

8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400–1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500–1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600–1699	<input type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700–1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800–1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900–	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> other (specify)
				<input type="checkbox"/> sports

Specific dates 1943–1946 Builder/Architect J. Rukin Jelks

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

SUMMARY

The Rillito Racetrack in Tucson, Arizona, established in 1943, is significant for its contribution to the development of regulated Quarter Horse racing in the United States. The original chute portion of the Rillito complex is the actual track facility used between 1943 and 1946 for the initial formulation of specifications and rules which govern Quarter Horse racing today. From its origins at the Rillito facility, regulated Quarter Horse racing quickly evolved into a major regional sport and had spread nationwide by the 1950's. As the origin of the rules and specifications governing the national spectator sport of modern regulated Quarter Horse racing, the Rillito chute is considered to be eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under criterion A, and, because of the current national scope of the Quarter Horse racing industry, it is deemed to have exceptional significance in view of the explosive national and international growth in Quarter Horse racing over the past 43 years.

BACKGROUND

The American Quarter Horse was an established breed in America as early as 1665, according to racing historian Nelson C. Nye in the Complete Book of the Quarter Horse. When settlers migrated west, they brought the Quarter Horse in preference to thoroughbreds because of the Quarter Horse's inherent suitability for travel and work purposes as well as sport on "off days." The Quarter Horse proved to be extremely useful on western cattle ranges and could adapt to both the more severe climatic conditions and less productive arid lands. Adaptability was particularly beneficial in the Southwest, where the Quarter Horse was integral to the ranching activity and initial settlement of the remote and arid regions of the frontier.

Throughout the westward movement of the nineteenth century, informal match races of Quarter Horses were common weekend events in the Midwest and western states. Beginning in the early 1900's, tracks devoted to the Quarter Horse appeared at places such as Tucson's Rillito Park; King City and Corona, California; Albuquerque, New Mexico; and El Paso, Texas. While these tracks represented the origins of Quarter Horse racing as a western pastime, there was no formal organization of the sport, and no rules or specifications existed.

In Arizona, Quarter Horse racing grew up under the auspices of Nelson C. Nye's "Four Horsemen": J. Rukin Jelks, M.H. Haskell, Jake Meyer, and Bob Locke, all from Tucson and involved in horse breeding. Each of the four men contributed to the development of racing and of the breed and, as a result, to the Quarter Horse industry. Jelks began breeding Quarter Horses on his Rillito farm in the

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early 1940's. To prove the viability of the horses, Jelks and Haskell carved a rough dirt track in the rear acreage of Jelk's farm (now Rillito Racetrack) where they started racing their horses to demonstrate the racing capabilities of the Quarter Horse.

The Journal of the American Quarter Horse Association (1983) traces the origins of Quarter Horse racing, as more than a casual sport, to a track at Hacienda Moltaqua in Tucson. This track, devoted to all types of horse racing, featured a racing card of Quarter Horses, trotters, and thoroughbreds.

The local and regional popularity of the Quarter Horse and the Tucson promoters of Quarter Horse breeding ultimately caused Quarter racing to outgrow the sharing of the Moltaqua facility. In 1943 Rukin Jelks and Melville Haskell opened the Rillito Racetrack by improving the practice track on Jelk's breeding grounds adjacent to the Rillito River. The first organized races took place there, beginning with the 1943-44 season.

The formalization of the races led to the establishment of the American Quarter Racing Association in 1945, with Haskell and Jelks among the founding members. A main purpose behind the organization was to publish the rules that had been in use for the races organized by Jelks and Haskell at Rillito. These standards, developed at Rillito, were the initial formal regulations written for Quarter Horse racing. These regulations were developed and drafted by horseman Melville H. Haskell, based on the results at the Rillito track during the first two racing seasons. For his efforts at recording the racing statistics and later drafting the resulting rules, Haskell was cited as the "Father of Modern Quarter Horse Racing" and inducted into the American Quarter Horse Association Hall of Fame. "He is credited with developing a system for handicapping and identifying the horses that was later adopted by the (American Quarter Horse) association." 1

All racing results for the 1943-44 and 1944-45 seasons were recorded by Haskell. All racing results for races held during these seasons and standard rules developed at Rillito soon applied to all races. By 1945 all tracks holding Quarter Horse racing had adopted the Rillito regulations and were utilizing the straight 3/8 mile course, based on the Rillito specifications. The course itself was known as the "chute," and ultimately the adopted procedures were named the "chute system."

Standardization of the races required decision on length of the race and the introduction of a photo electric timer to ensure results. Development of both is credited to Rukin Jelks and Melville Haskell at the new Rillito Track, beginning in 1943. The photo electric timer was a functional necessity in precisely measuring times of races for the purpose of specifications, as well as for determining the winner of close races. A high speed clock was placed at

1 Obituary, Arizona Daily Star, Tucson, September 5, 1984.

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the finish line, and the finish was filmed with a movie camera. Frame-by-frame examination of the photographs, which showed the horses and the timer, enabled precise timing. Although rudimentary, the use of the photo finish was introduced at Rillito and is now a standard feature of modern racetracks.

