Kodiak’s has a rich cultural history. For more than 7,000 years, people have lived in the archipelago creating a record of their activities by leaving items behind. When we think about this record, we tend to focus on the prehistoric part. We imagine deposits brimming with clamshells and slate tools, ancient settlements with buried remains. Yet, Kodiak is also home to hundreds of historic properties. Historic sites are places on the landscape that reflect more recent activity – Russian conquest, the fur trade, the commercial fishing industry, World War II, and Alutiiq village life. Many of these sites have standing remains – buildings or machinery, and familiar artifacts – barrels, beads, and teacups, which help to tell the continuing story of Kodiak history and Alutiiq heritage.

By definition, historic sites are properties formed within the period of written history. In Alaska, this period starts with the arrival of Russian traders in the mid-eighteenth century. Any property older than 50 years, but dating to the time of written records, can be considered historic.

The same laws that protect prehistoric sites also protect historic properties. All sites and their contents belong to the owner of the land on which they occur, and it is illegal to take objects from them without permission. Salvaging a window or collecting an old coffee pot may be tempting, but it is a form of vandalism. Taking historic objects damages sites and reduce their ability to be studied.

Many people wonder why historic places deserve the same protection as their older counterparts. The historic period is better known, with written records and even photographs. While such records are very valuable, they don’t provide a full picture of the past. Documents often tell of political and economic activity, famous people, or dramatic events. They less commonly record the details of daily life, or the history of Native people. This information can be learned from historic sites.
Your Questions Answered:

How old is historic?
In Alaska any property with evidence of human use that is more than 50 years old can be considered an historic site, and be listed in the state’s site database.

What are Kodiak’s historic sites?
Fort Abercrombie, the Erskine House, and the Port Hobron Whaling Station are well known examples of historic sites in the Kodiak region, but there are many others. Airplane wrecks, bear guiding camps, bunkers, cabins, canneries, hatcheries, mines, salteries, and villages are other examples. All of these are places with evidence of human history. They help to tell the story of Kodiak.

Learn More On Line:
Alaska State Historic Parks
http://www.dnr.alaska.gov/parks/oha/misc/dpor.htm
National Register of Historic Places
http://www.nps.gov/nr/
National Trust for Historic Preservation:
http://www.preservationnation.org/

Quyanaasinaq – Many Thanks to our 2011 Stewards

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www.alutiiqmuseum.org

YOU CAN HELP
Never dig in or collect artifacts from an historic site.
If you find an historic site, enjoy it, but leave it. Take photographs not objects.
Teach your family and friends to respect historic sites. Most people do not know that it is illegal, destructive, and disrespectful to alter historic sites.
Report illegal collecting and site vandalism to the National Park Service (1-800-478-2724). Rewards of up to $500 are available for information.

RESPECT THE PAST