



**National Park Service**  
**U.S. Department of the Interior**

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## Harpers Ferry Center Addendum

**To: Sitka National Historical Park**

**From: Harpers Ferry Center**

**Date: 11/14/2012**

**Subject: Wayside Exhibit Draft Plan Addendum**

We are pleased to present the Wayside Exhibit Parkwide draft plan for Sitka National Historical Park. The plan is a reflection of the subjects, thumbnail sketches, and purpose statements outlined in the Wayside Exhibit Proposal. The draft plan is a mix of draft text and proposed graphics. Many of the photographs and illustrations are low-resolution examples and only represent a concept for approval. Specific notes for some exhibits are outlined below.

### **SITK-01**

Map is generated from a low-res aerial from Bing Maps. It represents the subject area and elevation that would be used to take a new high resolution aerial photograph.

We suggest *Carved History* be turned into an accessible PDF available for FREE download via a QR code. This allows for the visually impaired to enjoy the publication (an accessible PDF is compatible with screen readers) and makes the publication available to those who visit the park outside of normal visitor center hours. The publication would still be available as a printed sale item.

### **SITK-03,04,11**

These layouts incorporate the black and white line drawings that were created for Carved History. An alternative would be to colorize the line drawings where appropriate or create computer rendered models of the Totem Poles using 3D scanning technology. The model is created by taking full 360 degree photographs of the entire totem pole which then creates a realistic model. The model can then be repaired and color corrected. Once the data is collected, scale models can be created using 3D printers.

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**EXPERIENCE YOUR AMERICA™**

The National Park Service cares for special places saved by the American people so that all may experience our heritage.

### **SITK-05**

The main fort graphic will be a computer-generated, full-color model. The black and white illustration is a placeholder only.

### **SITK-11**

The main salmon graphic will be a full-scale dimensional model of a pink salmon. Insets of each stage will be redrawn to match the stage of a pink salmon.

### **SITK-13**

The photo for the Sitka Historical Museum is out of date. We are still searching for a modern replacement.

We have included two options for this exhibit. The only difference is the slightly different treatment of the "facts" section.

### **QR Code Stickers**

The stickers are designed to attract attention and offer the opportunity to incorporate additional audio or video content. We have provide sample phrases for both Tlingit and Russian,

### **Cell Phone Tour**

The cell phone tour is a great vehicle for offering expanded content on each totem pole. We suggest to providing the phone number on each posted sign. For the deaf, the audio should be converted into a transcript available at the visitor center or downloaded via QR CODE.

### **Access Board Trail Data**

We suggest that technical trail data such as elevation gain, cross-slope, and trail width be presented on a changeable display sheet posted on the trail orientation panels since this information changes frequently.



**Writer/Planner**  
*Carol Petravage*

**Designer**  
*Chad Beale*

**Editor**  
*Mark W Johnson*

# Wayside Exhibit Draft Plan



Chena National Historical Park

## Totem Trail

**SO MUCH MORE THAN TOTEM POLES!**

On this nearly level loop trail you will find Tlingit and Haida totem poles brought here from all over southeast Alaska. You will also explore the site of the 1804 battle between the Tlingits and the Russians near the site of the Tlingit fort. Enjoy views of the Indian River as you walk back. In late summer you might encounter thousands of salmon traveling upstream to spawn.

**TRAIL FACTS**

Length **1.0 mile** (1.6 km) roundtrip loop      Average Time **30-45 minutes**

**VISITOR CENTER**  
Totem Trail is located here. The original totem poles that inspired the trail are located along the trail. See the totem and learn the history of the trail.

**FISH RIVER**  
See and hear about fish, salmon, halibut, and lingcod and how they are caught and raised as they travel upstream to spawn.

**RUSSIAN MEMORIAL**  
Remember the site of the Russian camp and the Tlingit and Haida who lived there in the Battle of 1804.

**Take the totem with you!**  
Carved totem poles are all the same. Carry one with you on your trail. It is a great conversation piece at the visitor center or use your phone to download a digital version.

Chena National Historical Park

### TRAIL REGULATIONS

- Foot traffic only
- Keep pets on a leash. Clean up all pet waste.
- No camping
- No open alcoholic beverages
- Walk bikes on the trail.

*Pet waste bags are provided at all trailheads.*

### TRAIL ACCESSIBILITY

- Totem Trail is wheelchair accessible. Trail surface is compacted stone. Current trail data is provided below.
- Audio description is provided for each wayside exhibit. Scan the audio description symbol at the corner of each wayside frame. The scanning device is available at the visitor center. The audio is also available by scanning the QR code with your smartphone.
- Cellphone walking tour. Look for cellphone tour stop signs on the backs of totem poles. Instructions are provided on each sign.

*Audio description scanning post and resolution.*

Changeable displays  
 (1) Access Board Trail Data  
 (2) Misc.

32"





## Totem Trail

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**TRAIL FACTS**

Length: **1.0 mile** (1.6 km) roundtrip loop      Average Time: **30-45 minutes**

**VISITOR CENTER**  
Totem Trail is available here. The longest totem poles that survived from the 1800s are along the trail. See the book and learn the techniques used to create these impressive monuments.

**FISH RUNS**  
See and hear salmon (sock, chin, coho, and king) and steelhead, pink, arctic, and rainbow as they migrate upstream to lay their eggs.

**RUSSIAN MEMORIAL**  
Commemorate the life of the Russian settler and Alaska, Alaska, and Russian fur trader who lost their lives on the banks of the Indian River.

**Take the totem with you!**  
Carved totem poles are available for sale at the visitor center or use your smartphone to download a 3D digital version.

**TRAIL REGULATIONS**

- Foot traffic only
- Keep pets on a leash. Clean up all pet waste.
- No camping
- No open alcoholic beverages
- Walk bikes on the trail.

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**TRAIL ACCESSIBILITY**

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Cellphone walking tour: Look for cellphone tour stop signs on the backs of totem poles. Instructions are provided on each sign.

*Audio description scanning free and available.*

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# Totem Trail

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Russians near the site of the Tlingit fort. Enjoy views of the Indian River as you walk back. In late summer you might encounter thousands of salmon traveling upstream to spawn.

### TRAIL FACTS

Length **1.0 mile** (1.6 km) roundtrip loop

Average Time **30–45 minutes**



#### VISITOR CENTER Totem Hall & exhibit

View the original totem poles that inspired many of the poles along the trail. See the tools and learn the techniques used to create these impressive monuments.



#### FISH RUNS

See and hear salmon (pink, chum, coho, and king) and trout (cutthroat, char, rainbow, and steelhead) as they struggle upstream to lay their eggs.



#### RUSSIAN MEMORIAL

Contemplate the fate of the Russian sailors and Alutiiq, Aleut, and Sugpiat hunters who lost their lives in the Battle of Sitka.

You Are Here

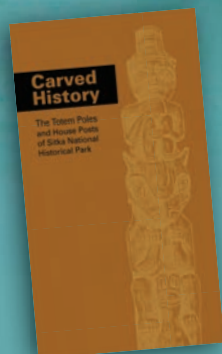
INDIAN RIVER

TLINGIT FORT SITE



#### BATTLE SITE

Compare Russian and Tlingit tactics.



#### Take the totems with you!

*Carved History* describes all the totem poles on this trail. Pick up your copy behind you at the visitor center or use your smartphone to download a FREE digital version.





## TRAIL REGULATIONS



Foot traffic only



Keep pets on a leash.  
Clean up all pet waste.



