

Mystery at the Museum!



Live History's Jasmine Bowen (as Robin) and Joshua Kitz. Photo by Vince Federoff, *Whitehorse Star*.

This summer we partnered with Live History, a theatre company that specializes in bringing local history to life, to take audiences back in time to 1906.

Each visitor was informed that: "... the revered Bishop Bompas has passed away. He promised to leave the remainder of his estate to a good cause, but in his own mysterious way. As an esteemed member of the congregation, you are invited to attend the funeral reception, presided over by popular missionary Isaac Stringer. The recently deceased has sent each of you odd clues, letters and objects, and it is up to all of you to solve the puzzle." However, the funeral reception was soon interrupted by Robin, who used to frequent the streets of Whitehorse, begging for change or food. Robin was often avoided by members of the community, and eventually faded from the city's memory. "Bishop Bompas was the only person who understood

Robin's unique personality and views on the world. Now, you'll have to join forces to find a hidden treasure, and set Robin free..."

On June 16th and 17th, audience members were treated to a very twisty mystery starring Jasmine Bowen as Robin, and Yukon's very own Bruce Barrett as Isaac Stringer. The performances were full of spills and chills that truly illuminated the remarkable lives of the real Bishop Bompas and Stringer!

Thank you, Lydia Nattin
and Robert Obermeyer,
for your generous
donation!

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Executive Director's Report

I stepped in the door of the Old Log Church Museum on a bright July day nearly a year and a half ago. I remember my first impressions - the sweet smell of the oakum, the patterned windows, and above all - the sense of peace. I immediately knew it was a special place, a place with a long and spirited history. I wouldn't have believed you if you had told me that the OLCM would take a chance on a young graduate as the next steward of this historic site.

Over the past year, I've learned so much, met incredible people from around the world, and have been warmly embraced by the community here. We've hosted artist talks, invited visitors to solve a mystery, continued to develop our tours to include first-person narrators such as Reverend Richard Bowen and Sadie Stringer, participated in the 2nd annual Museum Hackathon - Yukon, and created new educational programs for schools.

I wish to thank the outgoing Executive Director, Samantha Shannon, our hard-working and enthusiastic summer students; the Board of Directors; the heritage sector; and most of all, **you**. It is with your support that we're able to continue to share the story of the Anglican Church in the Yukon since 1861. I'm excited to care for this museum into its next century and to see what the future brings.

Kaitlin Normandin

**Kaitlin Normandin
Executive Director,
Old Log Church Museum**



Imaging Whitehorse: The Return of the Museum-Hackathon Yukon!

by Kaitlin Normandin, Executive Director

From September 22nd to September 24th, the OLCM hosted the second annual Museum Hackathon-Yukon, in partnership with Sylvie Binette. Eight creative women with backgrounds in IT, art, and heritage created a striking visual installation. The team was presented with a list of four artifacts from the museum's collection to base their project on. They selected Bishop Stringer's kerosene-powered magic lantern and a number of hand-tinted glass slides from the turn of the century. The Hackathon participants were very taken with the contrast between how Whitehorse was visualized and presented a hundred years ago and how it is today, particularly in terms of human beings interacting with the landscape. They were also interested to know if the glass slides were accurate representations of everyday life or if they presented a vision of an idealized Yukon.

Hackathon participants created a slide installation, "Imaging Whitehorse," that explored how the city and the North has been visualized and represented through photography. The installation was projected on two separate screens that ran simultaneously. The "historical" slideshow ran at a slower speed and included less images - a reference to the challenges that photography posed as a technology at that time. An audio clip of people

speaking in hushed voices ran in the background to create an atmosphere reminiscent of the environment Bishop Stringer would have given his lectures in. The "contemporary" slideshow projected images of the same sites taken from social media.

Over the following Culture Days weekend, I explained the installation, and invited visitors to participate in a number of interactive activities, including hand-tinting with oil paint on post-card sized reproductions of glass slides in the collection, using Sharpies to color acetate



L-R: Katie Newman, Emily Wilson, and Faye Chamberlain.

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Robert Service and the Church Social

by Jonas Vasseur, Collections Assistant

Of the many people and events that make up the OLCM's storied history, one of my favourites is Robert Service, the Bard of the Yukon. Many of our members know about his time here, but it's a fun story to take another look at, and I know I learned about several new tidbits this time.

While a banker in Whitehorse, Service was encouraged to join the church by his manager, Leonard De Gex. Service said, "though I may not believe in religion, I believe in churches. They give me a sense of social stability". While attending, Service worked as the vestry secretary and treasurer and passed the collection plate. And based on a letter to Harold Tylor, his co-worker, he had at least one round at a blackjack table with the church's funds.

