

# Fort Selkirk



# Your guide to Fort Selkirk

Fort Selkirk is a living cultural heritage site and a special place for all who come here. To the Selkirk First Nation people, it is part of their homeland and a place for spiritual and cultural renewal. For other Yukon people, Fort Selkirk is a cherished reminder of the past. For the visitor, Fort Selkirk provides a rare glimpse at the history of trade and settlement in the north.

This guide will give you an overview of the history of Fort Selkirk and a description of its historic resources. As you explore the area, please remember that this is an important archaeological site. Fort Selkirk is exceptional for the quantity and quality of its artifacts, the original condition of its buildings and its unspoiled landscape. Please respect the land and the historic resources you find here. A good guideline is “take nothing but pictures and leave nothing but footprints.”

# Fort Selkirk: the meeting place

Fort Selkirk is a meeting place for two major river systems, the Yukon and the Pelly. Located near good hunting and fishing grounds and on a flat site which was ideal for settlement, Fort Selkirk has been a gathering place for many years. A network of old trails and road beds, all meeting at Fort Selkirk, is still visible just beyond the town site. It has witnessed the meeting of cultures over generations and allows us to touch the past today.

## NORTHERN TUTCHONE HOMELAND

People have lived here a long time. Selkirk First Nation Elders tell stories of a volcanic eruption that occurred nearby an estimated 7,000 years ago. Stone tools discovered near Fort Selkirk have been dated at 8,000 to 10,000 years old. The discovery of 1.3 million-year-old caribou bones across the river indicates that a food supply adequate for supporting human life existed long before people inhabited the region. Oral traditions and artifacts found near Fort Selkirk give us information about people who occupied the land long ago.



Native copper arrow points

Northern Tutchone people of the lower Pelly region stopped here during their seasonal round. Following



Group of Pelly Indians at Fort Selkirk, 1894. Photographer: Veasey Wilson from: *Glimpses of Alaska, Klondike & Goldfields* by V. Wilson, 1895.

the migrating fish and game they depended on for survival, these indigenous people roamed over a large area including the upper Pelly and Macmillan rivers. They hunted wood bison, which were present in the region until a few hundred years ago. They also hunted caribou, sheep, and moose and trapped lynx, muskrat and beaver. Fort Selkirk was an important fishing location where family groups returned each summer to harvest migrating salmon.

People used brush shelters year round. There were open on the side where the fire pit was and were covered with Moosehide or caribou. Because they could be easily erected and taken down, the shelters suited people who moved often in search of game.

Other Tutchone and native people from outside the area met at Fort Selkirk for trade and celebration.

Northern Tutchone people, now living in Mayo and Carmacks, and Han people, now living in Dawson City, ranged into the traditional territory of the Selkirk people. Occasionally, Mountain Dene people from around Fort Norman on the Mackenzie River came here by way of the Macmillan River.

First Nations stories describe Fort Selkirk as an exciting place where families were raised, where friendships were renewed after food-gathering trips, where the people danced and stick gambled. Some people still practice this traditional life style. Today, young members of the Selkirk First Nation are returning to the site to learn traditional ways from their Elders and to celebrate their heritage. Generations of ancestors are buried at Fort Selkirk.

## TRADE AND SUPPLY CENTRE

The Chilkats, a Tlingit tribe from the coast, were trading partners and frequent visitors to Fort Selkirk.



The interior of the Schofield and Zimmerlee store. Photographer: John Gregg, October 1937. HBC Archives, P.A.M.

Partnerships and marriages between Northern Tutchone people and the Chilkats helped to keep the peace during negotiations. The Northern Tutchone traded their furs, hides and clothing with the Chilkats for goods from the coast. These included shells, walrus ivory, vermillion, obsidian, seal fat, eulachon oil, dried clams, seaweed and medicinal herbs and roots. Starting in the 1790s, the Chilkats brought European trade goods such as guns, wool blankets, tea and tobacco.

