

Yukon Heritage Inventory
Phase III, Part 2

The Church in Yukon - A Thematic Study

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THE CHURCH IN YUKON: A THEMATIC STUDY

Introduction

This study has been commissioned by the Heritage Branch of the Government of Yukon in order to better evaluate one of the Yukon's largest classes of extant historic structures - the churches. This will be done by examining Church history in the Yukon from three perspectives. The first will be a general overview of religious activity in the Yukon focussing on the various missions and ministries that came and went over the years. Although, to be thorough, such a history should include a discussion of existing native beliefs, this is more properly the purview of an anthropologist and outside the mandate of this thematic study. Also, this paper makes little mention of mission schools and church residential schools for two reasons. As these schools comprised a large segment of church activity and had a great impact on the native population, this large a topic is better treated in a separate study rather than in an overview such as this one. Secondly, this history is meant to provide a framework for evaluating extant churches and as such is concentrated on the activities that caused these buildings to be raised and fostered their continued use.

The second part of this paper consists of a structural history. This section contains a discussion on the evolution of church edifices and similarities and divergences in design, materials and construction methods. It will include a brief history of selected church buildings from the various historic

periods including some references to non-extant buildings.

The last section contains the data that has been found on all extant churches as well as any available information that will either contribute to an evaluation scoring or warrant re-evaluation of some of the structures that have already received scores. The conclusion will summarize the findings of this paper including an identification of gaps in information.

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Part I - The Church in Yukon: An Overview

Early Proselytization

Following a pattern established during early European exploration and settlement of most of Canada's Northwest, initial mission activity in the Yukon was carried out by two prominent religious organizations, the Church of England and the Roman Catholics. Both of these churches had evangelical groups devoted specifically to sponsoring missionaries to bring the good word to the heathens abroad. These were the Church Missionary Society based in England, which began its Canadian operations from Red River settlement in 1822, and the Oblates de Marie Imaculee of France who took on the major part of new Catholic mission activity in the 1840's. Representatives of the two societies were engaged in a fierce battle to be the first to win the souls of the native population to their respective doctrines. This often resulted in direct competitions for new unspoiled territory as in the race down the Mackenzie River in 1858-59 between Archdeacon James Hunter of the C.M.S. and Father Henri Grollier, O.M.I.¹ It was, indeed, the struggle for this particular territory that led to the first expedition into the Yukon Territory two years later.

On the basis of Hunter's report, Reverend William West Kirkby was sent to Fort Simpson in 1859. He later became the first missionary to enter what was to become the Yukon

Territory. In 1861, Kirkby and two native guides used the Rat River portage to cross the mountains to the Porcupine River and travel to Fort Yukon where he spent a week. Here, he was so enthusiastic about his reception and the prospects for future work that he wrote:

On the whole continent of North America, it would be difficult to find a more important and interesting field of Missionary operation. Gladly would I, if it were not for my family, live permanently among them. They require a single man to be their Missionary.²

Kirkby paid a second visit to Fort Yukon in the summer of 1862. Upon his return to Fort Simpson, he was greeted by Robert McDonald from Red River, Manitoba who would prove to be the requested "single man". While Fort Yukon was to be his base, McDonald was to also regularly visit Fort McPherson and LaPierre House. En route to Fort Yukon with the Hudson's Bay Company fur brigade, the party was joined by Jean Seguin from the Oblate Mission at Fort Good Hope. Although Seguin remained in the area until June 1863, he received little encouragement from the Protestant officers of the Hudson's Bay Posts at Fort Yukon and LaPierre House and few converts from the native population. This was the first of various unsuccessful attempts by the Roman Catholics to establish themselves in the Yukon over the next three decades.

McDonald was a talented linguist who would spend the next forty years among the "Tukudh" or Gwich'in Indians of the northern Yukon. In addition to learning their language and providing a substantial body of written translations of many

scriptures, McDonald seemed to have a real empathy and appreciation of the culture of the indigenous population and attempted to adapt his message to mesh with their existing beliefs. He married one of his converts, Julia Kutug, in 1876 and was responsible for training a number of native catechists who could carry the gospel to their own people. After Fort Yukon was discovered to be within American territory in 1869, McDonald retreated with the Hudson's Bay traders to establish his headquarters at Peel River Post or Fort McPherson.

When McDonald became seriously ill in 1864, an appeal was made in England for a replacement for the Fort Yukon mission. William Carpenter Bompas answered the call in the spring of 1865 and by Christmas arrived at Fort Simpson where he discovered that McDonald had made a full recovery. Consequently, Bompas changed his plans. Instead of taking over the Fort Yukon mission, he undertook a roving commission in a large area that would eventually extend from the Peace River area to the Arctic Coast and from Lake Athabasca to the northern coast of British Columbia.

To this time, the Yukon and Northwest Territories were included in the vast diocese of Rupert's Land. Realizing the difficulty of adequately servicing an area that encompassed over half of Canada, Bishop Machray determined to create four smaller dioceses. Thus, in 1872, Bompas was appointed head of the new bishopric of Athabasca, a territory which included "the whole of the enormous territories watered by the Athabasca and Mackenzie

Rivers and such part of the Yukon basin as was within British territory".³ This area in turn would be further divided twice more over the next twenty years. Each time Bompas chose the more remote posting resulting in his being named Bishop of Selkirk (after the Scots "Selig Kirke" or new church) in 1891, a bishopric that included all the area of what became the Yukon Territory eight years later.

In the meantime, a scant number of CMS missionaries with few resources, continued trying to serve the vast territory as well as they could. A number of the new recruits brought in to the Yukon had trouble adapting to the rigours of life in the north. In 1881, V.C. Sims was posted to Rampart House where he spent four years before his death brought on by overwork. John W. Ellington was sent to Forty Mile to establish St. John's or Buxton mission in 1886. Apparently, the pranks of the unsympathetic miners caused "both mind and body" to give way and he had to return to England where he died five years later.⁴ A Rev. Wallis spent only one year at Rampart House in 1891/92 before returning to England due to his wife's poor health.

One missionary who did adapt well was Thomas Henry Canham. After a few years at Fort McPherson upon his initial arrival in the north in 1881; Canham spent time at Rampart House following the death of Sims, at Forty Mile and several years at Fort Selkirk where he established St. Andrew's mission in 1892. Like McDonald, Canham sought to communicate with his native congregation by not only learning and recording their language,

but also by understanding their culture. Consequently, Canham left behind much valuable documentation on the language, customs and beliefs of the Indians with whom he worked.

The Seghers Expedition

During this period of gradual Anglican infiltration of the country, there was another Catholic excursion into the Yukon. This group consisted of Jesuit rather than Oblate clergy and they chose to travel via the little known Chilkoot Pass rather than either the northern Yukon trade route or by boat on the lower Yukon River via St. Michael's.

During the previous fourteen years, there had been a few visits from the Oblate clergy based in the Northwest Territories who travelled through northern Yukon while attempting "to plant the church in Alaska". With the decision of the Sacred College of Propaganda that "the Oblate missionaries could not exercise jurisdiction over the territory as the Jesuit Fathers were better qualified to organize the church in that vast territory of Alaska", Alaska was placed under the jurisdiction of Bishop Charles John Seghers S.J. 5

Archbishop Charles John Seghers, bishop of Vancouver Island and later archbishop of Oregon had long wished to work with the Indians of Alaska, a desire fuelled by a trip to Nulato in 1877-78. He was unable to return until 1886 when, with a party of two priests and a lay brother, he set out to return to the lower Yukon. As the group had missed the annual steamer trip of the

Alaska Commercial Company, they determined to cross the Chilkoot Pass with a small party of miners.⁶

While Seghers was renowned as a priest of great zeal and dedication, he did not seem to have much ability as either a practical planner or a good judge of character. These characteristics together with Segher's frail health, created much hardship for the small company. Frank Fuller, the lay brother, had a record of instability and showed increasing paranoia as the travellers progressed north but Seghers insisted on keeping him in the party.

After the departure of the group from Healy's Place at Dyea, much of the story becomes a familiar recounting of the vicissitudes to be endured by thousands a decade later: the gruelling climb over the Chilkoot Pass, the unexpectedly high prices charged by the Chilkats for transporting goods, problems with boat building, difficulties navigating the lakes and inclement weather.

On September 7th, the party reached Harper's Post at Stewart River where they missed the ACCo. steamer by only a few hours. The group decided to split up with Fathers Robaut and Tosi spending the winter on the Stewart River while Seghers, accompanied by Fuller, would continue downstream to Nulato. Seghers never did reach Nulato. After an arduous trip by boat and sled, Fuller shot and killed the bishop on November 28th, a day's travel from the settlement.

Eventually two mission stations were founded on the lower

river to honour Seghers' memory and efforts. Catholic activities in the Yukon, however, were suspended for another nine years when interestingly, it was Pascal Tosi in his role as the first Prefect Apostolic of Alaska who sent Father William Judge to Forty Mile.⁷

This ill-fated venture did leave some lasting memories with the local inhabitants. Father Tanguay, an Oblate priest who has worked in the north since the forties, recalls meeting an old Indian woman in Carmacks wearing a Jesuit cross. When he asked where she had obtained it, she told him it was from a "big bishop" who gave it to her when she was a little girl.⁸

The Church and the Klondike Gold Rush

By the mid 1880's the small population of white trappers, missionaries and traders in the Yukon were augmented by an increasing number of prospectors. The local traders catered to this new clientele by augmenting their stock with the supplies and tools required for mining and by setting up their posts near the busier areas of mining activity. Area natives were also drawn to these locales by the provisions available at the posts and economic opportunities afforded by the miners, such as hunting and making clothing. Inevitably, the Indians were also drawn into the less savoury aspect of mining society: alcohol, disease and the debauchery of native women. This created a greater challenge for the missionaries. No longer were they carrying their message to an "unspoiled" people. Now they had to

help their flocks adjust to the influx of newcomers, attempt to ameliorate the impact of this new society and prepare to minister to the rough and ready miners.

Meanwhile, on the Arctic coast, the local Inuit were experiencing a similar invasion from the sudden influx of whaling vessels in the late 1880's. While flocking to the new settlement at Herschel Island to take advantage of the enticing new trade goods which could be obtained with meat, clothing and, in some cases, their women; they also succumbed to the terrible effects of new diseases and alcohol.

Bishop Bompas was quick to recognize these problems and take measures to address both situations. He was one of the first to write the Canadian government requesting the presence of police and government officials. He was wise enough to point out that in addition to the social problems, both sets of invaders were predominantly American, creating a need to establish Canadian authority and sovereignty. An additional consideration which probably overrode all others was that the miners were starting to obtain substantial amounts of gold, all of which was leaving the territory untaxed. Eventually, the efforts of Bompas and others were successful in bringing a government presence to the area but in the meantime, the church did its best to deal with two difficult situations.

The CMS found additional funds to sponsor a missionary to minister solely to the Inuit of the Arctic coast. In 1892, Isaac O. Stringer headed north to undertake this new ministry. After

an apprenticeship period spent with Archdeacon McDonald at Fort McPherson, Stringer paid the first of several visits to Herschel Island in 1893 and four years later returned with his wife Sadie to establish a mission. Stringer's relationship with the whalers was generally friendly. This was fortunate as he was to rely on the whaling companies for much, including housing, various supplies and often assistance with transportation. Through his diplomatic approach, he was able to induce the whaling captains to sign a document agreeing to halt the trade in liquor with the local Inuit and contribute a substantial sum toward the new mission. It is difficult to determine how well this agreement was honoured or how receptive the Inuit were to Anglican doctrine but Stringer did secure a small core of converts, one of whom eventually became the first Inuit deacon in the Anglican church. Stringer and his wife spent four years at Herschel Island before increasing problems with snowblindness caused him to leave the north in 1901.

In 1892, Bishop Bompas made Forty Mile his headquarters and attempted to intercede on behalf of the Indians by dealing directly with the miners. Bompas' relations with the miners were not characterized by the same friendliness as those between Stringer and the whalers. According to various accounts of Bompas' character, he was a man much more at ease with Indians than the whites. Described as "irascible and combative", he was dismissed by the miners as being unrealistic and unappreciative of the rough and ready traditions of a frontier society.⁹

Bompas concentrated most of his work on his native congregants and the residential school for native children he had opened with the aid of lay worker Miss Mellet (later Mrs. Bowen) in 1893.

