

St. Olaf, Quatsino

Prepared by Jesse Robertson (April 2, 2024)

Property Acquisition

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| Address | Quatsino, BC, V0N 2V0 |
| Legal description | St. Olaf, Quatsino PID 009924019, PARCEL G (DD 64386I) OF THE SOUTH EAST 1/4 OF SECTION 36, TOWNSHIP 18, RUPERT DISTRICT. |
| First private landholder | Settler Halvor Bergh began leasing this portion of Section 36 in 1895 and received a Crown Grant in 1901. |
| Diocesan acquisition | The Diocese purchased Parcel G for \$400 in 1931. |

Narrative Overview

St. Olaf is located in Quatsino in the territory of Quatsino (Gwat'sinux) First Nation. In 1895, settler Halvor Bergh received a lease to adjacent parts of Sections 36 and 25, Township 18, Quatsino District, with the understanding that he would receive a full grant after clearing and "improving" the land.¹ Bergh sold and subdivided one-acre parcel of Section 36 in 1898 to serve as the location of a new schoolhouse.² He received a Crown grant to the section in 1901, having paid \$1.00 and fulfilled the terms of his lease.³

In 1929, a committee was appointed to raise funds for the construction of a new school on a nearby parcel to serve the community's growing population. The building was completed in 1930 and opened for classes in 1931.⁴ The former schoolhouse property was conveyed to William Walsh by January 1931. The Diocese purchased the parcel from Walsh for \$400 in May 1931.⁵

Interpretive Summary

Decisions regarding future land use should bear the following considerations in mind:

⇒ This land was leased to a private individual in 1896, three decades before it was purchased by the Diocese of British Columbia (1931). The parcel and surrounding area was subdivided and subject to various interventions during this period, including road construction and forestry. Diocesan ownership of this land did not contribute directly to the historical dispossession of Indigenous peoples from their territory.

¹ Crown Grant Image G00310556002, E1/2 OF SE1/4, Section 36, Township 18, Rupert District, Government Access tool for Online Retrieval (GATOR): [https://a100.gov.bc.ca/pub/pls/gator/gator\\$queryforms.menu](https://a100.gov.bc.ca/pub/pls/gator/gator$queryforms.menu)

² Denise Cook Design, 'St. Olaf's Anglican Church and Quatsino Elementary School Statements of Significance, Prepared for Regional District of Mount Waddington', 31 December 2013, 3, <https://www.rdmw.bc.ca/regional-services/heritage/heritage>.

³ Crown Grant Image G00310556002, E1/2 OF SE1/4, Section 36, Township 18, Rupert District, GATOR: [https://a100.gov.bc.ca/pub/pls/gator/gator\\$queryforms.menu](https://a100.gov.bc.ca/pub/pls/gator/gator$queryforms.menu)

⁴ Denise Cook Design, 'St. Olaf's Anglican Church and Quatsino Elementary School', 3, 4, 8.

⁵ William Walsh to Anglican Synod of the Diocese of BC (ASDBC), 13 May 1931; and Indenture, William Walsh to ASDBC, 13 May 1931, text 431; William Walsh to Bishop Charles Schofield, 31 Jan 1931, text 431, Archives of the Diocese of BC (ADBC), Victoria, BC.

⇒ The alienation of land from the Crown has been a central factor limiting Indigenous access to land in BC. Today, private property is considered “off the table” for Aboriginal treaty negotiations, such as those currently being pursued by Quatsino (Gwat’sinux) First Nation. Arrangements and/or transfers from private landowners will likely be required for these and other nations to regain stewardship and/or ownership over privatized lands.

Historical Context

In 1894, thirty families of Scandinavian origin arrived in Quatsino aboard the *Mischief*, as part of a new provincial scheme to establish settler colonies in remote areas of British Columbia. In exchange for settling and “improving” the area, aspiring colonists would be afforded land grants and employment in building local roads and schools.⁶

The settlers soon encountered members of the Quatsino (Gwat’sinux) First Nation. One settler, then a child, recalled that Indigenous people in scores of canoes paddled out to meet the *Mischief* and those aboard. An initial settlement was established near Coal Harbour. The following spring, the Scandinavians resettled near Quattishe, a Kwakwaka’wakw winter village on the western shore of the Quatsino Inlet. The settlers built cabins, cleared and cultivated the land, and erected a wharf and school, often with the assistance of local Indigenous labourers.⁷

Settler Halvor Bergh received a lease to part of Section 36 in 1895 and set about clearing his land, cutting wood, opening a merchandise store. In 1898, Bergh sold one acre of land to accommodate a new schoolhouse.⁸ The Quatsino colony struggled to achieve the minimum of thirty families stipulated in the province’s new colonization scheme. This requirement was waived in 1899, enabling those who had fulfilled the terms of their leases to receive land grants after the term of five years had passed.⁹ Accordingly, Bergh received a Crown Grant to his portion of Section 36 in 1901.¹⁰

The Diocese purchased the former schoolhouse property in 1931, following the construction of a larger school the previous year.¹¹

⁶ Eric Faa, *Norwegians in the Northwest: Settlement in British Columbia, 1858-1918* (Victoria: Runestad, 1995), 201–2; ‘BC Board of Trade, Continued’, *Daily Colonist*, 14 July 1895, 7.

