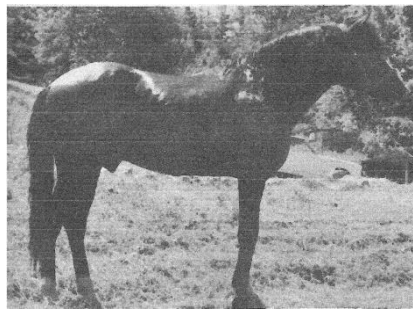


COMING TO AMERICA

By Diane Quam

The first Peruvian Pasos in the United States were sent to the Panama Pacific Exposition (1915) in San Francisco. The Peruvian government chose Peru's National Horse as a symbol to make an official appearance at the exposition which marked the opening of the Panama Canal. Approximately a dozen Peruvians were at the exhibit and were a crowd favorite. It was not determined what happened to the horses after the exhibition, but they were probably returned to Peru.

In the 1920's, George H. Stevenson of Los Gatos, CA, a banker who worked for the U.S. Government, was asked by the Peruvian government to help them fix their rural banking system. On that trip he traveled to remote areas through deserts, mountains, and jungles. Often, he could only reach his destination by horseback, and was introduced to Peruvian Pasos. He fell in love with the breed as they were smoother than anything he had ever ridden. Because of his banking help and his newly developed love of the breed, he was rewarded with a gift of two Peruvian Paso stallions; the National Champion Stallion of 1927, "Norbo," and approximately two years later, his son, "Gringo." This was indeed a special gift because Peruvians were extremely proud of their breeding efforts and very hesitant to allow exports.



Norbo

When the stallions came to America they were sent to the Stevenson's ranch in Round Valley, Covelo area of Northern CA. George Stevenson had the first two Peruvian horses in the United States in the 1920's. They caused quite a stir and photos and articles about Peruvian Pasos quickly spread.

In 1958, Dr. Walter Meyer, a German with an Argentinian and Peruvian background, spent his early life in Peru where he became a Consul General. He flew a dozen stallions to Texas. Because the horses were quarantined, Dr. Meyer slept with them in the San Antonio Coliseum. They made headlines in the newspapers and were frequently on television. They escorted the Governor of Texas during the Battle of Flowers parade and were the main attraction at the Pinoak Horse Show in Houston. During this time, Dr. Meyer was selling his stallions. Mr. Harry Jersig, President of Lone Star Brewing Company, purchased three of the stallions, R. Harris Masterson of Houston and Mrs. Hinckle of Houston purchased others. Guido Rahr, of the Rahr Malting Company in Wisconsin, purchased one stallion, Mr. Don McCormick of Saratoga, California, purchased a stallion, and Mrs. Nancy Bogdanovich of Rolling Hills, California purchased another. After having shown the horses "everywhere" and to "everybody" in Texas, Dr. Meyer went to visit California, to San Fernando Valley and Palm Springs.

In 1960, during a visit with the late President Dwight Eisenhower, Dr. Meyer was encouraged to lead an overland expedition from California to South America within the "People-to-People" program. After the expedition, Dr. Meyer returned to live in Texas.

It wasn't until the early 1960's that the importation of Peruvian Paso horses really began, which firmly and finally established the Peruvian Paso Horse in the United States,

As the Agrarian Reform changed the culture of Peru it looked as if the Peruvian Paso would become extinct in its native land. This allowed for the exportation in the early 1960's of about a dozen stallions and mares that went to Florida. A letter to Verne Albright from the Peruvian Poet Enrique Aramburu wrote, *"Our relationship with the Peruvian Paso Horse is about to end. Yours is just beginning."* Some of the horses remained in Florida, but most of them were later shipped to California.

More imports followed. Russell O.W. Dean, a U.S. Marine guard at the American Embassy in Lima, imported breeding stock to Texas where he produced Peruvian Pasos for many years. George G. Jones and Verne Albright, planning to promote the breed, imported a mare to Santa Ynez, California.

By 1964 California and Arizona horsemen were so fascinated by the Peruvian that they began an organization to develop and foster the popularity of the horse in the Southwest. Peruvian Pasos began appearing in horse shows and exhibition events. At the Santa Barbara Fiesta in 1964, a group of eight Peruvians was selected as the outstanding entry in this world-famous event, which included some of the finest horses in the nation.

At this time most of the importers were keeping the bulk of their breeding stock for their own ranches, selling only a few. The Peruvian Bloodstock Agency was formed to assist buyers with the complexities of importing breeding stock from Peru as well as buying and selling stock already in this country. There were still fewer than 100 Peruvian Pasos in the United States.

In April 1965, five horsemen from Southwestern United States sat in the clubhouse at the 21st Annual Horse Show in Lima, Peru. They were completely enthralled with the amazing performances. The five, Bud and Isabelle Brown of Prescott, AZ, William P. McClenahan of Burlingame, CA, Dr. R. Moser, and Verne R. Albright purchased 28 horses and 2 colts. The horses left Callao, Peru, on a ship, the SS Santa Malta of San Francisco, and after a 3,655 mile journey, they docked at Los Angeles Harbor on June 23, 1965.

