**Sitka National Historical Park**

**DISTANCE LEARNING PROGRAM OUTLINE**

**Created by Austin McCourt on April 9th, 2021**

**“Exploring Conflict and Colonization: The Sitka Battles of 1802 and 1804”**

**Overview:**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Duration | 40-50 Minute program |
| Location | Presented to students via remote meeting software |
| Audience | High School students |
| Topic | The Sitka Battles of 1802 and 1804 |
| Learning Standards | **See the “Learning Standards” table** |

**Goal:** The goal of this educational program is to provide students of various backgrounds, ethnicities, faiths, and statuses with a factual, curriculum-based educational program exploring the Battles of 1802 and 1804, in which fur hunters in the employ of the Russian American company battled with the Kiks.ádi Tlingit over control of the land that is now Sitka, Alaska. Significant historical events such as the foundation of the Russian colony of New Archangel and the Kiks.ádi Survival March are intrinsically linked to these events, and their impact had a wide-reaching effect on Alaskan, Russian, and later American history as well. This program will aim to explore the historical perspective and context of these events, as well as the forming effect they had on this land and the people who have called this place home.

**Objectives:**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| 1 | Objective | Students will understand what allowed Alaskan native people to thrive in Southeast Alaska, and the reasons the Russians wanted to settle here |
| Learning Tool | Students will be able to explain the abundance of natural resources in Southeast Alaska, and the particular draw European hunters and settlers had to Sea Otter fur |
| 2 | Objective | Students will understand how the Russian’s interacted with the Kiks.ádi before the Battle of 1802 |
| Measuring Tool | Students will be able to describe the foundation of Saint Michael’s Redoubt in 1799, and the ways the Russians and their Alaskan native allies offended and disrupted the lives of the Tlingit |
| 3 | Objective | Students will be able to describe the details of the Battle of 1802 |
| Measuring Tool | Students will understand that the “Battle” of 1802 was less of a battle, and more of a coordinated ambush that weakened the Russian American Company’s position here |

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| 4 | Objective | Students will learn how the Russians and the Tlingit reacted to the Battle of 1802, and the ways they prepared for the inevitable further conflict |
| Measuring Tool | Students will be able to describe what the Russians and Tlingit did in the aftermath of the battle, and how they prepared for further conflict |
| 5 | Objective | Students will understand the course of the Battle of 1804, and the disadvantages the Tlingit faced despite their preparation |
| Measuring Tool | Students will learn about the arrival of the *Neva* to aid Russian forces, the loss of the Tlingit’s gunpowder and supplies, and the siege of Shis’gi Noow |
| 6 | Objective | Students will learn about the aftermath of the Battle of 1804 including the Kiks.ádi Survival March and the establishment of New Archangel |
| Measuring Tool | Students will understand the history of colonization of this place, and the ways in which the Russians took over the village of *Shee Atiká* |

**Theme:** The foundation of Russian settlements, particularly here in the place we now know as Sitka, are accompanied by major historical themes including colonization and the erasure of the rights of indigenous peoples. Within the Battles of 1802 and 1804 that occurred between the Tlingit who lived in this part of Alaska (primary from the clans Kiks.ádi and Kaagwaantaan) and the Russian promyshlenniki and their own Alaskan native “employees”, these themes can be felt as very real, physical examples, and reminders.

**Essential Questions:** Why were the Russians so interested in establishing a colony here on Baranof Island? What factors caused rising tensions between the Russians and the Kiks.ádi? How were the Russian settlers abusing the land and its resources? How did the Tlingit prepare for the battle of 1804? What disadvantages did the Tlingit face during the Battle of 1804? Why did the Tlingit choose to leave on their Survival March?

**Tangible-Intangible Linkages:**

Studying the ways the Russians offended and outraged the Kiks.ádi will help students conceptualize a pattern of behavior demonstrated by European settlers towards indigenous peoples all over the world

Learning about how each side prepared for the Battle of 1804, such as gathering supplies and armaments, will help students learn about what kinds of trade were occurring between Alaskan Native people and European and American merchants

Studying the history of the Kiks.ádi Survival March will help students conceptualize the lengths that indigenous people had to go to in order to keep their culture alive.

