo Point collection, the pottery paddle and pottery smoother. The collection by Mr. Hopkins is on loan to the University of Alaska Museum.

sand. The impressions on these sherds have small brush-like marks in them which appear as though they were made with a grass-wrapped stick. The color is consistently black on the outer surface and grey on the inner surface; the average sherd thickness is 7 mm. The two remaining sherds are ridged and grooved on the outer surface. The feather and quartz temper protrudes through the surface. These two sherds, approximately 10.5 mm. thick, are from vessels with rounded rims.

Cape Nome The 23 sherds representing the Cape Nome group were collected at two different times but from the same site. Four are plain and tempered with feathers and sand (2) or sand alone (2). They are either black or brown-buff in color. The average vessel thickness is approximately 11 mm. Two of these sherds are rim fragments. One is rounded and the other A shaped.

The second type has either short horizontal grooves in vertical series (7) (Pl. 2, 12), or one, three, four or six broad horizontal lines above short horizontal grooves in vertical series (4) (Pl. 2, 11, 13). This ware is tempered with sand and feathers (8), quartz and feathers (2), and sand and grass (1). The temper protrudes through the surface, and one sherd appears to have been whipped with a wad of grass. The sherds are predominately grey in color with black cores, but there are one or two buff and black examples. One specimen in the group is from a flat-bottomed vessel. The average sherd thickness is 9 mm.

The third type of Cape Nome pottery, represented by two sand and feather tempered sherds, has a distinctive check stamp decoration in which relatively small squares shaped like inverted pyramids extend in a single line. These squares measure approximately 4 mm. across and have a relatively narrow band approximately 1 mm. wide separating the checks (Pl. 2, 7).

Five sherds have outside ridges and grooves and are tempered with crushed quartz and feathers (4) or sand and feathers (1). This ware ranges in color from black to buff and averages 9 mm. in thickness. The type is crumbly and temper protrudes through the surface. One of these sherds has a rounded rim with diagonal marking on the outer surface.

The remaining Cape Nome sherd has four horizontal lines near the rim and two short vertical lines below, off to the side beneath the lowest horizontal line are short horizontal lines in vertical series (Pl. 2, 8). This black sherd is sand and feather tempered.

King Island From this island off Cape Douglas at the western end of Seward Peninsula come two lamps which are pertinent to the study of ceramics from the Bering Strait region. The first lamp fragment has a knob 2.4 cm. from the rim, and toward the center of the bowl are two shallow ridges and grooves. Indications are that this sherd is from a rather large conical bottomed lamp. The tempering agents are crushed stone and a few feathers. The rock temper is coarse and protrudes through the surfaces. The second King Island lamp is complete except for a small hole in the center of the vessel; this was intentionally made to "kill" the container. The same type of hole is present in a wooden bowl found with the lamp in a grave. The lamp is 30 cm. long, 25 cm. wide and 5.8 cm. deep. It is rectangular with rounded corners and steep sides which terminate in a conical bottom. The grey vessel is tempered with crushed rock which protrudes through the inner surface of the bowl.

SUMMARY OF THE WARE

The University of Alaska collection of pottery from the Kukulik midden on St. Lawrence Island is voluminous. Part of this ware was considered by Geist and Rainey (1936) in their report on the site; however, the bulk of the collection was not analyzed. Geist's unpublished ware from 1934-35 excavations and collections made by the writer in 1948 together give a large sampling of recent prehistoric ware. The vessel shapes represented are the following:

flat-bottomed rectangular vessels with pierced outside corner lugs

flat-bottomed drip pots with slightly flaring sides and a depressed rim section

small flat-bottomed vessels with straight or slightly flaring sides
griddles

small flat-bottomed straight or curved drip bowls

very rarely some form of vessel with a rounded bottom

There is some variety in vessel rim form but the dominant type has a rounded top. The most distinctive rim form has flat thumb-impressions at intervals on the top of the lip. Vessels rarely have suspension holes near the rim. The above containers are usually sand tempered and not commonly decorated, but where there is some form of surface treatment it takes the following form:

