



THE ARIZONA HORSEMAN

ARIZONA STATE HORSEMEN'S ASSOCIATION
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HERD OF SPANISH MUSTANGS TO COME TO PIONEER ARIZONA LIVING HISTORY MUSEUM!

(Story on Page 14)

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"Big
Medicine"
— one of
the stallions
from the
Wilbur-
Cruce herd
of Spanish
Mustangs in
southern
Arizona. The
horses'
future in
Arizona
depends on
the Pioneer
Living
History
Museum.

**NO ASHA BOARD MEETINGS ARE SCHEDULED FOR THE
SUMMER MONTHS OF JUNE, JULY AND AUGUST. THE
ECONOMIC IMPACT SURVEY IS SCHEDULED TO COME OUT
IN JULY. CALL ROB ADAMS AT 860-8891 FOR INFORMATION**

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SPANISH MUSTANGS IN SOUTHERN ARIZONA

The Wilbur-Cruce horses are the only known "rancher" strain of pure Spanish horses in the Southwest derived from Spanish colonial days and persisting as "pure" to the present time. Most other strains have long since been absorbed and mixed into the Quarter Horse breed, or have undergone extinction. The only other strains of Spanish horses remaining until now are feral strains in certain isolated areas.

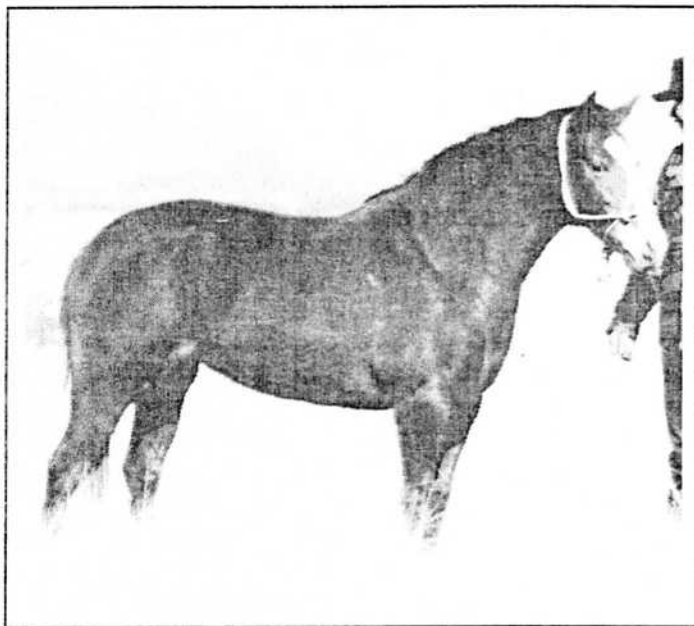
The Wilbur-Cruce herd represents a unique genetic resource. The American Minor Breeds Conservancy is interested in them because they are the most significant group of horses largely thought to be gone forever.

The Arizona State Horsemen's Association is working with Willcox resident Marye Ann Thompson, Registrar of the Spanish Mustang Registry, Inc., to preserve the horses. This herd cannot remain where it is on the federally administered southern Arizona Buenos Aires Refuge near the Cruce Ranch. The ranch, but not the horses, was purchased by the Arizona Nature Conservancy which, in turn, sold it to the federal government. On April 27th, ownership of the horses was transferred to the American Minor Breeds Conservancy under the direction of Dr. Philip Sponenberg of the Virginia Tech Veterinary school in Blacksburg, Virginia.

Dr. Sponenberg had a plan of action to gather and move the whole herd to the existing Buenos Aires Refuge facilities utilizing the cattle pens and chutes still there. But the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service does not believe the presence of the horses is compatible with refuge goals. It would take legislation in Congress to enable the herd to remain on a wildlife refuge. If such legislation is enacted, the fate of the horses is secured. According to Dr. Sponenberg, once removed from the Cruce Ranch and transferred to the Refuge, a census of the herd would be possible. Then a breeding nucleus not to exceed 51 horses could be released back into the Refuge some miles from its previous range thereby preventing possible damage to the riparian area at Arivaca Creek, which is now reserved for the reintroduction to southern Arizona of the endangered masked bobwhite quail. Incompatibility of habitat between birds and horses would appear to be unusual. The remaining horses would be placed in private hands.

The Refuge currently has over 112,000 acres of grass which have not been grazed for many years. Rumor has it that controlled burns are currently taking place to keep the grass down. Under those circumstances, an environmental study would be appropriate prior to forcing the removal of the horses from the refuge.

The Government does not want any horses to remain in the Refuge. The worst case scenario is that all the horses will be removed. And that, apparently, will be completed by the end of June, 1990. Land is available in Oklahoma for a breeding group of about 50 horses with the remaining horses going to private breeders. This is not the best solution as the horses are a part of Arizona's history.

