



*The Fort Sherman Chapel still in good repair in 1901*

## The Little Red Chapel

by Dorothy Dahlgren

As our region continues to change and grow, people seek out the things and places in their community that provide a sense of place. The Fort Sherman Chapel is one of those places. Built in 1880, it has become a beloved icon in our community. The Museum is proud to be its caretaker.

In 1877, one year after the Battle of Little Big Horn, General William Tecumseh Sherman was sent by the War Department on an inspection tour to determine if a new military installation should be built in the Inland Northwest. On April 16, 1878, Camp Coeur d'Alene was established by issue of the Headquarters of the United States Army, District of the Clearwater, on Lake Coeur d'Alene and the Spokane River. Soon after, the establishment of Camp Coeur d'Alene, it

was named Fort Coeur d'Alene. In 1887, Fort Coeur d'Alene was re-named Fort Sherman in honor of General Sherman. It was the guardian of the Mullan Road where a watch could be kept of all travelers. Its beautiful site and ideal climate gave it an atmosphere unusual in military posts.

Many of the soldiers were skilled mechanics and artificers. These men would receive \$100 for such employment in civilian positions. S. C. Clark wrote to the Quartermaster at Vancouver asking for \$224 to pay extra duty men to be employed for such work constructing buildings to house the one hundred recruits who were to come to the fort. Extra duty pay was between twenty and thirty-five cents a day. These skilled craftsmen built the Chapel in 1880 at an estimated cost

of \$1,709.30. It was used for the post library, reading room, school and lecture hall for military science classes, as well as for religious services. From local pine, the craftsmen also built an altar, baptismal font and Bishop's chair. These artifacts are owned by the Museum and currently on loan to St. Lukes Church at 501 Wallace because the Museum does not have room to exhibit them at the Museum. We also have a wood plane used in the fort's construction and the stove that heated the Chapel.

From 1880 to 1896, soldiers and their families attended religious services, funerals and weddings at the Chapel. General William T. Sherman, for whom the post was named, worshipped within its walls while on an inspection tour in 1883.

In 1898, Fort Sherman troops were sent to Cuba for the Spanish American War. At that time, there were five companies of the 16th Infantry consisting of about 350 men and 12 officers. On April 21, under the leadership of Colonel Theaker, they went by railroad to Spokane and from there to New Orleans and on to Cuba. A small detachment of 11 men under the direction of Lieutenant B. Buck was left to take care of the Government property. After the Cuban War, the fort was never regularly garrisoned. The troops, after returning from Cuba, were sent to Fort Crook, Nebraska; Fort Leavenworth, Kansas; and Jefferson Barracks, Missouri.

