Kodiak Island Borough School District

In partnership with the

Alutiiq Museum and Baranov Museum

Kodiak History, Culture, and Community Teacher Resources

Updated Oct. 2020

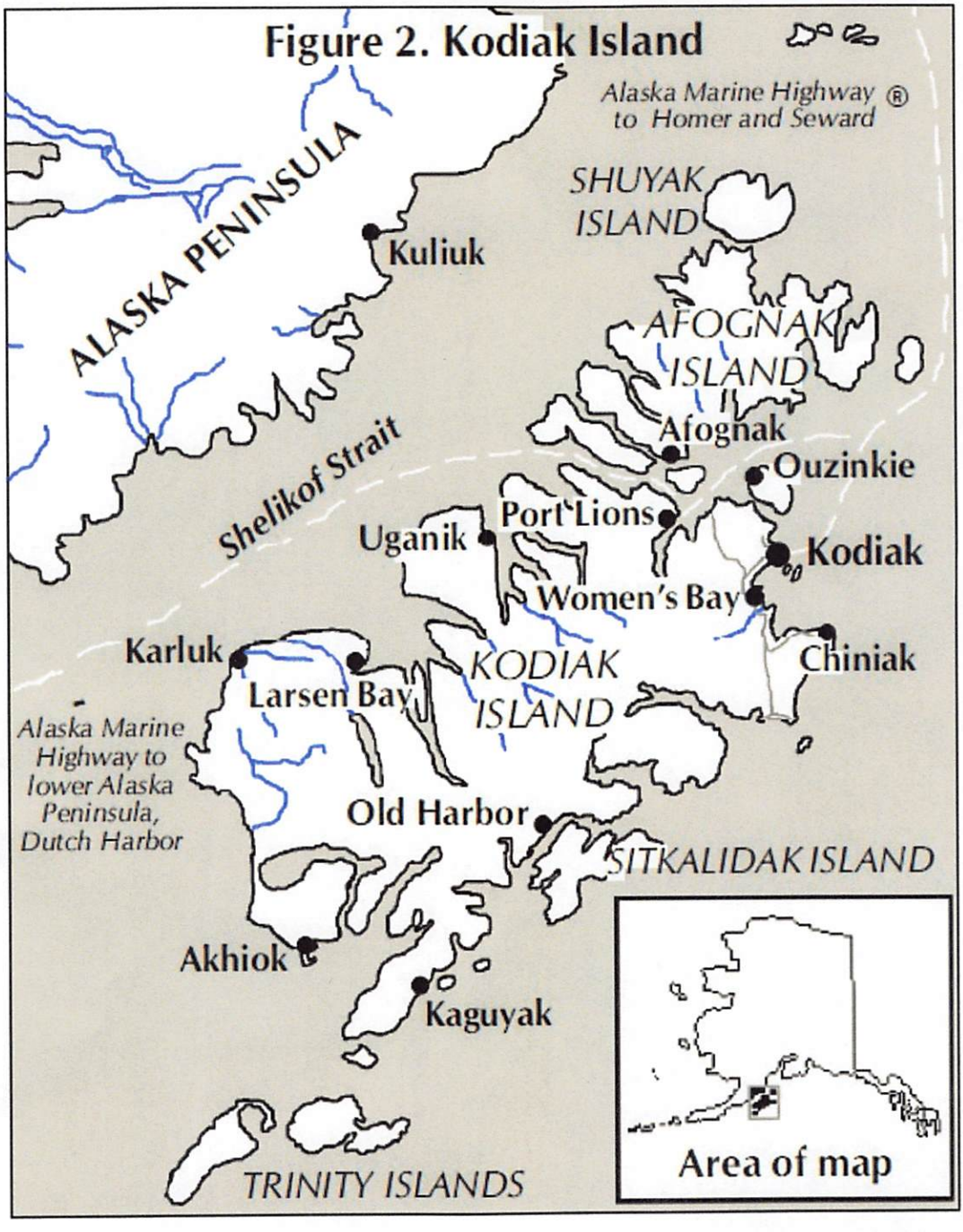


Figure 2. Kodiak Island
Alaska Marine Highway ®
to Homer and Seward
SHUYAK
ISLAND
ALASKA PENINSULA
Kuliuk
AFOGNAK
ISLAND
Afognak
Ouzinkie
Shelikof Strait
Port Lions
Uganik
Kodiak
Women's Bay
Karluk
KODIAK
ISLAND
Chiniak
Larsen Bay
Alaska Marine
Highway to
lower Alaska
Peninsula,
Dutch Harbor
Old Harbor
SITKALIDAK ISLAND
Akhiok
Kaguyak
TRINITY ISLANDS
Area of map

Guide for *Litnawistet*–Teachers

Alutiiq MUSEUM

ARCHAEOLOGICAL REPOSITORY

Guide for *Litnawistet*–Teachers

First Edition

Alutiiq
MUSEUM
ARCHAEOLOGICAL
REPOSITORY

About the Alutiiq Museum

We are a non-profit organization founded in 1995. Representatives of Kodiak Alutiiq organizations govern the museum with funding from charitable contributions, memberships, grants, contracts, and sales.

Our Mission

The Alutiiq Museum preserves and shares the heritage and culture of the Alutiiq people.

Our Vision

Celebrating heritage through living culture.

Our Educational Philosophy

Accurate knowledge of the past is essential to the health of the Kodiak community. History is a resource that can help people confront difficult issues, engage in discussion, and consider multiple perspectives. The Alutiiq Museum's educational programs provide an honest exploration of the forces that have shaped today's Alutiiq culture and they help Alutiiq traditions thrive in the modern world. Our programs are open to everyone. We are committed to creating respect and enthusiasm for Alutiiq culture among people of all heritages.

Guide for *Litnawistet*–Teachers was produced by the Alutiiq Museum & Archaeological Repository with support from the Munartet Project and funding from the Alaska State Council on the Arts.

The photographs in this guide are from the Alutiiq Museum's collections. Images of embroidery are from clothing in the National Museum of Finland, Etholén Collection, photographed by Sven Haakanson Jr. Petroglyph images are from Cape Alitak, courtesy Akhiok-Kaguyak, Inc.

Iluani *INSIDE*

Asirtuq Tailuten *WELCOME*

Before the Alutiiq Museum opened there were few places for educators to learn about the Alutiiq world. Information about Kodiak's Native heritage was hard to access, stored in the knowledge of Elders, archaeological sites, and distant museums. Today, the Alutiiq Museum provides accurate accessible information on Alutiiq heritage and numerous opportunities for cultural exploration. And we welcome people of all heritages to participate in our programs.

As educators, you are important partners in our work. When you introduce students to the history of their home, you invite them to see the world in new ways. You challenge assumptions and help students consider how the past has shaped the present.

We developed this resource guide to assist you. It is designed to connect you with the museum's services and provide ideas for collaboration. As you read through this guide, please remember it is a starting point. Our staff can help you tailor a visit to the museum, design a classroom project that supports your curriculum, or facilitate a research project. Please let us know how we can work together.

Taikina – You Should Come,

April Laktonen Counceller, Executive Director
april@alutiiqmuseum.org

Say Hello–*Cama'i*

Cama'i, a traditional Alutiiq greeting, is a friendly, welcoming word used much like the English term "Hi." "*Cama'i*," you might say as you meet a friend on the street or enter a room full of people. Alutiiq people often greet each other with this familiar word. To many it symbolizes pride in Native culture and a continuing respect for Alutiiq, Kodiak's Native language.

Pronunciation: Cha-MYE

Tours

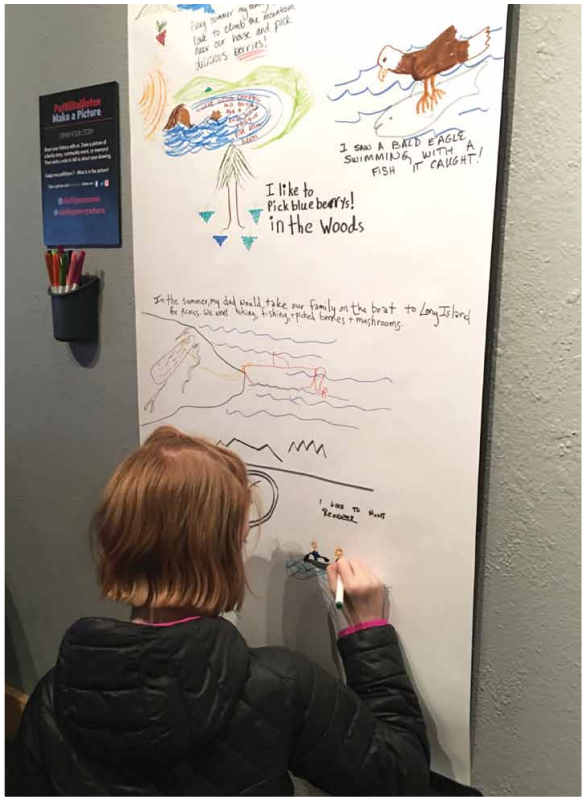
***Kula'irluni* – Visit**
The Alutiiq Museum provides free tours for educational groups and classes of all ages. Our guided gallery visits take about an hour and help students investigate Alutiiq history, language, and culture. Whether you are studying sea mammals, geology, weather, or storytelling, our experts can design a tour especially for your group.

Preview
Educators are invited to visit the museum before bringing a class. Stop by to develop ideas for discussion, consider activities, and talk with our staff. There is no charge to preview our gallery.

Virtual Tour
Visit roundme.com and search for Alutiiq Museum to explore 365° views of our exhibits. You can also download a free Roundme app for your smart phone.

Scheduling
To insure we can accommodate your group, all tours require advance scheduling. Please contact us to arrange your group visit at info@alutiiqmuseum.org, 1-844-425-8844.

The museum is wheelchair accessible and we have public bathrooms and a drinking fountain. Please let us know if we can provide additional accommodations. For groups with younger children, we recommend bringing one adult for every eight students.



Museum Manners
The museum is a special place with special objects. For the safety of our visitors, staff, and collections please ask your group to follow these simple rules:

- Please walk. No running.
- Leave bags, umbrellas, etc. in the rotunda outside the museum.
- No food, drinks, or gum.
- Do not touch objects or displays, unless invited.
- Stay with your group.

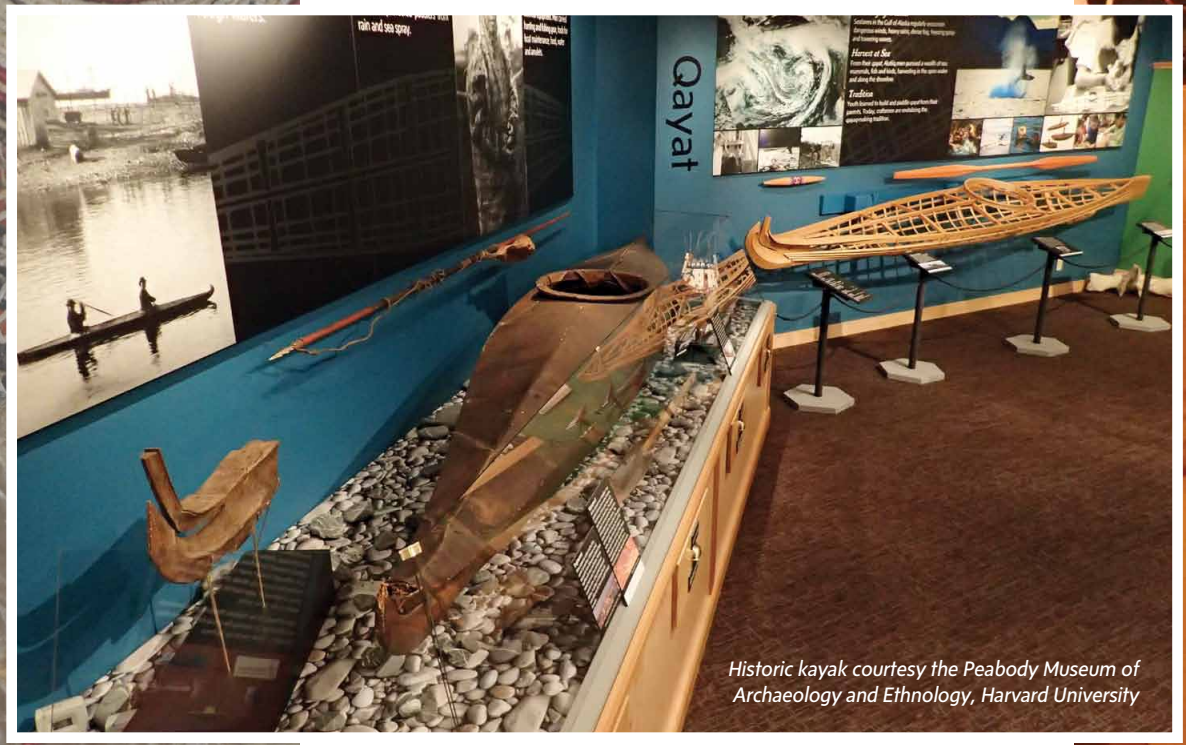
Exhibits

Explore our gallery! Our exhibits tell the story of the Alutiiq people–from the distant past to the present day. Archaeological discoveries, Alutiiq language materials, photographs, objects, and artwork fill displays on history, subsistence practices, social life, and spirituality. We have both long-term and rotating displays.

Qayat–Kayaks
From driftwood and animal skins Alutiiq people created swift, reliable boats expertly designed for Kodiak's windy waters. Historic and modern objects illustrate the gear essential for every paddler, including a 150-year-old Alutiiq kayak on loan from Harvard University.

Wamwik–A Place to Play
Our youngest visitors explore with their hands in our children's corner. This replica of a traditional Alutiiq sod house transports children into the Alutiiq world with toys, puzzles, books, and animal puppets. This is a great place for smaller groups to sit and talk about their museum visit.

Pililuki–Make Them! (until January 2019)
Explore the ways Alutiiq ancestors made and used pictures in our exhibit on Alutiiq graphic art. Then make your own artwork inspired by Alutiiq traditions. Visitors can color visors and headdresses, create an incised pebble, and draw family stories.



Historic kayak courtesy the Peabody Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology, Harvard University


Tangraqa!
Tangraqa!
Tangraqa!

Activities

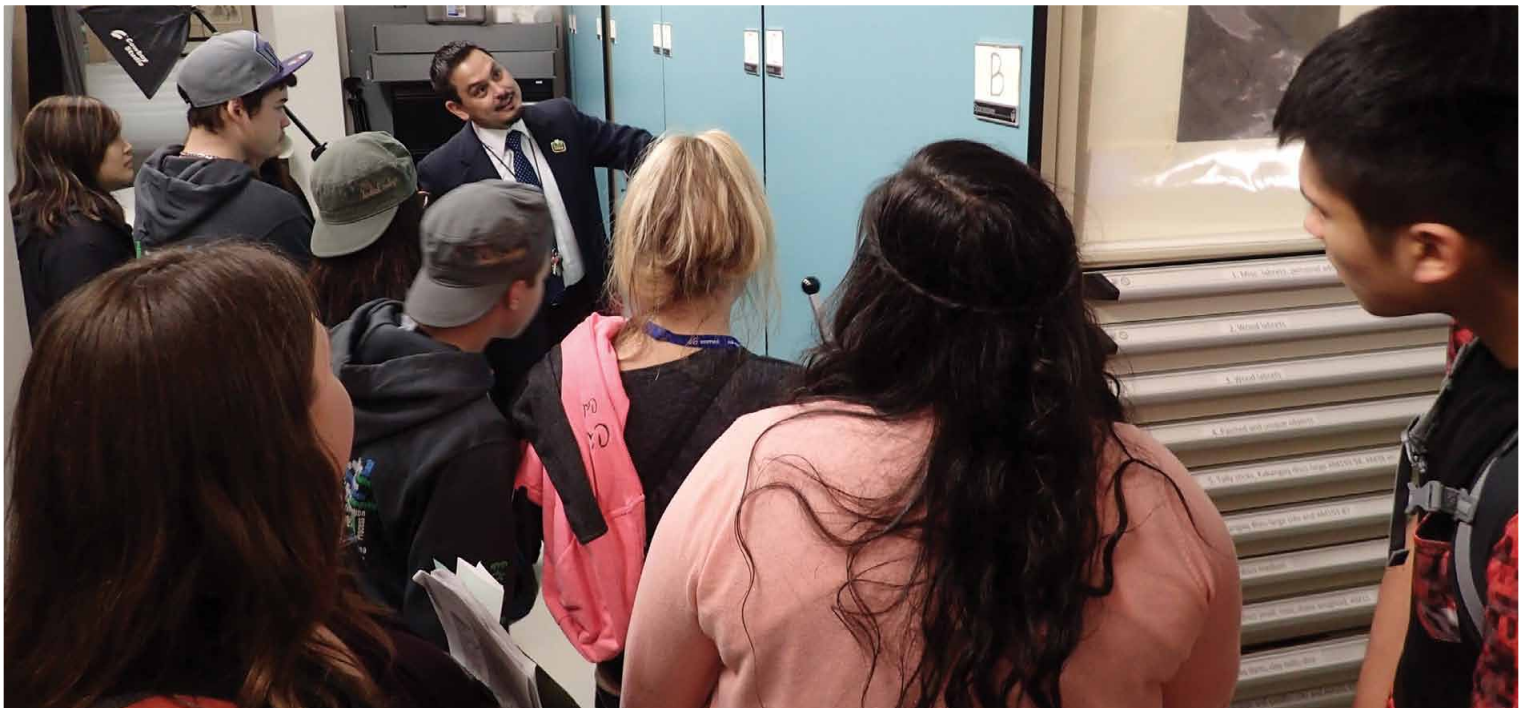
Educational groups can participate in a gallery activity upon request. Please schedule in advance.

Find it!
Encourage your students to learn from exhibits with a scavenger hunt. We'll provide pencils, clip boards, and clues that lead students through our displays to answer questions about Alutiiq culture. True or False–both men and women in Alutiiq society knew how to sew? Find the answer in our kayak display.

Touch It!
We have a selection of prehistoric artifacts that can be respectfully handled. Students can learn about Alutiiq technology and manufacturing by examining stone and bone objects from ancestral settlements. Our experts will explain the tools and their uses.

Watch It!
Our short videos (4 to 8 minutes each) teach visitors about rock art, wild foods, Alutiiq dance, archaeological sites, and other topics with the help of Alutiiq culture bearers. Videos are also available on the Alutiiq Museum Vimeo channel at vimeo.com/alutiiqmuseum.

