

THE RACE IS ON!

QUARTER HORSE APPALOOSAS



**BY GUY STEES
AND DONALD STONE**

In this story we are bringing some of the forefathers of the Quarter Horses and Appaloosas in the country. The breeding that these men started can be found almost any where there are Quarter Horses and Appaloosas.

This story is about the race in Routt County to make a horse that stands fourteen and one-half to sixteen hands high. This horse should have a slim neck, well proportioned muscling, good balance, speed, surefootedness and brains. In the first days of this race these horses were called "Steeldusts" or "Short Horses" and now "Quarter Horses."

In this race for the best horse the four major men in this area were Si Dawson, Coke Roberds, Marshall Peavy, and Quentin Semotan. There might be others, but only time will tell.

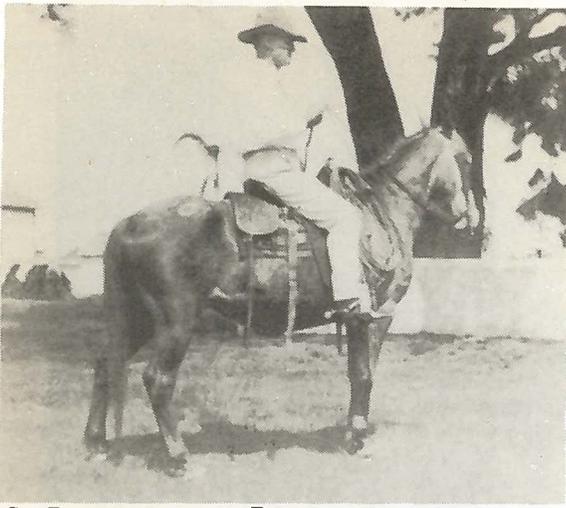
The first of these four proven horse breeders was Si Dawson. Si was born March 30, 1870, in Dawson, the territory of New Mexico. He lost his left hand in a roping accident while still a young man, but that didn't stop him.

When Si came back from school in Columbia, Missouri, the Dawson Ranch in New Mexico sold for a quarter-of-a-million dollars. The Dawsons came to Routt County and bought a ranch near Hayden, Colorado, in 1900. (This ranch is now the Ferry Carpenter ranch).

Another horseman in this race also came from New Mexico. Coke Roberds came to Routt County in 1908. He beat Si out of the gate to have the first great horses in this area.

Coke Roberds was born August 29, 1870, in West Texas where his father had moved before the Civil War. Just before Coke was school age, his family moved to Trinidad, Colorado. Coke was a true rancher and was good with both cattle and horses. After going to college in the East, Coke went back to West Texas to work on the Holland Easley Ranch. While there a fellow came by with some Steeldust mares that were for sale. Coke bought nine of these mares. Later he bought Primero, a thoroughbred stallion, by Leadville. He crossed Primero with some Steeldust mares and got some very fine colts. Coke then moved to the higher altitude for health reasons.

While on the train ride from West Texas to Wolcott, the nearest railhead to Hayden, the train was derailed. To Coke, it was a very tragic wreck because Primero was badly injured.

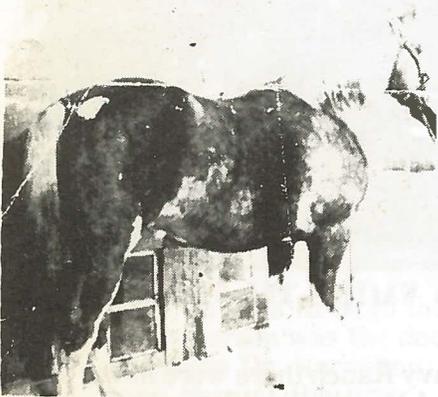


SI DAWSON ON A BRAZILIAN COW HORSE

When the train got to Wolcott, Coke's stallion, Primero died. It was a great loss to Coke, but he still had his Steeldust mares and Primero colts.

