

Appaloosa Sires

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We were interested to know to what extent the Nez Perce differentiated the Appaloosa from other horses, and wanted to know if there was a word in their language for Appaloosa. This was a rather difficult task; for, although Sam Fisher could understand and speak some English, he could not readily see that we wanted a Nez Perce word for something we were both using the commonly used word for. We were finally successful. The Nez Perce word for Appaloosa is *Mammin*, pronounced "Ma-meen." The Nez Perce word for the paint or pinto horse is *Tam-sel-peen*, showing that the two horses were not confused with one another.

Blood relation is claimed much longer among Indians of the Palouse country than would be claimed by you or me. Fourth or fifth cousins or great grandnephews are claimed as relations. Joe Garry, whose father claimed distant relation to Sam Fisher, recalled him coming to visit his father and giving him a present of two or three horses. However, the horses were not Appaloosas. Could it be that he had "giving horses" the same as we have "trading horses"?

In describing the relative value of the Appaloosa in comparison to other horses in language we could understand, the Indian said, "One Appalously — one truckload of other horses."

The blood of his horses is still strong in many of our present-day Appaloosas bred in the western portion of the Palouse country. The stallion Rex and the mare Lucy, dam of Old Blue, were bred by Sam Fisher.

Toward the end of the conversation he seemed to sum up his career with this statement, "Once much grass, many horses, many cattle, many fish — have money then — now, no grass (due to overgrazing and farming of wheat land), no horses, no cattle, no fish, no money."

Sam Fisher died in 1948 at near the century mark.

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