



Cataldo Mission and the Parish House, circa 1910

Early Kootenai County Churches

By Carl Gidlund

Attempting to trace the history of early churches in Kootenai County is akin to unraveling a thoroughly snarled skein. Missionaries served many early congregants. Others met in private homes and commercial establishments, and some of those worshipers eventually built churches only to move later into different buildings. Some congregations disbanded, and still others combined with congregations that held similar beliefs. Records are paltry for many churches, but what follows is an attempt to describe the early Christian movement in the county by telling of the churches still extant after their erection during the period 1848 to 1913.

Cataldo Mission, Cataldo: Excellent records exist for this church, the oldest standing building in all of Idaho. After hearing from a neighboring tribe that the “black robes” of the Roman Catholic Jesuit Order possessed “good medicine,” the Coeur d’Alene Tribe sent for the priests. The first Mission of the Sacred

Heart was built in the early 1840s near the St. Joe River, about 35 miles south of the present church. It was repeatedly flooded, then abandoned in favor of a location on a high grassy knoll overlooking the Coeur d’Alene River. Designed by Father Anthony Ravalli, the current church, 90 feet long and 40 wide, was built in 1848 by members of the Coeur d’Alene Tribe and two Jesuit brothers. Large logs were harvested near the site then latticed with saplings that were woven with grass and caked with mud. Wooden pegs held the structure together. Major restorations occurred in 1928 and 1974. It’s just off Interstate 90 at the eastern boundary of the county and is now a National Historic Landmark and an Idaho State Park.

Fort Sherman Chapel, Coeur d’Alene: The oldest standing building, circa 1880, in the City of Coeur d’Alene was on Camp Coeur d’Alene, later called Fort Sherman after the famous Civil War general. It was part of the construction efforts by four companies of



Fort Sherman Chapel with the original belfry, circa 1890

the Second Infantry that built the fort. Gen. William Tecumseh Sherman himself worshipped there while on an inspection tour in 1883.

“The Little Red Chapel,” as it is known, also served as the post library, reading room, school and lecture hall until Fort Sherman was closed in 1900 and the property turned over to the Department of the Interior. That agency sold the land at auction four years later and a pair of Spokane developers bought two lots on one of which the chapel stood. The Fort Ground Lutheran Church bought the building in 1928 and subsequently it was also used for Episcopal services. In 1942 the city’s Athletic Round Table and Burl C. Hagadone bought the property. It underwent major repairs in 1961 and was placed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1979. As one of the Round Table’s final acts of business, it deeded the property to the Museum of North Idaho in 1984. Since then, it’s been a popular spot for weddings, worship by various congregations and meetings of civic organizations. A further series of restorations have taken place over the years, and the Museum has a fund to continue that work. Like the Cataldo Mission, there is a very comprehensive history of the building. It’s maintained by the Museum.

Presbyterian Church, Rathdrum: The church was organized in 1883 and was reported to be the first Protestant church in Kootenai County excluding the non-denominational church on Fort Sherman. The church building was constructed on McCartney Street in 1905 and the congregation remained active until 1918 when it merged with Presbyterians in Post Falls. After the merger, the building was taken over by the Rathdrum Methodist congregation.

First Methodist Episcopal, Post Falls: The earliest recorded Methodist activities in Post Falls occurred in the late 1880s when the Fort Sherman chaplain, J.H. Macomber, organized a bible class. The first Methodist Episcopal Church building was constructed on the corner of 6th and Post Streets in late 1890. Later, the Post Falls congregation withdrew to Rathdrum and their former church was deeded to the Post Falls Community Church which moved the building to 4th and



First Methodist Episcopal Church, Post Falls, 1909

William Street. There it was attached to the former First Presbyterian Church which had also been moved to that location.

