



New Exhibit at the Old Log Church Museum



R-L Linda Thistle, Beth-Anne Exham, Dorothy Frost, Elaine Taylor, Samantha Shannon at the opening reception for new Exhibit The Exham Years in Old Crow.

This fall we hosted an opening reception for our newest exhibit, *The Exham Years: The Church, Art and Life in Old Crow, 1965-1969.*

Reverend Kenah Exham and his wife Beth-Anne lived and worked in Old Crow from 1965 to 1969. During this time they acquired many fine examples of Gwich'in artwork which were donated to the Old Log Church Museum in 2002. This is the story of daily life in Old Crow during that time as seen by the Exhams. Visitors learn through the items the Exhams acquired and the people who made them.

We were delighted that Beth-Anne Exham was able to join us for this reception and spoke briefly along with Elaine Taylor, Minister of Tourism & Culture, Samantha Shannon, OLCM Executive Director and Dorothy Frost of Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation. The following day, the Anglican Church Women hosted a tea for Beth-Anne at the Log Rectory where she was able to

reunite with a number of people whom she knew in Old Crow and recounted many interesting stories of her time there.

The exhibit was made possible with funding from Government of Yukon, Tourism & Culture, Museum's Unit, Special Projects and Economic Development, Community Development Fund.

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Old Log Church Museum's
Old Fashioned Christmas Sale

Saturday, November 19 & 26 11am - 3pm
Heritage and vintage inspired ornaments and more!

Executive Director's Report

This past year has been a busy one at the Old Log Church Museum. Over the winter we worked to put together an exhibit featuring the Exham Collection which was donated to the museum in 2002, It was a long time coming but is nonetheless exciting to see the end result and all the stories that come out of these wonderful artifacts. To top it off, we had the honour of welcoming Beth-Anne Exham to the museum for an opening celebration.

We were busy in the summer as well. We had a wonderful group of summer students who joined us with enthusiasm and dedication. Together with a professional museum interpreter, we worked to re-write our guided tours to ensure that they meet the highest standards of excellence and I like to think that we have succeeded!

As many friends and members of the museum

will know by now, I will be leaving the museum this fall. I have thoroughly enjoyed my time here and truly see this museum as a wonderful reflection of the community in which it serves. The appreciation that all our visitors have for the work that we do in preserving this history confirms this to me and I'm confident that the museum will continue to succeed for years to come.



Samantha Shannon

Samantha Shannon, Executive Director, Old Log Church Museum

Culture Days at the Old Log Church: a Museum Hackathon

by Samantha Shannon, Executive Director

This year on culture days the Old Log Church Museum hosted an exhibit called Around the Kitchen Table, visitors were invited to sit down, have a cup of tea and try their hand at beading a small keychain that looked like one of our most beautiful and unique artifacts, a caribou hide chasuble beaded by the Women's Auxiliary in Old Crow in 1966. For three days I explained the exhibit, showed people how to make their keychain, drank tea and chatted around the table, what a lovely way to spend culture days!

The most exciting part of this exhibit, though, took place the week before. In an initiative by Sylvie Binette, the Old Log Church Museum was the site of the first Yukon Museum Hackathon. A team of eight creative people along with myself as content advisor and Sylvie Binette as facilitator, worked for three long days to make this exhibit come together. I selected a few artifacts that could serve as inspiration, the team was told to pick one and to create an exhibit; they were not given much more direction than that other than a few objectives that the museum would like to accomplish with this exhibit including to figuratively remove the barrier...to make an artifact come to life. The team was instantly enamored by the chasuble, with its rows and rows of red and gold beads, everyone could just imagine the work that went

into it, but imagining would not be enough, they wanted to experience it! The team set out to accomplish just that. They envisioned a multisensory experience, sound, vision, touch, taste, smell, they wanted it all. There were a few items to build, so off our builders went to Yukon-construct, one of the project partners who allowed us to use their workshop and tools. The content experts got together and laid out the information they wanted to convey, from this came a storyline and script. Our tech experts took this and worked their magic to turn it from an idea into reality. By the end everyone



Around the Kitchen Table on Display at culture days

[continues on pg 3 ...](#)

