



Anóoshi Lingítch shawuxeej

or "When the Tlingits took
a club to the Russians"



The Fort

Although the Russians vigilantly protected their fort, they were unaware of the impending Tlingit attack. In the days leading up to the raid, most of the Russian-American Company employees living at Redoubt Saint Michael were deployed in hunting parties away from the fort. At the time of the attack, about 20 male employees were present, along with their Native families.

The Attack

On a Sunday afternoon, June 15, 1802, Tlingit warriors launched a surprise attack on the redoubt from the sea and from the forest. Having moved into place during the night, the warriors silently and quickly surrounded the fort. The Kiks.ádi chief Shk'awulyeil directed the attack from a hill across from the Manager's house. The Tlingit warrior, K'alyáan, was the first to draw blood when he killed a blacksmith who was working outside the walls of the fort. Stoonook led the attack that came by sea, and was killed in the siege by a cannon fired through the barracks door by Medvednikov. The Russians resisted, but the Tlingits swiftly overwhelmed the fort, set it aflame, seized the women and otter pelts, and killed or captured anyone who tried to escape.

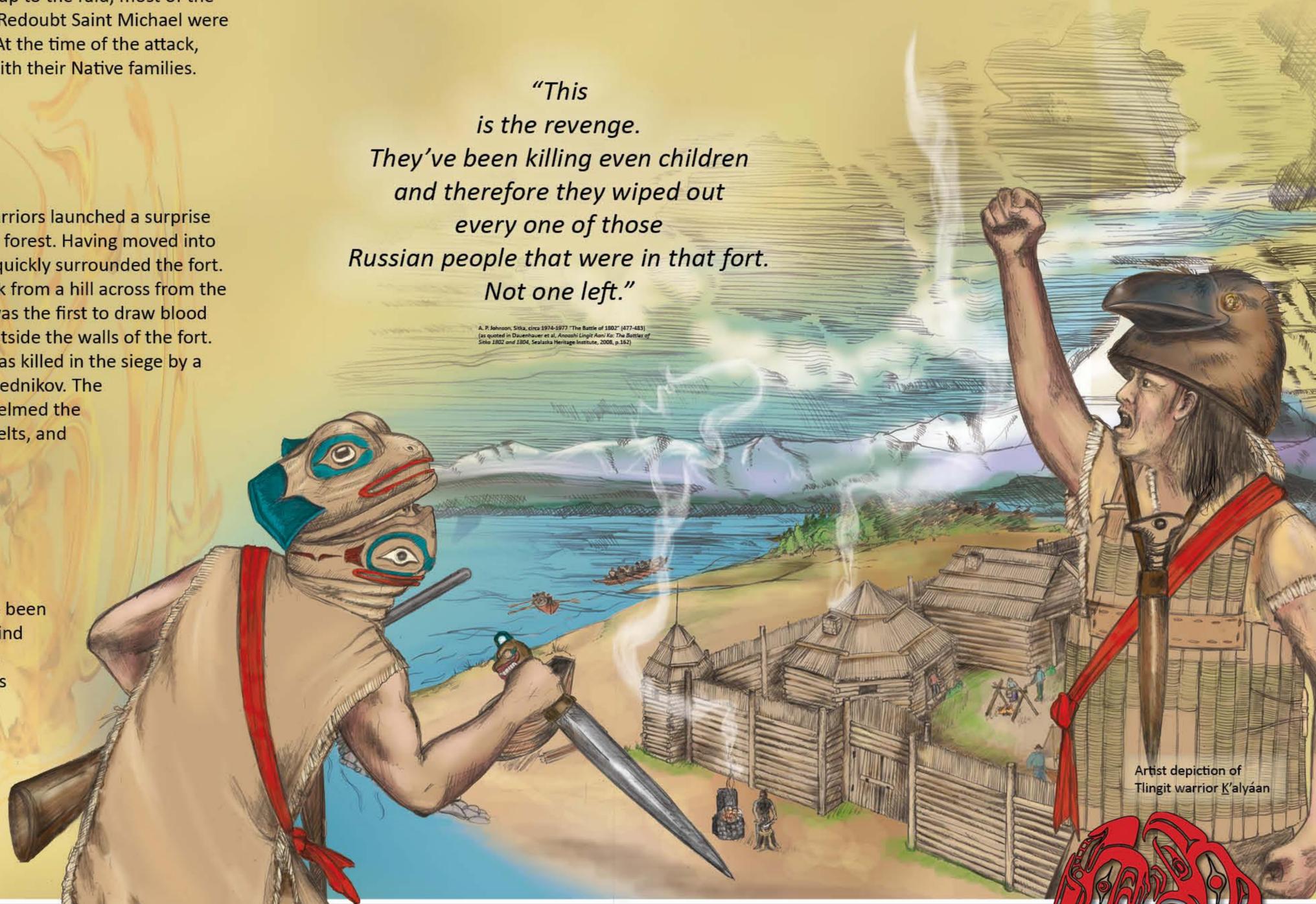
The Survivors

Most of the survivors were lucky enough to have been away during the attack. When they returned to find the fort reduced to ashes and surrounded by the dead, the intent of the attack was clear—this was revenge. The survivors feared that if they were found by the Tlingit, they too would be killed, and so they ran into the woods to hide.

There may never be agreement about what exactly happened during the Battle of 1802, but there's no arguing the outcome.

*"This
is the revenge.
They've been killing even children
and therefore they wiped out
every one of those
Russian people that were in that fort.
Not one left."*

A. P. Johnson, Sitka, circa 1974-1977 "The Battle of 1802" (477-483)
(as quoted in Dauenhauer et al., Anóoshi Lingít Ami Koo: The Battle of
Sitka 1802 and 1804, Sealaska Heritage Institute, 2008, p.162)



Artist depiction of
Tlingit warrior K'alyáan