In 1848, Robert Campbell descended the Pelly River to establish a Hudson's Bay Company trading post at the river's mouth. He named the site Fort Selkirk. Four years later, he relocated the post to higher ground at the present site. Also, he made arrangements to obtain supplies from Fort Yukon, which was served by a more reliable and economical route than the one Campbell had used previously. The new supply line allowed Campbell to compete with the Chilkats, who had a long-standing trade arrangements with the Selkirk people. The coastal tribe reacted to this challenge to their monopoly by pillaging Fort Selkirk in 1852. Campbell fled for his life and was rescued by the Selkirk Chief, Hanan. In gratitude, Campbell gave his name to the Chief, whose descendents still use it. After his rescue, Campbell snowshoed much of the way to Minnesota, then traveled to Montreal. There, he



Robert Campbell  
Yukon Archives

tried to persuade his superiors to mount a raid against the Chilkats but was unsuccessful

It was 40 years before another trading post was established at Fort Selkirk. In 1892, Arthur Harper started his store, the first of several stores, including Schofield and Zimmerlee, and Taylor and Drury. The last trading company to operate here had also been the first; the Hudson's Bay Company returned in 1938, only to leave 13 years later when Fort Selkirk was abandoned.

## TRANSPORTATION AND COMMUNICATIONS HUB

From early times, transportation and communications in the region centered on Fort Selkirk. First Nations people moved over their vast territory using a network of foot trails and river routes. Later, a spur from the Dawson to Whitehorse winter road came to Fort Selkirk. In summer, the settlement was a



Group in front of first airplane to land at Selkirk. L-R: Sophie Anderson (Old Abraham's daughter), Old Abraham, John MacMartin and Mrs. MacMartin. Van Bibber Coll. Yukon Archives



Sternwheelers Tyrrell, Dawson, Selkirk & Whitehorse docked at Fort Selkirk, 1903. Photographer: E.J. Hamacher, Vancouver Public Library

stop-off point for sternwheelers. Jack Dalton used the Chilkat Trail to create an overland route from tidewater into the central Yukon in 1896 to 1898. The arrival of the government telegraph line, in 1899, linked Fort Selkirk to the world. The first airplane arrived in 1922 and the construction of a runway, in 1938, tied Fort Selkirk even more closely to the "outside".

After the road to Mayo was completed, in 1950, the steamboats stopped running on the upper Yukon River and the telegraph office shut down. Community services and employment disappeared and Selkirk First Nation people relocated to Pelly Crossing, which was on the new route.

## POWER AND SOVEREIGNTY

Out of necessity, the Selkirk First Nation had strong leaders such as Thingit Thling, Hanan and

Big Jonathan. Because Fort Selkirk was a prime location for transportation, hunting, fishing, trade and settlement, there were many struggles over who should have power and sovereignty over the site. The sacking of Fort Selkirk by the Chilkats is an example of one such conflict.

The Chilkats maintained their trading monopoly by controlling the coast mountain passes until 1880, when a party of prospectors was permitted to climb the Chilkoot trail and enter the headwaters of the Yukon River. On the heels of the prospectors came Euro-American explorers. In 1883, Frederick Schwatka led an American Army expedition over the Chilkoot and into the upper Yukon. In 1887, the Government of Canada sent a geologist, George Dawson, and a surveyor, William Ogilvie, to map the region in preparation for establishing Canadian interest. When the Yukon became a territory in 1898, Fort Selkirk was seriously considered for the capital.

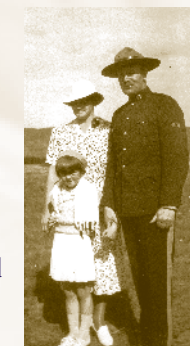
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*Today, following more than 20 years of negotiations on the Yukon Indian Land Claim, the Selkirk First Nation has sovereignty over its traditional land.*

## THE MISSIONARIES

By the 1890s, Anglican and Roman Catholic missionaries were competing for religious sovereignty in the region. In 1892, Reverend T.H.

Canham set up St. Andrew's Anglican Mission at Fort Selkirk. The Church maintained a mission at Fort Selkirk until 1953. It took over many traditional ceremonies such as confirmations and burials, and had a profound impact on the Selkirk people. Besides introducing Christianity, the Anglican mission school taught language and literacy skills, which were needed in the post Gold Rush society.



G.I. and Martha Cameron with daughter Ione, 1939. Ward Collection, Yukon Archives

Three Catholic missionaries built the St. Francis Xavier Roman Catholic Church on the site in 1898, when it was rumoured that Fort Selkirk might soon become the capital of the Yukon. Following the departure of the Yukon Field Force, in 1899, the Catholic population virtually disappeared and the church closed. In 1942, Father Marcel Bobillier, a missionary priest who served the Yukon for over 50 years, re-opened the Catholic Church in Fort Selkirk. Father "Bob" maintained a mission here for ten years.