The Whalers of Herschel Island: A Heist, Baseball and Frostbite

by Jonas Vasseur, Collections Assistant

By the 1890's bowhead whale populations along the Alaskan coast had been hunted to unsustainable levels, whalers moved north. It had been nearly impossible to manoeuvre through the ice above northern Canada, but with the introduction of steam-auxiliary power, ships were able to range much farther. Even with steam power the ice only permitted whaling for a very short season, so several ships wintered in Pauline Cove on Herschel Island through the 1890s in order to be prepared to hunt for those few weeks when the ice was broken up. In one year there were only 16 days and 18 hours of open water. Before you continue reading, please keep in mind that I do not aim to ignore the harm caused by the whalers on Herschel Island, but rather to explore what everyday life might have been like for the whalers living there.

Life on the island was apparently dull for the whalers. In the words of Captain Hartson Bodfish "Month after month... get up in the morning for breakfast, lay around till lunch, lay around till supper...varied by playing cards and... hauling and sawing wood." This perspective is of course accurate, but doesn't tell the whole story.

The whalers did find activities to occupy their time. A community house was built in 1894, and it included card tables, a billiard table, and a pool table. Baseball caught on quickly; after the first game in mid-February of 1894, four teams formed on the spot and league rules were established in early March. Sledding also became very popular and routes for climbing up and sliding down, had to be cordoned off. Conflict still occurred and during one incident, a drunken disagreement over the laying of a baseball diamond ended in a stabbing.

Captains were allowed to bring their wives starting in the winter of 1894-95, and things settled down a little. The daily routines would be interspersed with weekly plays, dances, or dinners. However, these women weren't just social butterflies, and on one occasion, encouragement from the wives resulted in a daring heist. Captain Whiteside had been hoarding his pork (defying an earlier agreement to share meat), the women told their husbands that if they didn't do something, the wives would. After drawing straws, Captain Cook snuck on board while the women distracted Whiteside. That night the pork was cooked and served to the captains and their wives, with the heist revealed via poem afterwards. Whiteside responded "with eyes dilated, mouth open, and a scowl upon his countenance, [then] gasped, 'My pork!'"

A full social calendar didn't stop the dangers of a harsh environment though. The cold was a constant problem throughout the years, and would bring frostbite, amputations, and sometimes death. On a warm day in March 1897 the weather took a turn for the worse when a blinding blizzard rolled in and the temperature dropped from -6°C to -28°C. This had been during a baseball game, and after the wind subsided in the morning, five people were found frozen outside.

The whalers worked near Herschel Island for many years even though the last great year for whaling around Herschel Island would be in 1893, and the already deflating whalebone market would drop in 1907 with the introduction of a slim line of fashion in Paris, which made whalebone corsets a thing of the past. Now, the bowhead whales are only occasionally hunted on a subsistence level by native Alaskans and Canadian Inuit.

[...culture days continued from pg 2](#)

was working on anything they could, we didn't know if we could do it, but by the end of the third day it was done. I watched the team taking it in for the first time, everyone went quiet, we had done it!

I want to thank the team, Scott Price, Michel Gignac, Laura Vinnedge, Selene Vakharia, Lea-Ann McNally, Andrew Kalek, Teresa Vander Meer-Chassé, Annie Binnette, and our leader Sylvie Binette, for putting this together. Also thanks to our partners Culture Quest, YG Tourism & Culture, L'Association Franco-Yukonnaise, Yukon Arts Centre, and Yukonstruct, and all our sponsors for making this happen. Thanks also to everyone who came out on culture days and participated in this interactive exhibit.



The History Hackers Team pose with their inspiration, the chasuble

The Man Behind The Painting: Sgt. Paul Herbert Pasco

by Teagan Beemer, Museum Attendant

When the U.S Army Corps of Engineers arrived in the Yukon in 1942 to build the Alaska Highway, it must have been impossible to predict the changes they would bring. The population of Whitehorse itself exploded to 30,000 people with all the soldiers moving into town, and because the Old Log Church was the only Protestant church at the time, many of them attended services here during their time in and around Whitehorse.

