

HISTORICAL INFORMATION

VERIGIN • MEMORIAL • PARK

DOUKHOBOR LEADERS

There is now little visible evidence of the Christian Community of Universal Brotherhood (CCUB) that once occupied the banks of the Kootenay and Columbia Rivers below the Verigin Memorial Park between 1908 and 1938.

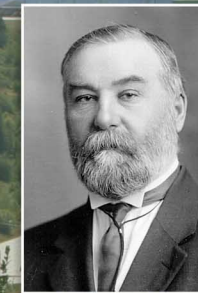
Although initial development here centered around the train station at Brilliant, a suspension bridge was built in 1913, spanning the Kootenay River and connecting Brilliant with the Ootischenia bench lands. The community included a jam factory, a sawmill and pipe factory, a pumping station, flour mill, various offices, warehouses and dormitories as well as numerous residential villages with vegetable and berry gardens and irrigated orchards.

Peter V. Verigin administered the operations here at Brilliant, and similar facilities and enterprises in Grand Forks, until his untimely death in 1924.

Peter Verigin's burial site was chosen for its central yet panoramic vantage point, along what was then the main highway between Nelson and Castlegar. It was also the site of his guesthouse from which he overlooked with satisfaction and pride, the prosperity of the communities below.

The original Verigin tomb was constructed of dark polished marble, with classical colonnades and carved relief panels. It was garnished with two symmetrically placed stone carvings of wheat sheaves that represented one of his well known slogans - "Toil and Peaceful Life". Only remnants of the original tomb remain as artifacts. The tomb itself is now constructed of more modest concrete.

Verigin's Tomb the Verigins



Peter V. Verigin



Peter P. Verigin



John J. Verigin

Peter Vasilyevich Verigin was born on June 29, 1859, in the village of Slavyanka in the Russian Trans-Caucasian province of Elizavetpol (now Azerbaijan). Regarded as a spiritual guide and revered Doukhobor community leader in Russia and later Canada, Peter V. Verigin was known affectionately as "Petyushka" and respectfully as "Peter Lordly". He died on October 29, 1924, from injuries in an unexplained train explosion at Farron, B.C., near the summit of the Blueberry Paulson highway. He was the first of the Verigins to be interred at this burial site, and in 2012 was designated as a person of National Historical Significance by the Canadian government.

Peter Petrovich Verigin, Peter Lordly's son, was born on January 2, 1881 in the village of Slavyanka (like his father), in the province of Elizavetpol. He succeeded his father in leading the CCUB Doukhobors in Canada from 1927 until 1938, at which time he organized the Union of Spiritual Communities of Christ (USCC). Also known as "Chistiakov" (the "Cleanser"), Peter P. Verigin died in a hospital bed in Saskatoon, Sask. on February 11, 1939. He was buried beside the remains of his father.

John J. Verigin was born in Orlovka, Georgia on December 6, 1921. He lost his father prior to his birth and was separated from his mother at age six. Brought to Canada in 1928 by his grandfather, Peter P. Verigin, John Verigin acted as his assistant until his death. He was proclaimed Secretary of the USCC at 18 years of age and served as the Honourary Chairman of the USCC from 1960 to 2008, in effect becoming the longest serving leader in Doukhobor history.

During his 70 years of service, John J. Verigin received many honours which he proudly accepted in the name of the people he served, including the Freeman of the City of Grand Forks, the Order of British Columbia, the Order of Canada, and the Soviet Order of Peoples' Friendship. He died on October 26, 2008 and was laid to rest near his mother.



The daughter of Peter Petrovich Verigin, and mother of the late Honourary Chairman of the USCC (John J. Verigin), Anna Petrovna Markova was born on January 01, 1902, living a tragic life in the Soviet Union until she came to Canada in 1960. In Canada, Anna Petrovna Markova dedicated herself to women's issues and children's Sunday meetings until her death on September 13, 1978. Her courage, strength and wisdom continue to inspire all Doukhobors to this day. She is buried on the grounds of the tomb, near the remains of her father.



Anna P. Markova



Peter V. Verigin's wife
Evdokia Gregoryevna Verigina (Katelnikova)
Born - September 10, 1861
Died - November 19, 1941



Peter P. Verigin's wife
Anna Fyodorovna Verigina (Chernenkova)
Born - August 21, 1885
Died - November 22, 1940

THE VERIGIN MEMORIAL PARK

The Verigin Memorial Park is an important historical Doukhobor burial site and flower garden located on a hillside approximately 2.5 km off Highway 3A between Castlegar and Nelson. It is a tranquil place with spectacular scenic views of the Kootenay and Columbia River Valleys, overlooking the Brilliant Dam and the historic Brilliant Bridge to the east, the Castlegar Airport to the south and Selkirk College and the city of Castlegar to the west.

