

MACK HASTINGS

Mack Hastings -- who farmed in the name of San Tan Tillage at Queen Creek -- came from a family that was in the Quarter Horse business since before Arizona became a state. Mack -- and now his son, Mike -- have kept alive the fountainhead strain of Arizona Quarter Horses.

Mack's father, Van Hastings, was a Texas cowboy who kept himself in pocket change by match racing horses. His most famous victory came in 1911, when he trained a stallion called King to beat the vaunted Yellow Jacket at Kyle, Texas. Eight years later, King was sold and Van Hastings rode him to his new owner's ranch near Bonita. Van liked Arizona, and stayed on to run a cow outfit at Fort Thomas.

The new owner intended to keep racing King, but the stallion's reputation as a racehorse had preceded him to Arizona -- so the owner changed his name to something a little less imposing: Possum, as he now appears in Quarter Horse pedigrees.

Possum died in 1925, and Van Hastings wound up with one Possum mare, registered as Hastings' Dimple, and through decades and generations, the Hastings family has kept the blood alive. Hastings bred her to one of his own stallions and got the mare Spunky Gal. Spunky Gal was bred to Piggin String, to produce Can't Catch It. Bred to Duplicate Copy, Can't Catch It