## GOVERNMENT PRESENCE

The arrival of the North West Mounted Police and the Yukon Field Force during the Gold Rush confirmed Canadian sovereignty in the Yukon. The Yukon Field Force arrived in Fort Selkirk in 1898 and, with the aid of civilian contractors, built a military complex of 11 large log buildings and a



Yukon Field Force at Fort Selkirk in 1898. Buildings in background are L-R: Dining Mess, Sergeant's Mess & Quarter Master Stores. E.A. Hegg photographer U. of Washington Libraries.

parade square. The Canadian government sent the Force north to keep order during the Klondike Gold Rush and ensure that the large number of Americans flocking to the gold fields did not threaten Canadian control of the area. The Force did not stay long; during the spring following their arrival at Fort Selkirk, 200 soldiers were dispersed to Dawson City or sent south.

Also in 1898, the North West Mounted Police built a small post at Fort Selkirk. It was one of a string of posts set up on the Yukon River to keep order during the stampede to the Klondike gold fields. River traffic and the population of Fort Selkirk declined after the Gold Rush and the detachment closed in 1911. In 1932, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (R.C.M.P.) reestablished the police presence to serve a growing population.

Corporal G.I. Cameron operated the detachment from 1935 to 1949. "Cam" and his family became highly respected members of the community. The Corporal carried out all the duties expected of the

sole government representative; enforcing game laws, meeting river and air travellers, distributing medicines, pulling teeth and helping with burials. He also patrolled the region in summer and winter. While he was away, Martha, his wife, kept the peace in Fort Selkirk.

### A SHARED COMMUNITY

For 60 years Fort Selkirk was a shared home to both Selkirk First Nation people and to Euro-American settlers. Differences between the two cultures were very apparent, yet much was shared. Both people lived off the land to varying degrees and everyone used the same stores and attended the same churches. First Nations people participated in the cash economy by working seasonally at wood camps, by barging firewood rafts to Dawson City, and by commercial trapping, hunting and fishing. Native people suffered social disruption, disease and other ill-effects after Euro-Americans came to Fort Selkirk, but they adapted to the changes and the two cultures lived in harmony.

Like their ancestors, modern Selkirk people spend part of every year on the land. While in Fort Selkirk they lived in tents or small cabins, which were practical and easy to heat. The Euro-American population usually built larger, more permanent structures. Winters here are extremely cold, with moderate snowfall and very short days from

November to January. Lightly-built wood stoves and chimneys were strained by the hot fires needed to keep warm, so house fires were not uncommon. At 50 below, when the river was frozen solid, a chimney fire often resulted in the total loss of a building. Harsh winters and isolation forced people to rely on each other, which led to a tightly-knit community.

### COMMUNITY LIFE

For people around Fort Selkirk in precontact times, life during the summer months was taken up by fishing and trading. A feast was held to mark the catching of the first salmon of the year. The salmon was "cooked up right away" and shared among everyone in the camp. The other time of year spent here was early winter, when people gathered to celebrate the solstice. They feasted on meat and fish that had been stored in caches during the summer; they played games and gave gifts. Strengthening of kinship ties was an important function of these events. In recent



Ione Cameron & Dale Devore out skiing at Selkirk, ca. 1937. Big Jonathan House in rear. Ward Collection, Yukon Archives



Back l-r: Oscar Adami, Pat Van Bibber, G.I. Cameron, Kathleen van Bibber, Dan Van Bibber, Mr. Coplend, Ione Cameron, Clare Van Bibber, JJ Van Bibber, unknown, Clara Van Bibber, unknown, unknown. Front l-r: Unknown, Kay Wood, Mary Adami, Anabelle Van Bibber, unknown, Steve Van Bibber. 1940s

