

# ["Scientific Work Sanctions Everything": Czech Skull Hunters in Alaska]

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**[Abstract]** *This article describes how the racial worldview of Aleš Hrdlička (1869-1943) shaped his unethical treatment of Native Americans during his expeditions to Alaska between 1926 and 1937. One of the main aims of the trips was to dig up and steal Native American skeletons, by stealth if necessary. As a globally lauded anthropologist from one of America's premier scientific institutions, Hrdlička's devotion to scientific progress provided the motivation behind his behavior. In his scientific philosophy, humans (and their bones) were nothing more than material, and all individuals were best classified into races based on physical characteristics. For Hrdlička, science sanctioned everything.*

**[Keywords]** *Alaska; Aleš Hrdlička; anthropology; Czechs; human remains; Native Americans; race; science; Slavs*

*Since Charles Darwin convinced the world that man came into existence by descent from lower animals, zoological analogies are presented to us not as literature but as scientific fact. The augurs of imperial Rome advised on grave matters of state after inspecting the entrails of animals or marking the flight of birds. Modern philosophers explain and justify human conduct after a visit to the monkey-house at the Zoological Gardens, or from observations on the family life of rabbits (P. Chalmers Mitchel, *Evolution and the War*, 1915).*