

# Big Bar Lake Guest Ranch

SITE #080103

GC1TQ4W

Written & Researched by Leona Paxton

## SITE IDENTIFICATION

Nearest Community: 70 Mile House, V0K 2K0

Parking: N 51°18.917'

W 121°49.422'

Geocache Location: N 51°19.018'

W 121°49.388'

Accuracy: 5 meters

Letterboxing Clues: Refer to letterboxing clues page

UTM: East 0582015;

North 5685732 10U

Geocache altitude: 1,104 m./3,623 ft.

Overall difficulty: 1

Terrain difficulty: 2.5

(1=easiest; 5=hardest)

Date Established: 1921

Ownership: Private Property

Access: • Gravel Road

• Year-round

• Vehicle accessible

• *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:

[www.goldtrail.com](http://www.goldtrail.com) or  
[www.GeoTourismCanada.com](http://www.GeoTourismCanada.com)

Apply Sticker  
Here



*The original lodge, before the fire.*

The Lady of Big Bar Lake is the title many have affectionately given Violet May (Peg) Marriott. At the age of 18, after completing high school and “Normal School” in Vancouver, she accepted a teaching position in the Cariboo. As Miss Price, she taught at Spring House School, followed by 70 Mile House, where Harry Marriott met her in 1920. Peg and Harry were married in December 1921 and moved to a log cabin to establish a homestead at Big Bar Lake.

Peg’s love for Big Bar Lake will never be questioned; for it is here that she lived for almost 80 of her 107 years... and made history.

This petite lady with a strong will and independent spirit faced challenges with outspoken determination. In 1931 Peg and Harry ventured to start a

guest ranch and fishing camp. By 1934 Peg ran Big Bar Lake Guest Ranch on her own while Harry was working the OK Ranch.

In 1947 Peg felt she should buy out Harry, after some negotiation she did so, becoming sole owner of Big Bar Lake Guest Ranch. Her brochure and advertising offered accommodation, meals, horseback riding, fishing, boating, swimming and evening activities. The Ranch operated for more than 40 years with many guests coming back



*Peg, Ron & Harry Marriott c 1930*



*Rebuilt lodge, after the fire*

annually. Some of these guests' ashes are now scattered on the knoll and hill overlooking the lake. Running the Ranch was not easy for Peg or without setbacks. There was no electricity, water was brought from the lake, and the outhouse was standard. In 1952 a fire destroyed the main lodge, but true to her character she rebuilt and carried on, continuing to have guests until the 1970s. Husband, Harry, died in 1969 and son, Ron, the following year. Peg concluded the sale of some of her lake property about 1980, retaining a 5 acre parcel where she lived full time until 1997 and in summers until 2002.

Today travel into Big Bar Lake is on a hard packed, gravel road, along which you might see deer, moose and bears as you go through forest and meadows with wild flowers. You may encounter cattle on the road; cross cattle guards; pass several ranches and see some flooding from beaver dams. If you meet any oncoming vehicles be sure to give a wave...this is the country way. There is a Provincial Park at the Northwest end of the Lake but before reaching it you can take a little trip into history.

Turning right off Big Bar Road onto Marriott Road you will soon come over a hill to the most spectacular view of Big Bar Lake. On your left is the knoll and to your right a hill side where ashes have been scattered. A little further on is a small white cottage (now slightly altered) which was home to Peg until 2002. After crossing the cattle guard under the Big Bar Lake Ranch sign you will see some remaining buildings of Peg's Big Bar Lake Guest Ranch. One cabin at the end is of particular interest as it shows how the first cabins were built. In the winter men walked across the frozen lake to cut the

trees for logs which were then brought back across on sleighs. Notches were made in the end of the logs for a tight fit. The roof consisted of cut poles, a little hay and then covered with dirt. You can see grass now grows there. Besides the Lodge, with adjoining dining room and kitchen, and single cabins, there was a common shower area and an ice house. In the winter blocks of ice were cut from the lake and covered with sawdust so fishermen in the summer could keep fish. As you drive the 5 km of Marriott Road you see the development of new homes with residents seeking the peace, beauty and freedom to be with the nature that Peg so loved.

Violet May (Peg) Marriott, truly a lady from a vanished era, died June 15, 2008 just shortly before her 108th birthday. As was her wish, she is buried in The Pioneer Cemetery in Clinton, "Loved and Remembered".



*(right photo) Peg on her 100th birthday, September 6, 2000*

**Detailed access information:**

- From Clinton, drive 9 km north on Hwy #97N to Big Bar Rd.
- Marriott Rd. is a no thru road, please respect private property markers.
- Park in day use area of Big Bar Provincial Park.
- Park is approx 5 km beyond Marriott Rd. turn off.

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**BIBLIOGRAPHY & SOURCES**

- Marriott, H. (1994). *Cariboo Cowboy*. Surrey, BC: Heritage House Publishing Company Ltd.
- Marriott, V. (2008). Personal files and Interviews.