continuous or discontinuous horizontal lines

short combed lines made with a two-tined comb

corrugations (St. Lawrence Corrugated Type)

striations made with the side of a rounded stick

striations made with a square ended stick

horizontal and diagonal lines near the rim

The lamps are usually flat-bottomed, rectangular and have one or two wick ledges; rarely they are round, conical-bottomed with bowl knobs near the rim. Sometimes wick ledge and knob are joined. There are various forms of hand lamps, including a small type with a wick ledge at the back, oval ones with short handles, and rarely the sad iron style.

The following types of surface treatment are used on recent Seward Peninsula pottery:

one to four horizontal lines

one to four horizontal lines with a row of short dots below

two continuous horizontal lines with short horizontal lines below in vertical series

one to five horizontal lines with groups of short vertical lines below the last continuous line

comb markings

short horizontal grooves in vertical series (Seward Striated Type)

cord-wrapped stick impressions horizontally to the rim and in vertical series

single line check stamp (Deering Pyramid Paddled Type)

ridges and grooves

rim lips with diagonal lines on the outside

These designs were on flat-bottomed vessels with an uncertain type of side. The sherds are most commonly tempered with the combination of feathers, quartz and sand or grass with sand; however, inorganic temper used alone is also recorded. The names listed above in parentheses have been selected to designate certain recurrent design styles. The names are derived from the locality in which the form is most prevalent and have been defined in the previous descriptions.

COMPARISONS

The geographical and strong cultural connections between St. Lawrence Island and eastern Siberia have been amply demonstrated (Rainey, 1941, 1953), and therefore it is not unexpected that we find little beyond a few widespread vessel shapes to connect this pottery continuum with that of the Alaska mainland. The most characteristic recent St. Lawrence Island shape, the flat-bottomed rectangular vessel with outside pierced suspension lugs, is unanimously considered to have been derived from the rectangular soapstone pot of the eastern Arctic

(Mathiassen, 1927, Vol. 2, p. 105; Birket-Smith, 1929, Vol. 2, p. 104; Collins, 1937, p. 347; de Laguna, 1947, pp. 231-2) which entered Alaska quite recently and was reproduced in clay. This vessel form spread to Siberia and is found among the Chukchee (Bogoras, 1904-08, Vol. 1, p. 186). The second important vessel shape, the flat-bottomed drip pot with slightly flaring sides and a depressed rim section, is shown by de Laguna (1947, p. 232) to be a local modification of a similar widespread vessel form which lacks the depressed rim. The drip pot too is found among the Chukchee (Bogoras, 1904-08, Vol. I, p. 18) and is probably a recent development. The griddle, as demonstrated previously (Oswalt, 1953), was recognized in St. Lawrence Island collections by Rainey (Geist and Rainey, 1936, p. 165) and is also found at the Kobuk River site of Ekseavik (Giddings, 1952, p. 95), where it is identified as a lamp, and in Point Hope Tigara burials, where with reservations it is identified as a lamp (Larsen and Rainey, 1948, Pl. 91, 7). The small flat-bottomed, low-sided, curved or straight drip pots are not known from any pottery-bearing sites other than those on St. Lawrence Island and are apparently a local development.

