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THE ANNEX TO THE COMMISSIONER'S RESIDENCE,  
DAWSON: A STRUCTURAL HISTORY, 1901-1964  
by Richard G. Stuart  
1979

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v	Acknowledgements
1	Background
1	Introduction
2	Historical Significance
3	The Setting
6	Construction of the Commissioner's Residence and the Annex, 1901-02
6	Materials and Patronage
9	Permafrost and Soil Conditions
11	Foundations
13	The Frame
14	Services and Internal Divisions
16	The Annex, 1902-12
16	The First Years
18	Domestic Service
20	The Fire of 25 December, 1906
23	George and Martha Black in the Residence, 1912-16
23	Renovations, 1912-13
25	The Sun Room, 1914-16
27	The Use of the Sun Room 1914-16
28	The Residence Closed, 1916-50
29	Dawson's Home For the Aged, 1950-64
38	Conclusion
41	Endnotes

52	Bibliography
56	Illustrations
84	Diagrams

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## List of Illustrations

- Figure 1 Beaver and Lory Building, Public Archives of Canada, C-18622.
- Figure 2 "Government Housing - north of the Gold Commissioner's Office." Captain T. J. Fuller Collection.
- Figure 3 "Commissioner's Residence, Dawson, October 1901." Yukon Archives, #426.
- Figure 4 "Commissioner's Residence, Dawson, Y.T., 1902." PAC PA-53169.
- Figure 5 "Dawson, Yukon, Victoria Day, 1903. PAC, PA-16504.
- Figure 6 "Governor's Residence, Dawson," University of Washington, Adams and Larkin #5.
- Figure 7 Commissioner's Residence—fire damage, north side. PAC, C-29259.
- Figure 8 Commissioner's Residence—fire damage, east side. PAC, C-29262.
- Figure 9 Commissioner's Residence—fire damage, south side. PAC, C-29260.
- Figure 10 "Commissioner's Residence from the side." University of Alberta, Special Collections, F5855, M11, 7-3, #10.
- Figure 11 "Commissioner's Residence from the rear looking towards Front Street." Yukon Archives #5617.
- Figure 12 "Drowned in Yukon, 1913, Military funeral for R.N.W.M.P. Constable Fitzgerald, Y.T." (date, in fact, 1915 - see f. 70). Glenbow-Alberta Institute, W.H. McKay and S.M. McKay Collection, NA-1663-26.



- Figure 13    Commissioner's Residence, Dawson, c.1916, The  
Yukon Territory. Its History and Resources, p.16.
- Figure 14    "Flood Conditions, Dawson, Y.T., June 1925"  
PAC, C-64896.

List of Diagrams (all portions taken from larger diagrams).

- 1 Government House, Dawson, Longitudinal Section, c.1903.
- 2 Government House, Dawson, Rear (east) elevation, c.1903.
- 3 Government House, Dawson, Side (south?) elevation, c.1903.
- 4 "Plan of Mud Sills Posts" c.1903.
- 5 "Plan of Main Sills and Veranda Joists & Sills" c.1903.
- 6 "Plan of Ground Floor," c.1903.
- 7 "Plan of First Floor," c.1903.
- 8 "Plan of Attic," c.1903.
- 9 "Plan of Roof," c.1903.
- 10 "Basement Cross Sections. Old Folks Home, Dawson, Y.T.,  
9 February 1963, D-101-1," Basement Outline.
- 11 "Basement Cross Sections. Old Folks Home, Dawson, Y.T.,  
9 February 1963, D-101-1," Cross-Section, thru A-A.
- 12 "Basement Cross Sections. Old Folks Home, Dawson, Y.T.,  
9 February 1963, D-101-1," Cross-Section, thru D-D.
- 13 "Plan of Posts," to 26 March 1973.
- 14 Ground Floor Plan of Annex.
- 15 Second Floor Plan of Annex.

The Annex to the Commissioner's Residence, Dawson,  
A Structural History, 1901-1964.

1 Background

1.1 Introduction

As the rear addition to one of five government structures in Dawson, the extension to the Commissioner's Residence (or Government House<sup>1</sup>) was never considered of anything more than functional importance, so it has left few traces in the historic records, both published and unpublished. Iconographic sources, fortunately, are slightly more useful, providing sufficient information to outline the historic development of the annex. There is also an additional disability for the student of any portion of the Commissioner's Residence, because, in striking contrast to the Post Office, Court House and Administration Building, there are few plans of the building dating from the historic period.<sup>2</sup> In fact, until recently, it was believed no plans existed, but those used here, from 1963 and, probably 1903, were saved from destruction by the Project Engineer of the KNHS while he was working in Ottawa.<sup>3</sup>

The Federal Government's construction programme in Dawson was predicated upon more extensive development of the Yukon Territory than, in fact transpired. Thus several of the structures quickly became redundant. The Court House was the first of the federal buildings to be shut down, but it reopened soon afterwards as the Mounted Police Barracks. The Residence was the second to close in October 1916, ostensibly for the duration of the Commissioner's absence. But

before he returned, the Yukon's budget was slashed and the building was shut permanently. As a result, it is highly unlikely that informants who lived in the building before 1916 will be found.<sup>4</sup> Occasionally, it was reopened for tourists or special events, such as the visit of the Governor-General in 1922, but it was allowed to slip into a state of advanced decay. For the next thirty-four years, the Residence stood empty, but a new use was found for it when St. Mary's Hospital burnt down in 1950. After re-opening as a home for the aged run by the Sisters of St. Ann, the building received a new lease on life, and a number of further changes were made to it. The sisters, however, only stayed a decade, deciding there was little point in investing in a structure which was in the condition this one had reached. After they left in 1964, it reverted to its former state. It still stands empty, but the decay has been arrested by Parks Canada, and the survival of the annex and the main building seems assured.

## 1.2 Historical Significance

The annex possesses intrinsic significance beyond its contemporary accommodation value. The ground floor is probably the only remaining portion of the original Commissioner's Residence as designed and built in 1901, because it alone escaped fire damage in 1906. In a telegram to the Chief Architect in Ottawa, the Superintendent of the D.P.W. in Dawson reported the state of the structure as:

...Basement undamaged, outside walls very little damaged, roof and third storey destroyed, interior finish, windows and doors destroyed, verandah considerably damaged, heating apparatus slightly injured, kitchen annex, etc., untouched. Contents destroyed totally.<sup>5</sup>

The annex, because of its raison d'être, was untouched by the gingerbread and later phases in the building's

development. Its purpose was functional, to provide essential services in the Executive's Residence. The lower floor, consisting of a kitchen (R1-01, see diagram 14) with attached shed (R1-09) and two other small outer rooms, thus provides an opportunity for a slight glimpse of life "below stairs" in Edwardian Dawson.

Thirdly, the annex was doubled in size by the addition of a second storey during George Black's tenure of the Commissioner's Office, apparently without either government authorization or approval. The upper storey was built as a sun room (R2-09, see diagram 15) probably to Martha Black's specifications. The result was a bright, airy, cheerfully decorated room for her beloved flowers. With the room facing south towards the curve in the river above Dawson, maximum sunlight in both winter and summer was assured.

### 1.3 The Setting

One of the ironies of the Federal Government presence in the Klondike was that, when it was most needed during the actual Gold Rush of 1898-1899, it was barely discernable. In fact, without the assistance of the North West Mounted Police, it would hardly have functioned at all. Short-staffed, working out of rented and inadequate quarters, tainted with the accusation of inefficiency and more than a suspicion of corruption, the federal administration attempted to assert its authority at minimal expenditure over the outsized mining camp of Dawson.

From the beginning the government realized the inadequacies of its accommodations, but did little. The police had established Fort Herchmer at the south end of the town-site in 1896, and were able to meet their accommodation needs there. The first civilian officials, Thomas Fawcett and D. W. Davis (gold commissioner and collector of customs respectively) arrived the next spring and occupied what sites



they could. In August 1897, James Walsh was appointed the first Commissioner, but he was caught short of Dawson by the freeze-up, so did not arrive until May 1898. His tenure of office extended only until August; presumably he passed it in the barracks. At any rate, there is no evidence the Canadian government had sufficient confidence in the Yukon's future to contemplate any extensive investment in public buildings at this early date.

Walsh's successor, and the first real Commissioner of the Territory, was William Ogilvie who reached Dawson in September 1898. The de facto senior civilian administrator had been Thomas Fawcett, Gold Commissioner, whose combined residence and office was a two storey log building which stood immediately to the south of the site the Commissioner's Residence would occupy. Erected in the spring of 1898,

The old log building, with its moss chinking and dirt roof, its hand-made doors and fixtures, and little 8 x 10 window panes was considered quite pretentious when first erected.<sup>6</sup>

There was no room for Ogilvie and his staff here, so after spending a short time in the barracks, the Commissioner rented half of the "Beaver and Lory" Building (figure 1) on Front between Princess and Harper. Ogilvie's residence was upstairs, his office downstairs, and the "Brewery Saloon" in the other half of the building.<sup>7</sup> He stayed here until the summer of 1899, when he moved into a quieter residence, a house owned by the Catholic priests in Dawson. There he stayed until his departure in 1901.<sup>8</sup>

Among his other responsibilities, Ogilvie was charged with meeting the government's building requirements. The proposals that he developed in conjunction with the Public Works architect went through a number of stages, eventually resulting in the construction of a Telegraph Office, Post Office, Court House, and all-purpose Administration Building as well as the official residence of the federally-appointed

chief executive, the "Commissioner's Residence."<sup>9</sup>

Thomas W. Fuller, a young Public Works architect, was sent to the Yukon to design and execute the construction of the government's buildings.<sup>10</sup> He was thus given the rare opportunity to put his own distinctive stamp on the physical setting of an entire town. Fuller did his work well; he designed structures of commanding simplicity and dignity, as befitted the government using them. They were built to last and all but the public school, which burnt down in June 1957, have survived the ravages of time, frost and neglect. They continue to maintain an imposing presence amidst the general decay of contemporary Dawson.

Ogilvie's original building scheme was comparatively modest. Fuller's actual plans turned out to be more elaborate and expensive, but he quickly accepted them. The Commissioner looked

...forward to a future of twenty years for the territory at least - possibly a longer time if Dawson is to be considered the capital of the Territory...I suppose we might as well build respectable buildings first as last.<sup>11</sup>

T. W. Fuller drew up the plans for the government buildings in two groups, the Post Office and Court House in late 1899 and the Administration Building and Commissioner's Residence in the spring of 1901. They were submitted to the Chief Architect in Ottawa and eventually approved.<sup>12</sup> The first two buildings were erected in the summer of 1900, the one in the town proper at the corner of Third Avenue and Third (later King) Street, the other south of the N.W.M.P. barracks on the government reserve. The location of a post office in the middle of town, and a court house near the Mounted Police barracks demonstrated an obvious connection between function and location. But there were no obvious locations for the other two buildings. Panoramic views of Dawson indicate a symmetry of location that was not necessarily a factor in Fuller's plans, and which only became obvious after the

gradual removal of the stockade and log buildings at Fort Herchmer. The contemporary effect, however, is striking.

If for no other reason than that of land costs, it was probably inevitable that the two buildings would be erected on the Government Reserve. At one point, Ogilvie suggested that the Residence be erected on Block "F" of the Reserve, a site (probably along Church Street) originally intended for the "Greek Russian Orthodox Church" but never utilized.<sup>13</sup> The present site of the Residence was originally intended for the Administration Building, but Fuller's final design of a building 160 ft. long was far too large for this location.<sup>14</sup> The area designated was occupied by five log buildings. From the north these were the Yukon Sun office, two government mess cabins, the Gold Commissioner's office, and the Bank of Commerce building (see figure 2 for the two structures north of the Gold Commissioner's which were demolished to make way for the Residence).

At the time of Ogilvie's departure in the spring of 1901, the decision to build had been taken. But it was only after formal authorization was received from Ottawa on 18 June 1901, and after Fuller had held discussions with the new Commissioner, James Ross, that the actual sites of the two buildings were determined. Construction began on the Administration Building on July 4, and on the Commissioner's Residence the 7th.<sup>15</sup>

## 2 Construction of the Commissioner's Residence and the Annex, 1901-1902

### 2.1 Materials and Patronage

Before this building could be started, materials had to be obtained. Two months after his arrival in July 1899 Fuller was appalled by the cost factor, although it is likely that prices had dropped somewhat from the previous year.<sup>16</sup>

What could be afforded depended upon the political will of the builders. By 1901 the rush was over, local prices had stabilized, and there were no longer any daunting problems of obtaining satisfactory building supplies in Dawson. Regular steamer service both up and down river during the navigation season; scheduled, year round rail connections between the coast at Skagway and the head of navigation at Whitehorse;<sup>17</sup> and the existence of a strong market for such supplies in Dawson, meant that what was unobtainable locally could be brought in without major difficulties. Only the cost of transportation and the shortness of the shipping season affected the building programme.

If there was a constraint, it was the government's political decision to buy Canadian commodities whenever possible. One reason for this reflected its uncomfortable realization that Americans still outnumbered British subjects in the Yukon, and that these probably did not take the Canadian government seriously. There was also local pressure from Canadian firms. Initially, Canadian manufacturers and suppliers had been unable to meet the demands of Dawson at the height of the Gold Rush. Gradually, however, Canadian manufacturers began to replace American, and came to control the bulk of the Yukon's trade.<sup>18</sup> But by this point, the easy money had been made and the Canadians had only the hollow victory of squeezing the Americans out of a declining market.

Even this had not been easy. At the end of 1899, the owner of the Vancouver hardware firm of McLennan and McFeely (more commonly "Mc and Mc") protested to Ogilvie about an American firm in Dawson advertising "All Government work placed with this firm." R. L. McLennan angrily wrote

...our interests and sympathies being entirely Canadian, I feel that to say the least I should not be discriminated against and ignored, and then have it nicely rubbed in by an advertisement of an American firm in the same line of business appearing daily in the newspaper...

Ogilvie attempted to mollify the indignant McLennan by stating the government's procurement policy:

...There is no desire on the part of anyone to overlook a Canadian firm. The intention is, all things being equal, to give the patronage to British subjects.<sup>19</sup>

There was also another factor "patronage" in its more pejorative sense. The Canadian Yukon Company received the largest single lumber order for both the Administration Building and the Residence. This probably reflected such factors as price and quality, but the CYC was also a Canadian firm, "friendly to the present government"—no small concern in the highly partisan Yukon.<sup>20</sup>

Because of the government's stake in the future prosperity of Dawson, it bought locally as much as possible.<sup>21</sup> There were still seven sawmills operating around Dawson in 1901,<sup>22</sup> but two mills, the Canadian Yukon Lumber Company and the Yukon Sawmill Company provided most of the lumber used. How much of it was local spruce is hard to determine. This wood was not highly regarded, but with due allowance for its limitations, it could be used for posts and mud sills.<sup>23</sup> They provided dressed, rustic and rough lumber, posts and sills, mouldings, rails, turned balustrades and posts, newel caps, rosettes, even brackets and knobs. The Canadian Yukon Sawmill also supplied sawdust, "20 loads at \$5." Mc and Mc of Vancouver and Dawson obtained the contract for the forced air heating apparatus and provided the galvanized iron roof and eaves. Local companies, such as the Dawson Hardware Company, Anderson Brothers and Edward Liebman, as well as local contractors, supplied much of the hardware and miscellaneous materials needed. The whole building was supposed to have been wired for electricity, and the heating system installed in 1901, but the accounts for these contracts, to the Dawson Electric Light and Power Company and the Yukon Hardware Company respectively, only appear in the Auditor General's report for 1902-1903.<sup>24</sup>



## 2.2 Permafrost and Soil Conditions

The site of the proposed Residence was already occupied by a pair of two storey log government mess cabins (figure 2). They were obviously considered to be of little value; the local contractor who did the excavation work was paid \$475.44, less a mere \$250.00 for these two structures, for his work.<sup>25</sup> Because the site chosen for the Residence had already been stripped of its vegetation cover, the surface and subsoil had been exposed. The question of the nature of the soil was important; northern building technology in 1901 was as yet barely developed to meet the challenge posed by permafrost.

Dawson City lies near the northern limit of the discontinuous permafrost zone. Here the permafrost extends about two hundred feet below the surface of the townsite, the surface itself providing an "active" layer of soil.<sup>26</sup> Soil conditions throughout the town vary considerably, but a broad generalization would be to distinguish between that part of the town north of the slough and the smaller portion to the south. In the former case, most of the overlying soil consists of silt and peat which does not drain easily, and so contains a high proportion of ice. South of the slough, however, the Klondike River has deposited sand to a distance of about 600 feet from its banks. This drains more easily (although it is low lying) and has a permanent thawed layer beneath the active zone. Before the Rush, builders working with a technology based on the use of green logs and wood stoves would not have been overly concerned with such distinctions. But for the builders of Dawson, knowledge of soil conditions was extremely important. It cannot be said that the area occupied by the Commissioner's Residence allowed Fuller to ignore the problems posed by permafrost and drainage, but they were not so serious here as at the Post Office, which he built first.

In August 1899, when he realized the magnitude of the problems posed by Dawson's situation, Fuller wrote the Chief Architect,

...I tell you, it is a hard job to know what is best to do in the way of building here, no one has the very faintest idea of what is best. I will tell you what I have to contend with. The ground here is frozen solid all the year, at a depth of 18"...[then related problems of drainage, cellars and furnaces, the use of brick and stone, and green wood...]...You will see by this what great difficulties I have to contend with. I can only act as I think best and hope and trust it may prove satisfactory.<sup>27</sup>

Fuller's first efforts were the Court House and Post Office, followed by the Public School, Commissioner's Residence and the Administration Building. Because soil conditions varied so much, the results differed. Thus, in the case of the Post Office which was located in a low lying area over peat and silt with a high ice content, the weight and heat of the building had the most serious effect. By 1902, it was sagging seriously in the centre, though not along the outside walls which had to sustain less weight (especially the vault) and heat pressure than the inside posts. That fall, concrete foundations for the furnaces were put under all the government buildings in order to avoid disturbing the permafrost. The depths that had to be sunk before solid earth differed in all cases; it was one foot at the school, three feet at the Commissioner's Residence, four at the Post Office and six at the Court House.<sup>28</sup> The latter two, being built a year earlier, had had an extra year to disturb the soil underneath them. It is worth emphasizing, however, that all buildings, both north and south of the slough, were built on permafrost, and that all were affected by it.

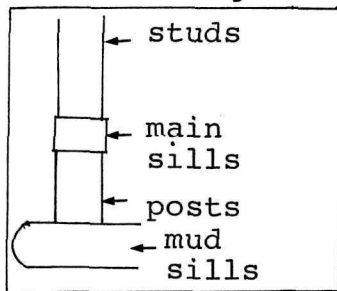
Eight decades of construction experience in the permafrost zone of the Canadian, Russian and American north have demonstrated the most effective types of foundations for different conditions, sizes of buildings, and needs. Such

refinements were not available in 1901 and, as a contemporary authority has noted,

...most early foundations were simple mud sills of local timbers laid in gravel or sand and levelled with the same material. The sills supported the main beams of the building or superstructure.<sup>29</sup>

### 2.3 Foundations

Because he quickly realized that conventional foundations were out of the question in permafrost, Thomas Fuller adapted to Dawson conditions, and used mudsills and posts. In the letter to Ewart (above p.8) he said that the Court House would be a balloon framed structure, "resting on posts, the latter on mudsills about 3 feet under the ground," and provided a diagram to illustrate what he intended to do. The



available evidence indicates this is exactly what he did; in the case of the Administration Building (which was constructed at the same time as the Commissioner's Residence) he went a full five feet below the active layer.<sup>30</sup>

No drawings, specifications or plans of the building survive; diagrams 1-9 probably date from the 1903 alterations (below), although they would have been based upon original plans. Diagrams 10-12 were made in February 1963, and so are, chronologically, closer to extant recordings than original plans. There is thus none of the detailed information about the construction of the Commissioner's Residence that there is for the Administration Building, but as the two were erected at the same time, according to the plans, and under the supervision, of the same person, evidence taken from the Administration Building will be considered where it does not contradict what there is available about the Residence.<sup>31</sup>

Fuller recognized the limitations of the most readily available lumber—green spruce—and was aware of some of the demands of permafrost construction, so he suggested that larger beams than those used in the south be employed. Apparently the Chief Architect of the Department of Public Works, D. Ewart disagreed, and had him reduce in diameter by two inches all foundation posts. Similarly, Fuller's observations of other large structures in Dawson convinced him that posts should be centred at no more than four feet for the greatest stability.<sup>32</sup> In at least these two instances, he made appropriate changes to the building technology he knew in order to adapt it to northern urban conditions.