⁷ Faa, *Norwegians in the Northwest*, 203; Will Dawson, ‘Quatsino: Village of Broken Dreams’, in *Pioneer Days in British Columbia*, vol. 4 (Surrey, BC: Heritage House, 1979), 139.

⁸ Crown Grant Image G00310556002, E1/2 OF SE1/4, Section 36, Township 18, Rupert District, GATOR: [https://a100.gov.bc.ca/pub/pls/gator/gator\\$queryforms.menu](https://a100.gov.bc.ca/pub/pls/gator/gator$queryforms.menu); Faa, *Norwegians in the Northwest*, 232.

⁹ Faa, 227.

¹⁰ Crown Grant Image G00310556002, E1/2 OF SE1/4, Section 36, Township 18, Rupert District, GATOR: [https://a100.gov.bc.ca/pub/pls/gator/gator\\$queryforms.menu](https://a100.gov.bc.ca/pub/pls/gator/gator$queryforms.menu)

¹¹ William Walsh to Bishop Charles Schofield, 31 Jan 1931, text 431, ADBC; Denise Cook Design, ‘St. Olaf’s Anglican Church and Quatsino Elementary School’, 3, 4, 8.

Indigenous Presence and Land Use

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| Languages | Kwak'wala |
| Governance | Quatsino (Gwat'sinux) First Nation |
| Land use | No specific land use has been identified. An 1894 survey described section lines near the site as featuring hemlock, fir, cedar, and spruce on rolling country and clay loam. ¹² Quattishe Indian Reserve 1 is located on Hecate Cove, about 2.5 kilometres east. In the late-nineteenth century, Quattishe served as a winter village containing around twenty houses, gardens, and burial sites. ¹³ |
| Archaeological data | The Archaeology Branch of British Columbia has not recorded any archaeological sites on the property. |
| Historic treaties | None |
| Modern treaties | Quatsino First Nation is currently in Stage 4 of the BC Treaty Process (Agreement-in-Principle negotiations). |

Timeline

Italicized text indicates contextual information. **Bold** text indicates information specific to the property.

| Date | Details |
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| <i>12 Jan 1859</i> | Diocese of British Columbia established amidst global expansion of British Empire and Church of England (38 new dioceses established between 1814-1859). The Letters Patent creating the Diocese give the Bishop power to hold property on behalf of the church. ¹⁴ |
| <i>31 Mar 1866</i> | The legislature of the united Colony of British Columbia (including Vancouver Island) removes Indigenous peoples' right to pre-empt land without the permission of the Governor. ¹⁵ |
| <i>Sep 1879</i> | Reverend Alfred James Hall crosses Vancouver Island with Admiral James Prevost to visit the "Koslemo (or Qualseno, or Quatsinough) Indians." ¹⁶ |
| <i>1881</i> | Coal mining operations commence at what would become known as Coal Harbour, on the West Arm of Quatsino Sound. ¹⁷ |

¹² "Portions of TPs 10.11.18.19," FB41-C/1896, pages 14-15, PH4, Rupert Land District, Provincial Survey Field Books, Land Title and Survey Authority of BC (LTSA), Victoria, BC.

¹³ Robert Galois, *Kwakwaka'wakw Settlements, 1775-1920: A Geographical Analysis and Gazetteer* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1994), 370.

¹⁴ "Letters Patent of the Bishop of Columbia, 1859" (copy), 85.36, ADBC; G. Hollis Slate, 'New Light on Herbert Beaver', *British Columbia Historical Quarterly* 6, no. 1 (January 1942): 14.

¹⁵ Paul Tennant, *Aboriginal Peoples and Politics: The Indian Land Question in British Columbia, 1849-1989* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1990), 41-42.

¹⁶ Columbia Mission Society, *Twenty-First Annual Report of the Missions of the Church of England in British Columbia for the Year 1879* (London: Rivingtons, 1880), 28.

¹⁷ George Nicholson, *Vancouver Island's West Coast, 1762-1962* (Victoria, BC: George Nicholson, 1962), 182.

