INTRODUCTION

"FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS"

In early November 1938, newspapers across Southeast Alaska announced a major new federal initiative to restore the region's "Indian antiquities."[1] Using funding from the Civilian Conservation Corps—the work relief program that had become a hallmark of President Franklin Roosevelt's New Deal—the US Forest Service had begun to hire Tlingit and Haida Native men to remove nineteenth-century totem poles from uninhabited Native villages, repair or replicate the poles, and reerect them in "totem parks" close to the tourists' steamship route. Regional Forester B. Frank Heintzleman, the head of the Forest Service in Alaska, explained the rationale of the restoration program, noting that Southeast Alaska's totem poles and community houses were famous worldwide, but many had "disappeared and new ones are not being built. With Indian permission and Indian assistance, some of the best that remain are now to be salvaged and preserved, under government protection, as historical objects." Heintzleman stressed the importance of the federal initiative to the regional tourist economy, arguing that the totem parks would make popular Tlingit and Haida totem poles more accessible to summer tourists and generate more sales for local businesses. He stated that the program would allow young Native men to study with elder carvers, a few of whom had trained in carving apprenticeships in the nineteenth century. Further, Heintzleman emphasized the restoration project's relationship to other New Deal preservation efforts, positioning Alaska's totem poles as part of the nation's heritage: "Federal and state governments, patriotic organizations and historical societies are now actively working on the restoration of sites and buildings that have played a part in the native and white history of the country," he wrote. "These distinctive Indian relics in Alaska are also worth keeping as interesting and instructive historical objects. Their

preservation is a case of now or never. The few remaining objects will otherwise soon be gone."[2]

The decision to collect, repair, and display totem poles in parks as "historical objects" of American history represented a radical change for Tlingit and Haida totem poles. Reversing decades of assimilation policies that had virtually ended monumental totem pole carving in Alaska, the CCC project heralded new non-Native support for totem poles but dramatically altered their context of patronage and production. By the close of the CCC program in 1942, more than one hundred poles would be removed from uninhabited Native villages, where they had been erected next to houses and graves in direct relationship to their clans and individual owners (figure I.1), and reerected in six "totem parks" laid out like Euro-American sculpture gardens (figure I.2). Nearly two hundred Tlingit and Haida men would be employed in the restoration program, many of them young men learning the art—and some the ancestral stories—of the totem poles for the first time.[3] The parks arose at the same time as the federal government was overhauling federal Indian law and championing Native American art as the quintessential "American art," but also as the Tlingit and Haida were developing a lawsuit challenging the federal appropriation of aboriginal lands and waterways across Southeast Alaska.

The New Deal totem parks stand as an important case study of the "entangled" histories of American and Native American art, as non-Natives sought to recode Native art forms within their own national narrative and as Native people sought to channel non-Native interest in their arts to assert their own claims of sovereignty.[4] The parks became the nexus for some of the most significant issues in federal/Indian relations in the interwar period: reforms to federal Indian policy, aboriginal claims against the US government, and American cultural nationalism that looked to Native cultures for a distinctive national past. Despite their significance, however, the New Deal totem parks have not been studied in any depth.[5] Dismissed by a generation of scholars as "gross affronts" to the nineteenth-century poles they were intended to reproduce, the parks' poles have been glossed as "tourist art" in most art historical studies of the totem pole, framed as inauthentic products of government bureaucrats with little meaning for Native communities.[6] Until quite recently, historians of Northwest Coast Native art positioned the interwar period as the "Dark Ages" between the "classical" era of the nineteenth century and the so-called "Renaissance" of the region's art traditions in the 1960s, terms that further dismissed the intellect and artistry of the CCC carvers.[7] Historians of American art have similarly ignored the New Deal totem parks, even though they are a key example of the pride of place that Native American art held in American

I.1. (*Top*) Totem poles in the Haida village of Howkan, Alaska, c. 1897. Photo by Winter and Pond. Alaska State Library, P87-0050.

I.2. (*Bottom*) Hydaburg Totem Park, c. 1941. Photo by Walter Aikins. University of Washington Libraries, Special Collections, UW24159.

culture in the interwar period and represent one of largest expenditures by the federal government on Native American art in the twentieth century.[8]

The CCC totem parks deserve a closer look, with an eye both to the parks' aesthetics and to the cultural and political negotiations that their making required of Native and non-Native sponsors between 1938 and 1942. Over the course of these four years, the CCC established six totem parks in communities in southern Southeast Alaska: Totem Bight and Saxman near Ketchikan; Hydaburg, Klawock, and Kasaan on Prince of Wales Island; and Shakes Island in Wrangell, where the CCC restored an existing Tlingit clan house and added several local totem poles to the island's display. The CCC also restored poles that had been erected in a park in Sitka in the early twentieth century, and it carved new totem poles for the state capital in Juneau. A total of 121 poles—repaired, replicated, and a few newly carved—emerged from the CCC workshops, in addition to two replicated clan houses in Kasaan and Wrangell, and a new clan house at Totem Bight. Little of this work has been closely considered before, much less contextualized within the rich historical matrix of the Great Depression, the Indian New Deal, and Tlingit and Haida aboriginal claims addressed to the US government. This book seeks to restore to memory the complex role of monumental poles in the New Deal totem parks as national monuments, tourist attractions, and most fundamentally, enduring crests for Tlingit and Haida clans.

The Forest Service's proposal to restore totem poles in the late 1930s took many Native people by surprise. This was a time when restaurants across Alaska still posted signs reading "No Natives or Dogs Allowed," when movie theaters and many neighborhoods were segregated, and when the major ceremonies for the Tlingit and Haida (ceremonies known generically in English as "potlatches") were widely condemned.[9] Furthermore, the federal agency's proposals followed years of official efforts to put an end to totem pole carving, either by Christian missionaries who mistook the carved crest figures for gods that Native people worshipped, or by government officials who denounced the expense of totem poles and their attendant potlatches as an impediment to "progress."[10] In 1905, Christian converts in the Haida village of Klinkwan chopped down totem poles to use as the supports for a new town boardwalk, and in 1912, Tlingits in the village of Kake burned several of their totem poles in a massive bonfire.[11] By the second decade of the twentieth century, few if any Native people in Southeast Alaska were carving monumental totem poles for Native communities.[12] No wonder, then, that many Native leaders in the 1930s questioned the government's about-face in supporting the restoration of Tlingit and Haida poles, and proposing to move the poles from uninhabited villages to the new communities where Native people lived.

There are several types of totem poles among the Tlingit and Haida: mortuary and memorial poles for the dead, heraldic poles that recall stories of clan history or the origins of world phenomena, house frontal and interior posts that identify the house's resident clan, and ridicule poles to shame another clan or person for an unresolved

offense. All of these poles display crests—images of animals or other entities that ancestors encountered and earned the right (sometimes through their own death) to claim for their clans as identifying symbols. In fact, *crest pole* is a more accurate English term than *totem pole*, since *totem* denotes a being from which a clan claims actual lineal descent.[13] However, I have chosen to use *totem pole* as a general term in this book because it is the most recognized name for these carved monuments and the most commonly used term in Tlingit and Haida communities in Southeast Alaska.

Historically, Tlingit and Haida communities did not try to preserve their totem poles from the decay inevitable in Southeast Alaska's temperate rainforest, where rainfall can reach thirteen feet a year. Allowing poles to decompose was not due to Native indifference, however, as so many non-Natives assumed, but rather to cultural protocols for ensuring that the crests and histories encoded in the poles were properly recognized by other clans.[14] Tlingit and Haida people belong to one of two moieties, Raven or Eagle (the latter formerly known as Wolf among the Tlingit).[15] A child inherits the moiety and clan of his or her mother and marries a person from the opposite moiety. For the Tlingit, the clan is further divided into houses, which are rooted in winter village sites known as *k̲wáans*.[16] For the Kaigani or Alaskan Haida, who migrated in the eighteenth century to what is now southern Southeast Alaska from their homeland in Haida Gwaii (formerly the Queen Charlotte Islands), moieties are divided into lineages and sometimes further into houses.[17] Preserving "balance" between the two moieties is a key aspect of Tlingit and Haida cultural protocols, and totem poles are still an important part of this exchange.

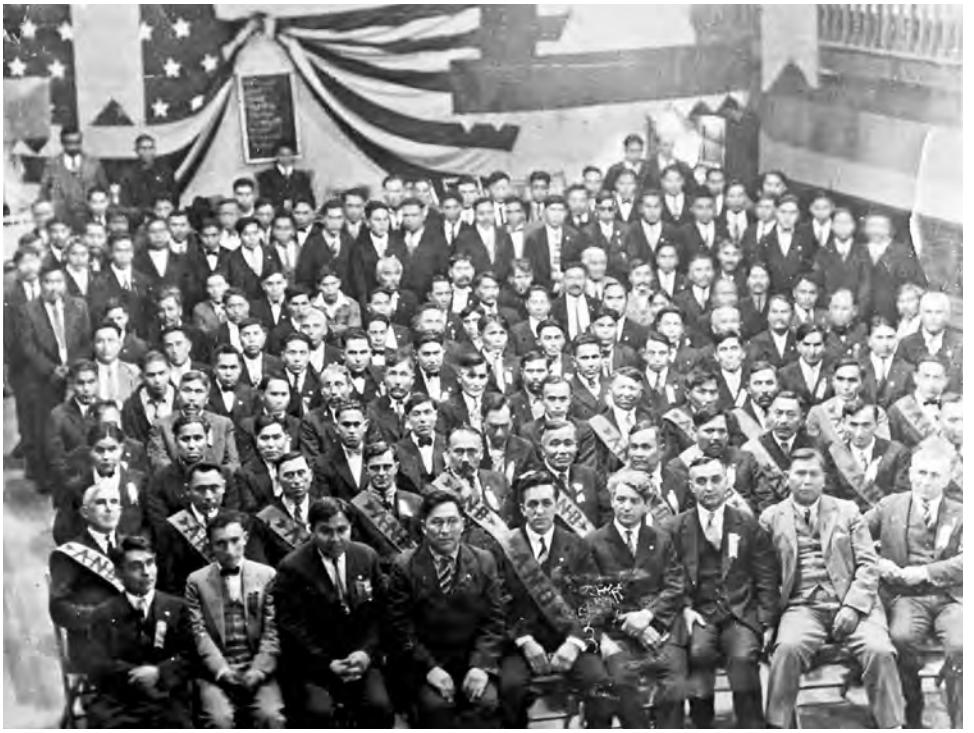
To create a totem pole, a patron commissions an artist from the opposite moiety to carve a set of crests that the patron designates (and has the right to display); when the pole is finished, the patron invites witnesses from the opposite moiety to help raise the pole at a "potlatch," such as a house dedication ceremony—known as a *wałal* in Haida—or memorial feast, called a *k̲oo.éex'* in Tlingit. Hosting a *wałal* or a *k̲oo.éex'* is an expensive endeavor, requiring at least a year to prepare the food and gifts necessary to distribute to guests, as well as the totem poles or other physical representations of the host's clan crests that will be "brought out" in front of witnesses at the ceremony. The more potlatches an aristocrat hosts, the more prestige is conferred on both individual and clan; similarly, the more totem poles one commissions, the more honor one accrues. Preserving older totem poles (with government money!) thus represented a radical change to Tlingit and Haida practices in the 1930s—a change that stirred up controversy within Native communities then and continues to be contentious today.[18]