The mudsills were the basis of the entire structure, so a necessary first step. These were 6" x 8" spruce (6" x 10" under the actual Residence), laid around the exterior of the annex, and in four lines east-west. Those under Rl-08 and Rl-09 were nine feet apart, the one under the exterior of Rl-10 and Rl-11 just under seven apart, and without a north-south portion at its west side. In the main building, they were seven feet, nine inches, except for the centre of the building, where the mudsills were thirteen feet five inches apart (see diagram 4). It is of interest to note that the Auditor-General's Report lists the 6" x 10" mudsills, but not the 6" x 8".<sup>33</sup>

As in the Administration Building, the posts supporting the one storey annex were smaller than those under the main building, 6" rather than 8" (diagram 4). The original height of the posts above the ground is not known; in 1963 it was six feet, (diagrams 11 and 12), and the Administration Building was five feet, so the floor of the annex must have stood at least five feet above the ground and ten feet above the mudsills. The main sills (diagram 5) which stood directly over the mudsills, also ran east-west and were smaller in diameter for the annex (6" x 6") than the main building (8" x 8").

#### 2.4 The Frame

The annex was originally constructed as a one storey structure twenty-four and a half feet by twenty-seven; but it was probably not all constructed at the same time. Extant recording notes show that the floor joists of the kitchen (Rl-08) were different from those of the other rooms.<sup>34</sup>

Also, Figure 3, dated October, 1901, and the first photograph of the building, shows window Wl-12 and the east end of the kitchen, but nothing past that. Figure 4, dated 1902, shows the entire annex, with the chimney in place over room Rl-09. Apparently contradicting this suggestion that the annex was constructed in two stages, is its description in the 1901-1902 D.P.W. report as a "one storey adjunct for use as a kitchen and shed." But this could be taken as merely indicating the adjunct would be built. It is worth noting that 10,000 feet of dressed and rough lumber was purchased from the Canadian Yukon Company the next year, indicating that the annex was constructed in two stages.<sup>35</sup> The floor joists under the kitchen, according to the extant recorders, are 2" x 10" in diameter, running north-south at 20" centres.<sup>36</sup> For the other three rooms, the joists are both smaller (2" x 6") and closer together - 12" O.C.. The floor of room Rl-08 was laid four inches higher than the others, but for rooms Rl-10 and Rl-11, another layer of joists was added to bring them up to the level of the kitchen. This left the shed (Rl-09) floor lower than the rest of the annex.

The walls do not show this same distinction between sections built early and late. Around the whole of the annex, the studs used were 2" x 4", set 2'0" O.C., and the layers were constant. From the inside, the extant recording team found two layers (one 3/4" x 3 5/16, the other 5/8" x 5 1/8") of v-jointed tongue and groove wall board, 1" x 9 7/8" rough-sawn boarding, the studs, 1" x 8" rough-sawn exterior wall sheeting, black building paper, and 3/4" x 5 1/4" cove siding. All but the inner (3/4" x 3 5/16" wall boards were thought to



be original.<sup>37</sup> Although the extant recorders did not find insulation in the walls, it is possible the annex as originally constructed had some sawdust insulation between the inner and outer wall layers. Twenty loads of sawdust were supplied by the Canadian Yukon Lumber Company when the building was erected; the plans for the Administration Building indicated that sawdust was poured between the inner and outer walls of the basement; and diagram 11 recorded that "all exterior walls sawdust filled."<sup>38</sup> The roof, as with all government buildings, was galvanized iron laid over an "L" shaped gable.

## 2.5 Services and Internal Divisions

As an integral part of the original structure, the annex had the same services as the Commissioner's Residence. The first year, this consisted of a "heating" apparatus installed by McLennan and McFeeley, (a forced-air furnace under the middle of the Residence), and electrical lighting, provided at considerable expense (\$2,014.21) by the Dawson Electric Light and Power Company. A second furnace was installed during the 1904-1905 fiscal year, this time a hot water system. Considering the Administration Building had four furnaces and the Post Office two, the purchase of the second furnace was certainly justified.<sup>39</sup>

There was no plumbing system in the building for at least a year, but this was not unique in Dawson. There were two distinct water systems in the city in 1901 and 1902, but it was only in 1904 that the Dawson City Water and Power Company was able to supply water year-round. Before that, its winter operations were conducted by a wagon which delivered water taken out of the Yukon. The Company did not have time to install a plumbing system and fixtures for the first winter; only in the 1902-1903 fiscal year did it put

in a system which included at least one water closet.<sup>40</sup> Considering the laundry was always sent out (reflecting, among other things, a highly developed cleaning industry in a community of transient males), and Fuller only provided for a "crematory closet" in his original scheme. The lack of plumbing imposed no greater hardship on the occupants of the Residence than upon anyone else in Dawson.<sup>41</sup>

The annex as originally completed in 1902 consisted of four interior units and an exterior walkway (now room R1-12) which connected room R1-11 with the rear entrance (ED-2) to the Residence. There were three exits from the annex door, ED-3 on the south end of the east side, leading to a small porch and stairs; door D1-33 out of room R1-11 to a verandah and another staircase; and door D1-07 from the kitchen to a rear hallway in the Residence. The most important of the rooms was room R1-08, the kitchen. Its most obvious feature would be the range along the south wall, probably connected to the chimney. It connected directly with only one room, R1-09, the level of which was about four inches below the rest of the annex. This was an all purpose room, described merely as a "shed" in the D.P.W. report on the building's construction<sup>42</sup> and the 1903 floor plan (see diagram 6). The exact use to which the other two smaller rooms were put is difficult to determine. Both were built at the same time as the shed, but were several inches above it, and so obviously meant to be very distinct units. Room R1-10 was probably a privy (Fuller's "crematory closet"?) originally. Once the building obtained plumbing, it was provided with a water closet (diagram 6). Room R1-11, which led via door fD (former door) 1-32 to the "shed" and D1-33 to the walkway outside had no function assigned it in the 1903 diagram; it was likely used for storage. At a point near where rooms R1-09, R1-10 and R1-11 met, there was probably a stove for extra heat, as a chimney was in place here from at least

1902 (see Figure 4).<sup>43</sup>

Purchases specifically for the annex are difficult to isolate, although a range (\$120.00, less range returned, \$79.75") and kitchen utensils purchased from Mc and Mc when the building was opened, are obvious. Probably the "galvanized pipe, 11 joints" and "chimney top, revolving" purchased in 1902-1903 from the same company out of capital funds were also intended for use in the annex. Under "maintenance" the same year, a "Regal Perfection" range and hot closet were purchased from William Bowness in Victoria, the plumbing system installed by the Dawson City Water and Power Company, and three sets of "refrigerator catches and hinges" acquired from the Dawson Hardware Company for an ice box, which was obviously built to accommodate these.<sup>44</sup>

### 3 The Annex 1902-1912

#### 3.1 The First Years

The Residence (less part of the annex) was completed in October, 1901, and Commissioner James Ross was able to move in soon afterwards. He held his first reception in January, 1902, but his was a brief term of office.<sup>45</sup> It was shortened by a tragedy that related to the furnishing of the Residence. Furniture of the quality desired could not be obtained in Dawson, so in August of 1901, his wife left for the outside to purchase it. She, their daughter and a niece were drowned in the sinking of the Islander on 15 August 1901. The Commissioner left Dawson immediately to attend to their burial, then returned in October to occupy his new residence. However, he only remained until January, then went "outside" until June, 1902. Two months after his return, he was paralyzed by a stroke. He soon left the Yukon for good, and resigned in November of that year.<sup>46</sup>

In 1903, the annex and most of the interior were neglected in favour of major exterior additions in the form of vast

and bizarre "gingerbread" verandahs and towers installed over Fuller's simpler structure (figure 5). It is difficult to indicate responsibility for these renovations. Ross may have approved the expenditure, but he was only present in Dawson from June to August, 1902; while possible, it is unlikely he would devote much time to such a small matter. His successor, Frederick Congdon, took office in March 1903, too late for approval of the estimates. The Administrator pro-tem, Major Z. T. Wood, was a career policeman and unlikely to indulge in the extremes the changes indicated. Probably the perpetrator of this inappropriate transformation was S. A. D. Bertrand, the Department of Public Works Superintendent in Dawson.

The elaboration of the Residence was not to everyone's taste. At the time of the building's post-fire renovations in 1907, the editor of the Dawson Daily News wrote in retrospect:

...From the funds appropriated by the federal government for this territory, was taken a large amount to disfigure and disgrace this noble building; to cover its classic front with geegaws and falderals and filagree work so as to hide its national significance and make of it a gingerbread subject of ridicule. The taste displayed, or the want of it, was shocking. Only at such places as Long Beach, Saratoga, and some of the "bads" of the smaller Prussian baronies are to be found such specimens of architecture, and they are found to be, and in fact designate, gambling houses and "maisons de joie."<sup>47</sup>

The functional annex was spared the excesses of the more visible sides of the Residence, thus preserving to a considerable extent the original character of Fuller's building. However, under Commissioners Congdon (1903-1904), McInnes (1905-1906), and Henderson (1907-1911) the decline in the Yukon's economy was reflected in diminished government expenditure. Except for such minor items as dishes and cooking paraphenelia, little was spent on the annex. A coal heater

in 1903-1904 which might have been intended for use in the annex privy/water closet; a sink and connection (which may, in fact, have been intended for use elsewhere in the building) in 1905-1906; and a refrigerator, costing \$35.00, purchased from Frank Lowe in 1906 were added to the government inventory.<sup>48</sup>

### 3.2 Domestic Service

There was obviously a functioning service area in the annex which made possible the maximum utilization of the Residence for social affairs. In spite of cuts in road expenditures and the civil establishment, Commissioners Congdon and McInnes entertained extensively in their "gingerbread subject of ridicule."<sup>49</sup> The Yukon's highest federal official stood at the apex of Dawson's social pyramid, setting a tone which, in retrospect, appears rigid. Certainly Martha Black felt so, deploring that "only the prosperous and important were entertained" at the Residence before her husband became the Commissioner.<sup>50</sup> This comment was meant to draw contrast between the Black occupancy and former Commissioners', drawing attention to the former's liberality; but Martha Black's observations were seldom free of partisanship.

In order to extend hospitality to both the "prosperous and important" as well as the ordinary citizen of Dawson, a domestic infrastructure was needed, the very existence of which "below the stairs" made it possible for the Residence to become the centre of the glittering social world of Dawson.

For the most part, the staff lived on the third floor and worked in the annex, storing supplies, cooking, cleaning, but, surprisingly, sending out the laundry. Domestic service during the Edwardian period was probably not so bleak in Dawson as in urban centres elsewhere.<sup>51</sup> While the work was hard and the hours long, as was the lot of most Dawson residents, neither the kitchen nor the backroom lacked up-to-date

amenities or conveniences to lighten the work. Government employment was always sought after, and before the First World War was probably apportioned on the basis of a partisan patronage. Except after elections, the positions were secure, the work not unduly difficult, and the remuneration adequate.

The domestic payroll took a large proportion of the money voted for the Residence, with a hierarchy of employees ranging from the firemen/night men who earned \$125.00 a month in 1903-1904 and \$160.00 a month after the fire in 1906; the caretakers who made \$80.00 a month in 1903-1904, and between \$110.00 and \$160.00 thereafter; the gardener (later combined with the night man) at \$1.00 an hour; the labourers (75¢ an hour) and charwomen (50¢ to 60¢ an hour initially, up to \$100.00 per month after the 1906 fire).<sup>52</sup> By the standards of the time, and in the economic environment of Dawson, wages in government service were quite adequate.

The classification of positions was not always accurate, but presumably met existing categories. At no point was anyone hired as a cook; only in 1903-1904 was there a "matron", and only between 1904 and 1906 was there a position for a "servant". All employees were listed as "caretakers", "charwomen" (or men), "night men", "gardeners" or "labourers". One individual, Nelson P. McDonald was classified as a "caretaker" between 1903 and 1916, yet he was listed as the "steward" in 1908 and was probably the "butler" Martha Black wrote of as being on the Residence staff.<sup>53</sup> Similarly, Ida Joitke, officially a charwoman from 1908 until at least 1913, was the "chef" in 1908, and Martha Black's "German chef". Government employees were not a distinct underclass - in 1906, when Nelson McDonald married, the reception was given by the Commissioner, and his family participated extensively in the wedding party.<sup>54</sup> While little is yet known about domestic service in Edwardian Dawson, it is unlikely that even the Commissioner's Residence, with its ornate frontage,

extravagant interior and functional annex, represented the clear cut social divisions of Dawson myth.

### 3.3 The Fire of 25 December 1906

Commissioners appear to have travelled outside as often as possible, and the gaps between their resignations and succeeding appointments often ran to months. William McInnes, for example, arrived in Dawson July, 1905, went to Ottawa in February, 1906, returned in June, then departed for good in September of the same year.<sup>55</sup> The Residence was often left with no one - not even the staff - resident.

There was thus nothing unusual about the building being "empty" at Christmas 1906. On that day, however, it caught fire. Whether the cause was human, as Martha Black implied, or as the Commission of Investigation suggested, improperly insulated hot air flues, and faulty wiring,<sup>56</sup> the fire originated at the west side of the building, as far from the annex as possible. Perhaps of equal importance for the annex was the fact that the fire department was able to lay two comparatively short (450 feet) lengths of hose from the back of the building, but had to lay longer ones from Church and 5th (1100 feet), Harper and 3rd (1200 feet) and the R.N.W.M.P. barracks (800 feet).<sup>57</sup> If any part of the building was guaranteed of an adequate water supply during the fire, it was the annex. Photographs of the building immediately after the fire, taken by the D.P.W. Superintendent, demonstrate the damage done. Figures 7, 8, and 9 show the damage done to the exterior of the Residence, with broken, charred and disfigured windows, doors and walls, and stalactites of ice gracing the building's openings and overhangs - but the annex seemingly unaffected. This was not entirely the case, however. The north and west kitchen walls - from the chimney south of door D1-10 to W1-19 were charred to some extent, although this



minor damage was much less serious than that sustained throughout the rest of the Residence. On top of this actual charring there would inevitably be both smoke and water damage.

The Commissioner's Residence was closed up after the fire, with only the most essential repairs to the roof being made.<sup>58</sup> Its charred, boarded exterior greeted McInnes' successor, Alexander Henderson, on his arrival in the summer of 1907, but there were no immediate plans to repair the building. Henderson and his family moved into Judge Mcauley's residence for over a year while the Residence remained empty. It was an eyesore to those sensitive to Dawson's evident decline and to the effect on morale that an unrepaired, neglected Residence was having. As the Yukon Territorial Liberal Association phrased it in a memorial to the government in August, 1907:

...the burned ruins of the Government Mansion [sic] in the present character and dilapidated condition, is so strongly suggestive of negligence and lack of vigorous progress, not only to our own citizens, but particularly to visitors and capitalists from foreign countries...that the Government Mansion in Dawson should be immediately restored to its former prestige...<sup>59</sup>

Whether this was the catalyst the government needed before an election is unclear, but it soon voted funds for the building repair. "The damage resulting to this building, its furniture, etc. by fire on December 25, 1906 was made good..." reported the Chief Architect laconically in 1909.<sup>60</sup>

But 1908 presented a very different situation from 1901 or 1903 as far as the Federal Government's perception of Dawson was concerned. The towers and the gingerbread disappeared. More native wood was used along with imported fir and cedar, and inexpensive wall paper replaced the polished wood interior. Although furniture was purchased in Vancouver, and the new doors were brought in from "outside", most of the repairs were based on local supplies and salvage—resulting



in a Residence more somberly hued and dignified than its ill-fated earlier version.<sup>61</sup>

After looking at the gutted hulk of the building for over a year, the improvements appeared wonderful to the people of Dawson. The author of an article about the first reception in the re-opened Residence in December 1908 waxed eloquent about such delightful features as the radiators ("not only a source of even temperature, but of adornment"), the chairs ("the most elegant...that the upholsters and cabinet makers can provide"), and the lighting ("overall glows myriads of white lamps from magnificent electroliers, filtered through white granulated globes [of glass] or through golden strands of beads").<sup>62</sup> Had the journalist ventured into the annex, it is unlikely that he would have stretched his vocabulary to such limits. It profited little from the largesse bestowed upon the Residence. Extant recording investigation has found that the door fDl-35 was moved to the location of a window, and then became Dl-06. Similarly, window Wl-19, which had sustained some fire damage, had stripping added around its frame. These changes, which can be dated to the 1908 renovations, also lead to the supposition that fDl-35 was closed at this time, to be replaced by Dl-34, presumably indicating that some use was intended for the south-east corner of the kitchen; and that room Rl-12 was covered in at this point, by the building of a wall along its north side, the placing of window Wl-18, and the change of a former window to door Dl-06.

Two other changes may also have occurred at this point, although no evidence exists for a date to be ascribed to them. The first was the placing of a door, Dl-10, to connect the kitchen directly with a room which may have been used as a pantry. No such connection existed in 1903 (see diagram 6), and the Sisters of St. Ann did not make it. The second change was to move the wall between the shed (Rl-09) and the

two small rooms to its north (Rl-10 and Rl-11) in order to enlarge the former at the expense of the latter two, and to close off fDl-32. This had the effect of isolating Rl-11 from the rest of the annex. These latter two changes cannot be dated with certainty to 1908; they may possibly reflect changes made in 1914 when the second floor of the annex was set in place. However, in view of the Federal Government's increasing reluctance to spend money on the Residence after the repairs of 1908, it is suggested that the changes were made then.

After spending some \$35,000 on repairs, the Federal Government reduced maintenance to the levels it had reached before the fire, ranging from \$10,000 to \$12,000 a year between 1909 and 1913. Only minor items were destined for the annex—perhaps the 70 gallon galvanized iron tank in 1908, certainly the new range in 1908-1909 and the iron frame covered with copper, copper drain boards, and the canopy for the range in 1909-1910, as well as hardware from the Dawson Sheet Metal Works the next year.<sup>63</sup>

#### 4 George and Martha Black in the Residence, 1912-1916

##### 4.1 Renovations, 1912-1913

Inevitably, the Residence ran down. Even with a smaller staff, salaries consumed up to half of the money voted for maintenance, leaving little for repairs or renovations. The reduction of public expenditures for the Territory took a very tangible form in 1910 with the closing of the Court House, and the removal of its staff to the Administration Building. Obviously the Federal Government was coming to regard the Yukon's diminishing revenues and increasing expenses less and less favourably.

Sir Wilfred Laurier's Liberal government was defeated by Robert Borden's Conservatives in 1911. In the Yukon, Commissioner Henderson, who had been first appointed in 1907

resigned in July that year, leaving a vacancy for the new government to fill. Borden took the opportunity presented to appoint one of the Yukon's most partisan Tories, George Black, as Commissioner.

The Blacks returned to Dawson in March 1912, and moved into the Residence vacated by the Hendersons the previous July. Martha Black reported that on her arrival as the "Chatelaine of Government House," she found the Residence "conveniently laid out." However, "as no money had been allowed for renovations for years, the place was badly run-down. Actually, there were cracks in the kitchen and attic so large you could see outside..."<sup>64</sup> They could do little to remedy the situation immediately, but they were eventually able to extract funds from a new government more favourably disposed towards expenditure in the Yukon. Presumably they repaired the cracks, then built a greenhouse behind the annex for Martha to indulge her passion for Yukon flora.<sup>65</sup>

By 7 April 1913, the new Commissioner was making plans for the amelioration of the Residence. He had a low regard for the improvements that Henderson made after the fire:

Speaking generally, the house was originally furnished with shoddy stuff, most of which is now in bad shape from ordinary use.

Almost for the first time the kitchen in the annex was presented as a part of the Residence meriting consideration;

"...the kitchen stove is so small as to be out of all proportion for requirements of a house of its size. It is even without a warming oven."

Consequently, he requested, as part of a \$14,000 estimate for furnishings, the following for the kitchen;

Range	\$200.00
Pots and Pans	50.00
Linoleum for kitchen, summer kitchen, back halls, pantry, etc.	100.00
	\$400.00 <sup>66</sup>

A special vote of \$6,022.41 was provided as a capital expenditure for "Dawson Government House: Furniture" in 1913-1914; however, none of the kitchen items were included in this amount. An "army range," worth \$250.00 ("less for old range \$20.00") was then bought from the "Klondike Thawing Company," and paid for out of operating expenses.<sup>67</sup>

#### 4.2 The Sun Room, 1914

At the same time, several other items, including four new doors, ten windows, extensive sheet metal work, double the usual lumber requirements, fifteen loads of sawdust (the first since the building was originally built) and over \$1,000. labour costs for carpenters and labourers were charged against the Commissioner's Residence.<sup>68</sup> Although there is no evidence, as there was for furniture, that such items were either requested or approved for a major renovation, they were used in the construction of a second floor to the annex—Martha Black's sun room.

