



Heritage Designation of Old Log Church and Rectory



Unveiling of plaques at the designation ceremony. Yukon Government photo.

On July 17 2015 a ceremony was held to celebrate the designation of the Old Log Church and Log Rectory as a Yukon Historic site and the Old Log Church and Rectory as municipal historic sites. An opening prayer was given by Rt Rev Larry Robertson followed by a welcome by Councillor Jessie Dawson of the Kwanlin Dün First Nation. Speeches were given by Minister of Culture Elaine Taylor, Whitehorse Mayor Dan Curtis, Yukon Heritage Resources Board Chair Anne Leckie, Bishop of Yukon Rt Rev Larry Robertson, and YCHS President Linda Thistle. Followed by an unveiling of plaques.

The ceremony was well attended by members of the heritage and church community, many faces familiar to the Old log Church Museum could be seen in the crowd. Refreshments were served at Hellaby Hall following the

ceremony with classical guitar music in Stringer Park provided by Nicholas Mah.

The Yukon Church Heritage Society is proud to be a steward for the protection of these important landmarks in the city of Whitehorse and Yukon Territory. Designation of these buildings ensures that they are recognized and protected for the future.

Want to know more about the history of the Old Log Church and Rectory?

Check out pages 2-3 for a timeline of changes and renovations to the Church and Rectory Buildings through the years.

Table of Contents

Heritage Designation of the Old Log Church and Rectory.....page 1

Executive Director's Report.....page 2

The Yukon and WW1, 100 Years Ago.....page 3

Timeline of Construction and Renovations of the Old Log Church and Rectory 1900-2015.....page 2-3

Quill Work in the OLCM Collection.....page 4

Heritage Tourism: From a Guide's Perspective.....page 5

Collections Management at the OLCM.....page 6

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Executive Director's Report

I am excited to introduce myself as the new Executive Director of the Old Log Church Museum. Having worked previously at the Old Log Church Museum as an intern and contractor, I had a certain level of familiarity with the museum and the stories that it tells. Since I started in the position in January, I have enjoyed learning even more about the other stories, the building and even the Society and people who have worked to preserve the building and share its stories. I am constantly hearing all the ways the Old Log Church is connected to so many individuals and the community. It seems like every day this summer, our guides would hear of some kind of personal connection from our visitors.

I had the pleasure of joining the organization in time to celebrate the designation of the Old Log Church and Log Rectory as a Yukon Historic Site and as Historic Sites in the City of Whitehorse. The celebration was a wonderful opportunity to showcase these examples of Territorial history and to recognize the importance of preserving

such structures. As part of this celebration we have asked people to share their memories of the Old Log Church and Rectory. To participate, visit our website, or contact the museum for more information.

