



*World's Grand Champion Edna May's King with Revel L. English up.*

## Edna May's King 8672

*by Lynn Weatherman*

**A**S we can see from the computer compilation of stallions in the pedigrees of the foal crops of 1968 and 1988 (appearing in this issue), Harrison Chief, through his grandson Bourbon King, ranks with Denmark as a foundation sire of the breed. Bourbon King had a number of important sons, but standing alongside King's Genius as the most important is Edna May's King.

Edna May's King was twice the Five Gaited World's Grand Champion. He was not a great sire of show horses, although he sired some good ones, Anacacho Shamrock was probably the best. Edna May's King was a great progenitor of the breed, his legacy carried on by Anacacho Shamrock, Nawbeek's

Highland King, the full brothers Anacacho Denmark and Cameo Kirby, Anacacho Princess (who produced full brothers Beau Gallant and Beau Fortune) and Anacacho Serana the dam of Anacacho Empire.

### Edna May

Edna May was a big, rangy chestnut mare with a small star and snip and two white hind stockings. Bred by M. B. Arbuckle, Richmond, Kentucky, she was the first horse to bring recognition to Rex Peavine as a good sire. Foaled in 1903, she was originally registered as Mabel Bell.

She was sold by Arbuckle as a two-year-old to Earl Curtis of Richmond, who broke her to ride and drive, but lo and behold, she was natural gaited and couldn't trot. In the spring of 1906, Curtis sent the mare to the noted horseman Nels Rowland of Lexington to be high schooled. He taught her the Spanish trot and sold her for Curtis to Walter Clark and W. G. "Billy" Shropshire, then operating out of Paris, Kentucky.

Shropshire brought her out in 1907, showing her 20 times in a variety of classes. She was a sensational five gaited mare and also a winner in fine harness, combination, in-hand and roadster a dealer had paid for a Saddle Horse

classes. In August of 1907, she was purchased by trainer Mat Cohen and Shelby T. Harbison, the owner of Tattersalls, for \$1,850, the highest price up to that time.

Mrs. Richard Tasker Lowndes then purchased her in 1908 for the record price of \$4,000 and changed her name to Edna May, after a famous actress of the day. Mary Lowndes was a native of Danville, Kentucky, and with her brother Joe McDowell, an original stockholder of ASHA, owned a Boyle County farm. She and her husband lived at Bostock House, Clarksburg, West Virginia. Richard T. Lowndes's father was Governor Lloyd Lowndes of Maryland. Some of Mrs. Lowndes's other horses included Kentucky Choice and Princess Sonia.

Edna May was left under the direction of Mat Cohen for the remainder of her career. She was shown 420 times on both coasts and throughout the nation and earned over \$21,000 in cash and silver.

Said to have had a tremendous action, purity of gait and great speed at the rack and trot, Edna May was beaten only four times. She was defeated twice as a young mare, once by Bourbon Prince and once

*Edna May with Mat Cohen, up. This photo was taken in front of the Louisville Armory in 1908 after Edna May had won the five gaited stake at the Louisville Horse Show.*



*This rare photo was taken at the Blue Grass Fair in 1909, held at the Red Mile in Lexington, Kentucky. Edna May was upset by Star McDonald. The picture shows Robert Moreland on Star McDonald, left, returning a salute from his cousin Mat Cohen aboard Edna May. Cohen had previously shown Star McDonald with great success, including handing Bourbon King his only defeat.*

by Bourbon Dandy Jim; then later by Grand McDonald at St. Joseph, Missouri, and by Star McDonald (the only horse to ever beat Bourbon King), at the Blue Grass Fair in Lexington. She was champion at the Kentucky State Fair in 1909 and a winner at New York and Chicago.

Study of the pedigree of Edna May shows she was the result of the old English breeding theory, "Give the sire back the best blood of his own dam." Daisy 2nd, a top show mare and the dam of Rex Peavine, was sired by Peavine 85 as was Lee Wood, the dam of Edna May.

