

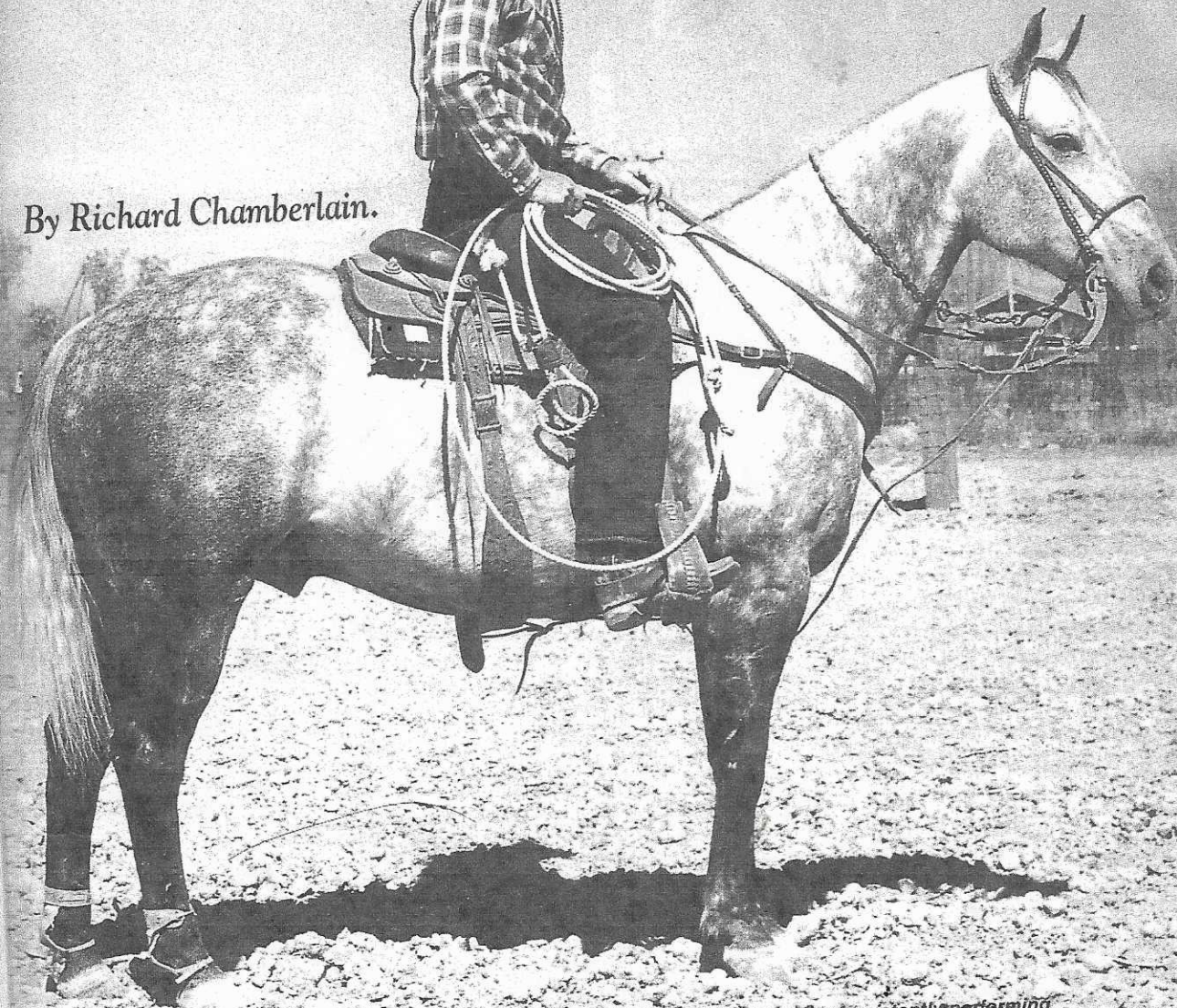
Three R's

Rodeo legend Dale Smith raises horses for ranching, rodeo and racing.

