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Introduction

Today many would call Edward Patterson a cowboy. More than a cowboy, he was a chaser of wild horses, bringing in the extensive Patterson horse herd off the rugged mountain range east of Osoyoos in the Okanagan Valley of Southern British Columbia. The horses were corralled near Osoyoos, and often used as rodeo bucking stock after being trailed to the next



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Patterson rodeo. Some of the horses were broken and sold as draft animals.

Ed was also one of the most medically knowledgeable men I have known. Many people in the South Okanagan will remember Ed Patterson as a reflexologist. He had trained with some of the early developers of this non-invasive medical technique. When one walked into a room, Ed could subtly detect a person's problem by their walk, the tilt of their head, or in other minor ways. Ed became a friend. He changed the lives of many people, all for the better, my family and me included.

Hearing snippets of conversation of his early life, in travelling across Alberta and British Columbia in a covered wagon, and trailing 250 head of range horses intrigued me. I endeavoured to find out more of his story. I did a significant amount of research to authenticate any information from transcribed tape recordings with Ed, and brought in the perspective of other members of the trek. Ed was about twelve years old at the time and really didn't know all of the details of the family, so he was not fully aware of some situations.

The Patterson family's story was first published



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in 1988 as a paperback, type-set with photos as PMTs, a dot matrix pattern. Through the magic of technology Ed's story has been re-formatted and presented as an e-book, with the original family photos scanned and enhanced.

When the publication was first researched 25 years ago, many of the people who had participated in the 1933 wagon trek had passed on. Since then, Ed, and most of his family, plus others mentioned in the story have also deceased.

Ed's grandfather, G.W. Patterson was the patriarch of the family, and by all accounts was a stabilizing influence. Ed was greatly influenced by his grandfather and much of his narrative centers around George Patterson. G.W.'s life spans nearly a century in time, travelling Indian trails, wagon roads, routes of cattle drives, treacherous mountain passes from Missouri, south to Mexico, and north to Montana.

The family moved to Canada and settled in the Crawling Valley of Alberta. Later they uprooted in a move that would take them west over the Rocky Mountains and the Monashee Mountains Pass, to finally settle in the Okanagan-Boundary country east of Osoyoos in Southern British Columbia.



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This is the story of their trek and the adventures they encountered.

Doug Cox



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Epilogue

The Patterson horse herds left the range in the late 1950's. Although I returned to the ranch in Bridesville following the Armistice, it appeared that the economy of breaking and selling wild range horses, as well as maintaining a good bucking string, was not economical. As a unit the ranch was not large enough to bring in a healthy profit, for the cattle herd was small, and we had been dependent upon the horse herd for the bulk of our income. Following lengthy deliberations, it was decided by the family to lease out the property



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and give up the range lease on the vast mountainous area of Bridesville, Osoyoos and Okanagan Falls.

In 1962 I made one last trip with some of the herd, which I now owned. I took twenty-five head of horses to Christina Lake. When I left the Osoyoos Lake corrals with them, I had only three broken horses, and when I came back that fall I had broken them all. I had remained in Christina Lake, operating a riding stables with these horses on five acres I rented there.

I had no trouble with the horses. I would break them one day and dude them the next. I would start out early in the morning, tie their foot up with a scotch hobble and sack them out. Then I led them about the corral and grounds with a rider in the saddle. The weather was very hot, and whenever the horses showed signs of restlessness and being tired of this whole business, I would get the youngsters who always hung around the stables, to lead them around the field several times before using them for a ride. Youngsters are affectionate, and showed this to the horses, petting them, crawling over them, and under them, having a trust in the animal that an adult might not have. The horses readily became accustomed to this attention and thrived on it. By three o'clock in the afternoon those horses were ready for a trail ride in



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the mountains and cooler altitudes.

However well I managed the riding stables, it did not become a really profitable concern. So, in 1967, I went completely out of the horse business. To let go of a lifestyle so involved around horses, and so familiar to me, was, to say the least, heart-wrenching. Horses had been an integral part of my family for over a century. However, married by this time and raising a young family, I searched for more stable employment.

Of the Patterson family and associates who made the wagon trek from Drumheller in Alberta, over the Monashee Mountain Range to the ranching country of Osoyoos and Bridesville in 1933, few remain in the valley. Their life of wagon trains, breaking and training and selling horses while they trailed west, and raising horses on the open range for harness, saddle, and rodeo use, is now only a memory. For those of us who travelled that route through the mountains to the valley, much was to be gained in experience as well as in character building. It gave us an added insight and understanding which we might not otherwise have had, in respect to one's own level of endurance, and the ability man possesses to pit himself against dangerous odds, and survive.



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The horse was the nation's earliest form of transportation. The fact that the horse served in areas far beyond that single realm, commands one's respect for its tremendous versatility and stamina, and I am very proud to have been associated with this aspect of our country's colourful history.

