

OUTSTANDING

By ROBERT L. PECKINPAH

APPALOOSA BLOODLINES

(Fourth Installment—Solomon Figueroa)

Shortly before President Woodrow Wilson's defeat of Charles Evans Hughes, Fred H. Bixby, a prominent southern California rancher at Long Beach became interested in that breed of horse peculiar to the Northwest, the Appaloosa. He made a trip north up the coast of California beyond Ventura to the foot of the Casitas Grade where the Craven's ranch was located close to Carpenteria. At the Craven's ranch, Bixby purchased Solomon Figueroa, a blind stallion who at that time was blue with large white spots over the loins and hips.

L. J. Rose, one of the old pioneers of Alhambra who died several years ago, owned the sire of Solomon Figueroa; but it has become impossible to substantiate, with any degree of authenticity, any of the stories relative to this sire, inasmuch as these "pedigrees" were verbal at best and are nothing but hazy hearsay expounded by men who have long since passed away.

This blind stallion was 11 years old when Bixby bought him and he died in 1925 at 21 years of age. The Bixby ranch bred 20 Appaloosa mares last spring—18 of them tracing to this prepotent stallion in the third and fourth generation; and they are awaiting their usual crop of spotted foals. None of the Bixby horses have ever been registered.

In the spring of 1919, a George Watson put a three-quarter Arabian, one quarter Morgan mare in foal to the Bixby stallion. The next year he traded the mare to Allan Freeman of Colton, California, and left for the mid-west.

The foal that appeared subsequent to this trade was called Freckles. The latter, white with black spots over the rump, was in due time, a typical "Freeman reined" horse—all horses he trains will simulate stock horse competition with nothing but kitchen string as reins. In 1927, Freeman bred Freckles to a mare sired by a red roan with liver colored spots over the hips and who was out of an Arabian type dam. The result of this meeting was foaled in June, 1928, and he was known as "Old Tony." At maturity he weighed 1080 pounds and stood close to 15.2; was white with very round black spots, the size of a two inch ring, all over his rump—and was extremely well reined.

A large percentage of the Appaloosa horses in the Riverside-Los Angeles-San Bernardino area are by, or go back to Old Tony; and to understand the imprint he's made, one must only talk to a few breeders in this southern section. Movie-goers will recall the white horse in the movie, "Thunderhead." This was Chuck, an Old Tony son with his spots painted out. He was bred and raised by Freeman but was sold, as was Freckles, to the "Fat" Jones stable in the San Fernando Valley several years back. Both horses brought \$1000.00 apiece. This huge North Hollywood stable caters to the motion picture industry and "Fat" Jones (brother of Buck Jones), who claims Ben (Wagon-Master) Johnson as a son-in-law, soon had both these horses before the cameras. Freckles died four years ago but can still be seen currently by television audiences watching old "Horse Op-