In 1895 he brought in R.J. Bowen to minister to the white population of Forty Mile. Bowen built a small log church, St. James. In 1896, however, he was "loaned" by Bishop Bompas to Bishop Rowe of Alaska to follow the stampede of many miners from Forty Mile to Circle City. He was recalled to the Yukon the following year soon after the events that virtually emptied Forty Mile overnight.¹⁰ Two more recruits arrived in 1896, H.A. Naylor and F.F. Flewelling. Flewelling spent the winter of 1896/97 at an Indian encampment at the mouth of the Klondike River.

The development of Forty Mile into a major centre drew the attention of the Catholics downriver. Father William Judge, a Jesuit missionary from Nulato, first paid a visit to the thriving mining community in 1894 and returned to spend two winters in Fortymile where he rented two cabins for use as a residence and a chapel. He appears to have ministered mainly to the miners, often travelling to the remote creeks to visit them.

When the electrifying news came of major gold discoveries on the Bonanza Creek in 1896, the miners left Forty Mile precipitously to stake claims seeking the fortune that had so far eluded them. Bowen and Judge were not too far behind the miners and were quick to establish the presence of their respective institutions in the new townsite that sprang up in the swamp at the confluence of the Yukon and Klondike Rivers.

By 1897, the Anglicans and Catholics had erected buildings in the new town of Dawson City. The Anglican church, St. Saviour's (later St. Paul's), was a modest one-room log cabin. Father Judge, after commencing operations in a tent, was soon able to oversee the construction of a two-storey hospital and a 25 foot by 50 foot church. When a fire ravaged Dawson the following June, the Catholic church was lost although the efforts of volunteer firefighters saved the adjoining hospital. Undaunted and supported by a generous contribution from "Big Alex" McDonald, Father Judge hastened to rebuild and the first service was held in the new church on August 21, 1898.

When news of the gold discovery reached the outside world, the consequent flood of goldseekers was soon followed by representatives from other churches. S. Hall Young, an American Presbyterian missionary from Alaska, commenced operations in 1897 until his Canadian colleagues could reach the new mission. He found a two-storey log structure that became a combination hostel and meeting house. When this building was destroyed by fire in the spring of 1898, his congregation met in a local sawmill. Many other proselytizers of various denominations arrived in 1898 and hastened to find or build structures to house their adherents. Seven members of the Salvation Army worked out of a tent, then a two storey log building. A group of the Sisters of St. Anne travelled from Alaska to staff Father Judge's hospital. Presbyterians R.M. Dickey and Andrew Grant arrived in May and Grant soon founded the Good Samaritan Hospital. Later that year

the Presbyterians completed a log church and manse. The Methodists were ministered to by James Turner, then A.E. Hetherington, from a log church completed in October.

Fire was not the only major problem the missionaries had to deal with. The rapidly-growing town of Dawson was built on lowlying swampy ground with no provisions for keeping drinking water clean or efficiently disposing of sewage. These factors together with a large population living in close quarters in primitive conditions brought on an epidemic of typhoid fever.

Two figures who were tireless in caring for the health of the community were Father Judge and, a year later, Andrew Grant. Both men were instrumental in setting up and operating hospitals that accepted all patients regardless of their beliefs. Father Judge died early in 1899 after a short illness, that was generally attributed to overwork and exhaustion.

As many smaller communities sprung up around mining operations on the outlying creeks, they were attended by itinerant ministers or priests. Thus Roman Catholic chapels were built on Dominion Creek, Grand Forks and Bonanza. From there the priests paid regular visits to other smaller settlements such as Gold Run, Hunker Creek and Sulphur Creek. Reverend Dickey built a Presbyterian church at Bonanza.

While the 200 members of the Yukon Field Force were constructing their headquarters at Fort Selkirk, two Catholic priests and a lay brother were building a church at the other end of town. When the soldiers dispersed within a year and it was

discovered that there were only a few Catholics in Fort Selkirk, the priests moved on to Dawson and the new church (St. John the Baptist) was left abandoned for over forty years.

Post Gold Rush - Consolidation, Expansion and Decline

The early years of the twentieth century marked a period of consolidation and prosperity in Dawson as well as in the new community of Whitehorse, which had gained importance as the terminus of the recently completed White Pass & Yukon Route Railway and the head of navigation for the Yukon River. Small log churches were supplanted by more substantial structures. Congregations now included businessmen, engineers and contractors all of whom could be called upon to contribute their funds and talents to build more impressive houses of God. Although many had left the Yukon to investigate the new gold discoveries in Nome, those who remained were committed to building a community in which they could thrive and raise their families.

In 1902, the small log structure belonging to the Anglicans in Dawson was taken down and, in the same location, a handsome frame structure was erected. A year earlier, the Presbyterians also felt justified in replacing their original log church with a large 600 seat building complete with a massive pipe organ.

The churches began to look southward. Reverend Bowen moved to Whitehorse in 1900 and built the church of Christchurch, now commonly known as the "Old Log Church". Bishop Bompas moved his base to Carcross where he established a large native residential

school. In 1900, the Catholics built Sacred Heart Cathedral in Whitehorse, an elegant frame structure that sat on what later became Fourth Avenue but at the time, as shown in early photos, was surrounded by tree stumps and tents. The Methodists made arrangements to procure property in Whitehorse but never got around to actually building on it.

After Bishop Bompas moved his residence and residential school to Carcross, he arranged for the construction of St. Saviour's church in 1904. Four years later, St. Phillip's church and mission house were constructed in Teslin by an Anglican divinity student, J.B. Bythell.

Meanwhile, in the far north, Isaac Stringer had to leave Herschel Island in 1901 due to increasing problems with snowblindness. By this time, the whalers had moved further east and the whaling industry was on the verge of an economic slump. After Stringer's departure, St. Patrick's mission was attended by C.E. Whittaker for a few years then went through nearly a decade with only occasional visits from itinerant missionaries and, when he was in residence, the offices of Inuit layworker, Thomas Umaok.

Bishop Bompas seemed to have been sufficiently impressed by Isaac Stringer that he offered him the parish of Christchurch in 1903 then two years later nominated Stringer as his successor when he decided to resign. Under Stringer's stewardship, the diocese became a more stable and organized operation. He spent much time raising funds for the operation of the diocese and its

endowment. His headquarters were moved from Carcross to Dawson and the diocesan name was changed from "Selkirk" to "Yukon". Many of Stringer's plans were limited by the extent of the monies raised by the Church Mission Society supplemented by funding from the Department of Indian Affairs for church day schools. In his letters to missionaries and catechists, Stringer rarely failed to remind them to carefully maintain their school attendance records.

While ensuring most of the larger settlements of the territory had their own churches and ministers, Stringer also attempted to maintain missions to the natives in the smaller communities and camps despite a chronic shortage of funds and manpower. This was done by using native catechists and deacons. Their number included Richard Martin, Julius Kendi, John Martin, Amos Njootli and Jonathan Wood. He also employed layworkers, such as Kathleen Cowaret (nee Martin) at Fort Selkirk, and divinity students who came north for short periods to gain practical experience at remote missions.

Often there were drawbacks with these arrangements. Missionaries tended to spend only a year or two at a posting before being transferred or moving on. The presence of a summer student for only a few months gave the student practical experience but did little for his native parishioners. There was little continuity or opportunity for the minister to learn the language and way of life of his parishioners. Even the native catechists were often posted to bands speaking a different

language. These last were expected to supplement their minimal stipend by hunting and trapping. Such supervision as they received was limited and often paternal in attitude.¹¹

During the teens and twenties, a number of new Anglican church buildings were erected. These included churches at Moosehide, Champagne, Mayo Indian Village, Mayo and a new church building in Teslin. Herschel Island obtained a permanent missionary and a new mission house in 1916. This situation lasted for only three years until Reverend Fry had to leave the north due to illness and the new mission house was left unoccupied. In 1922, Stringer realized his longheld dream of raising a church on the Arctic coast when Rev. Geddes and William Young built a log church at Shingle Point.

Catholicism, on the other hand, underwent a general decline throughout the Yukon but two new structures were built during this time. In 1904, in response to Dawson's shrinking population, St. Mary's was replaced by a more compact building in a central location that combined a chapel and school. By 1923, Dawson had further declined to the extent that Father Rivet was forced to admit that the large cathedral at the north end of town was much too large for the church's needs and dismantled the structure. Most of the furnishings went to the smaller building and many of the structural materials were shipped to Mayo to be recycled in the construction of Christ the King Church.

Mayo did not obtain a resident priest to go with its new building. Instead the two priests living in Dawson paid regular

visits to the new mining area. Whitehorse lost its priest altogether and was visited occasionally by a missionary from Atlin. Small wonder that a Catholic publication describes the years from 1917 to the mid thirties as "very quiet".¹²

The fortunes of the other denominations also took a downturn. By the early twenties, in response to the drop in Dawson's population, the Methodists had joined with the congregation of St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church. St. Andrew's was abandoned in 1932. The combination of the depression and few congregants made the large building uneconomic to operate.

The Thirties and Forties

The years leading to the next major upheaval in Yukon's history, the second World War and consequent construction of the Alcan Highway, showed a period of quiet but steady growth for the Roman Catholics while the Anglicans attempted to maintain those missions that were already operating.

The Roman Catholics

The Catholic Church expressed renewed interest in its Yukon missions after the appointment, in 1936, of Bishop John Louis Coudert as coadjutor for the Apostolic Vicariate of Yukon and Prince Rupert.¹³ Coudert, a young man of 41, had more interest in the northern missions than his predecessor and made a tour in the Yukon and northern British Columbia soon after his appointment. One consequence of this visit was a determination to establish more permanent missions in places that had

previously been attended to by visiting priests. Thus, in 1938, the Christ the King mission was re-established in Mayo. In the same year Father Drean moved to Teslin and then built a church in 1939. The church at Fort Selkirk was revived when Father Bobillier moved to the Yukon River settlement in 1942. Bobillier also opened a mission in Carmacks in 1945. New missions were also established in northern British Columbia.¹⁴

The expansion process was expedited by construction of the Alaska Highway in 1942. The project brought in a tremendous influx of chiefly American military personnel and had a great impact on the quiet settlements of the Yukon particularly those communities that were now accessible by the new road. Once again, the churches had to respond to an overwhelming influx of outsiders and try to lessen their effects on the indigenous population as well as minister to the new arrivals.

By 1941, Coudert had made Whitehorse his residence and in 1944, the new Diocese of Whitehorse was created. It embraced the both the Yukon Territory and a large portion of northern British Columbia. From his Yukon residence, Coudert oversaw the continued expansion of Catholic missions.

Priests travelled with the army as chaplains, enjoying the use of military transport and facilities, then established new missions at likely locations along the highway. Often the mission would be relocated when the army moved on. Thus, the main Catholic mission in Watson Lake was moved from the Watson Lake townsite, where it had been established during the war, to

the Indian village of Upper Liard in the early fifties to serve the local native population. In the Kluane area, Father Morriset set up his headquarters in Burwash Landing from which he visited a number of satellite mission stations at Snag, Champagne and Aishihik.¹⁵

Contrary to normal Oblate procedure, the first missionaries hired for the new diocese were recruited from Canada rather than the seminaries of France. One side effect of the war had been that French priests were kept busy with the conflict in their own country. Thus Father Tanguay and Father Joseph Forget came to the new diocese in 1944 travelling from Quebec and Ontario, respectively, with the last leg of their journey up the newly constructed Alaska Highway.¹⁶

In Whitehorse, the headquarters for the construction project, the Catholics found that their cathedral was inadequate to serve the increased population. Consequently, itinerant priests held services for the civilian contractors at their camps at McCrae, the airport, the refinery area and at Standard Oil. The armed forces were served by two barrack type chapels at Hillcrest and Camp Takhini. The latter building was later moved to Porter Creek to become Our Lady of Victory Church.¹⁷

The Anglicans

In the thirties, the Anglican Church also underwent some reorganization in its administration. In 1931, Bishop Stringer accepted the position of Archbishop of Rupert's Land, leaving behind the Diocese he had faithfully served for over twenty-five

years. During that period, the staff of the Diocese had expanded from thirteen to twenty-eight members; these figures included clergy, lay catechists and women workers.¹⁸

In 1932, it was discovered that \$860,000 had been embezzled from endowment funds for four northern dioceses leaving the church in serious financial distress and causing Stringer to spend the last years of his life trying to raise money to replace the missing funds.¹⁹ Stringer's successor, A.H. Sovereign, was Bishop of Yukon for only a year before leaving to fill a sudden vacancy in the Diocese of Athabasca. He, in turn, was succeeded by Bishop W.A. Geddes of Mackenzie River who managed both posts for a year then remained in the Yukon until his death in 1947. After the Provincial Synod of 1939, however, the Diocese of The Yukon was included within the Diocese of the Province of British Columbia.²⁰

Not much material was readily found to document either the effect of the monetary shortages on Yukon missions or the response of the Anglican Church to the Alaska Highway. A new frame church was constructed in Teslin in the forties, however, to replace the modest log building that been erected early in the century.