Behind the Scenes
Educational groups can also tour our laboratory and collections storage room. Behind the scenes visits help students learn about museums. What is a museum? How do museums care for objects? Why are museums important? We can explore these questions together.



Working with a Culture Bearer

Say Thanks -
Quyanaa

Quyanaa is the Alutiiq word for thank you.

Pronunciation:
Koo-YAW-nah.

In the Alutiiq world, every adult is a teacher and children learn by working closely with family members and mentors. Bring this style of teaching to your classroom by inviting a culture bearer to lead an activity. There are many knowledgeable Alutiiq people who enjoy working with students and many possible activities.

- Ask an artist to lead a carving, sewing, or painting project.
- Invite an Alutiiq speaker to teach Alutiiq language greetings or songs.
- Go on a field trip with a local harvester to learn about Alutiiq plantlore.
- Cook a traditional dish with an Alutiiq chef.
- Work with a dancer to choreograph a class performance.
- Interview an Elder about local history.

To discuss your project and identify a culture bearer please contact Molly Odell (molly@alutiiqmuseum.org; 844-425-8844, x14). We will facilitate.

Tips for a successful visit
Culture bearers are esteemed members of the Alutiiq community and should be treated with the greatest respect.

- Communicate your request carefully, clearly, and well in advance.
- Provide a comfortable seat for your visitor. This is especially important for Elders.
- Schedule plenty of time for the visit, so the activity isn't rushed and the culture bearer can share at a reasonable pace.
- Prepare your students to be respectful listeners.
- Do not expect your visitor to assist with classroom management.
- Make sure your activity is respectful of Alutiiq culture. Ask us if you are unsure.
- Offer a modest stipend or gift of thanks.

Education Boxes

Reserve A Box
Use our online reservation form to reserve a box for use by your class.

alutiiqmuseum.org/learn/handouts-teacher-resources/education-boxes

Anyone may check out an education box for up to two weeks. There is no charge to use the materials. If you need shipping, the museum pays the outbound shipping and the borrower pays to ship the box back. Borrowers are responsible for returning the box and its contents on time and in good condition.

Check it out!
Bring Alutiiq culture to your classroom, camp, program, or event with our traveling education boxes. Each box explores an aspect of Alutiiq heritage with hands-on activities that can be adjusted for many ages. Materials come in a sturdy box with instructions.

Boxes

Who are the Alutiiq? – An introduction to the Alutiiq homeland, language, customs, and history.

Subsistence – Pieces of fur, bone, tooth, stone, spruce root, and other natural resources supplement information on Alutiiq harvesting.

Stories and Games – Alutiiq darts, throwing discs, and die with instructions, and a print out of traditional tales.

Saving our Alutiiq Language – Language learning tools (doll board game, flash cards), audio and video resources, and an Alutiiq dictionary.

Alutiiq Dance – Alutiiq music CD, dance DVD, rattle, headdress, and directions to craft student headdresses.

Petroglyphs – Stamps and clay tablets for making petroglyph art, with cultural information.

NEW! Mask Box – Learn about Alutiiq masks–their design, use, and purpose, then make miniature masks. This box has directions for carving masks from soap and for painting wooden masks.

NEW! Pililuki–Make Them – Explore Alutiiq arts with hands on drawing and coloring activities.

Events

Craft Saturday
One Saturday per month we host a walk-in craft activity. Family-friendly crafts encourage visitors to explore Alutiiq culture with their hands. Projects are suitable for all ages and there is a small, suggested donation for supplies. Make Alutiiq language valentines, create a paper mask, sew felt ornaments, or color Alaskan animals. There is a new activity each month.

First Friday Art Walk
On the first Friday of every month, the Alutiiq Museum provides free admission from 5:00-7:00 pm and opportunities to meet artists and view local artwork.

Workshops
Alutiiq artists lead art activities, sharing everything from carvings and beading to painting and jewelry design. Workshops require advance registration and payment of a materials fee.

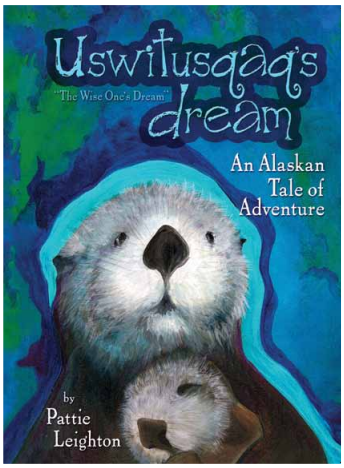
Volunteering
Museum volunteers give tours, set up for events, care for collections, and participate in research. By volunteering, students can learn about Alutiiq heritage and explore the museum profession. Unpaid internships can also be arranged for students who wish to pursue a project or shadow a staff member. Volunteering starts with a short application. Contact Jeff Garcie to learn more, jeff@alutiiqmuseum.org, 844-425-8844, x19.

Have you ever wanted to be an archaeologist?
Volunteers can work as members of an archaeological field crew, studying Kodiak prehistory with our professional researchers. No previous experience necessary. Participants must be at least 14 years old. Students can earn high school credit. Tours of the dig site can be arranged for groups.

Publications

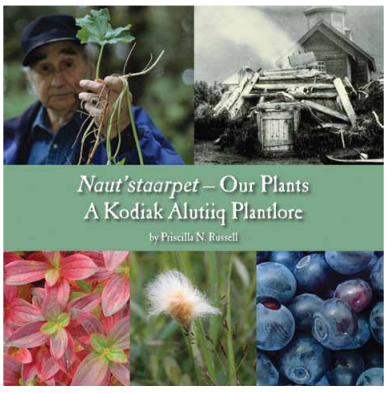
INTERACTIVE DIGITAL STORY BOOKS

Qbooks
Eight digital story books produced with the Native Village of Afognak that explore Alutiiq language and traditions with interactive features. Available as free apps on the iTunes store. *Recommended for elementary school students.*



FOR YOUNG READERS

Uswitusqaq's Dream
A shaman's dream, a journey by kayak, a hidden bay, sea otters, and an earthquake; these are the ingredients of this children's novel about Kodiak Island in the 1800s. The story follows Alutiiq boys on a journey of self-discovery, with descriptions of Kodiak's natural environment and details of Alutiiq culture and history. *Recommended for readers in grades 3 – 7.*

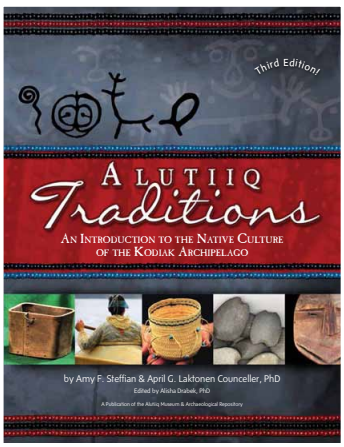


FOR OLDER STUDENTS AND SCHOLARS

Kal'unek–From Karluk
This history of Karluk village transports readers to the late prehistoric era, and examines village life with archaeological data, including pictures of Alutiiq objects and artwork.

Naut'staarpet–Our Plants, A Kodiak Alutiiq Plantlore
Explore Kodiak's forest and meadows with this colorful guide to Alutiiq plant harvesting and use.

Igaruacirpet–Our Way of Making Designs
From petroglyphs to tattoos Alutiiq people used pictures to tell stories, and share information. Learn about Alutiiq graphic arts in this illustrated guide.



Traditions
A 60-page paperback with one page answers to our visitors' most common questions. A great introduction to the Alutiiq world with information on where to learn more.

The Alutiiq Word of the Week–15 Year Compilation
What is the origin of the word Kodiak? How do you bend wood to make a bowl? Why is it bad luck to speak about hunting bears? This paperback book has the answers and many more. Over 470 entries pair an Alutiiq word and sentence with a short lesson.

Online Resources

It has never been easier to access Alutiiq traditions online. There are many web resources that can help you connect with Alutiiq culture, language and history.

Alutiiq Museum Website – alutiiqmuseum.org

- Online exhibits
- Introduction to Alutiiq culture
- Interactive Alutiiq alphabet
- Videos, handouts, craft activities

Alutiiq Education Website – alutiiqeducation.org
A clearinghouse of information for educators featuring:

- Alutiiq core values
- Alutiiq cultural history
- Storytelling
- Bibliography with downloadable resources

Alutiiq Language Website – alutiiqlanguage.org
Resources for Alutiiq language learners featuring:

- Dictionary of Alutiiq terms
- Word lists linked to audio files
- K-5 Elementary curriculum lessons
- Songs
- Storybooks & workbooks
- Teaching & learning resources

Cingtaataq
Razor Clam

Razor clam on the beach at Cape Alitak, May 2010. Photograph by Sven Haakanson Jr.

Alutiiq Word of the Week
Sign up for our weekly lessons on all things Alutiiq. Each lesson examines a cultural topic with an Alutiiq word, sentence, and photograph. Lessons can be delivered by email and we post them on the museum's website with a recording of an Alutiiq speaker.

All lesson are available in our searchable online archive at: alutiiqmuseum.org/learn/word-of-the-week-archive.

The Alutiiq Word of the Week is also podcast. Subscribe for free on iTunes.

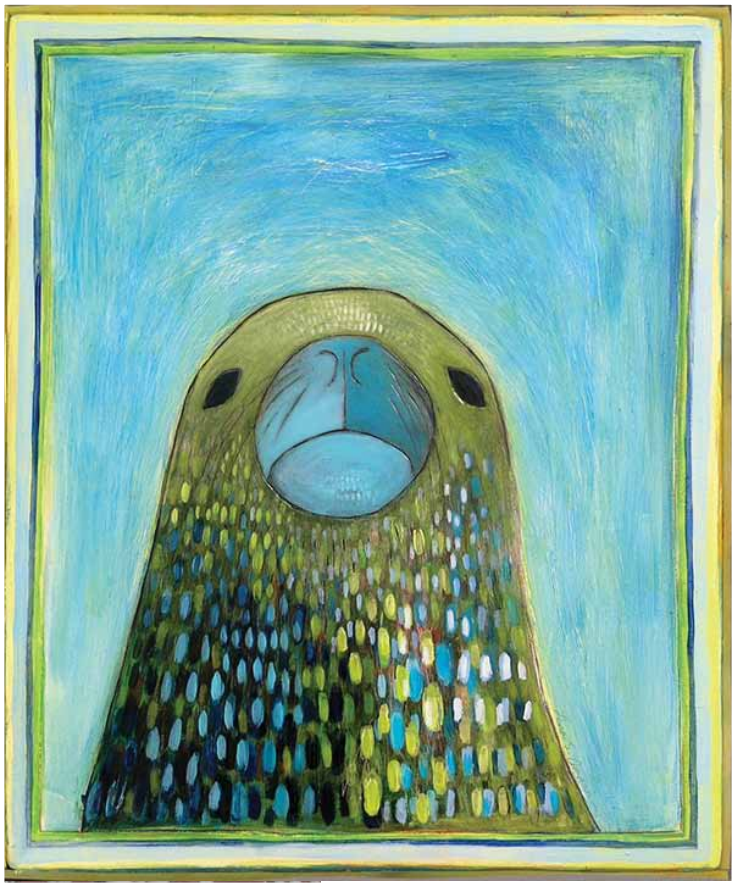
iTunes

Working with Collections

The Alutiiq Museum cares for collections that document the Alutiiq experience. There are more than 250,000 objects and photographs in our professional repository. Researchers of all ages can study these collections and access our library. All you need is an appointment. To schedule a research visit, please contact Collections Manager, Amanda Lancaster, at 844-425-8844, x22.

Permanent Collections
Archaeological Materials
Archival Materials
Contemporary Artwork
Film and Audio Recordings
Ethnographic Objects
Photographs
Natural History Specimens
Teaching Materials

Teaching Collection
Artifacts from our teaching collection can be checked out for respectful use in the classroom or at an event. A variety of stone and bone tools are available for hands on exploration and come packaged in a sturdy case for transport.



Library Collection
The Alutiiq Museum library has more than 1,700 books, 11,000 photographs, and 1,400 articles and manuscripts. Although we do not loan our library materials, researchers can use them in the museum.

Digital Art Gallery
Browse our collection of contemporary artwork online. Select an artist to see examples of their work: alutiiqmuseum.org/explore/collections/types-of-collections/contemporary-art

Sea Lion–Wiinaq, painting by Lena Amason, 2006, 16 x 13 inches, AM570:10. Purchased with support from the Rasmuson Art Acquisition Fund.

Directory

Phone 844-425-8844

Contact	Email Address	Extension
Scheduling & Questions	info@alutiiqmuseum.org	10
Gallery Coordinator Rebecca Pruitt	rebecca@alutiiqmuseum.org	13
Gallery Assistant Lauren McCausland	lauren@alutiiqmuseum.org	10
Development Assistant Jeff Garcie	jeff@alutiiqmuseum.org	19
Project Manager Molly Odell	molly@alutiiqmuseum.org	14
Chief Curator Amy Steffian	amy@alutiiqmuseum.org	17
Collection & Exhibits Manager Amanda Lancaster	amanda@alutiiqmuseum.org	22
Collections & Exhibits Specialist Alex Painter	alex@alutiiqmuseum.org	16
Curator of Archaeology Patrick Saltonstall	patrick@alutiiqmuseum.org	18
Executive Director April Counceller	april@alutiiqmuseum.org	12
Assistant Director Rose Wilson	rose@alutiiqmuseum.org	11

Connect
www.alutiiqmuseum.org

News–Sign up for our email broadcast to receive exhibit and event news.
Send your name and email address to info@alutiiqmuseum.org.

Say Goodbye - *Tang'rciqamken*

Saying goodbye in Alutiiq is a lot harder than saying *cama'i*–hello!

Cama'i, is a simple, one word greeting that people remember easily. To say farewell, however, you must use a full Alutiiq phrase. The common leave-taking salutation is *Tang'rciqamken*, which literally means, "I'll see you." Fluent speakers add a variety of endings to this phrase, like *camiku*, which means "sometime."

Tang'rciqamken camiku. – I will see you again sometime.

Notes

Gallery Hours

Tuesday – Friday	10:00 am – 4:00 pm
Saturday	Noon – 4:00 pm
Sunday	Closed
Monday	By appointment

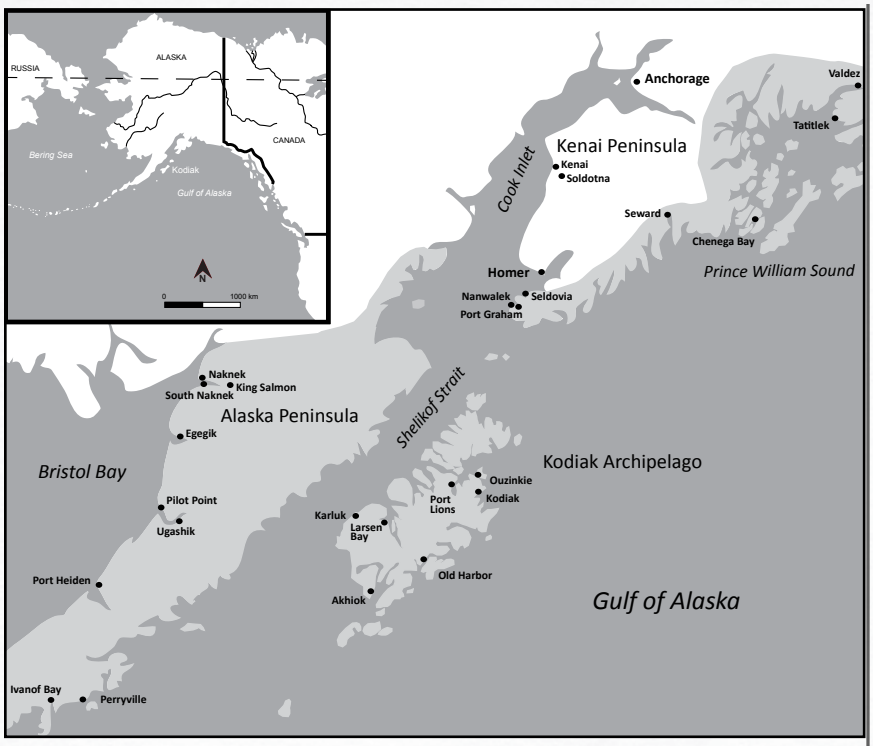
Where to Find Us

215 Mission Road, First Floor
Kodiak, AK 99615
TEL 844.425.8844
FAX 866.335.7767

Alutiiq MUSEUM
ARCHAEOLOGICAL REPOSITORY

Munartet Project

Alaska State Council on the Arts



Contemporary communities in the Alutiiq Nation.

Alutiiq / Sugpiaq Nation

The Alutiiq / Sugpiaq people are one of eight Alaska Native peoples. They have inhabited the coastal environments of south central Alaska for over 7,500 years. Their traditional homelands include Prince William Sound, the outer Kenai Peninsula, the Kodiak Archipelago, and the Alaska Peninsula. Here people lived in coastal communities and hunted sea mammals from skin-covered boats.

Alutiiq people share many cultural practices with the other coastal peoples, particularly the Unangan / Aleut of the Aleutian Chain and the Yup'ik of the Bering Sea coast. Anthropologists believe these cultural similarities reflect a distant but common ancestry.

At the time of European colonization, there were distinct regional groups of Alutiiq / Sugpiaq people, each speaking a slightly different dialect of the Alutiiq language.

Koniag - often used to refer to Kodiak Islanders, due to the Kodiak Island regional Native corporation of the same name. Linguistically, Koniag refers to the major Alutiiq dialect spoken both on Kodiak Island and the Alaska Peninsula. The word Koniag is derived from an Unangan (Aleutian Island) word for the people of Kodiak. Some people from Kodiak use the term *Qik'rtarmiut* - meaning "Island People" to refer to the Alutiit of Kodiak Island, and *Aluuwirmiut*, or "People of Aluuwiq (a place name)" to refer to the Alutiiq people residing on the Alaska Peninsula.

Chugach - Alutiiq people residing on the Kenai Peninsula and Prince William Sound. This term commonly refers to the major Alutiiq dialect spoken in this region, and is also the name of the regional Native corporation. The Kenai Peninsula Alutiiq people are known as *Kangiyarmiut* or "people of the bay." The Alutiiq residents of Prince William Sound are called the *Ungaalarmiut* meaning "people of the east."

Today more than 4,000 Alutiiq people live in fifteen rural villages, five towns, each of Alaska's major cities, and around the world. There are about 1,800 Alutiiq people in the Kodiak Archipelago. About 45% live in six remote villages - Akhiok, Karluk, Larsen Bay, Old Harbor, Ouzinkie, and Port Lions. The rest reside in the City of Kodiak. These communities represent a small percentage of the Alutiiq villages once occupied. In the 1700s there were more than 60 Alutiiq villages in the Kodiak Archipelago with an estimated population of 10,000 people.

