



Dawson
Historical Complex
National Historic Site

HISTORIC BUILDINGS OF DAWSON CITY

1. BANK OF BRITISH NORTH AMERICA
2. BILLY BIGG'S BLACKSMITH SHOP
3. COMMISSIONER'S RESIDENCE
4. DAWSON DAILY NEWS
5. K.T.M. Co. BUILDING
6. WEST'S BOILER SHOP
7. PALACE GRAND THEATRE
8. POST OFFICE
9. RED FEATHER SALOON
10. ROBERT SERVICE CABIN
11. RUBY'S PLACE
12. COURT HOUSE
13. BLACK'S RESIDENCE
14. THE B.Y.N. Co. TICKET OFFICE
15. HARRINGTON'S STORE
16. LOWE'S MORTUARY
17. FORT HERCHMER
18. MACAULAY HOUSE
19. MADAME TREMBLAY'S STORE
20. NORTHERN COMMERCIAL Co. WAREHOUSE
21. N.W.M.P. COMMANDING OFFICER'S QUARTERS
22. OAK HALL
23. ST. ANDREW'S CHURCH & MANSE
24. 3RD AVENUE COMPLEX

1 BANK OF BRITISH NORTH AMERICA



The BNA, which opened Dawson City's first bank in a tent in 1898, moved into these premises in 1899. By providing the essential services of assaying, buying and shipping gold, it helped integrate the local currency of dust and nuggets into a cash economy. As larger gold companies with their own assayers and capital took over mining, the bank (since 1918 the Bank of Montreal) became a more peripheral service, acting as payroll source for the dredges. It closed in 1968 after the last gold dredge fell silent.

Photo: Parks Canada Collection

BILLY BIGG'S BLACKSMITH SHOP 2



This building stands as a testament to the way frontier business changed and adapted to new realities. It began life in 1899 as the two storey Great Northern Hotel, to service the needs of a rapidly growing population. By 1907, as the population settled, it was converted into a blacksmith shop. In 1913, with the increasing mechanization of mining, a machine shop was added. Each change in business came with an addition to the building. In the 1940's then – owner Billy Biggs removed the unused second floor.

Photo: Dawson City Museum Collection

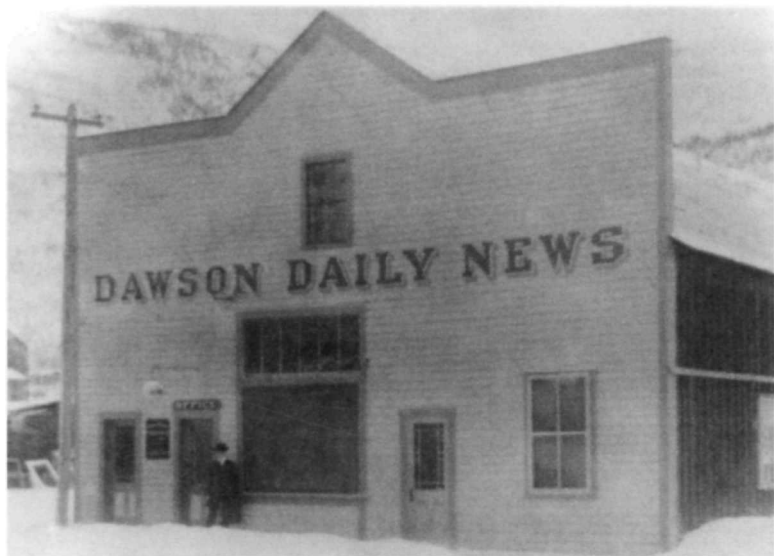
3 COMMISSIONER'S RESIDENCE



Just as the image of a flamboyant dance hall girl came to symbolize the raucous gold rush, the Commissioner's Residence came to symbolize the government's stabilizing presence. It also served as the model for a dignified, if not genteel, society. Built in 1901, it was home to the vice-regal head of the Yukon Administration and the setting for exclusive social events. The building was last occupied by a Commissioner in 1916.

Photo: Public Archives of Canada D. McDougall Collection

DAWSON DAILY NEWS 4



The Dawson Daily News moved into this building in 1910, the sole survivor among seven gold rush newspapers. It provided Dawson City with a window to the outside world and remained a profitable business until the early 1920s. Thereafter, it was essentially a one-person operation and shut down for good in 1954, its true legacy being a repository of Klondike history, faithfully recorded since 1899.