No camping



No open alcoholic beverages



Walk bikes on the trail.



*Pet waste bags are provided at all trailheads.*

## TRAIL ACCESSIBILITY



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Trail surface is compacted stone. Current trail data is provided below.



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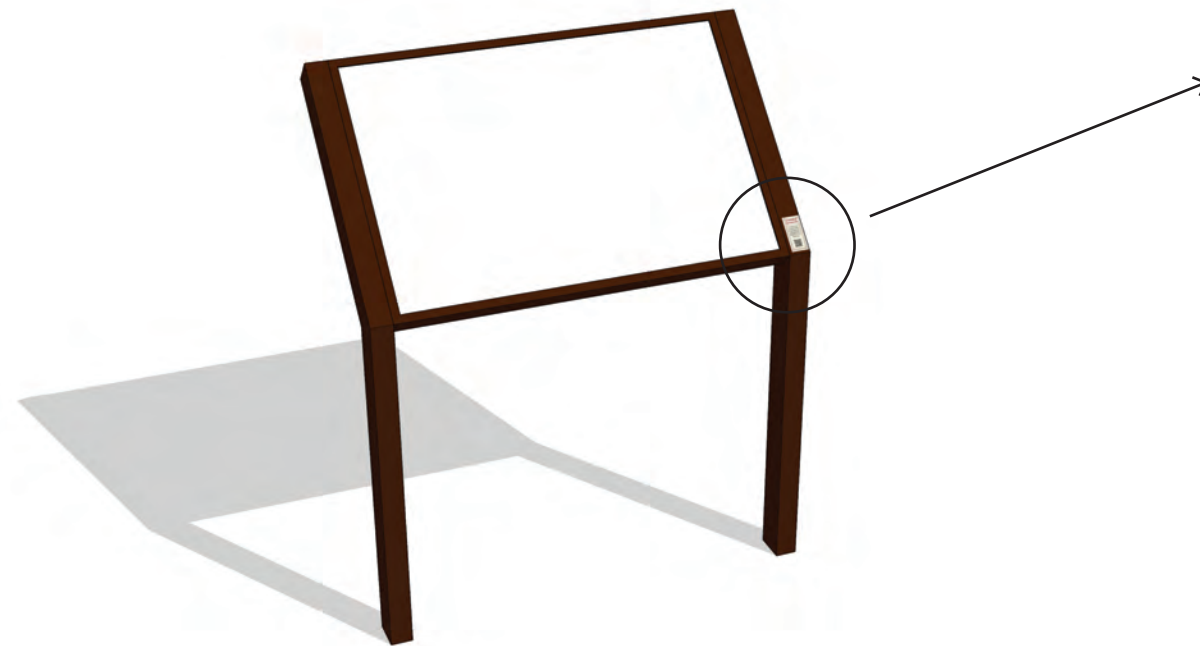
**Cellphone walking tour.** Look for cellphone tour stop signs on the backs of totem poles. Instructions are provided on each sign.



*Audio description scanning pen and medallion.*



SITK-01 - Totem Trail Orientation



SITK-01 - Salmon Lifecycle



SITK-01 - RBH Orientation





# Traveling Totems

Alaska Governor John Brady collected the original totem poles you see here from villages in southeast Alaska. Brady's respect for Alaskan Native culture enabled him to forge friendships with Tlingits and Haidas. They honored this friendship by donating their totem poles. In return, Brady promised to preserve the poles and persuade the US government to provide schools and other aid to their villages.

Brady collected the poles to exhibit at two world's fairs. He wanted to promote Alaska and attract homesteaders. After the fairs closed, Brady shipped the poles to Sitka, then the capital of the Alaska District. Brady thought the poles would increase tourism and bring more jobs and money.



### GET YOUR POSTCARDS!

Local photographers made postcards like this one of "lovers lane" to encourage tourists to travel to Sitka.

Haida and Tlingit villages  
1903

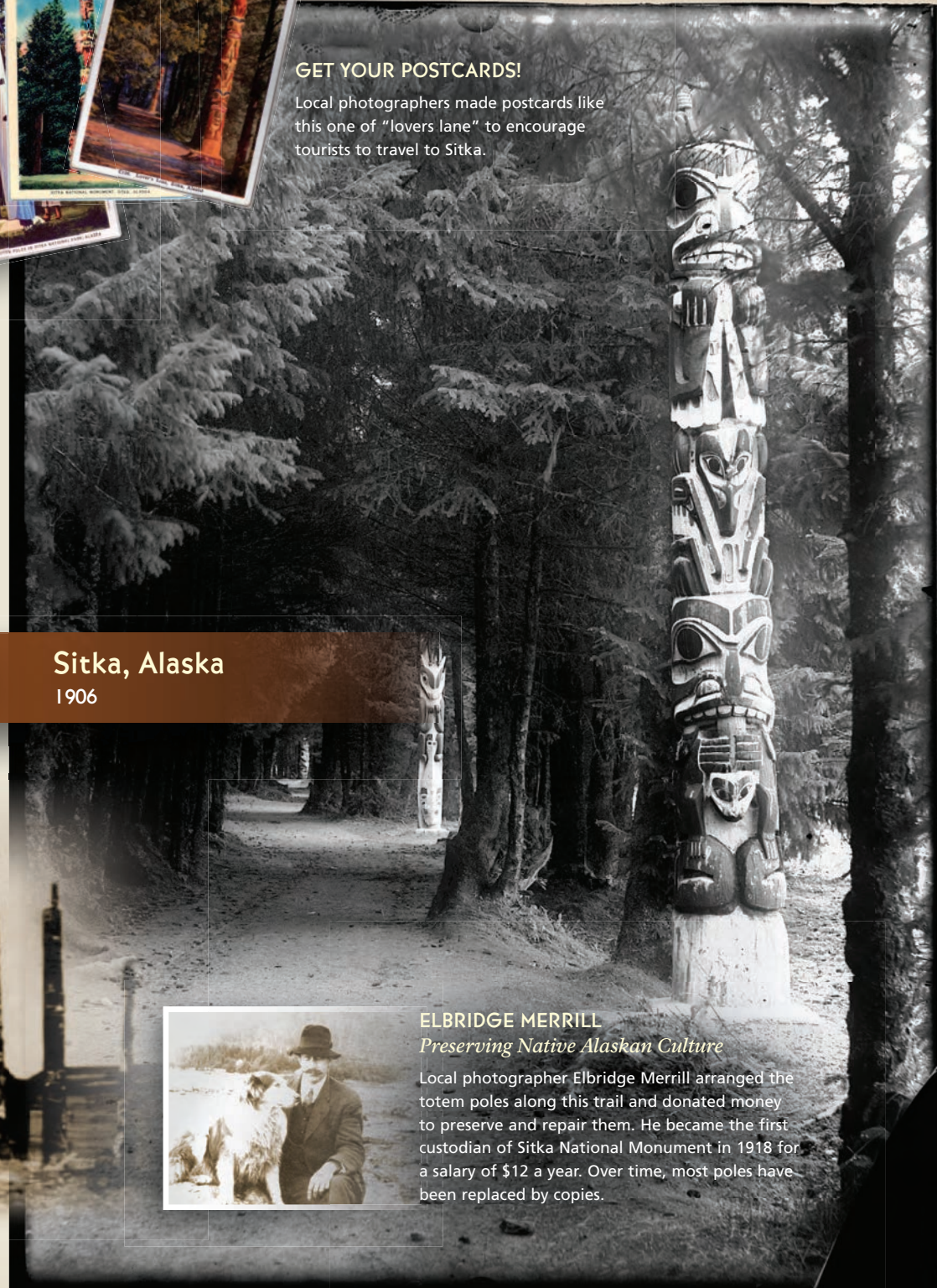
World's Fairs  
1904-1906

Sitka, Alaska  
1906



Governor Brady overseeing collection of the Saanaheit pole in Old Kasaan. Tlingit and Haida craftsmen carved the original poles for display in their villages in SE Alaska.