Kinkut Alutiit – Who are the Alutiiq?

In the historic era, Russian traders called all of the Native peoples of southwestern Alaska "Aleut" —despite regional differences in language, cultural practices, and history. In the modern era, this has caused confusion. People with distinct cultures are known by the same name. Today, Kodiak's Native people use a variety of self-designators. There is no one correct term. Many Elders prefer Aleut, a term they were taught as children. Today, others choose Alutiiq or Sugpiaq. What does each of these terms mean?

Sugpiaq – This is a traditional self-designator of the Native people of Prince William Sound, the outer Kenai Peninsula, the Kodiak Archipelago, and the Alaska Peninsula. It means "real person" and it is the way Native people described themselves prior to Western contact. This term is used by some today. Sugpiaq is a popular self-designator on the Kenai Peninsula, and is gaining use on Kodiak.

Aleut – This word means "coastal dweller" and it is derived from a Siberian Native language. Russian traders introduced the term, using it to describe the Native people they encountered in the Aleutian Islands, the Alaska Peninsula, and the Kodiak Archipelago. Aleut is still frequently used to refer to the Native people of the Aleutian Islands, although the word Unangan—meaning "we the people" in the region's traditional language—is gaining popularity.

Alutiiq – "Alutiiq" is the way Sugpiaq people say Aleut. It is the Native way of pronouncing the Russian-introduced word "Aleut" in their own language. Alutiiq is a popular self-designator in Kodiak, and reflects the region's complex Russian and Native history. People used this term occasionally in the Russian era. It gained popularity starting in the 1980s.

ALUTIIQ or ALUTIIT?

ALUTIIQ *(singular)*

- Noun: to describe one person: **I am an Alutiiq.**
- Noun: to describe the language: **They are speaking Alutiiq.**
- Adjective: as a modifier: **There are many Alutiiq artists.**

ALUTIIT *(plural)*

- Noun: to describe more than two: **There are 40 Alutiit living in Karluk.**
- Noun: to describe the people or culture collectively: **The ancestors of the Alutiit settled Kodiak Island.**

What about Eskimos? The word Eskimo comes from Montagnais, a Canadian Indian language.

It means "snowshoe netter," and not, as many think, "eaters of raw meat." Anthropologists use "Eskimo" to refer to a distinctive set of related cultures in the North American Arctic—from the Gulf of Alaska to Greenland. In Alaska, this includes the Alutiiq, Yup'ik, and Inupiaq peoples. The term Eskimo, however, is not a popular self-designator. Many people feel it is offensive. They prefer to be recognized by their cultural affiliation (e.g., Alutiiq, Yup'ik, or Inupiaq) rather than the term Eskimo. Similarly, in Canada, Native people prefer the term Inuit.

Today, there are two major dialects in the Alutiiq language—Koniag Alutiiq and Chugach Alutiiq. While part of the same language, each dialect has differences in accent and vocabulary, much like the difference between American and Australian English. Residents of the Kenai Peninsula and Prince William Sound speak Chugach Alutiiq, while residents of Kodiak Island and the Alaska Peninsula speak Koniag Alutiiq. Each dialect is further broke into sub-dialects and sub-sub-dialects, accounting for smaller variations in Alutiiq speech.

Pluralization

Singular words in Alutiiq usually (but not always) end in *q*. Dual (two) of a noun will end in *k*, and plural (three or more) of a noun will end in *t*. For example, one rock is *yaamaq*, two rocks is *yaamak,* and three or more is *yaamat*. Note the singular and plural use of Alutiiq nouns throughout this book.

Alutiiq Speakers Today

During the period of Western colonization, Alutiiq people learned Russian and English in addition to their own language. Many people became bilingual and some trilingual. In the 1900s, however, American schoolteachers punished Native children for speaking anything but English. In later years, many parents chose not to teach Alutiiq to their children, hoping to protect them from racism. As a result, the number of Alutiiq speakers declined steadily during the twentieth century. In 2002, the average age of Kodiak's Alutiiq speakers was 67.

To many Alutiiq people, reawakening the Alutiiq language is a critical part of preserving Native heritage. Today, there are many projects underway in the Kodiak community to revitalize the language. Kodiak College hosts Alutiiq classes. The Alutiiq Museum continues to publish and broadcast an Alutiiq Word of the Week program. Native organizations are incorporating language lessons into summer camps for children. Elders are teaching Alutiiq vocabulary in elementary schools. A new Alutiiq dictionary is in production, and island-wide language preservation and documentation projects are underway. Through these efforts, the sounds of Alutiiq are returning to Kodiak.

Learn More:

Published Resources:

Alutiiq Word of the Week: Fifteen Year Compilation, 2012, by Amy Steffian & April Laktonen Counceller, Alutiiq Museum, Kodiak.

Classroom Grammar of Koniag Alutiiq: Kodiak Island Dialect, 1996, by Jeff Leer and Nina Zeedar, University of Alaska, Alaska Native Language Center, Fairbanks.

A Conversational Dictionary of Kodiak Alutiiq, 1978, by Jeff Leer, University of Alaska, Alaska Native Language Center, Fairbanks.

Kodiak Alutiiq Language Conversational Phrasebook with Audio CD, 2006, by April G. Laktonen Counceller, edited by Jeff Leer, Alutiiq Museum, Kodiak.

Qik'rtarmiut Alutiit'stun Niugneret KRaasiirkii: "Color Kodiak Alutiiq Words": An Alutiiq Picture Dictionary, 2012, by Alisha Drabek, Native Village of Afognak & Alutiiq Museum, Kodiak.

Eskimo and Aleut Languages, 1984, by A.C. Woodbury. In, Arctic, edited by David Damas, Handbook of North American Indians, Volume 5, W.T. Sturtevant gen. ed., Pp. 49-63. Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C.

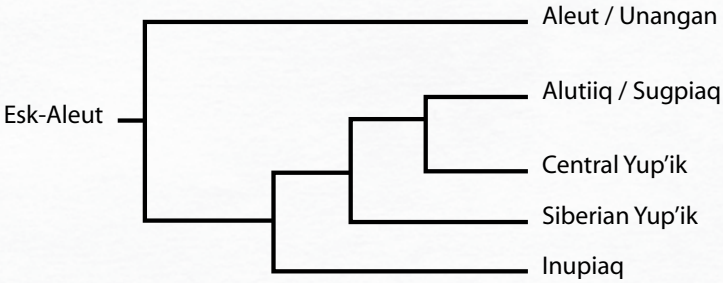
Electronic Resources:

Alutiiq Museum Website
www.alutiiqmuseum.org
Learn the Alutiiq alphabet, study grammar, and browse Alutiiq Word of the Week lessons.

Alutiiq Language Website
www.alutiiqlanguage.org
Learn the Alutiiq language through lessons, videos, printables, and look up words in the online dictionary.

Let's all study Alutiiq!
– *Guangkuta litnaurlita Alutiit'stun!*

The Alutiiq people speak Sugt'stun, or simply Alutiiq. Some Alutiiq people also refer to the language as *Alutiit'stun*—which means like an Alutiiq. This language belongs to the broader Esk-Aleut language family, which has two main branches—Aleut and Eskimoan. The Aleut, or Unangan people, of the Aleutian chain speak the language of the Aleut branch. The Eskimoan branch is spoken from southern Alaska to Greenland by a variety of different cultures. Speakers of Sugt'stun, the Alutiiq language, are found in the Gulf of Alaska, Yup'ik speakers are indigenous to Western Alaska and Siberia, and speakers of Inupiaq or Inuit live in Northern Alaska, Canada, and Greenland. The diagram below illustrates the relationships between these languages as understood by linguists:



Adapted from Woodbury 1984

Each branch in this diagram represents a distinctive split between languages, with each language most closely related to its nearest neighbors on the chart. For example, an Alutiiq speaker can communicate easily with a Yup'ik speaker. Their languages are closely related as illustrated by their nearness on the chart. In contrast, Alutiiq and Aleut speakers cannot understand each other. Although distantly related, their languages are very different. A comparison of some common Alutiiq, Yup'ik, and Aleut words illustrates this situation.

Word Comparisons

English	Alutiiq	Yup'ik	Aleut
hair (plural)	nuyat	nuyat	imlis
person	suk	yuuk	angagisinax
ten	qulen	qula	hatix
ocean	imaq	imaq	alagux

As a maritime culture, members of classical Alutiiq society were highly mobile, traveling and trading great distance across the Gulf of Alaska. In their travels, Alutiiq people interacted with Aleut, Dena'ina, Eyak, and Tlingit peoples, who spoke very different languages. Thus, villagers long ago had to learn their neighbors' languages to facilitate travel, trade, and intermarriage. Some people also used war captives as translators. It is not surprising that many Alutiiq families became multilingual when young men returned from visits to foreign villages or people from other societies joined Alutiiq families.

Qik'rtarmiu'allret Elwillret – Kodiak Archaeological Sites

Native people have lived in the Kodiak Archipelago for at least 7,500 years, yet the written record of their history extends back just 250 years, to the time of Russian conquest. Archaeological sites offer the opportunity to study the remaining 7,250 years of Alutiiq history. They are an Alutiiq library.

• There are more than 15,650 prehistoric archaeological sites in Alaska. Over 1,000 of these are in the Kodiak Archipelago. Although Kodiak comprises only 0.5% of Alaska's landmass, it holds roughly 6.4% of the state's known prehistoric settlements.

• Kodiak's high density of archaeological sites reflects 7,500 years of human occupation and large prehistoric populations. Before Russian traders arrived, archaeologists believe that there may have been as many as 10,000 Alutiiq people on Kodiak – about the size of the region's modern population.

• Kodiak's large number of sites also reflects the intensity of archaeological research. Scientists have been studying Kodiak prehistory since 1930. Kodiak is one of the more intensely researched regions of Alaska from an archaeological perspective.

• Many of Kodiak's archaeological sites are remarkably well preserved. A number contain bone, ivory, and antler tools, and some hold wooden and fiber artifacts. These unique finds reflect the archipelago's consistently cool, wet climate, which helps to preserve organic materials.

• Archaeologists recognize a variety of different sites from large coastal villages dotted with the remains of sod houses, to stream side fish camps, fort sites on precipitous cliffs, stone quarries, fish weirs, trails, cairns, petroglyphs, and secluded mountain caves where whalers prepared for the hunt.

• Archaeologists recognize five distinctive cultural traditions (see facing page), each representing a different way of life. Despite changes in the organization of ancient societies, archaeologists believe that modern Alutiiq people are descended from Kodiak's earliest residents.

Protect the Past

Archaeological sites are a non-renewable resource. There is a limited amount of information available about the past. Yet, each year sites are damaged by vandalism. Recreational digging and artifact collecting are illegal and destroy our ability to interpret the archaeological record.

YOU CAN HELP

• Never dig in a site or collect artifacts from the beach.
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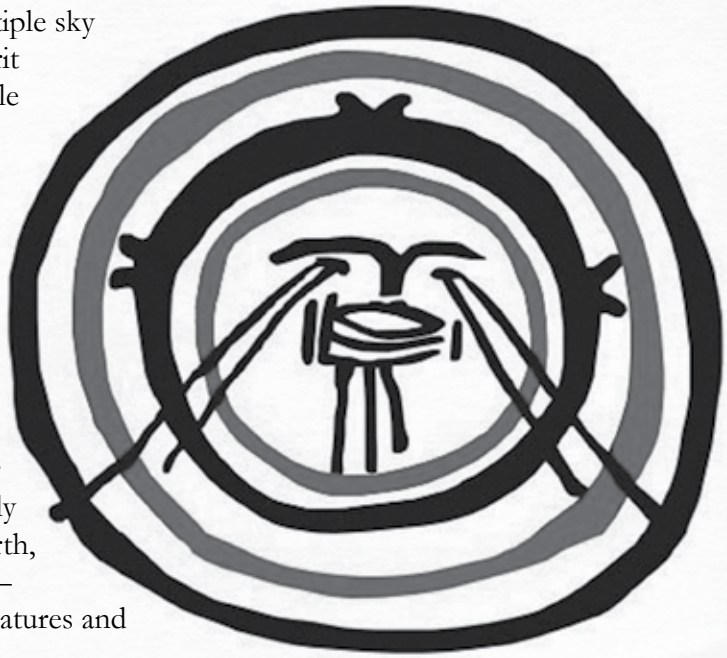
Llarpet – Our Alutiiq Universe

The Alutiiq universe contains many layers. Multiple sky and under sea worlds form a continuum of spirit realms that influence life on earth. Alutiiq people traditionally believe that all things—creatures, objects, places, and natural phenomenon like the wind—have a spirit. A human conscience characterizes these spirits. The word for spirit—*sua*—literally means "its person", illustrating the human dimension of all things. To have a spirit is to have a person inside, and this spirit can take human shape. For example, animal spirits can peer out from their bodies or remove their skins to show their human form. In addition to the spirits of earthly things, there are also two supreme spirits on earth, *Imam Sua*—person of the sea, and *Nunam Sua*—person of the land. These beings control all creatures and can be called on for luck in hunting and fishing.



Above the earth are five sky worlds. *Llam Sua* (the universe's person), the invisible spirit of all things, lives in the fifth and purest sky world. *Kas'arpak*, the spirit who created all birds and animals, lives in the third sky world and assists shaman by relaying the wishes of *Llam Sua* to earth. The first sky world, closest to earth, contains the moon, the stars, and the northern lights. Like earth, this world has forests, rivers, and animals. Stars are believed to be the eyes of spirits, peering down through holes in the ground and the moon is the spirit of a man who wears a different mask each night.

Llam Sua: Painted image from a prehistoric, wooden box panel (AM197.95:859, Karluk One Site, Koniag, Inc. Collection, ca. AD 1700). Painted in red and sparkling black pigments, this image may depict *Llam Sua*, the Alutiiq supreme being, in the fifth sky world. Lines extending from the eyes may represent the spirit's penetrating vision, or possibly rays of light. The Alutiiq people believed that *Llam Sua* could see and hear everything, and sometimes identified this spirit with the sun. Drawing courtesy the Smithsonian Arctic Studies Center, Looking Both Ways project.

Learn More:

The Chugach Eskimo, 1953, by Kaj Birket-Smith. Nationalmuseets Skrifter, Etnografisk Raekke, VI. National Museum of Denmark, Copenhagen.

Ukgwepet – "Our Beliefs," 2001, by Aron Crowell and Jeff Leer. In Looking both Ways: Heritage and Identity of the Alutiiq People, edited by A. Crowell, A. Steffian and G. Pullar, Pp. 189-121. University of Alaska Press, Fairbanks.

Qik'rtarmiut Sug'ucirpet
Kodiak Alutiiq Values

nuna
place - physical sphere

nunapet
Ties to our Homeland
"our lands"

nunapet carlia'arluki
Stewardship of animals, land, sky & waters
"taking care of our lands"

unguwacirpet
A subsistence lifestyle respectful & sustained by the natural world
"our way of being alive"

anerneq
spirit - emotional sphere

agayumaukut
Faith and spiritual life from ancestral beliefs to the diverse faiths of today
" we are prayerful"

englarstaisngukut
Humor
"we like to laugh"

Walter Simeonoff teaching his son to shoot an arrow.
Photo by Sven Haakanson, Jr.

Learn More:
Liitukut Sugpiat'stun (We are learning to be Real People): Exploring Kodiak Alutiiq Literature Through Core Values. 2012, by Alisha Drabek. Ph.D. dissertation, University of Alaska, Fairbanks.

http://ankn.uaf.edu/Curriculum/PhD_Projects/Alisha_Drabek

suuget
people - social sphere

suupet
Our people: we are responsible for each other & ourselves
"our people (community)"

cuqllipet
"our Elders"

ilaapet
Our family and kinship of ancestors & living relatives
"our family"

keneq
fire; process - cognitive sphere

Sugt'stun niuwacipet
Our heritage language
"our ways of speaking like a Sugpiaq"

liicirpet
Learning by doing, observing & listening
"our way of learning"

piciipet uswituu'uq
Traditional arts, skills & ingenunity
"our ways are wise"

lla
conscience - ethical sphere

ilakuisngukut
Sharing: we welcome everyone
"we favor sharing"

sugtanartukut
Trust
"we trust"

ling'aklluki
Respect for self, others & the environment is inherent in all values
"we respect them"

Umiurait Alagngaut – Stereotypes (Their Minds are Mistaken)

Visitors to Alaska often arrive with mistaken ideas about Native culture and history. Some of the confusion comes from stereotypes about Alaska. Other times, people are not familiar with local history, and need help understanding how the state's cultures have interacted or changed. Here are a few common questions, along with our answers.

Where are the igloos and totem poles?
Alaska is an enormous, culturally diverse state. Many different cultures live here, each with it own unique traditions expertly adapted to local environments. Igloos and totem poles, while common on picture postcards, are only found in certain parts of the state, among certain cultures. The snow house, or igloo, is a temporary shelter built by travelers in snowy northern Alaska and Canada. On rainy Kodiak, islanders built their traditional houses out of wood and sod, creating warm, wind and waterproof homes.
Totem poles are found in the cultures of southeast Alaska and British Columbia. The Tlingit, Haida, and other coastal peoples carve these dramatic works from large trees growing in their forested homelands. Some are house posts. Others are grave markers. Kodiak's Alutiiq people are expert carvers too, but until recently, there were few trees on the island. They fashioned ceremonial masks, dolls, and much more from driftwood.

Who introduced civilization to Alaska?
There is a common misconception that traders brought civilization to Alaska. While it is true that Russian seafarers introduced elements of Western life (firearms, churches, influenza), there were large, prosperous Native societies living in the region. Each of these societies had a unique way of life, with sophisticated political, economic, educational, and religious system. Native people brought human civilization to Alaska when they arrived over 13,000 years ago.

How can a person be Native if they hunt with a rifle?
Visitors sometimes think there are no more Native people. They don't see men paddling kayaks and hunting with harpoons, or women wearing bird skin parkas. They assume that true Native people would live as their ancestors did. "How can a person be Native if they drive a pick up truck, hunt with a rifle, or wear polar fleece?," they ask.

All cultures change. Alutiiq people have lived on Kodiak for over 7,000 years, and their way of life has changed dramatically. Even before the arrival of Europeans, the Alutiiq invented and adopted new technologies, like fishing nets and ulu knives. All people use the best technologies available to them, but they do so in ways that reflect their values and traditions. Alutiiq hunters may carry rifles today, but they hunt with a knowledge of animal behavior and the natural environment passed through generations.

