

CONFIRMATION OF CONSENSUS NOMINATION

PH005-4861

Form 10-300 (July 1969) UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

STATE: <b>Alaska</b>	
COUNTY: <b>First Judicial Division</b>	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE
<b>10-10-02-0001</b>	<b>10/27/70</b>

1. NAME

COMMON:  
**Chief Shakes Historic Site**

AND/OR HISTORIC:

2. LOCATION

STREET AND NUMBER:  
**Shakes Island**

CITY OR TOWN:  
**Wrangell** *280 WRANGELL PETERSBURG*

STATE <b>Alaska</b>	CODE <b>02</b>	COUNTY: <b>First Judicial Division</b>	CODE
------------------------	-------------------	---	------

3. CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY (Check One)	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
<input type="checkbox"/> District <input type="checkbox"/> Building <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Site <input type="checkbox"/> Structure <input type="checkbox"/> Object	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Public <input type="checkbox"/> Private <input type="checkbox"/> Both	Public Acquisition: <input type="checkbox"/> In Process <input type="checkbox"/> Being Considered	<input type="checkbox"/> Occupied <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unoccupied <input type="checkbox"/> Preservation work in progress
PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)			
<input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural <input type="checkbox"/> Commercial <input type="checkbox"/> Educational <input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> Government <input type="checkbox"/> Industrial <input type="checkbox"/> Military <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Museum	<input type="checkbox"/> Park <input type="checkbox"/> Private Residence <input type="checkbox"/> Religious <input type="checkbox"/> Scientific	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) _____ Yes: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Restricted <input type="checkbox"/> Unrestricted <input type="checkbox"/> No

4. OWNER OF PROPERTY

OWNER'S NAME:  
**United States of America**

STREET AND NUMBER:

CITY OR TOWN: <b>Washington</b>	STATE: <b>D.C.</b>	CODE <b>11</b>
------------------------------------	-----------------------	-------------------

5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.:  
**District Recorder**

STREET AND NUMBER:  
**Box 501**

CITY OR TOWN: <b>Wrangell</b>	STATE: <b>Alaska</b>	CODE <b>02</b>
----------------------------------	-------------------------	-------------------

6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

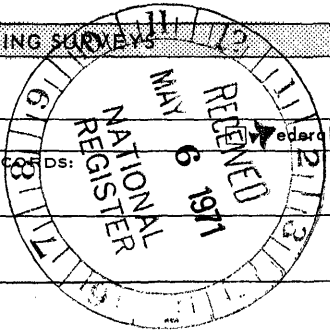
TITLE OF SURVEY:  
**None**

DATE OF SURVEY:

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:  
 State     County     Local

STREET AND NUMBER:

CITY OR TOWN:	STATE:	CODE
---------------	--------	------



SEE INSTRUCTIONS

STATE:  
COUNTY:

FOR NPS USE ONLY  
ENTRY NUMBER  
DATE

10-10-02-0001 10/27/70

7. DESCRIPTION

CONDITION	(Check One)					
	<input type="checkbox"/> Excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> Good	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Fair	<input type="checkbox"/> Deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> Ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> Unexposed
	(Check One)			(Check One)		
	<input type="checkbox"/> Altered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unaltered		<input type="checkbox"/> Moved	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Original Site	

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (if known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The present site encompasses .704 acres and is dominated by a 1940 replica of an early 19th Century Tlingit community house. Incorporating four ancient houseposts of Chief Shakes' "Shark House", as well as an original pair of Raven Clan houseposts, the house is surrounded by nine totem poles. Seven of these are copies of older poles, while two are originals. All were carved in 1940 as Civilian Conservation Corps project.

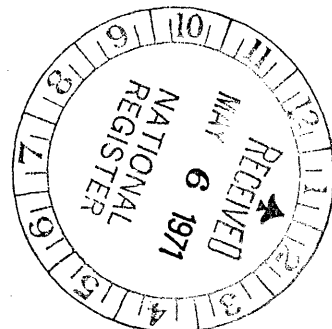
The community house also contains two carvings representing killer whale fins, a recently-painted screen representing the first Chilkat blanket design, and relics of the Shakes lineage.

A central square fire pit is the focus of the structure's interior. The fire pit is surrounded by a planked platform that would have served as living quarters for several families, each allotted its own space but sharing the common fire.

Structurally, the house is dominated by massive posts and beams that support the cedar shake roof with its smoke hole and the heavy, adz-hewn planking that is the facade. A stylized raven on the front is unusual; few houses were so decorated.

Poles outside the house include a Sealion Prince, Kadashan Red Snapper, Kadashan Crane, Underwater Grizzly, Three Frogs, Bear Up Mountain, and Sea Serpent.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS



**SIGNIFICANCE**

PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- |  |                                       |  |  |
|--|---------------------------------------|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Pre-Columbian | <input type="checkbox"/> 16th Century | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 18th Century | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 20th Century |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 15th Century  | <input type="checkbox"/> 17th Century | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 19th Century |  |

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known)

