

Lapierre House and Rampart House Historic Sites Interpretation Plan



Rampart House, June 2007.

Midnight Arts photo

prepared for
Vuntut Gwitchin and Yukon Government, Historic Sites

by
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Acknowledgments



Rampart House work crew. L-R: Brent Riley, Duffy Webber, Buttons the dog, Bertha Frost, Stanley Njootli Jr., Freddy Frost, Moses Lord and Wilfred Josie, 20 June 2007. *Midnight Arts photo*

The *Rampart House & Lapierre House Historic Sites Interpretation Plan and Interpretive Manual* have been prepared for the Vuntut Gwitchin and the Yukon Government’s Historic Sites Unit. These documents build on the work that went into preparing the *Rampart House Historic Site / Lapierre House Historic Site Management Plan* (1999).

Many thanks to the elders who recorded their memories of Rampart House and Lapierre House over the years, as well as other people and groups who have researched the sites and area in the past. Particular thanks to Brent Riley and project managers, Megan Williams and Doug Olynyk as well as those who offered resource materials, suggestions and other help with this project.

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Introduction

Abbreviations:

LH-RH Lapierre House and Rampart House Historic Sites
OC Old Crow YA – Yukon Archives YG – Yukon Government



Rampart House residents watching Bishop Stringer's departure, ca. 1911.
YA, James Fyfe fonds, 82/42, #13.

Rampart House Historic Site and Lapierre House Historic Site are special places within the traditional territory of the Vuntut Gwitchin. They are both sited on the Porcupine River system. These are two of the earliest places in the Yukon where First Nation people met and interacted with non-natives. At these sites, the Gwich'in dealt with fur traders, explorers, Christian missionaries, and government officials; people who brought many changes to Gwich'in culture. In the late 1800s and the early 19th century, the two sites were important Gwich'in communities. They were bases for some Gwich'in families and regularly visited by many others. Many families have relatives buried at these sites. Both sites are still visited by Gwich'in people and occasional tourists. For several weeks each summer, Rampart House is occupied by a work crew conserving the heritage resources.

The significance of these two sites was recognized in the *Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation Final Agreement* (the *Final Agreement* or *VGFNFA*) of 1993. The agreement states that the sites will be jointly owned and managed by the Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation and the Yukon Government, and will be designated as historic sites under the Yukon *Historic Resources Act*.

First things first: what is Interpretation?

Interpretation is a special way of communicating information in a manner which reveals meanings and relationships to an audience rather than to simply communicate factual information. It helps people to understand natural and cultural heritage through first hand involvement with ideas, cultures, objects, artifacts, landscapes or sites.

Good interpretation can mean the difference between wondering and understanding. For the visitor to an abandoned settlement, it can mean feeling more a part of the place without losing the sense of discovery and mystery.

What is an Interpretation Plan?

An interpretation plan takes a comprehensive approach to all aspects of interpretation. What are the main messages and stories that best reveal the nature of Lapierre House and Rampart House Historic Sites? What are the site resources?

Who are the members of the potential audience – Vuntut Gwitchin citizens, river travellers, students, other Yukoners – and what are their needs and interests? Who belongs to the broader audience who might be interested in the LH/RH stories but are unable to visit the site?

How does this interpretation fit with other interpretation initiatives in Vuntut Gwitchin traditional territory and elsewhere within Yukon? Are some RH-LH stories already being told elsewhere?

What are the best ways to tell LH-RH stories? Interpretive approaches can address a broad range of alternatives from self-guided hikes with a brochure, signage, onsite tours and interpretive programs, and video.

Which interpretive methods work best and which could be improved? There is no single best way to do interpretation. The main goal is to provide visitors with some new thoughts and ideas. There can be as many different ways of interpreting these historic sites as there are visitors.

What is needed to put interpretation into place? Answering this question means addressing issues such as setting priorities, training, costs, and timetables. Putting all these elements into a comprehensive interpretive plan, rather than taking a piecemeal approach can increase the effectiveness of interpretation. It can also mean increased cultural awareness for Vuntut Gwitchin citizens, increased tourism, more jobs and other economic benefits for the Vuntut Gwitchin as well as the opportunity to share and illuminate the rich history of Lapierre House and Rampart House Historic Sites with a variety of audiences.

GENERAL PRINCIPLES

for interpretation of Lapierre House and Rampart House

The following principles should guide the interpretation of Lapierre House and Rampart House:

- ◆ The primary audience for interpretation should be the Vuntut Gwitchin. Interpretation can be a tool to help younger people learn more about their language, culture and history.
- ◆ Use the expertise of Elders and acknowledge their role as educators, interpreters and counsellors in passing on stories of the Vuntut Gwitchin.
- ◆ Interpretation should be culturally appropriate and implemented by members of the Vuntut Gwitchin.
- ◆ Visitors should learn that Rampart House and Lapierre House are homes to the Gwich'in people and be encouraged to respect the sites and their heritage resources.
- ◆ Vuntut Gwitchin members have the first opportunity to realize social and economic benefits from interpretation.
- ◆ Interpretation should be environmentally friendly. Interpretation should make use of site resources but never to their detriment.
- ◆ All Yukoners should have the opportunity to experience, enjoy and learn from the heritage of Rampart House and Lapierre House.

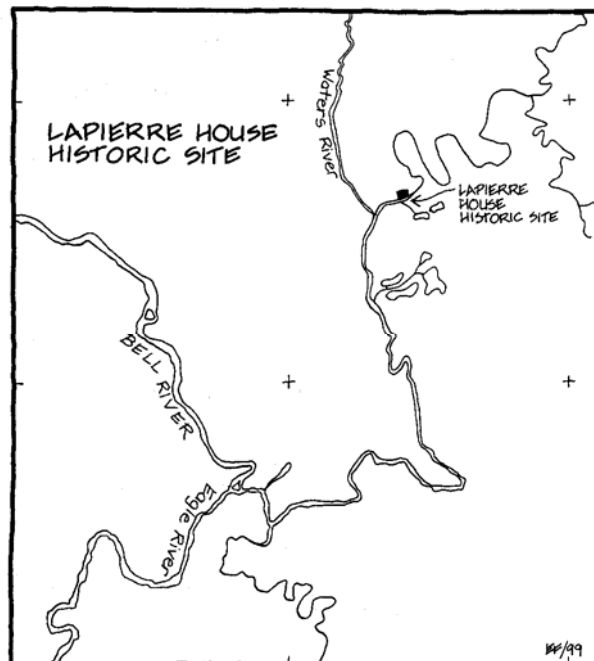
1.0 Orientation & Access

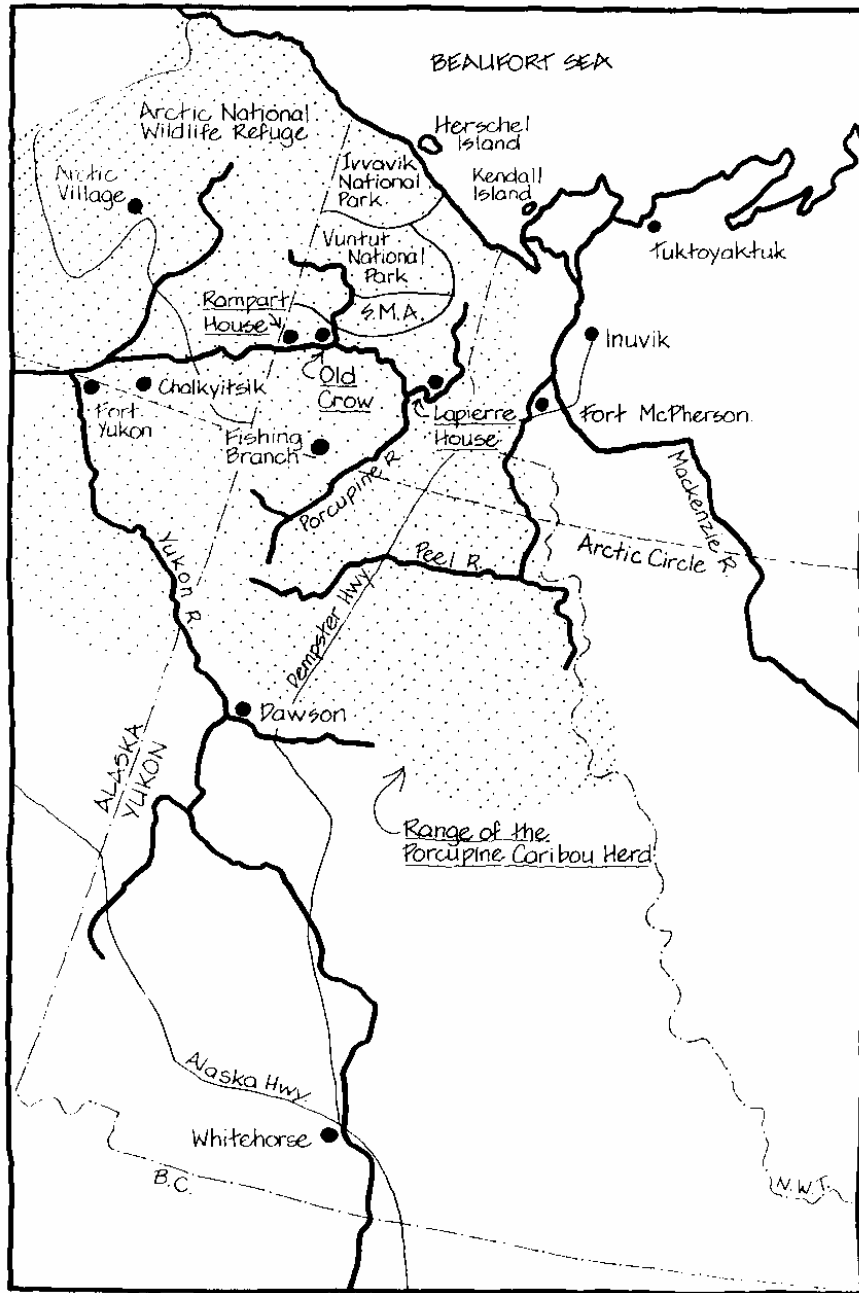
Rampart House and Lapierre House are both located within the drainage of the Porcupine River system. Rampart House is on the north bank of the Porcupine River adjacent to the Canada-US border, downstream from Old Crow, and upstream from the Alaskan settlement of Fort Yukon. Lapierre House lies along the Bell River (formerly called the Rat River), 45 km from its confluence with the Porcupine River, and in the western foothills of the Richardson Mountains (see Map 1).

Map 2 on the following page, also reprised from the management plan, shows the location of the historic sites in their broader geographical context and in relationship to the range of the Porcupine Caribou herd. Map 1-1 locates Lapierre House accurately on the meandering Bell River. Rampart House is easily located on small scale maps at the point where the International Boundary intersects the Porcupine River.

The third map, Map 3, prepared by Brent Riley, shows the current boundaries of Rampart House Historic Site as well as various other features of interest.

Map 1: Location of Lapierre House





Map 2: Geographical Context of Rampart House and Lapierre House.

RH 11x17 fold-out map to be inserted here.

2.0 Planning Background & Recent Activities

Interpretation planning needs to take place within the context of overall site planning and management. Considerable planning, research and preservation work has taken place at the two historic sites over the last two decades. A number of these activities are in themselves interesting stories, and worthy of interpretation.

Archaeological Activity

In 1997, Ray LeBlanc and a crew surveyed Rampart House. Grace Tenaja, a graduate student, also spent a couple of seasons working at the site. In 2001, Thomas J. Hammer was responsible for archaeological mapping and testing at the Lapierre House site. Most artifacts collected are housed at the Yukon Government, Archaeology offices in Whitehorse with some items held by Vuntut Gwitchin Heritage Department.



The Management Plan signing celebration at Rampart House, 23 July 2001. Yukon Government photo

Oral History

During two major oral history projects in 1993 and 1995, young people visited Rampart House and Lapierre House with elders to record their memories about these two sites.

In the late 1990s, Vuntut Gwitchin carried out a four year oral history project and subsequently prepared a detailed database/finding aid allowing researchers to consult transcripts on a great variety of topics. A book will be published in the fall of 2008, based on these materials. The working title is *Vuntut Gwich'in: History of the People of Old Crow, Yukon*.

Since then, additional oral history interviews focussed on cultural geography, learning about place names and accumulating material for educational materials. Eventually Vuntut Gwitchin researchers would like to interview Gwich'in in other communities such as Fort Yukon and Fort McPherson. Although this work will undoubtedly uncover valuable material about the two historic sites, this will happen within a wider research context.

Management Plan

In 1999, the team of Ecogistics Consulting (Judy Campbell), Eileen Fletcher, Colin Bearsto, Midnight Arts and Sheila Greer prepared a draft management plan for the two Historic Sites.

The plan was officially enacted on July 23, 2001. Many people travelled by boat and helicopter to Rampart House to celebrate the signing of the *Rampart House Historic Site / Lapierre House*

Historic Site Management Plan by Chief Joe Linklater on behalf of VG and then Yukon Minister of Tourism, Sue Edelman.

Preservation Activity

Since 2000, a conservation crew has spent about a month at the site every summer, usually June to early July, as this is the best time for travel based on water levels. To date they have stabilized most standing structures in the townsite through the installation of braces to support deteriorated or overloaded structural members. This is an ongoing activity since the deterioration of original materials continues and additional support is occasionally required. All of the stabilization jobs are being looked at as temporary installations until there is time for more permanent measures.

The work crew has completed exterior restoration of the Cadzow store as well as replacement of interior components such as the flooring at the ground floor level and the restoration of the stairs, counters and shelving. More recently, the crew has been working on the Cadzow residence and warehouse. The house is nearing completion with the exterior essentially complete except for chinking, daubing, and painting/whitewashing. The interior requires closing in with the addition of window sash and repaired doors as well as the repair and reinstallation of the stairs. Work on the warehouse has solely consisted of the stabilization and gathering of logs in preparation for future restoration.