First Presbyterian/Community United Presbyterian, Post Falls: The first record of Presbyterian activity in Post Falls appears to be in 1899 when it was reported to the Idaho Presbytery that a church was enrolled there with 15 members under the guidance of W.C. Beebe of the Rathdrum Presbyterian Church. In that year Post Falls was maintained as a preaching station. The following year the church was formally organized and enrolled in the Spokane Presbytery. In 1899 Frederick Post donated land for the church on the corner of 2nd and Henry and the following year a church was erected. The Post Falls First Methodist Church and the Post Falls First Presbyterian Church united in 1918. In 1921 the Presbyterian and Methodist Church buildings were moved from their original locations then adjoined on the northwest corner of 4th and Williams Streets. The Methodist Church served as the sanctuary and the Presbyterian church building was the Christian education wing. The cornerstones were laid in 1921. The church adopted the name “Post Falls Community United Presbyterian Church” in 1958.

St. Luke’s Episcopal Church, Coeur d’Alene: The Episcopal bishop of Idaho and Wyoming, Ethelbert Talbot, visited Fort Sherman in the late 1880s and conducted a service in The Little Red Chapel. A group of



St. Lukes on 5th and Wallace, Coeur d’Alene, 1910.

Episcopalians suggested to him that a church should be built outside the Fort grounds for civilian congregants. When he returned to his Laramie headquarters the bishop sent a candidate for the holy orders, Fred Sellick, to canvass the Coeur d'Alene area to determine whether there were sufficient congregants to warrant building a church. Sellick conducted a service in the Odd Fellows Hall in September 1891, then raised \$500 and received pledges for more money. He returned to Wyoming and reported to the bishop who obtained additional funds. Construction on the church, at 5th and Wallace, began in 1891, and the first service, conducted by Mr. Sellick, was held there on Sunday March 13, 1892.



First Presbyterian, Coeur d'Alene, 1910

First Presbyterian, Coeur d'Alene: Coeur d'Alene Presbyterians were involved in Sunday school activities in 1887 and the city's first Presbyterian church was organized the following year. Apparently, it was the fourth non-mission Presbyterian church in North Idaho following those at Lewiston (1873), Moscow (1881), and Rathdrum (1884). The church building was completed in November 1890 on the northwest corner of 6th and Lakeside. It was substantially remodeled in 1910, including finishing the exterior in brick. A large education building was completed west of the church building in 1959.



St. Stanislaus Catholic Church, Rathdrum, circa 1940.

St. Stanislaus Catholic Church, Rathdrum:

Jesuits conducted the first known Catholic services in Rathdrum on a periodic basis during the years 1881 to 1894. The church's first building, dedicated to St. Rose and staffed by the Jesuits, was built in 1891 opposite the site of the current church building. It was torn down in 1900 when work was begun on a new church building at

McCartney and 2nd streets across the street from St. Rose. It was dedicated in February 1901 in honor of St. Stanislaus and was the first brick Catholic church in the state of Idaho.



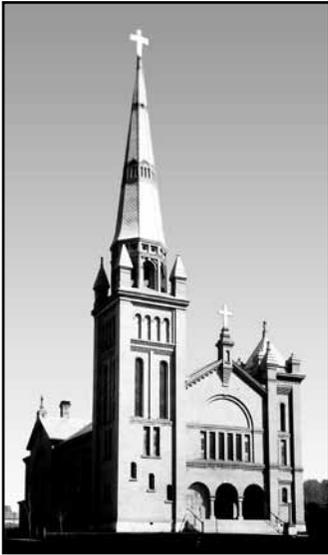
German Methodist Presbyterian Church, circa 1900

German Methodist Presbyterian Church Rathdrum:

The first record of the church's existence is on a 1908 map which placed it on the west side of McCartney Street between Second and Kootenai. The church apparently comprised many of the German-speaking families that were farming the Rathdrum Prairie shortly after the turn of the 20th Century. When the 1918 armistice that ended World War I was signed, Rathdrum citizens sought to sound the church bell in celebration. The German-speaking pastor permitted that, but he felt constrained to sell his furniture and leave town quickly. After his departure, the German-speaking Methodists began attending the Methodist Episcopal Church. The church building, a wood frame structure with a gable roof, is now a private residence.

