

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

For NPS use only

**National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form**

received **DEC 17 1987**  
date entered

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*  
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

**1. Name**

historical SITKA NATIONAL HISTORICAL PARK

and/or common Same

**2. Location**

street & number Headquarters, 106 Metlakatla Street not for publication

city, town Sitka vicinity of

state Alaska code 02 county Sitka Division code 220

**3. Classification**

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> district	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture <input type="checkbox"/> museum
<input type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> park
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational <input type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> site	<b>Public Acquisition</b>	<b>Accessible</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment <input type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government <input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial <input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military <input type="checkbox"/> other:

**4. Owner of Property**

name National Park Service, Alaska Regional Office

street & number 2525 Gambell Street

city, town Anchorage, vicinity of state Alaska

**5. Location of Legal Description**

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Bureau of Land Management

street & number 701 C Street

city, town Anchorage state Alaska

**6. Representation in Existing Surveys**

title Classified Structures has this property been determined eligible?  yes  no

date February, 1976  federal  state  county  local

depository for survey records National Park Service

city, town Washington, DC state

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## 7. Description

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<b>Condition</b>		<b>Check one</b>	<b>Check one</b>	
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input type="checkbox"/> original site	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> moved	date 1901; 1903 (totem poles)
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed			

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### Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

Sitka National Historical Park contains historic sites and structures related to Tlingit Indian and Imperial Russian history in Sitka, the capital of Russian America from 1808-1867.

Sitka is located on the southwest coast of Baranof Island in the Alexander Archipelago of southeast Alaska. Backed by steep, jagged mountains rising almost from sea level, Sitka was built on a narrow margin of rocky shoreline. To the south it overlooks a fiord-like inlet which cuts deep into the coast, providing shelter in its bays; to the west a scattering of dark reefs and spruce-covered islands stretch across Sitka Sound and out to the Pacific Ocean; to the east the Indian River, a picturesque, salmon-spawning stream, tumbles from the base of the mountains into the quiet waters of Jamestown Bay.

In 1865, two years before Alaska was transferred from Russia to the United States, the population of Sitka was approximately 2,000 with 1,500 natives outside the fortifications. (Colby, 163) A single street ran from the wharf to St. Michael Cathedral at the center of town and on out toward Indian River. The buildings were all log with hipped or gable roofs, some with siding, but most painted with yellow ochre. (Dall, 255) The Ranche, or Indian village, pressed up against the stockade which ran from the waterfront along the northern edge of the settlement.

Today, although Sitka has expanded to the north and east and has a population of some 8,000, the basic configuration of the town remains the same. An invisible boundary still follows the old stockade line between the native community and the rest of modern Sitka. Lincoln Street follows the old thoroughfare from the wharf, past the hill where Baranov's "castle" stood (now American Flag Raising Site NHL), up through the commercial center of town, past St. Michael Cathedral (NHL) and Russian Bishop's House (NHL), and on out to the Visitor Center of Sitka National Historical Park, where a trail continues to Indian River.

Sitka National Historical Park has three components: (1) The original Sitka National Monument, established in 1910 to preserve the remains of the Kiksadi (Tlingit) fort and the battleground upon which the Kiksadi and Russians fought in 1804, is a 57-acre tract which extends along the shoreline from Metlakatla Street to Sawmill Creek Road and is divided by the Indian River; (2) The Russian Bishop's House and adjacent property, 1.15 acres acquired by the National Park Service in 1973, is located near the center of town on Lincoln Street, the main thoroughfare of historic Sitka; and (3) the Russian Blockhouse, reconstructed by the National Park Service in 1962, stands at the west end of town on the site of an original blockhouse which guarded the stockade separating the Indian village and the Russian-American Company settlement.

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Only two of these components have historic resources eligible for nomination to the National Register: the original monument, now known as the Fort Site Unit, and the Russian Bishop's House Unit, which was designated a National Historic Landmark in 1962. The Blockhouse, a reconstruction, is not eligible for nomination under National Register criteria.

## CONTRIBUTING RESOURCES

### FORT SITE UNIT

Kiksadi Fort Site (Shishkeenu). The Kiksadi fort was strategically located at the mouth of Indian River, which provided both fresh water and a potential route of escape. Further, the gravel shoals extending from the river's mouth prevented close approach by large vessels. The fort, sketched by Captain Urey Lisiansky who participated in the battle of 1804, was irregular in shape, having four sides with its longest side looking toward the sea. The log construction was strong enough to withstand the pounding of Russian guns. The stockade was protected by a breastwork of logs; around and above it tangled brush was piled. There were embrasures for cannon in the side facing the sea and two gates facing the forest. Inside were fourteen large huts. Some 800 native men with women and children were believed to have occupied the fort. (Hadleigh-West, 5, 87-89) (ILLUS-1)

Today the site is a grassy clearing, approximately 150 feet by 210 feet, surrounded by dense forest; no surface evidence of the fort remains. However, the site retains a high degree of integrity. The archeological survey undertaken by Frederick Hadleigh-West in 1958 resulted in identification of the in situ fort remains. The corners of the fort are now marked; a wayside sign and audio-station provide an interpretive message. (ILLUS-2)

1804 Battleground. The site where the Kiksadi and Russians engaged in combat lies directly south of the fort on the gravel beach at the mouth of

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Indian River. (SITE MAP) Although the west bank of the river has eroded substantially since the Monument was established, perhaps as much as thirty feet, deposition of eroded gravels has occurred at the mouth. (Candelaria, pers. comm.) It would appear that the river's dynamic changes have not affected the battle site other than to buildup the beach, with a resulting increase of distance between the site and the water. The historic scene has been protected by the early establishment of a public reserve (1890) and the inhospitality of the surrounding shoreline.

However, there have been some impacts to the site in rather recent history. In the early 1940s the U.S. Navy extracted gravel from the river and from an island in the river within the Monument while the U.S. Army constructed machine gun emplacements along the trail as a part of World War II defense operations. Immediately before World War II and continuing in the 1960s, gravel removal immediately offshore from the Monument exacerbated Indian River and shoreline erosion problems. (Hanable, 23; Candelaria, pers. comm.)

To date no archeology has been done at the site. A spur trail leads to the beach, where an interpretive sign is placed.

Historic trails. Within the Fort Site Unit are 2 miles of trails with segments on both sides of Indian River. The west segment is a loop with cross-trails, at least two portions of which are historic. Part of this trail dates from the Russian period, ca. 1860. (Golovnin in Hanable, p. 16) An 1855 Admiralty drawn from an 1850 Russian chart shows an extension of what is now Lincoln Street which follows the approximate route of the park's Totem Walk, turning east in a route congruent with the first cross-trail to Indian River. (ILLUS-3) (This trail is more precisely rendered on the 1884 Sheldon Jackson survey, ILLUS-4.)

In 1869 the U.S. Army built a corduroy road over the path to enable wagons to haul water and wood from Indian River to Sitka. (Hanable, 8; Cracroft, 51) An observer in 1870 described it as a "well made road." (DeArmond, 3)

The segment of Totem Walk which follows the shoreline from the point where

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the old Russian walk turns east to the mouth of Indian River is also of early date. Available sources do not make clear whether this trail was established during the Russian period, although one source describes the trail, also known as "Lovers' Lane," as "an extension and improvement of the Russian walk through beach and woods." (Scidmore, 185) The initial portion of this segment is included on the 1884 survey map. It may, in fact, date from 1884 when some new walks were constructed under the director of Lt. Gilman, Officer-in-charge of the U.S. Marine Guard at Sitka. His men and a group of Indians on the ship's crew "cleared a new pathway from the beach to the river" and "led paths up either side of the stream for a half mile or more; bridged the stream twice, and threw two picturesque bridges across the ravines on the river bank." (Scidmore, 190) Portions of the two riverbank paths are also visible on the 1884 plat.

In 1895 a new trail was cut from the "point" (1804 battle site) to the Indian River bridge. It is not known whether this trail was cut fresh or was in effect a brushing out of the 1884 trail. There is some suggestion that the 1884 improvements had been allowed to deteriorate. (Hanable, 19)

It is the above system of paths or trails, dating from ca. 1860 to 1895, along with relict bridges and a new bridge constructed by the Alaska Road Commission in 1908, which existed at the time the National Monument was established in 1910. (ILLUS-5) Although the present Totem Walk follows a historic trail route, none of the historic bridges remain.

Totem Poles. The totem pole collection of Sitka National Historical Park contains eleven surviving pieces from the original Governor John G. Brady collection of Tlingit and Haida poles, 1901-1904; seven reproductions of poles 1939-1941; eleven contemporary reproductions by native carvers contracted by the National Park Service; and one original contemporary pole.

All original poles or fragments thereof which survive have been placed in storage and are being treated as museum objects rather than structures or objects appropriate for National Register listing. They are listed below for information purposes, but are classified neither as Contributing nor

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Non-Contributing Resources. Poles produced in 1939-41 and remaining outside storage collections are listed below as contributing resources. Poles produced in the 1960s, 1970s, and 1980s are listed as non-contributing resources.