**Background:**

After 1741, the Russians began expanding outward from the Eastern shore of Siberia in their search for sea otter fur- it’s density and warmth made it an incredibly valuable trade good, and would be exchanged in China for other luxury goods like tea, spices, and porcelain. Driven by their desire for sea otter fur, these Russian fur hunters expanded eastward throughout the Aleutian Islands, searching for more sustainable populations of their prey as they went. In Russian, these fur hunters were known as Промышленники (Promyshlenniki). When translated literally, this term means “industrialists” or “those who practice industry”; its colloquial meaning is much closer to “fur traders/trappers/hunters”. The Russians were experts at hunting land animals but lacked the knowledge or tools to hunt marine mammals like otters and seals. Instead, they relied on Alaskan native people they encountered in the Aleutian Islands like the Unangan, who the Russians called Aleut, to do their hunting for them. More often than not, the Russians coerced the Unangan into working for them through a system of threats, indenture, intermarriage, and outright violence. After decades of overhunting in the Aleutian Islands, marine mammal populations fell to such low levels that the Russian promyshlenniki and their Unangan workers needed to continue exploring to find new Sea Otter populations.

Fur hunters made their way into Southcentral and Southeast Alaska, meeting new populations of Alaskan native people like the Sugpiaq or Alutiit. The Russians coerced the Sugpiaq into working for them in the same way they had the Aleut. For the first time in their Alaskan venture, the Russians also had to contend with competing foreign interests. In Southcentral and Southeast Alaska, they began encountering hunters and traders from Great Britain and France, as well as early colonization efforts sent by the Spanish from Mexico and California. As a response, the Russians increased their efforts to establish bases of power and expand their sphere of influence in the region by establishing permanent colonies. In 1784, the Russians founded their first permanent Alaskan colony at Three Saints Bay on Kodiak Island. To decrease competition and increase efficiency, Tsar Paul I consolidated various, private Russian fur-trading enterprises into a single, monopolized, state owned entity (à la the Hudson Bay Company, or the British East India Company) in 1799- the Russian American company.

Among the locations the Russians wanted to build a colony was on Baranof Island, which was known as *shee* in the native Tlingit language. Its strategic location, natural harbor and shelter, and abundance of natural resources made it ideal. Unwilling to part with their native land, and rightfully so, the Russians and Tlingit eventually reached a compromise. The Russians would be allowed to settle at a site down the coast from the Tlingit village, *Shee Atiká*. The true nature of these “negotiations” were unknown, and it is unclear if the Russian settlers truly had permission to build an outpost and harvest natural resources in the area. Under the auspices of the Russian American company, promyshlenniki constructed a small outpost on Baranof Island, which they called Saint Michael’s Redoubt, in 1799.

The period between 1799 and 1802 was not a peaceful time for the Russians and the Tlingit. They frequently clashed over abuses of Tlingit women, disrespect of Tlingit elders, and tremendous strain on the natural resources of the region. The Tlingit who lived here (primary from the Kaagwaantaan and Kiks.ádi clans) were also harassed by Tlingit clans in other parts of Southeast Alaska for suffering Russian mistreatment without reprisal. This outrage led to violence in 1802, after an event described in Tlingit Oral History; Tlingit aristocrats were invited to Saint Michael’s Redoubt and, unbeknownst to them, fed human meat- something considered an ultimate taboo in Tlingit culture. A combined force of local Tlingit warriors and allies from across Southeast Alaska ambushed the Russian fort and hunting parties, killing dozens and burning the fort to the ground.

After 1802, the Tlingit prepared for a return attack by stockpiling food, weapons, and supplies and constructing a new fort at the head of *Kaasda Héen* (Indian River). They called this fort *Shis’gi Noow*, which means “The Fort of Young Saplings”. In 1804, the Russians returned with a large force of promyshlenniki and Alaskan native hunters. This force was aided by a Russian naval warship, the Нева (Neva), which had been passing by and checking on Russian holdings during a circumnavigation. It offered its guns, sailors, and the military expertise of commander Yuri Lisyanski. After a siege that lasted four days and nights, the Tlingit eventually realized that they would not be able to triumph in battle over the Russians without sustaining further losses. They elected to leave their traditional homes here in Sitka and move to a different part of *shee* in order to maintain their traditional way of life. This marks the beginning of a period the Kiks.ádi call their “Survival March”

