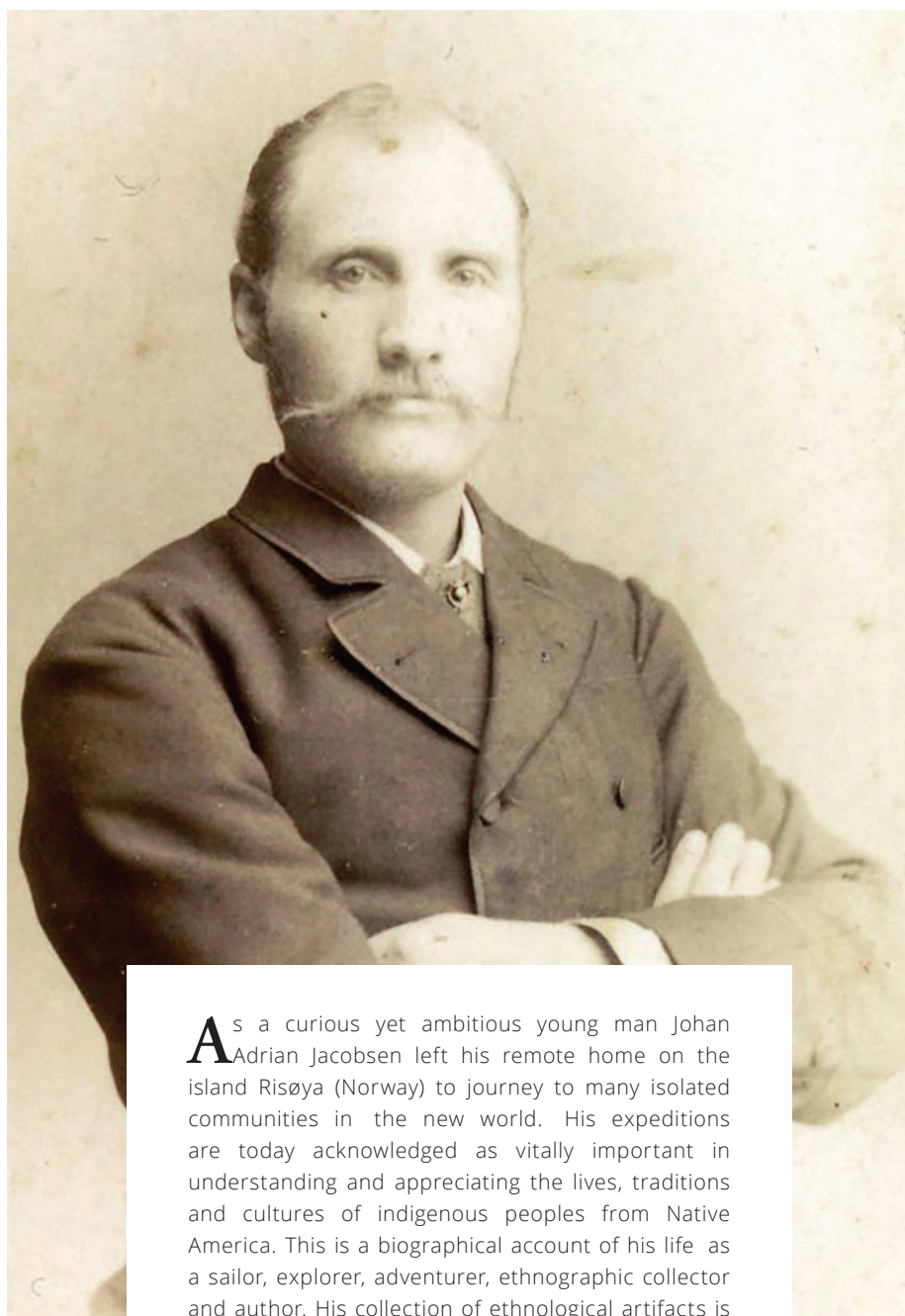


JOHAN ADRIAN JACOBSEN (1853-1947)