First United Methodist Church, Coeur d'Alene: Apparently Methodists were actively engaged in bible study classes from the early 1880s. One of the earliest ministers to those congregants was the Rev. J.H. Macomber, the Methodist chaplain at Fort Sherman. In 1890 he wrote in a letter to church hierarchy, "I would have built a church [in Coeur d'Alene] only that Presbyterians have commenced and I did not want to jump their claim." The first record of a Methodist church building in the city is 1894, four years after the construction of the Post Falls Methodist Church. As the congregation grew services were moved to a larger commercial building. A building on the corner of 7th and Wallace was completed in 1909 and an education wing was added in 1957.

St. Thomas Catholic Church, Coeur d'Alene: Roman Catholicism was probably the first Christian faith practiced in Kootenai County. Canadian and Iroquois traders brought the Coeur d'Alene Indians into contact with the religion at the beginning of the 18th Century. Jesuit priests and brothers furthered their religion after they arrived in the area in 1842. Following the establishment of Fort Sherman in 1878 the Jesuits conducted services periodically for the



St. Thomas Catholic Church, near the time of construction.

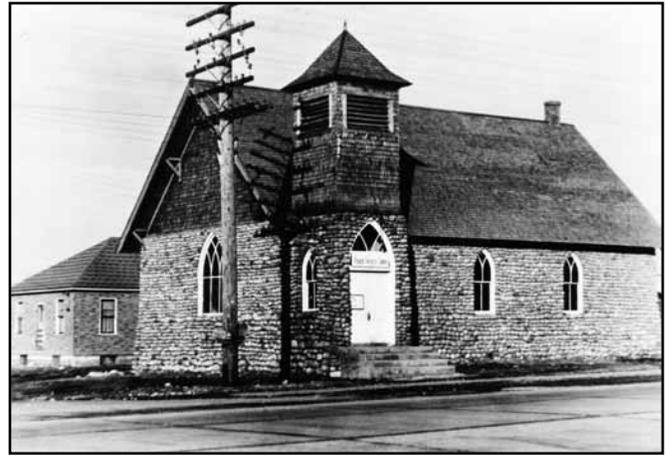
troops and early white settlers in the fort chapel, other buildings and private residences. The first Catholic church building in Coeur d'Alene was on the southeast corner of 4th and Indiana. In 1906, the Fort Sherman opera house and recreational hall was acquired and moved to the southeast corner of 9th and Indiana where it served as the parish church until about 1911. The cornerstone was laid for the current church building in 1909 and services were held there beginning the following year. The church is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The original church building at 4th and Indiana was acquired by Lutherans in 1910 and moved to 9th and Wallace.



First Baptist Church, Coeur d'Alene with Rev. W.E. Monbeck. He was Pastor from Dec. 1916 to May 1920.

First Baptist Church, Coeur d'Alene: It was organized in 1903 and the first services were conducted in the Fort Sherman opera house. The following year a tent was secured and erected on the corner of 6th and Sherman as a temporary church. Members bought a lot at Lakeside and 5th and their first church building was dedicated there in 1904. The building ultimately proved too small for the congregation and it was sold in 1912 to the Knights of Pythias. The funds accrued from that sale were used to buy a lot at 5th and Wallace. Church members worked on the building and worshiped in its basement until funds became available to finish the structure, and it was finally dedicated in 1917.

McGuire Wesleyan Church, Post Falls: The congregation apparently grew out of a series of revival meetings that occurred during the period 1909 to 1912. The



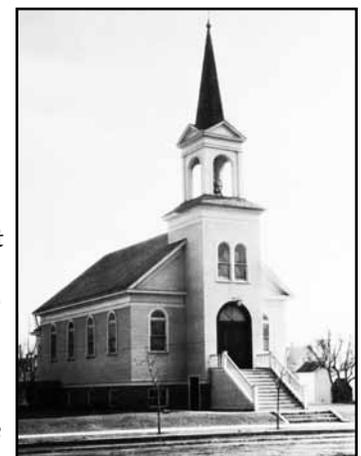
McGuire Wesleyan Church, circa 1950

church was formally incorporated in April 1911 and work began on the construction of "the stone church" at the northeast corner of Seltice and McGuire two years later. According to the church's minutes, a "Mr. Rogers, who lived northwest of the building site, built the church while the ladies helped him by picking up potatoes and other jobs on the farm. All of the men helped lay the rocks."

