

A Breed Apart

By JESSICA HEIN

A handful of dedicated horsemen put a new association's wheels in motion with a fateful meeting in February 1962.

In the 1960s, the stage was set for a new breed of horse to finally gain a foothold and thrust itself onto the national and international equestrian stage. Paint Horses themselves were not new to the equine industry—the colorful pinto horses had for decades been staple stablemates across the United States, favorites among some horsemen for their flashy coats and versatility, while shunned by traditionalist Quarter Horse breeders. “Cropout” horses—those of Quarter Horse descent born with excessive white markings on their coats, by which they were refused registration with the AQHA—along with other “painted” stock became the foundation of a new breed.

Rebecca Tyler Lockhart, a horsewoman from Gainesville, Texas, had always fancied colorful Paint Horses, and it was she who pioneered the development of an association for these stock-type pintos. Though she and her husband, George Tyler, were well-respected Quarter Horse breeders and exhibitors, Rebecca remained committed to the recognition of Paint Horses as a breed apart.

“Quarter Horse conformation and ability suited us fine, but we were a bit bored with their solid color coats so we decided to jazz them up,” Rebecca said in a July 1992 *Paint Horse Journal* article, titled “A Look Back.”

In the early '60s, Rebecca began contacting fellow horsemen to gauge their interest in forming a new breed association dedicated to colorful Paint Horses.

“Paint fans began to organize in 1960 when Rebecca called a few of her Paint-owning neighbors to see how they felt about starting a registry,” wrote Nancy Hood in a May 1987 *Journal* article, titled “Luncheon Honors Association

Founders.” “As each agreed, Lockhart wrote down the pertinent information and put the paper in a box on her kitchen table.”

With her primitive record keeping soon overwhelmed by volume, Rebecca enlisted the help of two local women to help organize the information she had collected. Soon, Rebecca was receiving mail from 17 states regarding interest in forming a breed registry for stock-type Paint Horses, Nancy wrote in “History of the American Paint Horse Association,” an article that

Horses at the 1962 Southwestern Exposition and Fat Stock Show in Fort Worth, Texas.

The next step, logically, was to organize and discuss the association's development—and given the concentration of Paint Horse owners in Texas and Oklahoma, it was only natural to hold a meeting in North Texas.

Rebecca began planning a meeting that would take place in early February, following the 1962 Southwestern Exhibition and Fat Stock Show.



appeared in the April 1992 *Western Horseman*.

With ever-growing interest in a breed registry, Rebecca recruited the help of E.J. Hudspeth, Truman Moody and Charlie Moore—three horsemen from the Gainesville area who shared Rebecca's desire to establish a registry, Nancy wrote in the 1987 *Journal* article. They organized an open color class for Paint

On February 16, 1962, 16 Paint enthusiasts took a chance on a horsewoman's vision and founded the APSHA at the Curtwood Motel in Gainesville, Texas.

Postcards were mailed to everyone with whom Rebecca had previously spoken and who had expressed interest in forming an association for Paint Horses, stated the May 1987 *Journal* article. A meeting was set for February

16, 1962, at the Curtwood Motel in Gainesville, Texas.

Seventeen Paint Horse promoters from around Texas and Oklahoma attended that inaugural meeting. According to an article written by Rebecca in the December 1977 *Journal*, titled “APHA Beginnings,” the attendees included Rebecca and George Tyler of Gainesville; Mr. and Mrs. C. C. Teague of Sherman, Texas; Dick Barrett of Ryan, Oklahoma; Ralph and Dorothy Russell of McKinney, Texas; L. N. Sikes of Sherman; Junior Robertson of Waurika, Oklahoma; Charlie Moore of Gainesville; E. J. “Junior” Hudspeth of Era, Texas; E. D. Hudspeth of Era; W. B. Hudspeth of Valley View, Texas; Mr. and Mrs. Truman Moody of Elmore City, Oklahoma; and Vern Brewer of Gainesville. The youngest attendee was 5-year-old Rosy, daughter of Ralph and Dorothy Russell.