Maintenance work has included some brushing, especially around work areas and where willows have been growing in and around the heritage resources.

Research

In the late 1990s, Colin Beirsto conducted extensive archival research on Rampart House and prepared a bibliography of sources.

The Vuntut Gwitchin Heritage Department continues to collect material relevant to the First Nation. Recent acquisitions include collections such as the Cass manuscript and audio recordings, Clara (Linklater) Tizya's photo collection and other material that refers to Rampart House and Lapierre House in addition to other topics.

Design Guidelines

In 2007, Aasman Design Incorporated prepared a report containing guidelines for signage and graphic materials about the two sites. This will be particularly useful for preparing interpretive materials such as signs, brochures or booklets, and possibly even website displays.

3.0 A Warmer Welcome: Site Issues

One of the most important elements in interpreting a site is to make people feel welcome. This creates a positive atmosphere and establishes a communication link right from the outset making people more receptive to your message. If the site is uninviting, people will not visit or stay for very long.

In order to deliver interpretation at Rampart House and Lapierre House, a few critical things need to be in place. Visitors need to be able to find the sites, they need to feel welcome so that they will stop, and then – at Rampart House – they should find at least basic facilities so that they can camp in a dedicated, appropriate area that is not intrusive. Visitors need to be able to tour the sites safely and have some awareness of where they are going and what they are seeing.

Tour organizers need to be aware of factors such as times of high and low water in the Porcupine River system and more desirable times to visit Rampart House such as when the crew is working in June and can offer logistical support or when the fall migration of the caribou is taking place.

Below is a brief discussion of these factors.

3.1 RAMPART HOUSE

The following observations are based on a visit to Rampart House in June 2007.

Site Recognition & Access

At present, there is nothing to identify the site to the river traveller. Visitors travelling downriver by boat see part of the work camp and a blue tarp over the warehouse. There is a flagpole but at the time of visiting, the “flag” remnants were tattered and unidentifiable. The only signage is a small sign just above the high water mark informing hunters that they are now in Yukon. It would be understandable if some visitors assumed that this was another private camp, similar to other places farther upriver. The two signs that identify the site as a Yukon historic site date from ca. the late 1960s or early 1970s and are not easily seen from the river.



Rampart House Facilities and Navigation Notes

Trails

- At the west end of the site, the **trail up the riverbank** is unmarked and in poor condition.
- Trail is clearer on **east side**, mainly due to heavy use by the work crew.
- The **bridge** linking the two parts of the site is hard to find. “Pointer” signs would be very useful in a few locations.

Camping

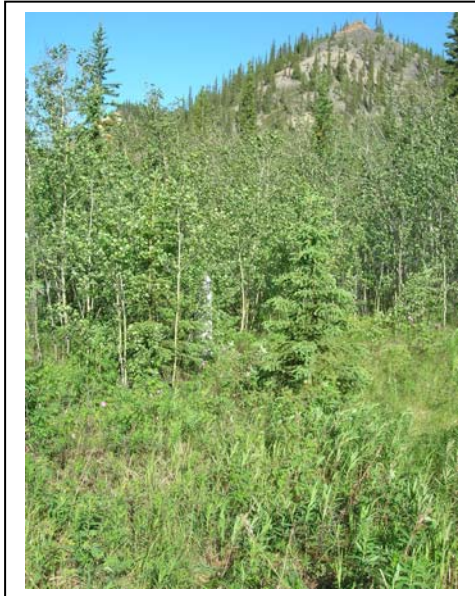
- The **lower bench**, commonly used for camping, is overgrown and would benefit from brushing. This would also be an excellent site for a welcome sign.
- The management plan suggests that the **upper bench** to the west of the church and rectory buildings would be a good tenting area. A major drawback to this, however, is that this is a long steep climb from a water source. This is also presently very overgrown.
- Both camping areas would benefit from installation of an **outhouse**. At present the only outhouse on site is east of the work camp and not very accessible to visitors.
- The management plan recommends construction of a **drying cabin** or shelter in the camping area. Even a framed wall tent would provide shelter and discourage visitors from using, and possibly damaging, historic buildings.



Clockwise from top left: trail to lower bench at RH west, suggested location for a “Welcome” sign on lower bench to left of barrel, bridge crossing creek, view of lower bench from proposed tenting area on upper bench (a long, steep way to carry water).

Rampart House Site Visit Notes continued:

- The international boundary marker is obscured by trees and bush and hard to find unless one knows where to look. This marker symbolizes an important part of the Rampart House story and should be highly visible to visitors.
- While the east side of the site is well-cleared, the west side is presently overgrown with rose bushes, raspberries, wild rhubarb, and other brush. This creates the misleading impression that the east side of the site is the most important part of the settlement and makes it hard for visitors to tour the west part.
(Note: Usually, there is more brushing of the site but the brushcutter was broken during my visit.)



Top Left: Look for the international boundary marker in this photo.

Top Right: Dense brush makes it difficult to move around the west side of Rampart House.

Bottom: Two kayakers passing by Rampart House without stopping for a visit.

Rampart House Recommendations

Access & Facilities

- **Riverbank trail** - Improve riverbank trail from shore to lower bench in RHW. It would benefit from widening and setting in log steps. Trail to upper bench also needs some improvement.
- **Tenting areas** - Clear designated tenting areas and install outhouse/s. ♦ There is a fireplace on lower bench. Consider whether campfires/cooking should be limited to this area or if a fireplace could safely be installed on upper bench. If you are going to encourage camping on the upper bench, you will NEED a firepit. Consider setting up a pole and rope structure to hoist food out of reach of bears.
- **Clearing** - Selective clearing has been used successfully in other locations such as Forty Mile to create wide trails that encourage visitors to walk to certain areas while avoiding fragile resources and potentially dangerous spots such as holes or large metal objects. This could be done in RHW to create a wide walking tour trail (wide enough so that two people could comfortably walk side by side) in a large loop. See suggested route in Appendix 1.
- **Rest areas** - Set up some simple benches at various spots around the townsite so visitors can rest and enjoy the spectacular views.
- **Hill trails** - The trails up the hills are very inviting. Hikers can climb a relatively short distance to get spectacular views. There should be some cautions, however, about bears, steepness and trails that aren't always clear, not travelling alone and notifying others where you are going.
- **Signage** – See Section 8: Recommended Interpretive Methods.

3.2 LAPIERRE HOUSE

“After hours of paddling, we must be close to Lapierre House (a former HBC post), but except for a clearing in the bush above the river, we don't see anything.”

– blog excerpt describing a canoe trip from Summit Lake to Fort Yukon, 2003
[Note: These river travellers never did stop at Lapierre House.]

Lapierre House is one of the most important sites in Vuntut Gwitchin traditional territory but there is little to indicate this to the visitor. The only river access in 1998 was a narrow trail though dense willows growing right down to the riverbank.

The site is overgrown with deep grasses, buckbrush and willow. The ground is hummocky and spongy from melted permafrost. Unwary visitors can easily trample building remains, trip over artifacts and hurt themselves as well as damage the heritage resources. Lapierre House was

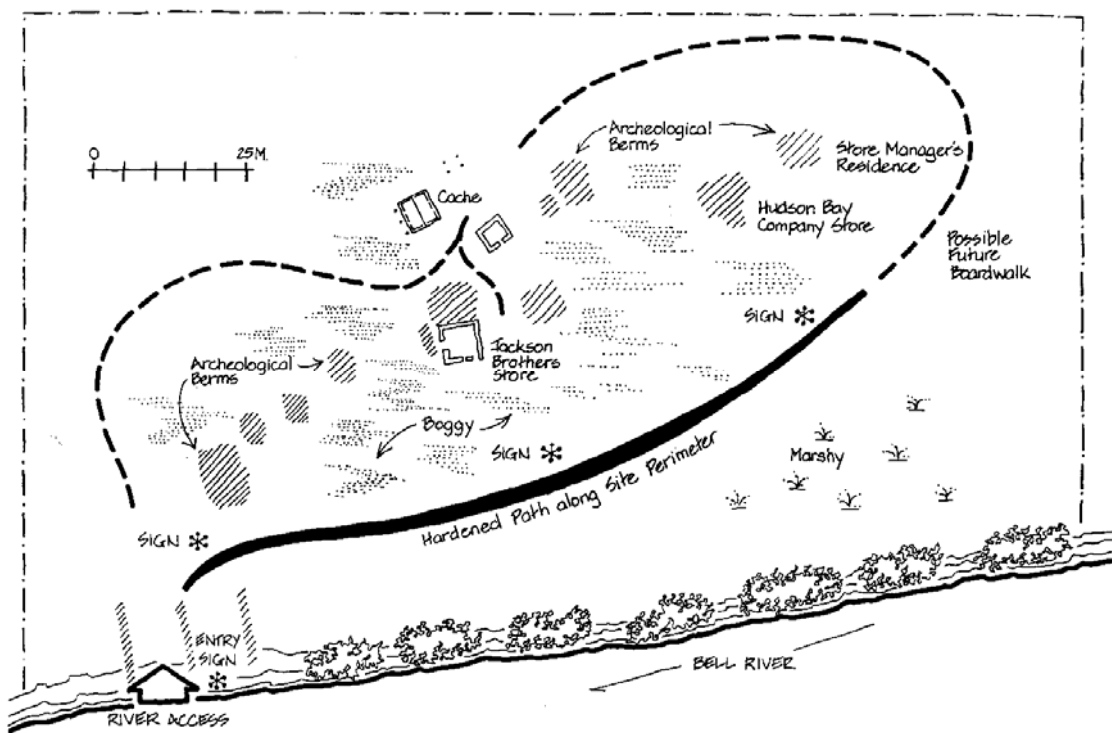
♦ According to Territorial Archaeologist Ruth Gotthardt, depending on location, an archaeological assessment may be required before digging privies. Email note, 12 March 2008.

primarily a winter site and, for the above-noted reasons, not very hospitable to visitors in summer.

Because of the relative inaccessibility of the site and low visitor numbers, the Management Plan recommends that interpretation be limited to a site identification sign and a few sign panels.

Before these can be installed, the following measures need to be taken to ensure the preservation of the fragile site resources and visitor safety:

- construction of a safe walking trail through the site
- sign/s cautioning visitors about avoiding damage to the site and territorial laws regarding collecting souvenirs.
- it has been suggested that a nearby area be cleared to allow for offsite camping.



Proposed Site Development and Visitor Services at Lapierre House (from Management Plan)

3.3 Travel Constraints

Planning of river visits to both Rampart House and Lapierre House requires awareness of high water and low water periods. When water is low, larger boats that can carry heavy loads are more liable to run into problems with shallow water and possible propeller damage or grounding on submerged bars. For this reason, the work crew and supplies travel to the site in late May and June when water is higher.

For independent travellers, there are few published river guides. Madsen and Mather have written about the Porcupine River in a recent guidebook (*A Guide to Paddling in the Yukon*,

2004) but as this is a two page summary, there are a number of omissions regarding logistics and cultural and natural features along the way. In future, Vuntut Gwitchin may wish to create a page with some of this information on the Old Crow website as well as perhaps publishing their own river guide.

Travel, particularly tours, may also be more desirable at certain times for other reasons. When the work crew is on site at Rampart House, people have the opportunity to learn more about preservation activity as well as possibly getting some logistical support from the crew. In late summer and early fall, visitors may be able to see part of the fall migration of the Porcupine Caribou Herd, a fascinating natural spectacle. Visitors should be made aware of the importance of traditional subsistence hunting in the region.

3.4 Conclusion

A number of these items were recommended as part of the management planning. While these may be management – as opposed to interpretation – issues, they are essential components to ensure that the sites are safeguarded and that visitors feel welcomed and have a comfortable and safe interpretive experience.

4.0 THE THEMES & STORIES

4.1 Introduction



Lapierre House, August 1999. *Midnight Arts photo*

The country of the Gwich'in abounds with stories, many centring on the sites and areas surrounding Lapierre House and Rampart House. One of the tasks of interpretive planning is to collect and organize these stories and suggest how they might be told.

The attached thematic outline provides one way of doing this. The six themes look at broad areas of interest, which are then broken down into specific stories. Some of these stories are particularly concerned with the country and history of Rampart House and Lapierre House. Others are more general and tell of the Gwich'in who spent time at these places. Underlying all the stories is the concept of *Family Stories*, reminding us that most Gwich'in feel their strongest connection to the two sites through the family members who once lived there. As more information is uncovered, stories can be added or substituted.

The overall concept for this thematic framework is the phrase “Our Family Stories Run through the Land.” This means that it is the stories of Gwich'in elders and others that link these two historic sites and set them in the context of the land, family history and other places where people lived and travelled.

Many of these stories are inter-related. Gwich'in stories of the giant beaver who dammed the Yukon River, are complemented by finds of 80,000-year-old wood remains gnawed by the giant beavers of Beringia. Stories of the Porcupine caribou herd link to evidence of hunting technologies and the importance of the meat trade at Lapierre House.

Most of these stories are told from a Gwich'in perspective. Although non-native people have been in the North Yukon for over 150 years, this is recent compared to the millennia that First Nation people have lived and travelled on the land. Gwich'in lore is so ancient that it includes

the giant animals of Beringia and the immense lakes that once covered their land. The First Nations' perspective is the unifying thread that holds these stories together.

Interpreters will need to be aware of how these stories interlink and overlap with other interpretation within Vuntut Gwitchin traditional territory and with stories being told at places such as the Vuntut Centre.