First Church of Christ Scientist, Coeur d'Alene: The Christian Science movement in Coeur d'Alene dates back to July 1904 when a small group met in private homes. In May 1908 a room was secured in the Wiggett Block for a Sunday school. A society was organized in 1908 and the first service was held in their new church in May 1910. The congregation sold their church building in 1943 and for the next 13 years conducted services in the Masonic Temple. The new church, at 6th and Coeur d'Alene Avenues, was completed in 1956.

Christian Church of Coeur d'Alene: That church, affiliated with the Church of the Disciples of Christ, was organized in 1904 and the following year the congregants bought a lot at the corner of 9th and Indiana. Straitened finances forced the sale of the property in 1914. By 1921 the church's financial situation improved sufficiently to buy lots on the corner of 4th and Garden where they built a church.

Trinity Lutheran Church, Coeur d'Alene: Two Norwegian Lutheran congregations met in a Swedish Lutheran Church in Coeur d'Alene in November 1905 and decided to form one church. The organizational meeting took place on Christmas Day 1905. The congregants selected



Trinity Lutheran Church, 1913.

a site just north of 5th and Reid and built a chapel in 1906. The first church building was constructed on the present site of the parish education wing and the chapel was then remodeled into a parsonage, remaining in that usage until 1969. Trinity Lutheran became an English-speaking church in 1924. In 1928 and 1929 enlargements and improvements were made to the building and a brick addition was made to the west. The congregation purchased a lot on the corner of 5th and Reid in 1954 and a new church building was completed and dedicated on November 20, 1960.

Seventh Day Adventists, Coeur d'Alene: The first meeting place of the city's Seventh Day Adventist members was in the Fort Sherman chapel in 1905. The small congregation erected a church building at the corner of 5th and Maple in 1910.

The information in the accounting above was obtained from a variety of sources including:

Volume 1 of Kootenai Chronicles: A History of Kootenai County, by Robert Singletary, published by the Museum of North Idaho in 1995.

North Idaho Milestones, published by the Coeur d'Alene Press in 1999.

An unpublished 1983 manuscript, "Religious Events and Church Buildings in Kootenai County, Idaho" by David Osterberg.

An article, "Churches Have Played Major Role in Area," published by the Coeur d'Alene Press on February 28, 1968.

Individual church histories in the archives of the Museum of North Idaho.

Coeur d'Alene's First Catholic School Opens

by Robert Singletary

Over 40 years ago the Immaculate Heart of Mary Academy, one of the most recognized schools in the area, held its last classes and final commencement exercise. The private Catholic school operated from 1903 to 1971.

Began in 1902 when The Rev. Thomas J. Purcell, founder of St. Stanislaus Catholic Church in Rathdrum, persuaded the Sisters of the Immaculate Heart of Mary in Scranton, Pennsylvania to open a school in Coeur d'Alene. On July 3, 1903, Sister Clement and Sister Zita--two experienced educators of the Immaculate Heart of Mary--arrived in Coeur d'Alene. On September 16, 1903, Coeur d'Alene's first Catholic school was opened at Fourth and Indiana with an enrollment of 64 students. The new school was named St. Cyril's.

Within a few years St. Cyril's was in need of more classroom space. The problem was solved on June 6, 1905, when the buildings at Fort Sherman were placed on public auction. James Graham, representing St. Cyril's, successfully bid on the fort hospital building. The hospital was moved to Ninth and Indiana where

Major J.J. O'Brien had donated a block of land to the sisters. One year later, the Stack-Gibbs Lumber Company purchased the Fort Sherman opera house and donated it to the IHM sisters. The opera house and the original St. Cyril's school building were also moved to Ninth and Indiana. The combined buildings became the Academy of the Sacred Heart of Mary.

