

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
REGISTRATION FORM

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

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1. Name of Property

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historic name Chief Son-I-Hat's Whale House and Totems Historic District

other names/site number New Kasaan Totem Pole Park

AHRS Site No. CRG-00018

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2. Location

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street & number Totem Park Trail

not for publication n/a

city or town Kasaan vicinity n/a

state Alaska code AK county Prince of Wales-Outer Ketchikan code 180

zip code 99950

201

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Chief Son-I-Hat's Whale House and Totems Historic District
Prince of Wales-Outer Ketchikan, Alaska

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, as amended, I hereby certify that this X nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property X meets does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant nationally statewide X locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Judith E. Buttner
Signature of certifying official

April 23, 2002
Date

Alaska
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of commenting or other official

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register
 See continuation sheet.
- determined eligible for the
 National Register
 See continuation sheet.
- determined not eligible for the
 National Register
- removed from the National Register
- other (explain): _____

[Signature] 6/11/02

Signature of Keeper

Date of Action

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Chief Son-I-Hat's Whale House and Totems Historic District
Prince of Wales-Outer Ketchikan, Alaska

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5. Classification

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Ownership of Property (Check as many boxes as apply)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

Category of Property (Check only one box)

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Number of Resources within Property

Contributing	Noncontributing
<u> 1 </u>	<input type="checkbox"/> buildings
<u> 3 </u>	<input type="checkbox"/> sites
<u> 1 </u>	<input type="checkbox"/> structures
<u> 9 </u>	<input type="checkbox"/> objects
<u> 14 </u>	<u> 0 </u> Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

Name of related multiple property listing (Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.) n/a

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6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: <u>Recreation and culture</u>	Sub: <u>outdoor recreation</u>
<u>Recreation and culture</u>	<u>work of art</u>
<u>Funerary</u>	<u>cemetery</u>
<u>Landscape</u>	<u>park</u>

Current Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: <u>Recreation and culture</u>	Sub: <u>outdoor recreation</u>
<u>Recreation and culture</u>	<u>work of art</u>
<u>Funerary</u>	<u>cemetery</u>
<u>Landscape</u>	<u>park</u>

7. Description

Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions)

No style

Materials (Enter categories from instructions)

foundation wood

roof wood

walls wood

other _____

Narrative Description (Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

Chief Son-I-Hat's Whale House and Totems Historic District includes a traditional longhouse, nine free-standing totem poles, two cemeteries, and a bridge and trail connecting the features. The Whale House was built during the 1880s at Old Kasaan. When Chief Son-I-Hat moved from the village to a new site about seven miles north from Skowl Arm at Kasaan Bay some time prior to 1904, he moved his Whale House and entrance totem to the new site. The new village, called variously Kasaan or New Kasaan, is on the east side of Prince of Wales Island about thirty miles northwest of Ketchikan.

It is not known if Son-I-Hat or one of his sons actually lived in the Whale House at Kasaan, however it was used for social events. Chief Son-I-Hat died in 1904 and is buried in the southern cemetery (included in the historic district). A 1914 photograph of the house shows loose and missing wall planks. When the Civilian Conservation Corps documented the building prior to restoring it in 1938, only the frame stood. It was recorded as measuring 45 feet square. The frame included three carved and painted house posts on the north wall. As part of the CCC project, the U.S. Forest Service moved eight additional poles from Old Kasaan to Kasaan. Over the next two years, local Native men repaired several of the totem poles and

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carved several replacements. The poles were placed east of the Whale House to create a park.

The totem and house poles at Kasaan display both Tlingit and Haida carving styles. In general, totem poles tell clan stories and history or serve as monuments to adorn graves or to hold the dead and their possessions. The three house posts in the Whale House show two styles. The two outer posts are identical, with the large faces tending to realistic shape, a key to the Haida style. The center post is predominantly carved in a Tlingit variation of the Northwest Coast style. It has Haida faces peeking out of the ears and nostrils of the creature portrayed. The center pole has a planed and drilled location for the head of a creature whose tail is in the hands of a bird.

