

THE DAVE HAXTON STORY (Part I)

(In the minds of a great many people, Dave Haxton is America's Number One Horseman. Here is the first of three installments of his own story. We hope you enjoy it as much as we have.)

During my marble shooting days at a public school in Scotland, I found it hard to apply myself full time to the task of obtaining an education. From a family, for three generations, steeped in Clydesdale lore, and in a district with the continuous activity of plowing matches, horse sales, and shows, I found myself constantly at odds with the truant officer. With a struggle, I got through five grades of public school.

The next few years were spent working with good livestock in the home district, where the importers were continually in search of animals for export. This created a demand for young men with the urge to emigrate by taking charge of a shipment of horses for the ocean voyage. The caretaker received free passage.

At seventeen, I lacked the experience for an assignment like this, so I persuaded my parents to provide the twenty dollars for a steerage passage to Canada. In March, 1911, I sailed from Glasgow aboard the Donaldson liner, S. S. Cassandra. This was the first night I had ever spent out of my parents home, so I was both homesick and seasick.

Two weeks later we docked at St. John, New Brunswick. I had six dollars and a railroad ticket to Brandon, Manitoba. Upon arrival there, at the Beaubier Hotel, I received a warm welcome from some of the older heads living there; Jack Carter, Peter Templeton, and Bill McCurdy, all top horsemen and international judges in their time.

To name all of the champions and great sires in the last fifty years, space would not permit. However, a few of the breed promoters, importers, and judges stand apart.

My apprentice years were in the employ of Alex Galbraith, who had stables at DeKalb, Illinois, and in Canada at Brandon, Manitoba, and Edmonton, Alberta. Mr. Galbraith, through experiencing good times and bad, knew every phase of the draft horse trade. I believe he imported more top Clydesdale, Shire, and Hackney horses than any other man of his time.



DAVID HAXTON

Percheron horses were very popular by 1912. Mr. Galbraith took on the agency from George Lane of Bar U fame, at Highriver, Alberta, to sell the surplus young stallions bred on the Bar U. Mr. Lane at this time owned some of the best Percheron stallions there were and a large band of purebred Percheron mares. About five importations were made by Mr. Lane. In 1909, he brought 72 mares and 3 stallions over from Le Perche. By the time of George Lane's death in 1925, there were 700 head of purebred Percherons on the Bar U Ranch, comprising some 100,000 acres. By this time, the Bar U had earned the distinction of being the biggest purebred Percheron breeding ranch in the world.

Mr. Lane had many great stallions, all imported. His favorite was Halifax. He also owned American and Garou. Mr. Lane tried to buy Imprecation, Grand Champion Stallion at the 1911 and 1912 International. The owners would not sell, so he imported his sire from France; the stallion, Pinson, who proved to be a top sire. Both Imprecation and his sire, Pinson, were grey. Garou was also a beautiful grey. Mr. Galbraith had him in his show string with the Clydesdales, Shires, Suffolks, Hackneys, etc., so at the Winnipeg Summer Fair in 1913, I showed Garou, still owned by George Lane, to Grand Championship.

I was twenty years old and was allowed by Mr. Galbraith to make

my first entry in the grooms contest. I was placed second, showing Garou. The decision was fair and just. A brother Scot, showing a Clydesdale gelding for Pacific Cartage in Winnipeg, was first with a diamond roll and a tail tie, which I have been envious of ever since.

Mr. Galbraith, through his agency, was well supplied with young Percheron stallions, all raised ranch fashion. Our job was to handle these horses and to make them saleable to ranchers and farmer breeders. By daily handling and training, they soon became useable and in some instances, the Percherons Mr. Galbraith was showing defeated the ones Mr. Lane was showing under the Bar U banner. Many top show horses and successful sires were found in this way.

The Bar U Ranch, at this time, had with their show string a six-horse hitch of grey Percheron geldings. They were used for parade work as well as for show purposes. They also had some big hitches hauling freight and supplies from Highriver, Alberta, to the Bar U, some twenty-six miles distant. I am sure some of the show geldings had part of their early training in this way. They were less bulky than the sixes we have today, but very nimble and showy on parade and did much to advertise Percherons for the Bar U. The driver was Alex Fleming, one of the best of his time. Fred Andrews was head groom in charge of the Percherons and did a "bang up job" with them; a top showman and a specialist in the art of decorating for show.

From this beginning, big sixes have come a long way in Canada. Today no livestock show in North America can put on a better show of draft horses in harness, than does the Royal Winter Fair in Toronto, Ontario. I believe, however, the biggest and best outdoor show of big hitches is the Schlitz, "A Day in Old Milwaukee." This must be the greatest attraction of its kind ever attempted and for draft horse people and the horse-loving public, it stands apart from all the others.

I do hope the managers of fairs and exhibitions will encourage classes for draft breeds in harness,

(Cont'd. on page 9)

(Cont'd. from page 7)

for singles, pairs, tandems, fours, and sixes are crowd pleasers. On the show circuit, when hitching time comes for show or parade, the men in charge, on occasion, have to rope off the hitching area, to keep the crowd back, while the horses are being harnessed and made ready. So great is the admiration for these monarchs of the tanbark, when the "go signal" comes and the leaders come prancing through the arena gate, the tremendous applause seems to indicate this is the class the crowd has been waiting for. As the teams go through their paces, looping figure eights, cutting to right and left, the leaders on the bit with arched necks responding to every touch of the drivers hand, the continuous applause and the air filled with breathless excitement is proof enough that draft horse hitches go over big with the general horse-loving public, who never tire of their magnificence and splendor.

The drivers of the big sixes in the past twenty-five years are many. Frank Housley, of Wilson & Company fame, was one of the past masters. I have watched him go through a complete driving exhibition with never the clatter of a singletree, only the chuckle of the wagon, and this is music to the ears of any teamster. Billie Wales, known as the "dean of the drivers," for many years drove for National Biscuit Co. and the Union Stock Yards Co., Chicago. He drove nine horses, three teams, three abreast, for the Hanley Brewing Co., Providence, R.I., and seemed to do it all with ease. The horses weighed a ton each, all roan in color.