*The life, times and explorations of Captain Johan Adrian Jacobsen,
Norway's forgotten explorer and ethnographic collector.*



As a curious yet ambitious young man Johan Adrian Jacobsen left his remote home on the island Risøya (Norway) to journey to many isolated communities in the new world. His expeditions are today acknowledged as vitally important in understanding and appreciating the lives, traditions and cultures of indigenous peoples from Native America. This is a biographical account of his life as a sailor, explorer, adventurer, ethnographic collector and author. His collection of ethnological artifacts is now the principal exhibit at the opening of the new «Berliner Schloss», one of Europe's leading museums.

By Sigbjørn Rønbeck

Bibliography

1853: Born: October 9 in Risøya, an island far out in the sea off the city of Tromsø (Norway).

1868: Earns a living as a fisherman in Finnmark (Norway).

1870: Takes skipper exam in Tromsø. Is the captain of his own ship «Elida».

1869-74: Working in the fishing and sealing business in Troms, Finnmark and Spitsbergen (Norway).

1874: Moves to live with his older brother, Jacob Martin, in Hamburg (Germany). Learns German both spoken and written.

1876: Valparaiso, Chile. Endeavors to establish himself as the captain of a fishing vessel.

1877-78: Negotiates and escorts group of Inuit people from Jacobshavn, Greenland (Denmark) to «Völkerschauen» exhibition in Germany/Europe.

1878-79: Negotiates and escorts group of Sami people from Kautokeino and Karasjok (Norway) to «Völkerschauen» exhibition in Germany/Europe.

1880: Explores – Davis Strait and the Northwest Passage (Greenland).

1880-81: Negotiates and escorts nine Labrador Inuit from Alaska (United States) to Europe in cooperation with German citizen Carl Hagenbeck. During this visit all of the Inuit die of smallpox. Hagenbeck and Jacobsen terminate their cooperation after the tragedy.

1881-1883: Ethnographic expedition to British Columbia (Canada) and Alaska (USA) «The North West Cost of America». Collection of Native American artifacts.

1883: Expedition to Arizona (USA).

1884-85: Ethnographic expedition to Russia, Siberia and the Far East. Collection of indigenous artifacts.

1885-86: Negotiates and escorts nine Native Americans from the Nuxalk tribe from Bella Coola, British Columbia (Canada) to «Völkerschauen» exhibition in Germany/Europe, in collaboration with his younger brother Bernard Fillip.

1887-88: Ethnographic expedition to The Banda Sea (Indonesia), the islands between Java, Australia and New Guinea. Collection of indigenous artifacts.

1910: Negotiates and escorts group of Native Americans from the Ogala Sioux tribe from South Dakota (United States) to «Völkerschauen» exhibition in Germany/Europe. Organizes a «Wild West Show» to compete with the travelling «The Buffalo Bill Show».

1926: Negotiates and escorts group of Sami people from Røros (Norway) to «Völkerschauen» exhibition in Germany.

1943: Returns home to Risøya, as a widower. Remains there until his death.

1947: Dies in January 18, aged 94. Is buried in Snellingen, Germany.

HONORS AWARDED:

1890: Knight of The Royal Norwegian Order of Saint Olav.

1908: The King’s Gold Medal of Merit.

1910: Made Honorary Chief of Native American Tribe – Ogala Sioux.

—
«Adrian undertook his first serious voyage at the tender age of 14 years old»

Growing up at Risøya

Small beginnings on an island far out in the Arctic Sea.

The remote island of Risøya lies in the Arctic Sea. It's one of many small islands in the northern archipelago of Norway, approximately five hours north by boat from the city of Tromsø.

Life for a small child living in a fishing village the 1850's was very hard, all children were expected to work from an early age and contribute to sustaining the family's battle for survival against the severe arctic conditions. This was equally the case for Johan Adrian Jacobsen, the third eldest son of 12 children born on the island to his parents Jacob Carl Gregoriussen and Erika Pauline Eriksdatter.

