

# ART TO ZOO

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## Of Kayaks and Ulus: The Bering Sea Eskimo Collection of Edward W. Nelson, "The Man Who Collected Worthless Things"

To the Alaskan Eskimos among whom he lived, this man was a puzzlement, if not downright crazy. Traveling by dog sled across the frozen tundra, he risked his life at every turn—and for what purpose? To collect boots, parkas, dishes, tools, and other humble objects used by the Eskimos in their daily existence. They could not understand why he collected as he did; and so they called him, "the man who collected worthless things."

But from another point of view, the actions of this man—named EDWARD W. NELSON—are totally understandable and, in fact, of great significance. To *anthropologists*, scientists who study human cultures, Edward Nelson stands out, even today, as one of the earliest and finest ethnographers and collectors in the field of natural science.

Nelson went to the Bering Sea area of Alaska just a little over 100 years ago, in 1877, and stayed until 1881. The Assistant Secretary of the Smithsonian Institution, Spencer Baird, had arranged for Nelson's job as a weather observer for the U.S. Army Signal Corps in the newly acquired Alaskan territory. As Baird had hoped, Nelson soon saw the opportunity for collecting for the Smithsonian among the area's native people and began to do so with enormous energy and singleness of purpose. On July 3, 1878, Nelson wrote to Baird informing him that shipment had been made of "fifteen (15) boxes and cases of specimens per the Alaska Company's steamer." He continued to make such shipments and, in just three years' time, amassed the greatest collection of Bering Sea Eskimo materials ever assembled, sending back to the Smithsonian Institution over 10,000 objects illustrating all aspects of Eskimo technology, art, and culture, as well as photographs and drawings, myths and folktales.

And besides *collecting* all these materials, Nelson also documented them, explaining in detail how each object was used. He was an astute observer and took copious notes. Later he wrote a 500-page report, *The Eskimo About the Bering Strait*, published by the Smithsonian's Bureau of American Ethnology in 1899. The sum total of his collection and its documentation now resides in the Smithsonian's National Museum of Natural History.

Nelson's work in Alaska is significant not only for its comprehensive thoroughness but also because of its timing. His research was undertaken at a time when the life of the Eskimo had yet to be changed appreciably by contact with the white man. Shortly after this time, missionary schools and the Alaskan gold rush would alter traditional Eskimo beliefs, customs, and technology for good. At the Smithsonian, large and comprehensive collections such as Nelson's allow all of us today to understand whole cultures whose ways of life have vanished.

The following lesson is designed to give you and your students a chance to study and learn from a great ethnological collection: the late 19th century Bering Sea Eskimo materials of Edward W. Nelson.

### Lesson Using Objects and Other Materials from the Nelson Collection

#### 1. Worksheet Activity

Using an opaque projector, show the six numbered mystery photographs to your students. Do not tell the children anything about the objects in the photographs ahead of time\*—

\*The objects are: (1) a fur parka, (2) a wooden bowl with painted decoration, (3) a kayak model made of skins stretched over a wooden frame, (4) a dart, (5) earrings, and (6) a wooden pipe.

but give them time to study each picture carefully as it is projected. Then on a worksheet like the one shown here, have each child write down his or her own answers to these three questions about each object:

- What is it?
- What is it made from?
- How is it used?

(Be sure to tell the children that it's alright to guess at answers they're not sure of; later, when they have more information to go on, they can return to the worksheet and revise their answers if necessary.)

#### WORKSHEET

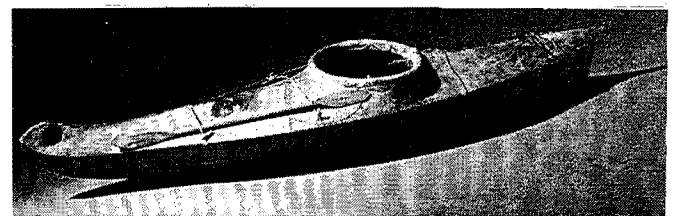
Object	1	2	3	4	5	6
Sketch of object						
What is it?						
What is it made from?						
How was it used?						



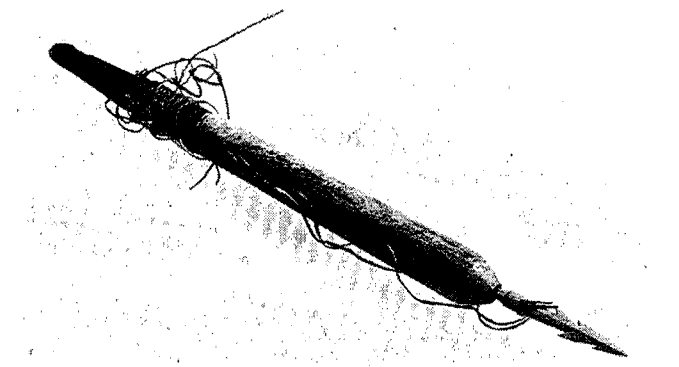
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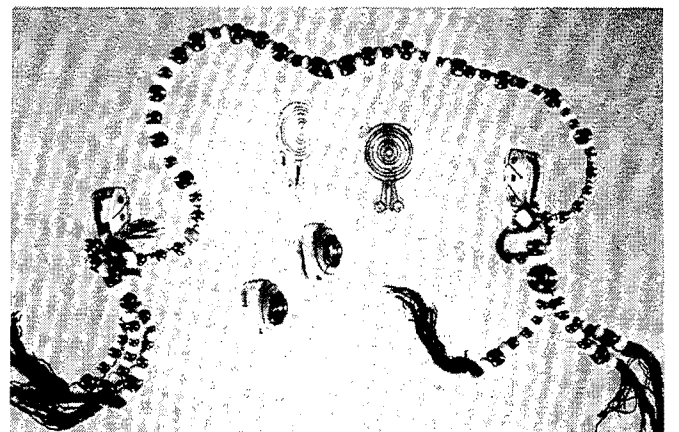
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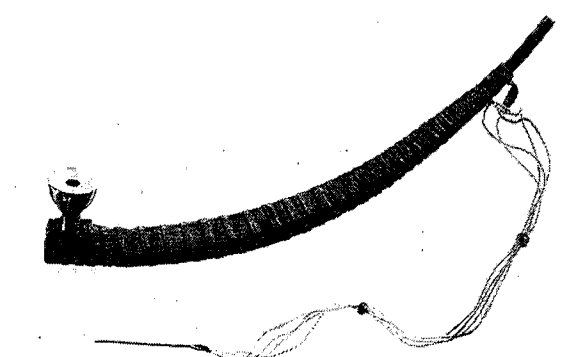
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2. Class Discussion

Now solely from what they have just seen in the photographs, what guesses can the students make about the people who made and used these objects? For example, the children might conclude that the people:

- lived in a cold climate
- got at least some of their food by hunting
- had leisure time for relaxation (smoking)
- were skilled craftsmen
- were fond of beauty in that they decorated everyday things
- were fond of personal adornment
- lived where there was water
- traveled by boat.