The Alaska Highway was completed in just over eight months, and once finished, the American soldiers left almost as quickly as they had arrived. Their presence here in the church was not forgotten though, and a more visual showcase came in the form of a large scale nativity scene painting. Painted by Sgt. P.H. Pasco and donated in 1943, for over seventy years, this has been the only information known about the piece.

I began researching the painting in late May to see if I could dig up anything further about the artist. With only the partial name and year from a signature to go on, I didn't expect to find anything, but I've always been interested in this type of research, so I figured I would give it a shot. My search began on Ancestry.ca, and it was there I was able to track down the World War II enlistment record, and marriage record of a man named Paul Herbert Pasco. The initials certainly matched up, so I continued my search. It was eventually through the obituary for Sgt. Pasco's wife that I was able to find the name of his granddaughter, and contact her on Facebook, finally confirming the identity of the painting's artist.

The museum began a correspondence with Sgt. Pasco's granddaughter, Anna Pasco Lineberger, and his daughter, Ann Deemer. Both were delighted that we had been able to track them down, and were more than happy to provide more information about him.

He was born in 1919 in Michigan and after graduating high school, took courses at the Detroit Art Academy. When the United States entered the war in 1941, Pasco enlisted very soon after with the U.S Army Corps of Engineers, 341st regiment, Company B and underwent training in Wyoming.

On March 17th, 1942, Sgt. Pasco was transferred to Fort St. John, British Columbia where work was set to begin on the Alaska Highway. Although the other companies of the 341st regiment had arrived as well, Company B was the only one available to begin work. They started officially on May 15th clearing swamps and other obstacles. Pasco spent ten days doing this job before being called back to Fort St. John to begin working as a cartographer. In this position, Sgt. Pasco would

take many pictures as he travelled the length of the highway. He also designed the patch worn by his unit.

In 1943, Sgt. Pasco completed the nativity painting, with oil paints on several strips of bedsheet. Its intended purpose was to serve as a Christmas decoration in the army barracks. It remained there until the departure of the army, at which time it was gifted to the Old Log Church out of thanks for the hospitality the soldiers received during their time in the Yukon.

Sgt. Pasco would return to Michigan where he would marry and start a family. He remained an avid painter for the rest of his life. Paul Herbert Pasco passed away in 1998.



The painting on display at the army camp near Dawson Creek, B.C., courtesy of Ann Deemer



Sgt. Pasco stationed near Dawson Creek, B.C., courtesy of Ann Deemer

Writing Systems

by Natasha White, Heritage Interpreter

In the northwest of the Yukon live some of the most northerly Indigenous peoples of Canada, the Gwich'in. This group of people is estimated to have lived in the area for over 20,000 years, and use a dialect of the Gwich'in language that is part of a larger family of languages known as Athapaskan. Prior to contact with Euro-Canadians, no Indigenous language in Canada had a writing system, Gwich'in being no exception. Instead, oral tradition has been used, whereby knowledge and culture are transmitted and preserved orally from one generation to the next.

The first writing system for the Gwich'in language was created by Robert McDonald, a part Ojibwe, part Scottish man born in Manitoba. McDonald had a knack for linguistics – in addition to English and Ojibwe, he could speak at least two other languages. His first appointment was at White Dog Mission in Manitoba, where he dedicated himself to teaching the Ojibwe people to whom he preached in their native language. He translated religious literature using the Syllabic System for Cree and Ojibwe that James Evans, a Methodist church missionary, had developed in the 1840s.

McDonald arrived in the Yukon in 1962 and went on to establish the first Anglican mission in the territory. Though various missionaries had attempted to gain religious sovereignty in this region, none had succeeded in adapting to the nomadic lifestyle of the native people. McDonald took a different approach, slowly integrating himself into the society and learning the way of life. He learnt the language quickly this way, and within a few years, he had become fluent. McDonald would go on to marry a Gwich'in woman named Julia Kutug, and together they would have nine children.