Ask An Expert
Do you have a question about Alutiiq culture or Kodiak history? Email the Alutiiq Museum and one of our heritage specialists will reply with an answer: info@alutiiqmuseum.org. All questions are welcome.

Learn More:
Do Alaska Native People Get Free Medical Care? And other frequently asked questions about Alaska Native issues and cultures, 2008, University of Alaska Anchorage & Alaska Pacific University, Anchorage, AK. [Available online as a free download].

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Awa'uq – Refuge Rock: *Conquest of Kodiak*

The colonization of the New World is a difficult chapter of history. Throughout the Americas, the arrival of Western settlers brought tragedy to Native communities. Fear, misunderstanding, and competition for resources led to intense conflict. Native peoples were forced from their lands, slaughtered, and enslaved. The rapid spread of diseases added to the devastation. Colonists introduced tuberculosis, small pox, and many other illnesses that killed vast numbers of people and hastened the loss of cultural traditions.

The clash between Alaska Native and Western cultures began in the 1700s, as Russian traders began to chart the North Pacific coast. In 1762, seafarer Stephen Glotov reached southern Kodiak Island. Here, Glotov's crew wintered aboard their ship. The large wooden boat and strangely dressed people bewildered the Alutiiq. Contact with the ship was erratic, with both peaceful trade and skirmishes. Other brief encounters with traders followed in the 1770s, but Alutiiq warriors scared the strangers away.

By the late 1700s, news of Kodiak's rich environment and large population attracted permanent Russian settlement. Merchant Gregorii Shelikov arrived in 1784, intent on establishing a fur trading business manned by Native laborers. While scouting the eastern Kodiak Island, Shelikof's men learned of a tiny, cliff-bound island filled with people. Fearful of the Russians, several thousand Alutiiq people had gathered at this defensive site. The Russians surrounded the island with their boats and demanded hostages. The Alutiiq refused. After a five-day standoff, the Russian's attacked the settlement with canons, storming the island as people tried to flee. Hundreds were killed and many others taken hostage.

This siege at Awa'uq was a defining moment in Alutiiq history. Here, Alutiiq people lost control of their homeland and a period of great suffering and loss began. Russian traders set up forts, took Alutiiq hostages, and forced men and women to work for little pay. Many people starved. Others died from small pox and the flu. By 1824, the Alutiiq population had dropped from 8,000 people to less than 2,900. By 1837, so many had died that the Russians consolidated the survivors into new villages, including some of the communities where Alutiiq people live today.

By the numbers...	
3	sailing ships commanded by Gregorii Shelikov
2,000	Alutiiq people who retreated to Awa'uq
5	days Russian sailors surrounded Awa'uq
5	2 ½-pound cannon used in the attack
71	Russians who attacked Awa'uq
5	Russians wounded in the attack
300	Alutiiq people killed or drowned while trying to escape
1,000	Alutiiq hostages taken

Awa'uq – site of the 1784 massacre. Awa'uq means "to become numb". Photo by Patrick Saltonstall.

Learn More:

Ethnic Identity, Cultural Pride, and Generations of Baggage: A Personal Experience, 1992, by Gordon Pullar. Arctic Anthropology 29(2):182–191.

The Russian Conquest of Kodiak, 1992, by Lydia Black. Anthropological Papers of the University of Alaska, Volume 24 (1-2):163-182.

Uksuq – An Alutiiq Year

Ugnerkaq – *Spring* – Spring arrives slowly in coastal Alaska, as dangerous, stormy weather gives way to calmer, misty conditions. Spring is the leanest time of year. Stores from the previous harvest are gone, and the abundance of summer resources is not yet available. At this time, Alutiiq people turn to the shore. During the lowest tides of the year they collect shellfish, hunt octopus, and pick greens. Gradually, fish and sea mammals move closer to shore to feed. Here, Alutiiq people hook cod and halibut, collect herring eggs, and hunt for seals.

Kiak – *Summer* – The long, warm days of summer are busy in Alutiiq communities. With more daylight and calmer seas, people can travel and harvest on the open ocean. They visit seal and sea lion haul outs, bird rookeries, and ocean fishing spots. In the past, Alutiiq people hunted whales in the summer, pursuing young humpback, minke, and fin whales feeding close to shore. They also traveled to the Alaskan mainland to trade for antler, ivory, caribou pelts, and glassy stone, materials not available on Kodiak.

Uksuaq – *Fall* – As the landscape fades from green to brown, and the days get shorter, Alutiiq people harvest more on land. They pick berries sweetened by the first frosts; harvest large quantities of salmon spawning in local streams; hunt fat bears headed for hibernation; and shoot ducks migrating south for the winter. Fall is also a time of preparation. Summer foods, especially salmon, are carefully preserved for winter food by drying, smoking, storing in oil, or freezing.

Uksuq – *Winter* – In winter, a storm crosses the Gulf of Alaska about once every five days bringing heavy wind, waves, and rain. At this time of year, people move indoors where they make and repair items, play games, visit, and celebrate. Although patches of clear weather allow people to trap fox, ermine, and river otter, hunt ducks, or fish through lake or river ice, most resources are father from shore and harder to find at this time of year. In the past, Alutiiq communities held large festivals in winter. People invited their neighbors to celebrate the year's harvest and remember ancestors with feasts and dances.

Beach seining in Afognak Bay, ca. 1960. Chadwick Collection, Alutiiq Museum.

Nuna Pillria – Natural Disasters

People who live in northern environments prepare for winter. They know that the change in seasons brings cold, darkness, and stormy weather, limiting access to resources. To avoid hardships, families stockpile food, repair and insulate their houses, and pull their boats from the water. But it is not always possible to plan for difficult times. In addition to the rhythm of the seasons, Alutiiq communities experienced devastating, unpredictable natural disasters. The Alutiiq homeland lies in a seismically active region. Here the earth's tectonic plates continually collide, causing earthquakes and volcanic eruptions. Small events have little effect on Kodiak residents. Large events can be catastrophic.

Volcanic Eruptions

Dig into Kodiak's soil and you will find layers of volcanic ash. There are no volcanoes in the archipelago, but for thousands of years, east winds have carried ash to Kodiak from the volcanoes on the Alaska Peninsula. On June 6, 1912, Mt. Novarupta exploded. It was the largest volcanic eruption in the twentieth century, directly opposite Kodiak Island. For three days, the skies over northern Kodiak were black and over a foot of ash fell like snow. The ash brought toxic fumes, collapsed buildings, disrupted communications, polluted drinking water, and killed plants, animals, and fish.

Earthquakes

On Good Friday, March 27, 1964, as Kodiak residents prepared for Easter, a giant section of the earth's crust slipped. Located beneath the ocean between Kodiak and Prince William Sound, the movement caused a series of tsunamis (tidal waves). Giant waves slammed into the eastern coast of Kodiak, flooding and washing away villages and destroying natural resources. People drowned, boats were lost, and entire communities had to relocate. The earthquake had a magnitude of 9.2. Geologists believe that earthquakes of this magnitude occur about once every 500 years; or at least 15 times since people first settled Kodiak.

How did people manage natural disasters? Social ties were essential. History tells us that people often dispersed to neighboring communities or regions, joining family members and friends. People also recorded rare events in stories and drawings, passing valuable information to the next generation–like the importance of storing fresh water, turning your boat upside down so it wont fill with ash, or covering your mouth with wet moss to avoid inhaling ash.

Shed in Afognak village pond remaining since the 1964 Tsunami. Photo by Patrick Saltonstall.

Learn More:
Witness, Firsthand Accounts of the Largest Eruption in the Twentieth Century. 2004, by Jeanne Schaaf. National Park Service, Anchorage. (http://www.nps.gov/katm/historyculture/upload/Witnessweb.pdf)

Nunarpet – Our Villages (Lands)

At the time of Russian contact, Alutiiq people lived in large coastal villages. These settlements were prominently located, often at the mouths of Kodiak's major rivers or on points of land where inhabitants could watch for sea mammals and monitor the movements of other people. Additional requirements included a source of fresh water and a beach suitable for landing skin boats.

Villages ranged in size from small summer fishing camps with a cluster of sod houses to large winter settlement with many dwellings. Archaeological data illustrate that some villages had as many as 70 houses. Russian accounts suggest that an extended family of about eighteen people lived in each house and that household residents were related to each other through women. For example, a pair of sisters might share a house, living together with their husbands, children, and perhaps other relatives. Women also held leadership positions through their roles as healers—*sungca'istet*, midwives—*paapuskat*, and shamans—*kalla'alet*.

Although living arrangements centered around women, men were community leaders. Each major settlement had a set of political and religious specialists, including a chief—*angayuqaq*, a second chief —*sakaasiik*, a ritual specialist—*kas'aq*, and at least one shaman—*kalla'alek*. The position of chief was inherited, and gradually passed down to a son, brother, uncle, or nephew by an aging leader.

Some powerful chiefs oversaw the political business of several villages and many maintained special men's houses. Such a building was known as a *qasgiq*. In these large, single-roomed, sod structures men of all ages met to discuss village business, plan war parties, and lead winter ceremonies honoring their ancestors.

Learn More:
Alutiiq Villages under Russian and U.S. Rule, 2008, by Sonja Lüehrmann, University of Alaska Press, Fairbanks.

Sod houses and fish drying racks in Old Harbor, ca. 1889. Albatross Collection, National Archives.

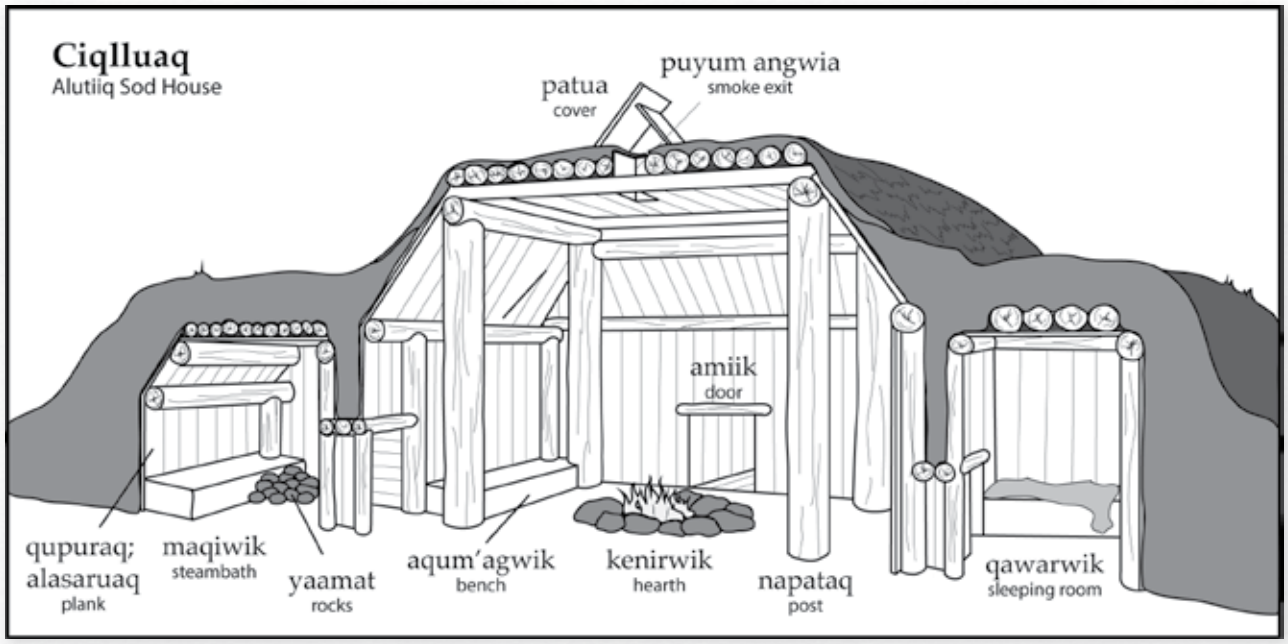
Ciqlluaq – Sod House

The traditional Alutiiq house—*ciqlluaq*—often referred to by the Russian term barabara, was a sod covered structure built partially underground. After digging a foundation, builders erected a post—*napataq*—and beam frame covered with planks hewn from driftwood. Logs were split with stone mauls and whalebone wedges, and formed into planks with stone adzes—an axe-like tool. Blocks of sod or grasses were then piled over the frame for insulation. A small hole—*puyum angwia* (smokehole)—was left in the center of the roof and covered with a hatch—*patua*—which could be opened to release smoke or let in fresh air.

Each house had a set of rooms connected by narrow tunnels—*amiik* (doorways) to side rooms. Houses were entered through a low passageway —*siinaruaq*—that led into a large room with a central hearth—*kenirwik* (place to cook). Around the walls were earthen benches for sitting and sleeping covered with dry grass or bear hide mattresses. Here, Alutiiq people cooked, repaired tools, sewed clothing, and hosted visitors. Stores of food hung from the ceiling in seal stomach containers.

Attached to the central room were a number of side chambers for sleeping—*qawarwik*—and steam bathing—*maqiwik* (also known by the Russian term banya). Rocks heated in the hearth were carried to the banya with wooden tongs—*tuulautek*—and splashed with cold water to create steam. The *maqiwik* was always the smallest room in the house with a low roof designed to trap heat. Hot rocks were traditionally piled in the corner so bathers could exit easily.

The outside of Alutiiq houses had many features. A drainage ditch might surround the entire house where its residents stored larger gear including kayak—*qayaq*—frames, paddles—*angyat,* and fishing nets—*kugyasit*, on the roof. Racks for drying fish and meat—*initat*—were commonly constructed beside houses.



Parts of a ciqlluaq. Illustration by Alisha Drabek

Qayaq – Kayak

From the Arctic Ocean to Prince William Sound, Alaska's Native people crafted swift, seaworthy boats from wood and animal skins. Each culture had a distinct style of *qayaq* with unique qualities. Alutiiq *qayat* were long and slender, built for flexibility in the rough, windy waters of the Pacific Ocean.

The *qayaq* was also a symbol of manhood. Carefully crafted, well-maintained boats allowed men to harvest fish and sea mammals from the ocean, to travel and trade over great distances, and to carry supplies home. In coastal Alaska, every man was a *qayaq* builder and paddler. No man could be a successful provider without his own skin boat. *Qayat* were a lifeline.

An Alutiiq kayaker. Photo courtesy Eric Waltenbaugh.

Alutiiq Qayaq Types

• *Qayanguaq* (little kayak) - Single-hatched: For fishing, traveling, and hunting fast animals like porpoise.
• *Qayarpak* (big kayak) - Double-hatched: For team hunting, particularly sea otters. The man in the front hatch hurled weapons while the man in the rear steadied and steered the boat.
• *Paitalek* - Triple-hatched: Made in the Russian era. A large hatch in the center held a Russian trader, smaller hatches in the bow and stern provided seats for Native paddlers. These larger boats carried quantities of gear and supplies.

Built for Flexibility

Made from natural materials—pegged, lashed, and sewn together, Alutiiq *qayat* were light, bendable, and stable. Flexibility kept them from breaking in rough seas or when landing.

It took months to collect the wood for a *qayaq* frame, and different parts of the skeleton required different types of wood. Craftsmen preferred dense, water resistant spruce for bow, stern, and deck pieces. They chose elastic woods with straight grains, like hemlock and alder, for stringers, ribs, and gunwales.

Alutiiq men used strips of hide and baleen to tie their *qayat* together. They never used nails. Nails can make the frame stiff or rub a dangerous hole in the skin cover.

One of the most distinctive parts of the Alutiiq *qayaq* is its split, upturned prow. The lower curved part is slightly hollowed on the sides, helping the boat cut through the water. The tall upper part provides buoyancy, helping the boat float through waves.

A Skin of Skins

A kayak's cover provided protection for the hunter inside. This thin layer of animal skin kept water out and created a smooth surface that slipped though the water. Women created their covers, a task that required great precision.

Alutiiq people used both seal and sea lion skins to cover their boats. A hunter preparing to cover a boat would collect skins and age each one to remove the hair. When it was time to create a boat cover, women soaked the skins in water to moisten them for cutting and sewing. They laid skins over the *qayaq* frame, positioning them to form a cover. Each skin was marked and then cut to shape. With the cut pieces, sewing could begin. It took at least a week to stitch a *qayaq* cover. Knowledgeable woman supervised those with less experience, checking their work carefully as poor sewing could cost a hunter his life. When the cover was complete, men pulled it over the frame, sometimes using seaweed to help the cover slide into place.

Caguyaq – Hunting Hat

Wooden hats were an essential piece of gear for Alutiiq hunters pursuing sea mammals in Kodiak's stormy waters. They transformed kayakers into magical beings with killing powers, and shielded their eyes from sun, rain, and sea spray.