In 1838, Adrian Jacobsen's father Jacob Carl, the son of a Russian sea captain (Alexander Gregorius Podomoroff and his wife Eva Henriksdatter Højer) purchased the island of Risøya, which consists of over a 100 inlets and reefs, to build the family home there. The house still survives today and is still owned by direct descendants of his family.

The main harbor in Risøya provided a natural protection against the harsh winds of the Arctic Sea. Over time it became a thriving hub of commercial activity. Around the main family house, 12 other fisherman cabins were erected, the island had it's own bakery, a forge, a barn for 12 cows, sheep and pigs, and the islanders also began the cultivation of potatoes.

Jacob Carl developed a successful

fishing and trading business, selling-on fish supplied to him by 200 local fishermen, producing and selling fish oil, gathering seagull eggs to be sold in Tromsø and eiderdown feathers which were shipped south for sale in cities in Scandinavia and Europe.

Along with his siblings and other children living on the island, Johan Adrian Jacobsen had limited access to formal education, probably receiving basic lessons from his mother or the wives of other fishermen. He most likely learnt his seamanship and entrepreneurial skills from his father and his yearning to travel the world from the correspondence he received from his elder brother Jacob Martin's journeys abroad.

Adrian undertook his first serious voyage at the tender age of 14 years old, fishing in the waters of neighboring county Finnmark. The following year he embarked on establishing a fishing and sealing business around the arctic Svalbard Islands. In 1870, at the age of 17, he passed his 'skippers' exam in the city of Tromsø and by the following summer he was captain of his own ship called the "Elida". His first voyage as captain was to go sealing in the arctic seas around Svalbard. The crew consisted of other youngsters of a similar age to himself, as older, more experienced sailors were hesitant to join the expedition with such a young, inexperienced captain.

«Völkershauen» in Germany

The Norwegian Captain brings «the world» to Europe.

In 1874, at the age of 21 years, Johan Adrian Jacobsen made a decision that would shape his life and career. He moved to live with his older brother Jacob Martin who had taken up residency in Hamburg, Germany. The first steps in his future life of discovery and adventure. He initially worked with his brother and also taught himself German, both spoken and written, which was no mean achievement for a young man who had limited formal education.

Within two years of arriving in Hamburg he travelled by sea to Chile in South America, returning in 1877. Later that year he met a German entrepreneur and zoo owner called Carl Hagenbeck. Hagenbeck had previously organized a «Völkerschau» exhibition (People Show), which featured the Sami tribe from Karesuando and Tromsø. These shows or exhibits displayed indigenous 'exotic' people in their tribal costumes, with simulations of their living environments and examples of the local fauna. The exhibition had proven to be a great commercial success; to such an extent that Carl Hagenbeck planned to repeat similar exhibitions across Europe.

Hagenbeck commissioned Captain Jacobsen to explore the possibility of finding a group of Inuit people to take part in his future exhibitions. Jacobsen succeeded in negotiating with a group of Inuit from Jacobshavn in Greenland to visit Germany and feature in another «Völkerschau».

This success formed the foundation of a long collaboration between Hagenbeck and Jacobsen that resulted in many more «Völkerschauen» exhibitions taking place across Germany and other European cities. It is estimated that during the period between 1800-1958 around 35,000 indigenous people from across the world featured in such ethnographic exhibitions throughout the European continent.

Adrian Jacobsen quickly gained a reputation for his negotiating skill and his ability to secure the participation of indigenous peoples/tribes from different parts of the world to travel and participate in «Völkerschauen» exhibitions organized by Hagenbeck. Jacobsen would often accompany these groups to Europe to ensure their wellbeing during their stays.

Throughout Jacobsen's travels to distant lands and regions where Inuit and Sami peoples inhabited, he documented their rituals, customs and rites and started to collect ethnographic artifacts used during such ceremonial acts.