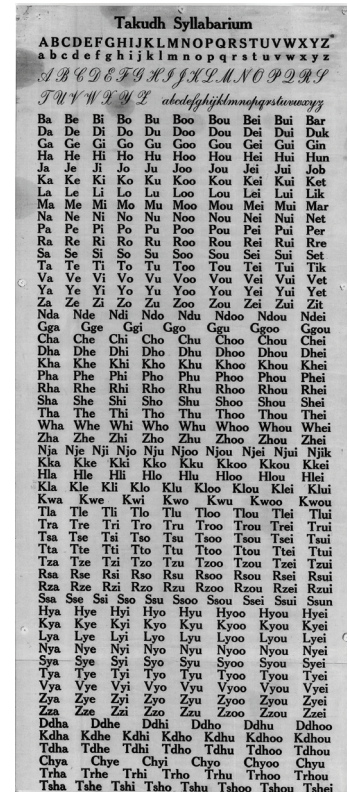
To the Yukon, McDonald brought nine years of invaluable translation experience. With the help of his wife Julia, he developed a syllabarium for the Gwich'in dialect of the area, known as Takudh. The Takudh Syllabarium that McDonald developed linked the phonetic sounds of the Gwich'in language

to Roman characters and English sounds.

In his past experience at White Dog Mission, a syllabic alphabet had been used, McDonald chose to use Roman characters for the Takudh Syllabarium instead because, although syllabics had been very useful in providing books for the Cree, it would not have been as practical for Gwich'in. This is because while Cree consists of roughly thirty-two distinct syllables, Gwich'in has nearly five hundred, and thus required a more complex writing system.

The Takudh Syllabarium allowed what had been an oral language to be read and written by the Gwich'in people for the first time. Yet McDonald was not alone in his missionary translation work. Three other Athapaskan languages including Chipewyan and Slavey, were also provided with Biblical translations around the same time by various other missionaries.

Today, McDonald's translations are still used by some of the Gwich'in elders who learned to read and write using his materials. However the younger generation have a difficult time using his works as the contemporary spoken language differs from his recordings and some of his translations were inconsistent. This generation uses a more modern writing system developed by Robert Mueller in the 1960s, and which has been used in schools in places like Old Crow since the 1970s.



Takudh Syllabarium

We Have a New Website!

Visitors to our website have been pleasantly surprised by its new design. This summer we worked with Aasman brand communications to redesign and redevelop the Old Log Church Museum website. Technology has been changing quickly and our old website was in desperate need of this overhaul, to ensure that we keep putting a modern face to the world. The new website has a responsive design so that it can be viewed on a phone or tablet with ease. It has a simple look with bright colours, featuring lots of photos of the museum and the smiling faces of our staff. And, of course, up to date and easy to find information about the museum and what is happening here.

See for yourself at www.oldlogchurchmuseum.ca

New Programs at the Old Log Church Museum

by Samantha Shannon, Executive Director

This summer we were proud to announce three new guided tours offered daily at the Old Log Church Museum. The tours were created and delivered by this year's summer staff and will be permanent fixtures at the Old Log Church Museum. The students worked with a professional museum interpreter to develop these tours. They are designed to entertain and educate our visitors by using props and provoking discussion. We know that these will be tours that will stick with you. Including everyone from missionaries, women, and First Nations people, to whalers and miners, visitors will not just learn about church history in the Yukon, but of the history of the whole Yukon through the people who made up the church.



Tour guide Jonas Vasseur speaks to a captive audience

Our Tours:

Yukon's Spirited History

The Anglican Church has had a significant role in shaping Yukon's collective history. Walking through the doors of the Old Log Church takes you back to these early days. Take a guided tour around the Old Log Church Museum, which touches on various aspects of the history of the Anglican Church in the Yukon.

If These Walls Could Talk

In 1900, Whitehorse was a small but active community. The Old Log Church and Rectory reflected the town in which they existed, and changed along with the needs of the community. It also provided a "taste of civilization" for newcomers. Tour the property, see photos of what the surrounding area used to look like, learn about the building of the church and rectory and changes that have been made to them over time.

Not Just Wives

Yukon women have never been "just wives" On this tour, you will learn about women's history in general, hear stories about some of the significant women in the Anglican Church in the Yukon, and be convinced that women were equally important as men.

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