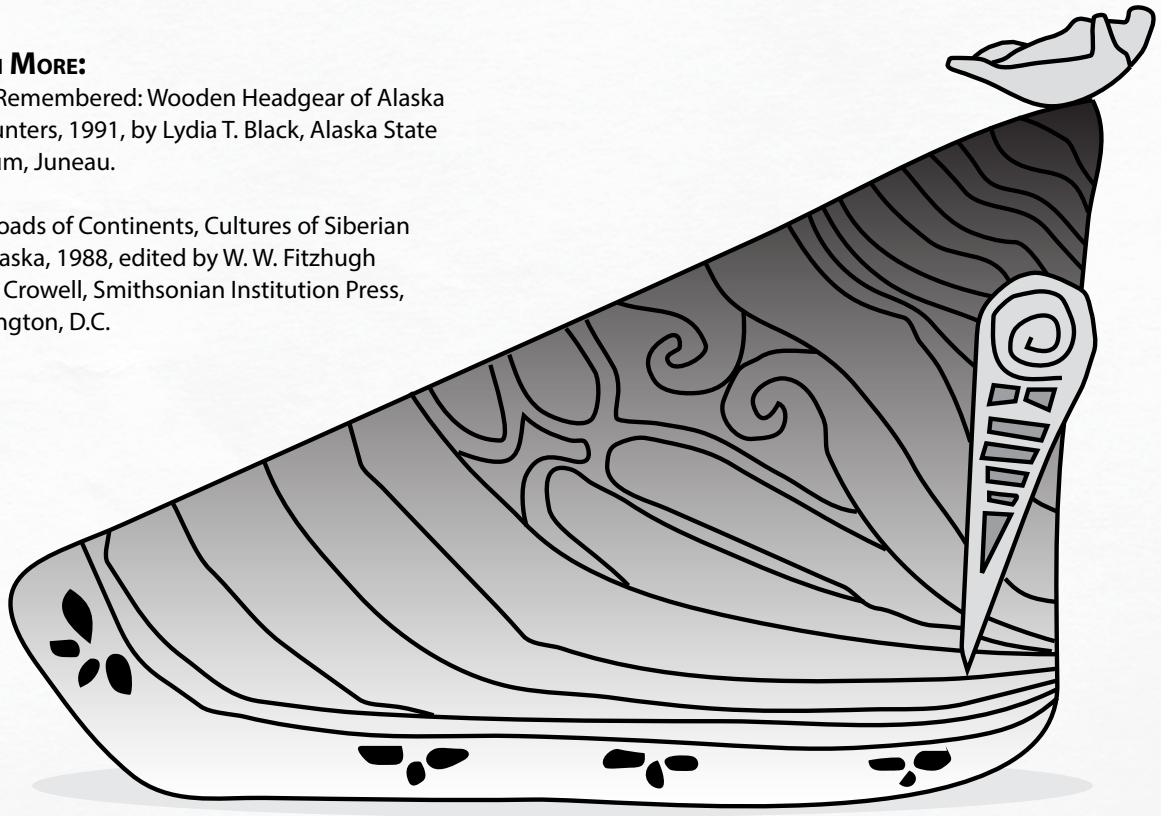
Alutiiq, Aleut, and Yup'ik peoples, along the Gulf of Alaska and Bering Sea coasts, wore similar hats. There were three common styles, a cone-shaped, closed crown hat (see below), an open-crown visor, and a rounded helmet. Hats and visors were made by carving a single piece of wood to a thin layer that was carefully bent to shape with steam. Helmets were hollowed from a single piece of wood and were often decorated with the face of a seal.

Each hat was a work of art, reflecting the owner's personality, achievements, and status. Hats were brightly painted with geometric designs, images of sea mammals, and hunting scenes, and elaborately decorated with ivory carvings, beads, woven tassels, feathers, and sea lion whiskers. Each element was rich with symbolism. Some motifs recounted great chases, others referenced helpful bird or animal spirits. Alutiiq Elders recall that hats were embellished over the course of a hunter's life. Elements were added or changed to reflect individual experiences. As such, each hat was highly personalized. Other hats were woven from spruce root, and were similarly adorned.

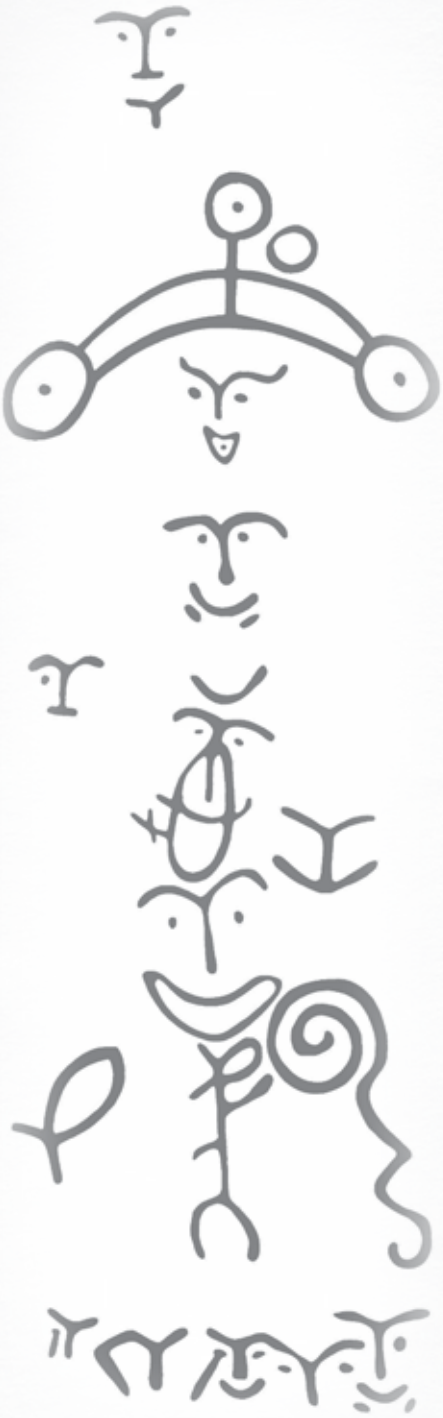
Learn More:

Glory Remembered: Wooden Headgear of Alaska Sea Hunters, 1991, by Lydia T. Black, Alaska State Museum, Juneau.

Crossroads of Continents, Cultures of Siberian and Alaska, 1988, edited by W. W. Fitzhugh and A. Crowell, Smithsonian Institution Press, Washington, D.C.



Yaamatni Igarait – Petroglyphs



Petroglyphs from Cape Alitak, Kodiak Island.

Petroglyphs are designs pecked into boulders, cliff faces, and other stationary pieces of stone. This type of artwork is rare in Alaska. The Tlingit of southeast Alaska made such carvings and a few pieces of rock art are known from other parts of Alaska. In the Kodiak Archipelago, there are at least seven petroglyph locations that depict human figures, animal forms, and geometric designs. These characters are probably from Alutiiq myths or family stories.

How did the Alutiiq create petroglyphs? There are clues in other types of stone tools. Kodiak's prehistoric residents made many objects out of hard greywacke and granite beach cobbles by pecking. Craftsmen used stone hammers to shape water-worn rocks into lamps, mauls, fishing weights, and even anchors. With similar tools, people probably pecked petroglyph images into Kodiak's bedrock. Recent experimentation suggests that artists used two hand held stones to hammer away fragments of rock and create the designs, perhaps employing a hammerstone to drive a pecking stone. However they were created, Kodiak's petroglyphs are finely made. Artists created deep, clean lines and carefully formed shapes and silhouettes. Some of these images are quite large, more than a meter (three feet) across. They must have taken a very long time to craft.

No one knows the precise age of this art form. Alutiiq people believe the petroglyphs are very old. Even a hundred years ago, Elders had no knowledge of this art form. Archaeologists suspect that the images date the to centuries surrounding AD 1,000, as other types of stone carving flourished at this time and many of the petroglyphs occur near village sites of this age. But why did Alutiiq people make petroglyphs?

Other Alaska Natives used rock art as territorial markers, permanent signs that linked families to particular subsistence harvesting areas. Perhaps the Alutiiq did the same. Kodiak's petroglyphs commonly occur at the entrances to bays, facing outward toward the open ocean, and would have been easy to see when freshly carved. It is also possible that the images are part of a hunting ritual. Historic accounts report that whalers carved images into rocks to bring them luck before the hunt. At Cape Alitak, both of these explanations seem possible. Here, there are thirteen clusters of petroglyphs with more than 1,300 individual images. Petroglyphs showing faces tend to appear below old village sites. In contrast, petroglyphs showing whales appear at the tip of the cape, overlooking an area where whales swim past.

Learn More:

From the Old People, the Cape Alitak Petroglyphs, 2003, by Woody Knebel, Donning Company Publishers, Virginia Beach, VA.

Cape Alitak Petroglyphs DVD, 2013, WonderVisions, Bend, OR.

Arwasucirpet – Whaling Traditions

The Gulf of Alaska lies on the migratory path of the Pacific Ocean's great baleen whales. Blue, fin, sei, humpback, and gray whales swim by Kodiak each year on their way to and from feeding grounds in the Bering Sea. These annual spring and fall migrations brought some species within reach of Alutiiq kayaks. Although challenging to harvest, they were an important subsistence resource. Even a small animal could feed a community for weeks. Whales also provided bone for tools, baleen for baskets, sinew for thread and cordage, and flexible membranes for clothing.

Historic accounts reveal that whalers were a select group of powerful people. Hunting was done from kayaks by men armed with slate lances dipped in a potent nerve poison. Hunters focused on the animals passing closest to shore, particularly those that stopped to rest and feed in coastal fjords. Gray whale cows with their newborn calves, humpbacks and fin whales were among those targeted, particularly the smaller, more easily killed animals. Once speared, the animals were left to die and wash ashore, a process that took several days. Dead whales were given a drink of fresh water and then butchered on the beach. People anointed themselves with fat and blood to honor the animal and show their gratitude for its sacrifice. This ensured future whaling success.

Whale petroglyph from Cape Alitak, Kodiak, Island.

A Whaling Song

After I have killed you, do you want to see me dance?
I would not feel bad if the whale dived with me!
I would not let the whale dive with me!
After I have killed the whale, he will feel fine with all the people around here!

Sung by Prince William Sound hunters
after spearing a whale.
(from Kaj Birket-Smith, the Chugach Eskimo, 1953:35)

Learn More:

Koniag Eskimo Poisoned-Dart Whaling, 1994, by Aron Crowell. In, Anthropology of the North Pacific Rim, edited by W.W. Fitzhugh and V. Chaussonnet. Pp. 217-242. Smithsonian Institution Press, Washington, D.C.

Prehistoric Use of Cetacean Species in the Northern Gulf of Alaska, 1994, by Linda Yarborough. In, Hunting the Largest Animals, edited by Allen P. McCartney, Pp. 63-81. Canadian Circumpolar Institute, Edmonton.

Pisucillerpet – Hunting Traditions

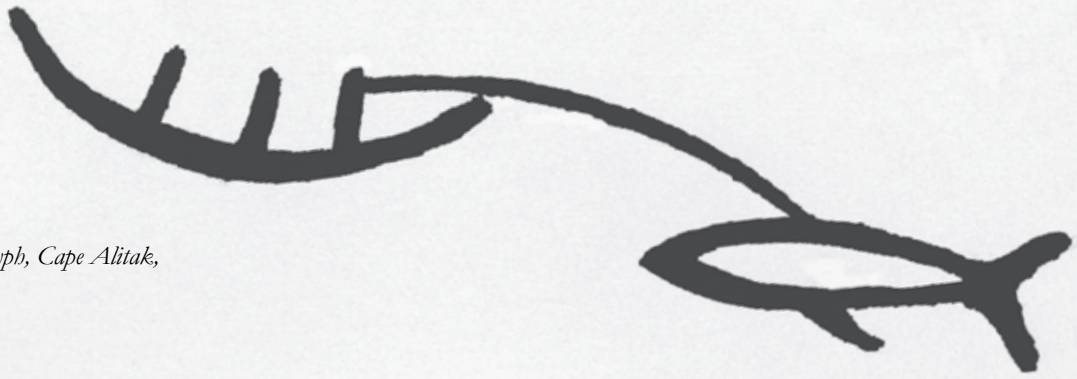
Kepsuutem cingia yaatalirluki ar'ursurtaartut. - They hunt whales with poison spears.

Among the Alutiiq people, whaling was a dangerous activity, shrouded in secrecy and steeped in magic. Whalers were a special class of men, who lived apart from everyday society. They were considered dangerous, more like spiritual entities than human beings, for their ability to land enormous sea mammals. The title of whaler was hereditary and passed through certain elite families. Each whaler maintained a secret cave where he stored hunting gear and prepared for the chase. Here he acted out hunts with model kayaks and prepared deadly hunting poisons.

The pulverized root of the Monkshood plant (Latin: *Aconitum delphinifolium*), a herb with many blue, helmet-shaped flowers, was a central ingredient in these poisons. This plant contains a powerful toxin that can paralyze the nervous system and dangerously lower body temperature and blood pressure.

To this chemically potent plant, whalers added spiritually powerful human fat. On Kodiak, fat was taken from the mummified remains of whalers, or stolen from the remains of a male child. When spread on whaling lances, this magical poison was strong enough to paralyze small whales and keep them from fleeing into open water.

In addition to poisoned spears, whalers carried amulets. Talismans included eagle feathers, bear hair, berries, roots, and luminous green stones. Collected privately, each hunter stored his charms in a small bag. A story from Afognak Island tells of the great success of a whaler who found a green stone. However, when the hunter fell in love and lost the stone, he could no longer kill game. He and his beloved died shortly afterwards.



Whaling petroglyph, Cape Alitak, Kodiak Island.

Qilam Unguwallria'i – Birds: As Resources

Wooden bird carving, AD 1400-1750, Koniag, Inc. Collection, Karluk One Site.

Birds are an abundant and valuable natural resource in the Kodiak Archipelago, as sources of both food and raw material. Alutiiq people hunted marine birds, waterfowl, and even raptors for their meat, skins, feathers, beaks, talons, and bone. Spring bird eggs have long been a favorite fresh food.

Alutiiq people harvested eagles and geese with fish baited snares set in feeding areas. They hunted ducks and sea birds from kayaks using special bird darts, or on land with bows and arrows, or braided sinew nets. Sea birds could also be collected at coastal rookeries. Using ropes made of sea mammals skin, hunters repelled down the rocky cliffs, snatching seabirds from their roosts.

Although birds contributed less to the annual diet than foods like salmon or sea mammals, they were of great economic importance. With few land mammals in the Kodiak Archipelago, bird skins were the primary material for clothing. Alutiiq women fashioned long, hoodless parkas from the hides of puffins, cormorants, and even eagles. Alutiiq people did not tan bird skins, but washed, scraped and chewed the pelts to clean and soften them for clothing. The number of pelts needed for a parka varied by species and garment design. One source reports that it took 150 cormorant neck skins to create a ceremonial parka. Another notes that 10 eagle skins could be made into a coat.

Bird feathers, *culut*, were also used to fletch arrows, stuff mattresses, make brooms, start fires, and decorated a variety of objects, from gut skin rain gear and basketry, to hunting hats and ceremonial masks.

Petroglyph from Cape Alitak, Kodiak Island.

Puffin - *Tunngaq*

There are two varieties of puffins—*tunngaq*—in the Kodiak region, the tufted puffin (Latin: *Lunda cirrhata*) and the horned puffin (Latin: *Fratercula corniculata*). These stout little birds live in near shore waters, nesting on rocky cliffs. Puffins are small, weighing just 1 to 2 pounds. Although Alutiiq people ate their meat—which is reported to taste like tuna fish—they used puffins for raw material. Puffin skins made warm, water resistant parkas, puffin bone could be carved into small tools like needles and awls, and their bright orange beaks created rattles and decorated clothing.

Rock painting of a raven's footprint from Cook Inlet.

Saqullkaanat Ikayusqat – Birds as Helpers

In addition to providing food and raw materials, birds were a source of information, inspiration and spiritual support for Alutiiq people. Elders remember that each Alutiiq hunter had at least two helping animal spirits, one for land hunting and one for sea hunting. These spirits provided luck and guidance, and were often birds. The frequent use of bird imagery in Alutiiq art, particularly on bentwood hunting hats, symbolizes this relationship.

In addition to luck, birds provided mariners with critical environmental information. Travelers know that birds can help them predict bad weather, find schools of fish, mark currents, avoid rocks, and lead you to land in the fog. Modern fishermen still appreciate seabirds for these qualities.

Birds were also a symbol of prosperity. When migratory birds returned to Kodiak each spring, signaling the rebirth of the year, children were allowed to take their toys from storage and play on the beach. To beautify objects and honor their spirits, birds were also carved on household objects, particularly spoons and bowls.

The powerful relationship between people and birds also appears in Alutiiq shamanism. Alutiiq shamans were people who interacted with the spirit world to help cure illness, predict the future, and insure prosperity. They were believed to fly like birds and hear the voice of their spirit helper in the cry of a bird. Owls, in particular, were believed to help shamans, and shamans' gear was often adorned with bird images. Birds also appear on ceremonial masks, illustrating their magical qualities, as masks helped people communicate with the spirit world.

Raven - *Qalnga'aq*

Like many peoples of the North Pacific coast, Alutiiq people admired the crafty raven (Latin: *Corvus corax*) for its intelligence. In Alutiiq stories Raven is both a creator and a hero. He appears as a bird, but possesses supernatural powers that assist him in great deeds. He can speak to people. He is strong enough to carry a whale. He can transform himself into other beings. One traditional legend tells how Raven brought light to the world. By tricking a stingy chief in a distant land, he obtained two boxes, one with the moon and stars, the other with the sun. For bringing these priceless possessions to his village Raven was rewarded with marriage to the chief's two daughters.

A curious raven.
Photo courtesy Sven Haakanson, Jr.

Aaquyaq & Arhnaq – River Otter & Sea Otter

Kodiak is home to two varieties of otter, the *arhnaq* or sea otter (Latin: *Enhydra lutris*), that inhabits near shore coastal waters, and the *aaquyaq* or river otter (Latin: *Lutra canadensis*), who lives primarily in fresh water lakes and streams, but ventures into the ocean to hunt. Alutiiq hunters continue to pursue both animals for their plush fur, which they make into clothing. Otter fur was once a preferred material for elaborately decorated ceremonial parkas. Today, people make warm slippers, hats, mittens, and bed covers from otter pelts.

Alutiiq hunters traditionally captured river otters in deadfall traps weighted with large rocks, or with snares made of flexible sticks. In contrast, they hunted sea otters by kayaks, with groups of men working together. Hunters encircled an animal, shooting at it with bone darts each time it surfaced. Air bubbles indicated the otter's movements. When exhausted, they captured the animal and clubbed it to death to protect its hide from further damage. Hunting magic was an important part of the chase. Hunters tied amulets of eagle down and red ochre to the inside of their kayaks and dressed neatly out of respect for the animal. Freshly killed sea otters were taken to shore, skinned, given a drink water, and their bones buried or returned to the sea. This act released the animal's spirit, insuring its reincarnation and eventual return to the hunter.

Alutiiq people have many stories about the playful otter. One legend explains that the sea otter was originally a man. While collecting chitons he was trapped by an incoming tide. To save himself, he wished to become an otter. His transformation created all otters. Another legend explains the otter's use of both sea and land. When the spirits of the land and sea divided the animal, the otter was left behind. At that time he had a short tail. While quarreling over the otter, the spirits tugged on his tail till it stretched. The otter cried, "Please let me go! I will stay with both of you."

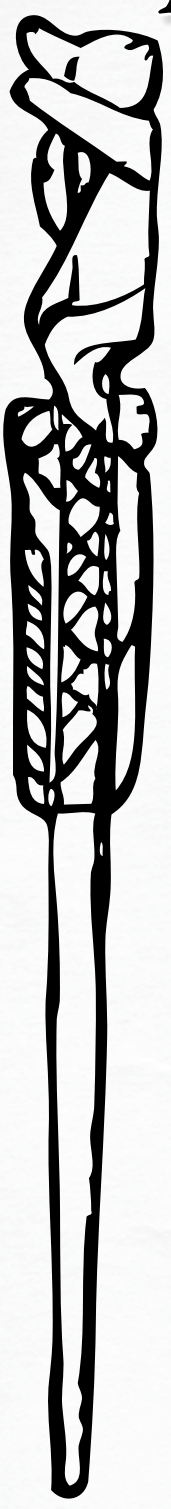
Learn More:
A Time to Dance: Life of an Alaska Native 1988, by Mike Rostad and Larry Matfay, A.T. Publishing, Anchorage.

