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# RODEO HORSE - NO. 1

By  
Joe Heflin Smith

Old timers, who followed the rodeo game from 1919 to 1927, were familiar with a red and white spotted horse that streaked "down-front" of packed grandstands from Calgary, Alberta to Madison Square Garden, and from Fort Worth to Belle Fourche, South Dakota. A slight acrobatic man, dressed in snow white pants and a tight fitting sweater, was going under the horse's belly, or standing erect in the saddle spinning two wide loops.

The rider was Leonard Stroud, who, at one time or another, held every professional rodeo record in the business, and thrilled millions with his daring exploits from the back of well trained rodeo horses.

The spotted horse, that carried Leonard Stroud to six world's championship titles in trick and fancy riding, was named Van.

Leonard Stroud named the horse Van in honor of a man named Van Cleave who gave the horse to Stroud.

The paint was only three days old on July 5, 1912 when Joe H. Smith of Floydada, Texas traded a mule colt to George Fawver for the tiny spotted colt and his mother. The mother

was a small tough Spanish mare and his father was a common black stud owned by the late Will Berry of Floydada.

Grover Smith of Floyd County broke the paint horse to ride and turned him over to his owner to be used on Smith's ranch in ~~Rickens~~ <sup>Ad</sup> Rickens County.

At that time, Joe H. Smith, father of the writer, and now of Silverton, Texas, was ranching and neighboring with the late W. H. Dougherty of Gainesville and his two sons, Newson, now deceased, and Frank M. Dougherty now of Fort Worth.

Newsome Dougherty liked the paint horse and bought him from Joe Smith in the fall of 1918 for \$190. He took him to Gainesville and turned him out on the Dougherty ranch.

Mr. Van Cleave, an ardent rodeo fan, wanted to present Leonard Stroud with a fine horse and promptly bought the paint from Newsome Dougherty for an undisclosed sum of money.

Men who were familiar with the horse doubted that he would ever be satisfactory for trick riding. "He was the toughest horse, I've ever ridden," Joe H. Smith said recently, "but he was high strung and I felt sure that he would never make a rodeo horse."

Sometime later, Newsome Dougherty explained to Joe Smith what happened when Leonard Stroud first saw the horse. "Van Cleave and Stroud came to Gainesville," Dougherty said, "and we went out to the ranch to look at the paint. Leonard saddled him, walked around him a few times, and swiftly mounted. Then he put his hand on the saddle horn and spun completely around in the saddle. He dis-mounted, patted the horse's head



and said he would make a good one."

And a good one he was. When Van Cleave gave Leonard Stroud the paint horse, Stroud was Americas most famous rodeo star. A few years before, he was named director of the rodeo at the Southwestern Exposition and Fat Stock Show in Fort Worth. He worked in close harmony with Bob Tadlock, Marian, Simpson, and Ray McKinley to make the Fort Worth Show one of the best in the world. It was from Fort Worth that Leonard Stroud contracted with Eddie McCarthy of Chugwater, Wyoming for McCarthy to furnish livestock for the Fort Worth show.

In 1919 Stroud was riding Van when he won the World's Champion Trick Riding Title at Cheyenne. In 1922 and 1923, Stroud entered Tex Austin's big show in Madison Square Garden, and, again on Van, won the worlds chamionship trick and fancy riding title, hands down. Van also carried Stroud to championship in Fort Worth, Belle Fourche, South Dakota and Indianapolis.