One of the most interesting features of the construction of a second storey on the Residence annex was the fact that it was built entirely without written authorization. It is possible that there was a verbal, or an implied, approval when the estimates for unusually large amounts of building materials were passed, but nowhere in the reports of the Public Works Department, the Interior Department or the Auditor General were there references to an extension on the annex. The first "official" indication of the extension's existence was a photograph which appeared in the 1916 edition of The Yukon Territory<sup>69</sup> where its presence was obvious.<sup>70</sup>

The upward expansion of the annex took place in early 1914. The ten windows and the huge volume of lumber purchased in 1913-1914 corresponded to the extension's requirements. The work was begun early in 1914, but did not pass unnoticed

by the Dawson City Inspector of Buildings. In an admonitory note to the Agent for the Superintendent, of Public Works in February 1914, he referred to "...the building about to go on at Government House." To this, the Superintendent replied, referring in turn to "...the addition now being built at the Commissioner's House."<sup>71</sup>

It was completed by May, meriting the congratulations of the Dawson Daily News which included the extension in an article entitled, "Spirit of Enterprise in Dawson"

...The Government House has been improved by the addition of two or three rooms over the kitchen for utility purposes...<sup>72</sup>

The reference to the second story as destined for "utility purposes" appears curious, but it was certainly meant to be for private use. Although the Dawson I.O.D.E. met several times at "Mrs. George Black's home" during the spring of 1914, all meetings took place in the more public drawing rooms on the first floor, and the reports of the meetings contained no mention of the construction of an addition to the annex.<sup>73</sup>

The second storey addition consisted of one large room (R2-09) and a small one (R2-10) which was probably used for storage. The only connection with the Residence was via door D2-26, which replaced a window, and which led to the second floor, the domestic (as opposed to the public first floor) portion of the Residence.

The extension was almost the same size as the ground floor, excluding room R1-12. The west section of the north wall, however, was 2' 8 1/2" south of the corresponding section of the ground floor wall. This was done in order to clear the side of the double window lighting the stairs of the main building. The construction of the second storey involved the removal of the original ceiling, and the creation of a crawl space between the floors, with the studs for the upper storey erected on the original wall plate. This

resulted in a modified balloon frame structure. The floor joists were laid in two patterns; north-south for the first twelve and a half feet east of the main building's wall (over the kitchen, R1-08), and east-west over the rest. All joists were 1 3/4" x 7 3/4", laid at approximately two feet O.C. The studs were the same as the ground floor, 2" x 4", set two feet O.C., except along the north wall.<sup>74</sup> From the inside, the wall layers were: wallpaper, muslin, 3/4" x 5" shiplap siding, 1" rough sawn siding laid horizontally (not diagonally as they were for the ground floor), 2" x 4" wall studs, building paper and shiplap cove siding. Fibre board was later placed over the wallpaper, presumably by the sisters in the early 1950s. The roof was, again, galvanized iron, gabled with the chimney in its previous position. It was also found to be insulated with sawdust by the extant records, probably (although not certainly) at the time of construction.

#### 4.3 The Use of the Sun Room 1914-1916

The most distinctive features of the room were the battery of seven windows along the south wall, the hand pointed wallpaper, and the manual dumbwaiter in the southeast corner of the main room.<sup>75</sup> Such features make it difficult to take seriously the assertion that this was merely "for utility purposes." Martha Black's interest in flora, both native and exotic was one of her more pleasant personal features, and it is most likely this light, spacious, and cheerfully-painted room was designed to her specifications. It was a private room, accessible only from the second floor, and fitted with a dumbwaiter which would have enabled the Blacks to dine in some privacy, and informality, when not entertaining. Her plants would be assured at least some light here even in the winter, and she herself probably spent many hours in the sun

room caring for them, reading, or entertaining visitors.

But the Blacks had only two summers during which they could enjoy their sun room. They spent the winter of 1915-1916, from October to June, outside, during which period the Residence was closed. George Black enlisted in the army in March 1916 and upon his return to Dawson in June, set about recruiting for the "Yukon Infantry Company." That summer, the Commissioner and his wife returned to the Residence, but with George's illness in June and July, and the demands of recruiting and drilling for the Company, there was probably little time to enjoy the sun room.<sup>76</sup>

##### 5 The Residence Closed, 1916-1950

In October 1916, George Black, his recruits—and his wife—left for the war. The Residence was shut down and even the utilities were stopped at the end of the month.<sup>77</sup> A skeleton staff was kept on, and necessary repairs and maintenance were carried out but the Residence which had cost some \$16,000. for maintenance in 1915-1916, cost only \$535.47 in 1917-1918, and \$71.75 in 1918-1919.<sup>78</sup> In October 1916, the gardener/night man, C. Paddock was retired. The caretaker, Nelson P. McDonald, left government service in January 1917. Thereafter, only miscellaneous charges for "labour" were made against the Residence.

It had been the intention to close the building only for the duration of the war. In 1918, however, national "economies" which involved a 40 per cent reduction in the Federal Government's grant to the territory and the abolition of the office of the Commissioner, closed it permanently as a Residence. It was used briefly by the Gold Commissioner in 1918-1919, and reopened (at a cost of over \$1,000.) for the brief Dawson visit of the Governor-General, Lord Byng in 1922, but from October 1916, it was effectively shut down.<sup>79</sup>



Everything remained as it had the day the Black's left, except for personal possessions they later recovered, and individual items removed on occasion.<sup>80</sup>

Into the 1940s the rooms in the Residence retained the functions and appearances they had had in 1916. With regard to the "sun room" on the upper floor and to the ground floor, it is worth noting the description of the annex given by the territorial comptroller in 1941,

There is an addition at the rear of the main building consisting of, on the ground floor, a kitchen and two small rooms used for laundry purposes, and on the first floor one large room with windows placed close together along two sides. This was used as a sun room and would not be suitable for bedroom purposes without filling in a large number of the windows. [sic]<sup>81</sup>

The neglect that the building suffered in the 1920s and 1930s continued through the forties, and worsened as its cumulative impact took effect. On occasion, furniture or other features of the building were removed, usually, but not always, with the knowledge and permission of the administration.<sup>82</sup> It is likely that the rooms in the annex suffered such clandestine depredations. As the cumulative effect of such activities and natural decay took over visitors to Dawson were more appalled by than impressed with the Residence. In 1947 when the need for a new residence for the Gold Commissioner was considered, the only suggestion made about the former "Government House" was that it be razed.<sup>83</sup>

#### 6 Dawson's Home For the Aged, 1950-1964

The Residence and annex were saved from utter ruin by the combination of two unlikely factors—government inertia and another of Dawson's spectacular fires. As indicated above, the Federal Government was considering razing the building in the 1940s, but it would have cost more to destroy it than the materials salvaged warranted. In March 1950, the



Chief Architect, C. Gustave Brault wrote

The building...is reported to be in a very poor state of repair. The Department of Resources and Development have stated that at times they have tried to get prices for the demolition of the building. This, as proved, would be a cost to the government and as no immediate use was to be made of the materials, the building has been left standing. There is no prospect of making use of the building due to the great expense of repairs and upkeep.<sup>84</sup>

Thus the proposed demolition of the structure had gone no further than words when the St. Mary's Complex—hospital, old folks' home, residences and church—at the north end of town was destroyed by fire.<sup>85</sup> Extreme cold, and the disturbance of the water at the sources for fire department hoses—"too damn much dirt and sticks in the mains, plugged nozzles and one line froze solid..."<sup>86</sup>—prevented the fire department from controlling the blaze.

There was only one death, but the sisters had to find immediate accommodations for their wards, who consisted of hospital patients, and elderly (mostly indigent) men. The more seriously ill among the former were flown out as soon as possible to Whitehorse and Edmonton, the rest were settled down wherever possible. The latter group, elderly men, mostly without the means to support themselves remained and were housed temporarily in the community hall.

This latter group, the argonauts of 1898 fifty years on, posed a unique problem for the territory. A demographic bulge of single men, they had come to Dawson at the turn of the century, and stayed on, most of them making a living by mining. A population of young, single, mostly transient males called into existence several of Dawson's characteristic social and economic phenomena—its hotels, boarding houses, laundries, restaurants, saloons and brothels. They were submerged between 1900 and 1920 by the more family-oriented town, but this community never really went away. Some obviously

had the foresight—and the means—to lay money aside for their old age, but others did not. After the Second World War, when increasing numbers of these sourdoughs ceased to be able to support themselves, they fell back on the care provided by the Sisters of St. Ann and other charitable organizations, or became wards of the state. But the Yukon was not a wealthy territory, and the demographic "bulge" these Ninety-Eighters represented strained its resources in the 1940s and 1950s. The sisters, with some financial assistance from the government were able to care for the "elderly gentlemen" in a manner both more efficient and more humane than the government could.<sup>87</sup> Thus, it was important that the sisters' geriatric as well as their hospital work continue in Dawson.

The Sisters of St. Ann (or Anne) had come to Dawson at the time of the Gold Rush and operated St. Mary's Hospital and School from the turn of the century. Originally a Quebec order, sisters had first come to Victoria, B.C. in 1858 and expanded along the coast from Washington State to Alaska in the years following. Although the Mother House of the order was at Lachine, St. Mary's Dawson was under the Provincial House in Victoria. The sisters were both French and English speaking; the "Chronique" of their activities in Dawson was written in French until 1950, then became the "Chronicles" in English afterwards. The order was highly regarded in Dawson, had a strong organization throughout Alaska, the Yukon, British Columbia and Washington, and was firmly based in the East. The sisters who ran its schools and hospitals were often accomplished administrators and business women; they were also quite adept at dealing with bureaucrats. Thus there was no question but that they would remain in Dawson, providing the services they always had, and it was probably inevitable that they would obtain the Commissioner's Residence and the Court House. These were the two largest vacant extant structures in Dawson, and although not in good condition, could be repaired.

In February, they launched a two-pronged attack on the Federal Government. The "Mother General" of the Order and the "Provincial" for British Columbia both visited Ottawa to press their case. At the same time, they enlisted the assistance of the Oblate Order, via Bishop Courdet in the Yukon and Fr. J. O. Plourde in Ottawa. The latter wrote the Deputy-Minister of Public Works on behalf of the Sisters, suggesting

...that the former residence of the Governor of the North West Territories [sic] is vacant and could serve as temporary quarters for the Sisters as well as some of their patients.

His letter was written February 15—barely a month after the conflagration. Within two days, the government had agreed to the lease of the Residence and the Court House to the Sisters of St. Ann for twenty-one years, with the possibility of two further renewals, for a nominal rent of \$10.00 a year each. This was to be subject to several conditions relating to the building's existing condition, its repair, use, insurance, and condition when returned to Public Works. The government was not giving away valuable property; in the Report for the Minister of Public Works to the Privy Council, it was described as being "in a poor state of repair," while the government insisted the order bring it up to a usable standard with their own resources. But the sisters in Dawson were delighted, "La visite de nos Mères à Ottawa est pour nous d'un secours très puissant..." On March 14, the Privy Council approved the lease to the sisters upon the terms already agreed.<sup>88</sup>

During the spring, the sisters collected their resources, including the insurance money for the old buildings, and began to make their plans. On May 12, they received the keys to the Residence.

...D'après les connaisseurs du Yukon, cette maison ne pouvait être réparée à cause de dépenses extraordinaires occasionnées par les travaux à exécuter. Monsieur Gibben [Commissioner] avait même autorisé

Soeur Superieure à se servir des portes, radiateurs, etc. qui pourraient aider à réparer le Palais de Justice. Après mures réflexions, Soeur Superieure fait de nouveau inspecter les fondations par quelques unes des nôtres et, sur leur encouragement, met la main à l'oeuvre.<sup>89</sup>

She also obtained as much technical assistance as possible from the administration and sought unsuccessfully the original plans of the building (see above, p.1). There were also several other points to clear up—particularly whether it would be possible to buy the Residence, in which so much was being invested (and its price), and the disposal of the furniture in the building—including the kitchen stove, dishes, table, chairs, etc. downstairs in the annex, and the "Sun Room" furniture still there—eight chairs, three pieces of carpet and one encyclopaedia with its case.<sup>90</sup> The question of the purchase of the building was not settled until 1955, when the furniture was all removed, although the stove may have stayed.

On May 22,

Soeur Superieure forme deux équipes d'ouvriers. Une première entreprend les travaux d'excavation à la maison du gouverneur [sic]; l'autre au palais de justice. Les fondations, les systemes de chauffage, et d'électricité, les conduites de l'eau, sont à renouveler en leur presque totalité. Les toits sont à réparer, les murs intérieurs à redoubler à Tintex au 3<sup>me</sup> étage de la maison du gouverneur.....En attendant la construction de l'hôpital qui sera annexé au Palais de Justice, les vieillards seront hospitalisés au premier étage de la maison du gouverneur. Le personnel religieux habitera le second étage, tandis que les gardes-malades se partageront le troisième.<sup>90</sup>

The Dawson Weekly News reported the renovations in early June, adding that William Nielson, with a team of 10-15 men was in charge of foundation and other work at the "old governor's residence," and that both "projects are going to require a great deal of work before the buildings are ready for occupancy."<sup>91</sup>

In the case of the annex, what this "great deal of work" involved is not easy to determine. The transformation of the Court House into a hospital was the larger project since the Residence was meant to serve only temporarily as a home for the aged. Consequently, most of the Sisters' records relate to expenditures associated with the Hospital, not the Residence. By November of 1950 for example, of the \$71,996.12 spent, only \$10,000 had been used for the Residence; the further \$25,000 requested at that point was for the Court House too.<sup>92</sup>

The author was able to interview four individuals who either worked in the annex, or knew of the changes that took place. Unfortunately none of their oral testimonies could be corroborated by contemporary materials, and there was little agreement among the testimonies. There was certainly foundation work, but according to Giovanni Castellarin, this consisted only of replacing the existing one along the south side of the main building with a double foundation.<sup>93</sup> A visitor to Dawson in the late 1950s wrote of the 1950 work,

Considerable renovation was required because of differential movement through the years. Ten-inch [sic] diameter wood posts which, resting on wood sills, support the building, have moved up and down a total of 5", and shimming and cutting of them is carried out as required.<sup>94</sup>

This observation is of value in pointing out that while drainage and rotting posts were a constant threat to the foundation of the Residence (and annex—the posts of which were still 6"—see Figure 13), so also was frost heaving. Finally, the cross sections of the annex "basement" shown in diagrams 11 and 12 show very different dimensions from those in diagrams 4 and 5, probably indicating the changes made in the early 1950s. Giovanni Castellarin also informed the author that he helped build a garage for the sisters between posts beneath the annex, presumably at its east end. This was replaced by a surface garage in the mid-1950s, and the

subterranean one became the root cellar.<sup>95</sup> As the entire area underneath the annex was filled in by Parks Canada, neither this, nor other testimony about foundations changes in the 1950s can be tested.

Diagram 11 also indicates that "all ext. [erior] walls filled with sawdust." It was stated above (p.18) that the Residence and annex were probably insulated with sawdust at the time of construction, on the basis of analogy with the Administration Building and the references to sawdust purchased in 1901 and 1913. If it were originally insulated, neither the Director of Resources and Development, nor Sister Mary Mark were aware of this before the building was renovated in May 1950, as both suggested it should be done.<sup>96</sup> However, no further references to wall insulation were made. It is also worth noting again that the extant recording investigation team did not find any sawdust between the wall layers of the annex, although it had been placed in the roof.

With the old men living downstairs and the sisters on the second floor, the distinction between the two levels of the annex in the Black's time was perpetuated. The kitchen (R1-08) retained its original function, with new cupboards along its north and east walls and a large table for serving the patients added by the sisters' carpenters. The stove was originally the woodstove the Blacks had used, but it was changed to propane in 1953, and to oil in 1961 according to two of the sisters who worked in the kitchen.<sup>97</sup> It was a warm pleasant working space, according to Sister Année who cooked there from 1950 until 1953, receiving at least one coat of paint—"ivory and brown enamel"—in December 1951.<sup>98</sup>

The old shed (R1-09) was used as a dining area. According to one informant, (Sister Mary Laurena) it was the old men's, but according to the other informants, it was the hospital staff's.<sup>99</sup> The dumbwaiter was already in place, but according to Sister Année, its size was expanded so it

could take four trays at a time. The sisters all lived in the residence, dining communally at breakfast. The hospital staff—sisters and laity—ate lunch and supper at the hospital, and the lay residence staff in this room. Although not mentioned by any of the oral informants, there was also a commercial freezer which was probably located here. In 1954, the Chronicles refer to a "frigidaire" and a deep freeze. In the latter case, the sawdust insulation proved unsatisfactory, so was replaced by cork and rockwood insulation.<sup>100</sup>

It was probably in 1950, along with other plumbing changes, that the toilets were installed in room R1-11, although it is not known whether these were for the patients or the staff. The former would appear the more likely; the latter still had the W.C. in room R1-10.<sup>101</sup>

The old sun room, room R2-09, stripped by the administration of its furniture (to the wrath of Martha Black, according to Sister Année) was the sisters' dining and community room. They were served by the manual dumbwaiter in the southeast corner, preserving the distinctions between those who lived on the second floor, and those who worked on the first. There is no record in the Chronicles of the repainting of this room, and the covering of the hand painted wallpaper, but this might have been done in 1954 ("...the Sisters' private apartments have just received a new white coat of paint, after the walls had been covered with hard-board") or, less likely, in 1957 ("the three bedrooms on the second floor of the Sisters' Residence are completely renovated..."). On at least one occasion—in 1952—the "Ladies Sewing Circle" met in the sisters' community room, as the former hospitality room was in the process of being transformed into the chapel.<sup>102</sup> Otherwise, it was strictly for the private use of the sisters.

On 7 August 1950 the sisters moved into the second floor of the residence; on the eighteenth the Fire Department,



understandably concerned about this building and its infirm inmates, checked the first aid and fire equipment, and on September 21, twenty of the "aged men" were brought in.<sup>103</sup> The peculiar arrangement of the aged patients living on the ground floor, the religious on the second, and the nurses on the third was not entirely satisfactory, but it was meant to be only temporary, until an annex could be built onto the Court House/Hospital for the men.<sup>104</sup> But it turned out to be as permanent as the Sisters of St. Ann's continued presence in Dawson. Initially a lack of funds, and the problems associated with a gradual government acceptance of its responsibilities towards the care of aged Yukoners, prevented changes from taking place. But by 1955, the arrangement whereby the Order cared for the elderly and ran the hospital looked permanent, so the Order was able to obtain title to the building it had repaired as well as the lots 'P' and 'R' of the Government Reserve for the nominal fee of \$1.00.<sup>105</sup>

A curious feature of the Home for the Aged was the visitors it received. George and Martha Black on several occasions stayed with the Sisters for the duration of their visits to Dawson, as did Prime Minister Diefenbaker in September 1958. Interestingly, in 1959, on the occasion of Prince Phillip's visit, it was noted that "The Sisters' Residence is the only place where the Duke stops." There was also a visit by a representative of the Public Works Department, "to ascertain what necessary repairs might be undertaken at the Residence in order to keep the building as a tourist attraction." Incredibly, despite the Sisters' imminent departure from a dilapidated structure, he declared that the building was still "in good condition."<sup>106</sup>

It was hardly that. In 1957 and 1962, the site was flooded by the Klondike River, doing serious—and noticeable—damage to the repaired foundations in the latter case. The Sister Superior requested that the government make a survey to the



buildings in order to determine their condition. This was done, and the results made public in February 1963. They were probably even worse than expected. The Territorial Engineer determined that there was serious danger of structural failure "in the near future," that the hot water and wiring system were on the point of collapse, and that it would cost over \$38,000 for the most immediate repairs. "You can see...that the structure is in sad shape." He recommended that the occupants be removed "and that the building be closed to the public." The next month the sisters agreed, and decided to withdraw from Dawson.<sup>107</sup> The decision was probably not an easy one; the abandonment of the Residence and Hospital would mean the severing of connections in the community which went back to the Gold Rush. However, besides the fact that the expense of maintaining the structures was now beyond the order's means; a large question mark hung over Dawson's future. With the closure of the Y.C.G.C. operations in 1966 mooted, it could be argued that the sisters' services would be utilized more effectively elsewhere. At the same time, the territorial government was now demonstrating both the willingness and the means to assume responsibility for the care of the aged.

The exact date of the closure of the Home for the Aged is not clear. According to Sister Mary Marcellus, who worked in Dawson from 1961 until 1963, the Residence was closed and the sisters left by August that year. Bush, however, citing no sources, said "the good sisters vacated the residence on St. Patrick's Day, 1964."<sup>108</sup> In either case, the Sisters were certainly gone, and the residence closed by the summer of 1964.

## 7 Concluding Note

It is extremely difficult to disentangle the history of the annex from the rest of the Commissioner's Residence. Although

the addition was completed several months after the main building, was spared the worst ravages of the 1906 fire, and underwent a major transformation in 1914, its history is basically that of the Residence—indeed of all the government structures in Dawson.

Constructed in 1901, and shut down 15 years later, the whole building was only saved from the effects of neglect over the next thirty-five years by the Sisters of St. Ann who made necessary major repairs and arrested the building's decay in 1950. But the sisters lived here for an even shorter period than had the commissioners earlier in the century. In spite of their thirteen—or at most fourteen—years in the building, its total period of occupancy was only thirty years, a period shorter than the other government buildings in Dawson, save the Post Office. For most of its history, the annex, and the rest of the Residence, stood gaunt and still, as it does today.

