

## SITE IDENTIFICATION

Nearest Community: Ashcroft, V0K 1A0  
 Parking: N 50°41.290'  
 W 121°15.000'  
 Geocache Location: N 50°41.274'  
 W 121°14.954'  
 Accuracy: 4 meters  
 Letterboxing Clues: Refer to letterboxing clues page  
 UTM: East 0623669;  
 North 5616502 10U  
 Geocache altitude: 711 m./2,332 ft.  
 Overall difficulty: 1  
 Terrain difficulty: 2  
 (1=easiest; 5=hardest)  
 Date Established: c 1925  
 Ownership: Private Property  
 Access: • Public Road  
 • Year-round  
 • Vehicle accessible  
 • *Detailed access information on next page.*

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

For more site pages go to:  
[www.goldtrail.com](http://www.goldtrail.com) or  
[www.GeoTourismCanada.com](http://www.GeoTourismCanada.com)

Apply Sticker  
Here



The two lakes that appear before you are called Willard and Barnes, named after two early ranching families who settled in the area. These pre-1900 man-made lakes provided local ranchers with much needed irrigation water and, in the winter, ice blocks cut from the lakes filled residents' ice boxes.

Between the lakes and visible to the eye is a white cross marking the home of a small private, family graveyard. Members of the Oppenheim and Bara family have been interred here over the years.

A large wooden headstone marks the final resting place of Philip Oppenheim; a rancher who lived at the lake and died in 1925 after a lengthy illness. Born in Yale in the early 1870s, Phil was well known throughout the area since boyhood. Two other names are carved along with Phil's; those of 'Donald Bara age 4' and another Bara family member who passed away in 1937. The white cross and graveyard fence have

recently been added, along with two additional members of the Oppenheim/Bara families.

Augusta Bara, a native of Chile, arrived in British Columbia before the turn of the century and packed freight up to the miners in the gold fields. August, as he was known to the locals, packed for many years and at the end of the freight wagon era took up



*The cross which is visible across the lake.*

Picture taken at ASHCROFT - "The Gateway to the Great North" - on Sunday Jan 16<sup>th</sup> 1938, at 9 a.m. on the occasion of the Inaugural flight of the United Air Transport 'plane from ASHCROFT to FORT ST JOHN ~



Sgt. Marland | Al Johnson | W.F. Ramsford | G.H. Baillie | Judge Calder | Geo. Miller | Guy Torgson | "Ginger" Coote | Sheldon Luck | T.J. O'Neill | Geo. Murray |  
 Provincial | Proprietor | Secretary | Superintendent | County | Mayor of | M.P. for | Dist. Mgr. | Pilot for | M.P. for | M.L.A. for |  
 Police | Ashcroft Hotel | Bd. of Trade | C. P. Ry. | Court Judge | Vancouver | Cariboo | U. B. C. | U. B. C. | Kamloops | Lillooet.

Photo: Ashcroft Museum

a homestead in the Highland Valley area. August met his wife Mary, a member of the Stolo First Nation, in Chilliwack, British Columbia and together they raised eleven children. When Mary passed away in 1926 August married Philip Oppenheim's widow, Lucy. Mary and August are buried in the Ashcroft Cemetery.

Barnes Lake made headlines across the province when, in 1938, it served as Ashcroft's "winter landing field". On January 16, 1938, dignitaries, along with 200 citizens of the town, gathered at Barnes Lake to witness the Inauguration of United Air Transport service between Ashcroft and Fort St. John. The ceremony concluded at 9:30 am and ten minutes later a five passenger Waco cabin plane lifted off the lake with pilots Sheldon Lucke and Ginger Coote at the controls.

The lakes continue to be an integral part of the local communities. Both lakes provide an opportunity for a relaxing day of fishing for annually stocked rainbow

trout. Avid fishermen advise that the lakes are best fished in the spring right after the ice comes out; however, you will find casual fishermen enjoying a day in the sun all summer long.

A small B.C. Forest Service Campground entices you to enjoy the peace of the outdoors on your next visit. Barnes Lake also hosts an exciting season of 'Cars on Ice' racing through the colder winter months. Whether your passion is history, scenery or recreation this site has something to offer!

**Detailed access information:**

- From Ashcroft, follow Hwy#97C south to Barnes Lake Rd.
- The gravesite is on private property and public access is not permitted.
- Please respect local land owners' privacy.

**BIBLIOGRAPHY & SOURCES**

Airline Inaugurated from here to the Yukon. (1938, January 21). *Ashcroft Journal*.  
 Bara Family History. In *Ashcroft Museum & Archives*. Ashcroft, BC.