



A Guide to

Nunavut Archaeology and Artifacts

for Northern Heritage Workers



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The Inuit Heritage Trust would like to extend its thanks to the following individuals and organizations for their contributions to the Nunavut Archaeology and Artifacts booklet series:

- Curriculum and School Services, Nunavut Department of Education
- Government of Nunavut Department of Culture and Heritage
- Tourism and Cultural Industries, Nunavut Department of Economic Development and Transportation.
- Nunavut Tourism
- Parks Canada, Nunavut Field Unit
- Krista Zawadski
- Luke Suluk
- Kevin Kelly
- Nick Amautinuuar
- Joanasie Qappiq
- David Aglukkaq
- William Beveridge
- Ralph Kownak
- Sharon Thomson
- Ken Beardsale
- Sue Ball
- Sylvie LeBlanc
- Max Friesen



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Explaining this Guidebook

Why was this booklet written?

Nunavut is a territory deep with tradition and history. For the last five thousand years, the Canadian Arctic has been home to different cultural groups who have not just survived from the land, but developed rich lifestyles to celebrate their worlds through art, religion and storytelling. Traces of these past lives can still be seen in the form of old tools and sites scattered across the landscape. These old materials, often called ‘artifacts,’ can also be found in homes and museums, where Nunavummiut use them to help remember and learn about the past.

Artifacts have a special ability to communicate stories about the lives of people who once made them. As tools previously used by Inuit ancestors, and tools used by modern populations to learn about these ancestors,

artifacts should be respected and preserved.

In Nunavut, guidelines and regulations have been put in place to help keep artifacts safe and accessible to future generations. Many of these regulations were created by Inuit during the process of Nunavut’s land claim settlement and its formation of a new Canadian territory. They have specifically been written for Nunavummiut so that they can help preserve Nunavut’s history. These regulations make sure that artifacts from the past are respectfully documented and studied by the field of archaeology. They also apply to a special line of work called heritage management, which exists to make sure that artifacts and the stories they tell are protected and made accessible to the public.



Explaining this Guidebook

This booklet was designed to outline best practices for managing material artifacts in Nunavut heritage centres. It will help Nunavut heritage workers become aware of their own roles and responsibilities in caring for Nunavut's artifacts and history. Heritage workers throughout the territory have a special obligation to protect and preserve historical artifacts on behalf of their communities and culture. As people who work with artifacts on a daily basis, heritage workers also have a responsibility to educate the public about the history of artifacts and their own role in caring for these materials.

Who is this booklet written for?

This booklet was written specifically for heritage workers in Nunavut. A heritage worker can include:

- Someone who works in a museum, cultural centre or heritage centre;
- Someone who works in a tourist centre, or gives guided tours to visitors;
- Someone who takes part in archaeology projects;
- Someone who works in an archive;
- Someone who organizes cultural or historical programs for their community.

The information in these booklets is designed to provide heritage workers with a broad overview of best practices for working with archaeological and ethnographic artifacts. It is hoped heritage workers will apply this information in their workplaces and use it to educate others.



Explaining this Guidebook

What will this booklet talk about?

This booklet will attempt to provide answers for some of the more commonly asked questions about archaeological artifacts and heritage centres in Nunavut. Heritage management is a job that often requires professional equipment and highly trained staff, and these resources are not always available to Nunavut heritage centres. This booklet will attempt to explain how Nunavut's guidelines for heritage centres and artifacts can be followed in a way that is realistic, given the training and resources available to most heritage workers in Nunavut.

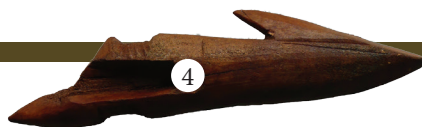
This booklet will address the following topics and questions:

1. Archaeological artifacts and sites

- What are archaeological artifacts and sites?
- What is the history of Inuit people in Nunavut?
- How does archaeology uncover old artifacts?
- Are Nunavummiut allowed to pick up and own old artifacts?

2. Nunavut heritage centres

- What are heritage centres, and what role do they play in Nunavut?
- What heritage programs exist in Nunavut?
- What equipment and supplies should heritage centres have?



Explaining this Guidebook

3. Artifacts and heritage centres

- How are artifacts brought into heritage centre collections?
- Do heritage centres own artifacts?
- How does a heritage centre's environment affect its artifacts?
- How should artifacts be handled and stored in a heritage centre?
- How are exhibits built from artifacts?

4. Archives in Nunavut

- What is an archive?
- How should the information in archives be shared with the public?
- What environmental conditions are harmful to archival materials?

How can this booklet be used?

This booklet should be used only as a basic reference guide. It often requires both professional training and practical experience to understand how artifacts are to be cared for. The material in this booklet is provided only as a broad overview of rules and best practice guidelines to help heritage workers make informed decisions about artifacts and heritage. There will be many questions that this booklet is not able to answer. In case you do not find the information you are looking for, other resources are listed in the back of the book. A section titled 'Notes and Comments' has been included at the back of this booklet for you to write in additional helpful questions, resources and information for the benefit of future readers.



Inuit in the Canadian Arctic: An Overview

Have Inuit always lived in the Canadian Arctic?

The origins of the Inuit people, as told through their legends, belong to a time long ago when animals, people and the Arctic landscape were one. The first material evidence for Inuit living in the Canadian Arctic has been dated by archaeologists to around 1250 AD. These early ancestors of the Inuit are known as ‘Sivullit,’ or ‘the first ones.’ Archaeologists have named this group the ‘Thule,’ or ‘Neo-Eskimo,’ people. Before the arrival of the Thule, the Canadian Arctic was inhabited by various different cultural groups who came and went from the region starting around 3000 B.C. While archaeologists call these early populations ‘Paleo-Eskimo’ people, they also name and group them according to the different ways in which they lived and the types of tools they used.

“In the very first times there was no light on earth. Everything was in darkness, the lands could not be seen, the animals could not be seen. And still, both people and animals lived on earth, but there was no difference between them...They may have had different habits, but all spoke the same tongue, lived in the same kind of house, and spoke and hunted in the same way. That is the way they lived here on earth in the very earliest times, times that no one can understand now.”

-From a story told to Knud Rasmussen in 1931 by Naalungiaq, a Netsilingmiut man.



Inuit in the Canadian Arctic: An Overview

When Inuit entered the Canadian Arctic, they likely overlapped with another cultural group known to Inuit as the 'Tuniit' and to archaeologists as the 'Dorset' people. Inuit stories describe them as a race of very strong, yet shy, people who hunted with massive strength and simple tools, and made their buildings with large boulders. What happened to the Tuniit when the first Inuit arrived is still not fully known. Inuit have many stories about how the two groups interacted, but archaeologists have never found any material evidence of the two groups meeting or living together. It is still not known why the Thule people migrated into the Canadian Arctic from their previous home in northern Alaska. Various theories have been suggested as to why the Thule would leave a familiar place for a new and relatively unknown land. These theories include:

- The Thule were searching for new sources of metal, which was one of the most valuable resources at that time;
- The Thule were escaping from negative social conditions in Alaska, which included overpopulation and warfare;
- The Thule were following bowhead whale migrations that moved increasingly eastward as the climate became warmer.

Regardless of their reasons for moving, Thule people soon found themselves in a land very different from the driftwood and whale-rich coasts of Alaska.



Inuit in the Canadian Arctic: An Overview

How have Inuit adjusted to the Arctic environment?

When the first Thule pioneers arrived in the Canadian Arctic, they tried living in a similar way to their Alaskan ancestors. They built large and elaborate winter houses, the earliest of which had kitchens as separate rooms so that food could be cooked over an open fire. As in Alaska, their main food source continued to be bowhead whales, which they hunted in teams from a type of large boat known as the 'umiak.' The skill, danger and large rewards in hunting these animals gave them great symbolism in Thule society and rituals.

Around 1400 A.D., the climate began to cool again and the sea ice increased, resulting in fewer whales and creating more dangerous whale hunting conditions. The Thule

people began adjusting their lifestyle. The High Arctic was abandoned, with populations moving to less ice-locked locations. During winters, groups began to construct and live in snow houses on the sea ice, which allowed them to focus their diet around seal hunting. In the summers, inland caribou hunting became more popular. Settlement sizes became smaller and less permanent than before so groups could re-locate more often to harvest a wider variety of animals. Life began to change even more dramatically after 1500 A.D., and especially after 1800 A.D. when explorers and whalers from Europe began arriving in great numbers.

By the late 1600s, Inuit had abandoned many of their early Thule ancestors' ways of life. The practice of bowhead whale and large sea mammal hunting decreased in most areas. Kayaks

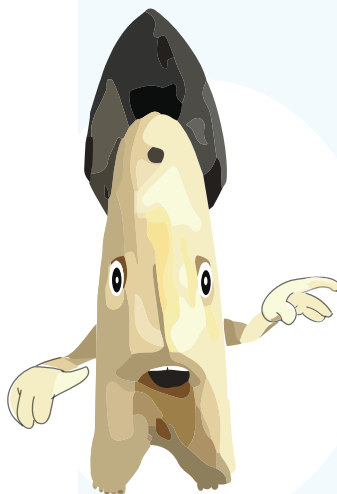
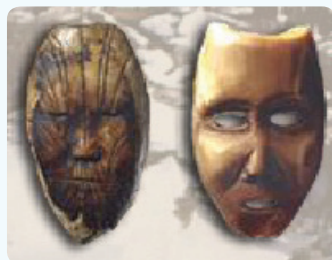


Inuit in the Canadian Arctic: An Overview

and umiaks became used more for travel, fishing and hunting caribou in rivers. Technology also changed during this period. Early Thule people had created ornate tools that were very task specific. Over time, these toolkits became less decorated, and contained more broadly usable tools. As groups of Inuit adapted to different areas and environments across the Arctic, they became more diverse. Regional variations began appearing in tools, housing, language and clothing. These variations have been passed along through generations, and can still be seen among regional Inuit groups such as the Netsilingmiut, the Umingmaktuurmiut, and the Utkuhiksalingmiut.