In February 1945, the American Quarter Racing Association was founded in Tucson for the purpose of formulating basic rules and regulations to govern Quarter Horse racing on a national basis. The formal adoption in 1946 of the Rillito rules by the American Quarter Horse Association for all Quarter Horse racing firmly established Rillito as the birthplace of regulated Quarter Horse races. These rules are still in effect, with only minor revisions.

THE NATIONAL SCOPE OF QUARTER HORSE RACING

Concurrent with developments at Rillito, other southwestern tracks offered Quarter Horse racing but, as yet, without any actual standardization. When the standards used at Rillito were accepted and promulgated by the American Quarter Horse Racing Association in 1945, the sport grew tremendously. Two racing circuits were established one year later as primary functions of the organization. These circuits included Texas and New Mexico, and Nevada and southern California. Tucson was the geographic center of both circuits and the center of Quarter Horse racing organization.

By 1946 the two racing circuits were recognized and sanctioned by the AQHRA. Top horses from both circuits would meet at Rillito in Tucson for the Worlds Championship Quarter Horse Speed Trials. By that time tracks existed in Texas, Oklahoma, New Mexico, Colorado, Utah, Arizona, Nevada, and California.

The chute system, a 3/8 mile straight track, originally defined at Rillito, was the accepted design by 1946. In the late 40's, the Ruidosa, New Mexico and the Los Alamitos, California tracks were specifically designed according to the layout and length of the Rillito Track. The design of these tracks followed the chute layout of the Rillito Racetrack. This was necessary to maintain compatible standards of competition throughout the sport.

Regulated Quarter Horse racing continued to spread nationwide. In 1963, when Quarter Horse racing was readily established throughout the Southwest, 3,653 races were recorded. By 1984 that figure had risen to 16,786 recognized races on ninety-three sanctioned Quarter Horse tracks in twenty-two western and mid-western states, including Illinois, Michigan, and Ohio. 2 Fifteen recognized tracks had been established in Canada.

By 1983 Quarter Horse tracks existed in eight additional western states: Oregon, Washington, Idaho, Montana, Wyoming, South Dakota, Nebraska, and Kansas. Tracks in the eastern and midwestern states exist in Louisiana, Florida, Illinois, Ohio, Indiana, and Michigan.

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In the context of Quarter Horse racing as a national industry and spectator sport, based on the parameters of the races held at Rillito Racetrack beginning in 1943, Rillito occupies a pivotal place in this discipline of horse racing. The chute system and the design of the track developed at Rillito set the standard for all subsequent tracks. This direct relationship of the Rillito Racetrack chute with the major characteristics of the sport today makes this resource extremely significant. For its association with the sanction of Quarter Horse racing rules, regulations, and specifications, the Rillito track is considered to have exceptional significance to the growth of a national sport as well as direct importance to the expansion of the horse racing industry. The clear spread of Quarter Horse racing from Rillito to the Southwest, and ultimately nationwide, gives Rillito significance at the National level.

9. Major Bibliographical References

See continuation sheet.

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property 2.2

Quadrangle name Tucson North

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UTM References

A

1	2	5	0	4	3	8	0	3	5	7	2	3	2	0
Zone			Easting				Northing							

B

1	2	5	0	3	7	9	0	3	5	7	2	4	4	0
Zone		Easting				Northing								

C

1	2	5	0	3	7	8	0	3	5	7	2	4	2	0
Zone			Easting				Northing							

D

1	2	5	0	4	3	8	0	3	5	7	2	3	0	0
Zone		Easting				Northing								

E

Zone			Easting				Northing							

F

Zone		Easting				Northing								

G

Zone			Easting				Northing							

H

Zone		Easting				Northing								

Verbal boundary description and justification The nominated property is a 3/8 mile by 45 foot wide rectangle within the grounds of the Rillito Racetrack. The eastern portion of this property forms the southern edge of the oval race track. The designated land is located in the NE quarter, section 19, T 13 S, R 14 E, Pima County, Arizona.

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state N/A code county code

state code county code

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Joanne Hamilton Vinik Edited by: Roger A. Brevoort, SHPO staff
Sally Calkins Wegner April 1986

organization The Committee to Preserve date July 1984
Historic Rillito Racetrack

street & number 3701 N. Camino Del Oeste telephone AZ SHPO (602) 255-4174

city or town Tucson, AZ 85745 state

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national state local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature Donna J. Schuber

title State Historic Preservation Officer date April 29, 1986

For NPS use only
I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

date

Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

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BIBLIOGRAPHY

Denhardt, Robert Moorman

Quarter Horses: A Story of Two Centuries

University of Oklahoma Press, 1967.

Gives the history of the origin of the Quarter Horse; contains lists of foundation horses; contains Glossary, Bibliography, Index.

The King Ranch Quarter Horses and Something of the Ranch and the Men That Bred Them University of Oklahoma Press, 1970.

Contains Index and Bibliography; Mr. Denhardt has extensive files and tapes.

Foundation Sires of the American Quarter Horse University of Oklahoma Press, 1976 (published in cooperation with the American Quarter Horse Association).

Contains brief history of Rillito Race Track as the beginning of organized Quarter Horse racing.

The Quarter Running Horse: America's Oldest Breed University of Oklahoma Press, 1979.

A very comprehensive book; contains author's notes, an essay on source materials, Bibliography, and Index.

