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Archaeology at St. Andrew's Rectory, 1980*

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Introduction

St. Andrew's, on the Red River some fifteen miles north of Winnipeg, was one of the five original English parishes established in the early 1800s for the Red River area. Its initial settlement in the 1820s is attributed to amalgamation of the Hudson's Bay and Northwest Companies which resulted in a surplus of company men who were then encouraged to retire. Some, choosing to remain in Red River, selected St. Andrew's because land near Fort Garry and the area of the junction of the Red and Assiniboine Rivers generally was no longer as readily available.

With development of settlement came development of the church. By 1820 a chaplain, supported in part by the Church Missionary Society in London, had been appointed at York Factory for several years but in the fall of 1822 moved to Red River. By 1828 prayer meetings were being held at St. Andrew's and by 1829 it was decided that the chaplain should relocate to St. Andrew's.

In 1829 a frame building on a stone foundation had already been constructed to serve as a rectory, school and church. A separate church building, also frame on a stone foundation, was begun in 1830 and completed by 1832. At the same time a day school was constructed on the mission grounds. By 1844 the rectory foundation was characterized as being "in a state of decay" (Guinn 1978: 16) and in 1847 the building was referred to as being "old and delapidated" (Guinn 1978: 19). A new church, still standing, was begun in 1844 but construction of the present rectory was delayed until the early 1850s.

*Historically the building was often referred to as a parsonage; today it is usually referred to as a rectory.

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In addition to the five major buildings mentioned above --two churches, two rectories and a school--there are occasional references to outbuildings such as barns or kitchens. However, available documents and maps are not too clear on their placement or relative locations. Maps, such as those included in Guinn (1978: Figs. 1, 3), are either too small or of doubtful accuracy. Since the original rectory and church were still standing when their replacements were being built, it is obvious that there are at least four building locations. The school represents a fifth location. Historic photographs of the early 20th century show a probable barn behind the rectory (Guinn 1978: photo B) and a possible residence. An early sketch of questionable accuracy shows three structures in the rectory area (Guinn 1978: Fig. 4).

By 1929 the building was "in need of constant maintenance and repair" (Guinn 1978: 38) and the new single rector, not needing or being able to afford such a large residence, chose to live elsewhere (Guinn 1978: 37). For a number of years it was then used as a school and subsequently, until 1939, as headquarters and residence for a company of clergy organized as the "Brotherhood of the Cross". The building then stood vacant. In 1943 it was sold but possibly not occupied. In 1948 it was again sold and for the next 17 years used as a single family residence. After 1965 its next owner made major renovations to convert it to a museum to house his collection of artifacts.

The building (Fig. 1, 2) is two stories, constructed of local limestone and stands on a less than adequate limestone foundation. By 1858 it included a large limestone annex on the west side. Its plan is rectangular with a central hall layout; four rooms on the first floor and five on the second. An attic, originally accessible via a trap door, was probably not inhabited in the beginning. The layout of the annex is not known. Originally there was no basement under the main building; a partial cellar under the annex will be discussed later.

In 1962 the Historic Sites and Monuments Board recognized the rectory as a good example of a particular type of mid-nineteenth century Red River architecture (Parks Canada 1980: 2). Themes recently accepted for development and interpretation of the site are Red River architecture and the role of the Church Missionary Society and the Church of England in settlement of Red River and the Canadian west generally (Parks Canada 1980: 2). Its architecture is characterized as representing

> the pervasive influence...of what is commonly described as the 'Hudson's Bay style'. Essentially, this style adopted the architectural techniques and style of 18th and 19th century Scotland...and introduced it to the new environment with certain modifications. The most striking feature of this type of architecture were [sic] the dressed limestone facade, high pitched roof and the deep set windows. The major

> stylistic modification was the 'verandah', a typically French Canadian feature common throughout Red River....[However, it] was not the average nineteenth century Red River dwelling. It was a large eight to nine room, two storey country home built to reflect the lifestyle and social position of the 'gentlemen' of Red River and their families (Parks Canada 1980: 2-3).

Following the owner's death in 1975, and removal of his museum/collection, the building and surrounding property were acquired by Parks Canada in 1976. In the same year the rectory was included in the Canada-Manitoba Agreement for Recreation and Conservation (ARC) on the Red River Corridor to be developed and interpreted within the overall agreement objectives:

1. to identify, preserve, interpret and develop the natural, historical and scenic heritage resources of the Red River Corridor, and
2. to increase the education, recreational and cultural benefits to be derived from the use of the said resources for the benefit of the people of Canada in general, and for the residents in the province of Manitoba in particular (ARC Agreement, quoted in Hilderman et al. 1980: 2).