At the outset of Jacobsen's collaboration with Hagenbeck the motivation was of a commercial nature, but as he visited more of these native peoples and observed their cultures and traditions, he became fascinated by the value and integrity of their way of life. He

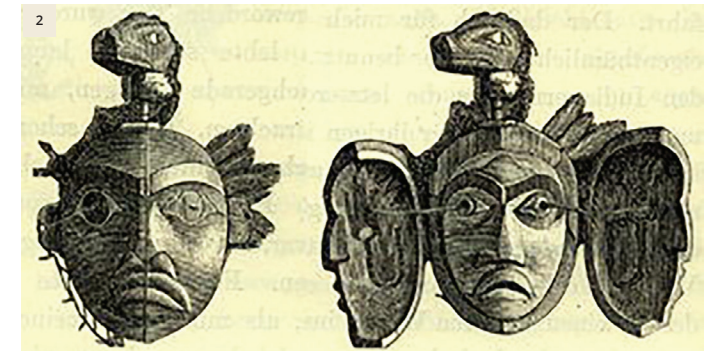


▼
1. JACOBSEN PORTRAYED
in Flensburg (Germany) with one of
the groups of indigenous people
he brought to Europe.

2. ILLUSTRATION
from one of Jacobsen's books.

became conscious of the historical importance of their customs, rituals and art for future posterity and decided to devote his life to the science of ethnography – to raise the awareness of these ancient cultures and customs.

Jacobsen continued his expeditions of discovery and in 1878/79 he brought a group of Sami people from Kautokeino and Karasjok in Finnmark (Norway) to Europe to participate in the exhibition «Jardin d'Acclimatation - Exposition Universelle» held at the ethnological



«... as he visited more of these native peoples and observed their cultures and traditions, he became fascinated by the value and integrity of their way of life»

gardens in Bois de Boulogne, Paris. It is estimated that almost a million people visited this exhibition venue, which shows the degree of interest European audiences had in seeing and experiencing the lifestyles and cultures of inhabitants from far-off lands.

During the year 1880/81 Jacobsen had organized the visit of nine Labrador Inuit from Alaska to participate in an exhibition arranged by Carl Hagenbeck. This event ended in tragic circumstances with the death of all nine Inuit from Smallpox. This tragedy signaled the end of any future collaboration between Hagenbeck and Jacobsen.

In this context, it is important to emphasize that the indigenous

people Jacobsen arranged to attend these exhibitions participated voluntarily and received payment for their involvement throughout their stays. Jacobsen, unlike many other less scrupulous promoters, ensured that the groups he brought to Europe were always treated with great respect.

In Cathrine Baglo's PhD dissertation on the phenomenon of live 'people exhibits' of indigenous tribes at major expositions during the late 1800's and early 1900's, she states her firm belief that Adrian Jacobsen cared passionately about the welfare of the people he had arranged to participate in these exhibits. She verified that on the occasion of Jacobsen's return visit to Jacobshavn in Greenland in 1880

the Inuit people greeted him with delight and jubilation.

In his diaries and travelogues Jacobsen describes the positive reception he received from the native villagers he encountered during his travels. He details the numerous occasions where he was invited to engage in their ceremonies and feasts where traditional rituals took place. This enabled Jacobsen to narrate many of these rituals and ceremonies precisely, from a position of personal involvement and observation. His approach was in stark contrast to the recognized methodology adopted at the time by established ethnologists, who based their research on more detached, third-hand observations.



JACOBSEN'S FINDINGS

Exceptional ethnographer

Jacobsen makes a living as an ethnographer and collector.

Whether it was a consequence of the tragic loss of life of the nine Labrador Inuit in 1881 or Jacobsen's awareness of the emerging unease regarding the demeaning nature of using primitive people as exhibits in 'human zoos,' Jacobsen decides to concentrate his efforts and resources towards ceremonies and the collation of historical ethnological artifacts.

Jacobsen was introduced to Adolf Bastian, a director of the «Ethnological Museum of Berlin» and established a successful and long-lasting collaboration with the museum and it's curators. He was engaged to find and collect ethnographic artifacts from indigenous tribes of Native America and began his travels to the north west coast of America and Canada to make connections and negotiate for the collection of such artifacts with native tribes.