To understand the significance of Rampart House and Lapierre House, one must gain a sense of the surrounding landscape and the lives of the people who spent time here. The first two themes, *The Land* and *The People* provide a context to understand the four themes that are more specific to interpretation at Rampart House and Lapierre House.

Much material has already been prepared on these two general themes and they will be interpreted in other locations in Vuntut Gwitchin traditional territorial such as the new visitor centre in Old Crow. For people visiting from elsewhere, this background information will be important to understand the significance of Rampart House and Lapierre House.

More specific stories about Rampart House and Lapierre House will need to distinguish the differences between the two sites as well as their similarities. While both sites have related stories about the Hudson's Bay Company, Anglican Church and changes in settlement patterns, they also had somewhat different economies, occupational use and were associated with different families.

RAMPART HOUSE & LAPIERRE HOUSE

Themes and Stories

Our family stories run through the land

The Land

- Geology
- Beringia
- River Environment
- Flora/Vegetation
- Fauna/Wildlife

The People

- Stories in Stones & Caribou Bones
- Stories from our Elders
- Traditional Territory/ Place Names
- Seasonal Round
- Traditional Technologies
- Connections among Gwich'in peoples

Rampart House & Lapierre House

Trade & Travel

- Travel: Ways & Means
- Trade with other First Nations
- Hudson's Bay Company
- Private Traders
- New trade goods/new technologies

Religion

- Arrival of Anglican Missionaries
- Gwich'in Church Leaders
- St. Luke's Mission at Rampart House

Government from Afar

- Northern Police Patrols
- Police Guides & Special Constables
- Epidemic of 1911-12
- RNWMP post at Rampart House
- the Mad Trapper Episode
- Boundary Survey: Drawing Lines on the Land

Times of Change

- Visitors to our land
- Changing settlement patterns
- Land claims
- Planning & Preservation



Lapierre House and Rampart House: Theme and Story Chart

Midnight Arts photo

4.2 OUR WORLD

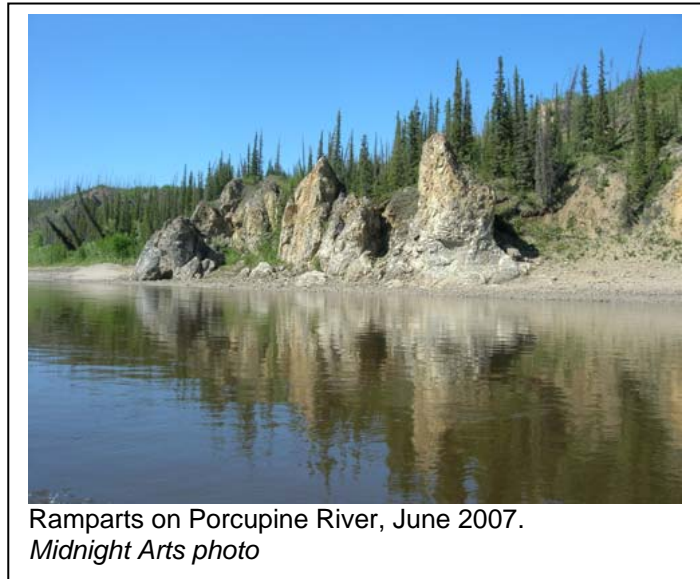
These two general themes, *The Land* and *The People*, provide a context for more detailed stories about Rampart House and Lapierre House. Visitors from outside, especially, will want to know more about the country through which they are travelling and the people who have lived there for millennia.

4.2.1 Theme: The Land

The land is real important to us. We use everything on it.

– John Joe Kaye, August 1998.

A visitor to the country around Lapierre House and Rampart House is viewing an ancient landscape. The area known as Beringia was never glaciated during the most recent ice ages. Beringia extended across Siberia through Alaska and west to the Mackenzie River area. It remained ice-free during two major Pleistocene glacial advances, ca. 120,000 to 65,000 years ago and 38,000 to 12,000 years ago. This unique environment supported many large mammals such as mammoths, mastodons, horses, camels, bison, giant moose and short-faced bear, most now extinct. This area has also been described as the cradle of human civilization in North America.



For two million years, fine grained sediments were being continuously deposited on this land. These layers of sediment preserved the remains of mammals, plants, humans, tephra (fine volcanic ash layers), and insects. One knowledgeable geologist claims that this landscape provides the best record on earth of what took place in the past two million years (S. Morison, pers. comm., Oct. 1998).

The Porcupine River once flowed eastward through the Richardson Mountains via McDougall Pass. About 25,000 years ago, the river was dammed by the ice sheet on the east side of the mountains. This blockage, as well as another ice dam at the head of the Peel River, caused the rivers to back up and create immense glacial lakes. Today we can still see the old beach lines and large sediment bluffs consisting of silts from the bottoms of those lakes. When the interconnected waters of the lake basins rose and overflowed into Alaska, they cut a new outlet into the Yukon River. The tremendous force of the draining water gouged into the bedrock through which the ancestral Porcupine River flowed, creating the dramatic Ramparts.

The Porcupine River valley has always been a rich food source for the Gwich'in. The abundant river environment is a source of waterfowl and several species of fish including three species of salmon. The river valley is also home to large and small mammals, particularly the Porcupine Caribou Herd which crosses the river in a number of places during its annual migrations.¹

Story: Geology

- ◆ For two million years, layers of fine-grained sediment or tephra were deposited on the land.
- ◆ The Porcupine River once flowed to the east through the Richardson Mountains by McDougall Pass.
- ◆ About 25,000 years ago, ice dams created immense glacial lakes. When the lake basins rose and overflowed into Alaska, they cut a new outlet southwest to the Yukon River.
- ◆ The force of water from the draining of the glacial lakes created the dramatic landscapes that make up the Ramparts.
- ◆ According to one geologist, this landscape provides the best record of what happened on earth over the last million years.

Story: Beringia

- ◆ Both Rampart House and Lapierre House are located in *Beringia*, an area which was unglaciated during the last major ice advance. This unglaciated area provided a wide land bridge that linked Siberia to the western Northwest Territories for most of sixty or seventy millennia during the Wisconsin glaciation period
- ◆ A number of plant, animal and insect species originate in Beringia and later spread beyond its limits.
- ◆ This was also the home of now extinct species such as the woolly mammoth, short-faced bear and the small Yukon horse.
- ◆ People were also part of Beringia. These hunters and gatherers hunted, gathered edible plants and engaged in other subsistence activities.

Story: River Environment

- ◆ The Porcupine River valley has always been a rich food source for the Gwich'in.
- ◆ Migrating waterfowl use the river as a flyway.
- ◆ Three species of salmon run up the river to spawn. Other fish found in the area include whitefish, grayling, lingcod, suckers, pike, and inconnu. Historically, great numbers of fish were caught at both Rampart House and Lapierre House.
- ◆ The Porcupine Caribou Herd crosses the river in a number of places during its annual migrations. People also hunt moose and sheep in the river valley.
- ◆ Small mammals that thrive in the riverine environment include marten, fox, muskrat, gopher, weasels, otter and beaver.

¹ This section relies heavily on the report prepared by Norman Barichello for the *Rampart House/Lapierre House Management Plan, Appendix Two: Ecological Setting* (Ecogistics Consulting, 1999).

Story: Flora/Vegetation

- ◆ Rampart House lies within the taiga forest or northern boreal forest, with black and white spruce and fire successional patches of paper birch, balsam poplar and aspen.
- ◆ The settlement and immediate area has an abundance of berries and blossoms. A casual plant survey in June 2007 revealed a number of berry bushes (soapberry, raspberry, lowbush cranberry, blueberries, wild rose – a source of Vitamin C rich fruit) and about three dozen varieties of wildflowers.
- ◆ Lapierre House is located along the forest-tundra ecotone or treeline. North of the settlement lies arctic tundra while to the south is the northern boreal forest.
- ◆ The understory is typically an extensive cover of shrub birch, and willow, associated with tussocks of sedge and cottongrass, and heath shrubs, mosses, lichens, berries and wildflowers.



Arctic Poppy near Rampart House.
Midnight Arts photo

Story: Fauna/Wildlife

- ◆ Lapierre House is the northern limit of such mammalian species as pygmy shrews, pikas, snowshoe hares, red squirrels, beaver, and northern bog lemmings.
- ◆ Lapierre House is also at the southern limit of arctic foxes, muskox, and polar bears.
- ◆ Birdlife in the Lapierre House area is also diverse because of the variety of nearby habitats.
- ◆ The area surrounding Rampart House features a rich fauna of water birds, furbearers, moose, and the migrant population of Porcupine Caribou.
- ◆ From 1909-1916, there was an average of 13,601 pounds of fish [salmon] caught per year at Rampart House. This was 14% of the entire annual Yukon drainage catch, and 75% of the entire Porcupine River catch.
- ◆ Other freshwater fish caught in the Porcupine River include whitefish, grayling, lingcod, suckers, pike and inconnu.
- ◆ Vuntut Gwitchin have hunted caribou near the settlement for at least a century. Donald Frost told of how women used to snare caribou on the bar below Rampart House and today's hunters still camp at the townsite and hunt nearby.

4.2.2 Theme: The People

In the mid -19th century, Rampart House lay within the traditional territory of the regional Gwich'in group known as the Crow Flats or Vuntut Gwitchin (Slobodin 1981). The Lapierre House area is thought to have been most heavily used by another regional Gwich'in group known as the Takudh or Upper Porcupine Gwich'in (Slobodin 1981). The Takudh have not existed as an identifiable regional Gwitchin group since the middle of this century. Families of Takudh background are now based in Old Crow, Dawson, or the Northwest Territories Gwich'in communities of Fort McPherson, Aklavik and Inuvik.

The third regional Yukon Gwich'in group are the Teetl'it, who are most closely identified with the Peel River basin. In the 19th century these people traded frequently at Peel River Post, later known as Fort McPherson. In the 20th century, the Teetl'it people have hunted and trapped extensively in the Richardson Mountains.

The Takudh or upper Porcupine River Gwich'in, however, were understood to have been the "mother people" from whom all Gwitchin were descended (Cadzow 1925). The Vuntut Gwitchin are reported to have been the largest of the regional Gwitchin groups in the 19th century (Cadzow 1925).

– Sheila Greer with Colin Beairsto, *Rampart House Historic Site, Lapierre House Historic Site Management Plan, Appendix 2, 1999.*

I felt kind of lonely to see how people lived then. . . I feel guilty to go there with shoes on my feet and pop and candy in my pocket.

– Stephen Frost, Senior, August 1998. (talking about going to see a caribou fence with archaeologist Jacques Cinq-Mars.)

Before the fiddle, this guy named Grasspants, a native person, he somehow sing with his mouth. . . He sing and all the birds come to him. That way, he catch one of them while they dance and that's how he eat. . . That's how that dance came, even before the fiddle come. They used to dance like that just singing with their mouth.

– Hannah Netro, September 1993.

This theme focuses on the Gwich'in and their forebears. Archaeological evidence provides important clues to the lives of the people living in ancient times. Stone tools and bone fragments tell us where they hunted and camped, as well as which animals they killed for food. The great caribou fences speak of large-scale hunts requiring intricate planning and coordination.

The recollections of Elders and the writings of early visitors describe the clothing, shelters and material culture of the Gwich'in when they had little or no access to European trade goods but made ingenious use of what the land provided.

Rampart House and Lapierre House were just two stopping places in an extensive web of travel routes, camps and small settlements within the traditional territory of the Vuntut Gwitchin. The Gwich'in people travelled extensively, both along the Porcupine River corridor from Fort Yukon to Fort McPherson and along various trails out of the river valley. People travelled along other, more direct, routes in winter. Gwich'in people have an intimate knowledge of the mountains, forests, creeks and trails of this land, as well as the seasons and cycles of the animals, fish and

plants. Nearly every landscape feature has a Gwich'in name and each place name usually has a story to go with it.

The Vuntut Gwitchin of Old Crow are linked to Gwich'in speakers in other communities in Northern Yukon and Alaska. The traditional links among Gwich'in, living in places as far distant as Fort Yukon and Fort McPherson, continue today through family ties and a shared culture.

In the past, the Vuntut Gwitchin have prepared interpretive materials have been prepared relating to the more general history and culture of the Vuntut Gwitchin. Some of this material should be added to the *Rampart House-Lapierre House Interpreters Manual* to provide useful background references for the following story headings.

Stories:

- ◆ Stories in Stones & Caribou Bones
- ◆ Stories from our Elders
- ◆ Traditional Territory/ Place Names
- ◆ Seasonal Round
- ◆ Traditional Technologies
- ◆ Gwich'in Connections

Story: Gwich'in Connections

- ◆ Gwich'in-speaking people occupy a vast area extending across Northern Yukon, Alaska and the Northwest Territories.
- ◆ Today the Gwich'in total about 5000 people living in 15 communities.
- ◆ Within this area, smaller groups are associated with specific areas. See the following chart listing these groups and their home communities.
- ◆ Today Gwich'in people across the north meet and work together, primarily to preserve the habitat of the Porcupine Caribou Herd.