In addition to the cultural misgivings Native people expressed about totem pole restoration, there were significant political obstacles as well. A key issue for the New Deal totem pole restoration program—and one that has not been adequately studied—is the fact that the Forest Service proposed the program just when the Tlingit and Haida were preparing a lawsuit against the federal government for aboriginal claims to the Tongass National Forest.[19] Since 1909, when seventeen million acres of Southeast Alaska

had been set aside as the Tongass—without any payment to, or negotiation with, the aboriginal peoples who claimed the land—Tlingit and Haida peoples had clashed with the federal agency that supervised the nation's largest forest reserve.[20] While other federal departments regulated some fishing activities, the Forest Service was the primary administrator of forest lands adjacent to the bays and streams where Native families had fishing and trapping camps, and the agency's policies of granting permits for these lands to non-Native homesteaders, trappers, and fox farmers pushed Native families out of places their clans had used for generations.[21]

Conflict over aboriginal title in the Tongass National Forest was not new in the 1930s—nor would it be settled until 1971, when Congress passed the landmark Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (ANCSA).[22] Congress had made no treaties with Alaska Natives when it bought Alaska from Russia in 1867. The 1884 Alaska Organic Act guaranteed that Alaska Natives "would not be disturbed in the possession of any lands actually in their use or occupation or claimed by them"—but it provided no legal means for Natives to secure title to their lands, saving that for "future legislation."[23] Meanwhile, the federal government continued to claim lands in Tlingit and Haida territory. In 1891, concern about the depletion of North American forests resulted in the Forest Reserve Act, which authorized the president to set aside wooded public lands for management by the Department of the Interior.[24] In 1902, Theodore Roosevelt set aside several islands in Southeast Alaska as the Alexander Archipelago Reserve; more were added in 1907, and that same year the reserve was redesignated a "national forest" and named after the southern Tlingit *k̲wáan* of Tongass. In 1909, Roosevelt extended the forest's boundaries to encompass seventeen million acres, nearly the entire archipelago of Southeast Alaska. The Tongass became the nation's largest national forest—without resolution of, or compensation for, Tlingit and Haida claims to the land.[25]

Jurisdiction over the massive new forest went to the United States Forest Service, an agency created in 1905 to "calculate and secure an economical use of the [nation's] existing timber."[26] The product of conservation movements for American forests, the Forest Service was still committed to timber development; its 1905 handbook, "The Use of the National Forest Reserves," emphasized the agency's doctrine of use. By the 1930s, the agency was committed to developing a pulp industry in the Tongass National Forest, which entrenched its opposition to Native claims, since pulp companies wanted fifty-year logging contracts to huge acreages of land before they would agree to invest.[27] The Forest Service was also haunted by the proposals of its parent department's federal rival, the Department of the Interior, to establish Native reservations in Alaska—thereby withdrawing more land from the Department of Agriculture's oversight.[28] Between 1938 and 1941, the very years of the CCC totem pole restoration project, secretary of the interior Harold Ickes approved forty-four village constitutions that would have created a network of Native reservations in Alaska. Although Native people ultimately rejected these reservations, they loomed as a major threat to the Forest Service during the CCC period. Regional Forester Heintzleman was appalled by Ickes's plan;[29] his



I.3. Delegates to the Alaska Native Brotherhood Grand Camp Convention in Haines, Alaska, 1929. At this meeting the ANB voted to make aboriginal claims to Southeast Alaska the organization's foremost priority. Photo from the Andrew Hope III Collection, courtesy of Peter Metcalfe.

second-in-command decried Ickes's intentions: "Ickes wanted to give it [the Tongass National Forest] all to the Indians!"[30]

It is against this background of aboriginal claims and the antagonistic relationship between the Tlingit and Haida and the US Forest Service that the CCC totem pole restoration project must be understood. The Forest Service actively opposed Native title to the Tongass National Forest, and Native communities actively sought to assert the territories that Tlingit and Haida clans had respected for generations. In 1912, men from Native communities across Southeast Alaska met in Sitka to establish the Alaska Native Brotherhood (ANB), one of the earliest Native rights groups in the United States.[31] While its initial platform focused on obtaining citizenship for Alaska Natives, aboriginal claims became the ANB's priority in 1929, when the members of the Alaska Native Brotherhood and the Alaska Native Sisterhood met in Haines to pursue their legal options (figure I.3).[32] In 1935, President Roosevelt signed the Jurisdictional Act allowing the Tlingit and Haida to sue the federal government for compensation for lands lost to the Tongass National Forest, and in 1939 the Central Council of Tlingit and Haida

Indian Tribes of Alaska was established as the federally recognized tribe that would negotiate the settlement.[33] *Tlingit and Haida Indians of Alaska v. the United States* would preoccupy Tlingit and Haida leadership for the next thirty years, but it began at the same time that Native people were debating whether or not to cooperate with the federal government on the totem pole restoration program.

Although testimony for the lawsuit was delayed by World War II, many of the men who had worked for the CCC between 1938 and 1942 testified in two of the major hearings used to determine Tlingit and Haida aboriginal claims: the 1944 Hanna Hearings, held in the communities of Hydaburg, Klawock, and Kake to determine fishing rights; and the 1946 Goldschmidt and Haas interviews, sponsored by the Office of Indian Affairs, held in Native communities across Southeast Alaska to determine historical clan ownership of land and fishing resources. It is striking to note the correlation between the men who testified for the federal hearings and the men who had enrolled in the CCC; it is also striking to realize that the majority of CCC enrollees were members of the Alaska Native Brotherhood and would have attended meetings on aboriginal claims throughout the CCC period.[34] All of this suggests that aboriginal claims *had* to be on the minds of at least some of the Tlingit and Haida men who participated in the totem pole restoration program, and that this battle for recognition should be highlighted when interpreting the decisions involved in the totem pole restoration program.

In fact, given these tensions over aboriginal claims, it is somewhat incredible that the Tlingit and Haida and the US Forest Service agreed to cooperate at all on restoring totem poles. Yet both groups saw their work as benefiting the "future generations" they cited in the memorandum of agreement signed by the parties before restoration began, and both sides remained committed to working through four years of a difficult and costly program. It is the work of this book to unpack how the two sides negotiated radically different understandings of totem poles and their relationship to the lands of Southeast Alaska in order to create six totem parks that remain popular with Natives and non-Natives today.

This book advances three arguments. The first, already asserted, is that the New Deal totem parks are aesthetically, culturally, and politically significant monuments. The second argument, which accounts for the bulk of this book, is that Tlingit and Haida people played an active role in the creation and presentation of the New Deal totem parks, finding ways to use the parks to advance wider claims of cultural and political self-determination. The third argument, which I will spend some time introducing here, is that federal officials saw the totem parks as part of a national New Deal movement to identify, preserve, and interpret American heritage—a movement that helps explain why the government paid for an expensive restoration program in the remote islands of Southeast Alaska.

Regional Forester Heintzleman's argument that Alaska's totem poles were "also worth keeping as interesting and instructive historical objects . . . as part of the native

and white history of this country" linked the totem pole restoration project to a larger national inventory underway in the 1930s, as the federal government worked to preserve and interpret historic sites across the country.[35] The search for a "usable past" worthy of preservation extended across ethnic communities, including Armenian and Turkish tapestry weavers in Los Angeles, Scotch-Irish woodworkers in Appalachia, and Hispanic *santos* painters in the Southwest.[36] Although Native communities did not necessarily want to be positioned within this "good" of multiculturalism—many tribes wanted recognition as sovereign nations with rights to self-determination, rather than celebration as another ethnic group within the United States—the federal government still positioned them as prized components of the nation's pluralistic heritage. In fact, it was the Roosevelt administration's championing of Native American cultures that ultimately helped convince federal officials to fund the totem pole restoration program, despite the fact that the Works Progress Administration initially labeled the program the "boondoggliest of boondoggles," a watchword for unnecessary spending that critics saw as the legacy of the New Deal.[37]

The interest that led to federal support for the totem pole restoration program had deep roots in the interwar period. The mechanized destruction of World War I had spurred a larger antimodern movement that led the West to look to Native Americans (and other "primitive" and "folk" cultures) as sources of redemption for modernity's perceived spiritual, moral, and aesthetic fatigue.[38] In the 1920s and 1930s, Native American arts and cultures had been championed by a small but powerful group of Americans who sought to define Indian arts as the quintessential "American" art form, touting it as one of the few national art traditions that had developed apart from Europe. In 1935, René d'Harnoncourt, the general manager of the New Deal's Indian Arts and Crafts Board and future director of the Museum of Modern Art in New York, voiced his interest in Native art: "I personally believe that the Indian artist has enough to contribute to American civilization to make it worthwhile to spend a great deal of time and effort [on him]. . . . I sincerely believe that Indian art . . . may become a powerful fresh factor in American art."[39] In 1941, d'Harnoncourt's exhibit *Indian Art of the United States* opened at the Museum of Modern Art in New York City—with a totem pole by CCC carver John Wallace at its entrance—to expose the public to the rich Native design traditions rooted in American soil (figure I.4).

In the foreword for the exhibit catalog, First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt affirmed Native art's place in the search for a national culture:

> At this time, when America is reviewing its cultural resources, this book and the exhibit on which it is based open up to us age-old sources of ideas and forms that have never been fully appreciated. In appraising the Indian's past and present achievements, we realize not only that his heritage constitutes part of the artistic and spiritual wealth of this country, but also that the Indian people of today have a contribution to make toward the America of the future.[40]

1.4. Totem pole at the entrance to the Museum of Modern Art for the exhibit *Indian Art of the United States*, 1941. The heraldic pole was carved by John Wallace, a Haida carver who had worked as a demonstration artist for the Indian Arts and Crafts Board at the 1939 World's Fair in San Francisco. Wallace was also the lead carver for the CCC totem pole restoration program in Hydaburg, Alaska. Image copyright the Museum of Modern Art/Licensed by Scala/ArtResource, NY, IN123.1.

Roosevelt's foreword affirmed that interest in Native art stemmed from the highest ranks of the New Deal administration, indicating the support that Native arts would enjoy during the Depression.

The reevaluation of Native cultures during the New Deal period was not limited to their artwork; it also influenced federal Indian policy. In 1934, Congress had passed the Indian Reorganization Act (IRA), also known as the Wheeler-Howard Act, a series of sweeping reforms to federal Indian policy that came to be known as the Indian New Deal.[41] The IRA abolished the Dawes Act of 1887, restoring communal land ownership to tribes and allowing Native peoples to buy and sue for lands lost to allotment. It transferred power away from federal Indian agents to give more power to Native village councils; it also allowed these IRA councils to establish and enforce local ordinances, budget federal funds, hold title to property, and form corporations to profit from resources on Native lands.[42]

On the cultural side, the IRA closed many government boarding schools and returned Native children to their families, operating day schools in local communities instead. It affirmed religious and civil liberties, lifting restrictions on dancing, arts, and Native languages. While many of the reforms were imperfect, reflecting paternalistic attitudes toward Native peoples or ignorance of their own self-governance practices, the Indian New Deal is still among the most significant reforms to federal Indian policy.[43] It was designed, to use the parlance of the day, to "give the Indian a place in modern life."[44] John Collier, Roosevelt's director of the Office of Indian Affairs (an office that would not reorganize under the better-known name Bureau of Indian Affairs until 1947), adamantly believed that Native people could enjoy the benefits of modern society without having to assimilate into it, and that they should able to retain their customary practices if and as they chose to.

