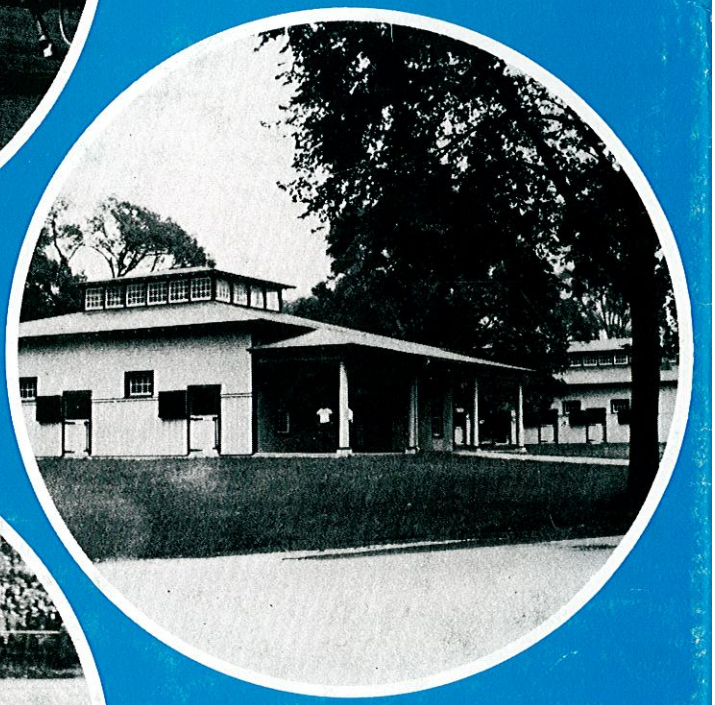
Hanover

The Greatest Name in Harness Racing



Donald P. Evans

$12.00

Hanover

The Greatest Name in Harness Racing

DONALD P. EVANS

Harper D. Sheppard and Clinton N. Myers had two great mutual loves: The Hanover Shoe Company they had rescued from oblivion and the sport of light harness racing.

In 1922, they went on vacation, leaving Sheppard's son, Lawrence Baker Sheppard, in charge of their harness racing interest: a collection of mediocre race horses, commonplace broodmares, and unproductive pensioners. When they returned, they found their stable empty of horses. Lawrence Sheppard had sold the lot of them.

There were roars of anger, growls of displeasure, but when the wrath had subsided, the two older men instructed young Sheppard to reconstruct their racing stable and rebuild their fledgling breeding operation. And Lawrence Sheppard did. In spectacular fashion.

This is the story of Lawrence Sheppard's long and colorful crusade to mold —stallion by stallion, broodmare by broodmare, acre by acre—the Hanover Shoe Farms into the world's leading and largest Standardbred breeding establishment. And it is the story of John F. Simpson's determined effort to keep the Farms head and withers above all the rest after Sheppard's death in 1968.

It's all here between the covers of this book—the brilliant transformation of a

(Continued on back flap)

£5.00

(Continued from front flap)

dying shoe manufacturing concern into the thriving Hanover Shoe Company; the unheralded birth but Topsy-like growth of the Hanover Shoe Farms; the salty, feisty, witty, riverboat-gambler character of Lawrence Sheppard; Sheppard's bevy of battles with anybody or anything blocking the progress of the Shoe Farms and the sport of harness racing; the glittering racing career of John Simpson, Sheppard's chosen successor; the day-to-day operation of the largest horse breeding farm on the face of the earth.

The Shoe Farms, celebrating their golden anniversary in 1976, are a vast conglomerate of 35 farms, 4,000 acres, 1,800 horses at the peak season, 40 barns, 50 houses and apartments, 40 miles of fences, 45 vehicles, and 100 employees. The Farms' annual yearling crop has brought as much as three million dollars at auction, while their roster of super stallions earns millions more in service fees each year.

Fifty years of harness racing history are recorded in this volume, recorded by the man—author Donald P. Evans—who is perhaps the sport's greatest living chronicler.

More than 100 photos, many of them old and rare, help to make *Hanover—The Greatest Name in Harness Racing* a textbook for any man, woman, or child who has ever surrendered to the grace, beauty, and high excitement of trotting and pacing horses.

