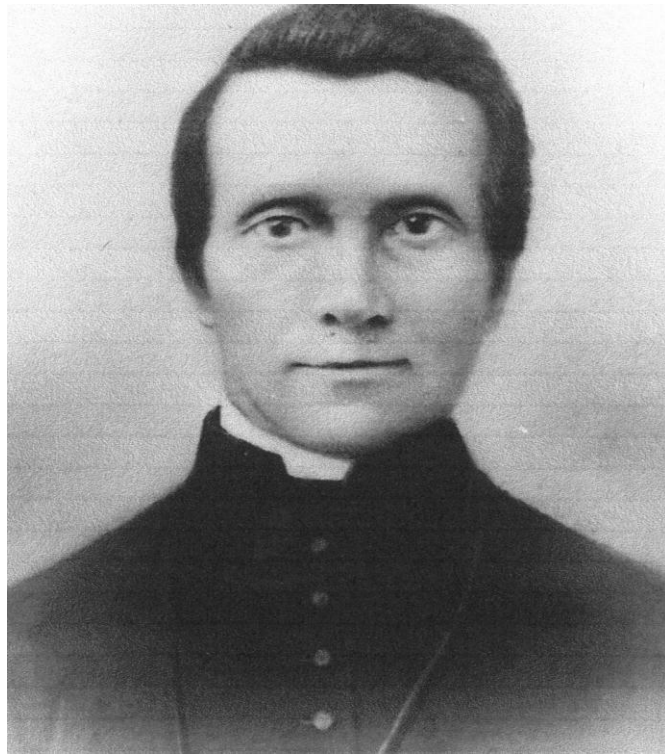


CHIROUSE

**The Reverend Father Eugene Casimir
Chirouse, a Pioneer in Oregon and
Washington Territories**



Eugene Casimir Chirouse, O.M.I.¹

**My personal journey back in time through the
records of his life.**

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¹ Photo from an old daguerreotype image of a very young Father Chirouse -- Archives of Marquette University.

INTRODUCTION

There were five men, all born in France, living in the protection and refinement of a seminary in Marseilles. They had a lofty mission. They came to the new country of the United States heading west to the frontier. Arriving at their destination, they faced the dangers of starvation, poverty and perils they could not have imagined. With nothing to protect them but faith in God and their tattered black robes they became part of our history in Oregon and Washington Territories. They were the Oblates of Mary Immaculate of the Roman Catholic Church.

The year was 1847, and in what is now the southeast corner of Washington and the northeast section of Oregon, the relationship between the native people and the white settlers was at a boiling point. These five men were different than the settlers encroaching on this land. They came to live with the native people, to teach and convert—not to take their land, but to save souls and to educate. Seldom mentioned in history books, they were important pioneers in our state. The Oblates were among the first white men to come to the area that became Olympia. Olympia has a beautiful park because of them. Yet when visiting Olympia's Priest Point Park along Budd Inlet there is no mention of the Oblates. In Olympia itself, our first state library was established in a building belonging to the Oblates. Isaac Stevens, our first Territorial Governor, made his home in a house he rented from them.

One of these men especially captures the imagination. He was a young man, only 26 years old when he came to this land. From the time he was 15 years old his heart was set on a goal. He realized that goal and lived his dream.

He was a simple man, yet a complicated one. He was a man of great faith who at times appeared to be battling demons. His prolific written words sometimes indicated loneliness, despair, a feeling that he had been abandoned. However, mostly he was joyous and excited about life. He loved to sing and play his violin or his small accordion. Writing in his diary, he skipped from one subject to another—the mundane to more lofty thoughts. Eugene Casimir Chirouse had a mind that never seemed to rest. It was as if he were driven by a force beyond himself.

He had a love for the people native to his new country--they became his people. He was one with them and was beloved. He became something more than their spiritual adviser and teacher—he became their father and friend.

He was the Reverend Father Eugene Casimir Chirouse, an Oblate of Mary Immaculate, a humble missionary to the First People of our Pacific Northwest.

THIS IS HIS STORY

PROLOGUE

The time is September—the year 1857. The place, a beach at Tulalip Bay, Tulalip Indian Reservation, Island County, Washington Territory.

Looking out over the sparkling waters of the bay, the eyes of the people waiting on shore follow the course of a canoe as it glides into view and comes ashore on the beach. One of those stepping out of the canoe is a small black-robed missionary priest. Those witnessing this sight cannot possibly imagine the transforming impact this one man will have on their lives for the next 21 years and beyond. To these, the First People of the Pacific Northwest, he would become their friend--the Reverend Father Eugene Casimir Chirouse, O.M.I.--or, as they would call him, simply *Chilouse*.

They are all gone now and his name has mostly faded from memory. However, Father Chirouse left his mark on the people and on the land. Seldom mentioned in our history books, Father Chirouse was a pioneer in Oregon and Washington Territories. His presence touched many lives, both native and non-native. He left a legacy in the many missions he established, with his desire to maintain peace, and in the records of those baptized, married and buried by him.

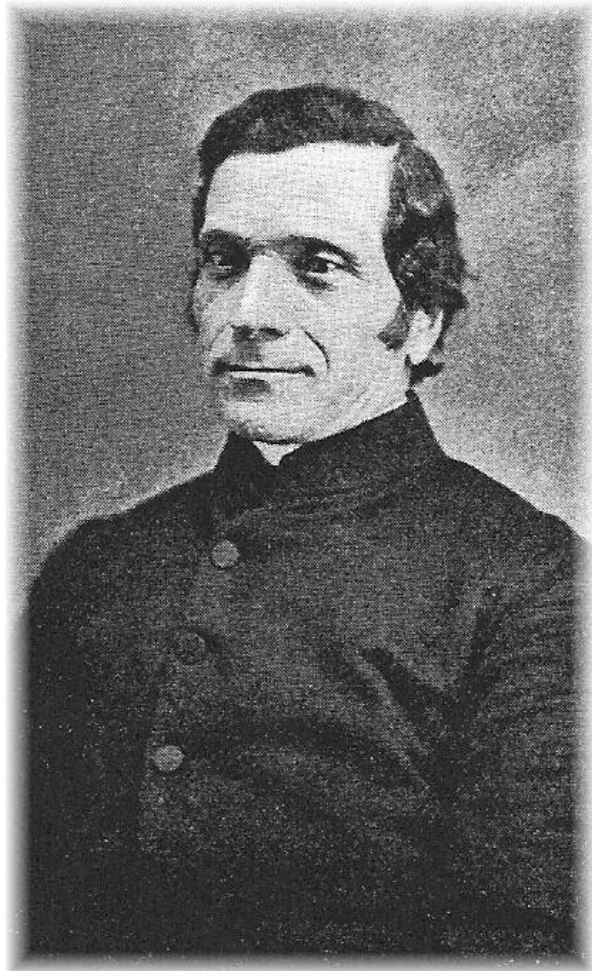
At the Tulalip Indian Reservation, his former presence is geographically noted by some of the place names. Reminders of him are Priest Point, where he established his second home, church and school. It was in this primitive school in 1862, he introduced his scholars to their first look at their own language in written form. In order to aid their studies, he composed a Snohomish to English/English to Snohomish dictionary. Priest Point Cemetery is another reminder. Father Chirouse and his boys from the school cleared this land for burials near the mission.

Father Chirouse's spirit hovers over Mission Beach located at the head of Tulalip Bay. On this beach he established St. Anne Mission. The little church he built as the center of the mission was the site of many services. Services often were conducted in the native language so the elders could understand. In addition to Sunday services, Father Chirouse baptized, married and officiated at the burial services for the ancestors of those still living nearby. Again, with the help of the boys, land was cleared on the hillside behind the mission for the cemetery that became known as Mission Beach Cemetery. Many of the young boys who knew Father Chirouse as their pastor, teacher and beloved friend, married, raised families, and now rest in this lovely cemetery overlooking Tulalip Bay.

In 1868 at Mission Beach, the first federally funded contract school for American Indians in the United States was opened with Father Chirouse as superintendent and teacher. After many years of requests from Father Chirouse to the federal

government to remind them of the promises made in the 1855 Point Elliott Treaty, the school opened at Mission Beach for the education of both boys and girls.

Running through this land is Mission Creek, another geographical reminder that a special man came to Tulalip Bay, made his home with the native residents, was accepted, respected and loved.



Rev. Father Eugene Casimir Chirouse, Oblate of Mary Immaculate
William Whitfield, *History of Snohomish County, Washington*, Vol. 1 (1926).

France -- The Beginning -- 1821-1847

The canton of Bourg-de-Pèage is located in the department of Drome in the Rhone-Alps region of France, a few miles east of Valence along the River Isère. The village owes its name to the presence of the bridge over the Isère, which was established in the Middle Ages by the Abbey Saint-Barnard of Romans, with the oldest mention dating back to 1033.²



The ancient canton of Bourg-de-Pèage located along the Isère River in France³ The bridge crossing the river to Romans can be seen in the background.

Chirouse was an old and respected name in this ancient French village of Bourg-de-Pèage, and it was nearby that Joseph and Marie (Barbier) Chirouse and their four children lived on the family farm.

On Tuesday, May 8, 1821, a fifth child, Eugene Casimir (called Casimir by his family) made his entrance into the world. Sadly, Marie Chirouse did not survive the birth of this son. Instead, after Marie's death the grandmother cared for the little baby and his siblings.

² Bourg-de-Pèage, Wikipedia < <http://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bourg-de-P%C3%A9age> >

³ < <http://quid.notrefamille.com/cartes-postales-photos/cartes-postales-photos-BOURG-DE-PÈAGE> >

Both Mr. Chirouse and the grandmother died while Casimir was a young boy.⁴ They never witnessed the destiny that awaited Casimir. A destiny that began with a journey from his homeland in France, across the Atlantic Ocean to New York in the United States of America. Over two thousand miles further west from New York, near the shores of a body of water called Puget Sound by the white people, Casimir would fulfill a vow he made as a young orphan boy. As the Reverend Father Eugene Casimir Chirouse, O.M.I., he would impact the lives of another ancient people and gently and lovingly help in guiding them into a changing and over-whelming new world.

The Event that Changed Casimir's Life

An event in far-off St. Louis, Missouri seems to be the catalyst that influenced Casimir's choice in life. This event also propelled many Christian emissaries, both Protestant and Catholic, to establish missions for the natives living on the lands in the northwest corner of the United States. The story told was that in the fall of 1831, a small party of Indians from the Nez Perce and Flathead tribes set out to travel to St. Louis in search of knowledge. They had traveled with a group of trappers and traders and reached an area near Council Bluffs on the Missouri River. The trip had been a long and dangerous one, and all except four turned back. These four had decided they would approach General William Clark.⁵ They wished to ask him to send men to their homeland so they could learn more of the white men's ways, including their religion.⁶

Back in France, after the death of his father and grandmother Casimir had gone to live with his elder brother Felicien in a neighboring town and was apprenticed to become a hat maker. Casimir read the account of this St. Louis event as told by the Roman Catholic Bishop of St. Louis, The Right Reverend Joseph Rosati.⁷ Bishop Rosati's letter of December 31, 1831 was published in Lyons, France in the magazine *Annals de l'Association de la Propagation de la Foy* [Annals of the Association of the Propagation of the Faith]. Following is an excerpt from Rosati's letter:

Some three months ago, four Indians who live at the other side of the Rocky Mountains, near the Columbia River, arrived in St. Louis. After visiting General Clark, who in his celebrated travels, had seen the nation to which they

⁴ Sister Mary Louise, O.P. (Nellie Sullivan) (1932) "Eugene Casimir Chirouse, O.M.I. and the Indians of Washington." Unpublished thesis for her M.A., University of Washington. Hereafter cited Sister Mary Louise.

⁵ General Clark of the Lewis and Clark expedition, was at this time Governor of the Northwest Territories and the United States Superintendent of Indian Affairs.

⁶ Buchanan, C. (Jan. 1918) "Indian Expeditions in Quest of a Priest and Pioneer Mission Work in the Old Oregon Country," *Indian Sentinel, Chirouse Number* Vol. 1, No. VII. Washington, D.C.: Bureau of Catholic Indian Missions. Hereafter cited Buchanan, Indian Missions, *Indian Sentinel*

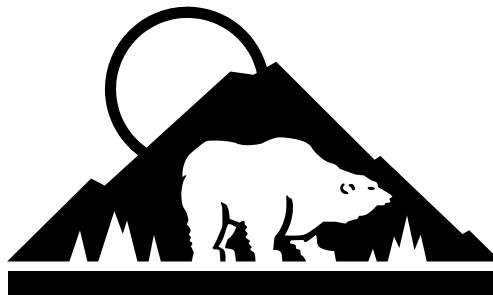
⁷ Sister Mary Louise

belong, and had been well received by them. They came to see our church, and appeared to be exceedingly pleased with it. Unfortunately, there was no one who understood their language. Sometime afterwards, two of them fell dangerously ill. I was then absent from St. Louis. Two of our priests visited them and the poor Indians seemed delighted with their visit. They made signs of the Cross, and other signs which seemed to have some relation to baptism. This Sacrament was administered to them; they gave expression of their satisfaction.⁸

Bishop Rosati wrote of the death of these two Indians, their funeral services and burial in the church cemetery. He went on to speak of the need for missionary priests in the northwestern United States, and that the most he could hope for was possibly to send two priests at a later date.⁹

In our day, the facts as stated in Bishop Rosati's letter appear to be confirmed by the register of burials at the St. Louis Cathedral which shows that one Indian was buried October 31, 1831 under the baptismal name of Narcisse [Speaking Eagle], Rev. Edmond Saulnier, officiating. The other, [Black Eagle] was buried November 17, 1831 under the baptismal name of Paul, Rev. Benedict Roux, officiating.¹⁰ The information contained in Bishop Rosati's letter seems to be further confirmed by a memorial erected in the cemetery in 2003. Inscribed on this memorial is the story of the 1831 event, giving the names of the two deceased Indians, as well as the fate of the two survivors. The fate of the survivors is told as follows:

The two younger Indians Rabbit-Skin-Leggings and No-Horns-On-His-Head left St. Louis to return to their home in Idaho. However, it was reported that they both died on the return journey. No-Horns-On-His Head became ill and died along the trail. Rabbit-Skin-Leggings made his way home as far as the headwaters of the Salmon River where he was killed by members of the Blackfeet tribe.¹¹

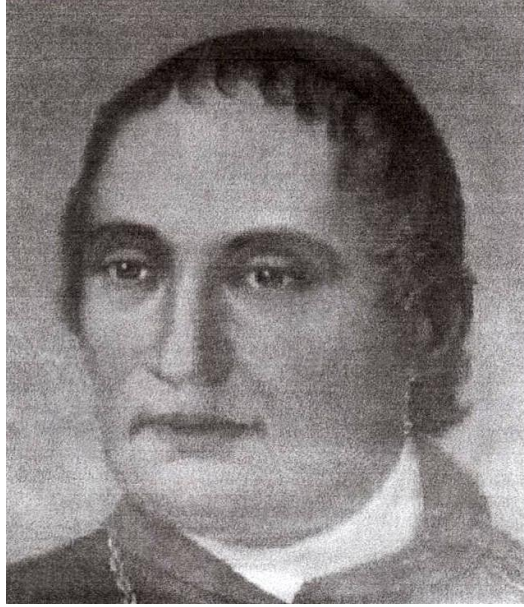


⁸ Buchanan, Indian Missions, *Indian Sentinel*,

⁹ Buchanan, Indian Missions, *Indian Sentinel*

¹⁰ Buchanan, Indian Missions, *Indian Sentinel*

¹¹ <http://www.archstl.org/cemeteries/>



Bishop Joseph Rosati, C.M. (1789-1843), from a painting located in the basement museum of the Basilica of St. Louis the King (the old Cathedral), St. Louis, Missouri.



No-Horns-On-His-Head and Rabbit-Skin-Leggings both Nez Perce Indians. They were members of the 1831 delegation to St. Louis. Paintings by George Catlin. Smithsonian Art Museum.¹²

¹² Thompson, Erwin N. (1964) *Whitman Mission National Historic Site*. Washington, D.C.: National Park Service Historical Handbook Series No. 37.



The Isère River—Bourg-de-Pèage on left and Romans on the right bank.¹³

In 1836 at his home in France, Casimir Chirouse was so inspired by the account written by Bishop Rosati, he resolved to become a priest and devote his life to missionary work with the Indians of northwestern America. This decision led him across the Isère River to the Church of St. Barnard of Romans. Before the church altar, 15-year old Eugene Casimir Chirouse vowed and pledged himself to become not only an Oblate of Mary Immaculate of the Roman Catholic Church, but also to serve as an apostle.¹⁴

On August 15, 1844, a day that would always have great meaning in his life (the feast day of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary) Brother Chirouse made a perpetual vow at the seminary in Marseilles affirming his final decision to dedicate his life to God. He did this in the presence of Bishop Eugene de Mazenod, founder of the order of the Oblates of Mary Immaculate. Bishop de Mazenod, as he spoke to the young men professing their vows said,

... You have placed your hearts upon the wings of faith, sending it upward even to the throne of God and it returns now burning with His love, strong with His strength.

To Casimir Chirouse, these words were always remembered as the heart of his missionary work.¹⁵ Many years later, when he was the Reverend Father Chirouse,

¹³ The Isère River in France from a post card depicting the two towns.