After the Battle of 1804, the Russians were quick to turn *Shee Atiká* into a new Russian colony, which they named Ново Архангельск (Novo Arhangelsk), which translates to New Archangel. This colony was named after the Russian city of Archangel, which is located on Russia’s northern coast. The Kiks.ádi relocated to *Chaatlk'aanoow*, an abandoned fort that they repurposed, reinforced, and stocked with food and weapons. From *Chaatlk'aanoow*, the Kiks.ádi could see any canoe or ship heading toward Sitka and began developing a blockade, which cut into the Russian American Company’s profits. Furthermore, the Russians took their lives into their own hands whenever they left the colony to hunt for food; the Tlingit still controlled all the hills surrounding the town and, consequently, most of the supply of deer or bear the Russians could eat (which contributed to a growing food crisis the Russians within New Archangel faced). This was the relationship between these two groups for nearly 20 years, until the Tlingit suddenly returned to Sitka in 1822 and rebuilt their village outside the walls of the Russian colony- thus, *officially* ending the Battle of 1804.

**Teacher’s Guide**

**Program Overview/Teaser:**

For nearly 70 years, the Russian American company oversaw a colonial empire from their seat of power in the Russian colony of New Archangel- but founding a colony on the native land of the Tlingit people was no simple task. In this robust, place-based distance learning program, come the Battles of 1802 and 1804 that occurred right here in Sitka, while discussing important historical themes like conflict, colonization, and the rights of indigenous peoples.

**Program Objectives:**

Students will:

* Learn about the Russian promyshlenniki who came to Alaska to hunt for sea otters, and the ways they coerced native hunters into working for them
* Learn why the Russians were so eager to establish a colony here on Baranof Island
* Discuss the buildup to the Battle of 1802, including the ways in which the Tlingit and the Russians and their Alaskan native workers came into conflict and the specific stories associated with these events
* Learn about the course of the Battle of 1802 and specific details
* Understand how the Tlingit prepared for an inevitable counterattack post-Battle of 1802, and also understand how the Russians viewed their return
* Learn about the Russian’s return to Sitka in 1804, and the course of the battle including specific details like how the Tlingit’s preparation helped them, what kind of disadvantages they faced, and what kind of violence transpired
* Understand the aftermath of the Battle of 1804, including the details of the Kiks.ádi’s Survival March, the building of Ново Архангельск/New Archangel, and their blockade

**Standards Addressed**

See “Learning Standards” table

**Vocabulary and Important Concepts**

Tlingit, Kiks.ádi and Kaagwaantaan, Kalyaan/Katlian, *Shee Atiká*, Saint Michael’s Redoubt, *Shis’gi Noow*, Alexander Baranov, The Нева, Yuri Lisyanski, *Kaasda Héen,* Ново Архангельск/New Archangel, Survival March, Blockade

**Pre-program prep**

* Read the [National Park Service’s overview of the Battle of 1804](https://www.nps.gov/sitk/learn/historyculture/battle1804.htm#:~:text=Thus%20the%20Battle%20of%201804%20officially%20ended%20where,in%20the%20history%20of%20Alaska%20and%20Russian%20America.)
* Review the “Vocabulary and Important Concepts” section with students
* Encourage students to think of questions to ask the presenter. We usually have time at the end of a program to answer questions, and we're happy to answer overflow questions via e-mail. We love chatting with students about Sitka!
* The teacher is responsible for classroom management during the program. This includes calling on students throughout the program and helping to ensure that their answers and comments are understood by all. The teacher is also responsible for facilitating questions at the end of the program.

**Post-program reflection**

* Discuss or write about any of the following essential questions
  + What parts of their culture or history did the Tlingit lose by leaving *Shis’gi Noow* on their Survival March?
  + How do existing sources provide us insight into the Battles of 1802 and 1804? What perspectives do they portray? What details do they leave out, that you wish they included?
* [Email in your questions, comments, and feedback](https://www.nps.gov/common/utilities/sendmail/sendemail.cfm?o=4F80D5BA91DA90B990AE10AEED1EA4A36693569C12B18389&r=/teachers/classrooms/why-wilderness-distance-learning.htm)! We love to hear back from students and teachers about ways we can improve our distance-learning materials!