Photo: University of Alaska Fairbanks Selid-Bassoc Collection

5 K.T.M. Co. BUILDING

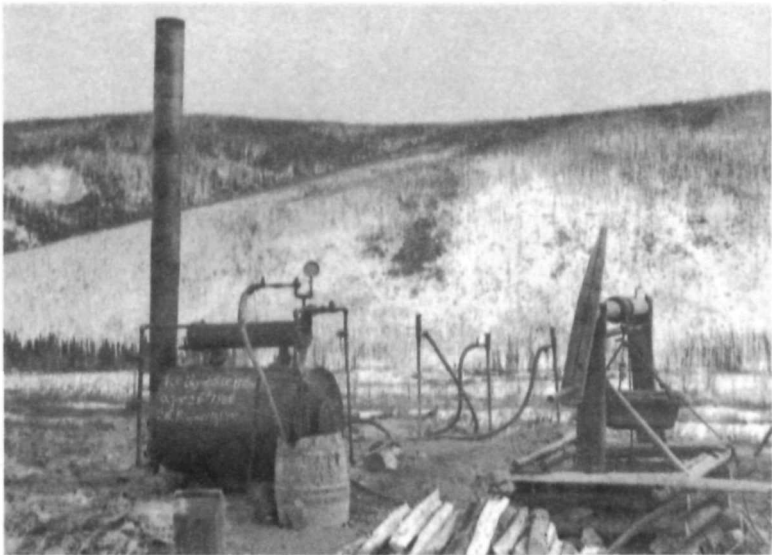


Built in 1899, this warehouse was taken over by the Klondike Thawing Machine Company in 1913. The growing hardware company was in the process of buying out other firms and expanding its line of goods even as Klondike gold claims were being consolidated by larger mining companies. The warehouse was necessary to store the company's varied merchandise stock because for eight months of the year Dawson City was cut off from "outside" sources of supply.

Photo: Parks Canada YCGC Collection

WEST'S BOILER SHOP

6



Likely built in 1903 as a residence and later a carpentry shop, Jesse A. West, a machinist and blacksmith opened “J.A. West Boiler Manufacturer and General Repairing” in 1915 and remained here until the mid- 1950’s. To extract the gold from the frozen gravels, it was necessary to thaw the ground in which the gold was trapped. Steam channeled from a boiler and driven through a steam point was a method of thawing that dominated Yukon gold mining for years. West’s profession was vital to mining activities central to Dawson’s existence.

Photo: Dawson City Museum Collection

7 PALACE GRAND THEATRE



“Arizona” Charlie Meadows, showman and self-made heroic figure, built this lavish structure in 1899 to prospect gold directly from miner’s pokes. Hugely successful over its first winter, the theatre offered vaudeville acts, comedy, music and melodrama – all on the same bill. At midnight, dance hall girls kept miners on their toes for a dollar-a-dance, while drinking and gambling continued until breakfast. As the heady gold rush days subsided, so did the theatre’s fortunes.

Photo: Yukon Archives Vogee Collection

POST OFFICE 8



As the first substantial building erected by the Federal government in Dawson City, the Post Office (which included a land registration and telegraph office) was the link to the rest of the country and to the goldfields. Completed in December 1900, it was a source of civic pride, symbolizing Dawson City's viability and the government's commitment to the region.

Photo: Parks Canada Collection

9

RED FEATHER SALOON



For a population predominately young, male and transient the saloons provided an opportunity to meet friends, conduct business and escape numbing toil. They were centres of warmth, light and provided a welcome relief from dingy cabins and an elegant contrast to their drab, everyday surroundings.

The Red Feather Saloon, constructed in 1902 is believed to be one of the last saloons built and licensed in Dawson. With growing pressure from women's groups and the clergy, liquor licenses in Dawson fell from twenty three in 1900 to six in 1915.

Photo: Yukon Archives Collection

ROBERT SERVICE CABIN 10



Though he did not spend a lifetime in Dawson, the poetry Service wrote while in the Yukon would capture the world's imagination and immortalize the Klondike Gold Rush. This cabin was home to the best-selling poet of the 20th century. Within 5 years of Robert Service's departure in 1912, the local press referred to his rented cabin as a "shrine."