All of Edna May's foals, with the exception of Edna May's King, were sired by Kentucky Choice. Emperor et Rex sold for \$3,000 before he was a two-year-old; Gloria Mundi was a top show mare; and Edna May's Choice was a good sire. Mrs. Lowndes held a dispersal sale in 1915, and Edna May was bought by Allie G. Jones, acting as agent for B. S. Castles of New York City. He paid \$1,125, a record price for a broodmare at public action. She was in foal and in 1916 produced a filly by Kentucky Choice.

### **Allie G. Jones**

Allie G. Jones had achieved his first  
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success in the Saddlebred world with Montgomery Chief. He then showed Bourbon King, a full brother to Montgomery Chief, to spectacular wins of the five gaited championships at the old Louisville horse show in 1903 and 1905 and the Kentucky State Fair in 1905, before retiring the son of Bourbon Chief and Annie C. to stud. Jones and his sons Joe and Charleton had a highly successful training, breeding and sales operation.

Edna May remained barren for a year, then finally got in foal to Bourbon King. In 1918 she delivered her last foal, a strapping chestnut colt with four white ankles and star and elongated stripe. Castles sold his entire crop of yearlings, including the youngster named Edna May's King to Allie Jones the next year.

Joe A. Jones was assisting his father with training duties, and he was responsible for breaking and gaiting Edna May's King who had matured into a big, rugged horse. With a rough head and slightly Roman nose, he was not pretty, but he was a bold moving horse with lots of motion, dash and speed at the rack and trot. He seldom backed an ear and had an air about him described as majestic and regal. He was developed slowly and bred to two mares in 1921. By the time it was decided to show him for the first time at the Kentucky State Fair in 1923, A. G. Jones and Sons had selected Edna May's King to succeed his sire Bourbon King at the head of their stud.

### Revel Lindsay English

Revel L. English was a character. He was born in 1880 in Kane County, Illinois. He became an opera star with the Castle Square Opera Company of Boston and the Savage Grand Opera Company. He was also a professional boxer. English moved to California shortly after the turn of the century and established a large Saddlebred operation at Chino. His Sierra Vista Stock Farm grew to 1,500 acres.

He served ten years as head of the equestrian division of the Tournament of Roses Parade in Pasadena. He once won the chariot race which was the main attraction of the Tournament of Roses before the football game was popularized.

English raised large numbers of horses including San Marcos, a walk-trot by Highland Squirrel King (sold for \$15,100 at auction) and the great mare Sally Cameron. Some of the stallions he stood were Highland Squirrel King by

Forest King and Solano by Majestic McDonald by Rex McDonald. English had many dealings with his friend Allie Jones.

Revel English later told the story of his acquisition of Edna May's King. He knew he needed a top stallion, so in 1923 he journeyed by train to the Kentucky State Fair and arrived on the Saturday of the stakes. Edna May's King had made his debut with Joe Jones aboard in the stallion stake and was tied behind General Bullard, a son of Richlieu King by Bourbon King. The Feudist, a noted stallion owned by Minton-Hickory Farm, was third.

Mass of Gold was the World's Grand Champion, with second to Violet Hemming, but English was most impressed with Edna May's King who was third, beating General Bullard and Easter Star. After the show, he could not locate Allie or Joe Jones and his train was leaving for California on Sunday morning, so he sent Jones a telegram asking for a price on the five-year-old stallion. After exchanging telegrams for over a week along a 2,500 mile route, English succeeded in buying a horse he had never examined for a remarkable \$12,000.

He sent J. E. Logan, a young Kentuckian who was working for him, back for the horse. Logan had strongly expressed his disapproval, saying that no horse was worth that price. When he arrived at the Jones farm near North Middletown, Kentucky, he was asked if he would like to see Edna May's King work. Logan replied, "Yes, I'd like to see \$12,000 under one saddle." Later that day, he wired Revel English compliments on his judgement.

Sharing a rail car with a broodmare and a jack, Edna May's King arrived, with a temperature of 102, in Portland, where English was showing at the Oregon State Fair. After a short rest, he was shipped down the coast to Chino. Hundreds of people came to Sierra Vista Stock Farm to see the stallion after the sale was reported nationally by Associated Press.

Edna May's King was shown at Los Angeles and at Santa Barbara in 1924 and was beaten both times in five gaited championships by a great doing mare, Daugherty Dare. However, he was improving, and Revel English said he felt confident he could win the stake at Louisville.

