



Buster Buffalo Paddock, 1926 and Doug McTrowe top picture feeding Buffalo



Cabin at the Devil's Head (Meadow Creek grazing lease , Dave McDougall).The following is a copy of an interview done with my Grandfather Douglas McTrowe. It appeared in the Banff Crag and Canyon on Friday, September 4th, 1925. It was copied verbatim with all the spelling errors namely " McTrow". Bruce McTrowe, April 13, 2001.

Friday, September 4th, 1925

MOUNTAIN SHEEP ANSWER CALL: MCTROW PERFORMS MIRACLES IN TAMING WILD ANIMALS OF ROCKIES

When the buffalo paddock keeper Douglas McTrow whistles and claps his hands in the mountain sheep paddock, every animal in the enclosure lifts its head, turns and scurries over to him to be petted. Old mountain hunters declare that this is the most wonderful sight they ever witnessed. The mountain sheep is the timidness of all animals. That this animal, which they declare is the hardest to hunt in the whole Rockies should be so tame is truly remarkable.

But Mr. McTrow is an old rancher. He has spent most of his life with animals and almost understands their language. Thirty years ago, he worked for Dave McDougall, the well-known foothill rancher and trader. While working for Dave McDougall he attended to herds of cattle from 500 to 1,000head each, taking them to Devil's Head region for as long as seven months. In all the time he worked for McDougall McTrow was never known to lose an animal. *2021 added by Bruce McTrowe: from Eleanor Luxton's book "Latch String Out". David McDougall had a lease at the end of Lake Minnewanka where he wintered cattle and built a cabin (photo above) for the man in charge. At that point, Devils Head the mountain still retained its shape. Later, in the 1890's, the stone head fell off, leaving only the neck. The tremors were felt in Morley, Banff, and the surrounding areas. When the fishing party arrived, Douglas McTrowe was in charge, responsible to see that the cattle did not stray when they pastured. He ran the camp for three years. A sick man when he came west to try to be cured of Tuberculosis, he regained his health and afterwards moved to Banff to oversee for**

the rest of his life the government animal park called The Buffalo Paddock at the base of Cascade Mountain. It had Rocky Mountain sheep, goats, deer, elk, moose, yak, buffalo, and Angora sheep. Back at the Devil's Head camp, the men used to like to spend the winter there, even though it was snowbound. The valley was sheltered and beautiful and the cabin was comfortable. **

When Howard Douglas was superintendent of the park Douglas McTrow forsook ranching to become the keeper of the paddock here. Not only has he tamed the timid mountain sheep, but he has taught other wild animals of the park to respect him and to allow him to touch them.

As far as it is known he is the only man who has succeeded in making a buffalo semi-tame. A buffalo calf four years of age will come to his call, allow himself to be stroked and even permit the keeper to lift its front feet.

Even the elk are not disturbed in the least when he walks among them. They know him. His reputation for kindness has spread to even the youngest and most unused to humans in the herd.

When others enter the park set aside for the Yak, these creatures seek the farthest point in the paddock from the gate. But McTrow walks among them unnoticed. Recently he entered the paddock, picked up a young Yak and held its head in a pail of milk until it drank its fill. The proud mother stood by, watching the proceedings with the placid gaze of a contented cow.

The bill-goat, a wild one for many years, walks over to the entrance when McTrow loosens the bars and is not content until he receives his "daily dozen" strokes.

When asked the secret of his success with the animals, McTrow said he always destroyed any fear that they might have for him by being kind.

"Animals are like human beings. They like kindness. If animals are never treated roughly, they will become more friendly each day until they will submit to petting".

