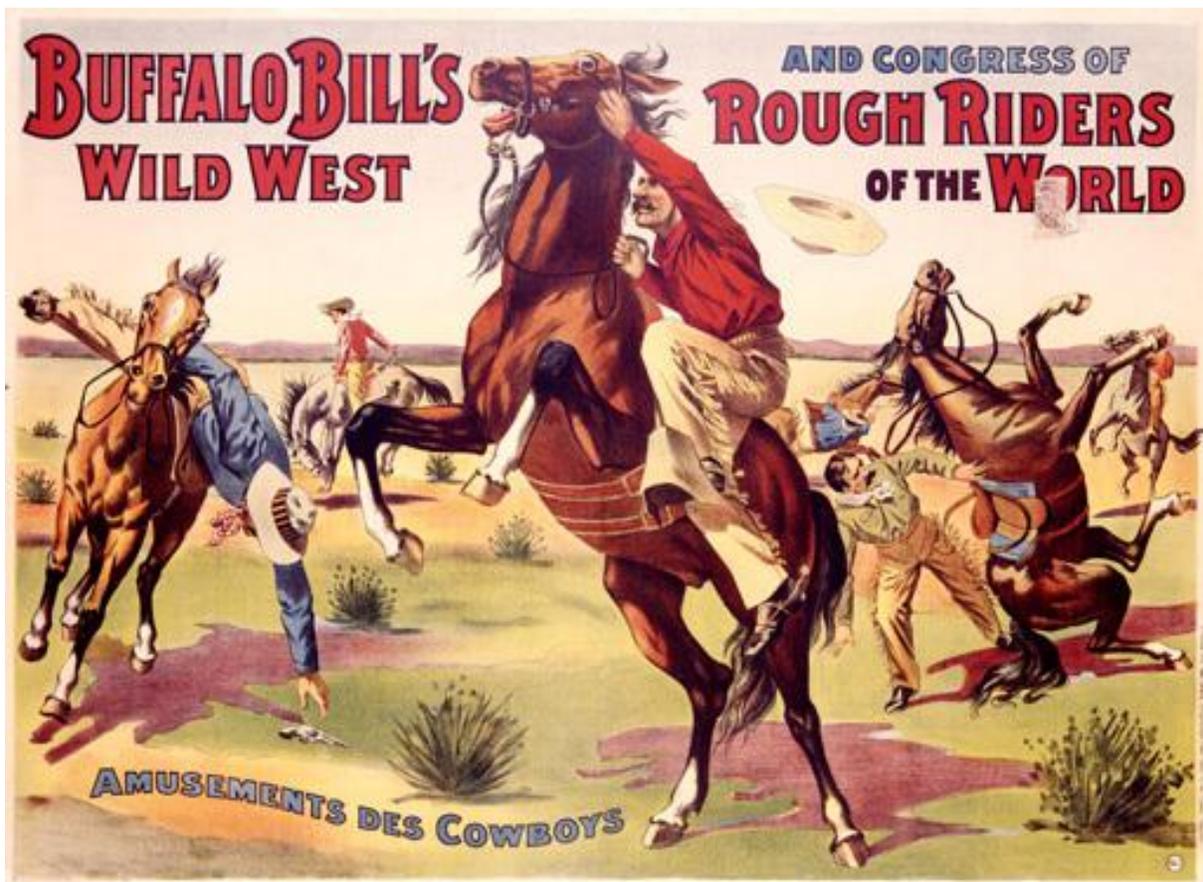


“RODEOS AND RACES”

The sport of rodeo has been around since the early days of cattle work and ranching. It originated in Spain and Mexico when vaqueros had to test their skills to maintain cattle and horse herds for general prosperity. The sport grew as they began to challenge others’ skills to see who was the best or the fastest at particular work. The first rodeo sport competition occurred after the Civil War and was held in Cheyenne, Wyoming in 1872. The sport grew and was often combined with Wild West Shows such as those hosted by Buffalo Bill and Annie Oakley. This caused crowds of spectators to gather for the fun filled events and the sport of rodeo grew around the world.



The most prominent rodeo events tested the speed and agility of cowboys and cowgirls and their horses. Each contestant was pushed to the limits both mentally and physically. Horses and riders had to be great athletes if they were to be successful. Events were timed for balance and talent to stay mounted on livestock or timed to see who was the fastest at a

particular skill. Early events consisted of bull riding, steer wrestling or “bull dogging”, saddle bronc riding and bareback bronc riding.



As rodeo developed further, horses were bred for better performance and specialty work. Athletes got better and stronger and looked for more serious and specialized competition. Organized associations added events like tie-down roping, team roping, breakaway roping,





goat tying, pole bending, and barrel racing to meet these new demands.



Rodeo events however were not the only developing sports with horses. Those horse owners and riders that did not work ranches or cattle had other ideas for timed events that tested endurance, speed, and agility. Formal groups began to branch off on their own even though rodeo had thousands of spectators and brought in large amounts of revenue and economic growth. The more sophisticated horse owners and those not interested in rough

stock began to develop another form of organized competition for their horses to event and show.

More people began to have an interest in the new events brought about from the earlier methods of cavalry training and cross entered their American Quarter Horses who also competed in rodeo events. They knew these horses could excel in many different activities. The new branch of organized eventing included the realm of jumping, the art of dressage, and cross country racing. These different sports were brought from England and other countries in the 1800's but did not become prominent or recognized sports in America until the early 1900's.



Unlike rodeos and eventing, the sport of horse racing had been around for centuries and only grew more prominent as America was settled and developed. Horse races were often run down the middle of town on the main street or in level fields.



Race horses were a huge business and owners showed them for conformation or build to perfect breeding for speed and endurance. Official tracks were built around the country to house spectators and horse owners that had been bitten by the racing bug. Large amounts of property and cash exchanged hands on a regular basis due to race outcomes. Thus, breeders were always trying to create a faster and more prominent horse. The art of breeding was perfected in the quarter mile with the development of the American Quarter Horse.



The American Quarter Horse Association was formed in 1940 and began the registry for the fastest breed for quarter mile racing and the legacy for the most versatile horse in the world. The American Quarter Horse registry is the largest in the world and has over 5 million

horses registered in 95 countries and over 280,000 members from 86 countries as of today. Many of the AQHA members regularly partake in rodeos, races, eventing, and shows.