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HANOVER

Also by DONALD P. EVANS

Super Bird: The Story of Albatross
Nevele Pride: Speed 'n' Spirit
Big Bum: The Story of Bret Hanover
Hooked on Harness Racing

HANOVER

The Greatest Name in Harness Racing

DONALD P. EVANS

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For
Alex Haley,
my writing guru,
who prodded the muse,
made it all happen

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A very special and personal thanks must go to Jerry Monahan, who started the ball rolling; to Bill Taylor, who again shared the co-pilot's seat during my travels; to Margaret Hart, who saved me from grammatical embarrassment as always; and to Jane Evans, who has developed into one hell of a typist.

HANOVER

1

SELLING AT HARRISBURG

THERE WERE RUMBLES in the harness racing sport that breeders were in trouble, that the folks who produced Standardbred horses would begin to see their market crumble about the time the Harrisburg sale rolled around in 1974.

The Hanover Shoe Farms, the world's largest Standardbred breeding establishment, would surely be caught in the crunch, the doom peddlers warned.

Maybe so, but on the surface the impending disaster simply didn't show. A visitor returning to Harrisburg after a couple of years' absence was surprised to find the auction in new, more compact quarters, but just about everything else seemed the same.

The familiar horde of colorful, intriguing concession stands was still in business near the main entrance to the hall, offering everything from diamond horseshoe stickpins to feed tubs, from bright scarves to stud supports.

The horse transporters were certainly there, a dozen or more. Sitting side by side at a long table, ready to accept a horse for shipping to Canada or California, to Florida or France.

The "No Smoking" signs were up in profusion, just as in the past. And just as in the past, no one whatsoever was paying any attention to them.

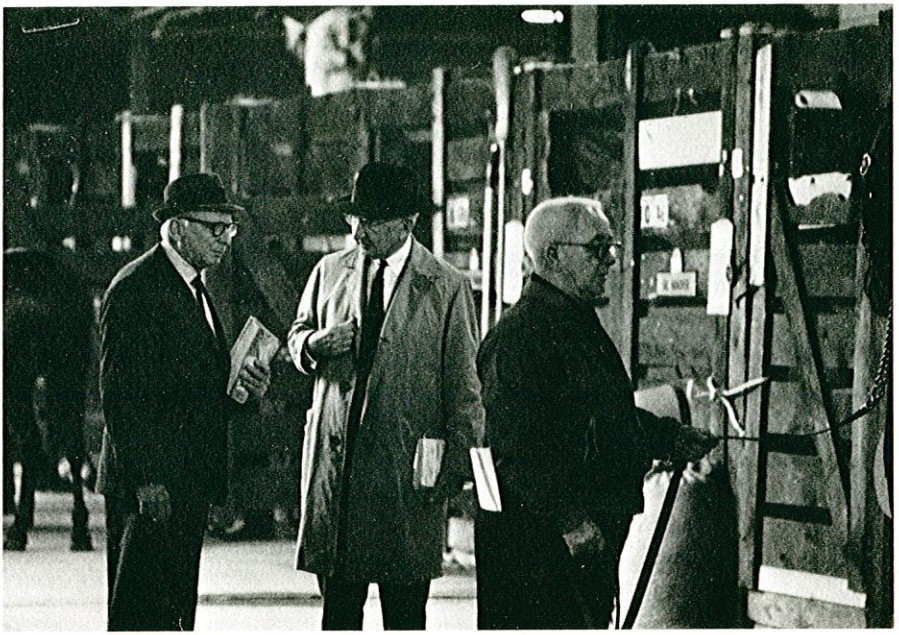
The smoke from hundreds of cigarettes, dozens of pipes and cigars drifted up to the high ceiling of the sales arena and settled there like a wispy blue cloud.

The snack bar was open and crowded as always. Horsemen were standing three-deep at the seatless counter, fighting for the right to swap twenty-five cents for a quantity of uninspired coffee in a cardboard container.

Though it was still two and a half hours to noon, the Hanover Shoe Farms hospitality room was operating, administering Bloody Marys to the gentlemen who had remained too long at the 210 Club the night before.