Nye, Nelson C.

Champions of the Quarter Tracks Coward-McCann, Inc., New York, 1950.

A very comprehensive book; Foreword by Van A. Smelker, Jr., Secretary-Treasurer, American Quarter Racing Association. This is a primary source book; contains Index and Appendices.

Speed and the Quarter Horse, A Payload of Sprinters. The Caxton Printers, Ltd.; Caldwell, Idaho, 1973. Walt Wiggins, publisher.

p. xi: "Perhaps the most unique factor about Quarter racing is that it is a sport of the people - the common folk, and it has been this way from its beginning several centuries ago." [Haskell's amateur] Significant chapter, "Telling It Like It Was," pp. 1-43. Gives thorough history with the significance of Rillito Race Track very specific. Relaxed style gives good, original feeling of first few years at Rillito.

The Complete Book of the Quarter Horse: A Breeder's Guide and Turfman's Reference. Arco Publishing Company, Inc., 1975.

Contains history; information about all activities in which a Quarter Horse is used.

Laune, Paul America's Quarter Horses Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1973.

History of racing, but starts in 1950.

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Lindeman, editor. *The Quarter Horse Breeder*. Humphrey Printing Company, Wichita Falls, Texas, 1959.

Includes several authors on history, conformation, performance, feet, breeding stock foundation families (Helen Michaelis), outstanding Quarter Horse breeders. Of significance is the chapter on racing by M. H. Haskell, pp. 55-63. Contains most of the information found in the AQRA "Year Books;" has a brief note on Haskell. Arizona breeders: James, Tom, and Jack Finley, Gilbert; Art Pollard, Sonoita. Haskell on the future of Quarter Racing: people like to see a longer race; perhaps the Quarter Horse will return to amateur standing, but "the BREED . . . can do the best job for the great majority of people." (p. 63)

Longrigg, Roger *The History of Horse Racing* Stein & Day, New York, 1972.

Overall history of the Quarter Horse; more information available from Nye.

Osborne, Walter D. *The Quarter Horse* Grosset & Dunlap, New York, 1972.
A nice overview of the Quarter Horse; brief history; "The complete story of America's own horse - how he was developed - how he is used - how he is trained."

Porter, W. T., esq. of the *New York Spirit of the Times*. *A Quarter Race in Kentucky, and Other Tales* Philadelphia: Carey & Hart, 1847, first published in 1836.

p. 13 ff: "A Quarter Race in Kentucky," by a Northern Alabamian. A humorous account of a Quarter race; gives example of it being the sport of the "common folk." Describes various types of horses and their owners - still true today; no facts or figures, just colorful, if slightly exaggerated; does provide early history of Quarter racing.

Simpson, Norman T. *Country Inns and Back Roads* A Berkshire Traveller Book, North America XIV, Printed in Dalton, Massachusetts by The Studley Press, 1979.

P. 313: "What I like about it here . . . is the really endless variety of things that are going on in Tucson - the Art Center, the many different theatres, the new museum, the exhibition of Indian arts, the opera company, the ballet, the Tucson Symphony, the golf courses, the racetrack, and all kinds of sports events - it's so civilized!"

Smelker, Renee H. *Dams of Quarter Racing Stakes Horses, 1949-1976* Tucson, Arizona, 1977.

Lists "wins" of foundation dams at Rillito.

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Vavra, Robert All Those Girls In Love With Horses William Morrow and Company, Inc., New York, 1981.
"Vicky Smallwood, Jockey," pages 196-215.
Photographed at Rillito.

Widmer, Jack The American Quarter Horse Charles Scribner's Sons, New York, 1959.
Overall view of the Quarter Horse; nothing significant on Rillito.

Wiggins, Walt The Great American Speedhorse: A Guide to Quarter Racing Sovereign Books, 1978.
The book is a good general review of horses, men, and tracks. It is well documented; contains bibliography, glossary, index, etc. Mr. Wiggins has a very good photo collection.

Magazines

American Quarter Horse Journal

November, 1950

- "Rillito 1949-1950 Racing," by Bernice Roth, pp. 18-19.
This article was Xeroxed and sent by the American Quarter Horse Association; further publishing information was not available. The article is primarily about racing at Rillito during the year of the title. It gives good background material from a (then) contemporary author.

1974 (The month was not identified; the year is a probability.)

- "Birthplace of a sport . . . Rillito Race Track," by Jim Jennings, pp. 104-110.

This article was Xeroxed and sent by the American Quarter Horse Association; further publishing information was not available. The article is an excellent discussion of the origins of both Rillito Race Track and of Quarter Horse racing which began in the Colonial period. It contains details of interest to horsemen who are actively involved in racing.

Collier's

November 1, 1947

This article was loaned by Mrs. E. J. Piggott, Jr. There is no title page and no author mentioned, pp. 75-77.

The article is a definitive discussion of the Quarter Horse; it explains the American Quarter Racing Association, its rules and regulations (now adopted by the American Quarter Horse Association); it has good color photographs.

The Magazine Tucson

May, 1949

- "Meet a Tucson Personality," "Horses, Horses, Horses - The Life and

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Love of J. Rukin Jelks,' pages 38-39; 56. The article profiles Jelks and explains how he came to be interested in building a track; some history of the Quarter Horse; mention of the men who started organized racing in Tucson.