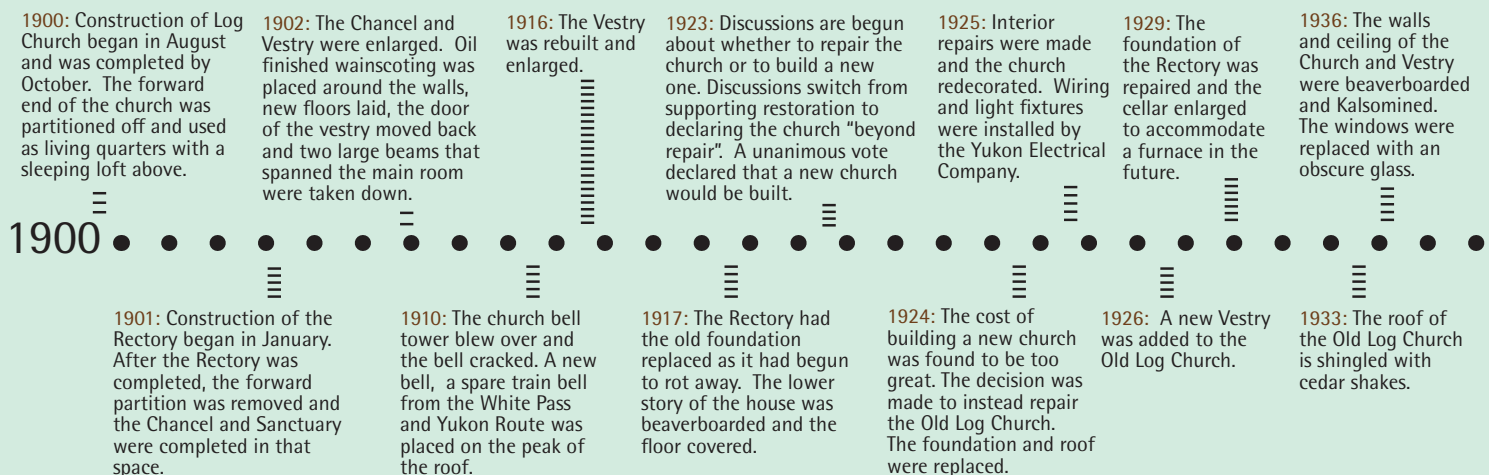


I would also like to take this opportunity to thank everyone who has helped make this a great summer, our volunteers, board of directors and, of course, our summer staff who all work hard to keep things running smoothly.

Samantha Shannon

Samantha Shannon, Executive Director, Old Log Church Museum

Timeline of Construction and Renovations of



The Yukon and WWI, 100 Years Ago

by Jonas Vasseur, Heritage Interpreter

Northern Lights is the Newsletter of the Diocese of Yukon. The Old Log Church Museum has a near complete set of *Northern Lights* starting with its first issue in 1913. We thought it would be interesting to take a look at what was making news 100 years ago. The following is a reflection on an article from 1915 about WW1. The original article has been reprinted on the right of this page.

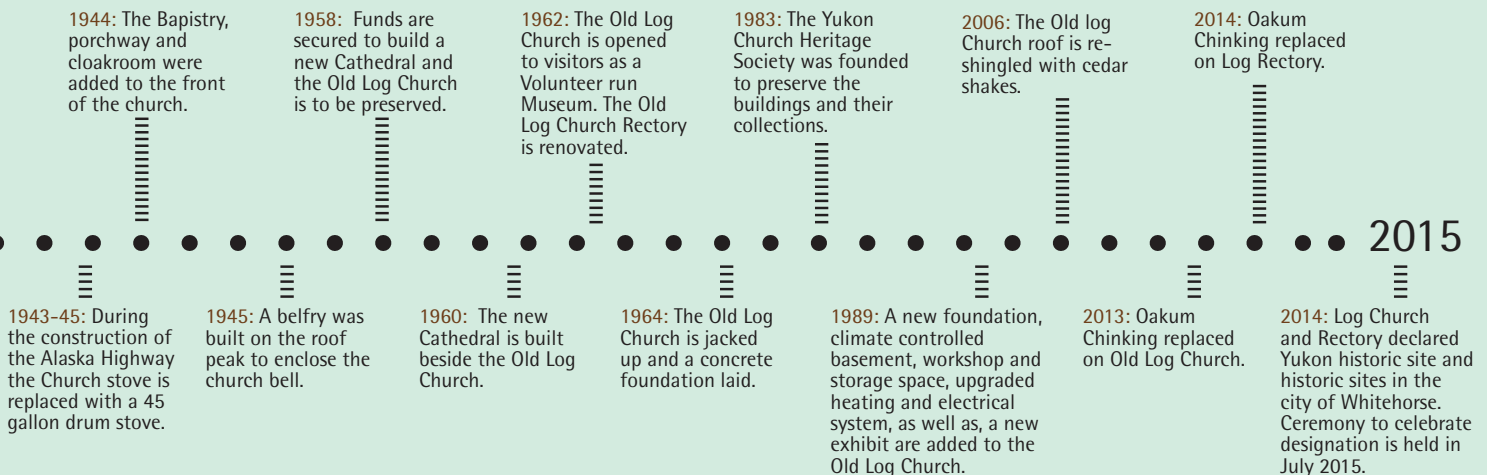
It is very easy to think of the Yukon as a place set aside from the rest of Canada. Living in the Yukon means living in the land of the midnight sun among vast regions of untouched land, but today most of it can be explored from the comfort of a luxury RV. 100 years ago, the Yukon was still further removed from the rest of Canada, and from the rest of the world. The Alaska Highway had not been built yet, and air travel wasn't even close to the place it is today. Those who wanted to move throughout the Yukon had to rely for the most part on the river and the railroad.

