

# ROUTES IN THE ROCKIES

*A Journey of Historical Trails from Jasper to Banff*

*by Rod Wallace and Don Mickle - Warden Service*



*Journal by  
Don Mickle  
September, 2001*

## ROUTES in the ROCKIES

A horse trip travelling historical routes from Jasper to Banff. We recorded numerous cultural resources that are still found along these routes.

Rod Wallace, Jasper Warden Service and Don Mickle, Banff Warden Service travelled a number of historic routes by saddle and pack horse from August 28, 2001 to September 17, 2001.

We did not take the shortest routes but followed various trails that were travelled through history by early peoples - the Stoney (Nakoda), the Blackfoot (Siksika), the Peigan (Pikani), the Sarcee (Tsua T'ina), the Kootenai (K'tunaxa), and the Shuswap of the interior Salish (Secwepeemc) These tribes used portions of the mountains and foothill routes included in this trip. Later the region was used by early European explorers and adventurers.

Our original plans were to step on our horses at Jasper Townsite and step off them at Banff Townsite. Our plans were somewhat changed by horse restricted areas in the province and by high water in the North Saskatchewan River. We still managed to travel over 400 km of historic routes by saddle horse.

(We may have to do it over again to get it completely right!)

We were guided by routes taken by Arthur and Lucius Coleman in 1892 and 1893 and by the Mary Schaeffer party in 1907, 1908 and 1911. We also followed a route used by Reverends Nicholls and Noyes and their party with Ralph Edwards in 1899.

### The Coleman Brothers

*Arthur P. Coleman was a noted Geologist and a professor of Natural History in Toronto. Lucius Q. Coleman had a ranch near Morleyville, Alberta. (Now Morely on the Stoney Nation Reservation). Arthur Coleman made previous exploration trips in the Rockies and Selkirk but the trip in 1892 with his brother Lucius was their first attempt to leave the East Slopes of the Rockies and travel by horseback through the mountains to find the elusive giant mountains in Athabaska pass - Mt. Brown and Mt. Hooker.*

*In 1892 they used Stoney guides and made their way through the foothills to the Red Deer River and up to what is now the Ya Ha Tinda Ranch (noted as Mountain Park in Coleman's journal). They worked their way to the Clearwater River over the pass to White Rabbit Creek and down to the North Saskatchewan River. Their guides took them down the North Saskatchewan to where the Brazeau River joins the North Saskatchewan. The party travelled all the way back up the Brazeau toward their destination.*

*They ran short of time and returned over a shorter route from the Brazeau (Job Pass and Coral Creek) to the North Saskatchewan and returned to Morelyville. They had climbed and named several mountains and lakes and explored Fortress Lake.*

*In 1893 they reached their destination of Athabaska Pass to find that the true height of the mythical giant mountains (Mt. Brown and Mt. Hooker) were about half the height that was recorded by Douglas decades earlier. The Coleman's returned to climb Mt Brazeau in 1902 but were weathered out before they reached the summit. They returned again in 1907 and 1908 in attempts to climb Mt. Robson.*

### Mary Schaeffer

*Mary Schaeffer and her companion Molly Adams were wealthy American tourists who explored the Rockies in 1907 and 1908. Mary returned in 1911. They were accompanied by guides Billy Warren and Sid Unwin on their first major journeys from Laggan (Lake Louise) through the mountains to the Athabaska River. Mary had made several trips in the Rockies previously and was a noted painter of wildflowers.*

*In 1907 the Schaeffer party followed some of the Coleman brothers' routes reaching Fortress Lake and Brazeau lake. In 1908 they were determined to find a large lake known as Chaba Lake (Beaver in Stoney). It had not been visited by Europeans for decades. The lake (now Maligne Lake) was kept hidden from Europeans by the Stoney and Cree until they lost interest in it for trapping and hunting.*

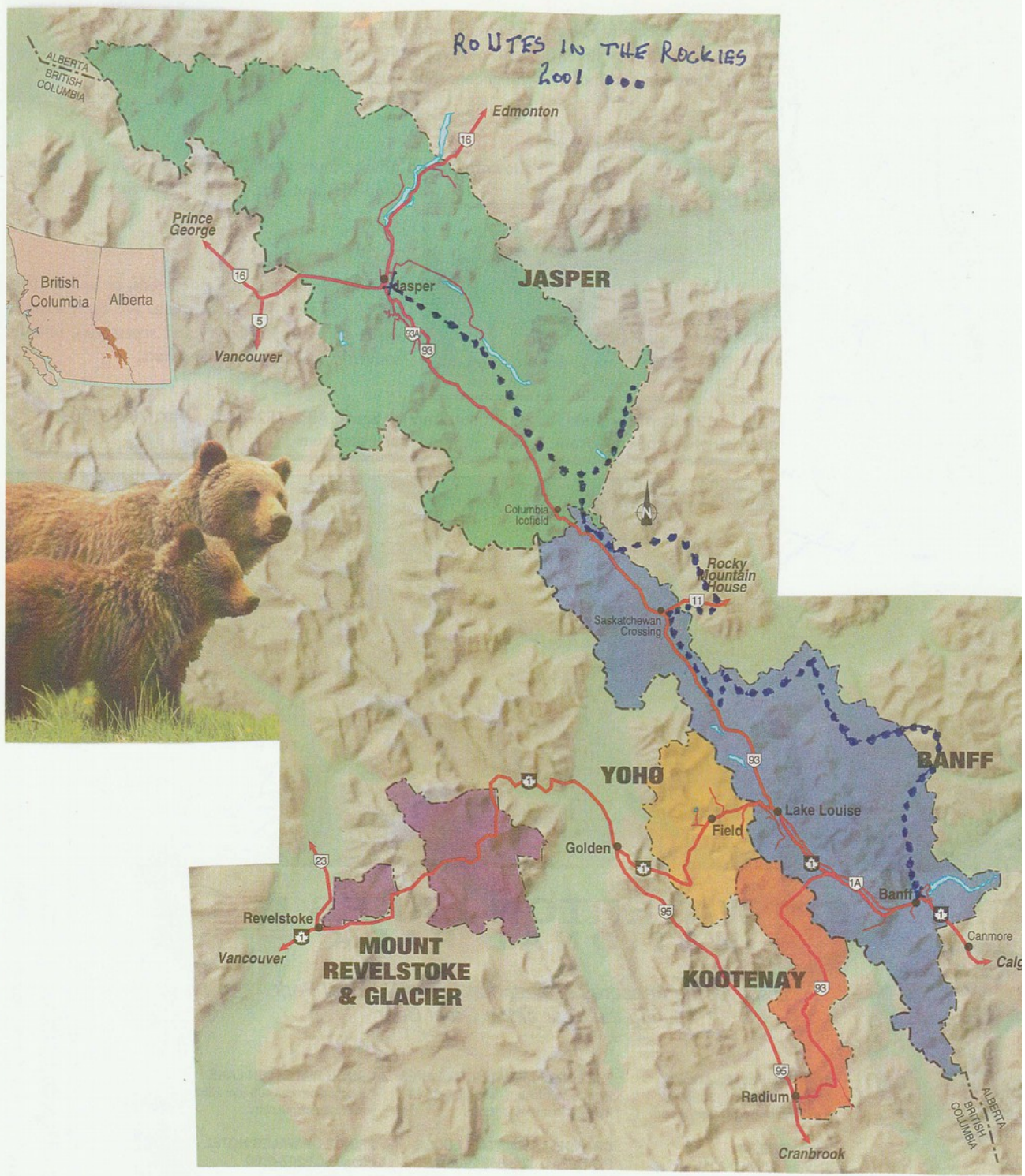
*The Schaeffer party was armed with a map from Jonas Beaver of the Stoney Nation and the party finally discovered Maligne Lake. Sid Unwin climbed a mountain and sighted the lake from the Maligne Valley. They spent some time exploring the area and returned through the mountains to Laggan.*

*Mary was asked to return in 1911 by the Geological Survey of Canada and survey Maligne Lake. Mary with her sister and nephew traveled by the new Grand Trunk Railway from Edmonton (Strathcona) to Hinton. Jack Otto met them with a wagon and they traveled to Fitzhugh (Jasper) and went by horseback with a prefabricated 16' boat on one pack horse to Maligne Lake.*

### Reverend C Noyes, Reverend H. Nicholls, C. Weed, and C. Thompson - 1899

*This party was guided by Ralph Edwards, who worked for Tom Wilson. They had a goal to climb mountains in the Saskatchewan River area. They left Laggan and travelled over Pipestone Pass, down the Siffleur. The party turned up Dolomite creek, thinking that they were on the North Saskatchewan river. They discovered that they were in the wrong valley then completed the first known crossing of Dolomite Pass. They made it back to the Bow Valley and completed the first ascent of Mt. Balfour.*

ROUTES IN THE ROCKIES  
2001 ...



