

# Jesmond

SITE #080101

GC1TTQJ

Written & Researched by Don Logan

## SITE IDENTIFICATION

Nearest Community: 70 Mile House, V0K 2K0

Location/Parking: N 51°15.444'  
W 121°57.237'

Geocache Location: N 51°15.457'  
W 121°57.227'

Accuracy: 5 meters

Letterboxing Clues: Refer to letterboxing clues page

UTM: East 0573005;  
North 5678994 10U

Geocache altitude: 1,157 m./3,797 ft.

Overall difficulty: 1.5

Terrain difficulty: 1

(1=easiest; 5=hardest)

Date Established: c 1870

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)

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You will not find a restaurant or even a store at Jesmond, but there is something magical about the quiet of the country road, the mountains and the soft green and gold of the sun and the ranchlands. You can almost hear the echoes and smell the dust created by horses and by the old mail truck on the hot summer days of an era gone by.

The history of Jesmond dates back to 1889 when a roadhouse was established. Known then as "Mountain House," it was built on Lot 150 by Nicolas Hammond. Nicolas sold to Philip Grinder, an American from Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. Philip had settled first at Alkali Lake, then Big Bar, before settling down at Jesmond, where he preempted the land for the roadhouse.

In the early days, Phil operated a freight packing business and was away for months at a time. He and his native

wife, Nancy Kastalamara, had eleven children and thus began a dynasty of Grinder descendants. Edward Haller, Philip and Nancy's grandson, lived with them during 1907 and 1908, helping around their small farm. Eddie gave an interview to the Vancouver City Archives in 1958 and related the following story.

*'Three packers, Philip Grinder, Conrad Kostering and Alex Burnett had joined forces to make a large pack train to the Nass Country. It was springtime and the winter had been long and hard, upon arriving they encountered natives who were near starvation and desperate. Unable to trade with the natives and concerned for their safety, they abandoned their*



Grinder's Mountain House



**Rebuilding the Mountain House in the 1920s**

supplies and headed home with their undernourished pack animals. Without food, they were forced to resort to utilizing pack animals for sustenance on the return to civilization. This misadventure ended the packing business for all three, each settling in the Big Bar and Jesmond region.'

Philip and Nancy's son in law, Grant Lee, sold Mountain House in 1912 to Harry and Louise Coldwell, a newly arrived family from England. There they raised three children, Pete, Elsie and Evelyn.

After settling in to the original Mountain House, the family prospered. Harry farmed and did carpentry work when available. Unfortunately in 1921, the Mountain House burned down and was replaced by the current structure.



**Elsie & Harry Coldwell at the Jesmond Post Office, c 1920**

When the post office was opened in 1919 the Mountain House name was changed to Jesmond, after Harry's hometown "Jesmond Dene" in England. The Coldwell family opened a store and gas station in 1927, which they operated until 1970.

A Vancouver gentleman, now in his 70s, recalls spending childhood summers at the Circle H, a working ranch near Kelly Lake. He and his brother would embark on their annual adventure, by taking the Union Steamship from Vancouver to Squamish and then proceed by Pacific Great Eastern rail to Kelly Lake. The boys would often ride horseback from the Circle H Ranch to the Jesmond General Store for ice cream. Sometimes they would hitch a ride with the mail truck, which made weekly runs along Jesmond Road.

Old-timers recall the excitement created in the Jesmond area in 1950 by the release of a Hollywood western, "Cariboo Trail," starring Randolph Scott, a major leading actor of the day. The movie's location was the Big Bar-Jesmond area; however, filming was actually done in the U.S.A.

Today, Jesmond is a private ranch, still owned and operated by the Coldwell family.



**Detailed access information:**

- From Clinton, follow Kelly Lake Rd. 15 km to Jesmond Rd.
- The original Jesmond town site is approx. 34 km.
- Alternate access to Jesmond Rd. via Big Bar Rd.
- Please park beside the large barn on the west.
- Remember this is private property and be respectful.

**BIBLIOGRAPHY & SOURCES**

Haller, E. (1958). Interview with Vancouver City Archives staff.  
 Patenaude, B. (1995). *Trails to Gold*. Victoria, B.C.: Horsdal & Schubart.