

CHAPTER FIVE

FORT ALEXANDRIA TO QUESNEL



Stagecoach on the Cariboo Waggon Road, early 1900s

Safety is an important concern in all outdoor activities. No guidebook can alert you to every hazard or anticipate the limitations of every reader. Therefore, the descriptions of roads, trails, routes, and natural features in this book are not representations that a particular place or excursion will be safe for your party. When you follow any of the routes described in this guide, you assume responsibility for your own safety. Under normal conditions, such excursions require the usual attention to traffic, road and trail conditions, weather, terrain, the capabilities of our party, and other factors. Keeping informed on current conditions and exercising common sense are the keys to a safe, enjoyable outing.

New Pathways to Gold Society

This guide is funded by the New Pathways to Gold Society (NPTGS) as part of its Cariboo Waggon Road Restoration Project initiative.

We acknowledge that much of the land discussed in this chapter is located on the traditional, unceded territory of the Secwepemc (Shuswap) and Tsilhqot'in (Chilcotin) Nations, which includes Tsq'Escen' (Canim Lake Band), Stswecem'c Xgat'tem First Nation (Canoe Creek/Dog Creek Bands), Xat'sull First Nation (Soda Creek Indian Band), T'excelc (Williams Lake First Nation), ?Esdilagh First Nation (Alexandria Band), Esk'etemc (Alkali Lake) and Tl'esqox (Toosey Band).

On this section of the route, most of the Cariboo Waggon Road is either underneath Highway 97, obliterated due to agriculture on private lands, inaccessible through First Nations Reserve Lands or simply disappeared through loss of use. Through this section, the differences between the **Main Route** and the **Alternate Route** are minor, though we still make the distinction between the two routes.

The route for cycling and trekking includes a few CWR remnants, in addition to ATV trails, as well as secondary roads in order to get the cyclist or trekker off Highway 97 whenever possible. This is designated as the **Main Route**. The option for motorists is Highway 97, the **Alternate Route**.

Ground truthing is **not complete**. There is a lot to do in this area in terms of permitting, trail building, permissions, etc, in order to create a through route off the highway for cyclists and trekkers.

Distance from Fort Alexandria to Quesnel: by bicycle or on foot via **Main Route** – 50 km

Distance from Fort Alexandria to Quesnel: by motor vehicle via **Alternate Route** – 53 km

Distances do not include side trips.

Cell service: There is coverage throughout this section of the CWR.

Elevations: Fort Alexandria: 490 m, Australian: 535 m, Kersley: 564 m, Quesnel: 475 m; the highest elevation is a short stretch along Red Bluff Road, at 642 m.

Road surfaces: pavement, hard packed gravel, dirt.

Connections: The closest centre to Fort Alexandria is Quesnel (53 km).

Health Care: GR Baker Memorial Hospital, Quesnel

Modern photographs by the author unless otherwise noted. Historic photographs from B.C. Archives unless otherwise noted. District Lot surveys from B.C. government website, specifically the application GATOR: Government Access Tool for Online Retrieval. Online maps from Google Earth.

IMPORTANT NOTE

Actual mileages in the guide may differ between your pedometer, your cycle computer, apps (such as GAIA, or Relive), our vehicle odometer, online map sources and official highway mileages. Keep this in mind when using our guide for your travels. Many variables come into play, depending on what side of the road you ride on, GPS signals, bumps, ditches and construction. This applies to country roads, two-lane tracks, as well as highways. It is not an exact science.

HISTORY OF THIS SECTION OF THE ROUTE

The route north from Fort Alexandria to Quesnel was practically the last section of the CWR to be completed. It had become an unpopular route since the first sternwheeler began carrying passengers from Soda Creek to Quesnel in 1863, bypassing the land route and now crumbling Fort Alexandria. (The owner of the sternwheeler was none other than Gustavus Blin Wright, pioneer road builder and entrepreneur, who had built much of the CWR.)

Surveyor and engineer, Walter Moberly, wrote about this section of the CWR: *“In 1864, I was employed by the Colonial Government as their engineer to go to Cariboo and locate the northerly portion of the wagon road from Fort Alexandria... to Richfield... I constructed a temporary sleigh road from Fort Alexandria to Quesnelle Mouth.”*

The “sleigh road” was eventually considered rough and unsafe, so a standard road was constructed in 1865. Meanwhile, the final lap from Cottonwood to Barkerville was completed, also in 1865.

There was now a through route – by land – all the way to Barkerville, suitable for stagecoaches and freight wagons, opening up this whole region to more settlement and ultimately, more development.

Unlike the complicated network of roads detailed in Chapter Four, the route north through this country was straightforward. The fact that Highway 97 is built right overtop of the original road in many areas (with only the twists and turns straightened out) is a testament to the suitability of this route to the gold fields.

The same pattern developed here as it had further south: land was pre-empted, ranches were established and roadhouses were built to attract the trade of travelers going up and down the CWR. While many of the ranches are still in operation today, few of the roadhouses are still standing, most having been consumed by fire, or in one case, by flood. A sad example of changing times is one of the last roadhouses standing beside the highway with ads for truck sales emblazoned on its old exterior walls.

In the final 10 miles heading to Quesnel, the CWR travelled close to the Fraser River. There was also a secondary route further inland that passed by Dragon Lake. Neither of these routes is passable today. While Red Bluff Road and Richbar Road were constructed in later years, it is close to the original road, so we have chosen this route to continue our journey north to Quesnel, while bypassing Highway 97.



Hay fields are a common sight along the Cariboo Waggon Road in summer

IMPORTANT NOTE

The route in this chapter continues the mileage from Lillooet to Clinton, (described in Chapter One), Clinton to 100 Mile House (Chapter Two), 100 Mile House to 150 Mile House (Chapter Three), and 150 Mile House to Fort Alexandria (Chapter Four).