*THE JOURNAL as recorded by Don Mickle with additions by Rod Wallace*

August 27, 2001

Don Mickle and Ross Gilmar trucked two horses, Crockett and Friar, from Banff to Jasper. The road from Banff to Jasper was busy with motor homes and tour buses - a little different from a century ago when the Coleman brothers and Mary Schaeffer made their way through this route. We met Rod Wallace at 'the Range' at Jasper where he was organizing equipment and horses for our journey. We were to begin by riding the Skyline the following day. We were doing this from Maligrze Lake\* to Jasper with two horses supplied by Jim Chesser. The horses were Wrangler and Ace. This is over a 50km day so we were using separate horses for the day ride to keep our horses fresh to start the rest of the journey. Ross headed back to Banff and Don had supper with Rod and Sharon at their home at Folding Mountain. Don returned and stayed at the Palisades for the evening.

August 28

The day was clear, warm and windy. After an early breakfast at the Palisades we went to 'the Range'. Doug Wellock trucked us to *Maligne Lake\** where we started our ride back to Jasper. We rode up *Evelyn Creek\** to Little Shovel Pass past the Snow Bowl and the Shangri-La cabin to *Big Shovel Pass.\** We travelled through alpine terrain with beautiful views on all sides. We arrived at 'The Notch' above Curator Lake\*. It was hard to believe that a horse could go over that route. We followed *Tekarra\** ridge to the Watchtower valley and across to the old Signal fire lookout site. We rode down the fire road from the lookout back to 'The Range'. We were eleven hours in the saddle over some of the most spectacular country in the Rockies. There are views of most of the watersheds in Jasper Park - including the Columbia Icefields, Athabaska, Whirlpool and Yellowhead.

- *Maligne Lake - named after Maligne River – a french word for something wicked - probably a reference made by early fur traders for the current of the river and the large boulders that make for difficult crossings.*

Shovel Pass  
Looking from "The Notch" above Curator Lake  
2001



Shovel Pass  
Packing the prefabricated "Chaba II"  
Mary Schaeffer Expedition - 1911



*\*Evelyn Creek - named after Evelyn, Duchess of Devonshire. She visited Jasper in 1920*

*\* Shovel Pass - This was named by Mary Schaeffer on her 1911 journey from the Athabaska river to Maligne lake. As the party approached the Pass they spotted what they thought were mountain sheep. They stalked the sheep to find that they were two shovels left by the trail crew in case they had to shovel their way over the pass. They named the pass after this incident.*

*\*Curator Lake - named after Curator Mountain by surveyor Bridgland in 1916 for its position as custodian over Shovel pass\*Mount Tekarra - named by J Hector in 1859 after a local Iroquois hunter who accompanied Hector on the Athabaska River.*

## August 29

We started from Maligne Lake to Maligne Pass. Our horses are Crockett, Friar, Abbey and Willow. We were following the Mary Schaeffer party route from 1908 on their search for Maligne Lake. We moved up the valley on a hot day. The flies were bad and we were plagued by several wasp nests along the trail.

Coincidentally, wasp nest were mentioned in this area in the Mary Schaeffer journals as well. A rope under the tail of Willow sent Rod for a spill in the dwarf birch. Only his pride was hurt but we spent some time looking for Rod's glasses, which were finally found wrapped around the root of a birch bush. We camped at the 'old horse camp', probably used by the Schaeffer party almost a century earlier. A fire, drink of scotch and full moon finished off the evening.

## August 30

We started the early morning by walking back down the trail towards Maligne Lake and spent about two hours retrieving our horses - which had decided to go home - or somewhere - led by Crockett. After a late breakfast, we eventually packed up and rode over Maligne Pass to *Poboktan Creek\** and Waterfall warden cabin. It was another warm clear day but cool at the pass. We passed by the 'Mary Vaux' campground and under Replica Peak. We met ten hikers on route, including Ross Glenfield and his girlfriend. Ross is a Banff Park Warden. We arrived at Waterfall cabin about 5 pm.

*\*Poboktan - named by A. Coleman in 1892 after the Stoney word for owl. There were large owls in the spruce trees along this route.*

Poboktan Pass - Mary Schaeffer Expedition - 1908

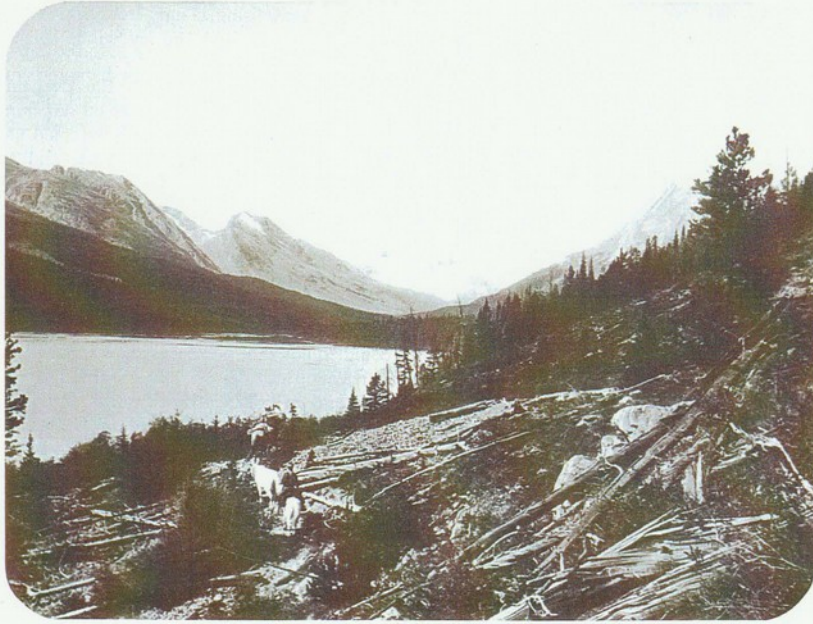


Poboktan Pass - 2001





Brazeau Lake - Mary Schaeffer Expedition - 1907



Brazeau lake - 2001



August 31

Waterfall to Poboktan Pass - This route was used by the Coleman brothers in 1892 and 1893 and by Mary Schaeffer in 1908 - down to *John John creek*\*

We saw a caribou in *Poboktan Pass* - some hikers had seen a black wolf. We rode by the *Jonas Shoulder*\* while on Poboktan Pass. We cleared some dead fall then had lunch at Poboktan Shelter. There were rain showers while we stopped at the shelter. We then went down John John creek to *Brazeau lake*\*. We rode on to Brazeau cabin where we spent the night. It was sunny and warm again and we saw eleven hikers on the trail today.

The Coleman brothers made a special trip to Brazeau Lake in 1902 to attempt to climb Mt. Brazeau. They were stopped about 500 feet from the top because of a bad snow storm on the glacier.

*\*John John Creek - named by Brazeau district warden Charlie Matheson in 1931 for his father-in-law - John John Harrington*

*\*Brazeau Lake - River and Range were named after Joseph Brazeau, a Hudson Bay clerk from 1852-1864. He was a linguist for the Palliser expedition.*

*\*Jonas Pass - named for chief Jonas Good-Stoney from the Stoney band for his direction to the Coleman brothers for their journeys to the Athabaska River.*

September 1

We checked out the old cabin near Brazeau Warden cabin. Frank Camp in his book *Roots in the Rockies* mentions that it is probably a Jimmy Simpson cabin. The cabin has a large fireplace hearth which is not typical of Simpson's cabins. We left the Brazeau cabin and rode down the Brazeau River to Arret. It showered all day and snowed up high. We passed a small waterfall which leaps out of a rock not far below the Brazeau cabin. There were lots of buffalo berries in the valley and several bear scats full of berries. We passed a crib burial along the banks of the river near *Aztec*\* meadows. 'Rumor' has it this grave may be of an oblate missionary, rather than that of a native person. We spent some time looking for an old camp near *Arret*\* cabin. We did not find it this day. We stayed at Arret cabin and the horses grazed down river a ways that evening.

*\*Arret - Mt Arret has ragged rock ridges caused by erosion - arret is the term used for such weathering.*

*\* Aztec - Mt Aztec - a zig zag outcrop of red rock - a favorite motif of the Aztec of Mexico.*

## September 2

The day was clear and cool with snow on the mountain tops. We rode to *Bear Tree Meadows* \*. There was a crib burial and a 'tool storage bin' on a wooded knoll above the meadows. Archaeologists believe that the structure may have been for tool storage related to trail construction. The crib burial site is lined with rocks (different from other crib burial sites that we have seen).