Aaquyat wamtaartut. - River otters always play.

Arhnat pugtataarut. - Sea otters float.

Otter pictographs (rock paintings) from Kachemak Bay, Kenai Peninsula, Alaska.

Taquka'asinaq – The Great Bear



Ivory pin with a bear carving, Three Saints Site, Kodiak Island.

The brown or grizzly bear is the largest land mammal in North America. The Kodiak Archipelago is home to more than 3,000 of these enormous creatures, which have long been a source of food and raw materials for Alutiiq people. Bears were once the only large land mammal available to Kodiak hunters, as deer, elk, mountain goats, and reindeer were introduced in the 20th century. In addition to meat and fat, bears provided gut for waterproof clothing, sinew for thread, hair for decorating clothing, bone for tools, teeth for jewelry, and hides for bedding. Inside the warmth of a sod house, people sat on bear hides to sew, make tools, and play games. And in the evening, families wrapped themselves in the plush fur for sleeping.

In classical Alutiiq society, people hunted bears in winter and spring, but not during the salmon season when their meat tasted strongly of fish. Before the introduction of firearms, Alutiiq hunters harvested bears with bows and arrows, slate spears, snares, and deadfall traps. Some were killed in their dens. Others were taken with traps placed in streams, or ambushed along habitually used trails.

> *The Aliaskans [people of the Alaska Peninsula], like the Koniagas [people of Kodiak Island], always send their best hunter alone against bears. He takes the bow and just two stone-tipped arrows …*
>
> G. Davydov, Russian naval officer, 1802-03

Bear hunting required great caution. Men cleansed themselves in a steam bath before the hunt, wore clean clothes to hide their smell, and never bragged about their kills. A bear might be listening!

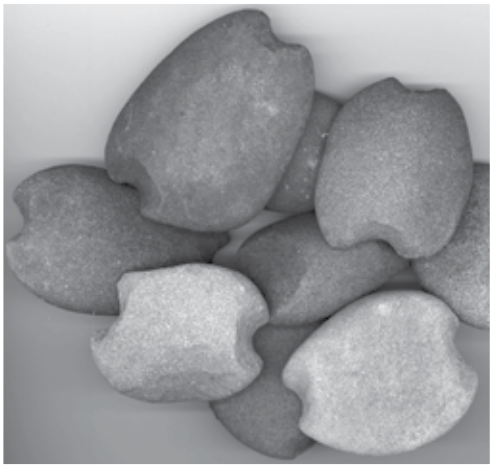
In the early 20th century, hunters from around the world flocked to Kodiak in search of trophy brown bears and Alutiiq men became famous for their expertise as guides. In the 1940s, however, much of the Kodiak Island became a National Wildlife Refuge, and bear hunting was seriously restricted. Some of these restrictions were lifted in recent years, allowing Alutiiq people to hunt bear for subsistence purposes once again.

Learn More:

Kodiak Island and its Bears, 2004, by Henry Dodge. Great Northwest Publishing, Anchorage.

The History of Bears on the Kodiak Archipelago, 2003, by Larry Van Daele, Alaska Natural History Association, Anchorage.

Iqallusucillerpet – Fishing Traditions



Notched beach pebbles functioned as net weights, sinking the bottom edge of ancient nets , like the leadline on a modern seine. Outlet site collection, courtesy the US Coast Guard, like the lead line on a modern seine. Outlet site collection, courtesy the US Coast Guard.

Seafoods have always been the foundation of Kodiak's human economies. Geological and archaeological data indicate that Kodiak's first settlers arrived in the archipelago by boat, fully equipped to harvest marine resources. Fish are among the most important of these resources.

Marine Fish: Bone fishhooks and stone sinkers more than 7,000 years old illustrate that Native people have been harvesting marine fish since their arrival on Kodiak. Comparisons with historically used fishing gear suggest that prehistoric tools were used to capture cod, halibut, and rockfishes. Kodiak's ancient residents baited fishhooks suspended from a wooden rig spreader – used to keep the hooks apart. Then they weighted the spreader with a large, grooved, beach cobble and lowered the assembly to the ocean floor from a kayak.

Marine fish play an important role in the annual subsistence cycle, as they are one of the first resources that return to coastal waters each spring. Ancient fishermen probably targeted ocean fish in April and early May. As in the past, Alutiiq people continue to eat marine fish both fresh and dried. Families cut fish into strips and air-dry the meat to eat all year.

Salmon: Salmon are another critical fish resource. The locations of archaeological sites suggest that people harvested these plentiful fish throughout the prehistoric era, but with increasing intensity over time. The earliest salmon fishermen speared individual fish with stone points from small streamside camps. About 4,000 years ago, fishermen began to harvest larger quantities of salmon with nets. They also developed new tools and storage facilities to process their catches more efficiently. These developments reflect an increase in Kodiak's population. As the landscape filled with communities, there were more mouths to feed and fewer places to move. As such, people intensified their harvest of locally available salmon—an easily accessed, nutritious food. Another period of intensified salmon fishing began about 900 years ago. Alutiiq people built large villages along major salmon streams where enormous quantities of fish could be harvested to offset declines in other subsistence resources. They built weirs to trap fish and developed a special salmon harpoon.

Fishing Today: Although the technologies used to harvest and process fish have changed with time, Alutiiq people still rely heavily on fish. In the late nineteenth century, employment in American canneries pulled the Alutiiq into the Western cash economy. Today, many Alutiiq people continue to make their living harvesting fish, whether for subsistence purposes, as part of the tourist industry, or in the commercial arena. Fish still feed Alutiiq families.

Yaamanek Pekt'suutelilita – Let's Make Ground Slate Tools

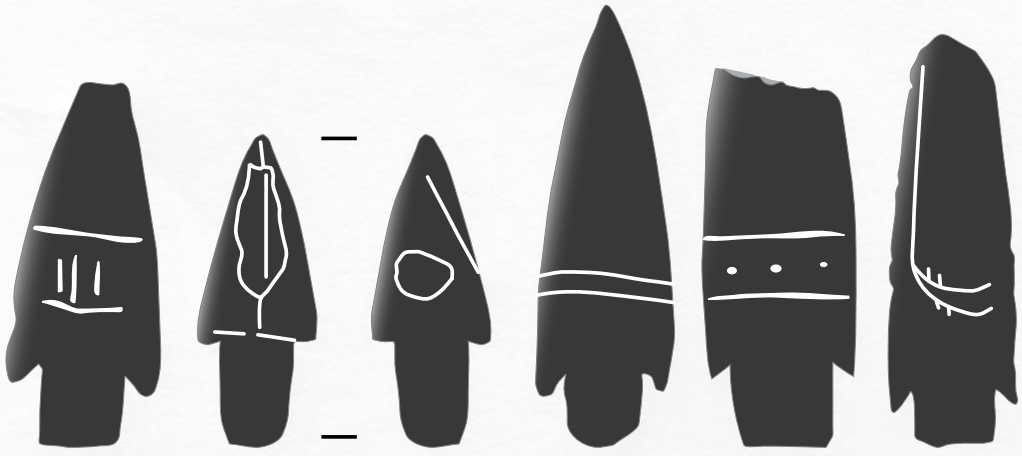
Slate is a plentiful raw material in the Kodiak Archipelago and can be fashioned into a variety of tools. In addition to the ulus and double-edged knives used to process subsistence foods, Alutiiq people ground lances, bayonets, and arrows for hunting, and fashioned beads and labrets from slate. Try your skill at slate grinding. Here are the basic steps.

Step One - Select a piece of slate. Kodiak beaches have many different types—but not all slate is suitable for tool production. The ideal material is hard with few visible layers. A good way to test slate is to break it into pieces and observe how they fall apart. Choose a thin sturdy fragment, one that is internally cohesive.

Step Two - Use a hard beach cobble (a water rounded rock) to chip your thin leaf of slate into a rough tool form—working along the edges. Another way of creating a rough tool, particularly if you wish to make a lance, is to saw the slate with a hard, sharp rock. A flake from a beach cobble works well as a saw. With the flake, wear grooves into the slate from both sides and then gently snap the pieces apart along the groove.

Step Three - Use a hard, flat beach rock to grind a smooth surface on both faces of your tool. Keep the tool flat as you grind. Water and a small amount of beach sand make a good lubricant and will speed the grinding process. Keep grinding until you have a smooth flat surface. Try to remove any nicks or indentations in the slate.

Step Four - Sharpen the edges of your tool by grinding at an angle. Turn the tool over to grind both sides of each edge. This will create a bevel (a v-shaped edge) that can be sharpened and resharpened.



Ground slate points with makers markers from Late Kachemak tradition sites.

Naut'staat Alutiit'stun – Plants in Alutiiq Society

Alutiiq people are best known for their use of marine resources—sea mammals and fish harvested with complex technologies like kayaks, harpoons, and nets. Around Kodiak, protein and fat are the central components of a traditional diet, and carbohydrates are eaten in smaller quantities. Yet plants have always been an essential source of food, raw material, and medicine. Alutiiq people still transform trees, shrubs, and herbs into everything from a shelter to a salad.

Clyda Christensen with a handful of spring greens. Photograph by Priscilla Russell. KANA Collection.

All members of Alutiiq communities participate in plant collecting, although men and women harvest different species. Men procure plants for raw material—particularly the wood used to fuel fires, smoke fish, and build houses. Women collect plants primarily for food and medicine. Berry picking and vegetable harvesting are activities often conducted by women and their children. Children learn to respect plants. Over picking, breaking branches, stepping on plants, or eating too much while you are collecting are considered poor etiquette. Moreover, families own certain collecting spots that they visit each year.

Although most people think of summer as the time to collect plants, Alutiiq people harvest plants throughout the year. In spring, as the landscape begins to green, people gather vegetables like goose tongue, beach loveage, or hemlock parsley from the beach. In the past, this was also the time when fresh, dry grass was cut to provide a clean cover for household floors and sleeping areas. By mid summer, berry picking supplements vegetable collecting. Berry harvesting continues into fall. People often wait to pick certain varieties till October or November, when the first frost sweetens the fruit. In fall and winter, storms replenish the supply of driftwood collected for fuel. And in late winter, Alutiiq people gather kelp and seaweed to eat, particularly when other sources of fresh food are hard to obtain.

Plants are also an important source of raw materials. Plants once provided lumber, thread and cordage, lashing material, weaving material, insulation, bedding, and even pigment for paint. Plants are also a central source of medicine. Healers use herbal remedies to treat everything from scrapes and swellings to more serious illnesses like fever, arthritis, and respiratory problems. Carefully collected herbs are used both fresh and dry. They are employed in washes and poultices, or steeped in hot water to create soothing teas. Others are applied in the sweat bath—where steam releases their rejuvenating powers. Healers often offer a small gift to the plants they collected, to help ensure the potency. A strand of thread, a match, or bit of tobacco may be left as a thank you and sign of respect. Gatherers also leave the root system of a plant intact whenever possible to help guarantee future harvests.

Take A Plant Walk

Attention plant lovers: Two Kodiak parks display Alutiiq plantlore signs. Take a stroll through Fort Abercrombie State Park or through the City of Kodiak's Rotary Park to observe traditionally important plants in their natural habitat and learn more of their cultural uses. Groomed trails with illustrated signs and short written guides will lead you through spruce forest and wildflower meadows.

Naut'staat Neq'rkanek – Plants as Food

Plants remain an important subsistence food in Alutiiq communities. Although they are taken in smaller quantities than fish or sea mammals, Alutiiq families look forward to the first green vegetables of spring and to the sweet juicy berries that ripen with summer. Plants are also used as seasoning. Petrushki (Beach Loveage—Latin: *Ligusticum scoticum*) is a favorite addition to baked salmon. To extend the availability of plant foods, Alutiiq people once stored harvested plants in seal oil in seal stomach containers. They kept others in grass-lined pits or hung them from household rafters to dry. Today, families collect plants to eat fresh, to store in the freezer, and for jams and jellies that can be used year round. Here are two favorite Alutiiq plant recipes:

Ciitaq (Cheeduk)
"Something mashed"
courtesy of Patricia Mullan Kozak

1 gallon **salmonberries**
¾ cup **sugar** (adjust this amount to your taste)
evaporated milk (if desired – it wasn't true *cheeduk* to my Dad if it didn't have evaporated milk in it.)

Using a potato masher, mash the berries until they are well crushed and you have a lot of liquid (berry juice). Add sugar and stir until dissolved. Use a soup ladle to put into individual bowl. Add milk if desired. Enjoy!

Salmonberries ripen in the sun. Photo by Sven Haakanson, Jr.

Nasquluk
Pickled Bull Kelp
4 cups rings or rectangles from **kelp stem**
¾ cup white **vinegar**
2 ½ cups **sugar**
1 Tbsp. **mixed pickling spice**
1 tsp. **whole cloves**

Remove outer skin of kelp with peeler and slice into rings or rectangles. Soak the kelp in fresh water for three days, changing the water several times a day to remove the salt. Enclose the spices in a cheesecloth bag and place in simmering vinegar and sugar for five minutes. Remove spices and pour the hot syrup over the kelp. Let stand overnight. Next day, drain off syrup, heat to boiling, and pour over kelp again; let stand overnight. On the following day remove syrup and heat to boiling. Place kelp slices in hot jars, cover with boiling syrup and seal, or store the pickles in a covered crock.

Attention: Information on plant foods is provided for educational purposes. The Alutiiq Museum does not recommend experimentation with wild plants. Any experimentation is done at your own risk.

Alutiit Kraas'kait – Alutiiq Colors

The world's societies interpret colors in different ways. The Alutiiq language has just four basic color terms—*Kawirtuq* (it is red), *Tan'ertuq / Tamlertuq* (it is black), *Qatertuq* (it is white), and *Cungartuq* (it is blue). Each of these color terms is a verb root (i.e., *kawirtuq* means "it is red"). Alutiiq people recognized a broader range of colors, but their traditional language describes most hues with these four terms. For example, green is a shade of blue. Alutiiq speakers also describe colors by their similarity to common things. For example, an Alutiiq speaker might say that a brown object is the color of dirt.

It Is Red – *Kawirtuq*

Alutiiq people manufactures red pigments from minerals and plants. They ground ochre, a soft, naturally occurring iron oxide, into a fine powder and mixed it with oil to make paint. On Kodiak, people produced a reddish-brown dye by boiling alder bark. In Prince William Sound, people boiled hemlock bark or a mixture of cranberry and blueberry juices to produce a dark red dye. Widely used in body painting and to decorate objects, the color red may represent ancestral blood.

It Is Black – *Tan'ertuq / Tamlertuq*

Historic sources indicate that Alutiiq people collected a specific stone to make black pigment. They also produced black pigment from a copper ore and from wood charcoal. With black paint Alutiiq people painted faces, particularly of people in mourning. Black paint also adorned masks, both as a background color and as a design component. Black paint often outlines facial features or illustrates brows and eyes.

It Is White – *Qatertuq*

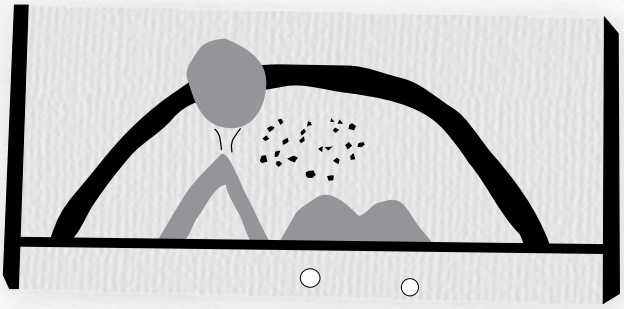
Alutiiq people made white pigment from limestone obtained in trade with the Alaska mainland, grinding this soft rock into a powder and mixing it with oil to create paint. At winter hunting festivals, the faces of the first two dance performers were often painted white and red, and masks were often decorated with white.

It Is Blue – *Cungartuq*

To the Alutiiq, blue is a powerful color. It is associated with the supernatural, particularly the worlds below the sea. Blue pigment was never used in body painting. However, a blue-green paint adorned hunting hats, and whalers, the magical hunters who pursued giant sea mammals, carried blue or green stones.

Payulik – Bringer of Food, painted wood and leather mask, Pinart Collection, Château-Musée de Boulogne-sur-Mer, France. Photo by Will Anderson.

Namiutat – Graphic Arts



Drawing of painted wooden box panel showing an erupting volcano, ca. AD 1550, Koniag, Inc. Collection, Karluk One Site.

In classical Alutiiq society, graphic arts had many functions. Careful decoration added beauty to objects, showing respect for the plants and animals that provided for people and ensuring future prosperity. Pictures also preserved history. Like books, they created a physical record of the past, recording events and stories.

Some images were also family symbols. Imagine that a hunter killed two seals with one harpoon strike. This very lucky event might be symbolized in paintings on his household implements. When people saw the painted tools they would be reminded of the hunter's skill and good fortune, and know the objects belong to his family. The picture preserved a story, celebrated the hunter's talent, and expressed ownership.

Painted images, including geometric designs, animals, human figures, boats, celestial bodies and spirits, were the final decorative touches on many objects. Alutiiq people painted pictures on wooden objects—hats, paddles, arrows, bows, boxes, masks, and many other implements. They also pecked pictures on boulders, etched designs into stone and bone weaponry, and created images through weaving and embroidery.

Paint

Before the availability of commercially made pigments, Kodiak artists created paints from plants and minerals. Artists extracted colors from hemlock bark, grasses and berries. They also created colorful powders by crushing red shale, iron oxide, copper oxide, charcoal, or even sparkling hematite with a mortar and pestle, and mixed the resulting powder with a binder of oil or blood. Artists applied paint to objects with their fingers, a small stick, or possibly a paintbrush made with animal hair.

Painted miniature skin working board showing a swimming otter, AD 1400-1750, Koniag, Inc. Collection, Karluk One Site.

Learn More:

Eskimo Artists, 1993, by Hans Himmelheber. University of Alaska Press, Fairbanks.

Klicirpet – Carving Traditions

Carving was once a daily act. Alutiiq craftsmen made throwing boards and shafts to propel their harpoons, split timbers to build houses and boats, and chiseled images into wood. Through woodworking, they produce many of the tools essential for every day life and designed beautiful works of art that recorded their spiritual beliefs.

