



Photos from the collection of Jewell Cantrell, Michael Bowling, Beatrice Paine and Georgia Cheer.

BEN RABBA: A TRIBUTE

**"Lo, what a horse should have, he did not lack"
by Michael Bowling**

My first thought was to open with "BEN RABBA was not just a horse" but that statement does an injustice to a whole species. A horse is precisely what BEN was - although he was a rare and remarkable individual, those of us who shared the gift of BEN RABBA's friendship have been vouchsafed a deeper than usual glimpse of what it really means to be a horse, of the limitless dimensions there are within these animals which share our lives. BEN was not "more than a horse;" he was "all that a horse might be."

BEN RABBA was a creature of so many excellences, which should I dwell upon? Physically he was gifted with unique beauty, power and bearing; surely the photos which will accompany this, say more about this aspect of BEN than my words ever could. BEN RABBA achieved a distinguished show career in spite of some negative experiences that must have worked against the complete fulfillment of his potential. BEN RABBA brought to life Carl Raswan's vision of "the Arabian horse as your friend and companion," a creature visiting this world from a higher plane and gifted with the "Contemplating eye." No one who ever looked into those great dark eyes could doubt that the magnetic aura which surrounded BEN was based upon a very real and very physical force of character. BEN could compel devotion with a glance from the height of that lofty neck; if humans could feel his power need I say what an effect he had on mares? I will anyway, for I shall never forget the first time we turned BEN out in our round pen. We had every mare and filly on the 20 acres lined up facing as if to Mecca to do him homage.

BEN RABBA has achieved genetic immortality. He has established himself for this generation and for generations to come as the leading sire of the "NASIK male line and unequivocally as an international sire whose influence cannot be overlooked. Those of us sharing in this legacy have a great responsibility to do him justice in the years to come.

Many of us have had the very course of our lives changed by BEN RABBA. I hesitate to list BEN's associates, for I know I will leave out many who deserve mention, but three names must be included. Beatrice Paine gave him his international opportunity when she took him to England in 1978; Jewell Cantrell gave him his happy retirement home and took responsibility for that final difficult decision. Finally, it is not possible to think of BEN RABBA without Ed Hubbert, and I know we will all be forgiven for believing that BEN and Ed are now together again. Those of us who are left behind must hope to emulate the largeness of soul which made BEN and Ed uniquely themselves - that gave them their importance in our lives, an importance beyond any of our individual lives.

Editor's note: There is a video tape available of Ben Rabba. I was informed by Michael Bowling that the 1 hour, 20 minute video opens with Ben Rabba in England and Ed Hubbert and Ben Rabba here in the U.S. The majority of the video is from Ben Rabba's 25th birthday celebration held October 15, 1989 showing each horse that was present at the celebration. The video can be purchased for \$18.50 (Beta or VHS) or \$22.50 (8 mm). Please specify film type, California residents add 6.25% sales tax. Make checks out to CMK Record, address is 1109-C Valencia Ave, Davis, CA 95616.



BEN RABBA in 1987 at Davis, California. Photo by Ann Bowling.



BEN RABBA with Michael Bowling in 1984. Ruth Sobeck photo.



BEN RABBA's last night in England. Beatrice Paine up.



BEN RABBA at age 20 years with Jewell Cantrell.