Once he became known as an entertainer, he was asked to put on a church concert, including songs, a play, and a monologue. The play was a one-act farce that he directed and acted in, called *The Area Belle*, written by Liam Brough and Andrew Halliday, and first performed in 1864. For many years it was assumed Service wrote the play and no one could find a copy; some files referred to it as the Missing Play. Other noteworthy actors were several NWMP officers, including Captain Fleming. Fleming described playing the part of a young girl, and how he borrowed frilly drawers from a lady friend and was made up by Service in the bank, with curtains open and remaining well-lit for security reasons. The next day both men were quite amused to hear of a scandal about a bank employee behaving inappropriately with a woman.



Service had grown tired of reciting poems by Kipling, Titus, and Thayer, and so was receptive to an idea from Stroller White, the *White Horse Star's* editor, to write something original "about our own bit of earth". Inspired after hearing revelry from a bar, he rushed supper and then began work in his teller's cage on 'The Shooting of Dan McGrew', writing almost continuously until 2am. Unfortunately he couldn't recite it at the social due to the cuss words (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H_TVijSm73Q). McGrew was placed in a drawer for a few months, and Service recited *Minding a Baby* instead, which was likely more tame. Once published, *Songs of A Sourdough* (including McGrew) concerned some church ladies due to the lack of good women, and they got the Rector, Hiram Cody, to voice their concerns. Cody was a writer and enjoyed discussing the craft with Service; on this occasion Service told him that he "had nothing against virtue,... [but] a lot of people look on it as rather a bore".

It is difficult to accurately picture Robert Service because he was fairly secretive, purposefully omitted some things in his autobiography, and made the narrative of his life into a story rather than a history. Service was cognisant of what the public was shown. For example, in his last public appearance he gave Pierre Berton a script for his interview. We'll likely never know everything about him, but we can be proud to say that our building and its members had a part in Service's life in the Yukon.

... Imaging Whitehorse Continued from Page 2

copies of the glass slides and fitting them in folders that could be viewed on a laser-cut magic lantern, as well as using a shoebox smartphone projector.

I want to thank the team, Faye Chamberlain, Michelle Clusiau, Lidwein Hanrath, Katie Newman, Kathy Piwowar, Sally Robinson, Emily Wilson, and our facilitator Sylvie Binette. Also, thanks to our partners Culture Quest, Yukon Government Tourism & Culture, the Yukon Historical and Museum Association's Heritage Training Fund, Yukonstruct, and all our sponsors for making this happen. Thank you to everyone who came out on Culture Days (including Mayor Dan Curtis, Min. of Tourism and Culture Jeanie Dendys, and Min. of Economic Development Ranj Pillai) to support us!



The "She-Hackers" team photo. Back row, l-r: Lidwein Hanrath, Katie Newman, Michelle Clusiau, Emily Wilson, Kathy Piwowar, Sally Robinson, Faye Chamberlain. Front row, l-r: Kaitlin Normandin, Sylvie Binette. Photo by Nelly Guidici, *l'Aurore boréale*, 5 Oct 2017.

Gwich'in Leadership in the Anglican Church

by Teagan Beemer, Museum Attendant

In the early 1860s, the first Anglican missionaries arrived in the Yukon. The Church Missionary Society quickly decided that a permanent mission should be set up in the area, and Robert McDonald, a Métis minister from Winnipeg, was soon on his way to the north.

McDonald set up a mission in the far north of the Yukon, in what is the traditional territory of the Vuntut and Tetlit Gwich'in people. He began to integrate himself into the community, baptising many of the Gwich'in people into the Anglican faith. Using his background as a linguist and translator, he also worked with his Gwich'in wife, Julia Kutug, to develop a syllabarium for Gwich'in, previously only an oral language. The McDonalds worked very fast, and by 1898 the entire bible had been translated and published in the language.

It was around this time that McDonald also began to train some of the Gwich'in as catechists, allowing them to be able to preach to their own people using the syllabarium he'd created.

By the late 1870s, several men had been listed regularly in McDonald's updates back to the Church Missionary Society. Thomas Chawulti, Henry Venn Ketse, William Loola and William Sekut were all working alongside Archdeacon McDonald at his mission in Fort McPherson by 1876, and he was very pleased with their efforts.

