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Nuniwarmiut Land Use, Settlement History and Socio-Territorial Organization, 1880-1960.

Abstract:

Prior efforts to identify traditional socio-territorial groups among the Central Yup'ik Eskimos of southwestern Alaska have been primarily theoretical in nature, examined the subject from very restricted temporal perspectives, and were heavily reliant on a small body of written historical accounts—none of which were informed by contacts with indigenous populations across the entire region. The collective results are inconsistent and largely unverifiable; hence many basic details about Yup'ik socio-territorial organization remain obscure.

This study deviates from its predecessors in geographical focus, temporal scope and methodology. The geographical focus is on the *Nuniwarmiut* (or Nunivak Eskimos), both the most isolated and best documented of all Central Yup'ik populations. Its temporal scope covers a period of 80 years, the earliest point of which marks the practical limits of reliability of the available ethnographic data. Finally, the study's methodology is ethnohistorical; it employs a rich array of complementary historical, ethnographic and archeological data to produce a far more authoritative account of socio-territorial organization than has previously been possible for any Yup'ik population.