

ST PAULS MISSION
Kettle Falls, Stevens County,
Washington.

HABS No.--Wash.31

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PHOTOGRAPHS
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA
District of Washington

Historic American Buildings Survey
Louis Baeder, District Officer
1615 Smith Tower, Seattle, Washington.

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ST PAULS MISSION

Kettle Falls, Stevens County, Washington

OWNER:-- On Washington Power & Light Company site.

DATE OF ERECTION:-- 1847

BUILDER:-- Father Ravalli, S. J.

PRESENT CONDITION:-- Only portions of three walls are left standing with timbers, and some truss members strewn about the site.

NUMBER OF STORIES:-- one and one-half stories.

MATERIALS OF CONSTRUCTION:-- Squared and fitted timbers, hand hewn trusses supporting the roof. In comparing the construction of St. Pauls Mission and the construction of the Hudson Bay Company posts in the Northwest, it is found that the buildings are very similar. This comparison was possible through old photographs of Hudson Bay Company buildings, and through the relocation and reconstruction of Fort Nisqually, a Hudson Bay Company Post, at Point Defiance Park in Tacoma, Washington. The main difference found between the buildings was, that Father Ravalli had improved on the Hudson Bay Company construction by dapping the roof rafters into ceiling beams and thereby forming a truss for the roof support, which in turn was tongued and pinned into the side wall, using ships-knees as supports.

OTHER EXISTING RECORDS:-- The establishment of Christianity and its missions in the Northwest was brought about through contact with Catholic laymen numerous among the fur traders and early settlers, and who intermarried with the Flathead Indians, a tribe on the western slopes of the Rockies; thus instilling in the tribe a desire for "Black Robes", a term applied by the Indians to Catholic Priests.

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Three different missions undertaken by the Flatheads, to St. Louis for the purpose of securing "Black Robes" for the tribe were made, in 1831, in 1835 and in 1837. All unsuccessful, and on two of them they were massacred on the return journey by other Indians.

Finally in the summer of 1839, a fourth band, joining a company of Hudson Bay men, on the journey east, was successful in securing a young Belgian Jesuit of noble lineage; Father Pierre Jean De Smet, who arrived among the Flatheads in July 1840, only to return to St. Louis, after two months, for funds and help to carry on the missionary work. He returned in 1841, and in September 1841, he established St. Mary's Mission in the Bitter Root Valley, in Montana, the permanent settlement of the Flatheads. This was followed by others, and in 1844, he established a mission near Fort Colville, (Hudson Bay Company Post), for more than eight hundred Kettle Indians; assembling above the Kettle Falls, on a rocky promontory he erected a temporary Chapel of boughs. Father De Smet, being called away, left Father Ravalli in charge, who, in addition to theology, had studied medicine, drawing and mechanics. Father Ravalli built a temporary church on the left bank of the Columbia River, high above the falls, which he replaced in 1847, with a more substantial building and which was called St. Pauls Mission, the building here recorded. St. Pauls Mission was later superseded by St. Regis Mission, which is in operation today.

MEASURED AND DRAWN:-- October and November, 1936.

Author:

Louis Bauer
District Officer, WPA.

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