The earliest acquisitions were a tall totem pole and four house posts given to Gov. Brady in 1901 by Saanaheit of Kasaan. (Duff, 64) In 1903 Brady collected some 20 poles from Prince of Wales Island, acquiring specimens from the Tlingit villages of Tuxekan and Klawock, and the Haida villages of Howkan, Klinkwan, Sukkwan, Old Kasaan, and Koinglas. Some recarving, patching, and repainting was done under Brady's direction, after which the poles were sent to St. Louis for the 1904 Louisiana Purchase Exposition. After the exposition some of the totems were in such poor condition that they were sold; the remaining poles were sent to the Lewis and Clark Exposition in Portland. They were later shipped to Sitka, repaired and repainted, and mounted in the park. (Knapp, n.p.)

A major rehabilitation program was undertaken in 1939 through the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) program. Native artisans repaired and restored many of the poles and carved reproductions of many others. Although this and other repair projects extended the life of some of the poles, it is believed that the original designs were altered over time and that today's poles may differ significantly from those produced by the original artists. Following the CCC project, many of the original poles were lost through improper storage. (Knapp, n.p.)

In recent years the reproduction of remaining original poles and repair and restoration of CCC poles has been undertaken by native artisans at Sitka National Historical Park. Artistic controls are stringent, and the resulting work has a high degree of integrity.

The general layout of a totem pole is essentially a two-dimensional form line wrapped around a half-cylinder. With the use of form line, abstract representation of creatures, either natural or supernatural, can be constructed on flat surfaces. If painted, the form line is either black or red. Its proportions run from thick to thin and usually travel in a

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curvilinear pattern to connect and outline the three principal elements found in the art: the ovoid, "U," and "S" shapes.

Black is used on areas to be accented, such as eye pupils, eyelid lines, eyebrows, and claws, as well as in primary form lines. Red is used on lips, nostrils, and sometimes bodies, and as a secondary form line element in two-dimensional design. Blue is used in eye sockets and in two-dimensional design areas.

Early Tlingit and Haida poles are often distinguishable by their layout. Haida figures interconnect and overlap more than Tlingit figures, which are often isolated from one another and present a more rounded and sculptured appearance. (The preceding technical description is excerpted from verbatim from Knapp, n.p.)

INVENTORY ( Poles which are Contributing Resources)

Saanaheit Pole. Original pole given to Gov. Brady in 1901 is lost. Reproduced by CCC, 1939-1941. Located in front of Visitor Center.

Over 50 feet tall, the original may have been a house entrance pole. It was intricately carved. The reproduction was made when the original was about 110 years old; a cedar log was laid alongside the original while the designs were copied. The traditional Village Watchman, a bear, and a raven are identifiable; little information about the pole has survived. (Knapp, #12)

Yaadaas Crest Pole. Original is lost. Reproduced by the CCC, 1939-1941. Located on Totem Walk Trail.

The original pole was from the house of Dzeilu in the Haida village of Kasaan. The two human figures on top of the pole are Village Watchmen, used in many Haida and some Tlingit carvings. The bear and Raven, which are both crests of the Yaadaas clan, also appear on the pole. (Knapp, #1)

Frog/Raven Pole. Original lost. Recarved in the early 1940s by George Benson and John Sam. Located on Totem Walk Trail.

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Possibly a legend pole showing Raven as mischief maker, or a Haida crest pole, perhaps from Sukkwan, displaying the local raven and frog crests. (Knapp, #5)

Trader Legend Pole. Original lost. Reproduced by CCC, 1939-41. Located on the Totem Walk Trail.

An example of a ridicule pole, usually erected to notify everyone of an unpaid debt. The top figure represents a white man--perhaps a trader who cheated the Haida. Figures of thievery are followed by a beaver, which may represent a crest or the crime of stealing beaver pelts. (Knapp, #7)

Lakich'inei Pole. Original lost. Recarved by the CCC, 1939-41. Located on Totem Walk Trail.

Although the top figure is the subject of Tlingit legend, there is evidence that the pole came from a Haida village. Tlingit motifs may have been learned through intermarriage and incorporated into Haida poles. Lakich'inei, the top figure, is pressing one of his children, who was half-human and half-dog, against his coat made from the spine of a fish, killing the child. (Knapp, #10)

Mosquito Legend Pole. Original is in storage; fair condition. Reproduction carved in the CCC program by Frank Kita, 1939-41. Located on Totem Walk Trail.

A story pole, Haida in design, with Tlingit figures. Haida carvers, recognized for their skill, would receive commissions from Tlingit as well as Haida villages. This pole may have been produced under such circumstances. (Knapp, #11)

Waasgo Legend Pole. Original lost. Reproduction carved under the CCC program by George Benson, 1939-41. Located on the Totem Walk Trail.

A Haida story pole, possibly from the village of Sukkwan, telling the

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legend of Waasgo, the lake or sea monster. In 1964 this pole was shown at the New York World's Fair. (Knapp, #13)

RUSSIAN BISHOP'S HOUSE UNIT

Russian Bishop's House. See Section 7, National Register nomination for Russian Bishop's House NHL (designated 6/13/62; boundary established 7/10/85). Copy attached.

House 105. See addendum to National Register nomination for Russian Bishop's House NHL (8/86). Copy attached.

Old School. The Old School is located immediately east of the Russian Bishop's House on the original Russian Greek Church Mission Reserve. It was constructed in 1897 to provide classroom space for kindergarten and girls classes for the parish school.

The building is a two-story frame structure with a horizontal gable roof. It was sheathed in beveled shiplap siding; shingles covered the roof. A ca. 1900 photograph shows the building with a masonry chimney and four-over-four light double-hung windows, elements which remain in the structure. Gutters and downspouts had been installed by 1905. The enclosed stairway at the north end of the building is an addition; its date is unknown. In 1922 the original west entrance was closed off and replaced with a double-hung window. An exterior stairway on the east wall appeared by 1924. Asphalt siding was applied to the south wall ca. 1963. Interior changes are undocumented. Some original beadboard remains, as does the tongue-and-groove flooring. (Cloyd, 42-44, 46)

From its construction to 1922 the building was used as a school or seminary by the Russian Orthodox Church. In 1922 it was rented to the Sitka Educational Bureau for use as a school. Sometime during the 1940s the old school became a tenement. The church had little funding to maintain the building so that it began to deteriorate. (Cloyd, 42-44)

During 1983-86, the National Park Service undertook exterior restoration of

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the building to the 1896-1922 period. It will be adaptively used by the park for support functions in the operation and maintenance of the Russian Bishop's House. It is presently in good condition.

NON-CONTRIBUTING RESOURCES

Visitor Center. (SITE MAP) 1965. Located at park entrance, Fort Site Unit. Contains information desk, exhibits, audio-visual room, and administrative offices. Also houses the Cultural Center with its Native craft workshops. Exhibits depict aspects of native history and culture and interpret life in Sitka under the Russians.

Maintenance Building. (SITE MAP) 1978. Adjacent to Visitor Center. A two-story structure with shop and garage on first floor and storage and museum office on second floor.

Indian River Bridge. (SITE MAP) 1968. Located approximately one-half mile up-river from the mouth. Several generations of bridges have spanned the river within the park reserve. The present bridge, built of wood and concrete, replaced a wooden bridge which washed out in 1961.

Trails. (SITE MAP) On the west side of the river, non-historic segments include: (1) the second (easternmost) cross-trail from Totem Walk to Indian River; (2) the short section which follows the river bank from the junction of the original Russian trail to the bridge; and (3) the return leg of the loop from the bridge to the Visitor Center.

None of the trails on the east side of the river is considered historic at this time. However, the trail from the bridge to the Russian Memorial follows the route of the old post road, which may date from the early American period and possibly from the Russian. Present information is insufficient to determine the significance of this trail. All spurs from this trail and the return loop are non-historic. The entire loop presently serves as a jogging trail; exercise stations have been installed.

Picnic Shelter. (SITE MAP) 1964. Located on the trail on the east side of

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Indian River.

Russian Memorial. (SITE MAP) 1961. A wooden Orthodox (three-bar) cross enclosed by a picket fence erected as a memorial to the Russian seamen who were killed in the 1804 battle. It is a long-standing tradition in Sitka that this is the actual grave site of the Russians. However, research in primary sources does not corroborate this. (Hanable, 13) Conclusive negative evidence was obtained in 1958 when Frederick Hadleigh-West excavated the site. Although remains of a timber structure were located which could date from the early nineteenth century, there were no human remains or other indications of a burial. (Hadleigh-West, 1967)

Blockhouse. (SITE MAP) 1962. A reconstruction of a Russian-era blockhouse built by the National Park Service on land leased from the Bureau of Land Management. The structure is located on the line of the old Russian stockade and on the site of the historic Blockhouse C (demolished in the 1890s). However, the design of the reconstruction is that of Blockhouse D, which stood fifty yards northeast on the stockade.

Blockhouse D was demolished in the 1920s, and a reproduction of it was built in the National Monument in 1926-27, using original hardware. This reproduction was torn down in 1959 when its condition became hazardous to visitors. Period cannon were removed after vandalism. The new reproduction was built in response to the strong sentiments of local Sitkans. (Hall, 1)

Fragments in Storage and Recent Reproductions of Totem Poles.

Saanaheita House Posts. Originals; brought to Sitka from the village of Kasaan in 1901. In storage, good condition. Reproduced in 1981 by Reggie Peterson. Located in front of Visitor Center.