Several of these men would continue their work well into the new century, with some of them even becoming mentors for future catechists. One of them, John Ttssiئتla, was the first Indigenous man ordained in the north in 1883. He worked along the Peel River, as well as spending time at Lapierre House. Ttssiئتla would also later become a mentor for Amos Njootli, a future Anglican minister himself.

Another early catechist was John Tizya. He had met Robert McDonald at Fort McPherson and the two men began travelling together. It wasn't long before John had been posted as a catechist at Rampart House in 1904. He also spent time working at Lapierre House, and Fort Yukon in Alaska, holding classes to teach people how to read and write in the Gwich'in language.

The first Gwich'in minister to be officially ordained was Edward Sittichinlii in 1903. Edward passed the skills he learned to his son, Jim Edward Sittichinlii, who was later ordained himself. Familial connections within the church were common, as also seen with John Kyakivichik, another Gwich'in catechist. He worked with Robert McDonald for many years, and eventually taught his son, Joseph Kyakivichik, how to preach as well. Joseph would in turn teach his own daughter, Ellen Bruce. Ellen

would later go on to become the first Indigenous woman in Canada ever to be ordained in the Anglican Church.

Moving into the 1900s, there were many more Indigenous people entering leadership positions within the Anglican Church. Two of these prominent men were Amos Njootli and Julius Kendi.

Amos Njootli had been mentored by another early catechist, John Ttssiئتla. At one point, the two men were travelling together and ran out of food. John became very ill and passed away in the middle of their journey. Before his death, John gifted his bible and other books to Amos, who promised to continue the work his mentor had begun. He devoted his life to the church, and was ordained as a deacon in 1911, working for the next twenty years at Rampart House.

Julius Kendi was born in approximately 1877 and worked as a catechist for several years along the Peel River. In 1918, Julius was ordained as a deacon by Bishop Isaac Stringer at Moosehide, and soon went to work at Rampart House, and later Old Crow. Julius Kendi and his wife, Persis, were both heavily involved in church activities, with Persis helping to create a Women's Auxiliary branch in Old Crow. They remained very well respected in their community for the years they worked there.

Indigenous peoples in the Yukon have continued to be heavily involved within the Anglican church in the territory. The Old Log Church itself served as a First Nations congregation in the 1980s and 1990s. Services were lead by Reverend Effie Linklater, whose grandfather was Robert McDonald, the man who had trained the first catechists.



A group of Anglican clergy at the Eighth Synod of the Diocese of Yukon. Front row, left to right: Rev. A.C. McCallum, Rev. Julius Kendi, Mrs. Frances (Persis) Kendi, Rev. John Martin, and Mrs. Martin. Back row, left to right: Rev. H.C.M. Grant, Rev. G.A. Cross, Rev. A. Anderson, Bishop William Geddes, Rev. Richard Martin, Canon A.J. (others unidentified). OLCM 2004.2.26 and Yukon Archives, Anglican Church Archives 9671.

A Scandal in Winnipeg and the Death of an Archbishop

by Jenna Gasper, Heritage Interpreter

On August 24th, 1932, the Anglican Church in Canada suffered a tremendous and shocking loss: the much-respected John A. Machray was arrested for embezzling approximately 1.5 million dollars from church funds, in addition to about 2 million dollars from the University of Manitoba. Machray's highly respected position in Winnipeg society made the discovery all the more devastating.

Machray was chosen as Chancellor of the Diocese of Rupert's Land in 1905 partially because of his high standing in the Anglican Church as the nephew of a former Archbishop. A year later his law firm was offered control of the business management of the University of Manitoba in Winnipeg, where he was also highly respected as a wealthy man and pillar of the community. There were no proper audits done of the university or church's funds during this time, meaning that Machray was the only person who had access to information on accounts over which he had significant control.

Unfortunately, Machray's firm was undergoing serious financial troubles at this time. The firm first started to lose money in 1912, and may have even gone bankrupt. However, Machray continued to keep the firm operating through various illegal methods, confident that he would soon regain the lost funds. In the meantime, all money received by the firm was deposited into a common trust account. Thus, the funds could be used to finance new investments, which then usually failed, losing even more money in an attempt to win it back.

While the illegal activity was kept secret for some time, eventually suspicions started to be raised. When the comptroller general decided to conduct his own audit, rather than rely on Machray, he revealed that the firm owed the university at least \$671 993.25. After another investigation which confirmed that the firm could not provide the missing funds, Machray was

arrested and charged with theft.

