

# DECONSTRUCTING THE AGLURMIUT MIGRATION: AN ANALYSIS OF ACCOUNTS FROM THE RUSSIAN-AMERICA PERIOD TO THE PRESENT

Kenneth L. Pratt

Bureau of Indian Affairs, ANCSA Office, 3601 C Street, Suite 1100, Anchorage, AK 99503-5947; kenneth.pratt@bia.gov

## ABSTRACT

Historical accounts describe the Aglurmiut as a Yup'ik Eskimo group from the Kuskokwim River area that migrated to Bristol Bay and the Alaska Peninsula in response to warfare with other Yup'ik groups and reportedly survived by allying themselves with the Russians at Aleksandrovskii Redoubt on Nushagak River. Variable, vague, and confusing, the accounts leave several key questions unanswered, such as: Who were the Aglurmiut? What was their original homeland? These are the primary questions with which this paper is concerned. The evidence suggests that the so-called Aglurmiut were survivors of an altercation at the former settlement of *Agalik*, near present Quinhagak on Kuskokwim Bay, who fled to the area of Bristol Bay sometime around the year 1750. This finding simplifies the story of the Aglurmiut migration while at the same time supporting its veracity.

## INTRODUCTION

Every human migration has a driving force behind it; in the case of the so-called “Aglurmiut<sup>1</sup> migration” the impetus was reportedly warfare between Yup'ik Eskimo populations in southwest Alaska (Fig. 1). Definitive details regarding the timing of the migration do not exist, but it is mentioned in the earliest historical accounts about this region, and indigenous oral tradition grounds the event in what is known as the “Bow and Arrow Wars” era. This period of internecine strife had its origins in pre-history, and the prevailing view is that it ultimately came to an end due to impacts tied to the 1838–1839 smallpox epidemic and/or the influence of Russian trading activities (e.g., Fienup-Riordan 1990:155, 1994:29; Frink 2003:172; Funk 2010:523). It is my opinion, however, that this warfare ended not only well before the smallpox epidemic but also prior to the establishment of Russian trade posts in the region, the first of which dates to 1819. I further believe warfare ended in the northern part of the

Yup'ik region earlier than in the southern part, where one seemingly well-attested battle may have occurred as late as about 1816 (VanStone 1988:91).<sup>2</sup>

At its root, the Aglurmiut migration is essentially a warfare story, one of many in oral and written accounts that imply warfare was endemic in the Yup'ik region during pre-Russian times. But such accounts should not be accorded validity without first subjecting them to critical analysis; to do otherwise is unscientific. Perhaps more importantly, to arbitrarily treat the large number of such accounts as a reliable indicator of the scope of indigenous warfare in the region is roughly equivalent to endorsing a dominant nineteenth-century social evolutionist perspective on “primitive” societies—the notion that the primeval state of man was war (e.g., Voget 1975: 255–257).<sup>3</sup>

My own perspective is that reports of warfare in the region, generally, are exaggerated in terms of scale. I instead think intergroup hostilities among the Yup'it were far less

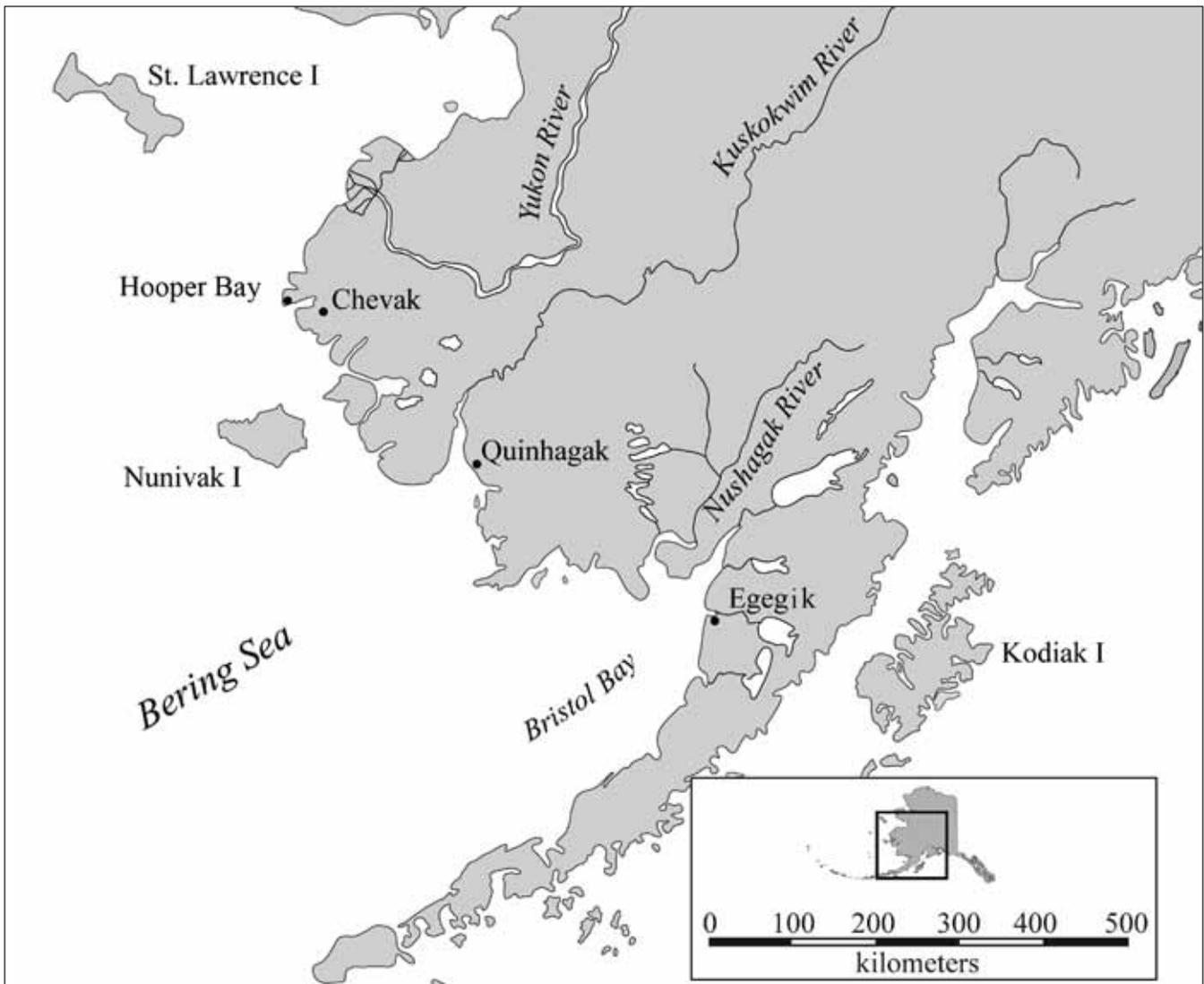


Figure 1. Southwest Alaska.

common and far more localized than other scholars have suggested (Pratt 2009a:269–276). My interpretation of the Aglurmiut migration relies on a similar local vs. regional level perspective.

### CONTEXT OF THE BOW AND ARROW WARS

The sheer volume of oral history concerning the subject makes it clear that Yup'ik peoples did engage in warfare;<sup>4</sup> some reported battle sites are sufficiently documented to either verify specific accounts or lend them substantial credibility. But just as we will never know exactly when such conflicts began, we can also never truly know what sparked most of them. As noted by Ann Fienup-Riordan (1990:153), however, “throughout western Alaska a single

story is repeatedly cited to account for the origin of warfare.” Referred to herein as the “eye-poking incident,” the story is very pertinent to the Aglurmiut migration. Fienup-Riordan summarized it as follows:

This is an old story, and narrators typically locate the incident in a village in their own region. According to tradition, two boys were playing with bone-tipped darts in the men’s house. One of the boys aimed poorly and accidentally hit his companion in the eye, blinding him. The father of the offender told the father of the injured boy to go ahead and poke out one of the eyes of his son in retribution. However, the father whose son had been injured was so enraged that he poked out both of the offender’s eyes, blinding him completely. The other father reacted by kill-

ing the first man's son. And so it went, the violence escalating and each man joining sides until the entire village, and eventually the entire region, was at war (Fienup-Riordan 1990:153–154).<sup>5</sup>

At least eight known locales in the region have been reported as the site at which the eye-poking incident occurred (Table 1, Fig. 2). Because none of the accounts are based on eyewitness testimony and the event they describe (if it really happened) clearly dates to precontact times, there is no reasonable justification for according one report more credibility than another (but see Funk 2010:538–539).

That said, the best-known version of the “eye-poking” story was published by Edward Nelson (1899:516–517) as the “Migration Legend.” He was told the story in 1880 by Lachar Belkoff, an elder of the lower Yukon River village of *Iqugmiut* [present-day Russian Mission] (Nelson 1880:42). In this account, the eye-poking incident occurred at the site of *Unglurmiut* (from *unglu*, “nest”), in reference to the nest of a giant eagle said to have been located on a nearby mountaintop (Hansen 1985:119–123; see also Pratt 1993). There are many other stories about this village (Hansen 1985:120; Nelson 1899:264), the tremendous size of which is implied by the name given to the watercourse along which it stood, i.e., “Thirty-Two Kazyga Slough” (Orth 1967:960), a reference to the number of men's houses (*qasgiit*) the site reportedly contained.<sup>6</sup> This detail about the village's reported size should be kept in mind when evaluating the associated migration story, in which the eye-poking incident led to a state of civil war between *Unglurmiut* residents. The resulting factions reportedly migrated to the following locales: (1) the village of *Qissunaq* (ancestral to present-day Chevak), (2) Nunivak Island, and (3) the Nushagak area of Bristol Bay (Fig. 3).<sup>7</sup>

According to the story (Nelson 1899:516–517), the Bristol Bay faction was subsequently attacked by a Koniag war party, which it reportedly defeated, and then by Aleut warriors from Unimak Island, who were victorious. Oddly, the surviving migrants are said to have “joined with some of their friends from Nunivak island and attacked the people living at Goodnews bay...killing them and burning their village.” They then built a village in the same locality (i.e., Goodnews Bay) and were living there at the time the Russians arrived in the country. The people reportedly “resisted [the Russians] for some time [but finally scattered], some going back to Bristol Bay and others... [to] Nunivak

island.” In other words, the parties that supposedly split from one another on the lower Yukon River due to intense internal strife later made amends and joined together as allies in war.

The story concludes with the following statement:

During the time of the migration from the Yukon all of these people spoke one tongue, but having settled at three widely separated places, their languages gradually became different, the people at Bristol bay and on Nunivak island being nearest alike in speech (Nelson 1899:517).

This story has been treated as the definitive account of the Aglurmiut migration by some researchers (e.g., Jacobson 1998:xii–xix), but the migration was first mentioned in Russian historical accounts sixty years before Nelson's story was collected. A review of other versions of the migration follows.