Postwar to the Present

When the American army and the force of civilian contractors who replaced them finally left the Yukon, it was a changed place. No longer were the rivers and the White Pass & Yukon Railway the

main routes of travel within and into the Yukon. The building of the Alaska Highway was soon followed by construction of an all weather road from Whitehorse to Mayo in 1950 and with a link-up to Dawson in 1955. One effect of this was the end of sternwheeler service on the Yukon River and consequent closing of many small river settlements.

One settlement that was strongly affected by the new road was the community of Fort Selkirk at the confluence of the Yukon and Pelly Rivers. Most of its native population moved to Minto in the late forties to work on the new highway and within five years the town experienced the closure of its RCMP post, the Taylor & Drury Store, the Hudson's Bay Company Store, the Telegraph Office and both churches. The Anglican Church, as represented by layworker Kathleen Cowaret, was moved to Minto and temporarily housed in a small log cabin. The Catholic Church moved to its mission station at Carmacks.²¹

Other native communities were relocated at this time in response to a desire of the Department of Indian Affairs to centralize services. This meant the abandonment of many community churches. The congregation of St. Mark's in Mayo Indian Village moved into Mayo in 1958.²² St. Barnabas in Moosehide was abandoned when the Han Indians were moved to Dawson City. In the latter case, native deacon Richard Martin was one of the last residents to leave Moosehide. The residents of Champagne and Aishihik moved into the new community of Haines Junction created upon the completion of the Haines Road in the

early fifties.

Another major effect of the new highway is that the economic and government centre of the territory shifted from Dawson to Whitehorse. Anglican Bishop Tom Greenwood responded to this movement when he transferred his See from Dawson City to Whitehorse in 1953, the same year that Whitehorse was made the new territorial capital.²³ Now the home of two Bishops, the city became the site of two new cathedrals by 1960. Christchurch Cathedral was erected at the west end of the block from the Old Log Church. This small building continued to be used as a church for native congregants and became the site of a church museum in the summers. The original Sacred Heart Church was completely demolished and a new building put up on the same site in 1959.

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22. Anglican Church Records, VI.2, Box 52, f.6.
23. Lambert, Historic Western Churches, p.191.

the itinerant nature of the natives and the frontier mentality of early white visitors in the nature of its structures. The early missionaries frequently travelled with their native charges, living in tents and often teaching and holding services in the open air. When time was spent in one spot, small cabins were built that could serve the multiple functions of clerical residence, church, school and occasionally hospital. These simple structures went up quickly and utilized logs for walls, poles and sod for roofing and mud and moss for chinking; all of which were cheap, easily accessible local materials.

Consequently, they could also be easily abandoned if an Indian Band should move on or gold was discovered at another creek. They were built with varying degrees of sophistication depending on the carpentry skills of the builder. Those buildings that were not abandoned after a few years often underwent various renovations and alterations, thus increasing their longevity. Two surviving early examples of these log cabin churches are St. Andrew's mission at Selkirk (now known as the Schoolhouse) and St. James at Forty Mile. Both are rectangular one-room log cabins originally ornamented by small steeples over the entrance.

The simple log church buildings of one or two rooms continued to be erected throughout the historic period, some going up as late as the forties. They were particularly effective for remote areas with small congregations when there were reservations about the probable permanence of these new missions or no access to a sawmill. These buildings also proved

useful for mission stations that did not have a fulltime minister. Examples of the latter type of churches would be the log structures at Snag, Champagne (both Anglican and Roman Catholic churches) and Keno.

The Catholic Church built at Fort Selkirk in 1898 is an example of a more carefully crafted structure. It utilizes the relatively rare piece-en-piece style of log construction and featured four gothic point windows. In marked contrast is the Anglican mission at Champagne which is a nondescript log box drunkenly perched on its foundation of shifting sand. Similarly, the first Anglican Church at Teslin (which has doubtless undergone some alterations over the years since it was abandoned as a church) could be any unremarkable log cabin.

Another type of favoured structure during the gold rush period were large canvas tents. These were portable, a distinct advantage for those who had laboured over the Chilkoot Pass, and could be raised immediately to provide a site for worship until a more permanent edifice could be constructed. In Dawson City, tents were used by the Salvation Army, the Methodists and the Roman Catholic Church. The Catholics also used a tent in Whitehorse until Sacred Heart Cathedral was completed. The Catholic Church Archives in Whitehorse have a wonderful photograph of the interior of the tent church in Whitehorse festively decked out for a wedding. These large tents only seem to have been in use for only a few years, however, from the height of the gold rush to early in the nineteenth century.

The Frame Churches

From 1904 until the early 1940's, several frame churches were built using a similar simple design and incorporating many of the same features. These buildings were rectangular, had gable roofs of medium pitch, were clad in white-painted clapboard siding and usually had one or two simple extensions, the most common being a nave at the rear and an extended belltower or a chancel at the front. Otherwise, there were only minor variations in such details as the fenestration and style of steeple or belltower.

Their construction often coincided with an increase in the prosperity of a settlement and/or the establishment of a sawmill in the area. In some cases, these structures were replacing the community's original log cabin style church. Churches of this type include St. Saviour's and St. John the Baptist at Carcross, St. Paul's in Dawson, St. Mary's in Mayo, St. Barnabas at Moosehide and St. Philip's in Teslin. Probably Christ the King in Mayo would also qualify for this category, but this should be confirmed by an examination of photographs of the church before the renovations that took place in the early eighties.

The More Elaborate Log Churches

This category includes log buildings that are both larger and more ornate than the simple one or two room cabins mentioned above. These exhibit such refinements as formal naves, extended towers, stained glass windows and costlier finishing materials.

There are two extant structures in this category: St. Mark's Anglican Church in the Mayo Indian Village and St. Andrew's in Fort Selkirk. These churches were both built in the thirties and are in many respects similar in design to the frame churches that were built from the turn of the century onward.

St. Mark's Anglican Church was completed in 1937 replacing the original church that had been washed away in the Stewart River flood of 1936. It is a rectangular log structure with a rear nave extension and an impressive extended belltower at the front. St. Andrew's Anglican Church in Fort Selkirk, which opened in 1931, is a church that was redesigned in mid construction. Work on the building was commenced by an Anglican layworker using salvaged logs from an 1898 Field Force barracks building. After the walls were partly raised, a set of architectural plans were drawn up and the remainder of the structure was built by a Dawson carpenter using high quality imported materials. Its distinctive features include stained glass windows with diamond-shaped lights and transoms with tudor heads, scissor truss bracing for the roof, a corner tower with a bellcast pyramidal roof and an interior finish of tongue and groove fir.

Both these structures coincide with periods of community stability. Fort Selkirk was about to become home to its first ordained minister in fifteen years and the small settlement was at the brink of a period of modest growth and prosperity. In Mayo Indian Village, the congregation was anxious to construct a

fitting replacement for the building that had been a community institution for twenty years and made it as impressive a structure as they could with the materials at hand.

The Cathedrals

This term is not being used in a formal sense to describe the church within a Bishop's See city but colloquially, to describe those few church buildings in the Yukon that were constructed on a grand scale. These include the second St. Mary's Catholic Church in Dawson, St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church in Dawson and the first Sacred Heart Cathedral in Whitehorse. Of these buildings, only St. Andrew's is still extant although it has been abandoned since the thirties and has greatly deteriorated.

St. Mary of the Immaculate Conception was constructed in 1898 immediately after the first Catholic Church was destroyed by fire. The new building went up in a little over two months and was much larger than the original building thanks to a \$25,000 donation from "King" Alex McDonald. By the early years of the century, however, it was obvious that the building was a little too grand for the now shrinking town of Dawson and the building was rarely filled except for special celebrations when the mining families came in from the creeks. When the Catholic school was built in 1904, it incorporated a chapel and was sited in the central part of town, far from the church in the almost abandoned north end. Finally, the church was dismantled in 1923.

The construction of Sacred Heart in Whitehorse was commenced in 1900 and completed in 1901. Plans for the building were prepared by two government engineers in the congregation, Messrs. Tache and Mercier, materials were bought in Vancouver and the construction of the structure was supervised by Brother Dumas and Father Lefebvre. After 1917, the building was almost deserted as the town declined and with it the Catholic population. The church gained renewed importance when Whitehorse became Bishop Coudert's residence in 1940 and the building was renovated two years later. By 1959, the building was considered unsafe and plans were afoot to erect a more modern structure. According to Father Tanguay, however, the two bulldozers used to demolish the church had a difficult time bringing down this stout edifice.

The final building in this category, St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, was erected on the site of the original log church in 1901. Its imposing Gothic Revival style was designed by architect Robert Moncrieff who had also been responsible for the Bank of Commerce Building and the Carnegie Library. The building had 600 seats and an immense pipe organ. It also fell victim to Dawson's gradual decline. Despite a merger with the Methodists of Dawson, the congregation eventually grew too small for the large building and it was abandoned by 1932.

Begged, Borrowed and Recycled Buildings

This category includes a grab bag of improvised structures

that were used as mission buildings or churches. They include buildings that were built for other purposes, buildings that were moved from other locations and even buildings that were reused or constructed from the remains of earlier structures. All these structures show a certain gift for improvisation. What follows is a few examples of the variety of structures of this type.

At Herschel Island, the first buildings belonging to the Church were a sod hut and store(house) purchased from the whalers. The Anglicans later used the large building that had been erected as a recreation hall by the Pacific Steam Whaling Co. Even when the missionaries constructed their own building in 1916, the mission house at the west end of the spit, it was by somewhat guiltily using lumber Bishop Stringer had destined for a church.

The Catholic Church in Burwash Landing apparently began life as an army mess hall and was moved from its original site at Duke's Meadows to its current location in the early forties.

The first Catholic Church in Porter Creek (non-extant), Our Lady of Victory, was originally an army barracks building in Camp Takhini that was converted into an army chapel. After the building was abandoned, Father Triggs purchased the structure for \$125, cut sixty feet off the end and moved it to a lot in Porter Creek.

The second Catholic mission in Keno was the former school. After four or five years of use, the building was transported to Faro to house the new Catholic mission in that community.

Christ the King Catholic Church in Mayo was constructed with recycled materials from the dismantling of St. Mary's Church in Dawson. Fittingly, the renovations carried out on this building in the early eighties by Father Huijbers apparently also utilized some recycled materials.

Part III - Profiles of Extant Churches

Introduction

What follows is a brief history of the construction and use of the churches still standing in the territory. As well, an attempt has been made to assess each building's role within the framework of Yukon church history thus providing a basis for evaluation of the structure. These histories have been organized under an alphabetical listing of communities. Sources are given for each structure allowing future researchers to determine where to pursue any further investigation that might be required.

Burwash Landing

Our Lady of the Holy Rosary Roman Catholic Church

This log building was first built at Duke's Meadows in 1934 then moved to its current location and reassembled on land belonging to the Jacquot family in 1943. Apparently it was first used as an army mess hall before serving as a Catholic Church, day school and Sunday school.

Father Morriset, the priest who established the Catholic mission at Burwash Landing, originally travelled to the area as a chaplain with the American forces. From his base in Burwash, he established a number of smaller mission stations in the Kluane area. These included small structures at Champagne, Snag and Aishihik that were each visited about once a month for two or three days. Morriset was responsible for the area until the

early sixties. The church is still in use.