GWICH'IN GROUPS

Name	Location	Translation
Vuntut Gwitchin	Old Crow, Crow Flats, Yukon	"people of the lakes"
Takudh (Dagoo)	Upper Porcupine River, Yukon	"head of Porcupine River"
Edhiitat Gwich'in	Aklavik, NWT	"delta people"
Gwichya Gwich'in	Tsiigehtchic, NWT	"people of the flats"
Nihtat Gwich'in	Inuvik, NWT	"mixed nations"
Teet'it Gwich'in	Peel River, Fort McPherson, NWT	"people of the head waters"
Danzhit Hanlaih Gwich'in	Circle, Alaska	"water flowing out of the mountains"
Dendu Gwich'in	Birch Creek, Alaska	"foothill mountain people"
Draan'jik Gwich'in	Chalkyitsik, Alaska	"Black River people"
Gwich'yaa Gwich'in	Fort Yukon and Venetie, Alaska	"people of the flats"
Neets'aai Gwich'in	Arctic Village, Alaska	"residents of the north side"

Source: website for Gwich'in Council International (<http://www.gwichin.org/gwichin.html>)

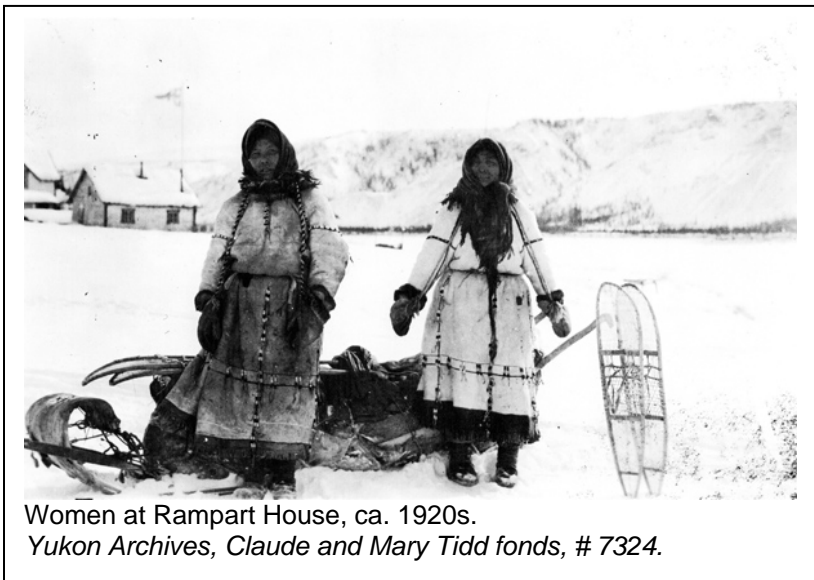
4.3 Rampart House & Lapierre House

The following themes and stories are more specifically concerned with the events and trends that led to the establishment of the two historic sites, the activities that took place at these two communities, and the circumstances that led to their abandonment.

4.3.1 Theme: Trade & Travel

Before we used to use skin tents. My oldest brother was born in one of those tents. People used to make trips to Herschel Island to get food and things we needed; there where they got their first tents from. Gwich'in and Arctic Village people were the first people to get [canvas] tents.
– Sarah Abel Chitzi, October 1993.

In those days when we spent our time out in the mountains drying caribou, we'd move out to certain places to start the fall and after we'd move to different places. We only moved by dog pack. . . In the winter, when they started trapping, people went out as far as Black River to trap for fur. The main fur was marten. On the mountains we trapped foxes and this is what we lived on.
– Charlie Thomas, September 1993.



Women at Rampart House, ca. 1920s.
Yukon Archives, Claude and Mary Tidd fonds, # 7324.

The Gwich'in have always been great travellers. They travelled widely on foot with pack dogs, by snowshoe, boat and later with dog team. During their extensive travels, they met and traded with other First Nations. Although the Gwich'in did not meet white traders until the 1840s, they were already well-acquainted with European goods from British and Russian traders passed on by their First Nation's contacts.

By the 1840s, the Hudson's Bay Company began to push across from the Mackenzie River to the Porcupine. They established Lapierre House in 1846 and built Fort Yukon the following year. Lapierre House, in the midst of a rich hunting area, was best known as a "meat post" supplying dried caribou and fish to other posts. It was used primarily in winter. At Fort Yukon, and subsequently Rampart House, the company traded primarily for fur.

The Gwich'in were shrewd traders. If they were unsatisfied with the quality of the goods or the prices offered, they travelled hundreds of miles to visit other traders. When American whalers at Herschel Island offered better prices than the Hudson's Bay Company, people went to the Arctic coast.

Hudson's Bay Company traders moved out of the area in 1893 and later were replaced by private traders at both posts. An interesting story is determining changes in trade goods over time as new items and new technologies were introduced.

Story: Travel: Ways & Means

- ◆ People travelled vast distances on the land, both for trade and to follow the cycles of the animals that sustained them. They established summer and winter routes.
- ◆ The group size varied according to the season and the resources. Larger numbers of people gathered together for the fall caribou hunt and salmon fishery. In winter, when resources were scarcer, people travelled in smaller family groups.
- ◆ People travelled lightly; carrying only the basic materials for shelter, clothing, hunting and trapping.
- ◆ People travelled mostly on foot using snowshoes in winter. When the rivers opened, they used a variety of watercraft including rafts and moosehide boats.
- ◆ They transported their gear using sleds, pack dogs and drags made of hide. In later years, people began using dog teams.

Story: Hudson's Bay Company

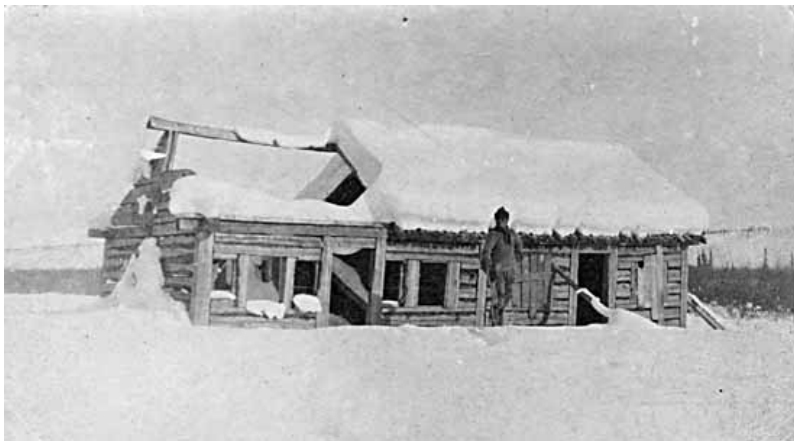
- ◆ The Hudson's Bay Company was incorporated in 1670. British King Charles II granted a Royal Charter to a group of businessmen and traders granting them a monopoly over First Nations trade in area drained by Hudson's Bay, known as Rupert's Land.
- ◆ In 1821, the company merged with their greatest rival, the Northwest Company of Montreal. Their combined territory extended to the Pacific and Arctic Oceans, an area of 7,770,000 square km (3,000,000 square miles).
- ◆ In the 1840s, HBC traders moved from the Mackenzie River valley into the Porcupine drainage. They built Lapierre House in 1846 and Fort Yukon in 1847.
- ◆ When the US bought Alaska and learned the HBC were operating on American territory, Fort Yukon was closed in 1869. New Rampart House was the third post to be built on the Porcupine River 1890, just east of the international boundary.
- ◆ HBC closed both posts in 1893. They were costly to operate and profits had dropped.

Story: Private Traders

- ◆ Hudson's Bay traders had various rivals for Gwich'in trade: Russian traders on the lower Yukon River were replaced by American traders after 1867. By the late 1880s, American whalers on the Arctic coast were trading with local people.
- ◆ When the Hudson's Bay Company left the region, private traders moved into the area.
- ◆ Dan Cadzow moved on to the HBC property at Rampart House in 1904 and operated a store there until. After his first wife's death, he married Rachel Blackfox. Mrs. Cadzow remained at Rampart House after his death in 1929.
- ◆ Two brothers – Frank and Jim Jackson – operated a store at Lapierre House from ca. mid 1920s to some time in 1930s.
- ◆ Traders at both locations supported their Gwich'in neighbours. Cadzow hosted large Christmas parties at Rampart House and the Jackson brothers often used their boat, the *Moose*, to help local families move camp.

Story: New Trade Goods / New Technologies

- ◆ The Vuntut Gwitchin were part of an extensive trade network with other First Nations. Archaeological investigations have uncovered copper and stone tools that show people traded over long distances.
- ◆ Long before non-native traders came to Vuntut Gwitchin traditional territory, people obtained European trade goods from their trading neighbours.
- ◆ From the 1840s on, Gwich'in were able to trade directly with people in their traditional territory. People began trapping additional fur in order to obtain European goods.
- ◆ Traders learned that some goods were more in demand and stocked goods to respond to local demand.
- ◆ Gwich'in were selective about which new goods and technologies they adopted. People were willing to travel long distances for better prices and goods, even going as far as Herschel Island.
- ◆ Items such as rifles changed traditional ways of hunting and camping. Caribou hunting became an individual as well as a group activity.



Ruins of HBCo. Post at Lapierre House ca. 1920.
Yukon Archives, Claude and Mary Tidd fonds, # 7226.

4.3.2 Theme: Religion

The church [at Rampart House] was built with the help of Archie Linklater, Old Bruce, and they got a lot of help from the local people. Ben Kassi worked for the church. He was the catechist who worked for the church most of his life.

– Charlie Thomas, September 1998

The Kutchin became Christianized by their own choice, at a time when they were strong people. They took the basic Christian faith and made it their own, including their own value system and remythologized ancient legends. With their own ordained clergy, Christianity became theirs, and that faith is still here.

– Lee Sax, in Sax & Linklater, *Gikhyi*, 1990.

In 1858, both Roman Catholic and Anglican missionaries travelled to the western Arctic seeking native converts. Although Catholic priests made a few excursions into the Yukon, they met with limited success in winning converts. The Anglican missionaries from the Church Missionary Society, supported by the Protestant traders of the Hudson's Bay Company, won a great many people to their church.



Group pose by St. Luke's Church, Rampart House during the wedding of Ben Kassi. Deacon Amos Njootli and Archdeacon Canham are two of the clergy. YA, *University of Alaska Archives*, #3057.

The Gwich'in developed a strong attachment to Christianity, largely due to the personality and efforts of the Reverend Robert McDonald. McDonald was a talented linguist who learnt the language of the local people, visited them in their camps, married a Gwich'in woman, and trained First Nation catechists to bring the Christian message to outlying areas. Many Gwich'in people became church leaders. Some, such as John Martin, travelled extensively to remote areas of the Yukon, preaching the Anglican Church's message. Of special note is Rev. Amos Njootli, the deacon at Rampart House for many years. St. Luke's church was built during his time there. The church moved to Old Crow in 1921, after the majority of the people had moved there.

Story: Anglican Church Missionaries

- ♦ The first Anglican missionary to visit Vuntut Gwitchin traditional territory was William Kirkby who travelled from Fort Simpson to Fort Yukon in 1861.
- ♦ Based on his recommendations, Rev. Robert McDonald was posted to Fort Yukon in 1862. McDonald travelled extensively throughout Gwich'in territory and trained several First Nations converts to share the Christian message with their people.
- ♦ Several non-native missionaries were posted to both Old and New Rampart House over the years, including Robert McDonald, V.C. Sims, G.C. Wallis, Benjamin Totty, G.H. Moody and A.C. McCullum.
- ♦ St. Luke's church at Rampart House was completed about 1918 and the nearby rectory soon after.

Story: Gwich'in Church Leaders

- ♦ Robert McDonald trained several Gwich'in men as catechists. These lay ministers learned to read in their own language, held services at remote camps and shared the scriptures with their own people.
- ♦ Often these church leaders acted as intermediaries between their people and non-native society.
- ♦ When Canadian citizens were being evicted from Fort Yukon, Robert McDonald turned his work over to William Loola, a Gwich'in catechist.
- ♦ Gwich'in church leaders working in the Lapierre House area included Henry Venn Ketse (Takudh) from 1876 until his death in 1880, and later John Ttsietla and his assistant Charles Tzikkyi (Takudh) and ca. 1903-06, Edward Sittichinli (Teetl'it Gwich'in).
- ♦ When the Church operated a school at Rampart House from about 1916-1921, Jacob Njootli was one of the first teachers.
- ♦ Reverend Amos Njootli was ordained in 1911. He served as the deacon for Rampart House for about nine years. He died in 1923.

Story: St Luke's Church at Rampart House

- ♦ The Gwich'in held services in other buildings at Rampart House before building their own church in 1918.
- ♦ Archie Linklater and "Old Bruce" were the carpenters in charge of construction.
- ♦ The church became a centre for many community events: christenings, marriages, funerals and Christmas celebrations.
- ♦ About 1921, the minister moved to Old Crow and the Gwich'in at Rampart House no longer had their own minister.
- ♦ The church roof and windows were later salvaged for the church at Old Crow.

4.3.3 Theme: Government from Afar

I heard the story that was passed down from my dad. At the time, when the smallpox was among the people, my sister Ellen Bruce was born in 1911. When this happened, they found supplies up here and built hospital right on the island. . . That's where they moved everybody and took care of them. . . . The doctor worked hard too and really took care of them. . . After everybody got well, they burned the hospital down.

— Hannah Netro, September 1993

Well it was good hunting here, but the biggest reason for moving from here was when they put the border in. This line here separates the people on both sides. It spoiled all the trapping and hunting by law.

— Stephen Frost, Sr., September 1993



Cst. Charles Young, Joanne Cadzow and Cpl. Thornthwaite in front of the police post at Rampart House, ca. 1926. YA, Arthur Thornthwaite fonds, 83/22, # 244.

Few people in the outside world knew anything about the country of the Gwich'in people. Nevertheless, governments located thousands of miles away made decisions that were to have a direct impact on their lives. The granting of the vast northwest tract of Canada to a consortium of British traders eventually brought employees of the Hudson's Bay Company into the north Yukon in the 1840s. In 1867, the United States purchased the territory of Alaska from Russia. Two years later, an American naval party displaced Hudson's Bay Company traders from Fort Yukon and installed American traders.

The Hudson's Bay Company rebuilt in three different locations before their post was determined to be within British territory. Even so, New Rampart House ended up right next to the U.S. /Canada boundary line. To protect his business, the local trader requested that customs be collected on goods purchased across the border at Fort Yukon. In 1914, the RNWMP opened a detachment at Rampart House which operated for the next 15 years.