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| 6 Apr 1889 | Anglican Synod of the Diocese of British Columbia incorporated by Act of Provincial Legislature and empowered to acquire, hold, and sell property. |
| 1892 | Quattishe, Kwakwaka'wakw winter village in Quatsino Sound, surveyed for an Indian Reserve. ¹⁸ |
| Nov 1894 | Thirty families of Scandinavian origin arrive in Quatsino aboard the <i>Mischief</i> , with an agreement from the Government of British Columbia that they would be granted land in return for establishing a colony in the area. One settler, then a child, later recalled that Indigenous people in scores of canoes paddle out to meet the <i>Mischief</i> and those aboard. ¹⁹ |
| 15 Dec 1894 | Settler Halvor Bergh writes to Provincial Secretary James Baker requesting part of Townships 10, 11, 18, and 19, Rupert District, for the benefit of the Scandinavian colony. ²⁰ |
| Apr-May 1895 | Portions of Townships 10, 11, 18, and 19 surveyed. The surveyor describes section lines near the site as featuring hemlock, fir, cedar, and spruce on rolling country and clay loam. ²¹ |
| 1 May 1895 | Bergh receives a lease for the east half of the southeast quarter of Section 36, Township 18, Rupert District, in Quatsino Sound. ²² |
| 1898 | Bergh sells a one-acre parcel of land for a proposed schoolhouse, to be constructed over the following three years. ²³ |
| 26 Jul 1899 | Chief Commissioner of Lands and Works waives the Quatsino colony's requirement to attain thirty families, enabling its members to receive land grants after the term of five years had elapsed. ²⁴ |
| 20 Feb 1901 | Bergh receives a Crown Grant to his portion of Section 36, having paid \$1.00 and fulfilled the terms of his previous lease. ²⁵ |
| Before 1927 | Bishop Charles Scofield visits Quatsino Sound aboard the Columbia Coast Mission's <i>Columbia</i> . ²⁶ |
| 1929 | Local school board appoints committee to raise funds for a new school to be built on a separate plot of land near the existing site. |

¹⁸ Galois, *Kwakwaka'wakw Settlements, 1775-1920*, 370.

¹⁹ Faa, *Norwegians in the Northwest*, 201-3; Dawson, 'Quatsino', 139; 'BC Board of Trade, Continued', 7.

²⁰ Legislative Assembly of British Columbia, 'Quatsino and Cape Scott Colonization', Sessional Papers of the Province of British Columbia, Session 1897 (Victoria, BC: Government Printer, 1897), 765, <https://open.library.ubc.ca/collections/bcsessional/items/1.0063716>.

²¹ "Portions of TPs 10.11.18.19," FB41-C/1896, pages 14-15, PH4, Rupert Land District, Provincial Survey Field Books, LTSA.

²² Crown Grant Image G00310556002, E1/2 OF SE1/4, Section 36, Township 18, Rupert District, GATOR: [https://a100.gov.bc.ca/pub/pls/gator/gator\\$queryforms.menu](https://a100.gov.bc.ca/pub/pls/gator/gator$queryforms.menu)

²³ Denise Cook Design, 'St. Olaf's Anglican Church and Quatsino Elementary School', 3, 8.

²⁴ Faa, *Norwegians in the Northwest*, 227.

²⁵ Crown Grant Image G00310556002, E1/2 OF SE1/4, Section 36, Township 18, Rupert District, GATOR: [https://a100.gov.bc.ca/pub/pls/gator/gator\\$queryforms.menu](https://a100.gov.bc.ca/pub/pls/gator/gator$queryforms.menu)

²⁶ Doris Anderson, *The Columbia Is Coming!* (Sidney, BC: Caitlin Press, 1982), 64.

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| | The building is completed in 1930 and opened to students in 1931. ²⁷ |
| By Jun 1930 | Old school site in the possession of the executors of the estate of Robert Montgomery. ²⁸ |
| By Jan 1931 | Old school site conveyed to William Walsh, who communicates his willingness to transfer ownership to the Diocese. ²⁹ |
| 13 May 1931 | Diocese purchases old school site and building from William Walsh for \$400, upon trust that it be used for church purposes. ³⁰ |
| 1940 | Former schoolhouse building consecrated. ³¹ |

²⁷ Denise Cook Design, 'St. Olaf's Anglican Church and Quatsino Elementary School', 3, 4, 8.

²⁸ Notes re: Parcel G of SE ¼ of Sec 36, Township 18, text 431, ADBC.

²⁹ William Walsh to Bishop Charles Schofield, 31 Jan 1931, text 431, ADBC.

³⁰ Indenture, William Walsh to ASDBC, 13 May 1931, text 431, ADBC.

³¹ Constance D. Isherwood (Holmes & Isherwood) to ASDBC, 4 Jan 2015, Synod files, Diocese of British Columbia.

Figures

Figure 1. *Map showing current extent of St. Olaf.*

PMBC Parcel Cadastre 009924019, iMapBC, Province of British Columbia.

Figure 2. *Map of Crown grant to Halvor Bergh.*

Crown Grant Image G01201388002, E1/2 of SE1/4, Section 36, Township 18, Rupert District, Government Access tool for Online Retrieval (GATOR):

[https://a100.gov.bc.ca/pub/pls/gator/gator\\$queryforms.menu](https://a100.gov.bc.ca/pub/pls/gator/gator$queryforms.menu)

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