Caretakers in the stable area behind the arena were as busy as ever. The yearling Standardbreds were being led from their stalls, paraded up and down the aisleways while prospective buyers squatted and peered at their legs, hunting for flaws in their hocks, their pasterns, their knees. Other grooms, clad in blue and orange Hanover work suits, were preening the young horses. Simonizing their sleek coats with currycombs, untangling their manes and tails with flying brushes. Now and again the piercing whinny of a frightened animal would punctuate the general din.

Trainer Joe O'Brien (left) joins Murray Brown and John Simpson in looking over a Hanover yearling at Harrisburg.



Important Standardbred owners K. D. Owen and Clarence F. Gaines discuss a Hanover yearling at the annual Harrisburg auction.

Murray Brown was in evidence more than ever, now that he was general manager of the auction. Like a swarthy, slender bird he flitted through the stable area, the hospitality room, the arena, stopping for a moment here, stopping for a moment there. Answering questions, dispensing advice, issuing orders, then heading at a half-jog toward the mobile sales headquarters out in the lobby, near the concession stands.

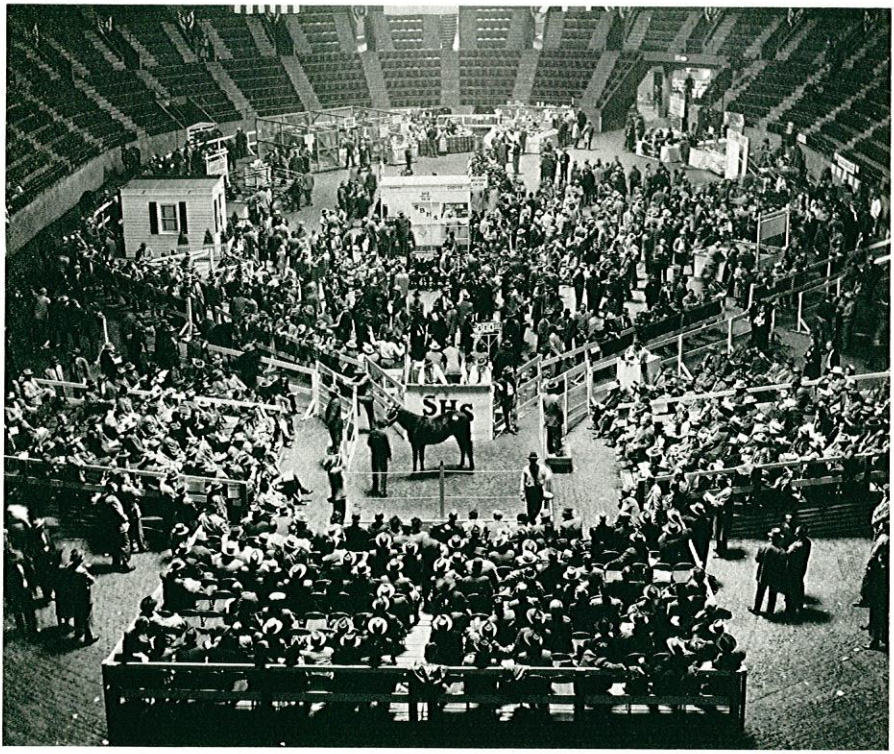
George Swinebroad, probably the most famous horse auctioneer in the world, was removing his suitcoat, settling himself in his seat at the rostrum. In a moment he would tap his microphone a couple of times, making sure it was alive. Then he would commence his familiar opening entreaty, all of it delivered with a rich, down-home, Kentucky drawl: "Aww-right, ladies and gentlemen. Les' settle down now. We got some hosses, some great yearlin's to sell hea' this mawnin', and we got to get about our business. Ya'all can say hello to one another when we take a break this afternoon. Right now we got to get on with it."

His booming voice, amplified to every corner of the sales complex, accompanied by several strong strokes of his hefty gavel, had never failed to get results. Scores of three- and four- and five-person huddles began to break up. Souvenir hunters drifted away from the stands. The population

of the coffee shop thinned. Scores of men and women, a few with a child or two in tow, scurried for choice seats.

The second day of the thirty-sixth annual Standardbred Horse Sales Company auction at the State Farm Shows building in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, was about to begin. The first day—Monday, November 4, 1974—had been a healthy appetizer. The Tuesday morning session was the start of the main course. The first of 164 yearling colts and fillies produced by the Hanover Shoe Farms was making its way up the ramp and into the sales ring.