Record on the chalkboard these or any other conclusions the children might come up with, and next to each conclusion, write down which of the six objects provided the clue that led to that particular answer. For example: For the conclusion that the people lived in a cold climate, the clue would be the furry, hooded coat, or *parka*.

3. More Discussion

Next, tell students that the objects, which now belong to the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, D.C., are part of a huge collection of Alaskan Eskimo materials amassed by one man—Edward W. Nelson—over a period of three years (1878–1881). Share with the children your information about Nelson and his reasons for going to Alaska. Then ask the youngsters to try to figure out what else, besides objects, Nelson could have brought back to the Smithsonian to tell about the Eskimo. With some help from you, the children should come up with something like the following list:

- photographs
- drawings
- language notes
- written accounts of what he saw (field notes and journals)
- written accounts of stories he heard (myths and folktales).

Of these items, the children will probably be least likely to think of the myths and tales—so have them consider for a moment what things besides objects an anthropologist studying our own culture would collect to tell about us. The kids probably will think of books and magazines, among other things. Now ask: Did the Eskimos have a written language? No, they did not.

Well then, since they had no written language, and therefore no books or magazines, how could they learn about their culture and their past? The answer is through oral *tradition* whereby stories, or *folktales and myths*, were passed down from generation to generation by word of mouth.

In every Eskimo village, there were storytellers who knew the myths and folktales by heart. At village gatherings on long winter evenings, the people would listen to these stories time after time without ever growing tired of them. The art of a good storyteller was much appreciated by the Eskimo for reasons beyond pure entertainment. Through words and gestures, the storyteller communicated the values and beliefs, the history and the hopes, of his people. Some of the folktales explained the universe, how the earth, sun, moon, and stars came to be; others contained lessons about standards of conduct. To young and old alike, the Eskimo myths and folktales served as a reminder that people must abide by certain rules of society in order to survive in a harsh, uncertain environment.

4. Reading Assignment

A Folktale:

The Shaman in the Moon

A shaman (priest) from Kotzebue Sound told me that a great chief lives in the moon. He is visited now and then by shamans, who always go to him two at a time, as one man is ashamed to go alone. In the moon live all kinds of animals that are on the earth, and when any animal becomes scarce here, the shamans go up to the chief in the moon. If he is pleased with the offerings that have been made to him, he gives them one of the animals they wish for. Then they bring it down to the earth and turn it loose, after which its kind become numerous again.

The shaman who told me this story said he had never been to the moon himself, but he knew a shaman who had been there. He had been up only as high as the sky. He went up that high by flying like a bird. He found that the sky was a land like the earth, only that the grass grew hanging downward and was filled with snow. When the wind blows up there, it rustles the grass stems, loosening particles of snow which fall down to earth as a snowstorm.

When the shaman was up near the sky, he saw a great many small, round lakes in the grass. These lakes shine at night to make the stars. The people of Kotzebue Sound also say that the north wind is the breath of a giant. When the snow falls it is because the giant is building himself a snow house and the particles are flying from his snow shovel. The south wind is the breath of a woman living in the warm southland.

5. Thought and Meaning

After they have read “The Shaman in the Moon,” have students first *tell the story again* in their own words and then *answer the following questions* about it:

- What clues does this story give us about the weather and climate in the land of the Bering Sea Eskimo?
- What clues can you find in this narrative about how the Eskimos explained natural events, such as snowstorms, the stars, and the wind?
- What else have you learned from this story about the Bering Sea Eskimo?



Eskimos from the Bering Sea area of Alaska. Photo taken by E. W. Nelson

From their reading, the children may conclude that the Eskimos were an imaginative people who believed in the supernatural and lived in a cold land, where there was a lot of snow, and where animals were very important. They may also get a sense of the Eskimo’s respect for nature.

At this point in the discussion, questions may arise about the role of the shaman and his power. The Eskimos believed that many spirits inhabited the natural world and affected a person in daily life—evil spirits, spirits of the dead, animal spirits, and even spirits of nonliving things like wind and water. These all-pervasive spirits had to be treated with respect if one were to lead a happy, successful life. Through magic and special ceremonies, the shaman knew how to get in touch with the spirit world and how to help control its influences—and this made him a very powerful and important man in his community.

If there is time at the end of this discussion, you might have the children create in poems and drawings their own versions of “The Shaman in the Moon.”

6. Portrait Photograph

And now, at last, everyone gets to see what the Bering Sea Eskimo really looked like! As you show your class the above photograph, ask the children what conclusions they can draw—*judging from the way the Eskimos are dressed*—about the land and its resources. Then have the students make a list of all the questions they now have, from all they have seen so far about the Bering Sea land and its people. For example:

- What did the people eat?
- How did they get their food?
- What kind of houses did they live in?
- What did their country look like?

Record this list on the chalkboard, and then have students read the essay, “All About Growing Up in the Land of the Bering Sea” (at right), with these questions in mind.

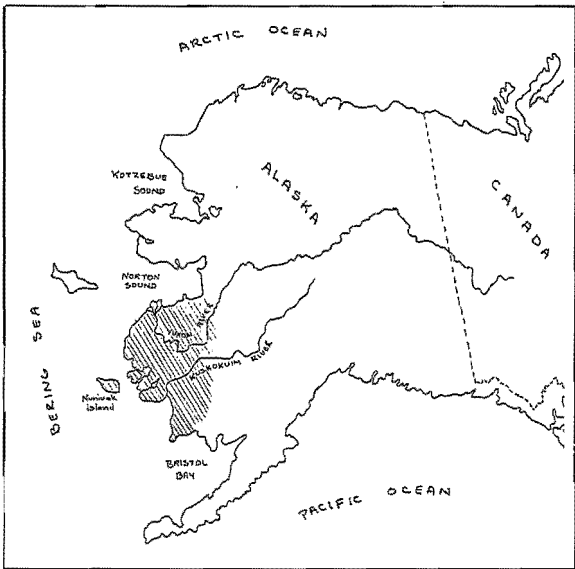
7. Reading Assignment: A Lesson-Within-A-Lesson

“All About Growing Up in the Land of the Bering Sea” is an essay designed for students to read by themselves. It is a narrative lesson-within-a-lesson, and works best when students read it at this point in the lesson plan.

8. Class Discussion on the Essay

When the children have finished reading the essay, ask them to go back to the questions on the chalkboard and see if they can answer each item to their satisfaction. If more information is needed to complete their answers, they may want to check some of the books and films listed in the bibliography at the end of this article.

Finally, be sure to remind your students that times have changed and so have the Eskimo people. Life in the land of the Bering Sea is very different today from what it was at the time of Edward Nelson’s visit! To emphasize this point, have the youngsters think of what sorts of objects—like rubber boots and electric lightbulbs—an anthropologist would bring back from the area to tell about the Eskimo in 1981. (Aylette Jenness’s book, *Dwellers of the Tundra*, listed in the bibliography, is a particularly fine source of information about contemporary Alaskan Eskimo life.)