After settling near Hayden, Colorado, on what is now the Leonard Flander's Ranch, Coke made many trips to Wolcott to get household goods. On one of these trips he met a freighter named Bud Laughlin. Coke saw a palomino in a freight team and tried trading for Fred. When that didn't work he tried to buy him. "After an hour or so I bought 'Fred' for three-hundred dollars."

He had to come back through Yampa and pick "Fred" up, because the freighter had Old Fred as a wheel horse and needed him to get home.



COKE'S FOUNDATION SIRES.

OLD FRED, AND PETER MCCUE

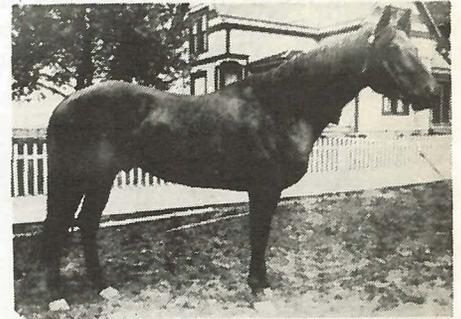
Fred was by Black Ball, and out of a mare by John Crowder. Fred was bred at Springfield, Missouri. Coke was the first one to leave the starting gate in this race in Routt County, but Si Dawson wasn't far behind.

After spending a few days at Overland Park race track in Denver, Colorado, and watching the three hundred horses there, Coke and Si both liked a chesnut horse called Buck Thomes, by Peter McCue. It was the first time that either Coke or Si had heard of the famous horse, Peter McCue. Both men decided to bring the Peter McCue blood line to Routt County.. So Si telling his banker that he was going on a cattle buying trip went to look for Peter McCue and some good cattle, too.



BRONZE OF COKE ROBERDS MADE BY CURTIS ZABEL.

Si went all over New Mexico and Texas and still didn't find the horse he wanted. Since leaving Overland Park in Denver, Si had found out many things about Peter McCue. One time he had five stop watches on him for a quarter of a mile race. Three of the watches timed Peter McCue at twenty-one seconds flat. The other two timers a little less than twenty-one seconds. Si Watts was the jockey. Coke said twenty one seconds was the fastest any horse on this earth had run a quarter-of-a-mile.



Si Dawson decided to buy the great horse himself if the horse was still able to walk. Si found Peter McCue in Cheyenne, Oklahoma. Milo Birlingham owned him and had bought Peter McCue for ten-thousand dollars a few years before. Si bought Peter McCue in 1913 when he was eighteen years old for five-thousand dollars. Peter McCue was by Dan Tucker, and out of Nora. He was bred by Samuel Watkins of Petersburg, Illinois. Si rode with Peter McCue in a box car all of the way to Hayden, Colorado, where the rail road had just come that year.

Now Routt County had two great horses: Old Fred and Peter McCue. Si bred Peter McCue to several of his top mares. Those mares that were not bred to Peter McCue were bred to Silver Tail and Wildcat. These two stallions had been on the Dawson Ranch for several years.

Coke wanted a colt or two from Queen Litz. Queen Litz had a great racing record in New Orleans, Louisiana. Si loaned Queen Litz to Coke. Coke bred Queen Litz to Old Fred and got Bob H. and Fred Litz. "They both turned out to be something," stated Coke.

For Si Dason, the race ended in 1914 when the Dawson's sold their ranch and moved to Albuquerque, New Mexico. In 1918 Si moved to Brazil to manage the Ferenda Morungave, a cattle ranch in the state of Parana. Si died a year later of a ruptured appendix.

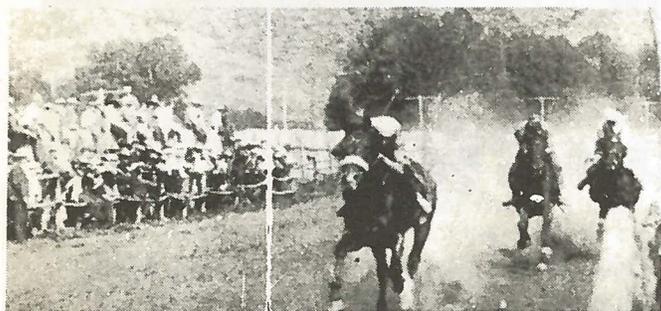
Before leaving Routt County, Si asked Coke to take care of thirty-five of his best mares until he had a place for them. Si gave Peter McCue to Coke, but as it turned out Si died before he could return to reclaim the horses.