St. Louis, Missouri, 1904



ORIGINAL MERRILL PHOTOGRAPH taken close to where you are standing

### ELBRIDGE MERRILL

#### *Preserving Native Alaskan Culture*

Local photographer Elbridge Merrill arranged the totem poles along this trail and donated money to preserve and repair them. He became the first custodian of Sitka National Monument in 1918 for a salary of \$12 a year. Over time, most poles have been replaced by copies.



# Billboards of the Pacific



## RAVEN SHARK

The Raven Shark pole may represent the totems, or clan symbols, of the Tlingit patron's wife—or it may symbolize the raven/shark legend. Tommy Jimmie recarved this pole in 1978.



1

You Are Here



2



3

## TRADER LEGEND

The Trader Legend Pole is a ridicule pole. At the top is a white man and below are images representing thievery. This pole is a copy carved between 1938–1942. Although the original story associated with this pole is forgotten, when the pole was recarved the images became associated with a dishonest Sitka trader. This pole lives on with a new story.



## STORIES LOST IN TIME

## YAADAAS CREST

The Yaadaas Crest corner poles originally stood near the Yaadaas clan house in Old Kasaan, and represent the symbols of that clan. Nathan Jackson and Steve Brown carved this reproduction in 1982.

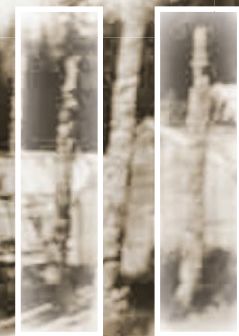


Originally, totem poles weren't placed along a forest trail like this one. They stood in villages where they could impress people passing by on the water. Totem poles were billboards advertising the wealth and prestige of the owner. They helped clansmen remember people, events, and legends.

What do they mean? Often we don't know. The story may have changed over time or been forgotten. The story may be sacred, to be shared only with clan members. Even in the past, the stories might have been so private that only owners understood the meaning of their poles.



YAADAAS CREST POLES



Old Kasaan Village, 1901, about 150 miles south of Sitka on Prince of Wales Island. Governor John Brady collected the Yaadaas Crest Poles in 1903.



# Suspended Animation

What matters more, an idea or an object? The totem poles in this clearing are both reproductions. Are the original poles more authentic?

In the past, clan members didn't try to preserve totem poles. Once the poles had stood for years, their job was done. The poles were allowed to decay in place and return to the earth.

Today the National Park Service tries to preserve the poles. When preservation is not possible, the poles are recarved. Recarvings allow the most important part of the poles—the story—to continue. People even suggested in the past that the original poles be destroyed.

Most of the poles on the Totem Trail are recarvings. You can see the oldest poles at Totem Hall or at the outdoor totem exhibit near the Visitor Center.

## RAVEN MEMORIAL POLE

Native Alaskans carved memorial poles like this one to honor a clan member. Some memorial poles were mortuary poles, which held the ashes of the deceased in a cavity at the back.

- 1903 John Brady collected original.
- 1939–42 Restored
- 1959 Accidentally burned during a school picnic
- 1959 George Federof and Ralph Branson carved replica.



Original Raven Memorial Pole, Tuxekan Village, 1904

Replacing Yaadaas Crest Corner Pole, 1978



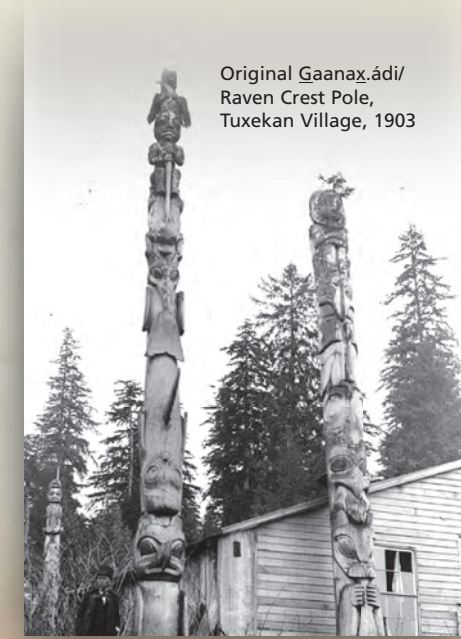
Master carver Nathan Jackson recarving Yaadaas Corner Pole, 1982



## GAANAX.ÁDI/RAVEN CREST POLE

This pole may be a crest pole—or it may tell the story of the raven and the whale.

- 1903 John Brady collected original.
- 1939 Restored or possibly recarved
- 1983 Nathan Jackson and Steve Brown recarved replica from photos of the original pole.



Original Gaanax.ádi/Raven Crest Pole, Tuxekan Village, 1903





# Riches from the Sea

People have coveted the abundant resources in the waters before you for thousands of years. The Tlingit settled here to fish, hunt, and gather food. They also traded with other Native Americans—and with Europeans who started visiting these shores in the 1700s.

Look closely and you may see a fur seal or otter. 200 years ago European traders acquired thousands

of these pelts—“soft gold” sold in China where they were a sign of wealth and prestige. As Alaska’s closest neighbor, Russia encountered Native Alaskans first. The Russian American Company, closely tied to the Russian imperial government, established outposts from the Aleutian Islands to Fort Ross near present-day San Francisco.

### DIVIDED WATERS

Tlingit fished for cod, halibut, herring, and especially salmon in waters near here. Each Tlingit clan had exclusive fishing areas. Infringement by others was grounds for war or retribution.



### Why Here?

- ✓ Direct access to the Pacific Ocean
- ✓ Naturally protected port
- ✓ Abundant fishing and food gathering
- ✓ Large population of sea otters and fur seals

### THE CHINA TRADE

From 1790–1820, Russians traded more than 175,000 sea otter pelts. In China, good quality pelts sold for up to ten times what they were worth in Alaska.

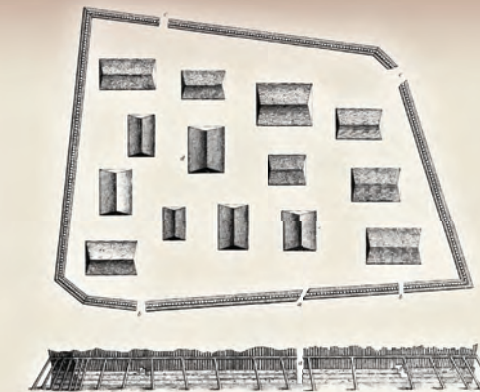




# Ready for the Russians' Return

Armed with muskets and cannon, the *Kiks.ádi* Tlingit defended themselves from a Russian assault in a fort they built near here. The Russians attacked to recover land lost in 1802 when the *Kiks.ádi* and their allies had driven them out of Sitka. They knew the Russians would come back, and built their fort out of range of ship-fired cannon—close to food and water in the river valley.

When the Russian ships appeared, the *Kiks.ádi* hoped that their former allies would come to their aid. Six days later the clan was running out of ammunition and no help was in sight. They slipped away under cover of darkness.