*"There were the tents of Dawson, There the scar of the slide;
Swiftly we poled o'er the shallows, swiftly left o'er the side.
Fires fringed the mouth of Bonanza; sunset gilded the dome;
The test of the trail was over—thank God, thank God, we were Home!"*

(The Trail of 98)

Photo: Yukon Archives Collection

11

RUBY'S PLACE



Opened as a boarding house and laundry in 1903, the building was taken over by Mathilde “Ruby” Scott in 1935. For 27 years, this former Paris Madame operated a brothel here, finding a ready clientele in the seasonal workers from the gold dredge camps. She operated with the tacit approval of local officials until 1961. With both gold mining and her business in decline, Ruby was charged with keeping a bawdy house. Reluctant to face more charges, for the next 8 years until her retirement, Ruby’s was simply a boarding house once more.

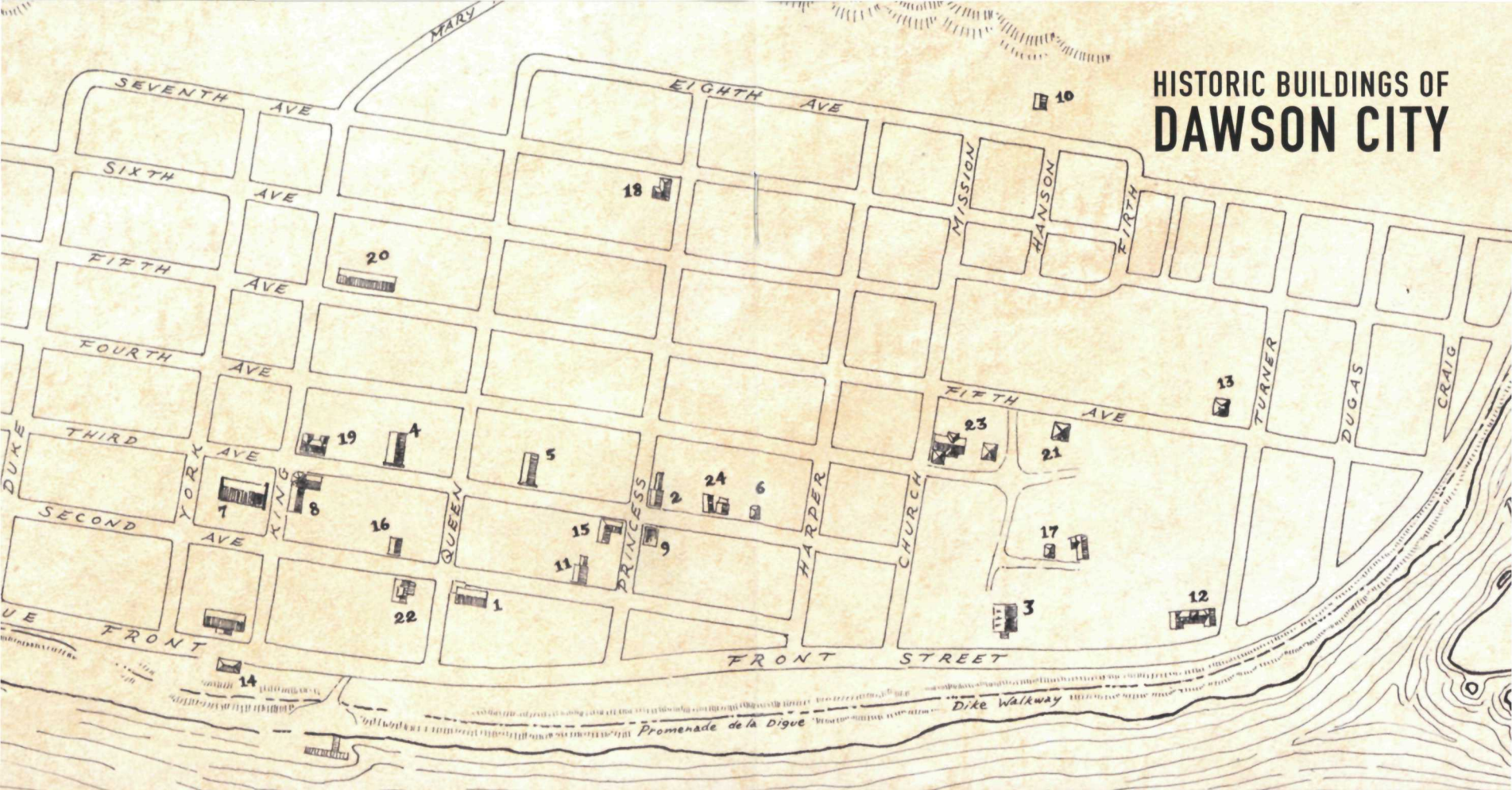
COURT HOUSE 12



By 1900, the Canadian Government resolved to stake its own claim on a newly-formed territory whose population and commercial institutions were largely American. This building was one of five federal administrative structures erected in Dawson City at the turn of the century. Its classical design and sober presence stood in sharp contrast to the humble beginnings of the boom town itself.