We saw a white wolf chewing on an old bone in the meadow.

We returned to Arret by riding the river flats and along the Brazeau riverside.

Back near Arret we had another look for the old camp and found a tent cabin in the forest near the south boundary trail. It may be the camp described in Frank Camp's book *Roots in the Rockies*. He said that there was a camp used while constructing the warden cabin in the 1940's. - another 'history-mystery' feature.

*\* Bear Tree Meadow - the local name comes from a grizzly bear study in the late 1970's where a grizzly bear was snared on a large tree in the meadow and made a distinct pathway around the entire tree while snared (Rod Wallace).*

## September 3

We rode from Arret back to Brazeau warden cabin. Mike and Lori Wynn and their little boy Joe were at the cabin. They were hiking on to Poboktan shelter. We repacked after lunch and headed to Four Point warden cabin (below Nigel Pass) .

We met five hikers on our way on the upper Brazeau. It was windy with some showers. We rode past Mt McDonald along a very scenic wide valley and river flats. We found the old *McDonald teepee*\* (wickiup) near Four Point cabin. There was a diary entry in Four Point cabin from Frank Camp, who visited the cabin in August 2001. He said that he visited the McDonald teepee in 1947. It was used while the cabin was being built. His entry also talked about the McGilvary grave behind Four Point cabin. In 1953 John McGilvary was found starving to death in the cabin. He died and was buried behind the cabin. The full story is in Frank's book *Roots in the Rockies*.

The horses grazed in the meadows below the cabin for the evening.

*\*Ed McDonald was a Rocky/Brazeau District warden living year round in this part of the Jasper back country for well over a decade from the 1920's to 1940's and built a number of these temporary "wickiup" structures while traveling between district cabins.*

September 4

We left Four Point cabin for *Nigel Pass*.<sup>\*</sup> The weather was turning bad but we made it over the pass dry. We reached the *Camp Parker*<sup>\*</sup> cabin in about three hours. We rode past Cataract Pass while traveling across Nigel Pass. This was the route used by the Colemans and Mary Schaeffer's party. The province side of the pass is zoned Wilderness and does not allow horse travel so we had to bypass this route and go by road from Camp Parker to *Graveyard Flats*.<sup>\*</sup>

We arrived at Camp Parker and walked over to the folk art carvings in the trees near the old horse campground (This camp was used by numerous horse parties and the Trail Riders of the Canadian Rockies as far back as the 1920's). One Indian head carving looks much like a similar carving near Takakkaw Falls and another on the shores of Brazeau lake.

It started to rain heavily - we were met by Mike Eder with a four horse trailer. In typical warden hospitality he handed us each a Kokanee beer. We loaded the horses in the trailer. We then drove to the Icefield 'airport terminal' where we made a few phone calls to loved ones. Major culture shock there among all the tourists at the Visitor Center. We then headed on to Graveyard Flats where Mike unloaded us and our horse's at the trail head. We packed up in the drizzle and headed up the trail to Sunset Pass along Norman creek - looking back at Graveyard Flats and the *Alexander River*.<sup>\*</sup>

We passed by a hiker group at the campground. Shortly after that Friar's pack slipped. He proceeded to buck it off in the bushy meadow. We retrieved everything (including the horse) but the lash rope could not be located. We decided to camp in the pass area and look for the rope in the morning (hoping the rain didn't turn to snow). We spent a comfortable night with a good fire.

*\* Camp Parker - Icefields Parkway road construction camp area named after a road work construction foreman (1930's)*

*\* Nigel Pass - Nigel Peak named after Nigel Vavasour a packer for Collie and Stutfield on their first major mountaineering expedition in the area in 1898.*

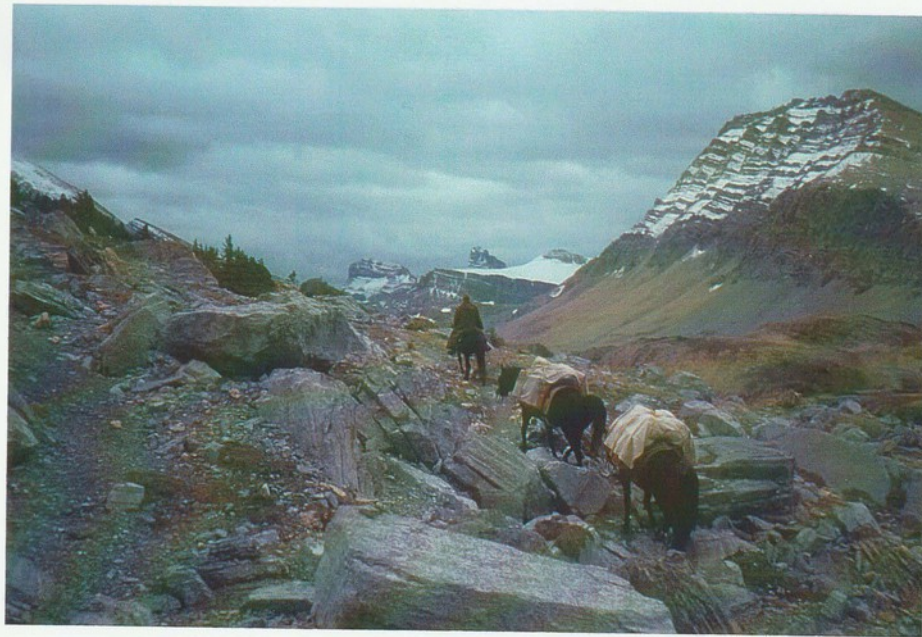
Crib Burial - Brazeau River  
2001



Crossing Nigel pass - Mary Schaeffer Expedition - 1907



Crossing Nigel Pass - 2001



*\* Graveyard Flats - Named by Mary Schaeffer because of the many bones strewn on the ground - probably from Stoney hunting camp*

*\*Alexandra River - Mount Alexandra named by Outram. in 1902 after Queen Alexandra, consort of king Edward II. This river was know as Nashan (Stoney for Wolverine) when the Colemans were first here.*

September 5

The weather cleared overnight and we got a spectacular morning sunshine view of *Mt. Coleman\**. The horses stayed in a basin above the camp.

We rode our horses over the meadow in search of the lost lash rope and Rod finally found it. The yellow poly rope blended in nicely with the autumn gold of the brush. We were glad to finally find it because it had a Ray Legace vintage wooden hook attached. We packed up and rode over Sunset Pass getting great views of *Pinto Lake\** and the *Cline\* valley* from the steep trail leading down to the lake. We camped near Pinto Lake at the horse camp. We found several interesting tree shields but could not locate the tree shields from the *Frank Pierce Rescue\** from 1923.

Our next goal was to find the Pictographs that we new existed up the Cataract valley. Rod had talked to an Ojibwa elder from west of Rocky Mountain House who had given a rough description of where to find them. We rode up Cataract creek over a lot of dead fall to an open riverside meadow with a view of the Pass. This is probably the same location as the photo from the Mary Schaeffer party in 1908. We ran into the same group that were camping in Sunset Pass the day before. They were a University of Calgary hiking group - a very pleasant and *ambitious group of about fifteen young people.*

*We had rode past a large rock slide which looked promising but did not spot the pictographs on the way up the trail. Many of the boulders nearby were covered with ocre colored red lichens. We stopped in the same area on the way back and tied up our horses. We inspected every large rock in the area for over an hour and finally returned to our horses. I said "Well Crockett - we couldn't find the pictographs" He gave me a wilting look. We were dodging fallen timber on the way back when Crockett took his head and went around some trees a different way than on the way up the trail. He stopped at a large rock near the canyon - and there were the pictographs! I couldn't help thinking that he said "why didn't you ask?"*

I will remember to take Crockett when I am traveling with the archaeologists in the future! The pictographs are in great shape and very interesting. The red ochre is clear and well protected by an overhang. We vowed to return with our archaeologist friends. At the fork in the river we visited a large horse camp with old tree blazes and some vintage wooden signage. We returned to camp and the horses stayed in a meadow by the lake. It was a warm and sunny day.