*The fort was an irregular square, its longest side looking toward the sea. It was constructed of wood, so thick and strong, that the shot from my guns could not penetrate it at the short distance of a cable's length.*

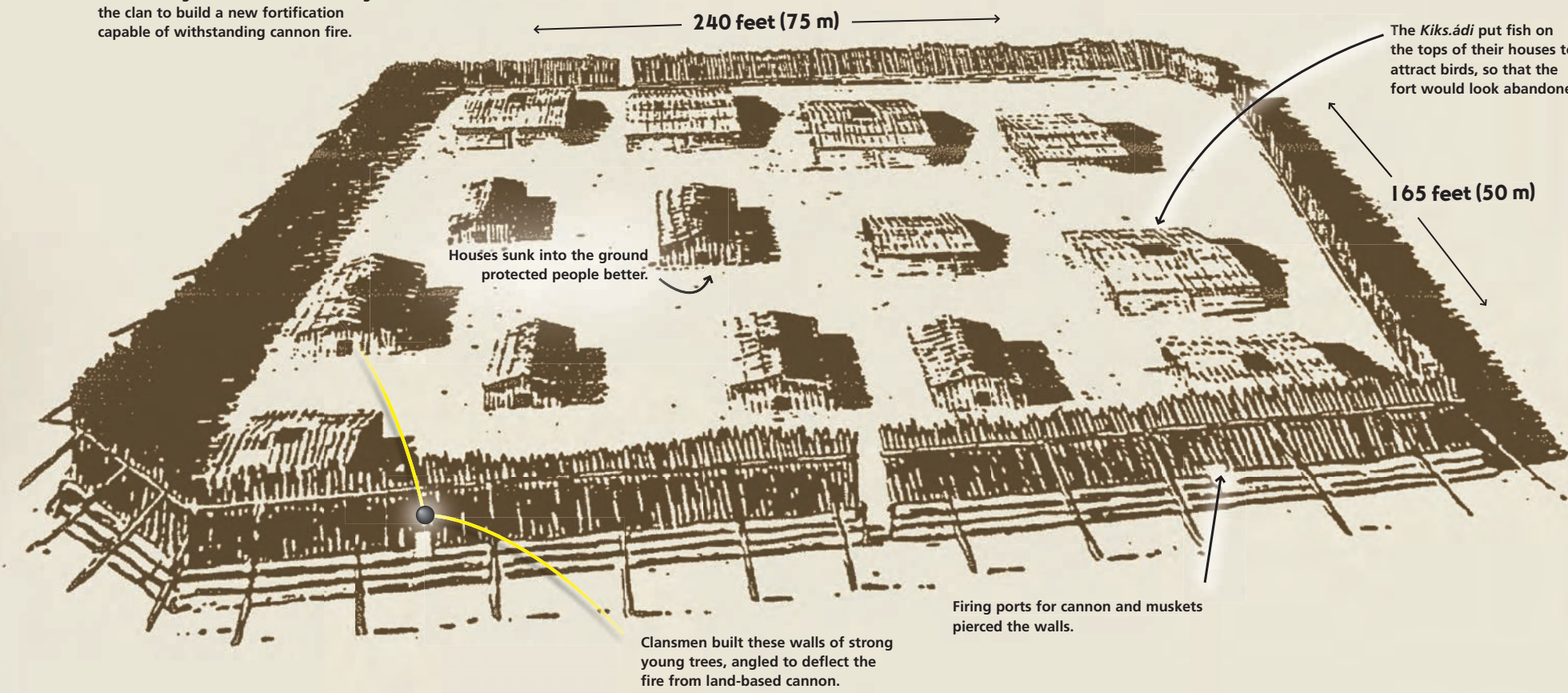
Iurii Lisianskii, captain of the Russian warship *Neva*, from his book *A Voyage Around the World*, 1814



Returning Russian ships

## SHÍS'GI NOOW "The Fort of Young Saplings"

In 1802, Tlingit Shaman *Stoonookw* urged the clan to build a new fortification capable of withstanding cannon fire.





*To our luck we found here . . . the Frigate Neva that came to our aid.*

Aleksandr Baranov, manager  
Russian-American Company, 1805

Two twists of fate spelled disaster for the *Kiks.ádi*—the unexpected arrival of the frigate *Neva* and the loss of the canoe bearing ammunition and young Tlingit leaders.

Confident of victory, Russian sailors had boldly waded ashore near here in 1804 in a frontal attack on the *Kiks.ádi* fort located close by. Driven back by cannon and musketfire, the Russians retreated to the beach. *Kiks.ádi*

*When the canoe blew up with all the ammunition, and the powder which they have saved for a long time blew up, they no longer have anything to fight with.*

A.P. Johnson, *Kiks.ádi* elder  
retelling the Battle of 1804

warriors counterattacked from underwater, led by their leader *K'alyáan* wielding the blacksmith's hammer he took when the *Kiks.ádi* drove the Russians out in 1802.

The Russians regrouped and laid siege. After six days—and out of ammunition—the *Kiks.ádi* left their fort, marching north to Peril Strait, leaving Sitka to the Russians.

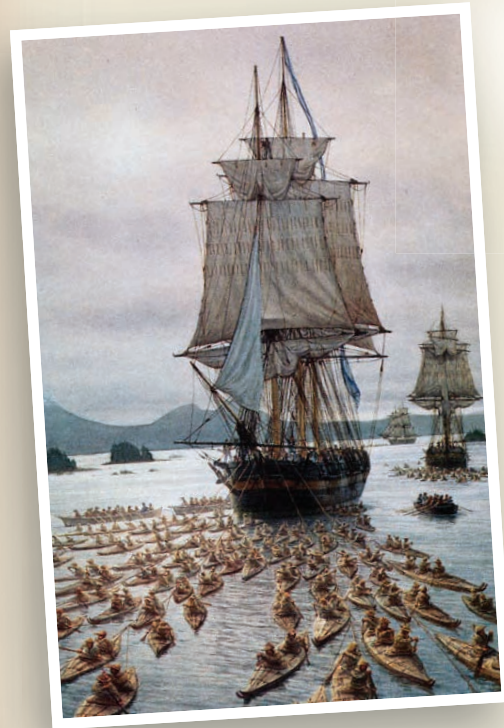


**THEN—AND NOW**

You can see *K'alyáan's* hammer at the visitor center. The raven helmet he wore during the battle is displayed in the Sheldon Jackson Museum. This helmet is still used in tribal ceremonies.

