

697 Front Street Grierson House – 1933



Front Elevation



Rear and South Elevation



North and Rear Elevation

Description

Grierson House is a small single storey wood framed house built in 1933 located on the southwest corner of Front Street and Bowron Avenue in North Quesnel, BC. The historic place includes the building and the parcel of land it occupies.

Heritage Value

Grierson House is located in North Quesnel which is an older residential neighbourhood in the city. Over the years, major renovations have occurred, however the house supports the other buildings on the street that have experienced change. While not in its original form, the house is a physical reminder of the people who shaped the development of Quesnel.

The house is named for David Grierson who was instrumental in building an electric plant on Baker Creek that would be operated by a water wheel and a standby unit for the town. In 1929, Quesnel only had twelve street lamps of 100 watts. The proposal that David put forth was to provide a twenty-five year franchise that would be tax free for ten years, with householders paying a small annual fee for service. The Village Commissioner wanted free water for fire fighting and street washing, and twenty street lamps for a flat fee of \$50.00 per month. David accepted the deal, obtained the rights to the project, and began Quesnel Light, Heat, Power and Water Company. By the mid 1930s, Quesnel had electricity. In 1935, the company was near bankruptcy. It changed its name to Quesnel Light and Water Company and mortgaged its assets to stay in business. A generator fire broke out in 1937 at 1:30 a.m. and two hours later the standby plant at Baker Creek was operating. In 1938, the power plant was moved to a new site on Baker Creek. By 1945, 289 people were provided with electricity which grew to 2,010 customers by 1957.

Other owners of this house included D. D. and Effie Fraser during the 1940s. D. D. was from New York State and had a mining degree. He did some exploration work for the mines owned by American companies who were looking for tungsten. The companies had interests in the Tertiary and Sovereign Creek Mines. Effie arrived in Quesnel in 1928 to take the position of matron at the hospital. There were very few women in Quesnel at that time and most of them were either nurses or teachers. Effie supervised three nurses, a cook, a janitor, and a part-time laundry helper. Effie and D. D were married in 1932.

In the 1950s, the property was owned by Jack and Mary (Moffat) Eagleson. Mary was born in 1903. She was the daughter of pioneers, Harry and Jeanie Moffat. The Moffat Bridge built in 1971 is named for Mary's family. Mary worked at the Department of Public Works and mining camps. She became a hairdresser and opened her first shop in this house. She married Jack

Eagleson who was a brakeman for the Pacific Great Eastern Railway. Jack died in 1938 and Mary died in 1968 at the age of 65. The Moffat family is recognized for their contribution to the development of the community with a street named in their honour.

Character-Defining Elements

The character-defining elements of Grierson House include:

- a small single storey wood framed house of simple 1930s construction;
- a sympathetic reconstruction in 1954 after a major fire completely gutted this building;
- a covered entrance with pediment;
- large picture windows on the façade;
- a central chimney;
- a pitched gable roof;
- the original form is still evident even though alterations occurred in 1960 to accommodate commercial activities.