During the 1940s and 1950s, IHM began to experience a period of rapid growth. In 1950, the St. Thomas Elementary School was completed at 10th and Indiana. In 1953, the sisters announced plans for the construction of a new high school on the southwest portion of the Academy block. The building was completed in time for fall classes in 1957. A new convent for the sisters was completed in 1962. In that same year, the St. Pius X parish and an elementary school were established.

The IHM Academy was recognized as one of the finest schools in North Idaho. The Academy had developed a tradition of academic excellence and also produced a number of outstanding athletic teams. The IHM Panthers won the Idaho 4-A basketball championship in 1967 and 1968. The football team was co-winner of the North Idaho Team of Year Award in 1967. The team won 33 consecutive games.

In 1971 the local Catholic community and the city of Coeur d'Alene received some very disturbing news. The Immaculate Heart of Mary mother house in Scranton, Pennsylvania announced that the IHM Academy would have to close at the end of the spring semester. The leaders of the order indicated that the sisters were needed in their eastern schools.

The IHM High School building and the convent were eventually purchased by School District 271. The high school became Sorenson Elementary and the convent became the district's administration building.



The old Fort Sherman hospital building after it was moved, circa 1910.

Museum News

A Call for Museum Advocacy

Dear Fellow Members:

While museum members and people working in the museum field know that museums play a key role in education, job creation, tourism, economic development and more, many elected officials are not fully aware of the value provided.

Please advocate locally for our Museum by either calling or writing your city and county officials. We need continued support from elected officials – especially the county – and we need our membership to join us in the effort to create a louder voice that will be heard.

We are being given an opportunity to have a louder voice and to be heard. The City of Coeur d'Alene is planning a visioning process involving government, business, civic and nonprofit organizations for the railroad land along Northwest Boulevard from Mullan Road to Riverstone.

This process will bring community members together to consider public spaces and will include an opportunity to create a shared sense of direction for the Museum, and to produce concrete goals and strategies for action to ensure the Museum's future.

This process will help the Museum and the City understand the whole community, reflect core community values, address emerging trends and issues, envision a preferred future and promote local action.

The Museum is the keeper of our

**Mark Your Calendar
Tuesday April 16
Museum of North Idaho Annual
Banquet & Speaker
Hayden Lake Country Club**

regional history and provides a place for people to go and discover not only the facts, but the values and culture that make our region what it is today. During these times of economic and social change, the Museum provides a sense of place and stability. Museums and history are important links to who we are and who, as a community, we were. To ensure our history and values are not lost the Museum needs adequate facilities and resources.

Please take advantage of the upcoming visioning process and share your vision for the preservation of local history and the role of the Museum of North Idaho. Contact Dave Yadon – yadon@cdaid.org or Mike Gridley – mgridley@cdaid.org for more information about the meeting schedule and visioning process.

And lest I forget: thank you for your advocacy and support!

Michael Dolan, Board President

By the way: The Museum has been collecting, preserving and interpreting the history of the Coeur d'Alene Region fostering an appreciation of the area's heritage for 45 years. We are a private non-profit 501(c)3 and have fulfilled our mission with a largely volunteer staff, support from Kootenai County, the City of Coeur d'Alene and the community. Our operational funds come mainly from memberships, Museum Store, interest, Kootenai County, donations and project grants.

Help Raise Membership Join the Committee of 100

Building the Museum membership and support base is vital to the future of the Museum. Take an active role in helping the Museum increase its visibility in the community by soliciting new members. Committee members are invited to take a free Coeur d'Alene Lake

GET ON BOARD

**JOIN THE COMMITTEE OF
100 TO RAISE MUSEUM
MEMBERSHIPS UP TO
1,000**

cruise March 1 to kick off the membership drive. Get on board and join the committee of 100 to raise Museum membership to 1,000. Current membership is about 470.

The role of the committee will be to provide a list of potential members and actively solicit individuals through the month of March. Call Robert Singletary 755-1308 to sign up for the committee and the cruise.

Serve on the Museum Board

The Museum of North Idaho's nominating committee is seeking applicants to fill three-year terms on its 9-member non profit Board of Trustees. As the Museum works towards a new facility and expanded programming the Board's role in connecting with community leaders and potential donors is essential.

