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**Through the Eyes of Louis Shotridge: Sharing Alaska's Native Tlingit History
A Digital Archive Project at Penn**

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Introduction

Good morning. My name is Lucy Williams and I am the Keeper of the American Collections of the University of Pennsylvania Museum in Philadelphia. I am delighted to be here today to present the Penn Museum's collaborative initiative with the Penn Library's Schoenberg Center for Electronic Text and Image to create the Louis Shotridge Digital Archive. The project is also supported by The Institute for Museum and Library Services (IMLS) and the Central Council of Tlingit and Haida Indian Tribes of Alaska (CCTHITA). In the next few minutes I will introduce the project and tell you something about Louis Shotridge and his collections from Southeast Alaska, and then introduce David McKnight, Curator of the Schoenberg Center, who will talk about the technical armature that he is developing to support public access to the digital archive over the World Wide Web.

Louis Shotridge, Stoowukháa (c. 1882-1937) was a Native Tlingit from Southeast Alaska who worked for the Penn Museum as Assistant Curator from 1915-1932. Shotridge was a member of the Native Tlingit Nation and a member of the *Kaagwaantaan* (wolf) clan of the Eagle moiety from the northern village of Klukwan. Tlingit inheritance follows the maternal line and thus, like his mother, Shotridge belonged to *Lagooshi Hit*, the Dorsal Killer Whale Fin House. His father belonged to the opposite moiety, the Raven side, and was the hereditary chief of the Klukwan Whale House. Shotridge is shown here, in clan regalia on the left in 1915, and on the right, in the field in Alaska in 1918 wearing Western dress with his 4 x 5 camera over his shoulder.



Under the sponsorship of the Penn Museum, Shotridge conducted three collecting expeditions among his own Tlingit people. The 19teens to 1930s were times of radical change and oppression for Alaska Natives when the American Government forced all Native Americans to assimilate and to meet standards of U.S. citizenry. Native social and religious practices were forbidden and federally imposed standards were put in place

that encouraged new systems of patrilineal inheritance and Christianity, and required the use of the English language.

It is within this context that Louis Shotridge's employment with the Penn Museum and his collecting activities are best understood. In these years, many Tlingit clan leaders felt pressured to sell their traditional clan regalia. Shotridge saw the waning of the Tlingit social systems and anticipated the loss of his people's traditional ways of life. He too felt the onrushing tide of modernity in Alaska, and in response, devoted his life work to recording the history of his Tlingit people and to finding a safe place for clan regalia in the Penn Museum where it would be seen on a world stage. Adopting Western anthropological methods and technologies, Shotridge worked systematically to record a comprehensive Tlingit history that emphasized his culture's clan system from the Tlingit point of view.

The Louis Shotridge Collections

While Assistant Curator at the Penn Museum, Shotridge conducted three collecting expeditions among his own people during 11 years of fieldwork.

Louis Shotridge's Tlingit Collecting Expeditions for the Penn Museum

First 1915 – 1919

Second 1922 – 1927

Third 1930 – 1932

He strove to record Tlingit history by purchasing objects from the leading clans of many Tlingit communities. Five Tlingit clan families are well represented. From his own northern community of Klukwan, he purchased the *Kaagwaantaan* clan Drum House hats and four interior house posts, as well as masks of his father's *Ganaaxtedi* (frog) clan.



From Sitka he purchased important *Kaagwaantaan* clan regalia such as this Eagle hat (on the left), and the Raven of the Roof Hat of the *Lukna.xadi* clan family, shown here on the right.



From Hoonah he acquired the *T'akdeintaan* clan collection of hats, robes, masks, and dance ornaments of the Snail House family, and from Angoon, similar clan regalia of the *Deisheetaan* clan family. All told, Shotridge purchased 400 Tlingit objects, including tools of everyday and household use, which he shipped to Philadelphia . He was fastidious and systematic in his note and record keeping. His paper documents include 1,707 papers in his own hand - letters, monthly lists of expenses, price lists, packing and

shipping lists. These documents reveal Shotridge's general practice of buying clan objects from clan leaders and House Masters.



| GENEALOGY | LHGH-nodi | CHUKAT |
|--|--------------------------|------------------------|
| | FAMILY | CLAN |
| WOMAN | <i>Gale-xitc II</i> | <i>Gay'Hit</i> |
| Husband | <i>Kat-xitc I</i> | <i>Kay'on-tan</i> |
| DAUGHTERS | | SONS |
| | <i>A Gag-nitc III</i> | <i>B Gal-gay'ii II</i> |
| | <i>D Cawit-gak'ii II</i> | <i>C Kat-siw' III</i> |
| | <i>G Gal-kak'ii III</i> | <i>E Kag'ay'ii III</i> |
| | <i>I Sitc-ton II</i> | <i>F Ok'ia-ga II</i> |
| | | <i>H An-tak'c III</i> |
| <i>B. F. Shotridge's father</i> | | |
| <i>E. Here during the final visit of the Sitka Kag'on-tak...</i> | | |

His ethnographic notes, which number over 500 pages, cover at least 22 topics with emphasis on language, clan histories, origin stories of emblematic clan objects, historical accounts of wars, and genealogies. Shotridge also took over 500 black-and-white photographic portraits of Tlingit individuals and places on the landscape.



