

Pioneers & Early Settlers

Clemes Hall



Photo: GCCS

Site Identification

Nearest Community:
Spences Bridge, B.C.

Geocache Location:
N 50°25.011'
W 121°21.138'

Ownership:
Spences Bridge Community Club

Cache Site:
Crown Land

Accuracy:
1 meter

Overall Difficulty: 1
Overall Terrain: 1

Access Information and Restrictions:

At Spences Bridge from Hwy 1 turn left on to Bridgeway St. Cross the bridge and turn right onto Hwy 8. Clemes Hall is located beside The Inn on Hwy 8.

Parking Advice:

Park on pullout on Hwy 8 near post #41.

For more information or to report a problem with this site please contact:

Gold Country Communities Society
PO. Box 933
Cache Creek, BC.,
VOK 1H0

Tel: 1-877-453-9467
email: info@exploregoldcountry.com

For more site pages go to:
www.goldtrail.com

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Built in 1907 by Archibald Clemes, this is the original community hall of Spences Bridge. It was built in the cement and stone architectural style that Mr. Clemes learned about on one of his many excursions to Mexico. The hall was home to many wonderful events such as dances, bazaars, Christmas celebrations, theatre and more.

The Spences Bridge Community Club, established in 1959, maintains Clemes Hall and hosts a variety of events there. The Club ensures that the historical building is heated and insured, also that all renovations and repairs are carried out. Plans are in the works to make the hall more energy efficient and to build a portable stage for theatre productions.

On the back outside wall of the building is a commemorative wall of plaques honoring the departed souls of Spences Bridge. There, one can find such names as Jessie Ann Smith, her husband John Smith, James Teit, Archibald Clemes and many others.

Mr. Clemes was an astute business man; he purchased various properties in Vancouver and built the original Pantages Theatre there. In Spences Bridge, he bought a section of John Murray's estate and in 1890, he bought the Nelson property which included the Nelson Hotel that Mr. Clemes and his wife operated. The Nelson Hotel, which is purported to have been built in 1862, still stands today as "The Inn at Spences Bridge". Clemes Hall is a short distance down the road from the hotel. A bakery once stood between the two buildings. All of Archibald Clemes' investments were quite fruitful and thus he became a very wealthy man.

Archibald Clemes was somewhat of a local celebrity. He was one of the first fruit growers in the interior of British

Columbia and he produced prize winning apples. He had one of the first automobiles in British Columbia's interior. In 1898, when he attended the World Exhibition in Paris, he spotted a Woolsey and simply had to have one for his very own! He made an order to have one of these vehicles shipped to him and it finally arrived more than three years later! He used to proudly cruise down the streets of Spences Bridge in his beautiful new car. The local townspeople would line the streets to capture a glimpse of Mr. Clemes parading about in his beloved 1902 Woolsey! In 1913, he installed the first power plant in Spences Bridge at the base of Murray Creek falls. This brought power to his hotel, the railroads and to the citizens of Spences Bridge.

Archibald Clemes died in 1922 and was known as "The Owner of Spences Bridge". He is buried alongside his pet horse who predeceased him and one can only imagine that his wife is buried there too. The cemetery is just off the Trans Canada highway, by the south end of town. The graves are mounds of piled up dirt and of course the largest mound belongs to the horse.

There you have it, a historical hall more than a century old which is still in use today for similar purposes as it was intended for all those years ago. A building with an interesting history built by yet another colorful character of Gold Country.

Written and Researched by Dominique Robillard

BIBLIOGRAPHY & SOURCES

J.Meryl Campbell and Audrey Ward. *Widow Smith of Spences Bridge* Copyright 1989 by Murphy Shewchuk. Sonotek Publishing.

Personal interview with Steve Rice.

Personal interview with Ray Nigalis.

The Rattler.ca

Letterboxing Clues:

From post #41 cache is 40m towards old fence on the right. Hidden under sage brush