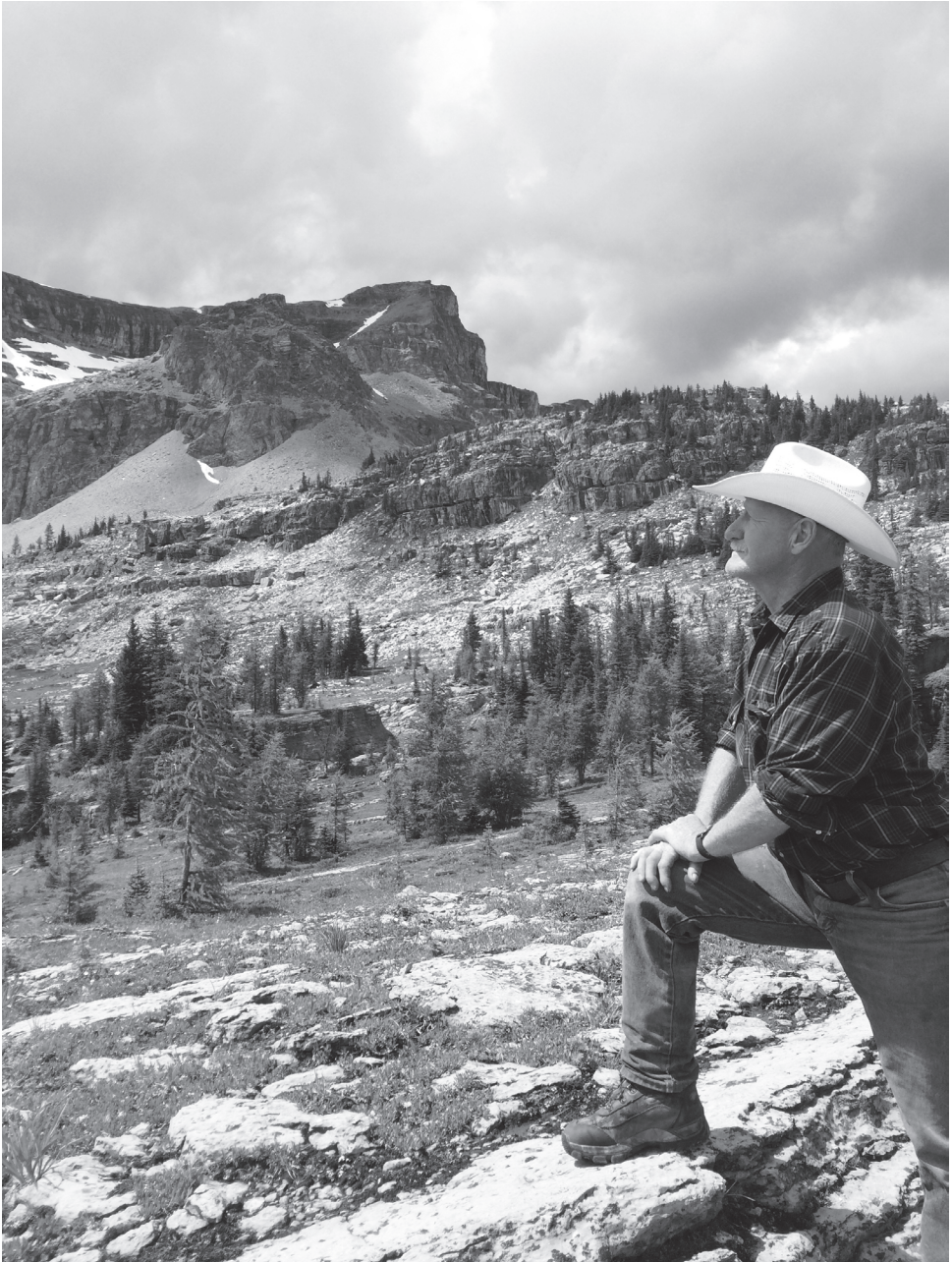


MOUNTAIN MAN

THE LIFE OF A GUIDE OUTFITTER

Hiram Cody Tegart
with Andrew Bruce Richards

CAITLIN PRESS



**THIS STORY IS DEDICATED TO THE HARDY MEN AND WOMEN
WHO GUIDE AND RIDE THE MOUNTAIN TRAILS AWAY FROM
THE TRAPPINGS OF CIVILIZATION.**