Four interior house posts with notches in the tops to receive log house beams. These posts were placed at corners of a large, single-story dwelling. The carved designs are said to be from a legend in which Raven

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obtains the sun, moon, and stars for the people of the earth. (Knapp, #12)

Yaadaas Crest Corner Pole No. 1. Original: acquired by Gov. Brady from the village of Kasaan in 1903. In storage; fragments, one small piece and two pieces approximately 10 feet each. Reproduction carved in 1978 by Tommy Jimmie. Located on Totem Walk Trail.

The pole stood at one of the exterior corners of the Yaadaas clan house. The human figure of Village Watchman is at the top; Raven and a bear also appear. Figures below the Village Watchman may be crests of the clan who owned the house and could represent incidents in the real or mythical history of the clan. (Knapp, #2)

Yaadaas Crest Corner Pole, No. 2. Original acquired by Gov. Brady from village of Kasaan in 1903. In storage; good condition. Reproduction carved in 1984 by Nathan Jackson and Steve Brown. Located on Totem Walk Trail.

Nearly identical to Yaadaas Crest Corner Pole No. 1. (Knapp, #6)

Wolf Pole. Original; collected from Prince of Wales Island in 1903. In storage; good condition. Reproduction carved in 1980 by Reggie Peterson. Located on Totem Walk Trail.

Named for prominent wolf totem at center of pole. Tlingit style of carving. Probably a crest pole with wolf and salmon representing clan crest symbols or, perhaps, the clan crests of husband and wife. (Knapp, #3)

Memorial/Mortuary Column. Original collected by Gov. Brady in 1903. In storage; fair condition. Reproduction carved in 1979 by Nathan Jackson. Located on Totem Walk Trail.

A single figure--in this case a cormorant--indicates the clan or moiety of the person interred or honored. The remainder of the column is unadorned. (Knapp, #4)

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Raven Memorial Pole. Original lost. Copy carved by George Federoff in 1960, after original pole was accidentally burned in 1959.

The carving is in the style of and is believed to have come from the village of Tuxekan.

Gaanaxadi/Raven Crest Pole. Original, from Tlingit village of Tuxekan. Significant alterations in the top and bottom figures from its appearance in its original location as shown in a photograph. In storage, good condition.

Reproduction carved by Nathan Jackson and Steve Brown in 1984. Located on Totem Walk Trail.

It is unknown whether this is a story or a crest pole.

Raven/Shark Pole. Original is in storage; fragments--3 pieces, approximately 13 feet, 8 feet, and 10-11 feet. Reproduction carved in 1978 by Tommy Jimmie. Located on Totem Walk Trail.

There are differing versions of the meaning and origin of this pole, though it appears to be Tlingit. Clans in Tuxekan, the village from which the pole may have come, claims the figures carved here as their crests. The totems appear to be Raven, a shark or dogfish, a wolf or fox, and a bear or stump. The original pole was part of the Alaskan exhibit at the 1964 New York World's Fair. (Knapp, #14)

Bicentennial Pole. Original, excellent condition. Carved in 1976 by Duane Pasco. Located in front of Visitor Center.

Pole is 27 feet high. Depicts 200 years of Pacific Northwest Coast Indian cultural history. The design is in keeping with traditional form and style. (Knapp, #15)

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Contributing resources:

Structures: 3  
Objects: 7  
Trails: 3  
Sites: 0

Non-Contributing resources:

Structures: 7  
Objects: 9  
Trails: 3  
Sites: 1

## 8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> social/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

**Specific dates** 1804; 1841; 1901;1910 **Builder/Architect** Ioann Veniaminoff; various

### Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

#### SUMMARY STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE:

Sitka National Historical Park was listed in the National Register of Historic Places by administrative action under provisions of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966. It was deemed nationally significant under National Register criteria by virtue of its status as a national monument established by President Taft on March 22, 1910 (Proclamation No. 959) under the authority of the Antiquities Act of 1906.

Sitka National Historical Park was established in 1972, as an expansion of the original National Monument.

The Russian Bishop's House was purchased by the National Park Service in 1973 because of its significance in commemorating "czarist Russia's exploration and colonization of Alaska." (PL 92-501, 92nd Cong., S. 1497, October 18, 1972)

The National Park Service has recognized the significance of Sitka National Historical Park under the following themes in American history and prehistory:

THE ORIGINAL INHABITANTS: Native Villages and Communities; Alaska

THE ORIGINAL INHABITANTS: Indian Meets European; Indian life at time of contact with the European

THE ORIGINAL INHABITANTS: Changes in Native Life due to Contact; Changes in social and political organization, [also] Native migrations and warfare due to contact, [also] Changes in economic base

THE ORIGINAL INHABITANTS: Contemporary Native Cultures; Indians and Eskimos of Alaska

THE ORIGINAL INHABITANTS: Aboriginal Technology; Arts and ceremonialism

EUROPEAN EXPLORATION AND SETTLEMENT: Other European Exploration and Settlement; Russian

WESTWARD EXPANSION, 1763-1898: The Fur Trade; Northwest and Pacific Coast fur trade

WESTWARD EXPANSION, 1763-1898: Military-Indian Conflicts; Pacific Coast

AMERICA AT WORK: Architecture; Colonial, public

Additionally, the Russian Bishop's House was designated a National Historic Landmark in 1962. (Nomination form attached)

This nomination documents the formally recognized significance of the historic resources of Sitka National Historical Park. It includes resources of state or local as well as national significance.

# 9. Major Bibliographical References

See Continuation Sheets

# 10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property 58.5

Quadrangle name Sitka (A-4)

Quadrangle scale \_\_\_\_\_

### UTM References

A	<u>018</u>	<u>48111000</u>	<u>6322000</u>
	Zone	Easting	Northing

B	<u>018</u>	<u>481650</u>	<u>6322550</u>
	Zone	Easting	Northing

C	<u>08</u>	<u>481000</u>	<u>6323000</u>
	Zone	Easting	Northing

D	<u>018</u>	<u>480550</u>	<u>6322500</u>
	Zone	Easting	Northing

E	<u>08</u>	<u>480014</u>	
	Zone	Easting	Northing

F			
	Zone	Easting	Northing

G			
	Zone	Easting	Northing

H			
	Zone	Easting	Northing

Verbal boundary description and justification Boundaries are shown on the accompanying map, Sitka National Historical Park, and further described in Section 7. The reconstructed Russian Block house is indicated, while recognized as a non-contributing element. The boundary is coterminous with the original Sitka National Monument, 1910, and the Russian Bishops House NHL, 1962.

### List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state	code	county	code
N/A			

state	code	county	code

# 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Kathleen Lidfors, Historian

organization NPS, Alaska Regional Office date 12/9/86

street & number 2525 Gambell Street telephone 907/271-2638

city or town Anchorage state Alaska

# 12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national  state  local

As the designated State Historic Preservation 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.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature Judith E. Bittner

title State Historic Preservation Officer, Alaska date 9/25/87

In compliance with Executive Order 11593, I hereby nominate this property to the National Register, certifying that the State Historic Preservation Officer has been allowed 90 days in which to present the nomination to the State Review Board and to evaluate its significance. The evaluated level of significance is  National  State  Local.

FEDERAL REPRESENTATIVE SIGNATURE Edmund C. Beavers

TITLE Chief Historian DATE 12/11/87

FOR NPS USE ONLY Attest:

Chief of Registration

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The historic components of Sitka National Historical Park represent both the Tlingit people who occupied Baranof Island, as well as much of southeast Alaska, and the Russians who exploited the Native people for the sake of New World resources, especially furs. The fort and battle site testify to the violence of the encounter; the Russian Bishop's House embodies Russian civilization in the colonies and profound changes wrought by this presence in Tlingit life and culture.

The Russian Bishop's House also reveals how the Russians were changed by the people they conquered. The totem poles speak of both traditional Native culture and art and of ongoing efforts to preserve and renew that heritage. In the landscape of the original unit, elements of the historic contact period scene are ~~still~~ preserved.

HISTORICAL CONTEXT:

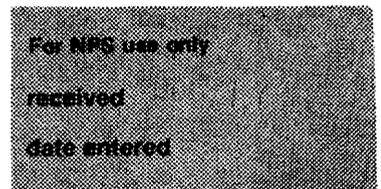
It was the lure of furs, rather than empire, that enticed the promyshlenniki, the Russian equivalent of the American mountain men, eastward across the expanse of the Russian frontier in Siberia, Kamchatka, and into the Bering Sea. Between 1743 and 1780 this advance progressed along the Aleutian Chain involving as many as forty-two different fur companies and over one hundred voyages. In the 1780s a new era in the history of the Russian fur trade began: Grigorii Ivanovich Shelikov and Ivan Golikov had the imagination to envision, through the establishment of a permanent settlement under their fur company, a colonial structure. (Faulkner, n. p.)

In August of 1784, 43 years after Bering's discovery of Alaska, Shelikov established a base at Three Saints Bay on the southeastern shore of Kodiak Island. However, earthquakes and dangerously high tides predated a short life for this community. When Alexander Baranov, chief manager of the Shelikov-Golikov Company, arrived on Kodiak Island in July of 1791, he acted quickly to build a new site for the company's headquarters. By 1793 the company had moved to Pavlovsk, today the city of Kodiak. (Smith, Erskine House, n. p.)