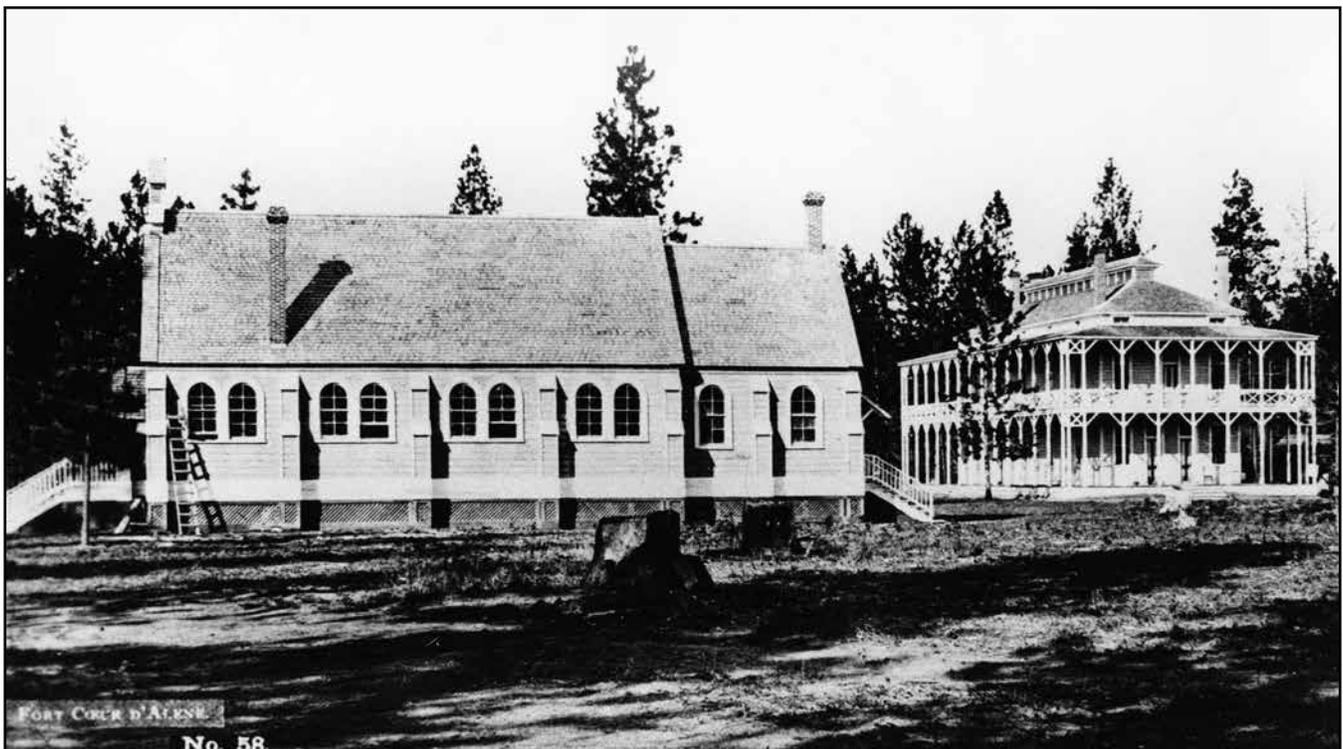
There had been efforts to abandon the fort prior to this. In 1894, the lake and river had risen to such an

extent that the Fort was flooded for several weeks. After the Indian wars period was over in the early 1890s many of the western forts were being abandoned. In April 1901, the fifty-two fort buildings including the Chapel were abandoned. The government set aside as property of Coeur d'Alene twenty acres for a park and 20 acres for what is now Forest Cemetery.

In 1905, the Department of Interior put the buildings and land up for public auction. Thomas T. Kerl and his partner David Ham, prominent land developers, came from Spokane to the auction by train. Kerl brought a bodyguard with him to guard the gold he carried in his suitcase to purchase two lots. These lots were developed into Coeur d'Alene's first subdivision, the Sherman Park Addition. One of these lots contained the Chapel. The Stack and Gibbs Lumber Company bought much of the land and built a sawmill which was later DeArmond Lumber Company. The Rosenberry family of the Winton Lumber Company donated 33 acres to North Idaho Junior College for a campus in the 1930s.

The Chapel sat vacant for many years and fell into disrepair. In 1991, the Museum received a letter from Kay I. Barmore with the following story:

My father Wilbur I. Snavelly, born in 1907, moved to Coeur d'Alene about 1915, and lived in the officer's house at 917 W. Garden until 1921. He and his brother Jim enjoyed playing in the Chapel. He said that, at the time the Chapel was not in use and in a bad state of neglect. The doors were open, and they could run and



*The Fort Sherman Chapel on the left and the hospital on the right shortly after construction in 1880.*



*The Chapel in disrepair. Notice the broken windows and the missing railing, before 1927.*

play inside from one end to the other. The latticework under the front porch was broken out on each side, and they could crawl underneath the building. One day they got under the steps and beneath the bottom front step they found a human skull. They recognized it immediately. The lower jaw was still attached. He is unable to remember anything else about it, and he was certain that they did not tell anyone about what they had found. They most likely put the skull back exactly where they found it. In 1992, when Overland Coach and Woodworking dug out the basement for the new foundation, they did not find a skull.

In 1926, the Chapel was sold to the Fort Ground Lutheran Church. In 1928, they removed the original belfry and replaced it with the one that is there today.