**FROM THE ARCHIVES OF THE BANFF CRAG AND CANYON, 1981..... FIFTY YEARS AGO;
JULY 17, 1931**

Unruly buffalo.... Douglas McTrowe, caretaker of the buffalo paddock, narrowly escaped a bad mauling and possibly death on Wednesday when a fractious buffalo bull charged him. At the time, McTrowe was rounding up a herd of buffalo from the back pasture and bringing them up so that they might be better seen by the tourists. All the animals but the one bull went along peaceably. This animal charged him and his horse. The horse stumbled but recovered himself only to fall a few seconds later throwing McTrowe on his head and injuring his leg. The buffalo continued the attack, but McTrowe was carrying a heavy club with which he hit the buffalo, dazing him long enough that he was able to regain his horse which had only gone a few feet. By this time the other buffalo had turned and had assumed a threatening attitude but once he was remounted, they turned and were driven into their corral along with the enraged bull.

An X-ray was taken of Mr. McTrowe's leg on Thursday, the photograph showing that he had sustained only bruises although it was feared that he might have fractured it in the fall.

The following incident was told to me by my Dad Arnie. It is a true story and I call it Douglas McTrowe and Buster the bull buffalo.

Grandpa McTrowe used to check the fences at the buffalo paddock from horseback. Buster as we all know used to follow him around like a dog. Dad and his brothers used to take turns going with Grandpa before they went to school. This one morning it was Dad's turn, but he slept in and later went to school. Grandpa left with his horse and Buster following like a dog as he always did. It only

took a couple of hours to check the fence but when the horse came back mid-morning without Grandpa, Grandma knew there was trouble at hand. She called the Wardens in Banff, and they came out to conduct a search. Not knowing where to start looking Grandma told them if they found Buster then they would find Doug nearby. The scene they came upon was this huge bull buffalo weaving back and forth while walking. Sure, enough in front of him was Grandpa. He was thrown from his horse and hit his head. When he came to, he was dazed and confused and was staggering aimlessly, hence Buster's erratic behaviour. Grampa had a slight concussion and was OK in a few days.

**New info From Walter Peyto's Journals, 1929 to 1934- Page 158
This incident happened on Nov. 13, 1933. From Journals 1935 to 1941 Page 139, April 8th, 1938, Page 139. Details of Buster's death. My Dad, Arnie told me about Buster's enlarged gallbladder. Dad would have been 14 years old. Buster was 19. Bruce McTrowe, Oct 3rd, 2009**

OBITUARY

A pioneer resident of Banff, Douglas Kenneth McTrowe, 72, of 408 Banff Ave., died Sunday at the Mineral Springs Hospital in Banff.

Mr. McTrowe was born in Inverness, Scotland and moved to Kitchener Ont. in 1889. In 1902 he moved to Banff and was employed by the late Jim Brewster in the early 1900's and later as barn boss at the old government stables in Banff.

From 1922 until 1940 he was caretaker of the Buffalo Paddock. Mr. McTrowe was also one of the first drivers of the Banff Volunteer Fire Brigade.

He is survived by four sons: Kenneth, Arnold, Norman, and Donald, and four grand children, all of Banff. His wife, Alvira, predeceased him in Banff in December 1947.

Rev. M.S. Blackburn will conduct the funeral service in St. Paul's Presbyterian Church in Banff Tuesday at 2p.m. and burial will be in the Banff Cemetery. Banff Funeral Services is in charge, supervised by Jacques Funeral Home.

New info. From 1916 Census for Banff. Douglas Kenneth McTrow: Born in 1882 In Australia, arrived in Canada in 1896. Tribal origin; Scotch.

There is an Inverness in Australia. Info I remember my dad, Arnie telling me about my grandfather when I was young:

- 1. He was 14 years old when he came to Canada with his older sister (another mystery). The above birth date and arrival date tally.**
- 2. Grandpa McTrowe's Mother remarried and moved to Australia or could have moved to Australia and married. (Another mystery)**
- 3. Grandpa worked his way over on a Cattle Boat.**

I must assume the above info is correct as the census taker interviewed Grandpa and his info is the truth. Obviously, his past was never mentioned because it was always assumed he was born in Scotland and the date of birth is different (1878). Bruce McTrowe, Oct 3rd, 2009



Doug McTrowe at the Buffalo Paddock