

Site Identification

Nearest Community: Savona, BC
Geocache Location: N 50 43. 434
W 120 47. 187
Altitude: 671m
Accuracy: 3 metres

Date Established: 1885c
Overall terrain: 2
Overall terrain difficulty: 2 *(1=easiest;5=hardest)*

Ownership: Private Property

Access and Restrictions: From Savona follow
the Tunkwa Lake
Road South.

Letterbox Clues: From the parking
spot, look up the gully
to a log. Ammo can

Parking Advice: A small pull out just
metres from the
cache.

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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Haywood Farmer-Indian Gardens Ranch



Photo: Doug Smith

The Indian Gardens Ranch was one of the properties built up by Johnny Wilson, the “Cattle King” who also had properties near Walhachin, Six Mile Point, Westwold, Cache Creek, and Copper Creek. He married a Lillooet Indian girl who subsequently died and by about 1885 he married a girl from the Indian Gardens Ranch and had 3 children.

Wilson became a rich and influential man in his life and was well respected. He died in 1904 in a buggy accident and the Indian property was divided among his family. All the Savona properties were taken over by his wife Nancy and their children. According to Peggy Haywood Farmer, an Argentinean family named Hemstock bought the Indian Gardens Ranch from the Wilson’s daughter and George Haywood Farmer bought the land from the Hemstocks.

George Haywood Farmer was born in 1915 in New Westminster and moved with his family to the Interior of B.C. In 1932, they moved to the present location of the Indian Gardens Ranch, south of Savona. By 1935, he was a full time rancher and cowboy. Conditions were often hard in the early days. George and a partner at one time moved 50 head of cattle from Taylor Lake to Savona in -45 degree F temperatures. George married Peggy Higginson in 1942 and they raised six children together over the next 60 years. George was a leader in the ranching community, serving on the BC Cattlemen’s Association, 4H, and the Savona Community Association until his death in 2003 and has since been inducted into the BC Cowboy Hall of Fame. Peggy has been involved with the community in Savona, the Girl Guides (she has her 55

year pin and a lifetime membership), Sunday School, and the Savona Elementary School PTA.

Peggy recalled some of their years at Indian Gardens.

“We were snowed in every year by November. We had to get all of our supplies in by the fall. When I had my first baby, I had to travel by sledge down to Savona and take the train to Kamloops a month early just to make sure. George did manage to get the car through the snow the day she was born and was there with me.

In the summer, we moved the whole family up to the summer range near Guichon Creek (3 miles west of Tunkwa Lake). We took the children, chickens, cows, ducks, horses, and cattle and whatever we needed to the high country. The travelling was hard, but our life was good. Later on, this did make it easier to backpack with the kids on camping trips.

We have been good caretakers of the land. We have preserved water. We reintroduced beavers back to the Tunkwa-Leighton Lakes area after trappers cleared them out. We planted clover in the high country for forage. We established water holes wherever we could. We have tried to get along with all the groups who have an interest in the area. We have set up and allowed access to Balancing Rock and Six Mile Lake and have worked with Ducks Unlimited. Our family continues to work the land and we have been good neighbors.”

Not many people know that the Trans Canada Highway used to climb the hill above Savona, go right through the farm and through the hills past Six Mile (Pat) Lake and down the hill on the other side to the highway where Tobiano now sits. The drive is a bit rough, but sections of paved highway still go through the hills, but

dams on Six Mile Lake and the Slough have flooded the roadbed, requiring two rough detours. Sport fishermen still use Six Mile Lake from the Tobiano side. When you leave Six Mile Lake heading back to the Trans Canada Highway a sign states “Leaving Indian Gardens Ranch Property. We hope you enjoyed your visit to Six Mile Lake.”

When you drive the Haywood Farmer Road east or west from the Tunkwa Lake Road, tip your cowboy hat to this pioneer ranching family and wish them some summer showers for their grazing ranges.

Bibliography & Sources:

Peggy Haywood Farmer, telephone interview transcript, May 16th, 2012
BC Cowboy Hall of Fame website - <http://www.bcchs.com/archives>
Balf, Mary Savona's Ferry Kamloops Museum, 1980

Coordinates
Haywood Farmer Road heading west – N50 44.551 W120 48.343
Haywood Farmer Road to Six Mile Lake (TCH) – N50 45.042 W120 47.504