*\*Mt. Coleman - named after the Coleman brothers by N. Collie in 1902.*

*\*Pinto Lake - named by the Coleman brothers for an obnoxious pack horse that was left behind on their 1892 journey.*

*\*Cline - Mount Cline - named by N. Collie after Michael Cline a trader from the Hudson Bay Company in 1834.*

*\*Frank Pierce Rescue - In 1923 Pierce, his wife and daughter were trapping near Pinto Lake. Pierce accidentally shot himself. His wife doctored him through the winter. Some natives happened by in the spring and reported the accident to authorities in Nordegg. A rescue party was formed to bring the Pierce family out in 1924. The story is told on tree shields near Pinto Lake. (T. Loblaw)*

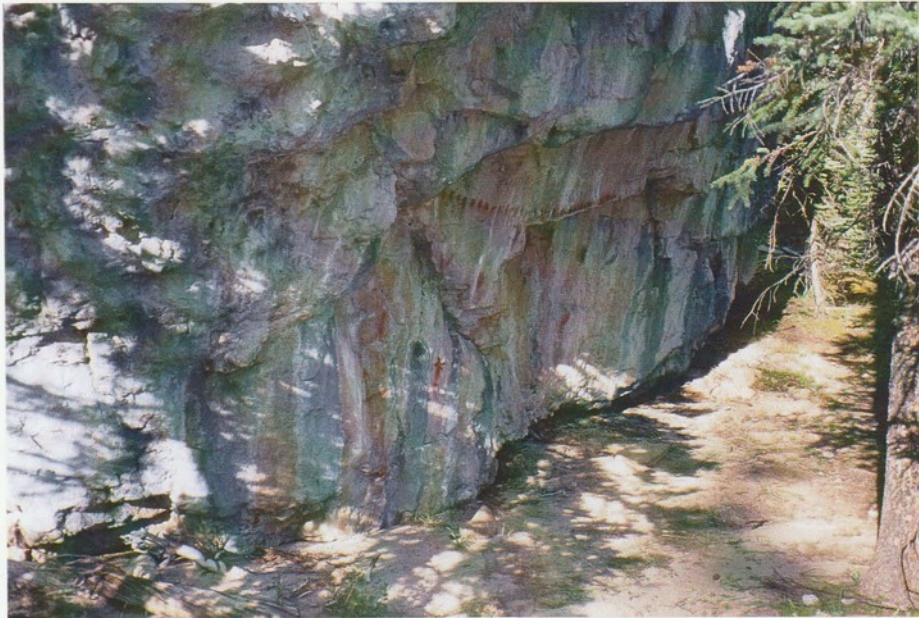
## September 6

We headed down the Cline River. We planned on camping somewhere in the valley and meeting wardens with a horse trailer about noon on September 7<sup>th</sup> to take us to the river crossing near Two-O'clock creek and to pick up our food stash at the Crossing. The traveling and weather were good heading down the Cline valley. Junior Forest Rangers have worked on the trail. The corduroy is dangerous though. We had to chase the pack horses around several rotting corduroy bridges. We stopped and looked up *Coral Creek* \* valley towards *Job Pass*\*, the route taken on the return trip by the Coleman brothers in 1892. We moved faster than expected and reached the David Thompson Highway about 5:30 pm. After a tense crossing over the Cline River bridge on the highway we tied up in an old campsite near the road - it started to rain.

Rod stayed with the horses and Don rode over to the Icefield Helicopter building and met the pilot, Ralph Silinger, who helped us. We used his phone liberally to contact the Saskatchewan River warden office and try to get an early pick-up. The wardens were not staying at the Crossing, however, because of water problems. Don caught a ride a ride with Terry, one of the pilots and picked up hay and oats at the Saskatchewan River warden station.



Pictographs  
Cataract Creek - 2001

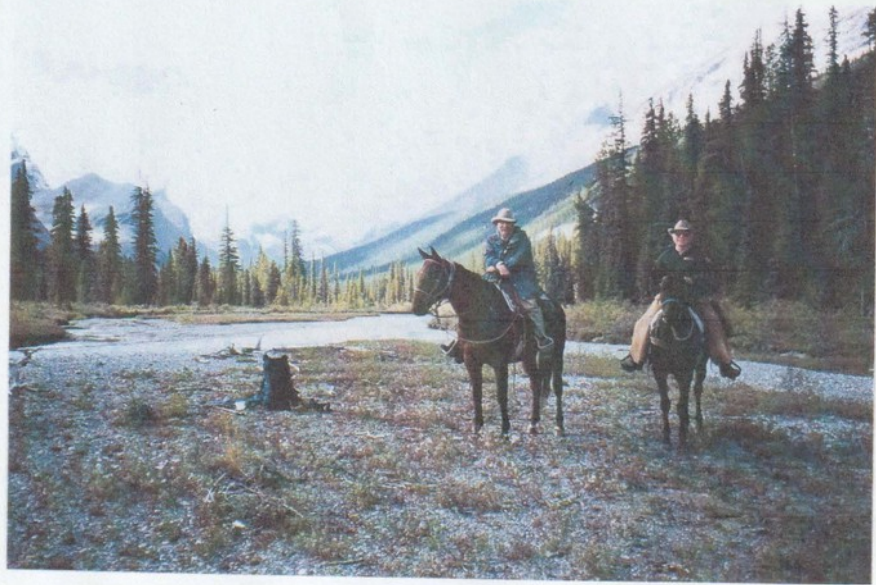


Cataract Creek - Mary Schaeffer Expedition - 1907

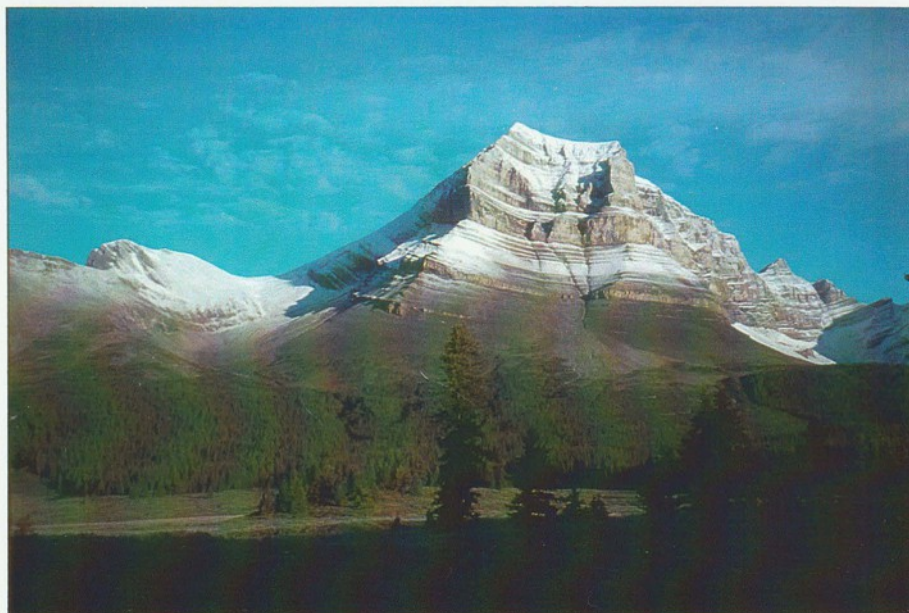


Cataract Creek -2001

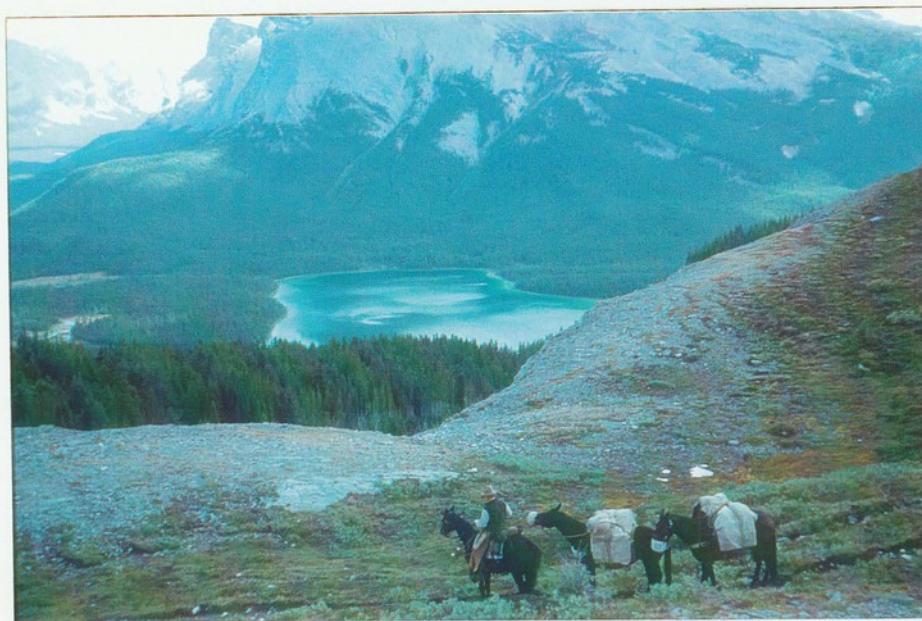
Rod Wallace & Don Mickle  
Warden Service



Mt. Coleman - 2001



Pinto Lake - 2001



Rene' and Dave, gate staff living at the Crossing, drove Don and the supplies back to our campground near the David Thompson Resort. We stopped and had a look at the North Saskatchewan River where we planned to cross the next day. The river was high because of glacier melt in the warm weather. We thought that we may have to change our plans about riding across the river and select another route.

