



## Baskets Collection Finding Aid

Grass basket weaving in the Aleutian Islands and Kodiak Island is an honored tradition. In the 1970's there was a revival in this art form, and the Kodiak Historical Society (KHS) participated. The past KHS Curator of Collections, Eunice Neseth, and the museum held classes to teach the art form to the community. Master weaver, Anfesia Shapsnikoff would travel from Unalaska to Kodiak to teach these classes. Shapsnikoff, along with Neseth and the other weaving class participants, passed this art form onto a new generation.

### **Provenance**

Associated objects are from various parts of the collection. Baskets and associated objects were donated by Eunice Neseth, Mr. & Mrs. Learn, and individual weaving artists. Correspondence has been donated by Mary Garoutte. Oral Histories are from Eunice Neseth. Research files are a collection gathered by Kodiak Historical Society Staff.

### **Scope and Content Note**

The Kodiak Historical Society has a vast basket weaving collection. There is not one collection that has all grass basket weaving information, therefore this finding aid does not cover everything that pertains to baskets. This finding aid contains the most essential information that the museum has pertaining to grass basket weaving in the Aleutian Islands and Kodiak Island. This includes baskets, rare photographs, artist correspondence, and booklets of weaving information.

### **Inventory**

#### *Object Collections, Location: Collection Room I*

- 138 baskets mostly created by Eunice Neseth, Dorothy Haberman, Dorothy Holm, Patricia Petit, Coral Chernoff, Arlene Skinner, and Hazel Jones

#### *Photograph Collections, Location: Archival Room*

- 2 photographs in P-52 & P-53
  - Photographs of Anfesia Shapsnikoff and other women in 1942 weaving baskets on Unalaska.
- 1 photograph in P-72
- 1 photograph in P-304
- 3 photographs in P-405
- 82 photographs in P-413

#### *Correspondence, Location: Archives Cabinet I, Drawer II*

- 7 letters from Anfesia Shapsnikoff dated from March-June of 1972. Written to employees of Baranov Museum

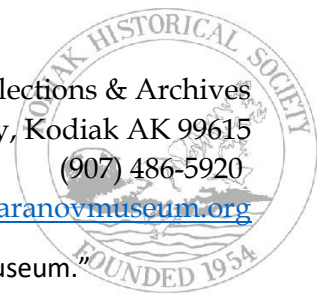
#### *Oral Histories*



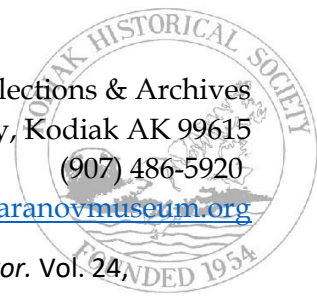
- *Written autobiography of Anfesia Shapsnikoff. Location: Archives Cabinet I, Drawer II*
- *Eunice Neseth transcript. Location: Research Files, Hallway I, Subject: Oral Histories*