## THE AGLURMIUT MIGRATION

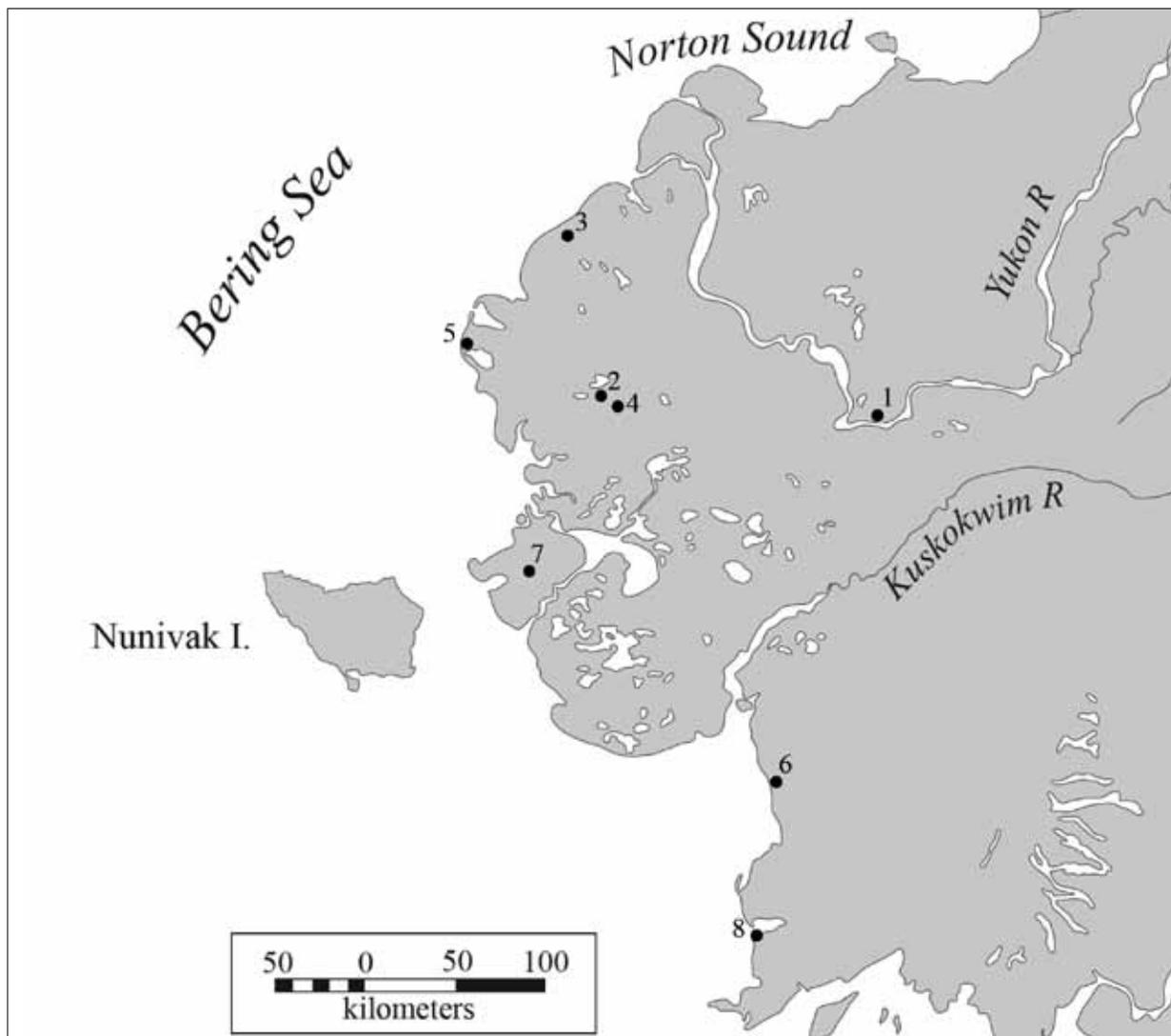
The name “Aglurmiut”—a modern Yup'ik rendering of what the Russians wrote as “Alegmiut” (Jacobson 1998:xvii27)—was historically applied to what Wendell Oswalt (1967:4) understandably described as “the most perplexing of all Alaskan Eskimo” groups (see also VanStone 1967:xxi–xxii). This group was first mentioned by Petr Korsakovskiy in 1818, who identified them as the “Alegmiut Indians” and reported that “they had rather a lot of conflict with neighboring peoples [who] have driven them from their real territory and now [the Alegmiut] reside at the mouth of Naknek River” (VanStone 1988:29–31). He also presented a description of the “Koingak Indians” (i.e., the *Kuinerraq* [Quinhagak] Eskimos) and described their village as lying at the mouth of Kuskokwim River (VanStone 1988:46–47). Korsakovskiy did not say where the “real territory” of the Aglurmiut was located. In the journals of his second (1819) expedition, however, the coastal inhabitants of Bristol Bay are referred to as the “Glakmiut,” which is presumed to mean the Aglurmiut (VanStone 1967:109, 1973:31), and said to be “constantly at war with [the] Eskimos living along the Kuskokwim River” (VanStone 1988:69n 46; see also Khlebnikov 1994:56; VanStone 1967:118–119).

Vasilii Khromchenko's 1822 journal noted that the constant migration of the Aglurmiut is:

still remembered by the old people, and constant war with other peoples had made them brave and

*Table 1. Reported locations of the “eye-poking incident.” Keyed to Figure 2.*

Site Number on Figure 2	Site	ANCSA Site Number(s)	Primary Source(s)
1	Unglurmiut (Lower Yukon River, about 20 km south-west of Russian Mission)	AA-11586 / AA-11587	Nelson 1880:42; 1899:328 (cf. Oswalt 1990:40–41, 228 <i>n</i> 1)
2	Kapuutellermiut (about 48 km southeast of Chevak)	AA-9626 / AA-10016	Friday 1983; George 1983; Nayamin 1983 (cf. Hansen 1985:171)
3	Kapuutelleq (about 32 km northeast of Scammon Bay [village])	AA-9382	Henry 1981, 1984
4	Englullugpagmiut (about 55 km southeast of Chevak)	AA-9722	Bunyan 1984
5	Naparyaarmiut (adjacent to Hooper Bay [village])		Phillip 1988
6	Quinhagak (east coast of Kuskokwim Bay)		Garber n.d.:1
7	Nelson Island (more specific location not mentioned)		Fienup-Riordan 1988:43–46
8	Pengurraraarmiut (on Platinum Spit, south entrance to Goodnews Bay)	AA-9951	Walter 1986



*Figure 2. Reported locations of the legendary “eye-poking incident.” Keyed to Table 1.*

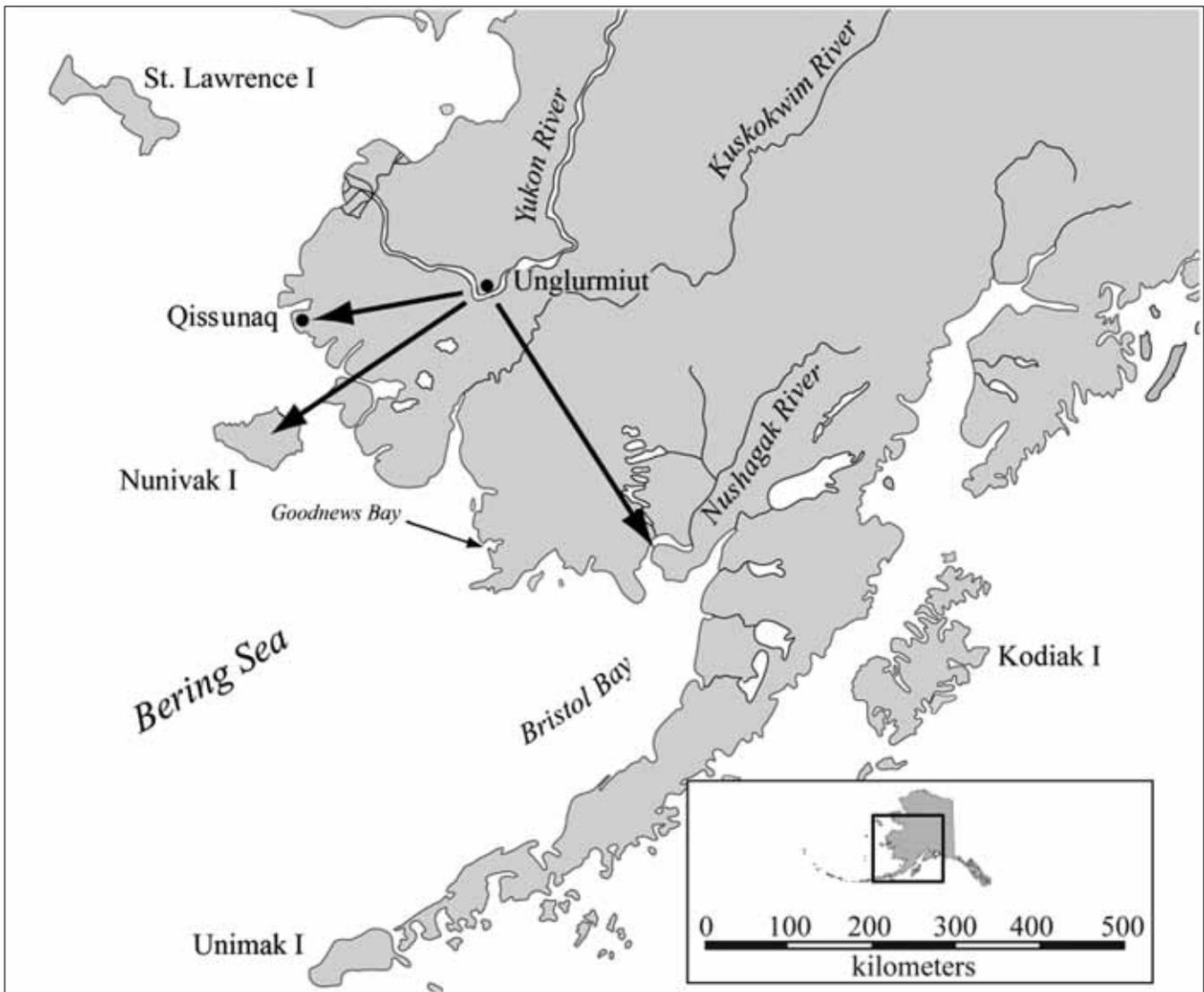


Figure 3. *Yup'ik migration routes based on the account of Edward Nelson (1899).*

experienced warriors, but had greatly reduced their numbers. Whereas once they had been dreadful, now they were persecuted and found refuge with Kolmakov. It would be difficult to determine their original homeland (VanStone 1973:53).

The “Kolmakov” referred to here was Fedor Kolmakov, who founded Aleksandrovskii Redoubt at the mouth of Nushagak River in 1819 (Black 2004:194; Dumond and VanStone 1995:4; VanStone 1973:8–10). He was apparently the first person to record the famous story of the eye-poking incident and the hostilities that ensued. Kolmakov’s account (Khlebnikov 1994:90) is silent about where the event occurred but indicates the combatants were “Aglekhumut” and “Kuskokvimtsy” (Kuskokwim Eskimos).