The Mounties brought Canadian law to the land of the Gwich'in. Some Gwich'in became special constables and guides for the police, helping them adapt to the land. Thomas Njootli worked as a special constable at Rampart House. Charlie Stewart, John Moses and Peter Benjamin are just a few of the prominent Gwich'in men who worked as police guides and special constables. Charlie Stewart was the police guide who led the party that found the ill-fated "Lost Patrol" in 1911, while John Moses participated in the manhunt for Albert Johnson, the "Mad Trapper" in the vicinity of Lapierre House. Without the aid of these Gwich'in men, it is likely the police would not have been able to function as effectively as they did. The police, in turn, helped the people in times of disease and famine.

The establishment of the international boundary line directly impacted the lives of the Gwich'in. Families that had once freely ranged throughout the border area had to decide whether they would become Canadian or American citizens. In many cases, families were divided. Because the Gwich'in travelled throughout Alaska, the Yukon and Northwest Territories, there were different sets of laws to contend with, such as limits on game and closed seasons for certain animals.

Story: Northern Police Patrols

- ◆ The Mounted Police relied on extensive patrols to keep track of people and activities in their area.
- ◆ The first northern patrol took place in 1899, Cpl. G.M. Skirving was sent to learn the fate of three missing Edmonton stamperders.
- ◆ From 1904 on, winter police patrols delivered mail and messages between Dawson City and Fort McPherson and later Herschel Island.
- ◆ Mounties relied on Gwich'in guides, dog drivers and hunters to help them along the trail.
- ◆ When Inspector Fitzgerald and his party lost their way and perished during the Lost Patrol of 1910-11, many believed it was because they did not include First Nations guides and hunters.
- ◆ In the 1930s, Old Crow replaced Dawson at the departure point for the northern patrols.
 - ◆ These patrols continued until the 1960s.

Story: Police Guides & Special Constables

- ◆ A number of Gwich'in men worked as translators, special constables and guides for the police.
- ◆ They acted as guides on patrol, hunted to feed the Mounties and their dogs and often looked after dog teams.
- ◆ Perhaps their most important role was educating the newcomers in the ways of Gwich'in life.
- ◆ Thomas Njootli worked as a special constable at Rampart House. Three other Gwich'in men who worked as police guides and special constables were Charlie Stewart, John Moses and Peter Benjamin.

Story: 1911-1912 Epidemic

- ◆ In July 1911, Supt. Z.T. Wood of Dawson was notified by the doctor from a U.S. survey party that the people of Rampart House were suffering from a smallpox epidemic.

- ◆ Constable James Fyfe and nurse Arthur Lee travelled to Rampart House to deliver vaccine and assist the doctor.
- ◆ Several drastic measures were taken to contain the epidemic. The settlement was quarantined and people in outlying camps were warned to stay away. Rampart House residents were isolated on an island opposite the townsite and their dwellings were later burned.
- ◆ There was one death, an infant. Some people later questioned whether the epidemic had indeed been smallpox. Many were affronted by the extreme actions taken by US and Canadian authorities.

Story: NWMP post at Rampart House

- ◆ As early as 1905, Rampart House trader, Dan Cadzow complained to the Canadian government of unfair American competition and requested that a customs agent be sent to Rampart House to collect duty on American goods.
- ◆ The customs department requested that the police handle this duty and in 1913, the NWMP sent Corporal Dempster to open a police detachment at Rampart House.
- ◆ This detachment operated for 16 years, from 1913 to 1929. At that time the Mounties moved their post to Old Crow, following most of the people.
- ◆ The local Mountie acted as a customs agent and enforced border regulations. It became harder for the Gwich'in people to move freely across the boundary.
- ◆ Two Mounties who served at Rampart House, Arthur Thornthwaite and Claude Tidd, were talented photographers and their photos are an excellent record of Gwich'in life at this time.

Story: The Mad Trapper Episode

- ◆ One of the most notorious cases in northern police history was the 1932 hunt for the mysterious “Mad Trapper” of Rat River.
- ◆ Over seven weeks, seven Mounties, three special constables and more than 30 First Nations and non-native civilian volunteers tried to track the man known as Albert Johnson.
- ◆ Johnson had wounded one Mountie during a routine inquiry then withstood a 15-hour assault with dynamite and over 700 rounds of ammunition before fleeing his trapline cabin.
- ◆ He later killed Constable Edgar Millen in another confrontation.
- ◆ Constable Sidney May and Special Constable John Moses led one of the search parties from Lapierre House. They met the party from Aklavik on Feb. 15 and took part in the final shoot-out two days later.
- ◆ This was the first time Mounties used radio and airplanes to help conduct a search.

Story: Boundary Survey: Drawing Lines on the Land

- ◆ Over a period of 20 years, the Hudson’s Bay Company was pushed back out of American territory – first from Fort Yukon, then two other posts on the lower Porcupine River.
- ◆ The second, Old Rampart House, operated for 17 years. Then in 1889, a U.S. survey party discovered the post was still 33 miles within US territory.

- ♦ The post was moved to its current location in 1890. Rampart House hosted an American survey party for a few years from 1911 on.
- ♦ Establishment of the boundary line meant that people had to choose a nationality. In many cases, families were divided.
- ♦ When a Mounted Police post was set up at Rampart House in 1914, police began collecting customs and enforcing Canadian laws. Gwich'in travelling in Alaska, Yukon and NWT might have to contend with three sets of laws on issues such as game limits.

4.3.4 Theme: Times of Change

They are hard time people. They all need each other round here.
—Mary Kassi, August 1998.

Our grandparents and great grandparents protected and looked after these places really good. That's why Rampart House and Lapierre House and Crow Flats are important places for us. That's why we have control of these places. We have to look after these places that our grandparents looked after. We have to protect these places for them and for the future. — John Joe Kaye, August 1998.

You have to attract tourists by doing a good job of the history of the area.
– Stan Njootli, August 1998.

The Gwich'in people have a long history of adapting to times of change and hardship. Being dependent on the migrations of salmon and caribou, the Gwich'in lived where their food was at any given time of year. When the fur traders arrived, they altered their life patterns to include trapping and the posts where trade was conducted. The new technologies brought by the traders were also accepted and incorporated with traditional ways. Unfortunately, disease also came north with the traders. Epidemics of influenza and other diseases caused many deaths.

People travelling to the traditional territory of the Vuntut Gwich'in went there for many reasons. They include early scientists learning about the people and animals of the area, surveyors and others exploring the country on behalf of their governments, some misguided stamperders taking the long route to the Klondike goldfields, and those who just enjoyed the adventure of travelling in new lands. Many of these people relied on help from Gwich'in people they met along the way to survive. Others, such as archaeologists, recognised and relied on the expertise and advice of the Gwich'in people and their knowledge of their land.

The new people also brought new ideas on education. This was a mixed blessing. Although the world was opened up to the Gwich'in, in many ways their traditional world was taken from them. Children were sent off to schools and many lost their connection to the land. Today, traditional knowledge and the Gwich'in language are recognized as important elements of the educational curriculum.

Now the movement back to the land and tradition is strong. The Vuntut Gwitchin traditional territory has been formally recognized under land claims to ensure a base for the culture to

continue. Agreements between different levels of government allow for the preservation and management of important historical sites such as Rampart House and Lapierre House. For the last seven years, Vuntut Gwitchin workers working at Rampart House have become specialists in stabilizing and preserving log structures. The stories of this work and the many skills needed to carry it out are just as interesting to visitors as stories of bygone days.

The lessons of today are being guided by the wisdom of the past as imparted by the Elders. Today, the northern Yukon still attracts scientists and travellers seeking a wilderness experience. The Vuntut Gwitchin are interested in developing the commercial opportunities provided by wilderness and cultural tourism. They are willing to share the culture of their people and stories of Lapierre House and Rampart House.

Story: Visitors to our Land

- ◆ From the 1840s on, the Vuntut Gwitchin met a variety of people visiting the north Yukon. They included explorers, scientists, prospectors, surveyors missionaries and even early tourists/hunters interested in visiting new lands.
- ◆ Most of these visitors relied on the expertise of the Gwich'in to survive and travel in Gwich'in traditional territory.
- ◆ Today, the land of the Vuntut Gwitchin is still of great interest to scientists and wilderness travellers. These modern visitors still rely on the hospitality and expertise of the people who call this area home.

Story: Changes to Settlement Patterns

- ◆ When the Gwich'in began purchasing more goods from trading posts, they spent more time trapping to supply traders with fur. Time spent at the trading posts became part of the seasonal cycle.
- ◆ Missionaries encouraged people to stay at settlements so children could attend school.
- ◆ At Lapierre House, the focus was on the meat trade. Traders purchased meat from Gwich'in hunters to supply Fort McPherson.
- ◆ In the 1900s, Gwich'in began establishing winter villages such as Bluefish River, Old Crow, David Lord Creek, Salmon Cache, Johnson Creek and Whitestone Village. These became home bases for trapping activity.
- ◆ By the 1920s, people were spending more time at Old Crow. Eventually the police and missionary followed them to the new settlement.

Story: Land Claims / Self Government

- ◆ When non-natives moved into the Yukon, First Nations people were never offered a treaty or any kind of payment for the lands and resources taken over by the newcomers.
- ◆ In 1902, Chief Jim Boss (Kashxoot) of Lake Laberge wrote to the Canadian government asking for First Nations lands to be protected. This was the start of the Yukon land claims movement.
- ◆ In 1973, leaders from all over the Yukon presented the document, *Together Today for our Children Tomorrow*, to Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau. It was accepted as the first comprehensive claim in Canada.

- ◆ In 1993, the Yukon Land Claim Agreement-in-Principle was signed by representatives of the governments of Canada and Yukon, and the Council for Yukon Indians (now CYFN).
- ◆ That same year, Vuntut Gwitchin was one of the first four First Nations to complete their land claim agreement.
- ◆ An important provision of this agreement was the protection of the historic sites of Lapierre House and Rampart House, both of which were to be co-owned and co-managed by the Yukon Government and Vuntut Gwitchin.

Story: Planning & Preservation

- ◆ Extensive archival and oral history research has been conducted on these two sites. Researchers have found photographs, government documents, maps, personal recollections and other resources that have told us much about the sites in earlier days.
- ◆ During two major oral history projects in 1993 and 1995, young people visited Rampart House and Lapierre House with elders to record their memories about these two sites.
- ◆ Between 1997 and 2001, there were four or five archaeological surveys at Rampart House and Lapierre House.
- ◆ In 1999, a team of consultants worked with Vuntut Gwitchin citizens to develop a management plan for Lapierre House and Rampart House Historic Sites. This plan looked at all aspects of planning, interpretation and priorities for these two historic sites.
- ◆ Since 2000, a conservation crew has spent a month every summer at Rampart House stabilizing the structures as well as doing more detailed work on the Cadzow store, residence and warehouse.



Working on the Cadzow House, June 2007.
Midnight Arts photo

5.0 The Interpretive Resources

To conduct effective interpretation, one must be aware of the interpretive resources available to tell stories, both on and off the site. Some are obvious, such as the spectacular ramparts near Rampart House and the store at Lapierre House. Others require knowledge of previous research work, such as the archaeological activities in the area and oral history interviews.

In some cases, new research might be needed to obtain a fuller story, such as documenting Gwich'in place names in the immediate areas of the two sites. The visitor's experience is much richer when the interpreter can draw on the landscape, oral traditions, buildings, artifacts and documentary sources to present a more complete picture of the historic sites and the people who once lived there.

5.1 Cultural Resources

5.1.1 Oral Traditions

The Gwich'in people have a wealth of oral traditions linked with the landscape, natural resources, people and events of the region. Gwich'in Elders relate stories about the formation of the landscape, mythological figures such as Ch'ataahuukaii, and how the animals of Beringia were made small. More recently, there are stories about trading and gatherings at Rampart House and Lapierre House, how the sites fit into the seasonal round of area families, and technique for living off the land.

While the most important sources for this knowledge are still the Elders themselves, much oral history has been collected and documented in the past. This includes work that has been done with the Yukon Native Language Centre; the Council for Yukon First Nations (Curriculum Development Branch); Yukon College, Old Crow Campus; and by the Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation, particularly in regards to land claims research. More recently, oral history projects have been carried out by the Vuntut Gwitchin, Parks Canada and Heritage Branch. In the past, scientists and visitors to the area have also documented traditional knowledge as related by Gwich'in people. Ethnographers Cornelius Osgood and Ann Welsh Acheson, plus historian Richard Slobodin are three notable examples.

Drawing upon oral tradition is the most effective way to present the lives and outlook of the Gwich'in people. This material has been effectively used in publications, displays, and by interpreters and guides. The sound recordings of these interviews bring life to displays, slide shows and video productions.

5.1.2 Heritage Structures and Sites

These range from several more-or-less intact buildings at Rampart House to the berms and cellar depression of the former Hudson's Bay Company store at Lapierre House. At Rampart House, there are also the remnants of the fox farm and the cemetery. These built resources are discussed in detail in Appendix 3 of the \Interpreters Manual.

The size and construction styles of the various buildings illustrate differences in use as well as the differences in the living arrangements of the two cultures that spent time at these places. The Gwich'in dwellings tended to be small, easy to put up and to heat. Most were only used seasonally when families came to the posts for trading and special occasions. Structures such as the Cadzow store and warehouse are larger, more elaborately-built buildings meant for year round use and particular functions such as storage and trading. The structures can also illustrate a number of stories by association (e.g. St. Luke's and the Anglican Church, the Cadzow store and the era of independent traders, stories about particular families, etc.).

