



AMERICAN CREAM NEWS

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Reflections

by Karene Bunker Topp

He could have been called "Mr. American Cream," so devoted were his efforts to develop and promote these beautiful and unusual draft horses. My acquaintance with C.T., as he preferred to be called, was a brief span when considering a lifetime, but I look back on those years with deep appreciation.

My father was first a hired man, then farmed on shares for C.T. We moved from near the Missouri border to his farm, five miles north of Radcliffe, in north central Iowa in 1940, when I was eleven years old. The next six years exposed me to the wonderful world of cream colored horses, a world I had not dreamed existed.

In reflecting on those years and the man, C.T. Rierson, I realize many facts are missing. I deeply regret not asking more about exactly when he became interested in cream colored horses and particularly which horse was his first acquisition. Recent interviews

with family members did not produce exact facts but his son, Wayne, says it was in the decade of the thirties. No doubt it was the unusual color that first caught his eye. And it kept him enthused and dedicated to preserving and improving them as a new breed to his dying day. In fact, this "rich cream color," as he expressed it, was so important to him, all the buildings on his farm were painted cream. Later, his show wagons were cream and he chose cream stock for the printing of stationery and forms for the newly organized American Cream Horse Association.

Through those early years, C.T. developed a vision, or you may call it a dream of what an ideal cream colored draft horse should be. He then proceeded through careful selection and breeding to develop that dream into a reality. He was always looking for better quality breeding stock while eliminating those that had less than ideal color or did not produce good colored progeny. The unusual characteristic of amber colored eyes was a must, for in his experience the pink skin, rich cream color and amber eyes were almost always tied together. Without one the others were sub-standard or missing.

Do not misunderstand, there were several others around central Iowa who were interested in creams and who were breeding them also. He was in touch with many and always encouraging anyone with the slightest interest to get involved too.

C.T. had been a purebred Aberdeen Angus breeder for many years, at one time or another owned registered Belgians so it must have seemed to him the natural thing to start an Association with a registry, thus securing recognition for these horses as an established breed - the first to originate in the United States. Maybe this is where the idea to call them American Creams began. At this point in time one cannot be certain, but I believe



The rich cream color was so important to C. T. that all his buildings were painted cream.

this name we now take for granted was coined by Mr. Rierson.

C.T. spearheaded the work involved in starting an Association in the early forties. A lawyer, Mr. E.L. Ackerman of Iowa Falls, Iowa, was retained to set up the constitution and by-laws and perform necessary legal work. Other associations were consulted as to method, one being the Spotted Morocco Cooperative Association of America. Because of their example, the Association was first organized under the cooperative laws of Iowa. It was soon decided this was not desirable, so a new organization was set up to form the present Association. There have been only a few revisions in the years since the charter was issued in July, 1944.

Let me here explain how I became involved in the Association. The Rierson's lost a son, Clair, at the age of seven, and C.T. felt that loss keenly. Since I was the same age as Clair, C.T. often said I came along to help fill the void. At his request, I would "ride along to keep him company" on business trips. He would be delivering a purebred Angus bull somewhere, or investigating a cream horse he had heard about, or visiting someone with the same interesting hobby.

Because of my love for the horses, work-



Clarence Theodore Rierson
Feb. 12, 1887-Aug. 8, 1957

CLOSING OUT PUBLIC SALE

To settle the C. T. Rierson estate, a complete dispersal sale will be held at the farm ½ mile north, ½ mile west, and 4¼ miles north of Radcliffe; or ½ mile west, 1½ miles south, 3 miles west and ¼ mile south of Buckeye

TUESDAY, NOV. 19

COMMENCING AT 12:00 NOON SHARP

1957

50 HEAD OF LIVESTOCK

20 Head American Cream Horses

| | | |
|--|--|--|
| Registered American Cream stallion, 5 yrs old, wt. 1800 | Registered American Cream mare 20 yrs. | broke to ride or drive. |
| Registered American Cream mare 9 yrs, to foal by sale time. | American Cream mare 10 yrs, heavy with foal. | Cream gelding 5 yrs, wt. 1500. |
| Registered American Cream mare 15 yrs, to foal by sale time. | Team Cream geldings 14 and 15 yrs, well broke, wt. 3600. | Cream gelding 4 yrs, wt. 1500. |
| Registered American Cream mare 3 yrs, bred. | Team Cream geldings 8 and 9 yrs, well broke, wt. 3800. | Cream gelding 3 yrs, wt. 1550. |
| Registered American Cream mare 2 yrs, bred. | Team Creams, mare and gelding, 5 and 6 yrs, wt. 2800, well | Palomino saddle horse, 2 yrs, wt. 800. |
| | | Palomino saddle mare 2 yrs, wt. 800. |
| | | Bay mare 7 yrs, wt. 1600, bred. |
| | | Buckskin suckling horse colt. |