Rod had a visitor that we dubbed the Great White Hunter - complete with 4X4 truck and ATV Trike. This guy told us he had crossed the North Saskatchewan river by blind folding his horses and walking them across the hiker suspension bridge. The bridge is a very narrow steel cable structure with an open steel grate walkway. Poor horse! He talked Rod's ear off for a long time then stated that "Real men do this shit - but I think that I will get a room at the resort tonight." We put up a wet camp and listened to highway noises all night.

*\*Coral Creek - named by the Coleman brothers in 1892 after the many fossil corals among its gravels.*

*\*Job Pass - named by the Coleman brothers after Job Beaver, a Stoney Indian, who explored and marked routes through the area in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century.*

September 7

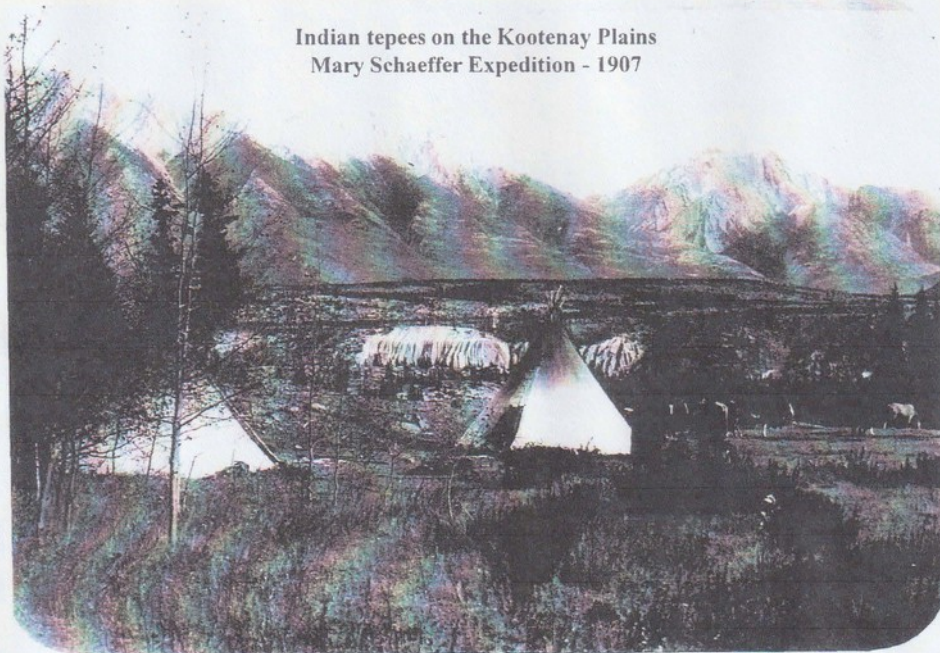
Rod's friend, 'The GW Hunter' returned in the morning. He mounted his quad, with his rifle strapped across the front and bags and buckets hanging everywhere. He prepared to head out into the wilderness. He said "I feel sorry for you park wardens camping out here - you want my egg salad sandwich?" I paid \$89.00 for a room to spend the night hearing some guy humping his old lady next door. Yup - I feel sorry for you park wardens - hope you get your guns soon - everybody should have a gun!"

Lyle Lambert, Saskatchewan River warden, picked us up about 10:00 am and shuttled the horses to the Kootenay Plains. We wanted to cross the North Saskatchewan River and ride up White Rabbit Creek to the Ram River. We drove to the Crossing to clean up and restocked our pack boxes with more food. Lyall dropped us off at our horses and wished us a good journey.

Kootenay Plains - Stoney Sundance Lodge  
Don Mickle - 1982



Indian tepees on the Kootenay Plains  
Mary Schaeffer Expedition - 1907



The horses were restless and uncooperative when we packed up and tried to cross the river. We picked a crossing below the suspension bridge that had only about 15 feet of swimming water through the main channel. (Don had crossed here before).

We were almost across when Friar panicked! He came around the down river side of Crockett and jammed the lead rope under the stirrup. We turned back but Friar was facing upriver and was washed over, almost pulling Crockett and Don with him. Friar lost his pack and went under in the main channel. At one point Friar's four hooves were all that was showing above the waves. Don managed to chase him out when he drifted into shallower water. Rod fished most of the gear out of the river, but we lost his rifle, the tarp and the luckless lash rope. We were lucky to have no casualties.

We put the horses in an old horse corral and hitched a ride back to the warden station. We hauled hay and oats back to our horses. Our wet gear was brought back to the Crossing. Don was thoroughly soaked to his armpits. We decided to abandon this route! We borrowed the generator truck from the gate again and drove to Lake Louise to get a truck and a four horse trailer. We dried our gear and clothing after arriving back at the Crossing at midnight. We stayed in the staff trailer.

## September 8

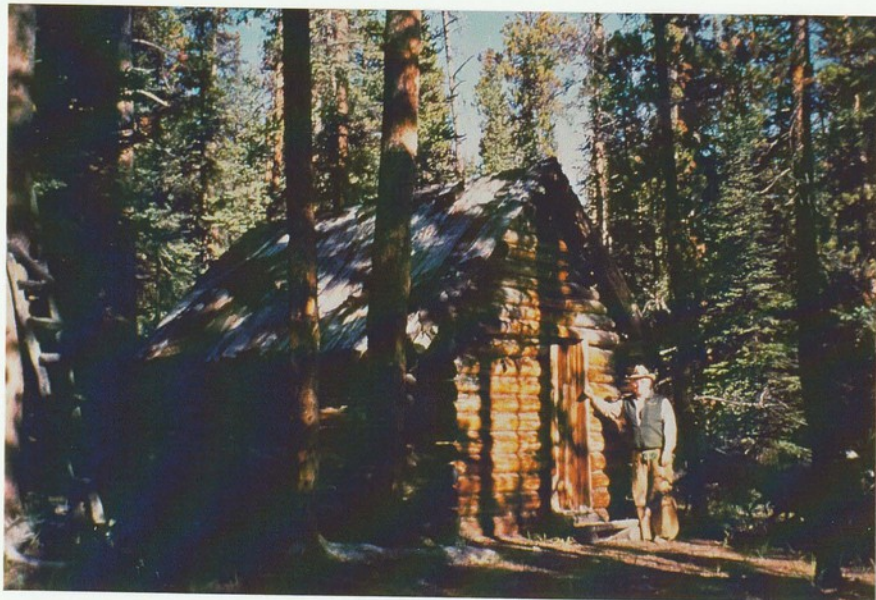
We checked damage again - Don's camera and film, which included photos of the pictographs, was ruined. We picked up the horses and gear (borrowing tarp and lash rope from the Crossing) and headed for the Helen Lake trail head. We decided to take the route over the Dolomite Pass - up the Siffleur - over Clearwater Pass to Indian Head on the Clearwater river. Indian Head was our destination from the abandoned route up the White Rabbit. We were going to follow another historic expedition from 1899 for this part of the journey. This was an expedition outfitted by Tom Wilson with guide Ralph Edwards and adventurers Rev. Noyes and Nicholls and attorneys Weed and Thompson.

We left the trail head at 11:00 after meeting with Lake Louise wardens to take the truck and trailer back. We rode over the pass in windy but beautiful weather. We passed by *Helen and Katherine Lakes\** on our way over Dolomite Pass.\*. We arrived at *Isabella Lake\** about 4:30 pm. We met about 10 hikers and saw a number of marmots. It was good to be back on the trail after our two wild days in civilization.