The next important Russian account concerning the Aglurmiut is that of Ivan Vasilev, in 1829 (VanStone 1988). He identified them as the “Agolegmiut,” stating that they originated in the Kuskokwim River area and took their name from their principal village, “Agolegma,” the location of which he was unable to determine. Based primarily on Vasilev’s account, later authors have described “Agolegma” as a “structure... [the group was] living in at the time of the siege” (Wrangell 1980:64) and as “a certain settlement or fortified spot” (Zagoskin 1967:210). Importantly, neither of those descriptions is supported by first-person observations, but both of them clearly imply a warfare association with the site. This underscores Vasilev’s report that hostilities with other Kuskokwim River area

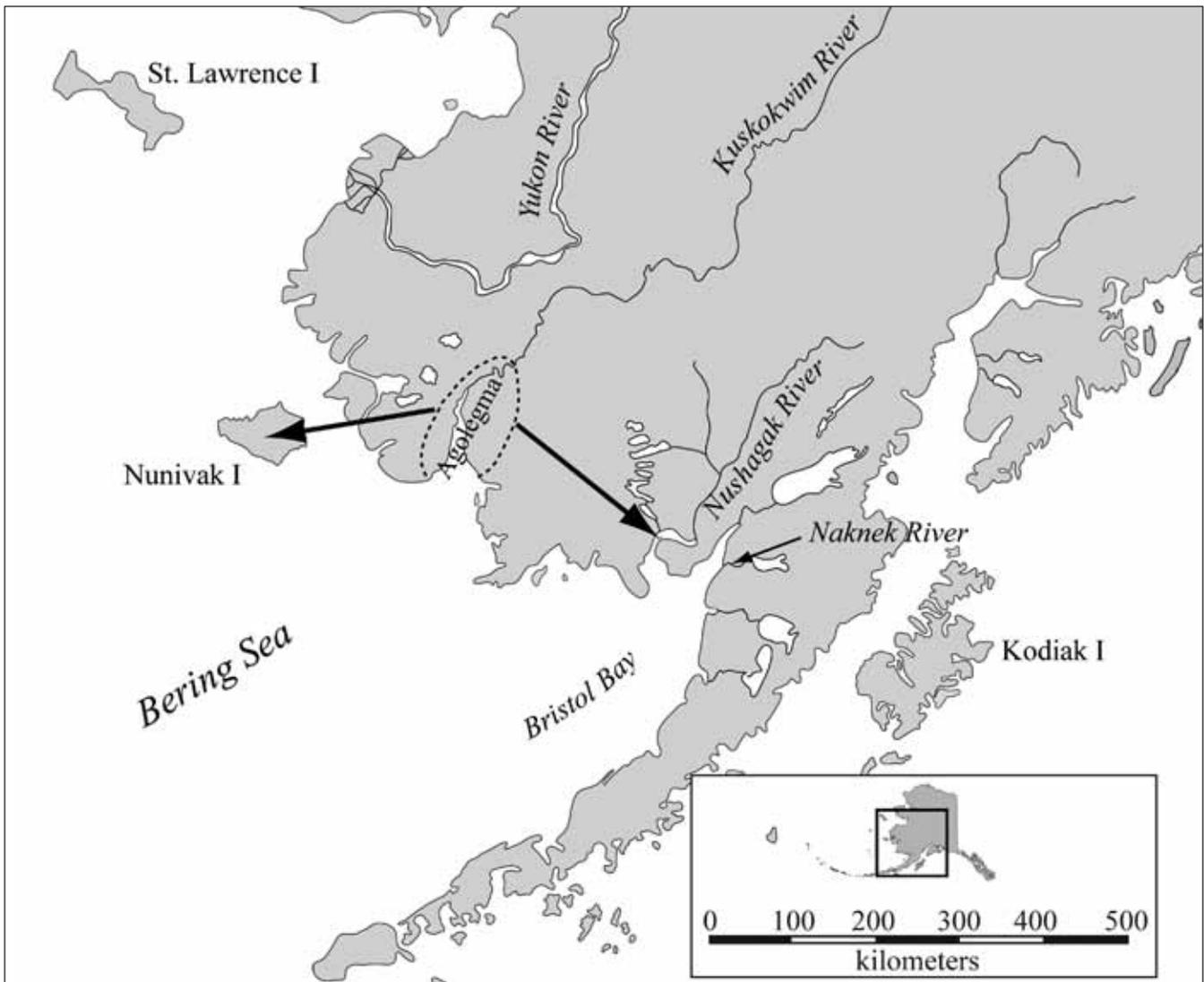


Figure 4. Aglurmiut migration routes based on the 1829 account of Ivan Vasilev (VanStone 1988). Dashed line denotes approximate area in which Vasilev believed the settlement of “Agolegma” was located.

Yup’ik groups drove these people from their homeland, after which they reportedly migrated to Nunivak Island (Zagoskin 1967:210) and the mouth of Nushagak River (Fig. 4) (see also Wrangell 1980:61–65).

The only other published account about the Aglurmiut migration that offers details not yet discussed is that of John Kilbuck (Fienup-Riordan 1988), and they are worth noting here. First, after naming three different “tribes” in the Kuskokwim district, Kilbuck stated:

there is some doubt about a fourth tribe. This fourth tribe are spoken of by the Kuskokwim people as the “Warrior people.” As to their origin and whether they are...only a clan belonging to the Kuskokwim Eskimo, is hard to determine, ow-

ing to the absence of direct data (Fienup-Riordan 1988:31–32; see also VanStone 1967:118–119).

In addition to noting that his use of the term ‘tribe’ was nontechnical, Fienup-Riordan (1988:472<sup>n</sup>92) concluded the “Warrior people, [Kilbuck’s] fourth tribe, were probably the Aglurmiut.” I concur with that conclusion.

The second noteworthy detail is Kilbuck’s claim that the “[Warrior people] seemed to make it their business to engage in war, and the Kuskokwim Eskimo their special object of enmity” (Fienup-Riordan 1988:32). He went on to say that the last battle between these two antagonists “occurred at the mouth of the Kuskokwim, a few miles below [Quinhagak]” (Fienup-Riordan 1988:33). Kilbuck also reported that the Warrior people “came from some-

where between the mouths of the Kuskoquim and Yukon Rivers. *It seems that the warriors either were inhabitants of only one village or of two lying close together*" (Fienup-Riordan 1988:43; emphasis added).

Finally, an odd twist to the Aglurmiut story was added by Frank Waskey ([1950] 2012:49n8), who did not mention anything about a migration in connection with this group and also stated that its members insisted they were "Aleut." Waskey was no doubt talking about essentially *modern* Native people, the great majority of whom habitually refer to themselves as Aleut—whether their ancestors were Alutiiq/Sugpiaq or Central Yup'ik speakers. In other words, the people Waskey was referring to were not the Aleut of the Aleutian Islands.<sup>8</sup>

### WHERE DOES THIS LEAVE US?

The majority of accounts just discussed contend that a Yup'ik Eskimo group from the Kuskokwim River area was driven westward to Nunivak Island and southward to Bristol Bay as a result of warfare with other Yup'ik groups. The migrants are consistently identified as the Aglurmiut—except by Kilbuck, who designated them the "Warrior people." Their original homeland is usually reported as being somewhere in the Kuskokwim River vicinity, with the precise location indeterminate.<sup>9</sup> Collectively, the accounts imply historic Yup'ik populations in the Bristol Bay/Nushagak region were derived from or dominated by Kuskokwim area migrants—a point reinforced by the fact that coastal Yup'ik residents of that region were identified as Aglurmiut in the earliest Russian accounts.

My opinions regarding the migration begin on the language front, with comments on Yup'ik linguist Steven Jacobson's (1998:xii–xxii) "Aglurmiut hypothesis"—which proposes (1) that the Egegik, Nunivak Island, and Hooper Bay–Chevak dialects constitute a distinct subgroup within Central Alaskan Yup'ik (see also Woodbury 1984a:52–53); and (2) that Nelson's "Migration Story" explains the dialectal differences evident between them today. Jacobson has produced a lot of impressive work in his career and his 1998 study is of particular interest, due mainly to its comparative framework. But the Aglurmiut hypothesis contained therein rests on both an optimistic assumption that Nelson's Yup'ik migration account is factually correct and an interpretation of linguistic evidence that relevant data from other disciplines do not support. The weakness of his

hypothesis is suggested by evaluating one of its most essential components, the supposed migration of Aglurmiut to Nunivak Island.

Based on his own analysis of the available linguistic data—mainly a vocabulary list compiled by Khromchenko (1824) in 1822—Jacobson (1998:xvi) concluded that "in 1824 Nunivak had not yet been occupied by the Aglurmiut." But, had the Aglurmiut migration occurred *after* that date (as Jacobson clearly suggested) the event would no doubt be solidly documented in the literature, especially in records of the Russian-American Company. Thus, it would surely have been known to later Russian explorers and—as one example—in 1843 Lavrentiy Zagoskin (1967:210–211) would not have dismissively characterized the report of an Aglurmiut migration to Nunivak as a "pure guess, or a legend." A post-1820s migration of outsiders to the island would probably be memorialized in local cultural history, documentation of which includes more than 300 oral history recordings with Nunivak elders between 1975 and 1995. But the only such event indicated in Nunivak traditions involves exploitation of the island's indigenous caribou herd by other Native hunters (predominantly Inupiat from Seward Peninsula) in the second half of the nineteenth century (Pratt 2001). The early ethnographic and genealogical work of Margaret Lantis (1946, 1960) also did not produce evidence of an Aglurmiut presence on the island.

Perhaps indicative of their own discomfort with his hypothesis, fellow linguists Michael Krauss and Jeffrey Leer suggested an alternative, "coastal dialect chain" explanation to Jacobson to account for the similarities and differences between the Egegik, Nunivak Island, and Hooper Bay–Chevak dialects of Central Yup'ik (Jacobson 1998:xvi; see also Woodbury 1984a:53–55). Jacobson further mentioned that Krauss:

has suggested that the various (and varying) traditional accounts of the Aglurmiut migrations, rather than reflecting population movements as such, may in fact have been an ingenious way in which Yup'iks could account for recognized similarities in speech between the geographically far separated Egegik and Nunivak regions in particular, also sometimes involving similarities with Hooper Bay–Chevak, the upper Kuskokwim and/or up-river Yukon as well (Jacobson 1998:xix).<sup>10</sup>

Both alternative explanations are more feasible than Jacobson's Aglurmiut hypothesis, but before linguists can

explain the Nunivak dialect's actual position relative to other Yup'ik dialects they will have to interpret the results of Jacobson's 1998 study in comparison with other historical materials, and also do more focused work with the Nunivak dialect itself, which is recognized as the most divergent in the Central Yup'ik language (e.g., Jacobson 1998:xix, 2003:vii–viii; see also Hammerich 1953, 1958; Nelson 1899:25; Pratt 2009a:132–138). Most significant for this study is to better understand the relationship between the Nunivak dialect and the so-called “Aglurmiut dialect.” Now restricted to Egegik (Jacobson 2012:45–46, 942), the Aglurmiut dialect is the least studied of all Yup'ik dialects. According to Woodbury (1984a:52–53), who cites Miyaoka (1974:78), evidence from the nineteenth century supports the existence of an Aglurmiut dialect “with important similarities to that of Nunivak, but also with some differences” (cf. Jacobson 1998:xii–xix).<sup>11</sup>

A final concern flows from the fact that efforts by linguists to trace connections between or reconstruct past, dying, or otherwise poorly known dialects are often, of necessity, reliant on vocabulary lists compiled by early explorers and visitors to the regions in question. From my perspective as an ethnohistorian, it is troubling that the factors affecting the collection of such vocabularies—for example, the amount of time the collector spent with the Native population, the collector's language skills, and use and identification of interpreters—are seldom discussed in assessing their reliability. Linguists may actually take such factors into account when working with early vocabularies, but failing to discuss their related findings implies that early collectors possessed the linguistic competence necessary to accurately “hear” and transcribe Native words for the objects, animals, et cetera that typically characterize historical vocabulary lists. It also suggests an absence of cross-cultural communication problems—which is highly unlikely—and ignores the roles intermediaries, such as interpreters, may have played in the process of collecting vocabularies. Realistically, all such undertakings must have encountered impediments of one kind or another that could have affected the accuracy of the language data collected (e.g., Pratt 2008; Zagoskin 1967:168, 242–243, 295–296n66).<sup>12</sup> Factors of this nature (rather than the rumored Aglurmiut migration to Nunivak) would provide a more reasonable explanation for the circumstance described below.