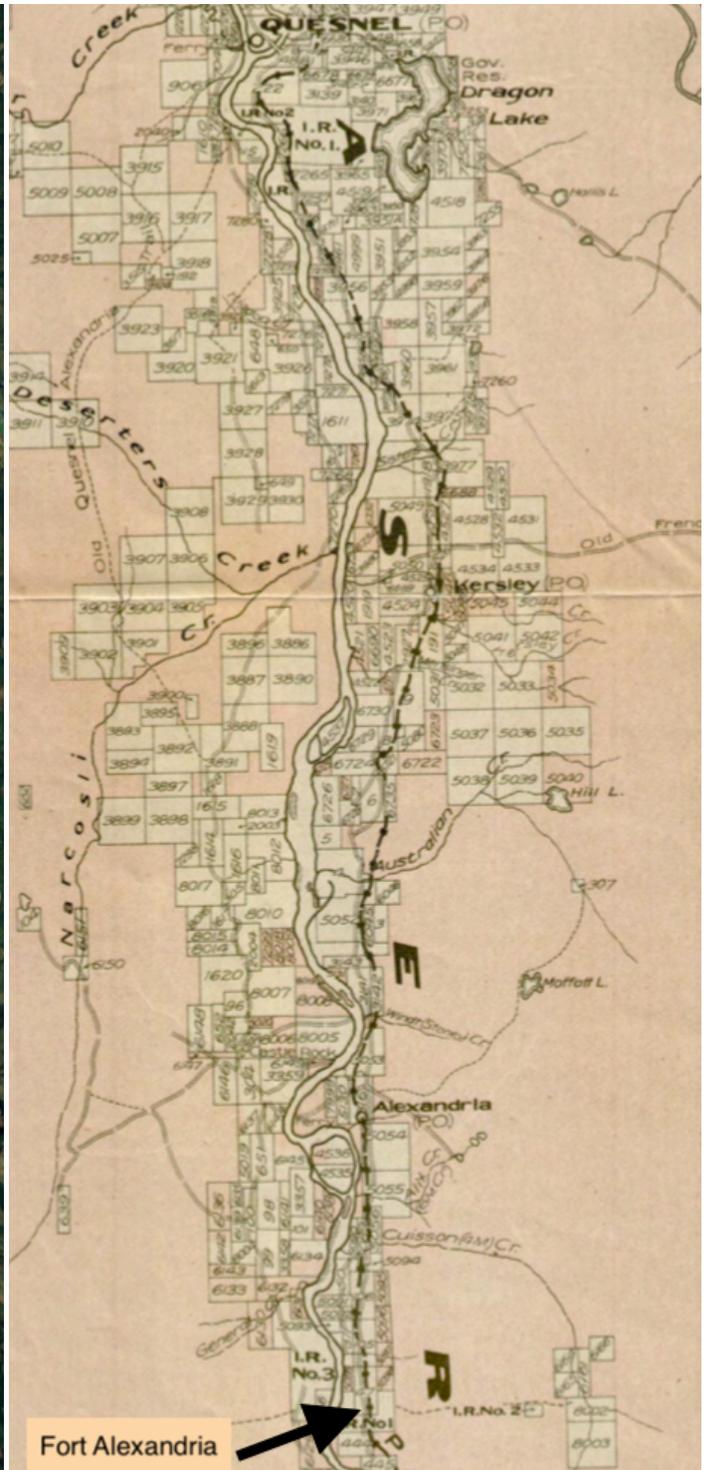
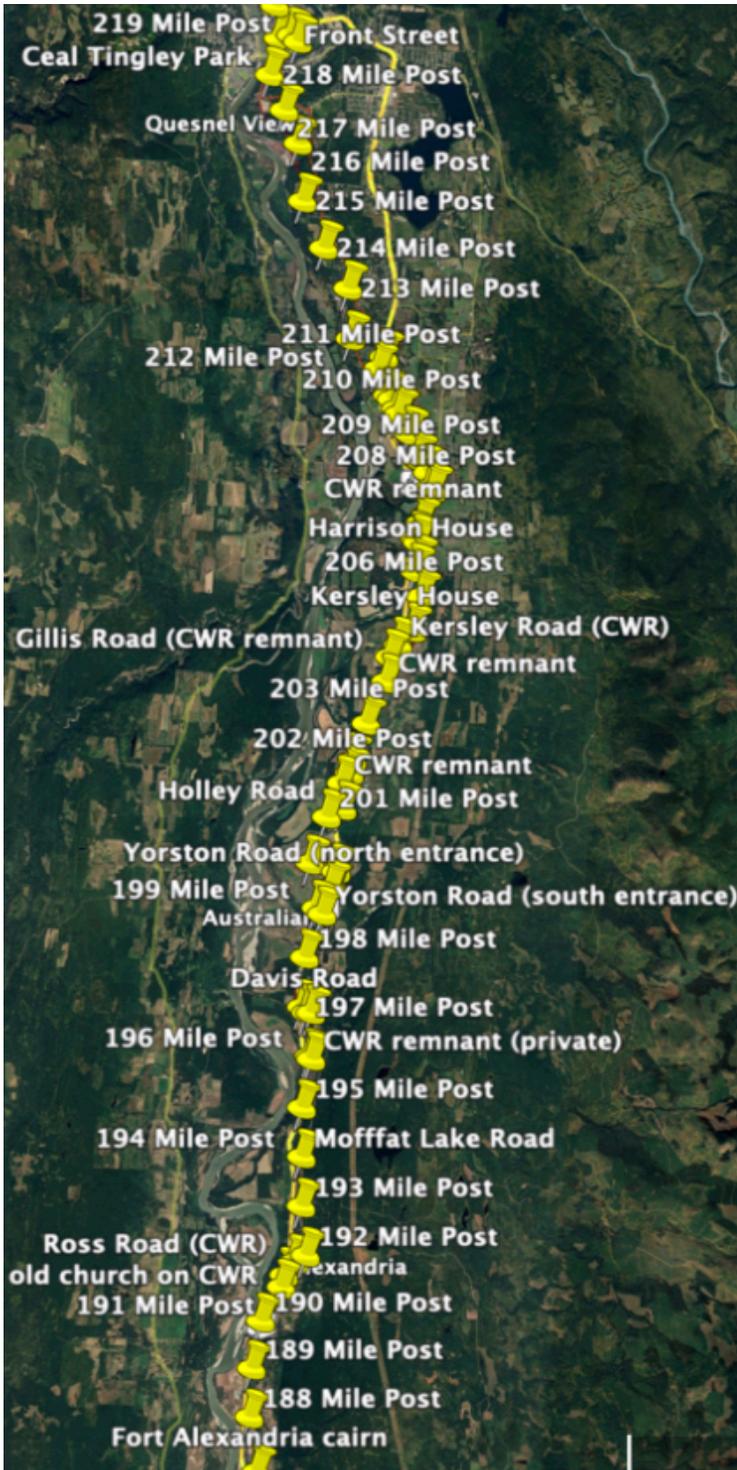
WARNING FOR ALL CAMPERS & TRAVELERS

You cannot safely drink water from lakes, ponds, streams, springs, rivers and creeks in BC, as they are likely contaminated by the Giardia parasite. You must boil or filter the water.