The Anglican Church, despite having also suffered severe financial losses, decided not to press charges against Machray. This was partially, as Archbishop Stringer claimed, out of respect for Machray who was already dying from cancer. In addition, since the firm was completely bankrupt the charges would not have yielded anything for the church anyway. Church authorities may also have felt somewhat guilty because of their now clearly unwarranted trust in Machray, when a more critical view of his behaviour could have prevented the losses.



John A. Machray. Photo Credit: Who's Who in Canada, 1927.

In order to try and make back the lost money, the Anglican Church established a restoration fund. A large portion of the responsibility for raising these funds came to Isaac Stringer. Stringer had been elected archbishop of Rupert's Land in 1930, after serving as bishop of the Yukon for four years. The Archbishop, who was already very busy with other tasks, was also responsible for organizing and promoting the restoration fund as of 1932. In 1933 he went on a long speaking tour across eastern Canada to promote the fund, with positive results, but he was unwell for weeks afterward as a result. Despite his wife urging him to take a break, he continued to attend services, meetings, public functions and other events for the sake of the restoration fund.

After spending the winter and spring working nearly constantly, he went on another long speaking tour the following summer. Then suddenly, on October 30th 1934, Stringer collapsed outside Holy Trinity Church and died soon after of a heart attack, likely caused in part by his stress and extreme workload. His funeral was held on November 2nd and he was buried in Winnipeg, very close to Archbishop Machray, whose nephew had caused Stringer and the rest of the Anglican Church so much trouble.

Want to Know More?



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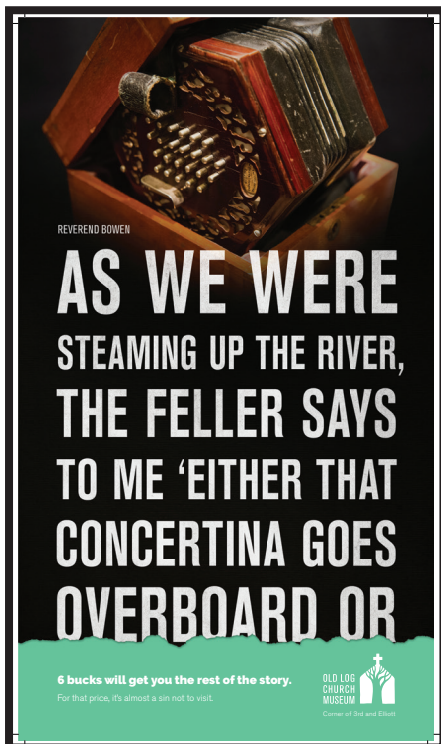
What's New at the OLCM? by Kaitlin Normandin, Executive Director

This summer we were proud to premiere our new “historic character” tours. Building on the guided tours developed last year, summer staff worked with actress Arlin McFarlane and a professional museum interpreter to develop characters that deliver programs in the first person! Visitors were delighted to meet Sadie Stringer (Jenna Gasper) and the Reverend Richard Bowen (Jonas Vasseur). Jenna researched best practices for developing educational programs, Jonas accessioned and scanned new acquisitions into our database, and Teagan took the lead as our social media/design guru.



L-R: Jonas Vasseur, Jenna Gasper, Teagan Beemer.

The OLCM partnered with Aasman on a new marketing campaign that better reflects the engaging and unique stories we tell. Keep an eye out for our ads in 2018 in local newspapers, publications, online, on social media, in the Whitehorse airport and hotels across the territory.



We are also pleased to welcome our new Young Canada Works at Building Careers in Heritage intern, Sarah Langlois. Sarah is a recent graduate of the Applied Museum Studies Program at Algonquin College, an avid hiker and canoeist, and very happy to be here in the Yukon! She is working with the collection, accessioning new artifacts, designing promotional materials, assisting with programming and ‘any other duties’ as required!



Collections Corner

On August 16th, the Trudgen family visited from Ontario. Descendants of Isaac Stringer’s sister, Sophia, they brought them an amazing collection of archival documents that includes extensive Stringer family correspondence, such as the invitation to Isaac and Sadie’s wedding, letters to his siblings and parents, cabinet cards, tintype photographs, news clippings, telegrams, schoolbooks, and a family tree. The Trudgens generously donated this material to the museum in memory of their sister, Patricia Anne (Trudgen) Walker.

Thank you to the Trudgen family - this material will enrich the historical record and will act as a great resource for the museum and researchers!



L-R: Lynn (Trudgen) Wilcox, Kaitlin Normandin, Judy (Trudgen) Magee, Karla-Jo Trudgen, Paul Stringer Trudgen (not shown).

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