30 HEAD OF CATTLE

10 head white Albino Angus cows with 7 calves at side; 1 yearling white Albino Angus heifer; 1 yearling white Albino Angus bull; 1 white Albino Angus bull calf, 6 months old; 1 registered Angus cow, well forward toward calving; 2 registered Angus bulls, 11 months old; 3 registered Angus heifers, 11 months old; 1 Angus bull calf, 6 months old; 1 Angus heifer calf, 6 months old; 1 Angus bull calf 4 months old; 1 P. B. Angus bull calf 4 months old. All T. B. and Bangs tested within 30 days.

Machinery, Harness, Buggies, Etc.

New Idea 4-wheel rubber tired manure spreader; 3-bar I. H. C. hay rake; Myer portable elevator, 36 ft., 3 years old; 12-ft. feed bunk, good; 16-ft. feed bunk, good; several old wagons; 1 hitch wagon equipped for up to six horse hitch; 3 sets heavy draft show harness with collars; driving harnesses—single and double; several antique buggies and carts; several sets work harness and collars; other articles too numerous to mention. 4-burner bottle gas stove; piano accordion, large size, in good condition.

1951 4-door Chevrolet, power glide, dark green color.

About 1200 bales Brome and Alfalfa Hay inside—no rain.

TERMS OF SALE—No property to be removed until settled for. Not responsible for accidents.

Lunch will be served by the Methodist W. S. C. S. of the Radcliffe Church

C. T. RIERSON ESTATE

Wayne Rierson and Dale Rierson, Administrators

Security State Bank, Radcliffe, Clerk.

Col. K. E. Reisinger, Auctioneer.

ing with them when I could and living nearby, C.T. thought of me when a secretary-treasurer was needed for the paperwork of the newly formed organization. With his guidance and knowledge and the support of other interested breeders, the American Cream Horse Association was successfully launched in 1944.

Once the American Cream became a recognized breed, C.T.'s next goal was getting classes for them at the local fairs. One of

the great joys of his life was showing his horses and cattle, and he soon convinced the Hardin and Hamilton County Fair Boards to include classes for the American Creams. It gave him real pride and pleasure to show them as purebreds instead of in the grade draft classes.

I recall how proud he was of putting together his first show harness, wagon, and matched creams for a four horse hitch that he could take to various events around the coun-

try. They created a lot of interest and admiration. The crowning accomplishment for him was seeing classes offered at the Iowa State Fair in Des Moines, Iowa.

Mr. Rierson was a small, sandy-haired, wiry man, full of enthusiasm and energy, with a pleasant manner and positive outlook on life. He wanted the members of the Association to be like a big family and to that end, he saw to it that we had a potluck picnic each summer in addition to the regular annual meeting in March. He urged everyone to come and bring their entire family. C.T. would furnish ice cream for everyone. I have pleasant memories of good times at those picnics.

C.T. was an excellent farmer and livestock breeder with a good head for business. He was also a frugal man and this, in combination with inheritances and his acumen enabled him to accumulate a considerable number of acres of farm land, an accomplishment which gave him much pleasure.

As I've thought about C.T. and what to write, I've felt a sadness about the timing of his life. He came along with his love and devotion to a beautiful animal at a time when draft horses were fast declining in numbers and popularity. Regardless of this, he would often say "draft horses will come back." However, his untimely death at age 70 did not allow him to see the renewed interest of the past 10 years. I am sure if he were living today he would be in the forefront, encouraging and urging the improvement and promotion of the American Cream Draft Horse, and in my book, C.T. Rierson would still be "Mr. American Cream."