Art became a cornerstone of the Indian Reorganization Act and its efforts to improve the economic situation of Native communities. In 1935, just a year after passing the IRA, Congress established the Indian Arts and Crafts Board (IACB) "to promote the economic welfare of the Indian tribes and the Indian wards of the government through the development of Indian arts and crafts and the expansion of the market for the products of Indian art and craftsmanship."[45] René d'Harnoncourt, the manager of the IACB, worked to create informed consumers for Native art by educating more Americans about the cultural and historical significance of Native art forms; he also researched ways to better market Native arts to appeal to more non-Natives. Embracing the "pedagogy of consumption" that motivated many arts programs in the 1930s, the Indian Arts and Crafts Board worked to inform Americans about the significance of Native art forms and to transform the reputation of Native objects from tourist art to a quality tradition of "American" design.[46]

The New Deal totem parks were part of this national effort, seeking to educate non-Natives about the significance of Tlingit and Haida totem poles and to encourage

I.5. B. Frank Heintzleman, regional forester for Alaska (1937–1953). Trained at Yale, Heintzleman led the Forest Service's totem pole restoration program at the same time as he worked to develop a pulp industry in the Tongass National Forest, which led him to vigorously oppose aboriginal claims in Alaska. Heintzleman was later governor of the Territory of Alaska from 1953 to 1957. Alaska State Library, J. Simpson MacKinnon photo collection, P14-064.

non-Native visitors to buy model poles and other arts from Native artists at nearby shops. Although the Forest Service was more removed from the New Deal discourses on Native American art than the Indian Arts and Crafts Board was, it shared the belief that Tlingit and Haida totem poles were important art forms that should be preserved. The 1906 American Antiquities Act required federal agencies to inventory the "monuments and ruins" on public lands they stewarded and to provide recommendations for their preservation.[47] In 1907, the Forest Service recommended monument status for the totem poles and community houses at Tuxekan and Old Kasaan (the latter did receive brief recognition as a national monument from 1916 to 1919).[48] But little money was allotted for the actual upkeep of these sites, and the rapid deterioration of Alaska's Native monuments alarmed tourists and scholars alike.[49] In 1922, the Bureau of American Ethnology sent anthropologist T. T. Waterman to Southeast Alaska to study the predicament of Tlingit and Haida totem poles; his report, "Observations among the Ancient Indian Monuments of Southeastern Alaska," renewed interest in preserving the poles among a new generation of Forest Service administrators, including B. F. Heintzleman, who would become regional forester of Alaska in 1937 (figure I.5).[50] Waterman wrote that Alaska's totem poles and community houses were "as beautiful and interesting as the Parthenon of the old Greeks," and he urged their preservation as icons of America's heritage.[51]

Ironically, it was not until the Great Depression that the Forest Service received the federal funding necessary to answer Waterman's plea. The Works Progress

Administration (WPA) provided the initial funds for a restoration project at Sitka, granting $42,878 in 1938. But it was the Civilian Conservation Corps that eventually funded most of the labor for the totem parks, beginning with an allotment of $127,492 in 1938.[52] As the hallmark program of President Roosevelt's New Deal, the CCC was designed to tackle two major problems of the Great Depression: finding employment for young men and conserving natural resources from drought, disease, and other threats that had plagued the nation's forests and agriculture in the 1930s.[53] Later in the decade, the CCC also worked to create trails and other recreational opportunities for Americans to better access parks and monuments across the nation.[54]

At the prodding of John Collier, Congress created a separate Indian Division, the CCC-ID, to hire Native men to tackle this work on their own reservations. The CCC-ID differed from other CCC camps in that it allowed Native enrollees to live at home and report to work as day laborers, rather than moving to work at rural camps (nevertheless, the term *camp* was often used to refer to the places where Native men worked, including the Alaskan totem pole restoration sites).[55] The CCC-ID also differed in that it enrolled Native men who were married and older than the eighteen to twenty-five age limit imposed on non-Native enrollees (in fact, some of the "CCC boys" in the totem pole restoration program were men in their seventies and even eighties). Still another difference in Alaska was that the CCC was overseen by the Forest Service rather than the army, which did not have a large presence in the territory prior to World War II.[56]

It is important to remember that Tlingit and Haida people had to fight for the right to enroll in the CCC in Alaska. The Depression hit Native communities hard, as I discuss more in the following chapter, and many were desperate for the relief work available to non-Natives. The earliest New Deal relief program in the territory—the Civil Works Administration (CWA) in 1933—had offered Native men jobs building sidewalks, digging sewer lines, and improving general infrastructure in their villages. But when the CWA program ended, the program that replaced it—the CCC—refused to hire Alaska Natives. Charles Flory, the director of the Forest Service and the CCC in Alaska from 1933 to 1937, maintained that Alaska Natives did not qualify for the regular CCC because they were the responsibility of the federal government in a long-term ward relationship, which precluded short-term emergency relief.[57] This discrimination angered Tlingit and Haida communities, and the Alaska Native Brotherhood took up the cause, lobbying Alaska's territorial governor and later Congress to change the policy. On April 13, 1937, after three years of lobbying, Congress ordered that the CCC in Alaska "increase to 600 enrollees, 50% of which were to be native."[58] The totem pole restoration program began the following year.

An important question here is to what extent the federal government's investment in Native American art—and in the New Deal totem parks in particular—constituted a form of cultural appropriation. Several scholars have framed the New Deal totem parks as shameless appropriations of Native heritage, suggesting that Native people

were the victims of a restoration project that paid lip service to honoring their cultures but worked primarily for a tourist industry dominated by non-Natives.[59] These scholars point out that efforts to "restore" Native art are often "symbolic restitutions," superficial commitments to restoring one (commodifiable) aspect of Native culture rather than tackling more difficult restorations of land, resources, and sovereignty.[60] Others have questioned the timing of the totem pole restoration program, wondering if the Forest Service offered work relief for Tlingit and Haida communities only when it learned that Native people were planning to sue the federal government over aboriginal title to the Tongass National Forest.[61]

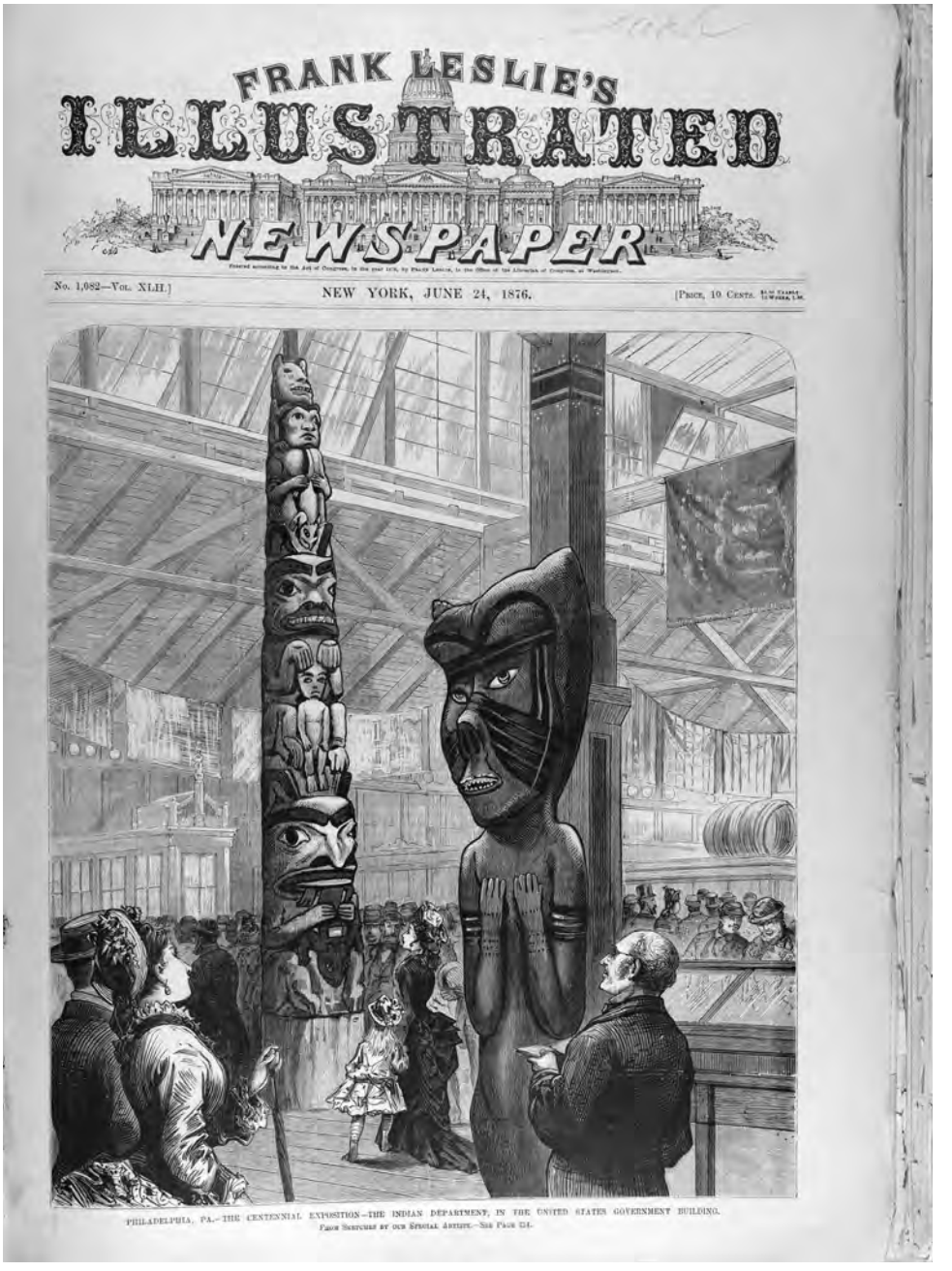
Certainly appropriation was at work in the New Deal totem parks. Many non-Natives embraced the parks as tourist attractions for their communities, even as they continued to implement racist policies against Native people.[62] Dr. Viola Garfield, the University of Washington anthropologist whom the Forest Service contracted as a consultant, put their motivations bluntly: "If present-day Alaskans wished, they could capitalize handsomely on their legendary Indian background."[63] And while the Forest Service did not exactly *time* the totem pole restoration program to counter the Tlingit and Haida lawsuit (there is a clear record of the agency's interest in restoring poles before they were granted the funding to do so), it is certainly true that they used the program to broadcast a "harmonious" relationship with Native communities during this tense period. The newsreel that the Forest Service prepared on the totem pole restoration program—ostensibly to teach more Americans about the significance of Tlingit and Haida art, but also to trumpet the government's beneficent role in supporting it—featured several scenes with Henry Denny Sr., a Tlingit man who would passionately protest the Forest Service's seizure of his clan lands at the mouth of the Unuk River (figure I.6).[64] After World War II interrupted the completion of the film, the Forest Service retooled the totem pole footage for a 1949 newsreel titled *Timber and Totem Poles*, which touted the Forest Service's development of a pulp industry in the Tongass National Forest—supposedly with the "goodwill" of Tlingit and Haida people whose claims to the forest had still not been resolved![65]

It is also important to remember that the New Deal totem parks belong to a much longer history of settler nations appropriating indigenous heritage. The United States had showcased Alaskan totem poles as part of national displays at World's Fairs as early as 1876, when the US Centennial Exposition in Philadelphia introduced totem poles to East Coast audiences (figure I.7). The exposition included Tlingit and Kaigani Haida poles that James Swan had collected in Alaska for the Smithsonian Institution (including a pole he commissioned from a Kaigani Haida carver supposed to be the father of CCC carver John Wallace).[66] The poles attracted a great deal of attention, although it was not necessarily positive: one commentator, noting the "fearfully distorted limbs" of totem pole figures, concluded that the poles demonstrated "most conclusively that the moral standards of the aborigines must have been of the lowest possible grade."[67] As I discuss in chapter 3, Alaska governor John Brady also used Tlingit and Haida totem

I.6. Henry Denny Sr. with his grandchildren and a Forest Service film crew at the base of the Giant Oyster totem, Saxman totem park, c. 1941. The newsreel was intended to teach Americans about the CCC restoration program; due to the outbreak of World War II, however, it was not released until 1949, when it was repurposed for a newsreel titled *Timber and Totem Poles.* Photo by Joe Yolo for the US Forest Service. Ketchikan Museums, 77.3.5.244.

poles in his displays at the 1904 and 1905 World's Fairs, where the poles served as a "unique attraction" supporting Brady's efforts to attract non-Native settlers to what was then the district of Alaska (figure I.8).[68] After the fairs, Brady brought the poles back to a public park in Sitka, which became an important model for the New Deal totem parks two decades later.