FOREWORD

BY ANDY

If the thrilling bugle of a majestic bull elk on a frosty morning makes your heart pound, or the thought of coming face to face with a grizzly on a narrow trail makes the hair stand up on the back of your neck, here's a read you might enjoy.

Such was the life of Hiram Cody Tegart, known to his family and friends as Cody. Born in 1950 to Jim and Doreen Tegart, Cody was the sixth of eight children. The Tegart clan were some of the original settlers in BC's Columbia Valley, with most taking up the ranching lifestyle. Jim was no exception to that trend, and he had a ranch located between Brisco and Edgewater. To supplement the ranch income, Jim also had a Guide Outfitter territory centred around the Palliser River and extending to the Kootenay National Park and Alberta borders in the spectacular area that is now known as the Height of the Rockies. With that pedigree, Cody had no option but to embrace the cowboy lifestyle, and he did so with great enthusiasm.

I met Cody in about 1969, when I was in Grade 10 at David Thompson Secondary School in Invermere, BC. I was a skinny,

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Coke-bottle-spectacled transplant from the Prairies, trying to fit in (quite unsuccessfully) with the greaser group. In the Columbia Valley during the sixties, the cliques included jocks and cowboys at the top of the scale, followed by greasers, nerds and hippies. I never was sure why Cody pulled me into the cowboy fold, but I suspect Jim had asked him to recruit some free help for haying season. The deal was that I would provide my labour for free, and they would teach me how to be a cowboy. It was one of the best deals I ever made, because the next five or six years were one outdoor adventure after another. Life with Cody, his younger brother, Garrett, and a few other friends was a whirlwind of playing hooky from school for impromptu fishing trips, weekend cruising in our various cars (which we spent a great deal of time fixing) and looking for bush parties, with our ever-present bootlegged case of beer. In the summer we worked the occasional guide trips on horseback, and we cut trail in the hunting territory, where I got to visit magical places like Tipperary Camp and the spectacular vista of the camp on Queen Mary Lake.

As life happens, all of us boys eventually wound up going our separate ways to pursue our own paths, while Cody kept doing what he loved, eventually taking over the Palliser territory from his dad. These are the tales of an outdoor life well lived, in Cody's own words, with contributions from guides that he worked with and some of us who knew him best. This is also a tale about a disappearing lifestyle. With commercial logging reaching the most isolated areas, the wild places we loved—and pretty much had to ourselves—are now easily accessible. The elk and moose that used to be plentiful have been decimated by decades of government bungling of both wildlife

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management and wildlife habitat. This is a story that reflects the glory days of the past and hopefully offers some hope for the future for those of us who truly love the great outdoors.

Sadly, Cody passed away in the spring of 2018 before we could finish the book together. While we were writing the stories, we had many discussions about where we wanted the book to go. After his passing, I continued writing to ensure that his story was told.

CODY'S ROOTS

BY ANDY

Cody was born in 1950 to a pioneering family who had originally established themselves in the Columbia Valley of British Columbia in 1886. The Tegarts were rough-hewn, hard-working folks who, through a lot of prolific breeding, helped populate an underpopulated valley. To this day the name Tegart can be found multiple times in phone books throughout the valley. Cody's parents, Jim and Doreen, followed the Tegart path of making a living from the land. It was a hard life but a good one. The only way to put a roof over your head and food on the table was hard, gut-busting work. They were ranchers, loggers, miners and hunting guides, plus whatever else they could do to make a living.