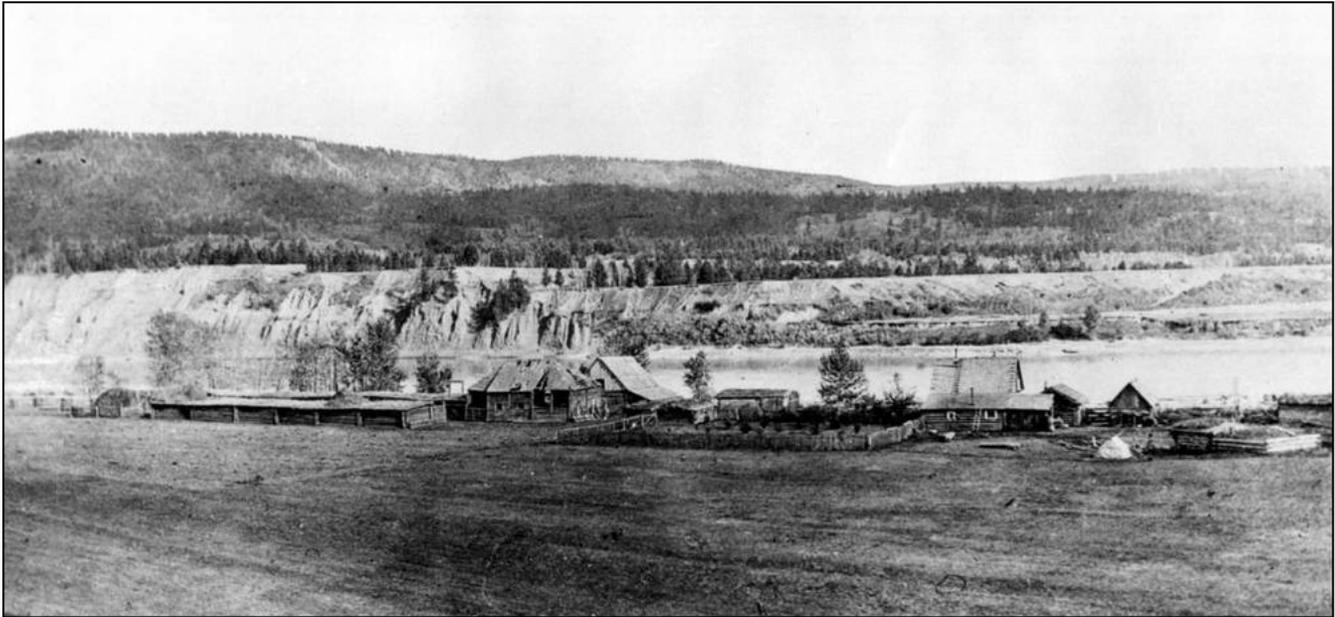
If you think you have become infected with this parasite, visit:

<https://www.healthlinkbc.ca/healthlinkbc-files/giardia-infection>, or check into the nearest health clinic.

THE JOURNEY AHEAD



Left: 2022 aerial map of Fort Alexandria to Quesnel along Highway 97 noting CWR remnants and mile posts
 Right: 1914 pre-emption map of Fort Alexandria to Quesnel highlighting district lots, railway and CWR



The remains of Fort Alexandria in the early 1900s

As described at the end of the last chapter, Fort Alexandria was an important historic area for colonial British Columbia. However, by the time of the Gold Rush, the buildings were already in a sad state of disrepair: *“Fort Alexandria, a half ruined cluster of log dwellings roofed with mud, stands on the right (west) bank of the Fraser, on a bench about fifty feet above the river and 1470 feet above the level of the sea...”*

Lt. Henry Spencer Palmer, Royal Engineers, 1863

The cairn we see today on the west side of the highway represents the site; it isn't in the right place. As Lt. Palmer pointed out, it was originally quite close to the Fraser River. The fort also alternated from one side of the river to the other over the years. It was a small town that included a trading post, stables, living quarters and a gristmill and granary just north of the fort at Four Mile Creek. It was a natural hub for the miners in the early years of the gold rush, but once the CWR was built, the fort had become redundant and closed in 1867. Some of the fort's employees stayed to farm the land and live in what was left of the buildings. Nothing remains of the fort today.

km 319.7

Elevation: 490 m

Fort Alexandria. Continue north along Highway 97.

km 322

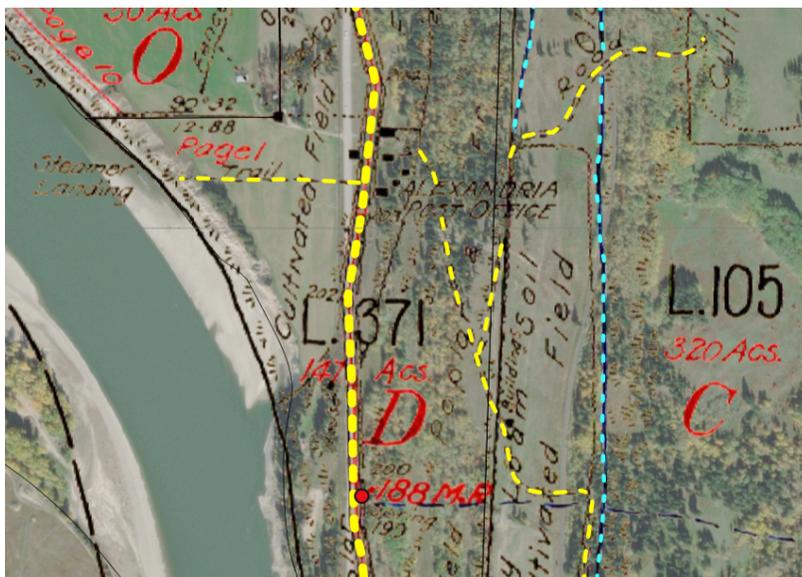
Elevation: 462 m

Slightly north of the 188 Mile Post is the old, dilapidated Anders Roadhouse on the east/right side of the highway. This was once a thriving roadhouse, (opened in 1896), owned and operated by William and Annie Anders, from Sheffield, UK. Guest rooms were well appointed, comfortable and attractive. Renowned poet, Pauline Johnson stayed here in 1904. Before his years as an MLA, journalist and historian, Louis LeBourdais began his career as a telegraph operator at this roadhouse.

The Alexandria post office was also here, and the Anders operated a store that was popular with the local First Nations community. While they had no children of their own, Annie's great nephew and his fiancé came (from Yorkshire) to join them at the roadhouse. The family grew over the years, and the property eventually passed to Annie's great nephew's wife, Ada, who came back to run the farm with her second family, after Annie and William's deaths in the 1920s. The farm was sold in 1991. Now the old roadhouse sits empty, abandoned and derelict, its only use as a signboard for a truck dealership.



The old 188 Mile Anders Roadhouse sits derelict and forgotten today (photo contributed)



Aerial map of 188 Mile overlaid on original survey map (Tenorex GeoServices, Quesnel)

km 324.4

Elevation: 486 m

190 Mile Post. Big hill with no shoulder.

km 324.8

Pullout on west/left side of Highway 97.

km 325.8

Elevation: 553 m

Junction. Church Road on west/left side of the highway. This was originally 191 Mile Post of the CWR, which took a jog along here. Take a short side trip along the original CWR at this junction. The road goes past a 1940s era church and then comes to a dead end on private property, so you need to turn back and continue along the highway. The CWR picks up again at Ross Road in 1 km.



