

George Dawson



Photo: Nicola Valley Museum and Archives

Site Identification

Nearest Community:

Logan Lake, B.C.

Geocache Location:

N 50°22.172'

W 120°47.861'

Altitude:

964m

Accuracy:

3 meters

Overall Difficulty: 1.5

Overall Terrain: 1.5

Access Information and

Restrictions:

From Logan Lake go to the junction of Hwy 97C and Tunkwa Lake rd, turn left onto the Mamit Lake Road (Highway 97C) and follow for approx 14 km to Mamit Lake going towards Merritt. Cache is at the edge of a steep bank that can be hard to see due to the tall grass. Go carefully.

Parking Advice:

Park at the pullout at the south side of Mamit Lake.

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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Geologist, paleontologist, amateur anthropologist, naturalist, and occasional poet, George Mercer Dawson helped map and pioneer western Canada and the Yukon in the 1870s and '80s. Working for the Government of Canada, he was charged with the task of mapping out major mountains, mountain passes, and significant rivers of the area. This would have been an enormous feat for any hardy scientist and explorer, but for Dawson, the task would have been even more difficult. At 11 years of age he suffered from Pott's Disease, or spinal tuberculosis, and endured his journeys through adulthood with stunted growth and a severely hunched back as a result. Estimated to stand between 4'8" and 4'10", Dawson may have been small in stature but the legacy he left behind was, and is, enormous. He never complained, and was often described as a cheerful and likeable man with an insatiable passion for exploration and discovery.

Dr. George, as he was affectionately known to many, was born August 1, 1845 to Sir John William Dawson, Principal of McGill University, and his wife, Lady Margaret Dawson, in Pictou, Nova Scotia. Although he was homeschooled with tutors while he recovered from his illness, Dawson later attended McGill University part-time before moving to London in 1869. There, he studied geology and paleontology at the Royal School of Mines, graduating after three years with the highest marks in his class.

After a stint as a chemistry professor, Dawson started surveying for the Canadian Government by contributing to the International Boundary Survey from 1872 to 1876. In 1875 he joined the staff of the Geological Survey of Canada.

From 1875 to 1878, Dawson led mapping and geological expeditions throughout British Columbia which included journeys to Stump Lake, Merritt, Highland Valley, Hat Creek, Savona, Ashcroft, and Cache Creek.

As he travelled he wrote extensive journals detailing his observations. Aside from geological and mapping notations, Dawson's journals demonstrate his appreciation for nature and his wry sense of humour. In 1877, while in the Spences Bridge area, Dawson's notations included the following entry:

Oct. 14. Off pretty easy, track-surveyed down to the mouth of the Nicola, and then commenced pace line up the Nicola Road. Got a photo of remarkable bluff of Tuff & dykes, & then told Casinto to go on & camp about 4 Pm. Got into Camp just as getting too dark to see to work longer. Douglas, unfortunate as usual, pitched the tent in his hurry on a bed of cactus, & gave us twenty minutes work clearing the hateful prickly pears out with the shovel, while they stuck to everything like burs.

Another magnificent day, & a really splendid view of the towering mountain below Spences Bridge & across the Thompson. The great rifts about its summit full full of dark shadow, a transparent blue haze Surrounding it, & the bridge & houses looking like very pigmies below.

In 1895 George Dawson became Director of the Geological Survey of Canada. His distinguished career led to many honours, including honorary doctorates from both Queen's University in 1890 and McGill in 1891.

A notorious chain smoker, Dawson unexpectedly died in Ottawa in March, 1901, after a one-day bout with acute bronchitis. He was interred in the Dawson family plot in Montreal's Mount Royal Cemetery. On April 12, 1901, Frank D. Adams of McGill University published a touching obituary to Dawson in the journal *Science*. In it he began, "By the death of Dr. G. M. Dawson, the Dominion of Canada loses one of her ablest and most distinguished men of science and one whose loss will be felt for many years to come". Both Dawson City and Dawson Creek were named in recognition of the contributions of Dr. George.

BIBLIOGRAPHY & SOURCES

Adams, Frank D. (April 12, 1901). "George M. Dawson". *Science*, New Series, Vol. 13, No. 328, pp. 561-563. Published by: American

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Cole, D. And B. Lockner (ed.) (1989). "George Mercer Dawson". (March 31, 2012). In *Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia*. Retrieved June 4, 2012, from http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=George_Mercer_Dawson&oldid=484806003

Life of a rock star. *Library and Archives Canada*. Retrieved June 4, 2012, from <http://www.collectionscanada.gc.ca/rock/021018-4300-e.html>

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Letterboxing Clues:

From the corner of the fence walk 10 m East towards the Hwy away from the fence. Located at the base of tree.