

Pedigree analyst Larry Thornton gives us an in-depth look each month at the bloodlines of the "working horse." Larry's interviews and research reflect the same goal as our magazine—dedication to the love of a good horse.

The designation "Blue Hen" is a term commonly used in the horse breeding industry to describe those special mares that have made a major contribution to their breed. The book *MATRIARCHS, GREAT MARES OF THE 20TH CENTURY* by Edward L. Bowen is a review of many of the top thoroughbred mares of the 20th Century that have become members of the "Blue Hen Club." These mares have a powerful influence on the breed as producers of outstanding thoroughbred race horses.

The MISS REBEL RITA

A passage in the introduction of Bowen's book eloquently describes the process of how great mares become "blue hens." He states it this way, "In that uplifting ritual of seeking to breed a nobler member of an already noble breed, we chance upon the exceptional. The jargon of the Turf styles them first as producers, then stakes producers, then blue hens. Some few give their genes to prosperity, and in so doing command an enduring reverence."

One of the truly exceptional mares of the quarter horse is Della Moore. This mare "commands an enduring reverence" through her great sons Joe Moore and Joe Reed P-3. Both of these stallions were leading sires of their day. The success of Joe Reed P-3 and Joe Moore as sires along with their dam have made them AQHA Hall of Fame members.

A modern day mare that is currently lending her "genes to the prosperity" of the modern pleasure horse is Miss Rebel Rita. This mare is the dam of the leading sires Investment Asset and Good Asset. The first and second generation foals of Miss Rebel Rita have earned over \$1,000,000 in the show ring. Her sons have become leading sires with both stallions showing up on the AQHA Leading Sire Lists for 2004. The story of Miss Rebel Rita is one in which "we chance upon the exceptional" when we look at the life of this great mare.

Miss Rebel Rita was foaled in Nebraska in 1980. She was sired by Top Rebel and out of Rita's Orphan by Poco Baron. She has been owned for many years by Dan and Carol McWhirter of Doniphan, Nebraska.

Dan and Carol recently recalled Miss Rebel Rita's early years. Dan started the story, "She was bred by E and E Horse Company of Norfolk, Nebraska. They own the Norfolk Livestock Company. They were the owners of her sire Top Rebel, who was a gray stud by Rebel Cause. He was their cutting horse."

He continued, "When Rita's Orphan foaled, she was owned by Ken Freudenburg of Council Bluffs, Iowa. He had bought the mare from E and E. Well Freudenburg was selling all of his horses and a good friend of mine Rich Erwin went over with his sister-in-law to look at them. Rich saw Rita's Orphan with Miss Rebel Rita on her side and he bought them." Dan and Rich Erwin had become friends while serving in the Air National Guard.

We will let Erwin tell us about his time with Miss Rebel Rita, "She was on her mother's side. She was born in May and I bought her in July or August. I liked the filly colt from the day I first saw her. She would just float across the field at her mother's side. So I bought the family. I got her home and we weaned her. We had her around here

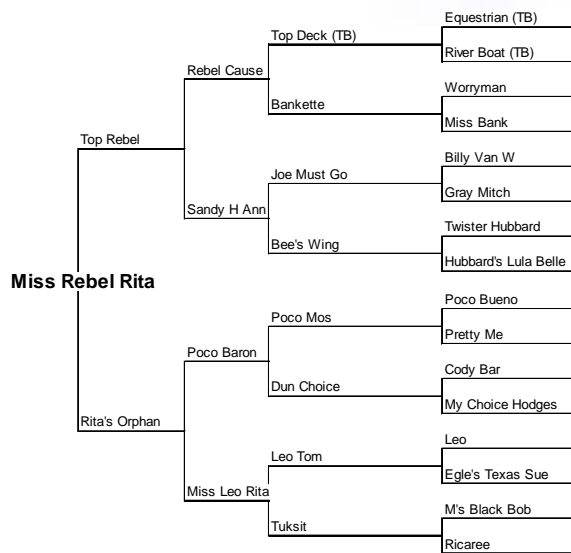
Courtesy of **THE SOUTHERN HORSEMAN** April 2005 issue



Dan & Carol McWhirter with Miss Rebel Rita

as a yearling and she just kept getting better. She was a beautiful quiet filly colt that moved like a cloud. She loved your attention.”

Dan continues our story, “After Carol and I got married, we were training a few horses and Rich brought Miss Rebel Rita down for us to ride. We rode her for half interest. Carol showed her at the Nebraska State Fair her two-year-old year in hunter under saddle. At that time there was no junior or senior class, it was all ages in the one class. She was Reserve on her as a two-year-old.”



