

FISH CREEK PROVINCIAL PARK

PARK NOTES

The John Glenn Building

First Nations groups have used the Fish Creek valley for over 8000 years, but it wasn't until 1873 that the first permanent settlers of European descent arrived.

A Calgary Pioneer

At 16 years of age, John Glenn is said to have emigrated from Ireland to New York City. After serving in the US civil war, he moved throughout western North America to trade and prospect for gold. In late September of 1873, John and his new bride Adelaide Belcourt settled at the confluence of Fish Creek and the Bow River - making them (along with Sam Livingstone) Calgary's first permanent residents.

One Building - Many Uses

In 1875, John and Adelaide had built their second home in the area near today's Bow Valley Ranch house. It is here that the Glenn family made a life in this valley by farming and settling.

Recent research has revealed much about the story of this 120 year old building, and it has been more than just a cabin. In fact, the Glenn building served as a blacksmith and harness shop, chicken coop and abattoir, and finally in recent times it was used as a garage.

In early 1998, the University of Calgary's Department of Archaeology began investigations on this structure. The building had features typical of Western Canadian Metis construction used in the late 1800s. These traits suggest Adelaide's Metis heritage influenced the design and construction of her home.

After many decades of use, in the interest of public safety, the building was dismantled and removed in late 1998.

First Irrigation in Western Canada

In 1879, John sold his cabin and homestead to the Federal Government. Here, the Government established Supply Farm #24 to provide the First Nations people in the area with desperately needed provisions.

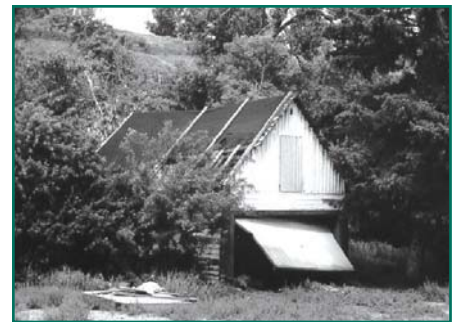
John and Adelaide moved upstream, and built their third and final home at the area now referred to as Glennfield. Here, they raised a family of six children, farmed and built the first irrigation system in western Canada. Their legacy of irrigation helped Samuel William Shaw to power a woollen mill, that would become southern Alberta's first non-farming industry.

Built to Last

The Glenn building was a common historical thread of European settlement in this area. This structure served as an example of a time when things were indeed built to last.



View of Bow Valley ranch buildings, Midnapore, Alberta, ca. 1912
Glenbow Archives, NA-1511-1



John Glenn, the first farmer in the Calgary area, AB, ca. 1880's
Glenbow Archives NA-49-1



Mrs. John Glenn (nee Adelaide Belcourt), Fish Creek, AB, ca. 1884
Glenbow Archives NA-262-18

For more information contact:

Fish Creek Provincial Park
15979 Bow Bottom Trail SE
Box 2780
Calgary, Alberta T2P 2M7
Phone: 1-877-537-2757

Website: www.fish-creek.org

