

Article for the Kamloops News
February 4, 1983

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N 214

THE EARLY CHURCHES OF KAMLOOPS

Before the establishment of churches in Kamloops by various denominations, with the exception of the Roman Catholic Church on the Reserve, buildings used for religious services included the old log courthouse, various halls and hotels.

The first services held by the Church of England in Kamloops took place in October 1880 when Bishop Sillitoe visited. A temporary church was built and in use by September 1884.

The Presbyterian movement also began in 1884 and this group, under Reverend John Chisholm, were the first to build a Protestant church, St. Andrews which opened on Christmas Day, 1887. The church and manse erected next door took two lots secured from the C.P.R. Robert Henry Lee, a civil engineer, surveyor, architect and later a member of the first City Council in 1893, designed the church which was built by Alfred and William Hill.

Lee, as well, designed the original Sacred Heart Cathedral between 1st and 2nd on Battle St., also built in 1887. Tenders were called by him and Hill brothers were also awarded the contract. The church opened on December 17, 1887 with the first service conducted by Father LeJeune. The house was built in 1889.

mission

In 1888 the Church of England's new church, St. Paul, was dedicated. It stood where Whiteway Laundry is located on Victoria Street.

The Baptist Church was the latest of the earliest churches to construct an edifice in Kamloops. It was built in 1899-1900 under Reverend A. W. McLeod on the SW corner of 4th and Victoria, then moved to 328 Seymour Street in 1907.

The later history of each of these early churches has been as noteworthy as their beginnings.

The unique "hand pointing to heaven" was saved from the old Baptist Church upon demolition in 1959 and can now be seen in the Museum.

After the Methodist Church was replaced by a brick edifice in 1912, the old one was used for different purposes including a second hand store.

St. Paul's Anglican was also moved from its Victoria Street location to its present site at 4th Ave. and Nicola in 1925, then added to and altered.

St. Andrew's Presbyterian church still stands on Seymour Street, as part of Calvary Temple. The exterior, except for a fresh coat of paint, has changed little over the years, even retaining the ornate cross on its spire.

Sacred Heart, the earliest church and its rectory was destroyed by fire, ironically on Ash Wednesday, March 5, 1919. The mission adjacent was later taken down.

The present Sacred Heart Cathedral was started in 1921 and as soon as the church basement was ready, services were held there. It was finally completed and opened in December, 1925.

Photo captions:

- #6585 - Old Presbyterian Church, built in 1887. Now part of Calvary Temple, this is the oldest "public" building in Kamloops.
- #118 - Sacred Heart Cathedral and the Roman Catholic Mission adjacent. This church dominated the skyline of Kamloops for many years, located on the southwest corner of Battle and Second. Photo taken about 1895.
- #1819 - The first Baptist Church in the 300 block Seymour Street in 1949. The unique "hand pointing to Heaven" on the top of the spire cannot be seen in this picture but is preserved in the Museum.
- #5649 - St. Paul's Anglican Church seen on Victoria Street West. This building was moved in 1924 to Fourth Avenue and Nicola St., then added to.
- #5650 - The first Methodist Church
- #5563 - a composite picture of the five churches described, as they appeared about 1908.