



## An Interview With Charlie Short

Charlie Short and Short's Gold Mine outside a barn in Mt. Sterling

An interview with Mr. Charlie Short, taken at his home in Mt. Sterling in October of 2004. Mr. Short has been involved with mountain horses for most of his 82 years. He has seen many great horses through his years and maintains a wealth of knowledge.

DS. Were you raised here in Mt. Sterling?

CS. No, I was raised right this side of West Liberty about three miles.

DS. When did you move?

CS. It was in 1958.

DS. Has there been a lot of changes since then?

CS. Oh, yea.

DS. Did all your family live around West Liberty?

CS. Yes, all around there. When I came out of the service, me and my dad

bought a farm together, pretty nice place, had 100 acres of level land and about 75 acres of hill land. We cut the timber and had it sawed. We kept the place 12 years. Land was just fixin to go up. We bought that land for \$14,000.00, kept it 12 years and sold it \$28,000.00.

DS. Did you farm that with horses or tractors?

CS. Farmed it with horses for awhile, I don't know what year I bought a tractor. Seem like, the last two years, I might have bought a tractor. I worked mules most of the time, Dad didn't like horses at all. We had four mules, great big mules, weighed about 1200 pound a piece. We got a big walking plow with the farm, biggest they made. I don't know why I didn't buy a

riding plow. I'd plow three mules abreast, and didn't worry about the mules getting hot or anything. I'd plow til I couldn't hardly get to the house.

DS. Did you raise horses back then?

CS. Yea, we generally kept something to ride. I have had horses all my life to ride. Dad gave me a pony back when I was just a boy. I've fooled with them all my life. We used to break several mules in the spring of the year.

DS. Did you know the horse trader, Hub Spencer?

CS. Yea, I was just a boy when he bought a palomino, I think it was a filly, off my uncle. It was a pretty thing, golden yellow. Back then, he gave a thousand dollars for it. That colt was out of

a sorrel mare, and awful pretty mare. He worked her all the time and she was a real saddle mare.

DS. Was a thousand dollars a big price?

CS. Oh, it was an awful price back then.

DS. How was she bred?

CS. I don't remember. There wasn't anything registered back in them days.

DS. Did you keep records?

CS. I kept records when I started out. Now Old Silver, he was first registered as a palomino. It went on for several years before they started the Mountain Pleasure.

DS. Did all your family fool with horses?

CS. Biggest part of them did, but they are mostly all dead now.



DS. Do you think the horses 50 years ago were better than they are today?

CS. I don't think so, one thing about back in those days, they were better broke because people worked them and rode them and they were broke to death.

DS. That makes a big difference, I guess?

CS. Yea. It makes a better horse.

DS. Was there any horses that stood out back then?

CS. My neighbor had two sorrel mares, real saddle mares. They wasn't real big mares, maybe 15 hands, but were made just as pretty as can be, real fancy.

DS. The mare that your horse Silver was out of, Bess, where did she come from.

CS. She was a sorrel, real pretty sorrel. Old man Ed Rice was the one that had her. He traded horses all the time, and I think he got her over close to Paris somewhere. She was already broke to work. He didn't say anything about her being broke to work. I pulled logs out with her. One time, right in the

winter time, she had stood in the barn for a month. Up where we lived, there was an old muddy road, I would get stuck or other people would get stuck, I'd take that mare out and hook her to it, she would lay down and pull every pound in her, taking her right out of the barn. I gave 275.00 for her at the Mt. Sterling Stock yard, course she wasn't registered back in those days. The first colt she had was a filly, called her old Dolly. I believe, seem like, I may have bred her to a horse down here and raised her first colt, then I took her up there and bred her to Merle's (McGuire) horse and she had Dolly in the Spring. I took her back and bred her again, and that's when old Silver came along. I kept him. I don't know, till he was a four or five year old. Never even thought about selling him, horses were selling cheap back then. We were all down in Mt. Sterling, October Court Days, forget what year it was now, we were all down at the Last Chance, drinking pretty heavy, Ronnie (Little) said "Just what would you

take for Old Silver". I

said, "It would take \$1,500.00" That was plum out of reason back then, you know. I didn't want to sell him, the reason I asked so much, Brenda liked him so well. He said, "I just bought him", so I said "Well, I'll catch Brenda gone and bring him up to you" I waited a few days and finally I told Brenda, but she was a person that didn't let on, so I took him up there and Ronnie bred him that spring, up to when breeding season was over, and he would bring him back down here and let Brenda show him. She showed him a lot after I sold him,

probably more than before. Back in them days, you had to break them to canter. I broke him as a two year old, and bred seventeen mares to him, Brenda showed all over the country and she won a right smart with him. She won a lot of ribbons.