Although the architecture of this log church is unremarkable, the building is significant for its association with the construction of the Alaska Highway, its role in the introduction of the Catholic Church to the Kluane area and its importance as a mission centre.

Sources:

Father Tanguay. Interview with Helen Dobrowolsky, November 1989. YRG I, Series 5, vol. 19, file 1083.
Yukon Heritage Inventory Form # 115 G/17/1.

Carcross

St. Saviour's Anglican Church

This simple frame building was originally constructed on the south side of the channel between Lake Bennett and Nares Lake in 1904. Its construction was arranged by Bishop Bompas, three years after he moved to Carcross and it was sited close to the Bishop's residence, a former Canadian Development Company warehouse. There were some problems with the church's location as the Anglican Church did not own the property on which it sat and the building was within the 100 foot reserve of the water.

Consequently, Bishop Stringer arranged to move the building to a lot on the other side of the narrows in 1917. This was the same year that the *Tutshi* was launched and the ship's ways were used to ease the building onto the opposite shore. The building's chancel and vestry were added after the move.

The building has historical significance for its strong associations with both Bishop Bompas and Bishop Stringer. Its

simple design marks it as one of the early frame structures that supplanted the simple log cabin style churches of the Anglican Church's early missions.

Sources:

Anglican Church Records. Diocese of Yukon. Series I.1.a., Box 2, f. 16.

Yukon Heritage Inventory Form # 105 D/2/44.

Heritage Branch, Government of Yukon. Carcross Research files.

YRG I, Series 1, vol. 25, f. 8460.

St. John the Baptist Catholic Church

In 1946, Bishop Coudert bought a lot from the British Yukon Navigation Company for the Catholic Church in Carcross. It is likely, however, that the church had already been constructed some years earlier and the Bishop was attempting to legitimize its squatter status. This would have been one of the churches erected during the increased Catholic presence throughout the territory in the early forties. Carcross apparently never had a fulltime priest but would have been visited from Atlin. Consequently, the building has little significance in the church history of this period.

Sources:

Yukon Heritage Inventory Form # 105 D/2/34.

Father Tanguay, personal communication, December 1989.

Champagne

Anglican Church

This simple log cabin with a sod-covered roof was raised ca. 1913 on land originally owned by Harry Chambers as lot 2, group 15. Apparently in 1928, the church was to turn this property over to the Indian Department with the mission lands to be set

aside for church use, although there is no evidence that this transaction actually took place. The mission did not seem to be one of the more important Anglican establishments and was staffed chiefly by layworkers and summer students. In its present condition, the structure is notable for the extreme undercutting of its foundations due to its location on shifting sands.

Sources:

YRG I, series 5, vol. 16, f.903.

YRG I, Series 1, vol, 42, f. 28792.

Yukon Heritage Inventory Form # 115 A/16/23.

St. Thomas Roman Catholic Church

This two room log cabin with appended steeple was built by Fathers Morriset and Tanguay in 1947 and served as a "mission station" until the early sixties. (See comment under Burwash Landing.) The front room of the building was a church and the room at the rear was where the priest resided. The mission was originally christened St. John the Evangelist by Bishop Coudert and it is not known when the name was changed. Although, it is an interesting example of a particular type of church used to service a small, remote congregation; it was in use for a relatively short period and has low significance in the overall history of the Catholic Church in Yukon. Inventory Form #

Sources:

Yukon Heritage Inventory Form # 115 A/16/38.

Father Tanguay Interview, November 1989.

Dawson City

St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church

Reverend Andrew Grant oversaw the replacement of the original log church with this new building in 1901. It was built during a period of high expectations for Dawson's continued growth and prosperity. Robert Moncrieff was the architect for this 600 seat Gothic Revival edifice. The installation of its large pipe organ crowned its status as Dawson's most impressive church.

This stable period in Dawson's history was short-lived, however, and the decreased population and economic decline was reflected in the church's fortunes. In the early 1920's, the dwindling membership of the Methodist Church merged with the congregants of St. Andrew's thereby anticipating Church Union and the formation of the United Church in 1925. By 1932, the remaining Presbyterians found the building too expensive to operate and shut it down. In 1963 the building was transferred to the Crown by the City of Dawson and now belongs to Klondike National Historic Sites.

Sources:

W.R. Hamilton. The Yukon Story. Vancouver: Mitchell Press Ltd., 1964.

Lambert, Florin. Historic Western Churches. Seattle: Superior Publishing Co., 1969.

Commonwealth Historic Resources Ltd. St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church. Prepared for Parks Canada, Prairie Region, Sept. 1984.

Carter, Margaret. Dawson City - Directory of Existing Structures. Parks Canada, 1973.

Yukon Heritage Inventory Form #116 B/3/29.

St. Paul's Anglican Church

In 1902, this building was erected to replace the simpler

log cabin that had been erected on the same site in 1897. Its construction represented the Anglican community's belief in Dawson City's prospects as more than a short-lived boomtown. The building has been in continuous use since its construction and has important historical significance as being the church serving the Bishop's headquarters or See City for many years.

Sources:

Hamilton, W.R. The Yukon Story. Vancouver: Mitchell Press Ltd., 1964.

Carter, Margaret. Dawson City - Directory of Existing Structures. Parks Canada, 1973.

Yukon Heritage Inventory Form #116 B/3/491.

St. Mary's Roman Catholic Church

Unlike the previous two Dawson churches, St. Mary's Church was not built in order to obtain expanded facilities but in response to the first signs of the town's decline. In 1904, the Roman Catholics decided to build this combination school and chapel away from their cathedral in the north end of town and closer to the shrinking business centre. By 1923, it was evident that the grand church, built in 1898, was too large for the smaller congregation and it was dismantled by Father Rivet and a Mr. Tremblay. Most of the furnishings from the church were moved to the newer building and the materials were used to construct Christ the King Church in Mayo.

Sources:

Lambert, Florin. Historic Western Churches. Seattle: Superior Publishing Co., 1969.

Fort Selkirk

St. Andrew's Anglican Mission

This one-room log cabin was the first Anglican mission building at Fort Selkirk and may be the oldest extant building in the Yukon. It was constructed in 1892, probably by Thomas Henry Canham, the first missionary at Fort Selkirk. As well as being the settlement's first church, the building was also a school to three generations of native children and on a number of occasions served as a hospital. Although a new church was built in 1931, the cabin continued to be used as a school until the town was abandoned in the early forties.

This building has high significance for its uniqueness as the Yukon's oldest standing mission building, its strong historical associations and its continuing importance throughout the life of the settlement.

Sources:

Dobrowolsky, Helen. "Directed Studies Project", for the University of Victoria's Diploma Program in Advanced Studies in Cultural Resource Management, 1987.

Yukon Heritage Inventory Form #115 I/14/024.

St. Andrew's Anglican Church

Although this elegant building was not completed until 1931, plans had been made for its construction many years before. Early in the century, Thomas Henry Canham, had raised funds in England to replace the small one room log cabin. In the early twenties, Bishop Stringer purchased the present site and one of the old Field Force barracks buildings for materials.

Construction was commenced by layworker William Young and completed by Fred Hickling, a carpenter from Dawson, with assistance from the local native congregation.

Although its walls are built from local logs, this structure is far superior to the early log churches as evidenced by such features as the scissor truss framing for the roof, the tongue and groove fir lining the interior and the tower with bellcast roof. The building was in continuous use until 1953, and in the summers, services are still held here occasionally. The building is in very good condition. In the early eighties, the foundation logs were replaced, the roof was resingled and the stained glass windows were flattened. Although the church was built late in the life of the settlement, its consequent reduction in historical significance is offset by its importance as one of the architectural treasures of the Anglican Church.

Sources:

Anglican Church Records. Diocese of Yukon.

Heritage Branch. Fort Selkirk Oral History Project. 1984.

Map H-1162

Wood, Ginny Hill. "Squaws Along the Yukon", National Geographic Magazine, August 1957, vol. CXII, no. 2, pp. 145-265.

Dobrowolsky, Helen. Directed Studies Project, University of Victoria, 1987.

Dobrowolsky, Helen. St. Andrew's Anglican Church, physical history. Jan. 1988.

Yukon Heritage Inventory Form #115 I/14/29.

St. Francis Xavier Roman Catholic Church

This church was built in 1898 during the peak of the gold rush amidst high expectations that Fort Selkirk might soon become a mining centre to rival Dawson. The building was constructed by

two Oblate missionaries and a few paid labourers. When it was determined that the only Catholics in Fort Selkirk were a few soldiers with the Yukon Field Force, the missionaries moved on to Dawson and the outlying communities on the creeks. The church was abandoned for 44 years and for nearly half that time served as a warehouse for the Taylor & Drury Store.

In 1942, the Catholic mission at Selkirk was re-established with the arrival of Father Marcel Bobillier. The building was moved back from the riverbank to property owned by the church and it underwent some alterations. The Catholic mission closed in 1952 when the priest moved to Carmacks. This building has important historical significance in that it is the second Catholic church built in the Yukon and is strongly associated with Father Bobillier, a prominent missionary who served in the north for over 50 years. It is less important in terms of the overall history of Catholicism in Yukon in that the building was only occupied for ten years and there was never a strong Catholic presence in Fort Selkirk.

Source:

Dobrowolsky, Helen. Directed Studies Project, University of Victoria, 1987.

Yukon Heritage Inventory Form #115 I/14/30.

Forty Mile

St. James Anglican Church

In the 1880's, Bishop Bompas had arranged for the establishment of Buxton Mission on an island near Forty Mile. The mission's mandate was teaching and ministering to the native

community of the area. In 1895, this log structure was built by R.J. Bowen for the sole purpose of ministering to the white mining community of Forty Mile. It was in use continuously for forty years, after which services were still held here occasionally until the 1960's. This building is of high significance as the first church built solely for the white people of the Yukon. There has been little modification to the building over the years and it is an excellent example of a prototypical log cabin style church.

Source:

Barrett, Bruce. "The Forty Mile Historic Townsite Concept Plan", typescript prepared for Heritage Branch, March 1987.
Yukon Heritage Inventory Form #116 C/07/09.

Haines Junction

Roman Catholic Church

This quonset hut style building was put up soon after construction of the Haines Road, probably in the early fifties. It was built by Father Morriset with the assistance of Father Tanguay. The community did not have a fulltime priest but was serviced by occasional visits from Father Morriset out of Burwash Landing. Although this building was constructed late in the historic period covered by the study and of little historic interest, it is of architectural interest as a unique design that was influenced by a common type of army building introduced to the north in the early forties.

Source:

Father Tanguay Interview, November 1989.

Herschel Island

St. Patrick's Mission House

This two-storey frame building was erected in 1916 on the occasion of Herschel Island receiving its first fulltime missionaries, William and Christina Fry, in over a decade. Although Bishop Stringer had sent materials and plans for a church for the island; logistics, as well as the desire of the missionaries to have a secure dwelling, dictated that a more practical structure be constructed. Archdeacon Whittaker together with a crew of Indians from Fort McPherson did most of the construction. When complete, the mission house served as a combination church and school on the main floor and as a dwelling on the upper storey. The building was occupied for only three years before the Frys left the Island after which it was used infrequently by visiting clergy. Despite its short period of use, the building has significance as the first church building constructed in the Arctic.

Source:

Ingram, Rob & Dobrowolsky, Helen. Waves Upon the Shore - an Historical Profile of Herschel Island. Prepared for Heritage Branch, Government of Yukon, 1989.

Yukon Heritage Inventory Form #117 D/12/13.

Keno

Catholic Church

This building was constructed in the twenties, about the same time as the Wernecke Mine started up. This is a log

building that is now being used as a squatter's cabin. According to a local resident, the church had sold the structure in the early seventies after it had been abandoned for some time.

Note: The Bishop later bought the old school at Keno for use as a church. This latter structure was used for four or five years before being moved to Faro.

Although not much information is available about the operation of this church, it was probably a mission station (see comment under Burwash Landing) and visited infrequently from either Dawson City or Mayo. Consequently, it would rank low in historical significance.

Sources:

Yukon Heritage Inventory Form #105 M/14/28.
Father Tanguay Interview, November 1989.

Klukshu

Anglican Church

According to Paddy Jim, this Anglican Church building was never completed. No information on this structure was readily available in the Anglican Church Records. More research is required for an assessment.