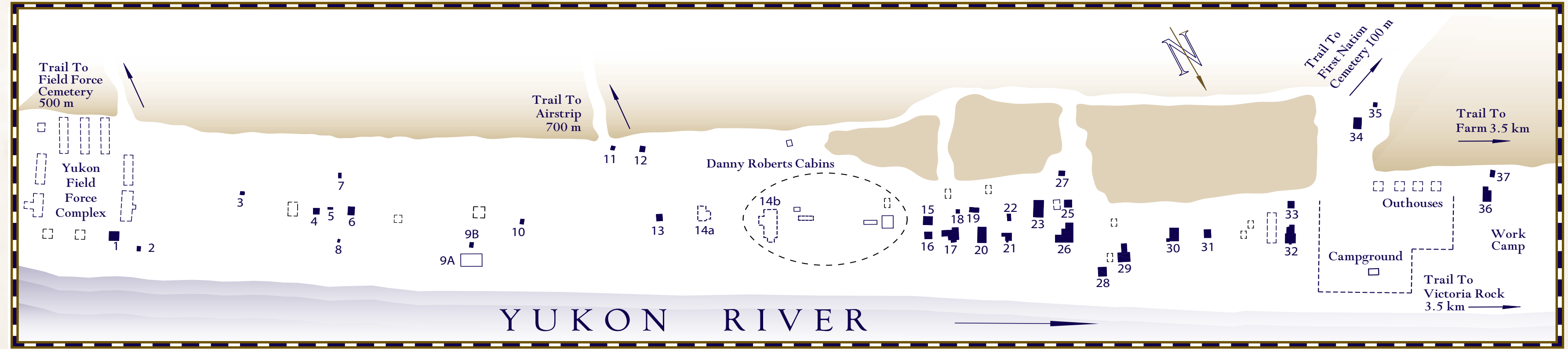
times, attending the church and school became a part of life at Fort Selkirk. Big gatherings continued to be held at Christmas, funerals and potlatches. People in all corners of the Yukon have roots to Fort Selkirk.

### PRESERVING & MANAGING FORT SELKIRK

Today Fort Selkirk is a modern gathering place and provides an opportunity for tourists and other river travellers to meet with the Selkirk people. Since 1984, the Yukon government has invested in stabilizing and protecting Fort Selkirk. The Cultural Services Branch and the Selkirk First Nation are working together to preserve, develop and interpret the site for the benefit of all Yukoners and visitors.

# Fort Selkirk

- |                                 |  |                                 |                                 |                         |                             |   |
|---------------------------------|--|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------------|---|
| 1. Orderly Room/Blanchard Cabin | 6. Stanley Jonathan Cabin              | 10. Tommy McGinty Cabin         | 14b. Hudson's Bay Company Store | 19. Cameron Shed        | 25. T&D Barn                | 31. The Armstrong Cabin                                   |
| 2. Frank Blanchard Cabin        | 7. Jackson Jonathan Cabin              | 11. The Old Abraham Cabin       | 15. Coward's Garage             | 20. R.C.M.P. detachment | 26. Taylor and Drury Store  | 32/33. Charlie Stone House And Shed                       |
| 3. Old Silas Cache              | 8. Peter McGinty Cache                 | 12. The Anderson Cabin          | 16. Coward's Machine Shop       | 21. The Devore Cabin    | 27. The Larsen/Lankin Cabin | 34/35. St. Francis Xavier Roman Catholic Church and Cache |
| 4. Luke Roberts Cabin           | 9a. Big Jonathon House (reconstructed) | 13. The Baum Cabin              | 17. The Coward Cabin            | 22. Devore Shed         | 28. The School House        | 36. Wilkinson Cabin                                       |
| 5. Double Cache                 | 9b. Big Jonathan Cache                 | 14a. Hudson's Bay Company Store | 18. Greenhouse                  | 23. T&D Stable          | 29. The Rectory             | 37. Van Bibber Barn                                       |



## Walking Tour of Fort Selkirk

Fort Selkirk pre-dates the Gold Rush and is one of the oldest settlements in the Yukon. The buildings you see here have been stabilized to prevent further deterioration. Many are in the condition they were left in when the settlement was vacated in 1950. A walk through the site will give you a glimpse into the lives of the native and non-native people who have called this place home. Some highlights are listed below, beginning with those at the end of the settlement which is nearest the campground. You may also want to hike one of the trails to the First Nations Cemetery, Victoria Rock, Swinehart's Farm, the air strip or the Yukon Field Force Cemetery.



