

250 Carry Street Johnston Farm – pre 1900s



Western View



Southwest View



Historic, date unknown

Description

The Johnston Farm consists of six wooden farm structures built prior to the 1900s on the original homestead on Carry Street located across the Quesnel River from Downtown Quesnel. The historic place is confined to the footprints of the buildings.

Heritage Value

The Johnston Farm is located on the flats where the Quesnel and Fraser River meet across the river from Ceal Tingley Memorial Park. This property is a physical reminder of the people who shaped the development of Quesnel. The original owners have been instrumental in the farming and forestry industries in Quesnel's early years.

The first owner of the land was Charles Danielson from Norway who arrived in Quesnel in 1860. He claimed the land to grow turnips for the miners in Barkerville, BC. This was a very successful business. In 1861 he earned \$3,000 for his crop of turnips. Charles installed a ferry on the Quesnel River where he operated a charter service. His property was the stopping place for cattle to pasture before heading to the butcher. At one time, Charles wanted to build a toll bridge between Downtown Quesnel and his homestead, but he was not given authority to construct a permanent link. In 1863, Charles sold the homestead to Thaddeus and Jerome Harper.

Thaddeus and Jerome Harper arrived in Quesnel in the early 1860s from West Virginia. They pastured cattle on this homestead which later became known as 'Fernbrook Farm'. The brothers supplied Barkerville with 1,400 head of cattle per season. The ferry and roadhouse at Fernbrook Farm were kept open year round. Jerome was also a partner in a flourmill and a sawmill in Clinton, BC with Gustavus Wright who operated the General Merchant and Fur Trading Depot where the Hudson's Bay Company Building on Carson Avenue in Downtown Quesnel is today. When a new land route was completed, Jerome and Gustavus built a sawmill at the mouth of the Quesnel River to cut timber for a new steamer 'The Enterprise'. At the time, Quesnel was a one mill town. In 1874, Jerome died and left the estate to his brother, Thaddeus, who sold it to William Albert Johnston. Thaddeus continued ranching until he moved to Victoria. Thaddeus died in 1898.

The farm is named for William and Roxalena Johnston who came to Quesnel from Quebec in the late 1880s. William was a business associate of James Reid who sold his interests in the Reid Estate in 1892 to purchase 'Fernbrook Farm' from Thaddeus Harper. He renamed the property 'Johnston Farm'. The homestead was the social center for Quesnel. Roxalena was known locally as 'Roxie'. She was a nurse and midwife who hosted many social events at the family home. William became involved in mining, a Justice of the Peace, and a Notary Public.

William and Roxie had seven children. Their sons owned and operated Johnston Brothers Motors in Quesnel. The Johnston family are recognized for their contribution to the development of the community with a bridge and subdivision named in their honour.

Character Defining Elements:

The character defining elements of Johnston Farm include:

- six remaining wooden farm structures;
- situated on the flats at the junction of the Quesnel and Fraser River;
- a reminder of pioneering families who have shaped the development of Quesnel;
- contributes positively to the community.