

## Morens' Farm & Family Gravesite

SITE #090101

GC1VA6F

Written & Researched by Dominique Robillard

### SITE IDENTIFICATION

Nearest Community: Spences Bridge, V0K 2L0

Location: N 50°27.430'  
W 121°18.376'

Geocache Location: N 50°27.451'  
W 121°18.357'

Accuracy: 4 meters

Letterboxing Clues: Refer to letterboxing clues page

UTM: East 0620248;  
North 5590873 10U

Geocache altitude: 323 m./1,059 ft.

Overall difficulty: 1.5

Terrain difficulty: 3

(1=easiest; 5=hardest)

Date Established: 1880

Ownership: Private Property

- Access:
- Highway
  - Year-round
  - Vehicle accessible
  - Watch for cactus & in season, snakes.
  - High visibility area, use stealth.
  - *Detailed access information on next page.*

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](mailto:info@exploregoldcountry.com)

For more site pages go to:  
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The Morens' house, built in the 1880s was the homestead of Pierre and Françoise Morens of the Savoie District in France. They were cattle ranchers and orchardists on the new colony.

James Teit arrived in Spence's Bridge in 1884 to work on his uncle John Murray's orchard, though his interests soon turned to researching the culture of the Interior Salish people. On September 12, 1892, he married his good friend Susanna Lucy Artko, a native from the nearby Twell Valley. At 33 years of age, she died of tuberculosis, only six and a half years into their marriage.

James Teit remarried in 1904 to Leonie Josephine Morens, Pierre and Françoise's daughter. After their honeymoon, they moved into the Morens' family home until they relocated to a new house in Spence's Bridge some years later. James wrote many of his anthropological manuscripts while living at the Morens' house.

James Teit soon learned the languages of the Shuswap and the Lillooet people and to them became a great and trusted friend. He participated in their hunting and fishing expeditions. James recorded hundreds of songs, collected hundreds of artifacts and costumes for anthropological photographs. He recorded a great



Gravesite of Pierre and Françoise Morens



*James Teit*

deal of information on their social customs and mythology. World renowned as the “anthropologist of the people,” he helped them in many ways, acting as an interpreter on their behalf, assisting them in legal matters and relating their many grievances to the government.

James Teit’s research contributions are recognized to be the most complete and accurate description of the culture of the Interior Salish tribes of British Columbia. He passed away on October 30, 1922.

For a time, the Morens’ house was a road house on the Cariboo Road and the white and red building next to the fruit stand accommodated the blacksmith and his shop. When the Canadian Pacific Railway pushed through, Morens’ house was home to the station master and it later served as a bunkhouse for laborers.

John Stepp purchased the property in the 1960s. Wayne Rice, whose wife Lolly was John Stepp’s sister, acquired the farm in 1971. In 1991, Wayne handed the business

over to his two sons, Steve and Mike in preparation for his retirement. Mike assumed full responsibility in 1999, he and his wife Jewel operate it as Hilltop Gardens. The present owners also open the house to fishermen during the Steelhead fishing season.

All that remains of the Morens’ original orchards are one apricot tree and one grapevine. A couple of other trees growing at the property are from seedlings of the original trees.

In the graveyard are buried Pierre and Françoise Morens, their son Leon, Françoise’s sister Josephine and two of Leonie and James Teit’s children; Inga, their only daughter and baby Rolf who died at birth in 1912.



*Original Morens’ House, built in 1880.*

**Detailed access information:**

- Located at Hilltop Gardens, north of Spences Bridge on Hwy #1.
- Please park at the fruit stand and avoid residential areas.

**BIBLIOGRAPHY & SOURCES**

Norton, W. & Schmidt, W. (1994). *Reflections: Thompson Valley Histories*. Plateau Press.  
 Rice, M. & Rice, J. (2009). Personal Interview.  
 Ward, A. & Campbell, J.M. (1989). *Widow Smith of Spences Bridge*. Merritt, BC: Sonotek Publishing.