Source:

Yukon Heritage Inventory Form #115 A/6/4.

Little Salmon

St. Peter's Anglican Mission

This small log building was constructed by the Rev. Cecil Swanson in 1913. Swanson and his wife stayed here for a short

period of only a year or so before moving to Carmacks, then leaving the area altogether. The small river mission was then visited intermittently by whatever clergy were spending time in Carmacks. The largely native settlement of Little Salmon and the mission were abandoned after a devastating influenza epidemic in 1918-1919 that killed many of the inhabitants.

Some work was carried out on this building by members of the Little Salmon-Carmacks Band in the mid eighties. As it was occupied for such a short time, it is not one of the more significant native missions.

Source:
Heritage Branch. Little Salmon Research File.

Mayo

Christ the King Roman Catholic Church

This church was built from materials taken from the old St. Mary's Church in Dawson when the 1898 building was dismantled. It was constructed by Father Rivard and Mr. Tremblay of Dawson in 1923. The community, however, did not obtain a fulltime priest until 1937 but were visited by clergy from Dawson in the meantime. In the early eighties, the building was "restored" - a process that introduced many new elements including smaller windows, imitation wall panelling, a dropped ceiling and pale yellow heat treated particle board siding replacing the original white-painted rough spruce siding. Although the building is of moderate historic importance in its role of reflecting revived Catholic activity in the thirties, the lack of integrity greatly

lowers its architectural significance.

Sources:

Cole, Leslie. "Mayo Church Restored", Whitehorse Star, 22 August 1983.

"Mayo Church Reopening", Whitehorse Star, 15 August 1984.

Father Tanguay Interview, November 1989.

Yukon Heritage Inventory Form #105 M/12/59.

Mayo Historical Society.

St. Mary's Anglican Church

This church and its accompanying rectory were built in 1922. Its first minister was Rev. F.H. Buck and the church has been continuously occupied until the present. It is a neat frame building similar to many Anglican structures that were built around this time. Interestingly, when Mayo was flooded in 1936 the only buildings to remain on dry ground were the two churches and the liquor store. It is of some significance in that it was constructed soon after the silver strikes that brought people to the region and remained a steadfast community institution. *

Sources:

Yukon Heritage Inventory Form #105 M/12/1.

Anglican Church Records. Part VI.2, Box 52, f.6.

Mayo Indian Village

St. Mark's Anglican Church

The first log church in this community was built in 1916 by Julius Kendi and local native people. The strip of riverbank on which it sat was washed away when the Stewart flooded in 1936. The structure was rebuilt within a year by the congregation and John Martin, the native catechist who had moved to Mayo in 1935. The building was abandoned when the Indian community was moved

Old Crow

St. John Catholic Mission

This building was erected in 1951 by Oblate missionaries Fathers Buliard and Plaine. From here, the priests visited the surrounding area travelling as far north as Herschel Island. The building is now used as a teacher's residence. Due to its late construction date and relatively short period of occupancy, the building is of low importance in Yukon Roman Catholic history.

Sources:

Father Tanguay Interview, November 1989.
Yukon Heritage Inventory Form #1160/12/5.

Archdeacon McDonald Memorial Church

Dating from ca. 1926, this log building was apparently used chiefly as a summer residence for Anglican lay workers. It is now abandoned and used for storage. Little data was readily available regarding this structure and more research is required to give it an accurate assessment.

Source:

Yukon Heritage Inventory Form #105 0/12/2.

Rampart House

St. Luke's Anglican Church

Little information was found about either this church or the mission buildings that undoubtedly preceded it. Rampart House was the site of the one of the first Anglican missions in the territory when V.C. Sims was posted here in 1881. In 1894, Bishop Bompas applied for five acres at the settlement although the transaction was never carried out. Apparently, when the

Hudson's Bay had left the settlement, Bompas purchased their buildings for the mission. These were vacated until "conditions should seem to justify the re-establishing of the mission.

This matter was renewed in 1909 when trader Dan Cadzow applied for a homestead tract that would have included the church land. According to Cadzow's application, all the HBCo. buildings were in ruins with the exception of one which he had rebuilt. In 1911, Stringer arranged to purchase lots 9, 10, 11 and 12 in the recently-surveyed townsite which were to be reserved for church buildings. Probably the present structure was built soon after that date but this needs to be confirmed.

Sources:

Yukon Heritage Inventory Form #116 N/7/6.
Anglican Church Records, VI.2, Box 64, f. 1.

Snag

Roman Catholic Church

This log cabin was probably built in the late forties. Along with Aishihik and Champagne, it was one of group of mission stations in the Kluane area. These stations did not have a resident priest but were visited for two or three days every month by Father Morriset, who was based in Burwash Landing. Occasionally, priests from Whitehorse would also visit the community by travelling on the supply plane. The church was probably closed in the fifties when most of the native residents of the village moved to Haines Junction. Although, it is an interesting example of a particular type of church used to

service a small, remote congregation; it was in use for a short period and therefore has low significance in the overall history of the Catholic Church in Yukon.

Sources:

Father Tanguay Interview, November 1989
Yukon Heritage Inventory, 1989.

Teslin

St. Phillip's Parish Hall

This building is Teslin's first church. The original church and mission house for this community were built in 1908 by divinity student J.B. Bythell together with the people of the Teslin Band. The church was pulled down in 1923 by then missionary S.W. Semple, R. McClear and Constable Hunter. They then constructed a new building using the original logs for the walls and topping the structure with a new roof. In the forties and fifties the building was used as a residence, then ca. 1965, it was used as a parish hall.

This simple log cabin with appended chancel has been described as the Teslin's oldest building. It is significant not only for its age but also as testimony of the Anglican Church's early interest in the community.

Sources:

Anglican Church Records, VI.2, Box 52, f. 6.
Yukon Heritage Inventory Form #105 C/2/1.
Teslin Women's Institute, "A History of the Settlement of Teslin, 1972.
YRG I, Series 5, vol. 17, file 941.

St. Phillip's Church Teslin

According to Teslin resident Len Usher, this structure was

constructed in the forties. It was then enlarged and remodelled by Rev. Lapham in 1955, according to a source in Anglican Church Records, or in 1956, according to Usher. At the same time, Lapham built a new rectory using materials salvaged from old army buildings. Lapham had moved to the community about 1954 and remained until about 1959. It would be useful to determine the exact date of Lapham's renovations to know whether they were done within the historical time frame of the Inventory. In any case, the building's recent date and the alterations to the original structure reduce its historic significance.

Sources:

- Anglican Church Records, VI.2, Box 52, f. 6.
- Yukon Heritage Inventory Form #105 C/2/2.
- Teslin Women's Institute, "A History of the Settlement of Teslin, 1972.
- YRG I, Series 5, vol. 17, file 941.

Watson Lake

Our Lady of the Yukon Roman Catholic Church

Construction on this small frame building in Upper Liard was commenced in 1954. Work on the building was completed by Father Guilbaud who has been the resident priest ever since. The church was originally entitled "Notre Dame Des Pauvres". As the structure dates from the very end of the inventory's historic period, it has little significance in terms of Catholic history in the territory.

Source:

- Father Guilbaud Interview. Recorded by Peter McDonald for Liard Oral History Project, 1989.

Whitehorse

Old Log Church (Christchurch)

This simple log building was constructed by Rev. R.J. Bowen in 1900 in what was just becoming a thriving community at the head of navigation and end of steel. Isaac Stringer was the priest here from 1903 to 1905 and for a short period, Robert Service was Vestry secretary. When Bishop Tom Greenwood transferred his headquarters to Whitehorse in 1953, the church became See Cathedral for seven years until a larger structure was constructed at the other end of the block.

The building is now used as a summer museum and has been used as a place of worship for native congregants in winters. Foundation work was done in 1984 and now plans are underway to install a full basement under the building. The building is important to the history of both Whitehorse and the Anglican Church and it is one of the earliest examples of the log cabin type of church building. The changes in the streetscape around the building, however, diminish its contextual significance.

Sources:

Lambert, Florin. Historic Western Churches. Seattle: Superior Publishing Co., 1969.

Yukon Heritage Inventory Form #105 D/11/8.

Conclusion

The churches of Yukon occupy a significantly large proportion of the Yukon's extant historic structures. We are fortunate that, for the most part, there is a large body of research material available to assist documentation and interpretation of these buildings. As well, we are fortunate to still have access to the memories of many Yukon elders and seniors regarding particulars that are rarely in archival documentation.

This thematic study has attempted to provide a general overview of church activities during the historic period, provide the basis of a structural analysis and summarize data available regarding individual buildings. This is by no means a comprehensive document, however and there is still much to be learned.

It is an interesting phenomenon that church history of nearly a century ago is better documented than church activities of the last fifty years. It is in this latter period, however, that more research is required for a number of topics. What was the role of the Anglican Church and other denominations, excepting the Catholic Church, during the Second World War and Alaska Highway Project? What were the direct effects on Anglican mission activity after the endowment embezzlement of the early thirties? What was the extent of activity of the Methodists, Presbyterians and other small denominations in the Yukon after

the gold rush and between the wars?

The structural analysis in Part II would benefit by the inclusion of more non-extant mission buildings and churches. This would require more research and analysis of historic photographs than time permitted in this study.

In the third section of this paper, many of the Church profiles are incomplete. There are information gaps in the histories of the following buildings: St. John the Baptist in Carcross, the Anglican Church in Champagne, the Catholic Church in Haines Junction, the Catholic Church in Keno, the Anglican Church in Klukshu, St. Peter's in Little Salmon, Archdeacon McDonald Memorial Church in Old Crow and St. Luke's in Rampart House. Lastly, both inventory and research is required for the old Presbyterian Church on Cook Street in Whitehorse.

Any discussion of religious practices in the Yukon should also include an examination of native spiritual beliefs together with any associated structures and sites. This subject would merit study by an anthropologist or ethnologist.

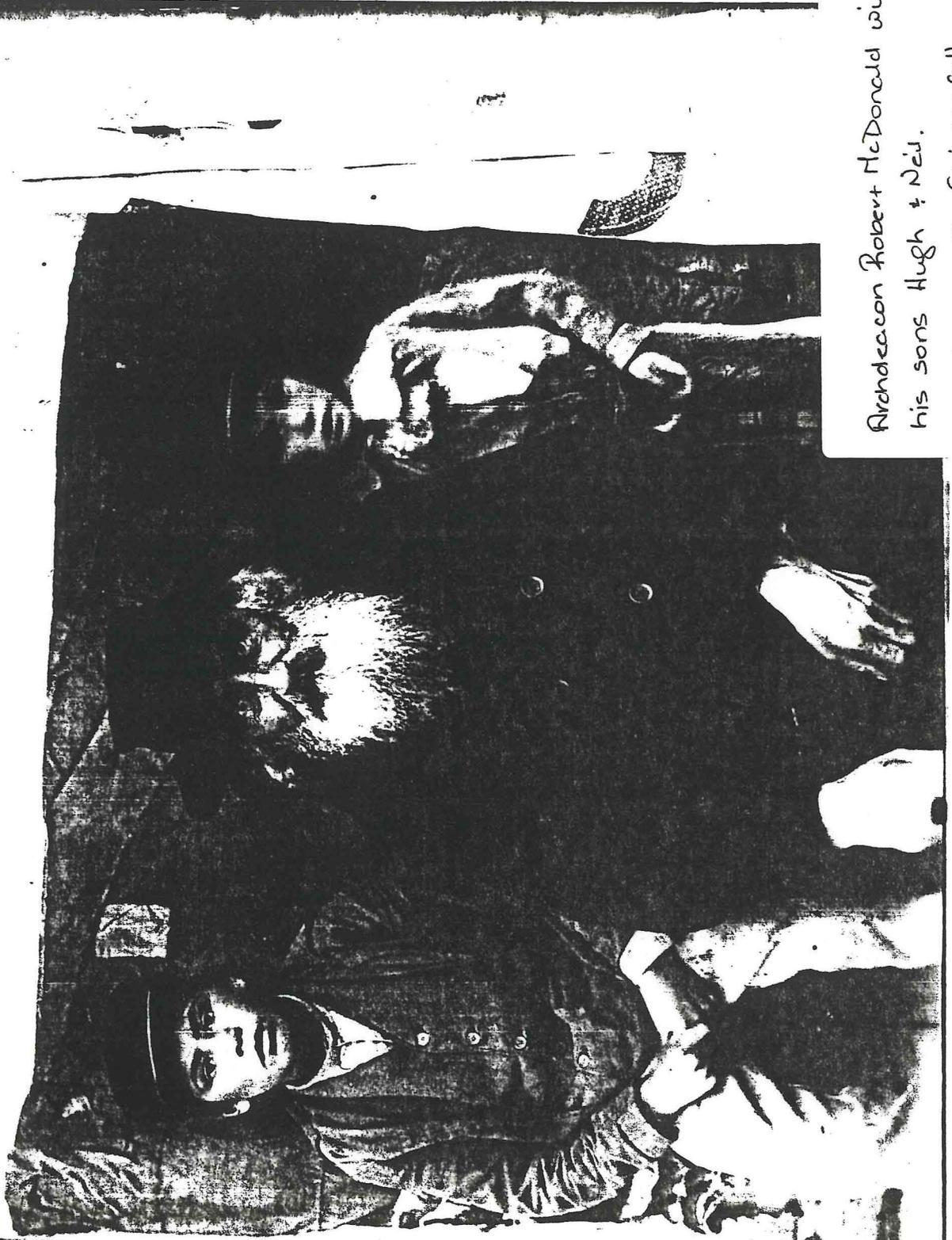
While much of the above material can be found by more intensive archival research, there is a great deal of information that can only be learned from oral history interviews. Needless to say, this is a rapidly-diminishing resource and this type of information collection should be a priority.