The youngster's name was Inglebert Hanover, and he was a chunky, bay colt by Tar Heel and out of a mare called Indra Hanover. Stanley Bergstein, harness racing's "Mr. Everything," read his pedigree, and Swinebroad was soon directing the bidding battle with his patented sales chant, that nearly incomprehensible garble that spurs the pulse rate of horsemen the world over. The colt circled around and around the small ring at the end of a lead shank while the auctioneer and his talented crew of horse hucksters strove to earn the best possible price for him.



Typical Standardbred Horse Sales Co. auction at Harrisburg when Large Arena was still being used. *Courtesy* **Harness Horse.**

It was a three-minute tug of war before Swinebroad surrendered, grudgingly knocking down the young horse to a gentleman from Maine on his high bid of $11,000.

John Simpson, Sr., the president and general manager of the Shoe Farms, was seated between Swinebroad and Bergstein on the rostrum. Simpson was scribbling something in his sales catalog, doubtless the price the colt had brought. You couldn't tell from his face whether he was satisfied or not.

The session was soon well along, rolling with its own momentum, its own rhythm. Two minutes were spent on this yearling, three on that one, four on a youngster that eventually brought $40,000. Most of the young horses accepted the walk up the ramp and the tour of the sales ring with the aplomb of salty veterans. A few skirmished briefly with the handler, shying from nervousness, squealing with fright. One, a colt, flatly refused the trip up the ramp, balking until a filly in heat could be found. With relish he followed her into the ring, where she was quickly withdrawn and he remained. A victim of lust and man's superior intelligence.

High bids on the youngsters fluctuated greatly as the morning turned to afternoon. A daughter of Hickory Smoke brought a disappointing $4,000, a daughter of Best Of All only $4,700. Occasionally Swinebroad would interrupt his own spiel—or that of associate Tom Caldwell—to lecture and cajole the big crowd. "Now, lookee here, evrabody. Ya'all tryin' to steal this filly. This is a great individual, and out of a producin' mare. Look at that pedigree; is there a better family around anywhere? Well, is there? This is one of the top fillies in the whole sale and I've only got $12,000 on her. You're only half way there, boys. Only half way there. Now, let's get on with it. Let's pay attention."

At other times he'd pause and ask Bergstein to repeat the highlights of the youngster's pedigree, shoring up, spicing up the reader's comments with some of his own.

Simpson, tallish, graying, vaguely resembling the late musical great Glenn Miller, offered whispered counsel to Swinebroad from time to time, but generally remained impassive, unperturbed as his consignment passed through the arena. One by one at $5,000, $10,000 or $20,000 a clip.

In early afternoon the pace and the prices picked up considerably. The Shoe Farms and the Standardbred Horse Sales Company were not likely to sell *all* the cream of the Hanover crop at 10 or 10:15 in the morning, when some of the nation's larger buyers were only then arriving at International Airport, hurrying to rent cars or taxis for the trip out to the arena. Or when some members of the army of horsemen were still putting the final touches to their breakfast. Many of the most promising youngsters in the Hanover Class of '74 were scheduled to be sold later in

the day. Half of Hanover's "front row," in fact, by design and tradition, was saved for the third and final day of the sale—when, indeed, the gang would all be there. With checkbooks firmly in hand.

California horseman Doug Ackerman paid $25,000 for Farno Hanover, a Best Of All colt. Pennsylvania home builder-horseman Ed Ryan captured Markita Hanover on a high bid of $24,000. Harold Dancer of the famed New Jersey harness racing clan spent $30,000 for Delayr Hanover. And then, minutes later, a resounding hush fell over the arena. A tall, bay colt, regal in bearing, was strutting up the walkway.

He was hip number 197 and Burnell Hesson, the man who generally rounds up names for the Hanover colts, had called him Delmont Hanover. He was by Speedy Count, out of Delicious, and that made him a full brother to Delmonica Hanover, an awesome trotting mare who would soon be named Harness Horse of the Year for 1974.