- "Quarter Horse Speed Trials: The World's Finest Quarter Horses vie each year for honors at the Tucson Track," pages 36-37; 56. Article mentions prominent people; several pictures.

- "Tucson Newsreel," page ?

Mentions establishment of Arizona State Racing Commission with M. H. Haskell as chairman. Mentions proposed physical improvements at Rillito.

January, 1950

- "Quarter Horse Racing in the Old Pueblo," page 42.

Track news and descriptions.

May, 1950

- "Raising Fine Quarter Horses," pages 18-19.

Article about the Strong Ranch; the importance of J. Rukin Jelks and similiar horsemen; the beginning of organized Quarter Horse racing in Tucson; some significant horses and men.

- "Pot Purri," page 37.

People and horses at Rillito.

March, 1953

- "Smartest Horse on the Range," by Nelson C. Nye, pages 12-14.

An overall history of the development of the Quarter Horse.

- "Tucson Fashions," page 21.

Fashion photos taken at Rillito.

Issues with specific ads (complete bus service, etc.):

March, 1953, page 5

January, 1950, page 37

Tucson Pleasure Magazine

February, 1948 (Rodeo Edition)

- "Tucson Sideshow," by Michael O'Shea, page 1. The importance of Rillito to Quarter Horse racing.

- "What's Wrong With Quarter Horse Races?" by Ed Echols, page 11.

Law and order article; has nice description of a Quarter Horse.

Spring, 1948

- "Keeping Up With The Bangtails," by Nelson C. Nye, page 3.

Same material to be found in Mr. Nye's books.

Newspapers

The Tucson Daily Citizen

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- February or March, 1956: Feature article on personalities by Bud Tucker.
- October 26, 1956: Several articles on Rillito, mostly people and their horses, types of races; "Bob and Leo" gate horses, by Dick Mackey.
- 1958-1959: "The Bull Pen," by George McCleod; feature column, mentions radio broadcast by Monitor.
- February 20, 1960: article on a race by Bill Davidson.
- September 19, 1975: article on Rulon Goodman by Allison Hook.
- February 15, 1977: article on Rulon Goodman, by Steve Weston.

The Arizona Daily Star

- No date available: "The Morning Line," column by "Turf Writer," Cecil James.
- March 10, 20, 26, 27, 29, 30, 31, 1954; April 3, 4, 1954; May 8, 11, 12, 1954: articles on Dragonette; includes M. K. Udall's Official Report (March 20, 1954), by Vince Davis.
- 1958: "Rillito Park Sale Provided Best Racing Story in 1958," by Bill Thompson. This was part of a series and also included a picture of the "elevated terrace" at Rillito.
- 1958-1959: "The Morning Line," by Ed Gallardo. A regular column on horses and people at Rillito.
- September 21, 1975: article on Rulon Goodman by Pete Cowgill.
- July 2, 1982: "Tucsonans responsible for quarter horse racing's roots," by Bob Christ. A brief historical review, quotes from Wollard, Jelks, and Figueroa.

Other Source Material

Early Chart Books

The books are extremely rare; a complete set is owned by John K. Goodman, and he was kind enough to Xerox those portions which the Committee felt were significant. Mr. M. H. Haskell presented autographed copies of the Chart Books for the years 1945 and 1946; Mr. Nelson C. Nye donated the 1949 Book to the Committee. All "Booklets" were prepared by Melville H. Haskell.

"Booklet No. 1": Racing Quarter Horses, prepared by Melville H. Haskell, Secretary for the Southern Arizona Horse Breeder's Association. Contains, in addition to track records, a good general history of the Quarter Horse and the modern method of starting a Quarter Horse race.

"Booklet No. 2": Racing Quarter Horses: 1944, prepared by Melville H. Haskell for the American Quarter Racing Association.

Introduction explains formation of the American Quarter Racing Association, terms used, cooperation with the American Quarter Horse Association, officials of the AQRA. Brief, but colorful, history of

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the running and working Quarter Horse. History of the formation of Rillito, type of track, chute system, page 5 (subsequently copied by other tracks); Discussion of rules and regulations and the reasons for them.

"Booklet No. 3": The Quarter Running Horse: 1945, Year Book and Register of Merit of the American Quarter Racing Association. Contains the logo of the new association; statement of purpose; membership; dues; rules; registration; qualification. There is a brief history of Quarter racing, an explanation of handicapping, how rules and regulations are derived.

"Booklet No. 4": The Quarter Running Horse: 1946, Year Book and Register of Merit of the American Quarter Racing Association. Contains Abbreviations and Definitions; the Introduction has a brief history of the formation of AQRA, the officers, the purpose, the explanation of rules and regulations, circuit map, review of handicapping, pertinent horses.

"Booklet No. 5": The Quarter Running Horse: 1947, Year Book and Register of Merit of the American Quarter Racing Association, Published by the AQRA, Tucson, Arizona.

A more detailed "Booklet" than those of previous years, more formal; has very good Introduction which includes history of organization, Quarter Horses, evolution of rules and regulations, statistics, qualifying horses, etc.