DS. How big of a mare was Bess?

CS. About 15 hands

DS. Was this also the mother of Goldfinger?

CS. Yes

DS. How did Ronnie get Goldfinger?

CS. I think he swapped another horse to him. I had old Goldfinger broke to work, but Ronnie never did have a harness on him, I don't reckon. He was the prettiest horse in harness you ever seen. I just broke him for fun. He was a plum broke horse.

DS. Was McGuire's Rocky the sire of Goldfinger and Silver

CS. Yes

DS. What type of a horse was he?

CS. He was about 15 hands, I guess, an awful pretty horse.

DS. Was he a yellow horse?

CS. Yea, he was yellow, I don't remember if he had four socks or two. He had a pretty blaze face. The last time we took that old mare up there, I let Ronnie have her, I think Ronnie had raised one colt out of



her, he give her to my youngest daughter, we took her up there and bred her, and the old horse was ruptured something awful. Worst shape you ever seen a horse in your life. He came out the stall and bred that old mare, just bred her one time. Mr. McGuire offered to give that old horse to me and Ronnie. We didn't want to fool with him, he would have to be operated on and he was getting old by then.

DS. Was he by Bucky?

CS. Yea, a horse called Jones Bucky.

DS. Did you ever see him?

CS. Yea, I seen him one time, he was running up there in a lot. Me and Ronnie went over there and seen him, he was pretty old. He wasn't a right pretty yellow, I didn't think. He looked more like a dun looking horse but he throwed some awful pretty colts.

DS. When did you start showing?

CS. I guess old Silver was the first horse we ever showed.

DS. Were the shows different in those days?

CS. Yea, they all had to canter back then.

DS. Did you show a lot.

CS. Well, no whole lot, just around close. Me and Ronnie went to London one time, took old Silver. Brenda showed three

times and won three blue ribbons. That was a pretty good show down there at London. There was a show up on this side of Frenchburg one time, Emmis Ratliff, he was in Menifee County and moved over to Ohio, been over there several years, we took that old horse up there. I don't remember, but I think she won that show. Emmis asked Ronnie, "Who's that girl down there ridin' that old stud horse?" Ronnie said, "Go down and look in his mouth and see how old you think he is." At that time, he hadn't slipped a tooth.

DS. Did you trail ride any?

CS. Along about the time Silver came along, we would ride every once in a while, but a little later on, we got to riding every weekend, if it wasn't bad weather.

DS. What do you consider the best horse you've ever owned?

CS. Well, old Silver, Goldfinger, these horses of this bloodline. I've had this bloodline, same stock, for .....46 years, I guess.

DS. The old McGuire's Rocky and the Bucky horse, did they use them a lot.

CS. McGuire didn't use his any. I don't know if he bought that horse or raised

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him. The Bucky horse belonged to a fellow by the name of Jones, I believe. I don't know who old Bucky was out of, I never heard anybody say.

DS. Being a breeder and trainer, what do you look for in a young horse?

CS. I always just look at the way they are made, the bones, and I always like a horse with a good long neck. I always like a pretty head. There are several things, I always liked a horse with a short back.

DS. How do you like to start a young horse.

CS. The first thing I do is make one come to me in the stall.

DS. Did you ever know that Will Ratliff over at Denniston?

CS. Yea, but not to well. I went with Margaret's dad over there to breed a mare to the yellow horse he had. The mare was a part big stock mare, we bred her and she had a buckskin colt and it made a great pretty horse and he could hit a lick, of course the old mare would trot up a storm. I finally got ahold of him and his name was old Prince. I broke him to work. He was a good work horse and weighed 1400 pounds.

DS. Do you think most of these Mountain Pleasure Horses have bred true from the beginning?

CS. Yea, I believe the Mountain Pleasure horses are a lot better breed of horses than a lot of them.

DS. As far as breeding goes, do you the Mountain Pleasure horse in on the right track?

CS. Yea, I think so.

Once again, I end by saying that I am not a writer nor do I have any literary skills. But I do have a love for horses and their history. I thoroughly enjoyed doing this interview with Mr.

Short and would like to thank him for allowing me the privilege. Send any questions or comments to david@spradlinrealestate.com



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