He was shipped back to Kentucky, reunited with Joe Jones and in 45 minutes vanquished Vendetta to be crowned Five Gaited World's Grand Champion. San

Marcos, the horse Revel English had raised, was the three gaited winner.

Edna May's King was then returned to California, ostensibly for permanent retirement to stud, and he was not shown in 1925. However, Revel English (never popular with West Coast horsemen) was criticized unmercifully and accused of being afraid to show.

So in 1926, the King was again readied for the show ring wars. He was started at the Ambassador Hotel horse show at Los Angeles where he ran into a buzz saw in the form of Easter Star, the Five Gaited World's Grand Champion of 1922.

Easter Star was shown to victory by Roy Davis. English later complained publicly that Edna May's King had "suffered the worst tie ever meted out to a great show horse." Suzanne included the story in her *Famous Saddle Horses* Volume III, erroneously naming Easter Cloud, rather than Easter Star, as the horse unjustly tied over Edna May's King.

However, another account of the class was published in the little known magazine *Horse News* shortly after it happened, and the writer was none other than Mat S. Cohen, the much respected horseman who had shown Edna May.

When Easter Star left Kentucky for the West Coast, it was predicted by an unnamed, but supposedly astute, trainer, "There isn't a man in the whole state of California that can bridle the horse, let alone ride and win with him."

According to Cohen, Roy Davis did a masterful job of showing. "Edna May's King had the house in the air, on their toes and cheering his great performance in a manner seldom seen on the Pacific Coast," wrote Cohen. "Several times during the early and middle part of the exhibition opinions changed."

"Then," he reported, "Roy Davis saw an opportunity, Easter Star scented it; his courage had reached the boiling point — he was listening, eagerly so, and anxious for the fray. When, all of a sudden, as if he had just thought of the large amount of cash prize going to the winner, Davis spoke, Easter heard him, and like a dash of roaring waters, Easter's efforts leaped forth. Davis smiled as if to say, 'it's our'n,' and from that time on Easter Star converted his enemies and made proud and happy his many friends. Then judge Victor Robertson asked for the rack, and it was there that the great gelding smothered his competitors into submission. While the many admirers of Edna May's King hated to admit it,

yet down in their hearts they knew their idol had fallen and Easter Star had won. In doing so he had made perhaps the greatest show of his most eventful career."

English was mad, but he didn't back down. He continued to work Edna May's King, and after a heavy season at stud he showed him to victory at Stockton and then decided to take him back to Louisville.

*The Show Horse* magazine reported, "It was not generally known by the public that Revel English had proposed exhibiting Edna May's King at Louisville this year. Mr. English had made the entry but due to the long trip, five days each way, he had not fully made up his mind to bring the horse here until the last moment.

"Edna May's King gave a convincing performance (in the stallion stake), and not one soul said nay on his being presented the first ribbon in this class. His owner, Revel English, can ride him as well as anybody. In the final, Edna May's King came back even better than on Monday night if that could be possible.



*Easter Star with Roy L. Davis up in a Haas photograph of the 1922 World's Grand Champion taken at the 1926 Ambassador show. This is an outstanding racking picture and if the two horses looked like their respective photographs when they competed, Easter Star would have to beat Edna May's King and Revel English in the photo below, also taken by Lee Haas at the Ambassador Horse Show.*



"Edna May's King is truly a wonder horse, wonderful in beauty, manners and perfection of gaits. To visit him in the stall, he displays a wonderful disposition, eager for friendship of whomsoever is seeking to know him."

Revel English became the first amateur to ride to the Five Gaited World's Grand Championship, a feat not duplicated for 62 years when another Californian, Michele Macfarlane, achieved it with CH Sky Watch a great-great-grandson of Edna May's King. In doing so she also became the first lady to win the class.

Edna May's King then returned to California and retired to stud. In 1927, Revel English held a sale, and 11 colts sired by Edna May's King averaged \$1,147.50, a record for Saddlebred yearlings. The buyer of ten of them was R. W. Morrison, a former Missourian, starting a major Saddlebred operation at his Anacacho Ranch. Morrison had made a fortune in the railroad business in South America and was involved in many enterprises.

