



**Indian River Park | Sitka National Historical Park, AK**  
**Totem Walk at Sitka | Emily Carr**

Courtesy of Art Gallery of Greater Victoria [1994.055.004]

The 57-acre Totem Unit of Sitka National Historical Park is widely known for its iconic Totem Walk. To commemorate the significance of the 1804 battle between the Kiks.adi Tlingit and Russian colonists and following the lead of the 19th-century public park movement, President Benjamin Harrison designated it the first federal park of the Territory of Alaska in 1890. From 1900 to 1903, Alaska Governor John Brady collected totem poles from around southeast Alaska to be displayed at the park and at the Saint Louis World's Fair in 1904, as well as the Lewis and Clark Centennial Exposition in Portland, Oregon, in 1905.

When the totem poles returned to Sitka in 1906, they were arranged in a "Totem Walk" along Sitka Sound to enhance the visitor experience. The totem poles have been re-carved when deteriorated – both during the Civilian Conservation Corps period (1933-1940) and on an ongoing basis. They represent the continuity and vitality of SE Alaska native culture and the public park movement.

Emily Carr (1871-1945) was a Canadian artist and writer. She was one of Canada's first painters to adopt a Modernist and Post-Impressionist style and was inspired by the indigenous peoples of the Pacific Northwest Coast.



*Totems have served as focal points for personal portraits and social events throughout the park's history (E.W. Merrill Collection, Sitka NHP).*