Sitka 1924

The Louis Shotridge Digital Archive

With a grant from IMLS, the Penn Museum is currently engaged in efforts to make the Shotridge collection accessible to the Tlingit people and the general public through the creation of a digital archive and searchable website. The Shotridge collection is of great significance to Tlingit people because it represents their cultural patrimony and cultural heritage. To date, one third of the object collection has been claimed for repatriation under the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA), by five separate Tlingit entities. At the present time some of these claims are incomplete or inactive, and the Museum is actively working to evaluate others. Because of these claims and the significance of Shotridge's unique accomplishments, the Museum is creating a digital archive and website of the collection in its entirety. There are innumerable ways in which the Shotridge Digital Archive can be of assistance to Tlingit people in their efforts to revitalize Tlingit culture. Shotridge's records are an important source of Tlingit clan histories that can renew relationships to clan names and ancestors, help revitalize the clan system, cultural and artistic traditions, and provide new resources for language study and retention.

Information about Louis Shotridge and his collecting activities will be organized and accessible in a variety of ways via the website. A section on Shotridge the individual will include biographical information and information on the context of the time he was collecting. This will incorporate notes on his anthropological and linguistic training with Franz Boas, a bibliography of his written works, and will introduce his collections according to each of his expeditions, to be described in detail along with geographical and cultural maps tracing his travels. The Shotridge collection will also be accessed by Tlingit social categories of moiety, clan name, and clan crests, and also by community name, object type.

Archives are important repositories that create safe houses for records of valued resources. They are also places where meaningful research can be conducted. A digital archive of the Shotridge collection will make all of its contents – objects, images, and Shotridge's writings, accessible to the public for research and educational purposes over the worldwide web.

I want now to introduce David McKnight of Penn's Schoenberg Center who will discuss the technical aspects of the website production.

Information Architecture, Technical Standards and Production Model

Complexity is one of the most compelling characteristics of the Louis Shotridge Collection in its wealth of artifacts, archival documents, and photographs. Each item in the collection tells an individual story, but given the nature of the materials and the history of its acquisition a collective story emerges in the form of a many to many relationship between objects and archival documents. Attempting to build and structure those relationships is one of the challenges for the Shotridge Project Team. The goal is to

design an integrated information architecture which will support the multiple functions of the collection and the wide community of users who will access the content and use the web site.

To better understand the information architecture and technical standards adopted by the project, it is useful to identify, briefly, the technical units involved in the project. First and foremost this is a collaborative project between five units: four within the University of Pennsylvania Museum including the curatorial staff of the American Section, the Museum Archives, Systems Office and the Museum's Reprographic Services. The other partner is and the University of Pennsylvania Library's Schoenberg Center for Electronic Text and Image (SCETI). The Museum and SCETI have collaborated in the past on several digital collections, none to date have required the same level of co-operation and shared vision.

At the same time, we are attempting to integrate three disparate practices which represent different approaches to cultural objects as represented by the separate needs of archives, libraries and museums. We are seeking a shared understanding which will enable the project team to design a system that will support parallel descriptive metadata standards for museum objects and archival documents ranging from correspondence, notebooks, photographs and graphic materials. At the same we require a system that will manage a large corpus of digital surrogates.

Given the nature of the partnership it may be useful to define what the roles of each partner will entail. At the highest level the American Section curators are responsible for the cataloging of the objects and the preparation of objects for digital photography. In addition, the curators will prepare all contextual materials for publication on the collection web site. The Museum Archivist who is responsible for the Shotridge Archives will be responsible for cataloging item level information in the museum content management system (CMS). The archivist also manages the Museum's reprographic unit. This unit will be responsible for the digital photography of the Tlingit artifacts. The Museum System's office is responsible for managing the project server including the CMS, and will archive the archival masters and web derivative images produced by the project team.

SCETI is playing several key roles, which include scanning of the archival documents and their conversion into machine readable-tagged XML documents and SCETI will take the lead role in developing the Shotridge web site. A part time project manager has been hired to co-ordinate these disparate activities and perform a wide range of roles and responsibilities ranging from undertaking inventories to quality control of digital images.