When Mrs. Dawson came back from Brazil after Si's death she told Coke, "All of the kids wanted to keep a horse or two. They all live in cities, and I think that it would be too expensive all of the way around."

Coke agreed with her and told her that she should have a horse sale. Mrs. Dawson asked Coke to take care of the details for her. Coke asked Bob Norrel to be the auctioneer. Coke wanted to know how much Bob was to be paid for it all. Bob asked Coke how much he was charging. Coke said "nothing." Bob said that he wouldn't charge anything either. This all happened in 1917.

"The first horse in the ring was a crackerjack. She only brought twenty dollars. Then I said that we are going to stop giving these horses away, and I bid one-hundred and fifty dollars on the next horse in the ring."

The next horse in the ring was Mary McCue. Mary McCue was by Peter McCue and out of First Out, a palomino "Fred" mare.



MARY McCUE WINNING EASILY AT HAYDEN

A young newcomer came into the picture. His name was Marshall Peavy. He finally outbid Coke for the young two-year old filly, and that's when he, the third man, came into race.

Marshall Peavy was born in North Carolina, on August 22, 1898. He moved to Routt County to the upper end of Deep Creek between 1914 and 1916. His mother bought a ranch on upper Deep Creek which is now the Haystack Ranch, managed by Joe Flores.



MARSHALL IN FRONT OF HIS BARN ON WHEELER IN 1916

The first great stallion that Marshall had was Bob H. He was by Fred and out of Queen Litz. Bob H was born in 1910 on the Roberds Ranch. He was one of the colts that Coke bred when he borrowed Queen Litz from Si. Marshall bought Bob H for five hundred dollars.

Marshall loved a good horse. His horses had to be able to work too. Bob H was running bugger, first known for his speed but later proved a top sire for all time. A couple of his better known colts were The Old Blue Mare and Papoose. Bob H lived thirteen years.

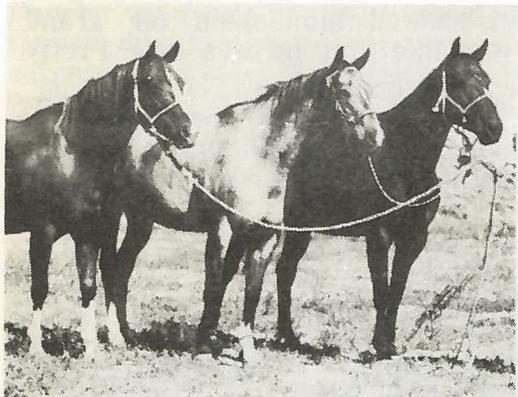


DING BOB WAITING FOR THE RACE.

Around the Peavy Ranch there were never any sheep; so many of Marshall's horses had never seen sheep. Bob H was a cow horse. When Bob H saw a band of sheep coming up the road he started running around the pasture half scared to death. Someone, while cleaning the barn had left a pitch fork out and the wind had blown it down. Poor old Bob H ran across the pitch fork and it flew up and stuck him in the belly. Bob H's death made a terrible day for Marshall.

In 1923, Coke lost a great stallion. Peter McCue died at the age of twenty-eight. It was about this time that Marshall married a young school teacher, Mavis Caldwell.

