

Unique 3,000-Year-Old House Found in Northeast Siberia

September 11, 2014

The  Moscow Times

The residents of Eurasia's extreme northeast were building elaborate wooden-floored houses as early as the 15th century B.C., according to new findings reported by Interfax on Thursday.

A dwelling with a floor made of wood and turf layers was found in layers of permafrost in Nunligran, an ancient settlement of the militant Chukchi people, a spokesman for the Bering archeological expedition said.

Nunligran is located on the Pacific shore of the Chukotka peninsula — the only part of Asia in the Western hemisphere, right across the sea from Alaska.

Now home to a population of 300, the settlement, situated on the same latitude as Reykjavik and Alaska's Fairbanks, was a whale-hunting village in the mid-second millennium B.C.

The house is the oldest such structure attributed to the Chukchi, a hunting-gathering indigenous people of northeastern Siberia.

The Chukchi were the butt of politically incorrect ethnic jokes in Soviet times — not unlike the Irish in Britain or Poles in the U.S. — but they have dominated the region for centuries.

They were one of the few indigenous people in the world to resist colonization: Tsarist Russia spent 150 years trying to conquer them and eventually incorporated them into the empire in the 19th century via negotiations.

Archeologists will continue to study the ancient house during the next warm season, the expedition spokesman said.

Items already found inside the dwelling include a wooden ski, several harpoon tips and a ochre-painted doll made of polar bear fur.

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