Baranov knew within his first few years as manager at Kodiak that a Russian presence must be established farther east along the coast. By 1796 he was regularly sending parties out to explore distant coastlines and collect furs. The first such expedition to southeastern shores brought back news that British and American traders had already established an active market among the Tlingit Indians of Baranof Island, exchanging guns for furs. Baranov, naturally, wished to foreclose any competition for furs, but he was most urgently concerned about the flow of firearms through native hands along the coast to Yakutat, which could jeopardize the survival of the small, mainland post his company had established there. (Lidfors, n. p.)

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It was not until 1799, when a struggle among the owners of the Shelikoff Company and its competitors resulted in formation of the Russian American Company under a twenty-year charter from the Tsar, that Baranov was able to act on his intentions. In September of that year he sailed from Kodiak with 1,100 Russians and Aleuts to build a fort on Sitka Sound. He chose a wide stretch of beach in a quiet bay on the southwest coast of what is now Baranov Island for the new post. Tlingits on the island were hostile from the beginning; harrassment was constant. In 1802, after Baranov and many of the company employees had returned to Kodiak, a local group of Tlingit Indians attacked and destroyed the fort.

\*\*\*\*\*

The Tlingit Indians were the most northerly development of the Pacific Northwest cultures, which include Haida, Tsimshian, Kwakiutl, Nootka, Bella Coola, and Coast Salish. At the time of contact with the Russians, the Tlingits were a highly integrated and well established culture occupying the coastline of Alaska from Yakutat to the Alexander Archipelago.

The Tlingits had a highly structured social organization based on clan, within which status was carefully delineated. Slavery was a part of the social stratification system. The more powerful clans tended to control local resources. However, land was not necessarily owned, but held in stewardship by the clan. The Tlingits were highly territorial, as seen in their control of various access routes to the interior--a system that remained in place until the 1890s. The characterization of the Tlingit as "warlike" derives from the heightened need for control of the resources in this most northerly of the Northwest Coast cultures.

Like other Northwest coastal Indians, the Tlingits lived in large permanent villages, sited to have direct access to water, with several satellite locations which were occupied seasonally, as resources were available. They built large houses of split cedar, which were occupied by many families related to a common ancestor. Their diet was based on hooligan, halibut, and berries. Sitka deer were utilized for food and the bones for tools; bear were hunted for primarily ceremonial uses. Cedar bark was woven into capes and rain-shedding hats; blankets of wool from mountain sheep, perhaps obtained in trade with the Chilkats, provided warmth.

The art of the Tlingits is exemplary of Northwest Coast culture. It is more highly patterned than that of the more southerly Northwest Coast groups, using every available surface. The totem poles reflect the history of a clan and its tradition, as well as clan individuals. (Gleeson, pers. comm.)

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Two years after the Tlingits destroyed the Russian fort on Sitka Island, Baranov returned to strike back. When he assembled his force in Krestof Sound, just north of the fort destroyed in 1802, he had an impressive force of four sloops and several hundred bidarkas (Aleut skin-covered boats). Word had been left at Kodiak for the warship Neva, an unexpected arrival in the colony, to join the Sitka venture.

The Sitkans had known that the Russians would return and had prepared for retaliation by building a fort at Indian River of second growth spruce trees called shishkeenue. Some of the Tlingits lived below, at what is now called Jamestown Bay, and at the right time they moved together and combined their strength.

On the first day of battle Baranov landed a party of 150 men and several field pieces. Orderly gunfire greeted them, and a fierce engagement ensued. The first day went in favor of the Tlingits. On the second day, because he had received a painful wound, Baranov turned over the direction of battle to Capt. Urey Lisiansky, of the Neva. Under the Neva's cannon fire, the Tlingits yielded to negotiations. It was not until the fifth day, after resumption of the bombardment, that a final parley was held, leading the Russians to believe that surrender would occur in the morning. But an eerie silence greeted the Russians the next day. The Tlingits had chosen flight to surrender. (Hall, in Hadleigh-West, 82-8)

The Russians stayed on Baranof Island and built a capital for their New World empire. But it was not until Governor Murav'ev's administration (1820-25) that the company policy to deny Tlingits access to any of the islands in Sitka Sound was reversed. On the premise that it would be safer to keep an eye on the Kolosh, as the Russians referred to them, than to leave them to their own devices, the toions (chiefs) were invited to settle their people beside the fort.

Sitka's fortifications were strengthened in anticipation of the move. From the three blockhouses along the stockade which separated Sitka from the native village, cannon were trained on the Tlingits, and an iron portcullis gate was constructed to admit Natives during designated hours only and never after dark. However, the move did stimulate trade with the Natives and ultimately developed a qualified, but interdependent, relationship between the Tlingits and the colonizers which persists in the physical and social structure of Sitka today.

In 1821, when the Russian American Company's charter was renewed for a second twenty years, Russia's colonial enterprises stretched from the Aleutian Islands to Fort Ross (California) and the Sandwich Islands (Hawaii). The colonies were organized in five administrative units, each containing several

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ports, forts, redoubts, odinochkas (one-man trading posts), and artels (hunting parties). The central administration for all districts was located in Sitka.

The Orthodox Church also established a strong presence in Sitka during the second charter period. The missionary efforts of several decades, but primarily the gifted leadership of Father Ioann Veniaminov (later Bishop Inokentii), resulted in the baptism of several Tlingit toions. By the close of the second charter the Holy Synod endorsed Father Veniaminov's recommendations to reorganize the colonial church, giving it more autonomy: a cathedral would be established in Sitka with a seminary to train clergy for service throughout Russian America; the senior priest at Sitka would supervise the church throughout the colonies. The seminary (Russian Bishop's House), built 1841-1843, and the Cathedral of St. Michael Archangel (St. Michael Cathedral NHL), built 1843-1848, became the educational, cultural, and spiritual center of Russian America. (Lidfors, n. p.)

The Seminary offered a rigorous curriculum of higher education, designed primarily for natives destined to serve the church in Alaska, but it also provided the education that gained many natives and creoles (those of Russian and Tlingit parentage) access to upper-rank employment with the Russian American Company. As an adjunct to the Seminary, the Bishop started a school for elementary and secondary education; an orphanage was associated with the school for a time. These institutions brought the Tlingit and other Native groups into the established Russian religion, as well as the dominant Russian culture.

These institutions functioned throughout the Bishop's term in Alaska and sporadically thereafter. Not until 1929 were the school and orphanage permanently closed. The students of these schools came from all over Alaska; most returned to their home communities to take up leadership positions there, but many went on to advanced work in Russia and were posted to churches outside Alaska, elsewhere in North America. The great religious and cultural influence exerted by the Orthodox church in this early period is still evident in the large numbers of Orthodox communicants living in the Aleutian and Pribilof Islands, Kodiak, Sitka, and other Alaskan coastal communities. (Smith, St. Michael Cathedral, n. p.)

Although the Russian American Company continued to show profits during its third charter (1841-1861), fifty years of intensive fur hunting by three maritime powers had resulted in depletion of fur seal and sea otter populations. The market for furs had also collapsed, silk hats replacing fur in western wardrobes. When the Company's charter expired in 1861, it was not renewed. The fur trade remained weak, and new ventures of the past decade had faltered. The Crimean War had depleted the Imperial treasury and focused

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Russia's attention on Europe. Further, the Russian American Company was becoming increasingly expensive to operate. To sell the colonies to the United States would have both political and financial advantages. Thus, in 1867, the territory and assets of the Russian American Company became possessions of the United States. (Lidfors, n. p.)

When William Dall, leader of the Western Telegraph Expedition, was in Sitka in 1865, he described the Tlingits as they appeared to him after more than a half-century of contact with the Russians:

They have generally adopted a style of dress somewhat civilized in appearance, and it is now impossible to find any of them dressed in their original style, which is quite forgotten. At present men and women wear much the same clothing. It consists of a long shirt or chemise and a blanket ornamented with buttons, which covers the whole body. Some of them weave variegated blankets which display...artistic taste. They all paint.... They perforate their noses, wearing a ring adorned with feathers. They make a succession of perforations all around the edges of the ears, which are ornamented.... (Dall, 412)

Dall noted that the Tlingits "migrated with the season, according to the prevalence of game or fish," but that there were some sixteen settlements in the archipelago which served as their primary dwelling places.

