

Melville H. Haskell

Inducted into the American Quarter Horse Hall of Fame in 1984



Following the footsteps of Doc Holliday, Melville Haskell left his Georgia plantation and became an Arizona rancher.

When Haskell moved to Arizona in 1924, he wasn't impressed with the quality of the local horses. So he and his business partner, Rukin Jelks, started breeding their own horses.

In the 1930s, "short horse" racing became more and more popular, and the two men moved from breeding quality ranch horses to breeding racehorses. Haskell and Jelks bought Thoroughbred and Quarter Horse mares and bred them to the Thoroughbreds Spotted Bull and Three Bars (</museum/hall-of-fame/horses/t/three-bars/>).

During this period of racing, Haskell was a founding member of the Southern Arizona Horse Breeders' Association. Quarter Horse racing kept flourishing throughout the Southwest, and guidelines were needed. In February 1945, Haskell formed, organized and ran the American Quarter Racing Association with the help of Jelks, R.C. Locke and Jake Meyer.

Haskell wrote the rules for AQRA and did the basic figuring on the grading and qualification standard. When AQRA and AQHA consolidated in 1950, AQHA kept most of the rules.

Before the consolidation, AQRA permitted Thoroughbreds into the association. Haskell did not think the infusion of Thoroughbred blood hurt the conformation of Quarter Horses. His opinion was if a horse could run, then the conformation was there.

Haskell was an AQHA Honorary Vice President and member of the racing committee until his death. He was chairman of the committee from 1958 to 1967.

Haskell was inducted into the American Quarter Horse Hall of Fame in 1984 and died later that year.