

Granite Creek Land Titles File (1907-1958)

Some Comments

The BC Archives has a Granite Creek Land Titles File of 154 pages covering 1907 to 1958. The documents break down into several major categories.

1907-09 Survey of DL 394 (now the Rice property) regarding the pre-emption of the property by Alice James to establish the boundaries. This survey set aside the land for the Granite Creek Cemetery.

1921-22 Survey in connection with establishing the boundaries of the 30 lots that make up the "Townsite of Granite Creek" (which is the name used throughout all the Government documents) in preparation for an Auction held in 1922 at which the Government hoped to sell off all the lots. There is little information about any actual sales, however, so it appears to have been a dismal failure.

1927-28 there was a flurry of activity and correspondence regarding inquiries to purchase lots in the townsite, during the heyday of Blakeburn. By the end of this decade a grand total of four lots had entered private hands. It was clear that previously nobody owned the land, and no taxes were ever collected, although the FP Cook Estate did voluntarily submit \$1000 in property taxes for the land at Granite Creek on which they had made improvements, likely to show they had a financial interest in the site. The improvements were held by the Crown "in trust" for those who built them, and some were actually compensated when the land was sold into private ownership.

In 1933 a company from California inquired about purchasing the entire townsite and was given a price of \$3,545.00 not including the four lots which were in private hands, and this failed to proceed. 1938-47 three of the lots in private ownership reverted to the Crown for non-payment of taxes. There does not appear to be any information on the 4th.

In 1953 a document states that ALL of the lots were owned by the Crown, and there was a proposal to terminate the townsite. One document gives exquisite detail of "the four Bills" (actually William and one Wilfred) who were squatting on the land, only one of which (Billy Dixon) ever applied for a permit to use it.

In 1956 the Mullen Coal Co. offered to purchase most or all of the townsite to establish a coal processing facility, and this prompted another flurry of activity proposing to destroy everything that remained, setting aside four building lots, having the Mullen Co. relocate Mr. Dixon's cabin to the lot of his choice, but the Government took too long and Mullen cancelled the application.

The GCPS archive file on this site, "Land_Ownership_Records-1922-1953.pdf", contains the following letters:

June 19, 1922 - Government land auction

July 12, 1933 - Superintendent of Lands describes the subdivision

July 17, 1933 - Superintendent lists 4 private owners

January 26, 1953 - Superintendent notes that all lots are now in the Crown

June 30, 1953 - Land Inspector notes that "the townsite was not a ghost town as expected but that there were four elderly men in residence in some of the buildings." He describes these gentlemen and their circumstances.