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Travis Hudson and Craig Bates; edited by Thomas Blackburn and John R. Johnson: Treasures from Native California: The Legacy of Russian Exploration

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Free Distribution model or IFD). This application of the IFD combines environmental and cultural change and provides insights into how human societies adapt to changing ecological circumstances, and how humans, in turn, structure the environment around them. As this paper—and other theoretical applications by Gill and Teeter et al.—show, the archaeological record is more broadly applicable outside the specific study area when it is firmly based on a theoretical approach.

As the contributions in this volume show, the Channel Islands continue to provide exciting data

germane to myriad topics of broader archaeological interest. The papers will, of course, be of interest to California archaeologists working along the Southern California coast, but many of the methods and models that are employed here are likewise relevant to those working with hunter-gatherers or on islands elsewhere.

## REFERENCE

- Stevens, Nathan E.  
2009 Archaeology is for the Living. *Proceedings of the Society of California Archaeology* 23:175–180.



## *Treasures from Native California: The Legacy of Russian Exploration*

Travis Hudson and Craig Bates; edited by Thomas Blackburn and John R. Johnson  
Walnut Creek, Cal.: Left Coast Press, 2015,  
231 pp., \$84.00, hardback.

### Reviewed by Lee M. Panich

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*Treasures from Native California: The Legacy of Russian Exploration* offers the most thorough accounting yet of the Native Californian ethnographic objects collected by Russian military officers and scientists who came to California during the first half of the nineteenth century. The bulk of these collections are housed at St. Petersburg's *Kunstkamera*, the Peter the Great Museum of Anthropology and Ethnography, including a wide variety of materials collected by Il'ia Voznesenskii in 1840 and 1841. The authors also survey additional materials collected by Russian visitors to California, which in some cases were deposited in other museums in central Europe. Through the authors' detailed commentary and ample photographs, this book provides an unprecedented look at the ingenuity and beauty of Native Californian material culture during a pivotal time.

The book's first four chapters provide the context for the Native Californian collections. After a brief introduction (Chapter 1), the authors assess what is known—or in many cases, not known—about the origins of the materials collected by the Russians in California. Chapter 2 gives a broad overview of the men who returned to Europe with Native Californian objects, while Chapter 3 details the important collecting work of Voznesenskii, whose travels took him from the Pacific coast around Fort Ross to the missions of the San Francisco Bay to Sutter's New Helvetia near modern-day Sacramento. These excursions enabled him to obtain large quantities of ethnographic objects that were shipped back to St. Petersburg, although records linking materials to specific villages or groups are largely unavailable. Chapter 4 discusses the ethnographic observations that Russian visitors made in California, notably pointing out the differences between the generally even-keeled assessments offered by the Russians and the decidedly less favorable attitudes of the Spanish toward Native Californians. While the ethnographic collections themselves will perhaps attract the attention of most readers, these opening chapters are important in that they outline the current dispositions of the collections as well as the social circumstances under which they were made.

The second half of the book describes the items collected by the Russians in California. These richly

illustrated chapters are organized by function, ranging from hunting and gathering equipment (Chapter 5), food preparation and other household items (Chapter 6), ceremonial regalia (Chapter 7), and musical instruments and basketry (Chapter 8). Hudson and Bates offer detailed observations about each item they were able to observe, discussing manufacturing techniques, materials, and other attributes. Because the objects largely lack meaningful provenience, much attention is paid to determining the ethnolinguistic origin of particular pieces through comparison with the ethnographic record, other museum collections, and archaeological specimens. Ultimately, few items can be securely attributed to a particular historically or ethnographically known group, but the discussion is enhanced by the authors' encyclopedic knowledge of Native Californian material culture and ethnography. Among the highlights are photographs and descriptions of a number of hafted arrows, flicker-quill headbands, a condor-skin cloak, beaded necklaces, and more than two dozen baskets. Many of these items are exceedingly rare among the world's ethnographic collections from Native California. While I doubt many readers will need to be convinced of the significance of the materials presented in *Treasures from Native California*, the final chapter takes on this topic as do the foreword by Stephen Watrous and the timely afterword by Glenn Farris.

It should be noted that this book has been a long time in coming: Hudson wrote the bulk of the original text in the mid-1980s, and the book has seen nearly

as many peregrinations as the collections themselves. Perhaps unavoidably, then, *Treasures from Native California* has some frustrating lacunae. Many objects at Moscow State University, for example, could not be analyzed or even photographed at the time of the original study, and several pieces from the Russian collections were missing at the time of the authors' visits in 1983 (by Hudson) and 1998 (by Bates). It remains unclear whether such objects have surfaced or have become available to foreign researchers in the intervening years. A larger disappointment is the only cursory nod, in the book's final paragraphs, toward the importance of these collections for contemporary Native Californian groups. Several Native Californian delegations have visited St. Petersburg as part of cultural exchanges and to view the *Kunstkamera* collections, providing the opportunity for tribal members to examine items that in some cases have no remaining material equivalent in California. These modern connections, linking the colonial era to today, warrant further reflection.

On the whole, *Treasures from Native California* offers a fascinating window into the material world of Native California during the first half of the nineteenth century. This deeply researched book will have wide appeal among anthropologists, archaeologists, native people, and others. It is a testament to the vision of Travis Hudson, and the dedication of Craig Bates, Thomas Blackburn, and John Johnson, that this book is finally available more than three decades after its original inception.



***Archaeology, Ethnography,  
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Shannon Tushingham  
Sacramento: California Department of Parks and  
Recreation, Archaeology, History and Museums Division,  
Publications in Cultural Heritage Number 30, 2013,  
Xii+172 pp., available at no cost.

**Reviewed by Rick Minor**

Heritage Research Associates, Inc., Eugene OR 97403

Since its publication in 1966, *Archaeology of the Point St. George Site, and Tolowa Prehistory* by Richard A. Gould has been the primary source of information on the prehistory of the northern California coastal region. Gould's research was distinguished by a major effort to enlist the aid of Tolowa elders in interpreting the archaeological record at the Point St. George shell midden (Point St. George II). An earlier component