The increase in the number and the quality of big hitches has been noticeable in the past ten years. We have more men today capable of putting together big hitches of our popular draft breeds, harnessing them properly and driving them better, than ever before.

I am sure the popular breeds have copied from each other to a degree and this has improved the overall picture. I can remember when the popular Belgian horse had some trouble getting his nose far enough away from the neck yoke. The sloping pasterns and wide heels he possesses today make him more oily in his move-



How many remember the roan 12-up of the Genessee Brewery Company?

ment. With the longer neck they have bred into him, he had to take with it a longer back. This all goes to help him wear harness and do the "big six job" better.

The Percheron people did not need any help in the head and neck area, since the breed has been blessed with head, ears, and throatlatch that appears to belong to this breed alone. They have, however, made great improvements in the set of the hind legs, more length of pastern and width of foot at quarter and heel. This helps him move with more bang and more nearly matches the elasticity of the modern day Clydesdale at the walk and trot.

The Clydesdale people, on the other hand, could be envious of the depth of girth, back rib, and width through stifles of the two other popular breeds.

A combination of all the essential things that go toward the make-up of all three breeds, regardless of color or breed characteristics would, I am sure, be accepted by judges and draft horse men alike, as the ideal American draft horse.

Showing draft horses today has become a fine art. Something should be said about mane and tail decoration. I can write on this subject with a great deal of assurance and certainty, begot from actual experience. Decorating has been done since man entered into competition with his neighbor in doing things with his best friend, the horse, at gatherings like plowing contests, horse parades, shows, etc.

The most popular mane decoration is a four braid. Two strands of dry goods bunting (the usual ma-

terial) is used with two strands of hair and simply cross the goods, then the hair. With each stitch pick up a small strand of hair, add it to one of the two strands you have in your hand and continue the crossing process. This is known as the Aberdeen braid or plait.

The other mane decoration is the diamond roll and is just another way of doing a four braid; only in this one hair is used only as a filler and four pieces of goods are used, instead of two as in the Aberdeen. The goods must be flat, like ribbon or tape, and simply continue the braid or roll and with each stitch add a strand of hair, as a filler. This four braid is wrapped flat around the hair filler until the roll is complete, showing one diamond after the other down the top of the horse's crest from ears to withers.

Tail ties are numerous. I prefer the Scotch knot with two stick-ups, having your color of ribbon on the knot, bow fashion. Stick-ups are a simple four braid, same as the Aberdeen, two goods, two strands of hair, with some thin wire added to help the stick-up stand rigid and top ends clipped off to give a fan effect. A straw fan can also be placed behind the ribbon bow in the knot. The Scotch knot is simple on a docked tail. Grab, if possible, all the hair in two hands, arrange hair into the start of a three braid, in the middle area of the docked tail and braid out to the full length of hair and tie into a secure knot.

Exhibitors with big show strings realized that decorating represented a lot of work. Back about 1940, Robert Watson, manager of horses

(Cont'd. on page 11)

HAXTON—

(Cont'd. from page 9)

at Ohio State University, and I agreed to stop braiding mare's manes. This caught on quickly and soon very few mares were shown with mane decorations. I believe the feminine appearance is brought out more by simply brushing the mane over, and using some form of tail tie. On stallions, I think a roll belongs and if not overdone with flowers and ribbons, lends greatly to his appearance show day.

Foot care and shoeing is very important and many a top horse has been helped on the way to championship distinction by corrective shoeing, for he has to walk and trot straight and true, with proper knee and hock action and when stopped should stand correctly and pose like a show animal.

Much has been said about fitting horses for show and most owners realize the importance of it. To have a horse at his best for show day, he must be in top bloom and bloom is not obtained by combs, brushes, and rub rags, alone, but more by proper timing and feeding. I was, at one time, of the belief that there was no substitute for good feed;

oats, bran, corn and good legumes, with some lime water and cod liver oil added. However, young men with training on feeds and feeding have proved me very wrong. Dr. William J. Tryznic, professor of Animal Science, Ohio State University, has made a believer out of me in thinking of supplements for proper nutrition through minerals and vitamins, etc. The know how of these young men of animal science and veterinary medicine can help us greatly and should be called on more often to help the good caretaker with his feeding program.

All horses, young or old, have a time each year when they look their best. Their body coat has the proper shine, they are sharp and alert and their hoof and bone texture is at its best. This is what one likes to have for the day he makes the supreme effort. Judges are continually in search of horses at their best in this respect, if they have the characteristics and proper make up of the breed they represent. Should the owner, or groom, have one ready like the one described here, I feel he has done more for the betterment of the breed and draft horses in general, than the man

who is simply doing the judging. In other words, the man capable of getting a horse ready to be judged has a greater calling than the man doing the judging. After having done a good share of this work at state and national shows from east to west, I have tried to give credit to the man capable of bringing out horses well fitted and properly shown. This is more than a common task; it has grown into a fine art. (to be cont'd. in next issue)

MORE MAIL BAG

From Alfred Millard, Vanderhoof, British Columbia: "I am not a farmer but a big game hunter up here. The bigger the horses the better I like them for packing out the big game, the moose, mule deer and bear. I live miles back in the bush and get the mail once a month at the post office."

From John Schell, Chesaw, Wash.: "I enjoy all your articles but especially those like the one on Jiggs Kinney. I like to hear about fellows like myself that don't think the tractor is here to stay. From the farm that has never supported a tractor."