**Learn more about
past cultures in the
Arctic!**

**Click on this icon at the
Arctic Peoples and
Archaeology website.
Connect to the site at
www.ihti.ca**



Archaeology: Uncovering the Past

What is archaeology?

Archaeology is the study of the human past. Archaeology often involves the collection and analysis of material objects, known as 'artifacts,' that people throughout history have left behind. Artifacts can be as small as a single tool or as big as an entire house. Artifacts can also be materials such as animal bones or landscapes that have become altered by humans. Sometimes these artifacts are found on top of the ground, and other times archaeologists have to dig into, or 'excavate,' the ground to locate them.

A good way to understand archaeology is through a comparison to puzzle solving. Archaeologists see the human past as a big unfinished jigsaw puzzle. Each artifact an archaeologist finds helps them to fill in another piece of the puzzle. As the puzzle fills in,

archaeologists are able to better picture the lives of past people and cultures.

Why is context important?

Context is one of the most important ideas to the practice of archaeology. Context refers to the relationship that artifacts have to each other and to the environment in which they are found. When doing an excavation, archaeologists carefully record the exact place where every artifact is found. This helps them understand what was being done with an artifact before it fell to the ground. Finding a specific tool in a pile of butchered bones, for example, allows archaeologists to see that the tool might have been used as part of the butchering process. Context allows archaeologists to understand the relationships between artifacts on the same



Archaeology: Uncovering the Past

site, as well as how different archaeological sites are related to each other. When people remove artifacts from the land without recording their precise locations, artifacts lose all of their contextual information and have less value for reconstructing what happened in the past.

How do archaeologists research the past?

Archaeological projects can draw on many different kinds of knowledge. Some archaeologists specialize in animal bones or old tools, while others examine DNA evidence, or compare old sites with written documents. Some archaeologists only work under water. Regardless of what type of artifact, time period, or culture archaeology focuses on, it usually employs a very similar research process:

Step 1: Forming Questions

The first step in archaeology is to think up specific questions about the past that can possibly be answered by researching archaeological sites. Examples might include:

- How did people hunt caribou 600 years ago?
- How have people's diets changed over the last one thousand years?
- Why did people stop living in a certain area?

Archaeological sites are rare and valuable resources that are often only investigated once. It is therefore important to have a strong research question to make sure that they are dug up for a good reason.



Archaeology: Uncovering the Past

Step 2: Site Survey

When archaeologists have decided why they are going to dig, they have to conduct a site survey to decide where they will be digging. A survey is usually done by walking or flying over a landscape to look for sites of a particular place, time period or culture relating to the research question. In Nunavut, old sites like houses are often very visible on top of the ground. Other types of sites remain buried, and must be searched for more carefully.

Step 3: Excavation

Excavation is the act of digging up old sites to collect information. This is done by carefully removing the dirt that covers the site and recording all of the artifacts, building materials and leftovers from past uses of that area. The position of each artifact is carefully mapped to create context. Sometimes, different activities occurred at the same place over time and have left numerous layers of remains. These layers, called 'strata,' often vary in their color and content, and also have to be recorded in maps. The position of layers and artifacts is often related to age: a tool found in a layer located deeper in the ground is likely older than a tool found on the surface.

Archaeology: Uncovering the Past

Step 4: Data Collection

The word 'data' refers to information about any detail of an archaeological site that helps archaeologists to better understand the past. Archaeologists must collect as much of this information as possible during their excavations to make sure their interpretation of the site is as well-informed as possible. The collection of archaeological data takes place through photographs, measurements, hand drawing maps, and the analysis of artifacts, animal bones, soil samples, and any other materials found at the site.

Step 5: Analysis and Conservation

When an excavation is finished, all the collected artifacts and data are returned to the workplace of the archaeologist to be cleaned, studied and pieced back together. Many old artifacts are broken or fall apart easily because of their age. Conservation is the process of repairing and stabilizing these artifacts.

Step 6: Interpretation

When all the evidence from a site is collected, organized and catalogued, an archaeologist will begin to develop a story about the past using these remains. As some data will always be missing, it is impossible to know if that story actually represents what really happened. The more information and sources (such as oral history, written documents, and artifacts from neighboring sites) an archaeologist uses to develop the story, the more detailed and complete that story will be.

Step 7: Publication

The final step of an archaeology project is to publish research results in a book, journal or plain-language document for communities. This helps other people learn about the archaeology that took place and the artifacts that were found. It also gives other people a chance to add to, or disagree with, the story that the archaeologist is putting forward about the past.

Archaeological Artifacts and Nunavummiut

What is an archaeological artifact?

An archaeological artifact is a human-made or altered material object from the past. Archaeological artifacts in Nunavut can be found in museums, on the land, and in personal and family collections. While many Nunavummiut can recognize archaeological artifacts as being old, few people know what responsibilities they have to making sure that these materials are protected and properly cared for. The Government of Nunavut has created important guidelines for how Nunavummiut should interact with archaeological artifacts to make sure that:

- The context of archaeological artifacts is well preserved, so that both archaeologists and non-archaeologists can use them to build a better picture of

- the past;
- Nunavut's archaeological artifacts are properly recorded, so that information exists about what kind of artifacts have been discovered, and where those objects are stored;
- Archaeological artifacts do not become the property of individual people. Archaeological artifacts in Nunavut are part of the Inuit cultural heritage and should be made accessible as learning tools to Inuit and non-Inuit alike.

What is considered to be an archaeological artifact in Nunavut?

Despite its name, an archaeological artifact does not belong to archaeologists. The Government of Nunavut defines an archaeological artifact as:



Archaeological Artifacts and Nunavummiut

“any tangible evidence of human activity that is more than 50 years old, in respect of which an unbroken chain of possession or regular pattern of usage cannot be demonstrated”

This means that an archaeological artifact is:

- Any form of material object that has been used by humans, not just old tools and old tent rings. Examples of archaeological artifacts include clothing, inuksuit, animal bones, and old garbage dumps.
- An object that was made more than 50 years ago.
- An object that has not been inherited, or handed down through families or from person to person.
- An object that is no longer being regularly used by Nunavummiut.

Who owns and looks after archaeological artifacts?

Inuit, as a collective group, own the artifacts of their ancestors. The Government of Nunavut and the Inuit Heritage Trust are responsible for managing most of these artifacts on behalf of the Inuit people.

These organizations oversee the collection, research and storage of all archaeological artifacts except for:

- Public records;
- Artifacts in an area managed by the Parks Canada Agency
- Artifacts collected and owned by museums or individuals prior to 1993.

Artifacts are often loaned to institutions outside of Nunavut such as universities and museums because Nunavut has few facilities to store and look after its own artifacts.



Archaeological Artifacts and Nunavummiut

Archaeologists can not keep and do not own the artifacts they find during excavations, but are allowed to borrow them from Nunavut in order to study them. A loan agreement for archaeological artifacts must be signed if they are borrowed longer than a year after they are collected. If the Government of Nunavut and Inuit Heritage Trust both agree, an artifact can be loaned to a museum or another institution for a long period of time.

Where do artifacts collected during excavations get sent?

Until Nunavut constructs its own storage centre for archaeological collections from the territory, archaeological artifacts must be stored in museums and storage centres outside Nunavut.

Archaeological collections are usually stored in either the Prince of Wales Northern Heritage Centre in Yellowknife, or the Canadian Museum of History in Gatineau, Quebec. If an archaeological collection comes from Inuit Owned Lands, the Inuit Heritage Trust decides where it will be sent. If an archaeological collection comes from lands other than Inuit Owned Lands, then the Government of Nunavut decides where it will go.

Artifacts collected from archaeological investigations in Parks Canada protected areas are stored in a specialized building in Winnipeg, Manitoba. The temperature and humidity in this building is set at levels which help to preserve very fragile artifacts.



Archaeological Artifacts and Nunavummiut

In some cases, an archaeologist will need some or all of the artifacts, animal remains and original documentation from their project for continued research or to write publications. In such a case, an archaeologist has to arrange an agreement to loan these artifacts from the storage facility that has been chosen by either the Inuit Heritage Trust or Government of Nunavut.

Can found artifacts be kept?

Archaeological artifacts should always be left undisturbed when they are found. When an artifact is moved it loses its context, or relationship with the place where it was left by past generations. Lack of context makes an artifact's history more difficult to understand. The rules in Nunavut do not allow for a found artifact to be taken home by Inuit or non-Inuit.

Can found artifacts be sold?

It is illegal for anybody to sell an archaeological artifact that was removed from an archaeological site on or after June 15, 2001. While it is legal to sell artifacts found before this date, it is illegal to take artifacts from an archaeological site.