Since the Historic Sites and Monuments Board identified only its architectural significance the building itself constitutes the prime resource for research and development. The second theme, the church, involves a consideration of all buildings which existed together to form a church complex even though not all of these are on Parks Canada property. The church building is still used and a foundation, possibly of the school, is still visible in the adjacent St. Andrew's School yard. Interpretation of the church theme should consider all buildings which formed the complex even if ultimately none of them are reconstructed. Characterization of the church operation involves recognition of what facilities (buildings) were present and their interrelationships. Development associated only with the standing structure is likely to involve disturbance of the ground, if for no other reason than utility installations. Therefore, a knowledge of archaeological resources, such as building remains, is required to prevent their being disturbed by such development.

Excavations

A first season of archaeological excavations was carried out to investigate two general concerns regarding structural remains. The first was largely in response to questions raised as part of an engineering and architectural examination and involved a number of questions relating to the existing building and its annex, past and present (Robert and Lebeuf 1979). Such questions were relevant to stabilization, reconstruction and interpretation. The second concern dealt

with archaeological resources, either in the form of building remains or other cultural debris, which might be present on the property and could be disturbed during site development. The general existence of other buildings was already known through documentary and iconographic resources but little was known about specific location, nature of construction or present condition and extent of remains.

Excavations around the existing building were concerned with structural information with most time spent in searching for information relating to the annexes. The existing annex is easily recognized as not being the one appearing in an 1858 photograph (Guinn 1978: photo 3). There is an obvious difference in their sizes and distribution of openings in the north wall. The rectory wall also contains two key stones above ground level which are probably the remains of a former wall joining at right angles. The rectory wall also retains scars showing a wall line and the roof line. There was, however, little else known about the relationship between the two structures. It was questioned whether they were two completely separate constructions or whether one was somehow derived through modification of the other.

Relationship between the two annexes was identified beyond any doubt; the two structures were in no way associated. The present annex had been built on its own foundation after the original one had been dismantled down to ground level. Excavations uncovered major portions of a mortared limestone foundation (Figs. 3, 4), generally located beyond the limits of the present north annex wall. In total the original annex had been more than twice the size of the present one. During dismantling, limestone building blocks had been left on the ground as fill and some were probably also reused in the new annex. No evidence was found for arrangement of the interior (rooms, etc.) nor was there any indication for floor construction or location of openings. Photographs are available to show that the walls were of stone, the building had a chimney and the north wall had a door and a window.

A major feature discovered for the annex was the existence of a cellar (Fig. 5) across the entire west end (cellar is being used to designate a below ground storage space lacking sufficient headroom for a person to stand upright and making the space uninhabitable). The west side had been the building foundation, the east side was a separate wall now considerably bowed due to ground pressure. The feature retained no evidence of a floor other than the clay ground surface. Within the cellar as well as the adjacent area within the annex foundation there was an extensive deposit of limestone blocks and mortar. Although no dressed stones were noted among these it is likely that they are material remaining from dismantling of the original structure. Some stone could also have been used for construction of the new, smaller annex but a large quantity would have remained.

The cellar fill contained a large quantity of artifacts including a high proportion of whole or restorable bottles. In some instances it was apparent that an item had broken in being dropped on a stone or having a stone dropped on it. In general there was the impression that deposition of artifacts and other types of fill had gone on together. Presence of the stone suggested that annex dismantling and cellar filling were concurrent.

Presence of the artifacts is likely due to house cleaning at the time of annex dismantling, the artifacts being from the annex and rectory in general. At least some of the items had been broken before deposition. Many of the bottles were marked, including one paper label, and many of the marks are identifiable and dateable. A preliminary examination of the marks suggests a time period early in the twentieth century, thereby indicating a time for removal of the original annex.

Excavations inside the present annex in search of remains of the original discovered that the original north wall had not continued in a straight line up to the rectory wall. It stopped short of the rectory turning at right angles twice to join the rectory wall in the vicinity of the west door. Key stones in the rectory wall, as already mentioned above, indicate that the south annex wall, however, was straight; this possibility cannot be readily established through excavation because of extensive ground disturbances during installation of a well and septic tank. Scars on the rectory wall indicate that the annex roof was symmetrical; it made no adjustments for any irregularity in the north wall line.

