

A Step Back in Time

By Bobbie Sue Shelton-Lonas

On June 19th, 2010, a long-standing tradition will again be held in our community, the Eagleville Horse Show. The early history of this event is scarce, but I was able to find an account of the first show, which was held in 1908. A group of farmers and citizens of the Eagleville Community, who was interested in good blooded, high class saddle horses, joined together and sponsored Eagleville's first horse show. These individuals were: J. H. McCord, J. M. Owens, S. M. Williams, John W. Taylor, H. W. Williams, J. H. Dyer, George K. Lowe, W. A. Kelley and D. H. Hughes.

It's been said that when this group of friends would get together, discussion would involve bragging of whose horse was the finest of the community, so they decided they would have a show and have their horses judged. Word spread about the event and soon other area residents entered their prize possession.

The show, which started as a day event, but later changed to nights, grew in size each year and became one of the feature attractions to horsemen of this section of the state. With only a few exceptions the show has been held annually since the very first event. At the beginning, entries were mostly local, but as transportation has become easier, the territory from which the show draws entries grew accordingly. As mentioned, I wasn't able to find records of the early shows but the following articles gives an insight of how popular the show was in the 1930s. The Eagleville Community Club, the PTA, businesses and individuals helped in the sponsorship until the Eagleville Lions Club took it over, sometime after the club was chartered in 1953. It is still an annual event, held the third Saturday night in June each year.

The following articles on the Eagleville Horse Show appeared in the county newspaper.

EAGLEVILLE IS TO ENJOY BIG NIGHT HORSE SHOW SOON

June 23, 1933

Some of the best saddle horses in this section of the state are expected to participate in the night horse show, which will be held at Eagleville High School on Saturday night, July 1st. Various horse fanciers and stockmen both in this county and nearby counties have signified their intentions to enter their mounts in some of the ten events, which have been arranged.

The show will begin at 7:30 o'clock and will be preceded by a picnic supper on the grounds at 4:30 in the afternoon. The grounds will be flood lighted and a brass band has been obtained to furnish music. Preparations will also be made to facilitate the unloading and loading of the stock entered.

Awards for the winners of the events will include a \$20 English saddle for the best boy or girl rider and pony, a \$10 silver cup for the best lady and gentleman rider and a \$5 electric lamp for the best lady rider. Three prizes will be given in each event, some of the awards in cash, ranging in amounts from \$5.00 to fifty cents.

The ten events will consist of best pony and rider, boy or girl; best plantation stallion, gelding or mare, three years and under; best plantation stallion four years or over; best plantation mare, four years and older, champion plantation stallion, mare or gelding, any age, best five-gated mare or gelding, best three-gather mare or gelding, any age; best lady rider; best lady and gentleman rider and best saddle mule.

James G. Miller of Bell Buckle, who served at the successful show, which was held last year, will again serve as judge.

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It was reported that the 1935 show, was one of the most successful and with more entries than in any of the previous shows.

ANNUAL AFFAIR WAS BIG SUCCESS - August 2, 1935

A crowd estimated at 3,000 people, the largest in the history of the annual event, attended the Eagleville community horse show last Saturday night at the Eagleville High School Grounds.

Horses from Florida, New Jersey, Georgia, Ohio, Mississippi, Alabama, and Indiana were entered. Gus Blanchard, veteran horse fancier from Gunniston, Mississippi served as judge. Eight Middle Tennessee counties were represented.

Rutherford county had six premium winners, as follows: Geraldine Smotherman, first in walking ponies, under 48 inches; Herschel Wall, on Mary Lou, second in plantation mare, stallion or gelding, two year old class; E. E. Miller, on Rose Marie, second in plantation class, three years old; Miss Lucille Smotherman, third in five gaited class on Moran Peavine; Dr. A. C. Topmiller, second in roadster class, driving Judge Hickman; E. H. Thompson, third in plantation gelding, four years and over, class on Smoky.

First prize winners in the 16 classes were as follows: Walking ponies under 48 inches, Geraldine Smotherman, Murfreesboro; three-gated ponies under 48 inches, Bobby Gannon, Nashville on Joe Pate; walking ponies, 48 to 58 inches, Palmer Walker, Shelbyville on Tommy; plantation stallion, mare or gelding, two years old, Floyd Carruthers, Wartrace on Dement's Black Mary; five-gaited ponies under 48 inches, Buddy Haynes, Shelbyville on Billie Lindy; plantation stallion, mare or gelding, three years old, Fred Walker, Shelbyville, on Walker's Allen; three-gaited ponies 48 to 58 inches, Brownie Heard, Nashville, on Little Man.

