

FISH CREEK PROVINCIAL PARK

William Roper Hull

Rancher, Businessman and Entrepreneur

In 1873 at the age of 17, William Roper Hull and his brother John came from Somersetshire, England to work on their uncle's farm near Kamloops, B.C. Over the next 10 years, the brothers grew from simple cowboys to major business figures. Beginning in 1883 with a small butcher shop in Calgary, their company would soon become Hulls Bros. & Co. By 1884, their company secured the rights to supply meat for B.C. railway construction crews. Their 'empire' was the first to systematically raise, process and retail cattle in western Canada.

The Bow Valley Ranche - Built to Impress

In 1892, Hulls Bros. & Co. purchased land in the Fish Creek Valley from the Canadian Government. In 1896, William Hull commissioned architect James Llewellyn Wilson to design a house to accommodate and reflect his business success. The result was the Bow Valley Ranche, a 2-story brick mansion with a gabled hip roof, a veranda entrance, a white picket fence and the unique accent of two whale ribs and a single vertebra framing the front entrance. The property became the central hub for business affairs, visiting dignitaries and elite social gatherings of fox (coyote) hunting, polo, tennis, lavish parties and extravagant dinners. Today the renovated Ranche House is one of Calgary's top restaurants.



Leaving a Legacy

W.R. Hull was well known for his five kilometre irrigation system that yielded crops two metres high and produced 1,200 tons per acre - a significant increase from the previous 90 tons per acre. William Hull was also a man of real estate. Some of his achievements included the Alberta Block, the Victoria block, the Albion block, Hulls Opera House and Calgary's first skyscraper, the Grain Exchange Building. Perhaps his most gracious achievement was his dying wish that with his estate a community agency provide social assistance for children, adults and families. Today, through the efforts of the William Roper Hull Home, youth are given a helping hand for a second chance.



PARK NOTES

For more information contact:

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