¹⁴ Sister Mary Louise

¹⁵ Kowrach, E. (1992), *Mie. Charles R. Pandosy, O.M.I., Missionary of the Northwest*. Hereafter cited Kowrach, *Pandosy*.

missionary to the Indians of Puget Sound, the anniversary date of his vow was a great celebration for him and his parishioners—much the same as the Christmas and Easter celebrations.¹⁶

The Oblates of Mary Immaculate, one of the largest missionary congregations of the Roman Catholic Church, was inaugurated at Aix-en-Provence, France on January 25, 1816 as the Missionary Society of Provence by Charles-Joseph-Eugene de Mazenod. By preaching to the poor, especially in rural areas, Father de Mazenod hoped to renew the life of the church after the French Revolution. On February 17, 1826, Pope Leo XII approved the new congregation, which became known as the Oblates of Mary Immaculate. In 1831, a general chapter [legislative meeting] voted to begin work in the foreign missions. The first mission foundations were in Canada in 1841 and a year later in the United States.¹⁷

Going to America – 1847

In far-off America in Oregon Territory, the Catholic Diocese of Walla Walla was created. Its territory encompassed what is now Eastern Washington, Idaho and Montana. On September 27, 1846, in the Cathedral of Montreal, Quebec, Canada, the Reverend Augustine Magloire Alexandre Blanchet (1797-1887) was consecrated as bishop of this newly created diocese. Rev. Blanchet was the younger brother of Archbishop Francis Norbert Blanchet (1795-1883) of the Diocese of Nesqually.

This was a new mission field for the Catholic Church and Blanchet's first need was priests. Since none were available, Bishop Blanchet knew he would have to appeal to Europe. He petitioned the Bishop of Marseilles, Msg. de Mazenod, to send him some. The first petition was denied, but soon thereafter de Mazenod changed his mind and five missionaries from the Marseilles' Seminary were chosen to be sent to Blanchet. Included was 26-year old Brother Chirouse, along with an older and physically ailing Father Pascal Ricard (1805-1862), the only ordained priest and leader of the group; Brother Charles Pandosy (1824-1891), an old seminary friend of Brother Chirouse; Brother Georges Blanchet (1818-1906) [no relation to Bishop Blanchet]; and Lay Brother Cèlestin Verney (1814-1889). On January 23, 1847, Bishop Blanchet received word that these five would be sent to America as missionaries.¹⁸

The five men left Marseilles, stopping at Avignon, Lyons, and Paris to bid farewell to their families and also to outfit for the long trip.¹⁹ They reached

¹⁶ Buchanan, C. (1917), "Rev. Father Eugene Casimir Chirouse, Apostle to the Indians of Puget Sound" (unpublished). Hereafter cited Buchanan, Apostle.

¹⁷ Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate—Wikipedia
<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Missionary_Oblates_of_Mary_Immaculate >

¹⁸ Sister Mary Louise

¹⁹ Kowrach, *Pandosy*

LeHavre, France, their port of departure and on February 4, 1847, they boarded the 155 foot, three-masted square-rigged double-decked packet ship Zurich.²⁰

In his memoirs, Father Pascal Ricard, speaking for all five of the men, made the following comments regarding leaving their homeland of France.

. . . On the eve of departure, we had even composed some couplets of farewell which we proposed to sing at the moment when all sails were unfurled. But when the anchor was lifted our enthusiasm vanished; the past, the whole past, unrolled before our eyes, our imaginations yielded first place to our hearts; we were leaving our native land.

. . . and in place of the songs which we had prepared, there was nothing but a dull silence which I shall never, never forget.²¹

Shortly after the departure of the Zurich, it was reported that an aurora borealis appeared in the evening sky, but after that beautiful sight, the passengers and crew experienced days of savage storms. Fifty-six days following their departure from France, the storm-battered Zurich finally reached the safety of the New York harbor on Good Friday, April 2, 1847. The westward crossing of the Atlantic Ocean was the longest and most dangerous the ship had ever experienced. The average crossing was 35 days, and once the ship had even made it in the very fast time of 21 days.²² Writing in his journal, Brother Georges Blanchet said that the captain himself was astounded at the fury of the storms. The captain's comment: "*For 30 years I have sailed the Atlantic, and never have I seen the like! Every devil in hell is out against us this trip!*"²³ In a later letter, Brother Blanchet also recalled this crossing.

. . . it is a terrifying thing to see those enormous masses of water advance like mountains, then break with a resounding crash over the ship which they entirely covered and seemed to submerge. A few of those billows were so high, that they drenched the sailors clinging to the rigging. What was most frightening was the pounding which rocked the ship, as the heavy sea churned around her and over her. She trembled from stem to stern; and one wondered if she would not be stove in. Our sails were torn to shreds on several occasions, and one of our masts was broken in half. We were obliged to stay for some ten days, without being able to come on deck. . . .²⁴

²⁰ Palmer, M. (2000), Palmer's List of Merchant Vessels
< <http://www.geocities.com/mppraetorius/com-zu.htm> > Hereafter cited Palmer, Merchant Vessels.

²¹ Kowrach, *Pandosy*

²² Palmer, Merchant Vessels

²³ Kowrach, *Pandosy*

²⁴ Kowrach, *Pandosy*

Overland to Oregon Territory

After the difficult crossing of the Atlantic Ocean, the men still had a long journey before them. They reached St. Louis by way of Philadelphia, Baltimore and Wheeling.²⁵ In St. Louis all five filed their declarations of intent to become citizens of the United States.²⁶

Also in St. Louis they met Bishop Blanchet. Along with him were Father Jean-Baptiste–Abraham Brouillet (1813-1884), Deacon Louis Rousseau, and Sub-deacon William LeClair. Outfitting themselves with wagons, provisions, horses and oxen, they took a steamboat up the Missouri River to Kansas City, where early in May of 1847 they joined a caravan consisting of 50 wagons and 172 people.

This group then set off for a five-month overland journey to Oregon Territory. Because of their status, the missionaries were not required to keep watch when the wagon train was bedded down for the night. However, in the evenings, Brothers Chirouse and Pandosy entertained the travelers by singing and playing a hand accordion.²⁷ Father Ricard, the recorder for the mission group, praised the cheerfulness of his companions, especially Brother Chirouse.²⁸ Most of the people on the wagon train considered the Catholic missionaries, or black robes as they were often called, good luck against Indian troubles, and during the difficult trip there were no serious problems. Father Ricard and his four charges arrived at Fort Walla Walla on October 3, 1847.²⁹

Life in Oregon Territory

The missionaries immediately began the establishment of their first mission. At a spot selected by Peo-peo-mox-mox, Chief of the Walla Wallas, the men began the building of St. Rose Mission. The site chosen was between what is now Toppenish and Mabton, Washington. This first mission in Yakima country was meant to be only temporary. By a letter dated October 8, 1847, Bishop Blanchet placed Father Pascal Ricard in charge and the young Brother Chirouse was given the task of supervising the actual construction. The wood for the buildings had to be transported from some distance and was made into rafts and floated down the Yakima River. That winter the Oblates lived in an underground dwelling with very little in the way of comfort. However, they were still looking forward with optimism to better times ahead.³⁰

Even though the building of the mission continued, the men did not lose sight of their reason for being with the Indians. On November 30, 1847, the first entry in the Yakima register was the recording of four baptisms by Brother Chirouse. The English names given to the baptized Indians were Joseph, Mary, Rose and

²⁵ Buchanan, *Indian Missions*, *Indian Sentinel*

²⁶ *Declarations of Intention to Become an American Citizen 1838-1849*; Circuit Court of the City of St. Louis. Place: Missouri; Year: 1847; pp. 32, 34, 44, 61, 65.

²⁷ Kowrach, *Pandosy*

²⁸ Sister Mary Louise

²⁹ Drouin, P. (2000) *The Oblates of Mary Immaculate in Oregon 1847-1860*. Ottawa, Ontario, Canada: Archives of Mary Immaculate. Hereafter cited as Drouin, *Oblates in Oregon*.

³⁰ Sister Mary Louise

Casimir. During the remainder of 1847, ten more baptisms were recorded at St. Rose, all by Brother Chirouse.³¹

On November 29, 1847, further south at Waiilatpu, the Protestant mission of Rev. Dr. Marcus Whitman was attacked by a group of Cayuse Indians, and Dr. Whitman and his wife, and 12 others were slain. The other mission members were held at the mission as prisoners. The killings were retaliation for wrongs the Cayuse believed to have been done to them by the Protestant missionaries.

Meanwhile, Father Brouillet, one of the traveling companions of the Oblates, had established St. Anne Mission about 30 miles south of Waiilatpu, and was also ministering to another camp of the Cayuse. The day following the killings, some of these Cayuse Indians asked him to go to the Protestant Cayuse camp to baptize some sick children. Father Brouillet arrived at that camp late in the evening of December 1st and heard of the killings at the Whitman mission. After spending a restless night, Father Brouillet proceeded to baptize the children, and then hurried to the murder scene. There, even though the suspects were still present, he and men of the Hudson's Bay Company buried the dead. After doing his best to assure the women at the mission that they would be safe, he hurried out to warn Rev. Henry Harmon Spalding, who was on his way back to the mission. Bishop J. W. Bashford of the Methodist Episcopal Church, in his series *Early Oregon Missions* (published in the *Christian Advocate*) wrote that a Roman Catholic priest [Fr. Brouillet] and officers of the Hudson's Bay Company saved the lives of Messrs. H. H. Spalding, Elkanah Walker, Cushing Eels, and their families. A few days later, Bishop Bashford was told that his life and those of the priests were in danger because the Indians had learned that it was Father Brouillet who had sounded the warning that made it impossible to carry out their plans to kill Rev. Spalding.³²

The Chief Factor from the Hudson's Bay Co., Peter Skene Ogden, arrived and convened a Council of Chiefs with Bishop Blanchet and Father Brouillet present. The captives were freed and then taken to Fort Vancouver accompanied by Chief Factor Ogden and Bishop Blanchet. At Fort Vancouver they were turned over to the care of the governor.

Before this group took their leave though, Father Pascal Ricard, who had been very ill for some time, asked Bishop Blanchet to ordain Brothers Chirouse, Pandosy and Georges Blanchet as priests so that he [Father Ricard] would be able to go where he could receive treatment. Were he to leave, there would be no ordained priest on hand to say Mass. Even though Brother Chirouse had been a member of the order for several years, he had not yet been ordained. In December of 1847, the three Oblate brothers were recalled to Fort Walla Walla for the ceremonies.³³ Brother Georges Blanchet, having recently shot off one of his fingers during a hunting accident, refused to be ordained, saying he was unworthy [Edward J. Kowrach, quoting Fr. Ricard's memoirs]. On December 26, 1847, Brothers Chirouse and Pandosy were raised to the order of sub-deacons and then on January 2, 1848, Bishop Blanchet administered the Sacrament of Holy Orders. Eugene Casimir Chirouse and Charles Pandosy were the first priests

³¹ Sister Mary Louise

³² Sister Mary Louise

³³ Buchanan, Apostle

ordained in what is now Washington State, with Father Chirouse [the elder of the two] being first. Kowrach, again quoting Father Ricard's memoirs had this to say regarding the ordination:

We did not have albs for the assistants of the Bishop and for the ordinandi. [An alb is a full-length white linen vestment, tied with a rope, used at Mass]. Do you know how an alb was provided for Father Chirouse? Eh, Bien! We altered a quite simple dress of Madam McBean, and the ceremony went forward, you may guess, with all the solemnity that circumstances permitted.

Another source says it was Mr. McBean's nightshirt. William McBean was the Factor at Fort Walla Walla where the ordinations took place in Bishop Blanchet's quarters. Just as it was necessary to improvise at his ordination, during his many years with the Indians, Father Chirouse often found it necessary to improvise, especially regarding his vestments.

Immediately following the ordination, the two new official priests, Chirouse and Pandosy, received their letters of appointment as assistants from the bishop. They stayed behind to tend the missions and Bishop Blanchet and the others left for Fort Vancouver. Father Chirouse's assignment was St. Rose Mission, among the Yakima Indians, and Father Pandosy's at St. Mary Mission with the Yakima and Kittitas Indians.

Following all this, a volunteer force of Americans arrived to apprehend the Indians who had taken part in the killings of Rev. Whitman and the others, and the Cayuse War began on February 19, 1848. As the volunteers were on their way to Fort Walla Walla, a group of Yakima Indians reached them, carrying letters from Fathers Chirouse and Pandosy informing these volunteers that the Yakimas were taking the priests' advice and would not take part in the war. Kamiakin, Chief of the Yakimas, had remained friendly to the missionaries and was firm on his stand despite threats from the Cayuse Indians.

Father Chirouse, since his ordination and appointment to St. Rose Mission, had been following the Indians from camp to camp, and up to that time had baptized 16 children and 13 adults, and married nine couples. The mission records also show that in July of 1848, Father Chirouse had gone towards the headwaters of the Yakima River to a place called Camp of the Lake, where he performed several baptisms, mostly of children. Also during that month, Father Chirouse had baptized two of Chief Kamiakin's sons, giving them the baptismal names of Peter and Xavier. Chief Kamiakin himself was never baptized, although he adopted many of the tenets of Christianity. Father Chirouse had told Kamiakin that he would not baptize him unless he followed the practice of monogamy and the Chief was unwilling to do this. [Kamiakin was known to have five wives.]

At the very beginning of the war, the Cayuse Indians plundered and burned Father Brouillet's St. Anne Mission on the Umatilla, near present Pendleton, Oregon. He was still attending the Cayuse, Umatilla and Walla Walla Indians who stayed neutral during the violence. Later Father Brouillet traveled to the mission of St. Paul on the Willamette, accompanied by Fathers Chirouse, Pandosy and others from the Yakima missions. Fathers Chirouse and Pandosy returned to their Yakima missions again in October of 1848, and during that winter Father Chirouse was under the protection of Chief Kamiakin.

On April 25, 1849, Father Chirouse was at Nisqually (near Olympia) but left again two days later and was accompanied by Brother Georges Blanchet. Father Pandosy was continuing with his missionary work from the mission further north and was traveling to different Indian camps. On one of his trips he fell from his horse and broke his shoulder. During this time he had been suffering extreme poverty and had been deserted by the Indians who had become angry with him. On August 14, 1849, Father Chirouse became concerned about his friend and went to Pandosy's mission to check on him. He was shocked by what he found. Even though there was food at the mission, Father Pandosy was extremely ill, both in body and mind, and had been unable to eat or care for himself. Father Chirouse stayed and nursed his old friend back to health, and then in September of 1849 he took Father Pandosy back to Holly Cross Mission in the Yakima Valley to recuperate.³⁴

When the Oblates had first arrived in the territory of the Yakimas, they had planned a mission to be built at a spot called Saralpas, but had postponed the construction. In the spring of 1850, Father Chirouse, now the superior of the mission band of Oblates in the eastern part of the territory, along with Father Pandosy and Brother Blanchet, erected St. Joseph Mission at Ahtanum Creek, near Tampico, at the site of Kamiakin's main summer camp. The mission building was described as a hut-like building of adobe clay, plastered upon a frame of sticks.

At St. Joseph, Father Chirouse and the others taught the Indians Latin and English, and wrote a dictionary translating the English words into the native Yakima language. In tattered robes and sometimes barefoot they worked side by side with the Indians in planting a garden and digging a primitive ditch about a mile long from Ahtanum Creek to the Chief's home, which served as an irrigation canal. This was thought to be the first irrigation of this type in what became eastern Washington. The garden that was planted grew wheat and corn, along with melons, potatoes and pumpkins. Through this effort, Chief Kamiakin had a very luxuriant and fertile garden of which he was extremely proud—he enjoyed walking through the lush oasis.³⁵

In 1923, a granite monument at the site of the old St. Joseph Mission was put in place and inscribed with the words:

St. Joseph's Mission—Founded Oct. 1847—by Oblate Fathers Ricard, Chirouse, Pandosy and Blanchet. Burned 1855—Rebuilt by Father St. Onge 1867. Memorial by Yakima Pioneers Ass'n-- July 1, 1923.

Since his arrival in Oregon Territory, Father Chirouse had applied himself to the study of the numerous Indian dialects. Regarding this study, less than a year before his death, Father Chirouse wrote to one of his former students at the Tulalip School.

There was among the Walla Wallas, an Indian named Peter Patatis,, who had often traveled with the French-Canadian employees of the Hudson's Bay

³⁴ Kowrach, *Pandosy*

³⁵ Splawn, A. (1917) *Kamiakin, The Last of the Hero of the Yakimas*. Portland, Oregon: Kilhan Stationary & Printing Company.