Shaded area shows the land of the Bering Sea Eskimo

9. Writing Assignments

Finally, to give your students a chance to synthesize and interpret all they have found out about the Bering Sea Eskimo at the time of Edward Nelson’s visit, have each child choose and complete either one of these two assignments:

- Pretend to be an 1880 newspaper reporter writing an account of your interview with Edward Nelson about his collection and discoveries.
- Pretend you are a 20th-century travel agent writing a travel brochure describing a trip you are offering that will take the traveler back, in a time machine, to the Bering Sea area of a hundred years ago.

## All About Growing Up in the Land of the Bering Sea

What was life really like for the Bering Sea Eskimo at the time of Edward Nelson’s visit? The parts of the Nelson collection you have studied so far have given you clues that should help you answer this question. But by themselves, these clues are not enough. Now it’s time for you to see—and experience—this life for yourself. It’s time to climb into a parka and a pair of sealskin boots and come with us to the land of the Bering Sea Eskimo. Imagine yourself an Eskimo boy or girl growing up in this cold land about one hundred years ago.

*The Land You Live In: Its Climate and Seasons*

The area we’re talking about is a little over three times the size of the state of Massachusetts. The landscape is hilly right down to the sea. Most of the land is tundra, where only plants with shallow roots (like grass, moss, lichens, and shrubs) will grow. There are also swamps and forests in certain places, however, as well as many lakes, rivers, and streams to fish in.

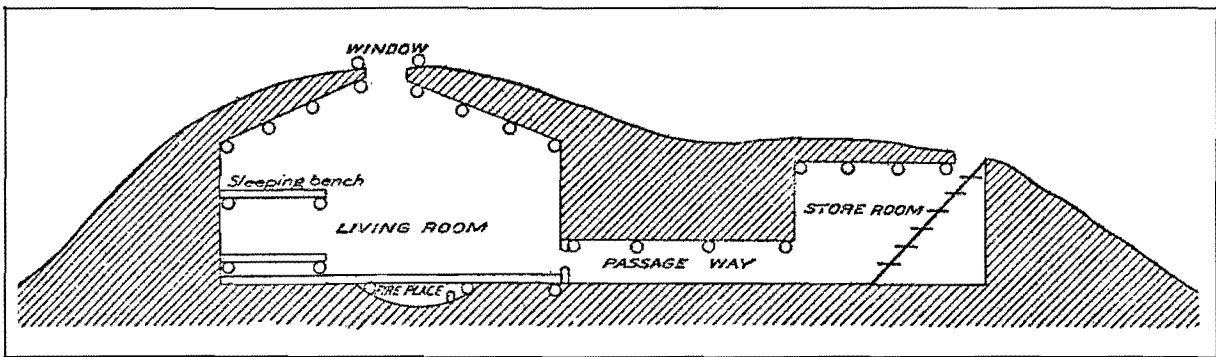
For much of the year, the climate is wintry and bleak. From early November until the end of April, the ground is covered with snow. For weeks at a time in the deep cold of winter, the sun barely rises at all. The months of November through March are marked by fierce snowstorms, high winds, and below-zero temperatures.

Spring, a time of lengthening days when morning meets evening in twilight, arrives full force in May. In the spring, a rainbow of wildflowers carpets the tundra. Herds of caribou (a kind of deer) come to graze on the tender young plants. The sea is alive with the splashing of walrus and seals, and many other animals—including wolves, foxes, bears, salmon, and geese—are also active.

Spring and summer pass quickly, and by October the snow begins to fall again. Land animals such as foxes grow white coats to blend with the winter landscape. In the ocean, seals make breathing holes in the ice as the water’s surface freezes solid. By November, the coast is locked in ice, and winter has returned to the Bering Sea.

*Your Home and Family*

There are many different groups of Eskimos living in scattered villages throughout this land of the Bering Sea—on islands, at the mouths of rivers, and along the coast. Your particular village is located on the coast of Norton Sound and has, all told, about 200 inhabitants.



Drawing of an Eskimo house

The house you live in is very different from the houses of ice built by Eskimos farther to the north. Ice will melt, but not *your* house. Your house (or *igloo*, as all Eskimo houses are called) has been built to last — from driftwood, sod, and pieces of whalebone.

The above drawing from the Edward W. Nelson collection shows the plan of a typical Bering Sea Eskimo house. Notice that the floor of the house is several feet below ground level and that there is a long passageway leading from the outside door to the living room. What would be the advantages of this design in a cold climate?

Inside, your house is cozy and warm. A sleeping ledge built against the wall is piled high with soft furs. Light and heat come from the flame of a large pottery lamp (or *quillig*) which is also used for cooking.

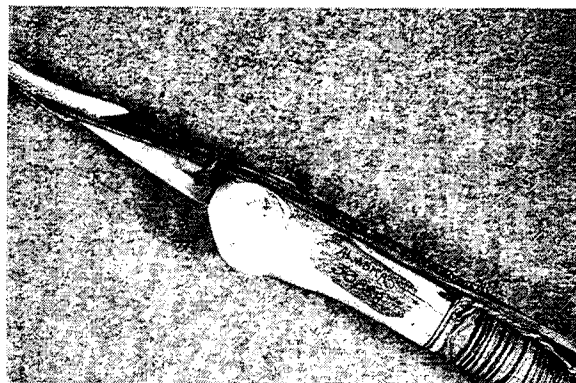
You share your house with your mother and father, sister and brother, probably your grandparents, and maybe one of your aunts or uncles and their children too. (This is what anthropologists call an extended family). Despite many hardships, everyone works together to survive and be happy in this harsh land.

#### Hunting on Land and Sea

Your father and the other men of your village are expert hunters—because they *have* to be! For all the people, survival depends upon individual skill. The animals they kill are used in many ways—the flesh and blubber, for food; the bones, for tools and house frames; the skin, for clothing, boat covers, and blankets. No part of the animal is wasted.

Dogs are important helpers in hunting. Each hunter has a strong team of huskies to pull his sled across the snow and ice. On the ice in the bays, the huskies sometimes help the hunter by using their sensitive noses to find the breathing holes of seals.