Photo: University of Alaska Selid-Bassoc Collection

HISTORIC BUILDINGS OF DAWSON CITY



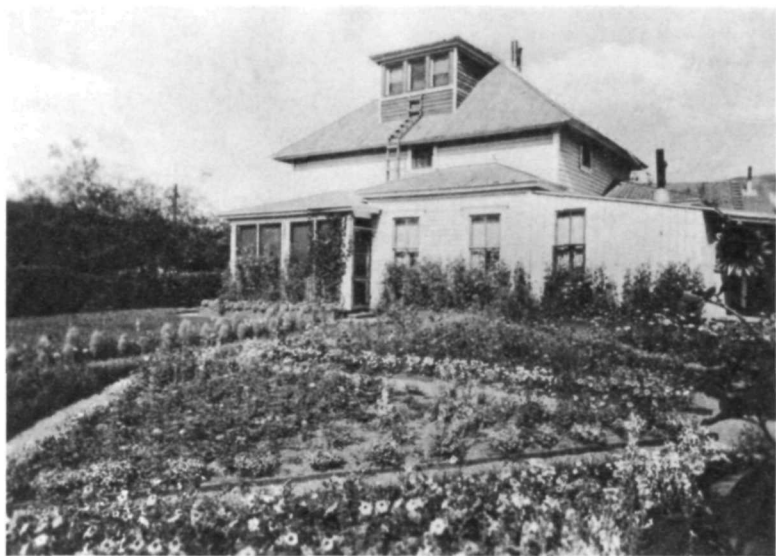
1. BANK OF BRITISH NORTH AMERICA
2. BILLY BIGG'S BLACKSMITH SHOP
3. COMMISSIONER'S RESIDENCE
4. DAWSON DAILY NEWS
5. K.T.M. Co. BUILDING
6. WEST'S BOILER SHOP
7. PALACE GRAND THEATRE

8. POST OFFICE
9. RED FEATHER SALOON
10. ROBERT SERVICE CABIN
11. RUBY'S PLACE
12. COURT HOUSE
13. BLACK'S RESIDENCE
14. B.Y.N. Co. TICKET OFFICE

15. HARRINGTON'S STORE
16. LOWE'S MORTUARY
17. FORT HERCHMER
18. MACAULAY HOUSE
19. MADAME TREMBLAY'S STORE
20. NORTHERN COMMERCIAL Co. WAREHOUSE
21. N.W.M.P. COMMANDING OFFICER'S QUARTERS

22. OAK HALL
23. ST. ANDREW'S CHURCH & MANSE
24. 3RD AVENUE COMPLEX

13 BLACK'S RESIDENCE



Money talks. When Dawson City residents started spending real money for elegant homes around 1900, they were talking about their confidence in the city's future. This residence was one such upper middle class home built by the professional class. While its most well-known occupants were George and Martha Black during the 1930's, an earlier owner was real estate broker T.D. Pattullo. He later became Premier of British Columbia and attempted to annex the Yukon to that province.