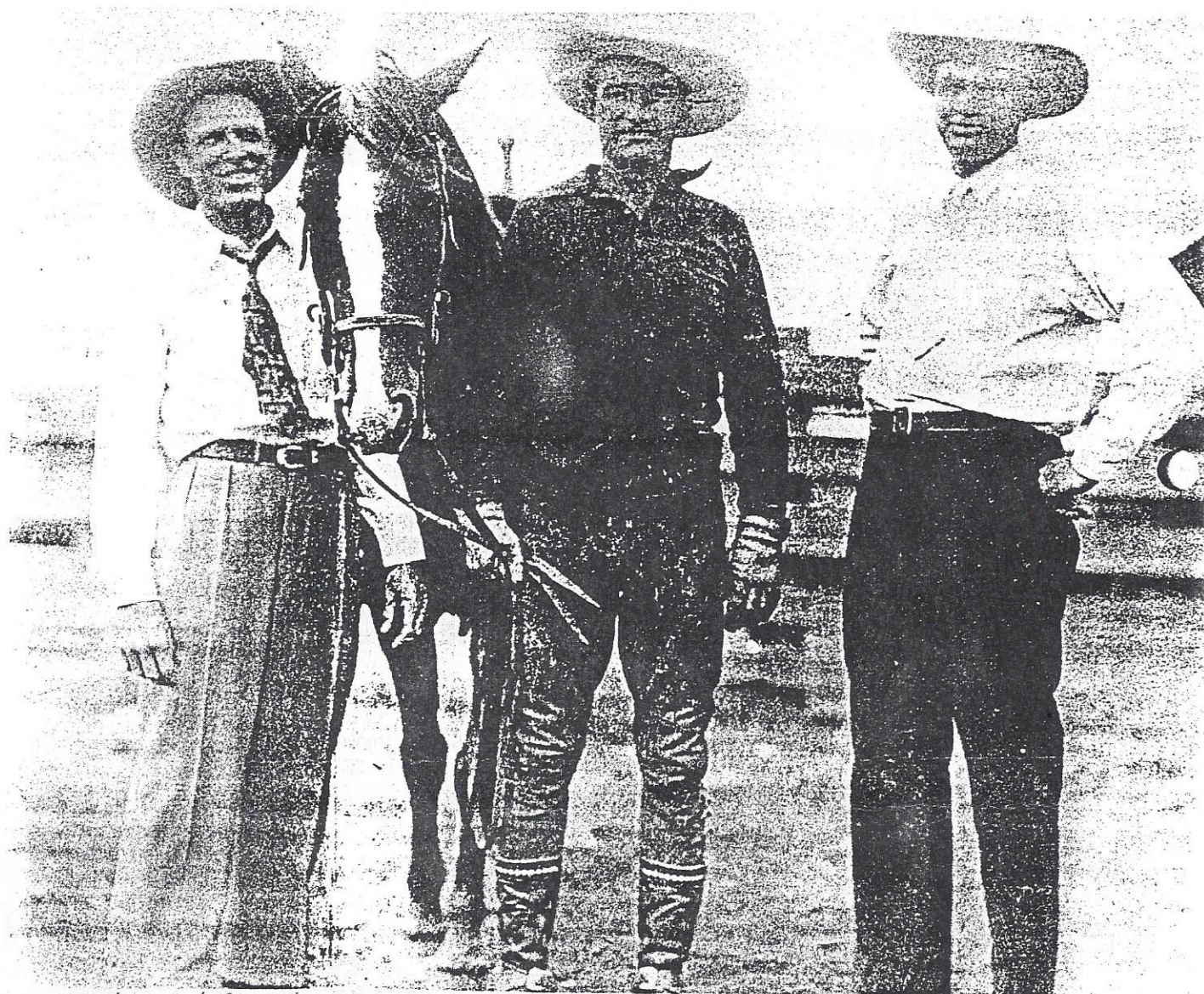
From 1919 to 1929, Leonard Stroud played every state in the Union, Canada, and Mexico. Every place he went, Van went with him. "He was about the best horse I've ever owned," Stroud told the writer in 1928. "He had plenty of sense, was fast, and I never worried about his falling."

As the years crowded in, Stroud rode Van less frequently. He was breaking in other horses to take his place. When Van reached the point where he could no longer take his place in the arena, Leonard Stroud retired him on his ranch at

Rocky Ford, Colorado.

When asked how much money Van had been worth to him, Stroud replied, "There is no way of knowing. Throughout my entire career, I lost only three decisions in trick riding. I was on Van a great deal of the time during those contests, and you can imagine for yourself what he was worth to me. He was worth a fortune, I can tell you that."