Five-gaited ponies 48-58 inches, Edd Dozier, Nashville on Stepping High; plantation mares, four years and over, Frank Womack, Shelbyville, on Noble Allen; five-gaited stallion, mare or gelding, J. B. Ward, Nashville, on Golden Parader; plantation stallion, four years and over, Floyd Carruthers, Wartrace on Last Chance; roadster class, J. B. Ward, Nashville, driving Lady in Black, plantation gelding four years and over, Martin Goodrich, Nashville, on Harvest Moon; three-gaited mare-stallion or gelding, Wallace Watson, Nashville, on Sporty; plantation sweepstakes, Martin Goodrich, Nashville, on Harvest Moon; jumping class, Mrs. Herron, Brentwood on Radiance.

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With the success of previous shows, the anticipation of the 1936 show was to be even more successful by the sponsors. Preparations were made to accommodate the largest entry list in history and a record crowd. A special feature at this show was an exhibition of the purebred Arabian Horses from the Travelers Rest Farm in Nashville. National famous, this was the only time the horses were shown that season.

NIGHT HORSE SHOW IS GREAT SUCCESS - July 1936

Over 3,000 people in attendance and almost four score horses as entries marked the success of the night horse show, which was held at the Eagleville High School on last Saturday night. The event, which took place in 12 rings, was declared to have been one of the biggest of its kind ever presented in this section of the state.

The grand sweepstake, feature of the show was won by Nightrider, owned by Mr. Kempau of Nashville. The same horse also won as the best plantation gelding, four years and over.

THE OLDEST "ONE-NIGHT HORSE SHOW" IN TENNESSEE

The great crowd started gathering early and the picnic, which was held during the afternoon, was well attended. The Christiana band furnished music and the grounds were well lighted. The event was sponsored by the Community Club of Eagleville, and Joe Jackson. Joe Miller of Christian served as judge.

The complete list of winners is as follows:

Best pony under 54 inches, James Jefferies of Unionville, first; Joe Bellenfant of College Grove, second; Marian Hay of Eagleville, third.

Best pony over 54 inches; Sam McMurray, Jr. of Arrington, first; Horace Hill of Chapel Hill, second, Lucille Culberson of Overall, third.

Best Plantation mare, gelding or stallion under 3 years of age; Ras Groom of Auburntown (on Mary Leg), first; Mrs. Robert Pate of Murfreesboro, second; Len Davis of Wartrace, third.

Best plantation gelding 4 years and over; Charlie Kempau of Nashville (Night Rider), first; W. S. Dean of Allisona, second; Sidney Leonard of Cornersville, third.

Best plantation stallion, any age; Frank Womack of Flat Creek, first; (on Black Allen); M. S. Dean of Allisona, second, (on Walking Hal); A. M. Dement of Wartrace, third.

Best plantation mare 4 years and over; Joe Barker of Readyville, first; Neil Dement of Murfreesboro, second; John Brown of Murfreesboro, third.

Sweepstakes ring: Mr. Kempau of Nashville (on Night Rider) first; Frank Womack of Flat creek, second; Joe Barker of Readyville, third.

Best 5-gaited gelding of any age: Cullom Ferrell of Murfreesboro, first; Lillard Smotherman of Murfreesboro, second, Mrs. Walter Oglivie of Allisona, third.

Best lady riders: Mrs. Walter Oglivie of Allisona, first, Miss Kathleen Archer of Fayetteville, second, Mrs. Robert Pate of Murfreesboro, third.

