

Walhachin Museum

Site Identification

Nearest Community: Walhachin, BC

Geocache Location: N 50 45.216
 W 120 58.785

Accuracy: 1 meter

Overall terrain: 1

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

Ownership: Privately Owned

Cache site: Crown Land

Access and Restrictions: From Trans Canada
 Hwy 1 turn onto
 Walhachin Road.
 Follow the signs to the
 museum.
 To access cache
 location take
 Walhachin Station
 road downhill to flat
 area. Park on the side
 of the road.

Parking Advice: Park at pull out at the
 bottom of Walhachin
 Station Road.

Letterbox Clues: Hidden in sage brush.
 Not an ammo can.

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.goldtrail.com

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Photo: Kurt Evans

2012 marks the 100th anniversary of the building of the Walhachin (WALL-ha-sheen) Soldiers Memorial Hall. Its construction, in 1912, added to this thriving community's list of already many services. The new hall facility served not only as a fruit packing house at one time, but proved vital to the social health of the town as well. The spruce plank floating dance floor set on springs for extra bounce was the delight of the well-heeled community's mainly British upper class citizens setting down their roots as prospective business men and gentlemen farmers. The hall's neighbor, the Walhachin Hotel, was no longer suitable to hold the large gatherings for which Walhachin was gaining a reputation.

The population at that time was about 300 people. The community hosted gala balls where top hat and tails, ball gowns and gloves would be considered appropriate attire.

The full width stage held the orchestra usually headed by Fanny Faucault, a Victoria B.C. born and raised local, trained as a classical pianist. It was under Fanny's guidance that a group of Walhachin citizens went to Vancouver B.C. and purchased, at auction, a Weber concert sized grand piano once owned by Igan Jan Paderewski. This world renowned Polish pianist had finished his North American tour in Vancouver and was returning to Poland to become their Prime Minister. His piano remained in Walhachin's hall for almost 50 years when, in 1961, the community donated it to the University of British Columbia's School of Music.

The 1960's brought about some drastic changes to the Hall. The full width stage was cut in half and the actors' dressing rooms were turned into men's and ladies washrooms (until then, there had only been an out-house to service the patrons). Further

renovations included removing the springs from the dance floor and completion of the upper walls and ceiling.

Over the years folks from the small outlying communities such as Ashcroft, Cache Creek, Savona and Clinton still reminisce about the boisterous dances, dinner theaters, and plays held at the community hall in Walhachin.

Sadly, Walhachin's heyday amounted to a mere five or six short years from 1908 to 1914. The start of World War 1 was its death knell. Out of 117 men living in Walhachin 97 of them enlisted. Walhachin had the highest enlistment rate per capita of any other city in Canada. Many men simply locked up their houses, leaving behind all their possessions, and returned to England with their wives. They fully intended to return and pick up where they left off. One of the many to leave was a young officer named Gordon Muriel Flowerdew, Walhachin's butcher. As a bachelor of 29 years of age, he received one of only six Victoria Crosses given to the Lord Strathcona's Horse. He perished of his wounds after the battle of Mereuil Wood in France and received his medal posthumously. Thus the name of The Walhachin Soldiers Memorial Hall was conceived in honor and remembrance.

There are fourteen original buildings left in Walhachin, twelve of these are homes. The store and school house have been turned into private residences. The last of the remaining foundation fruit trees can be found on the north side of the Thompson River where they co-exist with rattlesnakes, sagebrush and Prickley Pear cactus.

Walhachin is a ghost of its former self and its unusual story of hopes unfulfilled, attest to a community spirit rich in dreams.

Bibliography & Sources:

Val Carey, personal communication, long time Walhachin resident

Nelson Riis, Settlement Abandonment UBC master's thesis 1967

Joan Weir, Walhachin Catastrophe or Camelot? 1984