At this time, museums and institutions were afraid that Native American culture could disappear all together, and that historically valuable ethnographic objects would be sold, stolen, destroyed or simply lost for ever,

as and when the indigenous tribes were overrun or forced to moved on by European settlers. It was therefore seen as urgent to collect objects of historic importance to preserve this ethnological heritage. Competition between different national museums and institutions to acquire such examples was intense, which is why the Berlin museum believed that Jacobsen's experience of negotiating with indigenous peoples would give them a competitive advantage in acquiring artifacts.

During the time period 1881-83 Adrian Jacobsen successfully collected and shipped back to Europe a total of 7,000 artifacts from North America, most of which were collected for the Berlin museum. This vast collection is

«During the time period 1881-1883
Adrian Jacobsen successfully collected
and shipped back to Europe a total of
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today known and acknowledged as «The Jacobsen Collection/ Sammlung Jacobsen».

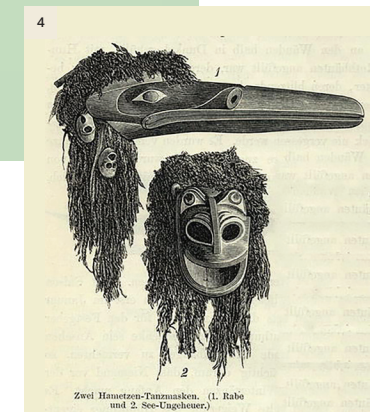
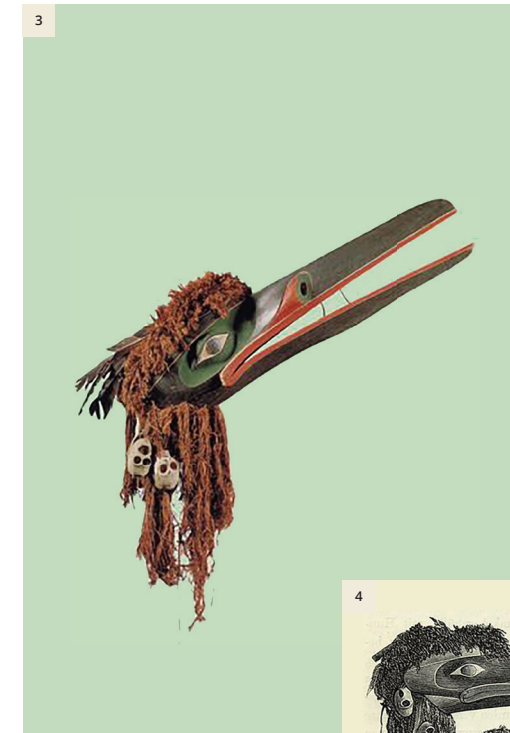
Captain Jacobsen was clearly one of the first and most successful ethnographic collectors the world has seen. His collection from North America and Alaska for the «Ethnological Museum of Berlin» , has only one real global competitor, and that is the Smithsonian Museum in Washington DC (the United States National Museum). It is testament to Jacobsen's dedication, skill and ability as an ethnologist that he was able to negotiate and acquire such a large and historically important collection in such a short period of time.

Today, Jacobsen's hands-on,

distinctive approach to ethnological study has been recognized. The details and descriptions recorded in his diaries, travelogues and the numerous articles he published over several years, are appreciated and evaluated by eminent researches across the world today.

In an academic article titled «Northwest Coast Ceremonialism: The works of Johan Adrian Jacobsen» (2010) by Prof. Richard Bland (University of Oregon) considers Jacobsen as an outstanding researcher in ethnography. His work is also acknowledged in the book titled «Yup'ik Elders at The Ethnologisches Museum Berlin» (2005) by Ann Fienup-Riordan. She affirms the Native Americans who participated in this project were proud that their story was well represented by the museum.