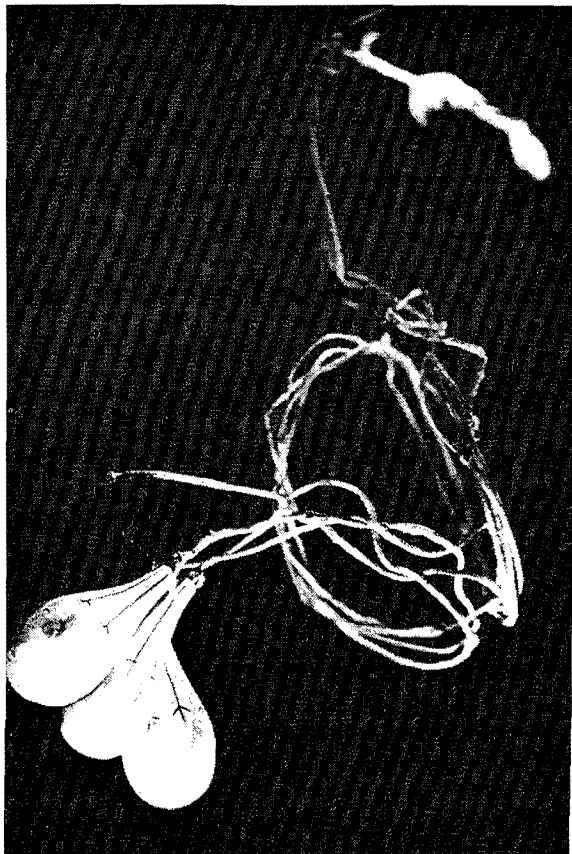
The seal and another sea mammal, the walrus, are important sources of meat, skin, oil, and bones. The men of your village have perfected different ways of hunting these animals in different seasons. In the winter, seals are harpooned through their breathing holes in the ice. The hunter waits by a breathing hole for a seal to come up for air, and then thrusts his harpoon, secures the animal, and loads it on his sled.



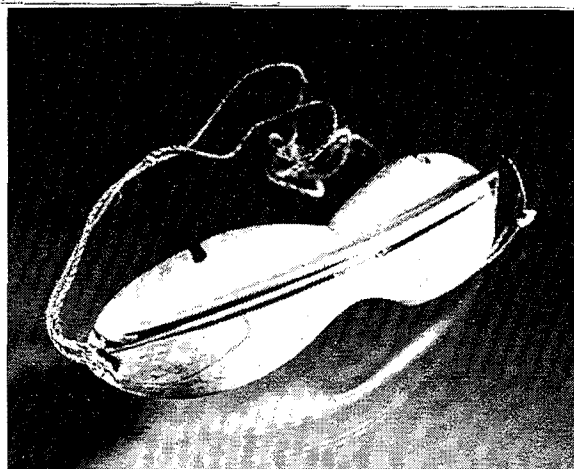
**HARPOON.** As this heavy weapon strikes home, the shock of the blow loosens the pointed ivory head from the wooden shaft. The hunter then grabs the line attached to the harpoon head and gives it a tug, which pulls the head at an angle, anchoring it in the wound. Harpoons were used by the Eskimos for hunting seals, whales, and walrus.

In the spring, seals are stalked while sunning on the ice, and walrus are hunted from boats. Migrating ducks and other birds are also captured in the spring, with cleverly designed darts and *bolos*.

For pursuing birds, fish, and other game over lakes and open seas, the Eskimo hunter uses a swift, lightweight boat called a *kayak*. Made to hold just one person, the kayak has a frame of wood or bone with a tight-fitting skin cover. The hunter climbs into a small opening in the top of the kayak and sits with his legs inside the boat. In this snug position, he can paddle swiftly over rough water without any danger of falling out.



**BOLA.** This weapon was made of ivory balls attached to leather thongs, which were tied together at one end in a feather-tufted knot. When thrown by its feathered handle at a low-flying flock of birds, the bola would entangle one or more of the birds and bring them to earth.



**SNOW GOGGLES.** Wooden "sunglasses," such as these, were worn by Eskimo hunters to protect their eyes from the glare of sun on snow.



**SEAL SCRATCHER.** When stalking seals sunning on the ice, the hunter would use this wooden-handled seal claw to imitate the sound of a seal scratching. In this way the hunter would trick the seals into thinking that he was one of them, and the animals would continue sunning and sleeping contentedly, quite unaware of danger.

Another important boat is the *umiak*. Although made of the same materials as the kayak, the umiak is designed along the lines of a large rowboat, to carry a dozen or more people. The umiak is used as a passenger vehicle and also, often, in whale hunting by Eskimos further to the north. On a whale hunt, several umiaks filled with hunters quickly surround a whale that has been wounded with a harpoon. Seal-skin floats attached to the harpoon drag against the whale and tire it as it tries to swim away. After the animal is killed by the hunters, the umiaks pull it to shore, where everybody gathers to cut it into pieces so that each family can have a share. As you work, you enjoy a special treat—fresh whale blubber!

When summer comes to the Bering Sea, it's time to move inland to fish and hunt. There, in a camp shared with two or three other families from your village, you are glad to be busy out-of-doors throughout the long, cool days. With your mother, brother, and sister, you search the plains and hills for berries, roots, willow leaves, and other edibles, while the men are off hunting and fishing for caribou and salmon. At night you all sleep together in a tent made of seal or walrus skins.

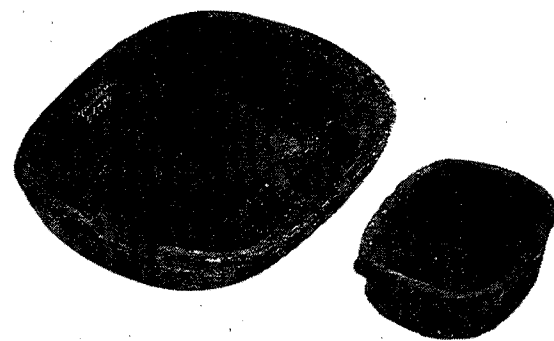
Food is plentiful in the summer around the Bering Sea, and what you can't eat right away is preserved, either by drying on racks or by soaking in wooden buckets filled with seal oil. When September comes and it's time to pack up your belongings and head back home to your village, you take this part of your winter's food supply with you.

#### Woman's Work

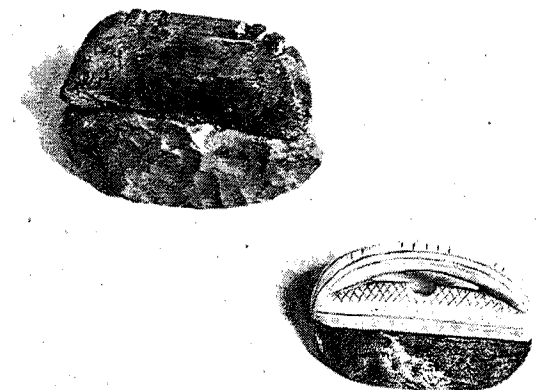
At home in the village, your mother is always busy in the igloo, cooking, sewing, and scraping animal skins. Usually you can find her sitting on the floor next to the pottery lamp. Because the lamp needs her constant attention, she always keeps an eye on it even when she is doing other things. By keeping its moss wick carefully trimmed and its oil level just right, she can maintain a fire high and bright enough to cook your food and heat the entire room.