“The dedication of the bell of Fort Ground Lutheran church, Rev. A Schormann, pastor, will take place Sunday, February 5th, with a special evening service at 7:30, which will be conducted in English. The Rev. John Groshupf of Immanuel Lutheran church of Spokane will deliver the sermon. The bell, which is of bronze metal with a clear and far reaching tone served for many years to call the children of Central School, which was destroyed by fire during the holidays. The bell was handed over to the Fort Sherman Chapel as a donation with the thought that the Chapel as an historical landmark was the most suitable place for it. The belfry has been constructed during the last two weeks.

The public is cordially invited to attend the special service. The morning service will be held as usual at 10:30.”

(Quoted from the *Coeur d’Alene Evening Press*, 3 Febru-

ary 1928)

When the Fort Ground Lutheran Church no longer held services in the Chapel, other denominations held their services there until their own churches could be established. In 1934, the American Lutheran Church, with headquarters in Iowa, acquired the Chapel and offered the building and lot for the sum of \$750. At this time, the Episcopal Church held services in the Chapel.

Local historian, Alice Nash and others lobbied local community leaders for the preservation of the Chapel beginning in 1934. By 1937, sufficient community support for the public purchase of the Chapel for use as a museum was still not forthcoming. However, an attempt by Fort

George Wright in Spokane to obtain and move the Chapel caused a storm of protest from local individuals.

In 1938, the City of Coeur d’Alene approved purchase of the Chapel provided the funds came from the community. The VFW pledged half of the money needed but still fell short of the target. Idaho legislation was introduced in 1939 by State Senator F. H. LaFrenz to obtain \$1,500 for the purchase and repair of the Chapel for use as a museum. The legislation failed.

In 1942, it was suggested the government buy the Chapel for use by the Navy at the Farragut Naval Training Station. Alice Nash objected to moving the building saying; “While I would hate to see the Chapel removed from its historic root, that would be preferable to seeing the citizens of Coeur d’Alene let it go to wrack and ruin (by people) who evidently prefer to expand the beer parlors rather than the historic places in the county.”

In 1942, the Athletic Round Table (A.R.T.), the City Club and Burl C. Hagadone obtained the property. The deed was held in trust by the A.R.T. with the intent that the structure eventually be turned over to the city.

Ron MacDonald recalls: “Well, I remember the day a real estate man by the name of W.K. Stacy came to the Athletic Round Table Club with the story that some businessman was buying the Chapel and was going to tear it down and build an apartment house on that location. The Athletic Round Table purchased the Chapel. It was in very bad shape, all the windows



*About 1975, with a parking lot in the front. The house on the left is gone.*

were broken out, and the altar had a lot of unsightly words on it. The pews were all gone, only the old organ and an old wood burning stove were left in it and the bell.”

The Fort Sherman Chapel Commission was appointed in 1946 to discuss ways to preserve the Chapel. It had been suggested that the Chapel be moved to a more suitable location where it could be better maintained by the park department, as well as more convenient for public visitation. Again, Alice Nash was trying to raise money to move the Chapel to the City Park and turn it into a museum.

In 1954, the City appointed a museum/chapel board to move the Chapel to a location south of the County Court House. The A.R.T. offered to present the City with the Chapel if they would move it. It was estimated that two thousand dollars would be needed to move the building and provide a new foundation. Planners expected the North Idaho Historical Society to operate a museum out of the building.

Ron MacDonald recalled that in 1961, “the Hydromaniacs provided new electrical fixtures, rewired, made new pews, and laid carpet. Ted Anderson cleaned the obscene words from the altar and redid the gold leaf. The A.R.T. replaced the front steps, porch and back steps and repainted the building with the help of a lot of beer and sandwiches from the club. The A.R.T. hired professionals to put a new roof on and to replace some timbers underneath.” The A.R.T. still provides a modest donation to the Chapel annually.

The St. Paul Memorial Church (later Coeur d’Alene Bible Church) rented the Chapel from 1963 to 1965. They put in the first toilet and furnace in the dirt basement. This “restroom” was still functioning until the sewer collapsed last year.

