

Conclusion

At this point of this literary journey it is hoped that the reader has obtained a more complete appreciation for the needs that motivated the formation of the **Chilean Horse** breed. There are those that tried to persuade me to not touch on the origins of the *Equus* genus. Yet its relevancy to so many of the characteristics we deal with in relating to our equine friends made me feel it was important that this topic be comprehended in a practical manner. Understanding the evolutionary process that haphazardly gave rise to the anatomical, physiological and psychological changes that were necessary in adapting to global alterations, seemed the logical place to start. I did not justify this only for theoretical reasons, but rather because much of what we deal with in handling horses requires we comprehend that this contemporary species carries with it many residual traits that are a product of those constant adjustments over the past 50 some million years. If we can fully comprehend why this species was able to survive, then we should be better suited to provide our horses with good physical and psychological health as we strive to make them respected participants in our world.

In reaching the stage of evolution whereby the genus that concerns us in this book came to being, I felt compelled to mention some of the taxonomical nomenclature that is used to differentiate the domestic and wild variants within *Equus*. This was more than justifiable on the basis that recently an international ruling determined how we should address the various members of the *Equus* genus. Still, I must admit that I also devoted the time to it realizing how incompletely instructed I had been on these matters in my own formal education. Moreover, this also led into some areas of discrepancy regarding the systematic classification of the domestic and wild caballines. Since we have no certainty who the direct ancestor of the domestic horse is, it makes perfect sense to me that it merits its own taxa. Moreover, wild horse variants which, more and more seems to be proving younger than the *Equus caballus*, should have their own specific nomenclature under the subgenus of *Equus* which should take in all caballine species.

In reviewing the domestication process I think it becomes clear that we have been able to count on horses as our allies because of the innate traits they possess and not because of our superior powers to control their actions to benefit our needs. Certainly, we have been able to manipulate the horse in many ways to our advantage, but this has only been made possible because of their amicable qualities that have permitted us to establish meaningful relationships with them. In comprehending that the horse is largely responsible for our union, then I believe we can contemplate being more appreciative of that gift in assuming a conscientious role as care takers and communicators.

The puzzle of where the domestic horse came from and how it was distributed around the world is something we still can only speculate about. It is interesting to know that long before the domestication process the horses were well disseminated around Eurasia and northern Africa. Once again, we must humble ourselves in realizing that most likely the early horse cultures were more a product of dealing with the equine forms that were native to the region than they were a result of human introduction. I certainly question the popular supposition that the modern horse dwindled to such low numbers and such restricted areas in Eurasia. Hopefully, I have provide enough reasons to be suspect that the presence of this species has accompanied us in more places and for more years than most tend to credit it. Moreover, I would hope that we could contemplate that domestication did not necessarily have to pass through a long hunter /prey phase to offer proof for the synergistic relationship between *Homo sapiens* and *Equus caballus*.

Our transit over the time table that leads to the **Chilean Horse** proudly passes through a part of the world that had one of the most prolific horse cultures known to man. Aside from being the homeland to the oldest horse representative we know about thus far, it also was a region that provided a fascinating influence of various other domestic horse types. The study of the impact of the various foreign invaders in the Iberian Peninsula gives us solid reasons to questions the most commonly reported origins of the horses in the Americas. By reviewing the historic accounts of invading armies that for centuries took up residence in the Iberian Peninsula, we get a better feel for the possible equine genotypes that may have been taken to the Americas. Just as importantly, we also get a much fuller understanding of the men that made

that possible and how that melting pot of cultures affected the policies instated in Latin America during the formative years of many types of horses.

It would be difficult to make mention of the breeds of horses that have arisen in Latin America and not credit the incredible challenges the conquistadors had to confront to establish horse breeding centers in this continent. Too often in books this is mentioned in passing without really giving the reader a sensitive feel for how much suffering and uncertainty these valiant men and their crews had to endure to reach their goals. Conveying that over 2,500 years of human conflict in Iberia is followed by 350 years of hardship and loss of lives in pursuing horse production in the Americas, is not only the writer's responsibility. Taking interest in absorbing this knowledge also forms part of the conscientious appreciation of the breeds that such sacrifices have made possible for the reader.

Lastly, as we approach the more technical aspects of the creation of the **Chilean Horse** we must understand how this race complied with the regional attributes within the territory, kingdom and republic of Chile. It is important that we determine what qualities the **Chilean Horse** breed should have to respond to the needs of the geographical, topographical, climatological, functional, historical, cultural and political demands of Chile. As we begin to read about the unique traits that make up this breed, we can do so with the assurance that its presence in the world is a result of solutions for the many variables that justified its existence.

All that you have read thus far are factors that had a role in creating a need for a special type of horse. Of equal importance is the fact that they were ingredients that molded the spirit of the people that would take on this innovative task at a time that had no equal in South America and few others in the rest of the Western Hemisphere. Until the official registry of the **Chilean Horse** became a reality, a crucial change of "cause-and-effect" took place in Chile. Before 1893 the **Chilean Horse** was the effect of the sum total of all the events I have detailed in the last six chapters. However, once the breed was formalized, the **Chilean Horse** would then become the cause for a series of effects that have been molded over the past 115 years.

Often I have thought how many times the breed has been contained in the sidelines as the Chilean huaso or the Chilean Rodeo take up the limelight of public attention. There are various museums in Chile that exhibit the Chilean huaso culture. The national championship rodeo has its prime time billing every year as well. Yet, although the **Chilean Horse** forms a part of both these personal interest stories, it unfairly is displayed as a secondary part of the action.

What I hope this book will be able to establish in a resounding manner, is that the **Chilean Horse** is a product of a 467 year history within Chile alone. There is no doubt that the Chilean Rodeo and the huaso have been strong allies of the **Chilean Horse** in modern times. Very probably they have been a big reason the breed has continued to exist with the enthusiasm that it evidences today. On the other hand, both the huasos and the sport of Chilean Rodeo are young subject matters in comparison, and they only subsist because of the existence of the **Chilean Horse**. As Volume I alludes to, the opposite is not true. So much of the **Chilean Horse** history is void of either and thus, it is important that we recognize that the real star of Chile is the one and only **Chilean Horse**.

I have long been a proponent of creating a **Chilean Horse** museum. I feel strongly there is not a living thing in this country that has stronger merits for being designated a place it can reveal its story. Obviously, the Chilean Rodeo and the Chilean huaso will be a part of a narrative that will be one of the most thought provoking accounts about any stock horse breed. Maybe someday you will be able to come to Chile and walk through just such a marvelous place, but for now, pick up Volume II and read all about it.



Figure I.132

This is a life size model created in 2002 representing the breed Standard of the Chilean Horse.