"Booklet No. 6": The Quarter Running Horse: 1947 Supplement, Year Book and Register of Merit of the American Quarter Racing Association, published by the AQRA, Tucson, Arizona.

Contains previously mentioned material. "This issue was necessary in order to bring the Year Book up to a calendar year basis. Previous Year Books had consisted of all racing from July to July, however meetings are now scheduled on a year-round basis which necessitates closing the records the first of each year in order to include all reports from every track. This statement shows how the organization had grown since it started at Rillito.

"Booklet No. 7": The Quarter Running Horse: 1948, Year Book and Register of Merit of the American Quarter Racing Association, published by the AQRA, Tucson, Arizona.

The AQRA had grown to the point that there is a large table of contents; statistics include the number of horses, member tracks, states represented, etc. Interesting is the statement that ". . . both Quarter Horse Breed Associations are represented on the Board of Directors." (page 3).

"Booklet No. 8": The Quarter Running Horse: 1949, Year Book and Register of Merit of the American Quarter Horse Association, Racing Division, published by the AQHA Racing Division, Tucson, Arizona.

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This is the last "Booklet" issued from Tucson; Amarillo, Texas, home of the AQHA took over. Page 3 explains how and why the merger occurred. Most of the "Booklet" is concerned with the rules and regulations of Quarter Horse racing.

Scrapbooks from Mary Mansur

These scrapbooks are primarily a record of the Mansur race horses, their triumphs and tragedies. The material is chronological; most of the clippings are identified. The books have been designated by letter in chronological order; the description of the contents is concerned only with items relating to Rillito Race Track. Much of the material in the scrapbooks has no direct bearing on the years designated by the Committee to Preserve (1943-1957), but are interesting, personal glimpses of the track and its history.

- "Book A" (1943-54)

1. 1948: Purchase of mare from J. Benjamin; significant for his name.
2. No date: Paper from Rukin Jelks on breeding - significant concerning attempt for registration - the beginning of foundation.
3. 1952: Clancy Wollard mentioned as Manager of RRT. Mentions of Figueroa family - various members involved in breeding, training, riding, etc.
4. 1953: Official programs of Rillito Race Track - officials listed; Hal Gras as announcer; Haskell logo; price 15 cents.
5. 1953: Official programs (earlier than above); different logo; slick paper; has ads; price 20 cents; called Rillito Park; Virgil Bond announcer. Needs investigation because it does not match chronologically with Assessor's records.
6. Handwritten note on same page: "Purple Gang of Detroit Mgr's of Rillito."
7. 1953-1954: "Sissler" became lead horse, later rope horse; shows versatility of Quarter Horse.
8. 1954: Official programs shows inclusion of Thoroughbreds with Quarter races.
9. February 13, 1954: Result Sheet from the track; shows weather, handle, attendance, horses, people, many states listed.
10. April 4, 1954: Benefit for Crippled Children's Clinic. Only mention of use of track for charity recorded in scrapbooks.

- "Book B" (1954-1956)

1. 1954: J. Benjamin, manager of Rillito Park.
2. 1955: J. Benjamin, manager of Rillito Park.
3. February, 1955: Result Sheets showing Thoroughbred handle greater than Quarter Horse.
4. 1955: Win picture shows outside stairway, now enclosed.
5. 1955: Letter from the American Quarter Horse Association regarding registration; shows development of system.

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6. 1956: Rillito, J. Benjamin, manager; in program has person in charge of "Courtesies and Complaints."

- "Book C" (1956-1958)

1. 1956: Rillito Park programs still show J. Benjamin as manager.
2. Citizen, November 10, 1956: Article by Dick Macky mostly about specific horses, but mentions "near record crowd." Inset picture shows Caliente Safety Helmet required at Rillito.
3. December 1, 1956 (newspaper not identified): mention of Porter's Western Store Handicap ". . . honors the Porter's Western Store, who for years and years has served all the needs of horsemen and tourists in the Tucson area."
4. No date: Citizen: picture with caption, "Rillito Shatters Mutuel Records."
5. 1957: Race sheets from program; no identifying outside sheets.
6. 1957 (?) Citizen: picture of injury on track; shows some rail and toteboard.
7. December 21, 1957: Program note concerning the construction of North First Avenue; no outside sheets.
8. 1958: Race sheets from programs, no other information.

- "Book D" (1958-1963)

1. 1958: Rillito Park program; J. Benjamin, manager.
2. On same page, handwritten note: "Fall of '58 - Detroit Businessmen took over Rillito - Joe Pulte - mgr. Denny Smith, Racing Secretary."
3. Star, November 28, 1959: "The Morning Line," by Ed Gallardo. Article concerning naming horses and mentioning many prominent people.
4. 1960: Letter from Rillito Race Track, Inc. Letterhead lists Directors and Officers - very interesting in light of later newspaper accounts and Recorder's records. (4 cents stamp on envelope!)
5. Citizen, January 20, 1960: Mentions "One of quarterhorse racing's top events, the Southwestern Futurity at Rillito Park . . ."
6. Citizen, no date: history of association between Mrs. Allen and Figueroa family.
7. February 17, 1960: Rillito Park Racing Conditions - technical entry, not actual track conditions.
8. February 20, 1960: New Program cover, not seen before, sunset picture.
9. 1962: New program cover - useful for names.
10. 1963: Same program cover, new color; useful for names.
11. Star, January 30, 1963: Article by Ed Gallardo concerning special races: age of horses, non-winners, etc. (perhaps some idea for future features.)
12. Daily Racing Form, January 30, 1963: feature article on Rillito Park, mostly Thoroughbreds.