### SELKIRK FIRST NATION CEMETERY

The cemetery is a short walk from the Catholic Church. There are over 100 graves in the cemetery, which date back to the late 19th century when Christian missionaries banned traditional burial and cremation practices. Despite the ban, Selkirk people continued certain traditions, such as the use of totems to indicate clan status and the use of symbolic painted designs. Some

of these designs are still visible on the earlier grave houses. The style of grave changed over time from small hand-made grave houses decorated with painted designs and carvings, to very elaborate and beautiful grave fences, also hand made, with carved totems. Later, larger store-bought, turned-wood fences and metal fences with garden-type wire screen were used. This cemetery is sacred to the Selkirk First Nation people. Please respect this area by treating it as you would your own family's burial place.



### ST. FRANCIS XAVIER ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH

34. Built in 1898, this was the second Catholic Church in the Yukon. Due to a declining population at Fort Selkirk, the church closed for a year after it was built. In 1942, Father Bobillier reestablished the Catholic presence in Fort Selkirk. His first duty was to move the church from the waterfront to this spot where the building stood. Father "Bob" also moved the altar forward to make room for living space at the back of the church. The log building uses French-style, piece-en-piece construction, which is unusual in the Yukon.



### CHARLIE STONE HOUSE AND SHED

33/32. Mr Stone, the government telegraph operator, began building this house in 1935. He intended it as a residence for his mother, who died before it was completed. Later, Mr. Stone married and the wedding was held in the lean-to addition at the rear of the house. The Stone house was considered the most modern building in Fort Selkirk and the only one with indoor plumbing. The telegraph operator used the shed behind the building to store wire and other supplies. In 1947, the Anglican Church acquired the building for use as a rectory. Before the Anglican priest could move in, however, Fort Selkirk was abandoned.

### EURO-AMERICAN TRAPPERS' CABINS

These three cabins in the central part of town are typical Yukon trappers' cabins. They are small and simply built, usually with one room, sometimes with a small addition. The cabins were built with the purpose of housing one or two people on a seasonal basis and they served that purpose well.



31. The Armstrong cabin appears to have been built in the early 1920s, possibly by

Neville Armstrong, a gold miner at Russell Creek on the Macmillan River and a big game outfitter. The building was used as a school in 1925-26. Later, it was a residence and telegraph office.

### ANGLICAN CHURCH BUILDINGS



30. St. Andrew's Anglican Church is one of three buildings remaining of the Anglican Church Mission. Built in 1931, the church was dedicated by Reverend I.O. Stringer. It was built of materials from the Yukon Field Force barracks and was the only building in Fort Selkirk designed by an architect. The building is the most elaborate one at Fort Selkirk and is a well-known and photographed landmark on the Yukon River. Once a focal point of the community, the church has been used occasionally for services since 1953, when the last resident minister, Kathleen Cowaret, moved to Minto.



29. The Rectory was built in 1893 to house the various ministers living at Fort Selkirk. These included Thomas Henry Canham, who probably built the rectory, and Bishop Stringer. The front room also served as a winter school house,

to save heating an extra building. The building is constructed of squared, dovetailed logs and retains much of its original finishes and furniture.



28. The School House (1892) is the oldest known standing structure in the Yukon and has a long history of service to the community. Reverend Canham probably built the school house, which served as both a school and a place of worship until the church was built in 1931. The building was also a temporary hospital and a men's club, but its function as a school lasted until Fort Selkirk was abandoned. The building retains many of its original furnishings.



27. The Larsen/ Lankins Cabin was built in 1940 by two American trappers who ran a trading post up the Macmillan River. The cabin was intended for summer use. In the winter, the partners returned to the post at Moose Creek, where they also ran a trap line. The property around the cabin looks much as it did 50 years ago. With its doghouses and other out buildings, it is a typical trappers' spread.

### TAYLOR AND DRURY STORE



26. This building was probably built around 1900 as the Dominion Hotel. A small, sloped addition on the east wall of the building was once used as a bar. On the opposite side of the building, there were stalls for horses. During 1900 and 1901 a very rough winter stage road came through Fort Selkirk, crossing the Yukon River just below Victoria Rock. Another road, the Dalton Trail from Haines, Alaska terminated at Fort Selkirk. After the merchandising from Taylor and Drury took over, sometime around 1920, the horse stalls were used for warehousing. The store manager lived at the rear of the main building where the hotel dining room and kitchen had been. The "T&D" is the only commercial structure left at Fort Selkirk.



23. This stable may have been built early in the century in association with the Dominion Hotel. Early liquor licence applications required that a hotel had to be able to house six horses, as well as rooms for their owners, in order to obtain a liquor licence. In later years, Taylor and Drury used the stable as a warehouse. This building has been largely reconstructed.