Carol added, “Then I went to AK-Sar-Ben and we placed first in Hunter Under Saddle.”

Dan continued, “In March we took her to the big show in Wichita. That would have been the first time we would have shown her in western pleasure. Denise Rivard and Jody Galyean were at the show.

Denise was a good friend of Carol's and they had known each other for years. Denise recently recalled her recollections of how she first came in contact with Miss Rebel Rita, “Back in 1983, Carol called me and I was working in Illinois, and she said, ‘I have a hunt seat mare you might be interested in.’

I said, ‘I'm going to be in Wichita, Kansas at the horse show and will you bring her down.’ She did and I rode her and I just loved her.”

Denise continued, “I got on the phone to find my customer and couldn't get a hold of her. In the meantime, Jody Galyean was watching me ride her

in the warm up arena and he said, ‘I would like to buy her’ and I told him to go ahead as I couldn't get a hold of my customer.”

Denise added, “She was a sweetheart. I had worked for Jody and he asked me to ride her at the Congress in the Hunter Under Saddle Futurity. We made the finals but didn't place. Jody sold her and eventually she ended up in my back yard owned by a Doctor. The Doctor that had bought her lost interest in the horses and so the mare came up for sale. I knew that Dan and Carol had bought The Big Investment and so I called Carol and asked if they were interested in getting Miss Rebel Rita back. And they were, so I bought her for them.” At that time she actually went back into the partnership of Dan and his friend Rich Erwin.

Dan interjected this interesting side note: “After the purchase was made, Jody asked who she was by. I told him she was sired by Top Rebel by Rebel Cause. He stated, “If I had known that she was Rebel Cause, I wouldn't have bought her.”

It is at this point that fate becomes a factor in the life of Dan, Carol and Miss Rebel Rita. Dan continues this very interesting part of our story, “Denise went and bought the mare for us. But she was still in Illinois. Well we had to take a bunch of bred mares back to Darrell Saul. So we loaded up the pickups and with two six horse trailers and headed for Darrell's in Arkansas. Carol was pregnant and sick as a dog.”

Carol and Miss Rebel Rita



The MISS REBEL RITA

Story

"So we dropped the mares off at Darrell's and spent a couple of days with him and then we headed for Illinois to pick up Miss Rebel Rita. This was in June," stated Dan.

"When we got home, Rich said, 'I would like to have my son ride her in 4-H.' I said, 'That was alright, but my half, which was the back half was going to get bred. Miss Rebel Rita was the last mare we bred to The Big Investment. He died about a month later.'"

When asked why he went ahead and bred Miss Rebel Rita, Dan confided, "I don't know why. It was late in the year and usually you don't want to breed one that late. But the foal we got was Investment Asset and as everybody knows he went on to be a Reserve World Champion in Junior Western Pleasure.

The next thing Dan wanted to do was finish Miss Rebel Rita's Superior for Western Pleasure. She had a good show record, but had not gotten the Superior Award. Dan explained what happened, "They told us she had 49 pleasure points. We didn't look it up. So in August, there was a show at the Skyline Ranch in Omaha. It rained all day long. It was a foot deep and a good one couldn't look good. There was five or six in the class. Billy Allen was the judge and he put me first. Well I thought that finished her Superior and we brought her home and turned her out. Then we checked and she only had 49 points. So she never achieved the Superior."

Despite the fact that she didn't get a superior, Miss Rebel Rita was a very good show mare that earned 65 performance points in Western Pleasure and Hunter Under Saddle. She earned her open ROM and had points in the open and amateur divisions. She had 49 open pleasure points; nine open hunter under saddle points and seven amateur western pleasure points.

"Miss Rebel Rita was real beautiful headed with a pretty neck. She had a lot of self carriage. A real natural mover that was very soft. You couldn't hear

her touch the ground. She was equally good in the hunt seat as she was in the western pleasure. She could jog in place," related Carol about the performance aspects of this great mare.

The natural ability to be a good mover transferred to her first foal Investment Asset. This is what Dan had to say about this first foal, "He was just a colt when he was a baby. Of course he was born late. But he just floated. We took him to the World Show Sale as a yearling. They didn't have round pens then and I had to longe him in the median out at the road. The day he sold, it was wet and cold, raining and the wind was blowing 40 miles an hour out of the North. Randy Wilson kept looking at him, but he didn't buy him. Liz Coe, who trained for Joe Geeslin, loved him and they bought him. Then two years later, he was the Reserve World Champion and he was born late."

