



Walking Tour

History of Old Crow

Old Crow is named after Chief Crow May I Walk, a Vuntut Gwitchin chief who died in the 1870s. The community was established in 1912 when John Tizya, Jacob Tizya, Elias Kwatlatyi and Joseph Kyikavichik built permanent houses here. These families moved up from another community, Rampart House, located 50 miles down river from Old Crow on the Yukon/Alaska border.

The area at the mouth of the Crow River is rich in small game, caribou, and fish and provides easy access to other good hunting and trapping areas. Old Crow is situated on the main caribou migration trail to and from the coastal plains of the North Slope of Alaska. Caribou is the mainstay for the Gwitchin people and was at one time their only means of survival.

The Vuntut Gwitchin were a nomadic people until well into the 1960s, trapping for fur and living strictly off the land. They followed game throughout the seasons and sustained themselves by hunting and fishing. There were regular visits to the trading post at Old Crow and a new school, Royal Canadian Mounted Police detachment and Nursing Station were built there. When the fur-trapping boom came to a sudden halt in the 1940s, families moved into Old Crow to work for wages.

Today, Old Crow is an electronic-age community with high-speed Internet, cable TV, modern buildings with up-to-date equipment, a bank and an airport. However, the Vuntut Gwitchin people still practice their traditional lifestyle and the two ways of life are intertwined.



1) St. Luke's Mission House



St Luke's Mission House was built in 1935. The Anglican Women's Auxiliary has used this building in the past to gather in sewing circles. The women sold their handicrafts and

held other fund-raising events in support of the local church. The Women's Auxiliary received donations of clothing in huge bundles from Anglican Church organizations in the south and held rummage sales to raise money for the community feasts at Christmas and Easter. Money raised above that needed in Old Crow was sent outside of the community to wherever it was needed.

2) St. Luke's Anglican Church



St. Luke's Anglican Church was built in 1959 to replace the original church. This building echoes with memories from the past and the voices

of those who ministered to the people of the region. Some of the native ministers include John Tizya, William Njootli, James Simon and Joseph Kyikavichik and his daughter, Ellen Bruce. Reverend Bruce was ordained in Old Crow in 1987 to become the second woman of Indian Ancestry in Canada, and the first in Northern Canada, to be ordained Priest in the Anglican Church. She was also named to the Order of Canada for her outstanding achievement and service in various fields. Reverend Bruce is now retired and local Deacons continue to provide clergy services for the community.

3) Archdeacon McDonald Memorial Church

The first Anglican Church in Old Crow was built in 1926. When the Anglican minister from Rampart House moved his headquarters to Old Crow, around 1923, the congregation built a house for him and he used the building to hold services and teach school. In 1926, Reverend A. C. McCullum was ordained in Old Crow and this church was built with local subscription. The old church continues to receive repairs and maintenance although it has not been used as a church since 1959. The people of Old Crow have a strong Anglican heritage dating from the forty-two years that Archdeacon McDonald ministered to this remote area. Robert McDonald became an Anglican priest in 1853 and was posted to the north in 1862. A gifted linguist who was fluent in English, French and Ojibwa; McDonald translated the bible, Prayer Book and Hymnal into the local "Takudh" language. Reverent McDonald married Julia Kutuq in 1876 and their descendants continue to live in the north.



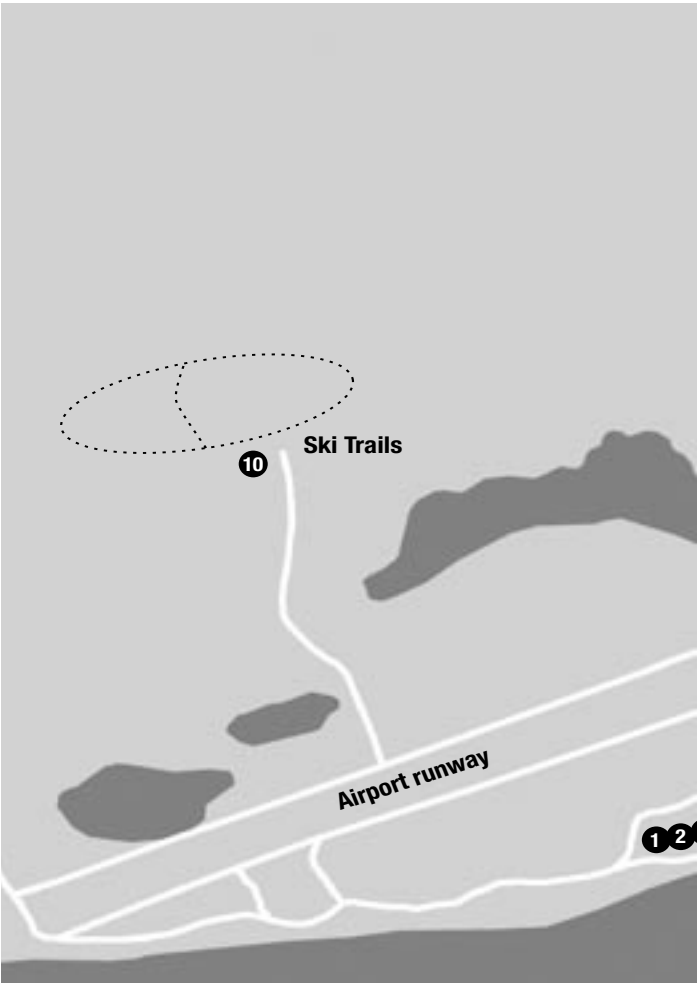
4) Royal Canadian Mounted Police Building