Company, and who understood a little French. At our invitation, Peter came to our aid for a few days, during which we learned from him, the principal interrogations and a great number of verbs and nouns (in the Indian language). We could ask him "How do you call this, or that?" and the answer was immediately written down in our books.³⁶

To understand why Father Chirouse was able to live among the Indians and to become their friend, and why he survived through some dangerous situations, it is necessary to understand his personality and appearance. At the beginning of Father Chirouse's priesthood, Father Pascal Ricard, Superior of the Oblates in Oregon Territory, wrote a letter dated September 14, 1848 to Bishop de Mazenod of Marseilles. Father Ricard especially praised Father Chirouse's missionary work, adding at the end: "*He certainly is an apostle, though so young.*" Regarding Father Chirouse's personal appearance, in 1917 Dr. Charles M. Buchanan of Tulalip wrote:

He was small in stature but robust and well built. His Alpine blood and the open life gave a swarthy tone to his complexion. He was known to be a man of considerable force, but this was tempered by kindness. Indeed, the kindly expression of his brown eyes, and the charm and refinement of his smile were the landmarks of a most pleasing personality.³⁷

Sister Mary Louise, in her thesis, spoke of the many people she had contacted who had known Father Chirouse personally and all she had seen written about him, commenting that it was always stressed that the Indians held great affection for this priest.

Another reason that Father Chirouse and the other Catholic missionaries were well liked by most of the Indians (and tolerated by some) is that they were not family men as were most of the Protestant missionaries—they did not encourage white settlements around them. They lived among the Indians and traveled with them from camp to camp. The Indians seemed to feel their land was safe from the priests. During the peace following the Cayuse War some white families settled in the area, and Fathers Chirouse and Pandosy ministered to them, but their main concern was always ministry to the Indians of the region. They built their missions among the Indians and lived the way the natives did. Dr. Buchanan commented:

In the days of Father Chirouse's apostolic labors, he lived the life of his missioners [the Native Indians]. This point of personal contact was perhaps one of the secrets of his singular successes. Indeed it is one of the things that made the French Priest, all other things being equal, the best missionary in the world. When he went to his mission, he went to it body, mind, soul and spirit, and lived the life of his people, with his people. If they lived on fish, he lived on fish. Their primitive blankets he used to fashion into his own soutaine [cassock], using the native dyes to secure his shades. Garments were very primitive in those days and flour sacks were in great demand for the making of men's clothing.³⁸

³⁶ Sister Mary Louise

³⁷ Buchanan, Apostle

³⁸ Buchanan, Apostle

By 1851, in addition to the larger missions there were smaller stations at the winter quarters where Father Chirouse also held services. One of them was the Mission of the Holy Cross in the lower Ahtanum Valley. Father Chirouse wrote a letter from that location on July 25, 1851 in which he gave an account of a typical day in the camp during the winter before. He mentioned that all had attended daily Mass. There was a school for the children and religious instructions three times a day for the adults. In lieu of a bell, the blast of a horn called them to the noonday Angelus. At the close of the day, a hymn was sung, and evening prayers said, after which all went home. As the Indians filed past him, each took his hand in a token of gratitude. Left alone, Father Chirouse said he took a little relaxation by playing on his accordion. Then he said his own special prayers and his day would end with what he called *Sleep in the Peace of God*.³⁹

In March of 1852, Father Chirouse reopened the Mission of St. Anne on the Umatilla, among the Cayuse Indians. This was the mission which had been closed since Father Brouillet had been forced to abandon it at the beginning of the war. At St. Anne, Father Chirouse was able to have the company of another Oblate missionary, Father Pierre Richard, who had just arrived from France.

A tale showing the humorous side of Father Chirouse was told in later years in the publication *History of the Northern Interior of British Columbia*, which relates to his early mission work. Peter Skene Ogden, the Chief Factor of the Hudson's Bay Company, was fond of playing tricks and practical jokes on the missionaries who stopped by. He met his match in Father Chirouse. Father Chirouse went into Ogden's trading store and while the manager was called away for a few minutes he saw some articles he desired but was unable to afford. Father Chirouse had the Indian boy with him wrap these items into parcels. Later, he said good-bye and Ogden, seeing the parcels, called out to Father Chirouse:

OGDEN (shouting): Just like you, Father Chirouse, look at the parcels you forgot.

CHIROUSE: I beg your pardon, Mr. Ogden, I took all my things away.

OGDEN: I tell you, you did not.

CHIROUSE: Excuse me, but really, , ,

OGDEN: No excuse; you are absent-minded, as usual. Take your parcels away.

CHIROUSE: Really, I am sure they are not mine.

OGDEN: They are, I tell you (insisted the imperious old man, who was bound to have the last word).

CHIROUSE: Do you mean to say that. . .

OGDEN: I mean that I want you to take your things away.

CHIROUSE: But. . .

OGDEN: Take them, I say, and if they are not yours. . .

CHIROUSE: They are not.

OGDEN: Well, then, I give them to you.

³⁹ Buchanan, Apostle

Father Chirouse then picked up the parcels and walked out the door.⁴⁰ As shown in later years, Father Chirouse often used ingenuity to feed, clothe, and care for the Indians who came to his mission, as well as providing his own vestments and needed articles for the church.

In 1853, Father Chirouse was further south ministering to the Cayuse Indians at St. Anne and St. Rose Missions. St. Joseph Mission, the Oblate's first permanent place of worship in the Yakima Valley, was now served by Chirouse's old friend and traveling companion Father Pandosy, with assistance from Father Louis D'Herbomez, O.M.I. (1822-1890), who had recently arrived from France. That year, under the direction of the War Department, surveys were made for a projected railway to the Pacific. Captain George McClellan encamped for two days on the Autanum, arriving there on August 7, 1853, he made this report:

The Autanum Mission is inhabited only during the summers; in winter it is established on the main Yakima, not far from the Columbia, the snow being less deep, and the cold less intense there.

Here, on the simplest fare, with few or none of the comforts of life, with no society save that of the savages, these men are content to pass their time in endeavoring to extend their religion, and improving the morals of their savage neighbors. I would here express my gratitude to the priests for the cheerfulness with which they afforded all the information in their power, and their personal kindness to all the gentlemen of my party.⁴¹

Governor Isaac Stevens, reporting to the Secretary of War on November 4, 1853 concerning the explorations for the northern railway route to the Pacific, wrote of Chirouse's influence:

Thirty miles from Walla Walla, and near McBane's [sic] lives Father Chirouse, a missionary of the Catholic order, who, with two laymen, exercises his influence among the surrounding tribes. . . . From Chirouse and McBane, I learned that the emigrants frequently cast wistful eyes upon the valley, but having made no arrangements with the Indians, they are unable to settle there.⁴²

Speaking of the situation in Yakima Valley in 1853, David Longmire, a longtime settler, in 1904 recalled: *"Not a white man lived in the valley at the time, save two Catholic priests."⁴³*

⁴⁰ Morice, Adrien Gabriel., O.M.I. (1904), *The History of the Northern Interior of British Columbia*. Toronto: William Briggs.

⁴¹ Sister Mary Louise

⁴² Sister Mary Louise

⁴³ *An Illustrated History of Klickitat, Yakima and Kittitas Counties, With an Outline of the Early History of the State of Washington* (1904). Interstate Publishing Company



Peter Skene Ogden

February 1790 – 27 September 1854

Factor of Hudson's Bay Company headquartered at Fort Walla Walla, Oregon Territory.



Kamiakin

Head Chief of the Yakimas.

As shown in *Treaty Centennial, 1855-1955, The Yakimas.*⁴⁴

⁴⁴ *Treaty Centennial 1855-1955, The Yakimas.* Published by Authorization of the Yakima Tribal Council. Photos from the Washington State Historical Society and Oregon State Historical Society. Hereafter referred to as *The Yakimas.*

With the arrival of McClellan and his men to survey a rail line through Kamiakin's land in the Yakima Valley, and with the significant arrival of white settlers, hostilities were again aroused. This was especially true after McClellan interviewed Kamiakin.

In 1855, when the Treaty of Walla Walla was signed, among those present, in addition to the governors of Oregon and Washington Territories were Fathers Chirouse and Pandosy. Both Chirouse and Pandosy evidently foresaw trouble ahead. Hazard Stevens, in his book *The Life and Times of Isaac Stevens*, wrote:

Father Chirouse of the Walla Walla, and Pandosy of the Yakima Mission, arrived for the purpose of attending the Council of Walla Walla. They reported that these Indians were generally well disposed toward the whites with the exception of Kam-i-ah-kan.

As stated, Father Chirouse attended the Walla Walla Council and was signatory as witness to the three treaties--Yakima and Walla Walla Treaties on June 9, 1855, and the Nez Perce Treaty on June 11, 1855. Even though the treaties were signed, peace was not to be. The time was past when the priests could keep Chief Kamiakin friendly—they noted a definite change. Both Chirouse and Pandosy again warned the authorities of the discontent among the Yakimas.

Father Pandosy made a special journey to Olympia, arriving on September 22, 1855. With Georges Blanchet as interpreter, he told Acting Governor Mason that Kamiakin was stirring up the Indians against the Americans. While there, news was received that Indian Agent A. J. Bolun had been killed on September 20, after returning from talking with Chief Kamiakin. A few soldiers were dispatched to the Yakima Valley, but they were outnumbered and no confrontation took place.

Father Chirouse did all he could to preserve the peace, and did succeed in preventing some Indians from taking part in the war that developed. George Fuller stated that Father Chirouse's influence kept many Cayuse and other tribes friendly during the entire war. Those who did turn hostile accused the missionaries of being in league with the Americans in taking their land. Later, a band of the hostile Indians pillaged St. Mary Mission and took Father Pandosy prisoner. Because the priests lived among the Indians and acted as intermediaries, some white settlers believed they sided with the hostile Indians. The volunteer soldiers from Oregon were also suspicious of them, and before federal troops could stop them, on November 14, 1855 they set fire to St. Joseph Mission on Ahtanum Creek.⁴⁵ An Indian woman Kiam Pun Sapellell was an eyewitness and on July 2, 1923, the *Yakima Daily Republic* told her story of the burning of the mission:

All Catholic Indians come here some times. Many Indians. Reach from creek to hills, and listen to priest. Then we have war Indians go away to North. Priest goes with Indians, take food only. Next day in Wenas. Keep

⁴⁵ Fuller, G. (1931), *History of the Pacific Northwest*. New York, Alfred Knopf (1st Ed.) Hereafter cited Fuller, *Pacific Northwest*.

going to where reach top of hill at gap. Look back, see church all burning. All burn down.

Gen. Philip H. Sheridan in his personal memoirs stated that the federal troops were not responsible for these acts by the volunteers, and that the federals were always on friendly terms with the priests, one of them, Father Pandosy, even acting as their chaplain in the field before his capture by the Indians. Sheridan further said that the officers and the men realized that it was due to the two priests and their efforts that many of the Indians were neutral, instead of active foes.

In the meantime, Father Chirouse, from his St. Rose Mission wrote a letter dated November 18, 1855 to his superior Father Pascal Ricard, and said:

All the country is on fire. One only hears of battles, murders, plunderings, burnings...As yet none of us have been killed, but we do not know from day to day...The bad Indians call us allies of the Americans, and plan evil projects. . .I have not been able to get any news of our other Fathers.

Rumor has it that Father Pandosy has been killed. Several people say so! Can it be true? For fifteen days I have not slept. Shall I be able to sleep tonight any better? Pray for us.⁴⁶

Fuller, in his book mentioned previously, said:

One day in December of 1855, while the Oregon territorial troops were in the field, they found at Mill Creek, about 100 friendly Cayuse and Walla Walla Indians, along with 25 settlers, mostly French and half breeds, who had remained in the valley. Stickas and several other Cayuse chiefs were with them. Most of these Indians were Catholic and had been kept friendly by the influence of Father Chirouse.⁴⁷

In 1853, Father Chirouse had founded St. Rose Mission of the Cayuse on the bank of Yellow Hawk Creek adjacent to the claim of William McBean, factor of the Hudson's Bay Company. This area, near Walla Walla, a few years later became known as Frenchtown.⁴⁸ Father Chirouse continued to work at establishing his St. Rose Mission, and on August 8, 1855, he sent a letter to Bishop Brouillet apprising him of the progress at the mission:

. . .For four months I have been with the dear Cayouses. By working I have been able to build a house of two rooms, 12' by 15', and have cultivated enough land to provide food for myself and to sell, moreover, some of the vegetables. All this work with only the help of Brother Verney, whom I have with me. . . .

Young Chief, in accordance with the other great chiefs, has given me, written with his sign, and the sign of the others, some land, about 4 miles above the

⁴⁶ < <http://www.content.lib.washington.edu/cdm4/viewer.Php?CISOROOT=/lctext&CISOPTR> >
Hereafter cited Library of Congress Collection

⁴⁷ Fuller, *Pacific Northwest*

⁴⁸ Munnick, H. and A. (1989) *Catholic Church Records of Pacific Northwest*. Portland, Oregon: Binford & Mort Publishing. Hereafter cited Munnick, *Church Records*.

Whitman Mission. The place is disappointing in appearance, and would tempt no one. But its richness and beauty are hidden. For I believe that I have found the most fertile place. This donation of land, the mandate which the chiefs got for the Catholic priests, has been signed and approved by Mr. Wampool, the Indian Agent. . . .

I have baptized only a few children. I have for a neighbor Mr. McBean, with whom I get along as well as it is possible. Mr. McBean does not as yet have a house. It is only started, and I do not know when it will be finished, as he does not work when he wishes, but when he can.

The Cayouses are at war with the Serpents. The immigrants are more numerous than ever on the Umatilla Reserve. It might be, dear sir, that I misjudge, but I do not believe that this mission will flourish for a long time, neither with the Whites nor with the Indians, in Oregon. . . .

When will the Archbishop write to me? It is as if no one knows that I am living. I am small, it is true, but worthy of attention. I still exist by the grace of God. I would like, dear sir, to have you help me if you could. Talk, or have someone talk to Mr. Dart, or to the Governor himself, so that he will give you a written permission for the missionaries of the Cayuse to use different left-overs of old boards or other things which are rotting or which the savages steal each day, from the ruins of the house of Mr. Whitman. . . .⁴⁹

Father Chirouse's premonition regarding the short life of St. Rose Mission proved true—within a few months it was destroyed, and his land claim for this property came to nothing.

Church records show that there were 17 burials at the original site, the last entry being December 11, 1855. All of the burials were Indians who had converted to the Catholic faith.⁵⁰ St. Rose Mission was burned during a fierce battle between the Indians and the Oregon volunteer army. The battle was on the mission land and took place December 7, 8, and 9, 1855. During this uprising, Walla Walla Chief Peo-Peo-Mox-Mox was ruthlessly slain. A memorial now marks this bloody battlefield.⁵¹

Included in a report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs for the year 1856 is a communication from Joel Palmer, Superintendent of Indian Affairs for Oregon Territory. Palmer's letter was addressed to Gen. John E. Wool, Commander of the Army's Pacific Division, and enclosed a letter from Father Chirouse from a place called Tamalinla, dated January 15, 1856, to Father Mesplie, the diocesan priest in charge of the Mission at The Dalles. In this letter Father Chirouse expressed grave concerns.

We thought ourselves saved and relieved from embarrassment by the victory of the whites and the flight of the savages; but have been greatly mistaken. The volunteers are without discipline, without order, and like madmen.

⁴⁹ Munnick, *Church Records*

⁵⁰ Munnick, *Church Records*

⁵¹ <http://www.frenchtownpartners.zoomshare.com/>

Menaced with death every day, the inhabitants of the country and the Indians who so nobly followed the order of Mr. Palmer to remain faithful friends of the Americans, have already disposed of their provisions. Today these same volunteers not yet satisfied with rapine and injustice, wish to take away the small remnant of animals and provisions left. Every day they run off horses and cattle of the friendly Indians. I will soon be no longer able to restrain them. They are indignant at conduct so unworthy of the whites who have made so many promises to respect and protect them if they remain faithful friends. I am very sure if the volunteers are not arrested in their brigant actions, our Indians will save themselves by flying to the homes of their relations, the Nez Perces, who have promised them help, and then all those Indians of Oregon would join in the common defense until they are entirely exterminated.

I call upon the justice of men, and particularly upon General Wool. Let him send us fifty regular troops, at least to protect us, and the friendly Indians, and stop the grand combination of savages. Let him send us help immediately; I think our conduct merits it. I think that all we have done to assist our government during the late critical disturbances merits this favor. Let the assistance which we ask be sent up speedily or we are lost.

I pray you, my dear sir, for the love I have for my Government and this new country, for the love of Heaven and Justice, to present these things to General Wool, and by so doing, you will render a great service to our country and to our citizens. Do not fail to submit these lines to General Wool. I am much pressed for time. Adieu. Pray for me. Your very obedient servant. *E. CHIROUSE, O.M.I.*⁵²

Father Chirouse's plea for help was forwarded to Joel Palmer, Palmer then forwarded a copy to Gen. Wool with his own thoughts regarding the danger.

I enclose herewith a copy of a letter written by Father Chirouse of Walla Walla to the father of the Dalles mission, the contents of which, I think merits, and should receive immediate attention. The picture may be strongly drawn, but unfortunately for the character and reputation of our troops, I fear it is too true. I have, I think undeniable evidence that a portion of the Indians in the country referred to are, and have been, desirous of peace, and are willing to submit to almost any sacrifices to obtain it, but there may be a point beyond which they could not be induced to go without a struggle . . .⁵³

Palmer also sent a copy of Father Chirouse's letter to the U.S. Commission of Indian Affairs in Washington, D.C.⁵⁴

⁵² Waggett, G. (Rev. Father) (Jan.-Mar. 1947). *The Oblates of Mary Immaculate in the Pacific Northwest of U.S.A. Etudes Oblate* Vol. 6, No. 1. Ottawa, Ontario, Canada. From the Mary Koch Collection of Information on Tulalip (1989); Ed. Sheldon, Lita. Tulalip, WA: Tulalip Tribes. Hereafter cited Waggett, *Oblates*.