Dolomite Pass and The Dolomites - 2001



Old Dolomite Warden Cabin - 2001



*\*Helen and Katherine Lake - named after daughters of reverend H.P. Nicholls in 1899.*

*\*Dolomite Pass -Dolomite Peak named in 1897 for its resemblance to the Dolomites in Europe*

*\*Isabella Lake - named in 1899 by CW Thompson after his sister*

## September 9

We left Isabella for the Upper Siffleur Valley, Clearwater pass and Clearwater Lakes. The weather was warm and sunny. We stopped at the old Dolomite warden cabin - built in the 1930's by Harold Fuller. It is still in good shape for preservation if the roof would be repaired with rolled roofing. We crossed the *Siffleur\** and rode up the valley. We stopped at the *Wildman camp*. There is an old cabin bottom here which is believed to be the cabin built by Tom Wilson when he had his ranch at the Kootenay Plains during the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. Wilson traveled this way from Lake Louise. There is an old outfitter camp here too, complete with a tree cache. This was a trademark of Outfitter Ray Legace who probably used this camp in the 1930's and 1940's. We stopped at the Siffleur warden cabin - the roof is mostly caved in now. There are still mileage posts up the valley and over to the Clearwater Pass. This could be from when this area was in the Forestry before 1930 before it was included into Banff Park?

We passed over Clearwater Pass in sunny weather. There are prehistoric sites along this route and a Clovis point was found on top of the pass by archaeologists in 1993. We passed *Devon Lakes\** and made our way to Clearwater Lake cabin. This cabin is a Federal Heritage building. A color blind warden, Jim Rimmer, painted the interior of this cabin pink and green in the 1960's and we have kept this bit of heritage too! Dave Norcross arrived at the cabin at the same time as us. He was planning an excursion up Roaring Creek to try and get over to the Red Deer River. Don put a front shoe on Crockett, and the stories continued well into the evening. The horses grazed near the drift fence at the Lake.

*\*Devon lakes - Devon Mountain - descriptive name for the well-developed Devonian geological formation here. (1923)*

*\*Siffleur - French word/or Marmot - from the Palliser Expedition in 1859.*



September 10

The weather changed overnight and we left for Indian Head in snow flurries. Dave had to change his mind about the trip up Roaring Creek because of the weather and returned to Indian Head with us. There was a bull moose at Clearwater Lakes when we went by. We rode past *Martin\* and Trident\* lakes to Malloch\* Flats.*

There are a number of prehistoric sites along this route. There is a survey marker on Malloch Flats. There was also a fire ring and an old horse camp site. We arrived at Indian Head about 1:00 pm. Dave headed on to Divide cabin on his way out to the Ya Ha Tinda Ranch. A medium size dark grizzly bear visited next to the yard at Indian Head cabin. It looked like the bear was hanging around for a while. Scat around the area had a lot of buffalo berry in it. The inside of the Indian Head Lodge (regular bungalow house design) is decorated with historic trail signs from the area.

The Single Side Band radio that evening was like a conversation from the past. Marv Millar, Brian Wallace, Dave Norcross, Scott Ward, Al Bjorn, Rod Wallace and Don Mickle were all on the radio in various parts of the back country of Banff and Jasper Parks. A bit of a time warp from other decades when we all worked in the back country of Banff and Jasper Parks.

During the evening many warden stories were told and even a few true ones like this one told by Don:

*The year was 1964. Keith Foster and myself were trailing about 16 horses from the Blackstone Country through to the Red Deer River where we grazed them for the winter. We had just finished a hunting trip (we were in the Guiding & Outfitting business then). We crossed the North Saskatchewan River and trailed up White Rabbit Creek. Crossing the river was easy in those days. There was no Abraham Lake or Bighorn dam. There was a logging bridge over the North Saskatchewan. We traveled fast from the Kootenay Plains and ended up at Indian Head about dark. Before we started on the trip, my sister Faye decided to use her unappreciated humor at the time and filled our pack boxes with nothing but beans to eat. (We should have checked). Keith hated beans and I was pretty tired of them. We looked forward to some hospitality and hot food at the Indian Head Lodge. Jim Rimmer was the warden there. We found that Jim did not share the Warden hospitality that we usually found in the back-country. We put our horses in the corral and walked over to the house. Jim reluctantly invited us in and said (in his clipped English accent) - "you boys look a little hungry - perhaps I can rustle you up a spud". We thought that it was a term for supper - but no - Jim cut a potato into slices - put it in a frying pan and gave us each half.*

*It was pitch dark by this time and we would have happily stayed for the night and hoped for a better breakfast. Jim said "Well - I suppose you boys better be off now - its getting past my bedtime." We headed out in the dark and could only see one white horse occasionally. We followed the Clearwater river and finally came out at Harrison Flats. We rolled our sleeping bags on the ground. We woke up under a foot of snow the next day and finally made our way to the Ya-Ha Tinda Ranch and turned our horses out across the Red. Our pick-up was a day late and we camped one more night at the Red Deer River. We put two cans of beans on the fire without opening them. We hid behind a log and watched in glee when they exploded all over the trees and blew out the fire. It turned out that our ride (My father) was waylaid at the Sundre Bar. We were starved by the time he finally arrived. Or in Foster's words; "If somebody pooped on a piece of pie - I would eat around it and underneath it". We finally got fed that night back at Sundre even if it was just chips and beer. We were too late for the restaurant! We did not offer to buy Jim a round of beer that winter at the Banff King Eddy.*

*\*Trident Lake - descriptive name for the Mythical spear shape of the 3 adjacent streams.*

*\*Martin Lake - origin unknown*

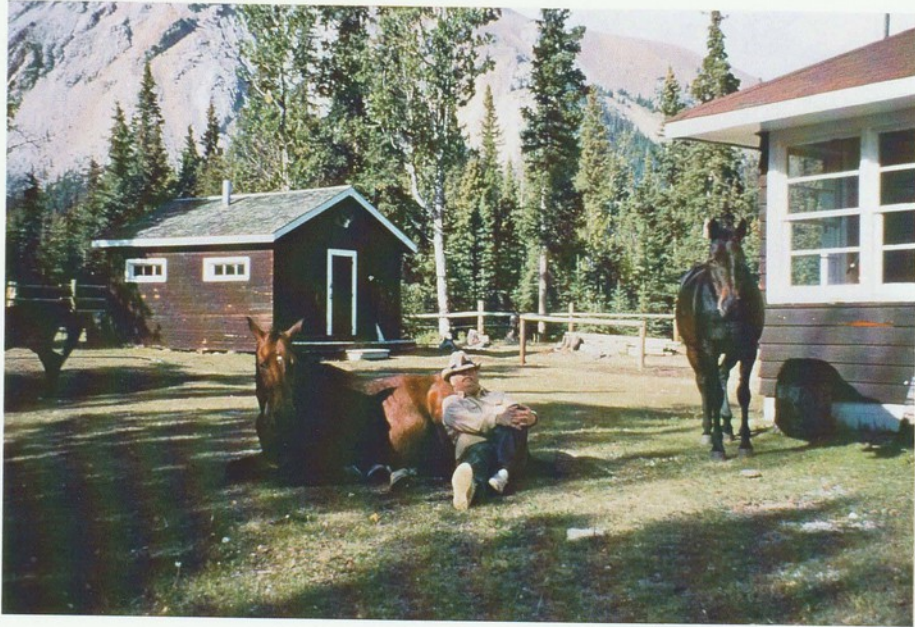
*\*Malloch Flats - Mount Malloch - named in 1920 after George Malloch, a geologist who mapped the area and also first climbed the mountain.*

## September 11

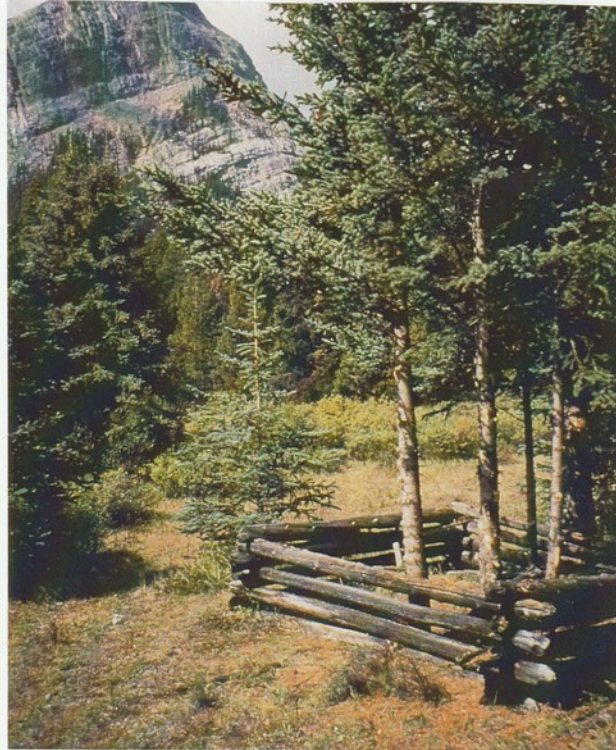
We were listening to the AM radio at Indian Head. The early morning was shattered by the news of the Terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon in the United States.