There is as yet no structural history of the Commissioner's Residence, although some of the main points such a history might contain are indicated here. Until such a history is written, it would be unwise to make irreversible transformations to those two parts of the annex—the kitchen and the sun room—most central to the rest of the structure.

The annex is of some limited historical significance itself. The ground floor escaped the worst effects of the 1903 transformations of the building and the 1906 fire, retaining the simple dignity Fuller had originally intended. The functions performed (or not, in the case of laundry) give some indication of domestic service in Dawson, although in the absence of a larger study of Dawson social history, observations made about domestic service must stand out of context. Finally, the sun room on the second floor was built without authorization, and probably to Martha Black's specification. As the Black's lived here long before they did at Turner and

Fifth, this room reflects an earlier stage of this remarkable woman's life than does their house.

## Endnotes

- 1 When under construction, the building was called the "Commissioner's Residence;" but became the "Government House" when it opened in 1902. The former name, the working title for the building while under construction, was changed to the latter "to avoid confusion with the Gold Commissioner, or other officials styled - Commissioners." Canada. Public Archives [hereafter PAC], RG11, Vol. 1437 file 238231, T. Fuller - J. I. Tarté, 11 January 1902. In the Auditor General's Reports, it was the "Commissioner's Residence" for 1902-03 the "Government House" from 1903-04 until 1907-08, then the "Commissioner's Residence" thereafter. The period when the building wore its gingerbread finery was its "Government House" phase, but the terms were used interchangeably, and with such other variations as the "Commissioner's House," and even the "Governor's Residence."
- 2 For the Administration Building, see M. E. Archibald, "The Structural History of the Administration Building, Dawson, Yukon Territory," Manuscript Report No. 217, 1978, pp. 132, 136-155, 174-177, 182-199. For the Court House and the Post Office, see PAC, RG11, Vol. 4268, file 2144-6. For the Court House when used as the R.C.M.P. Barracks, see RG11, Vol. 4260, file 1994-2-E.
- 3 See, for example, PAC, RG11, Vol. 4260, file 1994-2-E, C. Gustave Brault, Chief Architect - St. Mary Mark, St. Mary's Hospital, Dawson, 8 March 1950,..."With reference to the note attached to your letter of

May 19 in which you request plans of the former Commissioner's Residence in Dawson, Yukon Territory, a thorough search has been made of the records of this Department, and those of the North West Territories offices, but no plans have been found..."

- 4 This is particularly so for such an obscure corner of the building as the annex. One possible informant, Victoria Faulkner of Whitehorse, proved very helpful in research on other buildings, particularly the Administration Building. The author attempted to contact her while in Whitehorse in August 1978, but without success. Similarly, Martha Black's diaries in the Dawson Museum date from the 1930s and her "scrap book" in the Yukon Territorial Archives contains very little information before 1916.
- 5 PAC, RG91, Vol. 33, file 20348/1, telegram, S.A.D. Bertrand, Dawson—D. Ewart, Ottawa, 25 (or 26) December 1906.
- 6 Klondike Nugget, 26 June 1902. It was thus only four years "old."
- 7 See Archibald, Op. cit., p. 6, E. F. Bush, "Commissioners of the Yukon, 1897-1916," Canadian Historic Sites (Vol. 10, 1974), p. 108.
- 8 Canada. Sessional Papers [hereafter S.P.], Annual Report of the Auditor General, 1900, No. 1 p. H-36; 1901, p. V-155; 1902, p. V-48.
- 9 See Archibald, Op. cit., pp. 1-13, for a detailed account of the background to the building of the government structures.
- 10 M. E. Archibald is currently undertaking a study of Fuller's career within the context of the development of the Department of Public Works.
- 11 PAC, RG91, Vol 77, W. Ogilvie - C. Sifton, 12 December 1899. For a similar expression of confidence, see S.P.

25. Department of the Interior, 1902, p.4.
- 12 Archibald, Op. cit., pp. 12-13.
- 13 PAC, RG91, Vol. 77, W. Ogilvie—Surveyor-General, 26 February 1900.
- 14 Archibald, Op. cit., p. 19.
- 15 "What would be cents elsewhere would be dollars here, and we have (so) little to spend that it is hard to know what to do for the best..." PAC, RG11, Vol. 4268, file 2144-6. T. Fuller—D. Ewart, 30 September 1899.
- 16 PAC, RG11, Vol. 1405, file 2144-6, T. Fuller—J. I. Tarté, 2 July 1901, Archibald, Op. cit., p. 17.
- 17 See G. Bennett, "Yukon Transportation: A History," Canadian Historic Sites (Vol. 19, 1978), especially pp. 24-94.
- 18 S. P. 28, N.W.M.P., 1903, Report of Major Z. T. Woods, 1 December 1902, p. 26.
- 19 Yellowknife. Yukon Territorial Archives, file CR-631. R. L. McLennan, Commissioner, 30 October 1899; Wm. Ogilvie—McLennan and McFeely, 3 November 1899; Wm. Ogilvie—G. Apple, 8 November 1899; G. Apple—Wm. Ogilvie, 10 November 1899. By 1903, government policy was even more specific, "...when it is necessary to purchase any materials or supplies, Canadian firms only are to be patronized," Memo, Territorial Secretary - Heads of Department, 4 February 1903.
- 20 Archibald, Op. cit., p. 21. For a list of companies "receiving patronage from the local Government of the Yukon Territory," 4 July 1901, probably drawn up in part for the construction of the Administration Building and the Residence, see PAC, RG91, Vol. 13, file 2802, list of government employees and "persons receiving patronage," 4 July 1901.
- 21 S.P. 1, Auditor General, 1903, pp.V-64, for the items indicated in this paragraph.

- 22 M. Carter, "Timber in the Yukon During the Gold Rush," unpublished Ms., Appendix A.
- 23 Archibald, Op. cit., pp. 30-31. See also PAC, RG91, Vol. 77, W. Ogilvie, Minister of the Interior, 12 December 1899.
- 24 S.P. 1, Auditor General, 1904, pp. V-65-66.
- 25 S.P. 1, Auditor General, 1903, pp.V-64.
- 26 See R. J. E. Brown, Permafrost in Canada, (Toronto, 1970), especially pp. 61-62; W. W. Baldwin and G. W. Heinke, "Evaluation of Municipal Services at Dawson and Old Crow, Yukon Territory," (Toronto, 1973), pp. 8-10, 14-15.
- 27 PAC, RG11, Vol. 4268, file 2144-6, T. Fuller—D. Ewart, 13 August 1899.
- 28 PAC, RG91, Vol. 10, file 1602, G. H. Kincaid (government carpenter), and J. H. Bell (clerk of works)—Z. T. Wood, Dawson, 7 [?] October 1902; Klondike Nugget, 6 September 1907.
- 29 See Brown, Op. cit. pp. 56-60.
- 30 Archibald, Op. cit., p. 26.
- 31 Archibald, Op. cit., pp. 142-155.
- 32 Archibald, Op. cit., pp. 15-16, 26.
- 33 S.P. 1, 1903, pp.V-64. (See Appendix), According to a plan of the Court House done at the same time as the Residence, the mudsills were spruce, the obvious place to use the inferior local wood.
- 34 In the absence of either an engineering or extant recording report, the following information is based upon "as found" notes made in 1978.
- 35 S.P. 19, Department of Public Works, 1903, p. 21; S.P. 1, Auditor General, 1904, p. V-159.
- 36 For the Administration Building, the comparable figures were 3" x 10" at 20" centres (Archibald, Op. cit., p. 27); for the Court House and Post Office, the specifications were for 3" x 10" at 18" centres (PAC, RG91, Vol. 4268, file 2144-6, D. Ewart [Chief Architect]—R. C. Desrochers

[Assistant Secretary, D.P.W.], 14 November 1899.

- 37 Again, for comparison, the specifications for the Court House and Post Office were: one thickness 1" rough boarding, two-ply tarred paper clapboards (Douglas fir from outside) 6" x 2" studding 18" centres, 1" rough boarding, two-ply tarred paper, 7/8" V-jointed cedar sheeting.
- 38 S.P. 1, Auditor General, 1903, p. V-64; Archibald, p. 151. The sawdust could have been installed in the 1950s. See below, p. 42.
- 39 S.P. 1, Auditor General, 1903, p. V-64; 1906, p. V-130; S.P. 19, Department of Public Works, 1906, Part 3, Report of Chief Architect, p. 37, Archibald, p. 35.
- 40 S.P. 1, Auditor General, 1904, pp. 159-160.
- 41 PAC, RG11, B2, Vol. 1649, file 300156, S. A. D. Bertrand, D. Ewart, 16 January 1907. Bush erroneously implies (p. 116) that the Residence had water closets during Ross's tenure. It is rather difficult to identify what exactly a "crematory closet" was. The name suggests either a device for disposing of ashes or a toilet using ashes rather than water. The "earth closet" mentioned by Lawrence Wright, Clean and Decent, (London, 1963), pp. 208-210, which could use ashes sounds similar. The door below windows W1-15 and W1-16 (Fig. 8) could have been used for removing the waste from this "closet" which was soon replaced by a water closet.
- 42 S.P. 19, Department of Public Works, 1902, p. 21.
- 43 In conformity with City By-law No. 40, a metal extender was placed on the chimney by the time figure 5 was photographed, May 1903.
- 44 S.P. 1, Auditor General, 1903, p. V-188; 1904, p. V-66, V-159.
- 45 Bush, Op. cit., p. 117, Yukon Nugget, 2 January 1902.



- 46 Bush, *Ibid.*, pp. 115-117.
- 47 Dawson Daily News, 16 November 1907.
- 48 S.P. 1, Auditor General, 1905, p. V-163; 1907, p. V-130; 1908, p. V-97. Coal purchased from the North American Transportation and Trading Company was utilized to warm the W.C.'s in other public buildings; it may have been here too. See Archibald, *Op. cit.*, 36-37.
- 49 For examples, see Bush, *Op. cit.*, pp. 121, 128, 130, 131.
- 50 Black, M. L., My Ninety Years, (Anchorage, 1977), p. 78.
- 51 See, for example, G. Talbot, At Home: Domestic Life in the Post-Centennial Era, 1876-1920, (State Historical Association of Wisconsin, 1978), especially Chapter 7; M. Laski, "Domestic Service," Chapter 4 in S. Nowell-Smith ed., Edwardian England 1901-1914, (London, 1964).
- 52 Figures taken from Auditor General's Reports.
- 53 Black, *Op. cit.*, p. 98; Dawson Daily News, 3 December 1908.
- 54 Dawson Daily News, 29 September 1906.
- 55 On his way out, he achieved some notoriety by telling an incoming school teacher that Dawson was finished, and everyone was leaving. L. B. Berton, I Married the Klondike, (Toronto, 1974), p. 21.
- 56 Black, *Op. cit.*, pp. 82-84; Dawson Daily News, 23 January 1907; PAC, RG91, Vol. 33, file 20348/1, "Report of Commission... submitted...on January 18, 1907." The R.N.W.M.P. was probably more inclined to the Commission's interpretation. See S.P. 28, R.N.W.M.P., 1907-08, Supt. Wood's Report to 1 November 1907, p. 12.
- 57 Dawson Fire Department, Daily Report for 1905-06, 25 December 1906.
- 58 Dawson Daily News, 14 March 1907.
- 59 PAC, RG11, Vol. 1721, file 321070. See also RG91, Vol. 33, file 20348/1.
- 60 S.P. 19, Department of Public Works, Part 3, Report of Chief Architect, p. 5.

- 61 See, for example, PAC, RG91, Vol. 33, file 20348/1; S. A. D. Bertrand, Winnipeg - James A. Bell, Dawson, 1 February 1908; S. A. D. Bertrand, Dawson - Grant and Henderson, Architects, Vancouver, 9 March 1908, 11 March 1908. The design and architectural plans were provided by the D.P.W. Architect in Victoria.
- 62 Dawson Daily News, 3 December 1908.
- 63 S.P. 1, Auditor General, 1909; pp.V-166, 1910, pp.V-141; 1911, p. V-166; 1912, p. V-157.
- 64 Black, Op. cit., p. 98.
- 65 S.P. 1, Auditor General, 1914, p. 201. There is no specific reference to repairs to the kitchen and attic, although the cost of labourers—\$2,052.75—was substantially above the figure for the previous year—\$686.25. This, however, is hardly conclusive; the labour might have been used for building the new greenhouse.
- 66 PAC, RG91, Vol. 33, file 20348/2, G. Black—E. Rivard, (Agent, Department of Public Works, Dawson), 4 April 1913. For the "Statement of Furnishings Required," see also RG11, Vol. 3225, file 12, "Supplementary Estimates for Year Ending 31 March 1914," pp. 379-382.
- 67 S.P. 1, Auditor General, 1915, pp. V-67, V-193.
- 68 S.P. 1, Auditor General, 1915, pp.V-193.
- 69 Department of the Interior, The Yukon Territory, Its History and Resources, (Ottawa, 1916), p. 11.
- 70 Figure 12, taken at the time of Constable M. J. Fitzgerald's funeral, is mistakenly dated 1915, and appears to suggest the annex had not been transformed at that point. In fact, Fitzgerald was buried in Dawson 31 August 1913. S.P. 28, R.N.W.M.P., 1914, pp. 273-274, 288.
- 71 PAC, RG91, Vol. 33, file 20348/2, A. Hart—E. Rivard, Dawson, 24 February 1914; E. Rivard—A. Hart, 11 March 1914.

- 72 Dawson Daily News, 29 May 1914.
- 73 See, for example, Dawson Daily News, 11 March, 23 April, 2 May 1914.
- 74 All figures taken from notes of extant recording team. The studs along the north wall, from the west were; fourteen feet, nine and a half feet (W1-12), seven feet, five feet, and three and a half feet.
- 75 The wallpaper was mentioned by Mrs. Flo Whyard as a distinctive feature of the sun room in a private conversation, Whitehorse, 28 August 1978.
- 76 Bush, Op. cit., pp. 149-150.
- 77 PAC, RG91, Vol. 33, file 20348/2, G. Jeckell - Managers, Dawson City Water and Power Company, Electric Light and Power Company, Yukon Telephone Sybdicate Limited, 26 October 1916.
- 78 S.P. 1, Auditor General, 1917, pp.V-154; 1919, pp.V-127; 1920, pp.V-117. One of the 1915-16 expenses listed 1917 was the payment to T. Milne for "painting building as per contract, \$3,000; roof and out buildings, \$250; sundry, \$329.75" a total of \$3,579.75. According to an article entitled "Sketch of City of Dawson as it is Today," Dawson Daily News, 22 December 1916..."The Residence of the Governor is a great frame mansion painted bright yellow." Analysis of paint samples on the building immediately below the "bright yellow" should make possible the repainting of it to its historic colour.
- 79 PAC, RG91, Vol. 33, file 20348/2, (telegram) P. C. Wright, Chief Architect, Dawson—G. Jeckell, 5 June 1919; T. W. Fuller, Assistant Chief Architect—Comptroller and Acting Agent, 15 July 1920; RG85, Vol. 604, file 2532, O.S. Finney—Captain O.H.C. Balfour, 27 July 1922; S.P. 1, Auditor General, 1924, pp.V-192.

- 80 PAC, RG91, Vol. 33, file 20348/2 memo, G. Jeckell - The Gold Commissioner, 18 June 1919; T. W. Fuller, Chief Architect, Ottawa - G. A. Jeckell, Comptroller, Department of Public Works, Dawson, 31 July 1931.
- 81 PAC, RG91, Vol. 33, file 20348/2, G. A. Jeckell - R. A. Gibson, Director, NWT and Yukon Affairs, Mines and Resources, 23 October 1941.
- 82 For one example of (probably) unauthorized use of property from the Residence, see Dawson Fire Department Daily Record, 1 April 1945 - 31 December 1948, entry for 3 September 1948, "Fixed up J. Dillon's house on Harper St., took bed and table from Government House..."
- 83 PAC, RG11, Vol. 4260, file 1994-2E, C. F. Dawson (Resident Architect, British Columbia and Yukon Territory, Victoria) - J. A. Heisler (Department of Public Works, Ottawa), 16 September 1947; H. Keenleyside (Deputy Minister, Mines and Resources) - Deputy Minister, Public Works, 17 October 1947.
- 84 See PAC, RG11, Vol. 4260, file 1994-2E, memorandum from C. Gustave Brault to Deputy Minister of Public Works, 8 March 1950.
- 85 See Dawson Weekly News, 12 and 19 January 1950. The most vivid account is contained in the "Chronique Hôpital Ste-Marie," 1949-50, pp. 4-6. These chronicles, and material identified below as "S.S.A. Archives" are deposited in the Sisters of St. Anne Archives in Victoria, B.C. The material was kindly made available to the author by Sister Thelma Boutin.
- 86 Fire Department Records, January 1949 - December 1954, entry for 10 January 1950.
- 87 For correspondence relating to the question of the Yukon's elderly, see S.S.A. Archives, inter alia, memo, Commissioner F. Fraser - G. E. B. Sinclair, Northern Administration, Department of Resources and Development,

- 10 February 1952 and F. Fraser - Advisory Board of St. Mary's Hospital, 1 October 1952.
- 88 PAC, RG11, Vol. 4260, file 1994-2E, J. O. Plourde, OMI, (Superintendent General) - A. P. Murphy (Deputy Minister, Department of Public Works), 15 February 1950; E. P. Murphy - J. O. Plourde, 17 February 1950; R. A. Gibson (Director of Department of Resources and Development) - E. A. Gardner (Department of Public Works), 15 February 1950; Minutes of Meeting of Privy Council, 14 March 1950; S.S.A. Archives, Chronique, 1949-50, entry for March, 1950; Lease P.W. No. 31952, 18 April 1950.
- 89 S.S.A. Archives, Chronique, 1949-50, 12 May 1950.
- 90 S.S.A. Archives, Sister Mary Mark - C. Gustave Brault, 19 May 1950, 19 June 1950; N.K.V. Wylie (Executive Assistant, Mines and Resources, Dawson) - Sister Mary Mark, 14 September 1950.
- 91 S.S.A. Archives, Chronique 1949-50, 22 May 1950 Dawson Weekly News, 8 June 1950.
- 92 S.S.A. Archives, Minutes of meeting of Sisters of St. Ann Provincial Council, 27 November 1950.
- 93 Giovanni Castellarin, Dawson, telephone interview, 22 February 1979.
- 94 R. Brown, Op. cit., p. 63.
- 95 S.S.A. Archives, Chronicles, 1952-53, 8 September 1952 - a heated garage for the car and tractor was being built at this point.
- 96 PAC, RG11, Vol. 4260, file 1994-2E, R. A. Gibson—E. A. Gardner, D.P.W., 15 February 1950; S.S.A. Archives, Sister Mary Mark—C. Gustave Brault, 19 May 1950.
- 97 Oral testimonies of Sister Année and Sister Mary Marcellus, interviewed in Victoria 15 November 1978. The sisters installed an electric coal stoker for the furnace in 1950, but were forced by the price of coal to reconvert to wood in 1953, then to oil in 1961 when the

price of wood became prohibitive. S.S.A. Archives  
Chronicles, 1953-54, 11 August 1953, 1961-62, 3  
September, 1961.

- 98 Oral testimony, Sister année; S.S.A. Archives, Chronicles, 1951-52, 4 December 1951.
- 99 Oral testimony, Sister Mary Laurena, Victoria, 15 November 1978. If her testimony is correct, this room was also painted "ivory and brown enamel" in December 1951.
- 100 S.S.A. Archives, Chronicles, 1953-54, 5 and 27 April 1954.
- 101 Sister Année said no toilets were installed; Giovanni Castellarin that two were. The other informants did not remember the toilets, but Sister Laurena was at the hospital most of the time, and Sister Marcellus was only in Dawson briefly in the 1960s.
- 102 S.S.A. Archives, Chronicles, 1951-52, 6 March 1952, 1953-54, 8 May 1954; 1956-57, 10-20 March 1957.
- 103 S.S.A. Archives, Sister Mary Mark - C. Gustave Brault, 15 September 1950, Sister Mary Mark - A. H. Gibson and Yukon Council, 2 May 1951; Fire Department Records, January 1949 - December 1954, entry for 18 August 1950.
- 104 See S.S.A. Archives, Commissioner F. Fraser - G. E. B. Sinclair, 22 October 1951.
- 105 S.S. Archives, Chronicles, 1954-55, 19 January 1955.
- 106 S.S.A. Archives, Chronicles 1951-52, 12 January 1952, 1953-54, 17 July 1953, 1954-55, 17 August 1954, 1956-57, 14 August 1956, 1958-59, 29 September 1958; 1959-60, 19 July and 18 August 1959.
- 107 S.S.A. Archives, memo, K. J. Baker (Territorial Engineer)—Commissioner, 25 February 1963; Commissioner G. R. Cameron - Sister Mary Ignatia, 18 March 1963; Chronicles, 1962-63, 20 March and 16 April 1963.
- 108 Bush, Op. cit., p. 153.