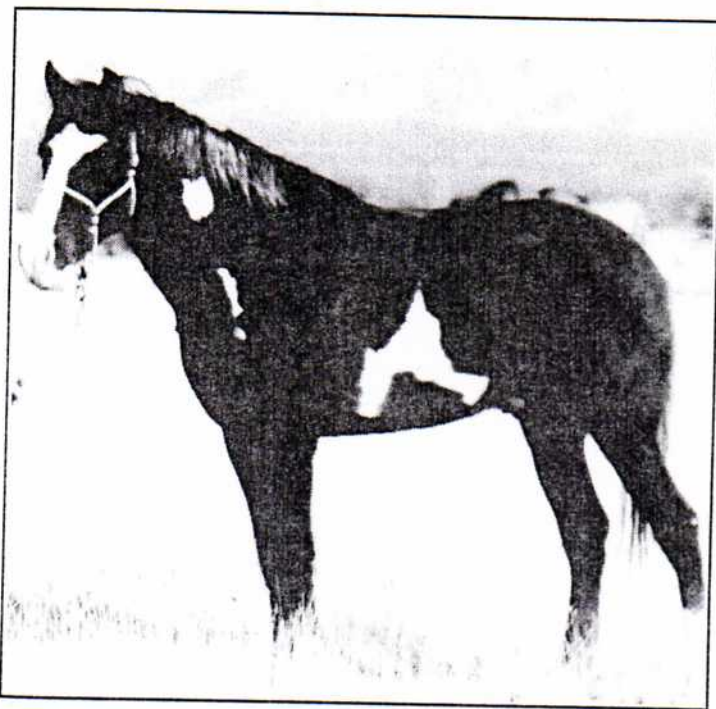


Chestnut mare from Cruce herd, 15 hands, 7 years

If the Wilbur-Cruce herd is disbursed, Arizona will have lost a valuable historical asset. This would be ironic particularly as another federal agency, the U.S. Parks Department, is contacting all registries of Spanish-descended horses inviting their participation in the Quincentennial of 1992 commemorating the 500th anniversary of Columbus' discovery of the New World. The Smithsonian and the Spanish Tourism Office are deeply involved in this project. Yet, Arizona has one, if not the only, truly documented herd of Colonial Spanish horses and our Government, as well as our Arizona Congressmen and Senators, chooses to do nothing about it.

When rounded up, the Cruce horses are scheduled to be blood-typed by the University of Kentucky to ascertain if any variants not currently found in modern horses are present and to provide insight into what Spanish horses of a century or more ago were genetically. Once gone, it would be impossible to recreate this herd.

The history of the Cruce herd is quite remarkable. In all probability, the horses are the same genetically now as they were 105 years ago when the original animals were purchased from Juan Sepulveda of Mission Dolores in Magdalena, Mexico. Mission Dolores, located 30 or 40 miles south of the border in the Mexican state of Sonora, was the main headquarters of Padre Eusebio Francisco Kino, the Jesuit priest who in the year 1700 founded San Xavier del Bac near the present-day city of Tucson. Father Kino was a stockman as well as a priest. He kept large herds of cattle, sheep, goats and horses to supply local needs as well as stocking new missions in northern Mexico and southern Arizona. Father Kino's horses presumably made up most of the seed stock of northern Mexico and southern Arizona. The original Kino records are in the Spanish Archives as well as in private collections and contain proof that he furnished herds of breeding horses to each new mission. Mission Dolores was a very large horse breeding center in the early 1700s and continued to produce horses for over 150 years.



Gelding from Cruce herd, 14.3 - 15 hands, 10 years

The purchase of the Mission Dolores horses, antecedents of today's herd in question, was from a man named Juan Sepulveda. At that time in history, the common practice was to drive a large herd of horses north, selling them along the way. The Sepulveda herd numbered about 1,000 head and came over the Arizona border southwest of Tucson bound for Kansas City. Juan Sepulveda, however, never got further than New Mexico because all the horses were sold. An old doctor at that time owned the Cruce Ranch. He was the grandfather of the last owner of the Ranch. The doctor purchased one stallion and 25 mares which he felt would make excellent ranch horses. These horses were called "rock horses" due to their ability to

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work in the local mountains which are very rocky, steep, and dangerous. The descendants of those early Sepulveda horses are the Cruce horses. The last ranch owner and granddaughter of the doctor who bought the Sepulveda horses, sold the Cruce Ranch to the Arizona Nature Conservancy. She calls the horses "Spanish Barbs." Her earliest memories are of riding her horse, Diamante, down to the border line camp with her father. She took over the 16 square mile working cattle ranch in 1933 following her father's death.

Please write to Governor Rose Mofford (1700 W. Washington, Phoenix, Arizona 85007), Senator Dennis DeConcini (323 W. Roosevelt, Suite C 100, Phoenix, Arizona 85003), Senator John McCain (5353 N. 16th Street, Suite 190, Phoenix, Arizona 85016), Congressman John J. Rhodes III (2345 S. Alma School Road, Suite 108, Mesa, Arizona 85210), Congressman Morris K. Udall (522 W. Roosevelt, Suite 100, Phoenix, Arizona 85003), Congressman Bob Stump (230 N. 1st Avenue, Room 5001, Phoenix, Arizona 85025), Congressman Jon Kyl (4250 E. Camelback Road, Suite 140 K, Phoenix, Arizona 85018) and Congressman Jim Kolbe (1661 N. Swan, Suite 112, Tucson, Arizona 85712) and urge them to work with Marye Ann Thompson, Registrar of the Spanish Mustang Registry, Dr. Philip Sponenberg of the American Minor Breeds Conservancy, the Pioneer Arizona Living History Museum, and the Arizona State Horsemen's Association to resolve this matter satisfactorily.

— by Marye Ann Thompson and Dr. Philip Sponenberg