Our Lady of Perpetual Help was built thanks to a local donation of land in 1940



Common wood nymph butterfly on salsify (aka oyster plant) seen here in summer 2020

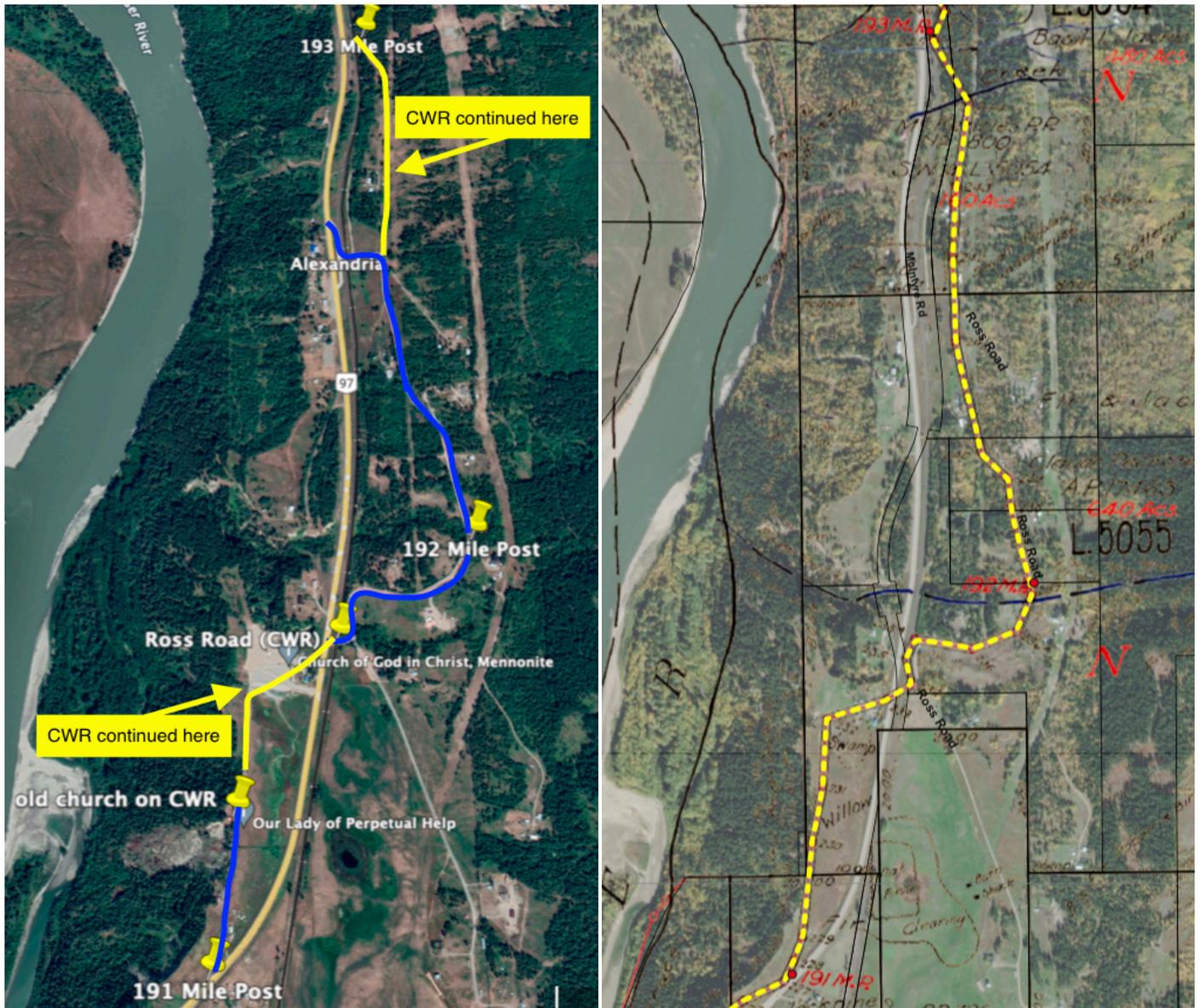


West side of the Fraser River viewed from the church grounds

km 326.7

Elevation: 550 m

Junction. Ross Road. The CWR picks up again here. Turn east/right, cross the railway tracks and follow this CWR remnant for 1.65 km.



Left: 2022 aerial map with CWR remnants in blue and yellow: blue is traversable, yellow is not accessible today
Right: 1914 CWR survey map with overlaid modern aerial map (Tenorex GeoServices, Quesnel)

Lots of chicory flowering here. While many consider it an invasive species (native to the Old World), it is beneficial to bees, due to its long blooming period, so it is well recognized as a honey plant. It's also grown commercially in the UK and Germany as a coffee substitute, in addition to having many uses as a medicinal herb for indigenous peoples around the world where it has naturalized.

km 327.8

Junction. Alexandria School Road. Turn left and head down to Highway 97.

At the end of Ross Road (CWR), the road turns west/left and becomes Alexandria School Road. On the right is the old Alexandria Elementary School, built in the Quonset hut style, and straight ahead is the CWR continuing through the grass and trees. Not accessible today as it is private property.

km 328

Junction. Highway 97. Turn right and continue north.

km 329.5

Moffat House and Lansdowne Farm property (District Lot 316) is on both sides of the highway here. Lansdowne Road on east/right side.

The Moffat family are well known pioneers/settlers in this area from the 1880s right through to the present day. Harry Moffat and his wife, Jeannie Roddie, owned and operated the farm and roadhouse for many generations along with their nine children. Harry was known as an excellent stage driver and eventually ran his own business freighting hay and feed to Barkerville. He also built many of the structures on the ranch, including the first roadhouse in 1883, and then a second roadhouse in 1902, in response to the increased traffic along the Cariboo Road, with the building of the Grand Trunk Pacific Railway. Moffat took down the old 1883 house and reconstructed it behind the new roadhouse in 1904.

Jeannie had the care of the house and children, a challenging job with nine children born over a period of 15 years. It was decided to school them in Quesnel, which meant another home there, where she lived with them during the school year and then brought them back to the farm in the summer months.



Moffat House and Lansdowne Farm in the late 1990s

The original 1883 house can still be seen attached to the back of the “newer” roadhouse from 1902

Many Chinese labourers worked at the Moffat House and Lansdowne Farm over the years. The longest remaining employee was Sidoo, who was well versed in both ranch work and housekeeping.

