

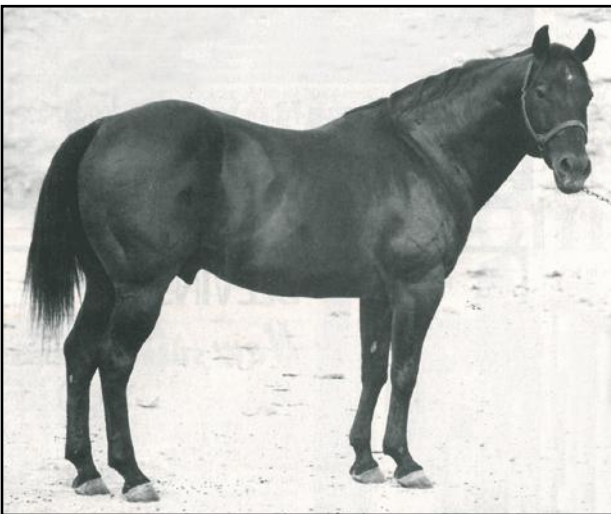
THE MORGANS BEHIND THE AQHA LEGENDS, PART IV

by Gail Perlee

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JESS HANKINS P-1939 King P-234 x Spider x Headlight Morgan 1942 - 1958

Jess Hankins was a chestnut stallion with a silver dollar sized star and a little white inside his right hind pastern. He was bred by his namesake, but registered by his owner, Bud Warren of Perry, Oklahoma. Both the breeder and the owner loom large in early days of the AQHA. Jess Hankins (the man) was one of three brothers who ranched near Rocksprings, Texas. They ran cattle and raised stock horses in a big way. Jess became famous as a breeder of foundation Quarter Horses in




King P-234, foaled in 1932 (Zantanon x Jabalina)
Photo courtesy of AQHA.

1937 when he bought a five-year-old rope horse stallion named King, who was registered in the first volume of the AQHA Studbook with the number P-234. Bred along classic quarter mile racing lines (Zantanon x Jabalina by the Strait Horse), King was never raced. Instead he became a respected rope horse and later a fine sire. He was an extremely handsome, useful horse and one of the earliest QH legends. Many considered him to be the ideal Quarter Horse and the cornerstone of the breed. In his 26 years King sired 658 registered QHs, including 20 AQHA Champions and 84 Performance ROMs.

Among King's earliest get were two, probably three, full siblings out a half Morgan mare named Spider. She was by Headlight Morgan and out of a mare by Wheat's Tony. The first was a 1939 chestnut filly, Dixie Lee H 2,506. Then Rocksprings P-25, 336 was foaled in 1941 and Jess Hankins P-1939 in 1942. Jess Hankins and Rocksprings were bred by Jess Hankins, while Dixie Lee H was bred by Jack Harris and owned by J. O. Hankins, all of Rocksprings, Texas. Possibly Spider was purchased in foal or with her filly, Dixie Lee H, at foot. If you check the current AQHA data base, you will find that all

three of the siblings are listed as being out of Spider H P-13, 102 (Darity, T.B. x Big Sorrel by Wheat's Tony). However, the original Studbooks give the dams of Dixie Lee H and Jess Hankins as "Spider by Headlight Morgan, (Mor.)", and there is reason to question Rocksprings' dam as well. What happened here? Was new information discovered or were the original pedigrees altered to reflect a more politically correct family tree? Based on the information gathered to date, I believe it was the latter. Here are the reasons.

Both Dixie Lee H and Jess Hankins were registered in Volume 2 of the original paperback AQHA Studbook, which was published in 1945, as grand get of Headlight Morgan. Despite the fact that errata sections appeared in the paperback editions and in the bound compilations, Vols. I and II, published in 1961 and 1962, the original breeding was never changed or corrected. Those pedigrees stood for at least 18 years. Moreover, the much higher registration numbers of Spider H (foaled 1928) and Rocksprings (foaled 1941) indicate that they were registered later than Dixie Lee H and Jess Hankins, probably in the late 1940s or early 1950s. By that time no one in QH circles was anxious to credit Morgan blood in foundation Quarter Horses. Spider became Spider H, daughter of the Thoroughbred Darity, and her son Rocksprings was registered with that pedigree. Sometime after that, the pedigrees of Jess Hankins and Dixie Lee H were changed to match Rocksprings. Spider's dam, Big Sorrel, was probably bred by Gus Wheat of Sonora, Texas as he bred and stood her sire, Wheat's Tony. We know that Gus Wheat had at least one half Morgan mare because he bred and registered the roan QH stallion Dusty Wheat 566 (Waggoner x Little Bay Mare by Headlight Morgan), which was foaled in 1939. Later Mr. Wheat sold a 1943 bay QH filly, Wheattie Wheat 11,440 (x Dusty Wheat), to Walker Epperson, Rocksprings, Texas. Sonora is roughly 50 miles south of the old Sellman Ranch and Rocksprings is about the same distance southeast of Sonora. Undoubtedly some of the 689 Morgans from the Sellman Ranch or their offspring ended up on ranches in this area.

