

Looking Both Ways: Heritage & Identity of the Alutiiq People.

Aron Crowell

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Looking Both Ways is an extraordinary introduction to the indigenous people and vital culture of Alaska's south central coast. Combining archaeology, history, and oral tradition, it traces the Alutiiq path through ancestral generations to contemporary life, including today's compelling issues of cultural identity and autonomy. The Alutiiq art, objects, and images featured are signposts along the way. Diversity is one of the signal points of the text: no one voice could tell the whole story, and no single approach defines what it truly means to be Alutiiq. The many contributors range over Alutiiq relations with neighbouring Alaska Native peoples and with non-Native colonisers, with the sea and land, with place and time, with animals and spirits. Alutiiq writers, elders, and storytellers convey a many-sided sense of cultural values and beliefs, even as they recall the struggle to survive more than two centuries of Russian and Euro American domination. From anthropologists and historians come insights into the great originality of Alutiiq culture as well as its debt to formative influences from around the North Pacific. Seen from these many perspectives, Alutiiq identity emerges as a rich mosaic of people, location, and experience. This volume was created by the shared efforts of Alutiiq communities, scholars, and museums, led by the Smithsonian Institution and the Alutiiq Museum and Archaeological Repository in Kodiak, Alaska. This is a story in itself, reflecting national trends toward greater Native American participation in cultural research and self-representation in the museum world. The book accompanies an exhibit opening at the National Museum of Natural History in Washington, DC, in June 2001 and travelling to Kodiak, Homer, Anchorage, Juneau, and Seattle.

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