Jeannie and Harry were well known for keeping a daybook of all their activities at the roadhouse and farm throughout the years. It makes for fascinating reading today:

“January 2, 1894

“Mr. Middleton, Mr. Craig, Mr. Olson, Mr. McLeod and John McInnes all came here this morning and drank whisky and ate cake so they could not see straight. JM”

“October 17, 1904

“Mr. John Bowron and Mr. Bonner, to stopping overnight

“One horse, hay and grain.... \$2.00

“Two men to 4 meals and 2 beds... \$3.00. HM”

Harry Moffat may have been one of the more influential landowners in the region, as he managed to convince his local MLA, and hence the government, to relocate the Cariboo Waggon Road slightly east of

his most productive fields. Looking at an aerial map of the property today, it's easy to see a distinct road running right through a large, green field. One may surmise that this was the original route of the CWR. The relocation of the CWR took place from 1895-96. As the survey maps we are working with today are dated 1914, we can assume that "new" route was the one surveyed in 1914.

Descendants of Harry and Jeannie Moffat still own and operate Lansdowne Farm. The old roadhouse is one of the very few still in use today.

km 330

194 Mile Post. Junction. Moffat Lake Road on east/right side leads to Alix Lakes Falls. This would make a lovely side trip off Highway 97. Continue north.



Moffat Lake Road (side trip mileage not included) heads over the railway; chicory is a common wildflower here



The least chipmunk is seen throughout the CWR

They are commonly found in open areas such as pastures, forest edges, rock cliffs and river bluffs.

km 330.9

Alexandria Ferry Road North on west/left side. Continue north on Highway 97.

This used to be a circular route, whose southern entrance was appropriately called Alexandria Ferry Road South. From either end you could travel to a reaction ferry, which crossed over to the west side of the Fraser. The ferries are long gone now, their hulks decaying on the eastern banks of the river in the 1980s. The circular route was closed in 2003, leaving just the bare bones of roads at both ends, still with their names intact. The lower road is south of the Moffat/Lansdowne Farm, but now peters out after it leads to private property.

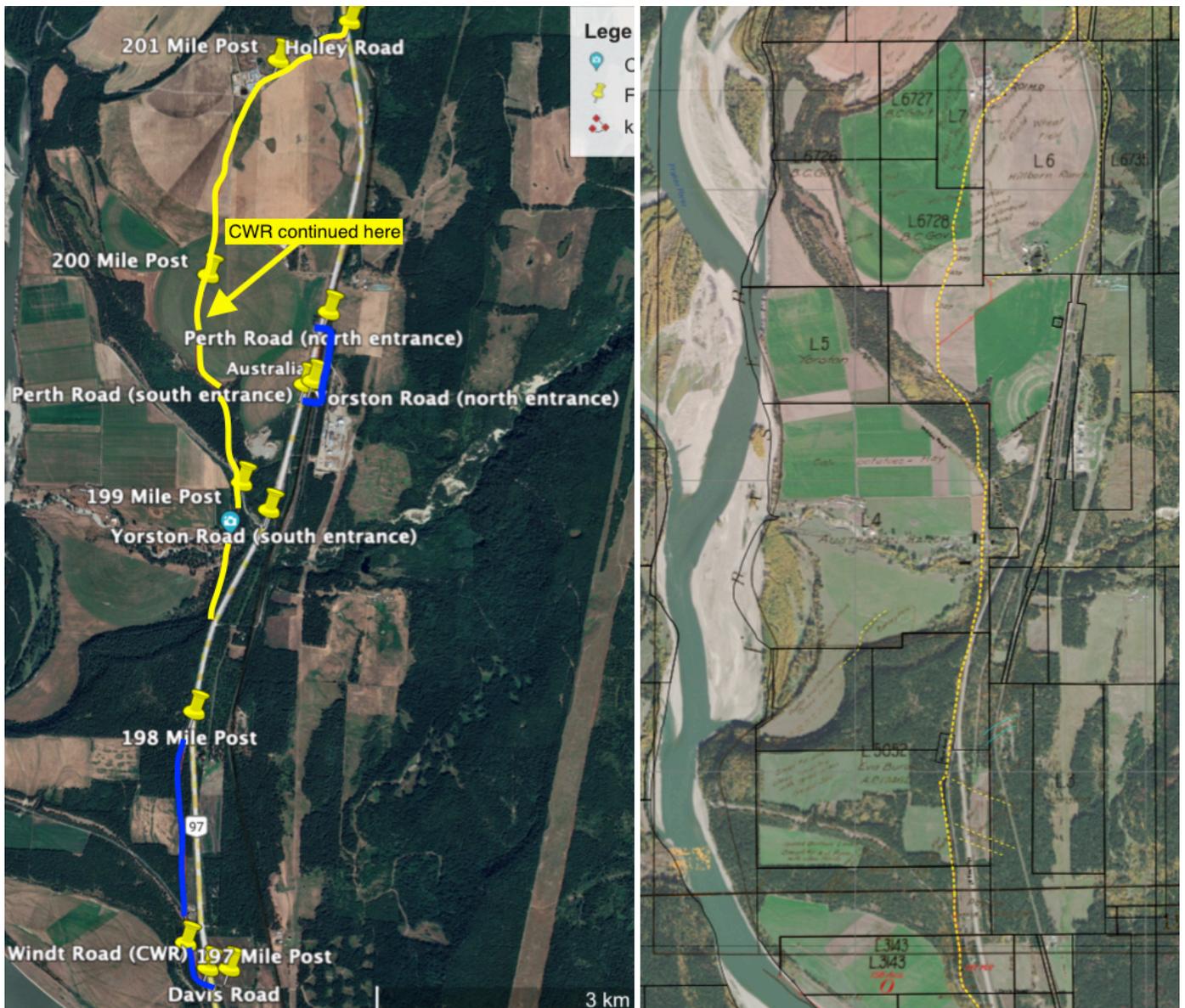
km 333.2

Driveway on west/left side of highway leads to private property. New research indicates this was originally part of the CWR. The old road ran slightly west of present day Highway 97. The 196 Mile Post was about 120 m along this road.

km 334.8

Junction. Windt Road. Turn west/left and follow north for 1.8 km to Australian Rest Area, which is right off Highway 97.

Windt Rd is a remnant of the CWR and is named for the Windt family who settled here during the Gold Rush. If you need accommodation, there is an RV campground on east/right side of Highway 97.



Left: 2022 aerial map with CWR remnants in blue and yellow: blue is traversable, yellow is not accessible today
Right: 1914 CWR survey map overlaid with modern aerial map (Tenorex GeoServices, Quesnel)

km 336.6

Australian Rest Area and Highway 97. Turn north/left and continue on Highway 97.

The CWR ran along what is now the highway for the next 1 km. As the highway today begins a very slight turn to the east, the CWR continued straight through the Australian Ranch, the Hillborn Ranch and other private properties.



Andrew Olsen and John Yorston demonstrating the trundle-barrow used to transport supplies

Andrew Olsen came to the Cariboo from his native Sweden via Australia. In 1863, he joined up with George Cook, William and Stephen Downes, and together they loaded all their possessions on two homemade trundle-barrows and headed north to establish a farm and roadhouse. The first couple of years were grim as the land was barely arable and winter food consisted of turnips, beans and rabbits. Their first crops were wheat and potatoes, but as they grew more and more produce they began travelling to the mining camps with a two-wheel cart, selling fresh vegetables to the scurvy ridden miners.

