

Qayassiq

“Place to go in a kayak”

Walrus have been harvested on *Qayassiq* for thousands of years using techniques and traditions still practiced today.

Sail-By Naming

Unaware of *Qayassiq's* existing name, Captain James Cook named this place Round Island when he sailed past in 1778. He was also unaware that the local peoples had lived and hunted here for ages. Today's Yupik are direct descendants of the *Togiagamiut*, who were present at the time of European contact, and the Thule who hunted here for at least 5,700 years.

Traditions of the Thule

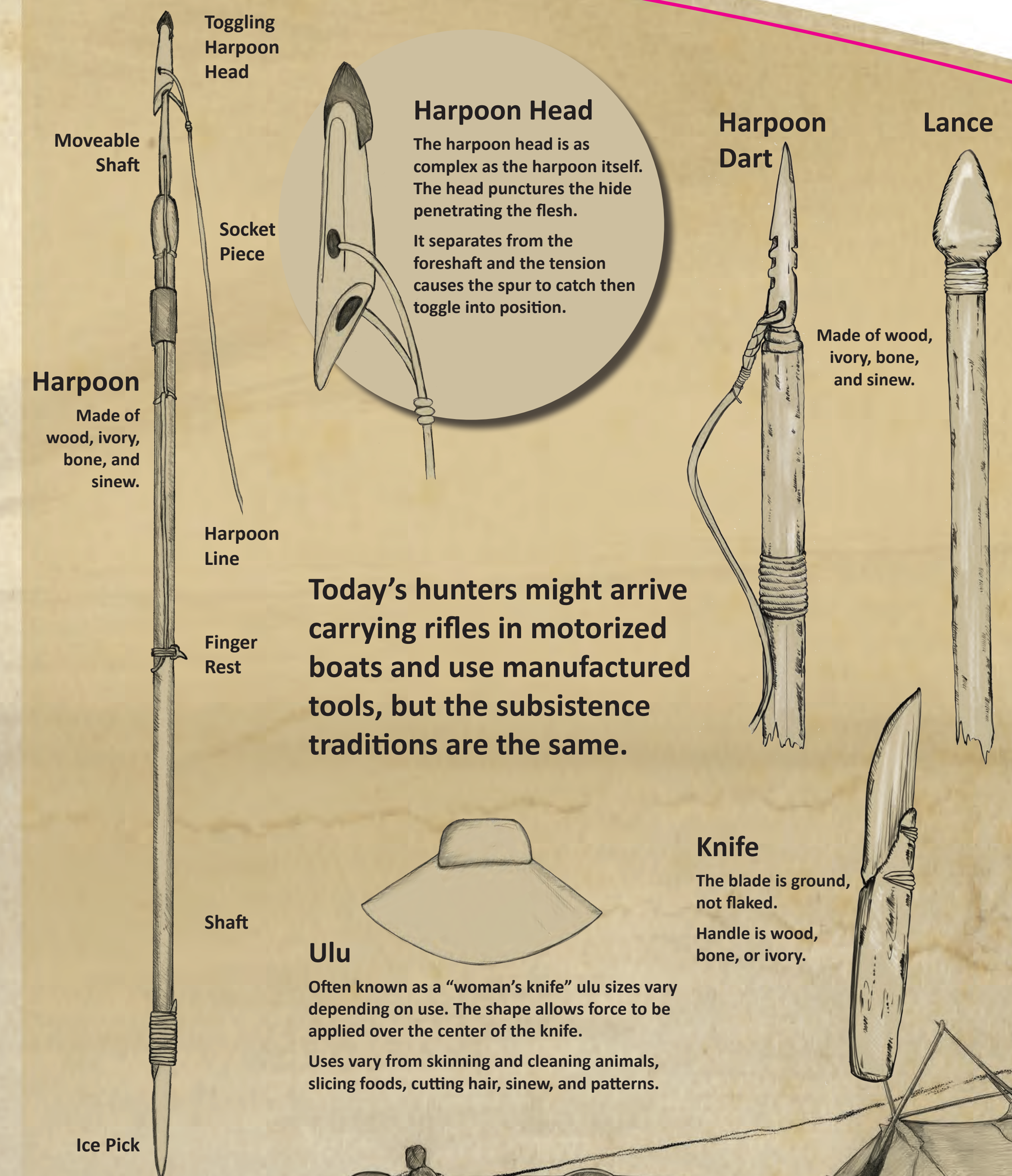
Yupik ancestors paddled here in skin kayaks, harvesting walrus on rocky beaches so as not to contaminate the flesh. In a manner called *caparpeknaki* or ‘with respect and without waste,’ they used the whole walrus including the meat, bone, ivory, hide, blubber, and internal organs, for food and the tools they used in daily life.

Tools of the Thule

Tools were fashioned from bone, ivory, stone, and wood. Blades were made of ground, polished slate while points were made from bone or ivory. The ingenuity of the harpoon's toggle point is adapted to hunting marine mammals, while the beauty of the ulu is in its simplicity.

Continuing Traditions

Using similar methods but some modern tools, the Yupik continue the traditions of their ancestors with *caparpeknaki* as they have for thousands of years. Today, nine area communities are active in the Qayassiq Walrus Commission and participate in annual fall hunts. Passing traditions along helps to ensure the continued health of these communities and availability of valuable resources in this unique place.



Today's hunters might arrive carrying rifles in motorized boats and use manufactured tools, but the subsistence traditions are the same.

