

BREEDING

Pedigree Analysis



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THE KEENELAND STUD

Racing's spotlight shines on Keeneland Race Course, hosting the 2015 Breeders' Cup World Championships, but visitors to the track may be surprised to learn that Keeneland was once also a prominent stud farm. America's leading sire, Tapit, descends from one of its foundation mares, Black Brocade.

Black Brocade was foaled in England in 1912 and brought to the U.S. by John O. "Jack" Keene, whose family owned the land on Versailles Road for generations. By Neil Gow, out of Black Velvet, by Veles, Black Brocade was unplaced in two starts, but was a granddaughter of the great broodmare Black Duchess. For Jack and his brother, George Hamlet "Ham" Keene, she produced stakes winners Jeanne Bowdre and Shuffle Along, both by the home sire Luke McLuke. She was sold to Joseph Widener carrying stakes-placed Negrina, a 1921 filly also by Luke McLuke. Negrina produced Armful, a foundation mare for Calumet Farm, whose offspring included the champion older male Armed.

The Keenes kept Jeanne Bowdre, who won the Golden Rod Handicap and when brought home to Keeneland foaled stakes winners Jean Valjean, Jean Lafitte, and Grand Slam, besides several daughters, including Jeanne d'Arc, Fantine, and Silver Beauty.

Silver Beauty was by Stefan the Great, and her daughter, War Beauty, by Man o' War, was bred on shares with Sam Riddle. War Beauty was bought out of the Saratoga yearling sale by Jack Keene and won the Selima Stakes in the Keeneland colors. Silver Beauty also foaled Shameen, dam of Calumet's Preakness Stakes



John O. "Jack" Keene

winner Fabius; Silver Horde, a useful sire; and Spotted Beauty, a full sister to War Beauty.

Ham Keene trained for Widener, which explains access to Elmdorf sires such as Stefan the Great (sire of Jean Valjean and Silver Beauty), and Chance Play (sire of Grand Slam). Ham Keene died in 1927, and Jack Keene died in 1943. At Jack's dispersal, Fantine, along with her foal, the future stakes winner Lord Boswell, went to Maine Chance Farm where she produced additional stakes winners Fantine Busher and War Fan.

Spotted Beauty, an unraced 2-year-old in 1943, was bought by Charles B. Schaffer and taken to Coldstream Stud. There she foaled stakes winner Royal Blood, stakes-placed Spotted Bull, and Tillman, and the fillies Hot Gossip and Beauty Spot among others. It's through Beauty Spot that we got stars such as Foggy Note, Relaunch, Glitterman, Ruby Slippers, Rubiano, and Tapit.

Much of the success that came to Keeneland Stud was linked to Luke McLuke (1911, by Ultimus—

Midge, by Trenton). Bred by James R. Keene (no relation to the Keenes of Keeneland), Luke McLuke was sold as a yearling to J.W. Schorr and won the 1914 Belmont Stakes. Jack Keene bought in as a partner and brought Luke McLuke to stand at Keeneland in 1916. He sired several stakes winners for the farm including Lunetta, Miss Muffins, Jeanne Bowdre, Comedie d'Amour, Shuffle Along, Mr. Pepp, Forest Nymph, and best of all, Nellie Morse.

Foaled in 1921, Nellie Morse was bred by Keene in partnership with William Cleveland, out of the mare La Venganza, by Abercorn. Sold as a yearling to Bud Fisher, Nellie Morse was the best 3-year-old filly of 1924, winning the Preakness and Pimlico Oaks. Nellie Morse became a foundation mare for Calumet Farm, and her daughter Nellie Flag was the champion 2-year-old filly of 1934.

Keene boarded mares for John D. Hertz, to whom he sold Luke McLuke in 1924, and the stallion moved to Hertz' Leona Stock Farm in Illinois where he died in 1929. Luke McLuke sired Hertz' Anita Peabody, the champion 2-year-old filly of 1927.

Luke McLuke's daughter Myrtle Dee (1923) wasn't a stakes horse, but she could reel off fractions in :11, :22, and :33, going on to win a 5½-furlong race in 1:04. She may have been the one to make the name of Luke McLuke popular in Quarter Horse circles as she produced the great speed sire Three Bars, foaled in 1940 and sired by Percentage.

Luke McLuke's son Pagan Pan (1918), a full brother to Jeanne Bowdre, was also brilliantly fast and highly thought of at 2, although he only placed in stakes. Back at Keeneland, he sired three stakes winners from 73 foals, but his most important offspring was the filly Absurdity, a winner whose son, Jackstraw (1942), became a top sire of Quarter Horses. Jackstraw's sire, Silver Horde, was a Keeneland-bred by Bull Dog out of Silver Beauty, the daughter of Jeanne Bowdre, which made Jackstraw inbred 4x3 to Luke McLuke and Black Brocade.

There were many to prove that speed was the game at Keeneland, long before the racetrack was established on Jack Keene's private racing club, and fast Keene-bred mares became the foundations for some of the greatest breeders of the 20th century. **BH**

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