RUBY REALTY'S BELGIANS



Photo by Waukesha Daily Freeman

A HANDFUL OF OUR PRIZE BELGIANS

Rolland J. Ruby & Son

165 S. Calhoun Road

Brookfield, Wisconsin 53005

THE DAVE HAXTON STORY (Part 2)

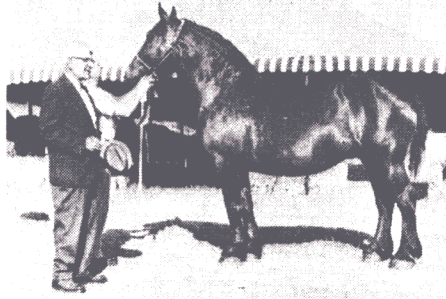
My Years At Woodside

I spent many happy years in the employ of W. H. Butler of Woodside Farm, Sandusky and Columbus, Ohio. At this time, Mr. Butler was president of the Percheron Horse Assn. and owned the stallion, Laet. His great ambition was to be a breeder of Percheron horses, like his good friend and former president of the Percheron Horse Assn., Colonel E. B. White, Selma Farm, Leesburg, Virginia.

Statesman, breeder and judge, Mr. White bred more International Grand Champions than any other man; namely, Laet, and three of his most famous sons, Jerome, Hesitation, and Sir William, also the good show and brood mare, Perfect. E. B. White had something other breeders did not have. He would join a group of good judges inspecting a top animal and after they had all had their say, he would point out a few things the others had passed up. For a man with no experience in preparing a horse for show, he was quick to detect whether the animal was prepared, brought out, and shown properly. He bred and showed many top Percherons from Selma. Everyone enjoyed having him around and when the company became blue and things looked hopeless, E. B. would come up with something that would bring everyone out of the depths and make them feel good again.

Mr. White and Mr. Butler were at their best when discussing blood lines and breeding farm operations. Their desire to breed only the best was always uppermost in mind. Mr. Butler bought La Belle, Couceorous and five good Dragon mares from Mr. White, so with Laet, the family ties and blood lines at Woodside were similar to those found at Selma Farm.

On the breeding stock farm, where one's family is as much a part of the general scene as the brood animals and young stock, one can prove that the popular breeds of animals on American farms today, were brought about through family efforts and association with good livestock. The younger generation today are the herdsmen, breeders, and judges of tomorrow.



It's been almost 30 years since Dave Haxton worked with the great Percheron stud at Woodside but he still knows and likes a good one. Here he is with Ray Bast, president of the Percheron Assn., looking over one of Ray's mares at Milwaukee this year.

I recall one Percheron stud foal that arrived in good order, but we found his mother had no milk for him. Naturally the task of feeding him fell to the whole family. After some trial and error, "Mam" (the good wife) came up with a mixture of powdered skim milk, limewater, and Mother's Oats. After a few anxious days, this formula appeared to be working out well, although our boy with the chore of having to prepare the morning feeding found it trying.

In the days to come our hopes were high. This foal's mother was the Dragon mare, Perfection 123001, and the sire was Laet 133886. Past performance had proven through futurity winners and junior champions that this colt had a chance to get into big print one day.

However, our promised joy was dampened soon, when after school one evening, Johnny came on the run to say the foal was colicky and very sick. Everyone at Woodside was anxious and tried to be helpful. After a hectic evening and well beyond midnight, our efforts were to be rewarded, when the foal came nosing around in search of food. Mam's oil, glycerin and warm water had it's soothing effect. At the breakfast table next morning the news that he had relished his morning feeding, sent all hands on their way rejoicing.

From scenes like these, the joy of getting the job done is greater than the pride of ownership. This foal continued to grow and do well. He was denied the freedom

of romping on blue grass with his dam, like other colts, but in the way of exercise, sunlight, grass, feed and care, he lacked nothing. When June came he was just another one on the showstring being fitted for the Ohio State Fair.

On making the rounds one day with Mr. Butler, and while discussing this foal, I asked, "Have you named this one yet?" "Yes", he answered, "his name is Premier Laet."

I had won the Ohio Futurity in 1921, with a full sister named Perfect. Again in 1923, we won the Futurity Stallion division with a full brother named Perlaet, so this family had winning ways and we were anxious to give the foal every chance.

We had a yearling half brother from Rozelle and by Laet, named Prince Laet, who we were fitting for the Ohio State and International Futurities. When Ohio State Fair time came and the Woodside Farm's showstring was on display, we felt well equipped in the junior division of the Percheron show.

We did very well with our senior animals and when the time came for the Ohio Percheron Futurity everyone was tense, for this was one of the top events for Ohio Percheron breeders. Usually there were twelve to eighteen fillies entered and often over twenty yearling stallions. The competition was keen, for there were many champion Percheron stallions doing stud duty in Ohio and the farmer breeder could make a good sale if he had the winner in the Ohio Futurity. After a long hard tussle, Prince Laet was declared the winner. The stud foal class came after the yearling stallions. Premier Laet, five months old, came out and performed like a veteran. He had been fitted and shod like one of the senior members of the showstring. No danger of him injuring his dam with the sharp steel shoes, for he had never been close to her since the day of his birth. He was kept alone in a box stall like the older horses.

Nothing unusual happened during the showing of the stud foal class and when the ribbon man was called, Premier Laet was first in line and the blue was tied on

(Cont'd. on page 15)

HAXTON—

(Cont'd. from page 13)

his show halter. This was a great moment for my family since we all had a hand in getting him to this point.

He was wintered with others his age in a feed lot with a good shelter shed and ran out in all weather, well fed, but never overdone. We liked to have them weigh 1000 lbs. on their first birthday and he was average. We had a good bluegrass lot and a building with two box stalls. By May, this lot took care of two yearling stallions, one in during the day, one during the night. By July 1st, they were shod with light plates and kept in during the daytime. Final preparation was done in the main barn and they were shod with show shoes a week or two before show day.

Premier Laet won the Ohio Futurity. Like his half brother, the year before, his next engagement was the Chicago Futurity. At this time, Woodside Farm showed only at the Ohio State Fair and the International in Chicago. Now Premier Laet was well along and weighed 1650 lbs. Shod by our good shoer, George Stephenson, his legs and feet were the very best. He won in a good class of yearlings and was greatly admired by the ringside. A number of times Mr. Butler and I had to say, "No, he is not for sale."