The house was the basic unit of Tlingit and Haida societies. Typically, it was large, square or rectangular, with cedar planks set vertically along the sides and a planked gable roof held up by massive decorated corner posts and equally massive round ridge beams. Inside, the floor was dug for two or more levels of benches. The inside also had two platforms for sitting and sleeping. The house faced the water, and usually would be in a single line along the beach because of the limited availability of flat land in southeast Alaska. Each house had an entrance pole incorporated in the front facade or standing a short distance in front of the house. The Whale House is an example of the latter practice. Typical of Northwest Coast houses, its main entrance is in the center of the front facade. There is a second entrance at the south end of the east elevation. There is a smoke hole in the center of the roof.

The Whale House and totems are of cedar which has helped preserve them. They are in need of repair. The roof of the Whale House leaks and repairs are needed around the smoke hole. Some of the planks in the house and the wood in several totems have rot. The house and totems need cleaning and the site needs clearing.

The historic district includes two distinct cemeteries. The north cemetery has some of the oldest burials, including one of Chief Skowl's sons. His grave is marked with a carved killer whale fin. Chief Frank is also buried in the older cemetery and his grave has an animal figure that turns. Chief Son-I-Hat is buried in the southern cemetery. The southern cemetery has a number of ornate, upright marble headstones. Together there are not more than fifty graves.

A trail, cut by the CCC, starts at the west end of the original Kasaan townsite. It goes through woods and, in several places, emerges close to the shore. After crossing a wooden bridge over Son-I-Hat Creek the trail passes the nine free-standing totems and the Whale House. It continues to the southern cemetery and turns north to access the northern cemetery. The land, buildings, and totems are owned by Kavilco, Inc., the village corporation created by the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act of 1971.

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8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria (Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing)

- A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations (Mark "X" in all the boxes that apply.) n/a

- A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B removed from its original location.
- C a birthplace or a grave.
- D a cemetery.
- E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F a commemorative property.
- G less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance (Enter categories from instructions)

Architecture
Art
Ethnic heritage, Native American
Conservation

Period of Significance 1900-1940

Significant Dates 1904
1938

Significant Person (Complete if Criterion B is marked above)
Chief Son-I-Hat

Cultural Affiliation n/a

Architect/Builder n/a

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Chief Son-I-Hat's Whale House and Totems Historic District
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Narrative Statement of Significance (Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

Chief Son-I-Hat, a Kaigani Haida house chief, moved his family from Old Kasaan to a new site seven miles north on the east side of Prince of Wales Island at least by 1900. He had his clan's Whale House, believed to have been built circa 1880, and a totem pole moved as well. After Son-I-Hat's death in 1904, the Whale House fell into disrepair. A Civilian Conservation Corps project, started in 1938 and completed in 1940, restored the house, entrance totem, and houseposts. At that time, the CCC moved eight totems from Old Kasaan to Kasaan, restored them or carved replacements, and arranged them to create a park. CCC workers cut a trail that started at the west end of the village, passed the totems and Whale House, and connected to two cemeteries. Today, the district, including the house, totem poles, two cemeteries, and the trail, is important evidence of the Kaigani Haida people, their art, and their lifeways in southern Southeast Alaska during the early 1900s. The period of significance starts in 1900 when the Whale House and entrance totem are known to stand at New Kasaan. The period of significance ends in 1940 when the CCC completed the restoration of the Whale House and creation of the totem park.