Jon Pestrikoff carves fire starters.
Photo by Priscilla Russell, KANA Collection.

Raw Material

Today artists search Kodiak's beaches, forests and lumberyards for the perfect grain, but in the old days, before spruce trees colonized Kodiak, most wood came from the beach. Carvers gathered drift logs of Pacific yew, cedar, hemlock, and spruce from Kodiak's shores, and collected alder, dwarf birch, and cottonwood from hillside thickets.

Carving Tools

Artifacts reveal traditional carving techniques. Wood workers split driftwood logs open with the help of resilient bone and wooden wedges, pounded with weighty granite mauls. They cut and shaped the resulting planks with a variety of stone adzes tied to flexible alder handles. Hand held carving implements, wooden handles fitted with beaver, marmot or porcupine incisors traded from the mainland, permitted finer carving. Carvers sanded the narrow gouges created by these tools with gritty abraders of pumice and sandstone and then applied finishing touches with a burnishing stone, a water-worn pebble rubbed over the carving to create a polished, splinter-free surface.

Decoration

In addition to wood, carvers used feathers, fur, animal hair, baleen, grass, and pigments to enhance their works. Decoration was an essential part of carving, as finely made objects demonstrated respect for the spirit world.

Modern Carvers

Today, most carvers are self-taught. They learned woodworking by repairing boats, building smoke houses, cutting firewood, and making toys. Their inspiration comes from many places. They combine information from traditional objects with their own vision to create unique works that express both ancient and contemporary themes and share their skills with the next generation.

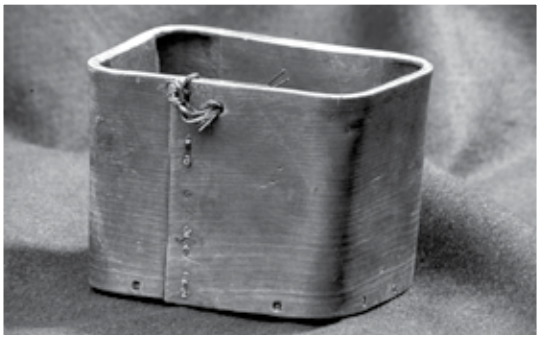
Percirpet – Bending Traditions

Archaeological finds from western Alaska illustrate that the art of bending wood is at least 2,000 years old. Some think that creating objects from flexible materials – leather, baleen, and bark – led Alaskans to experiment with bending wood. Whatever its origins, wood bending is practiced by all of Alaska's Native societies. On Kodiak, the tradition is at least 800 years old. At a well-preserved village site near Karluk, archaeologists recovered hundreds of bentwood box fragments around the remains of sod houses.

Bentwood and Alutiiq Culture

The variety of bentwood objects used by Alutiiq people is remarkable. In classical Alutiiq society, hunters wore elaborately decorated hats made of bentwood, paddled kayaks whose circular cockpits were fitted with a rim of bentwood. Women collected berries and plant foods in bentwood buckets, cooked meals by dropping hot rocks into bentwood containers, and stored water and urine for household tasks in vats made of bentwood. And at winter festivals, revelers beat skin drums, shook puffin beak rattles, and wore spiritually powerful masks all made with hoops of bentwood. Bentwood objects were common in Alutiiq communities.

This widespread use of bentwood objects illustrates both the importance of bending as a manufacturing technique and the skill of craftsmen. Bending wood is not very difficult, but it takes time. A carver must pick his material carefully, work it with precision and patience, and know how the wood bends. If you rush, the piece may break. But when a thin piece of wood is successfully bent, beautiful objects can be made. From a single plank, artists create strong, useful, and exceptionally beautiful objects.



Bentwood box, AD 1400-1750, Koniag, Inc. Collection, Karluk One Site, photo courtesy Chris Arend, Alutiiq Museum Library.

The Process

To create bentwood objects, carvers worked with planks of wood, using stone adzes to shape the plank and hand held carving tools to thin it. For oval forms, they thinned the inner edge of the plank in areas they intended to curve. For square forms they cut kerfs – small notches in planned corners to allow the wood to bend and compress.

Like all plant fibers wood is elastic. It can be manipulated with pressure, heat, and moisture to change its shape. How did Alutiiq people bend wood hundreds of years ago? They may have used steam, or they may have soaked a shaped piece of wood in a slow running stream for several months to make it pliable.

Working with heat or moisture, an artist bent the rim of a container into shape. Artists may have tied a cord around the rim to help it hold its shape while drying. When the bent rim was dry, the next step was to fasten its ends together. Craftsmen did this by drilling small holes through the rim and lacing them together with spruce root, baleen, or sinew, or using small wooden pegs. The final step was to add a base by pegging and gluing a flat piece of wood to the rim. The result was a strong, watertight container.

Inartalicirpet – Weaving Traditions

If you entered a typical Alutiiq household of the seventeenth century, fine weaving would surround you. Grass mats would line sleeping benches, cover the walls, and hang in doorways. Woven containers for collecting, storing, and cooking food would surround a central fireplace. People would wear woven socks, mitts, and caps. A mother would hold her baby in a woven carrier. And the rafters would hold woven tools, nets for fishing and birding, and braided lines for harpoons and boats.

Inartamek piliyuq. - She is making a basket.

Weaving was both a functional and aesthetic art. Woven objects served many purposes, yet were made with great care. Alutiiq weavers once made basketry from a variety of natural fibers. Weavers worked spruce root, grasses, birch bark, baleen, and animal sinew. Today, Kodiak weavers continue to work with spruce root and grass (*weg'et*). Grass basketry is particularly prized for its extraordinarily fine weave and warm natural color. The most commonly harvested wild grass is beach rye (Latin: *Elymus arenarius*), which weavers cut in coastal meadows between June and September.

Once cut, beach rye must be dried to create material suitable for weaving. First, the weaver wraps the grass in a towel or burlap bag to let it change color and sweat. Over the following two weeks, she must turn and air the grass daily to prevent molding. Next, she separates the grass leaves from their stems, sorts the pieces into piles of similar length, color, and texture, and hangs them to finish drying. Sunshine or a saltwater bath helps to bleach the grass to a pale brown. With drying complete, the weaver removes the spine from each leaf and splits the remaining tissue into thin strands.

Grass baskets are traditionally woven upside down, beginning at the base. Grass strands should be soaked in cold water and wrapped in a damp towel. Weavers wet their fingers to keep the grass soft and pliable. However, it is important not to over wet the strands, as they may rot or darken. Weaving is a time consuming process. It takes great skill to produce the tiny, even stitches for which Alutiiq weavers are known.

Arlene Skinner holds "Happy Basket", made of wild Kodiak grass, silk thread and turquoise beads. Photo by Sven Haakanson, Jr.

Learn More:

Pacific Eskimo Spruce Root Baskets, 1981, by Molly Lee. American Indian Art Magazine 6(2):66-73.

"If it's Not a Tlingit Basket, Then what is It?": Toward the Definition of an Alutiiq Twined Spruce Root Basket Type, 2006, Molly Lee, Arctic Anthropology, 43(2):164-171.

Mingqucirpet – Sewing Traditions

Cuumillat'stun minq'rtukut. - We are sewing like the Ancestors.

Alutiiq Garments

If you were an eighteenth century Alutiiq person, your wardrobe would contain a set of garments stitched from bird, fish, and animal skins including sea otter, seal, caribou, and ground squirrel. For daily activities, you would wear a long, loose-fitting, hoodless robe and a soft undergarment stitched from the skin of a baby seal. Your outdoor clothing would include a waterproof rain jacket made of bear or sea mammal intestine, some socks woven from beach grass, a pair of knee length boots, and perhaps some bear skin mittens. And, if you were fortunate, you would own an elaborately decorated parka for special occasions.

All of these garments were expertly crafted. Women spent countless hours working by the light of fires and oil lamps to turn natural materials into warm, durable, beautifully decorated clothing. Alutiiq garments were more than attire. They were pieces of artwork that expressed the identity of their owner and talismans that demonstrated the close spiritual connections between people and animals.

Preparing to Sew

Accumulating materials was the first step in manufacturing clothing. Alutiiq garments often contained a variety of hides harvested over many hunts. After Russian contact, people were restricted to wearing garments made of materials with little value to the fur trade, particularly bird skins. The typical puffin parka—an every day garment—had about 60 skins, and a cormorant parka for special events had as many as 150 throat skins. Other garments combined the pelts of several animals. Alaska Peninsula Alutiiq people wore parkas fashioned from squirrel, caribou, mink, otter, and ermine pelts.

Alutiiq people tanned mammal skins with urine collected in large wooden tubs stationed outside their houses. Alutiiq women soaked hides in these tubs relying on the ammonia in the urine to break down any remaining fat. Urine also removed hair from hides. Women soaked hides in urine and then rolled and left them in a warm place to sit for several days until the hair could be easily scraped away.

Wooden spool with ptarmigan carving, AD 1400-1750, Koniag, Inc. Collection, Karluk One Site.

Bird skins, a popular material for parkas, were tanned with fish eggs. After scraping the skins to remove fat and tissue, Alutiiq people covered them with fish roe and left them to sit. After several days, they scraped the hides clean and kneaded them until they were soft and dry.

In addition to processing hides, seamstresses also made thread. First, they twisted sinew —bits of animal tendon—into strips with small wooden implements. Then, with their fingernails, they separated the strips into thin fibers, moistened them, rolled them between their palms, and wrapped the resulting thread around a wooden bobbin.

Atkut (N); Agunat (S) – Clothing

The traditional Alutiiq parka was a long, hood-less robe. Worn by both men and women, Alutiiq people fashioned these garments from bird skins, squirrel pelts, caribou hide, or otter fur. A typical adult parka might require as many as 60 bird skins. Many parkas had slits in the sides so that the wearer could remove his or her arms from the parka's sleeves to work freely. Pants were seldom worn under Alutiiq robes and shoes were only used in the coldest months. Whale leather was a preferred material for the soles of boots, and beach grasses were woven into socks.

On their heads, Alutiiq men wore hats woven from spruce root or crafted from wood. Similar to Tlingit hats from Southeast Alaska, these garments were decorated with shells and beads, painted with bright colors, and considered a sign of wealth. Some spruce root hats were even passed from father to son. Other indications of social standing included facial tattoos and jewelry. Alutiiq people wore nose pins, earrings, necklaces, and labrets—plugs of stone or bone inserted in a hole below the lower lip. The larger the labret, the older and more important its wearer.

Alutiiq people also fashioned special clothing for hunting and traveling. Every kayaker wore a gutskin jacket, or *kanaglluk*, cut to his unique proportions and designed to fit snugly over his kayak hatch. Known today by the Siberian term kamleika, Alutiiq people sewed these garments from the intestines of bears or sea mammals. Strips of gutskin were sewn together with sinew and special waterproof stitches. Alutiiq skin sewers rolled a piece of dried beach grass into every seam, then made careful stitches through the grass. When water seeped into the needle holes, it was absorbed by the underlying grass, which swelled and prohibited more water from entering. This ingenious stitching technique kept the hunter dry and protected him from hypothermia.

Man's Ground Squirrel Parka—made by Susan Malutin and Grace Harrod, 1999 with support from the Alaska State Museum. Based on a parka collected in Ugashik for the Smithsonian Institution in 1883.

Bird Math

Consider the number of birds needed to dress Kodiak's Alutiiq people in a bird skin parka! Archaeologists believe that the Alutiiq must have harvested hundreds of thousands of sea birds. Here are some conservative estimates:

Kodiak's population about AD 1600
—10,000 people

Number of people wearing the common birdskin parka
—6,500 people

Life span of a birdskin parka worn daily
—5 years

Number of people needing a new birdskin parka each year
—1,300 people

Number of birdskins per parka
—60 skins

Birds harvested yearly for parka production
—60 X 1,300 — 78,000 birds

Birds were harvested around Kodiak and on the Alaska Peninsula. All of these birds were eaten.

Learn More:
The Ethnohistory of Alutiiq Clothing, 2001, by Dolores C. Hunt. Master Thesis in Museum Studies, San Francisco State University, San Francisco.

Nacaq – Headdress

JJ Orloff models a headdress made by June Simeonoff Pardue. Purchased for the Alutiiq Museum with support from the Rasmuson Foundation Art Acquisition Fund. Photo by Patrick Saltonstall.

Headdresses were once part of the elaborate clothing worn at Alutiiq winter festivals. Participants in these events displayed their prosperity with beautifully crafted garments. The materials and decorative elements used in clothing reflected their wearer's age, gender, and social position. Wealthy Alutiiq people wore elegantly decorated parkas of valuable sea otter, fox, or ground squirrel pelts. Headdresses, jewelry, and tattoos added to the appearance of prestige conveyed by these rich materials. The less affluent wore simple clothing of common materials like bird skins. Whatever your status, your clothes provided a link to the spiritual world. Alutiiq people kept their garments clean, well repaired, and nicely decorated to show respect for the creatures that supported human life.

Women's headdresses were typically made from hundreds of glass beads strung on sinew and embellished with feathers colored with cranberry or blueberry juice. Strands of small beads were tied into a tight fitting cap with many dangling lengths attached to the sides and the back. These attachments often featured larger, heavier beads that swayed, glittered, and jingled as the wearer moved. In Prince William Sound, the daughters of Alutiiq chiefs wore headdresses of beads and dentalium shells that extended far down their bodies, sometimes reaching their heels. Beaded headdresses were often accompanied by matching earrings, chokers, necklaces, and belts. Teenage girls and young women wore these lavish ornaments to symbolize their passage into adulthood.

Men also wore headdresses. These garments were hood-shaped, and though they might include beads, they lacked the long strings associated with women's *nacat*. Some were made of ermine skins, decorated with feathers, pieces of animal hair, strips of leather and gut skin, and embellished with embroidery.

Today, headdresses remain a part of traditional dress. Alutiiq Elders, dignitaries, and performers wear them for special occasions. Along with the increasing use of these garments there is a growing interest in their manufacture. Alutiiq women are exploring the art of beading and passing it to the next generation through classes in village schools.

Pinguat; Pisirkat (N) – Beads

Makut pinguat cucunartut. - **These beads are beautiful.**

Before the availability of European goods, Alutiiq people embellished their clothing and jewelry with a variety of handmade beads. Pieces of shell, bone, ivory, amber, coal, slate and even halibut vertebrae were fashioned into decorations for parkas, rain gear, headdresses, hunting hats, bags, and labrets. In Prince William Sound, people made shiny beads from unbaked clay mixed with seal oil, and on the Kenai Peninsula, they carved beads from soft red shale. A necklace collected in Kodiak in the 19th century, features hundreds of tiny bird claws set into each other to form small loops, like beads.

Some shells were particularly coveted for decoration. Alutiiq people obtained dentalium shells, the curved, white, tusk-shaped shells of scaphopods in trade with the societies of Southeast Alaska. They used these graceful shells to decorate clothing and as earrings and nose pins. They were considered extremely valuable. Historic sources indicate that a pair of delicate dentalium shells could be traded for an entire squirrel skin parka.

By 1840, trade goods from Asia and Europe began reaching Alaska in large quantities, supplied by merchants in Siberian ports and Hudson's Bay Company outposts in the United States and western Canada. Russian colonists hoarded the finer goods —porcelains, iron tools, and gunflints—for their own use, but traded food and trinkets to the Alutiiq. Traders used inexpensive commodities like glass beads to pay Alutiiq hunters for valuable sea otter hides resold in distant markets.

Manufactured in Asian and European factories, colorful glass beads were cheap, easy to ship, and coveted by Native peoples. On Kodiak, these brightly colored beads fit well into the prestige-based economy and were widely incorporated into ancestral arts—like the production of headdresses. The Cornaline d'Alleppo, a dark red bead made in Venice, was particularly prized, perhaps as its color resembled traditional red pigments.

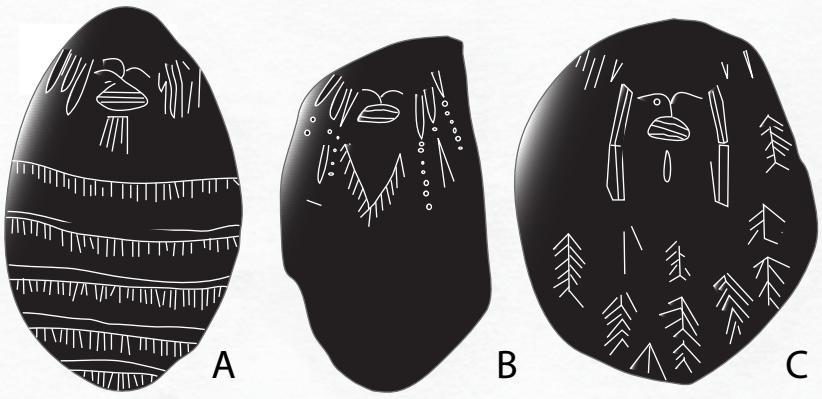
Detail of glass beads in an Alutiiq headdress, Afognak Island, 1872, Pinart Collection, Château-Musée de Boulogne-sur-Mer, France. Photo by Will Anderson.

Yaamat Quliangua'it – Talking Rocks

Objects left in archaeological sites tell many stories. Tools indicate the tasks people performed and animal remains record ancient meals. In the Kodiak Archipelago a unique type of artifact also documents how people dressed. Between AD 1300 and 1500, Alutiiq people sketched images of people on small slate pebbles, cutting their designs into the rock. These "talking rocks" show human faces, but many also include drawings of clothing, jewelry, and headdresses. Some individuals are even pictured with a ceremonial item—a drum or a rattle. For archaeologists these pebbles provide information that is not available from any other source.

These pebbles illustrate different types of clothing and jewelry. Example A (below) shows an individual wearing a decorated gut skin garment (represented by horizontal lines) and a labret (lip plug) with hanging attachments. Example B shows an individual with a V-neck garment and a headdress decorated with beads. Example C displays a person in a bird skin garment (represented by a feather motif) with a labret and a headdress. Patterns seen in these pebbles suggest that people in different parts of the archipelago once wore different styles of parkas and labrets. People all over the world use clothing to signal their affiliation with social groups. Perhaps each Alutiiq community had its own unique dress code.

What were talking rocks used for? Some archaeologists think they were pieces for a throwing game, others suggest that they were used to record the pictures of powerful people. Whatever the answer, they continue to speak to archaeologists, providing valuable information on ancient Alutiiq life.