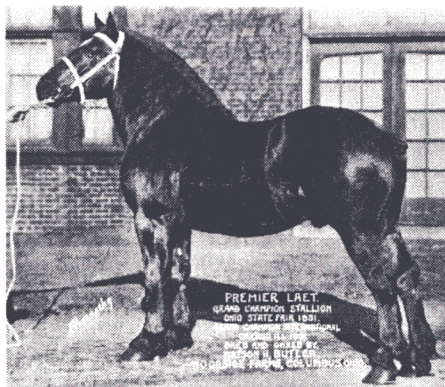
The following year, 1931, Premier Laet in his two-year-old form, was to reward us well for our patience and good care. He was made Grand Champion at Ohio State Fair by Judge Ernest Humbert. The next time out would be the International.

Up to this time the colt never had to settle for second best and I thought this could be the first time, for a number of reasons. However, this was not the time to let down and I thought we will just try a little harder. With a good crop of carrots that fall, we fed him a full gallon every evening, about 9:00, with his last watering. From September on, as the cool fall weather came, the hair on his body coat grew longer and it was of good texture. Our home barn was cold and I liked this for fall fitting.

George Stephenson and I decided to raise his heels in front so we placed a half inch leather shim at the heel, tapered thin at the quarter. We boxed his toe some, to let him break over quicker. This helped his knee action and raised him a little in front. He was not the largest of Laet's sons, but got to Chicago weighing 2020 lbs., and in excellent bloom.

Professor E. A. Trowbridge, Columbia, Missouri, was the judge. Premier Laet was placed first in the two-year-old class and it wasn't easy. Soon the class for junior champion was called and by this time, the senior horses were standing by. Premier Laet was made Junior Champion. The Senior Champion was Prince Libre II, a beautiful six-year-old grey, owned by Wenona Horse Co., Wenona, Illinois, that had been Grand Champion at Illinois, Indiana, and Iowa State Fairs.

Seniors and juniors were lined up for the grand championship. I could think of only three things, Premier Laet, Prince Libre II and Eddy Trowbridge. Our colt moved very well and Prince Libre performed like the champion he was, and looked good at the walk and trot. The two stallions stood side by side; my heart was thumping by now. After some study, Mr. Trowbridge motioned me to a vacant spot up by the Press Box and with rubbery legs, I headed for it. Premier Laet had been declared Grand Champion!



Here he is — Premier Laet

After a bit, when I was able to think straight, visions came back of my helping him into this world, and pulling him, limp, into a stall across the aisle from where he was born, knowing his dam would be unable to do any more for him.

Winning this championship was a big thrill for my family and all the folks at Woodside.

Premier Laet was Reserve Grand Champion at the International in 1932, and had to stand second in class to his half brother, Cylaet, the Grand Champion that year. After this he was sold to do stud duty in northern Indiana.

Perfection, dam of Premier Laet, in my opinion, was one of the greatest brood mares of the Percheron breed. She gave birth to fourteen foals in fourteen years, all by Laet. All were ribbon winners, mostly blue and purple.

In 1925, Perlaet, winner of the 1923 Ohio Futurity, was sold to a group of nine breeders from Hus-sar, Alberta, Canada.

Hardy E. Salter, Sec.-Treas, of the Alberta Percheron Club at Calgary, made the statement that he thought Perlaet did more for the Percheron breed in Canada than any other stallion, imported or home-bred.

After the Ohio State Fair in 1929, the Woodside Farm foals were let down some. Prince Laet was brought along slowly for the International, where he won the Stallion Futurity and with it a new home.

At this point, one might ask what a brood mare is worth. Perfection cost Mr. Butler \$800, but her colts brought \$8000. The cash awards won by her progeny totaled \$2000. I have proved many times if we expect to have success breeding livestock, we must start out with a good female.

E. B. White judged at the Iowa State Fair and the yearling filly he made Junior and Grand Champion was named Couceorous. He paid \$2000 for her and had her brought to Selma Farm. Her first foal was Laet, her next stallion foal was Treviso, both International Champions.

Rozelle, by Dragon, was the dam of Jerome and Sir Laet, both International Grand Champions.

Syncopation, by Dragon, was the dam of Hesitation, International Grand Champion Stallion. His son, Hesitation Leon, received the same award in 1938.

Carnot 66666 at this time was one of the top sires of the breed and many breeders referred to the

(Cont'd. on next page)

HAXTON—

(Cont'd from page 15)

Laet-Carnot cross as the "Golden Cross."

Carnona V was the winner of the first ideal type study, in competition with other Grand Champion mares. This was done by photographs, sent to many judges. She was Carnot's most famous daughter. This great mare was added to the brood mare band at Woodside. I was happy since I had tried to beat her four times and stood second to her every time, so "if you can't beat 'em, join 'em!"

When Carnona V came to Woodside she was in foal to Jerome. Here was the golden cross. Her foal, a stallion, was named Grand Laet. He could not win a futurity for he had a stable mate, Sir Laet, that was always in his way. Prof. R. B. Cooley bought him for Purdue University, La Fayette, Indiana, where he was greatly admired, shown and used in their breeding program for years.

Carnona V had four foals at Woodside. Igo Laet won the Futurity Filly division. Prof. D. J. Kays of Ohio State University wanted one bred like this. Carnona V had a filly foal about to be weaned, named Carlaetta. My chief, W. H. Butler, and D. J. Kays had been making the rounds at Woodside and were having a heated discussion by the stable door, when I was motioned to come forward. Mr. Kays had made an offer of \$800 for this filly and Mr. Butler had come down to \$850. They wanted me to make an appraisal of this

foal. I declined to name a price, but I did volunteer to flip a coin. They agreed and Mr. Kays paid \$850 for Carlaetta, thereby putting her in the hands of Robert Watson, horse superintendent at OSU. Bob was one of the best feeders and fitters of his time and dean of all the masters in the art of preparing show horses, whether Clydesdale, Belgian, or Percheron.