Canada also created totem parks in its efforts to showcase its distinctive national heritage. Between 1926 and 1927, the Canadian government worked to restore totem poles in First Nations villages along the Skeena River, reorienting them to be seen from the route of the Canadian National Railroad.[69] Like the totem parks in Alaska, these poles were restored by Native men hired by the federal government, although not in a



1.7. Cover of *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper* showing visitors at the 1876 US Centennial Exposition in Philadelphia viewing Tlingit and Haida totem poles that the Smithsonian Institution had collected in Alaska. The pole in the center was likely carved by Kaigani Haida carver gid k'wáajuss with his young apprentice, John Wallace, who would later carve for the CCC program in Hydaburg. Image courtesy of the University of Illinois Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Q051 FRA.

1.8. Tlingit and Haida totem poles with a reconstructed Tlingit clan house outside the Alaska Building at the Louisiana Purchase Exposition, Saint Louis, Missouri, 1904. Governor John Brady intended the Alaska exhibit, which was still under construction in this image, to "display all the wonderful things [of Alaska] which will instruct and delight our countrymen." Missouri History Museum, Saint Louis, N20889.

work relief program like the CCC. Leslie Dawn has argued that the government initiated the program largely to break the resistance of bands like the Gitxsan to assimilation measures and to pressure them to accept land settlements in British Columbia. Infiltrating the village with a work program to restore totem poles, the government proceeded to frame the poles for tourists on the railroad as monuments of "former Indian customs" banned by the 1884 act that outlawed the potlatch in Canada. The totem parks thus advanced the state discourse of the "vanishing Indian" assimilated into Canadian society and worked to empty the totem pole of meaning as "testimony to [the Gitxsan's] own territorialization of the region."[70]

The New Deal totem parks took several cues from the Canadian model, but they differed in important ways. Dawn contrasts the Canadian emphasis on assimilating First Nations peoples in the 1920s with contemporary American movements for American

Indian revival. He points to the work of American elites in the Southwest to champion Native American dancing, religion, and land claims, like the Taos Society of Artists' lobbying for Native dance rights and John Collier's work to defeat the Bursum Bill's threat to Pueblo lands.[71] Dawn also contrasts the work of Canadian anthropologists like Marius Barbeau, who had been trained in an English tradition of anthropology that emphasized cultural evolutionism and racial hierarchies, with American anthropologists like the German-trained Franz Boas and his student Ruth Benedict, whose influential works on the idea of "culture" as a shared set of beliefs and practices helped popularize cultural relativism, as opposed to racial hierarchy, in the United States in the 1930s.[72] (Notably, another of Boas's students, Dr. Viola Garfield, was the consultant for the CCC totem pole restoration program in Alaska.)

None of this is to say that the New Deal totem parks were free of racism or other colonial imbalances of power. But it is important to position the New Deal totem parks within their own historical matrix of New Deal heritage preservation, Indian New Deal reforms, and Tlingit and Haida efforts to claim their sovereignty in the interwar period. Framing the New Deal totem parks as a black-and-white narrative of cultural appropriation overlooks other transactions that the parks afforded—most significantly, the work of Tlingit and Haida leaders to *reappropriate* the parks for their own communities' uses. As Eric Zimmer has pointed out, New Deal programs for Native Americans have too long been viewed primarily as sources of economic relief, rather than as significant opportunities for Native communities "to assert themselves politically and to capitalize on the national policy shifts of the 1930s."[73] Recent studies of New Deal art programs for Native Americans in the continental United States have emphasized the ways in which Native artists redirected government patronage to benefit their own tribes: Jennifer McLerran has shown how Diné artist Gerald Nailor questioned a New Deal "progress" narrative in the murals he painted for the Navajo Council Chambers;[74] Jenny Tone-pah-hote has studied how Kiowa people used New Deal art programs to strengthen expressions of Kiowa nationhood.[75] Highlighting Tlingit and Haida decision-making in the CCC totem pole restoration program also reveals their strategic efforts to harness a government program for their own cultural and political needs.

Close attention to Tlingit and Haida use of the New Deal parks reveals that Native leaders worked to make the parks legitimate sites for several customary practices: to memorialize the dead, to proclaim clan histories, and to stake claims to lands and other resources that had long been owned by clans in their respective territories. As we will see in the following chapters, Native families sought to include their families' crests in the parks even if the Forest Service had not slated their poles for restoration, and they celebrated the New Deal totem parks with potlatches that observed protocols involving opposite moieties. They commemorated their ancestors in the parks, and they used their ancestors' histories on the land to argue for the primacy of Tlingit and Haida people in Southeast Alaska. In fact, it is striking how many totem poles restored under the auspices of the Forest Service implicitly challenged the white newcomers who

claimed to own the land. A Haida totem pole from Howkan replicated for the Hydaburg Totem Park was said to shame a Russian for an unpaid debt because the Russians (who annexed Alaska in the eighteenth century) "took the land away from the Indians and did not pay them. The eagle stands on the Russian's head to hold them down until the land is paid for."[76] The Seward pole from Tongass Village, which was replicated for the Saxman Totem Park, ridiculed William Seward, the secretary of state who had orchestrated the Alaska Purchase for the United States from Russia in 1867 without any acknowledgment of Native claims to that land.[77] Still other poles represented specific claims to lands and salmon streams owned by individual clans, claims that were later entered into the Tlingit and Haida lawsuit as evidence of their aboriginal title.[78] Preserving these poles in the New Deal totem parks—and recording their crest stories in government archives—thus became a means for Native people to assert the visual and oral evidence of their claims to lands and waterways they were fighting to secure.

The work of Native leaders to ensure that the New Deal totem parks supported their own cultural and political claims confirms their agency even within a federally sponsored program. These were acts of "visual sovereignty," as Tuscarora scholar Jolene Rickard has interpreted other Native art forms that assert indigenous worldviews and the right to live by them—part of her argument that sovereignty should be paramount in interpretations of Native American art.[79] *Sovereignty* has become a much-contested term in American Indian studies, with some scholars rejecting the Eurocentric origin of the term, and others adopting it despite its uncomfortable fit for indigenous polities rooted in bands or clans rather than "nations."[80] I use the term *sovereignty* in this book to denote the very real efforts of the Tlingit and Haida to establish their territories, claim their rights to self-governance, and practice their cultures as they saw fit. As Mark Jacobs Jr., a Tlingit elder whose father had worked for the CCC in Sitka, stated, "A way of life is the strongest evidence of a sovereign people exercising its inherent political system."[81] The CCC totem pole restoration program offered Tlingit and Haida people a way to reinvigorate their "way of life" in the interwar period: to bring poles back into contemporary Native communities, to retell their crest stories and prerogatives to a new generation of Native people, and to assert these prerogatives to a settler nation that had long rebuked them.

As a critical analysis of the New Deal totem pole restoration program, this book is not a continuous narrative of the project's timeline, nor can it address all 121 totem poles restored or replicated during the CCC.[82] The chapters do, however, follow the general chronology of the CCC restoration program, beginning with the early negotiations between the US Forest Service and Native claimants to nineteenth-century poles, to the final work of attracting tourists to the (mostly) finished parks before and after the outbreak of World War II.

Chapter 1, "Archival Claims," opens with the difficult negotiations that took place before the restoration program could begin. The Forest Service's photographic archive

of the nineteenth-century totem poles they hoped to restore revealed their view of the poles as "ruins" in "abandoned Indian villages" in the Tongass National Forest, which clashed with Tlingit and Haida claims to totem poles as enduring testimonies of their clan histories on the land. But Native desire to preserve their archive of crest claims—partly as a way to assert these claims to the federal government—offered a point of agreement that was enough for the restoration program to proceed. Chapter 2, "Exacting Copies," turns to the actual work of restoration, in particular the Forest Service's problematic strategy of replication as a means of totem pole preservation. The agency's emphasis on exact physical replication clashed with the Tlingit and Haida approach to preserving the *meaning* of the crest object and its associated crest story, as well as their openness to "copies" that did not replicate the physical appearance of the earlier version. Chapter 3, "French and English Totems," considers the radical rearrangement of totem poles in French- and English-style parks designed by Forest Service architect Linn A. Forrest Sr. I argue that Forrest turned to French and English landscape designs to create familiar public park settings for American tourists to encounter Tlingit and Haida totem poles, and to elevate the standing of these poles from "curiosities" to dignified statuary in the eyes of non-Natives. Chapters 4 and 5 offer close readings of two totem poles, as well as the work of their respective carvers, to argue for the intelligence and talent of CCC master carvers. John Wallace's Howkan Eagle is the first case study, which centers on two "copies" he made of a commemorative eagle effigy from the village of Howkan. Although the Forest Service condemned Wallace's first copy and forced him to carve an "exact replica" of the Howkan Eagle, the altered appearance of the first version better preserved the meaning of the original crest monument in the radically decontextualized space of the Hydaburg totem park. Chapter 5 analyzes one of the most famous Tlingit totem poles restored for a New Deal totem park, a pole known to Tlingits as the Proud Raven pole but which non-Natives knew as the "Lincoln pole" for the likeness of Abraham Lincoln at its top. The Forest Service's (mis)reading of the pole as a Tlingit memorial to Abraham Lincoln heightened their desire to restore it, even as Tlingits held that the "Lincoln" figure referenced the first white man their ancestors had seen on their shores—and therefore asserted Tlingit primacy in Southeast Alaska.

Beginning with chapter 6, I shift focus from the production of the totem parks to their presentation to non-Native tourists, analyzing the popular guidebook to the totem parks that began under the aegis of the Forest Service: *The Wolf and the Raven: Totem Poles of Southeastern Alaska*. First published in 1948 and still widely used today, the book aimed to dispel decades of inaccurate information that had circulated about Alaskan totem poles by working with Native knowledge bearers to record accurate crest stories. But the decision to edit the final manuscript for a general audience dramatically altered the way these stories were shared and erased some of the localized knowledge that Tlingit and Haida claimants had hoped to record with their poles. Chapter 7 considers tourists' reactions to the parks in the 1940s and 1950s, as well as New Deal efforts to educate them about the significance of Tlingit and Haida poles; as a corollary to

tourists' experiences of the parks, I consider the work of George Daniel Benson, one of the few CCC carvers who tried to make a living from the tourist art market after the close of the CCC. Chapter 8 concludes with one of the most extravagant celebrations of the totem pole restoration program: the 1940 Wrangell Potlatch, hosted by Natives and non-Natives in Wrangell to dedicate the city's new totem park on Shakes Island. The Wrangell Potlatch encapsulated the strange brew of touristic boosterism and Native sovereignty at work in the CCC restoration program and foreshadowed some of the conflicts between the Forest Service and the Tlingit and Haida in the years after the CCC ended. A brief epilogue considers the legacy of the CCC totem parks—both for the tourist industry and for Tlingit and Haida communities who continue to celebrate them today.

One final point to make is that, contrary to the claims of most critics, the CCC produced some good art! Quality in the CCC poles varied widely, and if some betray their makers' hiatus from—or more often their first introduction to—the complex conventions of Northwest Coast carving, others were highly accomplished. Charles Brown, who was thirty-nine when the program started, became the youngest master carver in the CCC camps in part because he took such pains to recreate the careful modeling of the nineteenth-century poles that he studied for his replicas at Saxman and Totem Bight. Rather than simply painting the U-forms on the cheeks of his figures, for example, Brown carved their outlines in delicate relief, leaving the designs raised not a centimeter above the surface (see plate 2).[83] Other carvers, like eighty-year-old John Wallace, were not so concerned with replicating the exact physical features of nineteenth-century poles but focused on maintaining their ability to signify the prerogatives of Haida crests in twentieth-century government parks. Wallace's work to pass on his knowledge of crest stories and crest arts to a younger generation is an aspect of social cohesion that New Deal art programs sought to support, and it should be part of the equation when measuring the success of the CCC.

