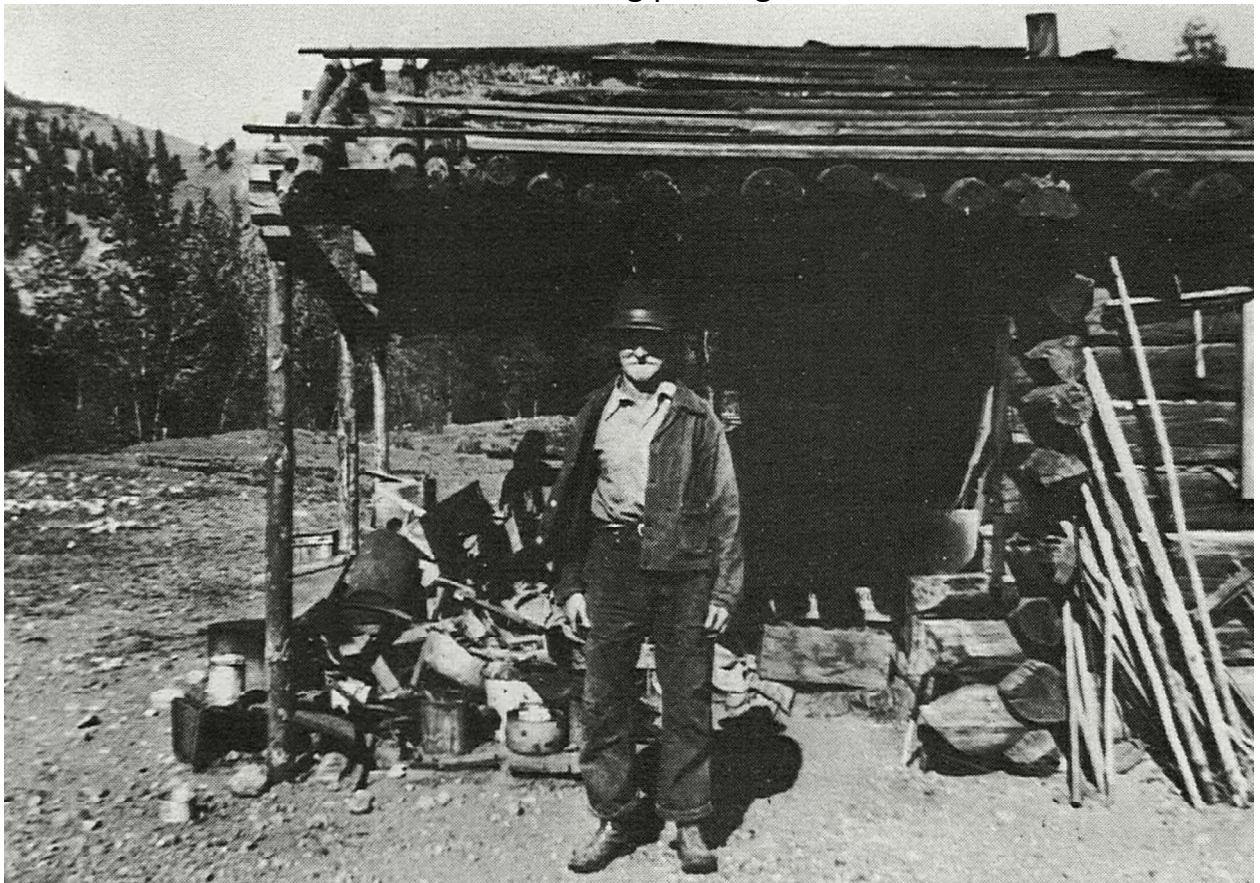


Dan Gallagher, an Early White Settler in the Black Mountain District

By Ian Pooley

Daniel Austin Gallagher was born in Calaveras County, California, in the heart of California gold mining country, in 1861. His father was the county treasurer, suggesting that Gallagher was brought up in the “better” social strata of county society. After working as a customs officer in San Francisco, Gallagher sailed north to Seattle on the steamer *North-West* in 1889. He had apparently intended to work there, but the day the steamer arrived, the Seattle fire forced the passengers to divert to Tacoma. Gallagher, for reasons we don’t know, moved to British Columbia and worked for several years as manager of the Palace Livery in Vernon. In 1891 he and a partner named J. Stevenson preempted what became a full section of land straddling Mission Creek at the foot of the south slopes of Black Mountain. Stevenson and Gallagher took out water rights on Hydraulic Creek in 1894. At the time, Mission Creek was experiencing its third gold rush, and Gallagher, interviewed by Nigel Pooley, a local Kelowna historian, in about 1939, mentions the Chinese who were still working placer gold claims in the creek



bottom. Gallagher worked at other jobs, including Lequimes' store in the new Kelowna townsite, and played at dances in a local band, but by the 1920s he appears to have been living a solitary bachelor life and working on his own preemption in the Mission Creek Canyon, where he raised horses and cut and sold fence posts to local orchardists. In the 1930s and 1940s, his sister from California made regular summer visits in her Cadillac, sometimes with a young nephew who later became a college instructor in Quincy California. Gallagher's biography in the 1965 Okanagan Historical Society report mentions these visits:

"...She would visit him for a while and even cleaned out his cabin on one occasion, piled all the old magazines and rubbish up in the lean-to outside, and swept the place out. But as soon as she had gone, he would put it all back in again and resume his normal life."

When he died in 1947, he left his property to Joe Casorso, a Black Mountain cattle rancher, who was his his nearest neighbour and friend.¹

¹ Nigel Pooley, "Dan Gallagher of Gallagher's Canyon," *Okanagan Historical Society Annual Report* No. 29, 68