Jim was a rough-and-tumble cowboy, in the ilk of John Wayne, who could either intimidate you with a twinkle in his eye or encourage you to push yourself for your betterment. He always came up with good quips. Once, after a few beers, while I was helping out with branding, he said, "Let me piss on your shoulder. It'll make you smell like a man!" While today that would be

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considered bullying and undermining my self-worth, back then it was all done in humour, and we all participated. When the kidding was done, Jim always also made a point to thank me for my free labour. Considering the amazing life experience that I gained over those years, it was worth every drop of sweat.

Doreen seemed to be the level-headed voice of reason that kept a boisterous family of strong-minded individuals together and focused. Man, she could cook. After we'd had a hard day of haying at the ranch or working at one of the hunting cabins, she would always deliver a delicious home-cooked meal. Considering everything had to be packed into the territory by horseback, she would work miracles.

After Cody befriended me in high school, I was accepted into the Tegart fold and got to know them all pretty well. Cody, his brother Garrett and I became fast friends, and I was accepted by all the other siblings as well. They would jokingly come to call me Andy Tegart. Larry, Erla, Sherri and June were all older, had their own families and lived in the valley, while Susan, the youngest, was always underfoot. All were strong-minded individuals with larger-than-life personalities, and I thoroughly enjoyed time spent with them.

Through high school and a few years beyond, Cody was always the instigator of our ragtag crew's many and varied adventures. Whether playing hooky from school to head to a fishing hole or making plans for a Saturday night on the town, he was always the man with a plan, and the rest of us just followed along. It was generally Cody, his brother Garrett, Tom Woledge and me, along with a cast of others, involved in a variety of hijinks, most of which were legal. Those adventures could fill another book.

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Cody always possessed this huge store of restless energy whereby he would run up a mountain while most of us walked. Some forty years later, on an elk hunt, he did the same thing to me, scurrying up a cutblock while I wheezed and sweated my way up behind him. What I'm doing here is trying to paint a picture of the man so when he tells his story, you'll have a better appreciation of his journey. There's a line from a John Mellencamp song that I always thought suited Cody to a T: "I'm a do anything and hope it'll turn out redneck." Well, that's my friend Cody! (Note: When I checked the actual lyrics, I wasn't even close, but that's the way I've been singing along with John for years, so I'm sticking with it.)

This story is not only about a man. It's also a story about the Columbia Valley and the watersheds that feed the Columbia River. Nestled between the magnificent Rocky and Selkirk Mountains, the valley is one of the most beautiful places in Canada, if not the world. In the sixties and seventies, before rampant development changed the character of the valley, this was our playground. Tourism, mostly of the tacky kind in Radium and Fairmont Hot Springs, was a small industry. Most of the wealth came from logging, mining and farming. If you wanted to work, you could show up at one of the local mills with your hard hat and lunch kit and be working the same day. Plus, the pay was fair, and you could make a living, buy a home and raise a family.

For those of us who loved to hunt and fish, game was plentiful, and streams and lakes were loaded with trout. When we headed to the hunting territory, we never ran into anyone. We were alone with the breathtaking beauty of the Rockies. We would hike trails where no human had gone, and picture-postcard, natural scenes were commonplace, without the scars

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of logging. As we all know, progress doesn't stand still, and while it creates wealth, there's sometimes a heavy price to pay. More about that later.

Like all good things, my role as Andy Tegart ended. It took a little brown-eyed girl and the realization that I had to find my own place in the world to result in my drifting away from Cody, Garrett and the family. I would move to the city and get way too civilized in the new path I had chosen along with that brown-eyed girl. Through those years I lost touch with Cody, but the friendship and experiences we shared never left my mind.

Cody, Garrett and I reconnected years later at a funeral in the valley. We sat down with a few beers and talked, laughed and rekindled old memories. After that, I would try to connect with Cody every time we visited the valley. It was one of those times, over a beer, that this idea of a book came into being.

What I've tried to do is give you some measure of the man and a vision of the land we loved. Now, it's up to Cody, along with some of his guides, clients and associates, to tell their stories while I edit. I generally try to write in proper English, but I will strive to stay as close to the vernacular of the mountain cowboy as possible. We want readers to feel like they're riding the trail with Cody, feeling the excitement of the hunt and enjoying a glass of rum in a warm cabin at day's end.