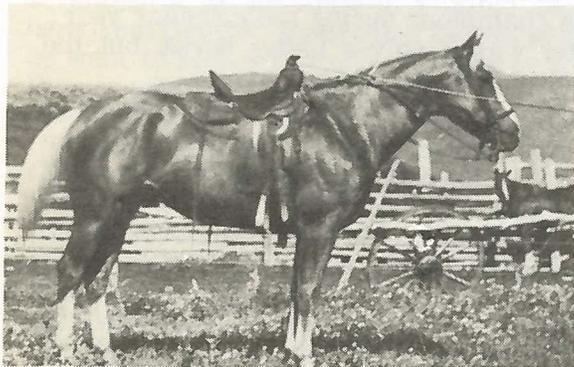
The Peavy s' were looking for a new stallion. Marshall bred Mary McCue to Brown Dick, a horse owned by Ben Anderson of the Round Bottom Ranch. From this cross came Ding Bob. Ding Bob was the horse that every body was looking for. Marshall let every horse in the country be bred to him. He sired some good ones. Some of these were Saladin, Margie, Sue Peavy, Chipeta, Mary K and many more.



MARGIE, CHAPETA AND SUE PEAVY THREE OF MARSHALLS TOP BROOD MARES

Saladin was bequithed to Marshall by his brother, Lawrence. He was Grand Champion Palomino Stallion at the National Western Stock Show in 1937. His most famous colt was Si, out of Flossie.

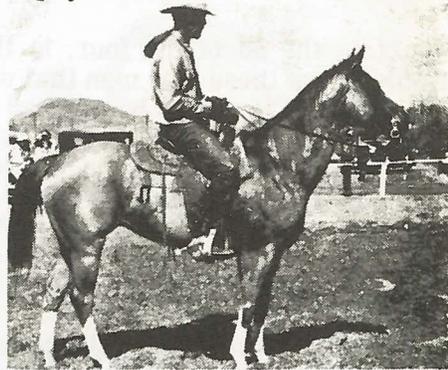
Mary Stees said that her father turned Saladin out in the pasture one morning and when he looked out a couple of hours later Saladin was having a bad spell. He was rolling, quivering and very sick. The Vet said that he had probably gotten into water hemlock, a poisonous plant. It was a tragic death.



SALADIN

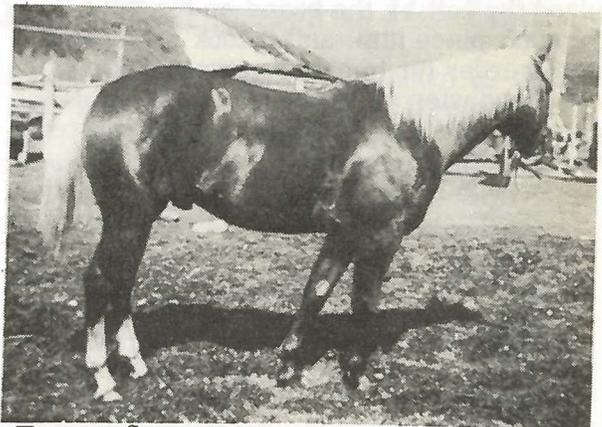
About this time several men from Texas, Oklahoma, Colorado, and New Mexico, started the beginning of the American Quarter Horse Association. The beginning of the Rocky Mountain Quarter Horse Association was a group of dedicated horsemen, Marshall Peavy, Quentin Semotan, Dewey Norrel, Del Owens, Jack Casement and a few other interested horsemen. Marshall Peavy, Jack Casement and Quentin Semotan were the Colorado directors of the beginning American Quarter Horse Association.

In 1941 Marshall took Margie and Monte to Phoenix, Arizona. Margie was Grand Champion Quarter mare, later crowned Grand Champion of all breeds. She was the fastest mare in the speed trials, who was also five months with foal. Monte did pretty well, too. He sure did pay the feed bill.



MARGIE

In 1940 another great addition was added to the Peavy horses. His name was Gold Heels. He won the first Colorado Quarter Horse Futurity with Jack Philipps as jockey, weighing one hundred and sixty five pounds. The next winter he was the first Grand Champion Quarter Stallion of the National Western Stock Show.