The oldest source for Aglurmiut and the only early source for Nunivak, Khromchenko 1824, presents

Nunivak as being closer to GCY [General Central Yup'ik] than NUN [the Nunivak dialect] is today, suggesting that perhaps Aglurmiut influence came to Nunivak after that time (Jacobson 2012:942; see also Jacobson 1998:177–179).

The pro-Aglurmiut migration position expressed in this quote is unconvincing not only for the suggested post-1824 timing of that event. Logically, the purported greater similarity in language prior to that date should mean that rates of contact between the Nunivak people and those on the adjacent mainland were higher *before* 1824 than they were afterwards. That may be theoretically possible, but the available documentary data suggest the opposite (Pratt 2009a:252–256). Scholars also generally accept that activities tied to the Euroamerican fur trade tended to increase contacts between distant Native groups—and, comparatively speaking, the Nunivak people were “distant” from all other Yupiit. Their closest neighbors were the Nelson Islanders, the Yup'ik group with whom they traditionally (and likely prehistorically) must also have had the greatest frequency of contact. This might lead one to expect that the Nunivak dialect would be most similar to the Yup'ik dialect spoken on Nelson Island; however, that is not the case (Jacobson 2012:35–46).

For all of the reasons stated above, I contend that Jacobson's Aglurmiut hypothesis is not supported with respect to its Nunivak component.

Other, non-language-based doubts about the veracity of the supposed Aglurmiut migration to Nunivak were expressed in 1843 by Zagoskin, who raised questions that remain relevant today. He stated:

The name Aglegmyut was believed by the pilot Vasilev to refer to a certain settlement or fortified spot on the Kuskokwim called Agolegma whose inhabitants were driven out by civil disputes and were pushed farther to the south onto Nunivok Island. This is a pure guess, or a legend. Why would the inhabitants of Nunivok not retain the name Aglegmyut instead of calling themselves “Those who live in a little land,” or, more properly, “little estate,” according to the real meaning of *nunivok*. Moreover, Pilot Vasilev traveled along the Kuskokwim but does not locate the site of Agolegma, which should have been preserved in native legends as the place that gave its name to the tribe. At all events we can be quite certain only of this: since the Russians first became acquainted with this country in the 1780s, all of the tribes we have named have been in the localities they occupy today (Zagoskin 1967:210–211).<sup>13</sup>

To the author's knowledge, the only other published historical indication of a connection between Nunivak and the people who apparently moved to Bristol Bay is Khromchenko's 1822 observation that he saw houses at Cape Corwin, on Nunivak's east coast, that were "exactly like those of the Aglegmiut" (VanStone 1973:62–63). But this suggested connection is very tenuous. If Khromchenko's travels in the region had been more extensive, he would have seen that house styles among the Central Yup'ik were remarkably similar everywhere.<sup>14</sup>

Vasilev's account of the Aglurmiut migration is also problematic relative to the Bristol Bay and Nushagak areas. For one thing, he suggests most of coastal Bristol Bay and the Nushagak River mouth area were either unpopulated or only lightly populated at the time of the migration. But this does not mesh with ethnohistorical and archaeological evidence related to the region's occupational history. Additionally, since the Aglurmiut migrants were a remnant population (once "dreadful" but by 1822 "persecuted" to the point of needing Russian protection [VanStone 1973:53]), it is improbable that they could have simply displaced existing Native occupants (cf. Wrangell 1970:17).

Reports that the Aglurmiut were driven out of the Kuskokwim area and found refuge under the cloak of the Russians at Aleksandrovskii Redoubt are similarly untenable—*unless* the Aglurmiut were actually a small, local population. An insubstantial emigrant group that truly feared attacks from other Yupiit, or was otherwise isolated in its new home, might reasonably have sought alliances with the Russians at Aleksandrovskii Redoubt. Extensive Aglurmiut involvement with the Russian-American Company is well known (e.g., Dumond and VanStone 1995:4–5). But the few Russians in the country during the Russian-America period could not have protected *any* Native population of a *regional* scale from other Native groups determined to do them harm.<sup>15</sup> The Russians' ability to protect the remnant population of a single village, however, may have been an entirely different matter.

## DEMOGRAPHIC AND TERRITORIAL CONSIDERATIONS

As previously detailed by James VanStone (1967:109–114), the literature is inconsistent with respect to the territorial extent of the Aglurmiut and the group's population during the period from ca. 1818 to 1870. This problem is illustrated below by quotes from historical accounts.

Regarding the indigenous population, Oswalt noted that:

Around the time Alexandrov Redoubt was founded there were only sixty Aglegmiut men, but the total population had increased in 1832 to five hundred [Aglegmiut], of whom one hundred fifty were men. This marked increase in the adult male population over such a short period of time probably represents an ingathering of the previously dispersed Aglegmiut population (Oswalt 1967:4–5; see also Dumond and VanStone 1995:5; Fienup-Riordan 1984:93).

I concur with Oswalt that the reported 150% increase in the number of Aglegmiut men in a span of just thirteen years (i.e., between 1819 and 1832) cannot be explained in terms of normal population trends. For reasons presented later in the text, however, I disagree with his explanation that the increase probably resulted from "previously dispersed" members of that group reuniting. That something strange was at play is emphasized by an even earlier report on the group's population: an 1825 tally of "Aglegmiuts at Nushagak, Aleksandrovsk district" (Khlebnikov 1994:19) suggests the number of adult males rose 200% in only six years (from sixty in 1819 to 179 in 1825)!

On a related front, VanStone remarked that:

Khromchenko believed the Nushagak area to be heavily populated and he was right. At the time of his visit [May 1822], there were approximately 500 people [Aglurmiut] living in villages along the shores of Nushagak Bay and perhaps another 700 [Kiatagmiut] in settlements on the river, its major tributaries, and in the large lakes to the west (VanStone 1973:28–29; see also Wrangell 1980:61).

VanStone's comment makes it clear that efforts to decipher the Aglurmiut puzzle must include consideration of at least one other Eskimo population, the so-called Kiatagmiut ("upriver" or "inland" people). According to VanStone:

It seems certain that the mixture of population in the Nushagak area began in the prehistoric period, but the newly established Aleksandrovskiy Redoubt served as an additional attraction for peoples from the north and south. Khromchenko was apparently the first to make a distinction between the coastal dwelling Aglegmiut and the Kiatagmiut who, at the time of contact, inhabited the banks of the Nushagak and Wood rivers and the area to the west possibly as far as and including the Wood River Lakes and Tikchik Lakes. The Kiatagmiut also occupied the upper Kvichak

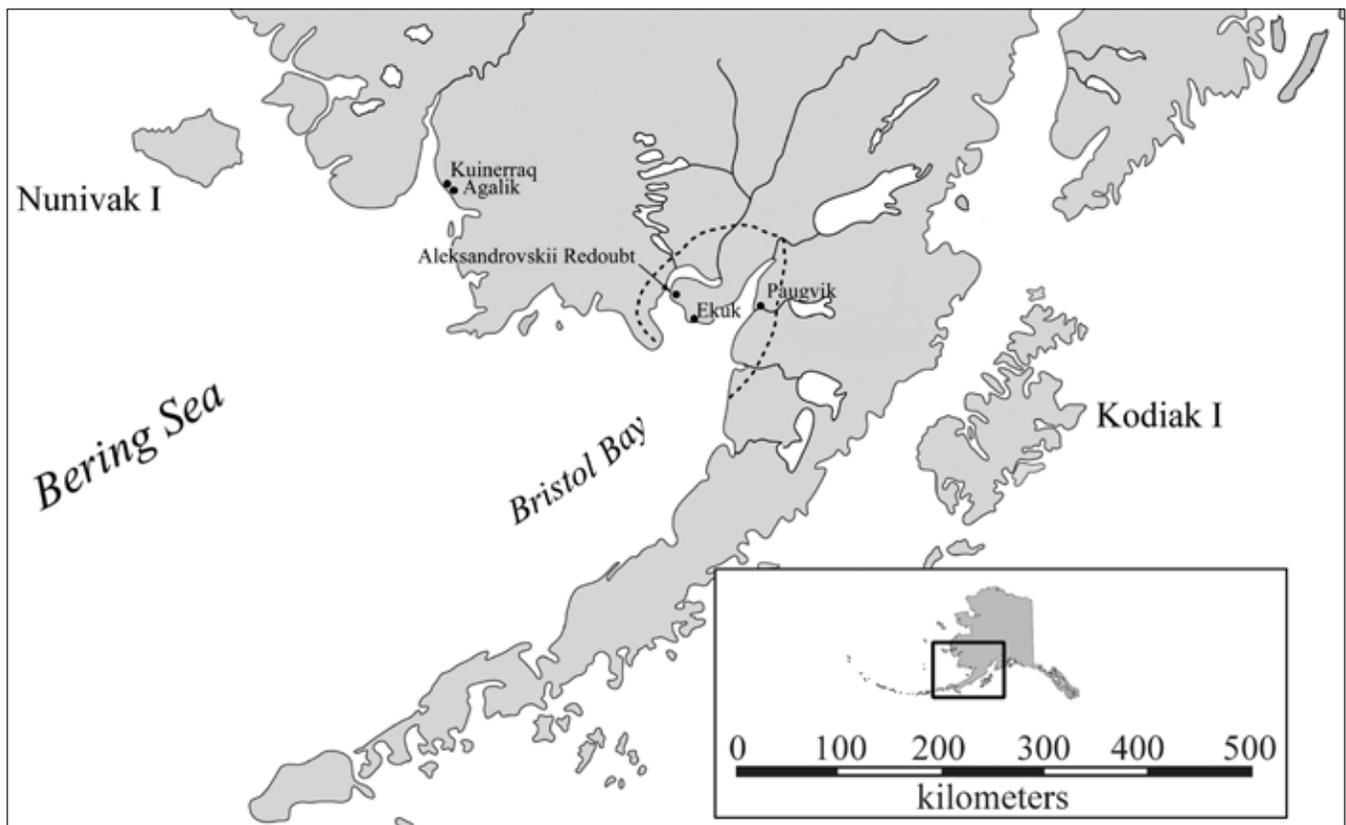


Figure 5. Key locations associated with the Aglurmiut migration. Dashed line denotes approximate limits of Aglurmiut territory circa 1840.

