

**Place and Power
Alaska Historical Society Annual Conference
Sitka, Alaska, October 14-17, 2020
Call for Papers**



Sitka from water, showing the Three Sisters in the background. Sitka Harbor-7, Alaska State Library Photo Collection.

“Place and Power” is the theme for the 2020 Alaska Historical Society Conference, to be held in Sitka, October 14-17. Gathering in Sitka while the community commemorates the 1867 transfer of Alaska from Russia to the United States provides a fitting location for exploring larger questions of power relations over time, such as how governmental laws and policies impact Alaskans and shape our understanding of history and identity.

Millennia of Tlingit history are marked in clan houses, place names and clan histories intimately connected with specific places. The power relationship between the Russian American Company colony at Sitka and the Tlingit people is represented in the Fort Site from the Battle of 1804, now the Sitka National Historical Park, and in surviving structures such as the Russian Bishop’s House and St Michael’s Orthodox Cathedral. The struggle between Alaska Native people and the U.S. government is also represented in the history of the Alaska Native Brotherhood Hall, Sheldon Jackson School, and Mt. Edgecumbe High School.

Conference sessions are being planned on Women’s Suffrage, the 50th Anniversary of the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (ANCSA), and the Legacy of Richard Nelson. The West, including Alaska, was ahead of the nation in recognizing the rights of women, thereby challenging us to ask how place influenced attitudes and what effect the Progressive Movement had on Alaskans and their views on women’s rights. Next year, 2021, marks the 50th anniversary of the passage of ANCSA, a major political settlement with profound consequences for Native sovereignty, subsistence rights, and governmental regulations on land use. The death of noted anthropologist and nature writer Richard Nelson provides a chance to examine a legacy of recording Native relationships to place and discuss how spiritual lessons learned from elders influenced his own understanding of place.

In addition to the planned sessions, papers on all topics related to Alaska history are welcome. Presentations are limited to 20 minutes, and all presenters must register for the conference.

To submit a proposal, please send your presentation title, an abstract of no more than 100 words, and two sentences about yourself to Rachel Mason, Program Chair, rachel_mason@nps.gov. Proposals are due May 31, 2020.