The bidding was brisk from the outset, rising at first in leaps of $10,000. When it settled to jumps of $5,000, then to $1,000, only two bidding forces remained—John Simpson, Jr., bidding for Clarence Gaines, and the indomitable Delvin Miller. Simpson threw in the sponge at $81,000 and Miller landed the youngster for $1,000 more. It figured, since Miller and partner Arnold Hanger were co-owners of Delmonica Hanover and were confident that lightning could and would strike the same breeding family twice.

The arena crowd buzzed appreciatively as Swinebroad's gavel fell and the figures "$82,000" went up in lights on the three-sided billboard at the front of the hall.

John Simpson, stoically puffiing on a large cigar while the bidding was in progress, permitted himself a small smile when it ended.

The figure was high for the day, but there were several youngsters bringing as much as $42,000 before the first half of the Hanover consignment was concluded shortly before 3 P.M. and breeder Max Hempt's handsome crop began its slow march through the sales ring. The offerings of other smaller breeders were also on the afternoon's agenda, and it was 4:25 before the session was over and the giant collection of buyers, sellers, and sundry participants dispersed.

Some would be returning to the arena in the evening, when broodmares and horses of racing age would be offered. Others would be calling it a day, spreading out to Harrisburg's impressive collection of restaurants, bars, and motels, where great racing triumphs would be recounted, great bargains at the sales recalled, great horses reanalyzed. And, with nostalgia running rampant, hardly a highball would be lifted without a reference to the late and great Penn-Harris Hotel, home of the legendary Esquire Bar. Many of the most important, most expensive transactions in harness racing history had been concocted at the

Penn-Harris and its bar. For some it was questionable whether a buyers syndicate could be formed without them.

One thing was for sure. Few, if any, of the hundreds of harness racing figures from around the world would be departing Harrisburg that night—not while the Hanover Shoe Farms still had their big guns to fire on Wednesday.

A quiet, rather organized brand of pandemonium was still the byword as Hanover girded to sell the balance of its 1974 consignment on Wednesday. Yearlings were again being shuffled in and out of stalls as prospective purchasers, foiled in their efforts to buy colts on Tuesday, hunted for others to bid on. Other young horses, sold the day before, were being led through the loading doors of the stable area and tugged up the ramp to waiting vans. A three-girl team was already at work preening the first of the yearlings due to enter the sales ring. The girls, barely out of their teens, were working frantically, stimulated by the warm praise of Monty Moncrief, who had hailed their efforts of the day before. The doors to the Hanover hospitality room opened and closed with regularity, business having picked up from Tuesday.

The crowd was bigger, more diverse on Wednesday. Italians in handsome silk suits from their native country rubbed shoulders with dusty, weary caretakers. Young trainers in flashy checked sports jackets chatted easily with veteran horsemen wearing giant western-style fedoras. Slender young ladies in hip-hugging jeans prowled the souvenir stands with matronly figures in loose fitting pants suits.

George Swinebroad and his sales entourage swarmed into the building, the aging auctioneer looking fresh and fancy despite the grueling day he and his associates had put in Tuesday.

Swinebroad, Simpson, Caldwell, Bergstein—they were all back up on the rostrum, and the familiar message was soon rumbling through the public address: "Aww-right, ladies and gentlemen. Les' settle down now. We got some hosses, some great yearlin's to sell hea' this mawnin'. . ."

Simpson, perched between Swinebroad and Bergstein on the dais, studied his catalog while the auctioneer verbally lassoed the colt buyers. It was Simpson's custom to write the sum he thought each yearling would bring next to its name. His estimates on the first eighty-three Hanover colts to be run through the sale—the Tuesday batch—were a little low on the whole, a fact that pleased him. The Hanover president, like breeders across the country, had heard the rumbles, had been a trifle apprehensive as the 1974 auction approached. Major breeders had plenty to be apprehensive about—the nation's rocketing inflation, its plunging productivity, the menace of Off-Track Betting, and the proliferation of small breeding operations, of stallions, and of broodmares.

But foreigners, mainly Canadians, Italians, Swedes, and West Germans, had turned out in force—just as they had in 1973—to take up slack left by the somewhat pinched Americans. Of the 456 yearlings to be sold by all breeders at Harrisburg in 1974, 124 would go to Canadians and twenty-five to European interests. Together, they would amount to thirty-three percent of the youngsters auctioned.