- "Book E" (1963-1966)

1. 1963: Program; useful for names.
2. December 29, 1963: New program for Rillito Park; H. F. Nunn, General Manager.
3. 1964: Programs.

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4. Citizen, March 17, 1964: Important article, no author identified, concerning the closing of Rillito; comments that loss is hard on horsemen and young horses; the state is to blame, etc.
5. Citizen, 1964: George McLeod: "The track which has known both the glories of championship quarter horses and the final days of bottom-of-the-barrel thoroughbreds, may soon echo to the clicking heels of shoppers. Rillito Park is almost sure to become Rillito Plaza." The comment on thoroughbreds echos Nye's contention that thoroughbreds of poor quality ruined Rillito.
6. Pima County Fair racing program, held at Rillito.
7. 1965 (probably): Handwritten note: "Rillito - now Emprise opened for a 4 day Pima County Fair race meet."
8. Handwritten note: "1965 ended with horses in bad shape and Rillito Race Track to be closed indefinitely as funds were stolen and records destroyed . . ."

- "Book F" (1967-)

1. Handwritten note: "Rillito Race Track sold to a Mr. Issacson of New York and will open once again as Tucson Turf Club - for the Winter Meet-" Needs clarification from Recorder's records.
2. December, 1967: Programs of Tucson Turf Club, lists Officials, Directors, etc.
3. 1968: Similar programs.
4. Handwritten note about Manny Figueroa, Jr. being "so hung over he could barely stay aboard . . ."
5. Handwritten note: last words about Mansur horses and "The Race Track did not reopen in the fall as it was a financial failure . . ."

- "Book G" (no dates)

1. October, 1982: Letter from Ron Asta, Community Planner, Riverside Downs, Inc. States status of Rillito in 1982. Subject to question.
2. The remainder of the scrapbook has nothing to do with Rillito Race Track.

Scrapbooks from Mary Shoemaker

These books contain clippings collected by Mrs. Shoemaker over a period of years; she now lives in Rukin Jelks' home to the north of Rillito Race Track. The scrapbooks are not indexed, nor are the pages numbered; the material is not in chronological order; only some of the clippings are identified. The books have been arbitrarily designated by letter; the description of the contents is concerned only with items relating to Rillito Race Track and is presented in the order in which the items appear in the books.

- "Book A"

1. Programs from "Rillito Park," April 6, 8, 12, December 15, 1957-1958. Mention that J. Rukin Jelks is on the Advisory Board.

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2. February 1, 1948: Program from Rodeo Race Track, put out by the American Quarter Racing Association (which started at Rillito); also uses the name "Tucson Racing Association."
3. Newspaper clipping, Arizona Daily Star, "Rillito Park," by Ed Gallardo. Mentions Mary Shoemaker's silks; jockey suspensions and fines.
4. Programs from Rillito Park, December 26; January 21, 1957-1958 (?) Contains names of active organizers.
5. Rillito Race Track Program, April 19, 1950. The name, Rillito Park, was apparently briefly used.
6. 1956 clipping from Arizonan showing pictures taken at Rillito; same page has mention of Jelks' horse and Rincon Stock Farm of Tucson (Haskell). Next page has mention of Jelks and his horse, Miss Todd (TB).
7. 1956 clipping from Arizonan discussing Charlie Baad and the Shoemakers. Useful for background information.
8. Mention of 1956 opening of Rillito Park (name change).
9. Clippings: Jim Hall replaced by Gale Mower (after 1955?) [names not checked out due to late date]; Jimmy Benjamin is manager of Rillito Park. Subsequent oral histories (W. K. Richey and B. Cook) indicated that J. Benjamin was owner, trainer, owner of El Corral Restaurant where everyone went after the races. The mention of his name elicits good oral responses; he passed away several years ago.
10. Newspaper article, 1957-1958 (?) "Stewards Crack Down on Careless Riding."
11. "The Bull Pen," feature column, mentions foundation sires of current favorites; Art Pollard of Lightning A Ranch.
12. March 7, 1957, Tucson Citizen, Sports Section: drop in Mutual explained by Jimmy Benjamin, General Manager.
13. April 25, 1948: American Quarter Racing Association Program. Used for names.
14. "The Bull Pen," by George McCleod. Article gives good background material on Rillito Race Track; "honors Rillito Park as the birthplace of formal organized Quarter Horse racing . . ." Mentions reasons for decline in Arizona of Quarter Horse Racing - going to California where money is better; there are no longer any good tracks in Arizona. " . . . the only good national publicity Rillito has ever received has come from World Champion Quarter Horses ."
15. Article about J. Rukin Jelks and his horses, Miss Todd and Old Pueblo. There is minor mention of Mr. Jelks.
16. Newspaper clipping: 1956 or 1957, "most successful racing season in Tucson history . . ."

