

BIOGRAPHY & TRIBUTE TO LEGENDARY KHPA PRESIDENT, EDWIN B. PATTERSON

Elwood Bryan Patterson was born February 21st, 1879. He was a native of Paris, Ky. Later in life, Elwood would become a Catholic and change his name to Edwin Bernard Patterson. Edwin married Clare Foster and together they raised three children: John J. Patterson (1906-1984), Helen Patterson (Rost), (1915-1966) and Edwin V. Patterson (1918-1991). The Patterson's resided on South Seventh Street in Louisville, Ky. Edwin Patterson made his living working as a blacksmith



The Patterson home on 1050 South Seventh Street.

and later as a parts supply clerk for Mengel Company. In 1907, Mengal Co. required Edwin to make two journeys to the Yucatan Peninsula, Belize, to establish a repair shop with forge, while training the native people to work the operation. The Mengel Body Co. manufactured furniture and other products in Louisville from the 1920s to the 40s until they were purchased by Kroehler Manufacturing in 1956. Edwin worked for Mengal for 40 years before retiring in 1946. It is uncertain how Edwin Patterson got started in horseshoes, as his son John Patterson is mentioned as pitching by 1925 and John's father-in-law, Modeste L. LaChance pitched in the 1926 State Tournament. Edwin also had a Seventh Street neighbor and fellow Kentucky Association player,

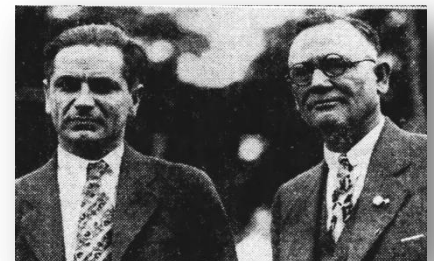


Edwin & Clare Patterson, 1954.

Orville Lee Daily, who was heavily involved in the sport by 1927. Edwin's skills as a leader were highly sought after in horseshoes by 1927 and in that year Edwin was elected President of the newly formed Central Park Horseshoe Club and 1st Vice President of the Louisville Horseshoe Pitchers' Club. Edwin would move on up to head the Kentucky Horseshoe Pitchers' Association as President in 1928. In open qualifying for the 1927 State Tournament, Edwin led all pitchers with a ringer percentage of 39%. This showed that he had some skills as a horseshoe pitcher but in one of many articles that E. B. Patterson wrote to the National publication, "Horseshoe World", **June 1931**, he wrote: *"For the past several years it has been my job to nurse the horseshoe game in Kentucky through its growing pains, no time for me to play the game could be spared after working hours, schedules were always waiting to be arranged or other matters such as standings of teams, ringer averages, dope for the press and conducting games."* Edwin was lamenting the fact that he had not had time to pursue his own

pitching game. Another clue to the rarity of horseshoe pitching results of Edwin Patterson is health. In an article from late 1939, Edwin states that he had spent 45 days and 45 nights sitting in an overstuffed chair with his foot propped up as high as his head due to blood poisoning in his leg. He also had some lasting leg difficulty due to being kicked in the leg by a mule during his years as a blacksmith.

Edwin worked hard with his promotion of the game in Kentucky by booking matches, hosting exhibitions, writing game articles and trying to locate the most skilled horseshoe pitchers from around the State to come and compete in the Kentucky State Championships in Louisville. In a general letter submitted to Kentucky county newspapers in **May 1929**, Patterson writes: *"In every county there is a horseshoe pitcher that cannot be beaten, and we are asking you to help us find that pitcher to represent your county at the Kentucky Championship Horseshoe Tournament at the Kentucky State Fair, September 9th to 16th."*



F. H. Marvin, Louisville recreations director, & E. B. Patterson at a 1928 Horseshoe Promotions event.

From 1931-1937, E. B. Patterson, it seems, would relinquish the KHPA Presidency to “younger go-getters” while he remained involved in the sport by managing league teams and conducting tournaments. He was also President of “The Old Timers’ Horseshoe Club”, which appears to be an annual gathering of past horseshoe legends, friends and neighbors. He pitched in an Old Timers’ Club tourney in 1931 and averaged 33% ringers, finishing 3rd. In 1937, Patterson arranged and refereed a grudge match between former State Champion, Sam Mattingly and fireman Gale Templin which turned into a battle for the title of City Employees Champion. During the match, an interested spectator told Patterson, “We need a league!” to which Patterson replied, “I’ll work one up... one with definite class distinctions.” Patterson also conducted tournaments at the Kentucky State Fair during that year.



Refereeing the City Employee’s Championship between Mattingly & Templin, 1937.

In 1938, Patterson would once again step into the role of KHPA President, helping to re-establish the state charter which had lapsed under the previous administration. He would continue to conduct the State Tournament and manage other events until the end of July 1940 when he would resign his office due to ill health. The Courier Journal article states that he had “labored for 15 years to promote interest in the State”, for the sport of horseshoes. The “Horseshoe Compendium”, published by the National

Horseshoe Pitchers’ Association, referred to E. B. Patterson as a “strong and willing worker for horseshoes in Kentucky.” It also mentioned that he had been President for 12 years. The Kentucky State Horseshoe Championship, with Louisville being the hub of the Kentucky Association, would survive for six more seasons before coming to an end after 1946. After leaving the horseshoe scene, it appears that Edwin left the sport for the final time after 1940. He would retire to porch swings and family life in his remaining years. Edwin B. Patterson would pass away November 23rd, 1958 at 79 years of age. His wife Clare would follow April 30th, 1966. His son, John J. Patterson, continued to pitch some horseshoes during



President Patterson & the KHPA officer’s of 1939 examining the State Charter.

his lifetime and also passed the sport down to his son, John J. Patterson Jr., as his family recalls them pitching some backyard games. Edwin’s youngest son Edwin V. Patterson dabbled in horseshoes at a young age but would go on to become a brave soldier fighting in World War 2. Daughter Helen passed away just ten days prior to her mother of the gone much too soon age of 51. Edwin Patterson’s historical horseshoe footprint will be remembered as a man who fought for the strength and betterment of the sport during his tenure in the early years of the existence of the Kentucky Horseshoe Pitchers’ Association. Special thanks to the Patterson family for providing photos and insight for this article.



Edwin Patterson in later years.



E. B. Patterson relaxing in April of 1956.