By 1872, Olson and Stephen Downes were the two surviving partners. Cattle and milk cows were introduced to the farm, as the business grew and prospered over the years. The ranch was a BX horse-change stop for many years and the roadhouse was popular with travelers, with a kitchen staffed by Chinese cooks and housekeeping duties performed by First Nations women.

A few years after the death of Stephen Downes, Andrew Olsen sold the ranch to the Yorston brothers (also two bachelors) in 1903. Olsen was persuaded by his brother to return to Sweden, after 40 years in the Cariboo. Local stories tell of his leaving Quesnel with most of the population seeing him off, but that in less than a year, he had died of homesickness.

The Yorstons continued with the ranch, marrying and bringing up more generations who ran the business. Sadly, the beautiful roadhouse (itself a “new” building constructed in 1906 after fire had destroyed the previous structure) succumbed to a calamitous mudslide in 1955. It was a catastrophic scenario of high snow pack bringing elevated water levels, in combination with heavy spring rains, which triggered heavy flooding that tore through Australian Creek. The mudslide ripped the roadhouse off its foundation and carried it across the road. While it meant the demise of the roadhouse, the action of the mud and the building saved the other homes owned by various members of the Yorston family.

The Australian Ranch is still owned and operated by the Yorston family today. One of their more recent enterprises is a nine-acre corn maze that operates from July to October every year. For more information, see <http://www.australianranch.ca>.



Australian Ranch, early 1900s

The beautiful roadhouse in the background was virtually destroyed by a mudslide in 1955.

km 338.5

Junction. Yorston Road (south entrance) on west/left side. This is now the entrance for the Australian Ranch. During the Gold Rush era, the road came up through the property from the south.

km 339.4

Junction. Perth Road (south entrance). Turn east/right and continue .5 km along what is probably the old Cariboo Highway.



Amy on Perth Road, checking original survey map

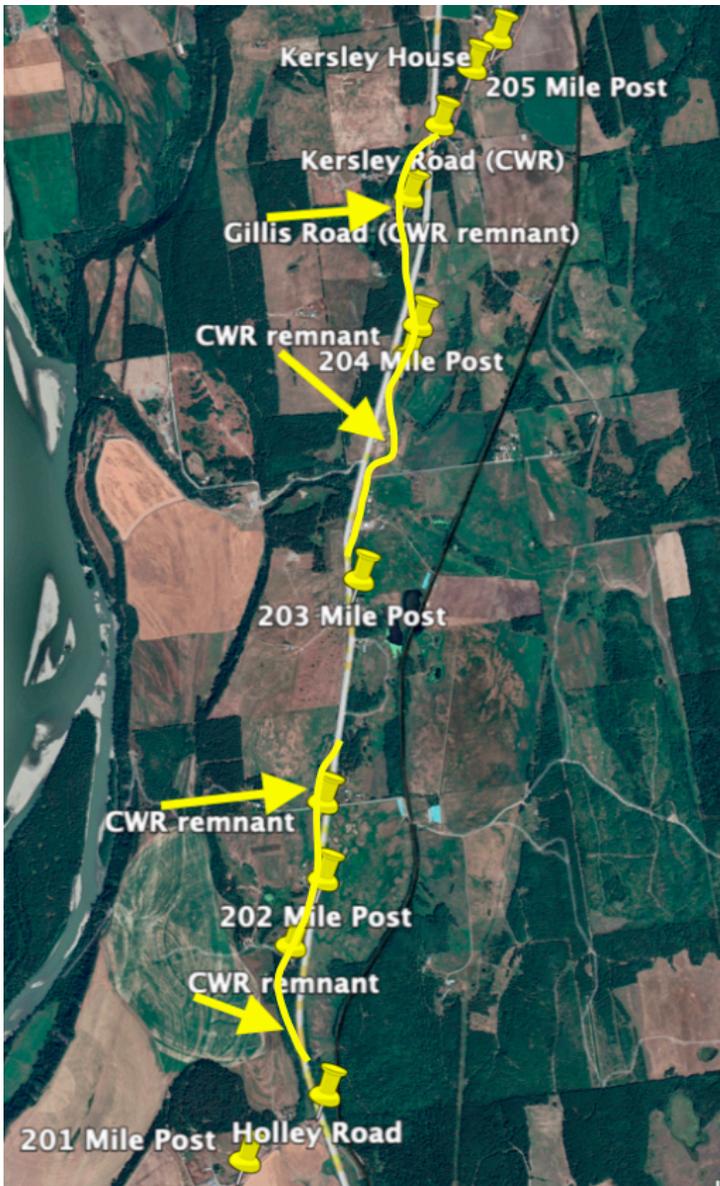
km 339.6

At end of Perth Road, turn right onto Highway 97 and continue north.

Perth Road offers some shade away from the heat of the open highway, thanks to the quaking aspens growing along its eastern side. At this point, the main route of the CWR headed through what are now large hay fields on the west side of Highway 97. The road is obliterated due to the cultivated fields, but Holley Road (coming up) is a remnant of the original road.



Richard with one of our new CWR maps from Tenorex Services, Quesnel: an original survey map with overlaid modern aerial map. This gives us the ability to pinpoint the original road with much greater accuracy. The hay field behind Richard was the original location of the CWR around the 200 mile post.



Left: 2022 aerial map with CWR remnants in yellow, which are NOT accessible today
 Right: 1914 CWR survey map overlaid with modern aerial map (Tenorex GeoServices, Quesnel)

km 341.9

Junction. Holley Road on left. At about .6 km along the road (which now leads to a ranch) was the 201 Mile Post. Highway 97 has some shoulder on both sides. Lots of hay fields on either sides of highway.

As the highway heads towards Kersley there are a few CWR remnants but none of them are developed and some pass through private property. Explore these sections ***only if you check in with local ranch or other property owners. Ground-truthing has not been completed in this area.***



Watch for livestock as the CWR passes through various ranches along its route



If you are cycling any part of the CWR and sharing it with equestrians, here are some friendly reminders to keep everyone and their animals safe:
“Say hello! Communicate with the rider to see if it is safe to pass. The horse rider will know if their horse is calm enough for you to pass safely. If the horse is frightened, take off your helmet and get off your bike to show you are a person and not a predator.”