Museum Board President Jack Pierce worked with A.R.T. President Robert Schroeder and Secretary Bob MacDonald to transfer the ownership of the Chapel to the Museum of North Idaho in 1984. Architect Doug Cranston helped oversee work on the building in the late 1980s. His son Scott, also an architect, produced the feasibility study funded by the Idaho State Historic Preservation Office in 1990. The study outlines the restoration of the Chapel. Museum of North Idaho board president Cort Sims spearheaded the two-year restoration project. Following the work plan, the roof and decking were replaced with like materials.

The original 1880 foundation was made of timber posts, and by 1992 they were badly deteriorated. The building was raised off the posts and a concrete foundation was poured. The front and back steps were replaced at this time based on research from photographs.

The Unity Church of North Idaho occupied the Chapel when the Museum acquired it. They were there from 1982 to 1997. Several churches have rented the Chapel over the years, but it became too small for most congregations. Many people in the community use the Chapel including Alcoholics Anonymous, Fort Sherman and Panhandle Symphony, NIC Music Department, NIC nurse’s awards, Coral Festival, The District One Music Educators, Overeaters Anonymous, funerals, weddings, Fort Sherman Historical Society, Christmas concerts and historical programs, Angel Network and the Museum of North Idaho.

As anyone who owns a building, especially an old one, knows things wear out. Last summer, Kevin Cornelson replaced the lattice and put up new stair railings. This summer Lance Newton of Vision’s West Builder’s repaired and shored up the steps. Shawn with Crist and Sons repaired rotted wood with full dimension lumber milled by Whiteman Lumber Company in Cataldo. Crist and Sons painted it in 2006 with Sherwin Williams Durations paint, which held up for nearly 10 years. They again painted it this summer. The 4th Street Sherwin Williams gave us a discount on the Durations paint.

The big project this year is to provide an adequate restroom facility. Last spring, the sewer line at the Chapel collapsed and a porta potty has been in place for over a year. The old bathroom with a sink and toilet is on a concrete slab in a dirt basement. We explored several options, including making due with the old bathroom, but decided to build a freestanding building. Without a bathroom facility we would no longer be able to use the Chapel. Without daily occupancy the Chapel could face vandalism as has happened so many times in its early history.

This spring architect Scott Cranston agreed to oversee the restroom project. Standing on Hubbard Ave. facing the Chapel it will be on the right. The 10'x20' building includes two bathrooms and a storage area. It will have the same siding and roofing as the Chapel and will be painted red. It will be handicapped accessible and meet all code requirements. The estimated \$50,000 project includes the building, removal of trees, City permits, digging a sewer line to Hubbard and connection fees. Next year we will replace the wooden shake roof and work on landscaping.

The Chapel Preservation Fund holds all income from and donations to the Chapel and is used to support ongoing cost, preservation and maintenance. In 2011, the Ace Walden Estate made a substantial donation to the fund allowing us to do the work we are doing this year. To ensure the Chapel will be preserved for future

generations, we need to grow the fund.

Please contribute to the Chapel Preservation Fund. Your tax-deductible donation can be made through the Museum of North Idaho, PO Box 812, CdA, ID 83816-0812. You can also use the form on the back of this newsletter. For more information call 208-664-3448 or email: dd@museumni.org

#### Thank you to:

Scott Cranston, Cranston Associates, Architects  
Lance Newton, Vision's West Builder's  
Kevin Konrath at the 4th Street Sherwin Williams  
Jim Meckel for locating the property line  
Ken Roberge and crew at Specialty Trees  
Crist and Sons Painting  
Richard Raymond, sanding  
William Kasner, replacing basement door

#### Chapel Donations

Kay Barmore  
Bob MacDonald  
Mr. & Mrs. R.A. Johnson  
Diana Oswald  
Shirley Smalley  
John & Dorothy McDonald  
Charles & Marion Long  
Coeur d'Alene Athletic Round Table



*The interior of the Fort Sherman Chapel, circa 1950. We are seeking more information about the painting on the wall.*

# Museum News

## From the Board President

Under the guidance of Dr. Trina Caudle, Director of Secondary Education for the Coeur d'Alene School District, the Museum of North Idaho Board of Trustees met on July 9th to review past plans, current programming; to review the mission statement and core values; to identify current strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats; to clarify our vision; and begin the strategic planning. This on-going process will require more time and commitment of the board members as we develop goals and action plans. Trina's non-partial and light-hearted guidance was well-received by the board. The collaboration brought momentum and enthusiasm to the group!