*Research Files; Location: Hallway I*

- Neseth, Eunice von Scheele. "Aleut Grass Basket Weaving." Edited and revised by Chernoff, Coral in 1992. With References. 7p. How to weave Attu baskets, including how to cure, dry, string, and bleach the grass. 3 copies.
- "Instructions for Weaving Attu Baskets." Author unknown. 4p. Includes images and detailed instructions.
- Oral history with Arlene Skinner. Interviewed by Ellen Lester. Martha Branson, Jennifer, Vanessa, Tonya Zharoff present. 2002, July 11. On the roadside of Pillar Creek. How to prepare the grass.
- Neseth, Eunice. *Aleut Weavers*. Fall Quarter (1982). 2p. Gathering grass, a story on gathering grass, letters to the newsletter, a natural grass dying workshop opportunity in Anchorage, pictures of Aleut basketry workshop participants, Eunice Neseth, Rita Blumenstein, Mary and Laura Simeonoff, Angie Dushkin and Marie Sugak.
- Nesth, Eunice. *Aleut Weaves*. Winter Quarter (1983). 2p. Letters to the newsletter, book review of Aleut Art by Black, Lydia T., naturally cured grass article, European inventory of Alaska art project. Pictures of: Vera Nevzeroff, Parascovia Wright, and Margie Lokanin.
- Ashford, Frances. "Attu Basket to the Edge- to finish off the basket." Given to museum in September (2004).
- Arlene Skinner
  - i. Herman, Drew. "Grass Baskets of Kodiak Island. Artwork by Arlene Skinner." Anchorage Museum of History and Art. Anchorage, AK. 5p, ill. Afterword by Arlene Skinner. Including two postcard photographs of Arlene Skinner's work.
  - ii. Anchorage Museum of History and Art. "Earth, Fire and Fibre." Exhibit book. Includes picture of Arlene Skinner basketry announcing her award winning work.
  - iii. Baranov Museum Staff. "Arlene Skinner's Basket Collection at the Baranov Museum." Includes object number, year, and description.
  - iv. DeSantis, Deb. "Basket Weaver Joins Art Exhibit." *Kodiak Daily Mirror*. Unknown. (1999). Summary of Arlene Skinner's artwork on display for the Earth, Fire and Fibre exhibit in Anchorage.
  - v. Smith, Dawnell. "Moving Work." *Anchorage Daily News*. Unknown 18, September (2005). Overview of Anchorage Museum of History and Art exhibit that displays some of Arlene Skinner's basketry.
  - vi. Baechtcl, Mark. "Weavers Distill Hours Into Treasures." *Anchorage Daily News*. Unknown. 25, September (2005). Review of Arlene Skinner's basketry that will be on display in Anchorage Museum of History and Art.
  - vii. Inbody, Kristen. "A Weaver's Art." *Kodiak Daily Mirror*. Unknown. 16, March (2006). Alutiiq Museum displaying Arlene Skinner's basketry.



- viii. Fulp, Judy T. "Kodiak Basket Maker to be Featured at Anchorage Museum." *Kodiak Daily Mirror*. Unknown. 11, August (2005). Anchorage Museum displaying Arlene Skinner's basketry.
- ix. Alutiiq Museum. "Grass Baskets of Kodiak Island." Alutiiq Museum pamphlet. Includes overview of basketry, grass gathering, and weaving. Includes Alutiiq translations of "baskets" and "she is making a basket." Further bibliography.
- x. Skinner, Arlene. "Oral History of Attue Weaving and Grass Curing Process." August (1987).
- xi. Waage, Nell. "Skinner is Entwined with her Art." *Kodiak Daily Mirror*. Unknown. 22 June (1994). Brief biography of why Arlene Skinner started basketry.
- xii. Kirkwood, Naomi. "Basket show opens today at Alutiiq Museum." *Kodiak Daily Mirror*. Unknown. 7, July (2000). Arlene Skinner's basketry on display at the Alutiiq Museum.
- xiii. Davis, Ken. "Skinner Weaves Way for Daughters." *Kodiak Daily Mirror*. Unknown. 24, January (1995). Arlene Skinner's motivations for basketry.
- xiv. Skinner, Arlene. "Basket Instruction." (1988). Brief overview of basket weaving, includes adding a new weaver. 3 copies.
- Eunice Neseth
  - i. Neseth, Eunice. "Museum Section's Spring 1971 Attu Basket Weaving." On Kodiak Historical Society Letterhead. List of objects that were loaned to the Anchorage Historical and Fine Arts Museum. Includes a background on Attu weaving. 28, October (1971). 2 copies.
  - ii. Neseth, Eunice. Interview for KMXT, Kodiak. Interviewers were Connors, Joan F. and Ryan, Michelle. Interview took place in Eunice Neseth's home. 24, February (1983). Interview includes why Eunice Neseth started basket weaving, what Anfesia Shapsnikoff's classes were like, what it's like to weave baskets, Anfesia Shapsnikoff's life, history of basketry and use of the baskets, future of basketry. 2 copies.
  - iii. Neseth, Eunice. Interview. Interviewer was Mulcahy, Joanne B. 7, July (1983). Background on Eunice Neseth basketry, brief mention of Anfesia Shapsnikoff, history and use of basketry, how to make a basket, changes in traditions.
  - iv. Jones, Molly B. "Basket Makers." *Anchorage Daily News*. Unknown. 28, March (1980). Article highlights four women who create baskets. Eunice Neseth included.
  - v. Fields, Leslie. "A Gathering of Experts in Kodiak Declares that Aleut Basket Weaving is no Longer a 'Dying Art.'" *Kodiak Times*. Unknown. 14, October (1981). Article on the basket weaving classes at Kodiak College.
  - vi. Neseth, Eunice. Instructions on how to cure, dry, string and bleach the grass. Instructions on how to weave."
  - vii. Neseth, Eunice. Visual instructions on how to weave a basket.