Excavation in the area of the annexes also uncovered evidence of earlier occupations in the form of a small, uncribbed cellar and a shallow stone foundation, the two features possibly being part of one structure. The cellar was irregularly square, very roughly dish-shaped and shallow. There was no evidence of cribbing and it would have been little more than a storage pit under the floor. The majority of the cellar's depth had been filled with a crushed limestone before excavation of the builder's trench for the original annex foundation (Fig. 6). It had also been cut through by trenches for the second annex. Unfortunately the cellar fill was generally deficient of artifacts with none to suggest a date of filling.

The foundation possibly associated with the above cellar consists of two courses of mortared limestone set more or less on the original undisturbed ground level (Fig. 7). It has no builder's trench but some ground levelling probably took place. Inside the present annex it was seen to be intruded on by remains of the original annex. Stratigraphy elsewhere also suggests that this foundation precedes the original annex. Shallowness of the foundation suggests that it was for a wooden structure, possibly one of the original buildings; the answer may be found through a comparison of sizes. Extensive ash layers discovered inside the rectory, under the floor, may also be associated with this earlier cellar and/or foundation

but evidence for drawing such a conclusion has not yet been recognized.

At the beginning of excavations the question was considered whether the specific nature of the building function would be recognizeable through any of the excavated remains. Preliminary consideration of the artifacts has not led to such conclusions. Although the artifacts may reflect status of the building occupants they do not seem to indicate an association with a church. If identification of the rectory was not known through other sources it would not likely come from the archaeological data. The nature of the structure itself also does not appear to suggest a church association.

In addition to structural remains uncovered behind the rectory a second major feature of the area was its stratigraphy (Fig. 8). It was discovered that the entire area contained multiple layers of fill which had accumulated to a depth in excess of 30 cm. In addition to fill in various depressions, such as the annex cellar, there were numerous other layers of gravel, mixed clay, mortar, limestone rubble, occasional ash and other materials. Some can be attributed to development of the structure as a musuem since 1965, others are probably due to gravelling or spreading material such as would be left by dismantling of the annex. Some may be from digging the rectory basement early in the twentieth century. Generally the material does not appear to be topsoil, deposited to level the ground and create a lawn or generally improve the appearance of the area. In general, then, the present ground surface is substantially higher than at the time when the rectory was constructed. Reasons for deposition of much of the fill were not readily apparent during excavations. The extent of filling was not determined through test trenches. Nature of the stratigraphy also resulted in prolonging the time required for excavation of the annex remains.

Testing extending westward from the annex area established the continuation of fill layers for some distance from the annex and the existence of remnants of wooden flooring approximately 45 m from the rectory. The fill included a relatively thick layer of manure close to the annex area and in a location where a possible barn appears in historic photographs of the early twentieth century. The flooring did not appear to be associated with any wall remains. Its extent was not established through expansion of the test trenches. It may be remains of a building (residence?) appearing in the approximate area in an early twentieth century photograph.

Building stabilization began shortly after completion of the field season and thus brought about a continuing need for archaeological consultation and, if necessary, excavation. Initial stabilization was concerned only with the foundation and first floor. The foundation was to be secured and the flooring removed to repair or replace the floor joists; only about a third of the joists were visible and accessible in the partial basement. The deteriorated condition of the latter

suggested the possibility that all joists had deteriorated and would have to be replaced. For practical purposes, it was also decided that stabilization should include creation of a crawl space under the floor, providing room for some utilities and space for air circulation. During stabilization the archaeologist was also called on to make observations and undertake investigations of a more architectural nature in order to prepare a report on construction of the building.

Removal of soils under the floor provided information both on construction of the rectory and use of the area prior to construction. Excavation everywhere within the structure was well into undisturbed ground; all cultural fill within the foundation has now been removed. It was discovered that prior to rectory construction the same general area had been used for repeated deposition, primarily of ash and mixed clay, resulting in multilayered deposits occasionally exceeding a depth of 30 cm. Excavations adjacent to some parts of the foundation exterior encountered similar stratigraphy. Deposition of the ash had been preceded by removal of most or all topsoil occasionally resulting in the creation of a shallow pit.