CHAPTER ONE

ARCHIVAL CLAIMS

On September 23, 1938, C. M. Archbold left his office at the US Forest Service in downtown Ketchikan and drove two miles south down a dirt road to the Tlingit community of Saxman, where he found the Alaska Native Brotherhood Hall packed with Tlingit families. They had gathered to support their elders in discussing the Forest Service's controversial proposal to remove totem poles from Cape Fox, Tongass Island, and Village Island—all some forty miles to the south, with village sites where many elders had been born in the nineteenth century—and to resituate the poles in a "totem park" in Saxman, where some of the elders' families had relocated at the turn of the twentieth century for access to a church and school. Archbold's presentation to the Tlingit crowd that afternoon was fairly short, since the Office of Indian Affairs had already primed the Saxman community on the logistics of the Forest Service's proposals. But he probably had not anticipated the time it would take for the elders to discuss the proposal publicly: five hours, predominantly in Tlingit. In a letter written the next morning to his supervisor, Regional Forester B. F. Heintzleman, who was in Juneau headquarters anxiously awaiting the results of the meeting, Archbold noted tersely that "the old men cannot speak or understand English very well, so an interpreter had to be used." But he was pleased to report that the outcome had been in the Forest Service's favor: "After much discussion these old natives together with all Cape Fox natives present voted favorably to allow the Government to move their totem poles to Saxman. They also agreed to give sufficient village land for a totem park or old village site." Archbold complimented the townsite lots the elders had chosen for the Saxman Totem Park, noting that they were uphill from Native houses along the beach, so that

"a row of totem poles here would be very noticeable from steamers in the Channel."[1] He seemed pleased not only that the Tlingits had agreed to the Forest Service's restoration program but, as Archbold believed, that they were already anticipating ways to attract tourists to see the poles.

The Saxman meeting was the first of many held in Native communities in Southeast Alaska in the fall of 1938, as Tlingit and Haida claimants to nineteenth-century totem poles debated the Forest Service's proposal to restore them. Congress had mandated Native hires for the Alaskan CCC in the spring of 1937, and the Forest Service had begun research on a totem pole restoration program that summer, but it was not until the fall of 1938 that the agency secured funding for the program and began to seek Native permission to restore the poles.[2] Regional Forester Heintzleman insisted that no restorations "be done until the Indian owners, *in writing*, agree to our doing the work and promise to retain ownership and location of the poles for at least ten years." He instructed Archbold to work with the Office of Indian Affairs to identify the Native claimants who would need to sign their poles over to the government for restoration; he also asked Archbold to travel to "abandoned Indian villages," as he called them, to identify the totem poles "worthy of restoration."[3] For Heintzleman, as for many non-Natives involved in the restoration program, totem poles were ruins in the Tongass National Forest, public land that was the Forest Service's responsibility to steward.

Given the Saxman Tlingits' verbal permission to proceed with the restoration program, Heintzleman and Archbold believed Native communities would readily sign the legal paperwork to authorize the government's work. They knew Tlingit and Haida communities were desperate for work during the Depression; they also believed Native people would find "some satisfaction in seeing their totem poles or old community houses, which are now almost ruined, restored and preserved."[4] But when Archbold returned to Saxman with the memoranda of agreement for various families to sign, he met with more resistance than ready pens. It took two months *after* the September 23 meeting for Archbold to secure signatures from Saanya ḵwáan Tlingits for the memorandum of agreement releasing totem poles from Cape Fox for restoration, and four more months to convince Taant'a ḵwáan Tlingits to sign for poles at Tongass and Village Islands. Still another month passed before Archbold could win the signatures of two prominent men from the G̲aanax̲.ádi clan of Taant'a ḵwáan Tlingits, so that it was not until March 19, 1939, almost six months after the initial meeting at Saxman, that Archbold could wire Juneau offices that he had received the final signature necessary to restore poles from Tongass Village. Writing of his frustration in the delays, Archbold used a racial slur in his letter to Juneau headquarters: "We had to give the Natives their good time in which to sign the agreement since some agitation was started by several squaw men at the village."[5] He noted that several elders had "held out against moving any of the poles," and that it had been fellow Tlingits—not the Forest Service or the Office of Indian Affairs—who finally convinced these men to sign.[6]

Meanwhile, resistance to the restoration program was growing in other Native communities. In December 1938, Robert J. Peratrovich Jr., the Tlingit mayor of Klawock, wrote to Archbold that elders in his community had met to discuss the Forest Service's proposals, but they were adamantly opposed to moving any poles associated with graves from their ancestral village of Tuxekan. "They were monuments whose owners request they deteriorate on their own graves, and no individual regardless of his rank in the tribe can order them moved, and which is only a supreme respect and tribute to those that erected these certain poles," he explained. Peratrovich assured Archbold that the elders had identified "certain other poles [that] could be moved," but only on the condition that the poles were "[re]erected on community-owned property rather than on the Government-owned property, . . . not and only then would they give consent to have these poles moved to Klawock for restoration."[7] Another Tlingit from Klawock, James Armour, referenced the controversies surrounding shame poles when he told a Forest Service official that "there was bitter feeling among the people when the question of bringing the poles came up. They said there were people here who knew the stories of debts and insults and knew who was meant and it nearly caused trouble and they wanted to forget all that old war."[8] Still more letters indexed Native people's discomfort with moving poles from their ancestors' graves and the desire for proper replacements to mark the graves if the poles were removed.[9] Given the internal nature of controversy in many Native communities, these notes likely represented the tip of the iceberg as far as controversy provoked by the restoration program.

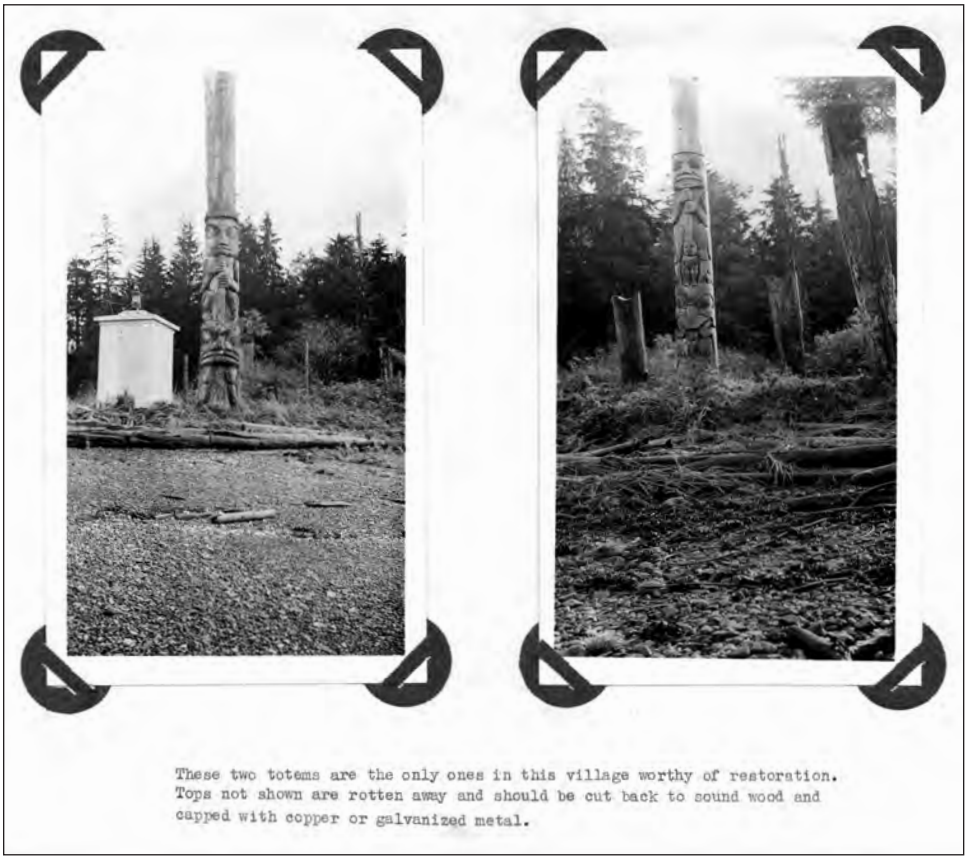
Archbold could not understand Native resistance to the government's generous proposal to restore their "ruins." Publicly, he assured the press that the CCC restorations were moving forward: in March 1939 he told the *Alaska Sportsman* that Native people were "cooperating in 'grand style' in this project of restoring the ancestral monuments."[10] Regional Forester Heintzleman backed up Archbold, lying outright when he told the *Wrangell Sentinel* that "the heirs of Chief Son-i-hat have cheerfully agreed to the restoration of a large and magnificent community house erected by this chief in 1880 on a site a short distance north of Kasaan."[11] The Forest Service was eager to assure the public that relief funds were being spent, since many whites objected to the new CCC quotas for Native men; the agency was also anxious to prove to their federal colleagues that the totem pole preservation project would proceed.[12] The assistant secretary of the Smithsonian Institution had warned the Forest Service in November 1938 that the Tlingit and Haida might not welcome the restoration program, noting "the opposition of some tribal groups who would prefer that the totems rot in place rather than to be moved." But the secretary urged the Forest Service to find some way to prevail, due to the historical significance of the poles: "Against this ethnological obstacle to a solution must be offset the needs of preserving valuable antiquities and objects of art, and the impracticability of establishing and maintaining national monuments on all of the outstanding areas in Alaska."[13] In other words, the poles' identity as national monuments outweighed any qualms the Tlingit and Haida might have about their clan crests.

But the "ethnological obstacles" to the totem pole restoration program were many—and in the 1930s these obstacles were deeply political as well. President Roosevelt had signed the Jurisdictional Act in 1935—just three years before the Forest Service approached Native people for permission to restore their poles—and allowed the Tlingit and Haida to sue the federal government for land lost to the Tongass National Forest. The lawsuit hinged on proving the extent of aboriginal title to the Tongass; according to US law, this meant proving "continuous use and occupancy" of lands that Native people claimed.[14] Totem poles were caught up in this lawsuit, as the poles' physical presence at village sites across Southeast Alaska attested to Tlingit and Haida presence there; further, the crest stories that the poles invoked recorded long histories of Native use of those lands. For Native people, these lands were not the "Tongass National Forest," but Native land from time immemorial. And totem poles were not "ruins" in "abandoned" villages, but enduring testimonies of their ancestors'—and therefore their—presence on and claims to clan lands.

The conflicting views of totem poles and their relationship to aboriginal lands were clear in the photographic archive that C. M. Archbold compiled in the fall of 1937 and 1938, as he traveled to "abandoned Indian villages" to identify the totem poles that the CCC could restore (figure 1.1). A broad, affable man, Archbold was the Forest Service's district ranger based in Ketchikan, the southernmost district of the Tongass National Forest, where most of Alaska's monumental totem poles stood. Because his office was closer to the CCC restoration sites than were his supervisors at Forest Service headquarters in Juneau, Archbold became the Forest Service's point person for the daily work of the totem pole restoration program, and he would come to have a better understanding of Native people's views of totem poles than many other Forest Service officials.[15] At the beginning of the program, however, Archbold joined his supervisor in framing totem poles as ruins on abandoned land. His reports for Heintzleman were full of this rhetoric: "remains of twelve totems," "ruins of a former house," "relics in deserted village." In the typed report he prepared for the Haida village of Sukkwan, the two poles he found "worthy of restoration" were pictured with as much beach in the frame as carving, the cropping emphasizing the disheveled landscape surrounding the poles and visually enacting his caption's proposal to "cut back" the poles' rotten tops (figure 1.2). A photograph from Old Kasaan, "Portion bottom of totem pole sea monster, Old Kasaan," focused on the carving but positioned the sea monster off center, half the photograph subsumed by bracken (figure 1.3). The shaft of the pole still boasted the incised lines that counted the impressive number of potlatches the memorialized person had hosted in his (or possibly her) lifetime, and the horizontal ribbing in the sea monster's ears offer a distinct marker of Kasaan's local style.[16] But Archbold cut off most of the pole in the photograph and purposefully allowed the forest to cover half the photo. The margin on the left was just enough to suggest the presence of another pole, this one tilting ominously toward the sea monster.