- viii. Martini, Jerry. "Gathering Grass for Fine Baskets." *Kodiak Daily Mirror*. Vol. 24, No. 215. 3, November (1982). Picture of Eunice Neseth from *Aleut Weavers* newsletter.
  - ix. "The Newsletter of Native Arts." *Institute of Alaska Native Arts, Inc.* Unknown. January-February (1982). Includes articles on Aleut weaving, basketry workshops, and interview with Eunice Neseth. 2 copies.
  - x. Schnieder, Teri. "Fine Art: Aleut Grass Basket Weaving Survives." Unknown. Background of history of basketry, and then the revival of basketry starting with Afensia Shapsnikoff, Eunice Neseth, and Arlene Skinner.
  - xi. Mantzke, Carolyn. "Local Resident Restores Ancient Task." *Kodiak Daily Mirror*. Unknown. 27, February (1978). Includes photograph of Eunice Neseth. General overview on curing and drying grass, beginning to weave. Brief history on weaving.
  - xii. Neseth, Eunice. "Basket Weaving Introduction." Taped 10, November (1978). History and tradition of weaving.
  - xiii. Samuelson, Virginia and Neseth, Eunice. How to Attu: A Guide to Making Your Own Attu Basket. Arctic How to Books: Kodiak, AK. 1981. 1<sup>st</sup> ed. Introduction, contents. 43 p, ill.
- Shapsnikoff, Anfesia T. and Hudson, Raymond L. "Aleut Basketry." *Anthropological Papers of the University of Alaska*. Vol. 16, No. 2. (1974). 41-69, ill. On library book case.
  - Shapsnikoff, Anfesia
    - Letters
      - i. 1 a, b: May 5, 1971 to Ella Mae Warren
        1. Speaking about basket weaving classes, pictures, travel, weather
      - ii. 2 a, b: November 11, 1971 Autobiography
      - iii. 3 a, b, c: March 4, 1972 to Ella Mae Warren
        1. Getting in touch, basket weaving classes, traveling to White Horse, getting a hold of Lola
      - iv. 4 a, b: March 23, 1972 to Ella Mae Warren
        1. Back from White Horse, looking to get in touch with Lola, will write to others, wishing for a pin for the Historical Society so she doesn't have to show her membership card
      - v. 5 a, b, c: April 23, 1972 to Ella Mae Warren
        1. Wish to work alone, go to camp, weaving classes, baskets exhibit, Hazel Ardinger, biadarka, kayak
      - vi. 6 a, b,: June 17, 1972
        1. Ray (Hudson)'s first basket, fish camp preparations, Priest going back to Old Harbor, Kodiak's basket weaver, basket weaving classes, going to Kodiak.
      - vii. 7: 1957 translation of John Veneminof by Anfesia Shapsnikoff
        1. Explanation of his book, Pointing Road to Eternity.
    - Neseth, Eunice. "Anfesia Shapsnikoff teaches basket making." *Alaskana*. Unknown. 1p.



- i. How to cure and dry the grass, then how to weave it, with a brief autobiography on Anfesia.
- Author Unknown. "Visiting Group Hears Kodiak History Talks." Publication unknown. 1p.
  - i. Group from Kenai learning about basket weaving.
- Author Unknown. "Ancient Art of Weaving Attu Baskets." *Alaska*. (1972) June. 1p.
  - i. Overview of the renewal of basket weaving spearheaded by Anfesia Shapsnikoff.
- Author Unknown. "Living Exponent of Basket Weaving." *Kodiak Daily Mirror*. (1957) May, 4.
  - i. Short biography of Anfesia Shapsnikoff's life with basket weaving.
- Hudson, Ray. "A Beginner's Basket." *We Alaskans*. Volume and number unknown. (1998) August, 16. 4 pgs.