

3 Mile Lake

Jean Caux

Site Identification

Nearest Community:

Clinton, B.C.

Geocache Location:

N 51°03.725'

W 121°34.287'

Altitude:

951m/3120ft

Ownership:

Crown Land

Accuracy:

2 meters

Overall Difficulty: 1.5**Overall Terrain:** 2**Access Information and****Restrictions:**

From Clinton follow Hwy 97 towards Cache Creek for 4.1 km. Turn right onto Clinton Cemetery road.

Parking Advice:

Just before the cemetery, pull off on right side of gravel road.

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

Gold Country Communities Society
PO. Box 933
Cache Creek, BC.,
V0K 1H0

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

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

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Photo: Kurt Evans

In its early days, the area in and around Gold Country attracted its share of larger-than-life personalities, many of whom went on to become legends. Few were more legendary than Jean Caux, known far and wide as “Cataline”, the king of the packers.

Little is known about his early life; there is even uncertainty about when he was born (probably 1832) and where (probably in Oloron, southwestern France). Even the origin of his nickname is disputed. One story is that it derived from the Catalonia area of Spain, near where Caux was born; another is that he was fond of using “Catalonia!” as a colourful swear word. He arrived in Lytton in 1858, part of a large group of packers. Purchasing his own string of mules, Cataline soon began supplying the goldfields of the Cariboo, transporting goods between Yale and Barkerville.

Cataline was not especially tall, but he was a powerful, barrel-chested man whose tremendous strength meant that he could handle the most difficult pack mules with ease. He spoke a curious mix of French, Spanish, English, Chinese, and Native languages, and could neither read nor write, although he had a remarkable ability to retain information. He kept detailed records in his head of money owed, fees to charge, and precisely what each of the mules in his team (some sixty animals, carrying loads of up to 300 pounds each) carried. On one occasion two packers decided to leave his team after only one trip, and Cataline reckoned up in his head what he owed each man. The first, who could neither read nor write, accepted Cataline’s sum, but the second man—who had kept a sheet of notes—argued

that Cataline was out by \$3.00 on what was owed. When the packer added up his list of figures again, he discovered he had made a mistake and that Cataline was correct.

When he was packing freight, Cataline's days would start before dawn, and his train would average fifteen miles or more per day. During his early years in B.C. he took as a wife a woman of the Spuzzum band, and stayed with her near Yale until 1885, when the completion of the railroad meant that packing for the goldfields was moved north to Ashcroft. He continued making the arduous trip to Barkerville, hauling everything from frying pans and food to grand pianos and cook stoves, until the 1890s, when the gold rush had dwindled to the point where there was little profit in the journey. He had already moved further north, to Quesnel, by this time, and continued to supply the Omineca region. When he retired from packing in 1918 he was living in Hazelton, B.C., and his career as a packer had spanned more than half a century, during which time he never lost a load.

In 1920 he moved to Victoria, but decided that city life was not to his liking, and returned to Hazelton. Two years later, however, he was back in Victoria on a visit, as reported in the *Ashcroft Journal*:

“[We are] in receipt of a letter from Victoria, which states that ‘a number of your readers will be interested to know that “Cataline” [*sic*] the well-known packer of early days on the Cariboo road, has just arrived from Hazelton. Considering his age [90] he looks well with his long white hair.”

Cataline died in October 1922, and is buried in the old Hazelton cemetery. A brass plate on his cairn bears the simple inscription “Jean Caux—Cataline, the packer.”

Written and Researched by Barbara Roden

BIBLIOGRAPHY & SOURCES

(1922) *Ashcroft Journal* (newspaper), January 27th. In Ashcroft Museum and Archive.

Duclos, Noel G. and Duclos, Blanche (1984). *Packers, Pans, and Paydirt: Prospecting in the Cariboo*. Quesnel, B.C.

Milliken, A.C. (1993). “Jean Caux: The Man They Called ‘Cataline’” in *Frontier Days in British Columbia* (edited by Garnet

Basque). Surrey, B.C.: Heritage House Publishing Company Ltd.

Temple, L.G. (1951). “Cataline: King of the Packers” in “The Shoulder Strap”, *Policing the West*. In Ashcroft Museum and Archive.

Letterboxing Clues:

When parked, hike up small hill on the left side of dirt road to the top.