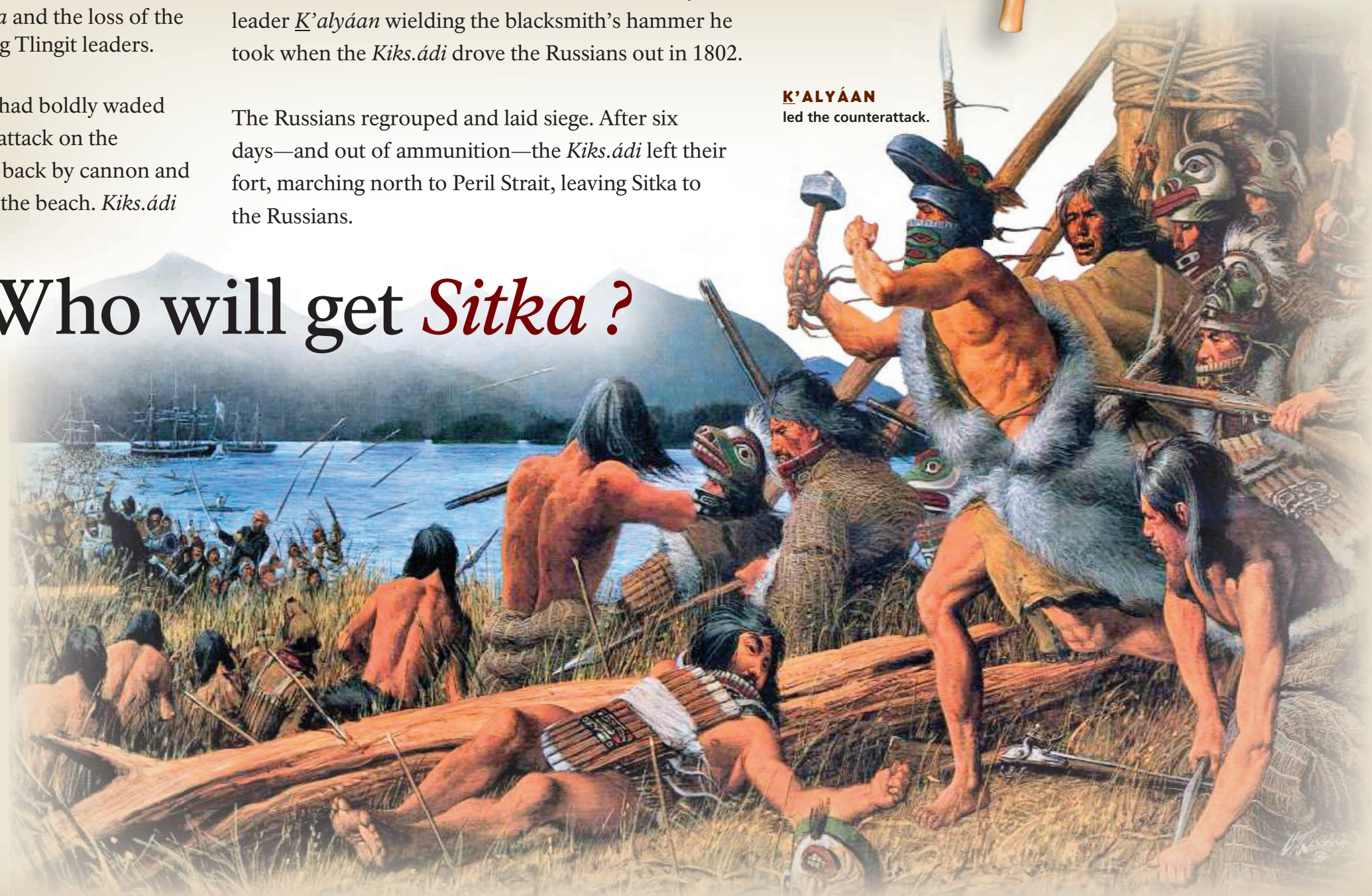
**K'ALYÁAN**  
led the counterattack.

# Who will get *Sitka* ?



**FORCED TO FIGHT**

Native Alaskan Alutiiq and Aleut hunters towed the *Neva* close to shore so its cannons could fire on the *Kiks.ádi* fort. The Russians forced these Native Alaskans to hunt and fight for them by threatening their families.





# To Honor and Heal

The *Kiks.ádi* Tlingit placed the totem pole in this clearing in 1999 in honor of *K'alyáan*, their leader during the 1804 battle. Then in 2004, 200 years after the battle, *Kiks.ádi* and Russians met here again to grieve, forgive and heal.

*Kiks.ádi* elders still tell the story of the battle. Retelling the story keeps the events as close as yesterday's news. Once peace was made, the *Kiks.ádi* put aside the conflict and closed the old wounds.

## 1999 K'ALYÁAN POLE

Tommy Joseph carved the 35-foot-tall red cedar *K'alyáan* Pole. Community members raised the pole to honor those who lost their lives here in 1804.

## 2004 PEACE CEREMONY

Russian leader Aleksandr Baranov presented this **brass peace hat** to the head of the *Kiks.ádi* tribe to ratify the peace treaty after the battle of 1804. The American Museum of Natural History in New York City purchased the hat in 1894 and returned it to the *Kiks.ádi* in 2003.



## 2011 MEMORIAL PLAQUE

The plaque you see near the totem pole honors the fallen *Kiks.ádi* of 1804. You can find a similar plaque honoring the Russian losses on the other side of Indian River.





# The Nutrient Highway

SEA TO SOIL AND BACK AGAIN

The river before you has been a grocery store for people and animals for millennia. The salmon that first attracted bears and other wildlife also drew the Tlingit who settled nearby.

The salmon feeds the forest as well. Leftovers of fish carried inland by bears and birds decompose, transferring nutrients from the sea to the soil.

Look For . . .



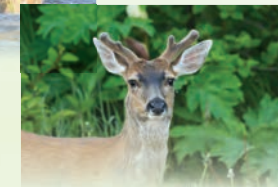
Brown Bear



Harlequin Duck



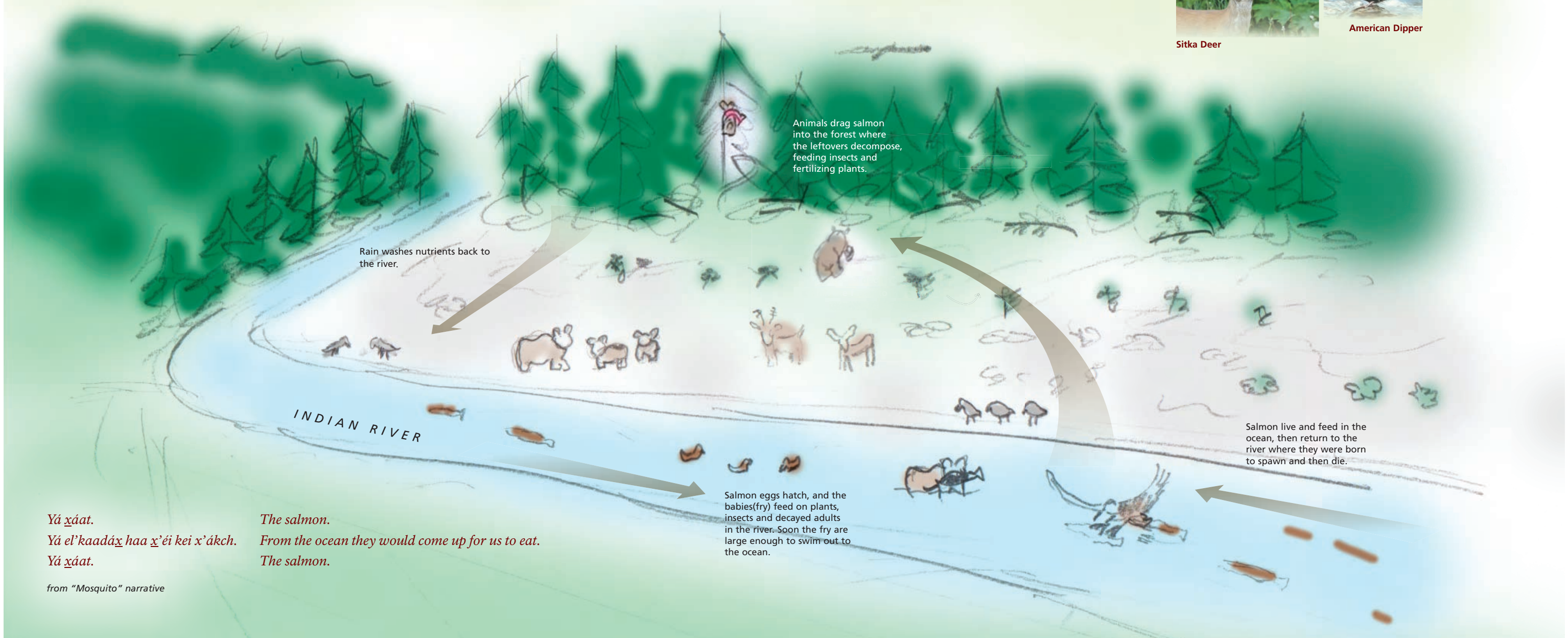
Bald Eagle



Sitka Deer



American Dipper



*Yá xáat.*  
*Yá el'kaadáx haa x'éi kei x'ákch.*  
*Yá xáat.*

*The salmon.*  
*From the ocean they would come up for us to eat.*  
*The salmon.*