BEN RABBA 1964-1990

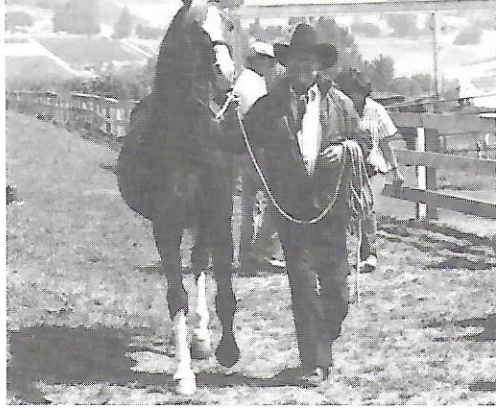
by Jewell Cantrell

August 6, 1990, was perhaps the saddest day of my life; it was the day I had to have my dear old friend of many years put to rest forever. BEN RABBA, who lived to be 26 years old, was a charismatic stallion who became a legend in his own time. He was the most magnificent, arrogant, loving and gentle horse I have ever had the privilege of knowing. He touched the lives of many people and everyone who ever came in contact with this great horse was absolutely captivated by him and loved him. BEN RABBA was responsible for many people becoming involved with Arabians. Ed Hubbert, BEN's owner, taught many new people to ride on BEN RABBA. It was amazing to see this fiery, magnificent stallion carrying these people who knew nothing about horses, going round and round the arena being so careful to try to stay under them and being gentle as a lamb.

I first saw BEN RABBA twenty-four years ago at a show in Sacramento when he was a two-year-old. At once I knew I was looking at a horse I should never forget. He was a very tall, lanky colt with a long and beautiful neck set on high and with a most gorgeous head. All his life,

whenever BEN RABBA came into a show ring, all one could see was this horse with the different look about him. All other horses in the ring with him seemed insignificant and that is just the way BEN felt about them, too. I introduced myself to his owner, Ed Hubbert, complimented him on his lovely colt and asked him what he intended to do with him. His response was that he was going to try to show him a little, but that mainly he was just his good friend and buddy. I told this man that he was holding the lead shank of a young horse who could very well one day be a champion among champions if given the chance. Ed was to hear these words many times in the years to come from many people, but that day Ed just smiled at me, thanked me for the compliment and went his merry way. At the time little did I know that one day Ed would be my dear friend and that BEN RABBA would become an important part of my life and the basis of our breeding program.

Two years passed before I ran into Ed and BEN RABBA again. My daughter, Renee, and I had gone to the half-Arabian show in Watsonville and at the noon-time break there was a presentation of the stallion AURAB who indeed was a magnificent animal and who just happened to be the sire of that beautiful colt I had seen at the show two years before. Following the presentation of Aurab there was a parade of broodmares with foals at side. In front leading the parade of mares and foals was the young stallion BEN RABBA, himself, who was the sire of all these foals. I could not believe my eyes because in this group of mares was every imaginable type from Walking Horse to pinto and Morgan, as well as Arabian, and the foals were absolutely the most beautiful creatures I had ever seen. They were big, bold, beautiful, and typy foals out of some ugly



Ed Hubbert showing Ben Rabba at the First Crabbe/American Day in 1986. G. Cheer photo.

mares. Renee and I decided right then and there we would, indeed, have to breed something to this horse. The following year we took the great old Crabbe lineage mare Safie to the court of BEN RABBA and the resulting foal was a beautiful colt Renee named PAZZAZ. He was to become her show gelding and later became many times a champion at halter as well as performance. He won his title of Legion of Merit in just four shows and went on to attain the coveted AHSA Horse of the Year for halter and western pleasure. PAZZAZ was the first of many foals we were to have sired by BEN RABBA through the years.

Meanwhile BEN RABBA went on to attain a very impressive show record of his own and you must remember it was all done with an amateur owner and all amateur handlers. Just a few of his wins were: U.S. Top Ten Ladies Side Saddle, Pacific Slope Champion Reserve Stallion, Pacific Slope Champion Western Pleasure, Region 3 Champion Stallion, Region 3 Champion Native Costume, Region 3 Top Five English Pleasure, Region 3 Top Five Ladies Side Saddle and Region 3 Top Five Western Pleasure.

BEN RABBA went on to win countless championships in all divisions of Arabian horse shows. He proved to be the epitome of the versatile and adaptable Arabian horse.