More info regarding safety and etiquette can be found here:

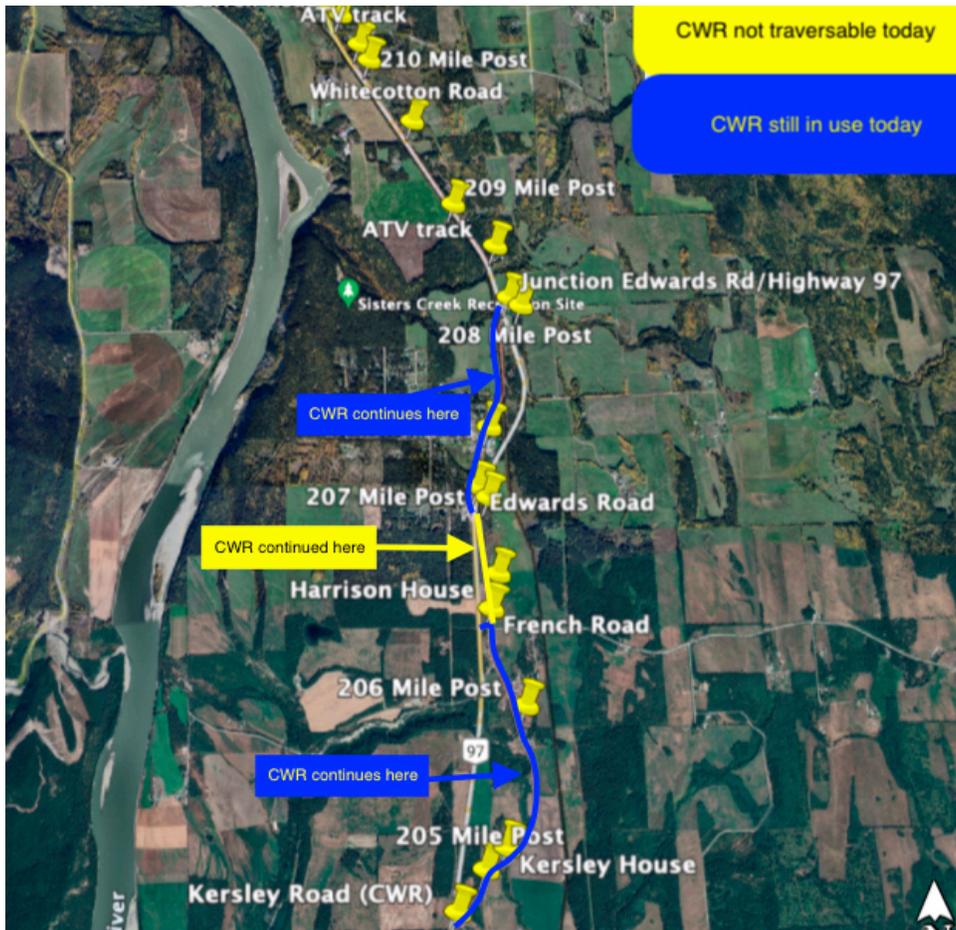
<https://hcbc.ca/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/Trail-Etiquette-Motorbike.pdf>



Horses are a common sight along much of the CWR route

km 347.5

Junction. Kersley Road. Turn east/right and head north. Kersley Road is the CWR.



Aerial map showing CWR remnants:
Blue routes are still in use today; yellow route is not traversable today.

km 348.1

On left is the site of Kersley House, a popular stopping place for travelers along the CWR from the early 1900s into the 1930s. There was also a post office on the premises, in service until 1950. The property was known for its excellent cooking and hospitality, as well as large harvests of wheat and oats. Sadly, the original house burned to the ground in 1955. The property is still a working ranch today.

km 350.2

Junction. French Road. Turn left, then quick right and continue north on highway.

The CWR originally continued straight ahead. Today, the road comes to a dead end in the driveway of an attractive, historic roadhouse, originally called Harrison House or Barlow House, visible from the highway.

km 350.6

The Harrison/Barlow House and other ranch buildings (and horses) can be seen on the east/right side of the highway, along with the CWR, which appears as a driveway in front of the house.



The Harrison/Barlow House is one of the few historic roadhouses still in use today
The CWR is now a driveway, seen here passing in front of the house.

km 351.2

Junction. Frontage road on west/left side of the highway. Here you will find the “Alamo Diner and RV”, a small complex, which includes a café, motel, RV park, gas and diesel bar, laundry facilities and general store. Turn west/left and head north along this frontage road (signed Edwards Road). Or stop for a meal, accommodation or a few grocery items, before continuing your journey north. Enjoy this 2 km bypass of Highway 97 through the community of Kersley.

As the road makes a slight jog (*just before* the Kersley Volunteer Fire Department on the right), it becomes a CWR remnant, which later became the first Cariboo Highway in the late 1940s, now known as “the old Cariboo Highway”.

If you turn and look south across Highway 97, you can see the old, paved highway heading off into the trees. You can imagine this slight jog of Edwards Road connecting perfectly with the old highway, which was the CWR. It originally continued in an almost straight beeline to the Harrison/Barlow House.



The CWR heading **south** through Kersley, past the Harrison/Barlow House, 1947



The same view today: the CWR, aka “old Cariboo Highway” heading **south** through the trees
The Harrison/Barlow House is just out of sight; Highway 97 at right.

km 352.3

Railway crossing.

km 353

Junction. Edwards Road and Highway 97. Cross highway when safe and continue north for a few hundred metres, to driveway just past Pettyjohn Road.

The CWR originally crossed the small creek near here and made a few jogs. A portion of Pettyjohn Road was the CWR.

km 353.5

Turn right into driveway next to Pettyjohn Road. You will see an ATV track next to the highway. Take it and head north for about 1.4 km. This ATV track keeps cyclists and trekkers off Highway 97. It will cross a few driveways and then become Whitecotton Road.



Pettyjohn Road; ATV track comes in off a driveway just north of this road

km 354.9

ATV track joins/becomes Whitecotton Road. Continue north.

km 355.8

Whitecotton Road turns back into ATV track. Continue north.

km 356.1

Junction. Durrell Road, and end of ATV track. Cross Durrell Road and rejoin Highway 97.

The CWR jogged back and forth in this area. In a few spots, it's right underneath Highway 97, while in other spots it heads through hay fields or other ranch lands west of today's highway. Across from Durrell Road is Dog Prairie Road, a CWR remnant which dead ends in a field.

km 357.4

Junction. Red Bluff Road. Turn west/left and follow .4 km to T-junction. The 211 Mile Post was a few hundred metres south of this junction along the north end of Dog Prairie Road.

km 357.8

T-junction. Red Bluff Road heads north/right. Turn right and follow Red Bluff Road as it passes through small acreages and neighbourhoods on a bluff above the Fraser River for the next several km.

The CWR is mostly overgrown, obliterated or inaccessible throughout this area, as it heads in a northerly direction towards Quesnel. If you follow the route of the railway on an aerial map, it is the general path of the CWR, though the old road made a lot more jogs as per road building of the period.