5.1.3 Archaeological & Palaeontological Sites

Archaeological work was conducted at Lapierre House in 1970 and at Rampart House in 1997 and 1998. Most of the material uncovered dated from the historic occupations of the sites with some prehistoric material found at Rampart House. The information uncovered from these investigations, combined with archival research and oral history research, provides a fuller picture of the people who lived there and their activities. Within the larger area, the Old Crow Basin contains some of the oldest and richest palaeontological and archaeological finds in North America. Many visitors will be interested in hearing about Beringia, Bluefish Caves, palaeontology finds.

The archaeological process itself is interpretable. Public programming for archaeology digs at sites such as Canyon City and Tr'ochëk have been very successful with students, tourists and local residents. This should be considered if it is determined that additional archaeology is going take place at either site.

5.1.4 Artifacts

These can range from prehistoric stone tools to more recent items such as household furnishings, all of which help to tell the stories of life at the two sites. The artifacts from Morlan's dig at Lapierre House in 1970 are housed at the Canadian Museum of Civilization. Artifacts from more recent digs at Rampart House are stored with the Yukon Government's Archaeology office. When families moved away from Rampart House and Lapierre House, they often left personal belongings. Over the years, many have been collected as souvenirs. Apparently some furnishings from Rampart House are now with family members at Fort Yukon.

Objects that were used at the sites can be potent ways of evoking how people used to live. Artifacts and replicas can be used in displays, in partial building interior restorations, as props, and in demonstrations. Depending on future decisions about the level of restoration of buildings or the types of seasonal displays to be set up at the Rampart House site, it may be useful to document – when known – the locations of other artifacts associated with the sites. This could be part of the Vuntut Gwitchin Heritage Office's current database on artifacts outside the traditional territory. In the future, some of these could be likely candidates for long term borrowing, replication, or return.

5.1.5 Archival Resources

The Yukon Archives has an extensive collection of materials relating to the two settlements and the Gwich'in people. These include maps, historical photographs, accounts by early visitors to

the area, scientific reports, sound recordings and some early films. The Yukon Native Language Centre has a detailed index to Archdeacon McDonald's informative diaries, a copy of which is available at the Vuntut Gwitchin office.

The Yukon Government's Historic Sites Unit has documented the sites with a series of photographs, site plans, partial as-found drawings and videos. They also hold copies of various archival materials relating to the two sites. The Archaeological Survey of Canada and Yukon Government's Archaeology office have copies of reports and photos related to archaeological investigations in the region.

The Vuntut Gwitchin, with assistance from the Yukon and Canadian governments, has conducted research on the two sites. The First Nation also holds copies of various photographs, band administrative records, and copies of tapes, research reports and other data on projects at the two sites. Many of the sources relating to Rampart House are documented in *Rampart House, Annotated Bibliography*, prepared by Colin Beairsto for the Yukon Government, most recently updated in 1998.

Materials relating to Rampart House and Lapierre House can also be found at other Canadian libraries and archives such as the Hudson's Bay Company Archives in Winnipeg, the General Synod Archives/Anglican Church of Canada in Toronto and, in Ottawa, the National Archives of Canada and the RCMP Historical Branch.

Archival research should be an ongoing activity. The photos, maps, personal accounts and government records all offer a variety of viewpoints for interpretation at the two sites.

5.2 Natural Resources

The sites of Rampart House and Lapierre House are near good hunting and fishing areas as well as along important trading and travel routes. To better understand the lives of the people who spent time in these places, one needs to learn more about the land from which they earned their living and the plants and animals that they harvested. This information also relates to stories about travel methods, traditional technologies, and trade. Gwich'in stories about how the land came to be provide an added dimension to descriptions of the geological forces that formed the land. Summer visitors are always interested in learning about the winter and cold weather survival techniques.

Natural resources can be used in interpretation in several ways. Some of these include giving information about the country while travelling to the sites, guided walks pointing out the trees, shrubs and flowers en route, displays or demonstrations about medicinal uses of plants and demonstrations of drying fish.

The natural resources that can be interpreted at Rampart House and Lapierre House include the climate, geology, ecological settings, vegetation and fish and wildlife.

5.2.1 Landscape Features & Place Names

There are many features in the Porcupine River drainage basin that have special significance to the people who lived and travelled in the region. Important features in the Rampart House area includes the Porcupine River, Shanaghan Creek, the Ramparts, and an important traditional trail to Crow Flats. Some features in the Lapierre House area include the Bell River, nearby creeks, routes to the Richardson Mountains and the winter trail between Fort McPherson and Old Crow.

Further documentation and research of the sites should include collecting available Gwich'in names for features in each region. The primary sources for this information are Gwich'in Elders. Sheila Greer's report in Appendix Two refers to a mountain associated with *Ch'ataahuukaii* to the northeast of Lapierre House. She suggests that more information about this site, and others, could be obtained from the Yukon Native Language Centre. Below is a partial list of place names, edited by the Vuntut Gwitchin Heritage Office in 2008.

English	Gwich'in	Translation
Berry Mountain	Jak Ddhah	“sticking up by river” (Vuntut Gwitchin Heritage Office)
Crow Mountain	Chuuts'aai Nàlk'at	“full head of hair mountain” (refers to a former practice of burning one's hair as a sign of mourning). This spelling was adopted in June '97 as a correction of Shahtlah Mt. (Vuntut Gwitchin Heritage Office)
Second Mountain	Chyah Ddhàa	(Vuntut Gwitchin Heritage Office)
Old Crow Flats	Van Tat	“amongst lakes” (YGNB file 4056-5-10-51, Map sheet 117A)
Lapierre House	Zeh Gwatsàl	“Little House” (Vuntut Gwitchin Heritage Office)
Lone Mountain	Than Natha'aai	“standing alone” (Vuntut Gwitchin Heritage Office)
Old Crow	Teechik	Named after a Gwich'in leader, the name means “Walking Crow”. Following his death in 1870s, people named the river, mountains and general hunting area, Old Crow. (Vuntut Gwitchin Heritage Office)
Porcupine River	Ch'oodeenjik	“Ch'o means quills in Gwich'in, name acknowledges abundance of porcupine in area. (Vuntut Gwitchin Heritage Office)
Rampart House	Jiindehchik	“Fish Spear Creek Mouth” (Vuntut Gwitchin Heritage Office)
Old Women Creek	Shanaghan K'òhnjik	Old Women Creek (Vuntut Gwitchin Heritage Office)

6.0 The Audience

Interpretation is most effective if you know your target audience. With whom do you want to share stories about Lapierre House and Rampart House? Usually there are several potential audiences who can best be reached using different methods. This section will identify potential audiences for LH-RH interpretation, some characteristics of these audiences and strategies for documenting and increasing audience numbers.

Much of the following information is taken from the *North Yukon Tourism Strategy* (NYTS) a draft plan produced by the Yukon, Dept. of Tourism and Culture in 2006. Information about Old Crow demographics comes from Yukon Government, Yukon Community Profiles, <http://www.yukoncommunities.yk.ca/communities/oldcrow/people/>.

6.1 POTENTIAL AUDIENCES

Vuntut Gwitchin

- The primary audience for the two historic sites is the citizens of Old Crow, both for site visits and offsite interpretation.
- Over the last 10 years, the population of the village has varied between 260 and 300, approximately 23% of whom are under 14, and about 14% of whom are between 15 to 24 years of age.
- People from Old Crow travel to Rampart House to hunt, often meeting friends and family from Fort Yukon.
- It has been suggested that students could visit Rampart House in summer as a culture camp outing. This could be a wonderful way for youth to be introduced to family histories and traditional technologies.
- Old Crow residents living outside the community can keep up on local news and community events via the Old Crow website.

Visitors to Old Crow

- Potential visitors include visiting friends and relatives of community members. There are no statistics available for numbers of these types of visitors.
- Business Travel (Approx. 1200 in 2005)
- The two bed and breakfasts are fully booked most of the year by various trades, professional, medical and government workers doing short term work for VG. Many of these people would welcome an opportunity to stay a few extra days and see more of the country.

Adventure Travellers (60-70/year)

- People interested in wilderness travel, including both guided and independent travellers
- For paddlers the two main routes to the Porcupine River are putting in on the Peel River near Eagle Plains or, the more expensive option of chartering a plane from Inuvik to start at Summit Lake to the Little Bell River, Bell River then Porcupine River.
- Most visitors debark at Old Crow or, if they continue down the Porcupine River, Fort Yukon.

- These people need more basic information about the country through which they are travelling, the Gwich'in and are likely interested in stories about two sites.
- One tour company, Wilderness Inquiry, advertises an annual 21-day trip down the Porcupine River setting off from the Eagle River on the Dempster Highway.
http://www.wildernessinquiry.org/destinations/index.php?dest_id=DES00343

Specialty Travel (Approx. 180/year)

- Several Old Crow residents have taken tourists, media, writers, TV film crews, and scientific researchers on trips. Park-sponsored trips into Vuntut National Park for media, journalists, film crews and self-guided adventurers are a potential product. Most are “one-off” events that do not occur regularly.

Offsite Audiences

- This can encompass a great number of groups with interests in various aspects of Yukon history, Gwich'in culture, and the ancient landscapes of the North Yukon.
- These audiences might include Yukon and other students, other Yukoners and indeed people from all over the world.

6.1 REACHING YOUR AUDIENCE

Three Principles or guiding rules for tourism development:

- Focus on tourism developments that respect and support the Vuntut Gwitchin way of life.
- Tourism developments should occur at a pace and level that the community is comfortable with.
- The Vuntut Gwitchin should develop and benefit from tourism in their traditional territory.

– *North Yukon Tourism Strategy, 2006*

There are a number of ways to increase audience numbers on and off site. It is important to ensure that there are facilities, trained personnel and the will to handle increased visitor numbers.

Collecting Statistics

At present, there are very few ways to document the number and characteristics of people travelling through Vuntut Gwitchin traditional territory. A simple way to do this is to put Visitor Registers at Rampart House and the new Vuntut Park Centre in Old Crow. A good model is the registers provided by the Yukon Government at Fort Selkirk and Forty Mile which document information such as visitors' homes, method of travel, number in party, etc.

When you know more about the nature of your audiences, you can gear your advertising and interpretation to better reach them.

River Travel

- There is little to inform visitors of how to arrange an independent trip and what they might see along the way.

- At present, people wishing to visit Rampart House from Old Crow can hire a local boat operator for about \$600 round trip. This can be arranged through the Vuntut Gwitchin Heritage Office.
- No one in Old Crow is currently insured and licensed to act as a river guide. Since there isn't enough tourism to keep one operator fully occupied, the VG Development Corporation is considering getting a blanket license for a pool of 10-15 boat operators. This would allow several people to get training and insurance. Their service would be enhanced if they were also given some interpretive training.
- Another possibility suggested in the NYTS is to partner with a commercial operator by providing local expertise.

Offsite Resources

- This topic is discussed further in Section 11.2.

7.0 Interpretation Today

This section summarizes a few sources where interpretative materials can be found about Rampart House and Lapierre House.

Publications

Many early Yukon histories mention the role of Lapierre House and Rampart House as early places of trade and contact with non-native traders and the role of these two sites in the history of the Hudson's Bay Co., Mounted Police and Church. Some examples are: *Land of the Midnight Sun: A History of the Yukon* (Coates & Morrison, 1988), *Prelude to Bonanza* (Wright, 1976) and *Law of the Yukon* (Dobrowolsky, 1995). A greater focus on First Nations use of the area can be found in books such as *Part of the Land, Part of the Water* (McClellan et al, 1987). A few river and travel guides also briefly mention the sites and their history.

Some aspects of the history of Old Crow, Rampart House, and Lapierre House, based on stories and recollection of the Elders of Old Crow, have been published over the last 15 years, e.g., *Rampart House* (Te'sek Geht'oonatun Zzeh College 1993), *Lapierre House Oral History* (Vuntut Gwitchin, 1995), *Recollections* and *The Land Still Speaks* (Sherry and Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation 1999).

Educational Materials

Recently, the Vuntut Gwitchin Heritage Department issued a series of seven booklets for primary students on a variety of cultural topics. A few titles include:

- How did the Gwich'in make and use the tthai? [caribou fence]
- Why is Van Tat important?
- Who are the Dagoo?

These booklets include photos, elder quotes and Gwich'in names for various items and sites including mentions of Rampart House and Lapierre House.

Displays

Displays in the future Old Crow Visitor Information and Operation Centre make mention of Rampart House and Lapierre House but do not specifically focus on the sites.

Websites

Yukon Government, Historic Sites

<http://www.tc.gov.yk.ca/436.html>

A page mentions Rampart House and Lapierre House and summarizes the current status of the sites as well as historic site has a page on the Historic Sites ,etc.

Old Crow – Yukon: Home of the Vuntut Gwitchin

<http://www.oldcrow.ca/ramp1.htm>

The Old Crow website has a page with an article and photos telling of the signing ceremony at Rampart House officially enacting the management plan for the two sites.

8.0 Recommended Interpretive Methods

In this section, we identify a variety of interpretive methods that can be employed on and off site and make some suggestions for how these might be employed to interpret Rampart House and Lapierre House.

8.1 ONSITE INTERPRETATION

Types of Interpretive Programs

Interpretive Talk



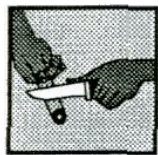
The Interpreter presents a prepared talk on a particular subject at a fixed site such as talking about traders at the Cadzow store or traditional uses of medicinal plants.

Interpretive Walk



The Interpreter leads a walk and talks about various features along the way. See a suggested route map and an outline for a guided walk in the Interpreters Manual.

Demonstrations



Demonstrations are used to illustrate activities or techniques.

Two approaches for using demonstrations are:

A: Interpreter can demonstrate something while conducting informal interpretation (e.g. carving).

B: Elders or other resource people can demonstrate an aspect of a particular interpretive theme (e.g. drying fish, archaeology work).

