

## The Kelly Lake Roadhouse

SITE #030101

GC1XHN2

Written & Researched by Don Logan

### SITE IDENTIFICATION

Nearest Community: Clinton, V0K 1K0  
 Location: N 51°00.768'  
 W 121°46.303'  
 Parking: N 51°00.649'  
 W 121°46.669'  
 Geocache Location: N 51°00.637'  
 W 121°46.714'  
 Accuracy: 5 meters  
 Letterboxing Clues: Refer to letterboxing clues page  
 UTM: East 0585686;  
 North 5651716 10U  
 Geocache altitude: 1068 m./3,505 ft.  
 Overall difficulty: 1.5  
 Terrain difficulty: 1.5  
 (1=easiest; 5=hardest)  
 Date Established: 1862  
 Ownership: Private Property  
 Access:
 

- Public Road
- Year-round
- Vehicle accessible
- High visibility area, use stealth.
- *Detailed access information on next page.*



*Kelly Lake Roadhouse with the two bottles found during renovations displayed on the table in front.*

**I**t was in the fall of 1862 that Gustavus B. Wright completed the section of the new Cariboo Wagon trail over Pavilion Mountain and down the Snake Hill to arrive at the scenic lake, known today as Kelly Lake. Not far from the bottom of the hill he encountered a settler, David Reynolds. Reynolds had come

from Pavilion Lake on the other side of the mountain. He had been growing and selling vegetables to the gold miners. On the Kelly Lake side he set himself up on a prime piece of real estate at the mouth of Porcupine Creek, establishing a roadhouse to meet the needs of the gold field travelers. The "House" was known as the 38

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*Kelly Lake c 1912*



*Kelly Lake Ranch House c 1950*

Mile House and was listed in the *Colonist* newspaper, along with others, in March of 1863 as a “Good Stopping House”.

The roadhouse was acquired in the mid 1860s by two brothers, George and Edward Kelly. The lake was later named after these two brothers.

Successful merchant in Clinton, F.W. Foster, purchased the property from the Kelly brothers giving him ownership of almost the entire Cut-Off Valley. But by the mid-1880s the legendary Thaddeus Harper of “Gang Ranch” fame was adding to his land empire.

Harper purchased George and Edward Kelly’s original 397 acres as a stopping place for his cattle drives from the Cariboo to the newly constructed Canadian Pacific Railway in Ashcroft. The 397 acres were also operated as a hay ranch until Thaddeus’ over extension on his credit forced his major creditor to call his note. The new owner and creditor were one and the same. The ranch became part of “The Western Canadian Ranching Company” holdings until 1948 when newlyweds, Joe and Doris Illingworth, purchased it from the Western Canadian Ranching Company.

Joe and Doris had shipped all their worldly possessions to their new home at Kelly Lake via the Pacific Great Eastern Railway. Many of the locals referred to the railway as the ‘Please Go Easy’, because it was so slow. However, Joe and Doris Illingworth had the luxury of a rail siding across the road from their new acreage and were given free demurrage for a week to unload at their convenience.

In the late 1990s, owners had decided to renovate a small cabin, at one time a ranch bunkhouse, and rent it out for a bed and breakfast. It was while removing the small wood heater that she discovered a small space beneath it, where a hired hand had stashed his whiskey flask.

Later renovations revealed yet another hiding spot, while removing all the old sawdust in the icehouse (used to insulate ice cut from Kelly Lake). One more bottle was exposed, a Chinese beer. This location would have been ideal as the beer would have been kept nice and cool all year round. Both discovered bottles were circa 1900.

Today, the buildings remain at the junction of the Clinton-Pavilion and Jesmond roads. Fabulous photograph opportunities abound on this short jaunt from the Village of Clinton; however, please do not access this historic property.



*Historic Kelly Lake Ranch barn*

**Detailed access information:**

- From Clinton, drive 17 km west on Kelly Lake Road.
- This historic site is at the junction with the Jesmond Road.
- The cache is NOT located on the roadhouse property, please follow the coordinates.
- Park in Downing Park day use area.

**BIBLIOGRAPHY & SOURCES**

Patenaude, B. (1995). *Trails to Gold*. Victoria, B.C.: Horsdal & Schubart.

Gallagher, J. (1975). *The Western Canadian Ranching Company*. In Victoria City Archives: PD212.