- "Book B"

1. March 9, 18, 1956; February 26, 1957: Rillito Park Programs. (Also includes November 18, 19; December 18, 1956 or 1957). Used for names of officials.
2. April 23, 1950, Rillito Race Track Program.
3. Newspaper clipping: "Big Handle . . ." probably 1957-1958; gives records of horses and money.

Clipping from probably 1957 or 1958

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5. 1953 Race programs. Used for names.
6. Background on Jelks and his horse, Old Pueblo (TB).
7. January 31, 1958, Steward rulings at Rillito.
8. Pictures of Rillito Race Track, probably 1958.
9. Article on Ismael Valenzuela, a jockey who got his start in Tucson on Quarter Horses; he rode for rancher Jim Livingston, probably in 1947 or 1948; he is later mentioned as the rider of Tim Tam. Used to show Rillito was the starting ground for famous men as well as horses.
10. 1957 or 1958: Picturesque comments on Rillito Park; lots of money, good horses; shows mud-mired 1956 Buick.
11. Newspaper article by Bill Thompson on new owners of Rillito - the "Michigan Businessmen." Article gives the ownership history from Jelks on; May 29, 1953, said to be the first sale date; lists the "Four Horsemen" who started racing in Tucson; Rillito opened November 14, 1943. Article provides a great deal of information for begining purposes; found to be slightly inaccurate when compared with deed records in Assessor's Office.
12. Death of Spotted Bull owned by Art Pollard who bought the horse in 1950. Spotted Bull was a leading sire of Quarter Horses. Article useful for names and tracing foundation animals.
13. Death of Phee Pollard; article useful in mentioning names of people and horses.
14. Rudy Campas and Milo Valenzuela, leading national jockeys, got their start at Rillito.
15. Article discussing the 1959 season under the Detroit group; mention "face lift," March 22, October 25, 1958.
16. 1957 or 1958: John Richmond, an attorney, as publicity director at Rillito.
17. 1958: Queen Elizabeth's trainer at Rillito.
18. Mel Haskell owned Rincon Stock Farm; significance is his development of both track and horses.
19. November, 1958, or February, 1959, snow closed the track.
20. 1957 or 1958: Article on Rod Fenton being locked in the men's room.
21. 1958: "Rillito Park Sale Provided Best Racing Story in 1958," by Bill Thompson (probably Citizen), 5th in a series. Reorganization in 1955 - Mr. and Mrs. A. D. Filiatrault held large mortgage purchased from J. Rukin Jelks, October 8, 1955; change in management resulted, 13 man board replaced Jimmy Benjamin and stopped "giveaway admission." Does not exactly match Assessor's records.
22. Go Man Go and Mr. Bar None set world records at Rillito.
23. 1958: Article by Bill Thompson detailing problems at the track.
24. "The Morning Line," by Ed Gallardo. Comment on tourists and the problem of getting quality horses - a foreshadow of why track lost prestige? [Nelson C. Nye oral history continues this comment.]
25. Horsemen's Benevolent and Protective Association formally organized at Rillito Park.
26. 1960 (probably): "The Morning Line," by Ed Gallardo: "It's standard procedure to take out a small percentage of the winning horse's purse for the breeder if the winning horse was bred in the state in which he is running. This is to encourage race horse breeding."

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27. 1960's: many newspaper comments on increased attendance, increased revenues; still some top horses, but probably a decline in horse quality.
28. 1960's: large feature stories, pictures in newspapers.
29. 1960: "Return of Ed Piggott," "a major stockholder of a race track (Hot Springs, Arkansas)." after a two-year absence - his wife did not want horses in claiming races [see Nye, oral history]. Ed Piggott now in Tucson, gave some unrecorded oral history.
30. 1960: "The Bull Pen," by George McLeod, Citizen Sports Editor: "A few years ago when Tucson was the quarter horse racing capital of the World . . ."
31. 1958-1960 (?): Denny Smith, racing secretary.
32. November 11, 1962: Star: social note lists track "regulars." Some old names, some still to be contacted.
33. June 10, 1963: Star: Death of Richard Lujan (killed at Ruidoso); rode Quarter Horses for Art Pollard, 1951 and before.

- Book "C"

1. 1956 (?): "The Bull Pen," by George McLeod: "J. Rukin Jelks, Mel Haskell, Jake Meyers, and Bob Locke are credited with building horse racing in Tucson, but without Jockey Charlie Guinup they might have had a much harder time." Jockey who was killed at the track. Several pages of articles on the subject - background information.
2. Article on Wise Heels, owned by Marjorie D. Allen [W. K. Richey oral history tape], names foundation horses and owners Jelks and Haskell.
3. Cecil James, sports writer about track, probably Star.
4. March 12, 1956: Rillito Park's board of stewards instituted training sessions for jockeys, "Big Crackdown on rough riding."
5. Article on Brezy Cox, old time trainer. Was he there in 1943-1946?
6. "The Morning Line," by Cecil James: Charlie Guinup Memorial Race: trophy and race will remain at the track " . . . as long as there is horse racing in Tucson."
7. 1954-1955: Mention of increase of handle - 15% increase over previous season; can see growth since 1949-1950.
8. 1955: Track pays \$120,000 in state taxes. Comments that jockeys are making a living wage, track employees have had jobs for winter months. "Rillito Park is another inducement for the ever-present winter visitors, who in turn, make up a large portion of Tucson's growing income.: See next page, too.
9. Rillito Park Programs: 1954-1955, November 10, first day of racing; November 17, third day of racing; December 12, 16, 29, 15th day of racing.
10. 1956 (?): "Southwestern Futurity, The 8th running of Rillito Park's only remaining Quarter Horse Stakes race . . ."
11. 1956: Audie Murphy bought several Quarter Horses; hoped to buy a ranch in Tucson; bought Queenie, daughter of Flying Bob, her son, Rukin String. Murphy wanted to breed short horses and help the Quarter Horse Industry.
12. Star, possibly 1956: First annual Rillito Jockeys' Ball held in the Rendezvous Room of the Santa Rita Hotel. [J. K. Goodman oral history