Another dramatic twist to the incredible story of «The Jacobsen Collection» occurred at the end of World War II. The Russian army sequestered the entire collection of artifacts. It is a miracle that the collection was returned undamaged, still in the original crates that Captain Jacobsen had packed himself over



1. YUPIK-MASK
with ivory and feathers.

2. KWAKIUTL-MASK
«Nulis»

3. CANNIBAL DANCE-MASK
from Bella Coola

4. ILLUSTRATION
from one of Jacobsen's books

a hundred years earlier. In 1990 the entire collection was returned to Berlin where the responsibility for it's care, preservation and display still lies with the curators at the «Ethnological Museum of Berlin». A 100 items from the collection are currently on display at the Humboldt Lab Dahlem in Berlin.

Jacobsen expeditions provided artifacts to museums throughout the world, totaling between 20,000 to 30.000 pieces. Johan Adrian Jacobsen and his brother Bernhard Philip, who for periods also worked for the «Ethnological Museum of Berlin», are perhaps the most successful ethnographic collectors in the world?

An unknown explorer

The national hero Norway forgot about.

Norway has produced many famous explorers over time. The two most honored are Fridtjof Nansen and Roald Amundsen, and as a matter of fact they both sought Jacobsen's advice on the use of dog-sleds over long distances. Jacobsen had used this transportation method during his expedition to Alaska, and his experience inspired Amundsen to do the same on his infamous polar expeditions 30 years later.

Jacobsen's expeditionary exploits are well recognized in Germany, yet almost unknown in Norway, even though he was honored for his ethnological work in 1890 when awarded Knight of The Royal Norwegian Order of Saint Olav, and the King's Gold Medal of Merit in 1908. He was also made an Honorary Chief of the Native American tribe – Ogala Sioux.

There are numerous books and articles written about his career, and over the last 10 to 20 years there has been increased acknowledgement of his contribution to ethnological study with many scientists, mainly from the USA, Canada, Germany and Norway. Researchers from Japan and Indonesia have also shown great interest in the artifacts he collected from the Banda Sea and Asia, with several of the scientists visiting the Ethnographic Museum in Oslo, where hundreds of artifacts collected by Jacobsen are on display. Jacobsen, in his later life wrote several books and articles of his journeys and the encounters he had with indigenous tribes during his travels. This includes

«Alaskan Voyage 1881-1883, An Expedition to the Northwest Coast of America» published in 1884, written in collaboration with the German artisan Adrian Wold.

Jacobsen returned again to North America with his brother Bernhard Philip in 1885, when they escorted nine Nuxalk Native Americans from Bella Coola, British Columbia (Canada) back to Europe. Several writers have also written about this adventure to North America, and a Canadian documentary film about the expedition was made in 2005.

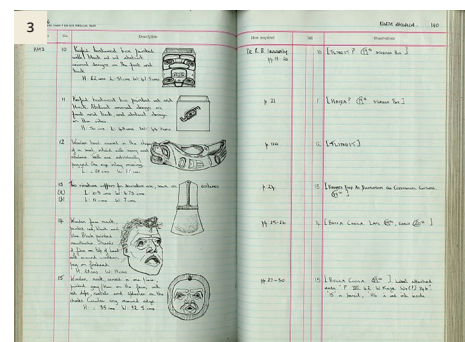
The Former Norwegian consul in Anchorage, Alaska, Anton Meyer, spent 18 years researching and writing the book «Captain Johan Adrian Jacobsen – an explorer Norway forgot about» after traveling in Jacobsen's footsteps across the world, the book was completed in 2013.

Another book was written about the nine Inuit who died from Smallpox in Paris in 1881 – «In the Footsteps of Abraham Ulrikab» by France Rivet. In this book Jacobsen's diary notes from the fated expedition to Labrador and his travels with the Inuit to Europe is described.