Finally, there are a number of historic buildings associated with the Yukon's churches that also merit further research and evaluation. These would include such structures as mission

houses, rectories and schools. It should be determined whether these buildings can be properly evaluated along with other classes of structures, such as residences, or whether their greater significance lies in their association with the religious institutions they served. There are at least two dozen historic structures in this category in Yukon and care must be taken that they do not fall through the gaps between theme studies. Perhaps a compromise approach would be to evaluate them architecturally with the other buildings in that community or class but to ensure that any historic evaluations would include their significance in relation to church history.

Appendix I
Selected Historic Photos

19/81



Arendaeon Robert McDonald with
his sons Hugh & Neil.

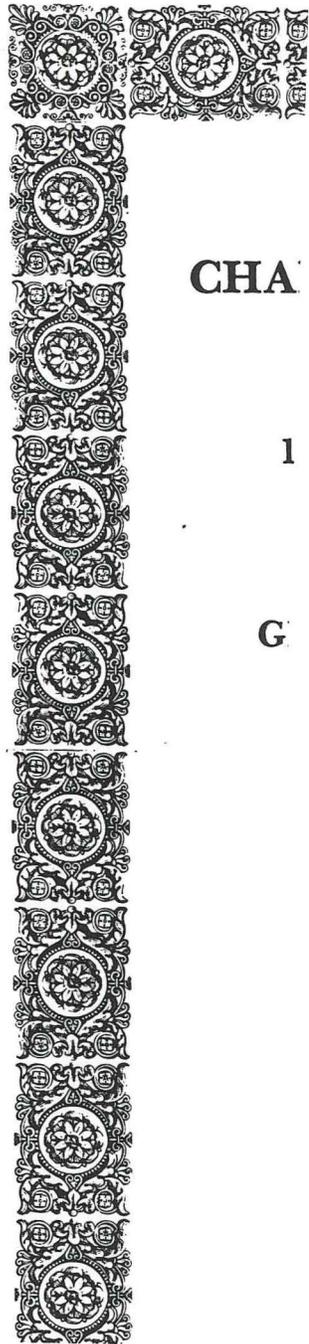
P1517-153 Stringer Coll.

Anglican Church of Canada/
General Synod Archives



ARCHBISHOP SEGHERS
1839-1886

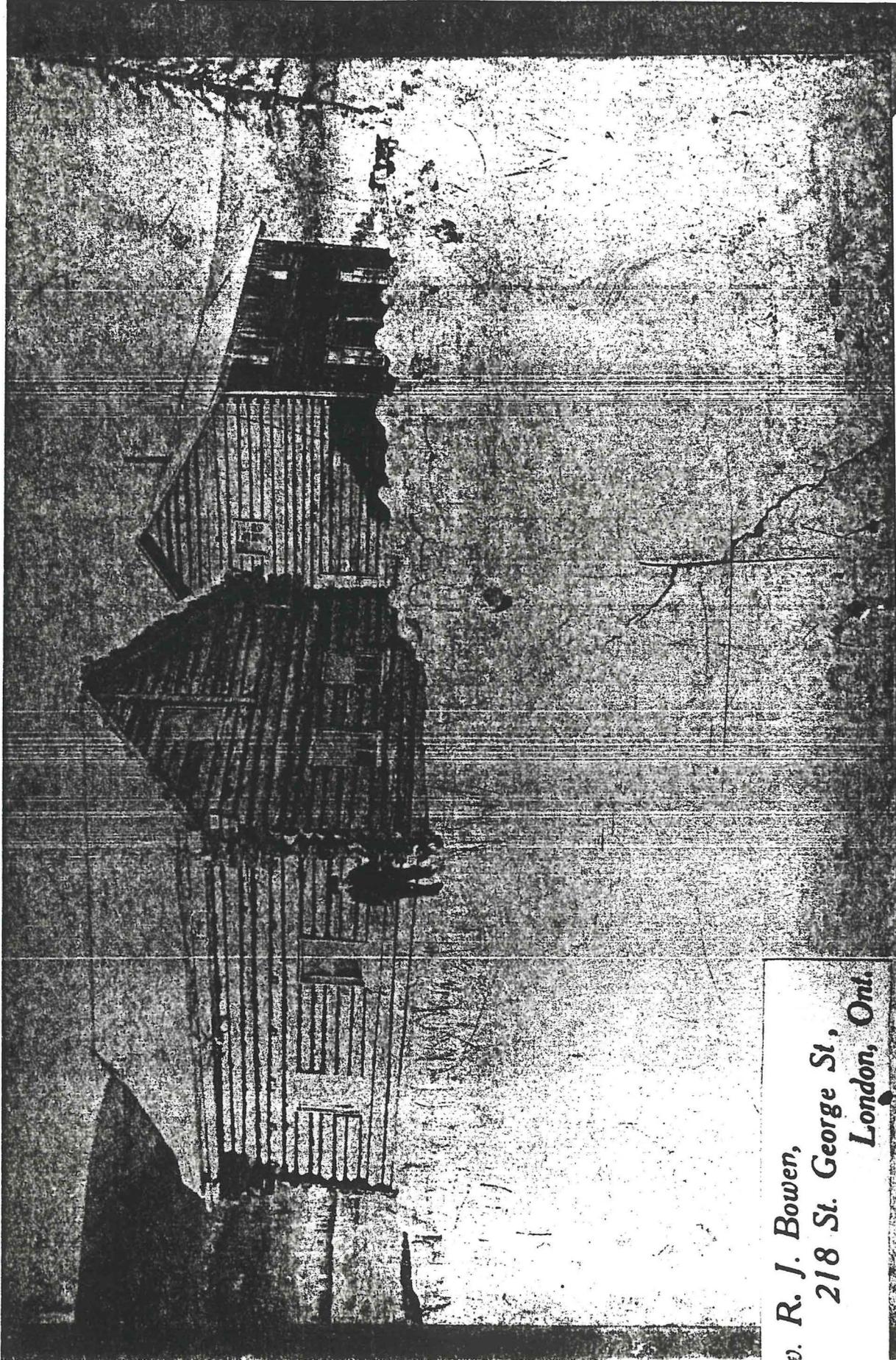
from:
Steckler, G., S.J. Charles John Seghers,
Priest and Bishop in the Pacific Northwest
1839-1886, A Biography. Fairfield, Wash.:
Ye Galleon Press, 1986



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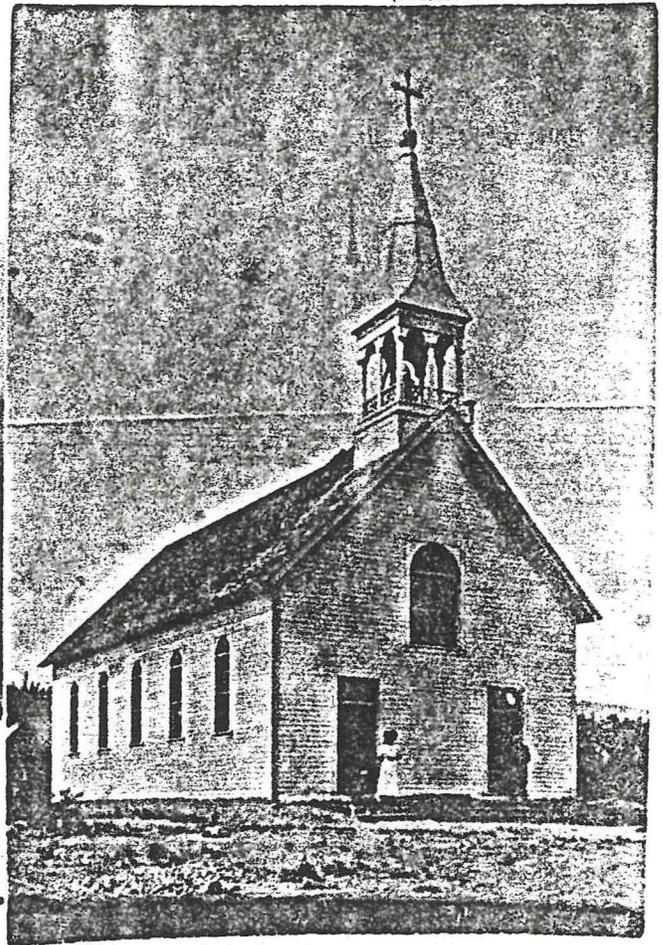
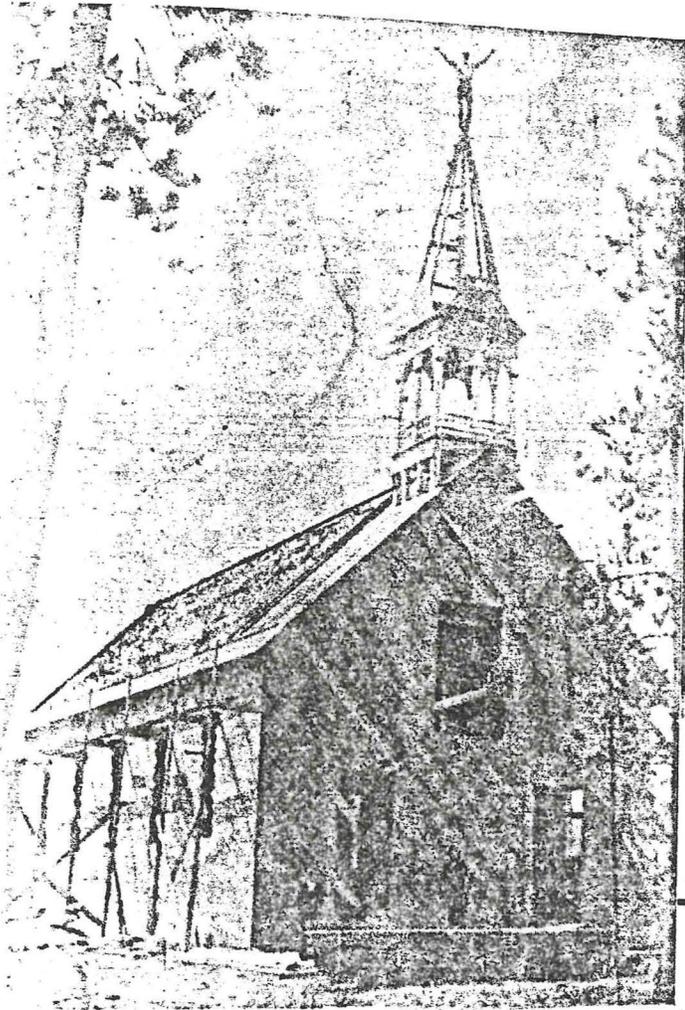
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G



Dr. R. J. Bowen,
218 St. George St.,
London, Ont.

