

Knial Kissee and Old Fox: Stepping out of the Shadows

By Clyde and Samantha Connelly

Knial Kissee was born in Christian County, Missouri, near the town of Ozark on November 20, 1906. He was the youngest of four brothers. His oldest brother Ellis was known for owning the Ellis Kissee Old Fox. The Ellis Kissee Old Fox was a stallion with unknown history or pedigree that was shipped in on the Frisco Railroad to the Union Stockyards in Springfield, Missouri. Knial, as well as his brothers, all followed their father in being active in the Ozark Commission Company at the Union Stockyards. Although the Ellis Kis-



Hawkeye's Black Sambo was an example of the outstanding progeny of Knial Kissee's Old Fox.

see Old Fox had a hidden past, the Kissees all had the opportunity to check stockyard records to obtain the Bill of Laden on any livestock transported in and out of the stockyards. They could have easily found out where the stallion came from, and then how he was bred, but none chose to do so. It was Ellis' younger brother Knial who may have done more for the foxtrotting horse than anyone could imagine. Unlike Ellis, who had purchased the Ellis Kissee Old Fox, Knial was a horse breeder without equal.

The cornerstone of Knial's broodmare band was an exceptional mare named Pet, from which he raised several foals. For Knial to have the confidence that he placed in Pet, she must have been a great mare. It was Pet that he bred to Cadmus Dare to get his famed stallion Ted. He bred Pet back to Cadmus Dare at least three additional times. Two full sisters to Ted were Pet II, foaled June 1, 1933, and Red Hot K., foaled May 10, 1934. At this same time, Knial was promoting his younger stallion who was sired by Ted, a stallion that he also called Old Fox. This horse appears either as "Old Fox" or "Kissee's Old Fox" on early MFTHBA registration papers. The "Old Fox" name was common in the days before the registry, and if a horse could foxtrot, he would generally be called "Old Fox." Like Ellis Kissee, the Hodges of Ozark County (written about in an earlier article) stood a stallion. Nobody knew where this horse came from or what he was out of, and they called him "Old Fox."

In the spring of 1935, Knial bred Pet to his Old Fox stallion and got a filly he named Ethel Beauty. She was foaled June 10, 1936. Based on available records, you could assume that Knial's Old Fox was foaled sometime in the late 1920s or early 1930s. Evidently Knial liked the result of this crossing, as he bred Pet back to Old Fox, and she had another filly, Lady Kissee, who was foaled May 14, 1937. Other daughters of Old Fox that Knial kept and raised foals from were Topsy K., Peggy K., and Bess K. All of these fillies that were sired either by Ted or Old Fox were registered by Knial into the new Tennessee Walking Horse Associa-

tion, which was just starting up. It would still be several years until the Missouri Fox Trotting Horse Breed Association would be organized.

Knial bred Pet back to Cadmus Dare one last time in 1939, and she raised the filly Sally Walker, who was foaled in 1940. Based on horse registrations found in the Walking Horse Association, Knial quit breeding to Old Fox in 1939. As no records have been found showing that he sold the horse, and he registered no later foals out of him, the assumption can be made that the horse must have died sometime in the winter of 1938 or early spring of 1939. That would give an explanation for Knial breeding Pet back to Cadmus Dare after so many years of breeding her to Old Fox.

Sally Walker was later sold to Mr. Ray Hedgpeth of Nixa, MO. Ray's claim to fame was being the owner of Ozark Golden King, who was a stallion sired by Old Fox. Ray registered Sally, along with other fillies he owned, in the Tennessee Walking Horse Association, just like Knial was doing. One of Ray's fillies, Hedgpeth's Red Cloud, was sired by Diamond, by Old Fox. This Diamond stallion was owned and raised by Knial. Later the horse became known as the Blankenship Diamond, as Elmo Blankenship of Protem, MO, owned and stood him for several years. Many of the old timers who knew both Blankenship Diamond and his younger maternal brother, Golden Governor, have stated that Blankenship Diamond had more "style and gait" than Governor did because Governor's sire, Ozark Golden King, was out of a "buggy mare."

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