1.1. US Forest Service officials at Old Kasaan village, 1938. Photograph number 035-TA-14, Records of the Civilian Conservation Corps, 1933–1953, Record Group 35, National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD.

Archbold's photographs did not lie about the dilapidated state of Tlingit and Haida totem poles in the 1930s. After fifty or more years of standing in the rainforest of Southeast Alaska, many totem poles were rotten, and wind, rain, and moss would soon overwhelm them. But in their emphasis on the natural causes of decay, Archbold's photographs suppressed the social reasons for the totem poles' deterioration. In a 1939 article he published in the *Alaska Sportsman* to explain the totem pole restoration project to the public, Archbold noted a ribbing he'd taken from younger members of the CCC camp at Saxman: "They jokingly reminded me that the missionaries moved the Natives away from their old villages, totem poles, and customs as a first step in educating the younger people. Now the Forest Service wants to move the totem poles back to the Natives!"[17] Although framed in jest, the young Native men made a crucial point in reminding Archbold of the social forces arrayed against totem poles since the late nineteenth century: missionaries' condemnation of the poles as heathen objects, government pressure to stop potlatching, and the disintegration of many Native villages as residents left for economic and educational requirements in larger towns. Their "joke" problematized the Forest Service's statements that their arts had been "abandoned" or left to passively "disappear."



1.2. Page from C. M. Archbold's report, "Photographs of Sukkwan Village, Near Hydaburg," October 25, 1937. Records of the US Forest Service, Record Group 95, Region 10, Correspondence Relating to CCC Activities, Box 3, File U-Improvement and Indian Totem & House Restoration, National Archives at Seattle.

Archbold's archive also played to a long-standing narrative that Native people had lost interest in their poles, so that non-Natives were now the only people who recognized the poles' significance. As early as 1907, the chief forester of Alaska, F. E. Olmsted, applied this trope of Native indifference to a heritage the government would have to ensure when he urged that Southeast Alaska's "poles be preserved *in situ* rather than be removed to another place, even though the Indians had lost interest in them."[18] The photographic archive Archbold created in 1937 and 1938 seemed to confirm this indifference, as the barrage of images of rotten figures and lopsided poles read—to non-Native eyes at least—as evidence that Native people no longer cared for the monuments they had left behind. There is little indication in these photos of living Tlingit and Haida people, who were, at that very moment, claiming the poles as something other than the ruins of an abandoned life.

1.3. "Portion, bottom of totem pole sea monster, Old Kasaan," 1938. Photo by C. M. Archbold. Courtesy of the US Forest Service, Ketchikan Ranger District.

Yet totem poles acted as their own kind of archive for the Tlingit and Haida. This archive was maintained as a physical presence in the totem pole itself, as well as through an oral tradition that the totem pole elicited—stories recorded in an archive of the mind passed down through generations. The Haida word for the tall exterior poles that stand in front of lineage houses is *gyaa.aang*, which, translated figuratively, means "man standing up."[19] The Tlingit word for totem pole—*kootéeyaa*, which comes from the root word meaning "to carve with a chisel or adze" and which some have translated as "carved thing that tells a story"—also highlights the relationship of totem poles to living human beings.[20] Totem poles cannot be "read" simply by the crests they depict; they rely on a speaker who has the knowledge—and the right—to publicly relay the expansive stories of the crests displayed on the pole. In speaking this story, the storyteller links him or herself to a long line of ancestors, including the relatives who commissioned the pole or who were commemorated by it, and the ancestors whose encounters

with the animals or entities depicted in the crests had earned the right (often through their own deaths) for their descendants to claim those animals or entities as their clan's identifying symbols.[21] This is why Tlingit and Haida people speak of their poles as living beings, as "sacred and tangible links to their ancestors and clan histories."[22]

In the Tlingit language, totem poles can become *at.óow*—literally translated as "owned or purchased thing"—which references the esteemed objects and prerogatives owned collectively by a clan.[23] *At.óow* includes tangible and intangible treasures—totem poles and clan hats as well as names, songs, and stories—that are passed down through generations of the clan, each generation designating a caretaker (often the clan leader) to care for *at.óow* that will outlast their own lives. If a particular totem pole or other item of *at.óow* fails physically, another can be carved and "paid for" in front of witnesses and take its place as *at.óow* of the clan. The ability to create multiple physical bodies depicting the enduring crest is predicated on the inalienable right of present and future generations of clan members to claim the crests and stories passed down by their ancestors, rights that link generations in a multidirectional relationship of heritage known in Tlingit as *shukáa*.[24] Haida peoples have a similar concept embedded in their word for "ancestor," *Iitl' Kuníisi*.[25] This multidirectional view of ancestors and heritage means that totem poles serve as vessels for enduring stories and symbols that were earned by ancestors in the past, continue to inform the ways of the present, and will guide the future as well. This view could not have contrasted more with the Forest Service's framing of totem poles as the "ruins" of an abandoned life.

The resistance of Native people to the CCC restoration program also stemmed from the radical changes that the memoranda of agreement required for their cultural practices. The memoranda of agreement were the legal documents drawn up by Heintzleman and Archbold to ensure that the Indian owners agreed "in writing," as Heintzleman had insisted, to the terms of the government program. It is worth including an example of an MOA in full; this one is for Tlingit totem poles that stood in a graveyard on Pennock Island.

MEMORANDUM OF AGREEMENT

> WHEREAS, the Thlinget Indians of Ketchikan and Saxman, Alaska, hereinafter known as the parties of the first part, own totem poles located near the north end of Pennock Island, and have a desire to see these poles moved, repaired and erected at Saxman so that said poles may have proper care and be preserved for the benefit of future generations:
>
> AND WHEREAS, the Forest Service U.S. Department of Agriculture, hereinafter known as the party of the second part, can do this restoration work through the Civilian Conservation Corps, or some other form of public relief work, NOW WITNESSETH:

1. The party of the first part hereby agrees to having the party of the second part move part or all of the totem poles remaining on the north end of Pennock Island to a publicly owned site within the townsite of Saxman.

2. The party of the first part further agrees that all poles so restored and erected by the party of the second part will hereafter be considered as community property of the residents of Saxman, and that at no time will any of such poles be disposed of by sale, gift or otherwise, and that said poles will be protected against harm of whatever nature.

3. The party of the second part agrees to select the poles worthy of restoration from the north end of Pennock Island, move and repair them, erect them at a suitable site in the Village of Saxman, and to furnish all labor, tools, equipment and materials necessary for the project.

December 19, 1938 [signed] THLINGET INDIANS OF KETCHIKAN AND SAXMAN, ALASKA: Andy Moses, owner of two inside house totems representing a wolf and one whale memorial; Peter Kyan, George McKay, William Andrews, James Andrews, claimants to the Raven Totem and to two inside house totems having beaver bases and to one other pole on North end of Pennock Island.

December 29, 1939 [signed] US DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, FOREST SERVICE, Charles Burdick, Acting Regional Forester[26]

The memoranda of agreement outlined five fundamental changes for Tlingit and Haida totem poles. The first, of course, was that totem poles would be preserved, either through restoration (if the original pole was sound enough) or replication (if it was not). Second, the restoration of totem poles would be commissioned not by the pole's Native owners but by the US government, a federal entity with no claim to the clan crests and histories recounted on the poles. This government patron would hire a CCC crew of mixed lineages and levels of training rather than a professional carver from the opposite moiety. Fourth, totem poles would be relocated from ancestral Native villages and reerected in a "totem park," removing them from the clan houses and grave sites that had anchored them to their owners. Finally, in legal terms, at least, Native owners relinquished title to their poles and handed them over as communal property of the village, divorcing totem poles from individual or even clan ownership.[27] It was a federal requirement that public monies be spent on public property; the Forest Service could not legally restore privately owned poles with CCC funds.[28] All of these changes had to be grappled with if Native people agreed to the CCC totem pole restoration program.

It is important to recognize the extent to which Native communities *did* grapple with these proposals. Moving poles to be preserved as community property in government-sponsored totem parks broke so many protocols for crest display and

"balance" between moieties that many elders balked at participating. Moreover, many must have wrestled with the prospect of cooperating with the very federal agency they were battling for title to the Tongass National Forest. Native complaints about the Forest Service's hostile appropriation of their lands—including posting no-trespassing signs near streams that clans had used for generations and burning down smokehouses and other evidence of Native property within the forest "reserve"—would be publicly chronicled in the 1940s, when the federal government held hearings to determine the extent of aboriginal title to Southeast Alaska.[29] But these tensions were already rife in the 1930s, at the very moment when the Tlingit and Haida had to decide whether to participate in the totem pole restoration program.

George Lewis, who would restore totem poles for the CCC at Sitka, testified that in the 1930s government officials had kicked his family out of Lanaak̲, or Redfish Bay, because it was "reserved land," and when he and his family protested that it had belonged to the Kiks.ádi people for as long as anyone could remember, "the men always threatened us with jail if we didn't shut up."[30] Lewis's relative, Ralph, bitterly recalled the way his own family had been evicted from T'aay X̲'é, the family's ancestral hot springs and fishing grounds, by a Mr. Goddard, who had bought the property under American law and was sanctioned by the Forest Service: "My older brother was at that place when Mr. Goddard made him leave. He told them to get out, and burned down the smokehouses they had there, with all the food, clothes and other valuables they had there. This made me feel so bad, I haven't been there since. This must have been ten or fifteen years ago."[31] The fact that Lewis testified in 1946 made "ten or fifteen years ago" the early to mid-1930s, just a few years before the Forest Service hired Lewis's family members to restore totem poles in the Sitka park.

The forced removal of Native people from their lands had important legal consequences for the Tlingit and Haida lawsuit predicated on the "continual use and occupancy" of aboriginal territory. Henry Denny Sr., a Tlingit man who later enrolled in the CCC at Saxman, was a poignant example of this dilemma. Denny voiced a common complaint against the federal government's appropriation of his clan lands when he testified for the Goldschmidt and Haas interviews in 1946: "My people owned the area at the mouth of the Unuk River. I have used that area all my life, and before me, my father and uncles hunted and trapped and fished in that area. Now, however, it is closed to me because there are homesteaders in there."[32] Denny did not mention the harassment he and his family had encountered when they tried to assert their claim to the homesteader, but several other Tlingit men in Saxman testified that the white man had run Denny out of his smokehouse with a gun.[33] Denny's wife was so shaken by the event that she begged him never to return—a decision that would later be judged by American courts to constitute "abandonment" of ancestral lands.[34] The decision effectively punished Denny for nonviolence, as he was deemed not to have "resisted" white encroachment on his land; more significant was that the ruling negated his claim to continuous occupancy of his clan territory.