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- 2 Dawson City Bylaws, from the date of incorporation to 23 March 1923.

#### C Victoria. Sisters of St. Ann Archives.

- 1 Chroniques/Chronicles, 1949-1963.
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- 1 Dawson City Fire Department Diaries, 1901-1957.
- 2 Plans and Sketches of "Government House, Dawson, Y.T.," (no date, probably 1903).
- 3 Plan D-10-1, sheets 1-5 (St. Mary's Hospital and Old Folks Home), 1963.

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## IV Personal Reminiscences

G. Castellarin, Dawson, phone conversation with author,  
22 February 1979.

Sisters Année Mary Laurena and Mary Marcellus,  
interviewed in Victoria, 15 November 1978.

F. Whyard, Whitehorse, conversation with author,  
28 August 1978.

Figure 1

Reference: Public Archives of Canada, C18622.

Subject: Beaver and Lory Building

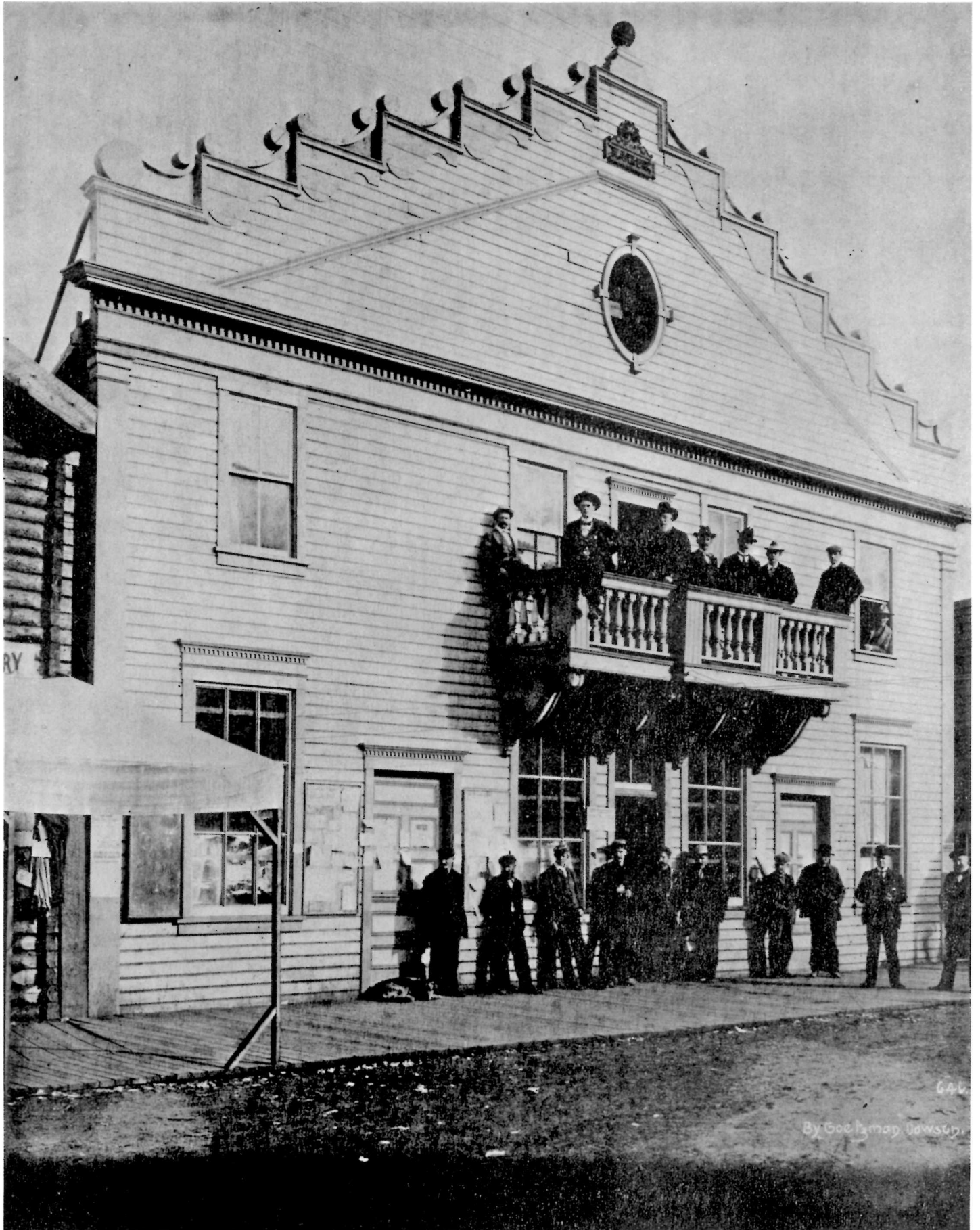


Figure 2

Reference: Captain T. J. Fuller's Collection

Subject: Government Housing - north of the Gold  
Commissioner's Office.

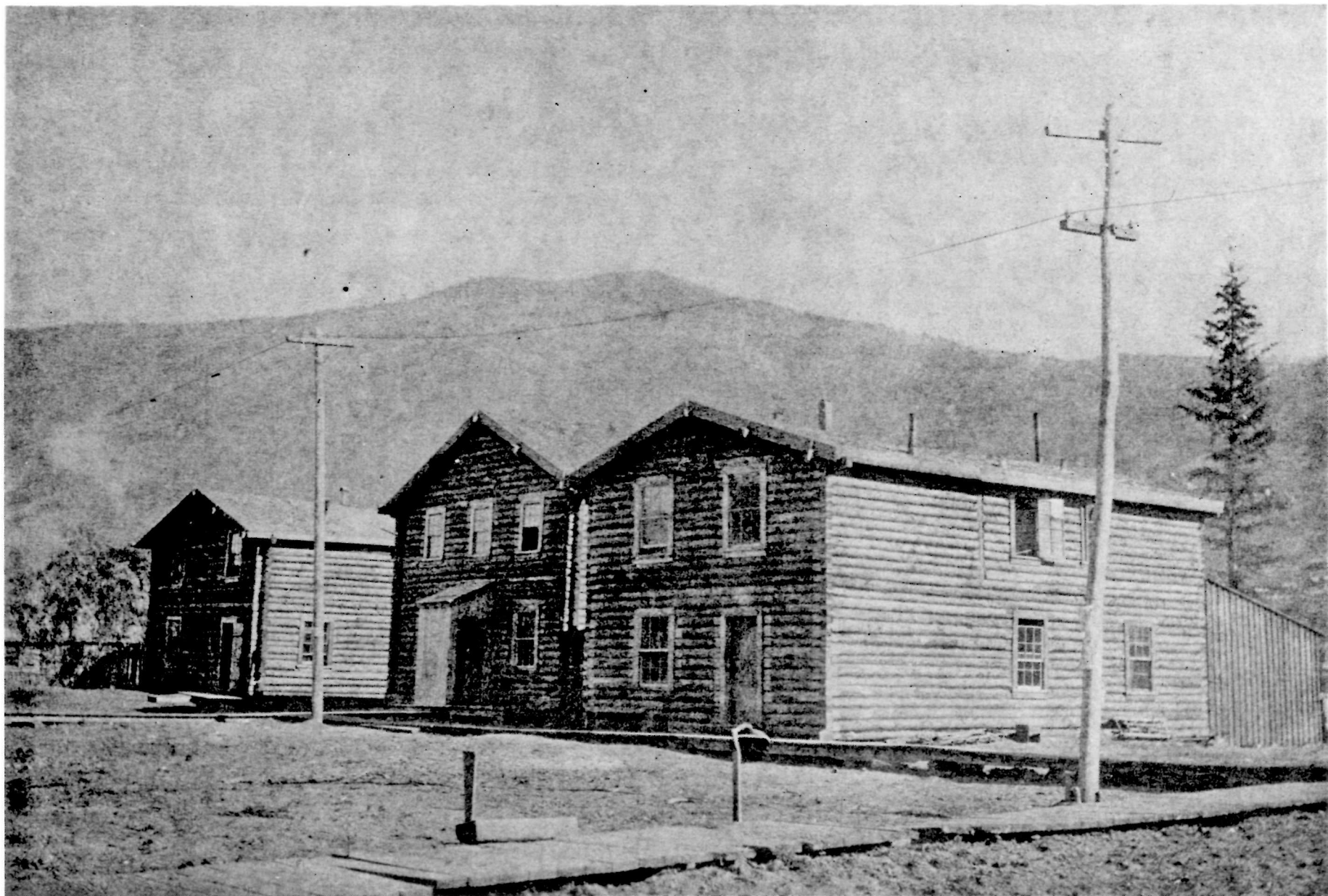


Figure 3

Reference: Yukon Archives #426

Subject: "Commissioner's Residence, Dawson,  
October 1901."

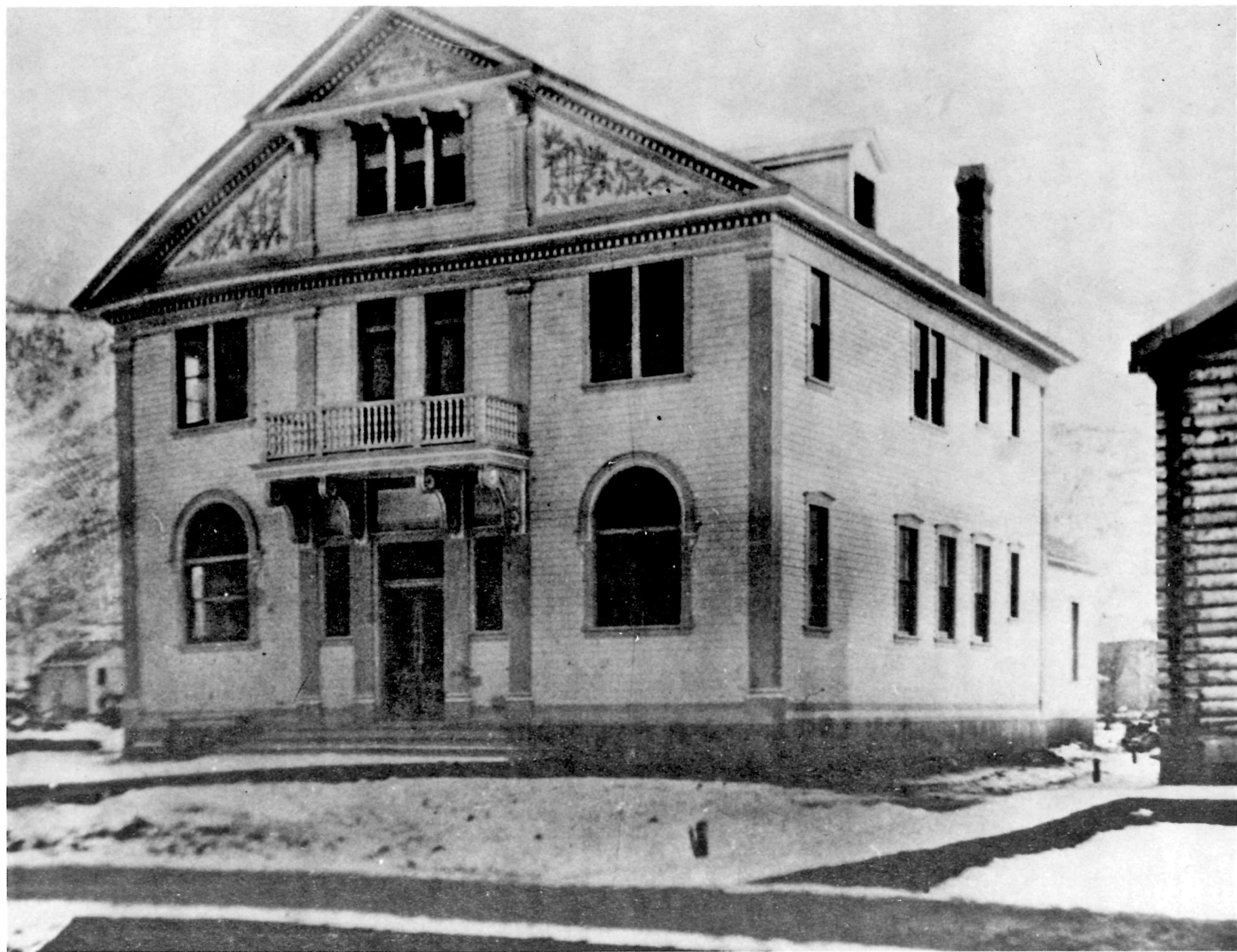


Figure 4

Reference: Public Archives of Canada, PA.53169

Subject: "Commissioner's Residence, Dawson, Y.T.,  
1902."





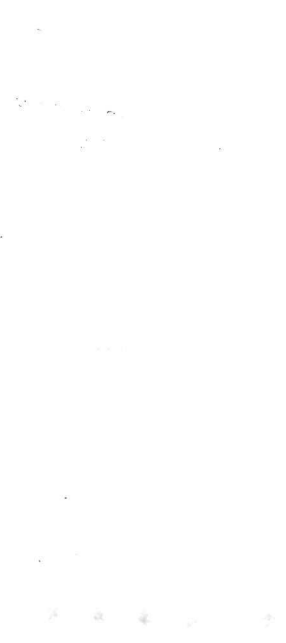


Figure 5

Reference: Public Archives of Canada. PA.16504.

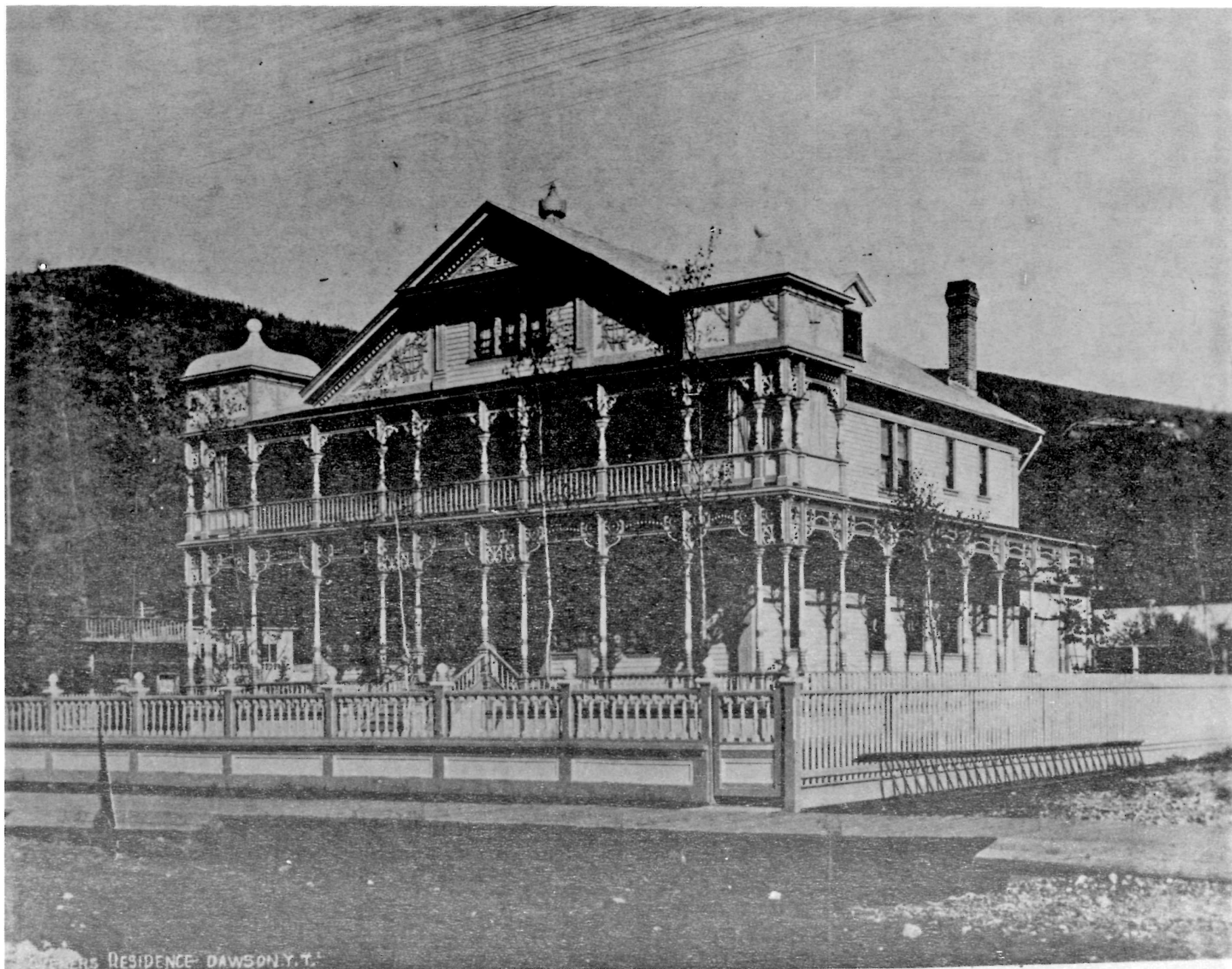
Subject: Dawson, Yukon, Victoria Day, 1903.



Figure 6

Reference: University of Washington, Adams & Larkin  
#5.

Subject: "Governor's Residence, Dawson."



WILLIAMS RESIDENCE DAWSON, Y.T.

Figure 7

Reference: Public Archives of Canada. C 29259.

Subject: Commissioner's Residence - fire damage,  
north side.





Figure 8

Reference: Public Archives of Canada. C 29262.

Subject: Commissioner's Residence - fire damage,  
east side.





Figure 9

Reference: Public Archives of Canada. C 29260.

Subject: Commissioner's Residence - fire damage,  
south side.



Figure 10

Reference: University of Alberta, Special Collections.

F 585S, M11, 7-3, #10.

Subject: "Commissioner's Residence from the Side."

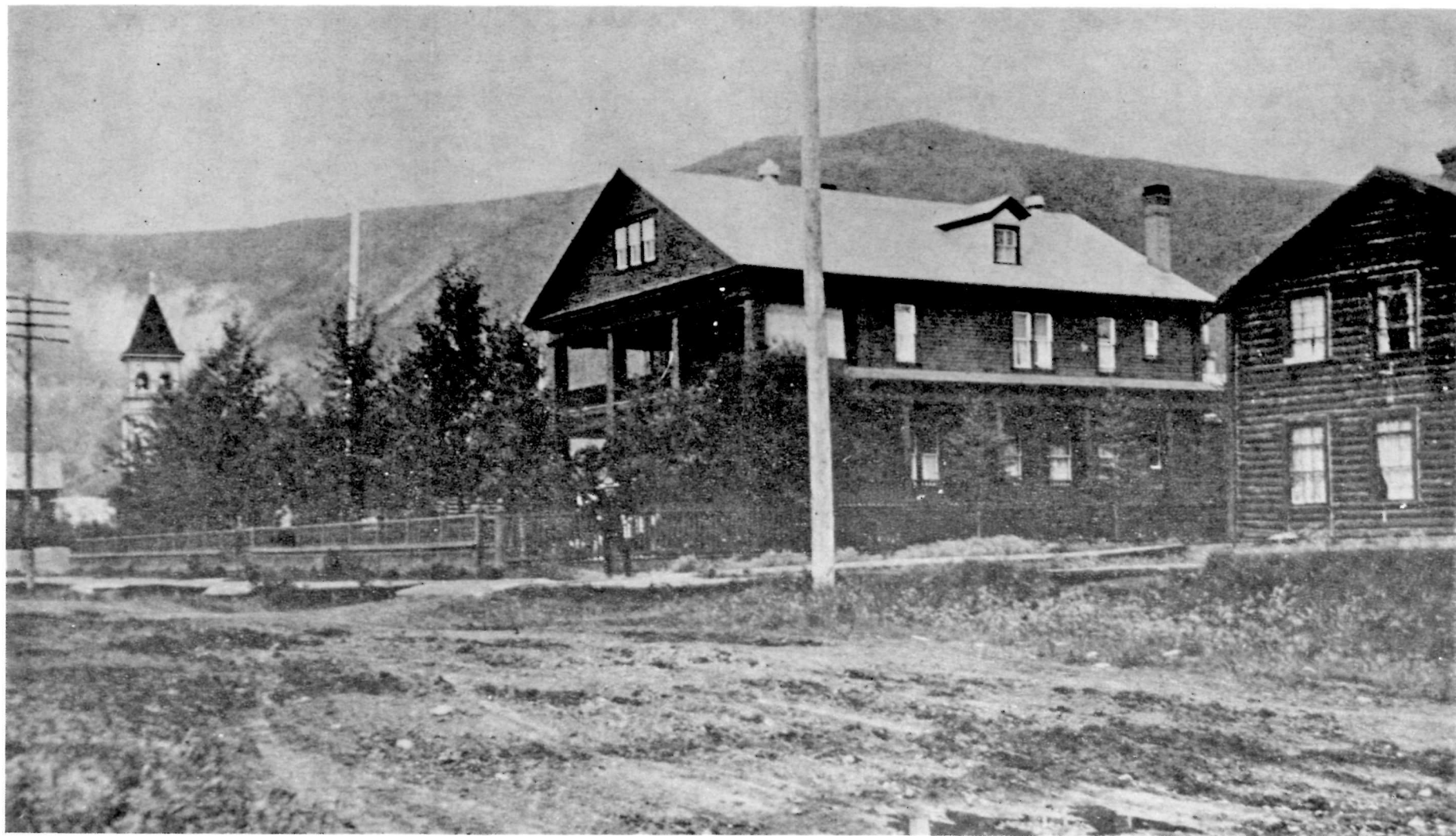


Figure 11

Reference: Yukon Archives #5617

Subject: "Commissioner's Residence from the rear  
looking towards Front Street."