The meticulously manicured flower gardens and park grounds are maintained by USCC members and friends, occasionally assisted by local seasonally employed students. A modern guest house with visual displays and restrooms has been recently constructed for the benefit of park visitors, who can stroll the grounds or rest in the gazebo and enjoy the beauty and serenity around them.

The large white crypt, known as Verigin's Tomb, contains the remains of Peter V. Verigin and his son, Peter P. Verigin, as well as their wives. Also buried on this site are the remains of Peter P. Verigin's daughter, Anna P. Markova, and her son, John J. Verigin.

As capable leaders, the Verigins, both men and women, have made an immense contribution to the Doukhobor movement in the last two centuries in both a practical and spiritual sense, earning the great respect and loyalty of their followers. To this day, the local community holds annual commemorative services to remember and celebrate the dedication and commitment of the Verigins and indeed, the dedication of all ancestors who committed their lives to peace and universal brotherhood.

ANNUAL MEMORIAL SERVICES

Peter V. Verigin and John J. Verigin Memorial Service - October 29, or preceding Sunday

Peter P. Verigin Memorial Service - February 11, or preceding Sunday

Anna P. Markova and Peter P. Verigin II Memorial Service - September 13, or preceding Sunday

Evdokia G. Verigina and Anna F. Verigina Memorial Service - November 19, or preceding Sunday

PARK ADMISSION

The Verigin Memorial Park is open to the public during the summer season from 10:00 AM to 5:00 PM. Admission is by donation. Normal park access by footpath is somewhat strenuous, although alternate arrangements can be made for physically challenged visitors. For additional information contact the USCC Office at the Brilliant Cultural Centre:

Tel. 250 365-3613 Fax. 250 365-5477

Email usccbcc@shaw.ca

WELCOME
TO THE HISTORIC

VERIGIN
Memorial Park

A SIGNIFICANT
DOUKHOBOR HERITAGE SITE

BRILLIANT - CASTLEGAR
BRITISH COLUMBIA
CANADA

ABOUT THE DOUKHOBORS

Early Doukhobors were a 17th century Russian Christian sect that rejected the established Orthodox Church, choosing a simpler, egalitarian form of worship based on personal communion with God. In lieu of the Bible they favoured their own orally transmitted "Living Book" that affirmed the existence of God within each individual, and helped them to live their lives in harmony with the teachings of Jesus Christ. Branded as heretics by an intolerant church, and accused of wrestling against the Holy Spirit, they were labelled "Spirit Wrestlers" in derision, persecuted for two centuries, and ultimately exiled to the mountainous regions of southern Russia in the 1840's.

By the 1890s, Doukhobors had adopted a pacifist ideology that also espoused vegetarianism and abstinence from alcohol and tobacco. In 1895, when confronted with military conscription, several thousand Doukhobors refused military service and demonstrated their commitment to non-violence by collecting and burning all weapons in massive symbolic bonfires. This large scale act of civil disobedience was met by even more severe punishment and persecution by the state. They faced imminent annihilation but their desperate plight received global attention when the world renowned Russian author, Leo Tolstoy, supported their cause with urgent appeals in the foreign press. With added support from other prominent individuals and groups like the Quakers, Tolstoy and his associates assisted the Doukhobors in seeking refuge outside the country, ultimately enabling some 7500 Doukhobors to immigrate to Canada in 1899.

The new immigrants settled in communal villages on the prairies of the North West Territories (now Saskatchewan). Although the Canadian government of the day promised them religious freedom, it reneged on some of these promises, confiscating thousands of acres of cultivated homestead land. Beginning in 1908, some 6000 Doukhobors subsequently resettled on communally purchased property in British Columbia where they established the Christian Community of Universal Brotherhood (CCUB), the largest experiment in communal living ever undertaken in North America. The CCUB was reorganized as the Union of Spiritual Communities of Christ (USCC) in 1938. Although members of the USCC no longer live communally, they actively maintain the pacifist ideals and spiritual values of their ancestors.

The USCC is currently the largest Doukhobor organization in Canada, primarily centered in British Columbia. Other sizeable populations of Doukhobors live in all three western Canadian provinces.

Visit the USCC website for more information about Doukhobors, their Life Concept, their history and culture, various other Doukhobor places of interest, as well as photos and information about current programs and activities.

www.usccdoukhobors.org



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CELEBRATING OUR CULTURE

PRESERVING OUR HERITAGE

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Funding assistance courtesy of the Kootenay Savings Credit Union
Graphic design - John Kalmakov, Castlegar, BC