

This is a plat of the Carnegie Land Company holdings circa 1890. In the late 1880s and early 1890s, 25-foot lots often sold for as much as \$5,000 each. During this time promoters projected Johnson City as a major iron and steel city and anticipated five blast furnaces and three steel mills and a population of 100,000 for the city by 1900. The projection was based on Johnson City's proximity to iron ore in Cranberry, North Carolina, and coal in Southwest Virginia. The bubble burst, however, with the discovery, in 1890, of iron ore in the Mesabi Range of Minnesota. By 1896 twenty mines in this range were producing about three million short tons of ore. The ore was so near the surface that open-pit mining was used. Power shovels scooped out the ore and transferred it to railway cars for shipment to Lake Superior ports. The mines of North Carolina could not compete—the price of iron ore dropped to less than half its former price—too low to afford the expense of mining it. For several years, Johnson City became a ghost town. Plat courtesy of Elizabeth Anderson Colonna