Their winter houses are massively built of large, squared logs. They serve both for dwelling and purposes of defense. The walls are several feet thick, six or eight high, and sometimes forty feet square. The roof is of bark; there is a round hole, reached by steps, for a door, and a square one, to let out the smoke, in the roof. They rarely have openings for windows. Some of the houses are floored, and have an air of durability and comfort. (Dall, 414)

Dall also noted that the Tlingits were divided into four totems: raven, wolf, eagle, and whale. Representations of these totems were carved "on every house, paddle, household utensil, and frequently on amulets or plates of native copper." Dall observed that tall posts, "curiously carved," were frequently positioned in front of the houses:

Sometimes they are placed directly in front, so that an entrance made through the block or the log, which is of enormous size. These carvings represent the successive ancestral totems, and are usually capped with that of the builder. They are frequently painted of various colors. (Dall, 414)

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In June of 1890, President Benjamin Harrison set aside, as a public park, the historic site of the Kiksadi Tlingit fort at the mouth of the Indian River. As tourists to the American territorial capital snapped up the elaborately carved Tlingit masks, utensils, and wooden boxes, local parties, particularly the Presbyterian missionaries, Sheldon Jackson, and his assistant, John G. Brady, acted to preserve Sitka's heritage. Brady was a key figure in the formation of Sitka's Society of Alaskan Natural History and Ethnology (1887). He was one of the three commissioners who recommended the establishment, three years later, of the public park on Indian River. (Brady, 82)

A decade later, Brady, now territorial governor, was responsible for acquiring some eighteen totem poles for placement in the park. The first of these were brought to Sitka in 1901 from Kasaan on the U. S. Revenue Cutter Richard Rush. In 1903 Congress appropriated \$50,000 for Alaska's participation in the Louisiana Purchase Exposition in St. Louis. Governor Brady personally went to Prince of Wales Island aboard ~~the~~ Rush to collect additional poles. (Knapp, n. p.)

After the exposition, the traveling poles were eventually returned to Sitka and installed with the others in Indian River Park. Sitka artist and photographer E. W. Merrill supervised the erection of the totems along "Lovers' Lane," now Totem Walk. The work of painting and repairing the poles was carried out by Native artisans, both Haidas and Tlingits. (Brady, 357)

The concept of "cultural caretakers" has been fundamental to Sitka National Historical Park from its earliest days as a government reserve, or public park, and later as a National Monument. An important expression of this concept was the CCC project for repair and reproduction of the totem poles from 1939-1941.

In April of 1938 Alaska's governor John. W. Troy wrote to the acting director of the National Park Service, A. E. Demaray, to suggest that it would be possible to get Civilian Conservation Corps help for rehabilitation of the Sitka totem poles. Demaray responded that the National Park Service would be pleased to participate in the program, so long as a technician would oversee the work. The project was initiated early in 1939, after the U. S. Forest Service obtained Works Progress Administration funds (later augmented with Civilian Conservation Corps monies). (Hanable, 45)

By March of 1940, Tlingit carver George Benson and nine Native workers had duplicated about half of the old poles, many of which were badly deteriorated. Duplicates and repaired poles were treated with preservatives and painted with compounds carefully mixed to match the original colors. All the tools for carving were hand-made, fashioned for the project. (Forrest, n. p.)

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According to the U. S. Forest Service architect who oversaw the totem pole project statewide, the Alaska program was unique for the CCC in allowing people over thirty years old to participate; some of the native carvers were over seventy years old. The young participants benefited in that "it gave them an interest back in their history that they probably would have lost. We felt at the time we were doing it that this would be the last chance to accomplish something like this." (Forrest,n. p.)

This manner of cultural stewardship has continued at Sitka National Historical Park in the on-going development of master carvers contracted by the National Park Service, which has resulted in artistically commanding reproductions of an additional seven of the original poles. Although these poles are less than fifty years old and not recognized exceptions to National Register criteria, as the poles carved under the CCC program would be, they merit listing as exceptions because of their artistic quality and their unique representation of a living and ancient cultural heritage.

In Tlingit culture poles were not preserved; they weathered as they told their stories and returned to the elements. New poles were carved, then, to refashion a tradition and a history for a new generation. The Bicentennial pole, completed in 1976, expresses both this temporal stance with respect to the meaning of the poles and a major artistic achievement in the traditional mode. Winner of a design competition for the honor of carving this pole, Duane Pasco has carved a highly sculptured pole which weighs the old against the new in the life of the modern Northwest Coast Indian. A staff in the right hand of the top figure is bare, yet to be carved; what the future will bring is unknown. (Knapp, No. 15)

In Sitka National Historical Park some of the false dichotomies of "oppressed" and "oppressor" are overturned. Here is preserved the tangible past and the living present of two sophisticated cultures which clashed on a small, rocky headland over resources spread across vast expanses of land and sea. Complex changes in both cultures resulted, leaving a rich inheritance for the descendents in Shee Atika, Sitka-by-the Sea, and for the visitors who come with eyes to see and ears to hear what the carved logs of a Tlingit totem and a Russian mission express.

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SUPPLEMENTARY LISTING RECORD

NRIS Reference Number: 66000164 Date Listed: 6/21/88

Sitka National Historical Park Sitka Division AK  
Property Name County State

Multiple Name

-----  
This property is listed in the National Register of Historic Places in accordance with the attached nomination documentation subject to the following exceptions, exclusions, or amendments, notwithstanding the National Park Service certification included in the nomination documentation.

*for* Patrick Andrews 6/21/88  
Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

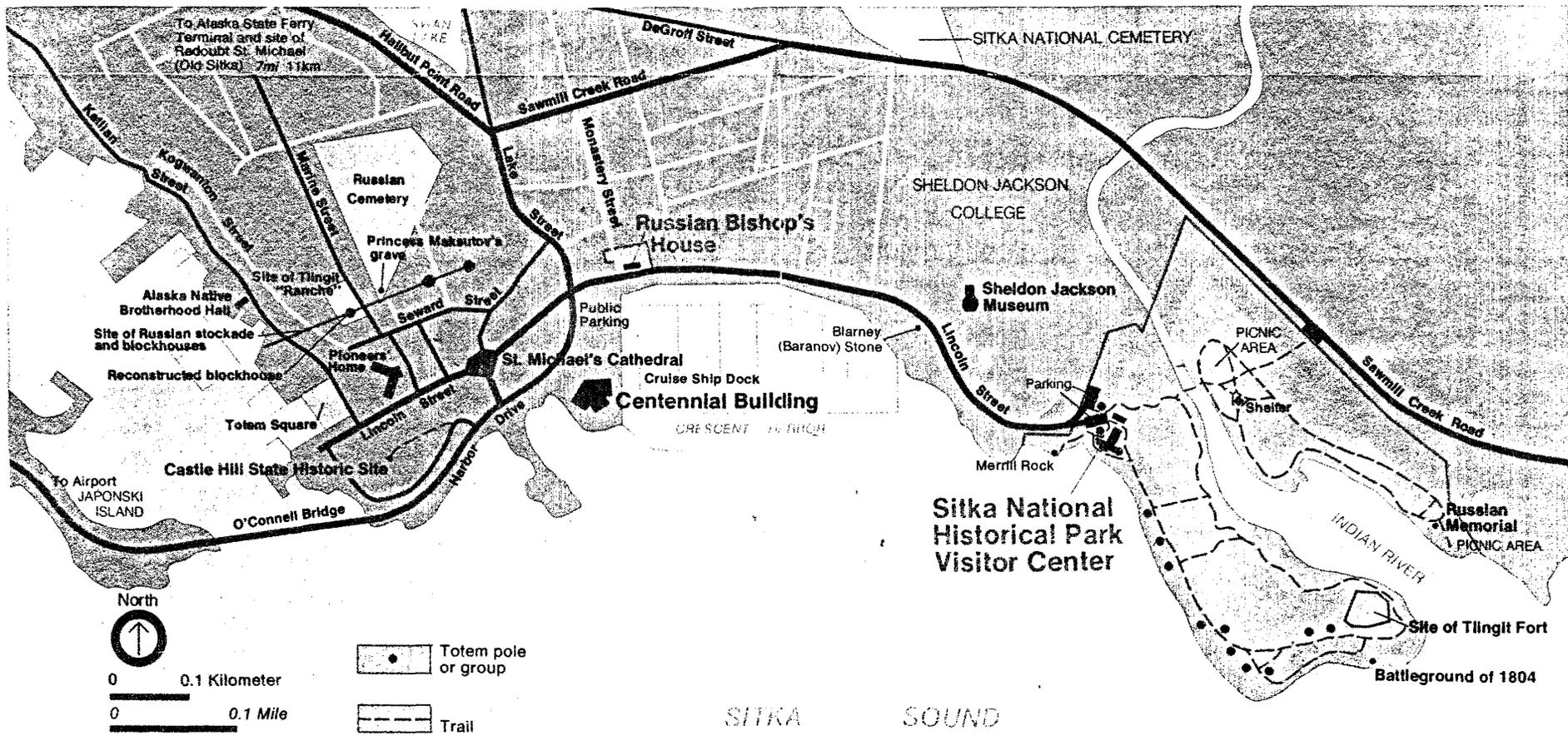
=====  
Amended Items in Nomination:

This SLR is being completed following a 6/20/88 telephone conversation with NPS Alaska Regional Office Historian Bill Hanable. The intent is to clarify the count of contributing and noncontributing resources included on page 13 of section 7. The number of **contributing** resources should read as follows: 3 buildings (Russian Bishop's House, House 105, and the Old School), 7 objects (Saanaheit, Yaadaas Crest, Frog/Raven, Trader Legend, Lakich'inei, Mosquito Legend, and Waasgo Legend totem poles), and 3 sites (Kiksadi Fort Site, 1804 Battleground site, and the historic trail system documented on pages 7-3 and 7-4).