As someone who has gone through many changes in my life, I'm not a big believer in destiny. However, in the case of Hiram Cody Tegart, I truly believe he couldn't have taken any other path. Cody was simply born into a lifestyle he loved and embraced with all his being. Anytime he might have thought of following a new path, the seductive call of the mountain trails would always bring him back.

TALES FROM THE TRAILS: STORIES BY GUIDES AND HUNTERS

SPAM AND BEANS by Don Koopmans

It was the first trip of the season in 1984. I had already gotten an elk for my hunter when Cody asked me to go up to Queen Mary Camp to fill in for another guide who was sick and couldn't take his hunter out.

I left Fisher Creek before daylight the next morning and got to Queen Mary before lunch. I got to camp and found a sick guide and a pissed-off hunter. I had a quick lunch of Spam and beans and went on a scouting trip on foot to see if there were any elk around. I climbed the ridge behind the cabin, into No Name Basin, then into Rolfe Lake. Keeping my elevation in the rock bluffs above Rolfe Lake, I made it onto the ridge looking down into Donnie's Basin. I got to the top of the ridge and looked down to see six bull elk and a bunch of cows. There were a few smaller bulls, a nice six point and one very big one. I wanted to stay and glass them for a while but had to get back to Queen Mary before dark. I got back to camp in time for more Spam and beans and told the hunter to rest up because we were going on a long hike the next day. I told him about the elk I had spotted, and his mood improved a lot.

TALES FROM THE TRAILS



Don Koopmans and Miss the mule with a 346 7/8-rated Boone and Crockett bull elk, which garnered the Southern British Columbia Guides and Outfitters trophy in 1984.

We got up early the next day and packed up Miss, the smallest but toughest mule I had ever seen. I told the hunter to take all his stuff, as we might not be back. I found out he was a sergeant in the US Army, and he looked tough enough. We left at daylight and retraced my steps from the day before. Crossing the rock bluffs above Rolfe Lake had been much easier without a hunter and a mule. More than once I was afraid the mule, or the hunter for that matter, would lose their footing and fall down the mountain. We made it to the ridge looking down into Donnie's Basin and crept over the top, hoping to see all the elk waiting for us. We saw nothing—not a thing, and the hunter was pissed off again.

“Well,” I said, “they must be in the timber on the other side of the basin.” We slid our way down to the basin, crossed the

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bottom and found an elk trail up the other side. By now my hunter was getting tired and hanging onto Miss's tail to help pull him up the steeper parts. We were halfway up the other side, taking a break.

The hunter asked, "Where's the elk?"

I said, "Beats me. Do you want to see Tipperary Camp?" He asked where that camp was. I told him it was just over the ridge and down the creek, not that far. He asked if they had Spam and beans there. I told him I didn't think so.

He said, "Let's go." We climbed the rest of the way to the top, with the hunter hanging off the tail of the mule. Now we were on the ridge between Donnie's Basin and Squaw Creek. The hunter came up beside me and asked where the camp was.

I told him, "It's just down there at the mouth of Squaw Creek." It was quite steep going down at first, and when we hit the timber at the bottom, it was hard going, as we couldn't find any elk trails to help us. We bushwhacked our way until we found the old pack trails that would lead us to camp. At one creek crossing the hunter thought he should get a ride across on the mule. He climbed on her back on top of the pack. She waited till she was in the middle of the creek and bucked him off. I guess that was her payback for pulling him up the mountain. I kind of laughed to myself. We made it to Tipperary Camp just after dark. Cody was there and asked where in the hell we had come from. When I told him, he couldn't believe it. We fed Miss some oats, but she was too tired to even eat. She just stood and stared at it. I'm not sure what we had for supper, but I'm sure it wasn't Spam and beans.

After a good night's sleep, I took the hunter to the Waterfall Basin and shot a very small three-point elk. After the way the hunter's trip had gone so far, he was quite happy to have it.