The only other option is Highway 97 with lots of traffic and narrow shoulders both directions. Red Bluff Road has no shoulder but little traffic, and all of it local. Research indicates construction of this route because of sloughing land closer to the original route, which is near the Fraser River for much of its length.

Red Bluff Road used to be the old Cariboo Highway until Highway 97 was constructed. It winds its way from the highway turnoff up to Maple Drive. Our route leaves Red Bluff Road at Richbar Road, which joins Plywood Road; Red Bluff Road then joins Plywood Road further ahead. The route then continues along Johnston Avenue, heads over the Johnston Bridge, continues along Front Street to Ceal Tingley Park in downtown Quesnel.



Left: 2022 aerial map with routes in blue and yellow; blue is in use today; yellow is not accessible today

Right: 1914 CWR survey map overlaid with modern aerial map (Tenorex GeoServices, Quesnel)

Note two routes of the CWR in map at right: early on, the second route was put in, passing along Dragon Lake.



The "old Cariboo Highway" used to travel through Richbar until the Red Bluff Hill slide closed the road in 1958. Photo courtesy of Marjorie McLeod Sales from "Remembering Quesnel" Facebook page.

km 364.7

Elevation: 605 m

Junction. Richbar Road comes in on west/left. On the east/right it gets a name change: Sales Road, which heads back to Highway 97; Red Bluff Road continues ahead. Turn west/left on Richbar Road (gravel), or continue along Red Bluff Road if you prefer a paved surface. The elevation drop from here to Plywood Road is about 100 m over 1.5 km.

km 365.2

Elevation: 582 m

End of public road; this section is owned by West Fraser; continue at your own risk as the road heads through the trees and down to Quesnel Plywood plant.



Arnold Kilsby (at left) helped Richard and me to locate the CWR in the Quesnel area

km 366.2

Elevation: 502 m

T-Junction. Plywood Road heads north and south. Gravel meets pavement here. Turn right.

Quesnel Plywood plant ahead. Formerly owned by Weldwood, West Fraser purchased Weldwood in 2004. The route in this area is close to the CWR. Land has sloughed off over the years. One of the early road beds and railway beds here.

km 367

Entering First Nations Reserve Lands here. Unnamed lake on east side.

km 368.1

Elevation: 547 m

Quesnel Sand and Gravel on east side used to be a dairy farm! We are now at the top of the hill and heading down to the river.

km 368.5

Junction. Maple Drive on east/right. Continue on Plywood Road. If you stayed on Red Bluff Road and took the Maple Drive turnoff heading west, you would end up here. The 218 Mile Post was close to this corner.



A winter view of the railway bridge crossing the Quesnel River



The railway bridge in summer

About 50 m ahead is Amsbaugh Road, a CWR remnant. There was another old alternate route to this point, which headed north from the 211 Mile Post, up what is now Loloff Road, through private property, onto Wheeler Road, through more private property, onto Sales Road, followed Highway 97 for about 1 km, headed through First Nations Reserve Lands, and then partially followed what is now Maple Drive to meet up with the original route at this location.

km 368.9

Redstone Road on east side. Plywood Road now becomes Johnson Avenue. Continue along Johnson Avenue to the roundabout and bridge.

The old Johnson farm was on the north/left side of the road here.

km 369.5

Roundabout. Head right into the roundabout; stay on it (making a right angle turn) to head over Johnson Bridge.

At the northeast corner of the roundabout was the 219 Mile Post and Danielson's Farm, Roadhouse and Ferry, named after Norwegian Charles Danielson.

km 369.9

Junction. Front Street. After crossing the bridge, turn west/left on Front Street and follow it .6 km to Ceal Tingley Park. In 2021, Front Street was flooded and we had to detour along Legion Drive, which is actually .1 km shorter. However, Front Street is the preferred route to the park as it's not as busy and negates the need for a left hand turn across a busy thoroughfare.

km 370.5

Ceal Tingley Park: a lovely, historic park for stopping to rest and refuel. Welcome to Quesnel, gateway to the gold fields of the Cariboo Mountains – and Barkerville!



An old steam shovel on display at Ceal Tingley Park, Quesnel



An osprey sits on its nest on a pole adjacent to Ceal Tingley Park in Quesnel



Arrival of the stage at Quesnel, 1910



Kong Sing on a horse, Barlow Avenue, Quesnel, 191- (C.D. Hoy) Barkerville Photograph Collection



The sternwheeler, "S.S. Charlotte" at Quesnel, 1911 Northern BC Archives & Special Collections

The final lap to Barkerville is 87 km from Ceal Tingley Park. Follow Front Street north out of town and watch for the big sign for Barkerville, Wells and Bowron Lake at the Highway 26 turnoff. Turn east/right and follow the highway all the way to Barkerville.

There are few services along Highway 26, except right near the beginning of the route, at 4-Mile where there is a small grocery/liquor store with gas bar. East of Cottonwood there is sometimes a food truck open. There are services in Wells, including groceries, accommodation, gas and recently introduced cell service. Along Highway 26, there is virtually no cell service aside from a hot spot at the highest elevation, Mexican Hill/Lovers Leap.

It's a mountainous route full of twists and turns and lots of wildlife. Keep your camera ready for photographing deer, black bear, moose, elusive lynx and the endangered mountain caribou.

If you are a mountain biker, you will want to take the Stanley turnoff and travel the original, historic route into Barkerville.

The Stanley turnoff is approximately 64.5 km from Ceal Tingley Park, about $\frac{3}{4}$ of the distance to Barkerville along Highway 26. If you miss the first/west entrance, the Stanley Road comes in again about 3 km farther up the highway.

The section of the CWR route from Stanley to Barkerville has been reclaimed, and is now passable for hiking and mountain biking. It will take you through to the southern entrance of Barkerville, a distance of about 25 km. Enjoy this gorgeous piece of history on the original road to the gold fields!

Here are a few links to videos we made about cycling the route over a couple of years. The first ride took place in 2018 before any restoration was done.

2018 Cycling the Cariboo Waggon Road

<https://vimeo.com/297374280>

The second ride took place after a great deal of work had been done to clear trees, clean up some of the washouts, etc. We also rode the route in the opposite direction, which made it somewhat easier.

2020 CWR Cycling: Barkerville to Milk Ranch Pass

<https://vimeo.com/461584586>

This final video shows the "new" Houseman Loop, which has been restored and is now part of the Cariboo Waggon Road route from Stanley to Barkerville.

The Houseman Loop of Cariboo Waggon Road

<https://vimeo.com/601328238>

Enjoy your journey on this historic route! Watch for Chapter 6 coming soon.



The Stanley to Barkerville route: Amy at Summit Rock, 2020



Richard with his bike on one of the newly constructed "bridges", 2020



Richard with Dan Cox near the end of the ride, 2020

END OF CHAPTER FIVE

WATCH FOR OUR LAST CHAPTER

THE FINAL LAP TO BARKERVILLE!