River and probably the lower end of Iliamna Lake (VanStone 1973:31).

He further noted that Khromchenko referred:

to the people in the Nushagak Bay area as “Aglegmiut,” presumably the Glakmiut of Korsakovski. The Nushagak River people are spoken of as being distinct from those Eskimos living around the shores of the bay and are called “Kiatagmiut” (VanStone 1967:109–110; see also Dall 1877:19; Holmberg 1985:6).<sup>16</sup>

Thus, whereas the Aglurmiut were recognized as inhabiting coastal areas around Bristol Bay and Nushagak Bay, as well as the mouth of Nushagak River (Fig. 5), Kiatagmiut were said to inhabit the adjacent inland or upriver sections of those areas. Complicating the matter further, the term Kiatagmiut also applied to Yup’ik people of the Kuskokwim River area from Bethel upriver to about Kolmakovskiy Redoubt (Oswalt 1990:12–14). “By the time of Russian arrival the Kiatagmiut not only lived inland along the Kuskokwim, but many had migrated as far as the Nushagak River drainage” (Oswalt 1990:14).

In Oswalt’s estimation,

the 1829 travel journal of the Russian explorer Vasilev indicates that the Kiatagmiut subgroup then found in the Nushagak drainages had the same name as those living from Bethel to Kolmakovskiy along the Kuskokwim (VanStone 1988). Thus the Upriver Eskimos of the Kuskokwim and the Nushagak Eskimos were once one people” (Oswalt 1990:227n3).

But Oswalt’s finding overlooks the root nature of the name “Kiatagmiut,” which any Yup’ik group in southwest Alaska could have appropriately used as a term of reference to anyone living upriver or inland from it. In fact, rather than construing the name as evidence that the two groups in question were once one, “kiatagmiut” is more easily explained, like “nunamiut” (Burch 1976), as a generic, demonstrative/directional term (see Jacobson 2012:963–972) that happens to have been used as a group designation for specific Yup’ik populations in both the Kuskokwim and Nushagak drainages.

That said, the position Oswalt had taken on the matter was supported by Ferdinand Wrangell’s (1980:63) reference to the “Agolegmiut” as “the Kuskokwim, whom Mr.

Vasil'ev made known to us" and the following supplemental remarks:

The Kuskokvim tribe is found only in the region between the rivers Nushagak, Ilgaiak [upper Nushagak (VanStone 1967:12, 52)], Khulitna [Holitna] and Kuskokvim as far as the sea coast. Most of the tribe lives on the Kuskokvim, west of its junction with the small river Anigak [Aniak]. Mr. Vasil'ev thinks they number some 7,000 souls, including both sexes and all ages [cf. Zagoskin 1967:308*n*]. They are also called the Kuskukchvak-miuts of Kushkukchvak, which has the same meaning as Kuskokvim.

The Agolegmiuts and Kiiataigmiuts...are indistinguishable from the Kuskokvim and the latter are considered to belong to the same tribe. But the Agolegmiuts and the Kuskokvim are enemies, since the former were driven from their homes on the banks of the Kuskokvim. They received their present name from a structure called the Agolegma, where they were living at the time of the siege. They finally moved away to Nunivok Island and another island at the mouth of the Nushagak, where they settled under the protection of the commander of the Aleksandrovskii Redoubt and were safe-guarded from the attacks of the Kuskokvim. They still mourn their old homeland in their songs.

For their part, the Agolegmiuts expelled the natives living at the mouth of the Nushagak, and these wandered as far as the eastern half of the Aliaska Peninsula and are now known as the Severnovtsy (Northerners) and Ugashentzy (Wrangell 1980:64; see also Dumond and VanStone 1995:1–5).<sup>17</sup>

Significantly, around 1830, Vasilii I. Kashevarov (n.d.) reported an indigenous ("Uglekhmut" [Aglurmiut]) population of up to 1,555 "in the jurisdiction" of Aleksandrovskii Redoubt, which he described as extending from the Nushagak area northward to Kuskokvim Bay. The nine Aglurmiut settlements he identified as lying within this redoubt's jurisdiction included Tugiakskoe (Togiak), Kviungagmiukskoe (Quinhagak), and Aglegomiukskoe (*Agalik*). The Aglurmiut information reported by Kashevarov is especially noteworthy when compared with that provided by Khromchenko (VanStone 1973:28–29) about eight years earlier. Specifically, Kashevarov's estimate of the group's population is three times higher than that offered by Khromchenko. Whereas Khromchenko restricted Aglurmiut territory to "villages along the shores of Nushagak Bay" (VanStone 1973:29), in Kashevarov's report it

extended northward along the coast to at least the middle of Kuskokvim Bay.

Kashevarov's report is also important because by specifically identifying the settlements said to comprise the Aglurmiut ca. 1830, it clearly reveals what numerous other historical accounts about this group only imply: i.e., that some observers perceived the Aglurmiut to be a *regional* Yup'ik population. This contrasts sharply with the earliest Russian accounts about the Aglurmiut, which portray the group as the surviving residents of a single village. The geographical extension of the Aglurmiut group name reinforces the implication that emigrants from a single village populated or assumed dominion over the entire coastline from the Kuskokvim River mouth southeast to the Nushagak Bay area. But the following comment by Zagoskin offers another possible explanation for the historically broad application of that group name:

In general the natives of Norton Sound call their relatives who live to the south "Aglegmyut" and "Kadyak." Actually, "Akhkugmiut" means "one who lives on the warm side" (Zagoskin 1967:291*n*40; see also Holmberg 1985:6).

It is tempting to conclude, but by no means certain, that Zagoskin was suggesting the terms "Aglegmyut" and "Akhkugmiut" were synonyms, though they are, in fact, two completely different words in Yup'ik. However, even if that was not the intent, his comment indicates some Yupiit used the Aglurmiut designation as an inclusive, general term of reference for Yupiit living to the south of them. Thus, Russian observers may have identified the people of certain areas as Aglurmiut on the basis of information received from nonresident Yupiit, who might simply have been referring to those other people in geographically relational terms. This scenario could explain some of the inconsistency surrounding accounts about the Aglurmiut in Russian sources.

## DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

Although historical accounts frequently suggest the opposite, rumors and guesses were the basis for knowledge about many Alaska Native groups and their territories in the Russian-America period and later. This certainly was the case with regard to the Aglurmiut migration, the reported focal site of which (i.e., "Agolegma") has not previously been determined. The research on which this paper

is founded, however, convinces me that the “Agolegma” site Vasilev reported but never found is *Agalik* (a former Yup’ik village just south of modern Quinhagak in the vicinity designated “Arolik” on modern maps). Further, Vasilev was correct in suggesting that the *Aglurmiut* derived their name from this settlement (see also Jacobson 1998:xvii27). More than a century after Vasilev’s report, Clark Garber (n.d.) identified this same site as “Ahlalich” and described it as “a warrior village [established by] a group of young warriors” from Quinhagak.<sup>18</sup> In Garber’s account, the famous eye-poking incident occurred at Quinhagak and led to the “chief” of that village killing a man from Tununak (*Tununeq*) on Nelson Island. Thereafter repeated battles took place between the Tununak and Quinhagak people. The account goes on to say:

Slowly but surely the Quinhagak people were being annihilated. In order to save themselves they must change their location, they must move away from their homes and establish a village in a secluded place. The women and children with all the household goods were packed off to a secret hiding place on one of the small streams that feed Iliamna Lake. Here they established themselves and built new igloos (Garber n.d.:2).

It was at this point that young warriors from Quinhagak reportedly also established *Agalik*, where they lived “for many years” while constantly warring with their enemies. Eventually, a large war party from Tununak attacked *Agalik* and overwhelmed its defenders.

The few Ahlhalich survivors finally joined their people near Lake Iliamna where their terrible story found ready ears. Here they lived in constant dread least [*sic*] their enemies find them and destroy their tribe completely (Garber n.d.:3).

Although the homeland of the attackers differs, Garber’s account supports Kilbuck’s assertion that the Warrior people’s “last battle” occurred near Quinhagak [*Kuinerraq*] (Fienup-Riordan 1988:33)—and also Kilbuck’s conclusion that the Warrior people either came from a single village or two adjacent villages (see Fig. 5). Finally, a Native oral history account provided by Quinhagak elder Charlie Pleasant (1986:47–49) documents a battle at *Agalik* that left most of its residents dead and the village burned;<sup>19</sup> Pleasant further reported that the site was also called *anguyiit nunallrat* (“warrior’s old village”). For all of these reasons, I believe Kilbuck’s “Warrior people” were the people of *Agalik*.

This village’s name merits special attention. Its pronunciation by Pleasant (1986) led staff of the Alaska Native Language Center (ANLC), University of Alaska Fairbanks, to produce the spelling used herein (i.e., *Agalik*) and the translation “two hanging things/a hanging thing.” Later, another ANLC linguist translated *agluq*—the apparent base of the Russian transliteration of the site’s Native name (i.e., “Agolegma”)—as “arch, arched thing” (Jacobson 1998:xvii27) and even more recently as “ridgepole” (Jacobson 2012:71, 1179). In Donald Orth’s (1967:87) entries for “Arolik” and “Arolik River,” however, the Native name for the latter is reported as “Aalalik, meaning ashes” and said to refer to the “ashes of a burnt village at the mouth of [the Arolik River’s] north fork.”<sup>20</sup> “Aalalik,” the name reported for the river along which the site is located, is an obvious match with “Ahlhalich,” the name Garber reported for the site. This reflects a common aspect of traditional Yup’ik Eskimo place-naming practices: i.e., “important settlements and adjacent watercourses often share the same names” (Pratt 2009b:151). Given the cultural and historical context, therefore, a more accurate spelling of the site name may be *Aralleq*, a word Jacobson (2012:132) translates as “site of a fire” (from *araq*, “ash” [Jacobson 2012:1026]). To clarify, I believe “Arolik” is a mistranscription of *Aralleq*.

Having now explained the Agolegma/*Agalik*/Arolik correlation, several related points must be made. First, Kashevarov’s report of an *Aglurmiut* village named “Aglegomiukskoe” around 1830 raises the possibility that *Agalik* was not completely abandoned following the devastating battle that is said to have ended with the village being burned. Alternatively, the site he referenced may have been a successor village established nearby that took the name of the original settlement. This was fairly typical of traditional Yup’ik Eskimo settlement patterns, and the existence of an entirely different “Arolik” site at the modern mouth of Arolik River’s north fork is a fact. This is the site Nelson (1882:712) and Ivan Petroff (U.S. Census Office 1884:14) identified as “Aguliagamute,” and which later researchers have also mentioned (e.g., Hrdlička 1930:191 [no. 53, “Arolik”]; U.S. Census Office 1893:6). Population estimates for the “Aguliagamute/Arolik” site are purposefully omitted from this discussion to avoid any suggestion that they might apply to the original settlement of *Agalik*, an error that has occurred previously (i.e., Fienup-Riordan 1988:497n12).

