

Window — Gaaleq

PATRIITAQ INIMAUQ GAALEM CANIANI. – THE PICTURE IS HANGING NEXT TO THE WINDOW.

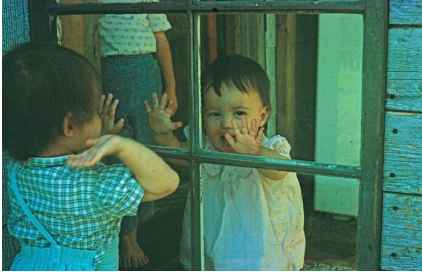


Photo: Toddlers playing on either side of a window in Karluk. Clyda Christensen Collection.

Alutiiq sod houses, *ciqlluut*, were dark inside. Their thick wood-planked roofs, covered with sod, grass, and boards, were designed to be waterproof and therefore let in little light. Most houses had a smoke hole—a square, board-covered hatch in the ceiling that could be propped open to release smoke from a fireplace below. When open, the smoke-hole flap let in some light. Burning oil lamps, fires in centrally placed hearths, and small gut windows provided additional light. While they were not large enough to use as an emergency exit, these coverings of translucent sea mammal stomachs or intestines let in enough light to ease the darkness.

Alutiiq people began adding wood-framed and glass-paned windows to their sod houses in the early nineteenth century. In Old Harbor, western-style windows appeared in sod houses in the early 1920s. In 1926, Old Harbor had more than fifteen sod houses with wood floors and windows and just three framed houses. Framed houses became more common in the 1930s. In 1931, when the Three Saints Bay cannery burned down, Old Harbor residents salvaged unburned materials to

use in house building. Anthropologist Harumi Befu, who visited the community in the summer of 1960, reported that the Karakims' and the Ingas' houses were probably built with these materials.