In this context, the Forest Service's references to "abandoned Indian villages" and "ruined" totem poles took on added weight. Native people strenuously objected to this rhetoric: when questioned in the 1944 Hanna Hearings as to why his people had "abandoned" the village of Shakan to move to Klawock, Tlingit Charles Demmert protested, "We did not abandon it! We just simply moved away."[35] The term *abandoned* elided the fact that many Native people had been forced to leave their village sites and fish camps, whether by threat of violence or by government officials threatening jail if they did not send their children to a government school.[36] "Abandonment" was also antithetical to Tlingit and Haida understandings of their relationship to place: in the Tlingit language, one's homeland was an inalienable concept; like family members and body parts permanently connected to a person, one's home *ḵwáan* could not be dispossessed and did not take the possessive suffix *-i*.[37] The seasonal nature of subsistence life had always entailed moving between fish camps and winter villages; even the winter village sites, where the massive cedar houses stood, changed if circumstances required.[38] For the Tlingit, what mattered was not where a person lived at a particular moment but that clans belonging to a particular *ḵwáan* moved within territory to which they had rightful claim. As Taant'a ḵwáan elder Herbert Burton testified about his move from Village Island to Tongass Island to Ketchikan: "I have lived all my life in territory belonging to the Tongass people."[39] "Abandoning" land was unthinkable to the Tlingit and Haida, and the government's persistent use of the term deeply disturbed their understanding of their homeland.

Totem poles offered evidence for this Native view of relationships to the land. The Kaats' and His Bear Wife pole from Village Island, for example, was said to be the fourth of its kind carved for the Teiḵweidí people (figure 1.4). The central figure of the pole was the Teiḵweidí ancestor Kaats', who had been hunting near the Unuk River when he fell into a bear's den (referenced by the hole at the base of the pole, which once framed the doorway of a Teiḵweidí clan house). Inside the den, Kaats' found a female bear (the figure perched between his ears), whom he married. In his hands and beneath him were human beings that referenced his many descendants. Their migrations traced a long history of Teiḵweidí village sites across southern Southeast Alaska, from the Unuk River to Cape Muzon, to the west coast of Prince of Wales Island, and finally to Village Island.[40] These sites mapped the territory of the Taant'a ḵwáan Teiḵweidí clan over at least two hundred years, testifying to their "continuous use and occupancy" of the land and waterways of their people.

Although many non-Natives found it implausible that a pole or its attendant oral history could record this lengthy history, Tlingit and Haida clan members corroborated each other's histories again and again with their individual testimonies on territorial claims. Judson Brown, who worked as the secretary of the Indian Reorganization Act (IRA) Council in Klawock and interviewed elders in 1935 about the boundaries of lands belonging to various clans, was struck that "the history they could recite went back into the 1800s and their reports were accurate. They all agreed on the boundary lines. . . . I

1.4. Kaats' and His Bear Wife pole, brought from Village Island to the Saxman Totem Park in 1939. Oral tradition maintained that this was the fourth version of the pole carved for the Teiḵweidí clan. Courtesy of the US Forest Service, Ketchikan Ranger District.

would call at a glance, and they would just agree right off, 'Yeah, this is the boundary line.' 'That was the boundary line.' That was it. They knew where they belonged."[41] Walter Goldschmidt and Theodore Haas, the anthropologist and the lawyer hired by the Office of Indian Affairs to chart Tlingit and Haida land claims, also noted that a "negligible portion" of clan territories in the vast lands and waterways of Southeast Alaska was disputed by the hundred-plus Tlingit and Haida informants they interviewed in 1946.[42] And they confirmed the significance of totem poles in documenting these clan territories, writing that "title to land and other property was frequently recorded in totem poles. . . . Nowhere among unlettered peoples in North American was there so clear a recording of property ownership as among these Northwest Coast people."[43] Totem poles thus served as a body of physical evidence for the Tlingit and Haida lawsuit—if only the courts would heed the totem poles' stories.

Archbold's archive contained a single photograph that alluded to this Native view of land and totem poles, although he probably had not realized it when he took the picture. A photograph at New Kasaan in September 1938 showed the Haida man James Peele standing beside the central interior house pole in his father's house, Naay I'waans,

1.5. James Peele, son of Chief Sonihat, stands beside the central interior house pole (*gotz*) of the Whale House, New Kasaan, September 21, 1938. Photograph by C. M. Archbold. Courtesy of the US Forest Service, Ketchikan Ranger District.

known in English as the Whale House (figure 1.5). As the only Haida clan house remaining in Southeast Alaska, the Whale House was highly coveted by the Forest Service for restoration; Archbold wrote to Forest Service headquarters that its remaining timbers would provide "all the measurements for restoration of an authentic clan house" and affirmed that there were Haida men in Kasaan who still remembered the joinery process to refinish it.

Initially, however, James Peele refused to allow the Forest Service to restore the Whale House—perhaps because of his own reservations about the government agency. Peele was the son of Chief Sonihat and therefore, in the Haida system of matrilineal descent, not officially heir to his father's house; nevertheless, he had assumed ownership of some of his father's properties under American patrilineal laws, and the Forest Service dealt with him as the claimant to the Whale House.[44] Peele would later testify for the Tlingit and Haida lawsuit against the federal government, complaining that the Forest Service had done nothing to stop white encroachment on Haida trapping

1.6. "Remains of Haida house, New Kasaan, September 21, 1938." C. M. Archbold stands outside Naay I'waans, also known as the Whale House, while James Peele and another Forest Service official talk in the background. Courtesy of the US Forest Service, Ketchikan Ranger District.

grounds and cabins at Sunny Point, south of New Kasaan.[45] Peele was also a member of the Alaska Native Brotherhood and may have helped pursue a reserved area in Kasaan Bay where the Haida community would maintain exclusive fishing rights for their own community cannery, largely to ward off white encroachment.[46] These activities suggest that James Peele was keenly aware of aboriginal claims to the Tongass National Forest in the 1930s—and may explain why he initially refused to work with the Forest Service on restoring his father's house. Eventually, however, Peele did sign the memorandum of agreement allowing Naay I'waans to be restored, perhaps out of pressure from others in his community for relief work. It also did not hurt that Forest Service officials personally courted him with a historical photograph of Peele's father that they had had professionally enlarged and framed.[47]

Archbold took several photographs of the Whale House on the day Peele signed the memorandum, framing the "remains" of the original house in a clearing littered with autumn leaves (figure 1.6). Archbold also took the rare photograph of Peele standing

beside the house's central totem, the massive planks of the multilevel house floor behind him. To the Forest Service, the photograph of the old pole—exposed to the elements and covered with graffiti, missing a small head between the ears of bottom crest—no doubt read as another totem pole in jeopardy in the Tongass National Forest, which the government would have to restore. But Peele knew an older meaning of the pole, one with serious repercussions for trespassing on Haida land. Forest Service architect Linn A. Forrest Sr. learned the story of the pole when he probed:

> The story of the central totem Mr. Peele was unable to tell in English. After a lengthy discussion in Haida with some of the other natives he said it was called the "Head House" totem, and then explained as follows: "In the earlier days each tribe claimed strict rights to designated areas including hunting grounds, berry fields, and fishing waters. Within these areas each family 'owned' certain districts and had hereditary claims to them. Generally, these areas were respected by the various tribes and trespass was uncommon. However, should a group of 'foreign' natives be found on another tribe's property hunting or fishing, all would be killed except one. This one being spared to return to the village with the bodies of his companions and in that way to be left to explain why misfortune had befallen them.'"[48]

Even in the gloss of the English translation, the warning in this story was clear: recognize the people that claimed the land or face serious consequences. Peele's father, Chief Sonihat, had saved the pole from his uncle's house in Old Kasaan and brought it to New Kasaan when he built the Whale House in 1880, so it was an old pole that showed the "interest" of Native people in bringing their poles with them when they could. Even James Peele, who was not a member of his father's *yáadaas* lineage, was still interested in the pole—and *not* interested, at least initially, in the Forest Service meddling with it. Perhaps Peele hoped, by sharing the pole's story, that the gravity of trespassing on other people's lands might not be lost on the federal official who now sought to preserve his father's house.

Given the tensions over totem pole restoration and aboriginal title, why did Tlingit and Haida people eventually sign the memoranda of agreement? It is easy to assume that the desperate economic situation of the Great Depression forced Tlingit and Haida communities to accept the Forest Service's terms—and certainly jobs were critical. The Depression had come slowly to Alaska. Isolated from the continental United States and its boom years in the 1920s, the northern territory continued to offer fishing, mining, and timber jobs after the crash of 1929. But falling commodity prices worldwide affected the price of copper, gold, and fish, and soon even subsistence lifestyles were difficult to support. Tlingit elder Judson Brown remembered that, by 1932, "the money had just completely run out. The villages were in desperate straits. . . . No one can really

visualize what desperation all of the people, not just our people, all of the people in southeastern Alaska were experiencing at that time."[49] The problem deepened in the late 1930s, as salmon fishing—the primary means of Native subsistence and livelihood in Southeast Alaska—continued to decline. Fish traps—large floating structures usually owned by non-Native absentee owners and placed at the mouths of streams to catch salmon returning to spawn—devastated salmon stocks in Southeast Alaska and cut deeply into commercial and subsistence fisheries for Alaska Natives.[50] White workers fleeing the Depression in the continental United States took more fishing jobs away from indigenous people: in 1929, before the crash, almost all seiners in Southeast Alaska were Native, but by 1934, as more white-owned canneries hired non-Native labor, the percentage of Native seiners in the Ketchikan district alone had dropped to 8 percent.[51]

So harsh was the blow to Native fishing communities in the summers of 1937 and 1938 that at least one Haida community *requested* a CCC totem pole restoration program for the relief work it offered. In a series of letters in late August 1938, Kasaan resident Raymond Jones pleaded for help from the Office of Indian Affairs: "The fishing season has just come to an end. The people of this village have not earned enough to keep them through the coming winter. There is a desperate need for relieve [*sic*] this winter." Jones suggested that the totem poles at Kasaan's ancestral village of Old Kasaan be repaired, as he had heard that a similar program was planned for Ketchikan. "This is a good worthwhile project, and we wish the Indian Office would look into this idea. . . . I tell you truly there is desperate need for any kind of work here."[52] Jones repeated in another letter that the CCC program would be "a worthwhile project, and anyone that could help to preserve those old totems will be doing a great thing. The natives that own those totems would repair them and do it well. Could you please look into this idea?"[53] The following month, Archbold visited Kasaan and affirmed that the village had a great need for relief work, with twenty-two of twenty-eight men unemployed.

But the resistance of so many Native people to signing the memoranda of agreement suggests that jobs alone were not enough to "cheerfully agree" to the government program. There had to be other motivations that would offset the radical changes the program posed for Tlingit and Haida totem poles; the parks had to have some cultural legitimacy for the display of Native crests. In fact, it seems that the cultural practices which could be invigorated by the restoration of totem poles played a key role in Native participation in the CCC program. The memorial function of the parks was affirmed when the town council of Klawock voted to name its totem park the Tuxekan Memorial Park, commemorating the original village of most of the Klawock park's poles but also legitimizing the new site's function as memorializing their former village and their dead.[54] Other totem parks built on their memorial function by adding marble gravestone markers—modern versions of memorial totem poles—from older grave sites.[55] Archbold noted that "Mr. Jacob Thomas asked that as a special favor this headstone [of Paul Jones] be brought to Kasaan and included in the exhibit of Old Kasaan totem poles in honor of the memory of the man who selected this English name for himself and an

1.7. Entrance to the Saxman Totem Park, showing the back of the Blackfish pole and a small marble bear monument to its right, c. 1940. The marble monument—a modern version of a memorial totem pole—had been erected at Cape Fox village to mark the grave of a Teiḵweidí man and brought to the Saxman totem park at the request of his descendants. The large building at the left was the ANB Hall, where the Saxman CCC carvers worked in the basement. Courtesy of the US Forest Service, Ketchikan Ranger District.

expanding family."[56] Similarly, the descendants of a Teiḵweidí man memorialized by a marble bear requested that this marker be moved from Cape Fox and included next to the totem poles in the park at Saxman (figure 1.7).[57] Even though the grave marker was clearly not a totem pole—and must have caused some consternation for tourists visiting the park—it was a clear sign that Native people viewed the New Deal park as a legitimate site for memorializing ancestors.

