

The Figueroa's have been an Arizona Household name since the early 1900's when Francisco and Gregoria moved to the small town of Rosemont near Sonoita from Sonora Mexico. They had a large family... 8 sons and four daughters. To say they were horseman was an understatement. All the Figueroa boys were small, tough, agile athlete's, light on their feet and light in the saddle. Always in demand their attributes and talents were known throughout Arizona, and the Southwest. The boys rode the horses bareback because they did not have saddles. That kind of thing taught them how to sit on the back of a horse. Match racing, Roping Bareback broncs and about anything else you could do on a horse, they were good at it. They were known as the "Fabulous Figueroa Boys". "They were the natural-born cowboys, you dream about having work for you. Any of them could ride into a herd and say this calf belongs to this cow, and this calf belongs to this cow. They simply had the natural ability, and they were all good horseman, too." Was said by Rukin Jelks one of the legendary "Four horsemen" who founded the American Quarter Horse Association and at the time owner of the X9 ranch in the desert east of Tucson. They worked with Rukin Jelks breaking and training horses at his breeding farm on River Road, Melvin Haskell at the Rincon Ranch, Art Pollard on the Lightening A and Manor Ranches, ramrodded the Apache Springs Ranch as well as 22 years of different owners at the X-9. They rode champions like Queenie, Joe Reed II, Miss Banks, Piggin String, Jeep B, Squaw H, Pay toll, Noo Music, Red Man, Wampus Kitty, Barbra B, Lightening Bar, Joe, just to name a few. All the boys were jockeys and fathers and even grandfathers of jockeys who made their mark throughout the years and still are today... There were known by many first names, Charlie, Cruz, Albert, Frankie, Juan, Manny, Ramon, Roman, Tony, Manny Jr.(the list goes on and on) ...but the last name of Figueroa still says horseman in these parts.

Sonoita pays tribute to the entire family as they celebrate their 100 years of horse racing at the Santa Cruz County Fairgrounds, and the part that family has played in their History...

By Loretta Brasher with thanks to Richard Chamberlain