We gave the horses a well deserved day off. It was too socked in and cloudy to follow our original plans to go up Indian Head Creek and the head of the Ram River. This is the route we would have originally come over from the North Saskatchewan River and White Rabbit Creek. We spent some time cleaning up the crib burial at Indian Head. Hopefully we appeased the spirits there and ghost sightings at the lodge will be reduced! We cut wood and cleaned up the yard. We listened to the horrible news of the terrorist attacks to the U.S. throughout the day on the radio. It is hard to believe that something like that was happening while we are at such a peaceful remote spot.

Rest day at Indianhead Lodge - 2001



Crib Burial Site - Indianhead Creek - 2001



September 12

We started off on another sunny day for *Peters Creek\** and Divide Pass. We rode through an empty hunters camp set up just outside the Park boundary. We passed the original Indian Head warden cabin site and meadow on the opposite side of the Clearwater river. There are still remnants of telephone line poles along the trail as reminders of the warden's phone lines throughout the back country in past decades. Don was reminded of previous park boundary patrols and occasionally meeting hunters at the boundary before heading over Divide pass. A spectacular array of alpine meadows in full Autumn colors greeted us as we headed toward the Red Deer river. We stopped at Divide cabin. The original cabin is another officially Recognized Heritage building. The cabin needs re-shingling and major log work. There are more prehistoric sites on this route including at the natural animal lick near the cabin.

After lunch we headed down the pass to the Red Deer river and to *Scotch Camp.\** Scotch Camp cabin is another recognized heritage building. It's location is at an open meadow beneath *Mt. White\**. It was a beautiful warm evening at Scotch camp with elk bugling in the pasture. Rod walked parts of the huge meadow and was amazed at the immense beauty of the setting.

*\*Peters Creek- Mount Peters - named in 1928 after F. Peters, the Surveyor General of Canada from 1924-1948.*

*\* Scotch Camp - old records show that this was called Scott's camp in the early part of the century (perhaps after warden Scotty Wright?) (Don Mickle)*

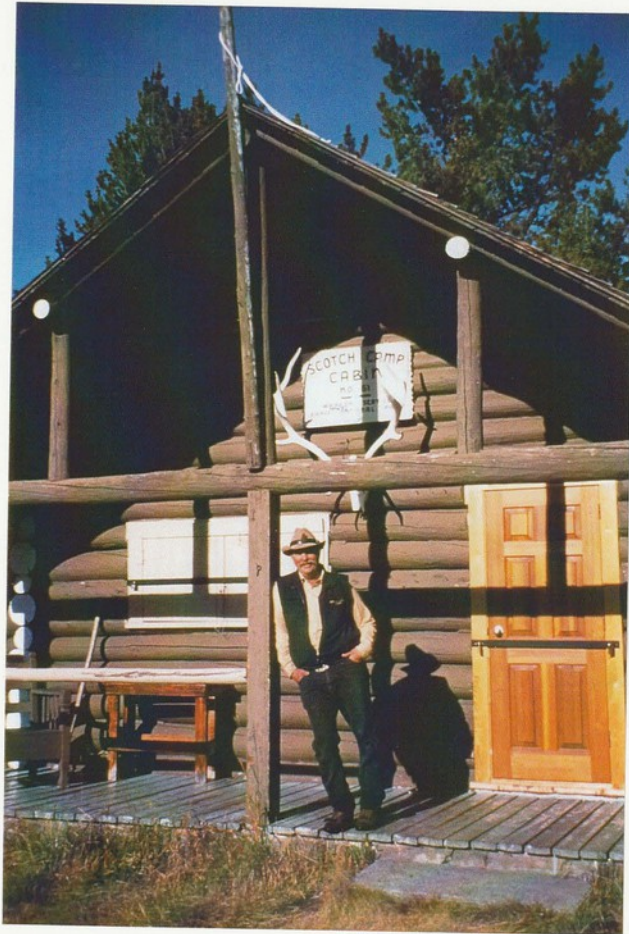
*\* Mt. White - named for a geographer by G. M Dawson survey party 1884*

September 13

We left under sunny skies for the *Ya Ha Tinda Ranch\**. We checked out the *prehistoric pit houses\** at Divide Creek across the Red deer River from Scotch Camp. We stopped at the Annie Johnson grave (1928) at *Tyrell Creek.\** Nearby are the old corral and the remnants of a Jimmy Simpson cabin.

The arrival at the Ya Ha Tinda in early afternoon was a leisurely ride. A pleasant evening was spent with Johnny and Marie Nylund at the Ranch. Steaks and beer in our food cache that Don had left prior to the trip were appreciated. A hot shower felt good too!

Scotch Camp Cabin - 2001  
A Federal Heritage Building



**Jim Simpson Cabin - Tyrell Creek - 2001**



**Annie Johnson Grave - Tyrell Creek - 2001**



There are several historic buildings and artifacts at the Ya Ha Tinda Ranch itself. The barn is a Recognized Heritage building. There are many prehistoric and historic Native sites in the area.

There has been a concentrated archaeological study of the Ya ha Tinda in the past few years which includes the recording of such features as *eagle pits*\*.

\* *Ya Ha Tinda* - Stoney word for *Prairie in the Mountains* (Nakoda Nation)

\* *Tyrell Creek* - *Mount Tyrell* - named after *Joseph Tyrell*, a surveyor and explorer in the Rocky mountains near the turn of the century.

\* "*Pit Houses*" - semi-subterranean winter dwellings and cache or roasting pits typical of Salish\*(Shuswap) habitation. ca. 2900 to ca. 200 B.P. (G. Langemann)

\* "*Eagle Pits*" - one person size depression in ground made by Native peoples to enable hunters to capture eagles for their feathers from nearby bait sites.(Peter Francis)

September 14

Rod and Don had a tour of Marie's historic display in the granary/bunkhouse that Johnny and Marie have fixed up with historic artifacts and displays. Mike Schintz has brought 'Packy', the famous travelling pack horse display, back to life and he resides at the Ya Ha Tinda. This display is a fabulous bit of park warden and ranch history.

We left about 9:30 for the Corners via Bighorn flats, across the Red Deer River and over Ribbon Creek flats. It was another sunny warm fall day. We checked out the historic teepee rings on Bighorn flats on the way through. There is also evidence of the coal mine air strip (Japanese company) from the 1970's. Horse drawn back country wagons travel up the Panther from the Mountaineer lodge area. Don was reminded of memories from wintering outfitting horses in this valley many years ago.

We arrived at the 'Corners' cabin in the early afternoon. This was an old warden patrol cabin (when this area was in Banff NP before 1930). It has been restored and used as an Alberta Forestry cabin for the last decade or so. Frank Coggins, retired park warden, who now works for the Forestry welcomed us to stay at the cabin.

We met one bow hunter along the way and passed through a few hunter camps. Elk season for firearms was to open in a few days.