In the late 70s BEN RABBA was chosen by English breeder Mrs. J.H. Paine, owner of Bowdell Stud, to go to England and stand at stud for two and one-half years in order to bring back to England some of the Blunt blood lost to them in the early part of this century; it was the *NASIK male line at last returned to England from whence it had come. There BEN RABBA sired get which have attained top show honors and many have been exported to other countries. Beatrice Paine, who loved BEN dearly, telephoned to console me when she heard of his death; she knew how very much I loved him. She told me our faith in BEN RABBA had been right and surely was becoming evident in the fact that his progeny are winning honors all over the world. She told me of the recent wins at the 1990 British National Show of a BEN RABBA son (AL MAURAB) who was named Ridden Arabian Champion in his division and then Ridden Champion of the Show. A 3-year-old BEN RABBA granddaughter (Aureme) was named Junior Champion Filly and In-hand Champion of the Show over all other ages and sexes. Another BEN RABBA grandson (Aukubra) took Best Yearling Colt and Reserve Junior Champion Colt.

Here in the U.S., at the recent Region 3 Regional Championships, another BEN RABBA son, HAJI RABBA, won the title of Regional Champion English Pleasure Gelding as well as winning all his qualifying classes. The BEN RABBA daughter VIVA LA RIBBA was named the Golden State Performance Futurity Reserve Champion Western Pleasure horse. She and a full-sister, RABBIANA, have been winning many championships at the Class A shows all year.

When BEN RABBA came back to the U.S., Ed and I decided I would pick BEN up from his quarantine at the University of California, Davis, and bring him to our ranch here in Marysville to stand at stud. BEN RABBA came to think of our ranch as his home and even when Ed would take him off to Idaho to stand for a while or to the New Albion Stud in Davis or home to Monterey when he returned here he let everyone know he was back and led the way directly to his pasture and stall. He was the King of all he surveyed and this was home.

In the mid 1980s Ed became worried about what would become of BEN should he himself die of his failing heart. He decided to make a will out leaving BEN RABBA and HAJI RABBA to me and I would take care of BEN for the rest of his days. I promised him BEN would always have a home here where he knew he was loved by all of us and so it came

Ed at the time and is still going strong. They spent their time sharing the same pasture, swatting flies, grooming each other and just enjoying life. Each morning they greeted me with their wonderful hellos and I fed them their warm mush and each waited for their hug from me to start out the day. BEN had a way of letting me know how he felt. In his regal manner he would come up to me, put that magnificent head and neck over my shoulder and around my body and hold me for a minute before he would ever eat. That horse really got to me. It was devastating to me when he got colicky one evening. My dearest friend and veterinarian, Dr. Susan Gillen, came at once to care for BEN. Susan had become acquainted with Ed and BEN RABBA when BEN was at U.C. Davis for his quarantine upon returning from England. She was a young veterinary student there and Ed had hired her to exercise BEN during his stay. BEN RABBA had touched her life also and she had fallen under the spell of this great horse. BEN RABBA has been under her care since coming here to live and needless to say she worked day and night for three days trying to save him, but at last we both knew he was not going to recover and the terrible reality of what must be done faced us. I explained to Dr. Gillen that in the next year or so we would be moving the home of Cantrell Arabians to my home town of Gridley, on the ranch where my father, before me, had been born. The ranch had been in the family for over one hundred years and would always be and that is where I really wanted BEN to be, with us, for he was truly a part of our family. Great friend that she is, Dr. Gillen said, "So get the trailer and let's take BEN up there." I got the trailer and BEN, knowing this was something really important, hopped right into the trailer and we took that last ride together to Gridley. He unloaded and looked around the ranch in that arrogant way of his and had to explore all the new surroundings. He finally came to a beautiful spot on a knoll overlooking the future pasture of his mares and that is where BEN RABBA now rests. He was regal and elegant right to the end of his life. I had bathed him the day before and his coat shone like a copper penny in the morning sun. As I put my arms around him for the last time to say goodbye and tell him how much I loved him, he put that gorgeous neck over my shoulder and wrapped it around me to hug me back. Dr. Gillen gave him the shot and he went peacefully to sleep. Our beautiful BEN RABBA was gone. Susan and I both lay across his warm body and sobbed till no more tears were left. He was just as majestic in death as he was in life. I shall never forget him; he will live forever in my heart. It was such an honor just to be a part of his life.

So goodbye BEN and Ed, now you can ride together again.



Ed Hubbert with Ben Rabba. This picture was sent to Jewell by Beatrice Paine.