

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

FOR FEDERAL PROPERTIES

Changed to State Nomination

FOR NPS USE ONLY
 RECEIVED DEC 17 1976 **DATA SHEET**
 DATE ENTERED JUL 17 1978

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN *HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS*
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

1 NAME

HISTORIC Kettle Falls Historic District

AND/OR COMMON

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER *N E 05th Kabetogama*
Kettle Falls

CITY, TOWN *Kabetogama* VICINITY OF *Eighth* —NOT FOR PUBLICATION
CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

STATE *Minnesota* CODE *27* COUNTY *St. Louis* CODE *137*

2 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL	<input type="checkbox"/> PARK
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> BOTH	<input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> SITE	PUBLIC ACQUISITION	ACCESSIBLE	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENTIFIC
	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
		<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER:

4 AGENCY

REGIONAL HEADQUARTERS: *(If applicable)* National Park Service, Midwest Region

STREET & NUMBER 1709 Jackson Street

CITY, TOWN *Omaha* VICINITY OF *Nebraska* STATE *68102*

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC. St. Louis County Courthouse

STREET & NUMBER 5th Avenue West & 1st Street

CITY, TOWN *Duluth* STATE *Minnesota*

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE Voyageurs National Park Survey of Historical Structures PX 6000 6 0057

DATE 31 December 1975 FEDERAL STATE COUNTY LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS National Park Service, Midwest Region

CITY, TOWN 1709 Jackson Street, Omaha STATE Nebraska

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED DATE _____
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Kettle Falls Historic District is located on the international boundary where Namakan Lake drains into Rainy Lake in Voyageurs National Park. It is in St. Louis county, Minnesota in the SW $\frac{1}{4}$ of section 33, T70N, R18W on the eastern end of the Kabetogama peninsula. This district is accessible only by boat or air travel through a sparsely populated wilderness. It is one spot on the international boundary where Canada lies to the south of the United States. The Kettle Falls district includes the Kettle Falls hotel, which is already listed in the National Register of Historic Places, the Kettle Falls dam, and two log structures used by laborers during construction of the dam.

Topography of the township is hilly composed of granite and mica schist. It is a wilderness forested with brush, and a mixture of coniferous and deciduous trees. Kettle Falls and her Canadian sister, Squirrel Falls, form two channels through which Namakan Lake waters flow west into Rainy Lake. Originally Kettle Falls was approximately nine feet high over a hard mica schist. These falls created a barrier around which travelers had to portage, both to the north and south. In 1910, the Rainy River Improvement Company, a subsidiary of Minnesota and Ontario Power Company, now Boise Cascade Corporation, started construction of a dam at Kettle Falls. Two buildings remain from the construction of the dam. Three years later the Kettle Falls hotel was built to accommodate travelers passing through the portage area.

The north portage around Kettle Falls was known to early explorers and fur traders. It ran from a bay in Rainy Lake north of the falls approximately 300 feet across the peninsula to an area about 300 feet west of the falls in Namakan Lake. Presently the north half of the original portage is incorporated into a dirt service road for the Kettle Falls hotel. The other half is not used and is now overgrown with brush and trees.

Kettle Falls dam was completed in March of 1914. This dam is divided by the Canadian-U.S. international boundary and is also called the International dam. The following description of the dam was provided by Mr. Ernie Gustafson, a retired employee in charge of dam operations for the Rainy River Improvement Company.

"The dam has four sluiceways, fourteen feet wide and each has a 6 foot wide fishway. The fishways have not operated for many years and perhaps never were effective. The piers which separate the sluices are of masonry construction, 5 feet wide with a top elevation of 1121.6 feet (Sea Level datum). The upstream face of the piers, four in number, are vertical and extend 30 $\frac{1}{2}$ feet downstream with a slight batter on the downstream face of 1 foot horizontal and 5 feet vertical. In addition, the dam has two piers bordering the fishways. The dimensions are the same as the other piers except that they extend downstream an additional 30 feet in a step pattern. The International dam has sill elevations as follows: two 1099.76 feet, two 1101.76 feet, and sill elevation of fishway 1106.28. For height of dam subtract sill elevation from top of pier elevation (1121.6 feet). The sluices of the dams are controlled with stop logs. The International dam has a power hoist [set on tracks] to place and remove stop logs. [Atop the American side of the dam is a wood frame gauging station measuring approximately 8 by 10 feet] The retaining walls of the International dam are about 25' and 30' long.

8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW				
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE: Recreation	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)	
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION			

SPECIFIC DATES ca. 1910-1934

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Kettle Falls Historic District is significant because of its association with transportation, industry, and recreation. It is located within Voyageurs National Park in northern Minnesota and includes the Kettle Falls hotel which was placed on the National Register on January 11, 1976. The expansion of the hotel nomination into a district is being submitted to include related portage and dam structures which were, in part, the reason for construction of the wilderness hotel.

