



**Heritage Foundation of Newfoundland and Labrador  
Building Report – 3 Barnes Road, St., John's**



View of main façade, 3 Barnes Road, St. John's. Photo taken November 22, 2007

**Researcher:** Deborah O'Rielly  
**Date:** December 3, 2007  
**City:** St. John's, Newfoundland and Labrador  
**Address:** 3 Barnes Road  
**Building Name:** 3 Barnes Road, Daybreak Parent and Child Centre, Academy of Mercy

**Building Information**

**Date of Construction:** circa 1850-1880  
**Architect:** unknown  
**Builder:** unknown, possibly first owner  
**Name of Original Owner:** possibly Stephen Knight  
**Building Use:** residence, office, business education school, daycare centre

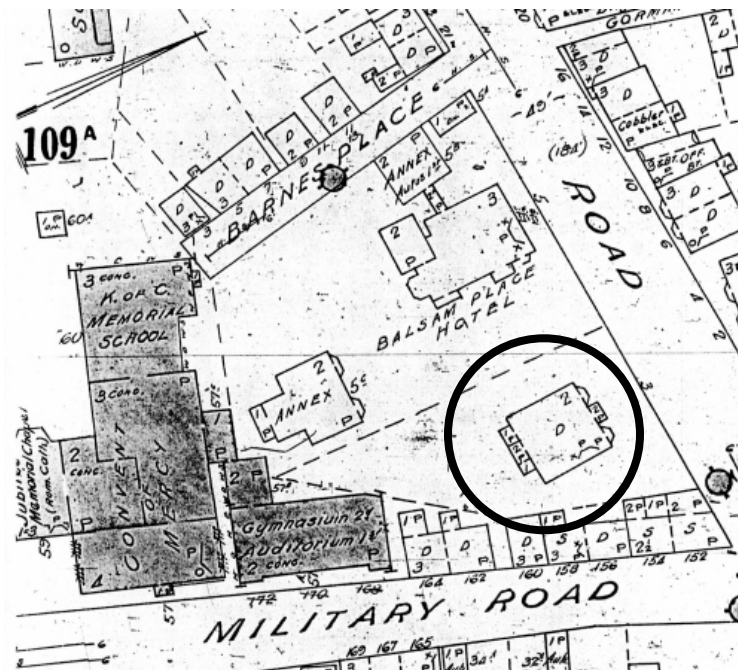
## History

3 Barnes Road was constructed between 1850 and 1880; due to its architectural style it was likely closer to the latter date. The land on Barnes Road was part of a larger grant given to Irishman, Richard Barnes, in 1785. Barnes moved to St. John's in 1766 from Halifax, Nova Scotia. He was a skilled shipwright and fisherman and eventually became a successful merchant involved in international shipping. His business was passed on to his son, William, and it eventually became known as J.B. Barnes and Company when William's son, John Butler Barnes, took over.

On that parcel of land Barnes erected a dwelling that came to be known as Barnes Cottage and eventually the Balsam Hotel. Additionally, a three-storey annex building, owned by the Church of England Orphanage, was erected there, as well as the Second Empire dwelling house known today as 3 Barnes Road.

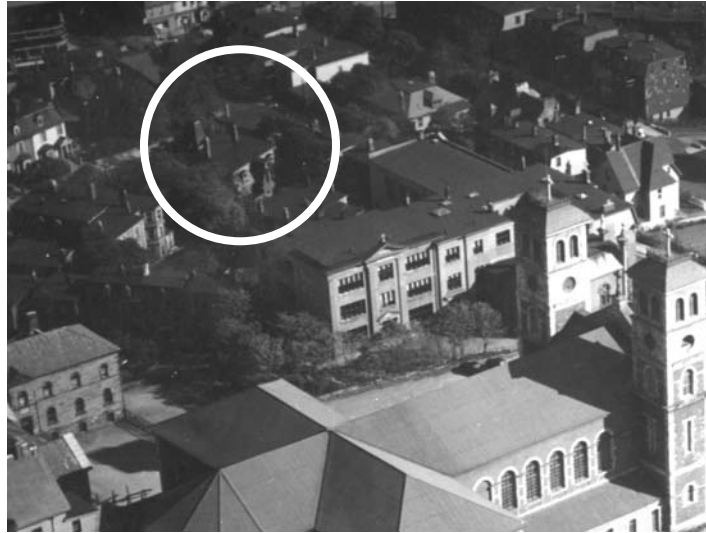
The house located at 3 Barnes Road was constructed circa 1850-1880, according to the City of St. John's insurance maps. The 1891 City of St. John's tax rolls are vague and indicate the land on Barnes Road west was owned by the Estate of George Winter (who had accumulated extensive property holdings in his lifetime and which were dispersed to his eleven children). Between 1886 and 1890 Stephen Knight moved to Barnes Road from Monkstown Road, the house then listed at number one; it is suggested that the property took up the whole corner.

From 1886 to approximately 1913 Stephen Knight occupied the property. He worked at the Savings Bank, firstly as an accountant, then as a manager.



City of St. John's Fire Insurance Map, 1946, showing 3 Barnes Road (encircled)

The next occupier, in 1913, was James Whiteford McNeily. He is listed as a clerk with Agriculture and Mines and he operated his office from the property, as well as lived there. J.W. McNeily comes from one of the early, influential families of Irish descent who set up businesses and thrived in the city. The Whiteford family included lawyers: A. J. W. - Alexander James Whiteford McNeily and his son J. A. W. W. - James Alexander William Whiteford McNeily.; and a prolific and well-known poetess named Isabella Whiteford Rogerson. Her father, Alexander Whiteford, built the historic St. John's home known as Dunluce. Many members of this family were philanthropists, and were heavily involved in the politics of the time.



Rear façade (encircled), 3 Barnes Road, looking east from above the Basilica of St. John the Baptist. Photo taken circa 1957

In 1939, 3 Barnes Road was occupied by Richard A. Cramm (1889-1958), a Newfoundland-born lawyer who, in 1921, wrote a book entitled The First Five Hundred, an Historical Account of the Royal Newfoundland Regiment in Gallipoli and on the Western Front during the First World War. He, too, was involved in politics starting in 1923 and served as the member for Bay de Verde through two elections, returned to his law practice, and, after confederation, unsuccessfully ran again in the 1949 election.

In 1951 the Sisters of Mercy purchased 3 Barnes Road from the Cramm estate. They then used the building as a commercial school known as the Academy of Mercy, then as extra classrooms for the adjacent Mercy Convent School. They continued to occupy the building until 1983 when they leased the space to a fledgling, specialized daycare centre.

3 Barnes Road was occupied by Daybreak Parent and Child Centre for 23 years. The facility provides optimal learning, development and programming for children and families experiencing challenges and it strives to enhance community capacity to support families with young children. Daybreak moved from the building in 2006 to a new facility.

The building is presently vacant and its future is uncertain.

**Sources:**

A City of Towns, Alternatives for the Planning and Design of Housing in St. John's, Newfoundland

City of St. John's Directories, various dates

City of St. John's Fire Insurance Maps, various dates

City of St. John's Tax Rolls, 1891, 1915, 1939, 1965, 1975

Encyclopedia of Newfoundland

Heritage Foundation of Newfoundland and Labrador

The Architectural Heritage of St. John's, An Evaluative Inventory

Mr. Shane O'Dea – for consultation

<http://ngb.chebucto.org>

[www.rootsweb.com](http://www.rootsweb.com)