On June 26, 1965, 7 of the Peruvians - 5 mares, 1 stallion and 1 foal, - made their way to the Brown's ranch in Prescott. The others went to their respective new owners. According to the October/November Arizona Horseman magazine there were now around 70 Peruvian Pasos in the United States.

The Brown's were instrumental in spreading the word about the Peruvian Paso. Bud Brown had filmed the 1965 Peruvian Paso horse show at Lima Peru which he shared at many events, thereby increasing interest in the breed. They showed their horses in exhibitions in Phoenix and around the area and participated in parades. Mrs. Brown would show with traditional Peruvian tack, clad in the native riding costume of Peru, a large white poncho-like garment coupled with a neckerchief. At their Friendly Pines Camp by Prescott they gave demonstrations of the breed, welcoming visitors at any time. Curious horsemen from all around the country visited Friendly Pines Camp that created so much interest that the Brown's decided to increase the size of their herd. Their Importation of Peruvians continued.

On March 12, 1966, 28 horses arrived in Galveston, TX aboard the ship, Clara Clausen, from Lima, Peru. There were 3 stallions and 25 mares. Of these, 16 went to Bud and Isabelle Brown, now becoming known as the Peruvian Paso Center of the country, 5 went to Mr. and Mrs. Harry Bennett of Tarzana, CA, and 7 went to Mrs. Marcus Daly of Las Vegas.



Peruvians unloading from the Clara Clausen

Peruvians were going to buyers from northern Colorado, southern Colorado, southern Arizona, central Texas, Tennessee, and Indiana. The demand continued. With inquiries from breeders of other breeds, and Bud Brown's fascination with the Peruvian, it caused him to try breeding to various other breeds. To his delight the natural Paso gait passed on to each of the foals. While keeping their own breeding stock pure, they offered breeding services to those who wanted to cross their breed with the Peruvian to achieve the smooth gait of the Peruvian Paso.

Increasing herds of brood mares was becoming a necessity to keep up with demand. There were only about 25 brood mares in the United States with an entire population of stallions and geldings of now around 100.

More frequent importations followed, notably Janetta Michael of Hacienda de la Solana in Guerneville, California, and In July, 1966, William McClenahan of Cypress Ridge Ranch, CA, who imported 15 mares, many in foal to champion stallions, and 2 stallions. At this time Cypress Ridge Ranch was the largest breeder of purebred Peruvian Paso horses in the United States.

In September, 1966, Mr. Verne Albright set out for Peru to undertake one of the greatest feats of endurance ever attempted by man and horses. His goal was to ride from Peru to San Francisco on horseback to prove the endurance of the Peruvian Paso. He purchased 2 mares in Peru and his entire account of their incredible 10,000-mile journey is written and published in *"Horseback Across Three Americas,"* by Verne R. Albright. In March, 1967, Mr. Albright arrived in Los Gatos, CA with "Humaca" and "Ima Sumac". These mares proved they had the kind of endurance inherited from their ancestors, the war ponies of the conquistadores.

The Brown's and Mr. McClenahan continued showing their horses in Arizona and California, earning many championship titles. The Peruvian Paso changed from an almost unknown breed to one of the most sought-after breeds in the world.

In late February, 1970, Verne Albright and associates bought 26 of the finest horses to ever leave Peru. They arrived via Columbia in Miami, Florida, where the horses were delivered to their new owners. Another shipment arrived in late February, 1971. The horses represented the best bloodlines that Peru had to offer, and their sons and daughters would assure that the Peruvian Paso would live on forever.

After 1971, there would be little exportation of Peruvian Pasos from Peru, so breeding here in the United States had become an important program. According to the American Horseman magazine, in 1972, there were around 700 Peruvian Pasos in the United States. They had grown to be one of the best-known new breeds to come to the U.S. in the last century.

Peruvian horses are gaining acceptance as superior pleasure, parade, and show horses. It seems certain that the breed is destined to become a welcome addition to the many of the excellent breeds already established in this country.

Today there are many breeders, too numerous to mention, around our country. They are keeping the breed thriving. From January 1997 to 2022, the North American Peruvian Horse Association (napha.net) shows there were approximately 9,000 Peruvian Pasos born in the United States. The United States Peruvian Horse Association (uspha.net) estimates that including unregistered Peruvians, there are approximately 20,000 Peruvian Pasos in the United States with a total of around 35,000 in the world.

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*importation of Peruvians to the United States in the 1960's and the history of the Peruvian Paso.
"Thank you," Isabelle, for having the insight to save these articles and painstakingly and lovingly place
them in an album for future generations of Peruvian lovers to enjoy. This is truly a historical treasure
of our breed!*