

The Garden Station, Northern Territory.

The Garden station is east of Alice Springs, snuggled into the MacDonnell ranges. It is eastern Arrernte country. Arrernte is pronounced Uh-rrahn-da.

The Garden got its name as market gardens there once supplied the nearby Arltunga mining community of some 300 people.

Garden horses were bought in the late 1980's and early 1990's from saleyards in Alice Springs. A government program to get rid of brumbies under the TB-Brucellosis eradication program meant they were going to the meatworks in unprecedented numbers; combined with an understandable need to reduce numbers of feral horses. There was a chance to save a few to continue their old Australian bloodlines. Reg Wilson, then a surveyor, of Darwin, was born and raised on Newcastle Waters and knew the areas. He conducted interviews and fresh research at the time we looked at getting horses, one interview with the Bloomfields of the area (another with Maisie Chettle etc) and he personally knew some station managers; to ascertain we were getting horses of old background without new blood.

Horses were once bred in these areas for work, racing and the India trade although the primary trade was cattle. The Garden, now slightly smaller in area due to some land reverting to Parks and Native Title, runs beside Undoolya and Love's Creek stations. Love's Creek is now native title, the homestead area is Ross River Resort. It's necessary to see what was nearby as horses both wandered to neighbouring properties and were bought, sold, exchanged, gifted around the area.

Undoolya, which name means shadow in an Arrernte language, was first taken up by Edward (Ned) Meade Bagot in 1872. In 1873 was the famous droving trip up there with cattle and horses from South Australia – undertaken by his son Ted, stepson James Churchill-Smith and William Gilbert who was to take up Owen Springs, his father Joseph Gilbert being one of the first lease holders of the area, like Bagot.

Ned Bagot had N.T. pastoral leases No.1 and No.2. His horses bore the BB brand on their shoulder, his good shorthorns on their quarters.

Ned, Irish by birth and well educated, was horsey, and a great character. His family immigrated in 1840 and Ned worked hard, soon acquiring property and breeding horses and cattle. He imported Suffolk Punch stallions into South Australia, two in 1869 per Orient- one named Suffolk Punch, another named Young Duke. He was an authority on the breed. He showed another of his in 1858 named Boxer. He was a keen racing man and bred and raced top stayers. He established saleyards in Kapunda in 1860, his father and brother farmed in the area. Boxer's progeny went far and wide. His sales were hugely successful as the rail went through for moving stock by 1860. Thousands of cattle and horses went through his sales. Ned also judged horses at shows. It was said that the horses bred by Ned's sons

while in central Australia were some of the best ever sent to Adelaide to the sales. Ned was an advocate for fencing and managing horses, and handling them.

He built part of the OT line on govt. contract, then leased land which included Undoolya where he took good cattle and horses. However he got his fingers burned developing what transpired to be disappointing gold mines. He left the Territory for South Australia to rebuild. Being declared bankrupt with mining partners, he had to sell Undoolya and other places such as Ned's Corner Station and paid 5 shillings in the pound of the debts. Ned, ever honourable, made sure over the next few years he eventually paid every single penny of what was originally owed. However his legacy of good horses remained in the Undoolya-Garden area – lines made of Thoroughbred, Suffolk. Bagot had horses by The Fisherman, an important sire in early S.A. and which traces to Birdcatcher - hence particular markings we see in Garden Walers. Bagot also had horses by Tregeagle by Wild Daryll out of Silvertail, which also traced to Birdcatcher.. Ned's legacy also left top horses on Dalhousie Springs, which produced winners for him including over jumps; the horses there became an asset to subsequent owners. His horses had good feet and iron legs.

The next owners of Undoolya, Andrew Tennant and John Love, brought horses up especially, having identified the India market; one mob was from Horse Peninsula (Coffin Bay), where Andrew Tennant's father John had property, the horses had a lot of Timor Pony blood. Both men knew horses and loved hunting, John Love becoming Master of the Adelaide Hunt Club in 1898.

Their horses became known as the best in Central Australia, and sold well in Adelaide. Tennant knew Thoroughbreds, and bred good ones, and knew markets – being a proponent of trade to China and an astute pastoralist. Alec Ross managed the station for them for 6 years from 1880, a good bushman. Andrew Tennant's stallion Sarchedon, a grand hunt horse which won the AHC's Hunt Club Cup in 1878, left his stamp on many of the horses on Undoolya and area – widespread, as a lot of the horses were stolen. Sarchedon was a chestnut foaled on Narrung Station by Corsair out of Mac's mare (not a Thoroughbred on either side of the family but nonetheless raced, most racing then being unregistered).

