

THE WONDERFUL APPALOOSA

The Snake River of the American Northwest flows through some of the most rugged, inhospitable terrain on the continent. It must be seen to be believed. After leaving the famous Hell's Canyon and turning toward the sea, the topography loses enough of its steepness for the slopes to sustain a grass cover suitable for grazing. However, these are still, in the main, more steep than gabled roofs of the past, and many have become as terraced as the hills of ancient China through action of the cutting hooves of the grazing horse herds of the Indians, followed by the white man's cattle instinctively moving on the contour.

The land has an awesome, but ominous beauty, and many a cattleman has witnessed, in helpless frustration, the loss of some of his herd falling to their deaths from a newly thawed, recently shaded, frozen spot, if he made the mistake of turning them out on the range too early in the season. Such surface permits few errors in judgment if man or beast is to survive. The careless and the inattentive simply don't grow up.

It is easy to understand how a process of natural selection in such an environment produced, in approximately a century, a sure footed, intelligent, smooth-moving horse whose movements protect the rider from the shocks from which he shields himself, and whose body structure has been shaped by that environment to this most desirable end.

This is the heritage of the Appaloosa, the especially versatile breed, whose colorful coat matches his colorful deeds.

The Nez Perce retreat of 1877 is well documented history, but to those who know the descendants of their horses, it is no mystery. In this country, one telegraph wire had more to do with their eventual capture and defeat than 3 armies mounted on the "white man's horse." It was Sam Fisher, the Palouse Indian horse breeder who said in his laconic manner, "ONE APPALOOSA--ONE TRUCKLOAD OF OTHER HORSES." In his setting this was true and is as true today.

Some modern northwestern horsemen who have recently imported stylish chunks of horse flesh from the south central U. S. find, and freely admit, that the common local Appaloosa is their pleasure horse in the mountain trails, and the fancy horse stays home because he hasn't the endurance or lung power, and his comparative agility off level ground isn't much ahead of the classic 4 poster bed. When you consider that the trained Appaloosa can do just about anything any other trained horse can do, and bring along the grace, color, and disposition that sets him apart, it does make sense to "go Appaloosa", if you want to go more places.

Good horses and lean men have a way of finding each other, and such teams, while their exploits are not always within the law, have performed feats that endure as legends.

The story is told of a cattle rustler, mounted on an Appaloosa stallion, who was caught in the act one fine afternoon near Whitebird, Idaho. Before he eluded his pursuers, he told his friends not to worry and rode off into the breaks in the direction of Weiser, Idaho, where he established himself with his horse before reputable

witnesses at 2:00 p.m. the next day. This was a distance of 120 miles as the crow flies, but over some of the roughest country in the west, crossed by canyons and streams seemingly without end. When his case came to trial this man was acquitted by the judge on the grounds that since he was in Weiser within 24 hours after he was supposed to have been seen stealing cattle, and since this fact was supported by witnesses, he could not have been the man who tried to steal cattle so far away the day before with so many natural obstacles and so great a distance between. But he was.



NOBBY

Trixie, the Appaloosa dam of Toby 1, was a race mare often loaned out by her owner to friends who traveled the fair circuit. She could win even while doing double duty as a broodmare, which is somewhat unusual. Floyd Hickman, her owner, said "I suppose the best thing you could say about her speed and getaway was that during prohibition a bootlegger used her to deliver bottled whiskey."

The most famous Palouse country stallion and foremost reference sire, antedating the studbook, was old Knobby, owned by Guy Lamb. He was a blanketed blue roan with black hip spots--hard as nails, just like the man who rode him. He never heard of a performance class or a horse show, but it was his performance that brought the best mares of the area to him for service.

Knobby was foaled of Appaloosa sire and dam in 1918--the day of the Model T Ford--at a time when a man or boy with a good horse had little to do with cars, and spent some time outdoing them. Guy took pride in jumping Knobby straight down the stairstep hills rising