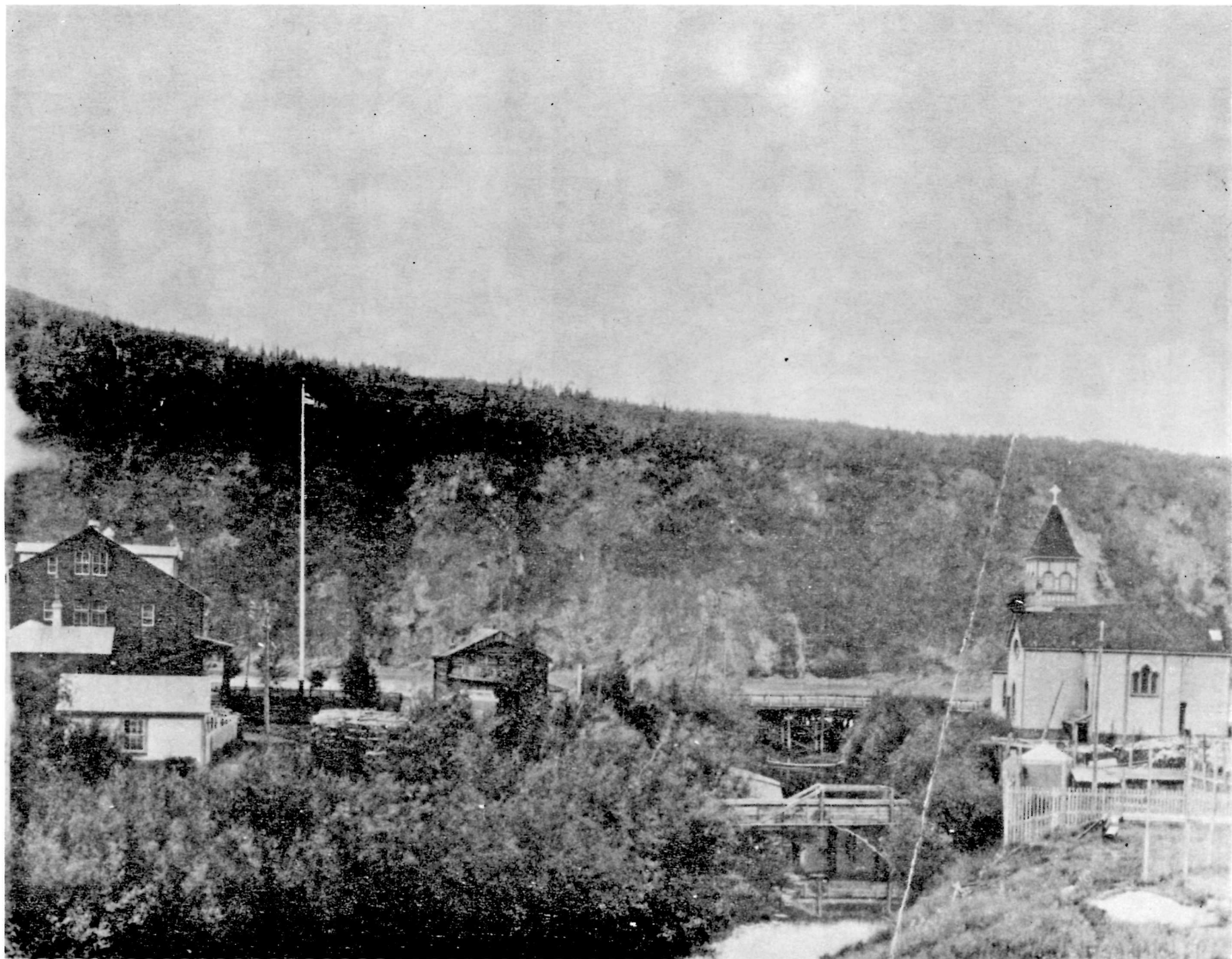


Figure 12

Reference: Glenbow Alberta Institute. W. H.  
McKay and S. M. McKay Collection.

Caption: "Drowned in Yukon, 1913, Military Funeral  
for R.N.W.M.P. Constable Fitzgerald, Y.T."

Remark: Date, in fact, 1915.



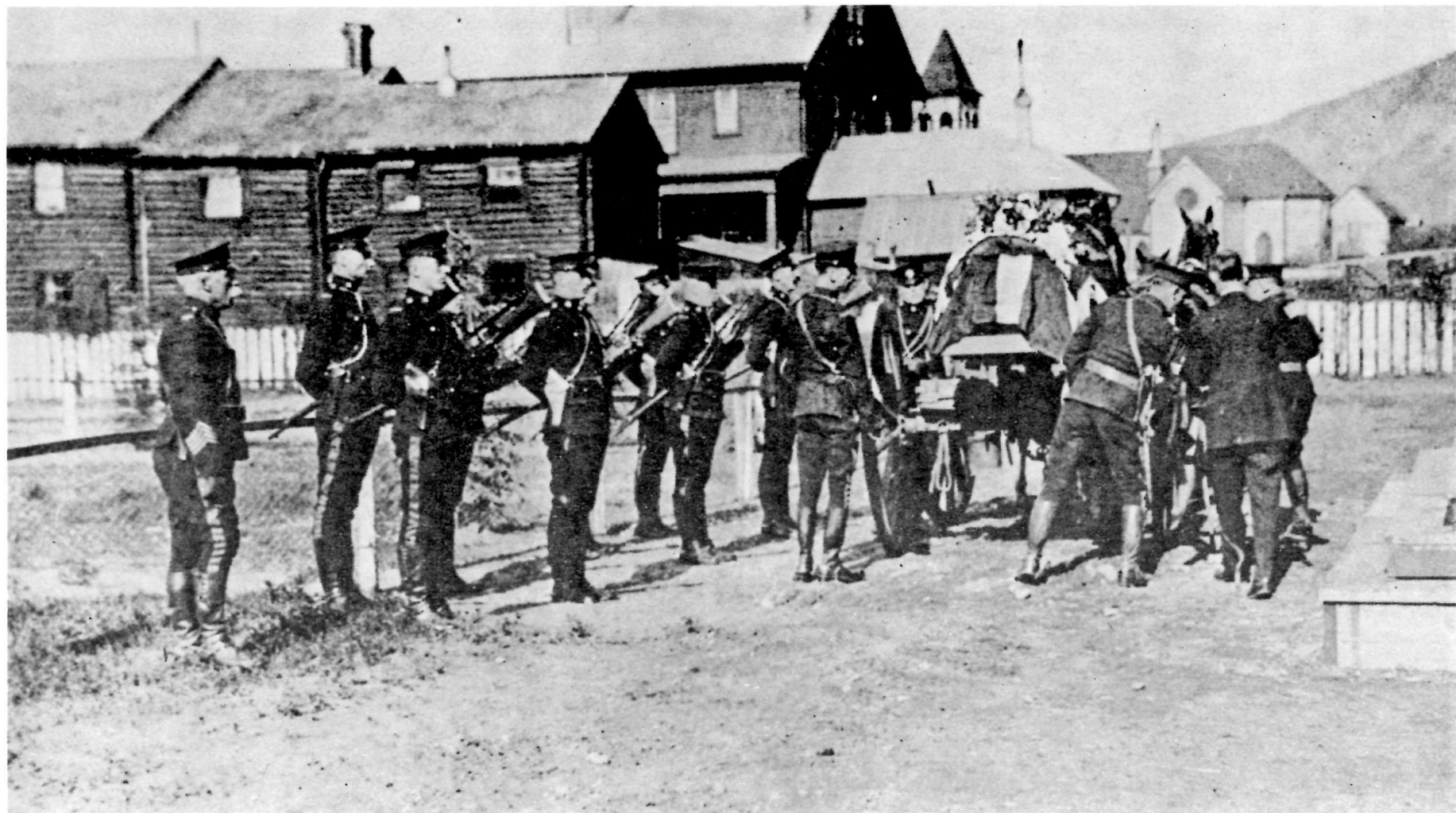


Figure 13

Reference: The Yukon Territory. Its History and  
Resources.

Caption: Commissioner's Residence, Dawson, ca. 1916.

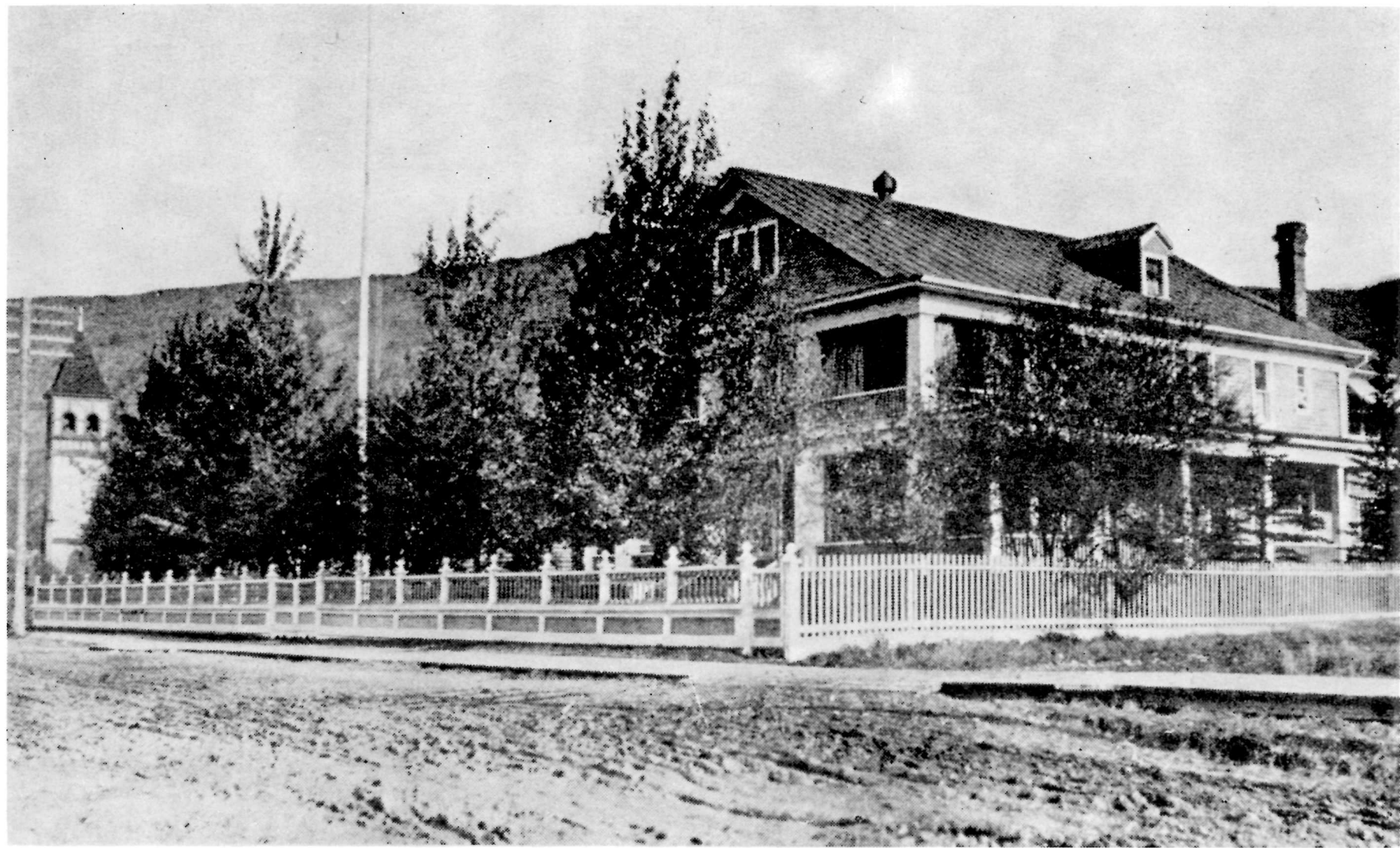


Figure 14

Reference: Public Archives of Canada. C 64896.

Caption: "Flood Conditions, Dawson, Y.T.  
June 1925."



Diagram 1

Government House, Dawson, Longitudinal Section  
c.1903.

**GOVERNMENT HOUSE  
DAWSON Y.T.**

**LONGTITUDINAL SECTION**

0 5 10 15 ft

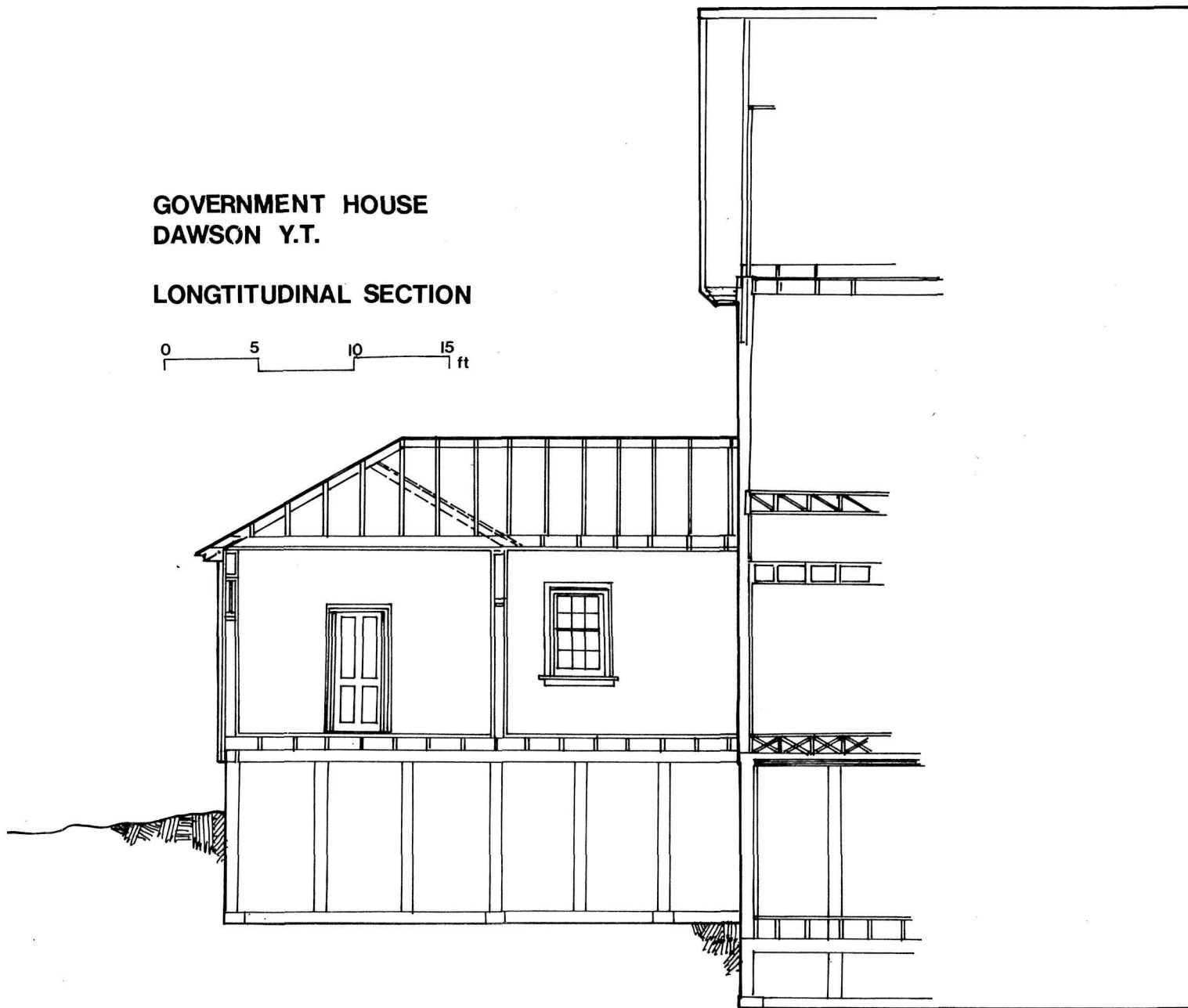


Diagram 2

Government House, Dawson, Rear (east) elevation,  
c.1903.





**GOVERNMENT HOUSE  
DAWSON Y.T.**

**REAR ELEVATION**

0 5 10 15 ft

Diagram 3

Government House, Dawson, Side (south?) elevation,  
c.1903.