21. The Devore Cabin dates back to the early 1930's. The cabin and its shed were built by George Devore, who trapped near

Fort Selkirk in the winter and mined in the Selwyn River area in the summer. Devore sold out after his wife died in the early 1940's. G.I. Cameron, an R.C.M.P. officer, and his family were the next owners. This building is more ornate than most bush cabins, possibly because Mrs. Devore had an influence on its design and decoration.

### R.C.M.P. DETACHMENT



20. Built in the mid to late 1920's, this cabin is similar in design to the Yukon Field Force

buildings, although it was constructed much later by Afe Brown, a local trapper. In 1932, the R.C.M.P. rented the cabin from the local storekeeper. Its best-known residents were the G.I. Cameron family, who lived here from 1935 to 1949. The Corporal used a front room of the cabin for his office. When the telegraph operator was off on patrol fixing the lines, Martha Cameron moved the telegraph equipment to this building and took over as operator.

### THE COWARD CABIN, MACHINE SHOP AND GARAGE



17. Built in 1898, the Coward Cabin was the Yukon Field Force officer's residence and

is one of only three remaining Yukon Field Force buildings. Alex Coward moved the building from the Field Force complex in the 1920's. Coward was a well-known jack-of-all-trades who could build, move and repair anything. He lived in the cabin with his wife Kathleen Cowaret (Martin), the long-time Anglican lay missionary. Mr. Coward added a kitchen to the east side and a porch on the back.



16. Coward's workshop was in the Machine Shop. The variety and quantity of items in

the shop indicates that he was a collector. The isolation of Fort Selkirk forced residents like Coward to be prepared for any contingency, which meant keeping everything that might come in handy.

15. The Garage, also built in 1898, was originally



the Guard Room for the Yukon Field Force and was located next to the existing Orderly Room.

It contained six jails but there is no record or recollection of prisoners ever being kept there. The North West Mounted Police used it for a time, after which it was used as a residence. Around 1947, Coward moved the building to its present site for use as a garage and for storage. Moving and adapting buildings to changing needs was a common practice in Fort Selkirk and other Yukon communities.

### HUDSON'S BAY COMPANY SITE



14a. The Hudson's Bay Company (HBCo.) post established by Robert

Campbell in 1852 was located to the rear of his property. Shortly after it was built, the Chilkats sacked the Fort. Later, another trading company, Schofield and Zimmerlee, built on this site. When the HBCo. returned to Fort Selkirk after an 86-year absence, it bought the Schofield and Zimmerlee store. After using the building (shown at left) for several years the HBCo. tore it down. The concrete foundation you see here is all that is left of a modern store which the HBCo. built in

the 1940's. In the early 1950's, the store was taken out to Nelson Forks, near Fort Nelson on some of the last riverboats traveling upriver.

### SELKIRK FIRST NATIONS RESIDENCES AND CACHES

After the Gold Rush, Euro-American settlers laid out the townsite in uniform blocks. First Nations were assigned to a reserve out of town, which they never occupied. Instead, the Selkirk people continued to live in the upriver end of town at the site of their traditional camp. Their cabins were used seasonally, when the Selkirk people returned from hunting and trapping on the land. Cabins of persons who died were usually dismantled or burned as a sign of respect.

The caches were elevated or ground-level buildings, which were used to store meat, fish and berries for winter use. Furs and valuables such as leather dog harnesses also were put into the caches where animals could not reach them. Each family would have four or five caches, sometimes including one under the floor of their cabin.



14. Joe Roberts may have built this cabin around 1916,



the date found on newspapers that were used as chinking between the logs.



13. The Baum Cabin was probably built by Andrew Baum between 1915 and 1925. The Baum family lived in it when they were not away from Fort Selkirk cutting firewood for the steamboats or trapping at Selwyn Creek.



12. The partially collapsed Anderson Cabin was built by Johnny Anderson in the mid 1930's, after he married Sophie Abraham, daughter of Old Abraham.



11. Old Abraham (Shi in Northern Tutchone language) and his wife, Jessie, lived here. He was one of several Indian doctors living at Fort Selkirk in the first half of the 20th Century. The traditional doctor's responsibilities included healing people, predicting the future and controlling the natural elements.