The chain of lakes and rivers between the Canadian and United States borders in northern Minnesota has long been an artery of travel. This route is punctuated by natural barriers requiring portages; chief among these is the area known as Kettle Falls. These falls were known to early fur traders, explorers, gold miners, and later to fishermen and lumbermen who had to frequently circumvent this barrier in transporting their goods west to International Falls and Fort Frances. The portage at Kettle Falls was used during the brief gold rush in 1894 in transportation of equipment to Rainy Lake City. Equipment and freight brought overland from Tower, Minnesota north to Crane Lake was moved by steamboat to Kettle Falls, portaged around the falls, and reloaded in boats for destinations on Rainy Lake to the north. Later, between 1913-1920, commercial fishermen operating fish camps in the area sold their 70 pound ice boxed catches to bidders from scores of major U.S. cities at the dock operated by the hotel owners just below the dam. 5000 boxes of fish a week passed over the portage at the peak of commercial fishing operations. It wasn't unusual for 300 people to gather at that location in one day. After the 1920s commercial fishing was severely restricted by the state but the area was used frequently during lumbering operations until the mid 1930s.

In 1910 the Minnesota and Ontario Power Company, located in International Falls, began to act on a plan to utilize the boundary lakes as a power source and reservoir by the use of control dams at Kettle and Squirrel Falls. These would control the water levels of and the outflow from Little Vermillion, Crane, Sand Point, Kabetogama, and Namakan Lakes into Rainy Lake where a dam had already been constructed at International Falls by the lumbering industry. The two control dams were completed by March 1914, one in Canada and the other situated on the international boundary at Kettle Falls. After the construction and operation of the dams, numerous questions were raised about water regulation effecting other interests than industry in both the U.S. and Canada. In 1925, the dams were studied by the International Joint Commission appointed by both governments to answer questions of regulation of the water levels effecting the lands of both countries for the most advantageous use of the waters for domestic, sanitary, navigation, industrial, fishing, power, irrigation and reclamation purposes. Since the final report of the Commission on

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Harren, Henry M. "National Register of Historic Places Inventory Nomination: Kettle Falls Hotel." St. Paul, Minnesota: 1974. (Unpublished) Located at the Minnesota Historical Society, State Historic Preservation Office, Ft. Snelling, Minnesota.

Ernie R. Gustafson, Personal Communication, 8 January 1976.

Oliver Knox, Personal Communication, 13 October 1975.

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 29 acres

UTM REFERENCES

A	1,5	52662,0	5,372,160	B	1,5	52677,0	5,371,780
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
C	1,5	52668,0	5,371,680	D	1,5	52629,0	5,371,810
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

Beginning at a point on the international boundary at the center of the Kettle Falls dam (15 526680 5371680) proceed approximately 1400 feet along a line to a point 18° west-northwest (15 526290 5371810); thence approximately 1600 feet to a point 117° north-northeast (15 526620 5372160), thence approximately 1265 feet along a line to a point 297° south-southeast (15 526770 5371780), thence approximately 450 feet along a line 307° south-southwest to the point of beginning.

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

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

John J. Hackett, Survey Coordinator
Liza Nagle, Survey Inventory Coordinator

ORGANIZATION

Minnesota Historical Society

DATE

September 13, 1976

STREET & NUMBER

Building 25, Fort Snelling

TELEPHONE

612-726-1171

CITY OR TOWN

St. Paul, Minnesota

STATE

MN 55111

12 CERTIFICATION OF NOMINATION

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER RECOMMENDATION

YES

NO

NONE

Russell W. Fiedler
STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

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

FEDERAL REPRESENTATIVE SIGNATURE

TITLE *Deputy Assistant Secretary*

DATE

DEC 10 1976

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

Charles A. ...
DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHAEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

DATE

7-17-78

Wm ...
KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

ATTEST:

Walter ... Cole
KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE

7-5-78

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The land within Voyageurs National Park is going to be purchased by the National Park Service, United States Department of the Interior. To date the properties specified in this nomination are still owned privately.

Kettle Falls Hotel

Charles Williams
622 12th Avenue
International Falls, Minnesota 56649

SE $\frac{1}{4}$, sec. 33, T70N, R18W, except the Kettle Falls property, including Government Lots 3 and 4.

Boise Cascade Corporation
P. O. Box 713
International Falls, Minnesota 56649
ATTN: Mr. Art Ennis, Manager
Communications & Environmental Affairs

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In the higher sections the walls are reinforced with rock fill on the downstream side. The ordinary highwater elevation is 1118.6. However, during periods of high run-off this elevation is exceeded occasionally. the discharge capacity is about 19000 cubic feet per second at elevation 1118.6. The dam was repaired in the late 1940s I believe and again in 1967 & 1968. The present dimensions of the dam are the same as when first built."