**GOVERNMENT HOUSE  
DAWSON Y.T.**

**SIDE ELEVATION**

0 5 10 15 ft

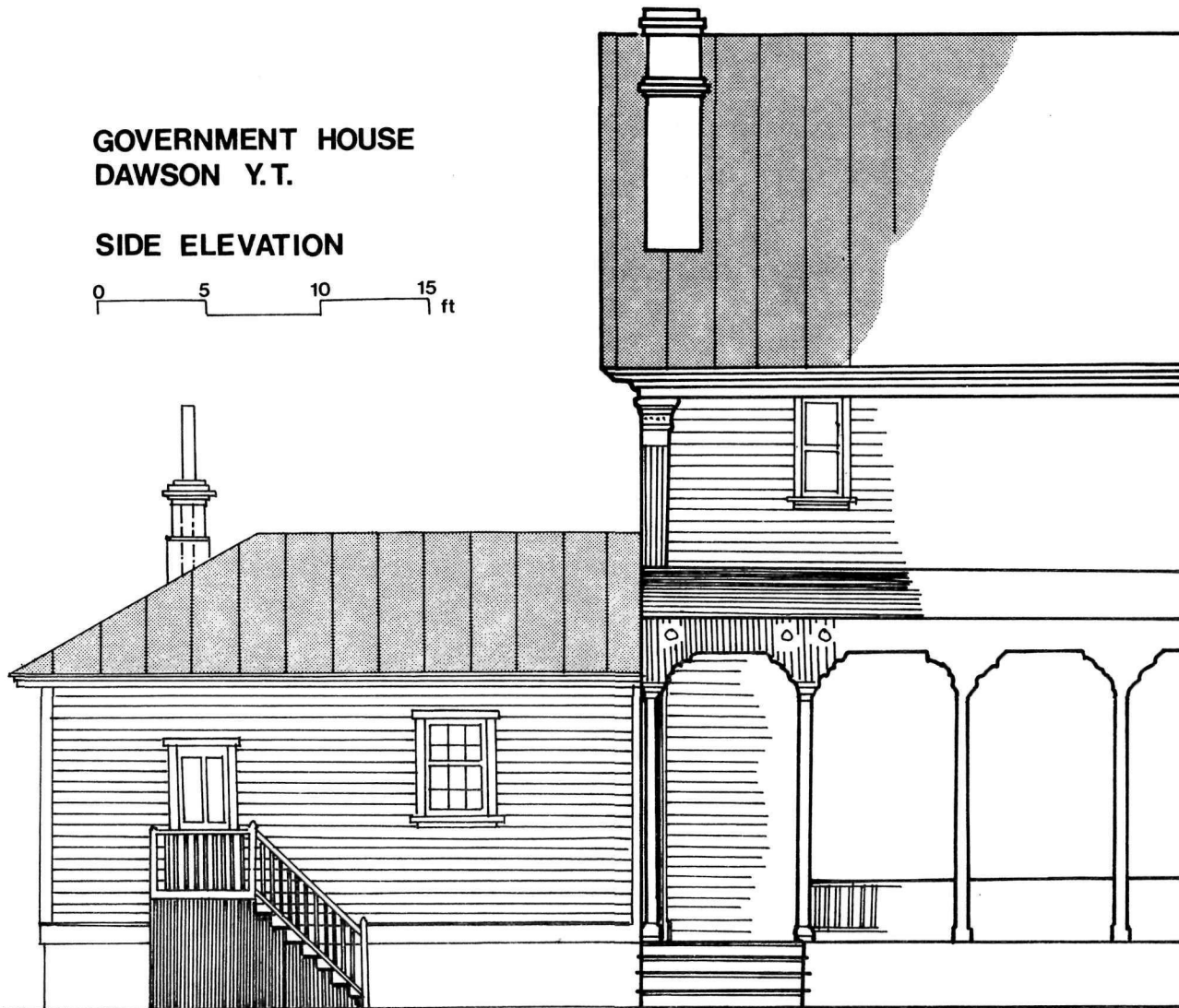
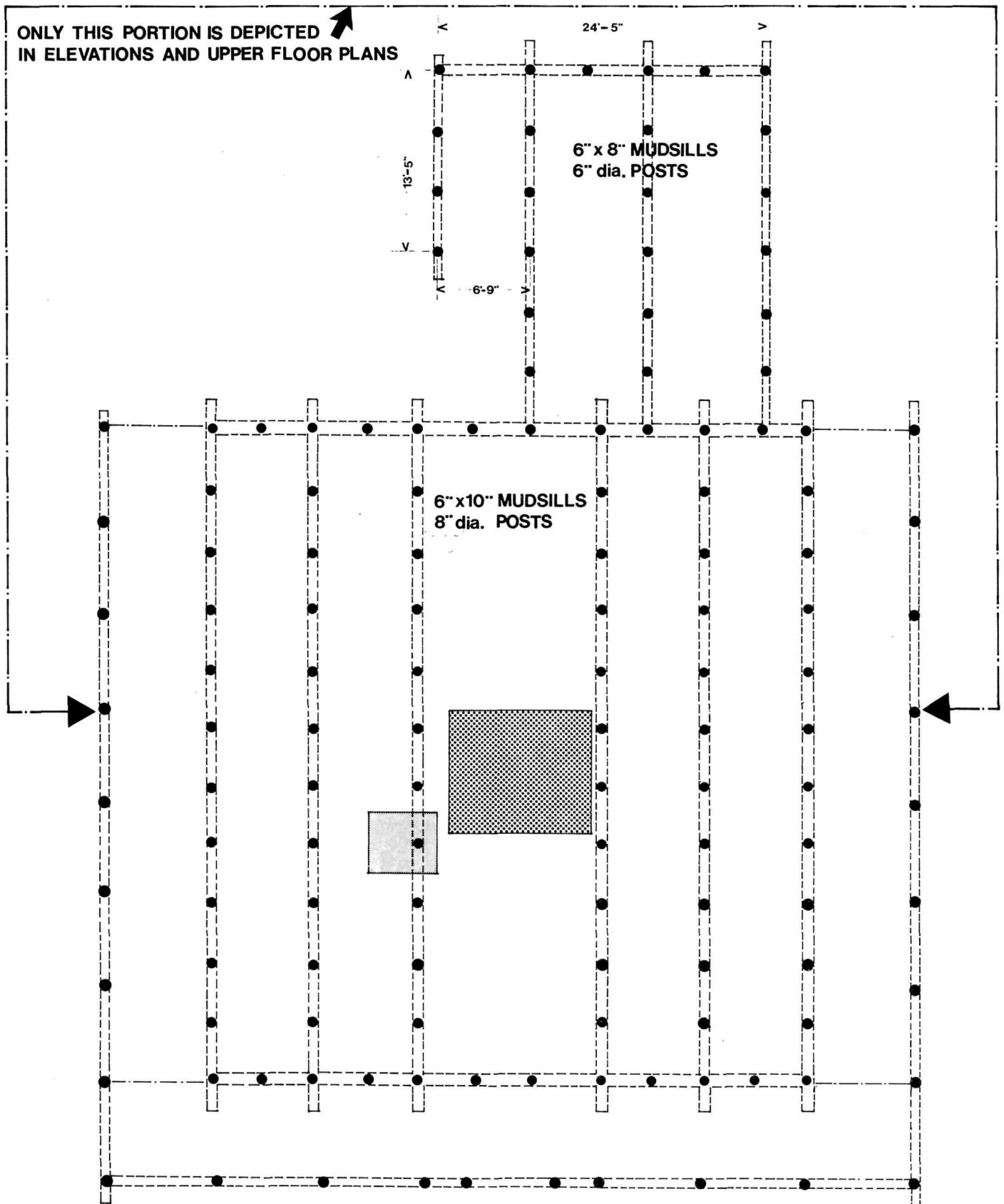


Diagram 4

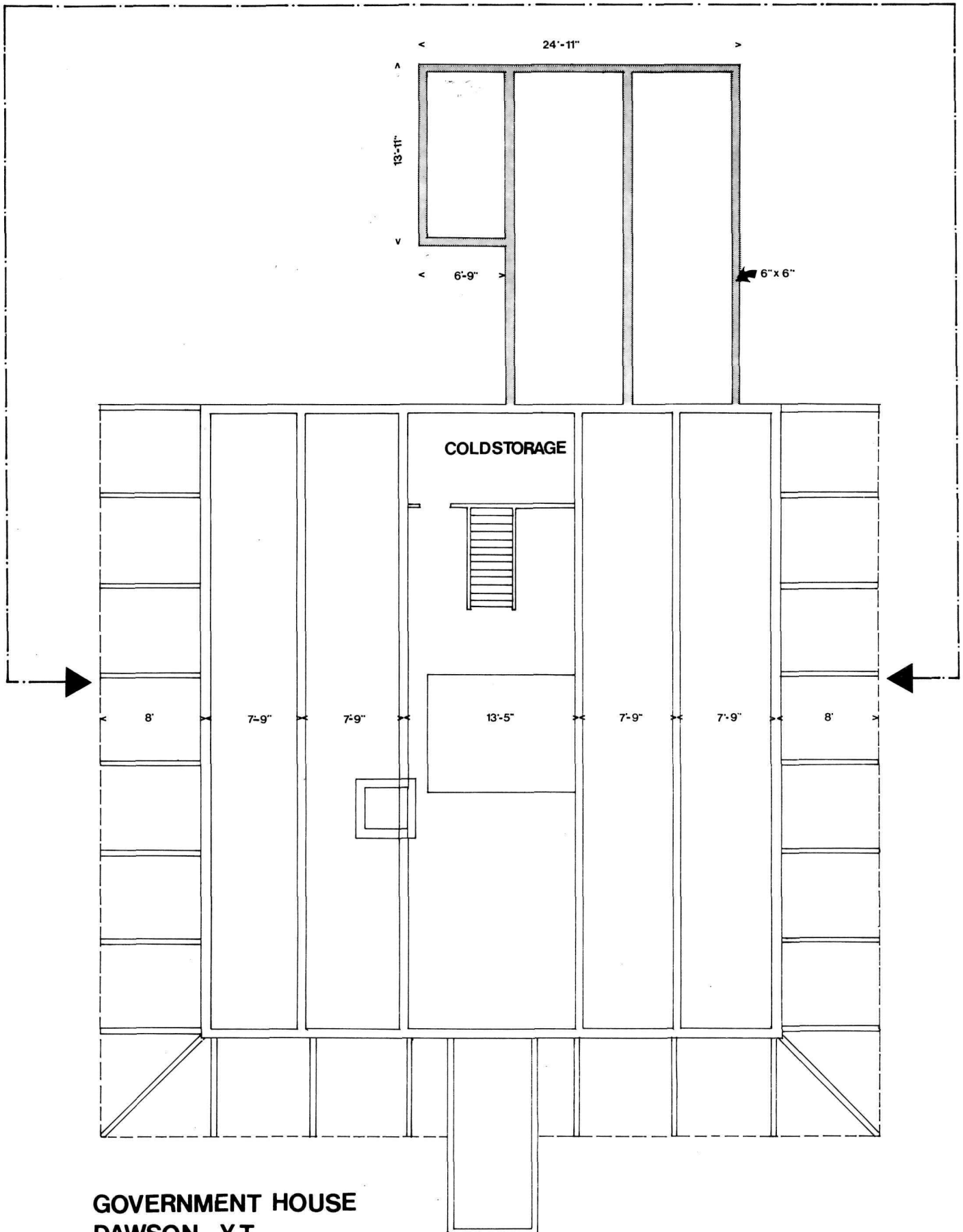
"Plan of Mud Sills Posts" c.1903.



GOVERNMENT HOUSE, DAWSON Y.T.  
PLAN OF MUD SILLS POSTS

Diagram 5

"Plan of Main Sills and Veranda Joists  
& Sills" c.1903.



**GOVERNMENT HOUSE  
DAWSON Y.T.  
PLAN OF MAIN SILLS AND VERANDA JOISTS / SILLS**

Diagram 6

"Plan of Ground Floor," c.1903.



**GOVERNMENT HOUSE  
DAWSON Y.T.**

**MAIN FLOOR PLAN**

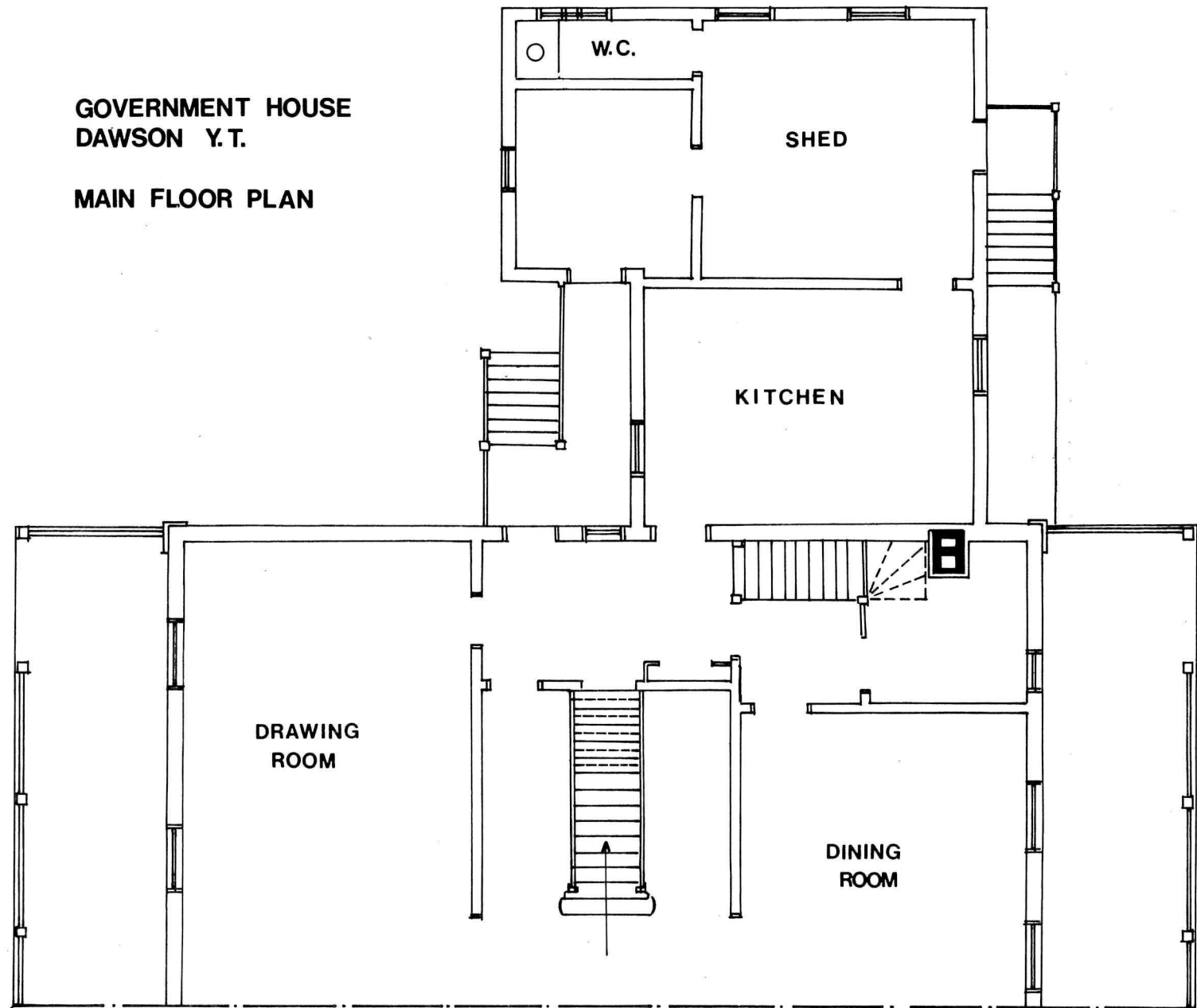


Diagram 7

"Plan of First Floor," c.1903.

**GOVERNMENT HOUSE  
DAWSON Y.T.**

**3rd STOREY PLAN**

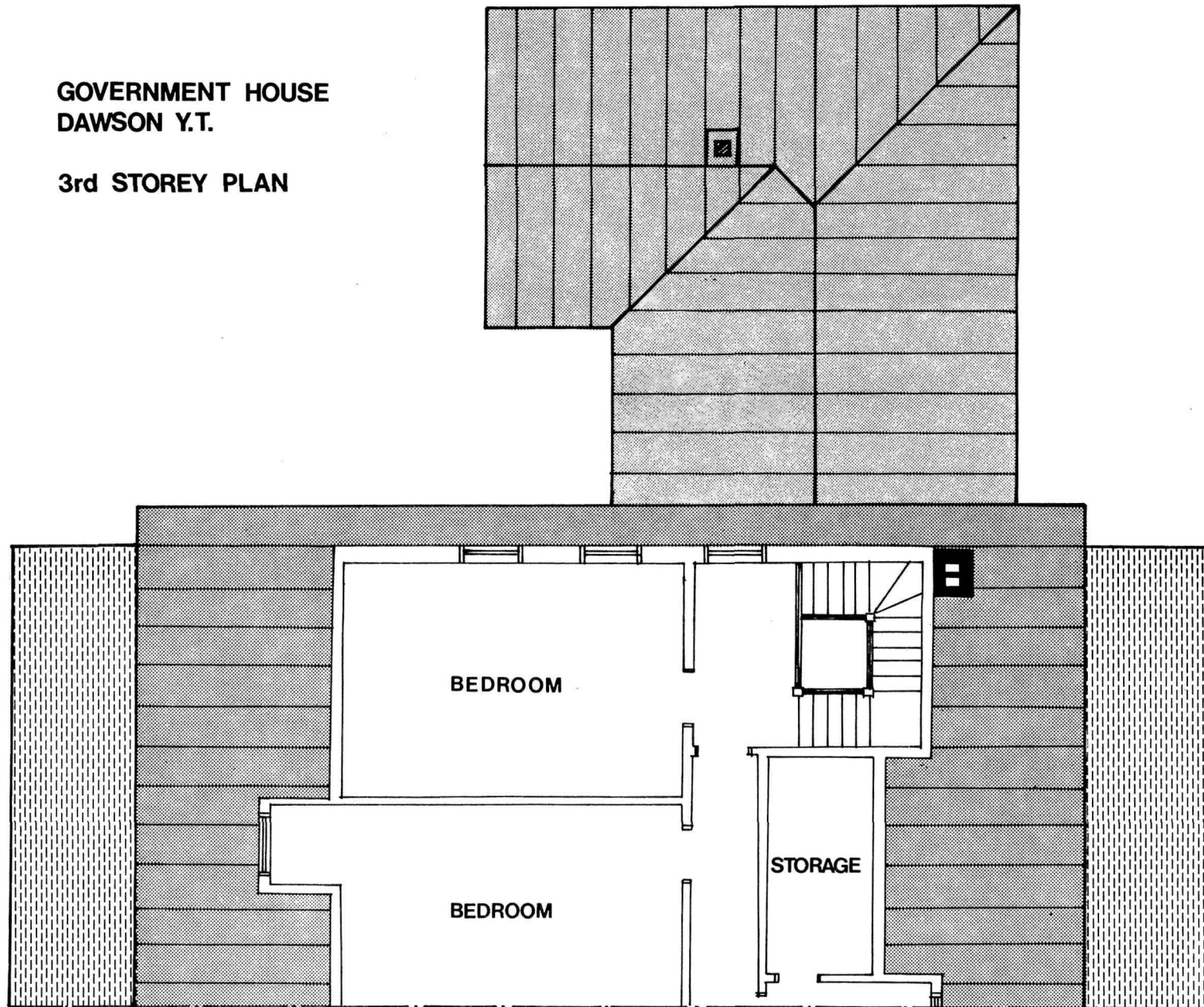


Diagram 8  
"Plan of Attic," c.1903.

**GOVERNMENT HOUSE  
DAWSON Y.T.**

**2nd STOREY PLAN**

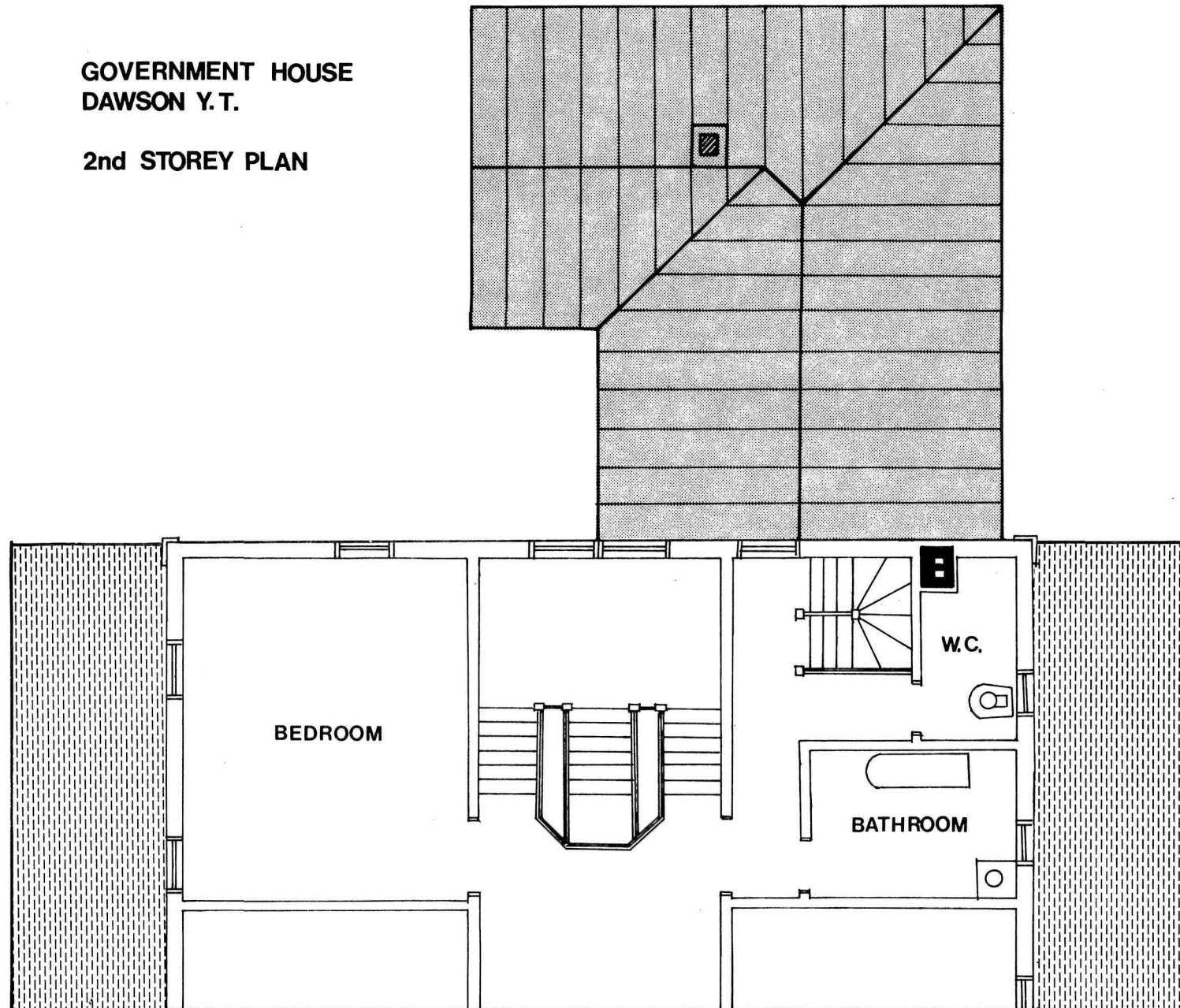


Diagram 9  
"Plan of Roof," c.1903.

