

Chiniak — Cingiyaq

CINGIYAQ YAQSIGTUQ SUN'AMEK KAARAKUN. – CHINIAK IS FAR FROM KODIAK BY CAR.



Photo: A sunny day in Chiniak Bay, view southeast.

Follow the highway forty-five miles southeast of the city of Kodiak and you will arrive in Chiniak, a small, unincorporated community with a population of about fifty. Although people have lived in the Chiniak area for millennia, the current town developed after the Second World War.

The Army Corps of Engineers built the road to Chiniak in 1942, and the Navy and Air Force both built intelligence-gathering stations here into the 1950s. Starting in the early 1970s, services developed to support the increasing number of residents: a gas station, a school, a library, a post office, and eventually in 1982 the Road's End restaurant.

Despite the recent origin of today's community, Chiniak has strong connections to the Alutiiq past. The word Chiniak comes from the Alutiiq word *cing'iyaq*, which means cape, and it refers to the rocky promontories that define this easternmost point of Kodiak Island. Many localities

bear the name Chiniak.

Archaeological data confirm the presence of Alutiiq people in the Chiniak region. At the Rice Ridge site, a settlement repeatedly occupied between 7,100 and 4,000 years ago, residents harvested cod and sea otter from the waters off Cape Chiniak.

Historic sources indicate that Russian administrators granted a family of Alutiiq and Russian descent permission to settle the area in 1846. This small settlement is listed in the 1880 census. However, it should not be confused with the larger village of Chiniak. This community was located on Woody Island and was occupied from prehistoric times well into the twentieth century. It is also known as Tangirnaq.