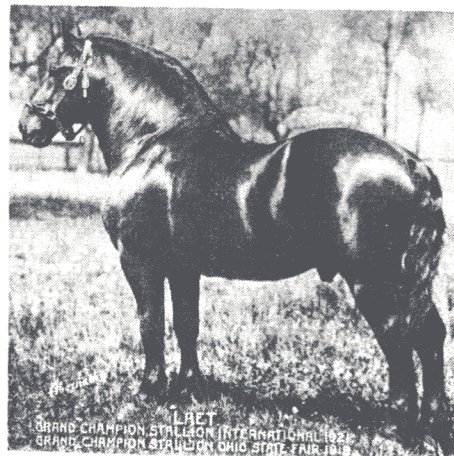
In naming the top brood mares at Woodside, La Belle should be mentioned in view of her produce; her son, Dreballegon, Ohio Grand Champion; Bellelaet, futurity winner; Belledragon, and others.

It was evident that one day these grand old matrons would outlive their usefulness as brood mares or pass on out of the picture. Mr. Butler and I discussed the possibility of finding some new blood in Le Perche, France, and soon my wife, two sons, and I were on board an ocean liner bound for Great Britain. My family stayed in Scotland while, I commuted to Paris, Nogent-le-Rotrou, and points in Le Perche.

We came home with four mares, all grey. In competition with American-bred mares at the Ohio State Fair, they won a second and a fourth. The following year two raised foals by Laet.

On another trip to France in 1934, I found the good young mare Kambriole, who was Reserve Grand to Wm. Murray's Laet mare, Carthela. A year later we brought over Jourdane. She was Grand Champion at the 1935 International.

Of the good imported mares brought to Woodside, most were mated to Laet and some to Laet's



Laet, chief herd sire at Woodside

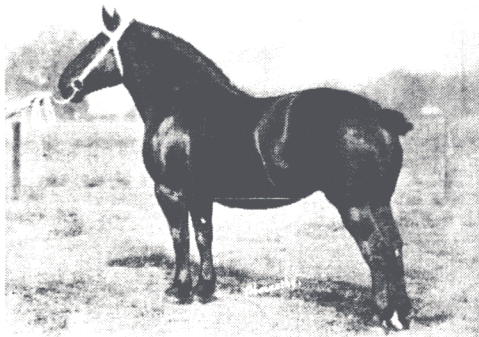
sons. They did not produce champions in the first generation like the Dragon, Carnot and Etudiant mares did, but by the second generation they fitted better into the breeding program here in America. By this time the competition was greater, for there were many more well-to-do men operating breeding farms and no one breeder took the lion's share of awards at our state and national shows.

The heyday of the importer was about ended, as the quality of the American-bred Percheron was such that there was no longer a need for imported animals to keep up the high standard of the breed at U.S. and Canadian shows. I feel, however, that new French blood from time to time will always be an asset to better Percherons.

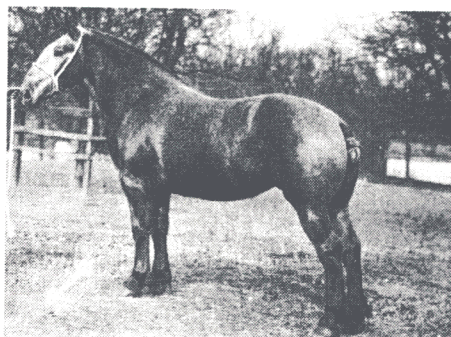
By this time, Laet's ill health was becoming too burdensome for him. His digestion was poor and he had a cancerous growth on a

(Cont'd on next page)

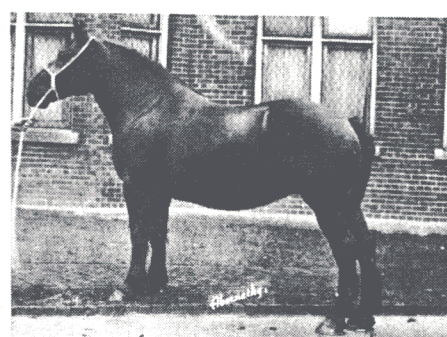
Three of the great Percheron Mares at Woodside during Dave Haxton's tenure



Carnona V, winner of the first ideal type Percheron mare contest.



Kambriole, imported for Woodside by Dave Haxton and reserve champion at the International in 1934.



Jourdane, imported a year later (1935), she was grand champion at the '35 International.

HAXTON—Cont'd.

hind leg, but the great satisfaction of having him around was good payment for all our efforts to make him comfortable. I could see he was getting close to the end of the trail, but I would not talk to his owner about this.

The months of late summer and the beautiful fall weather passed. Mr. Butler planned on taking his family to their winter home in Florida. I knew, by this time, he disliked talking to me about having the old horse put to sleep. I was sure this would come, however. One day Mr. Butler's Cadillac stopped at the stable and the chauffeur opened the door. Mr. Butler got out and walked straight to me in the feed room. Very few words passed between us. He said, "What would you say to having the old horse put out of his misery?" I asked, "When?", and was greatly relieved, as I knew Mr. Butler was.

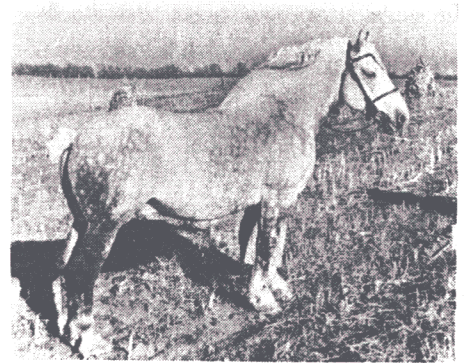
By the next day, my plans were made. Mr. Butler's family and mine agreed, with heavy hearts. One of our neighbors owned a pair of geldings by Laet. (They had been

kept as stallions until the age of two, when we were sure they would not make the right kind for stud duty.) We had them brought forward with a plow and a team-scraper and put to work digging a large pit. Mr. Butler and his family had left for Florida. I had arranged with Dr. Walter R. Krill, our young veterinarian, to come on the morning of December 22, 1936.