The dam is in good condition. It has had only three keepers since it was built: Chris Munson, 1912-1950; Herb Williams, 1950-1965; and Charles Williams, 1965- present. Charles Williams is also owner of the Kettle Falls hotel.

Two log buildings remaining from the construction period of the dam are situated to the west along the shore. They are owned by Boise Cascade and are managed by the hotel. One building is a rectangular cabin constructed in two parts. The original section was built ca. 1910 for use as a sleeping space for dam construction workers. It measured approximately 13 by 19½ feet and was later used as a residence by Chris Munson, the first dam keeper. An eastern addition was built ca. 1927 of identical materials and measured approximately 13 by 16½ feet. The cabin is built of pine logs with saddle shoulders and has an overall length of 36 feet. It has a gable roof of cut pine boards now covered by roll composition roofing. Presently the cabin is being rennovated by the hotel owners which involved stripping fiberboard and paper insulation from the interior walls, repairing and/or replacing windows, window frames, door frames, roof planks, rethinking and rewiring. It is in good condition and is rented to hunters, fishermen, and tourists staying at the falls.

Northeast of the cabin is a log building reported to have been used as a horse barn during construction of the dam. It is made of contemporary materials and styled as the ca. 1910 cabin. It is not known whether it was built to facilitate operations during the dam construction, or converted at that time. The building measures approximately 12½ by 13 feet and is in deteriorated condition.

The Kettle Falls hotel was built in 1913 and is a simple two-storey frame structure constructed in an "L" plan. It retains its original configuration with the exception of a lean-to addition to the east facade. The south facade forms the principle orientation of the building to the site and is approached from the landing dock two hundred yards south on the lake. This facade is marked by a one-storey screened verandah which runs the entire length of the building. No ornamentation is used. Original cedar shingle roofing has been replaced with asphalt composition. Through the years as the building settled and freezing and thawing occurred, bowing and sagging gave it a look of impermanence. In reality it remains structurally sound. Much of the settling occurred in the first years after construction and the result has added a unique feature to the site which no one wants to change. A barroom retaining fixtures and pictures of the 1920s is located at the west end of the first floor and leads to a storeroom which is part

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of the "L" to the north. The lobby is next to the barroom and near the main entrance. The stairway to the second floor is located in the southeast corner next to the lobby door. All furniture, except for a hanging gas heater and TV set are of the 1920-1930 era. The dining room and kitchen are at the east end. Pantries are located at the north end of the kitchen. The lean-to addition houses some kitchen equipment and serves as storage space. Originally eighteen sleeping rooms were provided for guests, each containing two small beds. Two of the rooms have been converted to bath facilities; one for each sex.

Originally there were sixteen buildings located at Kettle Falls. Four were the hotel and attendant out buildings, the dam keepers residence, the log barn, shanties, out buildings, and a trading store. Today there are twenty buildings plus a boat house and three docks. All are modern frame buildings except the hotel and the two log buildings, and are used in operation of the resort. They include the owners residence, garages, cabins and other out buildings.

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the boundary lake water levels in 1934, these levels have been maintained by the International Joint Commission through the dams at Kettle and Squirrel Falls.

In 1913 Ed Rose built a hotel to provide accommodations for waterway travelers at the portage around Kettle Falls dam. He realized the potential for increased usage of the area by industry and tourists, because it is situated in a strategic area accessible only by boat or air travel. The hotel provided liquid refreshments, home cooked meals, and sleeping accommodations. Commercial fishing waned after 1920 but the hotel was a favorite spot for lumbermen until 1937. By the time the area was left by the lumbermen, tourists were recognizing the northern lake region as a prime recreation spot and tourism became the economic mainstay of the Kettle Falls hotel.

Kettle Falls has been a portage area since man has used the boundary lakes as a means of travel. The falls were recognized as a resource by industry and a dam was built. However, the area was still a stopping place while getting from one lake level to the other. Levels of the lakes have been controlled by the dam and since 1934 have been regulated by the International Joint Commission for the mutual benefit of industry and recreation. The Kettle Falls hotel was built to capitalize upon the use of the area by industry and is now serving the tourist trade. The Kettle Falls Historic District developed as a result of a natural barrier in the wilderness and is still an isolated pocket of activity in the vast, sparsely populated forests of Voyageurs National Park.