SPEED, ONE MIGHT NOTE, is a handy thing to have in a Quarter Horse. Like the old-time cowboys used to say, a good hand can do anything with a fast horse that he can with a slow horse — but the opposite isn't true.

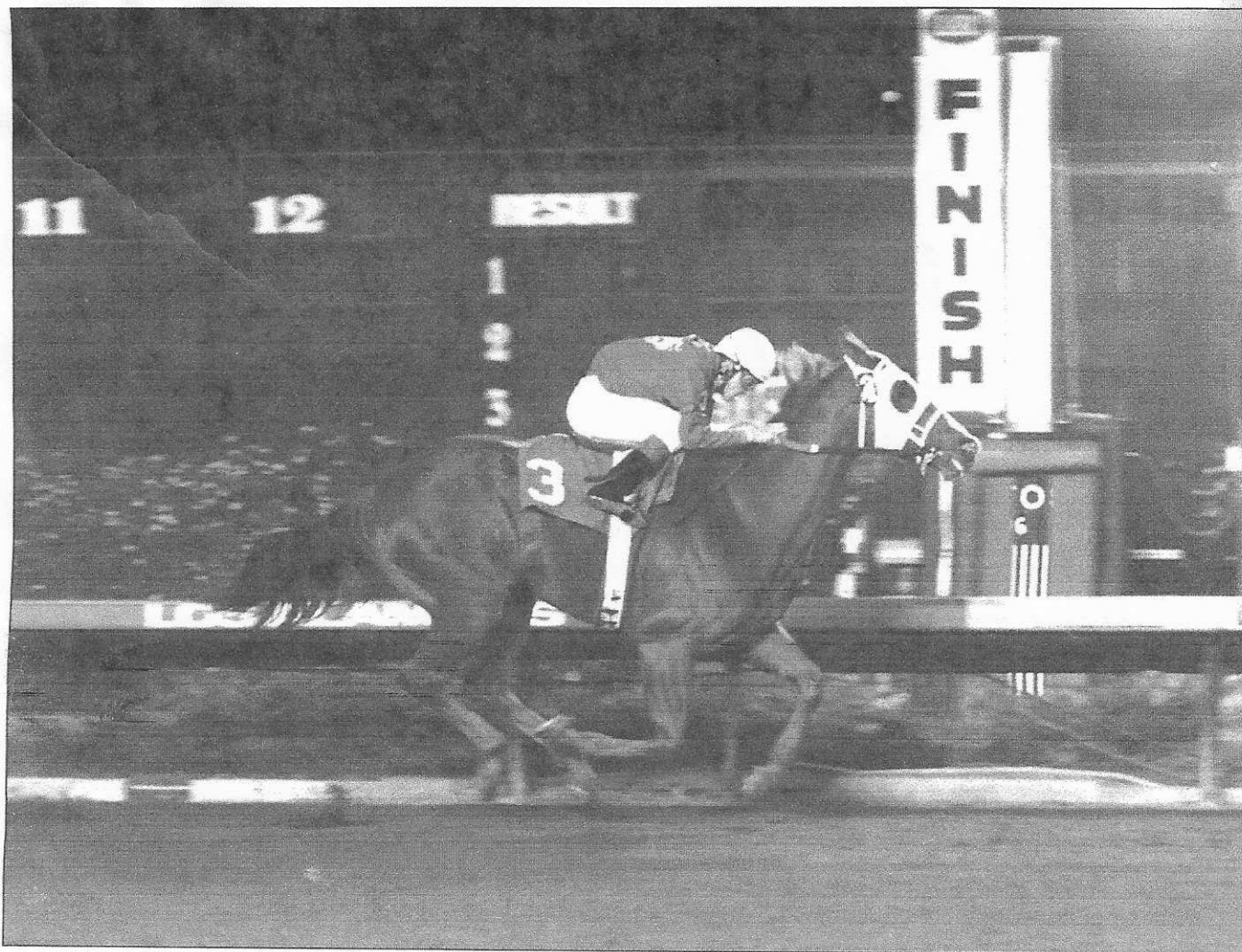
Just ask Dale Smith. He knows. He's one of them, an old-time cowboy who always made a point to be

By Richard Chamberlain.