The board members are volunteering more than quarterly meeting time to work towards what we want the Museum to look like in 5 years and to finding storage for our artifacts and the books we publish. Relocating everything out of the storage building is our immediate challenge.

Please phone Dorothy if you know of a 4,000 to 5,000 sq. ft. building that would meet our needs-also, if you have equipment or can help with the move. I have great hopes the board members will be able to accomplish what is needed to move forward with a new facility, but it will take the community support to accomplish our goals.

Mark Stromberg resigned from the Board after a few months for personal reasons. We thank him for his service on the Board.

Are you entertaining company this summer? Encourage them to visit our Museum and see all we are doing to share regional history with the community and visitors.

When was the last time you visited the museum? Need a birthday gift for someone, consider all the great books and gifts for sale at the museum.

The Little Red Chapel is looking brilliant with its new paint job!

In service to my community and its people,

Connie McGee, President  
Museum of North Idaho Board

## Cash Donations

Kathy & Denny Arneson  
Ladies Auxiliary FOE  
Raymond & Eleanor Grannis  
Art Thayer  
Robert & BJ Campbell  
Robert Hunt  
Bev & Joe Bloomsburg  
Cd'A Service Station Equipment  
Fred Glienna  
Robert & Mary Kay Yuditsky

The Museum participated in "Idaho Gives" May 7 with donations of \$379.83 after fees.

Thank you:  
Jay Broderick  
Doug Fagerness  
Geoff Howard  
Carl & Sally Gidlund  
Judy Stebbins  
Michael Grabenstein  
William McCarty  
Caroline Crollard

## Building Fund Donations

Glen & JoAnn Borden  
Joe & Diane Dahlheim  
Ramona & Joe Baldeck  
Art Thayer  
Shirley Smalley  
A.S. & Barbara Rostad  
Diane Melchiorre

## Artifact Donations Since May

J.P. Stravens: Map of historic railroads of North Idaho.

Stephanie Webb: 1940 Coeur d'Alene Sanborn map.

Heather Callahan: Photos of early Post Falls, Casey Ranch and Roosevelt school.

Nez Perce Historical Society: Photos of the Aquatic school at Twin Echo on Twin Lakes about 1955.

Bonner County Historical Society: Interview tapes with Brian Dennis talking about his work with steamboats, 1973.

Jim Joyce: USFS cobbler's set from 1929 in canvas bags.

City of Coeur d'Alene: 1960 era aerial photos of Cd'A, plans for Tesemini development.

Coeur d'Alene Public Library: Ace Walden scrapbook with photos of Ace during his banking career and Jamboree activities.

Barbara Wells: Her dad, Roy Burton Ruddiman's CCC photos at the Breakwater camp on the Little North Fork, the Breakwater splash dam and the copper mine.

## Processing History



Linda Shinn and Jay Broderick sorting and cataloging the Chuck Sowder negative collection.

On most Thursdays, you will find Linda Shinn and Jay Broderick at the light table looking at negatives. They have been working on a multi-year project to sort and catalog the Chuck Sowder negative collection donated by Mary Ann and Ron Erickson in 2011. There are about 14 linear feet of negatives and over 200 prints from the late 1950s to the 1970s. Carol LaBrie is sorting the photos and working on matching them to Ruralite articles.

They have cataloged over 1,100. Once numbered, the negatives are scanned and Joy Porter puts the information into the database.

Many of the images need more identification. Heather Callahan posted many images on Old School North Idaho providing additional information. Thanks, Heather Callahan and Keva Wolfe.

## Memorials

- For Red & Patti Barry From Marc & Tamara Richert
- For James Collins from Robert & Marcella Hanson
- For Marie Russell from Robert & Marcella Hanson

All memorial donations go into the Endowment Fund. The endowment is important to the financial health of the Museum and your help in building the endowment will ensure the Museum's future.