If someone wants to send an artifact outside Canada for any reason, including its sale, a special permit must be obtained under the terms of Canada's Cultural Property Export and Import Act. More information on the Act and on the steps to apply for a permit can be found by going to the Department of Canadian Heritage website at www.pch.gc.ca, and searching on Movable Cultural Property Program.



What should I do if I find an archaeological artifact, or have artifacts at home?

Old artifacts should always be left undisturbed if they are found on the land. Sometimes artifacts were collected by people who did not know they should leave them on the ground. Often these are handed down through friends and families. The best thing to do with these objects is to keep them in a way that makes sure that they are both respected and safe. What the rules in Nunavut try to prevent is the continued removal of artifacts from the land. If you have questions about any artifact at your house, you can ask about it at a local heritage center or museum, or see if local elders know more information about it.



Archaeological Sites and Nunavummiut

What is an archaeological site?

An archaeological site is any site where an archaeological artifact is found. A site can be as big as a whole ancient campground, or as small as a scattering of old antler flakes from somebody making a tool hundreds of years ago. Archaeological sites in Nunavut are not only areas formerly used by Inuit people, but can include areas with non-Inuit artifacts such as explorers' cairns and trading post goods.

Who is allowed to excavate or alter an archaeological site?

No one is allowed to excavate, alter or disturb an archaeological site unless they have a permit issued by the Nunavut Government or Parks Canada that allows them to do so. This means that

Nunavummiut and other people without permits should not:

- Dig up old antler and bone from archaeological sites;
- Remove artifacts they find at archaeological sites;
- Remove stones from old tent rings, inuksuit and other structures.

Many modern camping spots, cabins and outpost camps are near archaeological sites, and these sites can become threatened by modern camp activities. It is recommended that camp residents take extra consideration of not accidentally disturbing or damaging their archaeological heritage. If you go to a camp or cabin and you come across archaeological evidence nearby, please contact IHT for advice on how to manage your camp activities without threatening any old structures or artifacts.



Archaeological Sites and Nunavummiut

What permits are needed to document and excavate archaeological sites?

Before anyone is allowed to alter or remove items from an archaeological site in Nunavut they must get permission from Nunavut authorities in the form of a permit. In most cases, the permit process is overseen by the Department of Culture and Heritage, the Inuit Heritage Trust and Parks Canada. There are two different types of permit that can be applied for:

- A Class 1 permit allows someone to document an archaeological site for research purposes. Documentation might include preparing a map of a site, recording a site's geographic location, or writing down the number and type of different features

present at the site. A Class 1 permit does not allow artifacts to be collected or sites to be dug, altered or disturbed any way. This type of permit is also required by cruise ship operators who want to have tourists visit archaeological sites.

- A Class 2 permit can only be applied for by professional archaeologists. This permit allows archaeologists to document artifacts and archaeological sites, as well as excavate and remove artifacts and other materials for research purposes.

Archaeologists who want to do surveys, inventories or excavation in areas managed by Parks Canada must obtain a Parks Canada permit, instead of the permit from the Government of Nunavut. The archaeologist must submit an application through the Parks Canada on-line Research and



Archaeological Sites and Nunavummiut

Collection Permit System. Parks Canada permits do not distinguish between different classes of archaeological work, but allow for the same kinds of research activities as permits from the Government of Nunavut. They are also very similar to Nunavut permits in their requirements for the analysis and care of collected artifacts after the archaeology project is completed.

What happens to an archaeological site when an excavation is finished?

When an archaeologist is finished excavating an archaeological site, they have to restore it as close as possible to its original state. As part of Class 2 permit applications, an archaeologist must specifically describe what measures will be taken to restore an excavated site. Even if a site has already

been fully excavated and restored, it is still considered an archaeological site, and a Class 2 permit is needed by anyone who wishes to dig there again.

What happens if development and construction projects take place near archaeological sites?

There are many forms of development that can endanger archaeological sites. These include:

- Projects that cut lines through the landscape, such as the building of roads, winter roads, and pipelines.
- Projects that take things from the ground, such as mining, gravel removal, and the creation of landfills.



Archaeological Sites and Nunavummiut

- Projects that create heavy traffic on certain parts of the landscape, such as recreational areas, residential areas, and the use of heritage sites in tourism.
 - Projects that establish large scale camps and infrastructure on the landscape, such as oil, mineral and gas exploration.
2. A list is made of all the sites that might be changed or damaged if development takes place. It is the obligation of the developer to hire and pay for a qualified archaeologist to obtain a Class 1 permit and perform this survey. The developer will use the results of the survey to figure out costs and the best way to proceed with the development project. The number and type of recorded archaeology sites are used to come up with an archaeological value that decides what measures will be taken to avoid and fully protect the sites, or lessen the amount of harm that development does to the sites.

Before a development project even begins, there are several steps that a developer has to follow in relation to the area's archaeological sites:

1. Developers must have an initial heritage study done on the land where work is going to take place. This study identifies the number of archaeological sites in the area and the likelihood of it being an important archaeological area.



Archaeological Sites and Nunavummiut

3. A mitigation plan has to be built between developers and the Department of Culture and Heritage to continue development in the area. Options might include protecting the area's sites and relocating development, or excavating and recording the sites and continuing with development as planned.
4. Over the course of construction, development areas often have to be monitored to make sure that no new sites appear, and that known sites are being managed according to the mitigation plan.

Are Nunavummiut allowed to harvest bones and ivory from archaeological sites to make carvings or artwork?

In Nunavut, digging up old sites to remove items without a permit is not allowed. Even if the whalebone and ivory found in old sites has not been carved or is not visibly altered, they are still considered to be archaeological artifacts.



Heritage Centres in Nunavut

What is a heritage centre?

A heritage centre is a building or facility where community members, tourists and students can come to get information about the culture and history of a certain place or group of people. Nunavut has a number of heritage organizations that are included until the title of heritage centres. These are:

- Community museums
- Visitor centers
- National and territorial parks visitor centers
- Regional tourist facilities
- School museums
- Community and regional archives

Does Nunavut have a territorial heritage centre?

Nunavut does not currently have a territorial museum or heritage centre. The Nunavut Land Claims Agreement says that a special heritage facility should be built to conserve and manage archaeological collections from across Nunavut. Such a heritage centre would be a permanent home for these artifacts. Until such a storage centre can be built, archaeological artifacts are kept in facilities outside the territory. Nunavut does not currently have anywhere large enough, or with properly controlled environmental conditions, to store such a big collection of artifacts. The construction of a new territorial museum will happen when enough money can be raised to build a centre that meets professional museum standards.



Heritage Centres in Nunavut

What are some challenges facing heritage work in Nunavut?

The field of heritage management has many challenges within the territory of Nunavut. Despite Nunavummiut being very interested in and knowledgeable about Inuit history and culture, Nunavut still relies on trained professionals from outside the territory to manage much of its heritage needs. This is largely due to:

- A lack of professionally trained heritage staff in Nunavut;
- A lack of communication networks between cultural and heritage organizations across the territory;
- A lack of resources and best-practices guides to help untrained heritage workers

better understand how to do their jobs.

- A lack of core funding for heritage organizations across the territory.

In 2005, the Inuit Heritage Trust formally recognized the above challenges in its Nunavut Heritage Sector Needs Assessment report and has since been working on ways that these issues can be resolved.

What is the Nunavut Heritage Network?

The Nunavut Heritage Network (NHN) is a project managed by the Inuit Heritage Trust that seeks to increase local participation and training in Nunavut's heritage sector. The program is designed to bring together heritage interest groups from across Nunavut by creating a strong support network through which conversations about



Heritage Centres in Nunavut

education, training and best practice guidelines for heritage issues can take place. There are currently about 60 different individuals and groups taking part in the network. The NHN's ultimate goal is to strengthen local heritage organizations and showcase Nunavut's heritage to the world. In doing this, the NHN seeks to:

- Be inclusive of the heritage of all Nunavummiut;
- Recognize the role that elders and contemporary people play in shaping the future of Nunavut's heritage;
- Assist and support Nunavut Heritage organizations in achieving their goals;
- Respect communities' desire to reflect their heritage in a way they see fit;
- Advocate the social and economic importance of investing in Nunavut's heritage.

The NHN regularly issues an on-line newsletter dedicated to culture and heritage issues in Nunavut and the rest of Canada. If you would like to be put on the mailing list for this newsletter please contact the Inuit Heritage Trust.

What programs does the Inuit Heritage Trust offer to support heritage training?

The Inuit Heritage Trust offers the following programs to increase Nunavummiut involvement in the management of Nunavut's heritage:

1. Professional development is essential for northern heritage workers to update and upgrade their knowledge of best practices in the field of their profession. IHT is dedicated to regularly offer training opportunities such



Heritage Centres in Nunavut

as essentials in conservation, cultural heritage interpretation, and specific community outreach programs. Updates on upcoming training initiatives can be found on our website.

2. The Heritage Leadership Program awards \$3000 per year to up to 3 beneficiaries who are taking at least 60% of their secondary education courses in heritage or who are aiming for an academic graduation (bachelor, master, Ph.D) in any kind of heritage studies.

4. The Mentorship Program is specifically aimed at connecting youth who are interested in archaeology with current archaeology projects occurring in the territory. The program helps to make the connection between the youth and the project and provides up to \$3,000 per student to cover costs such as transportation, wages, and food.