Spontaneous Interpretation

The Interpreter is available to visitors to answer their questions on an informal basis.

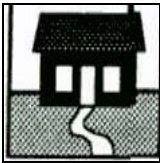


Bertha Frost collecting spruce sap at Rampart House, June 2008. *Midnight Arts photo*

Roving

The interpreter walks around the site and casually approaches visitors and provides information about the feature the visitors are looking at. This provides a security function as well. Prior to an evening program, the interpreter could walk around the campground to inform the visitors about the upcoming program.

Visitor Centre



Visitor Centres are places where people can sign in, find information and displays, attend indoor presentations, get messages from the bulletin board and meet a site interpreter. When there are more visitors to the site, the Cadzow store could fill some of these functions.

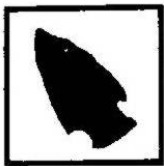
Photo Albums



At other sites, this interpretation method has proven to be a successful and popular means of interpretation with site visitors, site workers and elders.

- Photo albums can be more effective if organized to illustrate particular themes or stories with minimal text. e.g. Mounted Police patrols, mission work at Rampart House.
- Printed and laminated pages are more durable than photographic prints.
- The site caretaker/interpreter should be in charge of the albums. He or she should also make note of additional information learned when people view the albums.
- The albums could be stored at Vuntut Gwitchin heritage offices over the winter and used for other programming in places like the school or the new OC Visitor Information and Operation Centre.

Artefacts, Replicas, Specimens and Props



Interpretation is defined by first-hand experience and the presence of “the real thing”. Interpretive programs are enhanced by artefacts and replicas. These can range from replicas of ancient stone tools excavated on site to the kinds of items used in early log cabin housekeeping.

- To date most of the artefacts collected at Rampart House and Lapierre House are stored at the YG Archaeology Unit in Whitehorse.
- Artefacts at the site range from very small (microblades, beads, square cut nails) to very large (stove parts and machinery).
- Replicas can be made of items such as stone tools.
- Other small items found on site, such as old bottles, etc. should be kept in a secure location and can possibly be used in future displays.
- Research should continue into artifacts that may be held elsewhere.
- Specimens (e.g. dried plants, rocks, bird feathers, etc.) can be useful in illustrating a talk. They can be mounted in temporary, handmade exhibits.

- Props can include a variety of items (photos, replicas, specimens) used to illustrate and enliven an interpretive presentation.

Outdoor Artefacts

There are various large artefacts around the sites such as remains of cast iron stoves that are too heavy to move. These large pieces are site landmarks and should be identified and described in site tours and self-guiding literature.

Signage



Outdoor signage serves two main purposes:

- informational – e.g. directional signage, regulations, identification of buildings and features
- interpretive – telling stories of the site and the area; these can be particularly helpful to visitors during the off season, when the site is unstaffed

Note: Guidelines for signage design and materials have been prepared by Aasman Design.

Interpretive Signage

We recommend that the signage be unobtrusive and limited to a few locations. We suggest the following two sign groupings would be most useful to visitors.

Rampart House West

- *First Inhabitants* – Telling about pre- and post-contact use of this area by First Nations people and the continuing connection of Vuntut Gwitchin with this site.
- *Anglican Church* —interpret the extensive church history in this area, the interaction between church workers and First Nations people and contribution of First Nation church workers.
- *International Boundary* – the event (the actual survey and its impact on the site) and the longterm impact of the boundary separating families.

Rampart House East

- *Trade* — Discussion of how “New Rampart House was established, early trade – particularly Cadzow family, and move to Old Crow
- *Mounted Police* – the history of the RNWMP post at Rampart House, North Yukon police patrols, the many jobs and challenges faced by early Mounties and the role of special constables.
- *The Land and the Water* – natural history panel/s with orientation to the landscape, geology, Porcupine River and plants and wildlife. [Consider partnering with Wildlife Viewing on signs.]

Directional, Orientation and Identification Signage

- It has been suggested that a small sign be installed a few hundred metres upriver to tell people that they are approaching Rampart House.
- Welcome sign by boat landing on lower bench of Rampart House W.

- Some “pointer” signs to mark hard to find places such as the creek crossing and international boundary marker. These could be simple wood routed signs.
- Consider identifying buildings with discreet low level name plaques set unobtrusively on the outside of the building near ground level. Further information on the buildings can be provided by interpreters, in a self-guiding brochure, in a future booklet, or in a display at the Visitor Centre.
- There should be a change in tone of the signs between the historic site and the visitor reception areas. Signs at the boat landing and camping area should be noticeable and welcoming. These can be larger scale, higher profile signs to attract attention to regulations and camping areas. By using signage standard to other territorial campgrounds, the visitors will know when they are in the camping/visitor facility area and when they are in the historic site proper. These signs should not, however, interfere with the view of the townscape.
- Regulatory signs may also be necessary and carry messages regarding:
 - Respect for the buildings & landscape
 - Respect for archaeological sites and artefacts
 - Disposal of garbage
 - Camping and burning areas
 - Wildlife
- A sign at the cemetery could list known burial sites with a message requesting respect for the site. As recommended in the Management Plan, there should not be directional signs encouraging unguided visitation.

Lapierre House

After clearing of a docking area and construction of walkways make it possible for visitors to safely stop at the site, we recommend installation of the following signs:

- Welcome/site identification sign by boat landing
- Caution: warning visitors about fragility of the site, keep to walkways, collecting souvenirs against the law, etc. Please camp offsite.
- Interpretive signage – 2 to 3 panels highlighting the history of this site: early contact and the Hudson’s Bay Co., significance as the “meat post”, association with Anglican Church and Rev. Robert McDonald, later history of the site.

Special Events

This includes special events or celebrations, which might be held at Rampart House in summer and could include culture camps for students in summer.

- These would be opportunities for an interpretive cultural experience as well as a potential economic opportunity.
- If possible, such events should be promoted well in advance to allow visitors and local people to plan their site visit accordingly.
- This type of project could be initiated on a pilot basis and later extended if successful.

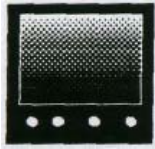
Interior Restoration



Due to limited number of site visits, security issues and cost, we suggest that interior restoration of Rampart House buildings should not be a priority. Some restoration has taken place in large part to either facilitate visitor safety (floors, stairs) or make the space more useable (shelves and counters in the Cadzow Store.)

8.2 OFFSITE INTERPRETATION

Video, Powerpoint Shows



Videos, DVDs and Powerpoint presentations can be useful interpretive tools. Some Vuntut Gwitchin have developed expertise in producing videos about their culture and land. These can provide an excellent context for site visits.

- Showing these media on site would require a generator, TV and VCR/DVD player, possibly a laptop computer and a suitable space suitable for people to view audio visual material.
- This option requires an expensive investment in equipment and an appropriate facility for viewing, and creates security concerns.
- For the foreseeable future, this interpretive method is best suited to offsite interpretation, perhaps shown in Old Crow to visitors en route to the site/s.

Website

As there is little likelihood of large numbers of people visiting these two sites, LaPierre House and Rampart House can travel to the audience via the internet. While it is not the same as being there, virtual sites offer the advantage of reaching wider audiences, allowing a great deal of information to be communicated and being changeable and updateable. There is adequate historical documentation and photographs available that simple websites could be set up for both sites. Pages might include:

- Welcome to the site
- History of the site – initially an overview then expand to include various subthemes and stories with historic photos
- Current Work at the site – including a virtual tour
- Getting to the site – best methods of travel and links to the people or companies who can deliver travellers
- to determine visitor demographics and interests, a brief questionnaire could be included.
 - Who are you? – establish a demographic
 - Would you visit? – what would have to be in place to attract people to the site
 - What else would you like to know? – ask what stories people might be interested in.

The site could be set up to include other historic sites in the traditional territory as well as LH-RH.

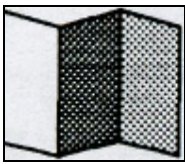
The sites could also be promoted and interpreted through virtual tours and podcasts featuring elders speaking about their family associations with these two places.

Publications

Note: Guidelines for logo, colour, layout, etc. have been provided in a separate contract with Aasman Design. These guidelines should be consulted when preparing publications.

- Interpretive publications include: pamphlets, brochures, booklets and books.
- Depending on time and finances, Vuntut Gwitchin may wish to collaborate with the YG Archaeology Section on one of the attractive and popular archaeology booklets.

Interpretive Brochures



Brochures can serve several purposes:

- They can convey a variety of types of interpretive information on and off the site.
- They can be printed in different languages for visitors who have little English.
- Although there is a possibility of littering, visitors can be encouraged to recycle the literature.
- If people can take a pamphlet as a souvenir, they are less likely to take a doorknob or other artifact.

Self Guiding Site Pamphlet

A fold-out brochure with a site plan allows visitors to take self-guided tours. Such a brochure could also contain anecdotal material about the buildings as well as general history of the townsite, the association of the Vuntut Gwitchin with the site, and information about the preservation and management programs.

An off-site brochure can provide images and basic information on Rampart House, for example, where it is, what is there, a bit of its history, how to get there and where to get more information. This can be as simple as a fact sheet or one of the multi-colour cards or “lure brochures” used by interpretive and tourism centres.

A brochure that unfolds into a poster could also be considered for off site interpretation. A similar document was produced for Herschel Island some years ago. This could portray Rampart House and the beauty of its setting with historic and contemporary photographs, as well as information about general history, events and transport to the site. In a kiosk or VRC, it is also more eye-catching and can serve as a take home souvenir.

Booklets & Books



Booklets and books are a potential source of more in-depth information about the site. These are also a potential revenue source and could be sold at Old Crow and other Yukon locations. These can provide interpretive information about the site that cannot be accommodated in signage or brochures. They can also provide good resource material for off-site educational programs.

A booklet with photographs and stories about the historic resources would complement the self-guided brochure with additional information. These could draw on quotes from the excellent oral histories that have been produced for the two sites.

Displays



Displays might best be prepared and housed offsite until there are larger number of visitors and better security. On the other hand, simple displays can be very effective (e.g. display with photos showing the progress of the crew in stabilizing Cadzow store in the store building.)

9.0 Interpreters

A heritage interpreter helps others understand and appreciate cultural and natural heritage. This section will discuss the work of interpreters who deliver stories about Lapierre House and Rampart House on and off site. In this chapter, we will discuss what it is that interpreters do, the resources they need and what they need to learn.

Note: Given the relative remoteness and few visitors to Lapierre House, we suggest that for the immediate future onsite interpretation be delivered by interpretive signs. Onsite signs can direct visitors to place where they could learn more (the Visitor Centre in Old Crow and a website).

9.1 Roles of an Interpreter

The low number of visitors makes it hard to justify a full-time interpreter at Rampart House in the near future. An interpreter might also be doing other work as a restoration crew member, caretaker or cook. This person needs to be comfortable spending time in a remote site and capable of working with minimal supervision. When hosting tours to the sites, particularly Rampart House, other resource people can be trained to guide tour groups.

Below is a list of some of the responsibilities of an interpreter.

Orientation, Advice and Visitor Support

- Yukon host
- Rampart House host
- orientation to the site: pointing out facilities and attractions
- informing visitors of proper site etiquette
- conducting first aid as required
- advertising interpretive programs
- ensuring that the Visitor Register is signed

Interpretive Programming

- preparing and delivering interpretive talks
- guiding a variety of interpretive hikes
- assisting visitors with the resource library
- engaging visitors in interpretive activities (e.g. interactive displays)
- introducing and showing videos (off site)

Facility Operations / Site Monitoring

- monitoring trail conditions
- keeping visitor statistics
- mowing and brushing as directed
- communications with Vuntut Gwitchin and Yukon Gov't. personnel
- ensure that there are adequate supplies (firewood, toilet paper) and that the camping area is clean
- ensure that food & petroleum products are not left unattended in campsites or picnic shelters
- keep a journal to document daily events

9.2 Interpreter Training

Interpreter training programs have been offered in the past at Yukon College in Whitehorse and Dawson but no courses are being offered at present. A Cultural Resource Management course run through Yukon College has been on the wish list created by the Yukon First Nation Heritage Group for a few years now but does not appear likely to happen in the near future.

Other agencies such as Parks Canada, various local museums and Visitor Information Centres offer some in-house training. Much of this training is very specific to each institution's collections, architecture and other heritage resources and not necessarily conducive to joint training with other agencies.

This is a complicated issue with no immediate and simple solutions. Perhaps a few days of detailed one-on-one training on site with an experienced historian/interpreter might suffice for the immediate future. In future, consider setting up some specific training with Yukon College in Old Crow. Interpretation Canada has developed two training modules: Interpretive Principles and Planning, and Interpretive Presentation Skills which are presented by accredited interpretive trainers.

(http://www.interpcan.ca/new/index.php?module=pagemaster&PAGE_user_op=view_page&PAGE_id=7&MMN_position=7:7)

As always, the best teacher is experience and it would be best to have staff willing to return to the site for more than one season. Given the remote location, it would be desirable if the interpreter could have also some basic training in first aid and fire suppression.

9.3 Lapierre House and Rampart House Interpreter's Manual

While there is no substitute for training and experience, the *Lapierre House and Rampart House Interpreters Manual* will be a valuable tool for interpreters. As well as containing general information about the process of interpretation and guidelines for carrying out on-site interpretive programs, the manual can also serve as a handy, one volume reference to the sites.

It contains descriptions of the interpretive resources, stories and themes including a selection of stories drawn from the thematic outline, a sample program and useful reference appendices.

The appendices are as follows:

1. Maps, townsite and area
2. historic chronology
3. Heritage Resources
4. Key References

The manual is in a binder format to encourage interpreters to add their own updates and additions.

