

Nukallpiat Calinrit – MEN'S WAYS



Young man with ducks, Nekeferof Collection.



*Petroglyph from
Cape Alitak,
Kodiak Island.*

Every man in Alutiiq/Sugpiaq society owned a kayak, a boat specially designed to fit his body. This was his most essential tool, a sign of manhood and a necessity for his central job—harvesting. In their kayaks, Alutiiq men traveled widely along the coast of Kodiak and to neighboring regions hunting, fishing, visiting, trading, and raiding. A good provider returned with food.

At home, men lived with their families, but spent a part of their days in the *qasgiq*, or men's house. This large building was a gathering place where men met to talk, make tools, discuss politics, plan travel, and perform rituals. Women and children could visit the *qasgiq* on special occasions, like winter festivals, but daily use was reserved for men.

In addition to manufacturing hunting and fishing gear, men carved household items, crafted boats, and built and maintained houses. These jobs required special skills that young people learned by working beside accomplished carvers and builders.

Men also filled special roles, serving as community leaders, whalers, shamans, and spiritual leaders. The position of *angayyuqaq*, or chief was passed through families. This person managed activities throughout a village. He organized work, settled disputes, tracked the location and well-being of community members, led raids, maintained the *qasgiq*, hosted festivals, and distributed goods. A respected *angayyuqaq* was fair, considerate, and able to build both consensus and wealth.

LEARN MORE:

A Time to Dance: Life of an Alaska Native 1988, by Mike Rostad and Larry Mattay. A.T. Publishing, Anchorage.