SAMUEL COKE BLAKE

It is funny how one small act can trigger a response that impacts the world. It was this sort of act that started Samuel Coke Blake in the Quarter Horse industry.

The gift of a Steeldust mare from his uncle started Blake's love for Quarter Horses.

As an adult, Blake started raising Steeldust horses in 1898 on his Oklahoma ranch. Taking the advice of N.B. Maxwell, a Tennessee native who also bred Steeldusts, Blake bought four White Lightning mares to cross with his Cold Deck stallions. The cross contributed greatly to the emergence of "The Blake Horse."

Blake's early quarter-type were particularly renowned throughout Oklahoma, Arkansas, Missouri and Kansas for their speed on the track and their ability for ranch work. Blake often said he could tell a fast horse by hearing it run.

"Fast horses' feet sound like buckshot on rawhide, with an even rhythm," he said.

His best-known horses were the stallions Tubal Cain, Blake's Traveler, Red Devil and Shiloah.

The 1930s brought the Depression and with it, the end of the Blake era. Hard times forced an eventual sale of all of Blake's holdings, but it did not ruin the mark his horses left on the Quarter Horse breed.

Blake was one of the few breeders in the early 1900s to keep pedigrees on the horses he

raised. The records proved valuable to Robert Denhardt, who started researching the history of the breed in the 1930s.

Blake died in 1951 at 89. He was inducted into the American Quarter Horse Hall of Fame in 1986.