Log Church & residence of Bishop
Bompas, Buxton Mission, Forty Miles,
1895.
Bowen Coll. P18-8-13
ACC/GSA



Sacred Heart Cathedral, Whitehorse, 1901.
Two views showing partially completed & fully constructed
building

Foster Tanguay Coll.



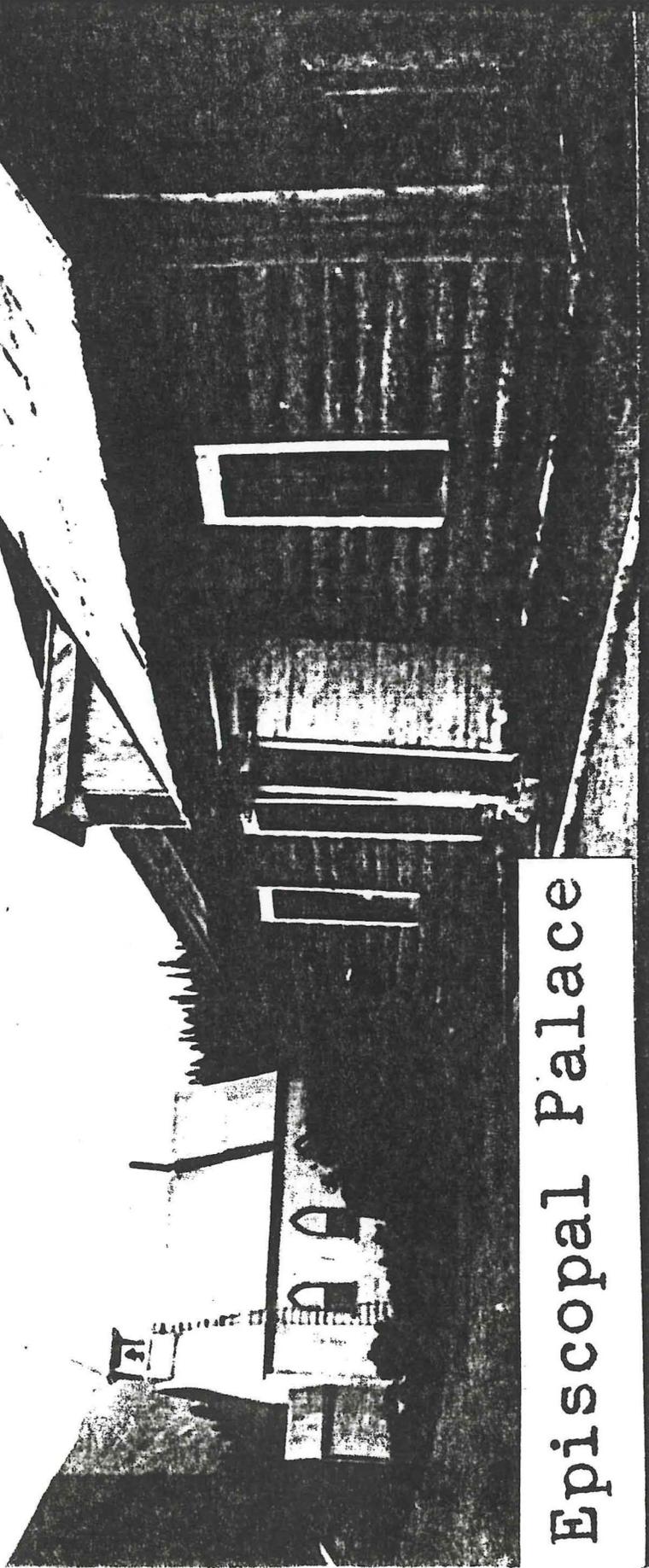
L'eglise de White Horse

Sacred Heart Cathedral, Whitehorse, 1901.

Father Tanguay Coll.

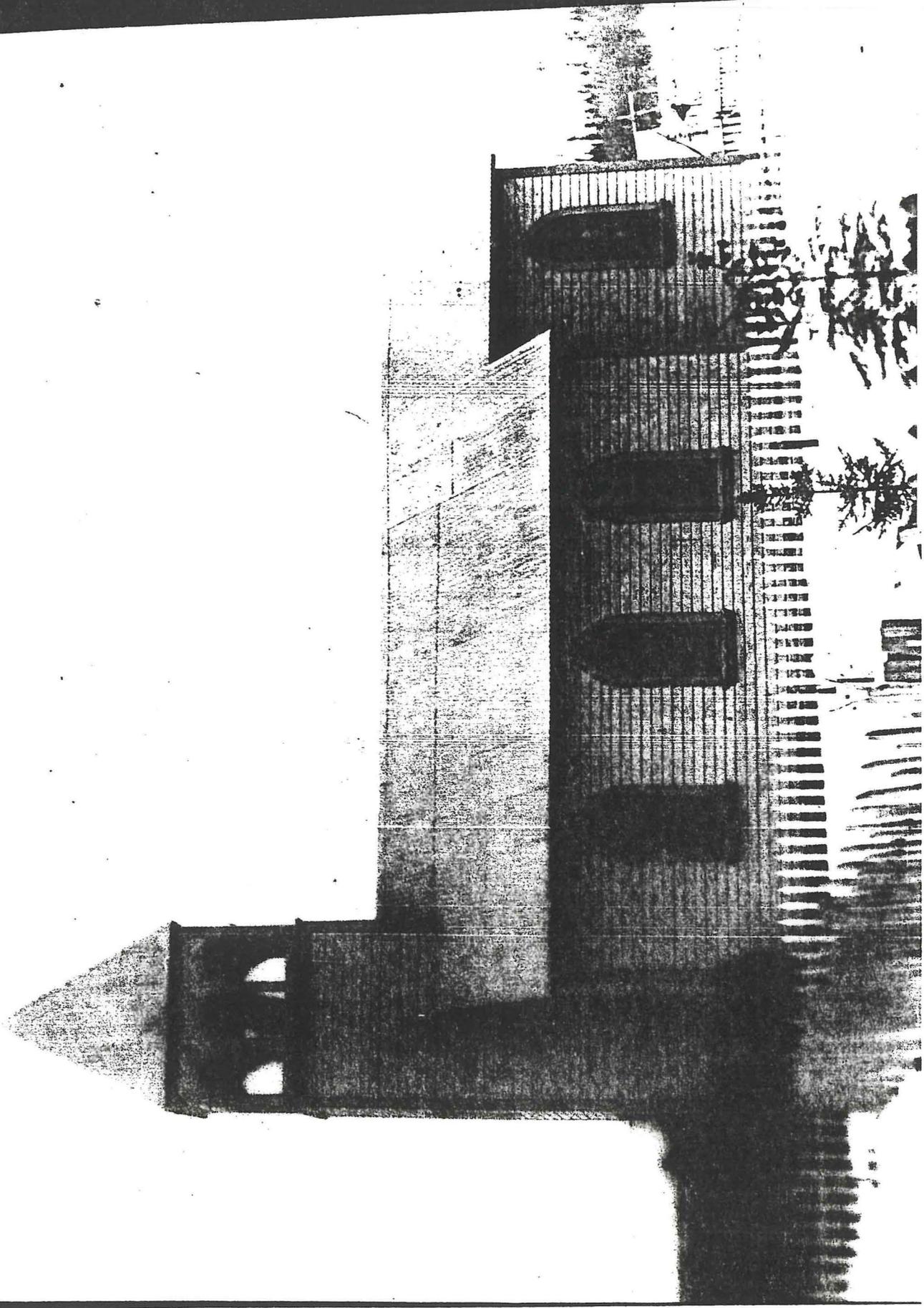
Bishop Bompes' residence in Caracas.
St. Savian's Church in background.

