

## 70 Mile Roadhouse

SITE #080102

GC1TTRQ

Written & Researched by Angela Wynton

### SITE IDENTIFICATION

Nearest Community: 70 Mile House, V0K 2K0

Parking: N 51°18.268'

W 121°23.819'

Geocache Location: N 51°18.270'

W 121°23.806'

Accuracy: 3 meters

Letterboxing Clues: Refer to letterboxing clues page

UTM: East 0611757;

North 5684907 10U

Geocache altitude: 1,094 m./3,588 ft.

Overall difficulty: 1.5

Terrain difficulty: 1

(1=easiest; 5=hardest)

Date Established: 1862

Ownership: Private Property

Access: • Highway

• Year-round

• Vehicle accessible

• Located at the junction of Hwy #97 and North Bonaparte Rd.

• Please respect no parking signage and remain in public areas.

For more information or to report a problem with this site please contact:

Gold Country Communities Society  
P.O. Box 933 Cache Creek, B.C. V0K 1H0  
Tel: 1-877-453-9467

email: [info@exploregoldcountry.com](mailto:info@exploregoldcountry.com)

For more site pages go to:

[www.goldtrail.com](http://www.goldtrail.com) or  
[www.GeoTourismCanada.com](http://www.GeoTourismCanada.com)

Apply Sticker  
Here



70 Mile House, c1914

Gold Country is rich with the history of roadhouses and pioneers and 70 Mile House offers both. Mae McConnell knows, after all she recalls tales of the Cariboo Wagon Road from Clinton to 70 Mile and beyond.

After G.B. Wright and his construction crew completed the phase to 70 Mile in 1862, he and partner J.C. Calbreith were surprised to see partner Charles Adrian had already pre-empted land and was erecting a large log house. This structure would soon serve as the local hostel for the road works crew and later be bought by Wright himself in 1869.

By 1922 Matt and Isobella Porter became the managers of the busy stopping house and 70 Mile Roadhouse would cater not only to wagons but now cars and trucks. It is during their ownership that we meet Mae McConnell, the youngest of eight children.

Mae's parents, Lydia and Haveloch Bryant, arrived in the area after spending four years in Clinton. They first settled at the Dunden B.C. Rail Station at the Flying-U-Guest Ranch, the oldest established working guest ranch in Canada. Three years later, after working at the ranch for rodeo rider Jack Boyd, the Bryants



70 Mile House in 1915 with an automobile and wagon train.



**70 Mile House in 1955**

moved from the dirt floor cabin to their new home-  
stead, Willow Flats at 83 Mile.

Unfortunately, Mae's father became ill and at the young  
age of eight Mae was sent to Clinton to work for  
rancher Arte Bishop and his wife Pearl. Later, Mae would  
work at the well known Clinton Hotel, home of the  
famous Clinton Ball. By the time Mae was eighteen  
years old, and now a young women, she was back closer  
to home and working at the busy 70 Mile Roadhouse  
for Granny Porter.

Mae tells us *"It was open 24 hours. The doors were always  
open. There was a sign at the desk that said 'Just Holler', and  
in the middle of the night Granny or 'Ma' Porter, would come  
down stairs with her oil lantern. She would register the guest  
and then cook a meal."*

It was a very busy roadhouse. *"The Porters offered a bed  
and breakfast for travelers all for just a \$1.50. They served  
a buffet of porridge, bacon, eggs, potatoes, hot-cakes and  
whipped cream and coffee, and it was help yourself,"*  
remembers Mae. It was at the 70 Mile Roadhouse that  
Mae Bryant met David McConnell, grandson of Granny  
Porter. Later, as a young woman of twenty-three, Mae  
married David.

David and Mae raised their six children in 70 Mile  
House. *"I remember when there were only three people living  
on Green Lake. We used to visit Hoofy Haines on the big  
island at the top of the lake. We went by wagon; we could  
cross because there wasn't much water. We used to ride out  
to Taylor Lake to visit the Japanese families, we would go  
everywhere by horse or wagon back in those days. It was  
better in those days. I loved it then. I would go back anytime,  
if I could."*

The Bishops, Bryants and Porters have long since been  
interred alongside other Cariboo Wagon Road  
pioneers in the Clinton Pioneer Cemetery. Although  
there is no longer a 70 Mile Roadhouse, the history and  
tales, many told and untold, are still alive with local  
pioneer Mae McConnell.

The 70 Mile Roadhouse burned in 1956, six years shy of  
its 100th anniversary.

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#### BIBLIOGRAPHY & SOURCES

- (1999). The Cariboo Gold Rush: Roadhouse Proprietors. Retrieved March 9, 2009, from British Columbia Heritage  
Web site: <http://bcheritage.ca/cariboo/people/70mile.htm>  
McConnell, M. (2009). Personal Interview.