⁵³ Waggett, *Oblates*

⁵⁴ Library of Congress Collection



Peo-Peo-Mox-Mox

Head chieftan of the Walla Walla Indians⁵⁵

⁵⁵ *The Yakimas*

Father Chirouse Escapes to Safety

Father Chirouse, when he vowed as a young man to become a missionary to the Indian people of the Pacific Northwest probably never realized the adventures and dangers he would encounter. He was again in the midst of yet another very threatening situation, both for him and for those in his charge. After his appeal in January of 1856 for assistance from the federal government's regular troops it was several months before these troops eventually were to police all of Oregon and Washington territories.

In the meantime with the threat of the impending danger, Father Chirouse was ordered by his superiors to leave his St. Ann on the Umatilla mission for civilized country. Father Chirouse's St. Rose Mission at Walla Walla had already been burned. Along with Father Pierre Richard, 15 mixed-blood families and 150 friendly Indians, Father Chirouse headed north to Fort Colville to safety with the Jesuit priests.⁵⁶

During this time Father Chirouse was relieved to discover that his old friend and colleague Father Pandosy, despite rumors to the contrary, was still alive. The rumors had started mainly because St. Joseph Mission had been destroyed by the volunteer army and hostile Indians. They were reported to have been wearing Father Pandosy's robes and displaying sacramental objects from the mission. It was even reported that one of the hostiles attached to the volunteers was not only drunkenly cavorting about in one of Father Pandosy's black robes, but also had tied to his horse a long, dark-haired scalp which looked suspiciously like Father Pandosy's hair. These rumors were proven untrue. Father Pandosy had also escaped, thanks to the help of the Indians from St. Joseph Mission who had taken him into protective custody and whisked him and his assistant Father Durieu to safety before the mission was besieged and destroyed. As the fleeing group looked back, they could see in the distance the smoke rising from their now burning mission home. Eventually, after a hazardous journey, Pandosy and Durieu joined the other Oblate priests in the safety of Fort Colville with the Jesuits.⁵⁷

On May 18, 1856, Father Chirouse wrote a letter to his superior Father Pascal Ricard at St. Joseph Mission in Olympia, indicating that despite the fact that the battle had not ended, he had made at least one more trip back to his missions:

If the government does not proceed in a better manner, and if the undisciplined bands continue their crying injustices, the troubles will last for a long time yet. Many of the tribes that we have succeeded up to now in keeping calm, will take up arms in their turn. If this unhappiness results,

⁵⁶ Waggett, *Oblates*

⁵⁷ Kowrach, *Pandosy*

heads will become so excited that the missionaries for many years will be able to do nothing worthwhile amongst the savages. . . Often I cannot hold back my tears at the sight of such ruins and atrocities. . . I have found everywhere only traces of burnings, rocks still red with the blood of the victims of the carnage. If by chance one sees a building still standing, it is filled with wounded or furious people who have lost all.⁵⁸



Young Chief

Ally of the Nez Perce and with his brother Five Crows, leader of Umatilla band of Cayuses. Although a friend to Father Chirouse he was not fond of other missionaries.⁵⁹

⁵⁸ Waggett, *Oblates*

⁵⁹ From the Washington State Historical Society. Drawing by Gustav Solon on June 8, 1855 at the Walla Walla Council for the treaty signing.

The New Challenge for Father Chirouse

As the war intensified and with the destruction of their missions, the Oblate missionary priests were instructed to abandon their missions on the eastern side of the Cascades. Once order was restored in the fall of 1856, Father Pandosy would temporarily return to his Yakima mission, but Fathers Chirouse, D'Herbomez, Durieu and Richard were called to missionary work with the Indians of the Puget Sound area. In October of that year, Gov. Stevens wrote to Father Ricard at Olympia telling him of a report he had received from George E. Page, the local Indian agent. Page's report especially praised the labors of two priests, Fathers Chirouse and D'Herbomez.

During the forepart of the month [October]," wrote Page, "the Indians in my charge were visited by two Catholic priests who remained amongst them several days during which time they were employed in preaching to them, baptizing, etc. This had a very good effect on the Indians and I would recommend that they be encouraged to repeat these visits as often as every six months. It gives me great pleasure to communicate the above testimonial and to express my concurrence in the news of the agent."⁶⁰

Father Chirouse's mission work from St. Joseph Priest Point Mission was short-lived. In late 1857, Father Ricard, the superior of the Oblates in Washington Territory, was very ill and ordered to return to France. Father Louis Joseph D'Herbomez was appointed to replace him, and D'Herbomez then decided to withdraw the Oblates for mission work in British Columbia. This was accomplished with their removal to Esquimalt on Vancouver Island, where they established Oblate headquarters. Only Father Chirouse was left behind, with his destination—Tulalip Bay. Father Chirouse's life as a missionary would now change as he headed for this new challenge.

However before his leave-taking, Father Ricard signed a power of attorney naming Fathers Chirouse and D'Herbomez as his agents in charge of St. Joseph Mission on the Priest Point land claim.⁶¹ After Father Ricard's death in France in 1862, Fathers Casimir Chirouse and Louis D'Herbomez were appointed as executors of Ricard's estate in Washington Territory. This included St. Joseph Mission (the motherhouse) on the Priest Point property north of Olympia.⁶²

Change Is Coming for the Indians of Puget Sound

The latter part of 2007 marked the 150th anniversary of the establishment of the first permanent Catholic Mission on what is today the Tulalip Indian Reservation by the Reverend Father Eugene Casimir Chirouse, O.M.I. It seems proper to reflect on his life and the lives of the native people who lived near Tulalip Bay at

⁶⁰ Waggett, *Oblates*

⁶¹ Nicandri, D. (1976); *Olympia's Forgotten Pioneers, The Oblates of Mary Immaculate*. Olympia, WA: State Capitol Historical Association, Northern Publications. Hereafter cited Nicandri, *Forgotten Pioneers*.

⁶² Nicandri, *Forgotten Pioneers*

that time. As we head for a day of fun at the Tulalip Casino or shopping at the Seattle Premium Outlet Mall, we should take a moment to reflect on what life was like for the native people before the 1855 Point Elliott Treaty. They were free to roam the Puget Sound area with its waterways, beaches and forests—it had all been their land. The white man, however, was fast encroaching onto the land and soon the Indians would be forced to live within the confines of a reservation set aside for them by the U. S. Government. The yet unratified treaty, with its promises made but unfulfilled, was an omen of the changes coming for the Indians of Puget Sound. Their culture would suffer, and their leaders knew that the people would need help in adjusting and surviving what would be a drastic alteration in their way of life.

In 1857, the Chief of the Snohomish Indians had appealed to Father Blanchet of the Nesqually Diocese to send a priest to live with them—one who would teach them more about the religion of the white man, and who would establish a school for their children as the treaty had promised. Whenever there was a challenge regarding the establishment of a mission, one man was selected to meet that challenge more than any other—Fr. Chirouse. His energetic and capable style and strong shoulders were always needed. Even though the other Oblates were leaving that year for British Columbia, Father Chirouse was left behind in Washington Territory and charged with establishing missions further north along the Sound. A young priest, Father Paul Durieu, who had worked with Father Chirouse before, was sent for a short time, but the main task of setting up the Tulalip mission and school would fall on the capable shoulders of Father Chirouse.

Casimir Chirouse was soon to face his biggest challenge yet. Missionary work with the Indians attached to the Tulalip Agency would prove to be a new and unique challenge, but it would also become his greatest personal passion and the fulfillment of his vision. Among the Indians of the Puget Sound country, this dedicated man of God who had come all the way from France would find his heart's home.

Late in the Year 1857—Tulalip Bay

A few years before his death in 1920, Dr. Charles Milton Buchanan, the long-time superintendent of the government school on the Tulalip Reservation, was able to talk to many of the elders who had actually known Father Chirouse; some having been his pupils and others members of St. Anne, the mission church he established. Some had even been present when Father Chirouse first arrived. Dr. Buchanan in his manuscript *Reverend Eugene Casimir Chirouse, O.M.I., Apostle of the Indians of Puget Sound*, stated that Father Chirouse had left such an impression on the Indians of the Tulalip Reservation that time was counted, in those early days, by his coming. *In placing the time of an occurrence, the Indians would often state that it was a long time ago, before Father Chirouse came, or it was not so long ago, it was since Father Chirouse came.* According Dr.

Buchanan the coming of Father Chirouse ranked with the treaty itself as a marker between the end of ancient time and the beginning of recent times for the Indians.

Jules, a 10-year old orphan boy in 1857, later known as Charles Jules and Chief Shimakum, was not only present at the signing of the treaty at Mukilteo, but was with his uncle Chief Jackson of the Snohomish Indians when Fathers Chirouse and Durieu arrived at Tulalip Bay. Jules had been baptized by Oblate priests at St. Joseph Mission in Olympia, so they were familiar figures to him and he was very happy to see Father Chirouse. Sister Mary Louise, O.P. (Nellie Sullivan), stated in her thesis that on July 11, 1931, she had personally interviewed Charles Jules, and wrote the following, which she said was for the most part in his own words.⁶³

Father Chirouse appeared at Tulalip—he asked permission of the uncle, who was Chief of the Snohomish Tribe, to live among the Indians. The Chief called an assembly of his people, and had all shake hands with the priest. The Chief then asked his people if they consented to Father Chirouse's dwelling among them. They replied that they would approve whatever their Chief wished in the matter. It was then gladly agreed upon. On this occasion, Father Chirouse made use of his interpreter, as the Snohomish language differed from the Yakima and other dialects with which he was familiar. Chinook also came to his aid.⁶⁴

After permission was granted, the Indians took their new friend in their canoes around to choose a place on which to settle. He chose a spot, and asked them to build their houses around, and he would live near them. This location was between what is now Priest Point and Quilceda Creek, on the banks of Ebey Slough.

Mission St. Francois-Xavier of Snohomish

The land Father Chirouse chose would later become part of the allotments of James Percival and Tyee George. On this land, Father Chirouse with the assistance of Father Durieu, established the Mission of St. Francois-Xavier of Snohomish. It consisted of a small log house, which served as living quarters, church and school. Even though at times he would have assistants, most of those early years Father Chirouse alone was the spiritual leader, teacher and advocate for the Indians. Only five families were part of the first congregation, but on Easter Sunday of 1859, five hundred Indians gathered around the mission to celebrate with Father Chirouse.⁶⁵

As Father Chirouse always did when he was establishing a mission home, he planted fruit trees. In 2007, the stump of a pear tree he planted near his home was

⁶³ Sister Mary Louise

⁶⁴ The Chinook jargon was generally understood by the Sound Indians. It consisted of words taken from French, English, Spanish and Indian, and the fancy of the inventor—used by the men of the Hudson's Bay Company for the convenience of trade.

⁶⁵ Waggett, Oblates

still in existence at the site of the original mission property. It was marked by a rough wooden board bearing the words: *Old Pear Tree 1857-1976 Planted by Father Chirouse*. Close to the beach on the same property was an old pear tree grown from a cutting of the original tree. In July of 2007 this pear tree was still bearing fruit.

When Father Chirouse opened the first school in his little log house, there were six boys and five girls—mostly orphans. Three of his first pupils were Charles Jules, Charles Hillaire and James Thomas. This was a day school--a boarding school would be established later.⁶⁶

The move to Priest Point on the Tulalip Reservation

Early 1859 the government at last formally ratified Tulalip as an Indian Reservation, and Father Chirouse then asked permission of the Indian Affairs Department to remain on the reservation. On May 10, 1859, Michael Simmons, the Territorial Indian Agent for Puget Sound sent a letter of recommendation to the Superintendent of Indian Affairs for Washington and Oregon Territories, Col. J. W. Nesmith:

I have been applied to by the Catholic Missionaries to know whether they will be allowed to build a schoolhouse and church on the reservation at Telalip (sic). They have already temporary buildings at that place and have been instructing the Indians in that vicinity for a year past.

My impression is that it will be beneficial to the service and to the Indians to have those gentlemen there and will ask you to inform me what answer I can make to them.⁶⁷

Shortly thereafter, Edward R. Geary was appointed as the new Superintendent of Indian Affairs and Simmons repeated the request to him under the date of September 9, 1859:

Two Catholic missionaries who have lived for this year passed with the Indians near the mouth of the Snohomish river have written to me requesting permission to build a comfortable residence on the ground designated in the Treaty of Point Elliott as the Telalip (sic) Reservation. You will please inform me if there will be any objection raised should I grant the permission these gentlemen require and designate the spot upon which they can erect their buildings.⁶⁸

A letter dated October 10, 1859 was sent to Father Chirouse by M. J. Simmons, Washington Territory Indian Agent:

⁶⁶ Sister Mary Louise

⁶⁷ Waggett, *Oblates*

⁶⁸ Waggett, *Oblates*

Rev. father Chirouze, Catholic Missionary, Snohomish River. Sir, You are hereby authorized to erect such buildings as may be necessary for the comfort of yourself and fellows, on the U. State Indian Reservation known as the Tulalip reservation. The spot where you can build has already been pointed out to you. This permission is meant to include a chapel, school house and any other necessary buildings.

The Superintendent cheerfully grants this permission and only suggests that you instruct the Indians in the English language if you possibly can. He assumes, and correctly, that they must acquire the civilized language of the country before they can be civilized themselves, in other words thinks that is the first step. Yours respectfully, M. J. Simmons, Ind Agt. W.T.⁶⁹

The location chosen first for the mission had proved to be unsuitable despite its fresh water supply. It was damp and difficult to access. With permission granted by the Indian Affairs Department, Father Chirouse moved to the new location the following year, this time to what is now known as Priest Point. This site later became the allotment of Charles Hillaire. Here, with the help of the Indians, he built a larger building for his home, church and school. The Indians assisted him in clearing a large area. He also taught them agriculture and eventually they had a garden, which helped support the school. By 1860, after further clearing and improvements to the buildings, the school was fully in operation with 15 pupils enrolled. By this time, about 200 Indians had built dwellings and were settled around him. They also cleared land for a cemetery.⁷⁰

Although Father Chirouse made Tulalip his residence, his parish included other reservations in the Puget Sound region: Fort Madison in Kitsap County, Swinomish in Skagit County; Lummi in Whatcom County, and Muckleshoot in King County; and also attended the numerous Indians who did not live on any reservation land. The reservations were all under the supervision of the Tulalip Indian Agency. In those early days, Father Chirouse traveled around the Sound by canoe establishing church missions in many different areas, such as Port Madison, LaConner and the Lummi Reservation.

In 1860, the territorial Indian agent, Michael Simmons, went to Tulalip to hold a conference with the tribes. He formally established the reservation of Tulalip and also furnished some much-needed supplies. Before he left, Agent Simmons appointed Father Chirouse as the provisional Indian agent until a regular one was sent. Father Chirouse held this position until September of 1861, when Samuel Howe was made the first regular sub-agent.

The School at Priest Point

On December 14, 1860, Agent Simmons wrote to the superintendent, with a recommendation that Father Chirouse be made the official teacher to the Indians

⁶⁹ Drouin, *Oblates in Oregon*

⁷⁰ Sister Mary Louise

of the reservation. This was in recognition of the success of the little school. Simmons' recommendation was accepted and on January 1, 1861, the school opened under the auspices of the federal government.⁷¹

On July 1, 1861, in his first report to the Indian Agency, Father Chirouse gives a very good example of what that first official school was like. He mentioned that school opened on January 1, 1861 with 25 scholars in attendance—20 boys and 5 girls.⁷² Then he went on to explain the schedule:

The general system of education is as follows: from 9 to half-past 10 o'clock spelling and reading, each scholar translating the lesson into the Indian language, and then into the Chinook jargon, this being the best, in fact, the only means of making them understand the meaning and impressing it upon the memory.

From half-past 10 to 12 o'clock, recreation and work in the gardens. After dinner, recreation for an hour. From 1 to 3 o'clock, writing and recitation in history, geography and arithmetic. On Tuesdays and Thursdays, arithmetic and singing lessons take the place of the other recitations. From 3 to 4 o'clock, recreation; from 4 to 6 they attend to their usual manual labors. On Saturdays, after the music lessons, school is dismissed.

Father Chirouse stated that he was very pleased with the progress of the students, and in spelling and reading using the pictorial primer, he felt they were excelling. Also, the students were beginning to write and to understand geography and arithmetic. He went on to report, however, that he alone had been supporting the school, having paid \$200 for books, clothing, etc., and \$400 for clearing and fencing the grounds. He stated that Mr. Simmons, the late agent, had told him that reimbursement would be forthcoming, but had not been received. He also mentioned that since there was no schoolhouse on the reservation, they used the lodges of the Indians, or a "wretched" log house, and that the teacher and the students were entirely unprotected from the wind and rain. It would be many years before any assistance would be provided for the support of the school. It was due to the ingenuity of Father Chirouse, with the help of his boys that they managed to survive and continue the school. Because of lack of support, Father Chirouse found it necessary to discontinue the schooling for the girls.