Dan then added, "I had people calling telling me what a great horse he was. He was a major deal. I was at a youth committee meeting and the Kaplows were sitting beside me. They were really into the pleasure side of it and they said they had just watched the greatest pleasure horse they had ever seen. His name was Investment Asset and he is winning everything. When I told them that I had bred him, they couldn't believe it."

Carol sees the following as a key to Investment Asset's success as a show horse, "Liz and Joe let him be what he would be. He was a natural and he was Reserve behind Kay Cee Leaguer. Liz was the only one to show him."

Investment Asset not only became the 1990 Reserve World Champion, he was Superior with 72 western pleasure points. He won 14 out of 19 AQHA pleasure classes he entered. His NSBA wins include being the Championship of the 1998 Tom Powers Two-Year-Old Western Pleasure Futurity and twice was the Champion of the Tom Powers Limited Open Western Pleasure Futurity. He was the 1989 Sold Gold Limited Open Champion as well. His earnings stand at \$49,875.

Investment Asset retired to the breeding barn with good results. He is currently found on six AQHA Leading Sire Lists. He is in the top 15 on five of the six performance categories. He is in the top 20 in the sixth category. These categories include Open Performance Point Earners, Open Point Earning Performance Horses, Amateur Performance Point Earners, Amateur Point Earning Performance Horses, Youth Performance Point Earners and Youth Point Earning Performance Horses. His foals have

earned \$483,157.56 in AQHA and NSBA competition. Some of his foals include Smart Asset, AQHA World Champion Amateur Hunter Under Saddle Horse; Frozen Assets, two time APHA World Champion Amateur Western Pleasure Horse, Little Bit Of Asset, AQHYA Reserve World Champion Western Pleasure Horse and Regal Asset, an All American Quarter Horse Congress 3-Year-Old Futurity Reserve Champion.

When The Big Investment died, Dan and Carol stood Zippos Mr Good Bar for Darrel Saul. Darrel had been a partner with Dan and Carol on The Big Investment. Miss Rebel Rita had two foals by Zippos Mr Good Bar. They were Good Bar Ms and Good Asset.

Good Bar Ms was foaled in 1988. She went on to earn 8.5 AQHA performance points. She has since gone on to be the dam of several good performers with four point earners. Her foals include Zipped By Cluso, an AQHA Superior Western Pleasure Horse with 108.5 AQHA points in the open, amateur and novice divisions. This 1993 bay gelding is sired by Investor Cluso, a full brother to The Big Investment. Good Chexpectation is another performer out of Good Bar Ms. This AQHA point earner is sired by The Big Chex, another full brother to The Big Investment. The next performer out of Good Bar Ms is Pine Valley Rebel. This bay gelding has earned 76.5 AQHA points. The interesting part of this show record is that this horse has 75.5 novice youth points. Investor Cluso is the sire of this horse. Lotsa Good Potential is the latest performer out of this good mare. This horse has five AQHA points and is an NSBA money winner. Lotsa Good Potential is sired by Potential Investment by Principle Investment by The Big Investment.

Good Asset, a 1989 bay stallion, became the next performer out of Miss Rebel Rita. He is an AQHA ROM performer with 1 halter point; 41.5 western pleasure points; 8.5 hunter under saddle points. He was a top ten finisher in the Junior Western Pleasure at the Congress. He was eighth out of 123 in the class. He was the 1993 Tulsa Holiday

Circuit Junior Western Pleasure Champion and the 1993 Nebraska State Fair NSBA Hunter Under Saddle Futurity Champion. Carol explained how Good Asset's show career was compromised, "He wound up having a bone chip in the left hind ankle. So he was real good going one direction but not as strong going the other direction. So that chip really interfered with his show career. That is until we figured it out and had the chip taken out. He did well afterward but didn't become what he could have become if it had not been for the chip.

The key to Good Asset is that the McWhirters put their faith in this good son of Miss Rebel Rita and that faith has paid off in the form that he has joined his brother Investment Asset as an AQHA leading sire in all six performance categories listed by the AQHA. They are Open Performance Point Earners, Open Point Earning Performance Horses, Amateur Performance Point Earners, Amateur Point Earning Performance Horses, Youth Performance Point Earners and Youth Point Earning Performance Horses. Good Asset is listed in the top 15 in all of these categories for 2004. He is also an AQHA Leading Sire of Western Pleasure Point-Earners. This makes Miss Rebel Rita a very special mare in that she has two sons on the leading sire lists. Some of the performers for Good Asset include Save Your Assets, All American Quarter Horse Congress All Around 11 and Under Champion; Protect Your Assets, NSBA 2-Year-Old Open Western Pleasure Champion; Good Obsession, All American Quarter Horse Congress Novice Amateur Western Pleasure Champion; Up Town Asset, All American Quarter Horse Congress 2-Year-Old Non-Pro Western Pleasure Futurity Reserve Champion; Hotroddin Good Time, All American Quarter Horse Congress Junior Western Pleasure Champion; A Royal Asset, All American Quarter Horse Congress Amateur Working Hunter and Pass The Asset, All American Quarter Horse Congress Work- ing Hunter Reserve Champion.