Second, an archaeological site excavation in the Quinhagak area of Kuskokwim Bay (which began in

2009 and was still in progress in 2013) calls to mind Don Dumond's (1998:59–60) criticism that—in contrast to the approach exemplified by VanStone in the Nushagak River drainage—archaeologists today frequently do not draw on “all relevant disciplines or subdisciplines” to inform their research. The lack of effort most archaeologists devote to place names research is a common example of this problem, and it has been repeated on the Quinhagak project. That is, project archaeologists identify the site being excavated by the generic term “*nunalleg*”<sup>21</sup> (implying that is its Yup'ik name), and characterize it as entirely prehistoric in age (e.g., Britton et al. 2013; Dunham 2013). Had they researched historical and anthropological sources for a site name, however, they might have discovered that they have been excavating the original settlement of *Agalik*, the remarkably rich and complex history of which poses a number of interpretive problems.

Moving on, if Garber's account is assumed to be historically accurate with regard to what became of the *Agalik* survivors following the attack on their village, it is logical to conclude that the first area of Nushagak Bay they occupied was at or near Paugvik (Dumond 1998:65–71; Dumond and VanStone 1995:4–7; Vanstone 1988:22, 68n30), at the mouth of Naknek River. Since the “Warrior people” also reportedly occupied the village of Ekuik (VanStone 1967:118; 1972:6; see also Fienup-Riordan 1988:496n11)—near the mouth of Nushagak River and very close to Aleksandrovskii Redoubt—this may be another place where the *Agalik* migrants initially settled (see also Dumond and Vanstone 1995:5), or perhaps relocated to after the Russians established Aleksandrovskii Redoubt. As previously suggested by Dumond (1986:61), and despite the general thrust of some historical accounts, the movement of a comparatively small group of people into an already inhabited region need not have been accompanied by great turmoil and disruption to the existing social order.

Also worth noting are inconsistencies between the story of the *Agalik* battle recorded by Garber (n.d.) in the late 1920s or early 1930s from an unnamed source and those concerning the same event as described in oral history accounts provided in 1986 and 2009 by elders from Quinhagak. Garber's account indicates the battle was the culmination of hostilities precipitated by the famous eye-poking incident, which is said to have taken place at Quinhagak, but that incident is not mentioned in accounts of Quinhagak elders. Additionally, Garber report-

ed the warriors who attacked *Agalik* came from the Nelson Island area; however, the Quinhagak elder accounts link the attackers to a Kuskokwim-area village named *Pengurpamiut*. The discrepancies in these accounts of the same battle highlight the need to subject Yup'ik warfare stories to objective, critical analysis.

In any case, the preceding discussion raises the question of when the *Agalik* people moved into the Nushagak area. There is no definitive answer to this query, but the historical literature clearly indicates the event predated Korsakovskiy's 1818 expedition and the 1819 Russian establishment of Aleksandrovskii Redoubt (VanStone 1973:31). Archaeologists with the “Quinhagak project” reportedly discovered the remains of burned dwellings at the site and concluded they were destroyed around AD 1650 (Fienup-Riordan 2013:xxxiv). But the accuracy of that finding cannot yet be objectively assessed. Even if the reported archaeological evidence is ignored, however, the event that caused the migration must have occurred long enough before 1820 for its finer details to have grown “fuzzy” in regional oral history—otherwise it arguably would be better documented in Russian accounts. This consideration leads me to conclude that the Aglurmiut migration probably dates to about AD 1750 (i.e., at least three generations before its first mention in the literature), possibly even earlier. In taking this position I am also acknowledging Zagoskin's summary statement regarding Vasliev's account of the migration: “At all events we can be quite certain only of this: since the Russians first became acquainted with this country in the 1780s, all of the tribes we have named have been in the localities they occupy today” (Zagoskin 1967:211).

Expanding on this line of reasoning, I conclude that the term Aglurmiut derives from the Yup'ik name for the people of *Agalik*—that is, the Agaligmiut (Fienup-Riordan 1988:497n12). Thus, the Aglurmiut were in fact a *local group*<sup>22</sup>—not a regional group of equivalent scale to the Kuigpagmiut (Yup'ik residents of the Yukon River), Kusquqvagmiut (Yup'ik residents of the Kuskokwim River), or Cenarmiut (“coastal people” [Shinkwin and Pete 1984:97; see also Fienup-Riordan 1984:70–74, 93, 1988:472n92]). Like the name “Kiatagmiut” discussed above, Kuigpagmiut, Kusquqvagmiut, and Cenarmiut are clearly regional in scale. That is, they are general terms indicating the relative geographical placement of people across the region. In contrast, the designation “Aglurmiut” (in addition to variants suggested above) has consistently

been translated in ways that imply a more restricted, local group base: for example as “people of the ridgepole” (Fienup-Riordan 1984:93; VanStone 1984:241). The first report on the Aglurmiut supports this interpretation. In 1818, Korsakovskiy described the “Alegmiut” as a group comprised of people from a single settlement (similar to how he described the “Koingak Indians” [Quinhagak Eskimos]) (VanStone 1988:29–31, 46–47). Later Russian reports characterizing the Aglurmiut as a substantially larger, regional group were therefore not in accord with Korsakovskiy’s account.

My view that the Aglurmiut were actually a local group conflicts with the regional literature (e.g., VanStone 1967:109–112), which consistently presents them as a regional group comprised of Yup’ik-speaking peoples living along the coasts of Bristol Bay and the western Alaska Peninsula, whose movement into those areas presumably displaced pre-existing inhabitants. Scholars have essentially accepted the scenario presented in the regional literature without serious debate, thereby contributing to a distorted image of Yup’ik socioterritorial organization in this section of Southwest Alaska. This remark reflects my conviction that “the regional group concept has little or no functional value for describing [Yup’ik Eskimo] socioterritorial...organization” (Pratt 2009a:280)—which was in fact village-based (Pratt 2009a:258–269). In this case, the name of a specific Yup’ik local group (the “Aglurmiut”) has repeatedly been extended to encompass numerous other equivalent Yup’ik groups (e.g., the people of *Asvigyaq* [Osviak], *Turyuraq* [Togiak], *Tuqlia*, *Quluqaq* [Kulukak]), all of which were almost certainly viable entities when the Aglurmiut migration took place. Use of the regional group concept here has thus sustained a “standardization of error” like that described by Burch (1976) with regard to the Nunamiut of Northwest Alaska.

That the Aglurmiut became valued and motivated Russian partners immediately following the establishment of Aleksandrovskii Redoubt is evident in Russian documents of the time (e.g., Dumond and VanStone 1995:5–8). Speaking speculatively, the redoubt staff may have rapidly become so familiar with the Aglurmiut (i.e., the past residents of *Agalik*) that the compelling story of their migration spread throughout the Russian-American Company and eventually generated a default assumption that virtually *all* coast-dwelling Yup’ik peoples in the Bristol Bay region were members or descendants of this

same group. Such an error may have led to its standardization, to include acceptance of the Aglurmiut migration as a large-scale, regional affair. Unfortunately, the lack of descriptions of local Yup’ik groups in Russian accounts of the region extending from Kuskokwim Bay to Bristol Bay (e.g., VanStone 1988:12) only reinforces the notion that it was all Aglurmiut territory.

Acknowledging that reality often pales in comparison with legend, I want to close by emphatically expressing my agreement with historical accounts on the following points: An Aglurmiut migration *did* occur, it was induced by intergroup conflicts, and it resulted in Yup’ik people from Kuskokwim Bay moving into the Bristol Bay region. However, I contend that this migration involved people from a single local group, centered at the village of *Agalik*, and probably involved fewer than one hundred people. Thus, as suggested at the outset, my main disagreement with prior treatments of the Aglurmiut migration is a matter of scale.

#### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The author thanks Robert Drozda, Don Dumond, Erica Hill, and Anthony Woodbury for insightful comments on earlier drafts of this paper, and Matt O’Leary for various interesting discussions related to the Aglurmiut migration. Of course, I alone am responsible for any errors of fact or interpretation this paper may contain.

#### ENDNOTES

1. Ethnohistorical sources contain numerous variations of this group name, including Agolegmyut, Aleggmiut, Aglyogmyut, Aglekhamut, Glakmiut, Uglekhamut, Ogulmut, and Aglimut.
2. In 1829, Ivan Vasilev reported seeing extensive human remains at the battle site, which was located along Nushagak River—by my estimation, evidently near its junction with modern Portage Creek. He said the battle occurred in 1816 (but offered no explanation for how the date was determined), identified the combatants as Aleggmiuts and Kiatagmiuts, and claimed “as many as 200 Kiatagmiuts” had been killed (VanStone 1988:91).
3. The following quote is an example of such thinking: “Lay out the map of the world, and wherever you find populations unrestrained by the strong hand of

- government, there you will find perpetual feud, tribe against tribe, and family against family” (McLennan 1886:73).
4. As used herein, “warfare” refers to purposeful, hostile actions taken by one group of people against another group of people (see also Reedy-Maschner and Maschner 1999:704–705).
  5. The “eye-poking” story belongs to a category of Yup’ik tales known as *qulirat*, defined by Woodbury (1984b:13) as “traditional tales that have been passed on from generation to generation and which are said to have originated with remote ancestors, rather than with any specific, known storyteller of the present or the past.” He also noted that the antiquity of such stories “is borne out by the fact that many of them are very widespread” and some “are told by almost every Eskimo group” (Woodbury 1984b:14). Interestingly, Fienup-Riordan (1990:242n4) presents information suggesting that possible variants of the eye-poking story have also been used to explain population movements and/or the origin of war among certain Canadian and Greenlandic Inuit groups.
  6. In September 1882, German explorer Johan Jacobsen stopped at a village identified as “Ka-krome” that was either at or in the immediate vicinity of *Unglurmiut*. Jacobsen (1977:110) stated that “one finds here along the rocks on the banks and down at the water’s edge the remainders of houses for about four English miles.” In the summer of 1929, Aleš Hrdlička surveyed a portion of “Thirty-Two Kazyga Slough” but found no trace of the village. He concluded it was probably overgrown by dense brush and grass (Hrdlička 1943:71–72, 170–171).
  7. These people were not identified by a group name in Nelson’s (1899) monograph. In his Alaska journal, however, they were called the “Aglimuts” and said to “inhabit Kushunuk, Nunevak Island, and then on the southern side of the Kuskoquim estuary from above Good News Bay around the head of Bristol Bay. The northern shore of Alaska Peninsula is inhabited by emigrants from the south shore of same” (Nelson 1880:43).
  8. It should also be noted that Russian historical accounts frequently extended the name “Aleut” to include indigenous residents of the Alaska Peninsula, Kodiak Island, and Prince William Sound.
  9. A recent paper by Caroline Funk (2010:534) includes the unsupported statement that the Aglurmiut homeland was “in the Norton Sound area”—which is wholly inconsistent with all known oral and written historical accounts relevant to the question. The same is true of where she locates the Aglurmiut in the traditional regional landscape (Funk 2010:528, fig. 3).
  10. This sort of ingenuity likely accounts for versions of the well-known “Dog Husband” story that link the origins of the Nunivak people with people from Hooper Bay and Quinhagak (e.g., Lantis 1946:267–268; Williams 1986). In the widespread Dog Husband story (another example of *qulirat*) “A woman takes a dog for a mate and produces offspring that are variously progenitors of Indians, Whites, and some Yupik groups” (Sheppard 1998:158).
  11. The need for systematic work with Cup’ig (Nunivak dialect) language materials is further suggested by reports from local elders that residents of the island’s west coast spoke a *subdialect* of Cup’ig (Drozda 1997:102–105; Pratt 1990:82n9). Evidence for this reported subdialect (and possibly others [see Jacobson 1985:38n18]) might be found on numerous oral history interview tapes recorded with Nunivak elders between 1975 and 1995, among other sources.
  12. Consider the following remarks by Zagoskin: “to avoid future criticism I feel that it is my duty to explain that all the information I collected here from the Tlëgon-khotana [Holikachuk Athabaskan] natives, as well as from those I met later on, came to me through the following system: every answer to my questions was given to Vtornik [a Koyukon Athabaskan], who passed it on to Tatlek [another Koyukon Athabaskan], who told it to the Creole interpreter [Nikifor Talizhuk] from our California colony [Fort Ross], who told it to me. Thus even a perfectly accurate piece of information could be distorted through the oral transfer between interpreters who barely understood each other” (Zagoskin 1967:168; see also Pratt 1984:135–137).
- Similarly, Khromchenko must have had a minimum of one interpreter with him during his visit to Nunivak Island in 1822 (possibly even an “Aglurmiut” from Bristol Bay). But we have no information about the ethnicity, place of origin, or linguistic competence of his interpreter(s)—especially relative to the Nunivak