There, over coffee in the Curtwood Motel's restaurant, the dedicated horsemen crafted a solid foundation for the new association. They christened it the American Paint Stock Horse Association, a name proposed by Dick and quickly embraced by the group, according to a May 1987 *Journal* article, titled “The American Paint Horse Association—Promoting the Best of the Breed for 25 Years.”

“The subject to be discussed was the formation of an association to record the bloodlines of Paints,” stated the June 1983 *Journal* article “In The Beginning.” “Before the day was over and after countless cups of coffee, the groundwork was laid. One after another, these individuals affixed their names to a single sheet of paper proclaiming their dedication to the breed ... and to the association.”

The fledgling association's directives were outlined at the February 16 meeting: collect, preserve and record the pedigrees of Paint stock horses; publish a stud book; maintain a registry; and regulate the breed's exhibition, publicity, sales and racing.

The association's first officers were elected—they included President C.C. Teague; Vice President Dick Barrett; and Rebecca as secretary/treasurer. Junior Robertson, Ralph Russell and L.N. Sikes were named directors. Ralph and L.N.

The Rest of the Story

Though APSHA was younger than its sister stock horse associations, the daunting task of growing the fledgling breed didn't intimidate enthusiasts, Rebecca said in a July 1992 *Journal* article, titled “A Look Back.”

“We liked the challenge of coming from behind,” she said. “The other stock horse breeds had been organized for more than 20 years when we started. We had seen a few good Paints and realized we could combine conformation, ability and class with an extra dash of color and individuality—and hold our own with the other breeds. It took a lot of hard work and careful planning. It sure didn't happen by accident. We did it all on a shoestring budget, and, in the beginning, we used our own money to keep the association solvent.”

During the early 1960s, a second Paint Horse registry—the American Paint Quarter Horse Association—opened its doors in Abilene, Texas. Failing to gain energy to stay afloat on its own, APQHA merged with APSHA in May 1965. Known as the American Paint Horse Association from that point forward, the combined association counted 3,800 registered Paint Horses and 1,300 members in 1965.

Since the association was founded 50 years ago, APHA has continued to expand its reach and impact. Cumulatively, APHA has registered more than 1 million American Paint Horses, and Paint Horse owners can be found worldwide, including all 50 U.S. states, all 13 Canadian provinces and 55 foreign countries. In 2010, APHA had nearly 65,000 members across 46 countries. Though the Curtwood Motel in Gainesville is no longer erect—it's now the site of a Chili's restaurant—APHA stands tall on a solid foundation laid by dedicated Paint Horse pioneers 50 years ago, continuing to uphold the core goals and values outlined at the Curtwood Motel on February 16, 1962.

were also appointed as the association's first inspectors, charged with reviewing stallions for entry into the association's registry. Furthermore, a committee was appointed to develop a constitution and bylaws for the APSHA. Rebecca recalls Charlie was the first to join the association, paying \$5 at the meeting for his APSHA membership.

As the association's secretary/treasurer, Rebecca bore the burden of getting APSHA off and running. She recorded the pedigree of the first registered American Paint Horse—Bandit's Pinto, a black-and-white tobiano owned by Flying M Ranch in McKinney, Texas—on August 11, 1962.

“I had a responsibility to a lot of people,” Rebecca said in the April 1992 *Western Horseman* article. “I had told them it would work, and I had to be certain that it did.”

The hard work and dedication of Rebecca and other Paint Horse pioneers promised success for the young

breed. By the end of 1962, 250 Paint Horses had been registered with the APSHA, and the association counted 150 members. The following year, 1963, the APSHA had more than 1,250 registered Paint Horses. Yet for all of the breed's early success and its growth over the following 50 years, credit must be given to the handful of Paint Horse enthusiasts who showed up to the Curtwood Motel on February 16, 1962, and took a chance on one horsewoman's vision.

“To those farsighted individuals and to the countless others like the who have dedicated themselves to the breed and to the association, the entire membership owes a tremendous debt of gratitude. They built better than they thought,” summarized the June 1983 *Journal* article. 