The desire to have one's own clan crests included in the totem parks was another indication that the parks were viewed as culturally legitimate—even important—new sites for the display of clan identity. Several families petitioned to have their clan poles included in the totem parks, even though the Forest Service had not originally slated them for restoration. At Hydaburg, Archbold wrote that Adam Spuhn and Charles Scott had reversed their previous refusal to move their poles from Klinkwan and now wanted "to have their family poles included in the Totem Park."[58] In another case,

Archbold noted "a request through Peter Kyan from his father George Kyan, asking that we take their pole and add it to the Saxman group. This request has been repeatedly made and most recently today."[59] The pole, the famous Chief Kyan pole erected in Ketchikan in the late nineteenth century, had been relocated to the Pioneers of Alaska Hall in 1924 with the permission of the Kyan family.[60] The fact that the family now wanted it included in the Saxman park is especially interesting given that the Kyans were Tongass people, and their traditional land was in the area that had become downtown Ketchikan; the transfer to Saxman would have entailed removing a pole from their own lands to a community populated largely by descendants from another *ḵwáan*, Cape Fox.[61] Ultimately the Pioneer Hall was successful in using this argument to keep the Kyan pole downtown—"The pole belongs to Ketchikan and not to Saxman," the Pioneer secretary wrote to the Forest Service in April 1939—yet the episode highlighted the legitimacy of the totem park in the eyes of the Kyan family, who accepted the mixing of *ḵwáans* at the Saxman park and viewed it as a more desirable site to display their clan crests than the non-Native context of the Pioneer Hall downtown.

The restoration of totem poles also aided the Tlingit and Haida in their battle to assert their aboriginal title to the Tongass National Forest and to present the federal government with material evidence of their histories on the land. The men who later testified for the Tlingit and Haida lawsuit frequently evoked totem poles as evidence of their people's primacy on the land, even if they were not asked—and did not volunteer—to recount the formal crest stories associated with the poles. Walter Young, who carved with the CCC at Kasaan, testified for the Goldschmidt and Haas hearings in 1946: "There used to be a fort at Chasina Point which belonged to the Haida people of Kasaan. The Haida people lived there a long time. There was a house and totem pole there from old times."[62] George Lewis, who had worked with the Forest Service in Sitka, testified that "there were several forts throughout the Sitka Territory. There are two on Redoubt Bay, one on either side; another fort and village, Kasdaxeix̱da.aan, had about nine tribal houses. This was a village with totem poles and permanent homes."[63] Here they used the poles as the kinds of evidence non-Natives would accept as physical markers of their ancestors' presence on the land.

Many of the poles that Native people selected for the government parks were explicit records of Native title to lands and waterways in the Tongass National Forest. The Sockeye Salmon pole restored for the totem park at Klawock, for example, recorded the claim of the L̲aax̲'oos.hitaan clan to a specific sockeye salmon stream on Prince of Wales Island and was actually cited in federal documents on Tlingit land claims against the federal government.[64] The property, a salmon stream at Deweyville, was represented by a face near the bottom of the pole with a round container of salmon; at the top of the pole was a brown bear, the crest of the clan that owned the stream (figure 1.8).[65] Another pole restored for the Klawock totem park, The Spirit of Hazy Island pole, recorded the title of the Naasteidí clan to Hazy Island, which was a nesting place for numerous sea birds, including the murres depicted at the pole's top. The fact that

1.8. The newly replicated Sockeye Salmon pole in the Klawock totem park, c. 1940. The pole proclaimed the ownership of the Ḵaax̱'oos.hitaan clan to a sockeye salmon stream on Prince of Wales Island. Courtesy of the US Forest Service, Ketchikan Ranger District.

the Forest Service published the history of these claims in their guidebook to the Klawock totem park was especially significant, since in 1912, the federal government had designated Hazy Island as a wildlife refuge, banning Tlingits from using the island and labeling any subsistence gathering of bird eggs as "stealing."[66] By choosing poles like the Spirit of Hazy Island for restoration in the Klawock totem park and ensuring that the Forest Service recorded stories like the rights of the Naasteidí clan to gather murre eggs on Hazy Island, Klawock claimants ensured that their aboriginal claims were preserved and heard by the very federal agency that had denied their claims in the first place.[67]

The restoration of poles also became a means for Native people to prolong the visual evidence of their aboriginal claims and to provide physical evidence for oral traditions that white attorneys dismissed as "hearsay." When cross-examined in 1944 about who exactly were the "old men" who had shown him the boundaries of his clan's fishing grounds, Hydaburg mayor Paul D. Morrison answered under oath: "I can take you right out to this park [the Hydaburg Totem Park] that is by the side of the school house, and show you who they are by the memorials there. . . . That eagle [a pole known as the Howkan Eagle], I was the one that signed that over [to the CCC for restoration]. That is

one of my old uncles. His name was Cogo."[68] The poles acted to symbolically buttress the kinship relations that non-Natives refused to believe based on oral history alone.

It is also important to recognize the efforts of Native leaders to locate the totem parks on Native townsite land rather than sites where Native people did not have clear title. Robert Peratrovich's letter to Archbold in December 1938 was especially revealing in his note that elders in Klawock would agree to remove certain poles from Tuxekan only if they would be "erected on community-owned property [in Klawock] rather than on the Government-owned property."[69] This was a clear sign that Native people were strategizing ways to maintain some control over their totem poles, despite the rewriting of ownership required by the memoranda of agreement. Rather than leave the poles in the Tongass National Forest, where title was still being disputed with the federal government, poles that stood in Native towns could be overseen by Native people—and used to prolong the claims of Native people to their ancestral lands.

Scholars have long assumed that the Forest Service sought to establish central totem parks in large towns along the steamship route.[70] But close study of Forest Service correspondence shows that in some cases the agency planned to restore poles in situ in older Native villages, and in many cases the park locations were not predetermined at all. In a letter from November 1937, when the Forest Service was in the initial planning stages for the totem pole restoration program, Heintzleman's assistant wrote to Archbold that "the intention of restoring totem poles to as near their original state as possible is based on their historic interest, which of course means their retention at the site on which originally placed. . . . If totem poles have to be moved to central locations, they should be centralized at one of the larger towns where more tourists stop. This, however, is not the intention of the rehabilitation work by CCC. The location of the poles at their original locations is preferable."[71] Early on, Heintzleman actually resisted efforts to remove totem poles from some villages, such as Sukkwan, maintaining that the poles should remain in their original village site.

But in the Sukkwan case at least, it was the Haida mayor of Hydaburg who lobbied to have totem poles moved from the older village to a centralized totem park in his community rather than being restored in situ. In 1937, C. M. Archbold reported that mayor Paul Morrison had proposed an alternative to restoring poles in the older villages: "In discussing the question of restoring these poles, Mr. Morrison suggested that we clear a location in Hydaburg and reconstruct an Old Native Village there by bringing in the best totems from Sukkwan, Klinkwan and Howkan. This suggestion was his own idea and he mentioned that since Hydaburg is made up of natives from these three villages, that permission for moving the totems could be easily secured."[72]

Archbold, who noted in his report that Morrison was "a very intelligent Native," readily endorsed the mayor's idea: "If restored at the old villages, they would get little attention in the future, while at Hydaburg the families would have an interest in them."[73] At first the Forest Service rejected this suggestion, insisting that the historical context of the poles was paramount. But Native pressure for central townsite parks won

out at Hydaburg—and at all but two of the CCC totem parks. At Kasaan, for example, the Forest Service reported that local Haidas "favored publicly-owned town site lands within their present village of New Kasaan, which stands some 15 miles from the Old Kasaan Monument. . . . There seems to be no sentiment to re-erect the poles at the Old Kasaan Monument."[74] Nor would Kasaan residents agree to move their poles to a central park at Ketchikan, as another memo noted.[75]

Native insistence that the New Deal totem parks be located on Native townsite land has been overlooked, but it was critical to Tlingit and Haida people's ability to maintain some degree of control over their poles. Totem parks on townsite land satisfied the memoranda of agreement's stipulation that restored poles be erected on a "publicly owned site, whether National Forest Service land, open public land or town site land"—and yet it was also land held in trust for Native people.[76] The Alaska Native Townsite Act of 1926 had given Native individuals "restricted" title to their lots, with lands held in trust by the General Land Office. Other lots within the townsite were held in trust for the community.[77]

Although these lands were held in trust, Native townsite land would give Native peoples better control over poles that were erected there compared to poles restored on Tongass National Forest land, where the US government was still contesting Native claims. A Forest Service official noted as much in 1938, when he wrote that any poles restored from Old Kasaan "will be looked after by the Indian Service or town council, if within the boundaries of an organized Indian town, or by the Forest Service if on National Forest land."[78] This distinction must have been key to Native leaders like Robert Peratrovich and Paul Morrison who were organizing for aboriginal claims against the federal government in the 1930s and 1940s. In fact, only the totem parks at Sitka and Totem Bight were not built on Native townsite land, and both of these parks were established without regard to specific Native communities.[79] The work of Native leaders to secure the totem parks on townsite land was a clear sign of Native intervention to ensure the parks would be cultural sites where Native peoples could still lay claim to their poles.

In the end, then, the motivations for Native communities to cooperate with the Forest Service's totem pole restoration program stemmed not only from the economic relief the CCC program would provide during the Depression. They were also motivated by political claims they could make by preserving the archive of totem poles in their contemporary villages and by cultural practices that the poles would help invigorate. The Forest Service did not see the archive of totem poles in the same way as the Tlingit and Haida did; for the federal agency, the emphasis was on preserving the physical archive of nineteenth-century monuments for American posterity. For the Tlingit and Haida, the archive of intangible crest stories and prerogatives to which the poles bore witness was most important to preserve, particularly at a time when non-Natives refused to

recognize other forms of evidence for their ancestral claims to the land. This difference in understanding regarding the significance of the totem pole archive would be a source of continued tensions in the restoration program, but the shared desire to preserve the archive of totem poles allowed the restoration program to move forward.

Archbold's first meeting in the Alaska Native Brotherhood Hall at Saxman in September 1938 had been, in his mind, an endless series of Tlingit speeches that he could not understand. But in interviews in the 1990s with anthropologist Priscilla Schulte, Tongass Teiḵweidí matriarch Esther Shea remembered the meeting differently. Shea had been an eleven-year-old girl when she entered the ANB Hall with her family, and she still recalled the elders "sitting with their opposites," according to protocols of balancing moieties. She said that each clan leader gave a speech acknowledging the radical changes proposed by the Forest Service's memoranda of agreement, things that "had never been done before."[80] And yet the elders agreed to have the poles moved from the older villages to Saxman for restoration to "fulfill their duties as uncles to train their nephews"—apparently a reference to teaching the next generation the stories of their clan poles. This reason is critical: in a matrilineal society, where boys were traditionally sent to their mothers' brothers to be raised, the duty of the uncle to pass on clan knowledge was paramount. The fact that the elders viewed the Saxman Totem Park as an opportunity to fulfill these duties—even in the twentieth century, when most Tlingit families lived in single-family homes, and sons stayed with their parents—testified to the legitimacy of the park as a site for passing on cultural protocols. The elders would draw on the new possibilities presented by the government restoration project to continue old customs of preserving clan knowledge—and to ensure that the stories of the clans persisted in the face of a government that rebuked them. It was one of many tenuous compromises that would need to occur over the next four years.

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FRONTISPIECE: US Forest Service officials at Old Kasaan village, 1938 (detail). Photograph number 035-TA-14, Records of the Civilian Conservation Corps, 1933–1953, Record Group 35, National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD.

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