dialect—so the technical accuracy of the Nunivak vocabulary list he compiled is uncertain. Khromchenko may even have misidentified as “Nunivak” some of the vocabulary terms he collected.

13. Abundant archaeological evidence (e.g., Griffin 2004:33–70) does not support the presumption that Nunivak was unoccupied prior to the supposed Aglurmiut migration to the island, which Zagoskin’s remarks imply would have taken place by 1780.
14. Khromchenko was an explorer, not an ethnographer or a linguist. Ethnographic data in his 1822 journal have previously been described as “sketchy” (VanStone 1973:34). Comparative statements he made regarding Native languages and material culture must also be viewed with caution. Such statements by Khromchenko were often little more than gross generalizations, for example: “the Nunivak baydarkas are exactly like those of the Aleut” (VanStone 1973:61) and “the language of the Aglegmiut resembles the Konyag language in all respects” (VanStone 1973:54).
15. As noted by Black (2004:xiii), “the Russians (who seldom exceeded 500 persons at any one time) were vastly outnumbered by the Natives.”
16. The Aglegmiut and Kiatagmiut reportedly differed “in their languages” (Khlebnikov 1994:79).
17. This paper does not address reported Aglurmiut relationships (territorial or otherwise) with people on the Alaska Peninsula identified in historical accounts as “Severnovtsy,” “Ugazshentsy,” and/or “Aleut.” That problem has been considered in detail by other researchers (e.g., Dumond 1986, 1998, 2010; Dumond and VanStone 1995:1–13; Morseth 1998:22–26, 163–164nn74–97; Partnow 2001).
18. According to Garber (n.d.:2), “Ahlahlich” was located “about four miles down the coast from the present site of Quinhagak.” Clark M. Garber was employed in Alaska by the U.S. Bureau of Education from 1925–1933. After spending two years in Wales (on the Seward Peninsula), from 1927–1933, Garber was superintendent of the Western District of Alaska and lived in the Kuskokwim River village of Akiak. His interest in Alaska Native culture and history is evidenced by a number of related publications (e.g., Garber 1934, 1940).
19. In 2009, apparently, a shorter version of this story was told by Quinhagak elder George Pleasant (Fienup-Riordan 2013:394–398).
20. Orth’s (1967:87) information about “Arolik” and “Arolik River” presumably derived from a 1913 U.S. Coast & Geodetic Survey chart. Significantly, Kilbuck (Fienup-Riordan 1988:32–33) also reported that the site of the Warrior peoples’ last battle had been burned.
21. “*Nunalleg*” simply means abandoned village or territory (Jacobson 2012:461; Woodbury 1984b:11) and arguably should not be treated as a formal place name. The term is a description sometimes applied to old sites in the Yup’ik region, either as a casual reference or when the actual site name is no longer known.
22. As used here, the term *local group* means “an assemblage of relatives who considered themselves part of one social group, lived in the same winter village and followed a distinctive annual cycle, and whose boundary included all of the seasonal camps its members normally utilized” (Pratt 2009a:215).

## REFERENCES

- Black, Lydia T.  
2004 *Russians in Alaska, 1732–1867*. University of Alaska Press, Fairbanks.
- Britton, Kate, Rick Knecht, Olaf Nehlich, Charlotta Hillerdal, Richard S. Davis, and Michael P. Richards  
2013 Maritime Adaptations and Dietary Variation in Prehistoric Western Alaska: Stable Isotope Analysis of Permafrost-Preserved Human Hair. *American Journal of Physical Anthropology* 151(3):448–461.
- Bunyan, Dick  
1984 Tape recorded oral history account. Jim Kurtz and Robert Waterworth, interviewers; Lillian Pingayak, interpreter. 3 August; Hooper Bay, Alaska. Tape number 84VAK074. ANCSA 14(h) (1) Collection, Bureau of Indian Affairs, ANCSA Office, Anchorage.
- Burch, Ernest S., Jr.  
1976 The “Nunamiut” Concept and the Standardization of Error. In *Contributions to Anthropology: The Interior Peoples of Northern Alaska*, edited by Edwin S. Hall, Jr., pp. 52–97. Archaeological Survey of Canada Paper no. 49, National Museum of Man, Ottawa.
- Dall, William H.  
1877 On the Distribution and Nomenclature of the Native Tribes of Alaska and the Adjacent Territory. In *Tribes of the Extreme Northwest*: part

- 1, pp. 7–40. Contributions to North American Ethnology, vol. 1. Government Printing Office: Washington, DC.
- Drozda, Robert M.  
2007 Introduction to Uraquralzrig/Sibling Brothers, told by Nuratur Andrew Noatak, transcribed and translated by Howard T. Amos. In *Words of the Real People: Alaska Native Literature in Translation*, edited by Ann Fienup-Riordan and Lawrence Kaplan, pp. 102–105. University of Alaska Press, Fairbanks.
- Dumond, Don E.  
1986 Demographic Effects of European Expansion: A Nineteenth-Century Native Population on the Alaska Peninsula. *University of Oregon Anthropological Papers* no. 35. University of Oregon, Eugene.  
1998 The Archaeology of Migrations: Following the Fainter Footprints. *Arctic Anthropology* 35(2):59–76.  
2010 Alaska Peninsula Communities Displaced by Volcanism in 1912. *Alaska Journal of Anthropology* 8(2):7–16.
- Dumond, Don E., and James W. VanStone  
1995 Paugvik: A Nineteenth-Century Native Village on Bristol Bay, Alaska. *Fieldiana Anthropology*, no. 24. Field Museum of Natural History, Chicago.
- Dunham, Mike  
2013 History Lesson. *Anchorage Daily News*, August 18, pp. A-1 and A-14.
- Fienup-Riordan, Ann  
1984 Regional Groups on the Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta. *Études/Inuit/Studies* 8(supp.):63–93.  
1990 *Eskimo Essays: Yup'ik Lives and How We See Them*. Rutgers University Press, New Brunswick.  
1994 *Boundaries and Passages: Rule and Ritual in Yup'ik Eskimo Oral Tradition*. University of Oklahoma Press, Norman.
- Fienup-Riordan, Ann, editor  
1988 *The Yup'ik Eskimos: As Described in the Travel Journals and Ethnographic Accounts of John and Edith Kilbuck, 1885–1900*. Limestone Press, Kingston, ON.  
2013 *Erinaput Unguvaniartut / So Our Voices Will Live: Quinhagak History and Oral Traditions*. Transcribed and translated by Alice Rearden. Calista Elders Council and Alaska Native Language Center, University of Alaska Fairbanks.
- Friday, Joe  
1983 Tape recorded oral history account. Jim Kurtz, interviewer; Leo Moses, interpreter. 2 July; Chevak, Alaska. Tape number 83VAK023. ANCSA 14(h)(1) Collection, Bureau of Indian Affairs, ANCSA Office, Anchorage.
- Frink, Lisa  
2003 A Tale of Three Villages: Archaeological Investigation of Late Prehistoric and Historic Culture Change in Western Alaska. Ph.D. dissertation, Department of Anthropology, University of Wisconsin, Madison.
- Funk, Caroline  
2010 The Bow and Arrow War Days on the Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta of Alaska. *Ethnohistory* 57(4):523–569.
- Garber, Clark M.  
1934 Some Mortuary Customs of the Western Alaska Eskimo. *Scientific Monthly* 39:203–220.  
1940 *Stories and Legends of the Bering Strait Eskimos*. Christopher Publishing, Boston.  
n.d. The Quinhagak-Tununak War and the Founding of Ahlahlich. Unpublished manuscript in author's possession.
- George, Agnes  
1983 Tape recorded oral history account. Marsha Walton, Beth Shide-Cochran, and Sue Thorson, interviewers; Laura Slats, interpreter. 23 July; Chevak, Alaska. Tape number 83VAK054. ANCSA 14(h)(1) Collection, Bureau of Indian Affairs, ANCSA Office, Anchorage.
- Griffin, Dennis  
2004 *Ellikarrmiut: Changing Lifeways in an Alaskan Community*. Aurora: Alaska Anthropological Association Monograph Series, no. VII. Anchorage.
- Hammerich, Louis L.  
1953 The Dialect of Nunivak. In *Proceedings of the 30<sup>th</sup> International Congress of Americanists*, pp. 110–113. Royal Anthropological Institute, London.  
1958 The Western Eskimo Dialects. In *Proceedings of the 32<sup>nd</sup> International Congress of Americanists*, pp. 632–639. Munksgaard, Copenhagen.
- Hansen, Susan  
1985 Yup'ik Eskimo Cultural History and Lore: Oral Traditions and Their Associations with the Land. Draft manuscript on file at the Bureau of Indian Affairs, ANCSA Office, Anchorage.
- Henry, John  
1981 Tape recorded oral history account. Alan Ziff, Ken Pratt, Robert Drozda, and Steve Deschermeier, interviewers; Xavier Simon, interpreter. 11 July; Scammon Bay, Alaska. Tape number