When your father returns from hunting, it is your mother's job to skin his catch with her half-moon-shaped knife, or *ulu*, and to prepare the meat and skins. In a pot hung from a rack over the lamp, she boils some meat to be eaten right away. The rest she freezes or dries for future use.

Preparing animal skins, which are used in many different ways around your house, also takes a lot of your mother's time. Using a sharp stone scraper set in an ivory handle, she may work all day on a single skin to soften it. Besides scraping a skin, she may soak, bleach, stretch, or even chew on it to make it soft. Reindeer skins are used for blankets, rugs, and items of clothing. The intestines of sea mammals are scraped to make waterproof garments.

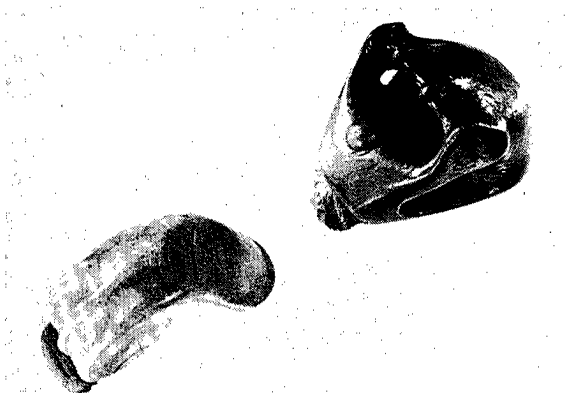


Pottery LAMP with stand

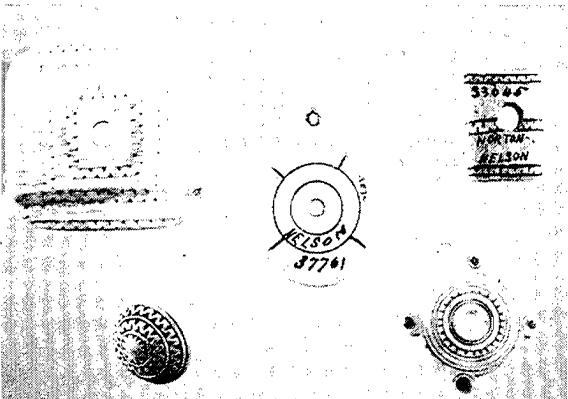


Stone-bladed ULU





SKIN SCRAPERS. Each one has been specially shaped to fit its owner's hand.



CLOTHING FASTENERS. Buttons and belt buckles were carved from ivory and decorated with simple designs.

Even though she has no printed pattern to follow and no sewing machine, your mother is an expert seamstress. Everything she makes is sewn by hand with just a needle and sinew thread. Her skill as a seamstress is very important, for without warm, watertight clothing, the family could easily freeze!

The clothing she makes for you consists of the following:

In the summer, you wear pants and a shirt of light yet warm animal skin, with the soft hair against your body. In colder months, you wear another layer on top—pants and a hooded parka, usually of caribou skin, with the fur facing out. The outer edge of your parka hood has a ruff of long, soft fur, which helps to keep your face warm. Boots and grass socks protect your feet. Caribou or sealskin mittens warm your hands. Everyone in your family wears this same basic outfit, with slight variations in style and decoration.

Besides sewing all your clothes, your mother also makes it her business to take good care of them. Every night she dries each item on a rack over the lamp and mends any worn spots. If your father's boots are hard, she may chew on them to soften the hide.

Yes, your mother is always busy in the igloo!

### Child's Play

You start your life on your mother's back, tucked inside the hood of her parka. There it is cozy and warm and you are happy. Dressed in a jacket and a little fur hat, you can eat and sleep whenever you feel like it and watch the world go by.

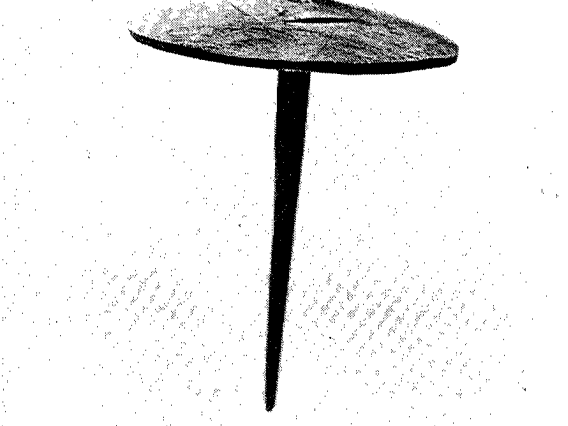


SEWING EQUIPMENT. Includes (from left to right): one needlecase; six bone needles of various sizes; one thimble; two awls, used for punching holes in skins; and one creaser, used for shaping soles of boots.

As you grow older and start to walk, you are given many toys to play with—balls made of caribou skin, bolas, small bows and arrows, dolls of skin and fur, and spinning tops of wood. By playing with these toys all the time, you learn skills you will need to know in later life; and this is very important, for there are no schools in your Bering Sea village. Everything you learn you must learn through play and from listening to and watching your elders.

Boys accompany their fathers on hunting trips from an early age. On these trips, they master many of the skills they have been practicing in play with their friends in the village—such as throwing bolas, spears, and harpoons, and setting traps. They also learn the habits of the animals and how to find their way around on the vast, open tundra, even in blinding snow. When a boy kills his first animal on one of these trips, it's really cause to celebrate. Now he's on his way to becoming a man!

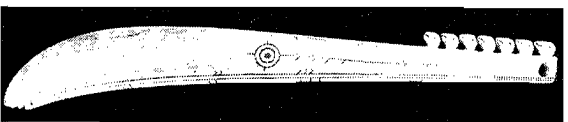
Girls, on the other hand, receive all of their schooling at home. Under the guidance of their mothers, they learn such "women's work" as cooking, sewing, preparing animal skins, and caring for children. When an Eskimo girl is still quite small, she is given a miniature lamp just like the big one that belongs to her mother. The girl learns to tend this lamp the same way her mother tends the big lamp, by trimming its wick and keeping it filled with seal oil, burning brightly.



WOODEN TOP. Top spinning was a favorite pastime among Eskimo girls and boys. The top was whirled between the hands and then let go. The object was to see who could keep his top spinning the longest.



Pair of DOLLS dressed in sealskin parkas.



SNOW KNIFE. In some of the villages Nelson visited, Eskimo girls used ivory knives like this one to draw pictures in the snow while telling one another riddles and stories. The handle of this knife is decorated with little animal heads. The tip of the blade is carved to look like a human profile; can you find the eyes, nose, and mouth?

Like all Eskimo children, you and your brother and sister are seldom scolded. You are free to play whenever you wish, day or night. Your games are much like those of children everywhere—tag, racing, cat's cradle, and dolls—but your toys are all homemade of skin and wood, fur and bones.

On special occasions in the winter, everyone in the village comes together for singing and dancing to the beat of a skin drum. On these long winter nights, you sit around the lamp, carving toys and sculpture and listening to stories like the one we read earlier of "The Shaman in the Moon." Then suddenly you are very sleepy, and it's time to return to your house and snuggle down for the night between soft fur blankets, while outside on the tundra, the moon and stars shine down on your Bering Sea village.