Decorated pottery from St. Lawrence Island constitutes a very small minority of the total number of sherds (60 out of approximately 6,850 sherds). The St. Lawrence Corrugated Type is found in the Old Bering Sea and Early Punuk periods, sometimes in the upper levels of the Kukulik midden and is also rarely found in Kotzebue houses dating approximately 1400 A.D. (Van Stone, verbal communication). The flat-stick impressed ware is old if the two sherds collected by Geist at Miyowagh (Gambell site) are indigenous to the site, but I suspect that they might not be since Collins (1937) did not find any of this ware at the same site after extensive excavations. Square-ended-stick impressed ware is thus considered to be both late and uncommon. The same may be said of striations made with the side of a rounded stick. The one sherd imprinted with a two-tined comb appears to have the horizontal markings in vertical series which suggest the short grooves in vertical series characteristic of the Seward Striated Type concentrated in the Seward Peninsula region. The few line decorated sherds are similar to a type found along the Yukon River and at Hooper Bay Village, but since in the latter regions this motif is most often associated with other sherds that are line-dot decorated (de Laguna, 1947; Oswalt, 1952), again the parallel with Alaska mainland pottery is obscured. The line decorated sherds with an offset decoration and the small clay figurine (Pl. 1, 5) are unique in Alaskan ceramic traditions. The latter does, none the less, recall the molded figure on the bowl of an Old Bering Sea lamp (Collins, 1937, Pl. 58, 14).

The round, conical-bottomed lamp from Old Bering Sea and Early Punuk probably was first modified to contain knobs near the rim and then replaced by the flat-bottomed rectangular lamp with one or two continuous wick ledges. The latter lamp style is associated with the drip pot and flat-bottomed rectangular clay vessel with pierced suspension lugs. The origin of lamp knobs is obscure; they are found in the center

of the bowl in eastern Asian lamps and are present in various forms in eastern arctic lamps, but the relationships are indefinite (de Laguna, 1947, pp. 249-58).

The seven recent prehistoric pottery collections from Seward Peninsula unfortunately offer little to suggest the cooking pot shapes except that the vessels were flat-bottomed. It is probable, however, that they were like the recent pots found both to the north and south of Seward Peninsula; that is, they had flat-bottoms with straight or slightly flaring sides or else flat-bottoms with slightly flaring sides that constricted at the neck and flared again at the rim, a vessel form that is better known as the situla shape.

The two King Island lamps are important since the knobbed sherds are like the St. Lawrence Island specimens and the rectangular, conical-bottomed lamp is a developmental stage between the round, conical-bottomed lamp and the rectangular, flat-bottomed type with wick ledges.

The decoration found on Seward Peninsula ware is usually comparable to other Alaskan styles. The line-dot ware is a peripheral manifestation of the Yukon line-dot pottery (de Laguna, 1947, pp. 266-48; Oswalt, 1952). The most typical design style, Seward Striated Type, with diagonally line decorated rims, is present at a Kotzebue house dating 1550 A.D. (Giddings, 1952, p. 94), and the Kobuk River site of Ambler Island, which dates 1760 A.D. (Giddings, 1952, pp. 94-5, Pl. IX). This same type of striated ware with a scalloped rim is pictured ethnographically from Hotham Inlet (Nelson, 1899, Fig. 60) and from Point Hope (Mathaissen, 1930, Fig. 17).

The Deering Pyramid Padded Type characteristically has a single line of square impressions that are shaped like an inverted pyramid. This same type of decoration is present on a flat-bottomed pot with slightly flaring sides that was purchased by Gordon (1906, Pl. XXIV, 2) from the Bering Sea region. This type is present at the Deering site on Seward Peninsula (Oswalt, 1952, p. 28) but was not recognized to be a distinctive form of check stamp until it was noted that the checks run in a single line. Mr. Charles Lucier had an Elephant Point (north side of Seward Peninsula) Eskimo make the pottery paddle which is illustrated in Fig. 2 and which was obviously the type of paddle employed on sherds at Deering and Cape Nome. The seal skin pottery smoother with a wooden back and a strap for holding was also purchased by Mr. Lucier at Elephant Point and is probably the type used on some of the Teller sherds that have outside hair impressions. I suspect that many of the so-called hair tempered sherds from Alaska were actually smoothed with such an implement.

Ridged and grooved pots are reported from Kodiak Island (Heizer, 1949, pp. 48-56), Hooper Bay Village (Oswalt, 1952, p. 20), the lower Yukon River (de Laguna, 1947, pp. 142-9), and St. Michael (Oswalt, 1952, p. 28).