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*The sensational show horse Chief of Longview, the Five Gaited World's Grand Champion of 1928 and 1929, shown by Lonnie Hayden. He was owned by Mrs. W. P. Roth. Haas photo.*

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### Enter Roy Davis

Roy Davis, the colorful Missouri trainer who had beaten Edna May's King with Easter Star, had become a major force in the California Saddlebred world. Known for his geniality, he was sometimes referred to as Roy "I Thank You" Davis, and for his dress he was often called the Beau Brummell of the show ring. His show string included the great walk-trot mare Nancy Highland, and one of his assistants at Bel-Air Stables was K. K. "Eddie" Gutridge.

Davis was a wheeler-dealer. In 1929 he had done very well showing and selling a number of Edna May's King get purchased from English. He then paid R. W. Morrison a reported \$68,000 for his Edna May's King horses which he sold at a profit during the 1930 season. Three were bought by F. C. Mars, Milky Way Farm for \$70,000. Summer Rain was later purchased by Mars for \$25,000.

Revel English put a price on Edna May's King in 1930. English maintained forever after it was the worst mistake

he made in his life. On June 25, 1930, he accepted a check from Roy Davis for \$40,000 for Edna May's King. Davis also paid \$10,000 for 16 mares and foals. On July 10, Davis resold the package to Morrison for \$75,000. The broodmares, including Sally Cameron, Hazel Simmons and Jane Black, and the young horses were shipped to Anacacho Ranch, located at Spofford, Texas, near the Mexican border. With much fanfare, Edna May's King, now a 12-year-old, was moved to Bel-Air Stables, Los Angeles, and returned to training. Davis had convinced his new owner to show him at Louisville one last time.

### 1930 World's Championship

The five gaited competition at Kentucky State Fair Horse Show of 1930 was among the best ever seen, and the two California stallions (Edna May's King and Chief of Longview) were the talk of the show.

Eleven stallions hit the ring for the stallion stake. King's Genius, Rex Lee Bourbon, Jean Squirrel, Sheridan Acres and Man in the Moon were among them.

Martha C. Moore, writing for *Saddle & Bridle*, left a vivid description. "And then our eye is caught by the appearance

of Edna May's King," she wrote. "Edna May's King comes in with all the pomp and dignity of a king. He seems to look the old ring over with a remembrance of other days.

"He had not trotted the full length of one side of the arena until Chief of Longview entered and flew past him. It seemed as if his feet did not hit the tanbark. Unquestionably one of the most animated and brilliant horses of the horse show world, he fairly lifts an audience from their seats with his speed and brilliance.

"The Chief was badly over-ridden. In the second workout both the King and the Chief were pushed. The Chief broke badly on numerous occasions for the battle was long. The King seemed to be showing signs of fatigue."

When Thomas Wilson and H. S. Caywood finished their judging, Chief of Longview left the ring with the blue ribbon and Edna May's King with the red. Rex Lee Bourbon was third, with King's Genius fourth. Partisans of both horses have debated the class ever since.

Sweetheart On Parade won the mare stake with Lonnie Hayden showing, second going to a daughter of Edna May's King, Summer Rain, with Roy Davis up. Again Moore criticized Hayden, calling the ride he gave Sweetheart On Parade, "grueling and heart-breaking and unnecessary."

The winner of the Five Gaited World's Grand Championship was Beau Wolf, a four-year-old black gelding shown by Charlie Dunn for Dixiana Farm. He established a record by winning the junior stake, the gelding stake and the World's Grand Championship. Moore reported that it seemed as if Edna May's King was just starting to work in the last workout. Beau Wolf made a sensational show and electrified the crowd, while Rex Lee Bourbon also made a terrific performance. The younger stallion was second, and Edna May's King was tied third.

Where were Chief of Longview and Sweetheart On Parade? It was reported that the Chief had an abscessed foot, and Sweetheart was running a temperature. Eddie Gutridge said that Lonnie Hayden had been "too drunk to ride" and had been grounded. As it was, he picked up the catch ride on Rainbow Rose for W. T. Treadway, whose trainer Harry Daniels showed Rex Lee Bourbon. Rainbow Rose was said to have made a good show for fifth.