Photo: MacBride Museum Collection

THE B.Y.N. Co. TICKET OFFICE 14



This structure, built in 1900, is all that remains of a larger complex that included a warehouse and dock. At the time of the gold rush and for years afterwards, the riverfront was the transition point between Dawson City and the rest of the world. Riverside facilities were developed until they stretched in a solid line along the city's length. For most people, it was the first thing that greeted them as they arrived in Dawson city, and the last thing they saw as they left.

Photo: Public Archives of Canada Collection

15 HARRINGTON'S STORE



Like other grocers at the turn of the century, William Harrington provided a cosmo-politan clientele with every conceivable foodstuff, from beans to truffles. This was made possible by the coincidence of improved transportation systems with new food storage technologies, such as evaporation, canning, and artificial cold storage. Linked to the rest of the world during summer by steamer and rail, Dawson City merchants provided perishable foods year round, all at a price 2 to 3 times higher than “outside”.

Photo: Interior N.C.Co Yukon Archives Collection

LOWE'S MORTUARY 16



Built in the spring of 1898, this building originally housed a blacksmith, a provisions store, and a ladies dress shop. Frank Lowe moved his business into the building in 1906. Lowe was a member of the Vigilante Committee that ended the reign of the notorious Soapy Smith in Skagway. Lowe sold the business in 1920; though ownership changed many times over the years, the business remained the same until 1953.

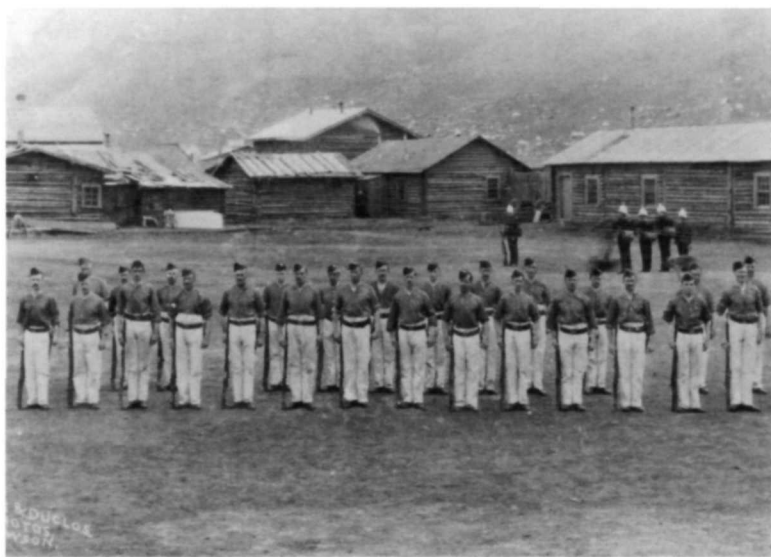
Photo: Provincial Archives of Canada Collection

17 FORT HERCHMER



The original layout of Fort Herchmer, the NWMP's Dawson City head-quarters established in 1897, was itself a reflection of that same keen sense of law and order. All that remains of some dozen structures built around a barrack square are the Married Officer's Quarters – a log structure erected in 1899; the NWMP stables and the NWMP Jail – originally a log hospital erected in 1898, converted into a jail in 1910.

Photo: Public Archives of Canada Collection



The reputation earned by the North West Mounted Police (today, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police) was a legacy of the Klondike Gold Rush. The federal government, responding to requests for law enforcement from the church and businesses, sent this para-military institution to the territory in 1895. Besides regular police duties, the NWMP at various times delivered mail, registered claims, collected gold royalties and tariffs, and escorted gold shipments.

Photo: Members of the Yukon Field Force. Parks Canada Collection

18 MACAULAY HOUSE



This two storey house, built in 1901, was owned by Henry C. Macaulay, Dawson City's first mayor. Subsequently, it housed such affluent individuals as a merchant, a territorial Commissioner, a surveyor, and senior management of the Yukon Consolidated Gold Corporation. It was a residence for those whose instructions, salaries and affluence came from "outside". Today, in partnership with the Klondike Institute of Art and Culture, Macaulay House is home year-round to visiting artists from around the world.

Photo: University of Toronto J.B. Tyrell Collection

MADAME TREMBLAY'S STORE 19



While this building dates to 1899, it did not become Mme Tremblay's, a dry goods and novelty shop, until 1913. Emilie Tremblay had first come to the territory as a young French Canadian bride in 1894 with her husband Jack. After 15 years on Eldorado Creek, and with the era of the individual miner on the wane, they moved into Dawson City. There they completed the transition from miners to merchants by investing their earnings from the creeks in the store. Tremblay ran the store until 1936.