Although Jacobsen has received many accolades, a Master's degree thesis written by Kirsten Kotte Holimann (2012) concludes the following: «Jacobsen had clearly done an impressive job of collecting these objects, but in spite of this, he would never get the recognition that he believed he deserved. His life's



1. BERLINER SCHLOSS
around 1900.
2. THE NEW BERLINER SCHLOSS
which opens in 2019.
3. ACCOUNTING CAREFULLY
Jacobsen's own notes.



work lives on in museums around the world, but Jacobsen has remained a relatively anonymous contributor to posterity.» Hopefully coming events will finally establish his rightful place in the annals of Norwegian explorers recognizing his significant contribution to ethnological studies of indigenous peoples from around the world.

«By comparison, this building is four times larger than the new Munch Museum in Oslo»



«The Jacobsen Collection» moving to the «Berliner Schloss»

One of Europe's leading museums honors the Captain's endeavors.

Captain Jacobsen's collection is to be given pride of place in the opening of the newly renovated Berliner Schloss Museum in 2019.

Currently the magnificent «Berliner Schloss/Berlin City Palace» is being completely renovated at the cost of millions of Euros. The building is centered on the Museum Island – on the 'Unter den Linden' boulevard in the heart of the German capital. This bastion of a building was once home to the German royal family from the 1500's. The Allied forces bombed the building in 1945. The remaining ruins were completely removed at the end of World War II and the building has remained vacant since. Plans to restore

the original facade of the palace are in full progress, with the intent to return the castle's facade back to its former majestic glory. It is scheduled to open in 2019.

On the inside, a completely new, cutting edge design of the interior will house the new «Ethnological Museum of Berlin», in a 100,000 square-foot space. By comparison, this building is four times larger than the new Munch Museum in Oslo. The Oslo museum is estimated to receive 500,000 visitors per year, whereas the Berliner Schloss Museum's visitor number is estimated to exceed more than tree million per year.

In October, 2015 a lecture titled

«Captain Jacobsen, one collector – many perspectives» was given by Viola König, director of the «Ethnological Museum of Berlin», together with Monika Zessnik, curator of the «American Ethnological Collection». The venue was the Humboldt Box, located near to the construction site of the «Berlin City Palace». The purpose of the lecture was to show how the museum's North American collection will be presented at the new museum.

The big announcement was that «The Jacobsen Collection/Sammlung Jacobsen» will be exclusively exhibited in the new museums Department of North America.



JACOBSEN'S LIFEWOR

Norwegian main attraction at the «Berlin City Palace»

A gift to posterity.

500 ethnographic objects from the collection of 7000 items from Jacobsen's North America collection will be selected for display when «Berliner Schloss» opens in 2019. This is a five-fold increase compared to the current Jacobsen exhibition in Humboldt Lab Dahlem. This creates an opportunity for the public to see many more of these beautiful, historically important artifacts.

The whole «Jacobsen Collection» consists of approximately 14.000 artifacts, with another 7000 from his travels to the Banda Sea in Asia years later.

In April 2016 a press conference was held at the «Etnological Museum of Berlin». The «Nulis Mask» from Jacobsen's collection was taken out from it's display case and shown to the press – as a celebration of the fact that moving into the «Berliner Schloss» has started! The relocation

process will take approximately three years to complete. Captain Johan Adrian Jacobsen's life and travels will receive considerable attention in the coming years.

The museum wishes to tell the full story of what happened at the time the objects were collected – the conditions that existed, who ordered the missions, who funded it, and of course – the history of those who actually went on these great journeys of discovery and collected the unique artifacts.

At the opening of the «Berliner Schloss» in 2019, Jacobsen's ethnographic collection from North America will be the main attraction in this magnificent building in the heart of the German capital.

The so-called unknown Norwegian explorer, writer and ethnographic collector, will finally receive the

recognition and acknowledgement that his lifetime's work richly deserves, from the academic community in Germany and to a broader worldwide audience.

No Norwegian (in any field of endeavor) has ever been granted such a place of honor in one of Europe's largest, most important museums. The selection of Captain Johan Adrian Jacobsen's expeditionary work provides the platform for us all to see the ethnological treasure he saved for posterity. And to learn about one man's incredible journey from a tiny remote island in the Arctic Sea, to traversing the four corners of the earth, collecting precious artifacts that tells the world the story of the lives, cultures and rituals of many of our indigenous ancestors.