To make a memorial donation use the form on the back of the newsletter.

## The Rosenberrys

With the passing of Elise Rosenberry Donohue May 21, 2015, at age 77, we are taking a brief look at this important family in our region's history. Many members of the Rosenberry family were, and continue to be, supporters of the Museum. Elise was responsible for a large donation to our building fund in 2012 from the Rosenberry Trust. Her aunt, Mary Jean Fer-

ris, was very interested in timber industry history. She passed away in 2011. Elise's uncle, Robert G. Rosenberry dedicated his life-time to a career in the lumber industry in our local area and Spokane.

Elise Rosenberry Donohue was the daughter of Sarah-Maud Weyerhaeuser Sivertsen and Walter Rosenberry Jr. Her great-grandfather, German emigrant Frederick Weyerhaeuser, came to Minnesota in 1891 and built a massive business empire. Her grandfather was Walter S. Rosenberry. He was in partnership with David and Charles Winton when they purchased the Rose Lake Lumber Company in 1911. He was transferred to Coeur d'Alene in 1916 when the partners, along with James Sullivan, purchased the Stack-Gibbs mill which was located where Riverstone is today.

Walter S. Rosenberry and his wife Sara Etta raised their six children Walter Jr., John, Ralph, Howard, Robert G. and Mary Jean at 820 Sherman Ave. The home was originally built for Frederick Blackwell's son Russell in 1904. Walter Rosenberry worked for over 34 years for the Wintons. Walter passed away in 1941. The mill was sold in 1946.

Walter S. Rosenberry, president of the Winton Lumber Company, was influential in the donation of 32 acres of the old Fort Sherman site along the river to Kootenai County for either a hospital or an educational institution. North Idaho Junior College began construction on the site in 1941.

At a celebratory All-Forestry Day in spring 1942, Mayor O.W. Edmonds christened the road along the Spokane River Rosenberry Drive to honor the Winton Lumber Company whose foresight in the thirties guided the community to designate public use areas.

The Athletic Round Table, the City of Coeur d'Alene and the U.S. Forest Service planted over 1,600 trees along the dike road bordering the new campus and the lake.

Elise is survived by three children and five grandchildren. She had spent 39 years cattle ranching and raising horses in Clyde Park.

## Field Trips

For the third year donations have made it possible to offer free bus and admission to students. About 550 students visited the Museum this spring. We thank these donors:

- Doug and Deidre Chadderdon
- Specialty Tree Services - Ken and Vickie Roberge
- Coeur d'Alene Insurance
- John & Erin Swallow Family
- Viking Construction - Wendell and Teresa Olson
- Maxine Hulick

## Museum Store Manager Needed

Do you have experience in retail? Would you enjoy selecting and arranging merchandize to appeal to museum visitors? This volunteer position is seasonal and ranges from a few hours a week to more if you want it to. Tasks include receiving and pricing merchandise and maintaining the inventory.

We thank Kathy Arneson for managing the store since 2008. Her husband is retiring in December and she would like to be free to travel but will be available to help out.

## Idaho: Wilderness to Statehood Fourth Thursday of the Month 7 pm Coeur d'Alene Library

- Robert Singletary will present:
- Indian Wars Aug. 27
  - Railroads Sept. 24
  - Settlements & Towns Oct. 22
  - Statehood Nov. 12

The Museum of North Idaho and the Coeur d'Alene Public Library are sponsoring the series.



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## Send in a Membership

- Community Sponsor* \$1,000
- Friend of History* \$500
- Georgie Oakes* \$100+
- Idaho* \$100
- Flyer* \$50
- Amelia Wheaton* \$25

## Make An Additional Donation To A Special Fund

- Memorial/Endowment \$ \_\_\_\_\_
- Building Fund \$ \_\_\_\_\_
- Chapel \$ \_\_\_\_\_
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## Museum of North Idaho Mission Statement

*The Museum of North Idaho collects, preserves and interprets the history of the Coeur d'Alene Region to foster appreciation of the area's heritage.*

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