Historic background

The Kaigani are Haida Indians who since the early 1700s lived north of Dixon Entrance, a body of water which separates the islands of Southeast Alaska from the Queen Charlotte Islands of British Columbia. The Kaigani people moved north from the Queen Charlotte Islands. The Haida and their northern neighbors, the Tlingit, were among the most aggressive Northwest Coast people. It appears, however, that the Haida and Tlingit negotiated the Kaigani move to southern Prince of Wales Island peacefully and incorporated each other into their social structures despite linguistic differences. Kasaan, for example, is a Tlingit word meaning "beautiful town." Old Kasaan was a Kaigani Haida village on the north shore of Skowl Bay, on the east side of Prince of Wales Island. The community had seven house chiefs, among them Son-I-Hat, and one village chief, Chief Skowl. The town had numerous totem poles in front of the houses that were in a line along the beach. In the 1870s and 1880s, several epidemics killed many of the residents including the village leader, Chief Skowl, who died during the winter of 1882-1883.

Between 1892 and 1900, the Copper Queen Mine operated at Kasaan Bay. The mine went bankrupt by 1900, but in 1902 a salmon cannery opened near the mine site. In the 1890s, Chief Son-I-Hat decided to move from Old Kasaan to a seasonal camp site near the bay, probably because of the availability of jobs for his family members. He also moved the name of the village, Kasaan as the old site was abandoned. The new site is sometimes referred to as New Kasaan. At the time, Chief Son-I-Hat had his clan's Whale House, built around 1880, and a totem pole moved to the new village. Chief Son-I-Hat had at least one other house at Old Kasaan. He donated several totem poles and house posts from it, known as Eagle House, to Territorial

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Governor John Brady in the late 1890s. The pieces were displayed at the World's Fair in St. Louis in 1904 and at the Lewis and Clark Exposition in Portland in 1905 before being placed at Sitka National Historic Park in 1910 (listed in the National Register of Historic Places).

A formal family photograph inside the Whale House just before the turn of the century shows Chief Son-I-Hat with three generations of his relatives around him. He displays his chiefly possessions, including a Chilkat blanket and leggings, a painted leather cape, two copper shields, a talking stick, and stacked and full chests indicating his great wealth.

In 1900, the census recorded 150 people living at Kasaan. The nearby cannery operated sporadically until 1953. A sawmill operated intermittently. The mine did not reopen after 1900. New Kasaan's population has never been higher than 150, and in the early 1970s was 7. The 2000 census count was 39, of whom 49% are Native.

The U.S. Forest Service used the Civilian Conservation Corps, a New Deal program, to provide jobs in Southeast Alaska during the 1930s. The program was used to develop recreational facilities in Tongass National Forest, to create parks for local residents and visitors in different communities, and to preserve the Native peoples' heritage. In several Southeast Alaska communities, the Forest Service hired local Native people to restore or reconstruct traditional Native houses and totem poles. The Forest Service moved a number of totem poles and pieces from abandoned Southeast Alaska villages, one being Old Kasaan, to Saxman, Sitka, Wrangell, Ketchikan, Klawock, Hydaburg and Kasaan. The poles were either repaired and refurbished or copied by carvers. Linn A. Forrest, an architect for the U.S. Forest Service in Alaska, led the effort. CCC funds paid for more than two hundred Native carvers and laborers to restore and replicate Tlingit and Haida traditional houses and totem poles.

At Kasaan, the Whale House and totem pole moved to the community by Chief Son-I-Hat at least thirty-five years earlier were in need of repair. They were documented and restored as part of the CCC program. The Forest Service moved eight totems from Old Kasaan to New Kasaan. The men who restored the building and totem poles were the children of the people who had moved at the turn of the century to Kasaan, including Felix Young, Peter Jones, Walter Young, and Chief Son-I-Hat's son James Peele. The CCC created a park at Kasaan. A trail from the western edge of the village extended through the woods and along the shore. It passed the totems and Whale House and continued to the village's two cemeteries. The graves at the cemeteries, about fifty of them, have ornate carved wooden or marble markers. They are a continuation of the carving tradition long associated with the Northwest Coast people. Together, the house, poles, and cemeteries at Kasaan, connected by trail, tell of the Kaigani Haida art and lifeways in Southeast Alaska during the early 1900s.

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Chief Son-I-Hat's Whale House and Totems Historic District
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9. Major Bibliographical References

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(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form.)