Packy - 2001

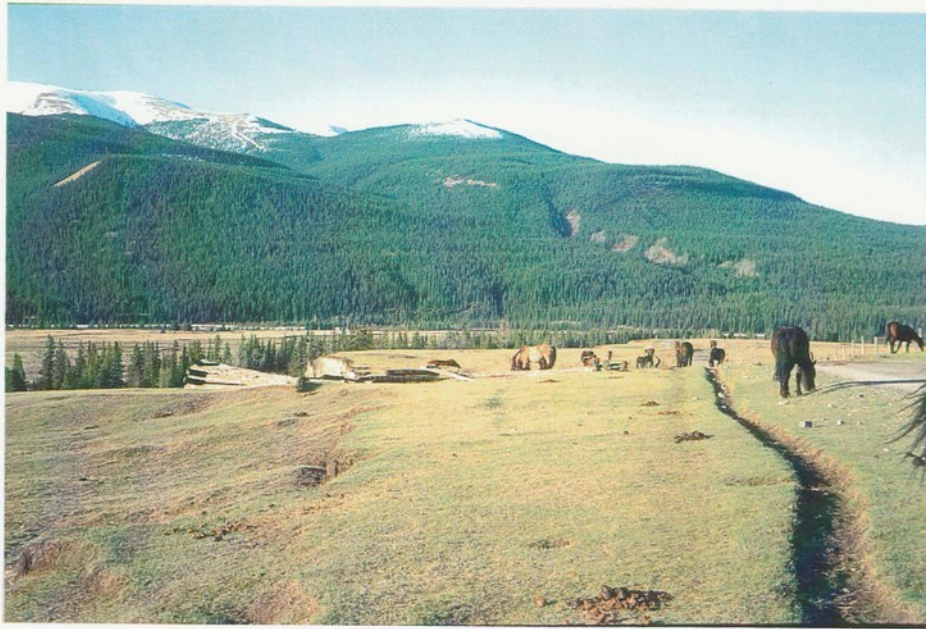




**Ya-Ha Tinda Ranch Buildings - 2001**



**The Ya-Ha Tinda Ranch  
Remnants of Brewster Corral from 1908**



Big Horn Flats on the Ya-Ha Tinda Ranch - 2001



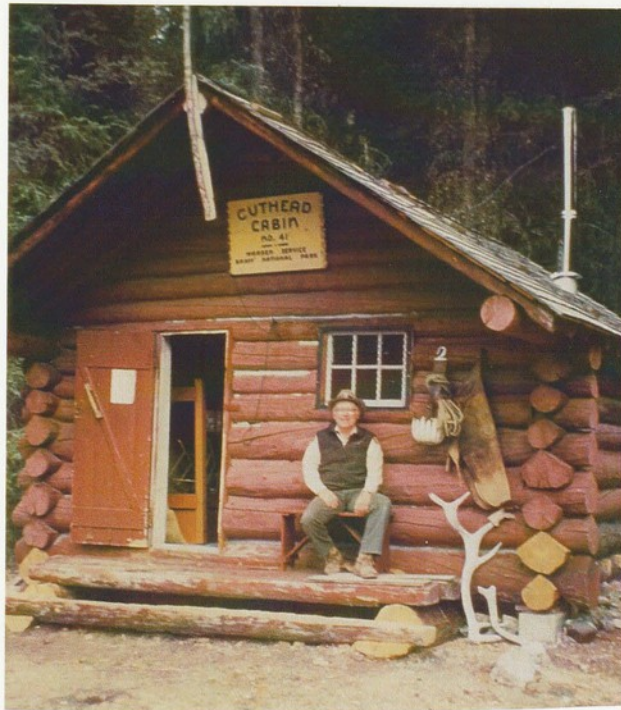
Ribbon Creek Flats and the 'Corners' - 2001



Henry Ness at Cuthead Cabin - 1933



Cuthead Cabin ( Federal Heritage Building) - 2001



September 15

We left the Corners about 8:00 AM on another sunny morning. We stopped at the historical boundary marker as we entered Banff park in a canyon section of trail leading up the *Panther River*. \* We stopped at Barrier warden cabin. The park trail crew were staying here while they worked on the new cut-off trail near Sulphur Springs. This new trail avoids an area of regular wolf den activity.

We arrived at Windy in the early afternoon. Don showed Rod the bomb shelter in the basement of Windy Lodge. Windy Lodge is a Recognized Heritage building constructed in the 1950's. Bomb shelters were installed in some of the warden houses during the nuclear scare. We then rode over *Wigmore Summit*\* and down the Cascade valley to *Cuthead*\* cabin. We passed by the old Cuthead College warden training site (1950's). It is one of the heritage sites along the Cascade corridor.

The Cuthead cabin is another Recognized Heritage building. There was restoration work on the cabin this past summer. Logs were replaced from logs cut the previous year by warden Art Laurensen. A heavy forested area in front of the cabin was cleared to open up the cabin site. We spent some frustrating moments fixing the Coleman lantern and trying to communicate with the useless SSB radio that evening after a long day in the saddle.

*\*Panther River & Panther Mountain - corresponds to the Stoney name for the stream which signifies "the river where the" mountain lion was killed".*

*\*Wigmore Summit\* - Wigmore Creek- named after Sam Wigmore, a prospector, who had a copper mine on this creek.*

*\*Cuthead Creek- translation of a Stoney name. The legend is that a Cree man had stolen a Stoney woman and was overtaken here and his head cut off*

September 16

We left Cuthead on another warm day for the last day of our journey. We stopped at the Elk Trap, a historical feature, from the elk control program of the 1950's and 1960's. The area was a large complex of log corrals and wooden runways for the capture and transplant of elk.

We then stopped at the Stoney warden station and toured the original restored Stoney cabin. It was completed this spring(2001) by volunteer help from Bob Haney, Ross Gilmar, Jim VanTassel and friends. There is a plaque that signifies the Carleton family and other district warden families that have lived in the back country in the past. It was an era when there were year around warden districts in the back country.

We rode down the Cascade road, through the Bankhead coal mining town and back to the government corrals at Banff. We trailed the horses past the Brewster corrals, a number of visitor use areas, and under the Trans Canada highway through a large drainage/wildlife passageway.

This completed the last day of our adventure. We traveled over 400 km of trails (and a few dozen kilometers on the road) on this historical journey from Jasper to Banff.

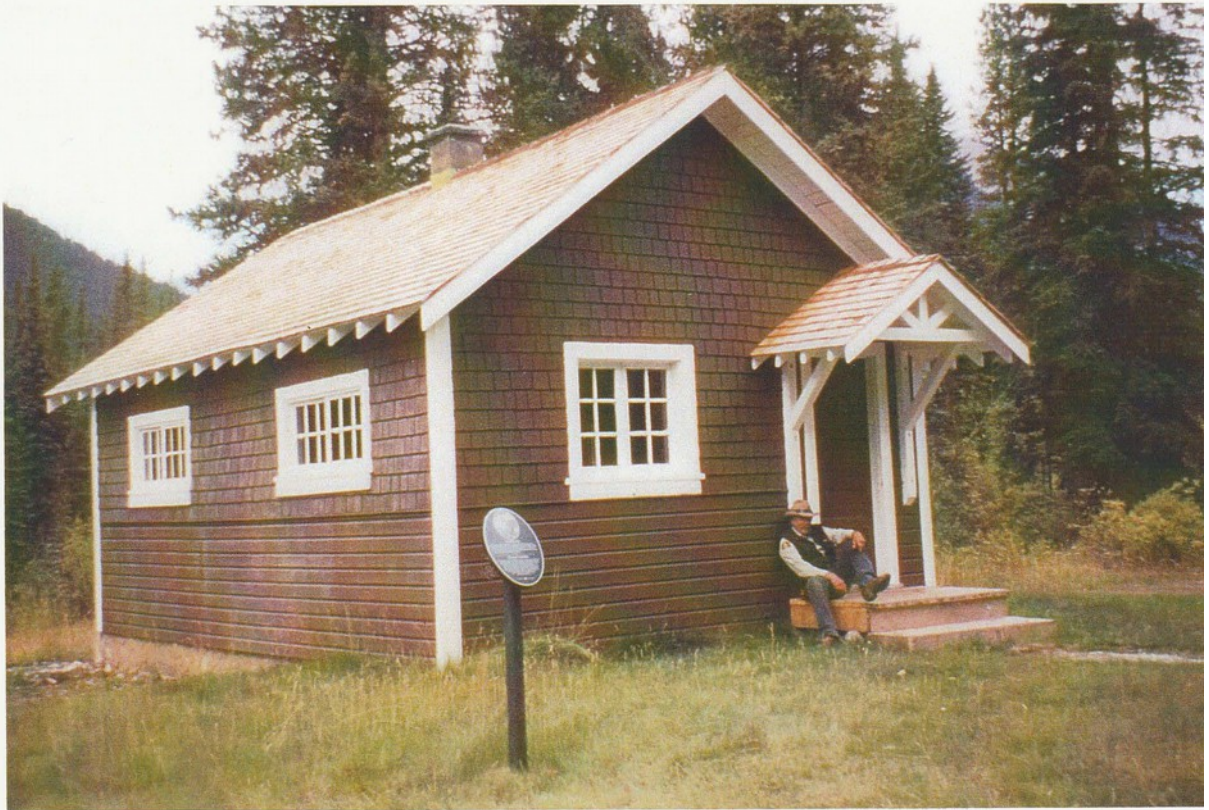
September 17

Don and Rod trucked Willow and Abbey back to Jasper and Don returned to Banff via the Icefields Parkway. We both look forward to more like journeys in the near future.

*NOTE - most of the place names were taken from 'Place Names of Alberta - Volume I (Alberta Culture and Multiculturalism). Others were taken from personal knowledge as noted.*

*The vintage photographs are all courtesy of The Whyte Museum Of The Canadian Rockies.*

**Stoney Creek Warden Cabin  
Restored in 2001  
Carleton Family Plaque in front**





*Rick Ralf crossing the North Saskatchewan – 1982*



*Jim Murphy & Scott Ward – Ya-Ha-Tinda Ranch - 2004*

*Still in the Saddle*



*Rod*



*Don*