from "Mosquito" narrative

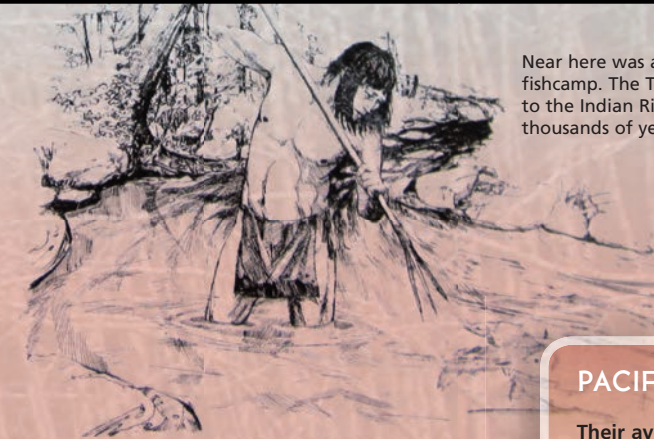




# Life-giving *Waters*

Look around you. Everything you see depends on the Indian River, which provides moisture, habitat and food for plants and animals in the water, on land, and in the air. In late summer, you may see this river teeming with salmon

swimming upstream to lay eggs and die. Salmon need healthy streams with good water flow to spawn and grow. Since plants and animals here depend on the salmon for food, a healthy stream is the foundation of a healthy forest.



Near here was a Tlingit summer fishcamp. The Tlingit people have come to the Indian River to catch salmon for thousands of years.

## Pink SALMON LIFE CYCLE



**EGGS**  
hatch in 5-8 months



**ALEVINS**  
(hatchlings) feed off their egg sacs for several weeks.



**FRY**  
migrate to the estuary, where fresh and saltwater mix. There they adapt to a salt water environment before entering the sea.



**OCEAN ADULTS**  
spend 18 months feeding and growing in the ocean.



**ACTUAL-SIZE ADULT Humpback**

Male spawning pink salmon develop a distinctive hump which helps them balance while swimming through rough rivers. Pinks outnumber all other species in this river. More than a million fish return every year.

### PACIFIC SALMON FACTS

**Their average maximum weight is**  
4.8 lbs. (Pink adults) to over 50 lbs. (King adults).

**Their average maximum length is**  
20 in. (Pink adults) to over 36 in. (King adults).

**Their average lifespan is**  
2 years for Pink, 9 years for King.

**They all come home to spawn.**  
Salmon spend their adult life in the ocean and return to lay and fertilize eggs in the fresh water streams where they were born.

**Pink salmon females can lay over 2,000 eggs.**  
Up to 85% die before hatching.

**All Pacific salmon die after spawning.**

### WHEN YOU CAN SEE SALMON

**MID-JULY ~ SEPTEMBER**  
Pink, Chum

**LATE SEPTEMBER ~ DECEMBER**  
Coho, King



### NO FISHING

in the Indian River inside Sitka National Historical Park's boundaries.

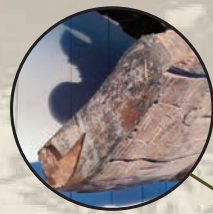


**MOSQUITO LEGEND POLE FRAGMENT** *original from 1804*



**FILLED CRACKS**

Early restorers filled large cracks with wood or plaster. Over time, these fillers separated and allowed water to seep in.



**LEAD CAPS**

The lead cap installed by CCC workers on the Mosquito Legend Pole reduced decay at the top of the pole.



**CANVAS WRAPS**

Canvas tacked over damaged areas reduced water exposure and slowed down decay.

**GAANAX.ÁDI/RAVEN CREST** *1930s replica*



**YAADAAS CREST** *original center section with replica ends*

replica



replica



**NEW PARTS**

Restorers replaced badly rotted parts with new wood. Carvers recreated the original design on the replaced wood.

# Our Responsibility to Preserve

Native Alaskans intended for their totem poles to decay and return to the earth. Federal law protects the poles now that they are in a national historical park. From 1939–40 Civilian Conservation Corps(CCC) workers restored the poles brought here in 1906. The CCC hired older experienced carvers to teach young craftsmen their skills. This helped revive the dying art of totem carving. When possible, the craftsmen repaired the original poles, but some poles

were so decayed that carvers made replicas. Over the years the Park Service has tried many ways to repair and preserve the poles. In the 1990s, NPS conservators cleaned and repaired the poles, treated them with a non-toxic fungal deterrent, and coated them with water repellent. They also attached the poles to new, separate support poles to prevent rot by keeping the carved areas out of contact with the ground. These preservation techniques continue today.

Recarvings of all three poles can be seen along the Totem Trail.



Lead caps are still used today to keep water from soaking into the pole.

Park staff use environmentally friendly wood preservatives that are easily applied with a sprayer. Poles are treated every 3 to 5 years.



Walk through a *Cool* Rainforest  
EXPLORE THE OTHER SIDE OF THE TOTEM TRAIL

Here you can see more plant matter per square foot than in the Amazon rain forest. Temperate rain forests form where moist ocean air is trapped by coastal mountains and condenses. The ocean keeps temperatures from getting too hot or cold. Sitka's temperate rain forest is cool and wet, a rare and wonderful world of huge, ancient evergreen trees.

Every living thing has a role to play. Trees provide habitat and convert carbon dioxide to oxygen, then die and become nurseries for seedlings. Birds and animals spread seeds. Decomposers like fungus fungi convert dead matter into fertilizer. Salmon travel up the Indian River. When they die, their bodies feed the forest with nutrients collected in the ocean.

**TRAIL FACTS**

Length: **1.0 mile** (1.6 km)  
Average Time: **30-45 minutes**

INDIAN RIVER

**TRAIL REGULATIONS**

- Foot traffic only
- Keep pets on a leash. Clean up all pet waste.
- No camping
- No open alcoholic beverages
- Walk bikes on the trail.

**TRAIL ACCESSIBILITY**

- Totem Trail is wheelchair accessible. Trail surface is compacted stone. Current trail data is provided below.
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Audio description scanning post and mobile device.

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**TRAIL FACTS**

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 Roundtrip time: **30-45 minutes**

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**TRAIL ACCESSIBILITY**

Totem Trail is wheelchair accessible. Trail surface is compacted stone. Current trail data is provided below.

Audio description is provided for each wayside exhibit. Scan the audio description symbol at the corner of each wayside frame. The scanning device is available at the visitor center. The audio is also available by scanning the QR code with your smartphone.

Cellphone walking tour: Look for cellphone tour stop signs on the backs of totem poles. Instructions are provided on each sign.