F7517-232 Stringer Coll.
ACC/GSA



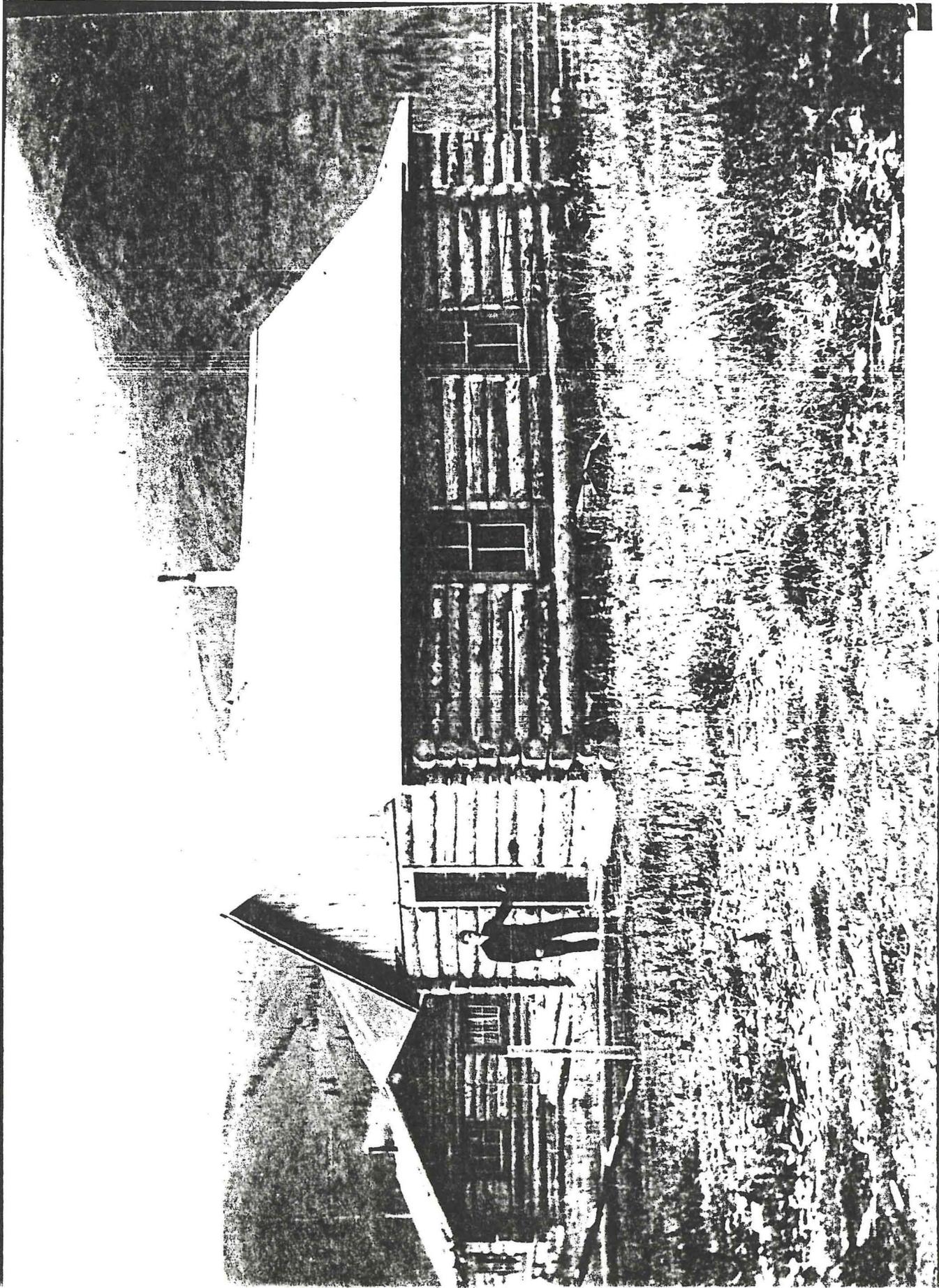
Episcopal Palace

5/9/86



St. Barnabas Anglican Church,
Moosehide.
P1517-261 Stringer Coll.
ACC/GSA

78/81

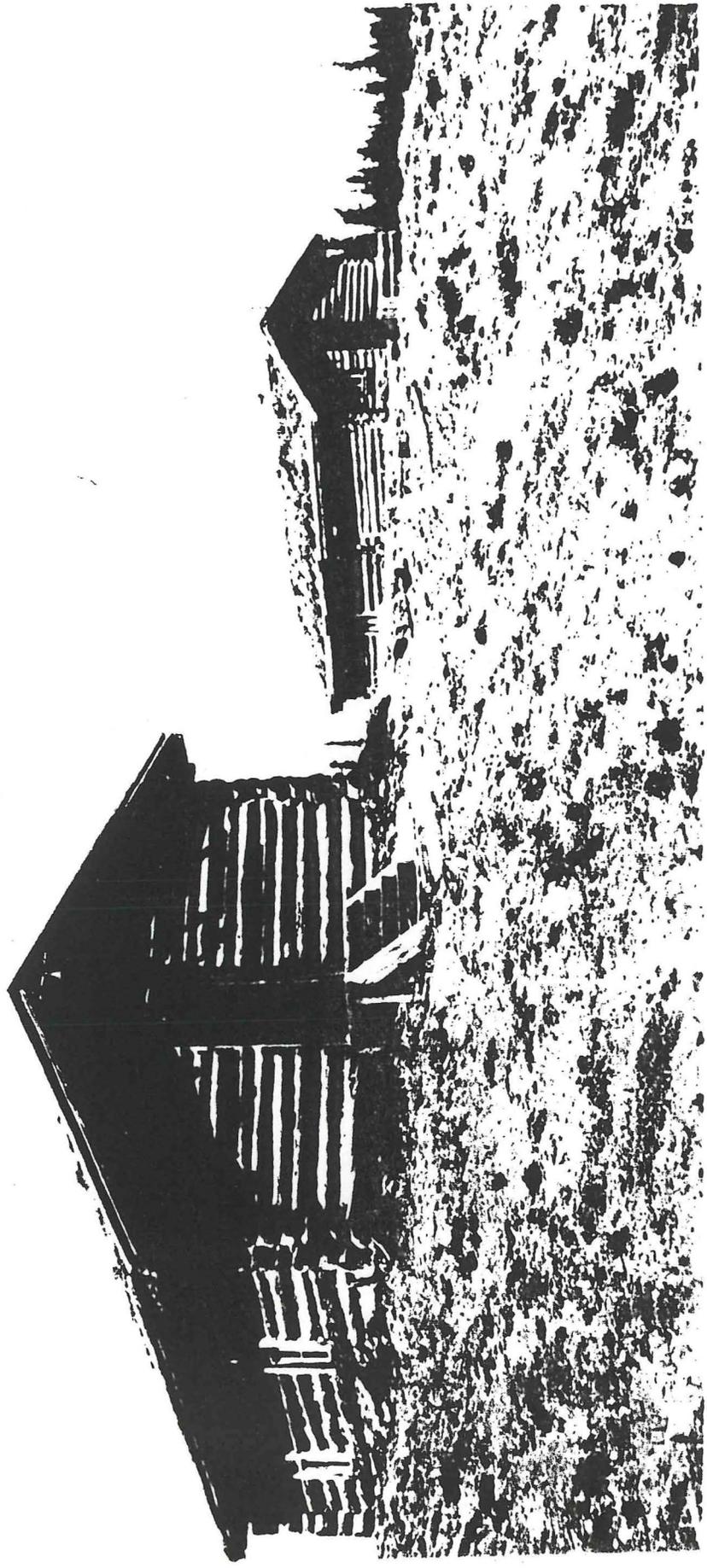


Little Salmon Church & Mission House.

P1517-236 Stringer Coll.

ACC / GSA

7/1/67



Champagne - Mission house on right
and church on left.

P1517-208 Stringer Coll.
ACC / GSA



Rev. E. Sittichini & congregation at
St. Luke's, Rampart House.

P1517-298 Stringer Coll.
ACC / GSA

1972

Appendix II
Chronology of Events

- 1891 - Diocese of Selkirk (Yukon) established from western portion of Mackenzie River. Bompas the first bishop.
 - Bompas to Forty Mile in August; later spends winter of '91/92 at Rampart House.
- 1892 - return of Mrs. Bompas after five years in England due to illness. Accompanied by Canhams, Mr. B. Totty and G.C. and Mrs. Wallis.
 - Wallis to Rampart House, Totty at Forty Mile with Bompas. Wallis left after a year due to poor health of wife.
 - Canham establishes St. Andrews Mission at Fort Selkirk
- 1893 - I.O. Stringer pays first visit to Herschel Island
 - Totty spends winter at Rampart House.
- 1894 - Father Wm. Judge, a Jesuit missionary from Nulato, pays first visit to Forty Mile.
 - Totty to Fort Selkirk; Canhams to Rampart House.
- 1895 - R.J. Bowen the first minister to the white population at Forty Mile
 - Jesuit priest Father William H. Judge arrives at Forty Mile on the last boat of the season.
- 1896 - discovery of gold on the Klondike
 - arrival of Revs. H.A. Naylor and F.F. Flewelling;
 Flewelling sent to minister to the Indians at the mouth of the Klondike River.
- 1897 -Rev. Bowen builds St. Paul's Anglican church in Dawson City. First service held Oct. 4, 1897.
 - Father Judge follows goldminers to Dawson & sets up in a tent on Main St. By fall, had built two-storey bldg for hospital and a church 25 x 50 feet. Land paid for and donated by James McNamee.
 - arr. of American missionary S. Hall Young (presbyterian). Invited by Father Judge to minister to Protestant patients
 - Isaac and Sadie Stringer establish mission at Herschel Island using PSWCo. community house as residence and school
- 1898 - Sisters of St. Anne of Lachine from Alaska arrive to staff hospital. Church and contents destroyed by fire on June 4th. One week after fire, arrival of Rev. Father Lefebvre, o.m.i. travelled to Dawson via Porcupine R. to meet Very Rev. Father Gendreau, o.m.i., Vicar General and appointed superior of the missions in the Yukon.
 - new church built with \$25,000 donated by Alex McDonald under direction of Andre Dionne. Dedicated by Father Judge on Aug. 21 to St. Mary of the Immaculate Conception.
 - arrival of first Methodist missionary, Rev. James Turner followed by Rev. A.E. Hetherington. Open log church in Dawson in Oct.
 - arrival in June of seven members of Salvation Army. Began services in tent, later replaced by log bldg.
 - Young takes over two-storey log bldg. Upper rooms used to

shelter a number of homeless men, ground floor converted into place of worship and recreation. Bldg. destroyed by fire. Young surrenders field to Grant but stayed on to work with him for 3 months.

- Grant assists Bowen in rebuilding St. Paul's church.
- Grant oversees construction of log Presbyterian church and manse. Named "St. Andrew's"

- arrival of Rev. R. M. Dickey and Andrew Grant, presbyterians.

- Good Samaritan Hospital founded by missionary Dr. Andrew Grant. Dickey establishes church at Bonanza.

- Father Desmarais, Father Lefebvre and Brother Dumas built chapel at Selkirk. (St. John the Baptist)

- chapel built at Grand Forks by Father Desmarais in fall. Later replaced by larger church on lot donated by gov't. and Desmarais estab. residence in spring of 1899 with monthly visits to Sulphur.

1899 - death of Father Judge by overwork in Jan.

- in fall, Father Corbeil builds church on Dominion. From there visits Gold Run and Hunker.

- Dickey, weakened by typhoid and malaria, leaves Klondike and is succeeded by Rev. D. G. Cock.

1900 - Grant leaves Dawson & is succeeded by Rev. J.J. Wright

- Sinclair makes arrangements for const. of church in Whse. then goes to Dawson to survey needs. 3 Presb. missionaries recommend to Home Mission Committee that work on creeks be phased out with resources concentrated in Dawson and Whse. Also prepare brief to gov'ts. re gambling, prostitution and alcohol.

- Father Lefebvre builds church on Last Chance, first mass celebrated on Mar. 11. Mission visited once a month.

- En route to outside, Father Gendreau obtains land in Whse. and calls on Father Lefebvre and Brother Dumas to build church. Large tent served as temporary place of worship. Charles Tache drafted final plans for church, M. Mercier drafted the final plans. A. Copland begins construction of Catholic church.

1901 - completion of Sacred Heart in Whitehorse.

- Yukon becomes part of new apostolic vicariate of Athabaska-Mackenzie divided into Athabaska in the south and Mackenzie in the north, under Bishop Gabriel Breynat, O.M.I.

- Stringers leave Herschel Island.

- construction of St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church in Dawson replacing smaller log structure erected in 1898.

1903 - I.O. Stringer takes over Christchurch in Whse.

1904 - the Catholics in Dawson construct a new building in a more central area of town housing a school and chapel.

1905 - Bompas retires and is succeeded as Bishop by I.O.

Stringer.

- 1907 - Diocese of Selkirk renamed Diocese of Yukon.
- 1908 - Catholic Church creates apostolic prefecture of Yukon which includes Yukon Terr. and B.C. north of 54th latitude.
- St. Barnabas' Anglican Church in Moosehide built by Rev. Flewelling and Han residents.
- divinity student J.B. Bythell built Anglican church and mission house in Teslin.
- 1916 - Walter and Christina Fry reestablish mission at Herschel Island. Mission house constructed with aid of Archdeacon Whittaker and crew of Indians from Fort McPherson.
- construction of St. Mark's Anglican Church in Mayo Indian village by Julius Kendi and congregants.
- 1918-35 - Catholic Church in Yukon "very quiet". Fathers Gagne and LeRay stationed at Dawson and pay occasional visits to Mayo/Keno district. Catholics in Whitehorse have no priest but are visited occasionally by priest from Atlin district.
- 1919 - departure of Frys from Herschel Island.
- 1922 - Rev. Geddes and Wm. Young begin construction of church and mission house at Shingle Point.
- building of St. Mary's Anglican Church and rectory in Mayo.
- 1923 - dismantling of St. Mary's Church in Dawson. Many of the materials used to construct Christ the King Roman Catholic Church in Mayo.
- Anglican church in Teslin dismantled and used for walls of new building. New roof installed.
- 1925 - formation of United Church by union of Presbyterian, Congregational and United Churches.
- 1931 - completion and dedication of new St. Andrew's Anglican church in Fort Selkirk.
- 1936 - Bishop John Louis Coudert appointed coadjutor to Bishop Bunoz, Vicar Apostolic of the Yukon and Prince Rupert.
- Coudert visits missions in Yukon: Dawson, Mayo, Whse. and Carcross, then Atlin.
- St. Mark's Anglican Church in Old Mayo washed away by flood.
- 1937 - reconstruction of St. Mark's completed by Rev. John Martin and native parishioners.
- 1938 - opening of RC mission in Teslin with arrival of Father Dreaan.
- opening of Christ the King mission in Mayo.

- 1939 - construction of first RC church in Teslin
- 1940 - Bishop Coudert moved his permanent residence to Whse. thus changing church into a cathedral.
- 1942 - Father Bobillier revives St. Francis Xavier mission at Fort Selkirk.
- St. John the Baptist church in Carcross built about this time.
- 1944 - creation of the Roman Catholic diocese of Whitehorse.
- 1945 - death of Bunoz
- convent and school built at Whse.
- Catholic mission founded at Carmacks.
- St. Peter's mission at Watson Lake officially opened. Father Poulet was first priest; also served at Lower Post.
- 1946 - Catholic Bishop buys lot in Carcross from British Yukon Navigation Company. (R.C. church may have already been squatting according to Father Tanguay.)
- 1947 - completion of mission of St. John the Evangelist at Champagne; operated by Father Morrisset until early '60s.
- 1951 - establishment of Catholic mission, St. John, at Old Crow by Father Buliard and Father Plaine.
- early '50s - Mary House built as chapel for the Indians. Our Lady of Guadalupe Mission erected near the "Indian reservation".
- (secondary posts establ. at Haines Jct., Snag, Aishihik, Klukshoo and Bear Creek each with own chapel)
- 1953 - Old Log Church becomes Cathedral Church of Diocese of Yukon when Bishop Tom Greenwood transfers his see from Dawson City to Whse.
- 1955 - new church built at Upper Liard. Resident priest also served two chapels at Watson Lake, St. Anne's and St. Peter's.
- 1958 - Indian people move from Old Mayo into Mayo and St. Mark's is abandoned.
- 1959 - Sacred Heart Cathedral in Whitehorse is demolished and replaced by present building.
- 1960 - new Anglican cathedral built in Whitehorse to replace Old Log Church.
- 1963 - Old Log Church raised and repairs done to foundations.

Appendix III

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(Note: This is a bilingual article on the recent history of the Yukon church That appeared in a monthly newsletter published by the Oblates in Rome.)

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