

## Fred Bagley

Fred Bagley was determined to join the North-West Mounted Police.

Despite his father's stormy opposition and Fred's age, he was declared a trumpeter, and at 15 became the Mounted Police's youngest recruit. The Great March West was slow and ragged. The men were dirty, lousy and hungry and lacked water canteens. Horses died, the men had to walk and, when their boots wore out, they shuffled along with their feet wrapped in gunnysacks. Bagley's uniform consisted of a "rough red shirt, moleskin (barn door) trousers, brogan shoes, and long stockings, topped off by a disreputable helmet, all miles too big for him."

Bagley's lips were sometimes too swollen and blistered by thirst that he could not play his bugle, but he and his horse were both survivors of the March West.

After the trek, Bagley stayed. Self-trained as a musician, he led bands all over the West, from the year he arrived until he resigned from the Calgary Citizen's Band in 1920.



Constable Fred A. Bagley, North-West Mounted Police  
Glenbow Archives NA-3173-9

### Buck, Fred Bagley's Horse

When he signed up with the North-West Mounted Police, Fred Bagley dreamed of riding a mustang. The Mounties always "got their man," and Bagley "got his horse."

At Fort Dufferin, Manitoba, Bagley saw Buck who was, “the traditional buckskin colour, and black streak fore and aft all along his backbone.” Bagley offered the horse’s inebriated owner 50 cents to hold his horse. That windfall encouraged the man to go off for more liquor, Bagley quietly walked Buck over to his own troop.

Buck was mustered into the Mounties in 1873, making him one of the earliest horse recruits. His regimental number, 199, was lower than young Bagley’s. Buck survived the March West, travelled down to Fort Benton, Montana, and carried Bagley all the way back to Manitoba in 1874 - a total of more than 2,000 miles. Buck worked into old age and in retirement roamed freely between Fort Macleod and Lethbridge.

In Calgary years later, Bagley ran into a man who declared, “You are the son of a gun who stole my horse in Dufferin.”

Bagley retorted, “I hope you enjoyed your drink. Where is that 50 cents I loaned you?”

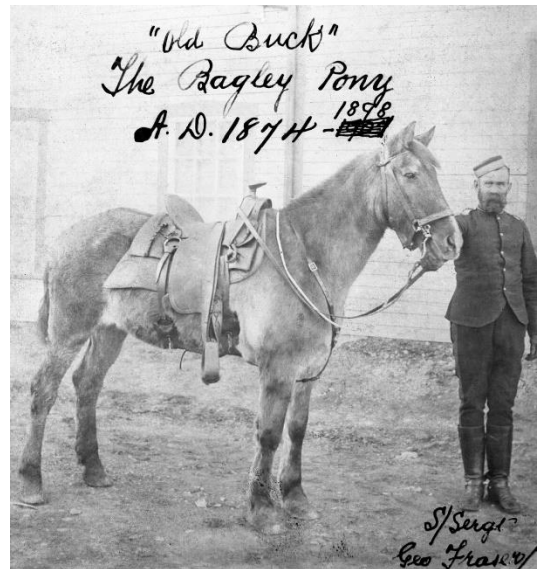
## Letter Home

In letters home to his brother Frank, Fred Bagley wrote of daily life as a Mountie. He scribbled extra lines across the pages to save cash and once used the scarcity of notepaper as a reason for not responding to an earlier letter.

Bagley was interested in his family back in Ontario, asking about his virtually estranged father in particular. In one letter he writes, “I hope father is getting along all right – he never writes to me now, he didn’t answer the last letter I wrote to him. Send my love to him and Mother and all the Children.”

Full Name: Frederick Augustus Bagley

Born: 1858 – Died: 1945



Staff Sergeant George Fraser, North-West Mounted Police, with “Old Buck”

Glenbow Archives NA-3173-11

## Additional Resources

- **Whyte Museum of the Canadian Rockies**  
<https://www.whyte.org/post/getting-to-know-fred-badley-bandmaster-and-nwmp-veteran>
- **Galt Museum & Archives**  
<https://nwmp.galtmuseum.com/chapters/fred-bagley>

## Our Collections

### Glenbow Museum

<https://www.glenbow.org>

### Glenbow Western Research Centre | Glenbow Library and Archives

<https://libguides.ucalgary.ca/glenbowlibraryandarchives>

### Glenbow Library and Archives | Digital Collection

<https://digitalcollections.ucalgary.ca/asset-management/2R340826N9XM?WS=PackagePres&Flat=1>