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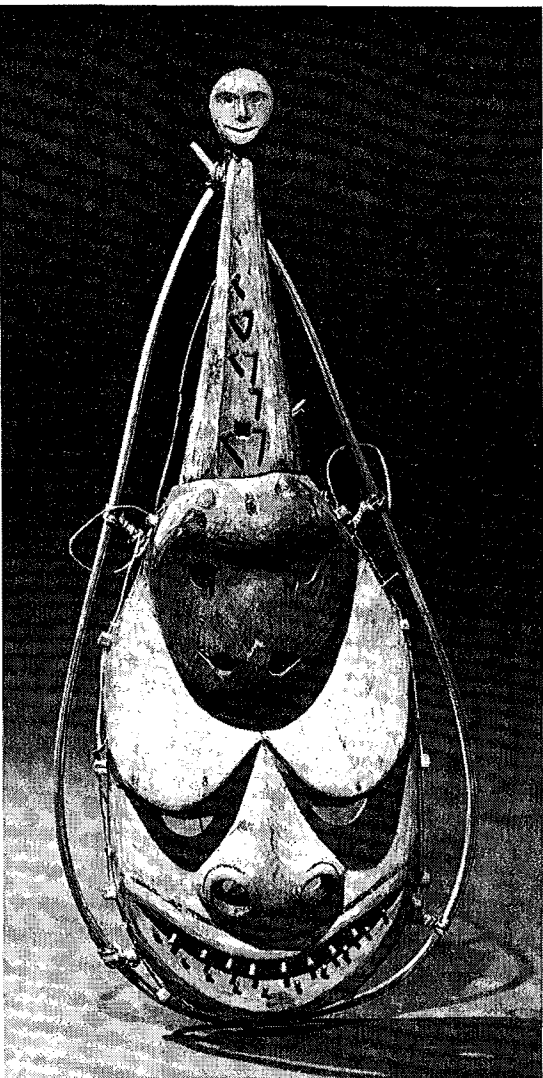
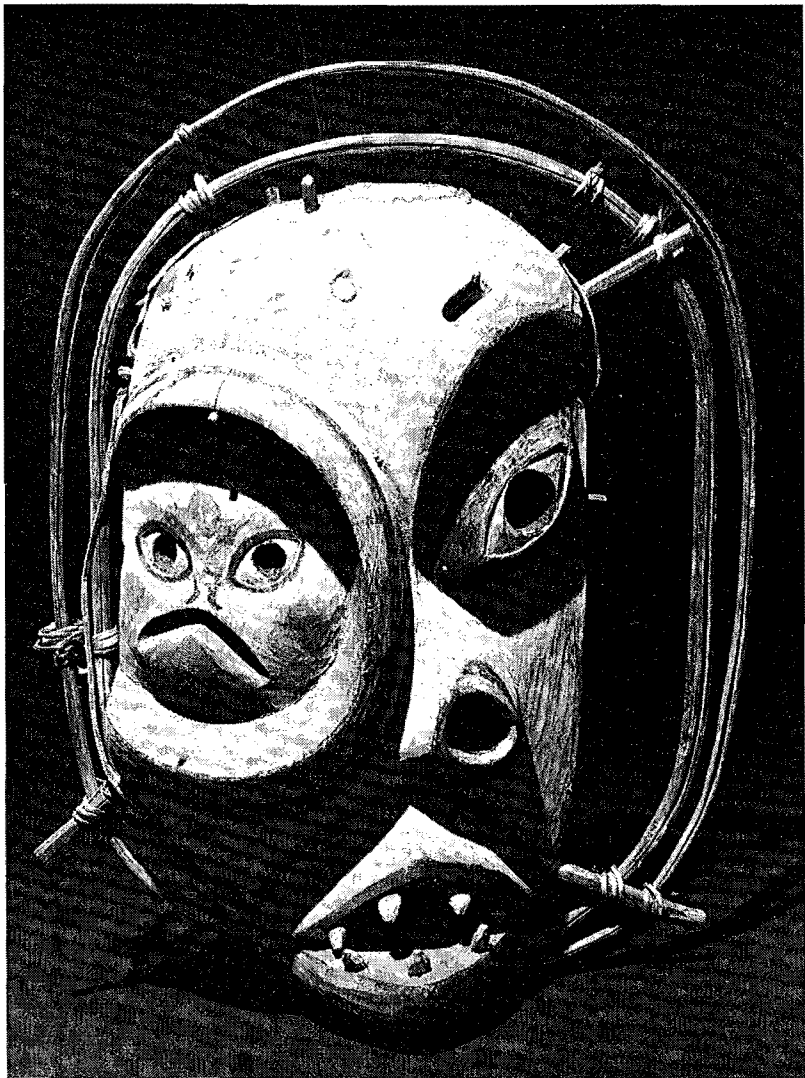
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THE NATIONAL MUSEUM OF AMERICAN ART and the RENWICK GALLERY  
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THE NATIONAL MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY  
THE NATIONAL PORTRAIT GALLERY  
THE NATIONAL ZOOLOGICAL PARK

*Art to Zoo* brings news from the Smithsonian Institution to teachers of grades three through eight. The purpose is to help you use museums, parks, libraries, zoos, and many other resources within your community to open up learning opportunities for your students. This is the last of four issues to be published this school year.

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- Anna Riggs, Chairman, Alaska State Council on the Arts
- Ruth Selig, Museum Specialist (Anthropology), National Museum of Natural History



7. *Face masks.* Carved wooden masks were worn in special ceremonies, when the Eskimos gave thanks to the spirits for bringing them luck in hunting and fishing. The men would hold the masks in front of their faces and dance energetically to the beat of a skin drum. In these same ceremonies, the women used smaller “finger masks,” which they moved with their hands while standing still and swaying to the music.

