

Parish House Fact Sheet



The Parish House was “home” to priests and brothers of the Society of Jesus, or Jesuits, who served the people of the region and was the center of business and social life of Old Mission.

Jesuit priests supervised construction of the first residence at Sacred Heart Mission in the early 1850s. Fires destroyed two early parish houses, but the priests and Coeur d’Alene Tribe rebuilt the current Parish House in 1887. By the mid-1880s, a flood of miners, farmers and military personnel poured into North Idaho. Jesuits decided to construct the new Parish House, in a Neo-Gothic design that was popular at the time. In the spring of 1887, carpenters set framework for the building. They ordered several hundred board feet of planks from mills in Spokane Falls, and purchased hardware supplies locally. Brother Achilles Carfagno, S.J., a carpenter from St. Joseph’s Mission among the Nez Perce, directed the construction. He hired two local craftsmen to assist him, and they completed the house exterior by October. The installation of hardwood floors, a chimney, and other finishing touches had to wait until spring of 1888. The final coat of lath and plaster was applied in September.

Many priests used the mission as a way station when going to and from assignments in the Silver Valley mining communities. Novices lived at the Parish House as they trained to become Priests. Prayer plus hard manual labor was the daily normal routine. With the assistance of these willing workers, the mission fields produced up to 500 tons of hay annually, a large portion of which they sold to the cavalry units at Fort Sherman in Coeur d’Alene.

The Parish House had its own private chapel attached to the east side of the house. Now remnants of the chapel are on display in the back room of the Parish House.

Later site caretakers used the Parish House as their home until the park was established in 1974. Today you can tour the Parish House displays and listen to the audio recordings describing life and activities of the early Jesuits.