

Pineridge Cemetery

SITE #070401

GC1TTWA

Written & Researched by Maggie Meekis

SITE IDENTIFICATION

Nearest Community: Merritt, V1K 1B8
 Location/Parking: N 50°07.194'
 W 120°47.580'
 Geocache Location: N 50°07.188'
 W 120°47.687'
 Accuracy: 5 meters
 Letterboxing Clues: Refer to letterboxing clues page
 UTM: East 0657641;
 North 5554280 10U
 Geocache altitude: 622 m./2,040 ft.
 Overall difficulty: 2
 Terrain difficulty: 1.5
(1=easiest; 5=hardest)
 Date Established: c1910
 Ownership: City of Merritt
 Access: • Public Road
 • Year-round
 • Vehicle accessible
 • From Merritt, follow Nicola Ave./Hwy #8 to Juniper Dr.
 • Please park at site ID coordinates, along the roadside.
 • No vehicles are permitted on the cemetery property.
 • Respect all interred here.

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 or
www.GeoTourismCanada.com

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Street names say as much about a town's history as its old buildings and museums. A trip to the Pineridge Cemetery in Merritt is much like looking at a roadmap of the area. The newer section of the cemetery is peppered with Garcias and Coutlees, Clappertons and Colletts, family names that were given to streets as well as children.

As you view the Pineridge markers, you walk through the history of Merritt and can locate nearly every street name in town. The stories of these pioneers, either large or small, are more than will fill this page. Here are a few, some with streets and some without.

Emma Castellou has her monument placed at the entrance of the cemetery. Her husband, Joseph, was a packer and her son, Henry, became a County Court Judge.

James Alexander Teit was born in Scotland and immigrated to Canada at the age of 19. Settling in Spences Bridge, Teit married a local Nlaka'pamux woman named Lucy Artko and became enamored with native culture. Teit was an ethnologist of note, and at a time

when anthropologists and archi- vists were few and far between, helped to preserve the culture of the time.

George Brown Armstrong first opened a store in Lower Nicola but in 1907 moved his operation to Nicola Avenue. "Armstrong's" became Merritt's first Post Office as well. He was elected Mayor of Merritt in 1929 but his term was cut short by his untimely death later that same year.



James Teit, 1911.

He spent much time with the First Nations people, learning their language and documenting their culture, customs and mythology.



Dr. Cyril S. Williams, the superintendent of the first Nicola Valley General Hospital, married Rosella Stewart, a schoolteacher, in 1912. She unfortunately died in childbirth at the age of 36.

William Henry Voght became known as “The Father of Merritt,” and his memorial grave marker expands this somewhat and proclaims him “A Father unto all.” His gravestone, in the corner of the Pineridge Cemetery, is

clearly visible when approaching the cemetery from the west and overlooks the city. Born July 15, 1837, in the town of Holstein in what is now West Germany, Voght left at 16 to try his luck in America. He spent some time in Iowa, New Orleans and California, and then in the summer of 1858 Voght travelled by ship to Victoria, and in 1873 he moved to the Nicola Valley. Voght had five children with his native wife, Theresa Clama, from Boston Bar: Timothy (whose gravemarker is also in the Pineridge Cemetery), William H., Matilda Anne (Cleasby), Christina (Collett) and Sophie (Newkirk).

Voght, Jesus Garcia and William Charters were the owners of the three original preemptions, portions of which became the new town site that became known as Merritt. Voght helped establish the first school and was a member of the first school board. He was involved in the push towards incorporation and died in February 1911, mere months before Merritt incorporated on April 11, 1911.

The stories associated with the headstones are many and varied and some are lost forever in time. Visiting the names etched in stone allows us to see the anchors of families and of eponymous streets.

BIBLIOGRAPHY & SOURCES

- (1978). Commemoration: William Henry Voght, “The Father of Merritt”. *Nicola Valley Historical Quarterly*. Vol. 1, No. 2.
- (1979). Commemoration: James Alexander Teit. *Nicola Valley Historical Quarterly*. Vol. 2, No. 2.
- (1980). Medical Doctors of the Nicola Valley. *Nicola Valley Historical Quarterly*. Vol. 3, No. 1.
- (1983). Coutlee. *Nicola Valley Historical Quarterly*. Vol. 6, No. 2 & 3.
- (2007, February 16). James Alexander Teit. Retrieved May 8, 2009, from Canadian Museum of Civilization Web site: <http://www.civilization.ca/cmc/exhibitions/tresors/ethno/etp0800e.shtml>