Construction of the rectory had begun without removal of this ash. Stratigraphy at the walls clearly demonstrated that the ash was already in place when the foundation trenches were dug. On completion of foundations and at least part of the walls the rectory interior had been filled with a mixed clay approximately to the bottom of the floor joists. The surface appears to have had a wash of mortar and limestone chips applied, presumably intentionally, before installation of joists. The area between joists was further filled with black soil almost to the level of the floor boards.

In the northeast room the fill below and between joists also included a thick layer of shavings, interpreted to be the product of planing floor boards or other planks and beams. Although the flooring was tongue and groove boards, most shavings were not from planing tongue and groove joints. Within the shavings there was also a wooden mallet and a wooden device which may be part of a vice for holding boards during planing. It is obvious that the northeast room was used as a workshop while the building interior was being completed, involving such things as installation of partitions and floors and possibly even the roof.

Investigation of locations of the two original chimneys concluded that nothing remained of the original construction. The north chimney had been removed and rebuilt as a larger chimney and fireplace. For the south chimney, which had been completely removed, location and size of the bottom could be determined by compression and depression of fill and undisturbed soil caused by weight of a stone chimney two stories in height. The chimney had been set on the ash deposits, apparently with no preparation of the ground or attempt to provide an adequate footing for the amount of weight involved.

The ash deposits under the floor contain a large quantity of artifacts consisting primarily of ceramics and butchered bone. Its location provides a terminus ante quem of 1854 at which time the area was sealed by completion of the floor. However, the manner in which the crawl space was dug out resulted in the inclusion of artifacts which had fallen off the edge of the floor and some that appear to have been introduced by rodents whose presence was readily apparent through the existence of open and filled burrows.

Ceramics recovered from various areas of the rectory interior are generally similar. It has not yet been established that any of the fragments are in fact parts of the same object; they are very likely parts of the same set. Unfortunately approximately one-third of the ash layers was removed early in the twentieth century for construction of the present basement. Possibly the fill can be recognized in one of the many fill layers outside the rectory through a matching of ceramic remains.

Archaeological investigation and recording continues as other stabilization activities which will disturb the ground are undertaken.

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1. Front of rectory; verandah is relatively recent.

2. Rear of rectory with second annex.

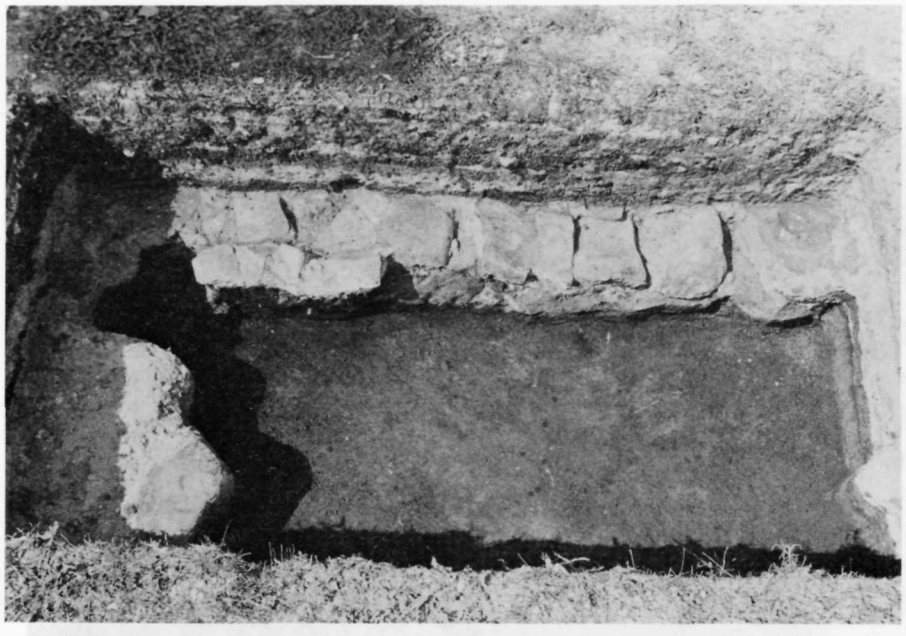
3. Section of foundation of original annex; part of annex cellar in upper left corner.

4. Section of foundations of original annex and structure predating original annex; inside present annex.

5. Fill layers in original annex cellar; light layer in right centre is plaster fragments.

6. Filled cellar predating original annex; annex foundation cuts through fill at extreme left of photo.

7. Section of foundation predating original annex; top, as found, probably is original top of foundation.



8. Example of multiple fill layers; in area of annex cellar.

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