

Arlie King

Marion, Illinois

IN WILLIAMSON COUNTY IN SOUTHERN ILLINOIS IN THE 1920S, Arlie King's family used horses to work the field. It wasn't until Arlie returned from the service and, with his brother, bought a coal mine that Arlie had time to show horses.

His first American Quarter Horse was a mare named Liza Bailey, and a friend advised Arlie to breed the mare to King Paul.

"When they led King Paul out, I thought he was the most beautiful horse I had ever seen, and that was when Marion, Illinois, became his new home," Arlie writes. "Of course, this meant I needed a place worthy of such a horse, so I bought some acreage and built a home for my new family and a new barn."

Stallion in place, Arlie added nine broodmares. National Cutting Horse Association Hall of Fame member Kenneth Jackson showed King Paul successfully in cutting classes. Soon, King Paul foals were making a mark in the show ring, and Arlie stood him to outside clients as well.

King Paul was honored on leading sires lists in the mid-1960s and early 1970s, and Arlie was on the leading breeders list several times, including most halter class winners in 1969 and the performance point earners by points and point earners in the early 1970s. King Paul died in 1977 and was buried under a big oak tree on Arlie's farm. He was inducted into the Illinois Quarter Horse Hall of Fame in 1995. Arlie joined him in the hall of fame in 1998.

After King Paul's death, Arlie added the stallions Sonny South Two and Lets Talk About AOK to his breeding program.

"We still have that original five-stall barn we built for King Paul, but we have now built a new 25-stall barn with an indoor arena," Arlie says. "My grandson Scott Thompson shows my horses and has other customers, also. His experiences are different than mine were in the early days.

"We often showed one day, then spent that night driving to the next show, sleeping in the truck with the horses in the trailer or tied to the trailer, but the thrill and satisfaction of foaling, raising and showing has not changed. The object has always been to produce top-quality show horses.

"I still take pride in that and enjoy the surprise that each new baby brings."



COURTESY OF ARLIE KING

Arlie King rides Liza Bailey, his first American Quarter Horse.