

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 judgement 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.



KNOBBY

Trixie, the Appaloosa dam of Toby I, 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 cards, and spent some time outdoing them. Guy took pride in jumping Knobby straight down the stairstep hills rising

behind the corrals of his father's Central Ferry ranch, or riding him across a railroad trestle, occasionally. In over 20 years of riding this horse both Guy and his brother, Glen Lamb, state unequivocally that he was never off his feet. Glen Lamb tells of a time while riding Knobby on an icy slope, the horse simply spread his legs a bit and "skated" in one unbroken slide for several hundred feet.



Guy Lamb. The Lamb family owned KNOBBY.

It was a most fortunate circumstance that placed old Knobby near the Snake River between the Hickman ranch, upstream, and the mouth of the Palouse River, downstream, where Sam Fisher, the Indian horsebreeder lived. Sam Fisher was then an aged man, whose lifetime interest and ability to breed colorful horses, had set him apart, even among his own people. His tribe, the Palouse Indians, were more a river people, and living apart from the main body of the Nez Perce, were not directly involved in the Nez Perce war. This means also that their horses, and Sam Fisher's were among the best, were not taken out of the country, killed or dispersed with the resulting dilution of nearly a century of breeding, but were quite unaffected by the hostilities to the southeast. This means further, that nowhere is there a more purely bred, unbroken and undiluted bloodline of Appaloosa horses than that descending from the breeding of Sam Fisher. (Two officials of the Appaloosa horse club personally spoke to Sam Fisher on two occasions before his death at very near the century mark.)



**SAM FISHER,
98 years old, 1947.**