- 81ROM010. ANCSA 14(h)(1) Collection, Bureau of Indian Affairs, ANCSA Office, Anchorage.
- 1984 Tape recorded oral history account. Beth Shide-Cochran and Robert Waterworth, interviewers; Veronica Charlie, interpreter. 21 August; Scammon Bay, Alaska. Tape number 84VAK082. ANCSA 14(h)(1) Collection, Bureau of Indian Affairs, ANCSA Office, Anchorage.
- Holmberg, Heinrich Johan
- 1985 *Holmberg's Ethnographic Notes*. Edited by Marvin W. Falk; translated by Fritz Jaensch. University of Alaska Press, Fairbanks.
- Hrdlička, Aleš
- 1930 Anthropological Survey in Alaska. Forty-Sixth Annual Report of the Bureau of American Ethnology for the Years 1928–1929, pp. 19–347. Washington, DC.
- 1943 Alaska Diary, 1926–1931. Jacques Cattell, Lancaster, PA.
- Jacobsen, Johan Adrian
- 1977 *Alaskan Voyage, 1881–1883: An Expedition to the Northwest Coast of America*. Translated by Erna Gunther from the German text of Adrian Woldt. University of Chicago Press, Chicago.
- Jacobson, Steven A.
- 1985 Siberian Yupik and Central Yupik Prosody. In *Yupik Eskimo Prosodic Systems: Descriptive and Comparative Studies*, edited by Michael Krauss, pp. 25–45. ANLC Research Papers no. 7, Alaska Native Language Center, University of Alaska Fairbanks.
- 1998 *Yup'ik Dialect Atlas and Study*. Alaska Native Language Center, University of Alaska Fairbanks.
- 2003 Introduction. In *Cup'ig Eskimo Dictionary*, compiled by Muriel M. Amos and Howard T. Amos, pp. vii–xvi. Alaska Native Language Center, University of Alaska Fairbanks.
- 2012 *Yup'ik Eskimo Dictionary*, 2nd ed. Alaska Native Language Center, University of Alaska Fairbanks.
- Kashevarov, Vasilii I.
- n.d. Report on Kodiak District of the Russian-American Company. Undated manuscript, Arkhiv Russkogo geograficheskogo obshchestva [Archive of the Russian Geographic Society], St. Petersburg, Razriad 99, opis' 1, delo 107. Translated by Lydia T. Black from a transcription by Svetlana G. Fedorova, 29 January 1990.
- Khlebnikov, Kiril T.
- 1994 *Notes on Russian America*, parts II–V, *Kad'iak, Unalashka, Atkha, the Pribylous*. Compiled by R. G. Liapunova and S. G. Fedorova. Translated by Marina Ramsay; edited by Richard Pierce. Limestone Press, Kingston, ON.
- Khromchenko, Vasiley S.
- 1824 Otryki iz zhurnala plavaniya G. Khromchenki, v 1822 godu. *Severnnyy Arkhiv* 11–18. Original manuscript in Perm State Archive, Perm, Russia.
- Lantis, Margaret
- 1946 The Social Culture of the Nunivak Eskimo. *Transactions of the American Philosophical Society* 35(3):153–323.
- 1960 *Eskimo Childhood and Interpersonal Relationships: Nunivak Biographies and Genealogies*. University of Washington Press, Seattle.
- McLennan, John F.
- 1886 *Studies in Ancient History*. Macmillan, London.
- Miyaoka, Osahito
- 1974 An Eskimo Tribe Near “Mount Saint Elias (Alaska).” *Arctic Anthropology* 11(1):73–80.
- Morseth, Michele
- 1998 *Puyulek Pu'irtuq! The People of the Volcanoes*. Aniakchak National Monument and Preserve Ethnographic Overview and Assessment. National Park Service, Lake Clark and Katmai National Park, Anchorage.
- Nayamin, Ulric
- 1983 Tape recorded oral history account. Jim Kurtz, interviewer; Leo Moses, interpreter. 18 June; Chevak, Alaska. Tape number 83VAK013. ANCSA 14(h)(1) Collection, Bureau of Indian Affairs, ANCSA Office, Anchorage.
- Nelson, Edward W.
- 1880 Alaska Journal, no. 6 (entry for 6–7 September). Smithsonian Institution, Arctic Studies Center, Washington, DC. Copy on file at Bureau of Indian Affairs, ANCSA Office, Anchorage.
- 1882 A Sledge Journey in the Delta of the Yukon, Northern Alaska. *Proceedings of the Royal Geographical Society* 4:660–670, 712 (map).
- 1899 *The Eskimo about Bering Strait*. Bureau of American Ethnology, 18<sup>th</sup> Annual Report, part 1, 1896–97. Government Printing Office: Washington, DC.

- Orth, Donald J.  
1967 *Dictionary of Alaska Place Names*. U.S. Geological Survey Professional Paper no. 567. Government Printing Office: Washington, DC.
- Oswalt, Wendell H.  
1967 *Alaskan Eskimos*. Chandler, San Francisco.  
1990 *Bashful No Longer: An Alaskan Eskimo Ethnohistory, 1778–1988*. University of Oklahoma Press, Norman.
- Partnow, Patricia H.  
2001 *Making History: Alutiiq/Sugpiaq Life on the Alaska Peninsula*. University of Alaska Press, Fairbanks.
- Phillip, Joshua  
1988 Tape recorded oral history account. Robert Drozda, interviewer; Vernon Chimegalrea, interpreter. 9 July; Tuluksak, Alaska. Tape number 88CAL057. ANCSA 14(h)(1) Collection, Bureau of Indian Affairs, ANCSA Office, Anchorage.
- Pleasant, Charlie  
1986 Tape recorded oral history account. Phyllis Gilbert and Beth Shide, interviewers; Mary Jones, interpreter. August 1; Quinhagak, Alaska. Tape numbers 86PLA018 and 86PLA019. ANCSA 14(h)(1) Collection, Bureau of Indian Affairs, ANCSA Office, Anchorage.
- Pratt, Kenneth L.  
1984 Yukon-Kuskokwim Eskimos, Western Alaska: Inconsistencies in Group Identification. M.A. thesis, Department of Anthropology, Western Washington University, Bellingham.  
1990 Economic and Social Aspects of Nunivak Eskimo “Cliff-Hanging.” *Arctic Anthropology* 27(1):75–86.  
1993 Legendary Birds in the Physical Landscape of the Yup’ik Eskimos. *Anthropology and Humanism* 18(1):13–20.  
2001 The Ethnohistory of Caribou Hunting and Interior Land Use on Nunivak Island. *Alaska Journal of Anthropology* 1(1):28–55.  
2008 Language Barriers and Lavrenty Zagoskin’s 1842–1844 Explorations in Alaska’s Yukon and Kuskokwim Valleys. *Proceedings of the International Conference “Lavrenty Zagoskin and Explorations of Russian America: Travels and Explorations of Russian Explorers in International Context,”* pp. 145–151. Ryazan, Russia.  
2009a Nuniwarmiut Land Use, Settlement History and Socio-Territorial Organization, 1880–1960. Ph.D. dissertation, Department of Anthropology, University of Alaska Fairbanks. ProQuest Dissertation Services, Ann Arbor.
- 2009b Unmasking Teng’arqaq (“One That Will Fly”): The Story of Kapegcualria. In *Chasing the Dark: Perspectives on Place, History, and Alaska Native Land Claims*, edited by Kenneth L. Pratt, pp. 142–154. Bureau of Indian Affairs, ANCSA Office, Anchorage.
- Reedy-Maschner, Katherine L., and Herbert D.G. Maschner  
1999 Marauding Middlemen: Western Expansion and Violent Conflict in the Subarctic. *Ethnohistory* 46(4):703–743.
- Sheppard, William L.  
1998 Population Movements, Interaction, and Legendary Geography. *Arctic Anthropology* 35(2):147–165.
- Shinkwin, Anne and Mary Pete  
1984 Yup’ik Eskimo Societies: A Case Study. *Études/Inuit/Studies* 8(Supplementary Issue):95–112.
- U.S. Census Office  
1884 *Report on the Population, Industries, and Resources of Alaska: Tenth Census of the U.S.A, 1880*. Government Printing Office: Washington, DC.  
1893 *Report on the Population and Resources of Alaska at the Eleventh Census, 1890*. Government Printing Office: Washington, DC.
- VanStone, James W.  
1967 *Eskimos of the Nushagak River: An Ethnographic History*. University of Washington Press, Seattle.  
1972 Nushagak: An Historic Trading Center in Southwestern Alaska. *Fieldiana Anthropology* no. 62. Field Museum of Natural History, Chicago.  
1984 Mainland Southwest Alaska Eskimo. In *Handbook of North American Indians*, vol. 5, *Arctic*, edited by David Damas, pp. 224–242. Smithsonian Institution Press, Washington, DC.
- VanStone, James W., editor  
1973 V. S. Khromchenko’s Coastal Explorations in Southwestern Alaska, 1822. Translated by David H. Kraus. *Fieldiana Anthropology* no 64. Field Museum of Natural History, Chicago.  
1988 *Russian Exploration in Southwestern Alaska: The Travel Journals of Petr Korsakovskiy (1818) and Ivan Ya. Vasilev (1829)*. Translated by David H. Kraus. University of Alaska Press, Fairbanks.
- Voget, Fred W.  
1975 *A History of Ethnology*. Holt, Rinehart and Winston, New York.

- Walter, Henry  
 1986 Tape recorded oral history account. Harley Cochran, interviewer; Dan Smith, interpreter. 21 March; Goodnews Bay, Alaska. Tape number 86PLA011. ANCSA 14(h)(1) Collection, Bureau of Indian Affairs, ANCSA Office, Anchorage.
- Waskey, Frank H.  
 [1950] 2012 Tribal Divisions of the Western Eskimo. Edited and annotated by Kenneth L. Pratt. *Alaska Journal of Anthropology* 10(1–2):42–52.
- Williams, Jack, Sr.  
 1986 Tape recorded oral history account. Robert Drozda and Miriam Stark, interviewers. 2 July; Mekoryuk, Alaska. Tape number 86NUN010. ANCSA 14(h)(1) Collection, Bureau of Indian Affairs, ANCSA Office, Anchorage.
- Woodbury, Anthony C.  
 1984a Eskimo and Aleut Languages. In *Handbook of North American Indians*, vol. 5, *Arctic*, edited by David Damas, pp. 49–63. Smithsonian Institution Press, Washington, DC.
- 1984b *Cev'armiut Qanemciit Qulirait-llu: Eskimo Narratives and Tales from Chevak, Alaska*. Alaska Native Language Center, University of Alaska Fairbanks.
- Wrangell, Ferdinand P.  
 1970 The Inhabitants of the Northwest Coast of America. Translated and edited by James W. VanStone. *Arctic Anthropology* 6(2):5–20.  
 1980 *Russian America: Statistical and Ethnographic Information*. Translated from the German edition of 1839 by Mary Sadourski. Edited by Richard A. Pierce. Limestone Press, Kingston, ON.
- Zagoskin, Lavrentiy A.  
 1967 *Lieutenant Zagoskin's Travels in Russian America, 1842–1844: The First Ethnographic and Geographic Investigations in the Yukon and Kuskokwim Valleys of Alaska*. Edited by Henry N. Michael; translated by Penelope Rainey. Arctic Institute of North America: Translations from Russian Sources, no. 7. University of Toronto Press, Toronto.