

## GRASS COMBS



Bruce White photos

### **Punuk human figures in the form of a grass comb, 12.3 and 19 cm**

Grass was "combed" in preparation for use in weaving socks (see photos below), and for pads in boots, both of which were removed and dried overnight (Nelson, 1899, p. 43 and Plate 21). All prehistoric grass combs seen up to now are Punuk (or later), and their use may have begun during that period. They are characterized by large, heavy teeth that are sufficiently strong and widely spaced for combing grass, as is evident in the examples shown here.

**Punuk grass combs of non-figurative form, 19.8 and 16.9 cm**  
(Fitzhugh et al., 2009, Figs. 18 and 20, p. 153)



**Literature:**

*Catalogue of the Ethnological Collections in the Sheldon Jackson Museum* (1976).

Corey, P.L., Ed. (1987): *Faces, Voices & Dreams*, Division of Alaska State Museums, Sheldon Jackson Museum, Sitka.

Fitzhugh, W.W., Hollowell, J. and Crowell, A., Eds. (2009): *Gifts from the Ancestors: Ancient Ivories of Bering Strait*, Yale University Press, New Haven and London.

Nelson, E.W. (1899): *The Eskimo About Bering Strait*, Annual Report, Bureau of American Ethnology, Washington, DC.



**Grass socks in the collections of the Sheldon Jackson Museum, Sitka, Alaska**  
Catalog numbers III.A5a.b and II-B-130