Forrest, Linn A. Notes relative to the original construction and the reconstruction of Chief Sonihat's Whale House, New Kasaan, P.W.I. November 22, 1938. Copy in files at Kavilco, Inc., Kasaan, Alaska.

Goldschmidt, Walter R. and Haas, Theodore H. *Haa Aani-Our Land: Tlingit and Haida Land Rights and Use*. Thomas F. Thornton, editor. Seattle: University of Washington Press and Sealaska Heritage Foundation, 1998.

Rakestraw, Lawrence. *A History of the United States Forest Service in Alaska*. Anchorage: Alaska Historical Commission, 1982.

Sealaska Corporation. *Resource Atlas*. Juneau, Alaska: Sealaska Corporation, 1982.

University of Washington. Archives and Special Collections. Seattle.

Previous documentation on file (NPS) N/A

preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested.

previously listed in the National Register

previously determined eligible by the National Register

designated a National Historic Landmark

recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____

recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____

Primary Location of Additional Data

State Historic Preservation Office

Other State agency

Federal agency

Local government

University

Other

Name of repository: _____

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10. Geographical Data

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Acreeage of Property 7.5 acres

UTM References (Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
1	<u>08</u>	<u>663535</u>	<u>6157665</u>	3	<u>08</u>	<u>662320</u>	<u>6158494</u>
2	<u>08</u>	<u>663555</u>	<u>6157681</u>	4	<u>08</u>	<u>662434</u>	<u>6158504</u>
3	<u>08</u>	<u>662754</u>	<u>6157634</u>				

 See continuation sheet.

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

The district is located in the northwest quarter of the northwest quarter of the southwest quarter of Section 18, Township 73S, Range 86E; and the northwest, southwest, and southeast quarters of the northeast quarter of Section 13, Township 73S, Range 85E.

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The boundary includes the Whale House with its three carved houseposts, its entrance totem and eight other totems grouped to form what is called the Totem Pole Park, two cemeteries that have always been considered part of the park, a wood bridge, and the trail that connects them. The district starts at the west end of the original Kasaan townsite, about five-eighths of a mile west of the center of the village. The district extends about two miles west then north along the shore of Kasaan Bay as shown on the attached site plan.

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11. Form Prepared By

=====

name/title Louis A. Thompson, President/CEO

organization Kavilco Incorporated

date November 2, 2001

street & number P.O. Box KXA-Kasaan

telephone 907-542-2214

city or town Ketchikan **state** AK **zip code** 99950-0340

and Erik D. Hilsinger, Natural Resources Officer and Joan M. Antonson, State Historian, Alaska Office of History and Archaeology, 550 West 7th Ave., #1310, Anchorage, Alaska 99501-3565

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Additional Documentation
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Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A sketch map for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative black and white photographs of the property.

Additional items (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)
=====

Property Owners
=====

(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

name Kavilco Inc., Louis A. Thompson, President/CEO

street & number P.O. Box KXA-Kasaan

telephone 907-542-2214

city or town Ketchikan **state** AK **zip code** 99950-0340

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Chief Son-I-Hat's Whale House and Totems Historic District
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(8-86)

