

## **Sitka's Cottages Community in Alaska History and the Development of the Alaska Native Brotherhood**

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Importantly for Alaska history, in the early twentieth century Peter Simpson and other residents of "the Cottages" in Sitka established the Alaska Native Brotherhood, a crucial organization in advocating for Alaska Native citizenship and political activism. Alaskan Native political participation continues to play an important role, as shown by United States Senator Lisa Murkowski's 2010 speech crediting Alaskan Native voters for the success of her write-in bid for office. This article examines oral histories of residents of the Cottages community, where some Alaskan Natives such as Simpson resided after graduating from the Sheldon Jackson School, with the resulting finding that the Cottages environment was significant for both its change and its continuity. New cultural activities such as basketball were integrated into Alaska Native society at the Cottages, while the Cottages society also had long term impacts on sustaining Alaska Native culture and advancing Alaska Native rights. Despite the acculturation goals of missionaries, residents of the Cottages maintained strong ties to their Alaska Native communities, continued subsistence activities, respected the mentoring roles of elders, continued living with extended families, and participated in ceremonial community gatherings where oration was prized. Therefore, leadership styles that could be employed in a quickly changing world flourished at the Cottages.

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