The other designs are either rare or of relatively unknown distribution. Comb-marking has been reported thus far from recent

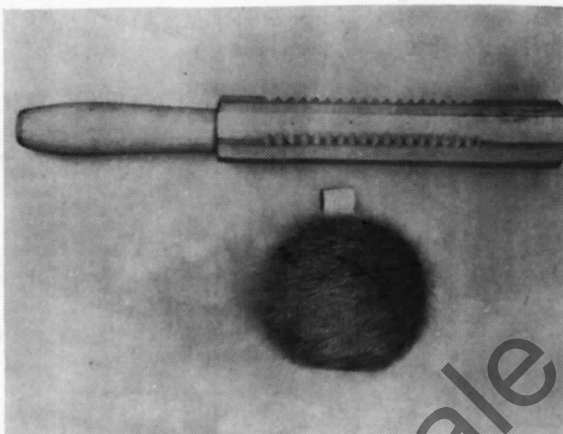


Figure 2: Pottery paddle and smoother made by a Seward Peninsula Eskimo. The paddle is approximately 26 cm. long.

St. Lawrence Island and the Kuskokwim Bay site of Platinum South Spit (Larsen, 1950, p. 180); however, it is quite possible that the latter "comb" striated ware is misidentified. In the University of Alaska collections of pottery labeled Good News Bay (where Platinum is located) is a striated sherd which is identical with the Hooper Bay Shell Striated Type (Oswalt, 1952). Cord-wrapped stick impressed sherds are reported only from the middle clay layers at Cape Denbigh (Griffin, 1953, p. 41), at Igloo Point on Seward Peninsula and at Cape Woolley.

Most of the few recent decorated St. Lawrence Island sherds are of the same general nature as those found on the Alaskan mainland and probably represent a small backwash from Alaska upon a basically Siberian pottery tradition, whereas recent Seward Peninsula pottery is an Alaskan development containing elements best known from the Bristol Bay-Norton Sound region and northern Alaska.

The typological parallels between Asian and Alaskan wares and even between wares from Asia and the United States are constantly coming to light and deserve serious consideration in any study of Alaskan ceramics.

Collins (1937) recognized that the check stamped pottery from Alaska was similar to that from a Japanese neolithic site and from various points in southeast Asia. To the Asian material Griffin (1953) adds sources in Mongolia and Manchuria, and Tolstoy (1953) lists occurrences in the Lena-Kolyma neolithic.

The writer and others have dealt at length with the unity between certain Japanese, Kurilean, and Kamchatkan pottery styles and those of the Bristol Bay-Norton Sound region of Alaska (de Laguna, 1947; Oswalt, 1952, n.d.), demonstrating that the situla shaped vessel decorated with horizontal lines and dots, split dots, zigzag lines, shell-made

striations, rim knobs, and horizontal ridges and grooves, is found in both Alaska and eastern Asia. There can be no doubt that the flow of these elements was from west to east since in eastern Asia they are old and rather widespread while in Alaska they are both late and localized.

The paddled St. Lawrence Island Corrugated Type and the stick-impressed wares from St. Lawrence Island and the Alaskan mainland are strongly suggestive of the possible paddled and striated forms present at the lower Lena-Kolyma neolithic sites and in the Baikal sequence (Tolstoy, 1953) and striated forms from a painted pottery Gobi site and an Eskimo site near the Kolyma mouth (Tolstoy, 1953). It will be recalled that on an occasional recent St. Lawrence Island sherd there occurs a flat oval thumb impression on the vessel rim. This impression spreads the rim outward and inward and leaves an area of central depression. This same type of rim also occurs in the late Jomon culture phase of Omori from Japan (University of Arizona collection), and interestingly enough in the same phase is found a ware with incised spirals and concentric circles which can not help bringing to mind the spiral and concentric circle paddled wares from Alaska.