Smith on Poker Chip Peake, the legendary "Poker Chip." One of the finest and most consistently performing teams in the 1950s and early '60s, Smith and Poker Chip have few peers in the long, colorful history of rodeo. Poker Chip was a son of Driftwood. A hard-knocking match racer in Texas before World War II, Driftwood, a.k.a. "Speedy," became a sensational rope horse in his own right, and until his death in 1960, sided outstanding roping horses that competed at rodeo's highest levels and earned their keep on ranches across the West.

Willard Porter



Sign It Super wins the Griswold Handicap under AQHA Champion Jockey Eddie Garcia. The first racing champion bred by Smith, Sign It Super is the first stakes winner from three starters by Smith's stallion Sign John Doe, a nine-year-old son of The Signature. Smith's interest in racing was piqued by the megapurses in the All American Futurity, and he breeds racehorses with an eye on both conformation and speed.

well-mounted on a pony that could run. Smith was a world champion roper who showed up last month at the AQHA Convention in Dallas, Texas, to pick up the trophy for the distance championship won by his homebred racehorse, Sign It Super. At 69, he still competes in old-timers' rodeos.

"Well, I was real thrilled and proud when Sign It Super won," says Smith, in the laconic drawl of a person who has spent his entire life in the western livestock business. "It shows that we're doing something right out here. And I like to get together with some of my old friends now and again to rope. I've qualified for the senior championships the last several years. We have a good time."

A father of five and a grandfather of another five, Smith today lives on his West Fork Ranch near Stanfield, Arizona, where he and long-time girlfriend Marty Goddard raise Quarter Horses and alfalfa on 103 acres. The grandson of a Mormon pioneer in Arizona who raised horses for the Remount Service in the days when fast could be the difference between life and death, Smith from an early age made a hand in a family

that had long bred horses that could run.

Smith, however, had no interest in racing until the purse for the All American Futurity reached \$1 million in 1978. The cowboy began breeding racehorses some 15 years ago, learning in the process that in order to be successful, "You have to have a good horse, a good trainer, a good rider and some good luck." The luck is starting to fall his way, helped in no small part by trainers such as Blane Schvaneveldt, who can command the services of the best riders in the sport. And Smith is supplying good horses. He's got a broodmare band that includes the likes of \$418,373 earner Baby Hold On and her peers. Smith bred and raced 1995 AQRA Turf Paradise Futurity winner Prince Of Cash, a colt by Chicks Beduino out of champion Queen For Cash that was trained by Wayne Brasher, one of the top conditioners in the Grand Canyon State.

Sign It Super is the first added-money winner from three starters by Smith's stallion Sign John Doe, a nine-year-old son of The Signature. Smith in 1987 purchased Sign John Doe's dam with the stallion in utero, raced him to three wins and now stands him at West Fork Ranch. Smith also

"I can trace the ranches I bought, all the land, all the property I ever acquired, to rodeo," he says. "Rodeo was real good to me."

owns Late To Bed, a son of Beduino (TB) standing at Double L Farm in Bosque, New Mexico.

Raising horses is only one aspect of Smith's ranching operations, and not the major one, at that. He also runs commercial cattle on sprawling ranches near Arivaca and Kingman, Arizona, and partners with a friend on a couple of thousand acres of grass east of Oakland, California. Staking a ranch was a primary goal of his when he was going up and down the road from rodeo to rodeo.

