Modified Tractor for Stacking Hay

"This photo shows my 1935 Massey Harris 25 tractor modified to stack hay," says Robert Sestrap, Vashon Island, Wash.

"About a week after cutting, we used the tractor to stack hay with the tractor-mounted overshot sweep stacker that's pictured. This is how we put up hay before hay conditioners and balers came into use.

"The winch that raised and lowered the stacker was made from a Model T Ford rear axle and was controlled by a Ford multi-disc clutch. Two people with dump rakes collected swaths into large windrows and the stacker came behind. We could clear 30 to 40 acres a day this way. It was high-quality hay with the leaves intact.

"When not used for stacking hay, we could equip it with a bucket for loading manure.

"In the early 1940's we converted this tractor to remote control because of the shortage of labor. One operator could run two binders in tandem, cutting a 17-ft. swath. It worked great.

"After more than 70 inventions, I'm still working on ideas but today I concentrate on automating food processing equipment using pneumatics, which can be set up to perform a vast array of repetitious functions without boredom or carpel tunnel syndrome. All you need to get started is a collection of stuff from big city junkyards. There's gold in them!"

Stacker's winch was made from a Model T Ford rear axle.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Robert Sestrap, 22744 Wax Orchards Rd. S.W., Vashon Island, Wash. 98070 (ph 800 634-6132; 206 463-9735).

"ONLY HISTORY OF PLANTER WIRE"

Book Traces History Of "Planter Wire"

It seems like an obscure subject, but co-author Larry Greer says there's a lot of interest in his new book about the development of planter wire and automated check row planters in the U.S.

Planter wires, which were often as long as 1/4 mile, stretched across fields. Knots fitted to the wire at regular intervals tripped the seed drop mechanisms on early horse-drawn planters. Most planter wires laid right on the ground and tension was applied to help keep the wires aligned.

Greer, a Chesterfield, Mo., barbed wire collector, got interested in the subject through his hobby.

"I often came across barbless wire with intricate knots on it in barns and on fenceposts and wondered what it was used for," explains Greer, who spent years writing "Planter Wire: Patent History and Collectors Catalogue".

Development of check row planters began in the 1840's and the first patent for planter wire was issued in 1857, according to Greer. The method was used until the 1950's, by which time tractor-pulled planters made check row planters obsolete, he says.

Between 1857 and 1939, more than 200 planter wire patents were issued. One of the most interesting was called the Faries system of the 1800's, where wire pivoted on a cylinder on the wire, he says.

Along with patents, history, wires, reels and knots, Greer's book covers the anchors used to fix the wire in place. Anchors were cast iron stakes, Greer notes.

The 350 plus page book includes photos and patent drawings of planter wires, as well as reproductions of early planter manuals. Greer wrote the book with co-author Jim Goedert.

Sells for $16 plus $4 S&H.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Larry Greer, 182 N. Green Trails, Chesterfield, Mo. 63017-2552 (ph 314 576-1152).

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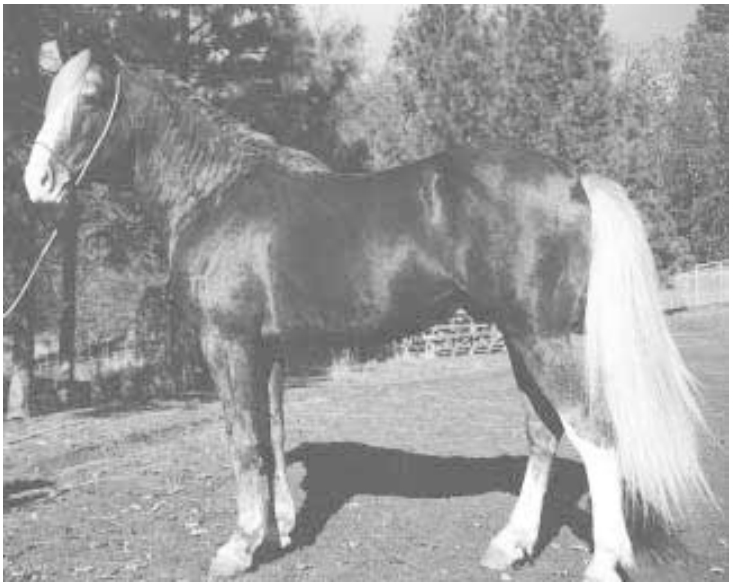

Over the centuries the ancient Spanish breed's bloodlines remained pure.