Leonard Stroud

**TOM MIX**

See other side  
Tom Mix

R.R. Doubleday

Tom Mix, another Oklahoman, was also a member of the first Madison Square Garden rodeo troupe, and, like Will Rogers, he went on to achieve renown as Hollywood's king of the silent western movies. Shown with Tom Mix in the photograph above are bronco rider Leonard Stroud on left, and rodeo photographer R. R. Doubleday on right.

#### **THE "STROUD LAYOUT" (on facing page, top)**

In the early days of rodeo no official records were kept, but westerners seemed to know who the "champions" were. Texas-born Leonard Stroud was known as the first All-Around-Cowboy champion, but his specialty was trick riding. Rodeo contestants are still performing his "Stroud Layout," in which the body is swung free from the horse with only one foot in stirrup, the other balanced against the saddle horn.



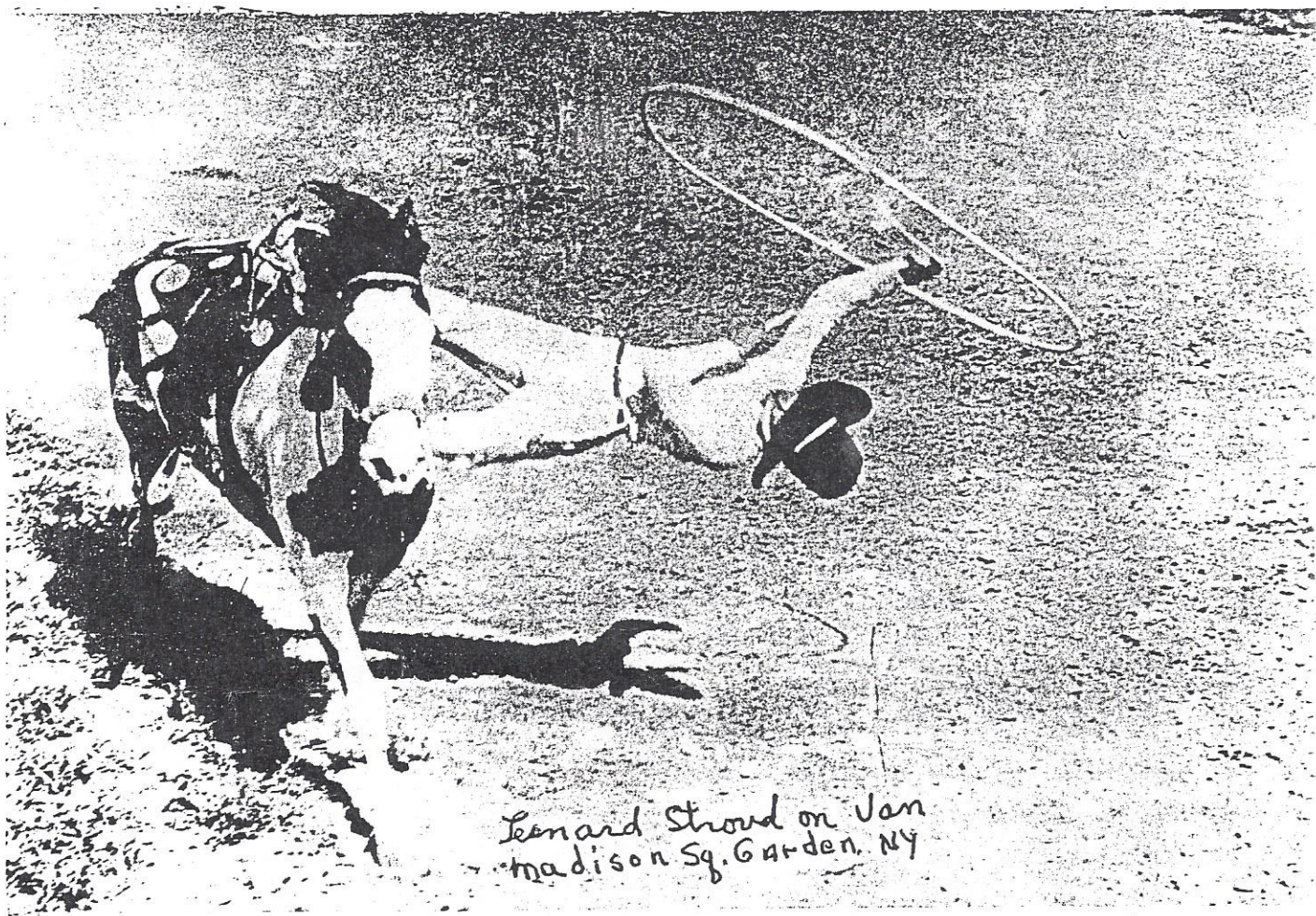


#### *ACTION AT CHEYENNE*

Cheyenne's Frontier Days was the first big-time rodeo, a commercial venture supported by local businessmen and the Union Pacific Railroad. This photograph of Leonard Stroud on Indian Tom at Cheyenne, is an early action picture which in its time was considered the most notable rodeo photograph ever made.

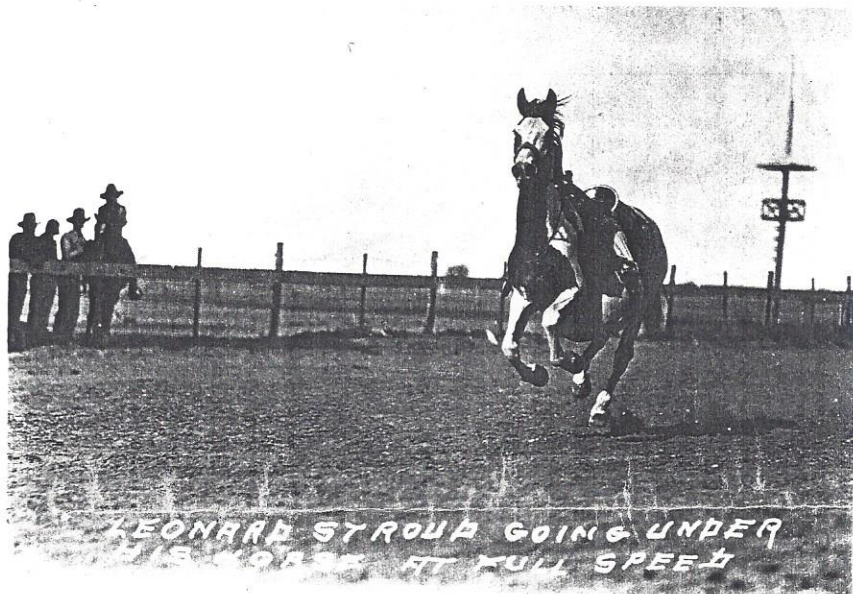






Leonard Shourd on Van  
Madison Sq. Garden, NY





LEONARD STROUD GOING UNDER  
HIS HORSE AT FULL SPEED



STAT



