

Prince Valiant Is Gone But His Line Carries On

By Kay Goff Payne



WAY LO'S PRINCE VALIANT.

A late summer breeze stirs a few black tail hairs caught in a corner of the stall gate. A few dusty oats remain in the big feed box. The floor is now swept bare, for the big stall has no occupant now. In adjoining stalls, mares with sleepy foals drowse in the dusk.

Lights from the farmhouse shine onto the spacious lawn. Inside the house, a slim, pretty housewife lights a fire in a large open fireplace. Above the mantle hangs a portrait of a dream that is dead. It is a painting of Prince Valiant, F-2215. Lois Wyant gazes sadly at it for a moment, adjusts the angle of the frame and returns to her evening chores.

Wayne and Lois Wyant of WayLo Acres, Fairmount City, Pa., first saw Prince Valiant in the advertisements of Weber's Money Creek Ranch in Houston, Minn., and in the flesh at a Pittsburgh Horse Show in 1963.

They made the long trip to Minnesota to see him and to purchase their leopard stallion, Sonseeray, F-3295, and a number of mares. But Prince was Lois' dream horse. She wanted him more than anything she could imagine. Wayne's a quiet sort—he didn't say much about him, but Lois bubbled with enthusiasm every time Prince was mentioned. She never really thought he would be hers, until she was told he would be her Christmas present from Wayne. They were highly excited over the prospect of owning Prince Valiant.

The Western Pennsylvania Appaloosa fanciers were almost equally excited about his being available for service. His arrival at WayLo Acres, Dec. 17, 1963, was nearly as heralded as a visit by the "Beatles!" His son, WayLo's Prince Valiant, arrived with him—so like his father that it was almost as if he had been duplicated. They shared the barn with Sonseeray and Money Creek's Siri Rock, a junior stallion.

An extensive breeding program was built around the senior stallions. Sonseeray and Prince were as different in every way as any two horses could be. Their bloodlines went back many generations on both sides, and encompassed many of the all-time greats in Appaloosa history. They had both left spectacular production records at Money Creek and were to do the same at WayLo.

... But, on August 15, 1964, at the Keystone

Appaloosa Club Horse Show, in Shippensburg, Pa., a freak accident occurred that would cost Prince Valiant his life and end a dream for Lois and Wayne Wyant.

The Wyants had had Prince in training with Hugh "Lefty" Hoak, of Hobby Horse Ranch, Irwin, Pa., and had shown him for the first time in two-and-a-half years at the Sacred Heart Hospital Benefit Horse Show in Cumberland, Md., on August eighth. He won a fourth place in Junior Pleasure, English Tack, ridden by 10-year-old Belinda Hoak, in a class of thirty-five horses. He and Belinda entered Junior Pleasure, Western Tack, and won third place in class of thirty-nine! The twosome went on to place third in Bareback Equitation, fifth in the Shovel Race, fifth in Apple Bobbing, third in Saddle Seat Equitation and fifth in the Pair Class! The sunny-dispositioned stallion was borrowed by a complete stranger for the all-day Endurance Class and they placed third in a class of thirty-five. Ginny Hoak, a tiny woman, won the Open Costume class with him; a thin strip of rawhide in his mouth for a bit. Then Lefty took over to place third in Appaloosa Pleasure, Keyhole Race, and Sr. Western Pleasure. He was only two points behind the High Point Horse for the day. The trophy saddle was presented to Chief Grey Cloud. That was the day the Wyants and the Hoaks arranged to go to the Keystone Appaloosa Show the following week. Prince went home with the Hoaks for a few nights of brush-up work.

The day of the show was as fine a day as any Horse Show committee could wish for. The Hoaks arrived early, after driving all night. Lefty took a snooze in the truck while Belinda worked Prince a little, and then Ginny cooled, fed, and bathed him. The Wyants arrived a little later. Prince, was, as usual, quiet and well-behaved among all the strange horses. He was tied to the side of the van, eating peacefully. About two p.m., while people stood by, he attempted to lie down. His attendants called to him to get up, and he tried to, but when he arose, his hind leg was a horrible formless mass . . . Everyone knew—but no one wanted to believe—that this was the end of the road for Prince Valiant.

The Appaloosa people at the show were wonderful! They did all that they could to help. A