Communication

When Father Chirouse first came to the shores of Tulalip Bay, he could communicate by the use of the Chinook jargon, but mainly he used an interpreter at first. The different dialects he had learned east of the mountains were of no

⁷¹ Waggett, *Oblates*

⁷² Library of Congress Collection

help to him. However, it did not take him long to master what he called the Snohomish language.

In his second annual report to the Indian Agency dated September 30, 1862, Father Chirouse reported on the progress of the school at Tulalip. He reported that his scholars were complaining that they did not understand what they were reading in English, and in order to help he was composing a Snohomish/English and English/Snohomish dictionary. He felt this dictionary would be of great benefit to them. The dictionary, later entitled *A Short Method to Learn the Snohomish Indian Language in 12 Lessons*, was very likely the first written example of the Snohomish language, and differs slightly from the present Lushootseed. Since Father Chirouse's first language was French and, as he mentioned in a report, he still had a French accent, he would have interpreted the oral language differently as he listened to his students with his French ear.

In his classes, Father Chirouse often used other methods for teaching. To better illustrate the Bible lessons, he would use objects such as pictures, statues, or his skill at woodworking to carve pieces of wood representing Biblical stories. These examples and also the use of moral legends or parables were teaching methods that all his pupils understood.⁷³

Father Chirouse learned to speak the Indian dialects flawlessly, as attested to by interviews conducted by Sister Mary Louise. It was even said, "*There was no one who could speak their language as Father Chirouse could.*" However, in one of his reports, he stated that he was not too happy that his Indian boys were learning English using a French accent. He indicated that he was glad when a teacher, (Brother McStay) came later to assist with the teaching, as Brother McStay spoke English correctly, which was much better for his students.

Father Chirouse made English the medium for instruction in the school, but when he said Mass or spoke to other gatherings, and especially when the elders were in attendance, he used the native language. In his reports, Father Chirouse mentioned that he often held two separate Masses—one the regular Latin Mass and the other in the natives' own language. Unlike many who came later to teach at the school, he did not insist that the natives speak only English and never use their own language. Even though Father Chirouse had mastered the English language himself, he never forgot his own French using it often, especially in his writings to other Oblates, or in his diaries.

Father Chirouse and His Boys

On August 21, 1863, Father Chirouse sent his annual report as teacher of the Tulalip School to Mr. S. D. Howe, Indian Agent. He reported that the school attendance was increasing and that they now had 33 pupils from seven different

⁷³ Library of Congress Collection

tribes on the Sound. He went on to say that they had many applications for additional students and as soon as the new buildings at Tulalip Bay [Mission Beach, about two miles further west of Priest Point] were completed, enrollment would increase. Since the move from the Priest Point location was imminent, he and the boys had only cultivated the old garden, without any new improvements. He also reported that because of this and a particularly dry growing season, the crops would not be sufficient to support the 33 boarding students and he expected help from the Agency. Father Chirouse also reported he had given the students a pleasant vacation by taking them twice on trips to visit settlements along the sound. Father Chirouse and his boys often went as far south as Steilacoom and Olympia, north to the Canadian border and to Port Townsend, where people were fascinated to see their canoes nearing shore with the boys' paddles keeping time to their rendition of a melodious hymn. The sound of the singing boys as they paddled Father Chirouse through the waterways became a familiar and appreciated event. Sometimes the group sang in their own native language, other times in English, and even in Latin at times.⁷⁴

Father Chirouse in this 1863 annual report to the Indian Agency especially exhibited his fatherly feelings and great pride in his children.⁷⁵ He spoke of the joy he received in teaching his boys, and then Father Chirouse listed the names and ages of each of his pupils and said that he had promised them that he would send their names to the President, the Great Father at Washington. This, he requested the agent to do for him. Here is the list of his boys—the 33 pupils at the Tulalip boarding school during 1863:

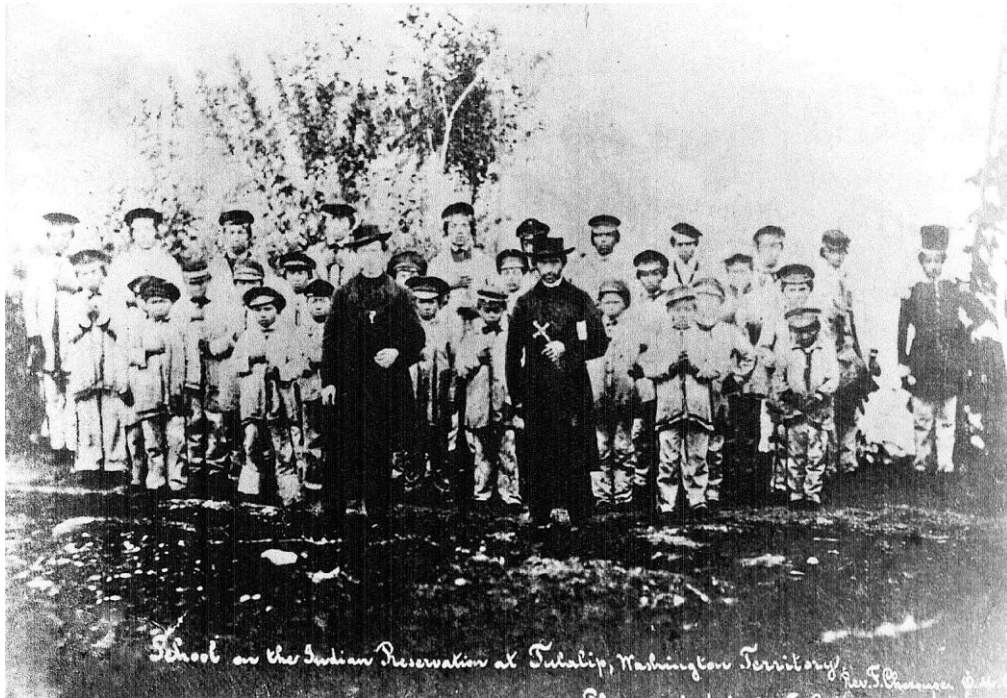
Jules, age 15	Issic, age 15	Josue, age 9
Hilare, age 12	Izadore, age 17	Maurice, age 8
Pierre, age 15	Damiens, age 9	Justin, age 7
Thomas, age 13	Mare, age 10	Jacob, age 8
Auguste, age 16	Louis, age 8	Victorin, age 9
Hyacinthe, age 11	Joubert, age 9	Williamkia, age 8
William, age 12	Michel, age 16	Emile, age 14
Peter, age 12	Honore, age 15	Hilare Lemi, age 7
Michel Seital, age 6	Henry, age 12	Andrew Siatla, age 12
Achille, age 14	Thos. Aligo, age 7	Dominique, age 15
Gregoire, age 10	Andrew, age 7	Damas, age 7

Father Chirouse then went on to say: "*I feel truly sorry that I cannot present to you a similar list of the girls.*" His sorrow over the plight of the girls in not being able to receive an education prompted him to keep bringing this matter to the attention of the authorities. Finally in 1868 the girls did receive their own school with the arrival of the Sisters of Charity of Providence. For 23 years the

⁷⁴ Sister Mary Louise

⁷⁵ Library of Congress Collection

sisters provided vocational and religious education, first to the girls and then to both the girls and boys after the transfer of Fr. Chirouse to Canada in 1878.



Father Chirouse (right) with Bro. McStay and the musical boys dressed in their sailcloth uniforms and other items of clothing collected from the military. (circa 1865)
Photo courtesy Archives of Marquette University



St. Anne Mission at Mission Beach, at the head of Tulalip Bay, Tulalip Indian Reservation, Washington Territory (circa 1870)

The Move to Mission Beach

Shortly after his 1863 report, Father Chirouse, his assistant Father Francois Jayol, O.M.I. (1824-1907), and the students made the move to the new mission and school facilities at Mission Beach on the eastern shore of Tulalip Bay.

History was made on February 19, 1867 when the *Agreement Regarding the United States Contract School Established at the Tulalip Indian Reservation of Washington Territory for the Children of the Allied Tribes Connected to the Tulalip Indian Agency* was entered into between Lewis V. Bogy, Commissioner of Indian Affairs and Rev. E. C. Chirouse by his representative Rev. J. B. A. Brouillet. The agreement stated:

. . . That whereas by the 14th Article of the Treaty of January 22, 1855 made with the Duwamish and other allied tribes in Washington Territory, the United States, agree to establish and support for a period of twenty years, an Agricultural and Industrial School 'at the general agency for the District of Puget Sound' to be free to the children of the said tribes and bands in common with those of the other tribes of said District, and whereas the said party of the second part, [Chirouse] Superintendent of a school for said Indians, which has been in operation for several years past purposes to enter into a formal agreement in regard to the care and management of a school, such as designated by the Article of the Treaty before referred to for the benefit of said tribes, upon conditions hereinafter specified.⁷⁶

This was the location of St. Anne Mission until it burned in 1902. A parsonage had been built as the home of Father Chirouse--also, a separate church building. A boarding school for the boys was built, also a home for the Sisters of Charity of Providence who would arrive in 1868, and a boarding school for the girls. Through the years, other buildings were built as part of the compound.

Early in June of 1868, several newspapers including those in Seattle, Olympia, Port Townsend and even San Francisco, carried the story of a severe earthquake centered in Mukilteo on May 30, 1868. The reports were that it was strongly felt at Tulalip and the new building which Father Chirouse was erecting was *much shaken*.⁷⁷

Again, Father Chirouse and the boys cleared land and this time established Mission Beach Cemetery. They planted an orchard and a much larger garden than they had at the old mission.⁷⁸

⁷⁶ True copy of original agreement certified by J. B. A. Brouillet. Records of Providence Archives, Seattle, WA. See pages 67 and 68 for a complete transcript of the Agreement.

⁷⁷ Cascadia Catalog 1793-1930. http://www.pnsn.org/HIST_CAT/CASCAT2006/72.html

⁷⁸ Sister Mary Louise

On August 10, 1868 at 10:30 in the evening, three Sisters of Providence from Montreal—Sister Blandine, Sister Mary Hyacinthe and Sister Mary Faith—arrived at the dock of the Agency at Tulalip Bay. They had made the trip from Vancouver with a stop at Steilacoom, and were quite fascinated by their travels. Arriving late at night, the travelers were met by two of Father Chirouse's assistants from the mission and two canoes with their Indian paddlers. They were now only one and a half miles from their final destination, which would be reached using the canoes. The sisters were thrilled by the beautiful voices of the paddlers as they sang hymns in time with the dipping of their paddles. Another group of young Indians, also singing as they ran along the shore, added to the escort. Father Chirouse was waiting for them at the mission and following a warm welcome from the father and more of the children, the sisters were escorted to Father Chirouse's home where a meal had been prepared for them. At midnight, Father Chirouse took the sisters to their new home so they could settle in and get some rest. Providence of Our Lady of Seven Dolours School could now officially open—finally the girls had a school!⁷⁹ Father Chirouse's long-time dream had become reality!

In 1869, as set out in the contract dated February 19, 1867 (see Page 68), the government designated the Tulalip Reservation Educational and Industrial Boarding School as a contract school—the first of its kind in our nation. The government began to provide financial assistance. After all the years of hard work and sacrifice by Father Chirouse and his students, some of the promises made in the treaty of 1855 were finally being kept.

The Ingenuity of Father Chirouse

During the early years before the government provided financial aid for the school, Father Chirouse, at his own expense when he could, and with the assistance of the boys, managed to keep the school going. They grew as much of their own food as they could, fished, and harvested clams. Father Chirouse worked right along with the boys in the garden, chopping wood and doing whatever physical labor was needed. They cleared the land together and made trails, and eventually roads. He taught the boys to sing and had much praise for their musical abilities. Father Chirouse obtained some bugles, a drum and other equipment from the troops at San Juan Islands and Steilacoom. He then organized a boys' band and a chorus. Accompanied by his assistant Brother McStay, Father Chirouse took the boys by canoe around the Sound where they entertained at different settlements, many miles away. The generous contributions made mainly by the lumberjacks and mill workers helped keep the school in operation.⁸⁰

Charles Jules spoke of those days as especially happy ones, but later thought of the fact that it could not have been easy for Father Chirouse to have had the major

⁷⁹ Horrigan, Sister Mary Barbara, *Sketch of Our Lady of Seven Dolours Indian Mission School Conducted by the Sisters of Charity of Providence at Tulalip from 1868 to 1901*. From the Providence Archives, Seattle, WA.

⁸⁰ Sister Mary Louise

responsibility for feeding, clothing and providing shelter, spiritual instruction and schooling for his young charges. In spite of the donations they received, there were also written appeals for help, but even so Mr. Jules told of the times when they had very little food to eat. As one of the boys had said, "*Those were the days of salt, salmon straight, and we had to catch the salmon, too, before we could salt them.*"⁸¹

In one of his diaries. Fr. Chirouse told about one of the summer trips he made with his boys to the outlying camps in 1869. As June was ending, their adventures were not pleasant.

There were rough seas, wandering in the fog without a compass, nights spent on the beach, suppers of dried clams dipped in fish oil, a scarcity of matches, canoes split, people firing on them, money coming bit by bit, and carefully entered in a ledger, long sojourning in lumber camps—all the hardships you could experience on a Sound cruise. At last, when early in the morning of July 4, 1869, they reached the mission, they were greeted with the words, 'Well, we thought you were dead.'⁸²

From the time Father Chirouse was ordained at Fort Walla Walla in January of 1848 and had found it necessary to improvise to provide an alb to wear for the ceremony, he used his clever ability to overcome difficulties. In the early days of his missionary labors at the Tulalip Reservation, Father Chirouse sent a letter to Msgr. de Mazenod, his superior in Marseilles, recounting the humorous story of his need for a new cassock, since his only one was no longer fit to wear. Here the story is told in Father Chirouse's own words:

My cassock was worn to tatters, and I was forced by necessity to seek out some means of providing myself with a new one. This was no easy task in a country without cloth merchants and tailors. Having no cloth of any kind at hand, and nobody but myself to make the cassock, even if I had a proper material to use in its construction, I was forced to adopt an expedient of an unusual kind. I found I had a supernumerary blanket. This I resolved to convert into material for my own cassock. I succeeded, not in the most artistic manner, I confess, in cutting it out into something of the cassock shape, but to add to my difficulties, I had neither needle nor thread at my disposal. Fortunately I had a strong pin and some slender twine, and by such helps I was enabled to connect the different portions of the cassock firmly enough together.

Finding that it had not the proper clerical hue, I resolved to dye it, and I used some of the wild berries that were growing in the woods, for that purpose. But instead of dyeing it black, they dyed it purple, and I found myself unexpectedly clad as a bishop. The next day, I had an immersion in

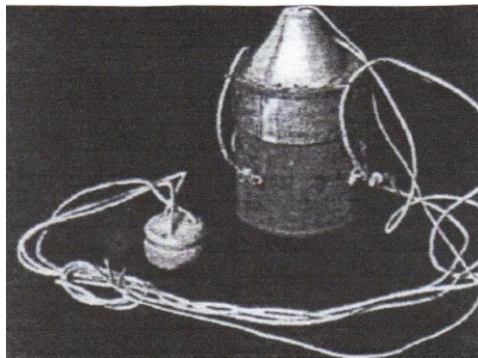
⁸¹ Sister Mary Louise

⁸² Sister Mary Louise

the water, and the dye being washed out, I found myself vested in a white cassock, like the Pope.⁸³

Another example of the methods Father Chirouse used to provide for his charges was told by his foster son, Billy McCluskey. Mr. McCluskey when interviewed in 1929 told about one time when the funds for the mission were cut back, and Father Chirouse used his gift of ingenuity to provide food, clothing and other necessities for his young people. The boys especially needed new clothes, so Father Chirouse approached a sea captain in Port Townsend, told him what was needed and was given some ship canvas. Then Mr. McCluskey went on to say that Father Chirouse took the canvas back to Tulalip and there he dexterously cut out and sewed suits of clothing for his boys.⁸⁴ Through the years, Father Chirouse's sewing skills must have improved.

Father Paul Gard, who several years later followed Father Chirouse as priest at St. Anne Mission Church, found many items that were left behind. One item was a very crude, but effective thurible (censer) which had been constructed and used by Father Chirouse. Unlike those of silver and fancy workmanship, this had been made using a round tin can with a perforated top. A piece of wood was attached to the lid of the can and from this a long string, with a strong wire ring for a holder, passed through a cone-shaped wooden block. Three heavy cords were attached by hooks made of heavy wire to hold the censer.⁸⁵



Father Chirouse's handcrafted censer as shown in the publication *Abundance of Grace: The History of the Archdiocese of Seattle 1850-2000* by Patricia O'Connell Killen and edited by Christine M. Taylor. Print permission by Christine M. Taylor, Chancellor of the Catholic Archdiocese of Seattle.

Using a different kind of ingenuity, Father Chirouse became doctor and nurse when sickness or injury came to the Indians. The treaty had promised a doctor for

⁸³ Oblates of Mary Immaculate, *Golden Jubilee of the Oblates of Mary Immaculate of the Mainland of British Columbia 1860-1910*. Providence Archives, Seattle, WA, Priests' Collection

⁸⁴ Sister Mary Louise

⁸⁵ *Indian Sentinel, Chirouse Number*, Vol. 1, No. VII (Jan. 1918), "Chirouse Collection at the Bureau." Washington, D.C.: Bureau of Catholic Indian Missions.

the reservation, but none came until 1894, many years later. During his time, Father Chirouse cared for the medical needs of the Indians; during the smallpox epidemic of 1863, he vaccinated them by the thousands, all the way from the Puget Sound country to the upper reaches of Vancouver Island.⁸⁶ On Vancouver Island, even the barbaric tribes living far north knew and respected the name of *CHILOUSE* (their pronunciation).

