

Cache Creek Cemetery



Photo: Kurt Evans

SITE IDENTIFICATION

Nearest Community: Cache Creek, B C
VoK 1Ho

Geocache Location: N 50 48.766
W 121 19.221

Accuracy: 2 meters

Overall difficulty: 1 (1=easiest; 5=hardest)
Terrain difficulty: 1

Ownership: Village of Cache
Creek

Access Information and Restrictions:

From Highway 1 in Cache Creek (near
the fire hall) turn onto Quartz road. Turn
right onto Stage Road and follow to
cemetery.

Parking Advice: Park at main parking
lot.

Letterbox Clues:

Walk along the outside of the fence line
to the left. Located at barbwire corner
under tree.

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.GeoTourismCanada.com

Code: GC3P6N9

Apply Sticker
Here

Even cemeteries can be
given a new lease on
life, as the Cache Creek
Cemetery

demonstrates. It began
as the Collins Family
cemetery, established
by the pioneering
family of the same
name, now

commemorated by a
road in Cache Creek.

John Gerome Collins
was born in Nashville,
Tennessee in 1851, and
arrived in the Cache
Creek area in 1874. He
worked at a variety of
occupations, and was
for a time manager of
Hat Creek House, after
William Cargile

purchased the property
in 1881. In 1883 John
married William's
daughter Mary, and
their son Bert was born
at Hat Creek in 1888.

It's likely that Collins
stayed on as manager
until Cargile sold the
property in 1894; by
1895 he had gone into
the drug and jewelry
business in Ashcroft
with a partner, F.C.
Lawrence.

In 1904 the seemingly
ever-restless John

Collins took his family
to Tennessee, where he
set up in the theatre
business. When the
theatre burned down in
1908 Collins returned
to British Columbia,
and purchased land
between Boston Flats,
northwest of Ashcroft,
and the Bonaparte
River, with his
holdings encompassing
much of what is now
the village of Cache
Creek.

In 1927 John and his
son Bert opened the
T.U. Auto Court, at the
point where the road
from Kamloops met the
Cariboo Wagon Road
(the current site of the
Cache Creek post
office). Auto courts
were a precursor of the
motor hotel or motel of
the 1950s, and catered
to the needs of that
newfangled being, the
motorist. The T.U.
Auto Court's central
building with
numerous cabins
around it soon became
well known as a
Cariboo landmark, but
was sold by Bert
Collins in the 1940s.

John Collins had died in 1931, and was interred in what was referred to as “the family plot” half a mile to the east of the Auto Court. This was probably the extent of the Collins family holdings in Cache Creek, as it seems that postmaster James Campbell, former owner of Bonaparte House, owned land to the east of this location, and farmed there. Mary Collins was buried in the cemetery in 1936, as were other family members, including Bert Collins' brother. Intriguingly, Roy Collins, great-grandson of John Collins, recalls going out to the cemetery late one night when he was five or so, in the late 1930s, with his brother. There they witnessed the disinterment of several Chinese people buried there; the bodies were, said Mr. Collins, disinterred by other Chinese people, and the bones repatriated to China.

The Collins family cemetery fell into disuse, and for many years lay neglected. In 2006 the Village of Cache Creek stated, in its Annual Report, the intention of establishing a cemetery in the village, either by upgrading the Collins family cemetery or purchasing another property. In the 2007 Annual Report it was proposed that the Collins family be consulted, with a view to changing the name from the Collins Family Cemetery to the Cache Creek Cemetery. By 2008 this permission had been obtained, and in 2009 the Village approached a firm of landscape architects to develop a plan to manage what was described as a “small but neglected pioneer cemetery”. Preservation of the few graves scattered through the site was paramount, as was locating the sites of any unmarked graves in the area. Construction and renovation of the site was completed in the fall of 2009, with the graves of John and Mary Collins given pride of place in the northwest corner. A stone noting the legacy of the Collins family stands beside their graves.

Bibliography

- (1931) *Ashcroft Journal* (newspaper). In Ashcroft Museum and Archives.
- (1974) *Ashcroft Journal* (newspaper). In Ashcroft Museum and Archives.
- Interview with Roy Collins 2012.