The Battleship Steeplechase Handicap was won by the victory of the great American-owned horse of the same name which won the English Grand National in 1938. The more Autumn Handicap salutes the city of Pimlico whereas the Lady Baltimore Handicap, for fillies and mares exclusively, could not be named more suitably in honor of a mare famed for feminine beauty. The more Handicap was named after the name and farm of the present incumbent of the presidential chair at Pimlico, Alfred E. Vanderbilt.

The Pimlico Futurity escapes the "system" and the designation is none the less significant. It is an event where the Thoroughbred filly eligible to run must be nominated prior to birth or foaling. In other words, the mare is nominated and her produce automatically become eligible to run for the rich prize offered by the Maryland Jockey Club.

## POLO RULES

THE recent meeting of the United States Polo Association was one of especial importance to players of the country in that the committee advocated a change in the regulations of play by which the periods of play would end virtually when the bell rang and not be delayed an indeterminate time, as at present.

Players will recall that such a change has been vigorously advocated in this magazine for the past three years as a means of making the rules more sensible, more in conformity with other competitions, and the game safer. The only difference between the recommendation of the rules committee and of this magazine is that the former advocates ending play as soon after the bell rings as the game reaches a neutral point, whereas the magazine recommended (and still does, in order to simplify the work of referees and to make the rule the same for all) that play should end at the first stroke of the bell.