OMB No. 1024-0018

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section Photograph identification
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1. Chief Son-I-Hat's Whale House and Totems Historic District
Prince of Wales-Outer Ketchikan, Alaska
Louis A. Thompson
January 15, 2001
Kavilco, Inc., P.O. Box KXA-Kasaan, Ketchikan, Alaska 99950-0340
Looking north at entrance totem and front of the Whale House
2. Chief Son-I-Hat's Whale House and Totems Historic District
Prince of Wales-Outer Ketchikan, Alaska
Louis A. Thompson
January 15, 2001
Kavilco, Inc., P.O. Box KXA-Kasaan, Ketchikan, Alaska 99950-0340
Looking northwest at the south and east elevations of the Whale House
3. Chief Son-I-Hat's Whale House and Totems Historic District
Prince of Wales-Outer Ketchikan, Alaska
Louis A. Thompson
January 15, 2001
Kavilco, Inc., P.O. Box KXA-Kasaan, Ketchikan, Alaska 99950-0340
Looking southwest at the north and east elevations of the Whale House
4. Chief Son-I-Hat's Whale House and Totems Historic District
Prince of Wales-Outer Ketchikan, Alaska
Louis A. Thompson
January 15, 2001
Kavilco, Inc., P.O. Box KXA-Kasaan, Ketchikan, Alaska 99950-0340
Looking south at the carved houseposts on the north wall inside the
Whale House
5. Chief Son-I-Hat's Whale House and Totems Historic District
Prince of Wales-Outer Ketchikan, Alaska
Louise A. Thompson
January 15, 2001
Kavilco, Inc., P.O. Box KXA-Kasaan, Ketchikan, Alaska 99950-0340
Looking north at Killer Whale Totem

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(8-86)

OMB No. 1024-0018

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National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section Photograph identification

6. Chief Son-I-Hat's Whale House and Totems Historic District
Prince of Wales-Outer Ketchikan, Alaska
Louis A. Thompson
January 15, 2001
Kavilco, Inc., P.O. Box KXA-Kasaan, Ketchikan, Alaska 99950-0340
Looking at the Bear Totem
7. Chief Son-I-Hat's Whale House and Totems Historic District
Prince of Wales-Outer Ketchikan, Alaska
Louis A. Thompson
January 15, 2001
Kavilco, Inc., P.O. Box KXA-Kasaan, Ketchikan, Alaska 99950-0340
Totem in park
8. Chief Son-I-Hat's Whale House and Totems Historic District
Prince of Wales-Outer Ketchikan, Alaska
Louis A. Thompson
January 15, 2001
Kavilco, Inc., P.O. Box KXA-Kasaan, Ketchikan, Alaska 99950-0340
Totem in park
9. Chief Son-I-Hat's Whale House and Totems Historic District
Prince of Wales-Outer Ketchikan, Alaska
Louis A. Thompson
January 15, 2001
Kavilco, Inc., P.O. Box KXA-Kasaan, Ketchikan, Alaska 99950-0340
Totem in park
10. Chief Son-I-Hat's Whale House and Totems Historic District
Prince of Wales-Outer Ketchikan, Alaska
Louise A. Thompson
January 15, 2001
Kavilco, Inc., P.O. Box KXA-Kasaan, Ketchikan, Alaska 99950-0340
Totem in park

