**Sitka’s Historic Waterfront Walking Tour**

1. **Pyramid Packing Company** – Located at 475 Katlian St., the Fisherman’s Quay buildings were built in 1918 by the Pyramid Packing Company cannery, which operated into the 1960s. These men and others built over 100 fishing boats in Sitka between the teens and the 1960s. Hope’s shop is the only one still standing.

2. **Andrew Hope shop** - Later owned by boatbuilder Harry Jimmy. George Howard, Frank Kitka, Andrew Hope and Peter Simpson were some of the most prolific of Sitka’s Alaska Native boatbuilders. These men and others built over 100 fishing boats in Sitka between the teens and the 1960s. Hope’s shop is the only one still standing.

3. **Naval Air Station** – Hangars used for aircraft during World War II are now part of the campuses of the University of Alaska Southeast and Mt. Edgecumbe High School. Prominent from downtown, the hangars were part of the Sitka Naval Air Station. At the start of World War II, the Air Station was the only U.S. Naval Defense installation in the North Pacific. Thousands of military and construction personnel came to Sitka from the late 1930s and throughout the war.

4. **Japonski Island Boathouse** – Built just before World War II as part of the Sitka Naval Air Station, the Japonski Island Boathouse was a US Navy boat repair facility during the war. After sitting unused for decades, it is now being renovated by the Sitka Maritime Heritage Society.

5. **ANB Hall** – The Alaska Native Brotherhood formed in 1912 to fight for civil rights for Alaska Native people. At that time, Native people did not have full citizenship rights, or recognition of Native title to lands. The Sitka ANB Hall was built in 1914 and expanded in 1928.

6. **Noow Tlein (Castle Hill)** – Sitka is in the heart of Tlingit Aani, the ancestral homeland of the Tlingit people. Four Kiksadi clan houses were atop Noow Tlein or Large Fort in this picture, made in 1793 from a Tlingit fort Shiskinoo. Loss of a canoe of gunpowder led to evacuation of the fort, although Tlingit people retained control of this region until American occupation in 1867.

7. **Russian Boatyard** – For much of Sitka’s Russian Era (1804-1867), a shipbuilding operation and affiliated workshops were located in the downtown area at what is now Totem Square. Dozens of ships were built in this yard, including the first steamship built on the West Coast.

8. **Herring Rock** – Herring Rock is an important, ancient Tlingit landmark. When it had to be removed for construction, this piece was saved and relocated.

9. **Sitka Cold Storage site** – Built in 1913, from 1931 to 1973 Sitka Cold Storage froze millions of tons of halibut, salmon and other species until a fire ended the operation in 1973. The fire caused over $2 million in damage, and left over 150 tons of salmon rotting.
Sitka has five public harbors that are open to everyone. Be mindful that these are working harbors and are often busy places. Note that vessels are often outfitted for more than one gear type.

**Trollers**

Trollers fish primarily for salmon. They are easily identified in the harbor by their tall trolling poles. While in port, these two poles are hoisted straight up on either side of the mast. When fishing, the poles are lowered about forty-five degrees. Baited hooks trail from the poles as the boat slowly passes through the water.

**Longliners**

Longliners are used to catch halibut and other deep-water fish. They set a long line with an anchor and bouy at each end, that sinks to the bottom of the ocean. Each line has hundreds of baited hooks, which are 180 feet long with a weight at the bottom. Longliners are identified by the large hydraulic power block suspended over the rear deck. Seiners operate by encircling a school of fish with the net, turning the bottom shut, then hauling it aboard using the power block.

**Seiners**

Seiners are used in fisheries such as salmon and herring, where schools of fish are thick enough that they can be caught with a giant net. Seiners are identified by the large hydraulic power block suspended over the rear deck. Seiners operate by encircling a school of fish with the net, turning the bottom shut, then hauling it aboard using the power block.

**Gillnetters**

Gillnetters catch salmon by casting long, fine-filament nets where salmon are swimming. The nets, which hang like a curtain from floats, are designed such that fish get stuck by the Gill when they try to swim through them. Gillnetters are identifiable by the large reels or “drums” on which the net is stored.

**A Navy Marine Railway and Boat Repair Shop**

A Navy marine railway and boat repair shop during World War II, the Japonski Island Boathouse is being renovated by the Sitka Maritime Heritage Society as a working, public maritime heritage center. The facility will have hands-on exhibits, programs, and ultimately a haul-out where repairs can be made on historic wooden vessels.

The Boathouse, located directly across the O’Connell Bridge from downtown Sitka, is part of the Sitka Naval Operating Base National Historic Landmark. All restoration work is being done to historic preservation standards, so the completed building will look and feel much as it did during World War II.

For more information on the project or to make a contribution visit sitkamaritime.org.

**Historic Sitka**

Sitka’s maritime history goes back 10,000 years. Expert Tlingit crews in exquisite watercraft traded and interacted with people from California to Kodiak. Boston trading vessels made the fur trade global in the late 1700s. With the permission of Tlingit leaders, the Russian American Company made Sitka their base of Alaska colonial operations from 1808 until the United States took over in 1867. Sitka was the site of strategic defense base during WWII; the base is now repurposed for major healthcare and educational facilities and a Coast Guard Air Station.

Sitka today is a thriving commercial fishing port, and a destination for visitors from all over the world who come to experience Sitka’s maritime history, culture, thriving arts scene and incredible natural beauty and abundance.

**The Sitka Maritime Heritage Society**

This brochure is a project of the Sitka Maritime Heritage Society, a non-profit organization committed to preserving and sharing the maritime history of Sitka, Alaska.

Learn more about Guided and Self-Guided Walking Tours and other programs, join, or contribute at sitkamaritime.org.

**Join Us!**

To become a member of the Sitka Maritime Heritage Society, or to contribute to our construction fund, visit sitkamaritime.org.

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