Slate pebbles with etched designs, ca. AD 1500, Koniag, Inc. Collection, Karluk One Site.

Learn More:
Incised Slate Images and the Development of Social and Political Complexity in South Alaska, 1992, by Chris Donta. In, Ancient Images, Ancient Thought: The Archaeology of Ideology, edited by A. Sean Goldsmith, S. Garvie, D. Selin, and J. Smith, Pp. 11-18. University of Calgary, Calgary.

Waamucirpet – Gaming Traditions

Games have been part of Alutiiq culture for centuries. Archaeologists studying old village sites find darts, dice, throwing discs, and tally sticks illustrating that the traditional games enjoyed today have ancient origins. Games had many purposes. They taught skills, reinforced spiritual beliefs, and provided entertainment. Men's games honed hunting skills, while children's games taught adult activities.

Alutiiq games varied with the seasons. In the fall, children played *aigat* (hands / fingers), a string game meant to slow the sun from setting and give families more time to prepare for winter. Then, as the migratory birds headed south, Alutiiq people put their toys and games away for winter—so as not to prolong bad weather. As spring approached, children played a sunrise game, a string game that hastened warm weather. When the geese and sparrows returned to the land, toys, games, and competitions reappeared to celebrate the birth of the year. Elders remember spring as a time when beaches filled with people playing games and preparing for subsistence activities.

Children's Play

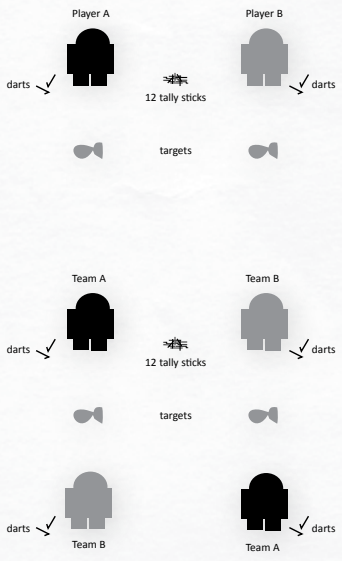
Young people imitated adults with toys. Miniature oil lamps, bowls, scoops, ulus, and skin stretching boards helped girls learn household tasks, while boys practiced boating, fishing, hunting, and ceremonial activities with toy kayaks, bows, harpoons, fish hooks, and drums.

Men's Games

Men competed in some of the liveliest gaming, assembling privately to play spiritually powerful target games. In prehistoric times, they played in the *qasgiq*—a community house. More recently, this type of gaming took place in an old sod house or someone's home. These raucous events featured singing and gambling that might last all night. Elders recall that people bet quantities of food, clothing and even firearms, boats, and houses on the outcome of matches.

Community Games

Community gatherings were an opportunity for outdoors games. Both men and women enjoyed participating in athletic challenges that included swimming, boating, and running races as well as tests of strength, wrestling, high jumping, target throwing, and a variety of team sports. Popular games included *yaamaq* (rock)—a rock throwing game like horseshoes, and shooting contests. Men and boys aimed arrows at pieces of kelp in the game *ruuwaq* (arrow). Both games are still played today.



Rules for *Augca'aq* As reported by Larry Matfay

OBJECT: To score 12 points by hitting a suspended target with darts.

EQUIPMENT: 2 darts and 1 target for each player. Twelve tally sticks. The target, or mangaq (dolphin), is carved in the shape of a sea mammal. Hang the targets about an inch from the floor and 10 to 12 feet apart.

PLAYERS: Two individual players, or four players in teams of two.

RULES:
- Players in a kneeling position take turns throwing their darts, until all the darts are thrown. If two play, each player has 2 darts. If four play, then one player from each team has 2 darts and team members play alternate games.
- The game begins with 12 tally sticks piled between the players. Players take their points from this pile. When the pile is depleted, they take points from each other.
- 12 points wins a game, 2 games wins a match.
- The game is also won if a player's second dart sticks into his first dart.

SCORING: Each target is divided into sections worth 1, 2, 3, or 5 points. Players score points by hitting the corresponding part of the target. To score, the dart must not fall out of the target. If a player's dart hits the line between target sections—he scores nothing. If a player hits the line on which the target is suspended, he scores 8 points.

Games Today

Game playing remains part of the seasonal rhythm of Alutiiq communities. Buoy races, tug of war challenges, pie eating contests, egg tosses, and boxing matches are popular activities at summer gatherings, and new forms of gambling—card games, Bingo, and pull tabs, are widely enjoyed throughout the year. Yet, many people remember the old games. Old Harbor men still compete at *augca'aq*—a traditional dart game—during the six weeks of Russian Orthodox Lent, when both hunting and other forms of gambling are prohibited. Youth continue to carve toy boats and organize Alutiiq ball games, and each spring teens tests their skills at the Native Youth Olympics.

The Stick Game - *Kaataq*

Kaataq is a favorite Alutiiq men's game, involving lots of singing, joking and careful sleights of hand. Native sea otter hunters working in California learned this game and brought it back to Alaska. In the past, men played *kaataq* in the weeks before Lent, staying up all night to bet on matches. Old sod houses were an excellent place to play, as they were warm and private. Men never played *kaataq* around children. It was considered shamanic.

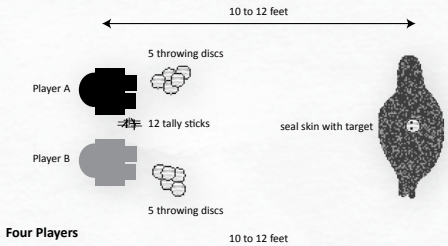
This simple guessing game requires two inch-long pieces of wood or bone. Although the sticks are the same size, one is marked and the other is plain. The marked stick, called the 'wee,' might be painted, burned on the ends, or grooved. The unmarked stick is the 'dip.'

Akhiok ladies play Kaataq. Photo by Mike Rostad, Rostad Collection, Alutiiq Museum.

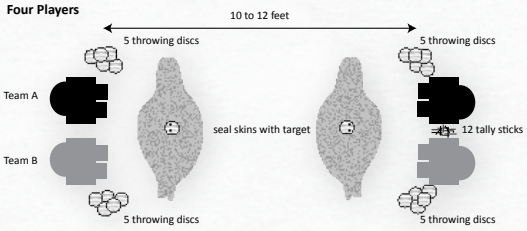
In *Kaataq*, two players stand facing each other. One holds the sticks behind his back, while taunting his opponent. The holder, arranges the sticks in his fists, then brings one hand to his chest and leaves the other against his back. When he says pick, the challenger must guess which stick is in the fist on the holder's chest the 'wee' or the 'dip.' If the challenger guesses correctly, he scores a point. If the challenger guesses incorrectly, the holder receives a point. The holder can change the game by putting both sticks in the hand behind his back. When the challenger guesses on an empty hand—the holder wins a point. However, if an observer catches the holder's sleight of hand, the observer shouts change, and the holder must put the hand with both sticks on his chest for the challenger to select. In this case, the challenger wins a point. The first player to accumulate 16 points wins.

Rules for *Kakangaq*, As reported by Larry Matfay

Two Players



Four Players



OBJECT: To score 12 points by covering a target with thrown gaming discs

EQUIPMENT: 5 throwing discs for each player (1½ to 4 inches in diameter each), one target disc (1 to 1½inches in diameter), and a sealskin or grass mat.

PLAYER: Two individual players, or four players in teams of two

RULES:
- Players take turns throwing discs one at a time until all the discs are thrown.
- Players may knock each other's discs off the target with their throws.
- After all the discs have been thrown, the score is calculated.
- The game begins with 12 tally sticks piled between the players. Players take their points from this pile. When the pile is depleted, they take points from each other.
- 12 points wins a game, 2 games wins a match.

SCORING: If a player's disc covers part of the target, score 2 points. If two discs land on top of the target, the top disc scores. If none of the discs cover the target, but the closest disc is within an index finger length away—the owner of that discs scores 1 point. If two discs are within a finger's length of the target, the closest wins the point.

Learn More:

Aurcaq: Interruption, Distraction, and Reversal in an Alutiiq Men's Dart Game, 1987 by Craig Mishler. American Journal of Folklore 110(436):189-202.

Cauyaq – Drum

Skin covered drum, Kodiak Island, 1872, Pinart Collection, Château-Musée de Boulogne-sur-Mer, France.

In the traditional Alutiiq language, the word for drum and music are the same—*cauyaq*. This duplication illustrates the importance of drums to traditional Alutiiq music. Although Alutiiq people also perform with rattles and whistles, the drum, with its penetrating beat, is their main instrument.

Drumming is an ancient practice. Prehistoric petroglyphs from both Afognak and Kodiak islands show people holding drums and archaeological sites with well preserved wooden artifacts include drum handles and drum rims many hundreds of years old. Historic accounts also indicate that drumming was an important part of the Alutiiq past. Until the late nineteenth century, Alutiiq people sang and danced in honor of ancestors, re-enacted stories, shared community history, and called spirits to their winter festivals to the rhythmic pulse of skin drums.

Making Drums

Like the drums of Yup'ik and Inupiaq peoples, Alutiiq drums are large, circular instruments designed for individual players. Made in many sizes, Alutiiq drums have unique features. Each has a large wooden hoop made from a narrow, oval-shaped piece of wood bent to shape with steam. To close the hoop, carvers drill holes in the end of the wood strip and lash the ends together. To this frame, some artists attach a cross brace, a piece of wood that provides extra support.

Next, drum makers stretch bear lung, a seal bladder, or even a halibut stomach over the hoop to form the drum's cover. They secure the edges of the skin by tying it to a thin groove that encircles the outside edge of the wooden hoop. The last step is to lash on a sturdy handle. Each handle features a notch to hold the drum rim, with a beautifully carved image on the inside.

Like other ceremonial objects, Alutiiq people decorated their drums. A drum's skin might be painted with images of spirit helpers, or its handle painted and adorned with carvings of people or animals. A prehistoric drum handle from Karluk shows a human face inset with two tiny animal teeth. Some drum handles had tiny masks attached. These carvings faced the audience as the drummer played.

Cauyaq nitnigiu.
- Listen to the drum.

Alutiiq people beat their drums with a rounded stick called *kaugsuun*—"something for hitting". The drummer controls the tone of his instrument by varying the location and intensity of his strike. Sometimes he may hit the rim of the drum, other times its skin surface.

A musician can also change the sound of a drum by altering the tightness of its skin cover. Drum skins are sensitive to moisture. By wetting the skin, the cover loosens, creating a deeper sound. Hold the drum near the fire and the warmth dries the skin, causing it to constrict and the tone of the instrument to rise. Today, some Alaskan drummers carry spray bottles to fine-tune their instruments during performances.

Listen:
Generations, An Alutiiq Music Collection CD, 2007, produced by Stepehn Blanchett for the Alutiiq Museum, Kodiak.

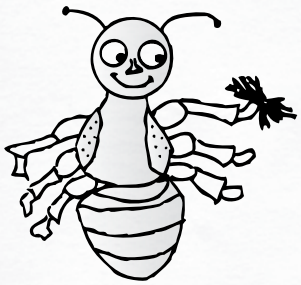
Atuutet – Songs

Singing is a favorite past time in Alutiiq communities. People of all ages enjoy sharing a tune or learning a melody from an Elder. In addition to expressing emotion, songs are a form of story telling. They record community history and express values. There are many different types of songs. Today people share everything from country western tunes to Orthodox hymns, but they also remember traditional verses sung for hunting, curing illness, praising ancestors, dancing, and visiting. Many of these songs once helped Alutiiq people obtain assistance from the spirits that influenced life on earth. Powerful Alutiiq whalers sang songs to control the movement of an injured whale. Hunters learned animal songs to attract game. Shamans used songs to drive away illness caused by evil.

***Kas'aq amlesqanek atuutnek nallun'ituq.* - The priest knows many songs.**

In classical Alutiiq society, singing was also a central part of winter festivals. The host of such gatherings hired a spiritual leader (*kas'aq*) to guide the festivities. Well versed in traditional songs and ceremonial etiquette, this person used songs to move guests from the everyday world into a magical realm. With singing, people welcomed spirits to the gathering, honored them, and appealed for aid. Alutiiq people also sang to venerate ancestors. A forebearer might be memorialized with a mask and a specially written tune. Men also paired masks and songs to tell stories—to remember a great hunt, to recount a battle, or to share family history.

Neresta, the song presented below is about a louse that annoys a group of steam bathers. Today, the Kodiak Alutiiq dancers perform a comical rendition of this song, with washing and scratching motions.



Neresta

Neresta taarimallria /
Taarirpaguarluni /
Ingqim yaamat ciqiluki, /
neresta atunguaruarluni.

The louse whisked himself. /
He whisked himself long and hard [showing off] /
The baby louse [nit] splashed water on the rocks. /
And the louse sang to his little self [for the heck of it].

A Kodiak Alutiiq dancer performs with hand motions. Alutiiq Museum Archives. Photo by Sven Haakanson, Jr.

Quliyanguat – Stories

Quliyanguiciiqaken. - I will tell you a story.

At day break a whale came to the surface and swam towards the shore. The tide was low and the waterfall was up some ways from the sea. The boy wondered how it could get up there to drink. As he watched, the whale slowly shoved its head up the beach and opened its mouth and a little man, with a leather bucket in each hand, came out and went up to the waterfall. He filled the buckets with water and went back down and into the whale's mouth. The whale closed its mouth and turned out to sea and disappeared.

Story collected from Ralph Demidoff, from Desson 1995:39.

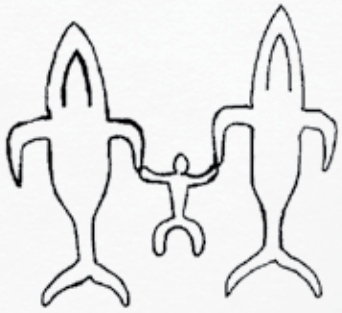
Among societies without a written language, storytelling is an important way to record history. Events, accomplishments, values, spiritual beliefs, and even survival techniques are passed from generation to generation through people rather than books.

Traditional Alutiiq tales held many lessons. Legends (*quliyanguaq*) recounted the pursuits of ancestors, explained unusual events, discussed the dangers of wandering far from home, and gave examples of model behavior. The Man of Winter, a story told to noisy children, warned that those who misbehave may cause bad weather. Children learned that poor behavior can have consequences for an entire community.

Myths (*unigkuat*) explained the cosmos—the origin of people, the stars and the animals. The Thirsty Whale story reveals the Alutiiq belief that every creature has a human-like consciousness, represented by a small person that lives inside of it. Whalers told such stories when training their apprentices.

Although many people practiced story telling, in the past, each Alutiiq community had at least one ritual specialist. Known as a *kas'aq*, this person had an expert knowledge of stories, songs, and dances. He led traditional ceremonies and helped to educate children.

Petroglyphs from Cape Alitak, Kodiak Island.



Anguyagcill'rait – Warfare

In Alutiiq society, success at warfare could enhance a man's social and economic standing. Men led raids to seek vengeance and acquire wealth. Alutiiq stories suggest the when visitors ridiculed or embarrassed a community member—particularly a chief or a child, the community would seek revenge. The goal of conflict was not simply to punish offenders, but also to take their possessions. Raiders collected loot and slaves—people who were ransomed for goods or taken home as laborers.

Alutiiq warriors were legendary, athletic fighters. In preparation for warfare, they received gifts from their leader, readied their gear, took a cleansing steam bath, and probably painted their faces. They departed by boat early in the morning, and carried wooden clubs, spears, bows, and specially fashioned arrows. Their arrows were tipped with bone points that had thin, splintery barbs. Craftsmen designed these barbs to cause extensive internal damage by breaking off inside their victims. In addition to weaponry, warriors held shields made from thick planks of hardwood, and wore protective vests of wooden armor. Fashioned from small pieces of wood and tied together with sinew, sturdy yet flexible shirts of armor protected a warrior's chest from enemy arrows.

War parties attacked neighboring Alutiiq communities, as well as the more distant villages of neighboring cultures. Secretive nighttime raids and open battles took place, often in the summer when travel was easiest.

Sentries, signal fires, and runners helped warn communities of approaching raiders. To protect their families, Alutiiq people built temporary settlements at the top of precipitous cliffs and small, rocky islands. Here, families had shelters and stockpiles of supplies. When communities feared assault, they retreated to these sites for protection. From these strategically located refuges residents could repel attackers by dropping logs, boulders, or piles of burning grass.

Frank Peterson, Jr. with a wooden war club and war shield, carved by artist Andrew Ahyo. Purchased by the Alutiiq Museum with support from the Rasmuson Foundation Art Acquisition Fund.

Learn More:
Warriors of Kodiak: Military Traditions of Kodiak Islanders, 2004, by Lydia T. Black. Arctic Anthropology 41(2):140-152.

Giinaruat – Masks

Nayurta – The Watchman.
Nineteenth century wooden mask from the Pinart Collection,
Château-Musée de Boulogne-sur-Mer, France.
Photo by Will Anderson.

Masking is an ancient Alutiiq tradition. For centuries, Native artists carved images of powerful ancestors, animal spirits, and mythological beings into wood and bark. Masks were made in many sizes. Palm-sized miniatures may have been used to teach children traditional stories, attached to drums, or carried by adults as amulets. Dancers wore full-sized portrait masks and enormous plank masks during ceremonial performances.

Masks were often brightly painted and adorned with a variety of attachments. Feathers, fur, and small wooden carvings were tied to an encircling hoop. Some masks were held in the hands or teeth, others were tied to the dancer's head, and very large pieces may have been suspended over performance areas. A long-headed mask was a sign of power and authority. A whistling mask could conjure spirits.

Following ceremonies, masks were broken and discarded. This tradition reflects the spiritual power of the images they portrayed. Masks were part of the dangerous process of communicating with the spirit world. They were used in dances that ensured future hunting success by showing reverence to animal spirits and ancestors.

Masking continues in Alutiiq communities today, where it has been combined with Russian Orthodox and American traditions. During Russian New Year, Alutiiq people participate in an annual masquerade ball. Others disguised with masks and odd clothing, travel from house to house dancing. Hosts provide refreshments and try to guess the identity of their visitors, who must quit for the night if they are identified. This modern practice holds many elements of ancient winter ceremonies—visiting, performing, and feasting.

While Elders today remember the older word *giinaquq*, most today use the words *giinaruaq* (like a face) and *maaskaaq* (borrowed from Russian) for *mask*.

Learn More:

Giinaquq: Like A Face, Sugpiaq Masks from the Kodiak Archipelago, 2009, by Sven Haakanson and Amy Steffian. University of Alaska Press, Fairbanks.