Audio description scanning free and available.

Changeable displays  
 (1) Access Board Trail Data  
 (2) Misc.

32"





# Walk through a *Cool* Rainforest

## EXPLORE THE OTHER SIDE OF THE TOTEM TRAIL

Here you can see more plant matter per square foot than in the Amazon rain forest. Temperate rain forests form where moist ocean air is trapped by coastal mountains and condenses. The ocean keeps temperatures from getting too hot or cold. Sitka's temperate rain forest is cool and wet, a rare and wonderful world of huge, ancient evergreen trees.

Every living thing has a role to play. Trees provide habitat and convert carbon dioxide to oxygen, then die and become nurseries for seedlings. Birds and animals spread seeds. Decomposers like banana slugs convert dead matter into fertilizer. Salmon travel up the Indian River. When they die, their bodies feed the forest with nutrients collected in the ocean.

### TRAIL FACTS



Length  
**1.0 mile** (1.6 km)  
roundtrip loop

Average Time  
**30-45 minutes**

Totem pole



'Potato chip' bark

**SITKA SPRUCE**  
grow to over 200 feet tall and 10 feet in diameter. They only live near the coast since they need lots of rain, cool summers, and mild winters.



'Bacon' bark

**WESTERN HEMLOCK**  
are easily toppled by strong winds because of their shallow roots. Look for young saplings growing out of fallen logs.

**INDIAN RIVER 1887**  
The heart of the local ecosystem, these waters pump nutrients between forest and sea.



**Baranof Castle Hill State Historic Site**   **Saint Michael's Cathedral**   **Sitka Historical Museum**   **Russian Bishop's House**   **Sheldon Jackson Museum**   **Sitka Sound Science Center**   **Alaska Raptor Center**

Climb to the site of the earliest Tlingit stronghold for amazing 360 degree views of Sitka and the harbor.  
 See icons and other Russian religious art—rescued when the cathedral burned in 1966—displayed in this reconstructed church.  
 Learn about Sitka's Tlingit, Russian, and American history through exhibits, photographs, and artifacts.  
 Explore one of the last remaining buildings from the Russian colonial period. Discover the legacy of Russian America and tour the refurbished quarters of the Russian Bishop.  
 Examine thousands of Native Alaskan artifacts and works of art collected in the late 1800s by missionary Sheldon Jackson.  
 Touch sea anemones, abalone, barnacles and star fish. Visit the hatchery where four species of salmon are raised, then released into Sitka Sound.  
 See eagles, hawks, falcons, and owls at Alaska's foremost bald eagle hospital and educational center.



**Totem TOP TEN**

- 1 The oldest totem poles in the park came from Haida and Tlingit villages located about 150 miles south of Sitka. Alaska Governor John Brady brought them here in 1906. Newer poles like the K'alyaan pole (1999) were carved specifically for the park.
- 2 Totem poles are not objects of worship. They honor families, commemorate events, or tell stories.
- 3 You can't read a totem pole like a hieroglyphic. You must know the history of the pole and of the family that commissioned it before you can understand its meaning.
- 4 The phrase "low man on the totem pole" is a misnomer. Figures on a totem pole are not stacked in order of their importance.
- 5 Traditional totem poles are made from a single cedar trunk. Artists can take 6 months to a year to complete one. Untreated poles can last 50-100 years depending on size and location.
- 6 Earliest carvers used tools made out of rock, bone, beaver teeth, and shells. Today artists use adzes, gouges, knives and sometimes homemade tools to carve poles.
- 7 Totem poles in Sitka are hollow in back to make them lighter. They are mounted on separate poles to prevent rot by keeping the carved figures off the ground.
- 8 The fur trade in the early 1800s led to the carving of more totem poles. Trade brought more money and iron tools to the native peoples. European diseases killed many high-ranking clansmen. Wealthy families competed for leadership by holding extravagant potlaches (gift-giving celebrations). They commissioned totem poles to advertise their families' prosperity and status.
- 9 Totem pole carving declined in the late 1800s. Missionaries and governments discouraged the practice of native traditions. Many natives moved from clan homes to single-family homes near work. Native children moved away to boarding schools. Skilled carvers had no work and no one to learn their craft.
- 10 The Great Depression stimulated a renaissance in totem pole carving. The few remaining skilled carvers worked for the Civilian Conservation Corps in the 1930s to teach their skills to younger tribal members.



Tommy Joseph using an adze.



The 70-foot-tall (21m) Saanaheit Pole (to your left) is the tallest totem pole in the Park.



**Baranof Castle Hill State Historic Site**    **Saint Michael's Cathedral**    **Sitka Historical Museum**    **Russian Bishop's House**    **Sheldon Jackson Museum**    **Sitka Sound Science Museum**    **Alaska Raptor Center**

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# Walk SITKA

The best way to see Sitka is by foot. Most attractions are just minutes away. Match your available time with the time scale above.

## Top TOTEM FACTS

- 1- What kind of wood is used for totem poles?  
Red Cedar
- 2- Which is the tallest totem pole in the Park?  
Saanaheit Pole (directly to your left), 70 feet tall
- 3- How long does it take to carve a totem pole?  
Around six months to a year
- 4- What tools are used to carve totem poles?  
One of the traditional tools is an adze.
- 5- Where did the Sitka totem poles come from?  
Most of the original poles that came to the park in 1906 were from Haida and Tlingit villages around 150 miles south of Sitka. Some poles like the *Kalyáan* pole (1999) were carved specifically for the park.
- 6- How long do totem poles last?  
Traditional totem poles were not treated with wood preservatives. They lasted 50-100 years depending on size and location.
- 7- What is the purpose of a totem pole?  
Totem poles are story tellers, memorials, family crests, and advertisements. Totem poles are not objects of worship. You can't read a totem pole like a hieroglyphic. You must know the history of the pole and of the family that commissioned it before you can understand its meaning.
- 8- When did Native Alaskans start carving totem poles?  
The Haida, Tlingit, and Tsimshian peoples made the first tall totem poles with multiple figures in the late 1700s. Totem poles were NOT traditionally carved by Native Americans in the southwest US.
- 9- Where do the names come from?  
The name given to a totem pole usually comes from the pole's purpose. The Mosquito Legend pole tells the story of the creation of mosquitos. The Yaadaas Crest pole is a family crest pole from the Yaadaas Haida clan.
- 10- Why are they hollow in the back?  
Totem poles here are hollow in back to make them lighter. They are mounted on separate poles to prevent rot by keeping the carved figures off the ground.



Tommy Joseph using an adze.

## DID YOU KNOW?

- 1- The oldest totem poles still standing in their original location are on Anthony Island in British Columbia.
- 2- Figures on a Totem Pole are not stacked in order of their importance. The phrase "low man on the totem pole" is a misnomer.
- 3- The fur trade in the early 1800s led to the carving of more totem poles. Trade brought more money and iron tools to the native peoples. European diseases killed many high ranking clansmen. Wealthy families competed for these vacant leadership positions by holding potlaches (gift-giving celebrations). They commissioned totem poles to advertise their prosperity and status.
- 4- Duane Pasco carved the Bicentennial Pole in front of you in 1976 to commemorate the last 200 years of Pacific Northwest Coast Indian cultural history.

The Saanaheit Pole was the first totem pole brought to Sitka in 1901, donated by Chief Saanaheit as a memorial to his people.