After that Undoolya was sold to the Willowie Pastoral Company. Good horse breeders were all around – Glen Helen managed at the time by horseman Richard Warburton. Joe Breaden was breeding excellent horses. Charlotte Waters stocked good horses for police horses. Pewsey Vale managed by Archie Conway had good horses. There were tough times on Undoolya with cattle being run off, and it was sold to Norman Richardson. 1892 was a shocking drought year, and some stations shut down completely. Lewis

Thomas Elder for a time owned Owen Springs nearby and bred horses for the India market, but it was not a success due to severe drought. Despite

spending a fortune drilling for water, he found none. He chiefly ran Thoroughbreds with two Suffolk Punch stallions. Kidman bought it briefly, sold many of the horses for good prices, and left it; then the Hayes bought this station and ran it until the year 2000. Owen Springs is now a Reserve, run by Parks. Thomas Elder's horses from Owen Springs got mixed reviews locally –Richard Warburton didn't find them much good; others liked them. Perhaps they had not time enough to grow into the country and become a type before Elder abandoned his scheme. His horses down on Blanchewater on the other hand, were outstanding, having longer to develop types and breed true before being sold to the India trade, also largely TB x Suffolk.

Bloomfield bought Love's Creek where he bred a lot of racing Thoroughbreds.

By 1906 properties were leased then bought by the Hayes family who still have Undoolya and The Garden – a combined area of some 3,500 square miles. They enjoyed racing horses with the Central Australian Racing Club and always had good horses. The Garden now runs organic cattle. Through drought and other times the Hayes use good practical management combined with adaptability. Experienced cattlemen and bushmen, the Hayes appreciated good working horses. William Hayes sold horses regularly at South Australian sales, horses from Mt Burrell. He set up the family empire of Undoolya, Owen Springs, Deep Well, Maryvale and Mt Burrell. A lovely close family structure meant a good support group.

William sold a mob of horses from Mount Burrell for good prices at Barker Brothers sale in 1902; horses from there sold regularly at Adelaide sales for decades showing active horse management. Mount Burrell is a fair way south of Alice Springs, south of Santa Theresa.

In 1911 John Hayes wrote a letter to the Register, Adelaide, refuting a claim by Kidman there were no good horses bred north of the MacDonnell's, citing examples of excellent horses he'd bought on northern stations, worked hard after cattle, and ridden extremely long distances, to be sold later at a good profit by Barker Brothers in Adelaide.

Horses were used to take cattle and at time mobs of horses, through to Oodnadatta to be railed south. Other times stock was taken along stock routes to Queensland or the Kimberley; stock horses from Central Australia were tough. Good bloodlines of stayers and clean legged draughts, agile pony blood, and subsequent adaption to the country over time being some of the earliest there, created a hardy, intelligent animal. As the Garden concentrated on cattle, there was minimal new horse influence brought in.

Garden horses are recognisable by their strong stocky build. They have tremendous loyalty and bond strongly to their owner, and are thinkers; they have plenty of wisdom. They are stoical and brave and kind. Solid colours

only came off the Garden when we got horses from there, most being black, brown or bay. As some of the earliest horses to Central Australia went to Undoolya next door, it's probable Walers obtained from the Garden have some of this ancestral genetic structure – Bagot and Tennant and Love horses. Indeed, their markings and conformation tell us that. Horses strayed from early mining camps and pastoral leases, natural water although in places seasonal, and the increasing numbers of wells and bores meant at times they could move over significant distances, and along stock routes. It was tough country to find water in drought and many wells were sunk without success. Discovery of gold and rubies, although it turned out much of a fizzer, led to the sinking of wells for miners. Horses soon learned where water was. Feed was good most times. There was always uncertainty finding water in the government wells while droving cattle and horses to Oodnadatta, pointed out by John Hayes who wrote a good letter about water on his stations in 1913 to the register, Adelaide, dispelling myths about plentiful permanent water in the area. It seems the Garden horses had their country worked out and didn't wander too far as the type was very uniform.

Richard Warburton when he was in the area, had top class draughts (he bought Suffolks and a Percheron, he didn't want hairy legs), roadsters and Thoroughbreds, although many of his horses were speared, some survived and he set up breeding on another place further south (Erlunda). He bred for the India trade.

In 1908 John Hayes of Undoolya sold 75 horses at Kidman's 5th annual Kapunda sale – it was huge that year. Some of Hayes horses were draught types for gunners and fetched an excellent price of thirty four pounds each, his light stamps 15 to 24 pounds each, good prices. Bagot, Shakes and Lewis horse sales at Kapunda – the firm started by the original leasee of Undoolya, Ned Bagot - sold horses for Hayes the same year. A few horse sales sighted in archives:

In 1930 at a dispersal sale at Kadina, Ted Hayes of Undoolya bought the 4 year old TB stallion Alfieri and Lewis Bloomfield of Love's Creek bought the 3 year old TB colt Irrtum. This shows interest in horses and no doubt bush racing.

In 1936 Ted Hayes sold 37 horses at the Kapunda sales for a good price, reported sold to the India market.

1937 Jim Turner of the Garden sold horses at Kapunda sales.

There were probably good horse books kept on the station which would give a great history. By having horses with the earliest connections to those brought to South Australia and the Territory, the Garden horses have a great genetic legacy.