Photo: Parks Canada Lorraine M. Schron Collection

20 NORTHERN COMMERCIAL Co. WAREHOUSE



One of a complex of four warehouses that covered an entire city block in 1898, this and numerous other warehouses like it provided the life blood of Dawson City. For four months a year, the river was open for shipping and in the ensuing flurry of activity, the warehouses were loaded with every conceivable item of merchandise. Over the next eight months, virtually cut off from the rest of the world, Dawson City drew on these supplies for survival, and to satisfy the needs and wants of a modern metropolis.

Photo: University of Alaska Fairbanks W.F. Erskine Collection

N.W.M.P. COMMANDING OFFICER'S QUARTERS 21



Built in 1902 for the commanding officer of the North West Mounted Police, this residence lent dignity, authority and a degree of permanence to the presence of law and order in Dawson City. The stampede of 1898 was notable for being free of the lawlessness that usually came with such endeavours and is a testament to both the wisdom of this move and the tenor of the men in the Yukon force.

Photo: Yukon Archives Allard Collection

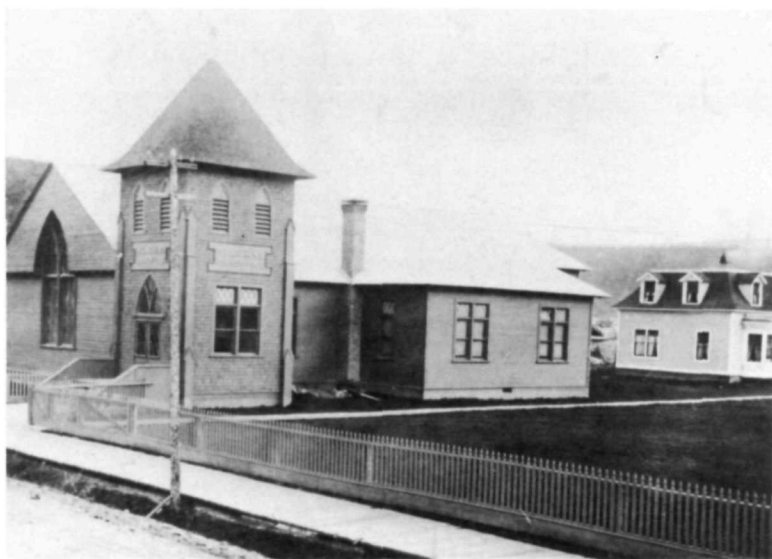
22 OAK HALL



From 1902 until 1904, the Standard Library Restaurant provided Dawson's early population with the comforts of home: writing, smoking and games rooms, a "natatorium" with porcelain warm tubs and plunge baths, and lodging for 100 men. In 1910 the building became Oak Hall Clothing. These "clothiers and haberdashers" took pride in the products they carried, emphasizing brand names rather than prices. Herbert Winaut ran a dry goods store here from 1926–1942, eventually selling the building to Jack and Pretoria Butterworth, who operated Butterworth's Store until 1957.

Photo: Parks Canada Collection

ST. ANDREW'S CHURCH & MANSE 23



This substantial Presbyterian Church was a reflection of the prosperity and commitment of the congregation it served. Erected in 1901, it boasted a pipe organ and carved oak pews that could accommodate 600. The church bore the architectural stamp of the Gothic Revival popular elsewhere in the country. Together with a spacious manse, of Second Empire design, it was one more element of familiarity and respectability in a city that was rapidly changing from its boom-town origins.

Photo: Parks Canada Collection

24 3RD AVENUE COMPLEX



In Dawson City's history, permafrost ranks second only to fire as the bane of buildings. These three dating from 1901, once a hotel, photography studio and hardware store, illustrate what can happen when heated buildings are placed on frozen ground: the frost melts, mixing water with the soil to form a very fluid muck into which the different footings settle at different rates. No restoration measures have been taken with these buildings so that visitors may experience history as it naturally unfolds.

Photo: Parks Canada Collection



Parks
Canada

Parcs
Canada

Canada