Royal Canadian Mounted Police corporal Arthur B. Thornthwaite arrived at Rampart House in 1926 and patrolled the region from there until 1929, when the detachment moved from Rampart House to Old Crow. The first Old Crow detachment building was a log building constructed by Thornthwaite, Sidney May and the police carpenter, Special Constable Fox from Dawson. Between 1926 and 1928, the Rampart House and Old Crow detachment patrolled an area of 17,500 square miles. The personnel included two Mounted Police and a Special Constable guide and interpreter. Three RCMP members man the station today and a local person works as an auxiliary. The oldest building in the compound was built around 1963.



Old Crow Historical Buildings

*Walking
Tour*





- 1** St. Luke's Mission House
- 2** St. Luke's Anglican Church
- 3** Old St. Luke's Anglican Church
- 4** Royal Canadian Mounted Police Building
- 5** Community Hall
- 6** Peter Moses Building
- 7** Sarah Abel Chitze Building
- 8** Kenneth Nukon Ground Cache
- 9** Edith Josie House
- 10** Old Crow Ski Lodge
- 11** Crow Mountain Road
- 12** The Island Trail





5) Community Hall



The Community Hall was built in the early 1980s at the centre of the community. Old Crow people gather

here for meetings, potlatches, annual gatherings, workshops and dances. Inside, the walls are hung with photographs of community Elders, past and present.

6) Peter Moses Building



The Peter Moses building was constructed around 1964 and the name commemorates Peter Moses who was a chief in Old Crow for 18 consecutive

years. Chief Moses and his people sent relief money to London, England to support the orphaned children who lost parents in the bombing raids during World War Two. Chief Peter Moses received the British Empire Medal in 1943 for his honourable gesture and the medal, and letters pertaining to it, can be viewed in the Sarah Abel-Chitze Building. The Peter Moses Building was the community hall in the 1960s and then became the Land Claims building until 1998. Today it houses the Old Crow Fitness Centre.

7) Sarah Abel Chitze Building



This Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation administration office was

constructed in 1998 and is named to honour Elder Sarah Abel-Chitze, a well-respected spokeswoman for the Vuntut Gwitchin. She provided advice and leadership on many issues and concerns. Sarah passed away on August 14, 1998 at the age of 102 years. Her last recorded speech was on her 100th birthday on April 10, 1996. The administration building houses all the Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation government departments, Chief & Council, Housing, Finance, Human Resources/Education, Information Systems, Natural Resources, and Social Programs.

8) Kenneth Nukon Ground Cache



This cache belonged to the late Kenneth Nukon and stands today as an icon for a traditional way of life. These types of ground caches were commonly used by the Vuntut Gwitchin to store meat, fish and fur supplies as well as the personal belongings that could not be stored inside a house.

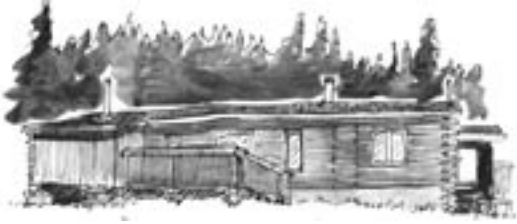
9) Edith Josie House



This is the home of Old Crow's journalist. Edith Josie has been writing newspaper articles since 1963 for The Daily News Miner in Fairbanks and the Whitehorse Star in Whitehorse. She and her parents moved to Old Crow from Eagle, Alaska around 1940 and Edith started her column to let people know the news from Old Crow and to help her people and the community. As she says, "People have to get together and tell funny story and laugh..." Edith Josie is a nationally recognized personality, having received the Canadian Centennial Award in 1967, the Order of Canada in 1995 and National Aboriginal Achievement Award in 2000.



10) Old Crow Ski Lodge



The Old Crow Ski Lodge is located across the runway in the Tdchah Nyayin Subdivision. The ski complex was dedicated in 1972 to the people of Old Crow and to the loving memory of Dean Feist and Don Doll. Today it is home to the Health and Fitness Program that provides healthy alternatives for school aged children to follow. The ski lodge also promotes skiing activities for adults. There are 3km and 5km ski trails on the foothills behind the lodge.

Crow Mountain Road

The Crow Mountain Road begins at north end of the community is a good route for a hike. The road was built over an old existing trail to Crow Flats that Old Crow people used long ago. Families travelled with dogs, equipped with dog packs, to hunt caribou or pick berries on Crow Mountain. A 2.5 km gravel road winds up to the bottom of Crow Mountain and is accessible year-round. In the fall, this road provides local access for hunting caribou.

The Island Trail

This trail is located at the northeast end of the community and leads up to Crow Point. The trail winds along the east side of Old Crow Island and comes back into Old Crow down by the slough located below the Skating arena.

This brochure was produced with the help of the Vuntut Gwichen First Nation. If you have additional information or corrections regarding the information presented here, please contact YTG Cultural Resources Branch at (867) 667-3458 or call toll free 1-800-661-0408.