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National Park Service

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CONTINUATION SHEET

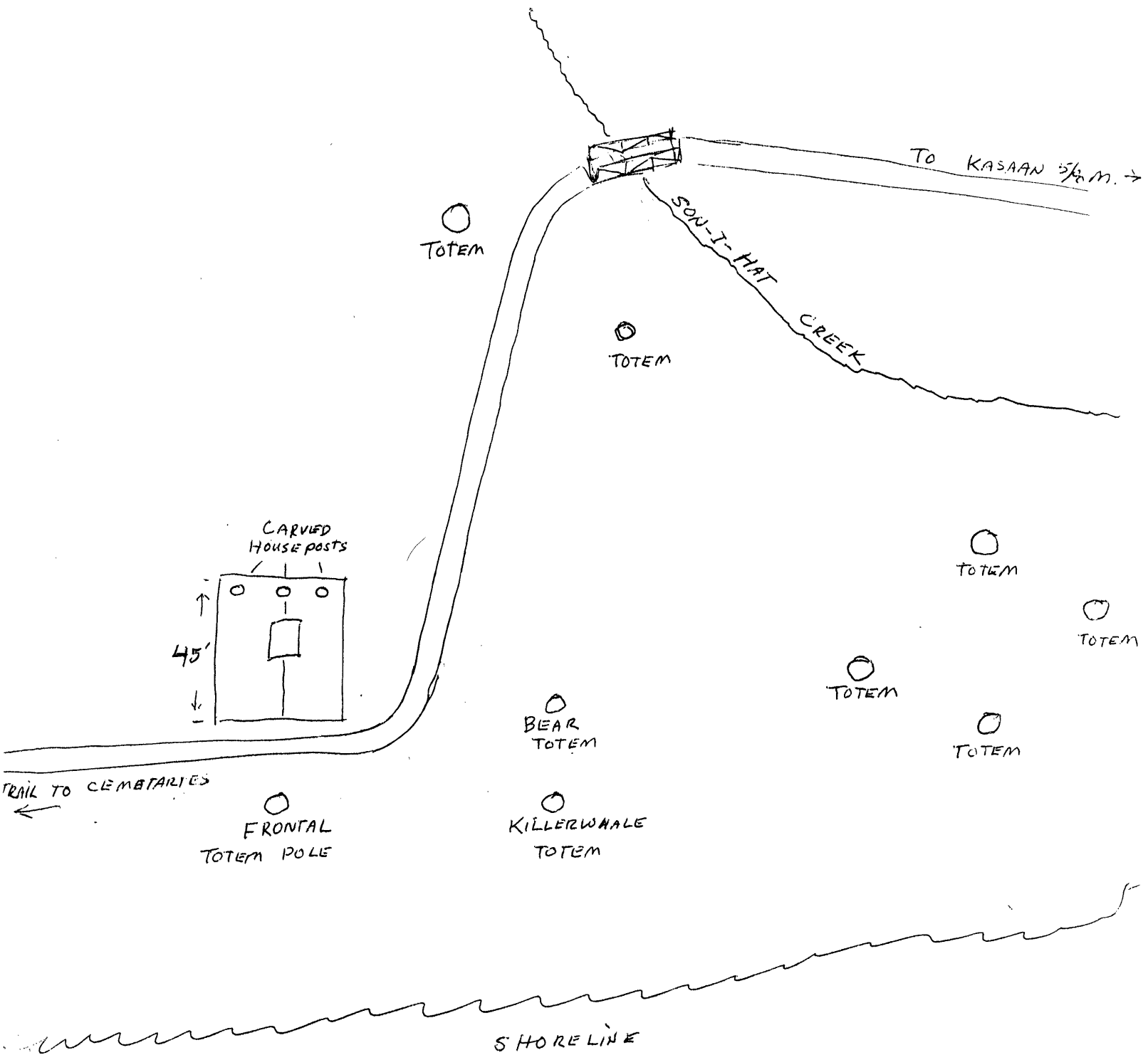
Section Photograph identification

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11. Chief Son-I-Hat's Whale House and Totems Historic District
Prince of Wales-Outer Ketchikan, Alaska
Louis A. Thompson
January 15, 2001
Kavilco, Inc., P.O. Box KXA-Kasaan, Ketchikan, Alaska 99950-0340
Totem in park