▼
1. NUXALK-MASK
2. HAIDA-MASK



JACOBSEN'S LEGACY

The Ethical Dilemma

A true hero or truly an opportunist?

In today's socially inclusive and morally conscious society, museums have been asked to consider the context in which artifacts in their possession were acquired, and in some cases there are demands for the repatriation of items back to their origins.

Some of the reasons these questions are being raised today relate to past colonial mentalities and questionable methods of acquiring such artifacts. Some also relates to past attitudes that today may seem demeaning and exploitative, in particular relationship to such events as displaying native people in what would today be considered as 'human zoos'.

When considering the ethical dilemma that the museums are facing, it is important to take a balanced and reflected approach to the discussion. It is crucial to remember the circumstances and prevailing attitudes that existed at

the time many of these artifacts were collected.

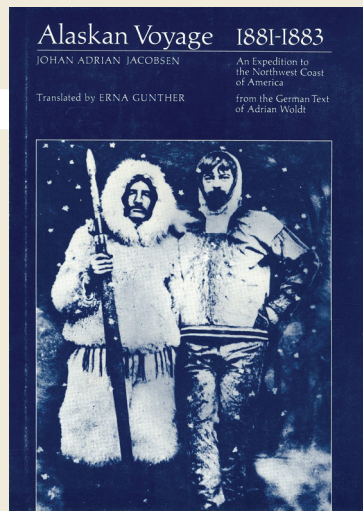
The intention of ethnological collectors working for museums in the late eighteenth century was to secure such items to protect and preserve them from looting or destruction. The motivation was to collect examples to engender knowledge for posterity.

Even within the same society – what is considered ethical, changes as the need and values of the society change. What was acceptable or right in the past, is not anymore, and today's opinions of ethical standards may not apply in the future.

With regards to Jacobsen's activities there may exist concerns regarding his early involvement and collaboration with Carl Hagenbeck in organizing «Völkerschauen» exhibitions during the late 1880's. In

today's society these types of events would be considered demeaning and exploitative. But it must also be remembered that many millions of people visited these shows at the time, as there existed an appetite to see and learn how other 'exotic' peoples and societies lived, and how different their lives and cultures were from that of Europeans. Without such exhibitions the general public had no other way to see or experience these different cultures, as global travel was simply not an option.

All the research that has been undertaken regarding «The Jacobsen Collection», affirms that the requisition of the Native American artifacts was undertaken with due propriety and that Captain Johan Adrian Jacobsen was held in high regard by the indigenous peoples he encountered on his expeditions.



RECOMMENDED READING

Publications and documentation

1884: «Alaskan Voyage 1881-1883, An Expedition to the Northwest Coast of America» by Johan Adrian Jacobsen and Adrian Wold (German author)

1894: «Adventurous Crossings»
by Johan Adrian Jacobsen

1944: «Through the Arctic Ocean and The Wilderness» by Johan Adrian Jacobsen

2005: «Yup'ik Elders that The Ethnologisches Museum Berlin» by Ann Fienup-Riordan

2010: European Journal of American Studies:
«Northwest Coast Ceremonialism: The works of Johan Adrian Jacobsen» by Aaron Glass.
Translations from German by Prof. Richard Bland at the University of Oregon (USA)

2011: Doctorate at the University of Tromsø:
«Off road?» by Cathrine Baglo

2012: Master's Degree at the University of Tromsø: «Johan Adrian Jacobsen – From the polar cold and into the warmth?» by Kirsten Kotte Holiman

2013: «Captain Johan Adrian Jacobsen – an Explorer Norway Forgot About» by Anton Meyer, former Consul in Anchorage, Alaska (USA)

2014: «In the Footsteps of Abraham Ulrikab»
by France Rivet

2014: Exhibition at the Polar Museum in Tromsø,
«Johan Adrian Jacobsen -
Captain, Ethnographer, Author»