From idea to proposal to project, one of the major issues for the Shotridge project has been the question of what is the underlying information architecture that will be used to support the project. The project team was faced with two possible models. The first was to develop an open source system using MySQL as the database platform and writing scripts in PHP. The alternative was to follow the Penn Museum's lead which had after a lengthy search process decided to purchase Ke EMu, a commercial museum content

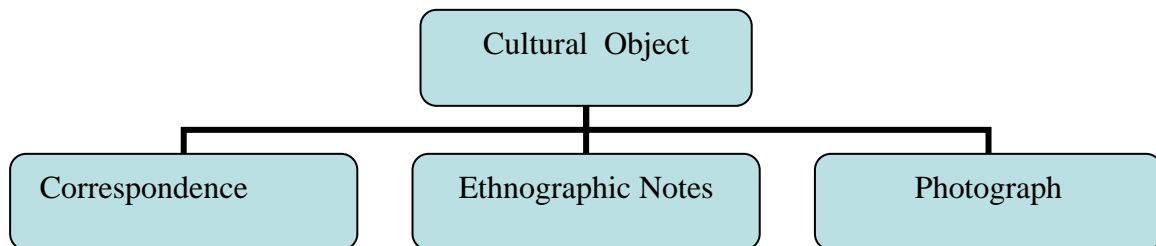
management system. At this juncture of the project, the team has begun the lengthy process of better understanding the full capabilities of Ke EMu.

E-MU is a commercial Unix-based museum management software created by KE Software. Used in a number of museums around the world, E-MU has been adopted on another Penn Museum/Penn Libraries project, the IMLS funded Louis Shotridge Digital Collection. E-MU supports “object-oriented database structures utilizing text attributes, multivalued-fields, nested tables and object references.”

(source:<http://www.kesoftware.com/content/view/423/212/lang,en/>) One of the attractive features of the product is the fact that “[d]esigners can easily build a KE Texpress system which provides an intuitive or natural representation of the way users visualise their data. Databases can contain any combination of structured (field-based) or unstructured (free text) information. Forms are designed to describe the information to be stored and indexed and these forms serve as an interface for data entry, query specification and the display and reporting of results.” (source:

<http://www.kesoftware.com/content/view/423/212/lang,en/>)

The project team believes that E-MU will provide the ability to incorporate the standards as outlined above in the Methodology section, but it will also provide the flexibility to generate the customized user interface that mirrors the goals and objectives of the project. Based on a number of implementations throughout the museum world, the product will provide the Shotridge team with the flexibility to integrate, link and cross reference the diverse objects in the collections within a unified interface. Our underlying assumption is that we will be working with a two tiered model in which the cultural object stands as the principal object to which subsidiary content is associated and linked.



Because the Shotridge Project will be the first Penn Museum project to adopt E-Mu there remain many questions that will be answered during the next several months as the project team examines the software, its modules, and its web output capabilities. The most important question at this juncture is defining the parameters of the data module that the Curators will use to describe the Tlingit objects. In the case of the documents, we are considering a different approach.

Archival documents will be cataloged using Dublin Core (unqualified). This will enable the project team to eventually share the content, at least, at the document level with other repositories through the OAI-PMH harvesting protocols. The contents of archival documents will be converted machine readable texts and linked to the digital facsimile. These texts will in turn be cross-referenced to objects. Documents will be tagged in XML and we will use TEI P5 (Text Encoding Initiative version 5).

Output of records will be generated using configurable XSLT style sheets. As part of the project, the Investigators will explore the use of XPath (a language for finding information in an XML document) to better understand the complex epistemology grounded in the rich grammar of TEI elements which identify and define the relationships between items in the collection.

From the perspective of searching and discovery, TEI permits the project team the opportunity to define a set of conceptual elements which create links to the descriptions of the objects. These include name of the artifact, cultural function, geographical location, clan affiliation, among others. The list of elements have not yet been defined but have discussed in a preliminary way.

Creating the architecture, defining the data model, identifying the structural and conceptual elements remain among the most important challenges facing the team. Conceptually, we have a vision of rich connections that exist between object and supporting documents. Although much work has been completed to date including the scanning of archival documents, much work remains. The significance of the Shotridge Collection is such that task ahead is not so much a challenge but opportunity to map technology to cultural significance of the artifacts which represent the vibrancy and endurance of the Tlingit people.

Thank you.

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David McKnight is currently the Interim Director of the Rare Books and Manuscript Library & Curator of the Schoenberg Center for Electronic Text and Image at the University of Pennsylvania Libraries. Possessing an MLIS (McGill University, 1992) and an MA in English (Concordia University 1993), he is active in the field of digital libraries, book history and descriptive bibliography. From 1993 to 2006 David was a member of the McGill University Library staff.