Word-Search Puzzle

- IGLOO  
BOLA  
ULU  
KAYAK  
UMIAK  
COLLECTION  
SHAMAN
- SEALSKIN  
TUNDRA  
CARIBOU  
WALRUS  
PARKA  
GOGGLES  
QUILLIG

I	L	R	A	S	Q	U	I	L	W
S	G	O	R	T	U	N	D	R	A
E	R	L	T	O	I	A	E	G	L
A	U	P	O	U	L	U	S	O	R
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S	I	N	G	P	I	L	A	G	S
K	A	Y	A	K	G	A	R	L	E
I	K	A	M	E	R	A	K	E	N
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PULL-OUT PAGE



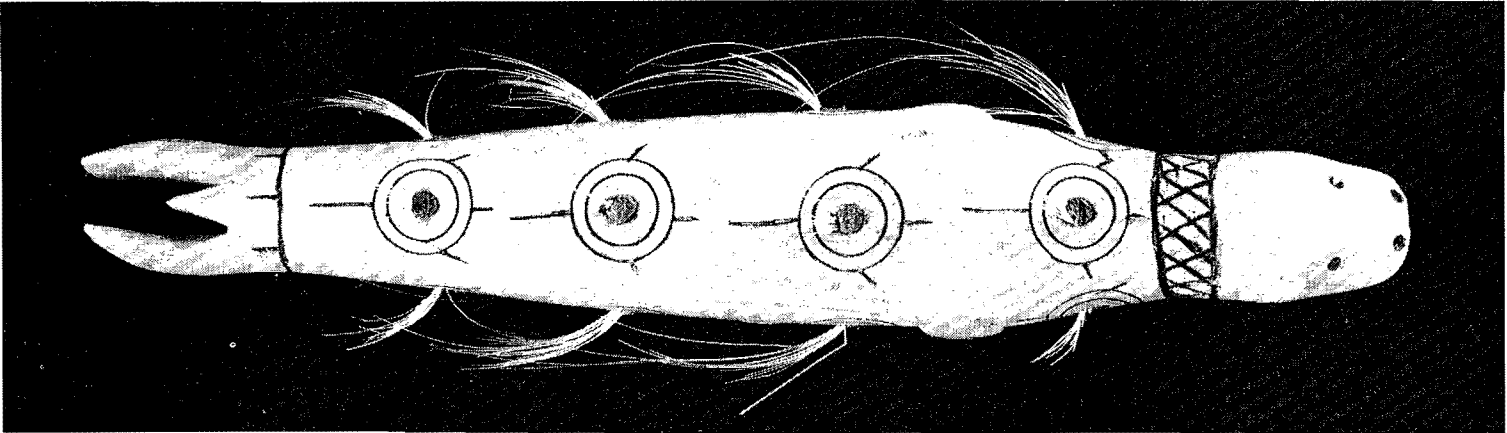
The Art of the Alaskan Eskimos

Art has always flourished among the Alaskan Eskimos, despite the hardships of their daily lives. And this was certainly true in Edward W. Nelson’s day. Practically everywhere he traveled in the land of the Bering Sea, Nelson found evidence of the Eskimo’s artistic talent and skill.

The men of the villages were expert carvers. Using simple tools, they created elegant masks, sculptures, and other objects from materials they had found close at hand — driftwood washed in by the sea; ivory from the long, curved tusks of the walrus; pieces of antler and bone.

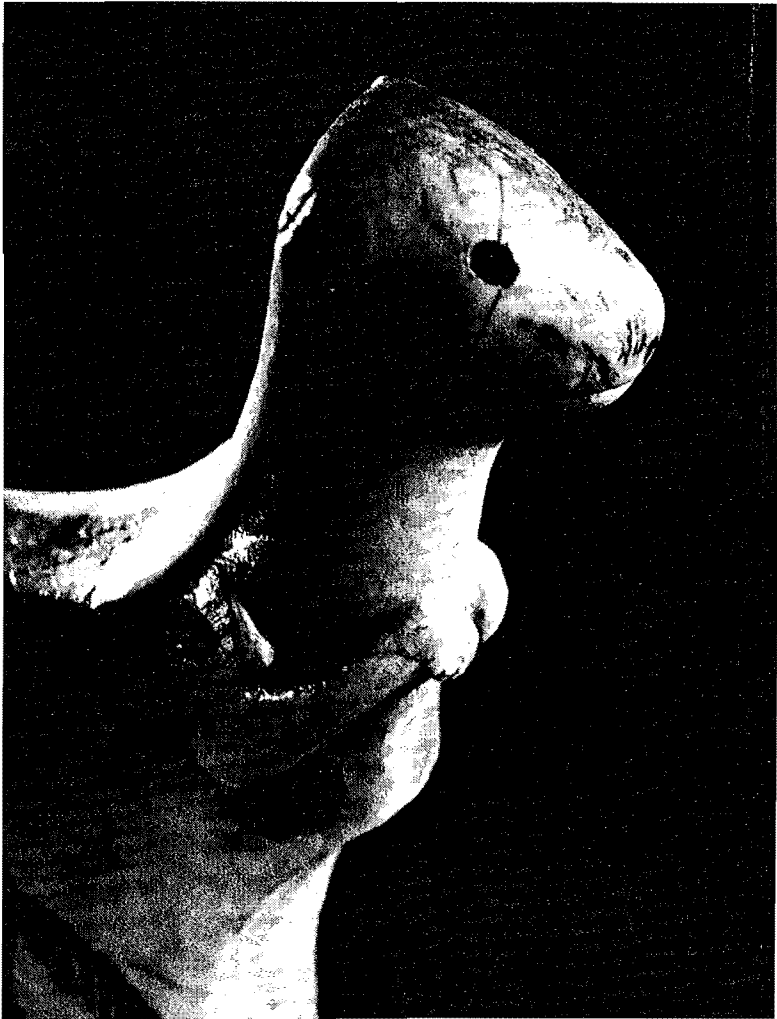
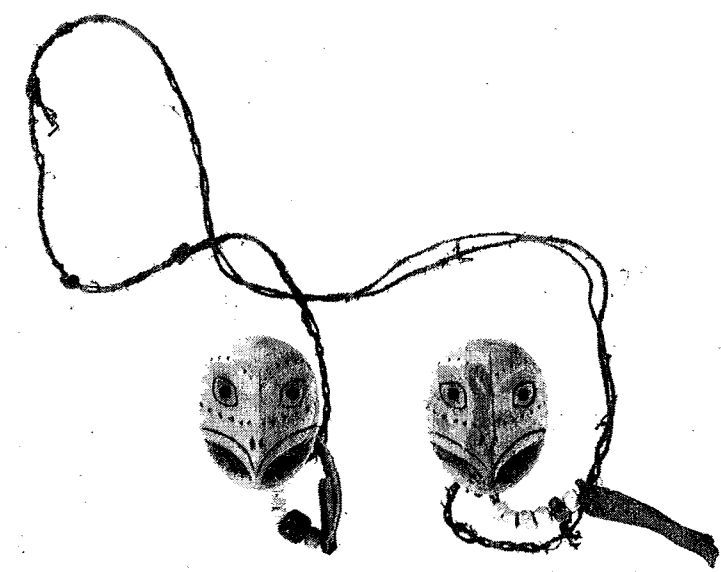
Many of the things they made served useful functions, like the ivory needlecase, below, carved in the shape of a seal. Everyday objects, such as workbag handles and dishes, often were decorated with human or animal forms or with simple geometric designs. In fact, the Eskimo seemed to take special delight in making humble objects beautiful.

Here are some particularly fine examples of Eskimo art collected by Edward W. Nelson in the land of the Bering Sea.