5. Every year one or several heritage institutions in Nunavut are given the opportunity to apply for a conservator fly-in visit. The conservator will do a multi-day site visit to assess the heritage facility, its collections management plan and either the entire, or parts of, its material collection. During the visit the conservator will work with staff at the heritage centre on a one-on-one bases to help them learn key principles of conservation and care regarding the centre's collection. The project also includes the development of a report by the conservator to point out areas that require improvement at the facility, and recommend treatment options for at-risk artifacts.



Artifacts and Heritage Centres

What kind of artifacts are found in heritage centres?

The term ‘artifact’ references any object made by a human being, and is usually an item of cultural or historical interest. An artifact can be made from many different kinds of materials and can serve many different purposes. When dealing with Inuit cultural artifacts, two basic categories apply:

- Archaeological artifacts are objects made, modified or used more than 50 years ago by human populations.
- Ethnographic artifacts are also made by humans, but during a more recent time period. Examples of an ethnographic artifact might include a homemade tool or parka, a soapstone carving, or a modern sled. An ethnographic artifact in Nunavut can be made by Inuit or non-Inuit.

Unlike archaeological artifacts, ethnographic artifacts can be owned by individual people and museums. Special laws have been put in place that allow the Inuit Heritage Trust to request the return of ethnographic artifacts from museum collections outside Nunavut. Both archaeological and ethnographic artifacts are considered important for understanding the culture of the people who made them.

Can heritage centres keep and display artifacts found during local archaeological excavations?

Archaeologists are sometimes asked to return excavated artifacts directly to the community closest to where they were found. Archaeologists, however, are not allowed to choose where the artifacts go and must follow regulations by



Artifacts and Heritage Centres

storing the items at the Prince of Wales Northern Heritage Centre, the Canadian Museum of History, or at a Parks Canada facility. If a Nunavut museum or heritage centre would like to obtain archaeological artifacts for their collections, they can arrange to loan them or have them permanently transferred from one of these storage centres. In some cases, these facilities will cast replicas of archaeological artifacts and send them instead of the original artifacts.

Where do heritage centres get the artifacts in their collections?

There are four main ways that artifacts are brought into a museum or heritage centre collection:

1. Donations

Receiving donations is the most common way for heritage centres to acquire new artifacts. Many Nunavummiut have collections of old belongings that they would like to put in a place where they will be kept safe and accessible to the community. While this method allows collections to be brought together without much cost, it also means that museums have less control over the types of artifacts in their collections.

2. Loans

Many heritage centres in Nunavut rely on artifact loans from other museums and institutions. This allows Nunavut heritage centres without much funding to build large and interesting collections of relevant artifacts. Loans can either be made as short or long term agreements, and often require that the borrowing heritage centre regularly monitors and reports on the state of the objects.



Artifacts and Heritage Centres

3. Purchasing

Another way that artifacts are acquired is through purchase. Buying an object from a private seller allows a museum to choose exactly what it wants for its collection. Buying artifacts for a collection, however, can also be a very costly process. Purchasing old artifacts in Nunavut is not recommended, in order to discourage people from illegally collecting old artifacts they find on the land with the intention of selling them for profit. If an artifact is bought for a collection, the purchaser should know as much as possible about when and where it came from.

4. Production

A final way that heritage centres acquire artifacts is by making them. Artifacts created during land camps, traditional knowledge workshops, and community projects are great sources for public exhibits and displays. Making artifacts for a collection is a great way to

involve the public in learning about cultural activities and sharing their stories and knowledge about art and technology making.

How does a heritage centre decide which artifacts to accept into its collection?

Many heritage centres have something called a ‘collection policy,’ that helps them decide what new artifacts they will accept into their collection. A collection policy outlines specific themes that define a heritage centre’s collection, and which artifacts might best match these themes. Specific collection themes in Nunavut might include:

- Items from only a single geographic region (ie. Kitikmeot or North Baffin);
- Items from only a single cultural sub-group (ie. Copper



Artifacts and Heritage Centres

Inuit, European explorers, Baffin Inuit);

- Items from only a particular time period (ie. modern Inuit art, pre-contact Inuit artifacts).

Museums usually establish a fixed procedure for deciding if new items line up with the collections policy and should be accepted into their collections.

This might involve either the person responsible for managing collections deciding the item should be acquired, or might require a decision by an entire board of people. The following questions can be asked to help decide if a new artifact should be added to the collection:

- How does the work of art relate to the Museum's mission and to objects already in the collection?
- What is the quality and condition of the work, especially in comparison to other works of the same

region and time period?

- Will the museum be able to store, display, and take care of the work safely?
- Are there any restrictions placed on the gift? (In general, the museum cannot accept conditions imposed by the donor: for example, a request that the object be always on display.

Once a new artifact is added to a collection, it becomes very difficult to remove it from that collection. A decision-making process similar to acquiring new objects must be used. Some reasons that an artifact might be removed from the collection include:

- An artifact is no longer relevant to the theme of the collection;
- The cost of storage or conservation for the artifact is too high, or there is limited storage space;



Artifacts and Heritage Centres

- There are multiple similar artifacts in the collection, or a replacement artifact in better condition has been found;
- The artifact has deteriorated too much;
- The documentation accompanying the artifact has been lost or ruined.
- They can be exchanged with other heritage centres and museums for other artifacts that are needed in your collection;
- They can be used for education and research purposes in school programs, hands-on demonstrations, and analytical tests where there is a chance that artifacts will be damaged or destroyed.

When artifacts are removed from a heritage centre collection it does not mean that they have to be thrown away. Destruction of an artifact should only occur if the artifact becomes hazardous to people's health, a risk to other artifacts and collections, or has become damaged or deteriorated beyond repair. Here are some options for what to do with artifacts or artifact collections no longer wanted by a heritage centre:

- They can be donated to another institution such as a museum, school or cultural organization. This helps keep the material accessible to the public for educational purposes;

How are gifts and loans of artifacts accepted by heritage centres?

Gifts and loans are the most common ways for heritage centres to acquire artifacts, and there is a set process for accepting them. For legal and documentary purposes, a form must be filled out each time a heritage centre receive gifts and loans. Templates for each can be found on the following page.



Artifacts and Heritage Centres

Deed of Gift

A Deed of Gift form is issued when an artifact is officially accepted into a heritage centre. It is a legal document that transfers ownership of the material from the donor to the heritage centre. This document must be signed and dated by both the artifact's owner and an authorized heritage worker. After a gift form is signed, the artifact belongs entirely to the heritage centre and can not be requested back by its original owner. Unless specific conditions are written into a deed of gift agreement, a heritage centre is allowed to store, display, or get rid of the gifted artifact as they see fit.

Loan Agreement

When an artifact is loaned to a heritage centre, it means that its original owners have the right to take it back at some point in the future. Museums and heritage centres often loan each other artifacts for exhibits, but loans can also come from people's private collections. There is

no standardized form for loan agreements, but the document must make sure that both parties agree on certain conditions before the exchange of an artifact takes place. Important information to write into a loan agreement includes:

- A description of the object's history and physical appearance (including a photograph);
- The condition of an artifact is before it is loaned out;
- How the artifact is to be stored and displayed by the institution borrowing it;
- How long a loan will take place, including beginning and end dates.

The length of a loan can vary. Artifacts can be loaned for short-term exhibits. In some cases, what is called a long-term loan is arranged for artifacts. This means that the artifact remains the property of the original owner, but can be used by a museum for extended periods of time.



Sample Heritage Centre Loan Agreement Form

LOAN AGREEMENT

1. Lender's name and address:
2. Borrower's name and address:
3. Loaned Artifact description:
 - Artifact name type and origin
 - Artifact materials
 - Artifact dimensions
 - Artifact appearance/colour (include photo)
 - Condition of artifact before loan
 - Artifact catalogue number
 - Insurance Value
4. Costs:
 - Insurance?
 - Loan fee?
 - Shipping fees?
 - Administration fees?
5. Duration of Loan:
6. Reason for Loan:
7. How will the loan be acknowledge in display or published images of the artifact?:
8. Special requirements or loan conditions:
 - Staff monitoring of artifact conditions?
 - Staff monitoring of artifact environment?
 - Special display requirements?
 - Special shipping requirements?
 - Special storage requirements?
9. Artifact pick up and Return Address:

Lender's name _____ Borrower's name _____

Date _____ Date _____

Lender's signature _____ Borrower's signature _____



Sample Heritage Centre Deed of Gift Form

(INSERT YOUR CENTRE'S NAME)

(Insert your centres' address, phone number, and other contact information)

DEED OF GIFT

(INSERT YOU CENTRE'S NAME)

gratefully acknowledges the gift of the material described below, and wishes to thank

(Name of Donor)

for this valued addition to the collections of the Heritage Centre.

Description:

Conditions of deposit:

It is understood and agreed that the materials donated shall become the exclusive and absolute property of (INSERT YOUR CENTRE'S NAME). This property will be handled according to the procedures established in (INSERT YOUR CENTRE'S NAME) policy.

(Date)

(Signature of Donor)

Accepted on behalf of (INSERT YOUR CENTRE'S NAME):

(Date)

(Signature of authorized heritage centre worker)

How does a heritage centre's environment effect its artifacts?

Creating a proper environment for museum artifacts is always a challenge. Even in best-case scenarios, temperature, light, and humidity all combine to weaken material artifacts. Nunavut's extreme climate, extended periods of sunlight, and very dry air make it even more difficult to ensure that artifacts stay in good condition.