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- |  |   |   |  |
|--|---|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal              | <input type="checkbox"/> Education              | <input type="checkbox"/> Political                      | <input type="checkbox"/> Urban Planning  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Prehistoric             | <input type="checkbox"/> Engineering            | <input type="checkbox"/> Religion/Philosophy            | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Historic     | <input type="checkbox"/> Industry               | <input type="checkbox"/> Science                        | _____                                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture             | <input type="checkbox"/> Invention              | <input type="checkbox"/> Sculpture                      | _____                                    |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Landscape Architecture | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Social/Humanitarian | _____                                    |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Art          | <input type="checkbox"/> Literature             | <input type="checkbox"/> Theater                        | _____                                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Commerce                | <input type="checkbox"/> Military               | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation                 | _____                                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Communications          | <input type="checkbox"/> Music                  |   | _____                                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Conservation            |   |   | _____                                    |

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Shark House houseposts incorporated in Chief Shakes Community House have been characterized in an Alaska State Museum report as perhaps "the oldest and finest set of houseposts in existence." At least one source states that these dogfish totems were brought from Old Wrangell to Wrangell in 1832, while another suggests that they were carved eight years before the first Russian ship arrived in the Lituya Bay area. It is not inappropriate to categorize these unique carvings as national treasures.

While the houseposts are superb and paramount objects of historic interest, the replica Tlingit community house of which they have become a part is not without its own interest. One of three such structures extant, it was built about 1940 as a part of a Civilian Conservation Corps project that became a departure point in efforts to preserve the heritage of the state's original occupants. An analysis by Dr. Joe Clark (a Wood Pathologist with the U.S. Forest Service who contributed to the Museum's report) testifies to the intrinsic value of the house:

I was much impressed with the framing design, the perfection of joinery fit in the complex framing of heavy members around the smoke hole, and the overall fine workmanship exhibited including the perfection of adzed wood surfaces and the practice of pegging rather than using metal fasteners.

(continued)

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

**9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES**

1. Barbeau, Marius, Totem Poles, Volumes I and II, National Museum of Canada (Ottawa: 1950, 1964).
2. Corser, H. P., Totem Lore and the Land of the Totem, 2nd ed., The Nugget Shop (Juneau: n.d.)
3. Duff, Wilson with Jane Wallen and Joe Clark, Totem Pole Survey of South-eastern Alaska: Report of Field Survey and Follow-up Activities June-October 1969, The Alaska State Museum (Juneau: 1969).
4. Keithahn, Edward L., Monuments in Cedar: The Authentic Story of the Totem Pole, Roy Anderson (Ketchikan, Alaska: 1945).

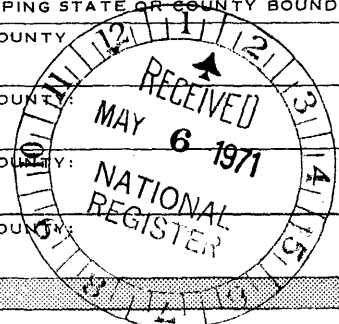
**10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA**

LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY			O R	LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY OF LESS THAN TEN ACRES		
CORNER	LATITUDE	LONGITUDE		LATITUDE	LONGITUDE	
	Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds		Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minute Seconds	
NW	° ' "	° ' "		56 ° 27 ' 57.5 " N	132 ° 22 ' 44 "	
NE	° ' "	° ' "				
SE	° ' "	° ' "				
SW	° ' "	° ' "				

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: **0.704**

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE



**11 FORM PREPARED BY**

NAME AND TITLE:  
**William S. Hanable, State Park Historian**

ORGANIZATION: **Alaska Division of Parks** DATE: **December 21, 70**

STREET AND NUMBER:  
**323 E. Fourth Avenue**

CITY OR TOWN: **Anchorage** STATE: **Alaska 99501** CODE: **02**

**12. STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION**

<p>As the designated State Liaison Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service. The recommended level of significance of this nomination is:</p> <p>National <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> State <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Local <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p> <p><i>Theodore G. Smith</i> Name <b>THEODORE G. SMITH</b></p> <p>Title <b>Director, Division of Parks</b></p> <p>Date <b>December 21, 1970</b></p>	<p>I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register.</p> <p><i>Ernest A. Connally</i> Chief, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation</p> <p>Date <b>NOV 5 1971</b></p> <p>ATTEST:</p> <p><i>William M. Hartz</i> Keeper of the National Register</p> <p>Date <b>OCT 19 1971</b></p>
---	--

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM  
8-2 (Chief Shakes Historic Site)  
(Continuation Sheet)

STATE Alaska	
COUNTY 1st Judicial Div.	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE
70.10.02.0001	10/27/70

(Number all entries)

8. A traditional chieftains' campsite, Shakes Island carries its own values through association with a revered lineage in Alaska Indian heritage and was, in fact, owned in part by the last Chief Shakes at the time of his death. Oral history reports that at the end of a fierce war between the Wrangell people and the Tsimpsians, the former were accorded the right to use the "Kit" (whale killer symbol) on their canoes and the right to use the Tsimpsian word "Shakes" (whale killer). A succession of Wrangell leaders used the name until 1944, when the last Chief Shakes of Wrangell died. In 1970 "Shakes" was assumed again, this time by an heir from another village.

This connection with heroic folklore creates a special distinction for Chief Shakes Historic Site in local tradition; just as the community house, a three-dimensional recognition of the Tlingit's unique folkways, is significant in a statewide chronology of white and native contact. Overshadowing these considerations, though, is the transcendent artistic and historic value assigned to the Shark House houseposts. Relics of a major aboriginal American culture that chose wood as its dominant material, in an environment that destroys wood, they are without parallel.