Not previously recognized as a link between Asian and North American wares is the occurrence in Alaska of interior textile imprints, "probably in some cases whole twined baskets around which clay vessels were molded" (Giddings, 1952, p. 95). This is on one form of ware from an inland Eskimo site on the Kobuk River in Alaska and dates at approximately 1250 A.D. by a tree-ring chronology (Giddings, 1952). Fiber moulds are also reported from China and parts of the western United States (see Tolstoy, 1953). That one of the latter reports is from an ethnographic source makes the comparatively recent Alaskan finds all the more crucial and suggestive of a connection with the western states and brings to mind the remarks of Wissler (1950, pp. 69-70) regarding the similarities between Eskimo-northeast Siberian and Mandan-Hidasta pottery techniques.

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Department of Anthropology
University of Alaska
College, Alaska

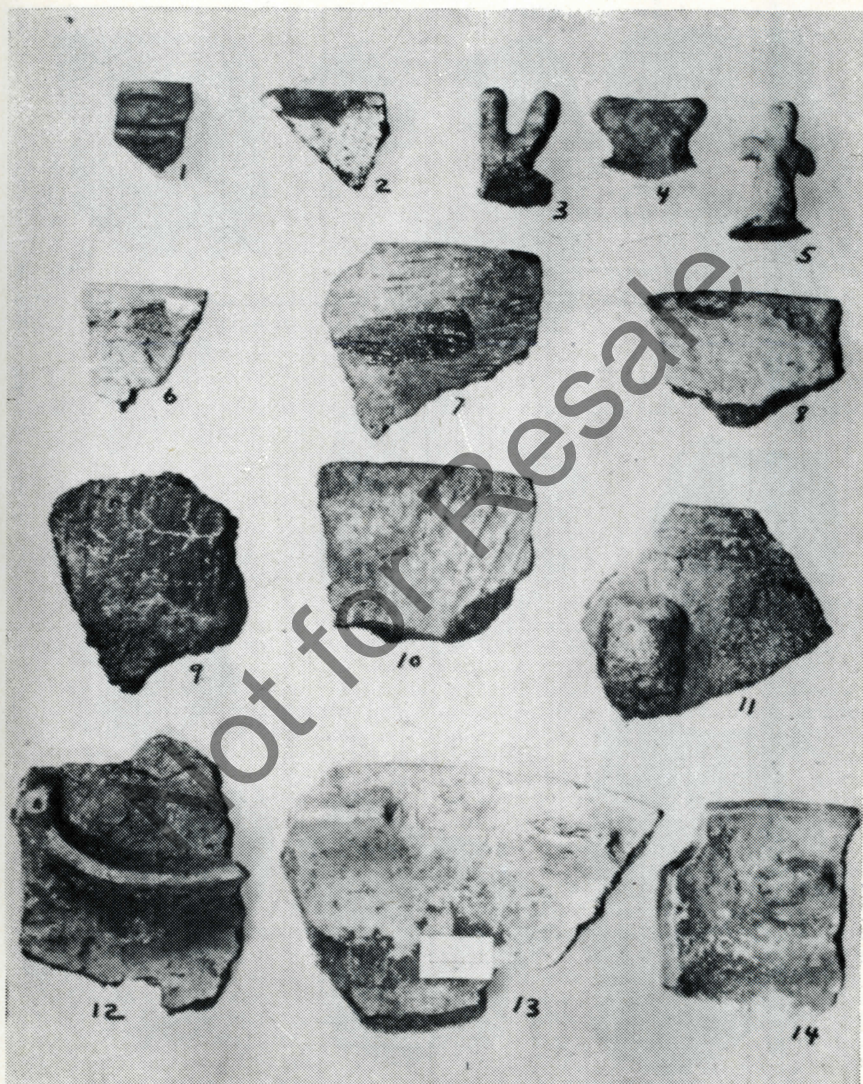


Plate 1: Sherds from Kukulik, St. Lawrence Island, Alaska



Plate 2: Decorated Sherds from Seward Peninsula, Alaska