ANCESTRY TRACES BACK TO SPANISH CONQUISTADORS OF THE 1600'S

They're Saving Old World Spanish Colonial Horses

"They look as if they walked right out of the history books. They're an important part of our past, which makes them a breed well worth preserving," say Robin and Richard Keller, who have commited themselves to preserving pure bloodlines of rare "Wilbur-Cruce" Spanish horses on their ranch near Mokelumne Hill, Calif.

They are breeders dedicated to the preservation and celebration of this ancient horse, whose ancestry can be traced back to Spanish Colonial times in the 1600's. Over the centuries the horses' bloodlines have remained pure while other American "wild" horses became a mixture of many breeds. How did it happen?

In the late 1600's, Father Eusebio Kino, a Jesuit priest and missionary, brought the Spanish horses into the Pimeria Alta, an area made up of southern Arizona and northern Sonora, Mexico. Father Kino established headquarters in the San Miguel River Valley, about 25 miles east of today's Magdalena, where he founded Mission Dolores and Rancho Dolores. It is from this area that the Wilbur-Cruce horses originated. His mission remained active in the production of livestock for many decades, producing stock that was destined to be spread northward as each new mission was established.

In the 1870's Dr. Ruben Wilbur bought some of the original Wilbur-Cruce horses from Rancho Dolores to stock his ranch in southern Arizona. Through three successive generations, spanning 110 years, the Wilbur-Cruce Spanish horses were kept in isolation on the family ranch. They were allowed to run in wild bands in rocky and mountainous terrain, developing qualities that only the harsh selection process of survival of the fittest can produce.

In 1990, the elderly granddaughter of Dr. Wilbur, Eva Antonia Wilbur-Cruce, sold part of the ranch to the Nature Conservancy to be added to the Buenos Aries National Wildlife Refuge. Due to their historical and genetic importance, Eva agreed to donate 77 of the wild horses to the American Livestock Breeds Conservancy, an organization dedicated to conserving endangered breeds unique to the Americas. The Conservancy coordinated the task of trapping and removing the horses, ensuring that blood samples were taken for typing. Dr. Gus Cothran, director of the Equine Blood Typing Research Laboratory at the University of Kentucky, concluded that the Wilbur-Cruce horses were an isolated or closed population, with ample evidence of their Spanish ancestry.

Robin Keller, who had worked with and studied domestic horses for most of her life, became one of the individuals chosen to receive 18 of the Wilbur-Cruce Spanish Colonial horses. That herd has now grown to 50 horses, all stallions and mares.

"They have a unique, noble character that sets them apart from all other horse breeds," says Keller, who has worked with the animals for the past six years. "They have a lot of pride and passion, and a willingness to serve which usually isn't found in more modern horse breeds. They want to be with you and are always very interested in what you're doing. It's like having several horses in one, because in the Spanish Colonial days horses were more total. In the quest for fine horses through technology, the emphasis is on a specific performance rather than on character. Character is rarely spoken of, nurtured or bred for.

"They come in a variety of sizes and colors, and there are three types: trotting and galloping horses used for war, mounted games, and racing; a gaited type with a short back prized for their swiftness; and the Iberian which is smaller, coarser type that the peasants could afford. We have all three types. Safety in numbers and working together kept them alive over the decades, which is why they are so social. They're also very intelligent - they can learn in one day what the average horse learns in one month."

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