GOLD HEELS. STALLION, COW HORSE AND SHOW HORSE

on December 3, 1943, Marshall moved to West Plains, Colorado. Marshall and his daughter, Bidly, were out doctoring a calf who had bugs when Monte, Marshall's favorite cowhorse, stepped in a badger hole. Monte tried desperately to stay on his feet, but with a calf on the other end of the rope Monte could not. Marshall died soon after and was buried back on Deep Creek. Monte was never ridden again.



MONTE, THE HORSE MARSHALL PEAVY WAS KILLED ON.

Marshall's wife, Mavis, carried on with the ranch with the help of her daughters, Mary Peavy Stees and Bidy Peavy Bonham. Mavis now lives on a ranch near Keota, Colorado. Mary lives three miles above Marshall's first ranch. Bidy lives north-west of Cheyenne, Wyoming.

Quentin Semotan, the 1st of the four, in this race was the only one of these four men that was born in Routt County on his dad's homestead on Deep Creek. Quentin grew up working with cattle and horses, and as a young man, worked for both Coke Roberds and Marshall Peavy. In the late 1940's he started his own ranch on the Elk River, now known as the Moon Hill ranch.

In 1945 Quentin Semotan bought Starduster from Leonard Millagon. Starduster was by Nowota Star and out of Lowery's Mabel. Quentin took Starduster to the National Western stock show.

When Starduster was three years old, Quentin took him back to Denver where he was shown for grand champion.

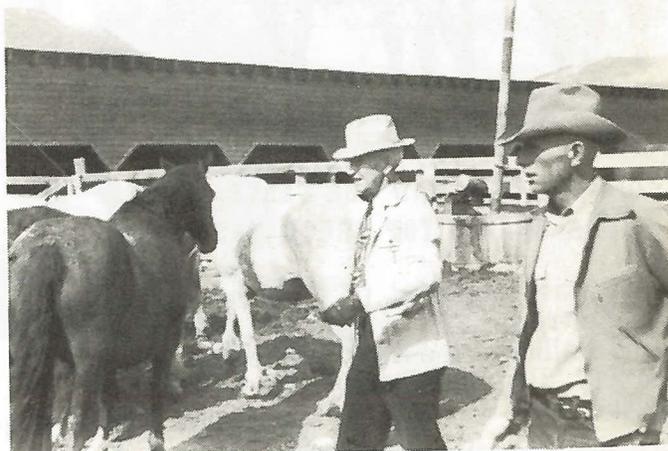
In his class Starduster and Poco Bueno were nose to nose, and the judges couldn't decide who was ahead, so they called in Fred Lowery and another man to make five judges. Fred Lowery recognized the colt by the brand on his left hip, but he couldn't place him, and it took him some studying in order for him to remember that he had sold Starduster as a weaner. In the class, they placed Poco Bueno first, and Starduster reserve, after much consideration.



STARDUSTER STANDING NEXT TO ELK RIVER.

Quentin sold Starduster after owning him for fifteen years. The reason he sold her was because he had so many of Starduster's daughters. He sold him to Ralph Bell of California who owned him for a couple of years, then he sold him to Shane Lancaster of Idaho.

In 1948, Semotan took Starduster back to Denver and showed him again for grand champion, and this time he won over Pretty Buck another Waggoner horse. The Waggoner ranch, just outside of Vernon, Texas, is well known for famous horses. In all Starduster was shown 47 times and only once did he place second to anyone -



COKE SHOWING QUENTIN SOME OF HIS MARES.

Starduster died on June 4th at the age of 30. Starduster's show career was kept by AQHA records. Starduster was the champion of champions at Fort Worth which made him a world champion, defeating 136 top horses that had been champions during the calendar year. Starduster wasn't only a halter horse, but the sire of halter and working horses.

We have just touched briefly on the history of some of the Quarter Horses in Routt County. The race Si, Coke, Marshall and Quentin started will never be concluded. Only the future will tell what breed of horse will be coming around the corner next.

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 interviewing Coke Roberds