With World War One in full swing, it became very obvious that the action was far away from home. However, the people of the Yukon still saw a glimpse of what was going on. As the author of this article notes, many were absent from church, working for their country immense distances away. Those who couldn't go to war participated in other efforts including knitting wool socks and other items that would stave off cold feet in the trenches. As this article from 100 years ago shows, even as the distance to the Yukon seemed even greater than it is today, the people of the Yukon were still distinctly aware of the action going on overseas, and more than willing to be a part of it.

Far away from the stirring events which, are making our own times the most famous in history, we are yet in closer touch with the happenings in the world than, perhaps, the casual observer would gather by looking at the map. The missionary in the Yukon, as well as ministers in other parts of the Empire, while preaching on a Sunday can see in front of him seats, that only a short time before were filled by those who are now either fighting, or preparing to fight, for their country. While some have been able to offer for active service, many who were willing and ready to go have been prevented by the distance to the nearest recruiting station. There are, however, things to be done into which limitations of distance do not enter, and in none of these has the Yukon been behind. Perhaps we should make one exception to the last statement; there have been no applications as yet to be allowed to bring knitting to church, but in other respects the ladies of the Yukon have shown that their patriotism is in no way less ardent because they happen to be a thousand miles or more further from the scene of action.

From *Northern Lights* (Diocese of Yukon Newsletter) May 1915. Old Log Church Museum Reference Collection.

the Old Log Church and Rectory 1900-2015



Quill Work in the Old Log Church Museum Collection by Kylie Malo, Museum Attendant

At the Old Log Church Museum we are fortunate to have the ability to preserve many artifacts that showcase the Yukon's colourful history. Our quill work artifacts in particular, exemplify the meticulous craft and workmanship of the Yukon's first peoples. Before beads were introduced by trade, quill work was one of the most popular and prevalent forms of art. The beautiful but tedious art was being created across North America wherever quills were available.

The art involved first attaining quills. Most commonly, porcupine quills were used although sometimes bird quills were used as well. A healthy, adult porcupine, would have approximately 30,000 quills. The next step is to dye the quills. Different materials were used as dye depending on what was available in the area. Dye materials included tree bark, berries, flowers, moss, etc. Quills were boiled with the dye materials for many hours then were left to dry and for the colour to set. Once dry, the ends of the quills were cut off in order to prepare them for use.

When applying the quills to a medium (from soft tanned leather to bark), several techniques can be used depending on the artist, the form and the intended function. Techniques such as weaving, shaping, sewing, stitching, splicing, wrapping, embroidering, plaiting, crossing and folding are/were used. The complex terminology and variety of methods show just how much skill and dedication was required. Quills were often stored in a bag made out of a bladder. Also needed for quill work was a bone marker for tracing, awls, sinew, and a knife.

At the Old Log Church Museum we have three artifacts which feature quill work; a knife sheath gifted to Reverend A.H. Sim, a bracelet gifted to Isaac Stringer and a

model canoe gifted to Bishop Bompas. All made in the 1800's.

Currently in storage at the OLCM, is a knife sheath which was owned by Reverend A.H. Sim. Sim was sent to Rampart house in 1881 and quickly gained popularity because of his pure and enthusiastic teaching style. It showed in his hard work, and the items he was gifted, that he was well loved. Upon falling ill, prior to his death in 1885, he put a few of his belongings together to send home to his loved ones. One of the items sent was this sheath, made of leather with blue, white and red porcupine quill detailing, and red and white beading.

The bracelet was owned by Isaac Stringer. The piece consists of porcupine quill work on cotton cloth and fringed with white and blue beads in a Mackenzie delta braid pattern. Unfortunately there are no further details known about the piece, even the date of creation remains a mystery. It was said to be owned by Stringer during his stay on Herschel Island in the late 1800's where he did some of the most well-known missionary work in the Yukon.

Currently on display is another interesting piece of quill work, a model canoe, made out of light brown birch bark sewn and decorated with green, pink, blue, red, and white quills in a floral/ heart design. The canoe was owned by Bishop Bompas who sent it to a friend back in England around 1875. As bishop of the Yukon, he held much love and respect for the First Nations people. He put much effort into narrowing the gap between white and aboriginal cultures. Bompas was gifted many items including this canoe. He often sent the items home to England, to show people there the amazing art and craftsmanship of the First Nations

people.

All of the quilled gifts given to the missionaries tell a story. Each piece shows the patience and skill it took to create, and also highlights the relationship the missionaries had with the Aboriginal peoples.



