

Attractive widow

Mary Hatch farms, raises horses trains trotters for Acton man

STORY AND PHOTO BY JENNIFER BARR

"I'd do it all over again, exactly the same, only with fewer mistakes," says Mary Hatch of R.R. 5, Rockwood, about eight years of farming and horse breeding.

A city girl, enjoying riding from the age of 16, Mary married well-known local horseman Bill Hatch of Rocking Chair Ranch, at the corner of 24 Highway and Rockwood Line. Widowed early, Mary was left with a small son, 150 acres and 80 head of horses to look after. "I had no alternative but to carry on," recalls Mary. "I loved the horses and couldn't live in the city again."

Mary's "carrying on" meant farming the 150 acres totally on her own, handling the horses (including stallions) and learning the business.

Teaching herself to plow, harrow and seed the land, rake hay and harvest the grain "wasn't easy", Mary remarks matter-of-factly.

Running her farm successfully for three years, Mary sold the excess horses. A great many horses from Galt to Georgetown originally came from Rocking Chair Ranch.

Next logical step was a move to a smaller farm—50 acres, on the 4th Line Eramosa, down Eden Mills way. For the past five years Mary has worked this acreage, even to servicing the machinery.

Quality Arabs

Following in the tradition of her husband, one of Ontario's early Arab breeders, Mary is now concentrating on producing quality Arabians. The new Rocking Chair ranch sports a small cosy stable converted from the original cattle barn. Five purebred Arabians (and two more due

to be born shortly) form the nucleus of the breeding operation. Mary hopes to enlarge. Boarding horses occupy remaining stalls. They keep her hopping.

Mary makes the hay, harvests oats and straw necessary for the 11 horses she usually winters. She raises foals, trains, shows

and sells them; saddle-breaks colts; handles the stallions; and tides up.

Many a breeding season has seen Mary sitting up all night to wait for a foal or to doctor its mother. When you're on your own dirty jobs fall on you. Mary says: "There's no alternative." She's been faced with the

distressing task of having to shoot a mortally injured horse and now keeps a revolver handy for emergencies. Fortunately, not many of those have come along.

Training Trotters

As if this doesn't keep her busy, Mary works with Dan Campbell of Acton five days a

week helping to care for and train Dan's trotting Standardbred racehorses. Several years working with Vivian and Ray Creighton, before they moved from their 6th Line Eramosa farm, taught Mary the fundamentals of trotting Standardbreds as well as galloping Thoroughbreds—the fundamentals of manure shovelling she already knew.

Sam Todd, now 10, is becoming a real help with stable care. He has a large gentle Anglo-Arab, Tomie, to call his own.

Mary's riding ability (both Western and English) is apparent in the well-schooled horses she turns out. A Half-Arab, Stoney, won the Arabian Reserve Championship for Ontario in Competitive Trail Riding in 1969. To achieve this, Mary rode hundreds of miles on the sturdy gelding in order to prepare him for the four OCTRA (Ontario Competitive Trail Riding Association) endurance rides.

Stoney completed all rides, won a 5th place at the calendar ride and walked away with the Grand Sweepstakes in the Rockwood Ride.

Another colt of Mary's, the purebred Arab Ibn Regal, became High Point English horse of the Rockwood Trail Riders for 1972, taking home an armload of ribbons and trophies for Mary.

Seeing Mary, slim, young and attractive, it's hard to picture her changing tires, pitching bales and breaking stallions but she's done all this and more.

Mary Hatch is a truly liberated woman, doing what she likes to do—and doing it well.



MARY HATCH jogs Standardbred mare K. F. Tourbai, owned by A. C. Berry of Acton and T. Schmitz, Nobleton, training at the stables of Dan Campbell, Acton.

Ospringle

Large crowd at auction sale

Mr. and Mrs. Danny Hutchinson and baby daughter of Ingersoll, visited on Sunday at the home of Danny's uncle, Mr. and Mrs. George Fletcher and family, Town Line.

We are sorry to hear Harold McMillan is again a patient in Guelph General Hospital for surgery. We wish him a quick recovery.

A large crowd attended the auction sale on Saturday for Mr. and Mrs. Clarence Hurren. Prices were brisk and very good, especially for the antique articles. The Hurrens were well pleased with the results of the day. The Ladies Aid had a booth, and hot coffee went well on a cold day. A good attendance from the congregation of Ospringle Church were on hand at Burns Presbyterian Church in Erin for the 9 a.m. breakfast of bacon and eggs with all the trimmings, on Sunday morning. They stayed for the church service, to hear Mr. Roy Hamilton of Irlington, deliver the sermon.

Miss Lois Cunningham of Erin, was guest speaker at the March meeting of Ospringle Ladies' Aid. She showed slides from The Unevangelized Field Mission from South America.

Lois will be going to North Western Brazil as a nurse, and will be spending eight months at a language school before going into field work.

4-H visit

On Monday, March 11 the members of the Hutton 4-H Sheep Club visited the farm of William McTaggart, Arkel. Mr. McTaggart told how he began breeding sheep in 1969 with a flock of 12 ewes. He now has 60 Suffolk and Suffolk-Finn crossbred ewes.

4-H members placed a class of purebred Suffolk ewe lambs with some of the members giving reasons. We then enjoyed the refreshments served by Mrs. McTaggart.

Discussing plant costs

During a meeting of Regional Public Works Committee Wednesday the committee:

—Agreed to meet with representatives of the Ministry of the Environment to discuss budgets for pollution control plants in Hutton Hills and Burlington operated by the Ministry.

She then will be staying four years doing Indian work in the Northern Amazon.

Mrs. David Stewart was

hostess for the meeting, with eleven ladies present.

Mrs. Gordon Aitken gave the devotional, a reading

from the Glad Tidings, on Living Bread.

The meeting was adjourned with the Lord's Prayer.

INFECTIONS

Cleanliness is essential in the prevention of infection to a wound, according to St. John Ambulance. Everything which comes in contact with the wound (the hands and dressing) must be scrupulously clean.

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Local delegates attend conference

The March meeting of the Acton Jr. Farmers was held at the home of Bill and Joe Brooks of Limehouse on Mar. 13. A skating party previously planned had to be cancelled due to the mild weather.

This is Junior Farmers Week and marks the 30th anniversary of Ontario Jr. Farmers. Several local members will be attending the Provincial Spring Conference being held at the Inn on the Park, Mar. 22-thru Mar. 24. Junior Farmers from all across Ontario will be participating in the three day conference. Saturday night is highlighted

by the annual banquet and dance, where the winners of travelling scholarships will be announced.

On the local scene, several of the Acton members are rehearsing a play for county drama night to be held May 11 in Milton. April is membership month and the club welcomes new members rural or urban.

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