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notes: his father owned the hotel and most of the breeders, trainers, owners stayed there.]

- Book "D"

1. 1950: Rillito Race Track Programs: March 19, April 30, 1950: use for names.
2. December 19, 1953: Citizen article by George McLeod, "Classy Field" about championships.
3. Star (?) Article by Dick Mackey: Bob and Leo, matched Belgian draft horses responsible for moving the starting gate for the past three seasons. Before Tucson, they were at Santa Anita (1954?). Once won California pulling contest; at one time were the second largest Belgian draft team in the world. (Oral histories from W. K. Richey and N. C. Nye have no memory of the horses.)

- Book "E"

1. 1961: Article by Charlotte Cardon on Shoemakers' house, built by J. Rukin Jelks.
2. April 21, 1956: Article in The Thoroughbred Record on Mary Shoemaker - no mention of Rillito.
3. 1950: Article on Quarter Horse race at Rillito.

- Book "F":

1. Article: Ross Dollarhide bought a Quarter Horse from J. Shoemaker.
2. May 25, 1955: Article by Cecil James on J. Rukin Jelks and Miss Todd (TB) - use for background.
3. "The Bull Pen," by George McLeod: on Miss Todd (TB); states that Jelks is a pioneer of racing in Arizona.
4. No date: rain and flood damage at Rillito.
5. Poem written by Col. Fred Hamilton of 2500 East River Road on Miss Todd; sent to Jelks from Kent Cochran's column in The Daily Racing Form sent by Marie Shriver. Also in article is mention of famous quarter horses and owners in Tucson; sale of Haskell's Rincon Farm.
6. Picture of harness racing at Moltacqua (forerunner of Rillito).
7. Article by Cecil James: Rillito's 13 consecutive years of racing - started in 1943. Foundation of racing in Arizona. "Angel Valenzuela who rode Prince John . . . started his days at Rillito." Jelks' 1953 sale of track to Rod Fenton - scandal developed. 1955-1956: controlling interest owned by Ben Shermerhorn, Art Filiatrault. Helpful background.
8. "The Bull Pen," by George McLeod: "J. Rukin Jelks, former owner of Rillito Park, is one of the many horsemen who mourn the end of match races in quarter horse racing . . ."
9. Virgil Bond calls races at Rillito [N. C. Nye oral history].
10. "The Bull Pen," by George McLeod: "Lack of good brood mares in Arizona and the lure of the breeders' slice of purses for California-bred horses has caused . . . Spotted Bull to move . . ."

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11. Article: "Fair Site Might Be Switched" - on using Rillito for Santa Cruz Fair: reasons for and against.

Oral Histories

In taking oral histories, the Committee found that the people being interviewed loved to remember Rillito and the people they knew there. In fact, often the questioning was reversed to "get caught up" on who was doing what. In a sense, for a brief time, we went back to old friends and good times.

Cathey, C. D.: April 20, 1983, at Rillito Regatta; interviewed by Joanne Hamilton Vinik and Sally Calkins Wegner

Cook, Bill: July 1, 1983, tape #101A; interviewed by Joanne Hamilton Vinik and Sally Calkins Wegner

DeWeese, Mary M.: August 4, 1983, tape #104A, interviewed by Sally Calkins Wegner

Haskell, Melville H.: September 24, 1983, tapes #105A-B, 106A-B, interviewed by Joanne Hamilton Vinik and Sally Calkins Wegner

Jelks, J. Rukin: January 27, 1983; interviewed by Joanne Hamilton Vinik and Sally Calkins Wegner

Nye, Nelson C.: July 31, 1983, tapes #102A-B, 103A-B; interviewed by Joanne Hamilton Vinik, Sue Brown, Sally Calkins Wegner

Piggott, Ed: February 12, 1983; interviewed by Joanne Hamilton Vinik and Sally Calkins Wegner

Piggott, Mrs. E. J., Jr.: March 22, 1984; interviewed by Sally Calkins Wegner

Richey, W. K.: July 11, 1983, tape #101B; interviewed by Joanne Hamilton Vinik and Sally Calkins Wegner

Shoemaker, Mary: February 11, 1983; interviewed by Joanne Hamilton Vinik and Sally Calkins Wegner

Smelker, Van A.: Jr., March 7, 1983; interviewed by Joanne Hamilton Vinik

Institutions

American Quarter Horse Association
Arizona Heritage Center
Pima County Assessor's Office
University of Arizona: Libraries
University of Wyoming: Western Research Center