

108 Mile Heritage Site



Statement of Significance

Description of Historic Place

The 108 Mile Heritage Site is located midway between 100 Mile House and Lac La Hache on Highway 97 in the Cariboo region of British Columbia. The 8-acre site which borders the 108 Mile Lake and is dissected by the 108 Mile Lake Creek, contains a unique collection of 13 buildings dating from the early 1860s into the 20th century, some original to the site and others moved to the site from other locations in the region.

Heritage Value

The 108 Mile Heritage Site is significant for its unique collection of historic buildings and associated artifacts that are representative of the development of the Cariboo region since the 1860s.

The primary value of the site lies in the remaining physical evidence that it provides of various phases of post-contact regional development – particularly the gold rush of the 1860s, the construction of the Cariboo Road, the introduction of the telegraph, the servicing of the B.C. Express Company's stage line, large-scale cattle ranching, fur trapping, the introduction of one-room schools to the South Cariboo, and the start of large-scale logging and forestry operations.

The location of the original gold rush period buildings is significant since they were constructed at what was to become the junction of the main Cariboo Wagon Road and the shorter, but less accessible direct route to the gold rush towns of Likely and Horsefly. The location was also significant because of its close proximity to the creek and the lake that provided its inhabitants and their animals with drinking water.

The 108 Mile Post house which was originally built in the 1860s and later relocated to this site across what is now Highway 97, has historical value as one of the very few remaining Post houses of the gold rush era.

Several buildings that were constructed during the period when Steven Tingley was the owner of the BX Stage Lines, have value as having supported the operation of that company as well as the functioning of the telegraph service operated by Tingley's son.

The 160-foot long log barn, built in 1908 by then owner Captain Watson to house a collection of more than 100 Clydesdale horses, has value as the largest log structure of its kind left in Canada.

The 1904 altar, lectern, pews and font relocated to the site from a defunct Anglican church in the Nicola Valley have value as being typical of church furnishings of that era in the Cariboo,

The 1932 one-room schoolhouse that was moved onto the site in recent years, has value as one of the very few one-room schoolhouses remaining in the South Cariboo.

The uniquely significant Mack truck and portable sawmill that were driven to 100 Mile House in 1952, have value as marking the genesis of the world-renowned Ainsworth Logging Company,

The 108 Mile Heritage Site has distinct social value as a community landmark, which contributes significantly to the area's sense of identity.

Character-Defining Elements

The character-defining elements of the 108 Mile Heritage Site include:

- The visual impact of the cluster of historic buildings and the unobstructed view of them from Highway 97,
- The portion of the original Cariboo Wagon Road that runs alongside the property,
- The small fish-bearing 108 Mile Lake Creek that runs through the property, and provided the site with its primary source of drinking water,
- The cluster of original pre-1892 buildings that comprises one of the two core areas of the site,
- The 105 Mile McNeil Road house, including such features as its exterior and interior metal sheathing which was designed as protection against fire,
- The original wallpaper in the upstairs hallway and bedroom closets of the McNeil house,
- The collection of furnishings and household artifacts relating to the pre-1905 period that are on display in the relocated 105 Mile McNeil Road house,
- The 1908 Watson Barn, including its enormous size, its unusually heavy log structure, and its two-story design,
- The collection of farming, ranching and transportation artifacts relevant to the site's history,
- The evidence of various log construction methods utilized in the various pre-1892 buildings within the site and in the Watson Barn,
- The Mack logging truck and portable sawmill.

October 2, 2010