**GOVERNMENT HOUSE  
DAWSON Y.T.**

**PLAN OF ROOF**

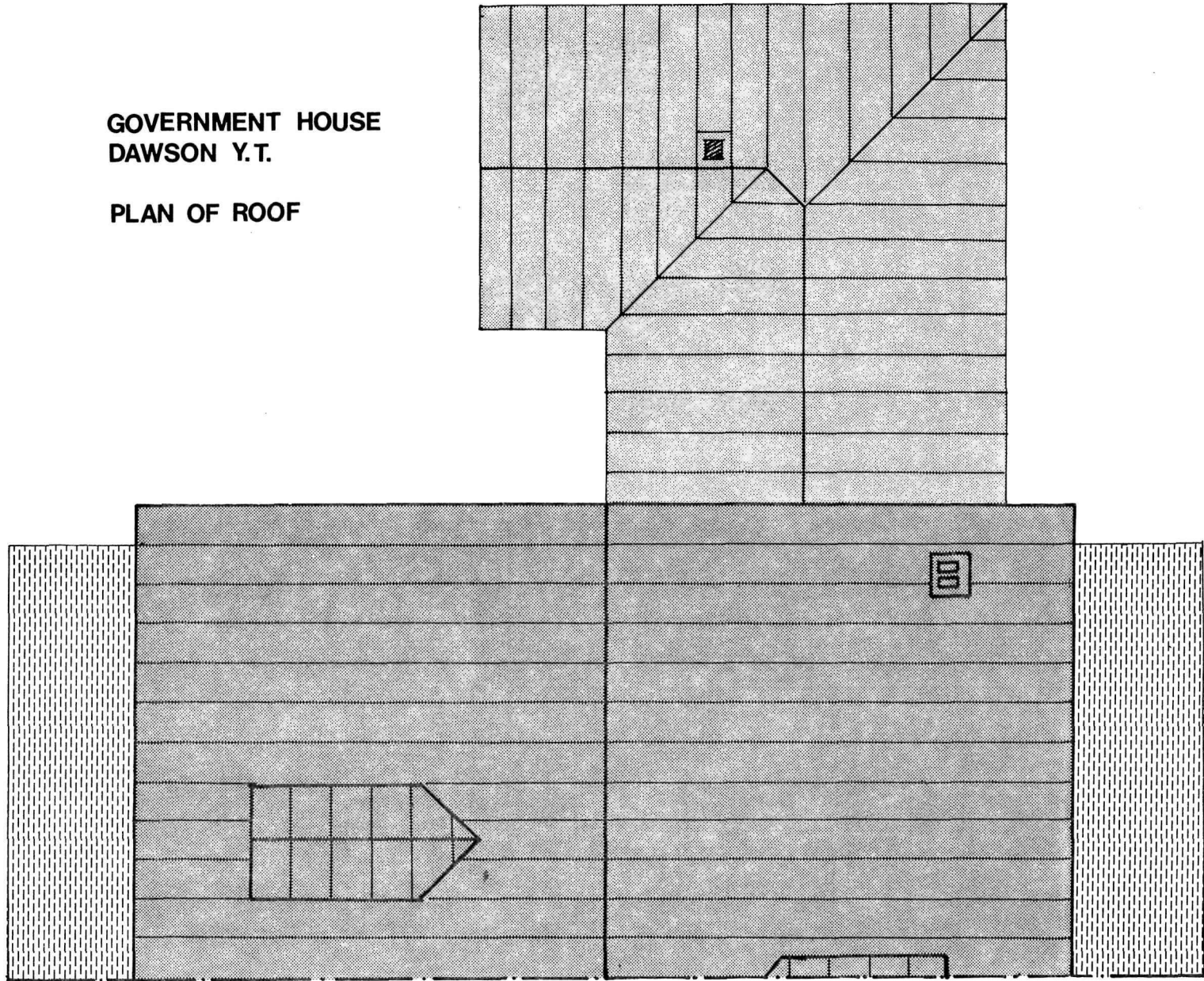


Diagram 10

"Basement Cross Sections. Old Folks Home,  
Dawson, Y.T., 9 February 1963, D-101-1,"  
Basement Outline.

Diagram 11

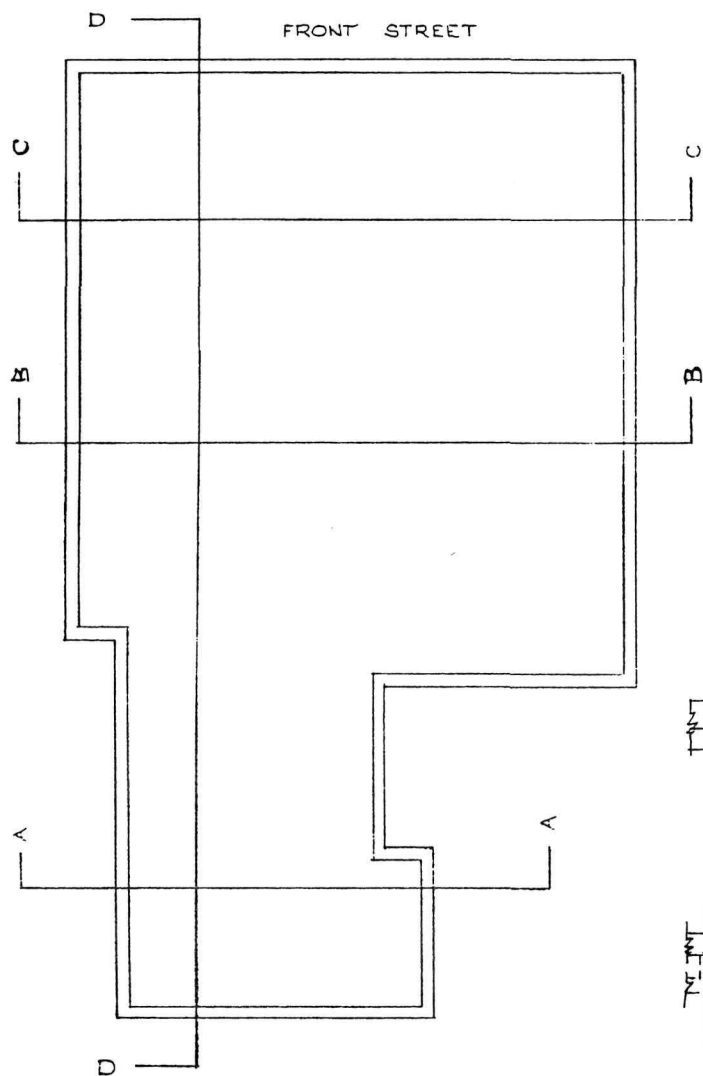
"Basement Cross Sections. Old Folks Home,  
Dawson, Y.T., 9 February 1963, D-101-1,"  
Cross-Section, thru A-A.

Diagram 12

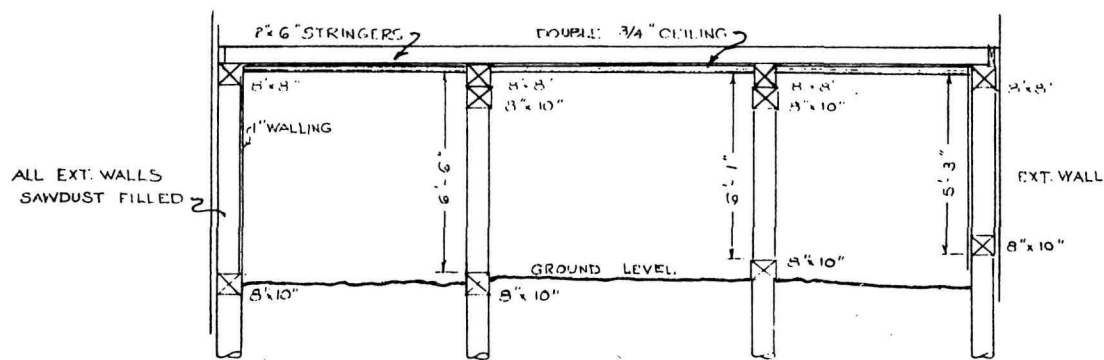
"Basement Cross Sections. Old Folks Home,  
Dawson, Y.T., 9 February 1963, D-101-1,"  
Cross-Section, thru D-D.



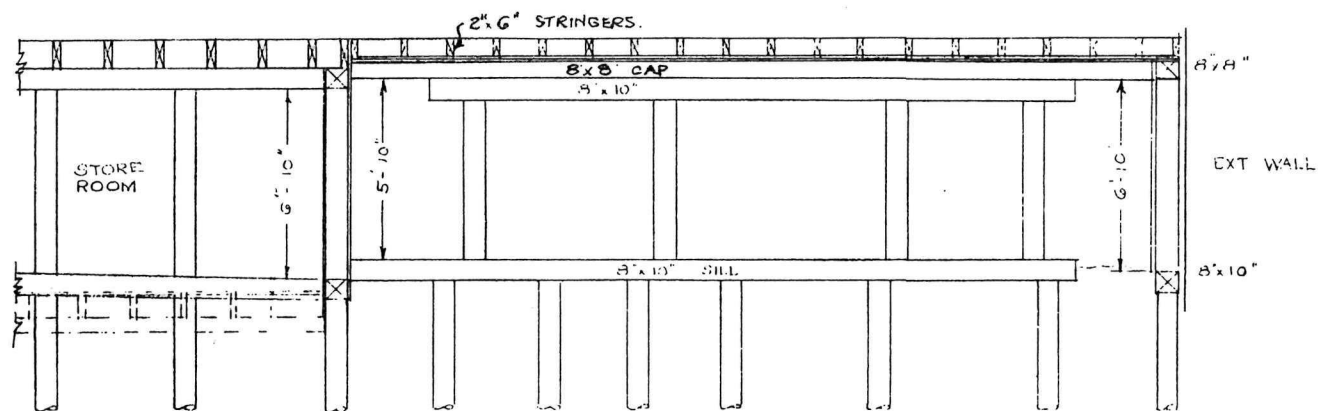
## STRUCTURAL SECTIONS



BASEMENT OUTLINE - SHOWING THE  
LOCATION OF CROSS SECTIONS



CROSS SEC. THRU A. A.



CROSS SEC THRU D-D

Diagram 13

"Plan of Posts," to 26 March 1973.

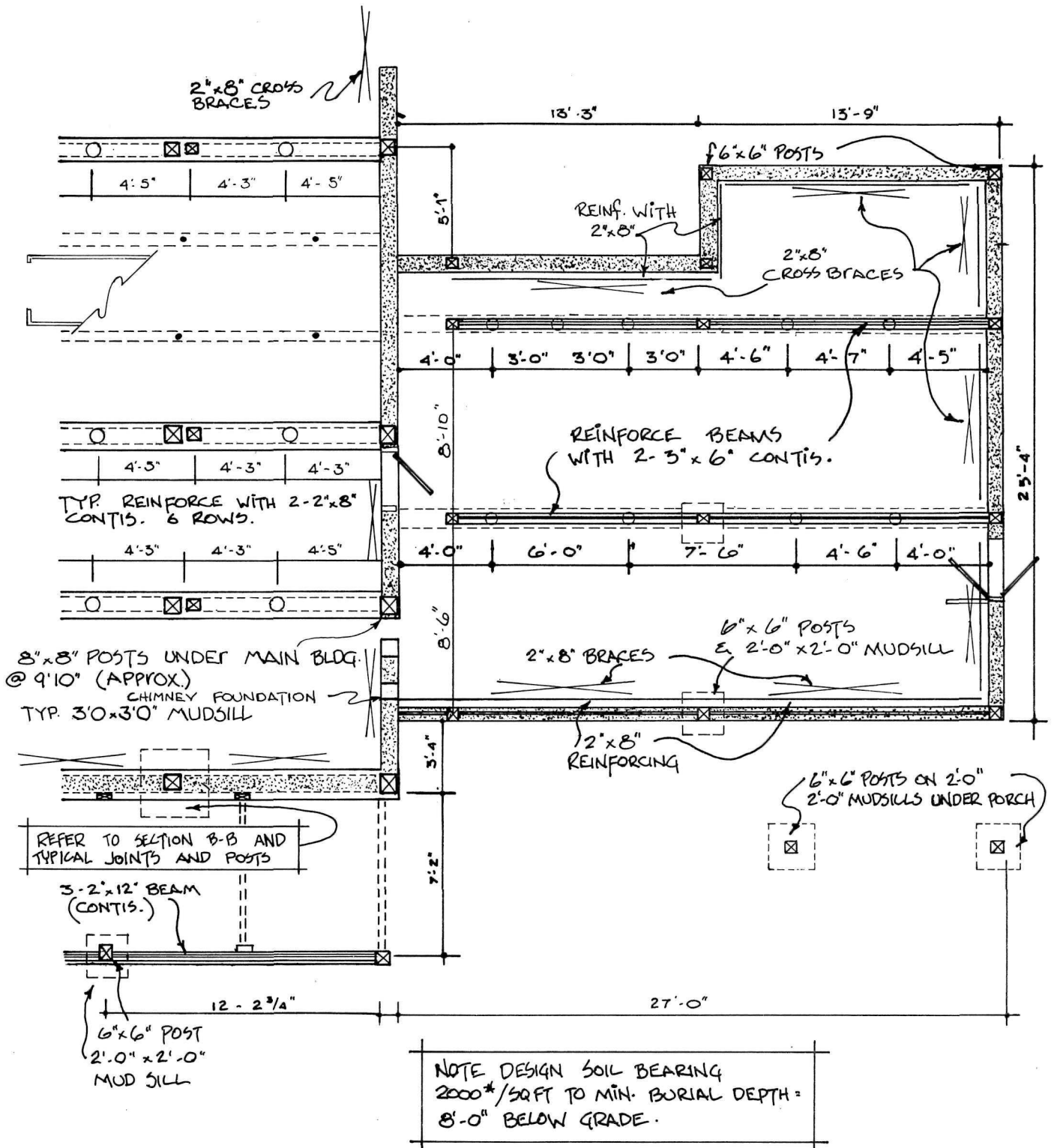
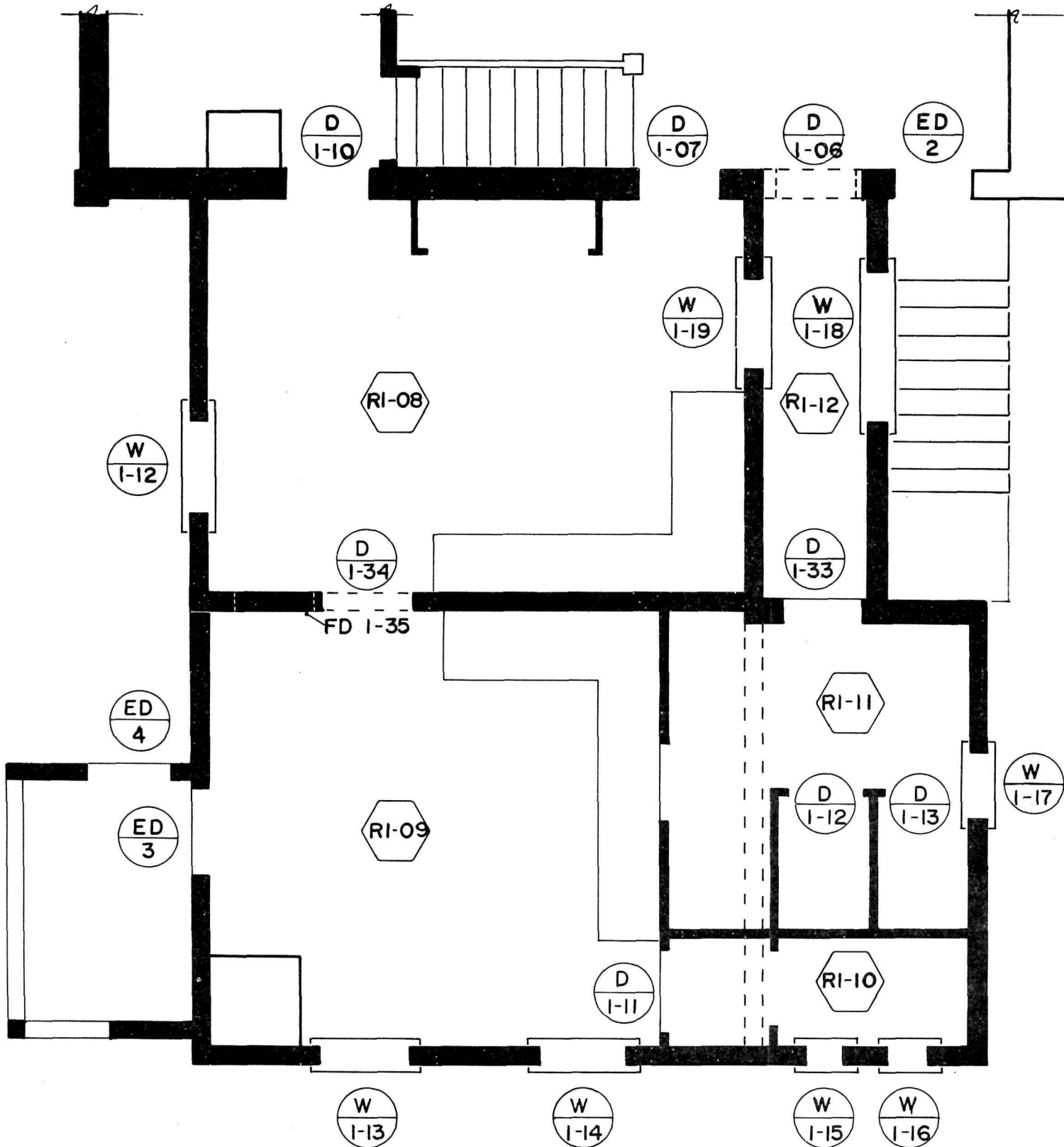
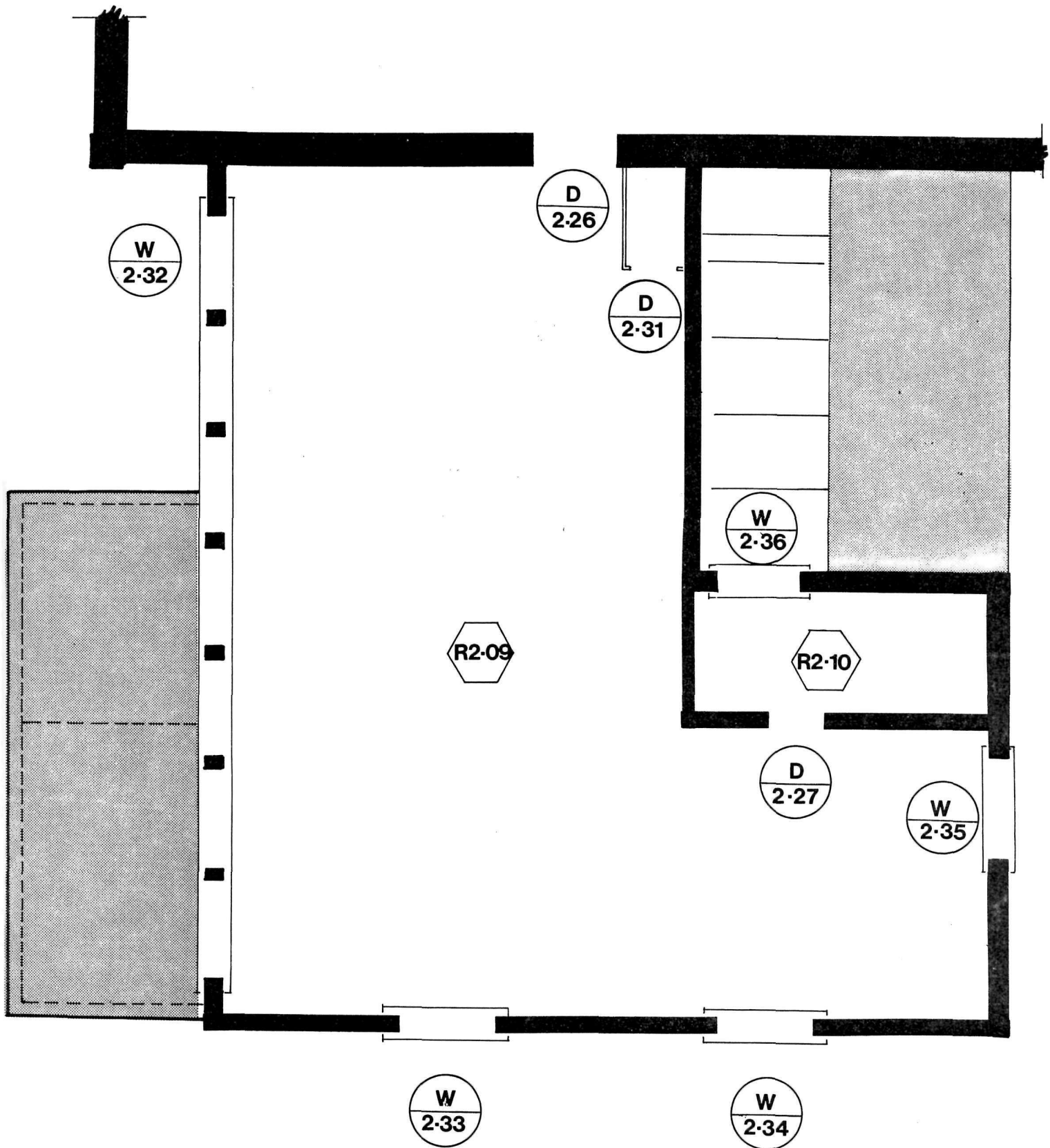


Diagram 14  
Ground Floor Plan of Annex.



COMMISSIONER'S RESIDENCE ANNEX  
GROUND FLOOR PLAN  
SCALE:- 1:50

Diagram 15  
Second Floor Plan of Annex.



COMMISSIONER'S RESIDENCE ANNEX  
SECOND STOREY PLAN  
SCALE 1:50