## POLO PONY SALES

A NUMBER of polo pony sales of real interest have been held recently. They have brought some sorrowful news and, to be quite honest, brought some sorrowful prices. On September 14, John Hay Whitney sent a string of ponies from his sizable string to the tent at Fred Post's, East Williston, Long Island. Inasmuch as he is giving up polo, the inimitable Tommy Hitchcock intends to pick up the game with him, the rest of his ponies will be sold privately during the winter, and any that remain going under the hammer in the spring. (At the same sale J. P. Mills, Rex Benson and Mrs. Charles S. Payson sold one each.)

On October 3, eight ponies from the valuable string of Charles B. Wrightsman were sold at Post's.

The prices were as follows:

Whether or not there is any basic law behind the fact that such outstanding figures as Tommy Hitchcock, C. V. and J. H. Whitney, Raymond Guest, *et al*, are giving up polo is hard to say. Probably there is not. The present generation of top stars has had a great deal of polo; it is growing up; it has other interests it would like to pursue while there's still youth enough to make them enjoyable.

Those who love high-goal polo will never be satisfied with puttering around in everyday club games and top polo is a very exacting pastime; it requires a vast effort in time and money, it's no fun to do badly, and it's downright dangerous to attempt unfit.

As one generation of players goes on, another one happily comes to take its place. Fortunately we have such youngsters playing first-rate polo today: Peter Grace, Charles von Stade, William H. Chisholm, Alan Corey, Jr., George H. Mead, Jr., John Milburn.

It just seems as though there aren't quite so many of them as there were in what might be called the Old Aiken Era, when Hitchcock was leading a group of such players as Stewart and Philip Iglehart, Jimmy Mills, Cokie Rathborne, the four Gerry brothers, the Guest brothers, the Phipps brothers and cousins, and the very promising young players overshadowed by this extraordinary group of star performers.

Incidentally, it doesn't take a new generation to revive interest in polo. The owner of the biggest string of polo ponies in the country, and, as may be seen above, the most active buyer today, is Douglas G. Hertz, aged close to 50, who is establishing a polo empire of unique form and vitality at Rockleigh, N. J. When Hertz got through selling in Chicago and buying on Long Island he had 123 polo mounts in the stable of his Pegasus Polo Club.

## RODEO

IF YOU are a rodeo fan, it's a safe bet that you have seen R. R. Doubleday in some arena taking pictures. He travels thousands of miles each year just to take pictures at rodeos—all over the country. His camera work, starting as an experiment and a hobby, has brought him fame, friends, excitement and has taken him around the world in search of interesting subjects.

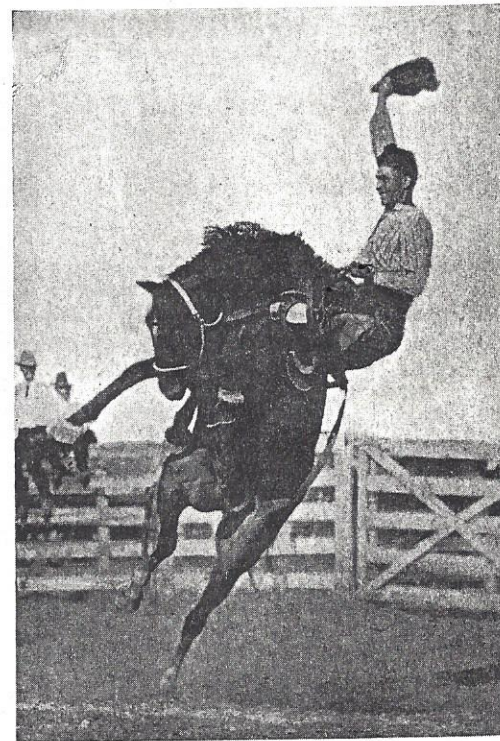
His bucking horse pictures are the ones Doubleday gets the biggest thrill out of; they capture the strength and spirit of the

great western cow-country. His first bucking horse picture was a picture of Gus Nylen being, as they say, thrown by a bronc at the Douglas, Wyoming, State Fair thirty years ago.