The following section will describe environmental agents that cause artifacts to break down. These agents affect artifacts whether they are on display in exhibit cases, or are in storage in a collections room. Unless an environmentally-controlled case or room is built for artifacts, they will remain vulnerable to environmental extremes and changes. As specially controlled conditions

are expensive to create, heritage workers should focus on simply monitoring environmental conditions and trying to make sure they change or fluctuate as little as possible.

What role does temperature play in artifact deterioration?

A steady room temperature is essential for heritage centres. Extreme hot or cold temperatures or extreme changes in temperature in a building can damage the materials being stored there. It is generally suggested that heritage centre temperatures should be kept around 19.5 degrees Celcius or 67 degrees Farenheit.

Temperature affects artifacts in a various ways. Higher temperatures cause chemical reactions and biological activity to increase. This can cause mold to grow and spread, and organic



Caring for Collections: Creating the Right Environment

artifacts to lose their color, melt, and disintegrate more quickly. At lower temperatures, materials begin to dry out too much causing paint to crack, leather to tighten and break, and glues to come apart.

Abrupt changes in the temperature of a heritage centre should also be avoided. Fluctuating temperatures cause the materials in artifacts to expand and shrink quickly, making them brittle and more likely to break apart. If objects are stored outside or in freezers, repeated freezing and thawing should be avoided.

What role does humidity play in artifact deterioration?

Relative humidity (often called RH) refers to the level of water vapour that is in the air. RH is usually related to temperature. When the temperature goes up in

an enclosed space, the RH goes up; when temperature goes down, the RH goes down. Generally, a safe humidity level for artifacts is considered to be between 45-60 % RH.

Like temperature, relative humidity can have a strong impact on the condition of artifacts. When RH levels are too high, certain artifacts become saturated with water and begin to swell and expand. With a high RH, wood and ivory begin to warp, and skins and canvasses can lose their tightness and go slack. A high RH can also cause metals to rust and fabric dyes to fade or run. When humidity levels are low, it means that there is less water in the air. Low RH levels cause objects like wood and ivory to dry out, shrink, warp and crack. Other items such as photographs and leather become very brittle and break apart more easily. As with temperature, extreme changes in RH makes artifacts deteriorate due to repeated swelling and shrinking.



What role does light play in artifact deterioration?

Over time, light causes multiple physical and chemical changes in objects, and can make them fade, become brittle and yellow. The effects of light deterioration become worse when an object is exposed to higher levels of light. A 100-watt light bulb for example, will cause twice as much damage as a 40-watt bulb in the same amount of time. An old photograph put on exhibit for six months will fade about half as much as it would if put on exhibit for an entire year. Direct sunlight is a particularly strong source of artifact deterioration because it contains UV rays. Light damage to an artifact is cumulative and can not be reversed. Ways that heritage workers can minimize the amount of damage light causes to an artifact include:

- Reducing the amount of light around the artifact by removing objects from direct sunlight or windows, or by reducing the amount and wattage of light in the room where the artifacts are kept. In the case of extremely light-sensitive objects, UV-filter glass can be used on an exhibit case to minimize the harm of light.
- Reducing the exposure time of an artifact. This can be done by lessening the amount of time that artifacts are exposed to light. This can include putting artifacts on exhibit for less time, or storing artifacts in boxes or in a completely dark space.

How can insects and infestations of artifacts be prevented?

Even though insects are generally not an issue in Nunavut, heritage workers should still be careful to



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prevent infestations in their collections. The biggest risk to artifacts occurs when new artifacts are accepted into a collection. Organic artifacts such as fur, hide, skin and feathers can sometimes be carrying small insects that can spread to the rest of the collection. New organic artifacts should be placed in the freezer or in sealed plastic bags for about a week before bringing them into a collection or storing them alongside other artifacts.

Should a heritage centre environment be monitored?

Monitoring the environment of a heritage centre is essential to artifact preservation. Long-term monitoring helps people track temperature, humidity and light so that they can maintain optimal conditions and correct any fluctuations from these conditions. There are a variety of tools to help with this process.

Many of these tools, like thermometers and hygrometers, only measure present environmental conditions. The information they give should be noted down on a regular basis so that fluctuations can be observed. For example, if a thermometer gives a reading of 20 degrees one week, 23 degrees the next, and 25 degrees the following week, it is clear that something will have to be done to bring the building's temperature back down to safer levels. Another way to monitor heritage centre collections is to routinely check the condition of the artifacts themselves. A picture and description of an artifact's condition is usually obtained for every new artifact that enters a collection. This photo and description should be compared to the physical artifact on a regular basis to make sure colours have not faded, or that new cracks or warping have not occurred. This form of monitoring is often mandatory for artifacts on loan from other heritage centres.



Caring for Collections: Archaeological Artifacts

How do the materials used to make an artifact affect its care?

When caring for and storing archaeological artifacts, it is important to first understand what materials the artifacts are made out of. This will help to decide the best way to store, display and handle the artifacts. There are three basic categories of artifact materials:

1. Organic Artifacts

Organic artifacts come from things that were once living, such as animals and plants, and can include various material types such as wood, paper, textiles, leather and skins, shells, horn, bone, ivory and grasses.

2. Inorganic Artifacts

Inorganic objects come from things that have never lived, such as stones, minerals,

metals, ceramics, glass, and some pigments.

3. Composite Artifacts

Composite objects are made up of two or more different kinds of materials and can include both organic and inorganic parts. A traditional Inuit harpoon, for example, might contain antler (the harpoon head), stone (the harpoon blade), animal skin (the harpoon line) and wood (the harpoon shaft).

Each of these material types has specific physical characteristics that affect how artifacts should be handled, stored, and displayed. Inorganic materials such as stone, brick or pottery are usually stable and can handle big fluctuations in temperature and humidity without being damaged. Organic materials such as leather and bone, and composite artifacts made of both organic



Caring for Collections: Archaeological Artifacts

and inorganic materials, are much more sensitive to temperature and humidity. This is especially the case with composite artifacts, as their different materials will react to environmental conditions in different ways, or even react against each other, creating physical stress and chemical interactions that speed up artifacts' deterioration.

How should artifacts be handled and moved?

Most artifacts in heritage centres become damaged because they are not handled or moved in a proper way. This is especially the case with archaeological artifacts. When archaeological objects are first uncovered in the Arctic, they often appear to be strong and in good shape due to having been frozen in the permafrost. When artifacts are removed from the ground, they begin to break

down in their new environment, becoming very fragile. Before picking up an archaeological artifact, or any other type of artifact in a museum setting, take some time to consider the following questions:

- Does the artifact absolutely have to be moved?
- Am I qualified to move this artifact, or should someone with more experience do it?
- Has the artifact been damaged in the past, or does it have any loose pieces or fragile surfaces that might come off easily?
- Is there any equipment I can use (such as a cart or tray) that will make moving the artifact easier?
- Is the route to where I want to bring the artifact clear and easy to navigate?
- Is this artifact too big or too heavy for one person to handle?
- Am I moving the artifact to a safe storage space?



Caring for Collections: Archaeological Artifacts

If an artifact is deemed safe to move, these best practices should be followed when transporting it:

- Don't wear anything (such as jewelry, rings, a watch or a belt buckle) that might damage artifacts by scratching or catching on their surface;
- Closely examine an artifact before picking it up and ask yourself where it is most fragile;
- Use both hands to pick up an artifact;
- Wear white cotton gloves when lifting artifacts. If artifacts are slippery, wear plastic or latex gloves instead of cotton;
- Never walk backwards while carrying an artifact. Always make sure you can see the path ahead of you;
- Never slide an artifact along a surface as it might become scratched. Pick an artifact

straight up, and put it down the same way.

When transporting artifacts accidents sometime happen. If you think an artifact might have been broken or damaged during a move, report the damage on its condition sheet and notify a heritage worker who is able to arrange for the artifact to be properly re-assembled or repaired.

How should artifacts be labelled?

When a new artifact is introduced into a museum collection, it should be labelled with a unique 'accession' or 'inventory' number. This number helps keep track of information that is linked to an artifact. By knowing an artifact's accession number, one can connect it to documents describing its history, condition, previous owners, and



Caring for Collections: Archaeological Artifacts

designated place in a museum, because those documents are all titled with the same number.

Labelling is an important way to keep basic information attached to an artifact. Without labels, artifacts can easily become lost within a museum collection. There are two main ways that labels can be attached to an artifact:

- Direct labels, which are applied directly onto an artifact as writing or a label;
- Indirect labels, which are written on another form of material (such as a tag) and loosely attached to, or placed near, an artifact. Indirect labelling should be used on artifacts that are on loan from other collections.

When deciding which type of label to use on an artifact, you should pay close attention to the material the artifact is

made from and its physical properties:

- For hard, non-porous artifacts (ie. glass, glazed pottery, metal) and hard, porous artifacts (ie. bone, wood, ivory), labels should be written onto a coat of clear lacquer painted on the artifact's surface. This helps protect the artifact's surface and means the label can be removed in the future. Once a label is written onto lacquer, a second coat of lacquer can be painted over the label to protect it from rubbing off. Labels can also be written on a small piece of paper and applied with lacquer to an artifact;
- For paper surfaces (ie. books, prints, photographs), a label should be written directly onto the paper with a soft pencil that can easily be erased;



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- For textile surfaces (ie. clothing, wall hangings, hides), labels should be written onto cloth strips and sewn onto the object using only a few stitches.