"Dad never really encouraged me to rodeo," Smith says. "But when I put up the cash for the Diamond Bar at Kingman, well, then, after that he was always real complimentary about rodeo."

Growing up on the family ranch with seven brothers and a sister, Smith entered his first junior rodeo in 1939 at Florence, Arizona. Tying his calf in 31 seconds, Smith found his calling.

"That kind of started me off," he says, in cowboy understatement. Smith joined the Rodeo Cowboys Association (now the Professional Rodeo Cowboys Association) in 1953 and was the world champion team roper in 1956 and '57. Smith also roped calves and tripped steers, and one year was third to Jim Shoulders and Benny Reynolds in the all-around. In 1959-60, Smith became the first cowboy to qualify for the National Finals Rodeo for two consecutive years in three events (calf, steer and team roping).

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Smith was good to rodeo, also. He became the RCA's team roping director in 1959, and held the position until 1961. A year later, he took office as the association's president, where he served 16 years. Smith was one of the original inductees into the ProRodeo Hall of Fame in Colorado Springs in

1979. In 1995, Smith was inducted into the National Cowboy Hall of Fame in Oklahoma City, an honor bestowed years before on his favorite rodeo mount, Poker Chip Peake — the legendary "Poker Chip," one of the most famous of all roping horses.

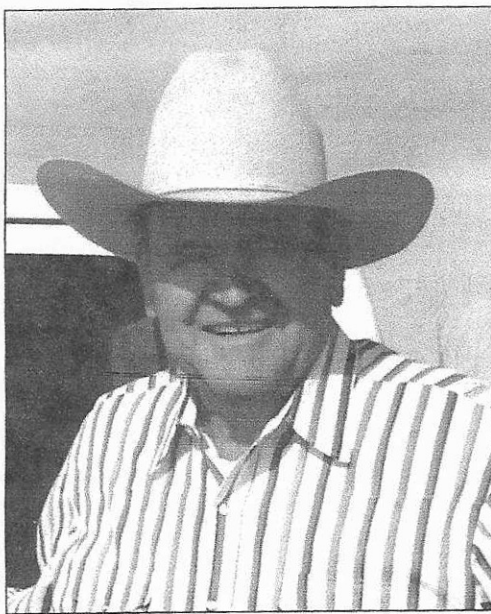
Smith's siblings are still in ranching and horses, also. All the brothers are involved in the family ranches, and two of them are veterinarians. Smith's brother Lot handles the vet work on Smith's horses, and his brother Max is an AQHA judge who parlayed a one-year stint in Hawaii into a quarter-century-and-counting career as state veterinarian in the islands.

Though everything in his life revolves around cattle and horses, the cowboy has stepped off the ranch and out of the rodeo arena at times. In high school, Smith played football, basketball and baseball, and in 1947-48, he co-captained the Gila (Arizona) Junior College football team. In college, he was coached by a man who had taught him to fly airplanes when Smith was but a sophomore in high school. Having a pilot's license later proved a valuable asset when shuttling between rodeo arenas, and Smith uses it today when checking cattle in the mountains, mesas and canyons of the starkly rugged Arizona land on which his cattle range.

Getting the cattle out of that country still requires horses. Not just any horse, mind you, but the kind that can carry a cowboy through any kind of terrain, outrun — and outsmart — a cow brute and keep it up all day long. Smith has found that a dose of running blood gives him what he needs, and he breeds his Quarter Horses

for conformation and speed.

"I want my horses to go both ways," Smith says. "If they can't run, I want to be able to put my saddle on them. I want to be able to go and catch a calf, and you can't do that with a slow horse." ➤



Christ Huffman

Dale Smith, world champion team roper and former PRCA president, is a cowboy who became a cattleman. Parlaying his rodeo winnings into extensive ranch holdings, Smith raises commercial crossbred cattle and Quarter Horses that can work them. A private pilot, Smith uses his airplane to check stock on his and his family's ranches in Arizona.