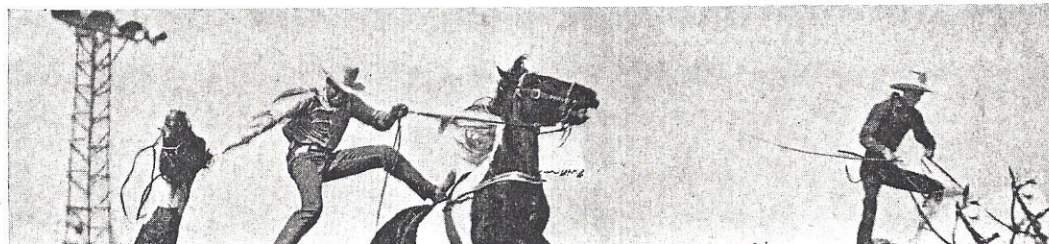
He was born in Jackson County, Iowa, July 4, 1880. Several years later his folks moved to a farm in Illinois and there his boyhood was spent. He attended grade school, high school, then business college at Elgin. Vacation time found him helping with the work on the farm. But he had a friend named



R. R. Doubleday travels thousands of miles to make pictures like these



Here is action; Smoky Branch on Glasseye





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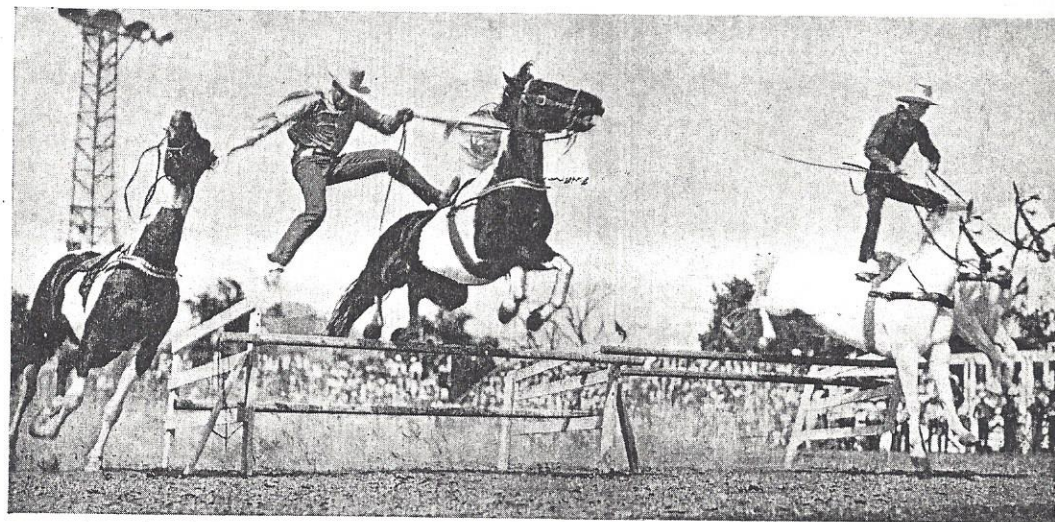
	Vendor	Purchaser	Price
1	J. H. Whitney	W. H. Foales	\$435
2	J. H. Whitney	W. H. Foales	350
3	J. H. Whitney	A. T. Long	305
4	C. B. Wrightsman	Douglas Hertz	225
5	Major Rex Benson	W. H. Foales	200
6	C. B. Wrightsman	Douglas Hertz	200
7	C. B. Wrightsman	Douglas Hertz	180
8	C. B. Wrightsman	Frank Butterworth	180
9	J. H. Whitney	Douglas Hertz	175
10	J. H. Whitney	Douglas Hertz	170
11	J. H. Whitney	A. T. Long	160
12	J. H. Whitney	Douglas Hertz	120
13	Mrs. C. S. Payson	Douglas Hertz	110
14	C. B. Wrightsman	Hugh Gormley	110
15	C. B. Wrightsman	Douglas Hertz	100
16	C. B. Wrightsman	Douglas Hertz	100
17	C. B. Wrightsman	Douglas Hertz	90
18	J. P. Mills	Douglas Hertz	75
19	J. H. Whitney	Douglas Hertz	60
20	Mrs. C. S. Payson	Douglas Hertz	52.50

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Ray and Marvin Ramsey in a Roman Jump. We don't know what happened to Ray