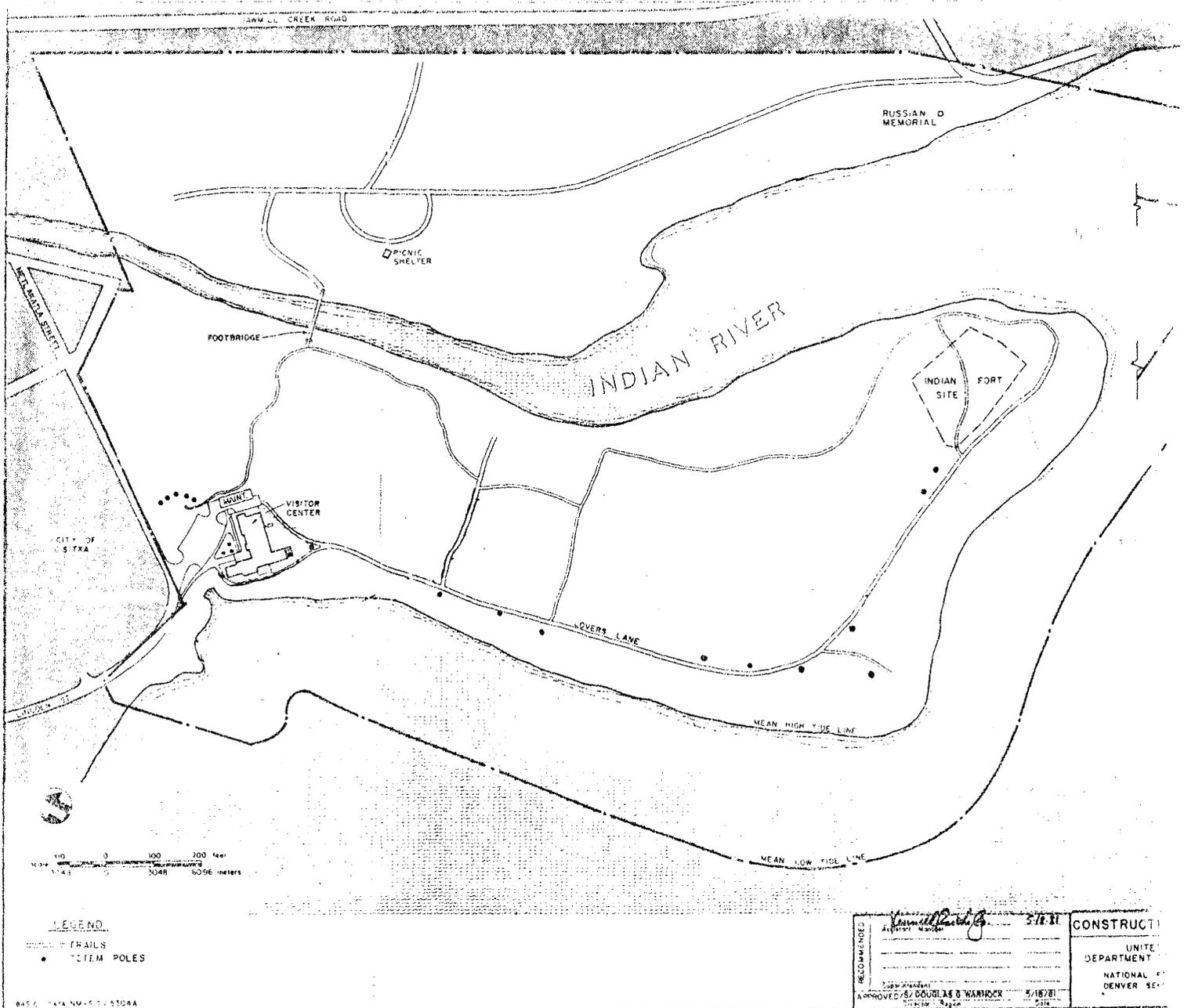
The number of **noncontributing** resources should be counted as follows: 3 buildings (Visitor Center, Maintenance Building, and the Picnic Shelter), 2 structures (Indian River Bridge and the Blockhouse), 4 sites (the 4 trail segments located on either the west or east side of Indian River, as documented on page 7-9), and 10 objects (the Russian Memorial and the following totem poles: Saanaheita House Posts, Yaadaas Crest Corner Pole No. 1, Yaadaas Crest Corner Pole No. 2, Wolf Pole, Memorial/Mortuary Column, Raven Memorial Pole, Gaanaxdi/Raven Crest Pole, Raven/Shark Pole, and Bicentennial Pole).

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- National Register property file
- Nominating Authority (without nomination attachment)