When Dan, Carol and Wayne Atchley brought The Investor to Nebraska in 1990, it was obvious that Miss Rebel Rita would be bred to this great stallion. The results of that mating came in 1991 in the form of Assets. Assets would prove to be a great "asset" for her dam. She would earn 130.5 AQHA Amateur Western Pleasure Points earning a Superior. She would earn \$12,012.20 in NSBA money. She was an All American Quarter Horse Congress Non-Pro Western Pleasure Derby Champion, a Nebraska Silver Classic 3/4-Year-Old Non-Pro Snaffle Bit Futurity Champion and the Dixie Nationals Amateur Western Pleasure Champion. She was owned and shown to these titles by the late Mary Carole Heckaman.

Assets has made her contribution to the money earning prowess of Miss Rebel Rita and her foals. She is the dam of horses like Gota Lota Potential and Potential Asset. Both of these stallions are sired by Potential Investment by Principle Investment by The Big Investment. Gota Lota Potential is the winner of such aged events as the Lonestar QHA Futurity Breeders 3-Year-Old Western Pleasure Class; the Houston QHA Futurity Breeders 3-Year-Old Open Western Pleasure Class and the Lonestar QHA 3-Year-Old Open Western Pleasure Class. This good horse has earned \$24,043.74 in AQHA and NSBA competition. His AQHA record shows that he is Superior in open and amateur western pleasure with 162.5 AQHA points. Potential Asset has earned \$10,357.93 in AQHA and NSBA competition. He was the 2001 Just For Pleasure 3-Year-Old Limited Open Western Pleasure Champion and the 2001 Reserve NSBA High Point 3-Year-Old Limited Open Horse. Potential Asset is an AQHA World Show finalist with a fourth place in Western Riding. He has 50 AQHA performance points with an ROM.

The next foal out of Miss Rita Rebel was Rita Investment. This daughter of The Investor is unshown. She is the dam of an AQHA point earner in Flash My Assets. This gelding has earned 4.5 AQHA points.

The MISS REBEL RITA

Story

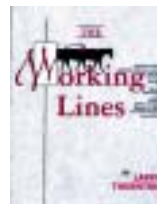
Invested Security was Miss Rebel Rita's 1994 foal. This foal would change the life of Miss Rebel Rita. His birth resulted in a torn cervix. Invested Security is an unshown son of The Investor. Dan and Carol did try one more time to get a foal out of Miss Rebel Rita by natural birth. This was a foal by Impulsions and it died at birth due to complications from the injury to her cervix.

Dan and Carol would go on to use embryo transfers as a solution to Miss Rebel Rita not being able to carry a foal naturally. This too would prove to be difficult as her system has not been cooperative to the procedure.

She has since produced, by embryo transfer, the 2000 bay gelding Secured Principles, an AQHA point earner by Principle Investment by The Big Investment. Carol described Secured Principles as "a gorgeous mover, but a little coarse in the head." So they gelded him. The next embryo was Whata Big Asset. This 2000 solid bay son of the McWhirter's paint stallion Whata Investment is unshown but is being used as a

sire by Jerry A. Jobe. He is proving to be a color sire.

We have seen how Miss Rebel Rita has proven through her offspring to be one of those mares that has founded a family of pleasure horses. Her offspring through the second generation have made her a \$1,000,000 producer with earnings of \$1,053,564(through 2004). Thus she is a mare that will "command an enduring reverence" as a part of the pleasure horse industry and if that doesn't make her a "blue hen" mare, the title isn't far behind. But our look at this great mare will continue next month as we take a look at her pedigree and how that pedigree may make her an even more special mare. We will also take a closer look at how her sons are playing a role in her influence on the modern quarter horse.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR- Larry Thornton is the author of the books "The Working Lines," Volumes 1 and 2. These books bring together many of the informative stories of prominent stallions and mares, and both are valuable for use as reference books.

To order a copy of either book (\$19.95 each plus \$2.95 for shipping and handling), call 1-800-647-6672. VISA, MC and AMEX accepted. For information on how to contact Larry, call us at 601-693-6607 or southernhorseman.com or go to his website at PedigreeNotes.com

Assets, ridden by Mary Carole Heckaman

