

## Oldest Christmas Issue

We were all set, with the December 1977 issue of *Saddle & Bridle* nicely book-marked for this month's nostalgia, but then a reader sent, anonymously, a somewhat battered issue for December, 1940, and nothing could have competed.

The cover had lost most of the metallic gold ink that once had made it festive. Five big, discolored bands of once-transparent tape had failed to keep the cover on. And the cover horse picture was badly ripped. It was, incidentally, of Golden Genius, 13646, possession of Mr. and Mrs. J.E. Amis, Jr., Tyler Texas. J.W. McIlvaine was pictured up. With the first couple of pages of the magazine missing, we had no data about this animal.

But what remains makes choosing a picture for this month's column a

nightmare. On page eight, there is Welch Greenwell, handsome in a fedora, coming at us on Ardella King, winner of the \$1,000 junior stake at the American Royal. Who has seen this picture before? Farther on, page 63, is another that is probably new to everyone, the inimitable (according to the caption writer) Senator Crawford, posed between John Gottfried of St. Louis and R.C. "Doc" Flanery — closest human associate of this great animal. They were at Flanery's Highland View Farm in Maple Park, Ill.

Striking for its smooth roundedness is a picture of a painting of Lovely



Ardella King with Welch Greenwell

— Hense

McDonald, ridden by Mrs. Russell M. Riggins of Bartlesville, Okla., owner. In color, the picture must be lovely indeed.

The artist was John Shelby Metcalf whose work and name may be unfamiliar to most of us, but he must have been much appreciated by horse lovers of his time.

The caption tells us that this grand champion mare was by Arletha's Easter Cloud by McDonald Chief, the dam Minnie H. McDonald by Diamond McDonald by Rex McDonald. She had won the \$10,000 mare division at Louisville in 1938, and many state fair stakes, her prizes for work both in harness and under saddle. At the 1939 American Royal, Lovely McDonald had won top mares' classes both ways.

For today's Saddlebred book collec-



John Gottfried and R.C. Flanery with the "inimitable" Senator Crawford.

tors, who may feel that their vintage shelves are complete, here are two scarce items to provide deliciously challenging quests. First is *The Great Parader*, by Jay Shillingford, featuring the life story and achievements of Chief Of Longview, a Missouri stallion who spent most of his life on the West Coast. The book was apparently subsidized by Chief's owner, Mrs. W.P. Roth. Several times here, we've told the story of how Chief Of Longview left his home state by inadvertency.

After his sensational debut as a three-year-old at the 1925 American Royal, his owner, Loula Long Combs, had been asked what she'd take for him. She answered facetiously, "not less than \$35,000", a prohibitive price, she thought. But it was not so to Mrs. Roth, whose husband was a steamship line magnate. She said at once that she'd take Chief and when Mrs. Combs said she hadn't been serious, Mrs. Roth held her to the price. She said, "You named your price and I accepted it, here before several witnesses. He'll make a nice Christmas present for our daughter."

In her biography, *My Revelation*, Mrs. Combs wrote that she and trainer Lonnie Haden, wept together in Chief's empty stall. They were remarkably gracious, however, when in a few weeks Mrs. Roth sent a telegram telling Mrs. Combs, "You'll have to let me have Lonnie. Chief's not doing well without him." Possibly both were too concerned about the well-being of a horse they loved, to refuse. Lonnie went to Roth's in Redwood City, Calif., and made the Missouri stallion world famous, along with his California stable mate, Sweetheart On Parade.

*The Great Parader*, Chief Of Longview is described as being printed on handsome



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Lovely McDonald.

— Painting by John Shelby Metcalf

reasons why people retained joy in the cavalry. One example: a columnist told of a show by the Boots and Saddle Club of the Black Hills which had been graced by a large number of hunters and jumpers from nearby Fort Mead. They said that though the cavalry there had been motorized, two troops of horse remained and that troops retained their love of jumping and doing demonstrations for the public.

The reader who sent this issue of *Saddle & Bridle* had folded in page 35 and jotted, "As good as Senator Vest's about dogs." On that page Arthur Van Ronzelen, founder and editor of *Saddle & Bridle* had written a Christmas editorial. "Van" first said, "Christmas time this year finds us in a world gone mad." He wrote that the thing most to be desired would be men all over the world laying down their arms and living in peace and then he offered some sentiments we would all do well to remember.

Van Ronzelen said that in a war-torn world, humankind was turning more and more to horses "As an escape from iron and steel ... refuge in dependable friends." Van Ronzelen said that the spirit of Christmas is found in the horse every day because: "He goes on endlessly, giving selflessly without thought of return. From the day he is foaled until he goes to the Happy Hunting Grounds, he gives his all. He asks nothing in return but kindness. He is ever patient, no matter the mood of his master, doing always the best he can. He is a source of inspiration to thousands as he goes through his gaits in the show ring and he's ever on parade, no matter how long he has worked or how hard. From the horse, then, the men and women of the horse world need to learn a lesson they seem to have forgotten..." the editor went on to mention that the spirit of sportsmanship left a great deal to be desired, that there was too little courtesy and cooperation, and too much criticism. He urged all to "be as good sports as the horses you ride."

We need to remember than Van Ronzelen practiced what he preached. When he learned that a mare he knew to be kind and worthy of respect was going to be killed because she was blamed for an accident in which her rider died, the editor bought her and used her for years as his pleasure horse. His picture on that animal, whose name was Hell's Bells would have been a nice addition to that 1940 editorial page.

thick sepia paper, text interspersed by many photos of Chief Of Longview in harness and under saddle. No hint appears anywhere as to how many copies had been printed, but almost certainly no more than a few hundred.

Another book worth pursuing is *Hobby Horses* by Amy Freeman Lee. It is about Midnight Star, who began and ended his life at the Lees' Happy Hour Stable in Texas. Meanwhile, however, he belonged to several different people and was shown all over the U.S. The reviewer warned that though parts of the book were interesting for any reader, some of it was only "for the intelligensia of the horse world whose vocabulary is unlimited."

Another notable facet in this issue was reassurance from the military: cavalry would never be abandoned. Notes from California said that three high ranking officers had been inspecting horses in San Diego County, geldings between four and six years old. One of these men was quoted as saying "Horses are not a thing of the past, as far as the Army is concerned." It is hard to understand why anyone would find this good news, considering what had happened to horses in WW I, but there were several



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