Attention should also be paid to the materials that the labels are made from. Use only acid-free, museum quality labels if they are going to be in contact with artifacts. Museum quality labels are made from materials that will not chemically react with artifacts, causing them to stain or fade. Labels should also have no metal or sharp pieces that could scratch an artifact. Before applying labels to an artifact, ask yourself :

- Do any other labels exist on this artifact? (if so, these should always be left on, and a new indirect label added);
 - Can the type of label I am adding be easily removed from the artifact if necessary?
 - Will the type of label I am adding come off too easily if the artifact is moved?
- The next step for labelling is to choose a good position on the artifact:
- Try to put a label in a slightly hidden place, or somewhere that will not easily stand out if the artifact is displayed;
 - Avoid placing labels on the bottom of heavy or large artifacts or in areas where they might be easily scratched or rubbed off;
 - Avoid placing labels on or near fragile areas of an artifact;
 - Avoid placing labels in areas that cover up important designs, features, or artist signatures on an artifact;
 - When possible, put labels in the same place on similar artifacts so that they can be easily found;



Caring for Collections: Archaeological Artifacts

- If an artifact consists of many different pieces, make sure that each of the pieces has its own label.

Should I try to fix and clean an archaeological artifact myself?

Archaeological research in Nunavut requires that most significant artifacts are looked at by a professional conservator before they are put into storage. Because of this, archaeological artifacts have to be cleaned and stabilized before they are loaned to a heritage centre. In situations where this is not possible, cleaning of archaeological artifacts should be kept to a minimum. The cleaning process may destroy important details and information that exist on the outer layers of an artifact. Many cleaning products will also chemically react with artifacts,

causing them more harm than good. Unless you have received specific training in cleaning and fixing artifacts, it is best to avoid any form of treatment that might risk damaging an artifact.

How are artifacts shipped by mail?

Shipping artifacts is a common practice at heritage centres. Artifacts must be shipped to and from other collections for loans, and sometimes to conservators for repair. If an artifact is not packed properly for shipment, it can be damaged by sudden humidity and temperature changes, or by being mishandled, bumped or dropped during travel. Theft is also sometimes an issue. The best way to learn how to pack artifacts is by watching another heritage worker who knows how to do it. If that is not possible, here are a set of steps to follow:



Caring for Collections: Archaeological Artifacts

1. Examine the artifact for places that are fragile or that have already been broken or repaired. Write up a condition report about the object, with photos and a description of how it looks before shipping.
2. Select your packing materials carefully. Certain materials might scratch or chemically react with artifacts. Try to use only acid-free paper and tissues for wrapping an object. Cushioning materials such as bubble-wrap or foam should be added to the artifact to prevent it from bumps and shocks.
3. Select a shipping box or container. The best containers are made from materials such as metal, wood, cardboard, fiberglass, and strong plastic. Ideally these containers should be able to withstand punctures, light, water and shocks.
4. When wrapping and placing an artifact in the box, try to:
 - Place the heaviest part of the artifact low and close to the center of the container.
 - Take artifacts with many pieces apart and wrap each separately.
 - Provide extra support for heavy parts of an artifact.
 - Only pack artifacts of similar weight together in the same container.
 - Fill empty space inside the box with cushioning or extra padding.
5. When labelling a box for shipping always:
 - Print the recipient's name and address in clear handwriting and in permanent ink;
 - Write the address both on and inside the box in case the address on the box's wrapping gets torn.



Caring for Collections: Archaeological Artifacts

A visual guide to labels

1. Direct labels are drawn or pasted onto a less visible part of an artifact using a coat of lacquer to protect the artifact surface.
2. Indirect labels attach to artifacts with a string, and are used when an artifact's surface is too fragile for direct labels or when an artifact is on loan.
3. Textile tape is made from materials that don't chemically interact with textile dyes.
4. Labels written on textile tape should be sewn onto a less visible area of a textile using several small stitches.



Caring for Collections: Archaeological Artifacts

A visual guide to handling and moving artifacts

1.



2.



3.



4.



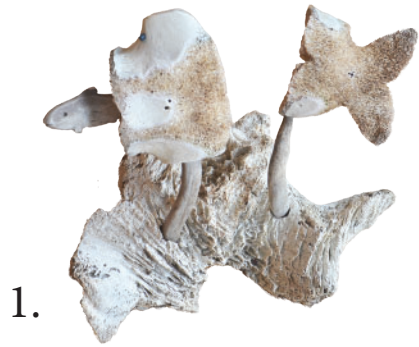
1. Always use gloves to directly handle artifacts. Use both hands to carry an artifact to make the process of transporting it safer.
2. If you want to transport numerous artifacts, use a carrier that keeps the artifacts cushioned and separated from one another. This will prevent them from bumping and scraping.
3. When handling artifacts that are fragile or made of numerous pieces, use one hand to support the most at-risk area. This will make sure that the pieces sticking out do not bump against anything or collapse under their own weight.
4. If an item is too big or heavy to transport comfortably, use a rolling cart to move it. Place artifacts on the cart inside a box or in such a way that they will not easily fall off during turns.



Caring for Collections: Archaeological Artifacts

A visual guide to packaging artifacts for shipment

1. Examine an artifact closely for fragile areas or breaks that might affect how it is shipped. Take a picture of its condition before being shipped.



2. Using foam and tissue, provide extra cushioning on parts of an artifact that are thin or fragile.



3. Wrap the entire artifact in several layers of foam or bubblewrap, cushioning its entire surface.



4. Place the wrapped artifact in a padded box. Fill empty spaces in the box with foam pieces to prevent movement.



Caring for Collections: Archaeological Artifacts

What kind of storage space is needed to house artifacts?

Heritage centres should have a space reserved only for storing artifacts that are not on display. Storing artifacts in a space shared by other activities (such as research or office space) increases the likelihood of accidents, theft and artifact deterioration. The room chosen to store artifacts should either be designed specifically for that purpose, or should be re-fitted with equipment and shelving to provide more security for the artifact collection.

Ideally, storage rooms should be sealed and regulated environments that keep artifacts at optimum temperature and humidity levels. Environmental control is expensive and not always possible in Nunavut, but these are a few things you can

do to make sure a storage space is as safe as possible:

- Use an indoor space that has no windows or natural light, and that is not vulnerable to big fluctuations in temperature or humidity;
- Make sure that shelving in the space is sturdy and made of materials that will not harm the artifacts;
- Make sure that there is enough room for both the artifacts presently in your collection, and artifacts that might be there in the future;
- Make sure the space and doorways in the room allow for artifacts to be brought in and out easily. Leave enough room between shelving aisles so that artifacts can be put in and taken out with no problems;
- A storage space must be secure against the possibility of theft. Entrances to the room should always be



Caring for Collections: Archaeological Artifacts

locked, and only trained heritage centre staff should have the keys.

How should artifacts be stored inside a storage room?

Choosing proper storage materials and equipment is essential because they will be in direct contact with artifacts for long periods of time and can possibly cause them harm. Try to follow these guidelines when choosing storage equipment:

- Make sure all boxes, padding, foam and paper used to wrap artifacts is museum quality and acid-free;
- If made of metal, make sure the storage equipment has no rust or paint that can transfer onto artifacts;
- Make sure that storage equipment is built so as to raise artifacts off the ground

by at least four inches. This will prevent damage from flooding, and allow dirt and dust to be removed from the floor beneath the artifacts;

- Foam padding should be used as a buffer between artifacts and shelving;
- Accessibility is a key issue. Find equipment that opens and closes easily, and does not have pieces that will break off or catch when an artifact is placed in or removed from it. Do not use equipment that is too high or dangerous to reach.

Different artifacts require different methods of storage depending on their size, shape and material make-up. Here are a few basic rules for storing different artifacts:

- Find cabinets and shelves that will fit different sizes and shapes of artifacts. Long flat drawers should be used



Caring for Collections: Archaeological Artifacts

for maps and prints, and open shelving can be used for larger artifacts;

- Small artifacts should be stored so that they do not bump into one another or roll when a box is moved or a drawer is opened;
- Foam supports should be built to help protect and hold up more fragile parts of artifacts.

A visual guide to archive tools

- 1. Large wall hangings and tapestries are best stored as rolls. Roll with the back of the textile facing upwards around an acid-free tube. A textile shelf can be used to store rolled textiles.**
- 2. A simple thermometer and hygrometer can be used to monitor environmental conditions inside sealed exhibit cases and artifact storage rooms.**
- 3. A horizontal storage shelf can be used to store large flat items such as maps, prints, photographs, and textiles.**
- 4. Artifact boxes come in various shapes and sizes. Make sure that they are made of acid-free materials that will not harm their contents.**
- 5. Artifact boxes can be purchased with interior dividers to hold and cushion small artifacts during storage or transport. Never place multiple artifacts loose in a box if there is any chance of them moving or colliding.**



Caring for Collections: Archaeological Artifacts

1.



4.



2.



5.

3.



Archives and Archive Materials

What is an archive?

An archive is a space that is used to store information and records related to a particular organization, cultural group, community, or geographic area. Like museums and libraries, an archive's purpose is to keep collections in such a way that they can be both safe and made available to the general public. While archives sometimes collect artifacts and books, they tend to focus on written documents that contain particularly important or hard to find information. Archives also collect materials that are very unique, rare, or one-of-a-kind.

While archaeological artifacts are not usually stored in archives, records produced through archaeological fieldwork such as field notes, photographs, maps, and digital documents are often kept there.

