

## Godey Creek Trail

### Site Identification

**Nearest Community:**

Merritt, B.C.

**Geocache Location:**

N 50°05.291'

W 120°44.683'

**Altitude:**

696m

**Ownership:**

BC Parks

**Accuracy:**

3 meters

**Overall Difficulty:** 1.5

**Overall Terrain:** 2

**Access Information and**

**Restrictions:**

Located behind the British Columbia Visitor Info Centre at the junction of Hwy 5 and Hwy 97C. From the gate to the Godey Creek trails take the left path, follow until you go through a small gully. Turn left walk to small stand of Spruce trees.

**Parking Advice:**

Park at Info Centre.

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](mailto:info@exploregoldcountry.com)

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

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Photo: GCCS

Among those drawn by the lure of fortune to the California Gold Rush were a number of Spanish-speaking miners from Spain, Mexico, and Chile. Like many others, they followed the gold north and arrived in British Columbia working as packers and horsemen carrying supplies for those who were heading inland to the gold rush.

By 1860, a group of these Spanish-speaking people were wintering in the Nicola Valley to pasture their animals. From a legal standpoint, they were considered different from the local white population. They were counted separately in the 1876 Directory of B.C., which listed 40 Mexican adult males on the roster. Unlike local first nations, however, they were granted all rights of citizenship, including the right to vote and were not required to pay a poll tax like those who had come to Canada from Asia at around the same time.

Many of these men left a lasting impression on the new community that would become Merritt. Some of them included Jesus Garcia, Raphael Carranzo, Pancho Gutierrez, Pedro Ateago, Joseph Castillou, Blais Leon, Jesus Silva, and Antonio Godey.

All operating as packers, the group built several cabins near where the present Fox Farm subdivision sits on Hamilton Hill, above what is now the Tourist Information Centre at the junction of the Coquihalla and Highway 97C just outside Merritt. The abundance of bunch grass made this an ideal spot to winter their animals and the packers often built their huts partially underground and partially above ground to protect them from the elements.

Garcia later became a wealthy and prominent citizen in Merritt and Garcia St. is named after him. Castillou's son,

Henry, became a well-known lawyer and judge in B.C. Little is known about Antonio Godey, who the creek and trails were named after. It is known that he pre-empted Lot 711 near Garcia Lake in 1889 and that he passed away in 1904. His son, Jamie, was born at 86 Mile House, between Spences Bridge and Ashcroft, in 1889. He passed away in 1955.

Early on Godey Creek was known as 74 Mile Creek, which is possibly due to its distance from Hope on the Coquihalla Trail. The creek was also known as Jo-as-kas Creek, likely referring to the Joeyaska Indian Reserve, which sits east of the Coldwater River. The creek itself flows northwest into the Coldwater River from Garcia Lake.

Now Godey Creek is home to hiking and mountain biking trails that are frequented by locals and visitors alike. Birdwatchers visit to observe the abundant varieties of swallows, chickadees, wrens, sparrows, warblers, tanagers, and other species they can see in the Hamilton Hill area and at nearby lakes. It is also a popular picnic stop, offering travelers the opportunity to rest and enjoy the expansive views of the City of Merritt and the Nicola Valley.

#### BIBLIOGRAPHY & SOURCES

Nicola Valley Historical Quarterly, Vol. 6 – No. 4, May, 1984, "The Garcia Story"

Nicola Valley Historical Quarterly, Vol. 2, No. 3, July, 1979, "The Hazards of Early Logging"

Nicola Valley Museum Archives Association (no date). Notes.

#### **Letterboxing Clues:**

From the gate to the Godey Creek trails take the left path, follow until you go through a small gully. Turn left walk to small stand of trees. Cache is under lowest branch.