10. Tommy McGinty built this cabin in ten days during the summer of 1939. He was a respected



Selkirk First Nation Elder and a great source of stories, songs and lore about the traditional way of life. In his early days he would spend much time trapping in the bush, returning to this cabin when he was in Fort Selkirk. This is a good example of a small, seasonal cabin which could be built and heated easily.



9. The Big Jonathan Cache (early 1920s) is one of the oldest standing buildings at this end of town. It belonged to Big Jonathan Campbell and sits beside the reconstructed Big Jonathan Cabin. Big Jonathan Campbell was the grandson of Chief Thlingit Thling and the son of Hanan, to whom the Hudson Bay trader Robert Campbell gave his name. After Big Jonathan's death, his house was taken down as a sign of respect, but the cache remains.



8. The Peter McGinty Cache is typical of those used to store fish and game as well as valuables such as furs. Peter McGinty was the father of Tommy McGinty.



7. Jackson Jonathan, third son of Big Jonathan and Susan Campbell, built this small cabin about 1947 and lived here alone for a few years until he married Leta Johnson and moved to Pelly Crossing. He built the cabin first as a tent frame, to which he added wood siding, flooring and a roof; this was a common construction practice in early Yukon.



6. Stanley Jonathan, Jackson's brother, moved this cabin from Garnet Creek, which is up the Pelly River, in 1940. He bought the cabin from George Crosby, who had lived here with his parents until the family moved to Minto.



5. The Double Cache was built in two stages and was jointly owned and used. Robert Luke and, later, David Silas used the upper half, which was built around 1930. About ten years later, Stanley Jonathan built the lower half for his own use.



4. People say that Luke Roberts built this cabin around 1930, then sold it to David Silas.

Robert Joe, Copper Joe and Copper Peter are said to have lived here. They were sons of the Copper Chief, who was a contemporary of Chief Hanan.



3. The Old Silas Cache may be made of materials from the Yukon Field Force buildings and probably was built before 1949. With its door and window, it looks more like a shed than a cache.



2. Frank Blanchard, the son of Ralph Blanchard, built this cabin in 1938, when he was still a bachelor. Later, it was used as a seasonal dwelling when the Blanchard family came into Fort Selkirk from their trapline.

### ORDERLY ROOM / BLANCHARD CABIN



1. The Orderly Room is the only remaining Yukon Field Force building left on its original site. It was one of three similar buildings with pyramidal roofs, which fronted the parade ground. These buildings, plus large barracks beside the parade ground, completed the complex. After

the Yukon Field Force left, in 1899, the North West Mounted Police occupied part of the complex until the detachment was temporarily withdrawn in 1911. The Ralph Blanchard family lived in the Orderly Room in the 1920s and 30s. Blanchard ran a large woodcutting camp 12 miles upriver. He and his First Nation wife, Susan, raised a large family. In the late 40s, the front wall was removed so the structure could be used as a garage.

### YUKON FIELD FORCE CEMETERY



This cemetery is about a five minute walk past the Yukon Field Force area. The cemetery was the resting place of three Field Force soldiers, known only by their surnames: Corcoran, Hansen and Walters. Later, the cemetery was a burial place for the Euro-American population of Fort Selkirk. According to those inscriptions that are still legible, the cemetery was in use from 1898 to 1939.

### CAMPGROUND FACILITIES

The Fort Selkirk campground includes outhouses, picnic benches, well (with a hand pump), fire rings, tent sites, kitchen shelter with cook stove, and bear proof food and garbage containers. Firewood is provided from June to mid-August.

### RULES OF CONDUCT

Please treat this site with respect. You are asked to observe the following rules:

No alcoholic beverages out of the campground. No fires outside the campground.

Restrain pets.

No littering.

Food smells may attract bears- keep a clean camp.

Keep noise levels at a minimum after 10:00p.m.

Please note that west of the campground there is a work camp for the Fort Selkirk preservation and interpretation staff. To assure your safety and their privacy, stay out of this area unless invited.

### FURTHER INFORMATION

For further information about Fort Selkirk's historic resources, contact:

Government of the Yukon, Historic Sites

Box 2703, Whitehorse, YT Y1A 2C6

Phone: 867-667-5386

Fax: 867-667-8023

<http://www.tc.gov.yk.ca/fortselkirk.html>

<http://www.virtualmuseum.ca/Exhibitions/FortSelkirk/english/index.html>