



# **Last of the Saddle Tramps: One Woman's Seven Thousand Mile Equestrian Odyssey (Equestrian Travel Classics)**

*Messanie Wilkins*

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Historically the world of equestrian travel has contained an exciting mixture of unique men and women. Some are adventurers seeking danger from the back of their horses. Others are travelers discovering the beauties of the countryside they slowly ride through. A few are searching for inner truths while cantering across desolate parts of the planet. Then there is Messanie Wilkins. She was acting on orders from the Lord! In 1954, at the age of 63, Wilkins had plenty to worry about. A destitute spinster in ill health, Wilkins had been told she had less than two years left to live, provided she spent them quietly. With no family ties, no money, and no future in her native Maine, Wilkins decided to take a daring step. Using the money she had made from selling homemade pickles, Wilkins bought a tired summer camp horse and made preparations to ride from the Atlantic coast to the Pacific Ocean. Yet before leaving she flipped a coin, asking God to direct her to go or not. When the coin came up heads several times in a row, one of America's most unlikely equestrian heroines set off. What followed was one of the twentieth century's most remarkable equestrian journeys. Accompanied by her faithful horse, Tarzan, Wilkins suffered through a host of obstacles including blistering deserts and freezing snow storms, yet never lost faith that she would complete her 7,000 mile odyssey. "Last of the Saddle Tramps" is thus the warm and humorous story of a humble American heroine bound for adventure and the Pacific Ocean. The classic tale is amply illustrated with photographs.

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