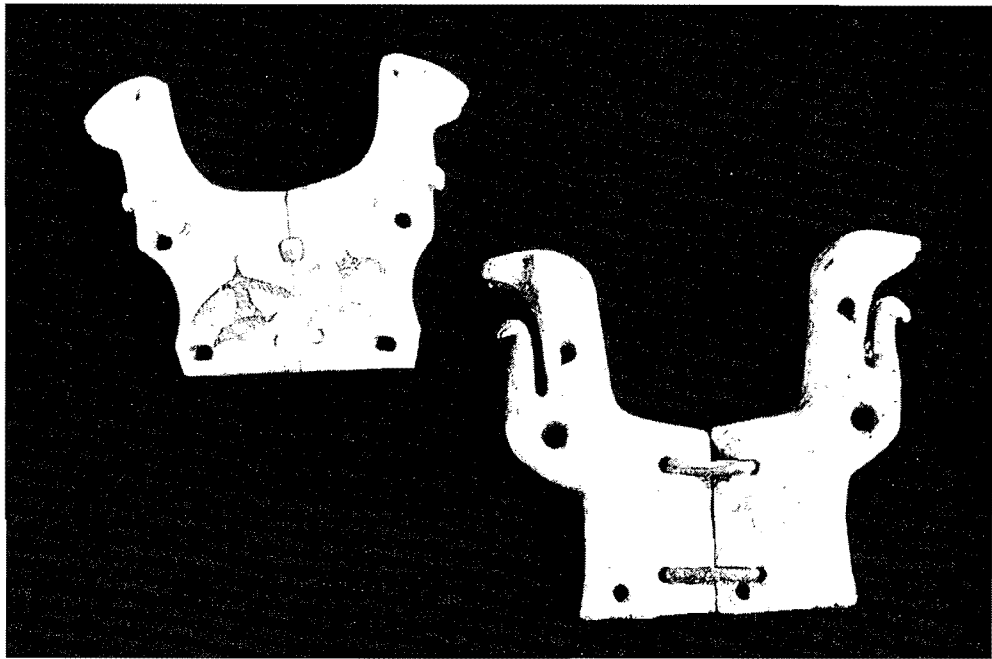


1. *Ivory needlecase carved in the shape of a seal.* Circles, lines, and dots were often used by the Eskimo artist to create simple designs.

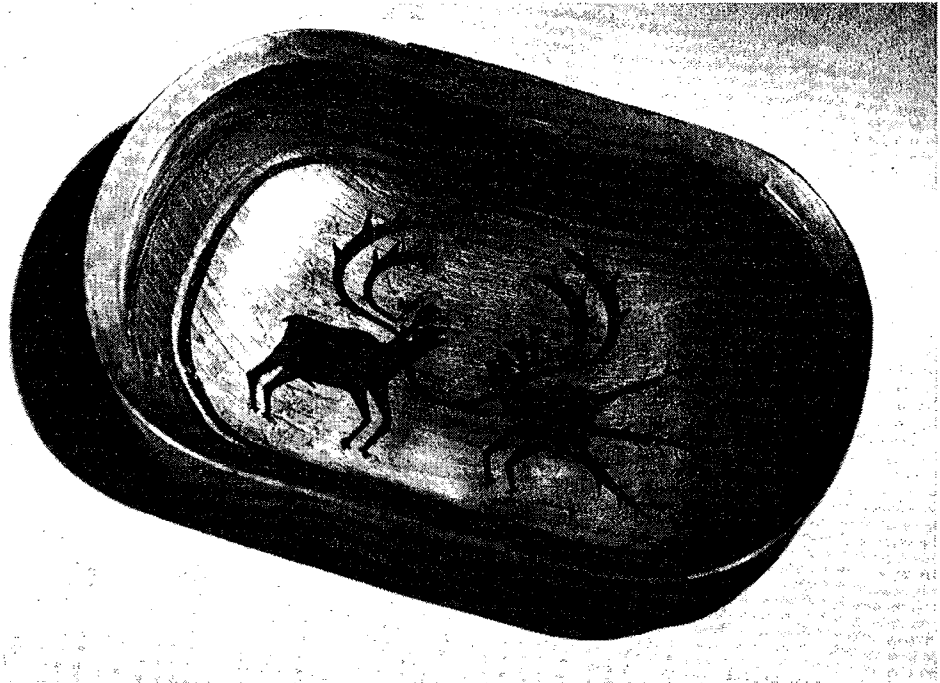
2. *Pair of ivory earrings, with beads.* Nelson reported that before working ivory, the Eskimo artist would soak it thoroughly in urine to soften it. After the shape of the object had been carved out, the design would be etched (scratched) into the surface, using a sharp-bladed tool. Black paint would then be rubbed into the lines of the etching to make the design stand out.



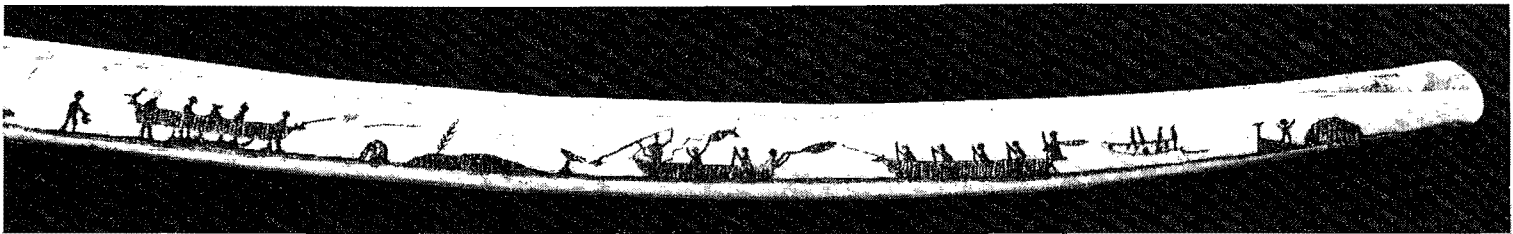
4. *Close-up of polar bear harpoon rest* (top left figure in photograph 3). Does this look like a polar bear to you?



3. *Harpoon rests.* Specially designed holders were used to keep harpoons and spears from falling overboard when the Eskimos were out hunting in their boats. The harpoon rest *at upper left* is carved in the shape of two polar bears standing back to back, and is etched with a thunderbird design painted blue. The other harpoon rest *at lower right* is also in the shape of two polar bears, but is undecorated.



5. *Bowl.* This carved wooden serving bowl is painted with a picture of two caribou. The animal *at left* is a real caribou; the one at right is a mythological representation.



6. *Drill bows.* Drill bows and other long, narrow ivory objects, such as workbag handles, often were etched with scenes from daily life. The drill bow *at top* shows a whale being hunted by Eskimos in their umiaks. Can you find the whale? The drill bow *at bottom* shows a party of white men arriving in their ship, coming ashore, and standing next to their tents. You can tell right away that these are white men because the Eskimo always depicted the white man in exactly this way: wearing a hat and standing with arms akimbo!