E. C. Chirouse, United States Indian Agent

In addition to all his other duties, Father Chirouse was appointed Indian agent as of April 1, 1871, and held this position until mid-1876 when he resigned. In his annual report dated September 23, 1874, to the Hon. E. P. Smith, Commissioner of Indian Affairs, Washington, D.C., Father Chirouse stated:

It is a fact that, unfortunately, the Indians have not always been treated with justice by the whites, and for that reason they have but little confidence in them. It is very difficult to make them believe that the whites are their friends.⁸⁷

Father Chirouse's duties as agent were to see that reservation land was not settled upon by the white people and to keep liquor from being sold on the reservation. Father Chirouse posted notices, written in his own hand, regarding these infringements, and appointed tribal policemen to enforce these laws. As agent, Father Chirouse also began a trading post on the Tulalip Reservation and in 1872 hired James Comeford to manage the trading post. Later, Mr. Comeford became the founder of Marysville.⁸⁸

Father Chirouse made his final report as Indian Agent on August 17, 1876. Since Father Chirouse duties as agent required him to spend time away from his Indians at Tulalip, he was glad to turn the position over to someone else, so he could return to his pastoral and teaching duties.⁸⁹

As agent for the Tulalip Indian Agency in 1876 Father Chirouse posted handwritten notices to keep outsiders away from his Indian charges on their reservations. These notices also included a reminder that no liquor was allowed on the reservations and any white man who brought liquor to sell to the Indians would be arrested.

⁸⁶ Sister Mary Louise

⁸⁷ 1872 annual report to Indian Agency by E. C. Chirouse, agent. Library of Congress Collection.

⁸⁸ 1872 annual report to Indian Agency by E. C. Chirouse, agent. Library of Congress Collection.

⁸⁹ Sister Mary Louise

Charles Jules' Remembrances

Having personally known Father Chirouse for 35 years, as a substitute father, spiritual adviser, teacher, doctor, nurse, friend, and benefactor, Charles Jules during his 1931 interview was able to tell Sister Mary Louise much about Father Chirouse's character and the high esteem all the people felt for him. Mr. Jules recalled proudly his winning a prize as a child for the best record in studies and conduct for the month, and, with a big smile, Father Chirouse presented his prize, a print of the Madonna, which was still proudly displayed in the Jules' home in 1931.

Mr. Jules' best memory of Father Chirouse's character came when he was 21 years old and was told by Father Chirouse that it was time for him to leave the school—his education was complete. He had made his home with the Father for 11 years. Having no money of his own, nor any idea what he would do or where he would go, Jules received some money from Father Chirouse and other assistance so that he could settle on his own land as a small farmer. Jules worked hard, saved his money, and with another advance and sound advice from Father Chirouse, he started his own store on the reservation. The little store was a success, but later Mr. Jules felt he could do better at logging. As a logger he did very well, and was able to hire other men from the reservation who needed jobs. He never forgot what Father Chirouse had done for him—not only the monetary help, but also the spiritual teaching, the practical advice, the schooling, the great joy of working with him on their many projects at the mission, and traveling all over the area as one of the Father Chirouse's boys.⁹⁰

Charles Jules saw history being made during his lifetime. As a very young boy, he had been present with his uncle (a delegate and signatory) during the signing of the Point Elliott Treaty on January 22, 1855 at present-day Mukilteo. He became a very respected businessman, and was appointed as Chief. He lived a very long life until September 2, 1935 when death took him at age 89. A portrait of Charles Jules (Chief Shimakum) painted by Angela (Anje) Crawley, a world renowned artist, hangs in the Council Chambers at the Tulalip Reservation. Artist Crawley, though not a native herself, grew up on the reservation, and until a few years ago lived on the property between Priest Point and Ebey Slough, where Father Chirouse had established his first mission home.

A Foster Son for Father Chirouse

William McCluskey, from the Lummi Reservation near Bellingham, also expressed his admiration and love for Father Chirouse in an interview with Sister Mary Louise dated August 22, 1929. He told the following story. On one of his monthly visits to the Lummi Reservation, Father Chirouse was touched by the plight of Mrs. McCluskey, a young Indian widow struggling to raise her boy after her miner husband, a white man, accidentally drowned. The family had been

⁹⁰ Sister Mary Louise

doing fine until the accident, but afterward Mrs. McCluskey and young Billy went back to live on the reservation. Soon thereafter young Billy was crippled. Father Chirouse always checked on them when he made his monthly visit and helped with their expenses and personally began teaching Billy. Mrs. McCluskey died, and in 1872, ten-year-old Billy was left an orphan. An ever compassionate Father Chirouse took little Billy back to his own home at the Tulalip Reservation.⁹¹

At Tulalip, Billy lived with Father Chirouse and not only attended the Tulalip school, but was personally educated by him. Thus, young Billy had an education far surpassing the average. He stayed with Father Chirouse until Chirouse was transferred to Oblate headquarters in Mission City, British Columbia. Thereafter Billy returned to the Lummi reservation, but often visited Father Chirouse at Mission City. He told Sister Mary Louise that he always remembered those six years with the Father as especially happy ones. He recalled that Father Chirouse was always at the center of activity around the mission, whether the people were at work, at prayer, or at play. It was a joyous occasion just to be with him. The Father would join in the games of both the old and the young, and would often entertain by playing his violin or accordion. In 1906, William McCluskey joined the Indian service and worked to ". . . *improve the conditions of the Indians from whom his mother came.*" He married, and his children attended Tulalip boarding school.

Illness at St Anne Mission

Classes for the winter of 1875-1876 had barely begun when most of the pupils came down with measles. The big classroom was turned into an infirmary and the teachers, both priests and sisters, became nurses. With their good care, most of the children recovered. A four-year-old girl, however, who had arrived at the mission after the epidemic, caught the disease and did die. Then Father Chirouse, always so energetic and healthy, became very ill. His illness continued through the winter and the students feared they would lose him. However, with the care of the Sisters of Providence and the fervent prayers of all the children, he finally recovered.⁹²

In the early spring of 1876, Father Mederic Hetu, also an Oblate of Mary Immaculate, arrived at St. Anne Mission to assist with the teaching in the boys' school. When he arrived, the Indians remarked on how thin and pale he was. A few short weeks later, April 23, 1876, Father Hetu, at the young age of 26, died from consumption. Like Father Chirouse, who had arrived in this country at the same age, Father Hetu must have looked forward to a long life of missionary work. Father Hetu was buried at Mission Beach Cemetery—Father Chirouse conducting the burial Mass. An Indian woman, Jennie Celestine, tended Father

⁹¹ Sister Mary Louise

⁹² Sister Dorothy Lentz, S.P. (1978) *The Way It Was in Providence Schools*. Montreal, Quebec, Canada: Sisters of Providence, Providence Mother House. Records of Providence Archives, Our Lady of Seven Dolours School. Hereafter cited Sister Dorothy Lentz, *The Way It Was*.

Hetu's grave for many years before she died in 1946, supposedly at the age of 105. Father Hetu (Aye-too, as the Indians called him), became the only Oblate priest buried in the cemetery.⁹³

A Christmas Celebration at St. Anne Mission

Christmas at Tulalip Reservation's St. Anne Mission in 1876 was a particularly happy one. They had weathered a tough year with a measles epidemic, the serious illness of their pastor Father Chirouse, and the death of a young teacher. This season they were visited by a delegation of Suquamish Indians from the Port Madison Reservation who had come to Tulalip Bay to see the agent and were invited to stay and celebrate the holiday with Father Chirouse, the Sisters of Providence, the staff of the school, and the students and their parents.⁹⁴

Father Chirouse celebrated midnight Mass on Christmas Eve and Monday, Christmas morning, the little church overflowed with worshippers. On Christmas evening, a children's festival was held featuring Christmas hymns and recitations by the children. Father Chirouse spoke briefly to the Indians in their own language, and then he translated for Agent Mallett when he expressed greetings on behalf of the government. Gifts were distributed—each student, teacher and guest receiving one. The young girls distributed candy and the Sisters gave gifts of fruit. Following all the festivities, and more Christmas songs, the festival ended with Benediction by Father Chirouse. The Indians from Port Madison returned to their homes, cheered by the warm reception they received from their friends at St. Anne's Mission.⁹⁵

A Sad Time for Father Chirouse and His People

The lengthy illness Father Chirouse suffered during the winter of 1875-76 had taken a toll on his health and he was beginning to wonder if he could continue his pastoral and teaching work. When he was urged by some to rest, he would tell them "*I must do my work.*" When others suggested that a change would be good for him—ministering to the white people instead of Indians—he replied: "*The Indians need me; the whites do not. This is my life, I want to die among my Indians.*" Father Chirouse would joke, saying that he no longer felt at home among the whites.⁹⁶ In fact, when people saw him in his canoe with his young Indian paddlers, they often mistook him for an Indian. Having spent so much time out in the open, his complexion, swarthy from birth, was now similar to the Indians. Father Chirouse had truly become one with the Indian people he had loved and lived with for most of his life.

⁹³ Sister Dorothy Lentz, *The Way It Was*

⁹⁴ *Christmas at Tulalip—1876, The Catholic Northwest Progress*, Dec. 12, 1858. Hereafter cited *Christmas 1876*.

⁹⁵ *Christmas 1876*

⁹⁶ Sister Mary Louise

A few years earlier, one man who knew how hard Father Chirouse worked, commented “*It must be a very satisfying life, if you can manage to work 18 hours a day.*” Father Chirouse had to agree—his missionary work, hardships and responsibilities were becoming difficult for him. In 1877, Bishop D’Herbomez, now Superior at the Provincial House in British Columbia, announced to Bishop Blanchet that he intended transferring Father Chirouse to Canada before he was lost to them. Bishop Blanchet was not pleased with this decision—he did not have enough priests as it was. The Indians were more than unhappy—they were desolate. They presented Bishop Blanchet with a petition asking to keep Father Chirouse with them, but the Bishop told them that he had already pleaded with the Oblate superiors and nothing would change their minds. On May 10, 1878, Bishop Blanchet sent a letter to the Indians of *Old Man House Reservation* (Port Madison), stating that he understood the bereaved Indians intended to petition the Pope to keep Father Chirouse from being sent to Canada, and Bishop Blanchet advised them to abandon this plan.⁹⁷ Following orders from his Oblate superiors, Father Chirouse severed his ties to the Indian Bureau, resigning as superintendent of the first contract Indian school established by the federal government. He then said good-bye to all his old friends, leaving the pastoral work in the hands of Father Jean-Baptiste Boulet. On August 15, 1878, 31 years after he had arrived in the United States, Father Chirouse left the Diocese of Nesqually for Mission City, British Columbia, Canada.

St. Mary’s Mission Along the Fraser River in British Columbia

In 1857, when the Oblates of Mary Immaculate first decided to leave Washington Territory and move their headquarters from Olympia to British Columbia, they first picked a site on Vancouver Island near Esquimalt. At that time Father Chirouse, in the company of Father Louis Fouquet was chosen to assist with the establishment of this new mission. Father Chirouse was already familiar with Vancouver Island, having made a trip previously. He did not, however, remain, as he had just begun his own mission at Tulalip Bay and was needed back in Washington Territory. Father Chirouse made other trips back to Esquimalt and also further north on Vancouver Island, where he helped with the vaccination of the Indians during the rampant smallpox epidemic of 1862-1863. According to records, Father Chirouse himself vaccinated thousands of Indians throughout the Puget Sound area and Vancouver Island. However, St. Anne Mission on the Tulalip Reservation was his home, where those closest to him lived and he was always anxious to return.

In 1861, the Oblates decided to move their headquarters from Esquimalt when Father Fouquet found what was considered to be a more suitable location along the Fraser River near what is now New Westminster, British Columbia. The new mission was established and given the name St. Mary’s. A residential school was

⁹⁷ Sister Mary Louise

opened, its objective being to educate the children of the First Nation. The Oblate priests continued to follow their doctrine established many years before in France: education of the native poor.⁹⁸

In 1878 when Father Chirouse left his Tulalip Reservation home of 21 years, his destination was Mission City, British Columbia and St Mary's Mission and Indian Residential School. At St. Mary's, Father Chirouse found his work easier than what it had been and also his responsibilities were lighter. He was appointed superior of St. Mary's and principal of the school. He did not stop traveling altogether and often visited the Indians along the Fraser River where he again became a beloved figure, known as the *Good Old Father*.⁹⁹

One month after Father Chirouse's arrival in Canada, he was visited by William McCluskey, who told him that back at Tulalip Bay he was missed and his loss was hard to bear. Shortly thereafter, young McCluskey, in order to be closer to Father Chirouse, returned to live at his former home on the Lummi Reservation. Meanwhile, even though Father Chirouse was expected to take life easier, before the close of 1878 he established a mission at Kamloops, British Columbia. In 1879, Father Chirouse wrote to Charles Jules at Tulalip telling him that he was happy to be able to visit the Indians at the missions along the Fraser River.¹⁰⁰

Father Chirouse also made trips to see his old friends back in the United States. According to records in the archives of the Archdiocese of Seattle, he made frequent trips back to minister to his friends, the Indians of the Tulalip Agency. 1879 records of the Chancery office show that Father Chirouse baptized three Indian children at Port Madison—the record signed by Father Boulet. The 1883 records show the baptism of two children at Tulalip and a funeral at Port Madison—the record signed by Father Chirouse himself. Also, the Archdiocese's records show that Our Lady of Good Help Church of Seattle in 1883 reported a baptism at Newcastle by Father Chirouse—record signed by Father Chirouse. In 1884, at the Swinomish Reservation, Father Chirouse performed a marriage—the record signed by Father Boulet. According to Sister Mary Louise, Father Chirouse made many summer visits to see the Indians of Puget Sound, including the years mentioned above; he also returned in 1881. In her thesis, Sister Mary Louise stated that many of those she interviewed spoke of the great honor in having their old priest officiate at their marriages and baptisms when he visited. They felt so comfortable with him; his knowledge of their language was special to the Indians. He personally visited many and was welcomed into their homes.¹⁰¹

During an early visit to his Lummi children, where his foster son William McCluskey now made his home, Father Chirouse arrived by canoe to find a crowd gathered. As the canoe neared the shore, some of the Indians ran out into the

⁹⁸ Fraser Valley Heritage Park—St. Mary's Mission School, Catholic Order of Mary Immaculate
< <http://www.heritagepark-missionca/stmary.html> >

⁹⁹ Archives of the Catholic Archdiocese of Seattle Records Collection.

¹⁰⁰ Sister Mary Louise

¹⁰¹ Sister Mary Louise

water to greet him and his paddlers. Father Chirouse was lifted onto their shoulders and carried ashore. Those on the shore were excited and there was weeping, shouting, laughing and happy greetings— much of it from Father Chirouse himself.