At 7:30 in the morning, we brushed his mane over, cleaned him up, fitted on his purple show blanket with gold lettering and binding (the Woodside colors). This was the one he wore leaving the ring the day he was Grand Champion at the 1921 International. Tom Wells led him toward the high mound on the hill by the Sycamore tree, but I left in the opposite direction.

Upon my return two hours later, the team had worked up a sweat and the trench was almost filled. Somehow that Sycamore looked bigger that day; Perfection, Syncoption, La Belle and Rozelle were all asleep under its great branches and falling leaves.

(The Dave Haxton Story will be concluded in the November issue.)



One of our subscribers in Arkansas, Mr. Ed Conrad of Rt. 4, Springdale sent us this picture of Don's Phar Lap, one of the good stallions he traveled in the Hales Corners, Wisconsin community about 25 years ago. This good son of Don Degas won many show ring honors in the late 30's. Mr. Conrad also owned Belgian stallions, including Boulder Bridge Prince Edward, grand champion at the Wisconsin State Fair in 1944.

Advertise in the
DRAFT HORSE JOURNAL
The all-breed publication
Send for rate sheet.

EBERSPACHER BELGIANS

*Where we raise quality Belgians
from quality bloodlines*

See our Belgians at the:

National Belgian Show, Davenport, Iowa
Nebraska State Fair, Lincoln, Nebraska
Dairy Cattle Congress, Waterloo, Iowa

ELMER EBERSPACHER

SEWARD, NEBRASKA 68434

CONGER'S CLYDES

went to Milwaukee again



Left to right: Floyd, Jim Groves, Betty Groves with the three horses that made up our unicorn hitch in Chappie's big parade.

You'll be seeing all six of us, plus the other member of the firm that makes up our 4-Horse Hitch, at some of the good shows this fall.

FLOYD CONGER

Pecatonica,

Illinois

THE DAVE HAXTON STORY (Part 3)

(Conclusion)

In 1937, Mr. Robert Lyons, Fairholme Farms, Lewisville, Indiana, requested that I represent him in the purchase of some Percherons in Le Perche. I agreed and was off to Europe again.

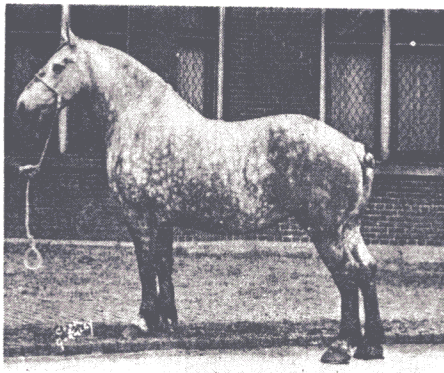
I arrived at the show grounds the morning before the start of the district show at Nogent-le-Rotrou. To see the country folk come in with their mares and young stock always fascinated me. It was a gala day for the whole family and most of them stayed with their horses for the three days' duration. This is also true at the Paris Horse Show, where the very best of all the French breeds are brought for show and display. But the district show in Le Perche is best for the foreign buyer as this is where the Percheron breeders operate.

A young farm worker led a grey three-year-old mare into the showgrounds and stopped at the entry tent, where he was issued number 48. I made note of this and watched as many others of various types and sizes came in.

Next day the show was in progress. The first prize aged mare was very big, but coarse, and not suitable for U.S. or Canadian trade. The first prize three-year-old was large, masculine, and also too coarse for me. The one I had spotted coming in the day before was down in fourteenth place. So, I contacted Louis Aveline, president of the Percheron Society of France, who was always willing to help me. Due to the language barrier, I needed help many times. On a piece of paper I made an offer for No. 48 and handed it to him.

Mr. Aveline left, returning some time later to say I had bought the mare. I thanked him and asked that he join me in looking at her. He led me to the first prize three-year-old mare! I explained this was not the mare I wanted and after some time the mistake was corrected and by that evening we owned No. 48; her name was Nerva. The only one displeased in the whole deal was the owner of the first prize three-year-old mare.

By the end of the Paris Horse Show, a week later, I had agreed to buy seven head.



Nerva, Grand Champion Mare at the Chicago International in 1940 and 1941. Imported by Dave Haxton for Fairholme Farms.

At the English Royal Show in Cardiff, Wales, some weeks later, I bought a two-year-old filly by a French stallion, from an imported mare, bred and raised in England. Up to this time, I had never seen a better mare at this age. She was owned by my good friend Mr. Stanley Chivers, Histon, Cambridge. I got her for Bob Lyons.

I had bought four stallions in France from the Avelines at Le Tuche: Nesus, for Fairholme Farms; Nastic, for an Ohio breeder; Obusier and Oton for myself.

The horses were brought to Le Harve and loaded on the French liner, Champlain. The first port of call was South Hampton, England, where we took aboard the two-year old mare, Shenley Serverie. A week later we docked at Pier 68, New York City.

The next morning a barge came alongside the ship with an express car for the horses. After loading and stalling them one at a time, I had the job of transferring a good quantity of statuary, art, champagne, quantro, etc., that Bob Lyons had left for me to get through customs, as if I didn't have troubles enough with sanitary certificates, port of entry papers, pedigrees, people from the Dept. of Animal Industry, etc.

Eventually we were on our way to Penn Station and soon after headed for Indiana on one of the good PRR express trains with a dining car in the rear, bound for St. Louis. I had shipped show horses all over western Canada and the corn-belt states in the U.S., but never before had I traveled in

such luxury. We unloaded Nastic, Obusier and Oton at the Union Station in Columbus Ohio. The express car and the other horses were taken off the train at Lewisville, Indiana.

Later that fall, the Fairholme Farms Percherons won a goodly share of the championships at the Indiana and Wisconsin State Fairs.