Please contact Board member Wayne Sweney at 664-2274, email dd@museumni.org or visit www.museumni.org for an informational packet. Interviews with the nominating committee will take place in early March. Board members are elected by the membership in April.

Building Fund Donations

The Rosenberry Family Trust
in memory of the Rosenberry Family

Eleanor Smith Virginia Smith
Juanita Price Nadine LaVonne

Cash Donations

Roger & Carolyn Miller
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Brad & Wendy Fenison
Kathy & Denny Arneson
Wayne & Faye Sweney
Cort & Brenda Sims
David & Virginia Jensen
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Steven Ames
Rick Norton

Volkssport Club Honors Roger Hudson

Roger Hudson was a driving force in the Coeur d'Alene Volkssport club organized here in 1986. The club has disbanded and the following officers have donated over \$2,000 of their remaining funds to the Museum's Endowment in memory of Roger Hudson:

Larry & Sharon Strobel
John & Karen Huber
Cort & Brenda Sims
Barbara Hudson

Memorials

- For Emma Weeks from Judy Lingle, Mary Ann Babin, Mo & Tony Ellis and the Weeks Family
- For James Douglas Casey from Carrie & Greg Bergquist
- For Jim McKahan from Sarah McLain and Gladys, Randy & Susan Bates
- For Jim Countryman from Jack Rogers
- For Ray A. Miles from Anne Miles
- For Ken Nelson From Dave & Maxine Martin
- For Gene Hyde from Bob & Sally MacKenzie
- For Bjorne & Anne Svendsgaard from Mae Ann Henderson

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.

Or Current Resident

The Post Office charges first class postage (and sometimes more) for the Museum to get the mailed piece returned or forwarded. Post Office staff understands we operate on a limited budget and to pay, at times, over \$50 for returned mail on one mailing is a hardship. They suggested we use "or Current Resident" which eliminates these charges. We know it looks terrible and we have had some complaints but we hope you will understand.

We do our best to keep our member addresses up to date and assure your newsletter gets to you. Our database system will keep track of your second address and the dates it changes. If you have a secondary address, are temporarily away, or changing your address please let us know. Newsletters go out in early February, May, August and November and the Post Office will not forward them, so please let us know your address to ensure you receive your newsletter.

Artifact Donations Since November

Pat Acuff: Hydroplane slides.

Joann Adams: Adams family portraits.

Donald Johnson from Merrill, Wisconsin: 1915 Regatta Trophy

Thomas Tomlison: Squaw Bay school ledgers from Gozzer Ranch.

Dick Rainbolt: Fort Sherman artifacts found on the Fort Grounds and photos of the Fort Magazine when it was a house.

Wanted

Exterior and interior photographs of the Northern Pacific Railroad Depot on 3rd and Lakeside, Coeur d'Alene and building on the south side of Sherman Ave. especially the building where Java is today (previously Hart Drug Store and Exchange National Bank).

Field Trip Donations

Thanks to Specialty Tree Services & Doug and Deidre Chadderdon

Fourth grade teachers are signing up for field trips through our program to provide bus and Museum admission funding. It will be on a first come basis as we only have \$600 of the \$1,400 needed to provide all 794 students with a field trip.

The Museum is seeking businesses to become Community Partners to support the preservation of local history including the support for the field trip program.

Our goal is to give every 4th grader the opportunity to visit the Museum. Teachers have told us that lack of funds for buses is the main reason they do not come. Total student visitation in 2012 was only 366 from throughout the area. We want to see more 4th graders at the Museum.

Garden Plaza

On Dec. 7, 100 Museum members attended a very nice wine and cheese reception hosted by the Garden Plaza retirement community of Post Falls. The reception was in appreciation of the Museum's efforts in creating a Heritage Gallery of historic photos at the Garden Plaza. Robert gave a short presentation about the images on display and Quick Silver Photography provided free Christmas portraits.

We thank Garden Plaza's Dean Dickman and his staff for a wonderful event and their support of the Museum.



Garden Plaza guests enjoying the Museum exhibit.



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- 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

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Send your tax deductible contribution to:
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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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