

Airport Road



Photo: Kurt Evans

Site Identification

Nearest Community:

Lytton, B.C.

Geocache Location:

N 50°14.768'

W 121°33.991'

Altitude:

274m/898ft

Ownership:

Crown Land

Accuracy:

2 meters

Overall Difficulty: 1

Overall Terrain: 1.5

Access Information and

Restrictions:

From Lytton take Hwy 1 North,
turn right onto Airport road.

Parking Advice:

Park at the side of the runway strip.

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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What do airplanes, horse races and hardball have in common?
Around Lytton quite a lot. It is known as one of the hottest spots in
the canyon, probably for more than just the temperature.

People have been living in the Lytton area for almost 9,000 years.
Many historians consider the Lytton-Lillooet region as one of the
longest continually inhabited areas in North America. While people
may have been meandering about the area for what seems an
eternity, horses were only introduced to the region since the early
1800s. The automobile has only been around Lytton since 1907.
But small aircraft didn't start landing in Lytton until the middle of
the 1900s.

In the 1920s the flat land a mile north of the Lytton, not far from
what is now the southern boundary of Skihist Provincial Park, was
cleared to create a racing track. High above the Cariboo Wagon
road, now Highway 97, the flats at the top at the foot of the hills
was an ideal place. And the horse racing was hot. It was a big draw,
with folks coming from as far away as Merritt and Ashcroft with
hopes of winning the big race.

There were pony races, ladies' races, men's races and saddle races.
All tried very hard to make the finish line first – betting was rather
serious business around the track. However, the biggest bets were
saved for the Thompson Stakes. The race, which was a half-mile,
ran some well-known local horses of the time including Hennesy,
owned by John Pasco, Birdie, owned by Alphonso Hautier and
Singer, owned by Walter Baillie, to mention a few.

During July 1st celebrations, while races were running, a small
rodeo would be taking place in the middle of the field. The day
started with a baseball tournament and ended with the big highlight
– the Point-to-Point Mountain Race. A hair-raising, air-raising race
of scary proportions and excitement.

Riders and horses would mosey up the back ridge of the steep hills above the field and wait on the flat several metres back at the top. The spectators would be gathered at the far end of the field across from the steep incline waiting breathlessly. Suddenly, the horses and riders would literally be flying down the hillside. Once at the bottom the thundering hooves sprinted the distance to the racetrack, made a hard left and ran the last 100 metres to the finish line.

While the horse racing would eventually die down, other activities on the field did not. It became evident in the middle of the century that the field was ideal as landing strip and thus it became so. Instead of horses flying down hillsides, it was now small aircraft flying in to, and flying out from, the 685 metre grass runway.

Baseball was played on the field for years. Whether it was softball, hardball or slow-pitch, practices, games and tournaments shared the field with pilots up until the end of the 1960s. This airstrip has been decommissioned and is only used in case of an emergency.

It was a busy field! From horse races to baseball and to airplanes, there is little activity this field hasn't seen. There was always something going on at the end of Airport Road, high above the quaint town of Lytton, in the heart of Gold Country.

Written and Researched by Angela Wynton

BIBLIOGRAPHY & SOURCES

1 No horses or riders were ever hurt or killed during the Point-to-Point Mountain Race, although both horses and riders had a few spectacular tumbles.

www.botaniecreek.com/museum, The Lytton Museum and Archives

Letterboxing Clues: At base of pine trees.