What materials are found in an archive?

The materials stored in an archive are variously referred to as 'records' or 'documents.' Archives contain both published and unpublished records in different formats that include:

- Text-based records (ie. manuscripts, letters, rare books, diaries, old newspapers, and reports);
- Image-based records (ie, photographs, slides, drawings, artworks, and blueprints);
- Moving image-based records (ie. old film reels, home video recordings, and DVDs);
- Audio-based records (ie. interviews, oral history tapes, musical recordings, tapes, and records);
- Physical records (ie. historical tools, artifacts formerly owned by famous



Archives and Archive Materials

people, and equipment needed to watch or listen to old recordings).

How do I find out what records are in an archive's collection?

One of the primary purposes of an archive is to promote public interest in a certain topic or research area. In order to build this public interest, archival records have to be accessible to the people wanting to learn from them. Artifacts are made accessible through a 'catalogue,' or 'database,' which is a detailed list of all the records contained in an archive. This list pairs each record with a different catalogue number, as well as a description of:

- The format or material of the record;
- The information a record contains;

- Who or where a record came from;
- Whether or not there are any restrictions on a record;
- Where in the archives a specific record can be found.

This information helps both archivists and people wanting to use the archives keep track of what and where specific records exist in the collection. Archive records should always be stored in the same order so that they can be found by reading the location described under their catalogued number.

How can archival records be shared with the public?

Often, materials have specifically been placed in an archive because they are fragile, rare, or one of a kind. Because of this, certain rules have to be placed on how the public uses them. Unlike a library, archival



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records can not be checked out or loaned to the public. These are some other ways that the public can gain access to archive records without affecting their safety:

1. Public Visits to Archives

People are allowed to visit archives to look at original documents or records under certain controlled conditions. This means they can look at collections under the supervision of somebody who knows how to handle the records properly. Often visitors to an archive will not be allowed to bring coats and bags with them while looking at materials so that accidents and theft are less likely. If a document or record is fragile, it is recommended that visitors wear clean white gloves when handling them. These will usually be supplied by the archives.

2. Copies and Reproductions

Copies and reproductions allow the public to get information from records without handling the original records. If a material is considered too fragile for visitors to handle, a copy of part or all of the record can be made by archive staff. This might include taking a photo of an object, using a scanner to digitize an old photograph, or photocopying pages out of a book. This allows the public to have their own copy of the material without putting the original at risk. Visitors are sometimes allowed to take digital photos of documents and photos that are too fragile to copy in any other way.

3. Digital Collections

Many archives are beginning to digitize materials from their collections to make them available on the Internet. Digitization means that



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virtual copies of materials are created by scanning records and uploading the scan onto a computer. This allows people to view materials without having to visit an archive in person. Often, digital catalogues are created on archives' websites that allow all digitized content to be searched. Visitors to the website can type words related to the subject they are interested in (such as names, or places) into a search box, and have all the documents containing those words appear on the screen.

Are all the materials in an archive accessible to the public?

Not all records in an archive are accessible to the public. Some records have rules attached which specify who is allowed to see them and how they are used. Reasons for limited access generally fall into two categories:

1. Copyright

Copyright is a legal way of protecting the rights of an original author or creator of materials. When a copyright is placed on an idea, a piece of music, or a written material, the person holding the copyright can decide how the materials are used, reproduced, and distributed. When an archive accepts a new item into its collection, copyright on the item can either be transferred to the archive or remain the property of the original copyright holder. Getting permission to use copyrighted material is not an archive's responsibility. It is the responsibility of whoever wants to use an archival record to contact the material's copyright holder for permission to publish or use the materials in other public ways.

2. Other Restrictions

When materials are loaned or gifted to an archive, the original



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owner might place conditions on who the materials can be shared with. This occurs because the information the materials contain might be considered to be sensitive, or is something that not everyone should have access to. Specific reasons for this might be that the information is sacred, or might unnecessarily damage somebody's reputation or cause harm to a community if it was known by everybody. In cases such as this, it is an archive worker's responsibility to write the restrictions into a record's catalogue file and make sure that they are followed when members of the public try to access the record.

Accepting materials into an archive's collection

As with the acquisition of artifacts in heritage centres, archives can not accept every donated or gifted item into their collection. For a new item to be housed in an archive, it should be directly relevant to the specific topic an archive has chosen as a theme for its collection. This might include material related to a specific organization, time period, geographic area, or cultural population.

As with heritage centres, an archive accepts gifts into its collection. A 'deed of gift' form must be filled out for the donated item and signed by both the donor and an authorized heritage worker. A template for this form is provided on the following page.



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The loaning of items to archives for display is not a very common practice. Items are, however, often loaned to archives so that copies can be made and stored in the collection. A loan agreement for archives should always make clear what permissions (such as copyright and reproduction) are transferred to the archive along with the loaned item. A template for this form has been provided on the next page.

How can archival materials be handled safely?

Like artifacts, archival records are often old and fragile. Unlike artifacts, however, archival records are frequently removed from storage to be handled by archive staff, researchers and the general public. In order to ensure that archival records are not damaged as a result of this increased contact, there are a

number of best practice guidelines that should be followed by staff and visitors alike:

- Hands should always be clean and dry when working with archival records. If records are particularly old or fragile, white gloves should be worn;
- Records should always be carried with both hands. Fragile, heavy, and oversized materials may need to be carried on a carrying board or cart to prevent tearing and folding;
- Only one archival record should be handled at a time. A flat surface should always be underneath documents to prevent them from bending;
- Never flip archival records like magazine or newspaper pages;



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- Do not write on archival records. Avoid placing writing pads on top of records because the ink or pressure of the writing might transfer. Do not trace maps or other records;
- Do not use post-it notes or other self-sticking labels, staples or paper clips on archival records;
- Do not force records to lie flat when reading, scanning or photocopying them.
- Store papers in acid-free folders before putting them in boxes. Do not over-or under-fill folders;
- Label a document's folder with all relevant information about the papers. When necessary, label paper documents directly with a light pencil.

Many of the non-paper media stored in archives (ie. film negatives, glass slides, old photographs) can be very sensitive to their environment and require specialized storage conditions.

Labelling and storing archival materials

The labelling and storage of archival records is similar to that of other artifacts. Many of the records stored in archives are paper-based, which requires several specific guidelines to be followed:



Sample Archive Deed of Gift Form

(INSERT YOUR ARCHIVE'S NAME)
(Insert your Archive's address, phone number,
and other contact information)

DEED OF GIFT

(INSERT YOU ARCHIVE'S NAME)
gratefully acknowledges the gift of the archival material described
below, and wishes to thank

(Name of Donor)

for this valued addition to the collections of the Archive.

Description:

Conditions of deposit:

It is understood and agreed that the materials donated shall become
the exclusive and absolute property of **(INSERT YOUR ARCHIVE'S
NAME)**. This property will be handled according to the procedures
established in **(INSERT YOUR ARCHIVE'S NAME)** policy.

(Date)

(Signature of Donor)

Accepted on behalf of **(INSERT YOUR ARCHIVE'S NAME)**:

(Date)

(Signature of Archivist)



Sample Archive Loan Agreement form

(INSERT YOUR ARCHIVE'S NAME)
(Insert your Museum's address, phone number,
and other contact information)

LOAN AGREEMENT

Received from:

Name: _____

Address and telephone: _____

I hereby loan the following material to (INSERT YOUR ARCHIVE'S NAME)
for the purposes of duplication:

Description:

(INSERT YOUR ARCHIVE'S NAME) may reproduce any or all of the above
described material for any purposes which promote the educational/
research objectives of the Archive. The disposition of these reproductions
is solely the prerogative of the (INSERT YOUR ARCHIVE'S NAME). Any
copyrights such as the owner may possess in this property are hereby
transferred to the archive.

(Date)

(Signature of Lender)

Received by: _____

(Signature of Archivist)

I hereby acknowledge the safe return of the material described above:

(Date)

(Signature of Lender)



Creating Exhibits from Artifacts

What is an exhibit?

In the context of heritage centres, an exhibit is a display of text and material items that is built to educate the general public about a particular subject. Exhibits are designed to tell a particular story to an audience. Material artifacts can be used to illustrate this story, and to allow public to visualize and make a stronger personal connections to the story's subject. When artifacts are directly associated with a specific person, culture or historical period they are able to bridge the distance between a museum audience and other places and times. Exhibits will often use other media such as text, sound and video to more clearly communicate their message.

How can artifacts be made into an exhibit?

There are many types of exhibits. Stories can be realized as physical exhibits in many different ways, from simple table top displays to more elaborate museum cases. Regardless of what type of final exhibit you are working towards, a similar set of steps should be followed to plan and develop the project:

1. Finding a topic

The first step to exhibit building is deciding what kind of story you want the exhibit to tell. Exhibit themes and artifacts are often inter-related in that exhibit themes are usually developed with a particular set of artifacts in mind. These artifacts might share a common history or similar characteristics, or might illustrate the ways that the people who made them are different. As ideas for an exhibit



Creating Exhibits from Artifacts

topic begin to take shape, you should ask yourself some important questions:

- What will be the purpose of this exhibit?
- Are there any artifacts in this heritage centre that fit the theme of this exhibit?
- What message do I want the public to learn from this exhibit?
- Who is the intended audience of this exhibit?

