

From the Banks of the Nile: The Egyptian Arabian



In ancient days, the horses of Egypt's fertile Nile delta brought fame and honor to the mighty pharaohs who bred them meticulously and used them to conquer vast empires. Their inherent attributes of beauty, courage, pride, and speed elevated these royally bred creatures to celebratory and godlike status. So famous did they become that even wise King Solomon was said to have "brought horses out of Egypt."

Neither sacred nor profane history tells us the country where the horse was first domesticated, or whether it was first used for work or riding. It probably was used for both purposes in very early times and in various parts of the world. We know that by 1500 B.C. the people of the east had obtained great mastery over their hot-blooded horses which were the forerunners of the breed which eventually became known as "Arabian."

About 3500 years ago the hot-blooded horse assumed the role of king-maker in the east, including the valley of the Nile and beyond, changing human history and the face of the world. Through this horse the Egyptians were made aware of the vast world beyond their own borders. The Pharaohs were able to extend the Egyptian empire by harnessing the horse to their chariots and relying on its power and courage. With its help, societies of such distant lands as the Indus Valley civilizations were united with Mesopotamian cultures. The empires of the Hittites, Assyrians, Babylonians, Persians and others rose and fell under its thundering hooves. Its strength made possible the initial concepts of a cooperative universal society, such as the Roman Empire. The Arabian "pony express" shrank space, accelerated communications and linked empires together throughout the eastern world.

This awe-inspiring horse of the east appears on seal rings, stone pillars and various monuments with regularity after the 16th century B.C. Egyptian hieroglyphics proclaim his value; Old Testament writings are filled with references to his might and strength. Other writings talk of the creation of the Arabian, "thou shalt fly without wings and conquer without swords." King Solomon some 900 years B.C. eulogized the beauty of "a company of horses in Pharaoh's chariots," while in 490 B.C. the famous Greek horseman, Xenophon proclaimed: "A noble animal which exhibits itself in all its beauty is something so lovely and wonderful that it fascinates young and old alike."

But some have asked "What is an *Egyptian* Arabian horse?"

A purebred Arabian horse, the Egyptian Arabian is literally a "breed within a breed" Certain bloodlines, as defined by The Pyramid Society (an international organization of Egyptian Arabian breeders www.pyramidsociety.org) and recognized throughout the world, form the nucleus of this specific group which has been valued since time immemorial as the "archetype" of classic refinement. The Egyptian Arabian has for centuries been bred to concentrate the breed-distinguishing qualities known throughout the horse world as "Arabian type."

Today Egyptian Arabian horses, bred around the globe, shine forth as some of the most naturally beautiful and athletic animals the world has ever witnessed.

While any claims that today's Egyptian Arabian horse derives its magnetic power from the ancient pharaohs of Egypt or from the awesome presence of the pyramids are purely legendary, the Wisconsin Egyptian Arabian Horse Alliance, one of the oldest Arabian breeder's organizations in the US, preserves and perpetuates the magic and mystery, romance and history of these splendid steeds. It brings the Egyptian Arabian horse community together and introduces others to this noble horse. Although Wisconsin and

its neighboring states are known for a cool climate, the area has been the warmly loved home for several of the earliest imported horses - Farazdac, Tuhotmos, and Akmar. The great Nabel stood at stud in Wisconsin for most of his breeding days, and Ruminaja Ali and El Halimaar more briefly. Sons and daughters of the great Ansata Ibn Halima, Shaikhh Al Badi, Moniet El Sharaf and Ramses Fayek, as well as more current champions such as Hadaya el Tareef, have grazed our green fields.

Each year the Wisconsin Egyptian Arabian Horse Alliance sponsors a tour of farms in some section of Wisconsin. In 2010, the farms are in scenic Southwestern Wisconsin. Beginning in historic Mineral Point and continuing to north of Dodgeville and then east toward Belleville, visitors are invited to visit four farms. At each stop along the way, farm owners – Heidi Phetteplace, Don Keller, Kent Mayfield and Jack Ford, will introduce visitors to mares and foals and exotic stallions of Egyptian breeding. Food and beverage will be offered, compliments of the host farms.

The WEAHA tour maintains a tradition of hospitality and breeding in which some of the finest, most beautiful and distinguished representatives of the breed are presented for public examination and celebration.

Far from the banks of the Nile, history, romance, magic and mystery still surround these beautiful horses. WEAHA invites you to see them “up close and personal” at the 2010 Tour of Farms, September 11, 2010. For more information and directions to the farms check the WEAHA website: www.weaha.org or contact: Mark Rustebakke