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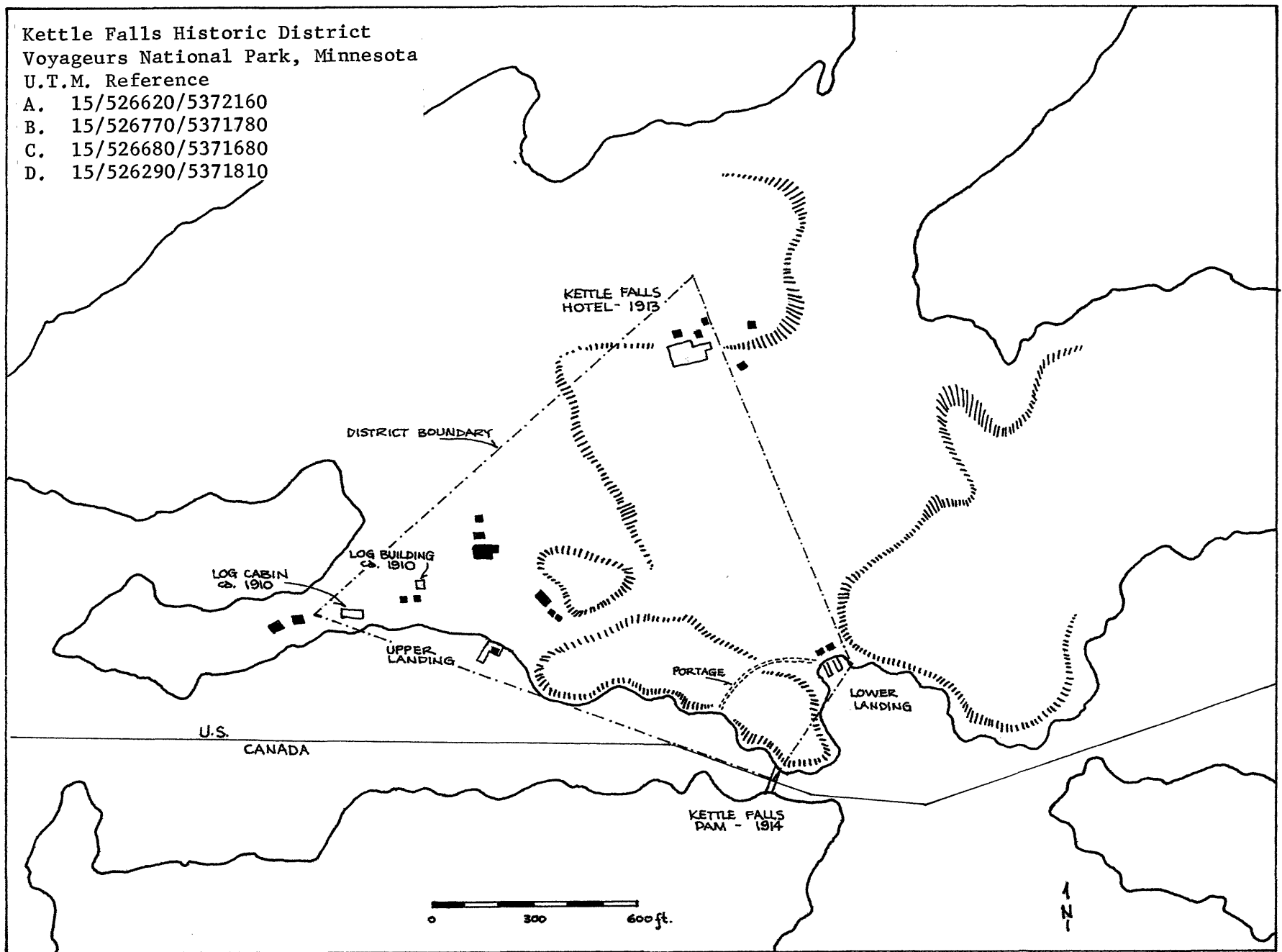
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Charles and Michael Williams, Personal Communication, 9 October 1975.

International Joint Commission. Final Report of the International Joint Commission
on the Rainy Lake Reference, Washington-Ottawa. Ottawa: J.O. Potenaude, 1934.

Kettle Falls Historic District
Voyageurs National Park, Minnesota
U.T.M. Reference

- A. 15/526620/5372160
- B. 15/526770/5371780
- C. 15/526680/5371680
- D. 15/526290/5371810



KETTLE FALLS HISTORIC DISTRICT

- • HISTORIC STRUCTURES/BUILDINGS
- • MODERN STRUCTURES/BUILDINGS

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

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**Note: These changes apply to
Kettle Falls Historic District in
St. Louis County, Minnesota.**

REFERENCE NUMBER: 78000376

STATE: MINNESOTA

COUNTY: St. Louis

RESOURCE NAME (HISTORIC):

CITY:

VICINITY OF: Island View

ADDRESS: Kettle Channel in Voyageurs National Park

CERTIFICATION DATE:

REMOVED DATE:

COMMENTS:

Nina M. Archabal

Nina M. Archabal
State Historic Preservation Officer

JUN 17 1988

Date