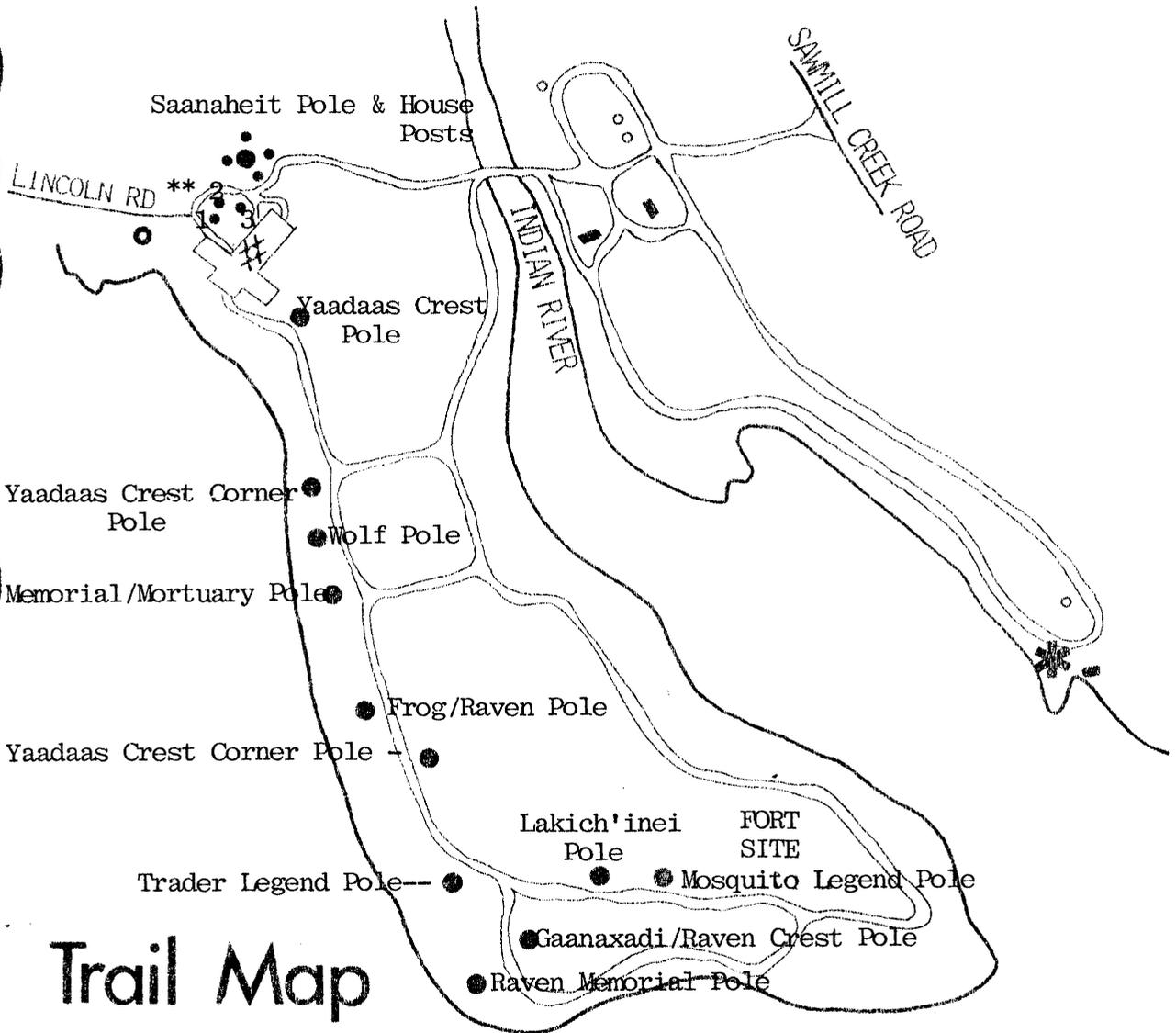


MAP 1



SITE MAP, SITKA NATIONAL HISTORICAL PARK

# Sitka National Historical Park

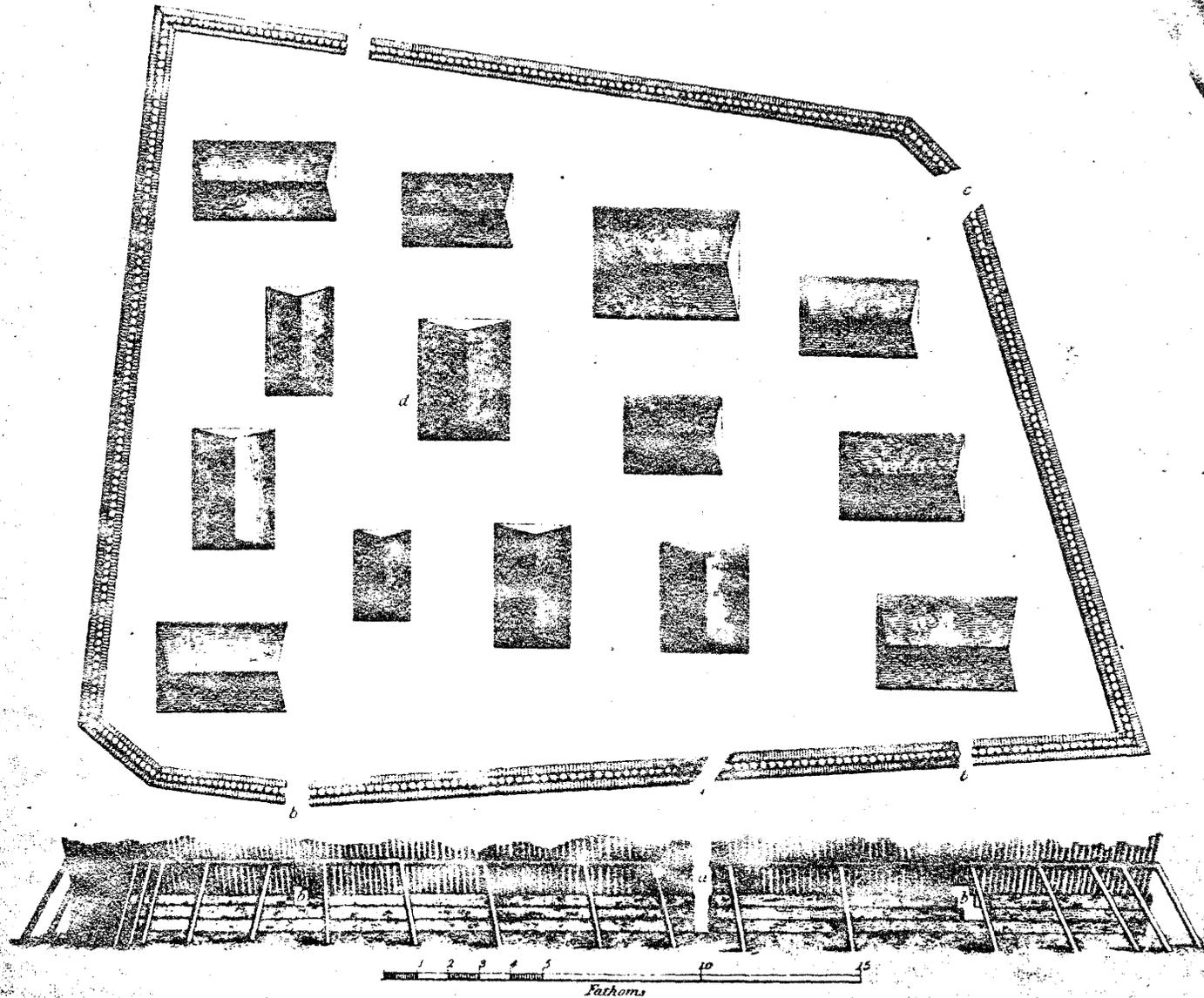


## Trail Map

SITKA  
SOUND

### KEY:

- TOTEM POLES
- RESTROOMS
- ▣ PICNIC TABLES
- \* RUSSIAN MEMORIAL
- # VISITOR CENTER
- MERRILL PLAQUE
- \*\* 1 Raven/Shark Pole
- 2 Waasgo Legend Pole
- 3 Bicentennial Pole



Lisiansky's map of the Sitka fort as published in 1814.  
(Reproduction 1:1)

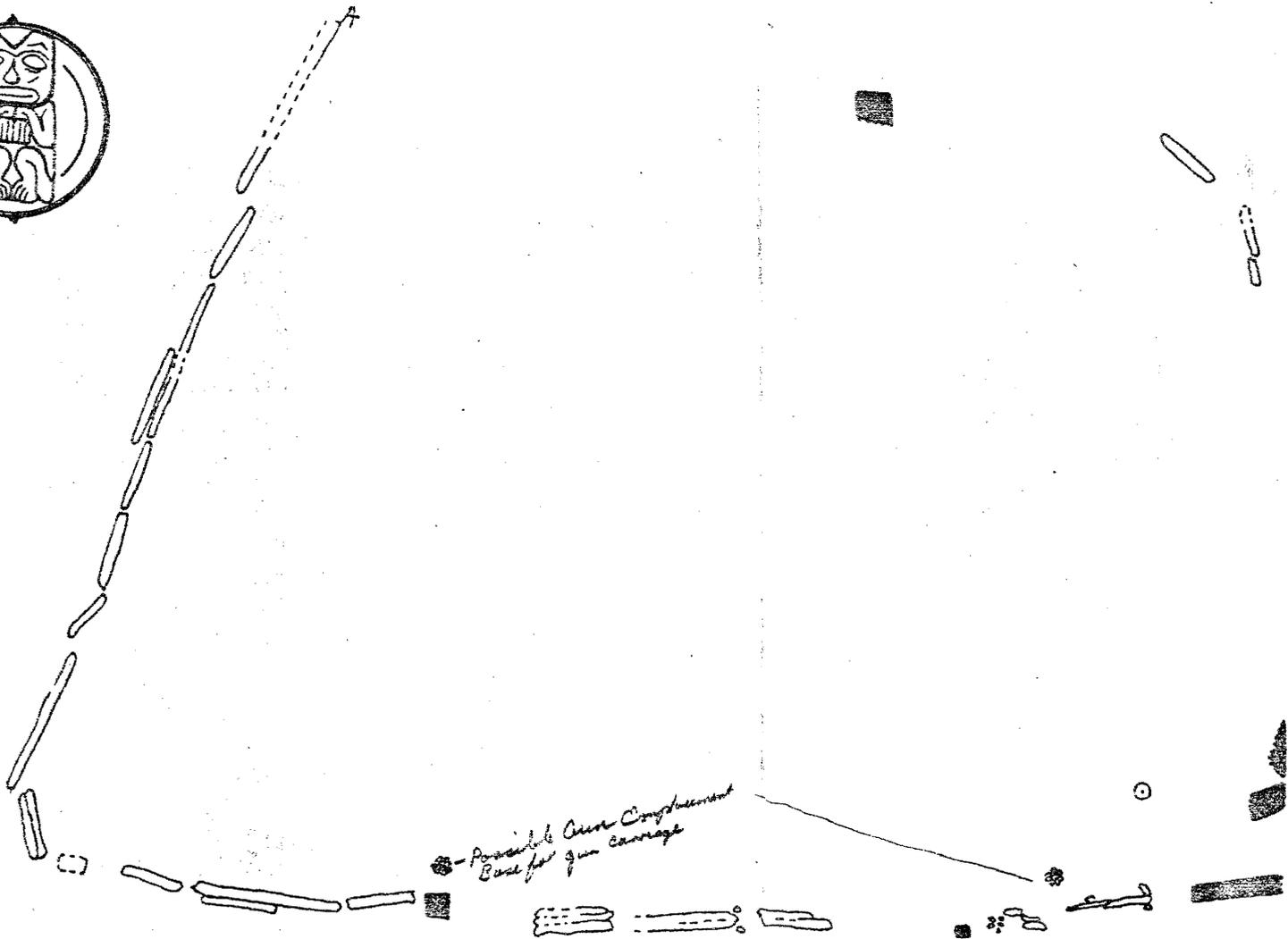
-- From Hadleigh-West

Smith sculp.