[The following is an epilogue from C.T. Rierson's obituary:]

At the age of 3 he moved with the family to Hamilton County, settling on farm northwest of Radcliffe, where he lived until the time of his marriage. During those early years, death struck the family, taking the mother, leaving Clarence Motherless at the age of 5, along with three sisters, ranging in age from 8 years down to 19 months. An aunt, Miss Anna Rierson, came to care for the family for 5 years, until the eldest sister, May, was old enough to do the work.

On December 23, 1912, he was united in marriage to Miss Ethel Pearson of Ellsworth, Iowa, by the Rev. C. A. Bates, pastor of the Methodist church in Radcliffe. Their marriage was blessed with five children, Dale, Ruth, Wayne, Donald and Clair. Donald passed away on August 30, 1928, at the age of 2 years, and Clair was taken on the 20th of October, 1935, at 7 years of age. He also was preceded in death by his parents, and two sisters, Sivrie Rierson in 1916, and Mrs. May Reed in 1938.

Following their marriage, Mr. and Mrs. Rierson settled on a farm 5 miles north of Radcliffe, where they lived continuously in the nearly 45 years since.

C. T., as his many friends called him, was an ardent livestock man, along with his farming interests. He had been in the purebred Aberdeen Angus cattle business continuously since 1918, building up a sizeable herd. But his greatest love was his American Cream horses. He first became interested in the

Creams in the early thirties and since then had worked continuously in raising, showing and promoting them. As a result of his untiring efforts, the American Cream horse was recognized as the first purebred draft breed ever to originate in the United States. In 1944, he was able to organize the breeders into the American Cream Horse Association, chartered by the State of Iowa. He was elected as its first president and was still serving in that capacity at the time of his death.



Karene Bunker Topp with some of C. T.'s American Creams

Bits 'n Pieces

- The date for the next Association meeting is September 11, 1993. Mark your calendars, details coming soon!
- The new color brochures are done. Betsy Ziebell deserves a big hand for a great job. Those wishing to have a brochure please contact Betsy.
- The National Sporting Library, located in Middleburg, Virginia, is solely dedicated to the horse. Their extensive collection of books and periodicals covers all facets of the horse world. The American Cream News is now included in their collection. Anyone interested in contacting the library for information please write:
The National Sporting Library
c/o Laura Rose, Librarian
P.O. Box 1335
Middleburg, VA 22117
- The Kentucky Horse Park also is receiving the Cream News for their library. Mr. R.K. Walker, Director of Equine Operations, is very interested in having a nice pair of young American Cream geldings for use in the horse-drawn tour area. Each breed is always identified and a short history of the breed is given. The draft barn in which the horses are housed receives much exposure to the public. Anyone who can help with this project please call Mr. Walker at (606) 233-4303.
- The Colonial Williamsburg Foundation has come out with their 1993 calendar. The month of April has an American Cream mare and foal represented. The cost is \$7.95 per calendar. Anyone wishing a copy please contact Karen Smith at The Cream News.

Letters

(The following is a letter sent to the Association)

Pioneer Graphics has developed a series of collectible trading cards that will be promoting all horse breeds in the Americas in 1993. This exciting project is steadily taking shape with the help of breed associations across the country and we are seeking your assistance as well.

Sherman Ivy of the United States Equine Marketing Program suggested that we contact you to obtain not only information concerning your specific breed interest, but also to obtain a representative photograph that could be used on the card, which will be approximately the size of the standard baseball trading cards I'm certain you have seen.

Collectible trading cards have become quite a phenomena and in order to take advantage of this opportunity to get all the horse breeds represented in this set, we need to include your association in our planning and production.

Initially we need a color photo (5 x 7 or larger) and would like the original or a duplicate negative of that photo as well in order for proper size reproduction and a brief history of your breed (100 words or less will help).

If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to contact either myself or Jim Volgarino, president of Pioneer Graphics.

This limited edition set of the Horses of the Americas promises to be an exciting way to share our love for horses with both owners and enthusiasts all over the country and we hope you will participate in this effort.

Sincerely,
Curtis Gardner
Horses of the Americas Card
Coordinator

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Lanexa, VA 23089-9501

The American Cream Newsletter is a benefit of membership in the American Cream Draft Horse Association. Published bi-annually from the Coach and Livestock Operation at The Colonial Williamsburg Foundation. The American Cream Newsletter welcomes articles, pictures, letters, and classified ads for publication that deals with American Cream Draft horses.

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