While at Louisville, Edna May's King made a special exhibition in the show

ring with eight of his sons and daughters. Roy Davis also won the fine harness stake with a gelding by Edna May's King owned by Anacacho Ranch named Supreme. This horse reportedly sold for \$15,000.

Walter Palmer, often called the poet laureate of the show ring, wrote of the duel in the stallion stake at Louisville in 1930.

## The Last Show

Late in September, the Bel-Air show string went on to Oklahoma City where Edna May's King made his last show ring appearance, winning the stallion-gelding class. He was not shown back in the stake and was then shipped to his permanent home at Anacacho Ranch.

Edna May's King spent the rest of his life living in luxury. His band of mares was the best money could buy and included the World's Champions Jonquil and Nancy Highland. In the 13 years he stood at Anacacho Ranch his get sold for nearly \$300,000. He was also an ambassador for the breed. R. W. Morrison was host to a major Democratic political party at the ranch, and Will Rogers rode Edna May's King. Annie Lawson Cowgill took Stephens College girls on tours of Anacacho Ranch several times.



*Edna May's King with Roy Davis aboard.*

## To The Chief And The King

*When a fellow has won all the glory and fame  
That this gracious old world can bestow,  
It's a might fine thing to step out of the game  
And look on awhile, at the show;  
But it's better by far, when you feel you have lost  
In a game where you know you are right,  
To throw down the gauntlet, not counting the cost,  
And roll up your shirtsleeves and fight.*

*And somehow our horses are very like men,  
The champions reign for a day,  
They rest on their laurels contently and then  
They quickly return to the fray;  
The fact of losing the battle don't count,  
Or the fact of their winning, or why,  
If the courage they've shown is of proper amount  
And they enter the contest and try.*

*So here's to the Chief and the King in their stalls  
In that far-away land by the sea,  
The coming of twilight each evening recalls  
The picture they fashioned for me.  
Aye, here's to the horses whose names will endure,  
The steeds from across the divide,  
They failed to recapture the crown, to be sure,  
But they came back to fight. Yea, they tried.*

Edna May's King died in July 1943 at the age of 25. Ironically he had outlived his younger rival for preeminent progenitor of the Bourbon King line, King's Genius, who also died in Texas in May of the same year at age 19. Edna May's King was given a proper burial in a natural setting. His grave was not marked, but it has not been lost, at least not yet. Anacacho Ranch may become a nuclear waste disposal site.

## Retrospect

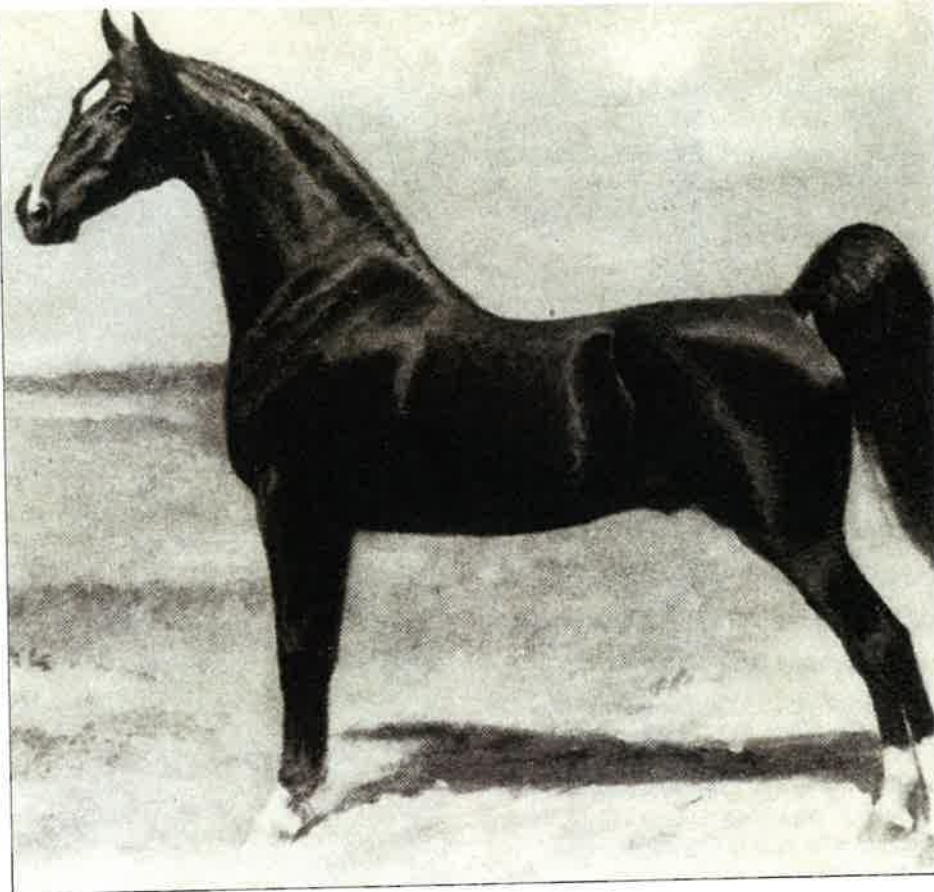
One will not find the names of many get of Edna May's King in the record books, because (as previously stated) he was not a great sire of show horses. He led the Jeff Harris's sire rating of five shows in 1932 and appeared among the top five stallions on *Saddle & Bridle's Sire Rating*, fourth in 1937 and fifth in 1938.

