

Trade, Exchange — Cimigiug, Cimiug

SUUGET CIMIUTUT. – PEOPLE ARE TRADING.



Photo: Microblades found on Kodiak, made of stone from the Alaska mainland.

Alutiiq communities obtained resources and formed alliances by exchanging foods and raw materials. In good weather, people traveled by skin boat to neighboring communities to share their surplus goods and barter for items. Trade with the Alaska mainland was particularly important. Here, Kodiak Islanders could obtain resources not locally available. These included caribou skins, walrus ivory, antler, volcanic rocks, and other exotic items. What did Kodiak Islanders offer in trade? Mainlanders coveted Kodiak's high-quality slate, perfect for making ulus and slate points.

Kodiak's archaeological record holds abundant evidence of ancient trade. The archipelago's early residents appear to have traded sporadically, relying primarily on locally available raw materials. However, as Kodiak's population grew, trade became more important. Twenty-five hundred years ago, Kodiak Islanders were exchanging goods regularly with the Alaska Peninsula and Kenai Peninsula Alutiiq people. In addition to food and raw materials, they traded for jewelry and small pieces of artwork. These valuable trinkets probably acted as a form of ancient currency because

they could be traded for food in times of need.