9.4 Interpreter's Journal

We suggest that the interpreter keep a journal or daily log to document items such as the daily weather, wildlife sightings, tasks accomplished, unusual events, etc. This can be in point form and doesn't need to take a lot of time or space. This would be a valuable record of life at the site during the summer season.

10.0 Evaluation of Interpretive Programs and Media

The development and implementation of interpretive programs for Rampart House and Lapierre House are only the first steps in an overall interpretation plan. Evaluation must be built into the plan to ensure that the right messages are reaching the right audience.

Evaluation is not a one-time event but an ongoing process. Interpreters are constantly learning more about the sites, the audience, and how to best reach them. Evaluation is the tool that shows them what works best and how to improve their skills.

Before a final decision is made on using a particular interpretive medium, it should be thoroughly tested and evaluated. This evaluation can be used to assess a number of things. For example:

- is the information of interest to visitors and can they understand it clearly?
- is the format of the sign, brochure or display assisting with effective communication?
- is the material in a suitable location for visitors?

By testing out expensive interpretive media before final implementation, expenditures will be more cost effective.

Once programs and interpretive media are in place, evaluation should occur again. This will indicate any changes or additions that may be necessary. This exercise is useful as both the audience and methods of communication may change over time.

If visitors have concerns or problems with any forms of interpretation, or a lack of interpretation, they will likely tell the interpreters. These comments should be recorded in a notebook and passed on to the Vuntut Gwitchin Heritage Department staff. Visitors may also be asked to add their comments to any survey conducted on site. Any serious problems will quickly become evident from visitor comments.

Recommendations for evaluating specific interpretive media are outlined below. The various evaluation exercises should be considered together in determining the final interpretation format.

10.1 To Evaluate the Audience

Evaluation of the visitors to Old Crow and Rampart House will provide more precise information regarding their motivation, length of stay, age groups, etc. One way to do this would be ensure that people sign the visitor register. This should have categories for the visitor's name, address, number in party, method of travel and length of stay as well as a section for comments.

Another method of audience evaluation would be to request some visitor information in verbal visitor surveys or survey forms that are handed out on site. This might include questions about the visitor's age, whether they are travelling with a commercial tour or privately, their departure point and destination.

10.2 To Evaluate Interpretive Information

There are many ways to present interpretive stories. This Interpretation Plan has condensed the available information into distinct themes and stories. It is generally known, for example, that visitors are eager to learn about First Nations cultures and interested in stories about life on the land. In order to write signs, brochures and design displays and programs that speak to visitors

most effectively, it is important to determine their particular interests and balance this with the priorities of the Vuntut Gwitchin and Yukon government.

We recommended that visitors be asked to complete a simple survey form to determine what they are particularly interested in. The survey should be presented to as wide a cross-section of people as possible and contain a few questions about the visitors themselves (length of stay, number in party, etc.). A simple one-page questionnaire should be developed by Vuntut Gwitchin and Yukon government staff. During the survey, visitors should be informed about how important their feedback is in developing interpretation on the site. The survey should be short and easy to fill out so that visitors do not feel encumbered by it.

Types of questions could include:

- What aspects of Rampart House history are you interested in learning about: traditional and/or contemporary First Nations lifestyles, life in a log cabin town, the church, the police, current preservation and archaeology work?
- Would you be interested in purchasing a booklet about Rampart House and Lapierre House?
- How would you prefer to have the information presented to you: rate the following from 1 (most preferred) to 5 (least preferred), interpretive talks, interpreter led walks, pamphlets, map of site with written information, signs, displays in buildings, demonstrations, restored buildings.
- What aspects of natural history are you interested in learning about: fish, caribou, geology, river environment?

10.3 To Evaluate Brochures/Pamphlets

Many of the interpretive stories could be presented in brochure or pamphlet format. A survey will determine to what extent site visitors are interested in obtaining written information about LH-RH. A preliminary site brochure could be developed to determine if the extent or depth of information is suitable for visitors. Visitors can be asked to take the brochure with them and either mail their comments back or fill out the on-line questionnaire at the website noted at the bottom of the pamphlet. Or if a website is not yet available, they might email a designated person with comments.

10.4 To Evaluate Signage and Displays

Mock signage and displays can be presented to visitors for their comments. Displays can be made economically on presentation media mounted on lightweight, rigid material. These could be set up at the store, or other sheltered site at Rampart House. This type of evaluation is particularly valuable for insuring the effectiveness of costly and more permanent interpretive media. The signs and displays have been designated as a level two or three priority which allows for a season or two to test these.

10.5 To Evaluate Programs and Interpreters

The use of formal interpretive programs should be evaluated as the project develops. The first few seasons of interpretive programs should be viewed as pilots for determining what programs can be done at the site. What the interpreters can accomplish, what visitors want to learn about and what methods are most effective, should all be considered. In time, certain types of programs will emerge as being best suited to the site and to the visitors. This can be evaluated in four ways:

- through the survey

- by the on-site interpreters
- by another professional interpreter and
- by a follow-up survey (for summative evaluation).

Interpretive programs are dynamic and thus should be continually evaluated and modified by the interpreter. The programs should also be evaluated by someone other than the interpreter delivering the program as should the interpreter's presentation. This is best done by an experienced interpreter.

Until there is a interpreter with a few seasons of interpretation, it would enhance the professional delivery of interpretive programs to bring an experienced interpreter on-site to evaluate programs and to provide guidance and assistance. This should happen near the beginning of the season, but after the interpreters have had some experience delivering programs.

A final evaluation tool would allow visitors to fill out an on-line form at their leisure, after they leave the site. This site would also be a tool to introduce the site and its programs to potential visitors.

10.6 The Web as an evaluation tool

While people visiting the sites on the web will not necessarily be interested in the same things as people going to the physical places, it would be useful to find out what type of information people are after. This can be done in a simple questionnaire as noted in Section 9.

Similarly, people who actually go to Rampart House and Lapierre House can be asked to fill out a questionnaire or evaluation on-line at the end of their travels. There might be the incentive of a moosehair tufting or similar locally produced keepsake.

11.0 Implementation Strategy: Recommendations & Priorities

The following is a summary of recommendations for Lapierre House and Rampart House interpretation on and off the historic site. Recommendations are followed by suggested rankings or timelines for implementation. See Section 8 for more information about the various options.

The suggested priority ranking is set up as follows:

Immediate Should be possible to implement in near future with little extra cost or effort

High Within the next one to three years

Medium Within the next five years

Long-term Projects that could be done as budget and personnel permit

11.1 ON SITE

Visitor Services

Lapierre House

- Because of the fragility of the site, visitors should not be encouraged until the site has been better secured with safe walkways and cautionary signage.

Priority: High

- Only then, should identification signage be installed and a docking area cleared and interpretive signs installed.

Priority: Medium

- Since some people do visit the site, a nearby campsite and directional signage should be a priority.

Priority: Medium

Rampart House – The site requires better visitor services such as:

- identification and brushing of potential camping areas
- Brushing of selected areas in Rampart House should be carried out to a regular schedule, not just as a maintenance task but also to mark interpretive routes. See the tour route suggested in Interpreters Manual and appended to this report.
- improvement of trails from the river up the banks.

Priority: Immediate

- basic facilities for visitors (wall tent frame, firepit/s and outhouse/s).

Priority: High

Visitor Records

- Improve documentation of visitor statistics including nationalities and mode of travel. This can happen at both Rampart House and in the future Visitor Information Centre in Old Crow.
- Ensure that detailed statistics are compiled at the end of the summer season.

Priority: Immediate

- In future, based on statistics collected, interpretive materials can be geared toward the types of visitor. For example, determine if there is a need for translation of interpretive material in languages other than English and French, such as German.

Signage

- Welcome sign in Rampart House West on lower bench
- Install a small sign a few hundred metres upriver informing river travellers that they are approaching Rampart House.
- Low level signs identifying buildings.
- Pointer signs (bridge, camping area, crossing over creek, etc.)
- Notice of site rules / cautions (install at camping area & in Cadzow store).

Priority: High

- Interpretive signage cluster in RH West on themes of Gwich'in use of area, Anglican Church and International Boundary
- Signage cluster in RHE could interpret trade, traders and the police.
- At Lapierre House, interpretive signs can tell the stories of the origins of the post, its significance as an early contact point, the "meat post" and more recent history of families and traders that spent time at the site.

Priority: Medium

Displays

- Interior Displays and Displays of artifacts and/or replicas
This should not be considered until there are greater visitor numbers and perhaps should consist of small portable displays that put out or taken to the site on special occasions such as organized site tours.

Priority: Long-term

- Simple but effective displays can be put together on site such as a panel of photos documenting the restoration work.

Priority: High

Props

- Replicas of ancient tools, sturdy artifacts and a few laminated historic photos are useful tools for interpreters. These can also be used off site in winter.

Priority: Medium

Library

- Put together a small reference library for visitors to Rampart House containing a variety of useful cultural and natural history references.

Priority: High

Photo Albums

- Assemble binders of photos of historic Rampart House and Lapierre. These could be organized and captioned thematically. Photos could be scanned, printed and laminated to reduce on site wear and tear. A relatively inexpensive and very effective interpretive method. Should be made available in Cadzow Store in summer.

Priority: High

Special Events

- Organize and promote special events to attract visitors. e.g. cultural tour to Rampart House.
- Set up as a pilot project and extend if successful.

- Ensure these don't conflict with other events and happen at optimum times, e.g. high water, when work crew is on site, during caribou migration, etc.

Priority: High

Interpretive Centre

- At Rampart House, consider using the Cadzow House as an interpretive centre.
- This could be a gathering place as well as a spot to house a notice board, any publications, props, photo albums, etc.

Priority: High

- Adapting the building may require some simple furniture (stools or benches, shelving).

Priority: Medium

Interpreters

- Ensure a variety of people have some interpretive training including work crew members and boat pilots as well as some heritage resource workers from Old Crow.
- Encourage worker handling to maintain a daily log: weather, animal sightings, tasks undertaken, unusual occurrences (e.g. the muskox visit to Rampart House), etc.
- Training: Try to take advantage of potential interpretive training opportunities.
 - Ensure interpreter/ caretaker and work crews have some site specific and wilderness (first aid, fire prevention, machinery operation, etc.) training.

Priority: High

Interpreters Manual

- Encourage interpreters to add their own notes and observations.
- As budget permits, flesh out the manual by developing more story topics, focussing on the stories needed to support specific interpretive needs (e.g. signage topics).
- Debrief interpreters post season to see what questions were asked and what topics need to be addressed

Priority: High

Archaeology

- Archaeological assessments required before new construction.
- Interpretive archaeology would be an asset to the overall site management.

Priority: Medium

11.2 OFF SITE

Publications

- Self guided brochure or booklet for Rampart House with site map. Can be used on and off site.

Priority: Medium

- Consider publishing an archaeology booklet similar to the attractive publications co-produced with other First Nations.
- Consider publishing a river guide to the Porcupine River and its most-travelled tributaries focussing on the cultural and natural features along the way.

Priority: Long-term

Site Promotion & Education in Other Facilities

- Use of Rampart House albums, props, etc. at sites like the Old Crow Visitor Information and Operations Centre and Chief Zzeh Gittlit School.
- Temporary display in Old Crow, this can highlight various historic themes as well as more recent preservation activities.
- Perhaps one of this work can be carried out by Visitor Centre staff.

Priority: Medium

On the Web

- Promotional Page Begin with just a page on Vuntut Gwitchin or Old Crow website. Perhaps request additional information to be added to YG Historic Sites page about the sites. A good start would be some basic information about the site, how to get there and who to contact to learn more.
- Interpret the Preservation work. Consider putting a page on the Old Crow website showing the work being carried out at Rampart House together with some photos.

Priority: High

- Stand alone website could include several pages.
- see Section 8.2
- Interpretive website display The Virtual Museum of Canada program is one option for developing a website display. More information about this program can be obtained from the territorial manager of the Museums Unit or found at the CHIN (Canadian Heritage Information Network) site <http://www.chin.gc.ca/English/index.html> . Consider exploring this or other avenues to fund and prepare a website interpreting the historic sites.
- Virtual tours This is a very effective way to show the sites to potential visitors.
- Podcasts These have become an effective and popular way to share audio programming such as narrative histories of the site, elder stories, etc.

Priority: Medium to Long-term

DVD/Video Production

- Consider commissioning an audio-visual production that will tell the stories of these sites and can reach a variety of audiences on and off site. This could be produced in Old Crow drawing on existing expertise.
- Could be shown in Old Crow as preparation for a trip to Rampart House and elsewhere in the Yukon to educate other Yukoners about the site.

Priority: Medium to Long-term

Oral History

- Expand historical documentation of the sites by continuing interviews with people with knowledge of the site. They might include elders from other communities, longterm work crew re preservation work, and travellers from the early days.
- While ongoing oral history is taking place within a larger context (the cultural technology project), ensure that recordings collected regarding LH-RH are identified for possible future interpretation.

Priority: Medium

Research

- Consider updating the RH-LH bibliographies regularly to include new studies and additional oral history, discovery of new photo collections, etc.
- Continue updating the historic photo collection (valuable for interpretation & site research). This can include photographs of recent events and celebrations at the site as well as images of earlier days.
- Identify Rampart House and Lapierre House references in more general research related to the Vuntut Gwitchin.

Priority: Ongoing

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WEBSITES

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<http://www.gwichin.org/gwichin.html>

Gwich'in Social & Cultural Institute

<http://www.gwichin.ca/index.html>

Old Crow Official Website

<http://www.oldcrow.ca/index2.htm>

Yukon Government, Historic Sites Unit

<http://www.tc.gov.yk.ca/79.html>

Yukon Community Profiles <http://www.yukoncommunities.yk.ca/communities/oldcrow/people/>

Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation website

<http://www.vgfn.ca/>