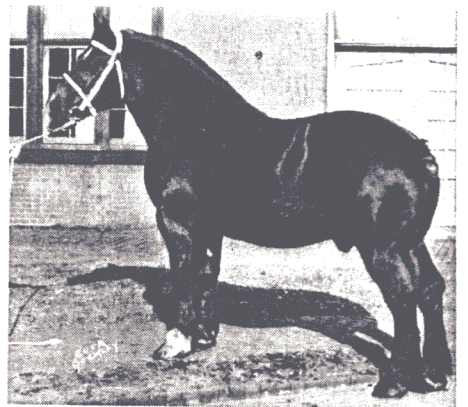
Shenley Serverie, Champion at the Indiana State Fair, had been mated to Nesus, but she aborted in the late autumn and never again was a contender in the show ring.

Nesus went on to be Grand Champion at Chicago, 1938, and again in 1939.

Nerva was Grand Champion, 1940 and 1941; also Champion at the American Royal and many state fairs.

Obusier, Junior Champion and Reserve Grand Champion in 1938.

All of the importation gave a good account of themselves wherever shown.



Nesus, Grand Champion Stallion at the Chicago International in 1938 and 1939. Also imported by Dave Haxton for Fairholme.

Robert Aveline, son of Louis Aveline from whom I bought the stallions, is now president of the Percheron Society of France, like his father before him. He continues at Le-Tuche, Nogent-le-Rotrou, to breed and show top Percherons, though not quite as many as they did thirty years ago.

I stayed with Bob Lyons, Fairholme Farms, until January of 1939. I moved to Hawthorn Farms, Libertyville, Illinois, and was in the employ of John F. Cuneo, a breeder of Suffolk Punch horses and other breeds of livestock.

Mr. Cuneo wanted a six-gelding hitch that could beat the Bud-

(Cont'd. on page 17)

HAXTON—Cont'd.

weiser Clydesdales. Mr. Cuneo and Mr. Busch, of Anheuser-Busch, Inc., had agreed to a gentlemen's wager that the Suffolk geldings would, or would not, defeat the Clydesdales the first time they met.

My brother, Andrew Haxton, was manager and driver of the Budweiser hitch at this time and he had won with them three years in a row at the International. To beat them was a big order.

During the spring and summer of 1939, I searched most of England for mares, top geldings and a stallion. I found a good two-year-old stallion, named Two Knocks Commandant, at Woodbridge, as well as a four-year-old mare, Eva of Tangham, and two other mares. I found the Suffolk geldings at the English Royal Show, that year held at Windsor Great Park.

One day, while walking between the Suffolk and Percheron rings at this show, a Clydesdale gelding was being led back to his stall, after having been declared supreme champion of his division. He was the Budweiser kind; bay with four white legs and a white face. Since I had worked some as a scout for my brother, I figured this gelding would do. I followed him and made some inquiry as to who owned him, where he had been bred, etc. He was owned by John P. Sleight, St. Johns Wells, Fivy, Aberdeenshire, Scotland, and his name was Sir James.

Shortly I realized I had asked too many questions, for this Scottish groom clammed up and did not know much of anything after that. I did find out the gelding had been sold, but the Scot did not know whether he was going to Timbuktu or Vladivostok, so I went back to my job with the Suffolks, and in a few days left England.

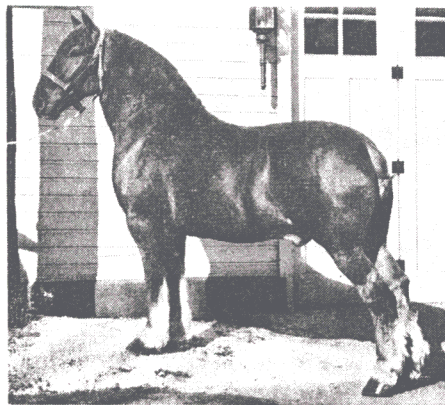
Eight days later, we were unloading from a ship to an express car on a barge at a New York pier.

They had a railroad spur and a loading platform on the farm at Libertyville and soon the Suffolks were at home in new surroundings. Art Newell was in charge of the horses at Hawthorn and it did not take him long to have the geldings driving in pairs, fours, and in a six, for they had been broken to all farm work in England.

By late summer, they were all fit and ready and soon the Suffolks (stallions, mares, geldings, harness, wagons and all) were on display at the 1939 Illinois State Fair at Springfield.

The breeding animals won both championships. We had two geldings named Prince, so Mr. Cuneo changed one's name to Haxton. This horse placed second in the open class, all breeds competing. Haxton also won third award in this same class at the International that fall, where Two Knocks Commandant was named Grand Champion stallion and Eva of Tangham was the Grand Champion mare.

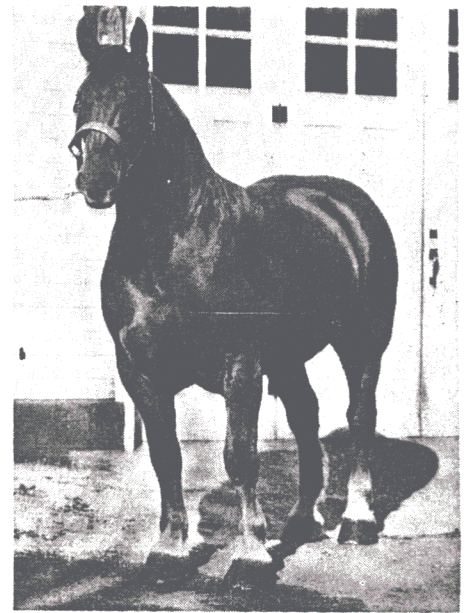
The Governor's Cup at the Illinois Fair was for a six-horse hitch that was used for advertising purposes. We were advertising Hawthorn Melody Dairy Products.



Haxton, the left side wheel horse in Hawthorn's Suffolk six—a winner many times at state and national shows. He weighed 2100 lbs. in show condition.

In the singles, tandem, pairs and four hitches, we had our fair share of awards and, by this time, I discovered that brother Andy's best geldings were at home in St. Louis (being fitted for the coming International) and it was his second-best hitch we were having some difficulty beating. This hitch, known to the Budweiser people as their "street team", was the one used for advertising in cities all over the U.S.