THE SITKA FORT  
-1958-



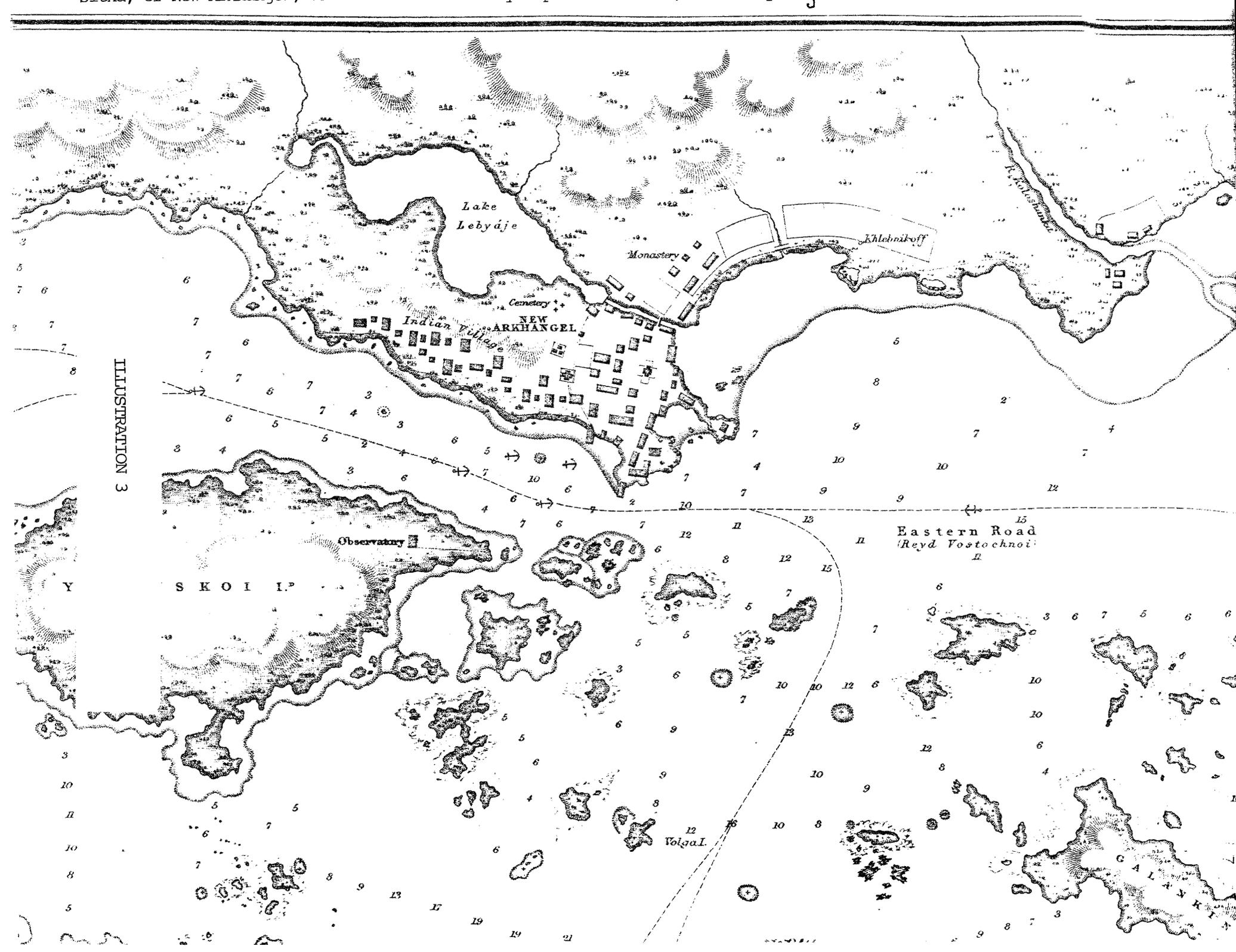
ILLUSTRATION 2



0 20 40 60 80 100  
FEET

Rocks ----- ●  
Wood Mould --- ■  
Hearth ----- ○

Frederick Hadleigh-West



Lake  
Lebyaje

Monastery

Khebnikoff

Cemetery

Indian Village  
NEW  
ARKHANGEL

Observatory

Eastern Road  
(Reyd Vostochnoi)

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ILLUSTRATION 3

Plat of Land Reserved by Act of Congress, May 17, 1884  
For Sitka Industrial Trailing School, Sitka, Alaska  
Surveyed and Platted by John Speckbacher for Sheldon Jackson

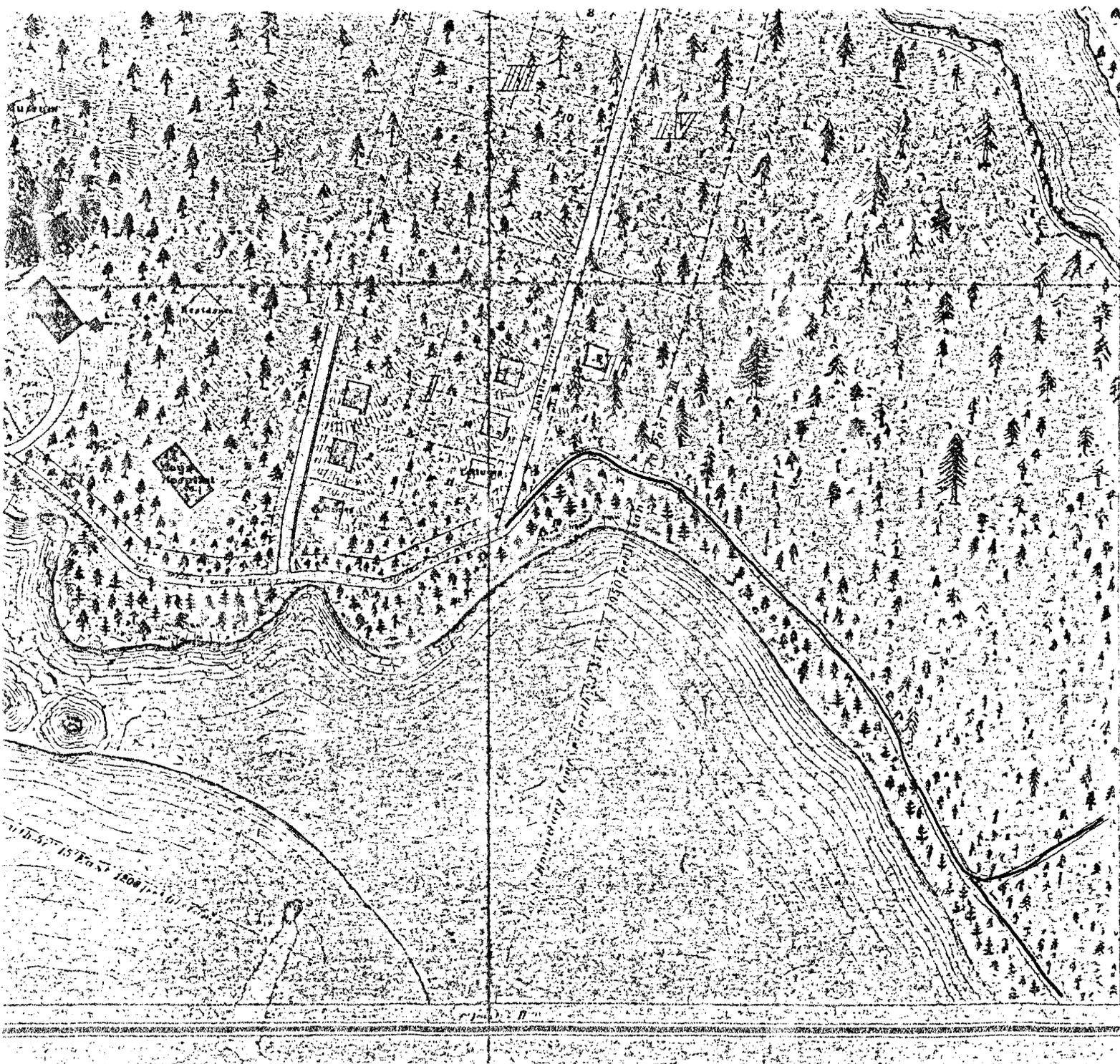
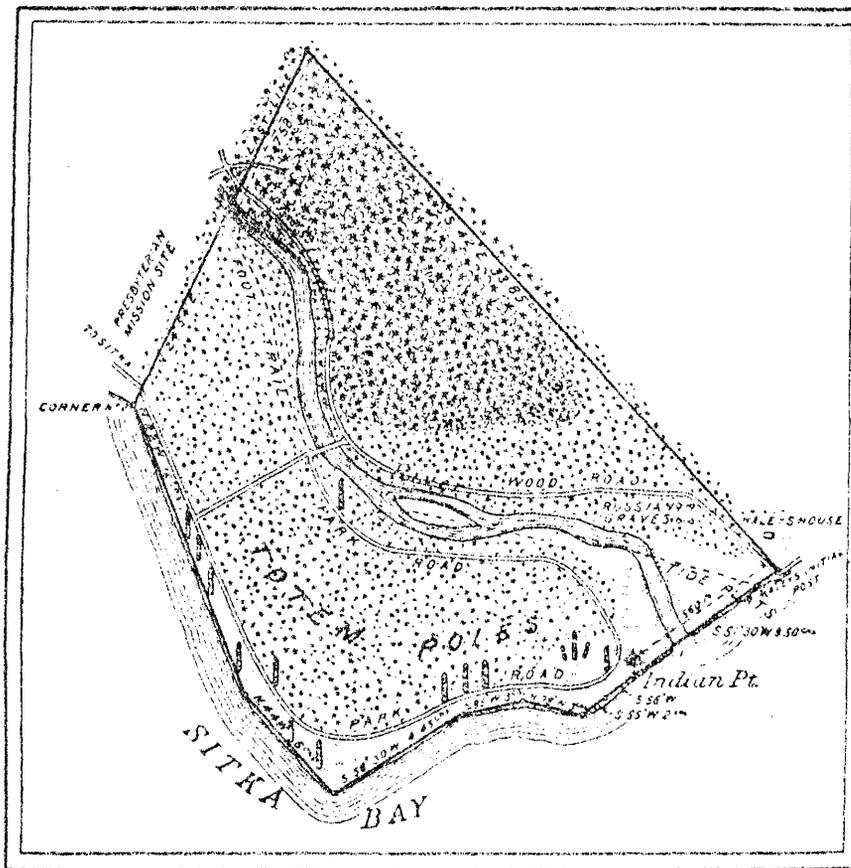


ILLUSTRATION 4

# SITKA NATIONAL MONUMENT ALASKA

*Embracing a tract of land which includes the  
mouth of Indian River and adjacent territory  
near Sitka, containing about fifty seven acres.*



DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
GENERAL LAND OFFICE  
Fred Dennett, Commissioner

[1910]

ILLUSTRATION 5