Leather knife sheath with quill work and beaded tassels. OLCM Collection 1995.1.2



Quill and bead work bracelet. OLCM Collection 1984.20



Birch bark canoe with quill work. OLCM Collection 1984.389

Heritage Tourism: From a Guide's Perspective

by Sam Sellon, Collections Assistant

Here at the Old Log Church Museum, we benefit greatly from the large numbers of tourists who visit the Yukon each year to enjoy the spectacular landscape and history of the territory. The importance placed on heritage by Yukoners and visitors is unique. With so many heritage attractions competing for attention here in the territory it can be difficult to leave the kind of impression on visitors that cuts through the noise. Although the Old Log Church is very beautiful, why should someone come here when there are so many other beautiful places and museums to visit? The answers are obvious to us, but how do we communicate them in a meaningful way to visitors?

Perhaps the best way to do this is by emphasizing the historical context of the events, people, and places we discuss at the OLCM. In relation to Yukon history, the contrast between the Old Log Church and Saint Paul's Cathedral in Dawson City can be particularly illuminating for visitors. Despite the fact that the two buildings were constructed during the same period, the obvious differences between the two can place the social and economic differences between 1900s Dawson City and Whitehorse into tangible context for visitors. The wealth of Dawson City can be given a valuable contrast to the informality of buildings in Whitehorse.

Once this dichotomy has been established, the discussion of artefacts relating to the construction of the Alaska Highway can provide further valuable information on Yukon history for visitors interested in the societal changes the territory experienced following the gold rush. The economic activity brought on by the construction of the Alaska Highway is embodied in some of the artefacts displayed at the Old Log Church and facilitate a broader discussion of the shift in economic and political power from Dawson City to Whitehorse in the 1940s and 50s.

The artefacts taken from Rampart House are also a good example of this, as they provide a physical link to a place in the Yukon that is extremely remote. After they've left, visitors will still be able to place the artefacts into the physical landscape that unfolds around them, and, more importantly, examine the social changes that have been seen in the territory. The OLC itself illustrates these changes through its evolution from one of the first permanent structures in an informal settlement to the centre of the diocese in the territorial capital. In my opinion, the

difference between the OLCM and most museums in the Yukon is our focus on permanence over transition and this places the history of the Klondike gold rush and the Alaska Highway in the dramatic context of economic boom and bust.

There are no shortage of heritage sites where visitors can learn about the unique history of the Yukon. The competition for visitor's attention can be intense, and it is difficult to leave a lasting impression. This challenge can be met in a number of creative ways that take Yukon history out of the realm of myth and makes it more tangible for visitors.



St. Paul's Church, Dawson. OLCM Collection 1996.1.121.



Christ Church (The Old Log Church), Whitehorse. OLCM Collection 2001.213.23

Collections Management at the Old Log Church Museum

by Samantha Shannon, Executive Director

This past year saw the completion of the Old Log Church Museum’s two year collections management project. This project included a complete inventory of the 4600 objects in our collection, complete digitization of the collection, and improved storage of a number of collection items. We also completed a revision of our collections management policy and developed a manual to guide staff in their work with the collection.

Collections management is a very important part of a museum’s function though something that is not often well understood by the public. In addition to collecting objects which are important to the history of the museum and the community it serves, a museum must also care for the objects and ensure that the significance of each object is clearly identified. Collections management is a behind the scenes function of the Old Log Church Museum but something at which we continually strive to do our best.

I would like to thank our Collections Technician Kendrie Richardson for all the work she has done in the past two years working on this collections project.

A collections policy is a document developed and adopted by a museum which uses the mandate of the institution to outline the types of objects that we collect, the circumstances under which we would or would not acquire an object and our responsibility for the object once we have accepted it into our collection. The policy makes it clear to staff what we do and do not collect, who is responsible for the collection and how it should be treated. The policy also makes it clear to donors the kind of care they can expect their donation to receive and the legal implications of their donation. If you are interested in learning more about our collection policy and the steps required to make a donation visit our website at oldlogchurchmuseum.ca/collection.

Not Yet a Member? Need to Renew Your Membership?

Visit www.oldlogchurchmuseum.ca/links_downloads to download a membership form. Return with payment to the Old Log Church Museum. Show your support for the Yukon Church Heritage Society and the Old Log Church Museum!

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