At the evening performance on Governor's Day, when the Cup was to be awarded—newspapers had alarming headlines with rumors of war—our six was the last to enter the arena, which was jammed with spectators. When they came through the gate on the bit, with a few small American



Britton, winner of 9 championships in England and off-side wheeler in Hawthorn's Suffolk six. Selected in England by Dave Haxton, he weighed 2200 lbs. in show condition.

flags flying on their shining harness, above the beautiful chestnut color of the geldings, they were at once favorites with the crowd. After a good performance by both horses and drivers, the blue ribbon and the Governor's Cup were awarded to John F. Cuneo's Suffolk six!

I was not very popular that evening, in the Budweiser tack stall and tap room. To add insult to injury, the next day I was standing by our stable door at the fairgrounds, when a Budweiser pickup came forward. The driver mistook me for Andy, and inquired, "Where do you want this stuff?"

I said, "Let me show you." Two cases of iced Budweiser, intended for my brother and his helpers, were delivered to our tack stall. A number of my friends were invited over.

I then walked to the Budweiser tack stall, threw my hat over the blanket drape in the doorway and walked in, before they had time to throw it out. I told Andy about the friends gathered in our stall and asked that he join us; this he did. There was still some of their product left when the question arose as to how it got there, so all hands took the joke as intended.

This may help to prove the good feeling amongst the draft horse exhibitors. I am sure, as they con-

(Cont'd. on page 19)

HAXTON—Cont'd.

tinue to produce better draft horses, there will always be some Budweiser wherever horsemen gather.

After twenty-three years at Woodside Farms, in charge of Laet, with thirteen International grand champion sons and daughters and twenty-three futurity first prize winners at the Ohio State Fair and International, to his credit; I was thought of as a Percheron man. When I joined forces with Hawthorn Farms and the Suffolk Punch, some of the Percheron people felt that I had turned my back on them. To this I could not agree, as my interest had always been with draft horses of all breeds.

I never owned a really high class gelding of any breed; however, my sincere interest has been with the show geldings and big hitches as much as with the breeding animals and I will attempt to name a few.

While at the Illinois State Fair, I had told Andy about the good bay Clydesdale gelding at the Royal Show in England. Soon after he received orders from St. Louis to go to Montreal for a shipment of Clydes, bought for their account by James Kilpatrick of Cragie Mains, Kilmarnock, Scotland.

My next assignment was to judge Belgians at Kansas City. After checking in to Andy Patterson, then manager of the American Royal, I went in search of the Budweiser Clydesdales. Soon I found the harness and wagon display. I was attracted to a bay gelding in a tie stall near-by. At once, I recognized Sir James, the gelding I had seen at the English Royal in July.

Prof. D. J. Kays was the judge of the geldings and hitches that year. After he had placed Sir James at the head of the gelding class, he made the statement, "I have never seen a better one, of any draft breed."

Sir James, while at his best, won three times at the International, and was one of the Anheuser-Busch six; a five time winner at Chicago, with Andy Haxton driving.

In my effort to recall a number of the top geldings I asked my brother to name a couple from his lifelong experience in making up hitches of many kinds. He spent twenty-five years with Shaes Brewery in Winnipeg and the Bud-

weiser Clydes, having made many importations from Scotland and Canada.

He had two favorites; Warrior and Sir James. Ben Findlayson brought over the gelding named Warrior for Shaes Brewery. He won forty championships (five at the Toronto Royal Winter Fair) and never was beaten in a halter class. Warrior played his part well in his position on the six, usually a winning combination.

Meadowbrook Farms' Firestone represented the Belgian draft horse better than any gelding of his day and for many years won the halter class whenever shown at our state and national shows. In his general conformation, he had all of the essential things that go toward the make-up of the ideal American draft horse. Developed and fitted by Harold Clark, a man with years of experience and know-how with Belgian, Percheron and Clydesdale horses and a master in the art of placing one, fit and ready, on the tanbark for inspection. Harold returned Firestone in top bloom for many years and was admired by more draft horse people than any other combination of their time.

Harry Heck, St. Augustine, Illinois, one of the popular younger men in the big hitch business today, came out a few years ago with a very high class grey Percheron gelding, sired by Lynnwood Don,

named Duke. While this horse was at his best, he won many times; competing with all breeds, in Illinois and elsewhere. He was twice Champion at the Royal Winter Fair in Toronto, and did a bang-up job in the Stittsville Lumber Co. Percheron hitch from Ontario.

Bob Jones, Farmer City, Illinois, a veteran in the big hitch business, bred a pair of grey Percheron geldings, named Sam and Silver; weight, 2100 each. They were a credit to their breeder and to that breed. From mares by the good sire, Wilkie, and through him they got their thickness and substance. Sired by the five time National Show Grand Champion, Ann's Silver, who gave them enough quality, animation and Percheron character to make them stand out in the pair class wherever shown. They also played a big part in the six for Gilbert Crawford, Stittsville, Ontario.

After a lifetime in every phase of the business and in close association with the greatest of both men and horses, I have taken on the most difficult assignment of all, trying to put some of it in print, knowing full well for me the sun is well out in the west. However, if some younger men with enthusiasm and the urge to carry on, can glean some knowledge from my story, I am sure the effort has been well spent.

IN LOVING AND RESPECTFUL MEMORY OF MRS. ALFRED G. WILSON

who passed away on September 19, 1967
in Brussels, Belgium.

Her birthdate was October 19, 1883.

Few people, in their lifetime, are given the privilege of being associated with and of knowing someone like Matilda R. Wilson, the late owner of Meadow Brook Farms-Howell.

We were given this privilege for the last 25 years. We respected her as our employer, and loved her as our best friend.

Now she is gone, and we miss her so much. God alone knows why we were chosen to be with her during her last days on earth. We consider this a privilege also.

Mrs. Wilson left with us, a heritage of great strength and courage, with which we shall continue to operate Meadow Brook Farms-Howell, for as long as we have the right.

Harold and Ruth Clark

Thank you to all of our friends and relatives, who sympathized with us, with cards, letters, telephone calls and flowers.

Harold and Ruth

Meadow Brook Farms

Route 4

Howell, Michigan