JESS HANKINS  ch. H, QUARTER HORSE, 1942						
Color: ch						
#0001939						
Breeder: Jess L. Hankins, Rocksprings, TEX. Owner: Bud Warren, Perry, OKLA. Sired: AQHA ROM; Sired 4th Dam of First Down Dash.						
(CLOSE)						
JESS HANKINS* ch 1942 QUARTER HORSE #0001939	KING* b 14.3 1932 QUARTER HORSE #0000234	ZANTANON* ch 1917 QUARTER HORSE U0081745	LITTLE JOE* br 1905 QUARTER HORSE U0073964	TRAVELER* sor 15.1 ~1885		
			JENNY br 1891	SYKES RONDO dk ch 1887		
			JEANETTE 2 1901 QUARTER HORSE U0074619	BILLY BY BIG JIM ch	BIG JIM	
			MARE BY SYKES RONDO	SYKES RONDO dk ch 1887		
			STRAIT HORSE* dun QUARTER HORSE U0080215	YELLOW JACKET* rd dun 1908	LITTLE RONDO 1 ch 1895 BARBEE DUN dun	
	BAY MARE b QUARTER HORSE #U0075253	TRAVELER* sor 15.1 ~1885	TRAVELER* sor 15.1 ~1885			
	SPIDER H sor 1928 QUARTER HORSE #0013102	BIG SORREL sor QUARTER HORSE U0068205	DARITY 1 QUARTER HORSE probably Headlight Morgan (see notes)			
			WHEATS TONY QUARTER HORSE U0076991	ALLENS SYKES b 1902	SYKES RONDO dk ch 1887 BLAZE BY SYKES RONDO	
			SPANISH MARE QUARTER HORSE U0080006	MARE BY TRAVELER	TRAVELER* sor 15.1 ~1885	

* - Photo Available

Pedigree from All Breed Pedigree

I have obtained a photo copy of the original application for registration of Jess Hankins. It was submitted by Bud Warren in 1944. Spider is given as the dam, she by the Treadwell Horse and out of Big Sorrel. No breeding is given for Big Sorrel or the Treadwell horse. Apparently after further checking, probably with the breeder of Jess Hankins, his dam's sire was found to be Headlight Morgan and the 2nd dam to be by Wheat's Tony, and he was so registered. The Headlight Morgan information was not recorded on the pedigree. At some later time, someone has drawn a bold line through Treadwell Horse and handwritten in "Darity, TB". Other handwritten notes reveal that Jess Hankins was inspected three times before being accepted for registration. In September 1944, an inspector notes, "No - he does not have QH conformation to me." In October a different inspector says, "he does to me" and a week after that the same inspector looked at him again and noted simply, "OK". Perhaps Jess Hankins looked too much like a Morgan?

The pedigree of Jess Hankins is important because he was one of the first sons of King P-234 to become a prolific QH sire and he begat more sires and dams who contributed to the King family. Some of Jess Hankins' sons who bred on are Choc Hankins P-19,503, Cowboy Blue P-14,710, Diamond King P-13,613, Governor Hankins P-22,858, Mainline Buck P-19,454, Sitting Bull P-22,385, and Swampie P-19,168. He also produced good QH brood mares, including G-Fern Crystal Bell 20,118, Blue Miss P-19,905, Cindy Moore 23,150, Jessie Blue 20,895, Jessie Hancock P-34,703, Jezebell W P-12,430, Stardust Thompson 24,054 and many others. Jezebell W was kept by her breeder, Bud Warren, and bred to Leo P-1,335 to produce Sweet Leilani W (AA Racer and AQHA Champion); Leolib (dam of AAA Racer and AQHA Supreme Champion, Milk River) and the good horse, El Leo. Later Jezebell W was bred to Sugar Bars to produce the popular sire, Candy Bar Sugar.

Jess Hankins' full sister, Dixie Lee H, was also a producer of note. She was the dam of, among others, Dixie's Balmy P-32,931, Honey Lee P-13,373 and the sire, Scharbauer's Pale Face P-28,445, all bred by J. O. Hankins. The other probable sibling, Rocksprings, also became a popular sire. However, since he was not recorded as a descendant of Headlight Morgan in the original Studbooks, I will not detail his production record here. You can see from this article how just one Headlight Morgan daughter brought Morgan blood into some of the top foundation Quarter Horse families, including those of King, Leo and Sugar Bars. Through her son, Jess Hankins, and daughter, Dixie Lee H, and probably Rocksprings as well, Spider became just one of many who pumped Morgan blood into the emerging Quarter Horse breed.