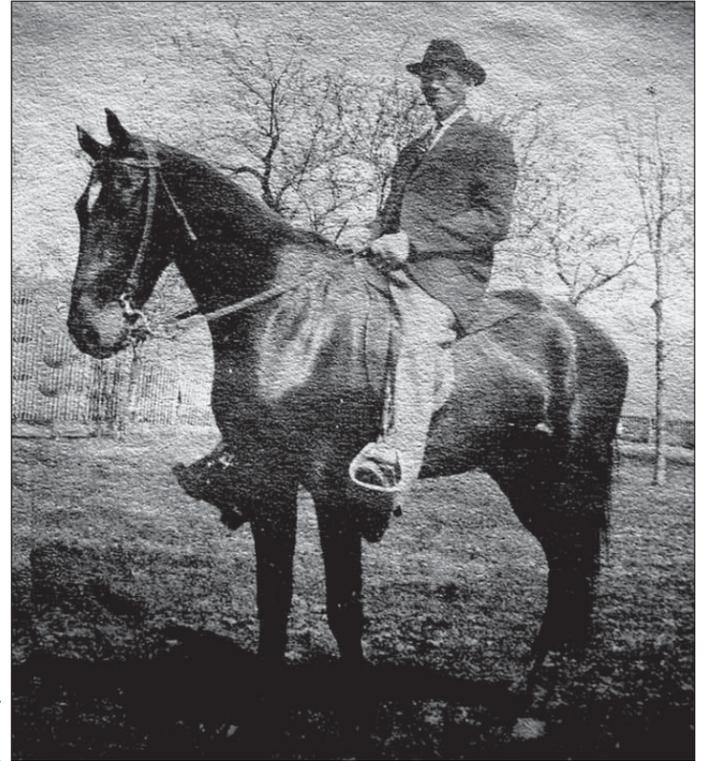
Added girl ride ring of any age: Miss Sarah Sue Womack of Murfreesboro, first; Miss Eula Lee Hailey of College Grove, second.

Best lady and gentleman rider: Sidney Leonard of Cornersville and Miss Kathleen Archer of Fayetteville, first; Walter Ladd and Miss Eula Lee Hailey of College Grove, second; Cullom Ferrell of Murfreesboro and Miss Sara Sue Womack of Murfreesboro, third.

Best saddle mule rider: Will Kelley of Eagleville first; Dug Gillespie of Eagleville, second, and Norman Davis of Eagleville, third.

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My friend, Dorothy Ann Stephenson Crowell, a resident of Shelbyville, often attended the Eagleville Horse Show while growing up in Eagleville and has the following recollection: There was only a small wire separating the show grounds from spectators, who were very close to the horses - An organist who



Mr. John W. Taylor - Mr. Taylor was one of the sponsors of the first horse show in Eagleville and continued to be involved with horse activities his life time. He was often called up on to judge shows. He owned and lived on the farm, now owned by Ruby Jarrell on Allisona Road.

played during the Eagleville horse show. It was entertaining just like the big shows of today. She remembers singing "The National Anthem" before the show began, sometime between 1945 and 1948 and that Mr. Joe McCord operated a BINGO stand, which was filled with lots of interesting prizes. She also said the land adjoining the school, owned by Mr. Sullivan was mowed, and used as a parking lot.

Eagleville not only had a horse show in the early days, but also was the home of several Champions. In February, 1947 Kenneth C. "KC" and Helen Bell of Illinois purchased approximately 375 acres from Joe H. Jackson and operated their horse training facility on Allisona Road. Horses from this establishment were entries in many of the local shows as well as the National Celebration in Shelbyville, Tennessee. This facility employed several local men to help train horses and also to operate the farm. In 1947 Arthur (Sal) Tucker went to work on the farm. His duties was working in the horse barn, riding, cleaning and feeding the horses. Mrs. Bell fed the horses on a rigid feeding schedule; 7 a.m., 11 a.m., 5 p.m. and 9 p.m. which she took care of the last feeding. He remembers, Mrs. Bell loving her horses and really taking care of them, but she never rode any of them. Sal and Robert Weaver often showed the horses and colts for her at local events including the Celebration in Shelbyville.

The Bells employed several local residents during their operation of the farm. In addition to Sal Tucker, some of the other workers were; Marshall Potter, Edgar Poe, Robert Weaver, Leon Lamb, Frank Webb, Leroy Murray, and Jack McCall.

In the mid 1950's J. T. and Mary Ann Leach, trainers at the facility, employed Jack McCall to help with the training and farm duties. Jack often rode horses at local shows and also at the Celebration in Shelbyville. After the departure of J. T. and Mary Ann Leach, Jack lived on the farm and took care of the horses until the farm was sold. Mr. K. C. Bell died in Crawford County, Illinois several years after his wife, Helen. The executors of his estate sold the farm to Fred and Dorothy Massey in August 1971. (Mr. Sam Tune presently owns this property).

On June 19th, please support the Lions Club with your attendance at the "Oldest One-Night Horse Show in Tennessee", an annual Eagleville event, which began in 1908, 102 years ago.