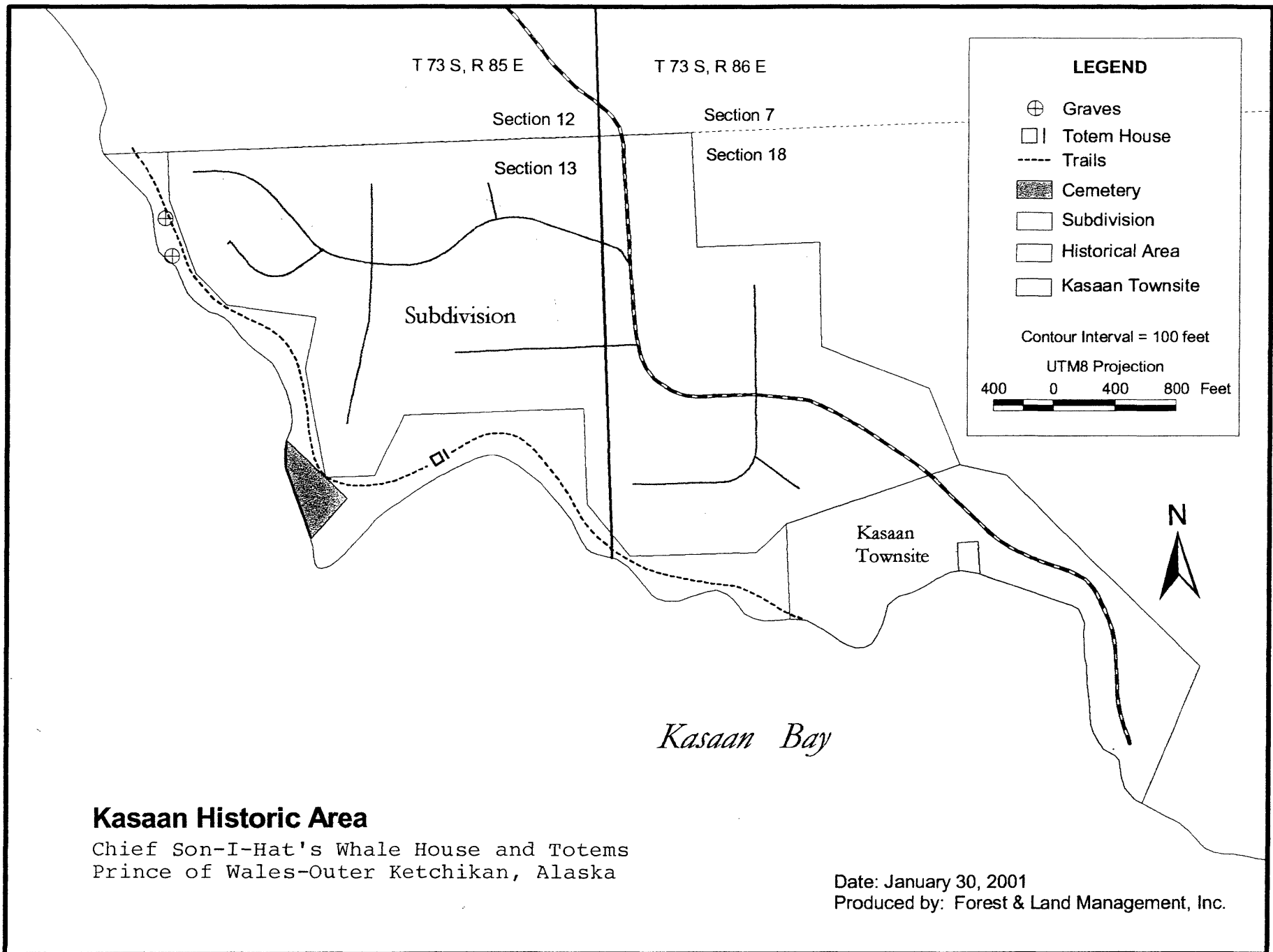
12. Chief Son-I-Hat's Whale House and Totems Historic District
Prince of Wales-Outer Ketchikan, Alaska
Louis A. Thompson
January 15, 2001
Kavilco, Inc., P.O. Box KXA-Kasaan, Ketchikan, Alaska 99950-0340
Looking north at bridge over Son-I-Hat Creek and a section of the park
trail near the entrance to the park, northwest of the Whale House

13. Chief Son-I-Hat's Whale House and Totems Historic District
Prince of Wales-Outer Ketchikan, Alaska
Otto Schallerer
1938
University of Washington Libraries, Viola Garfield Collection No. 130,
negative NA3586, Seattle, Washington
Looking north at whale house and entrance totem



Chief Son-I-Hat's Whale House and Totems
 Prince of Wales-Outer Ketchikan, Alaska
 2001





Kasaan Historic Area

Chief Son-I-Hat's Whale House and Totems
 Prince of Wales-Outer Ketchikan, Alaska

Date: January 30, 2001
 Produced by: Forest & Land Management, Inc.