# Living, Learning, and Praying Together

In this large building, Tlingit children learned to read and write in their own language. Native men studied to become Orthodox priests in the seminary here. The Russian bishop lived and worked in this building as well. Language was key to their interaction.

Wherever they went in Alaska, Russian priests first learned the native language. They often developed the first written form. Then they translated religious texts so that natives could read them. This acceptance of the native language extended to native customs and lifestyle.

Respect helped the Russian Orthodox religion take hold amongst the Tlingits and other peoples. Marriage, parenthood, and friendships reinforced what appreciation for language began. This mutual respect is why the Russian Orthodox Church remains strong in Alaska today.



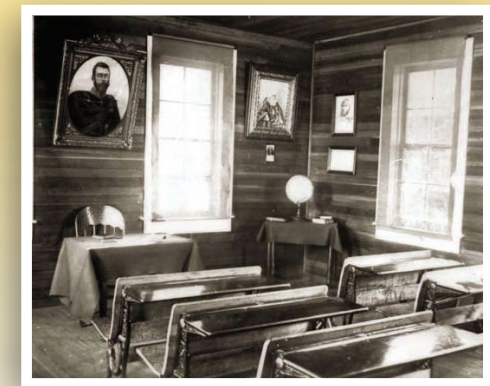
Clergy and congregation pose with a model of St. Michael's Church, around 1900. The 1848 Church and the 1842 Russian Bishop's House remain the best symbols of the Russian Orthodox faith in Sitka.



The Russian imperial government expected the Russian Orthodox Church to oversee native education. These Tlingit schoolchildren pose near here at the main entrance to the Russian Bishop's House.



An Orthodox priest and Native Alaskans pose with beehives behind the Russian Bishop's House around 1900. Russians—many from northern Siberia—and natives shared their techniques for growing and gathering food in this challenging climate.



Interior of schoolhouse, around 1900. By this time only white children received schooling here.



Russian Bishop's House, built 1842

Schoolhouse, built 1897

You Are Here

View of Russian Bishop's House from beach by E.W. Merrill, around 1900





# Church, Company, and Empire

## RUSSIAN BISHOP'S HOUSE



Russian Bishop's House, 1895



### EXPANDING INFLUENCE

The Russian American Company spread the influence of the Russian Orthodox Church throughout Alaska and as far south as Fort Ross near San Francisco, California.

If you lived in Sitka in the early 1800s, you would have recognized the yellow walls and red roof as the colors of the Russian American Company. In 1799, Tsar Paul I granted this company a monopoly on all trade in Russian America. In return, the Tsar required the company to support the Russian Orthodox Church with money, supplies and protection.

The Russian imperial treasury continued to support the church in Sitka even after the United States acquired Alaska in 1867. This support ended after the 1917 revolution when the Bolsheviks overthrew the Tsar. The Russian Orthodox Church in America continued to maintain the Russian Bishop's House until the National Park Service acquired it in 1972.

### ENDURING PRESENCE

The Russian Bishop's House is one of two remaining historic Russian structures in Sitka. Only four Russian buildings survive in North America.

Russian American Company Building  
*(now the Tilson Building, private business)*  
1852

St. Michael's Cathedral  
1848  
*(rebuilt in 1966)*

Russian Bishop's House  
1842





# Russian Bishop's House



## Sitka National Historical Park

National Park Service  
U.S. Department of the Interior



# The Cottage Community

## Bridge to the Future or Barrier to the Past?

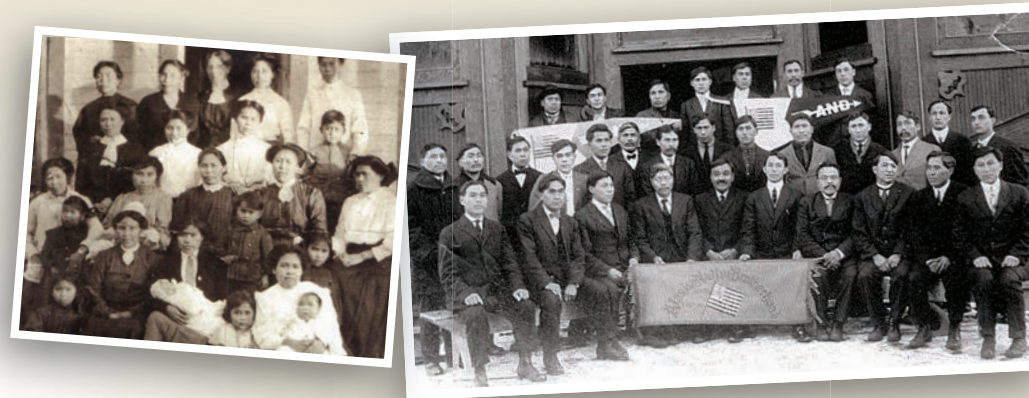
*Here American ideas will continue to grow, Christian graces will be fostered and encouraged... They will continue to receive advice and counsel from the teachers of the school, and we hope to see them keep model homes.* - Indian Industrial and Training School, August 2, 1887.

If you stood here in 1900 you would have seen neat American style cottages financed by the Indian Industrial and Training School for their Tlingit graduates. Protestant missionaries established this model village to safeguard their influence over these young families. The Tlingit men and women who lived here agreed to give up native

traditions, unlike Russian Orthodox followers who were encouraged to incorporate tribal customs into their faith. This close-knit community produced many of Sitka's modern day Tlingit leaders. Did this lifestyle doom native culture, or did it help Native Alaskans prove that they were "real" Americans?



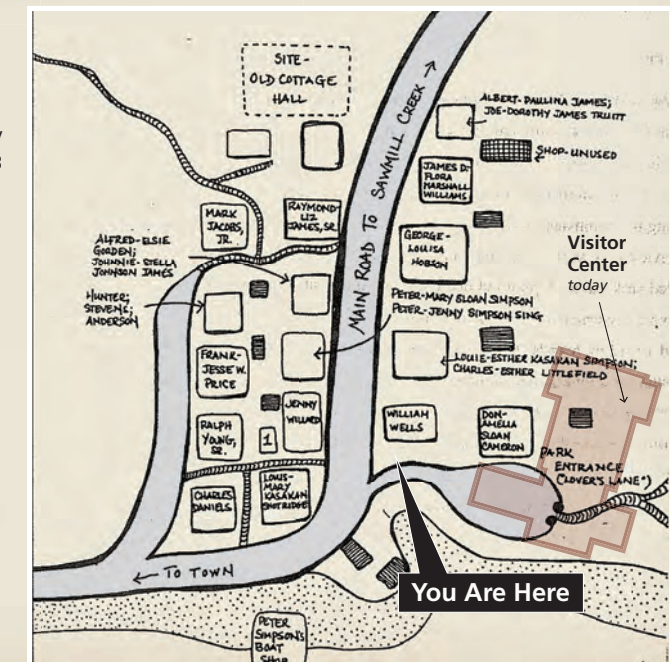
Members of the Cottage Women's Missionary Society, 1905. Cottage residents pledged to send their children to school, keep the Sabbath, abstain from alcohol and gambling, and avoid traditional festivities and customs.



Cottage residents Peter Simpson, Frank Price, and Ralph Young helped found the Alaska Native Brotherhood in 1912 to promote education, citizenship, and civil rights for Alaska natives.

Cottages along Metlakatla street (in front of you), early 1900s.

Cottage Community homesites, 1923



*Every native Indian . . . who has severed all tribal relationships and adopted the habits of civilized life may . . . have . . . [United States] citizenship.*

Legislature of the Territory of Alaska, April 27, 1915