There were shouts of ‘Oh! Oh, Oh! Our old Father has come to see us again. Oh, no,’ he said with tears of joy streaming down his cheeks, ‘I am not your father anymore; Father Boulet is your father now, but I will always be your grandfather.’ This statement was joined by shouts and laughter.”¹⁰²

Through the years, Father Chirouse wrote often to his children and old friends back at the Tulalip mission. Returning to his home at St. Mary's after a visit to see them, he wrote a letter to the young people. The following is an extract from that letter:

Dearly beloved Children of Tulalip: During the month of July last (which I consider one of the most beautiful months of my life) I had the happiness of visiting the principal Indian tribes which belong to the Tulalip Agency . . . On the streets of Seattle, I often had to stop to greet friends, and we were so happy to meet and recognize each other in the crowd hurrying in all directions in this young city which is already assuming the airs of a great metropolis.¹⁰³

After dwelling on his happiness at revisiting his former parishioners, Father Chirouse praised the good work of his successor, of the Sisters, and the agent. He was happy they were remaining loyal to the teachings of Christianity, and the return of some who had fallen away. Commenting on his visit to the Tulalip school, Father Chirouse said:

That reception you gave me, those eloquent addresses, those pieces you well executed, those charming dialogues and joyful hymns, those palms, flags, garlands and flowers, together with my joy mingled with yours, shall ever remain engraved in my memory, as a reminder of the gratitude I owe to your teachers and to you also.¹⁰⁴

In August of 1891, the year before his death, 70-year-old Father Chirouse made his final trip back to the Tulalip Reservation. The occasion was to celebrate the Feast of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary, as well as to celebrate the anniversary of the day as Brother Chirouse he had taken his perpetual vows at Marseilles, France on August 15, 1844. Here again he was greeted with enthusiasm by about 400 of his old friends, many of them former pupils. Journalist William Howard Phelps, writing for the *Portland Oregonian*, gave an account of Father Chirouse's reception by the Tulalip Indians during this visit. Following is an excerpt from Mr. Phelp's article:

There was a crowd of them at the wharf... They paid no heed to aught else, and as he came from the boat, they met him with bared heads and eager, loving words of welcome. The older men with deep wrinkles in their faces, met him first, and then gave way to the next younger, and so on. It was his

¹⁰² Buchanan, *Apostle*

¹⁰³ Sister Mary Louise

¹⁰⁴ Sister Mary Louise

world and his life, he had traveled far to reach it, and he had conquered it by love and devotion.¹⁰⁵

Charles Jules, who had been the 10-year-old boy who had happily greeted Father Chirouse as he approached the beach many years before, was especially glad to see his old friend. Years later when interviewed by Sister Mary Louise, Mr. Jules spoke of being especially thrilled when Father Chirouse accepted his invitation to spend the night at the Jules' home. Feeling that this could very well be the last reunion, he took his old friend and teacher to Marysville that very afternoon and had a photograph taken of Father Chirouse. In 1931 that treasured picture of the "holy priest with the kindly heart" was still hanging on the wall of the Jules' home.¹⁰⁶ Information from a newspaper article shows that Charles Jules' daughter Agnes James was living in the old family home when on August 26, 1957 it burned and everything was destroyed.¹⁰⁷

The Final Days of the Good Old Father

In December of 1891, Father Chirouse suffered a paralyzing stroke and was recuperating at St. Mary's Hospital in New Westminster, British Columbia. On January 5, 1892, sixteen days later, from his hospital room Father Chirouse wrote to Charles Jules, telling him that he was "*feeling much better and that the Sisters of Providence were taking excellent care of him.*"¹⁰⁸ Friday, March 4, 1892, was St. Casimir's feast day. This was Father Chirouse's name day—the day on which he annually received congratulatory messages. This year the messages were especially numerous, but most appreciated were those from his children of the Tulalip School. They remembered him—to the last he was their *dear Father*, and they were his *affectionate children*.¹⁰⁹

God bestowed on Father Chirouse many gifts, and he used them wisely. He never attained high office in the Church as did many of the men he had mentored. Father Chirouse remained a simple missionary priest, but his *faith* and *works* were unmatched. As a young man in 1847, traveling with the wagon train on the long and difficult journey from St. Louis to Walla Walla, Oregon Territory, he brought cheer to the others with his music in the evenings when they were at rest. Did the Indians hear the joyful music of the accordion and the beautiful voice raised in songs of faith—the sound vibrating across the prairies. Did they observe the young man in the black robe and wonder at the strange sight.

Father Chirouse never lost this gifted spirit for entertaining—it became part of his missionary work. At Tulalip he taught his boys to sing, play instruments and to love music as he did. Their well-trained voices were heard at Mass—in their own native language, English and Latin. Along with the Father, they traveled to the lumber camps to perform and earn money so they could continue their education. The sound of their singing as they paddled canoes through the waterways never failed to provide enjoyment. Their music especially provided

¹⁰⁵ Sister Mary Louise

¹⁰⁶ Sister Mary Louise

¹⁰⁷ Mary Koch Collection

¹⁰⁸ Sister Mary Louise

¹⁰⁹ Sister Mary Louise

much joy for the elders. As a young priest, Father Chirouse had been reprimanded for not always being pious, but his superiors must have learned that Father Chirouse's joyful exuberance for life, so often expressed in music, was what endeared him to the Indians and made him such a successful missionary.

At Canada's St. Mary's Mission on Sunday, April 17, 1892, Father Chirouse awoke to another Easter. He had always looked forward to this season. Now frail, suffering the results of the stroke, along with rheumatism from the years of hard work during harsh weather, he still had that ever-present twinkle in his eyes. He enjoyed reading all the letters he received from his former pupils whom he had watched grow from little children to adulthood. Confined to his hospital room, he must have wished to be back at St. Mary's Mission to participate in the joyful festivities.

Later, the Indian tribes from the Fraser River area, the Staves, Squamish, Sechelt, Stekine and Tlayamen, gathered on the mission grounds for their performance of the popular Passion Play. About 1500 tribal members had set up their tents to form a city of white canvas surrounding the chapel.¹¹⁰ No doubt Father Chirouse longed to be with them to take part in the celebration--just one more time. This was not to be.

Father Chirouse seemed to be recovering, and on May 28 he heard confessions and assisted at Benediction, suddenly he faltered. His mind, which had always been so active, became still. Father Ouellette administered the last rites of the Church just before Eugene Casimir Chirouse slipped away into his final *Sleep in the Peace of God*. The beloved *Good Old Father* was gone.

Father Chirouse's body was put on the train for the trip back to St. Mary's Mission, his home for the past 14 years. Back at the mission, the sad news that their revered priest was gone forever reached the Indians and mournful cries were heard. As the train carrying Father Chirouse's body approached, every tribal member present went to the station and formed two long lines alongside the tracks. The *de Provundus* was repeated in many different languages. The procession then moved forward toward the church. Bishop Durieu of New Westminster, who as a young priest had assisted Father Chirouse, celebrated the Requiem High Mass and led the prayers, with the Indians singing the liturgical chants. Then Father Chirouse's beloved Indians escorted his body to his final resting place beside the Fraser River.¹¹¹ A cross was placed over his grave. Sadly, a few years ago, the O.M.I. Cemetery was vandalized and the cross marking Father Chirouse's grave was desecrated, and it has never been restored. However as shown in the accompanying photo, his name is still legible on the gravestone

In the same cemetery there is another grave with a stone inscribed Eugene Casimir Chirouse, O.M.I., however, this grave marks the resting spot of Casimir's nephew

¹¹⁰ Sister Mary Louise

¹¹¹ Sister Mary Louise

and namesake. The younger Chirouse served for 47 years at St. Mary's and died there in 1927.¹¹²

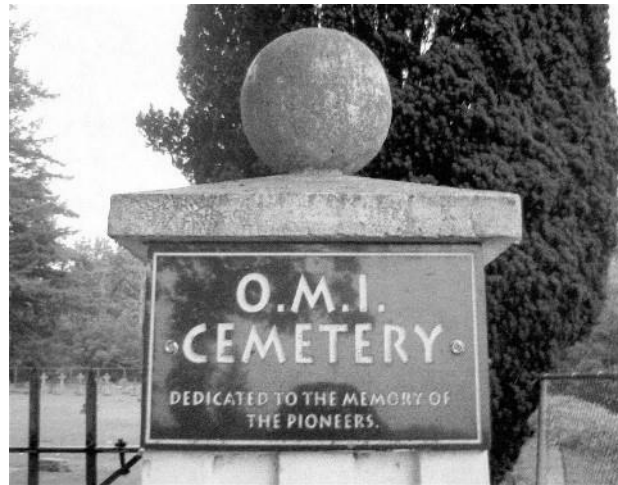
On the Tulalip Reservation the people who fondly remembered the kindly black-robed priest who had lived among them for over two decades are all gone now. This simple man of God is now part of history. Father Chirouse was a man who never sought glory in this life--his eyes were always on a higher calling. Dr. Charles Buchanan wrote regarding this *one-of-a-kind priest*:

He came of an ancient lineage and it showed, all his life, the characteristics of his race. He carried his head like one with high peaks and heavenly visions before him. He was small in stature, but robust, well-built, keenly intelligent, persistent and sincere, in fact a true son of the Rhone Valley. Father Chirouse was an optimist, cheerful, hopeful and saw good in everyone. He ever had a kind, encouraging word for all he met. and was as simple, as naive, as a child. All who approached him felt the warm and generous nature of his heart.¹¹³



¹¹² Fraser Valley Heritage Park

¹¹³ Buchanan, *Apostle*



Entrance to the O.M.I. Cemetery in Mission, British Columbia, Canada and the vandalized gravestone of Father Chirouse (the cross destroyed).¹¹⁴

¹¹⁴ Photos furnished by Toby Langen, Lushootseed teacher at Tulalip.

A quarterly magazine of the Bureau of Catholic Indian Missions included a photograph of a young Father Chirouse and on the opposite page was a sonnet by Charles J. Quirk, S.J.

CHIROUSE

*Yes, men have lived who were God's counterpart,
Who loved what e'er He loved and in the race
Sought not the Laurel nor a lasting place
In carven marble in the Square or Mart,
And raised the wounded up the Mount of Grace
To gaze in rapture on our Lord's blest face
And know that Love shall never more depart.*

*O, boldened Knight, true Soldier of the Cross,
But toiled and suffered for the lowly heart
Thou wert of those who loved the poor of Christ,
And deemed all labors done an utter loss
Unless unto thy God pure-sacrificed,--
Thou with thy redmen seek'st Eternity
And winnest Life through Death's dark Calvary.*



Eugene Casimir Chirouse as he appeared in *The Indian Sentinel*, the official organ of the Catholic Indian Missions.¹¹⁵

¹¹⁵ Quirk, C. (Jan. 1918) "Chirouse" (Sonnet); *The Indian Sentinel*, Chirouse Number Vol. 1, No. VII. Washington, D.C.: Bureau of Catholic Indian Missions.

The Great War Brings Tragedy

Even though Father Chirouse was gone, this narrative cannot end here. On March 15, 1893, almost one year after the death of Father Chirouse, at the Port Madison Indian Reservation in Kitsap County, a little Suquamish boy was born and given the name Eli George. Eli was a descendant of Father Chirouse's old friend Chief Sealth (Seattle). Father Chirouse had even officiated at the burial of the old Chief.¹¹⁶

When Eli was of school age, he was sent to the Tulalip government school at Tulalip Bay and attended for several terms.

On June 15, 1917, as a young man of 24, Eli registered for the World War I military draft. Under the question as to his race, Eli, a full Suquamish Indian simply entered *American*.¹¹⁷

Not long after his registration, Eli became a soldier in the United States Army and was sent to France. On Christmas day of 1917, Eli lost his life in that far-off country where 96 years earlier Eugene Casimir Chirouse had been born. As a young man of 26, Casimir Chirouse left his home in France to live a life with the Indians of the Pacific Northwest, never to return to his birth home. As a young man of 24, Eli George traveled from his home along the shores of Puget Sound to the battlefields of France. Eli George never returned to his Port Madison home, instead he was buried at Chaumont in France.¹¹⁸

Two other young men, schoolmates of Eli George at the Tulalip school, lost their lives in France while serving in the United States Army in World War I—Alphonsus Bob and Elson James. However, both were brought back to be buried near their homes on the Tulalip Reservation. Alphonsus rests at Mission Beach Cemetery, and Elson at Priest Point Cemetery.¹¹⁹

The narrative of the life of a remarkable man from across the sea and the people who became his beloved family, now comes to a bittersweet end. The little lad from France, who so early in life made a vow to God and lived a life few can imagine, now rests. The eloquent words of Dr. Charles Buchanan upon receiving news of the death of Eli George provide a suitable ending for this portion of the story of Father Chirouse and his beloved children.

*In America, Father Chirouse slumbers, and in France, Eli's dust is a part of that land—in Chaumont he slumbers. Half a world intervenes between the two, but the thunders of war disturbs not their slumber.*¹²⁰

¹¹⁶ Buchanan, C. (July 1918) "Evolution of an Indian Hero in France." *Washington Historical Quarterly*, Vol. IX, No. 3. Hereafter cited Buchanan, Indian Hero.

¹¹⁷ World War I Draft Registration Cards, Year: 1917; Place: King County, Washington.

¹¹⁸ Buchanan, Indian Hero

¹¹⁹ Guydelkon, S. (2005) *Directory of Tulalip Veterans*. Tulalip, WA: Tulalip Communications Dept.

¹²⁰ Buchanan, Indian Hero

EPILOGUE

Changes were made during the 21 years Father Chirouse had been with the tribes of Puget Sound—not always for their benefit. More changes were coming. Little by little, the federal government was making an effort to remove the influence of religion in Indian reservation schools—and with this would come the strict enforcement of English only. The school continued for a few years with the Sisters of Providence as teachers. However, in 1896, Congress decided to abolish sectarian schools on Indian reservations and began an annual decrease of about 20 percent in contracts, with the plan of eliminating all of these schools at the end of five years. The Diocese for a time made up the difference in funds at the Tulalip school. Finally, in 1901, the sisters were forced to withdraw and the federal government then took control. The school Father Chirouse had envisioned and worked so hard to establish was no longer part of the mission.

The *Everett Daily Herald*, Everett, Washington, under the date of Monday, June 10, 1901 published the following article regarding the government's policy change:

TULALIP RESERVATION. Dr. Buchanan is Made Superintendent of Industrial School and Acting Agent Under the Non-Sectarianism Law. Dr. Buchanan, the resident physician of the Tulalip Indian reservation, received a telegram yesterday from the Interior Department at Washington appointing him superintendent of the Industrial school and acting Indian agent at the reservation. Dr. Buchanan will assume his new duties July 1.

Regarding the change, Ed Mills, the present Indian agent at Tulalip said: "Hitherto the Indian school has been in charge of the Catholic church and it is the purpose of the government to eliminate sectarianism and assume control of the Indian schools itself. It has been gradually withdrawing the support from all the reservation sectarian schools. Last year the mission school at Tulalip had a contract for 24 pupils, the year before it was for 48, while during the present fiscal year ending June 30, there has been no appropriation whatever, and the school with attendance of something like 80 pupils has been supported entirely by the Bureau of Catholic Missions.

"In assuming this control the government is looking to its graded system of Indian education. These pupils are prepared for entering the higher institutions established for their education, as Carlisle, Pa., Hampton, Va., Laurena, Kan., Phoenix, Ariz., and others of similar character situated in different parts of the country, where their education with a view to their becoming citizens is continued.

“And, too, it may be regarded as an evolutionary step toward the ultimate opening of all the Indian reservations in the country to settlement. The government is gradually raising the Indian into citizenship through education.

“In addition to Dr. Buchanan’s appointment, there will be employed by the government at Tulalip three teachers, one of whom will be an industrial teacher, a matron, cook and laundress.”

Mr. Mills, the present agent after July 1, will remove to this city and engage in business.”

Almost ten years following the death of Father Chirouse in British Columbia, another major happening occurred back at his old home on Mission Beach. The day before Easter, Saturday, March 29, 1902 on page 5, the *Everett Daily Herald* reported:

“Three Buildings of the Tulalip Agency Destroyed by an Incendiary Fire and Attempts to Burn Others. A fire, supposed to have been of incendiary origin, occurred at the Tulalip Indian Reservation this morning between 4 and 5 o’clock, resulting in the total destruction of three of the reservation buildings—the old Catholic church, the kitchen and the girls’ dormitory.

“Suspicion points strongly to the incendiary theory, from the fact that rags and burlap bags saturated with kerosene oil were found on the porch of the boys’ dormitory, ready to be ignited, and also a quantity of the same material was set fire under the porch of Dr. Buchanan’s residence. Dr. Buchanan, the agent and superintendent of the school, however, discovered this before any damage was done.

It appears to have been the intention of the incendiaries to make a clean sweep, as oil-soaked rags were found under the boys’ dormitory which is the only one of the school buildings not destroyed.

The buildings are a total loss and practically none of their contents were saved.

The girls’ dormitory was a wooden building two stories high, 30x70 feet, and contained in addition to the sleeping apartments for the girls, their recitation rooms. It was practically a duplicate of the boys’ dormitory and school rooms, which is the only school building remaining. The kitchen and laundry burned was 30x40 feet and also two stories high, and on the second story formerly contained the sisters’ apartments. No insurance was carried, as the government does not insure its buildings.

The general opinion points to incendiarism. It is stated that the Indians do not entertain the most kindly feeling toward Dr. Buchanan on account of certain restrictions alleged to have been placed upon them. The burning of his residence two months ago was by many attributed to the same cause, while the doctor himself, it is understood, thinks it was accidental.

Alexander Spithill, an old resident of Marysville, and familiar with the Indian custom, does not think the fire an act of incendiarism. He says: I have been among the Indians for the last 45 years, and I have never known them to seek this method of revenge. It is contrary to Indian custom. It looks like a case of malicious burning, but it may have come from some other source.

A few days later on April 5, the *Everett Daily Herald* reported further regarding the fires:

DOES NOT THINK INDIANS DID IT. Superintendent Buchanan, of the Tulalip Agency, Thinks Jealous White Folks Set the Fire. Dr. Charles Milton Buchanan, superintendent of the Tulalip reservation, was in the city today, with a pair of badly burned hands, injured while endeavoring to save government property during the recent incendiary fire on the reservation in which every occupied building was set on fire. Dr. Buchanan said:

The crackling of flames aroused me at 4:30 o'clock, but I thought the noise came from falling hail. When we saw the light of flames I sprang from bed and began sweeping fire from the walls of my house with a broom. I burned my hands very badly dragging an armful of burlap saturated in oil from under my veranda.

We tried to use water on the buildings, but a messenger returned to me saying our reservoir and well on the hill, always full of water, had been drained. We had to fight flames with six small chemical extinguishers and pails of water. I was overcome by smoke and was forced to retire for a short time.

When the girls were ordered to leave their dormitory, they evacuated in exactly one minute and a half, which was the result of long and careful training received for just such emergencies.

The Indians all think none of their race committed the dastardly deed and such a deduction is probably correct, as each Indian on the reservation is related to every other Indian and they certainly would not burn their children. This appropriation of \$30,000 made by the Indian department comes as a God-send. I estimated our needs to the department at \$20,000.

I do not believe an Indian set fire to the reservation buildings, but think it arose from jealousy. We shall try to discover the offender. The torch was put to every occupied building, but in no single instance was an out-house burned.

