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Book on the History of Karluk Release

Karluk may be Kodiak Island’s smallest modern village, but its history is voluminous. The Alutiiq Museum’s latest publication, Kal’unek – From Karluk, fills nearly 400 pages with the rich and enduring history of this Native community.

Weaving together archaeological, ethnographic, environmental, and historic information, authors Amy Steffian, Marnie Leist, Sven Haakanson Jr., and Patrick Saltonstall describe Alutiiq life before Russian conquest. Hundreds of illustrations share artifacts from the Karluk village site and images of the settlement. Also included is a glossary presenting several hundred Alutiiq terms for artifacts developed by Elder speakers with Dr. April Laktonen Counceller.

Essays by people involved in the study and care of Karluk One collection tell a second story: the far-reaching impacts of the project on Alutiiq heritage studies. Contributing authors illustrate the importance of Karluk archaeology to the Alutiiq heritage movement and the collection’s long lasting impacts on students, artists, Elders, and researchers.

Kal’unek is the culmination of many years of work by the museum. Alutiiq Museum Curator of Collections, Marnie Leist: “Before we even started writing the book, we spent several years recording information from our collections. We cataloged photographs from Karluk and created an inventory of the site collection—more than 26,000 pieces. Amy [Steffian] scoured historic sources to help create a broad picture of Alutiiq life about 400 years ago. While we were working in the museum, Patrick Saltonstall was conducting archaeological surveys along the Karluk River, learning about the bigger picture of Karluk history. All of this information helped us to tell the remarkable story of Karluk and Alutiiq heritage.”

Many organizations and individuals contributed to the development and publication of Kal’unek. The collections featured in the volume belong to Koniag, Inc., who assisted the museum with the project. Major financial contributions came from Koniag, the Kodiak Area Native Association, the Institute for Museum and Library Services, the Alaska State Museum, the CIRI Foundation, and the Alaska Humanities Forum.

Published by the University of Alaska Press, the book is a large, hardback volume with over 400 illustrations. It can be purchased from the Alutiiq Museum Store for $50 by contacting Gallery Manager Dana Haynes (dana@alutiiqmuseum.org, 907-486-7004), or online at kalunek.alutiiqmuseum.org. All royalties from the sale of this book will support the preservation and study of Alutiiq heritage at the Alutiiq Museum.

The Alutiiq Museum is a non-profit organization dedicated to preserving and sharing the cultural traditions of the Alutiiq, an Alaska Native tribal people. Representatives of Kodiak Alutiiq organizations govern the museum with funding from charitable contributions, memberships, grants, and sales. #