**Learning Standards**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **“Exploring Conflict and Colonization: The Sitka Battles of 1802 and 1804”**   * Russian promyshlenniki and how they coerced Alaskan native people into their employ * **The Pacific fur trade, and the value of Sea Otters** * European colonial efforts in Alaska, specifically by Russians * **The value of *Shee*, or Baranof Island, and why the Russians wanted to settle here** * The foundation of Saint Michael’s Redoubt in 1799 * **Growing conflict and antagonism between the promyshlenniki and the Tlingit** * The outbreak of violence in 1802, and the specific event that triggered it * **How the Russians and the Tlingit prepared for the inevitable battle to come** * The Russian’s return to Sitka and the details of the Battle of 1804 * **The Kiks.ádi Survival March, resettlement, and blockade** * The colony of New Archangel, and the return of the Tlingit in the 1820’s * **The continuing legacy of conflict in Sitka National Historical Park, and Southeast Alaska** | **PEOPLE, PLACES, ENVIRONMENT** | **CONSUMPTION, PRODUCTION, DISTTRIBUTION** | **INDIVIDUAL, CITIZENSHIP, GOVERNANCE, POWER** | **CONTINUITY AND CHANGE** |
| **The student demonstrates an understanding of the interaction between people and their physical environment by:**  **Learning the history of the Tlingit who have called this land home for thousands of years (G. C3)(G. E1,2,3)(G. F1,2,3)(H. B1bd,2,4,5)(CS. E1-8)**  Understanding the value of fur in the global economy (G. D1,2,5)(G.E 1,2,4)(GC. F1,2,4,10)(GC. G1,2,4,5,6,7) (H. B1bd,2,4,5)  **Learning the reasons that Baranof Island, or *Shee*, was a strategically valuable or important location(G. B1,2,4,8)**  Understanding the ways that Russian fur hunters coerced Alaskan natives into their service and perpetuated a cycle of dominance and control over these people (H. B1bd,2,4,5)(G. D1-5) | **The student demonstrates an understanding of the discovery, impact, and role of natural resources by:**  Understanding the value of fur in the global economy (G. D1,2,5)(G. E1,2,4)(GC. F1,2,4,10)(H. B1bd,2,4,5)  **Learning about the discovery of the sea otter and their valuable fur (H. B1bd,2,4,5)(G. D1-5)**  Understanding the historic settlement patters of both Alaskan native and European peoples in this area (H. B1bd,2,4,5)(G. D1-5) | **The student demonstrates an understanding of the historical rights and responsibilities of Alaskans by:**  Understanding the history (traditional, Indigenous, or otherwise) of their environs and homes (GC. 7,8)(H. B1bd,2,4,5)  **Learning about the ways Alaskan native people used and maintained natural resources, versus how Russians did the same (or lack thereof)(H. B1bd,2,4,5)(G. D1-5)**  Discussing the impacts of overhunting on Alaskan native people, economy, and further settlement(H. B1bd,2,4,5)(G. D1-5)  **Discussing the legacy of conflict between European settlers and Alaskan native people (H. B1bd,2,4,5)(CS. A1,4,7)(CS. B1-4)(CS. D5)(CS. E1-8)** | **The student demonstrates an understanding of the chronology of Alaska history by:**  Understanding the value of fur in the global economy (G. D1,2,5) (GC. F1,2,4,10) (H. B1bd,2,4,5)  **Understanding the historic settlement patters of both Alaskan native and European peoples in this area)(H. B1bd,2,4,5)(G. B1,2,4,8)(G. D1-5)**  Learning the background of the Battle of 1802 in Sitka, how the Tlingit prepared for further conflict, and the course of the Battle of 1804 (H. B1bd,2,4,5)  **Discussing the foundation of New Archangel and the Tlingit Survival March, and the subsequent Tlingit blockade and control of the land(H. B1bd,2,4,5)** |

All learning standards taken from: [Alaska State Educational Standards](file:///I:\Interpretation\SCA\2021\Austin\Misc\Alaska%20State%20Educational%20Standards.pdf)