Under the same date, the *Herald* reported:

Tulalip Gets \$30,000 for School. By a new provision in the Indian appropriation bill, as amended by the senate committee, the Tulalip reservation falls heir to \$30,000 for the erection of a ‘training school.’ This appropriation is immediately available.

Dr. Buchanan reported that a young boy, Emil Williams, with help from some of the other students, rescued the French Madonna statue which had been part of the little church for many years. The statue along with the old church bell is now located in the present-day St. Anne Catholic Mission Church, Tulalip Indian Reservation.

Following the fire the children attending the school were all sent home and a school on the reservation did not open again until 1905. This new school was one built a short distance to the west. Since this school was a federal government facility, as were all the other buildings in the compound, the newly built St. Anne Mission Church was no longer at the center as it had always been.¹²¹ The church was now separate, set further back on the hillside. The federally sponsored separation of church and state on the Tulalip Indian Reservation was now in place. Also, the school policy of *English only* was strictly enforced. Only lay teachers taught classes in the school. Dr. Charles Milton Buchanan, the medical doctor on the reservation since 1894, was appointed superintendent and the title of Indian Agent was abolished. Dr. Buchanan held this post until his death in 1920.

A plaque in front of present-day historic St. Anne Catholic Mission on the Tulalip Reservation commemorates the name of Father Chirouse as the founder of the original mission and school. The plaque, however, erroneously states that the early teachers at the mission school were Jesuit priests. There were never any Jesuit teachers at the mission school, only Oblates of Mary Immaculate, with Father Chirouse, O.M.I., the founder of the school, the first and the last. After he left, the Sisters of Providence continued as the teachers for both boys and girls until the school was completely administered by the federal government

After the destruction of Father Chirouse’s St. Anne Mission in 1902 and with the loss of his little church, a new St. Anne Mission Church opened for services in 1904 with a diocene priest Father Paul Gard as the pastor.

There is no doubt that Father Chirouse would have been pleased about a development which would occur over 98 years following his death. A major change regarding school policy was enacted into law when the United States Congress passed an act regarding Native Americans and their language. This act became law when the president affixed his signature.

¹²¹ Sister Dorothy Lentz – *The Way It Was*.

It had been the historic policy of the federal government to suppress native languages in Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) and other schools until this policy was reversed October 30, 1990 when President George H. W. Bush signed into law the Native American Languages Act, Public Law 101-477. This act was sponsored by Senator Daniel Inouye from the State of Hawaii; then approved and enacted by both the Senate and the House of Representatives. The rationale was as follows:

The status of the cultures and languages of Native Americans is unique and the United States has the responsibility to act together with Native Americans to ensure the survival of these unique cultures and languages. The policy of the United States is to preserve, protect, and promote the rights and freedom of Native Americans to use, practice and develop Native American languages. The right of Indian tribes and other Native American governing bodies to use the Native American languages as a medium of instruction in all schools funded by the Secretary of the Interior is recognized. The right of Native Americans to express themselves through the use of Native American languages should not be restricted in any public proceeding, including publicly supported education programs.

The federal policy statement defined Native Americans as American Indians, Alaska Natives, Native Hawaiians, and Native Pacific Islanders of any island in the Pacific Ocean that is a territory or possession of the United States.¹²²

Since Eugene Casimir Chirouse was so diligent in learning the language and dialects of the Salish people—the first to record their language in written form—this action by the federal government is a particularly appropriate final ending for this story of an unusual pioneer missionary priest.

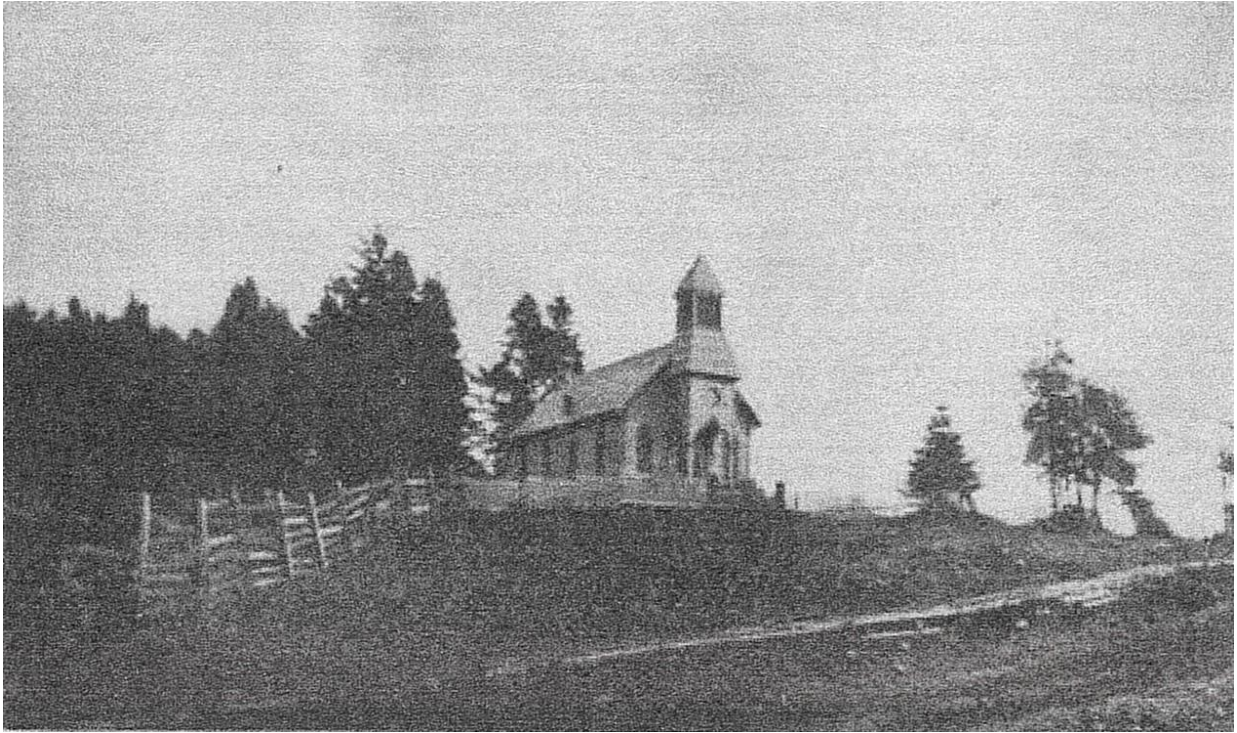
During his time, Father Chirouse referred to the language spoken by *his* people as *Snohomish*. However, decades later the language was renamed *Lushootseed*, as it is called to this day.

TO QUOTE SISTER DOROTHY LENTZ, THAT IS.....

THE WAY IT WAS!

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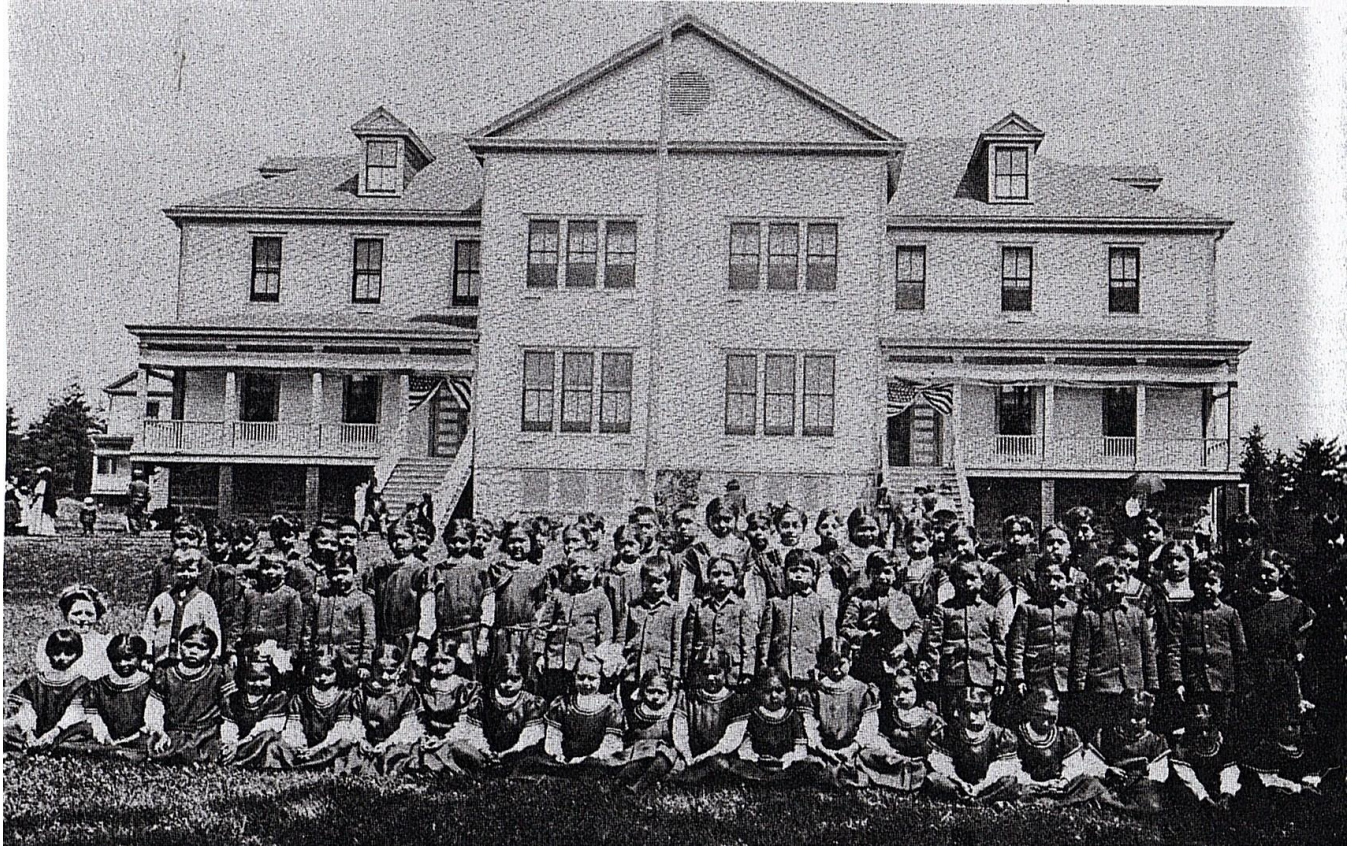
¹²² P.L. 101-477 (Oct. 30, 1990): Native American Language Act of 1990.)



THE LITTLE CHURCH ON THE HILL
St. Anne Mission Church, Tulalip Indian Reservation,
Washington State, pictured soon after it opened in 1904
with Father Paul Gard, Pastor.

From *The Indian Sentinel*, 1905-1906
Published by the Bureau of Catholic Indian Missions, Washington, D.C.

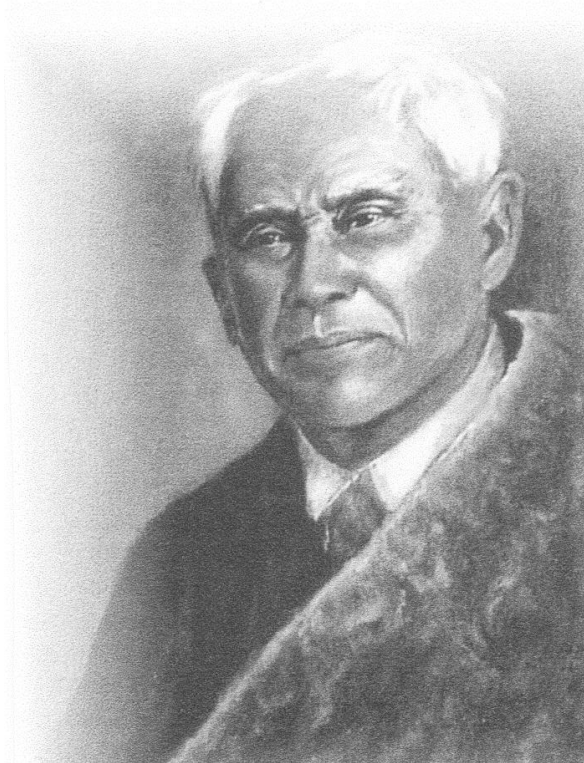




The Federal Government's Tulalip Indian Industrial School on the Tulalip Indian Reservation. The year is 1912. Note the children's clothing is uniform—the boy's clothing very military in appearance. Photo from Library of Congress collection.



The Good Old Father Eugene Casimir Chirouse (1821-1892). He is shown here sometime after 1878 when he was Superintendent of St. Mary's First Nation School in Mission, British Columbia, Canada. Photo from the website of the Oblates of Mary Immaculate, British Columbia.



Charles Jules

This is a black and white version of the painting that hangs in the chambers of the Tulalip Tribal Council on the Tulalip Indian Reservation.¹²³ Charles Jules' death certificate states that he was the son of Schi-pam-kun who was born in what is now Snohomish. Charles Jules was born in 1846 and died in 1935.

He was given the name Jules when he was baptized into the Catholic Church at St. Joseph of Newcastle Mission located at Priest Point, Olympia, Thurston County, Washington Territory. This mission was the Mother Church of the Oblates of Mary Immaculate in the territory.

He was the little 10-year old boy who welcomed Father Chirouse at the beach on Tulalip Bay in September of 1857. At the time he was orphaned and was with his uncle, Chief Franklin. Jules was also present when the treaty was signed at Mukilteo January 22, 1855.

Jules was one of the three pupils at the Tulalip Reservation school established by Father Chirouse at Ebey Slough. He moved with Father Chirouse to Priest Point and then to Mission Beach's St. Anne Mission. He was shown as Jules when Father Chirouse listed the names of his students in his official report to the Indian Agency in 1862. When the first census schedule for the tribes of the Tulalip Indian Agency was conducted in October of 1880, Charles Jules was enumerated as a Tribal Chief. He became one of the first businessmen on the reservation.

¹²³ Photo by Betty Lou Gaeng, 2007.

Railroad yard in Bourge de Peage, France shown in early times as it appeared on a historical post card. The tall light-colored building on the left displays the name of the town.



Following is a copy of the 1867 Agreement executed establishing the United States Contract School at the Tulalip Indian Reservation, Washington Territory, on behalf of the children of the Allied Tribes connected to the Tulalip Indian Agency. This Agreement between Father Chirouse and our federal government established the first United States government contract school with the American Indians.

Note that the Rev. J. B. A. Brouillet signed the Agreement as the official representative for Father Chirouse, the second party to the Agreement.

It is transcribed from a certified hand-written copy of the original Agreement. The certified copy is on record at the National Archives and Records Administration, Records Group 75, Seattle, Washington.

Betty Lou Gaeng--June 2008

THIS AGREEMENT entered into between L. V. Bogy, Commissioner of Indian Affairs of the first part, and Rev. E. C. Chirouse by his representative Rev. J. B. A. Brouillet, of the second part, WITNESSETH, That whereas by the 14th Article of the Treaty of January 22, 1855, made with the Duwamish and other allied tribes in Washington Territory, the United States, agree to establish and support for a period of twenty years, an Agricultural and Industrial School “at the general agency for the District of Puget Sound” to be free to the children of the said tribes and bands in common with those of the other tribes of said District, and whereas the said party of the second part, Superintendent of a school for said Indians, which has been in operation for several years past proposes to enter into a formal agreement in regard to the care and management of a school, such as designated by the Article of the Treaty before referred to for the benefit of said tribes, upon conditions hereafter specified.

Now this Agreement witnesseth, That the party of the first part agrees to pay to the said party of the second part, or his duly authorized representative, the sum of Five Thousand dollars annually, for the maintenance of said school, Two Thousand dollars thereof to be supplied by the “Civilization Fund,” and the remainder by an appropriation by Congress annually for that specific object; also the further sum of Two Thousand dollars, out of the “Civilization Fund” to defray the expense of completing the building designed for the use of the female scholars connected with the school, which building was authorized to be erected at the expense of the Government and intended for the use of the Sisters of Charity.

In consideration of these payments, the said second party agrees to receive at said school, children of both sexes to the number of not less than forty, belonging to the aforesaid tribes, and to give them a good education, which shall include for the boys instructions in farming, the use of

agricultural implements and mechanics tools; and for the girls instruction in the various branches of housewifery, including sewing and knitting, and what else may tend to advance the scholars in civilization; to take good care of the scholars, furnishing them with books and stationery, good clothing, board, medicine and medical attendance; to report half yearly the number of scholars in attendance, their progress, and the conditions and prospects of the school generally.

It is also distinctly understood and agreed that the Department reserves the right to annul this agreement when in its opinion it becomes expedient to do so, and the party of the second part will not be entitled to anything for damages that may result therefrom, but of any such intention this second party shall have one years notice.

In testimony whereof they have hereunto set their hands and seals this nineteenth day of February 1867.

(Signed) *LEWIS V. BOGY* (L.S.) Comm.
J. B. A. BROUILLET (L.S.)

In the presence of:
THOS. E. McGRAW
CHARLES E. CLEIN

True Copy: *J. B. A. BROUILLET*



Photo taken during Father Chirouse's final visit to see his former pupils. St. Anne Mission and School, Mission Beach, Tulalip Bay, Tulalip Indian Reservation, August 1891.