

# Savona's Ferry

SITE #100101

GC1TTWW

Written & Researched by Don Logan

## SITE IDENTIFICATION

Nearest Community: Savona, V0K 2J0  
 Location/Parking: N 50°45.449'  
 W 120°51.969'  
 Geocache Location: N 50°45.375'  
 W 120°52.192'  
 Accuracy: 4 meters  
 Letterboxing Clues: Refer to letterboxing clues page  
 UTM: East 0650245;  
 North 5624882 10U  
 Geocache altitude: 351 m./1,152 ft.  
 Overall difficulty: 2  
 Terrain difficulty: 1.5  
 (1=easiest; 5=hardest)  
 Date Established: 1858  
 Ownership: BC Provincial Park  
 Access: • Public Road  
 • Year-round  
 • Vehicle accessible  
 • Located off Hwy #1, on Savona Access Rd.  
 • Parking in Steelhead Provincial Park day use area.

For more information or to report a problem with this site please contact:  
 Gold Country Communities Society  
 P.O. Box 933 Cache Creek, B.C. V0K 1H0  
 Tel: 1-877-453-9467  
 email: info@exploregoldcountry.com

For more site pages go to:  
[www.goldtrail.com](http://www.goldtrail.com) or  
[www.GeoTourismCanada.com](http://www.GeoTourismCanada.com)

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Current view of the Savona ferry crossing location.

The current is gentle where the First Nation people and fur traders crossed to the north side of the North Thompson River near the Hudson's Bay Co. fort in Kamloops. However it was 1858 and the gold rush was on! Miners and settlers coming up from the south were heading for the Fraser River and North Country, and wanted the shortest and quickest route. And so, despite the fast moving current at the "Boute du

Lac" where Kamloops Lake flowed out through a narrow channel, François Saveneux established a cable ferry. He also operated the Hudson's Bay Company's wharf and warehouse on the north shore where a small community grew.

The "Saveneux" name soon became anglicized to "Savona" and the community adopted the name. While living in Savona, François married the daughter of Joseph



Savona's Ferry, 1871

Photo: Kamloops Museum & Archives, IP7698



*View of Savona and Kamloops Lake*

Bourke, a one-time Hudson Bay Company employee. Bourke's daughter, Frances, brought her teenage daughter with her to Savona.

The early ferry was only large enough for saddle horse and pedestrian traffic, as there was only a trail west of Savona. The Royal Engineers did not complete the Wagon Road from Cache Creek until 1866. With the road completion and wagon traffic, a vessel larger than a raft became required.

A traveler who recorded his crossing at Savona was 16 year old Andrew Jackson Splawn. A.J. had been hired by Major John Thorpe to help drive a herd of cattle to the gold fields. They arrived at the ferry in the late fall of 1861.

*"We crossed the Thompson River at the old landmark kept by Savanos, a French Canadian, who had come to New Caledonia-the name given to all of British Columbia- with the Hudson's Bay Company at a very early date. He had a small*

*ferry, on which we crossed the horses, while the cattle swam. Another day found us on the Bonaparte, near the mouth of Cash Creek."*

It was noted in the Christmas 1862 Victoria Colonist that François Saveneux had passed away. With her daughter's help Mrs. Saveneux continued to run the enterprise. The H.B.C. sent Donald McLean, son of the Chief Trader, to help with their end of the business.

In 1866 Ned Roberts was the operator; however by 1870 the provincial government had taken over the ferry and appointed James Uren.

Accidents were commonplace, the high water flood of June 1875 broke the cable and the ferry was down until the following year. In 1878 the scow broke away again and in 1879 there was another break, resulting in the drowning of Charles Fortier, a retired H.B.C. employee.

Continued requests were made for the construction of a bridge to replace the ferry but it was not until the Canadian Pacific Railway arrived in Savona in 1883 that construction started. It was completed in 1884 at a cost of \$15,250.00.

The bridge also had its problems. In 1888, it was covered by the high water; in 1894 it was swept away by the flood. This brought the ferry back into operation until 1906.

The site of the original ferry can be seen on the North side of the present day bridge.

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#### BIBLIOGRAPHY & SOURCES

- Balf, M. (1980). *Savona's Ferry*. In Kamloops Museum and Archives.  
 Splawn, A.J. (1917). *Ka-ma-akin-The Last Hero of the Yakimas*.