2. Building a story through research

The public relies on heritage centres to make sure the information included in an exhibit is well researched and correct. When developing your exhibit's story, take time to learn background information about the exhibit topic. Research for a exhibit subject can take place through books, the Internet, oral history interviews, archival records or public meetings and

workshops. There are often multiple versions to every story and it is an exhibit builder's job to present this information in a truthful and unbiased manner.

3. Planning how your project will develop

Develop a project plan for the exhibit that lays out the following information:

- Project budget: How much will a project cost? Where will the money for the project come from? What grants or funding sources are available to help pay for such a project?
- Project schedule: What are the different phases of the project and how long will each phase take to complete? When is the exhibit scheduled to open to the public?
- Project staff? Who will be working on each phase of the exhibit? Will contractors



Creating Exhibits from Artifacts

- have to be hired, or will staff do the building?
- Project materials: What materials will be required to build the exhibit? Are these available, or will they need to be shipped?
- Evaluation plan: When will the exhibit be considered complete? What criteria will be used to decide if the exhibit is a success?
- Is there a lot of natural sunlight? Is the exhibit close to a heater or a doorway that lets in cold air? Keep in mind that sudden temperature changes can damage artifacts.
- How will the placement of an exhibit affect traffic in the heritage centre? Will safety exits be blocked? Is the exhibit in a place that is heavily used for other reasons?
- Is the exhibit positioned well for viewing? Is there enough light to read the text? Is it low enough to be looked at by children?

4. Assembling an exhibit

Before starting to build an exhibit, it helps to create a visual picture or drawing of the desired exhibit layout to guide your work. When turning this blueprint into a physical structure consider the following:

The exhibit's surrounding environment

- What environmental conditions might influence artifacts in an exhibit?

The exhibit's materials

- How safe are the construction materials being used to build the exhibit? Are they good quality or will they fall apart with time? Will they chemically react with the artifacts?



Creating Exhibits from Artifacts

- How safe are the artifacts being used in the exhibit? Are the artifacts sensitive to light? Are they fragile or do they show signs of damage?
- How can the exhibit as a whole be built to withstand public usage and wear? Should barriers be put up between people and artifacts? Are there any loose ends that can be pulled on or broken off? Can the exhibit be washed down if something is spilled or gets dirty?

The exhibit's audience

- What type of people visit this heritage centre? What do they already know about the exhibit topic and what will they find interesting?
- Does the audience read? Will they be able to understand the language level used in this exhibit?

5. Follow-up and evaluation

Just because an exhibit has been built and installed, it does not mean that the project is finished. As long as the exhibit is in place it will continue to require staff supervision in the following areas.

Monitoring

An exhibit needs to be checked on a regular basis for signs of wear and tear. Make sure that a condition report exists for each artifact on display so that its appearance can be monitored in reference to how it looked before the exhibit. Designate somebody to be in charge of regular inspections of the exhibited artifacts to monitor them for signs of change or deterioration.

Education and outreach

Museum exhibits are more effective when they play a role in their surrounding



Creating Exhibits from Artifacts

community. Think hard about different ways that an exhibit can be built into classroom activities or public workshops. Organize staff members or volunteers to help interpret the exhibit materials for community members.

Project evaluation

Because exhibits use up both time and money in heritage centres, it is important to make sure they are being used. Keep track of visitor numbers and conduct surveys to help determine which parts did and did not work in an exhibit. This feedback can be applied to build more effective exhibits in the future.

How can artifacts be kept safe while in exhibits?

Any time an artifact is displayed outside of a storage room, there is a greater risk of it becoming

damaged. In order to minimize the amount of risk to artifacts, there are a number of considerations that should be taken into account when planning the exhibit.

- Make sure that exhibit cases can be locked;
- Put barriers in front of artifacts too large for cases;
- Choose appropriate artifacts for the exhibit's environmental conditions. Choose examples of artifacts from your collection that are in good shape and do not have existing problems that will be made worse if they are exposed to changes in light, humidity or temperature;
- Change up sensitive artifacts in long-term exhibits, giving them a chance to rest in storage;
- Original artifacts can never be drilled, trimmed, tacked, nailed, screwed, or glued



Creating Exhibits from Artifacts

down when installed into an exhibit. An artifact should look exactly the same when removed from an exhibit as when it originally went in;

- Mounts should be built to hold and protect artifacts that are in danger of moving or slipping during an exhibit. Mounts should be built from museum-quality materials that will not harm the artifact and should cushion artifacts so that the heaviest and most fragile parts of the object are supported. Artifacts should be firmly attached to their mounts with fishing line or see-through thread so as not to fall off if an exhibit case is accidentally shaken or bumped;

Creating exhibit labels

Museum labels are used to help communicate an exhibit's story through words, symbols, photographs, and other visual images. Without labels, artifacts become purely decorative objects and the public often has difficulty figuring out how they relate to the story that the exhibit is trying to tell. When creating labels for an exhibit keep these tips in mind:

- Labels should communicate information in a concise and interesting way;
- Labels should be written in plain language at a basic reading level that most audiences can understand;
- Labels should be written in dark text on a light background, and in a font type and size that is easy for visitors to read.



Creating Exhibits from Artifacts

Several different layers of information labels should be added to an exhibit to help audience navigate its content:

- **Title label**

This label contains the title of the exhibit. It should clearly communicate what the exhibit is about and should be large enough to grab a visitor's attention.

- **Primary label**

This label provides a general introduction to an exhibit as a whole, explaining what the exhibit is about, what specific perspective is being taken, and why the exhibit topic is important.

- **Secondary label**

This label provides more detailed information for different sections or sub-themes of the exhibit. These labels help audiences understand the relationship between the exhibit topic and artifacts included in the exhibit.

- **Artifact identification label**

This label provides the basic information about individual artifacts or images included in an exhibit. An identification label should have no more than four lines of information about what the object is, where and when it came from, what materials it is made from and who it belongs to.



Creating Exhibits from Artifacts

1.



Lena Kamoagyok lighting a qulliq
Cambridge Bay, 2011
Photo by Brendan Griebel
KHS-754632

2.



Creating Exhibits from Artifacts



3.



4.

A visual guide to exhibit stands and labels

1. Exhibit mounts should be built to support both the weight and fragile pieces of an artifact. Special mannequin mounts can be used when displaying clothing. Mounts should provide protection and safety for an artifact, yet should not be distractingly visible.
2. Exhibit images need labels too. When using a picture in an exhibit write a small label describing what the picture is, where and when it was taken, the name of the photographer, and the accession number of the photograph (if there is one).
3. Small exhibit cases can be purchased pre-made from various companies. These cases can either be built as regular (i.e., non-airtight) displays or as environmentally-sealed displays, which have airtight strips and contain silica gel to help keep the humidity at a desired level.
4. Adding audio and visual components to an exhibit encourages the public to interact with its contents.







References and Resources

Works cited in this booklet

- **Knud Rasmussen. 1931. *The Netsilik Eskimos: Social Life and Spiritual Culture*. Report of the Fifth Thule Expedition 1921-24. Vol. 8 (1-2). Copenhagen: Gyldendalske Boghandel.**
- **Douglas Stenton. 2003. *Guidelines for Applicants and Holders of Nunavut Territory Archaeology and Palaeontology Permits*. Nunavut Department of Culture and Heritage available at: www.ch.gov.nu.ca**

Recommended resources for general museum and archive questions

- **National Park Service Museum Handbooks Part 1, II, and III**

This handbook series is an excellent overview of all museum operations including museum collections, records and exhibits. It is available as an on-line printable PDF at the following website: www.nps.gov/museum/publications/handbook.html

- **Museum Basics (Heritage: Care-Preservation-Management) by Timothy Ambrose and Crispin Paine. 2012. 3rd edition. Routledge Press.**
- **Canada Council of Archives publications.**

The CCA offers a wide array of free publications for people interested in learning more about archival practice. These publications range



References and Resources

from basic information on how to use archives to more detailed advice on professional techniques for managing and storing archival collections. These booklets are available on the CCA website at: www.cdncouncilarchives.ca/public_free.html

- **Canadian Conservation Institute Notes**

CCI has produced a large amount of practical publications detailing how cultural artifacts should be handled, stored and cared for. These publications are available for free on their website at: www.cci-icc.gc.ca/

Heritage and research resources specifically written for the Arctic

- **Conservation Manual for Northern Archaeologists by Prince of Wales Northern Heritage Centre. 2007.**

This PDF booklet gives instructions on how to excavate, stabilize and care for archaeological artifacts in northern settings. It can be found in the programs section of the PWNHC website at: www.pwnhc.ca

- **Arctic Peoples and Archaeology by Inuit Heritage Trust**

This multimedia CD outlines the history of arctic peoples in Nunavut. The CD-ROM can be purchased , or tried for free, at the IHT website.

- **Guidelines for Working with Inuit Elders by Pelagie Owljoot and the Nunavut Arctic College. 2008**

This document has many suggestions for heritage centres wanting to involve elders in oral history projects or educational programming. It can be viewed as a PDF at the Arctic College website: www.arcticcollege.ca



“When we speak about the origins and history of our culture, we do so from a perspective that is different from that often used by non-Inuit who have studied our past...Our history is simply our history and we feel that the time has come for us as Inuit to take more control over determining what is important and how it should be interpreted. To be of value, our history must be used to instruct our young and to inform all of us about who we are as Inuit in today’s world”

- Inuit Tapirisaat Kanatami 2012

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