With the dark days of World War II and R. W. Morrison working for the U.S. Government in the war effort, the final American Saddlebreds left Anacacho Ranch in March 1944.

At that time an anonymous author (perhaps it was Susanne or R. W.

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*This is probably a third or fourth generation reproduction of the George Ford Morris painting of Edna May's King.*



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Morrison himself), wrote . . .

"Spring is in the air, the trees and shrubs are putting on their lacy greenery. Texas wild flowers cover Edna May's King's grave with a riot of color. From its arch over the great Anacacho Barn the bell tolls. The sunlight shimmers from the satin coats of a line of horses marching over the hill and down the long tree-planted road to the Anacacho Gate. Wind ripples their silken manes as they toss their heads, arch their necks, and march out to have their fling at life. They are the last of many that have gone this way before!

"The argosy is ended."

Through his sons and daughters, Edna May's King founded one of the most dynamic lines of American Saddlebreds which continues strong and prominent today. The full force of the impact Edna May's King has had on the breed begun in 1947, and of the 126 World's Grand Championships offered in the three major divisions since that time, 40 descendants of Edna May's King have been winners of 84 of these classes.

They include: Regal Air, Wing Commander, Kate Shriver, High Button

Shoes, Dream Waltz, The Lemon Drop Kid, Denmark's Daydream, My My, Forest Song, CH Duke of Daylight, CH Tashi Ling, Valerie Emerald, CH Yorktown, CH Lover's Sensation, CH Supreme Airs, CH Surefire, CH Seymour's Finest Hour, CH Shadow's Creation, Sultan's Santana, CH Sultan's Starina, CH Captive Spirit, CH Dear One, CH Virginia Wolf, CH Belle Elegant, CH Will Shriver, CH Night Prowler, CH Melody's Winged Sensation, CH Cora's Time, CH Mountain Highland Encore, CH Happy Valley

Treasure, CH La La Success, Ch Imperator, CH Hometown Hero, CH Sky Watch, CH Our Golden Duchess, CH Black Irish, CH Buck Rogers, and the current reigning World's Champions Man On The Town, Gimcrack and Fox Fire's Prophet.

While his photos make him look ugly in comparison to today's Saddlebreds, Edna May's King apparently had that rare spark that inspired people. Three poems were written in tribute to him. After his sale to Anacacho Ranch, Revel L. English wrote this tribute to Edna May's King.

There have been Kings before you  
And there will be Kings to come,  
But for those of us who knew you  
There can forever be only one.  
Gentle, obedient, yet the spirit of the wind blowing free,  
You gave in each move and motion the best unstintingly.  
I have thrilled to the chords of Wagner  
In their measure majestic and bold  
And the same joy of living surged through me  
In the rhythm your hoofbeats told.  
"Scoll" to you King with your great true heart  
Your spirit undaunted and free  
May your sons and your daughters still carry on  
Your standard in years to be.

The sentiments of Revel L. English came true. The argosy of Anacacho Ranch is over, but the name Anacacho

and the legacy of Edna May's King will not end as long as there are American Saddlebreds. □