Simpson barely had time to mutter *"viva les foreigners"* before the first of his remaining eighty-one Standardbred babies was clomping up the sloped passageway. Before the day was out, the Hanover Shoe Farms would know what their year-long efforts had wrought in 1974.

Again, the action started slowly, the bids modest. Some of the early youngsters under the gavel were the offspring of lesser-known or green mares and drew bids accordingly, although any one of them could turn out to be the *big colt* of 1975. It was nearly an hour later when the sale headliners, the colts and fillies that had had their pictures in the advertisements, began to move into the arena. Pocketbooks began to loosen. $29,000 for Laurelton Hanover. $35,000 for Starral Hanover. $35,000 for Verinda Hanover. $30,000 for Pendleton Hanover.

And then that sudden hush, that same collective quietude that had greeted Delmont Hanover's arrival on Tuesday, descended on the sales hall. Olondo Hanover was swashbuckling around on the green carpet of the auction ring, and he was something to be quiet about. Something to gape at.

Olondo was tall, deep chested, long limbed like a trotter should be. His presence was commanding, and he moved about the ring with an oily looseness that made you know he had to make it big at the race track if lameness or illness did not interfere. His coat was mahogany brown like the lid of an expensive piano, and not a white hair could be found on him—not one—to mar his perfection. He was impeccably bred—by Star's Pride, out of Ole Hanover—and the fact that he had occupied stall number one on Hanover's front row told his hopeful purchasers all they really had to know.

Bidding started with a flurry, but the would-be buyers with little but optimism in their wallets quickly dropped by the wayside. It left only Morton Finder, a lanky, handsome, man-about-racing, and John F. Simpson, Jr., son of the Hanover president, in the battle. Young Simpson was again representing Clarence F. Gaines, long one of the top owners in the industry, and was yearning to land the young trotter for his big and classy public stable.

A tense four minutes later, the colt belonged to Gaines. At a plump, round figure of $100,000. Gaines promptly announced that he would have two partners on the colt—longtime friends and associates A. C. Mudge and K.D. Owen—and confirmed that Johnny Simpson, Jr. would train the youngster.

There was a great deal of ooohing and aaahing and buzzing before Swinebroad could restore proper order, get the auction moving again.

A filly from Steady Star's first crop made her tour of the sales ring, bringing a creditable $8,000, and then the highly charged audience was on the edge of its seats again. The throng was paying its respects, saying hello to Remus Hanover.

Remus was a product of the most successful pacing union of modern times, Dancer Hanover and Romola Hanover. Up to the day of Remus Hanover, Dancer and Romola had turned out Dexter Hanover, 1:58.3; Romeo Hanover, 1:56.1; Romulus Hanover, l:57f; Romalie Hanover, 1:57.3f; and Nevele Bigshot, T1:59. Altogether, Romola Hanover had produced offspring who had won more than $2,300,000, and no other broodmare—Standardbred or Thoroughbred—had ever done that before.

It was assumed that Thomas A. Dexter, the printing magnate who owned Dexter Hanover, would be active in the Remus market war, and he was. His presence in the battle probably frightened off other hopeful buyers, and he secured the young pacing machine for $85,000.

John Simpson, Sr. had to fight off a slight case of disappointment. The Hanover president had marked "$100,000?" next to the colt's name in his sales bible.

Lunch time arrived and passed without a break in the auction action. Few among the crowd of horsemen and spectators left the Farm Shows complex. The snack bar did a land-office business, dispensing hotdogs, hamburgs, French fries, and prewrapped ham and cheese sandwiches. Most of the gathering stoically ignored the hunger pains to remain with the big show.

There were other top Hanover colts and fillies passing through the ring, ribbons in their manes, sales numbers glued to their hips—Orator Hanover at $70,000. Magna Hanover at $40,000. Welk Hanover at $55,000. Peyton Hanover at $50,000. Jorge Hanover at $60,000. Luzella Hanover at $40,000.

Murray Brown, doing double duty as Hanover's public relations director and general manager of the Standardbred Sales, had a perpetual grin on his face now. He was still hustling about, shuttling between the arena floor and the mobile sales headquarters, but his step seemed even lighter.

Hal Jones, the Shoe Farms' general superintendent, was looking relieved, was shaking a lot of hands. He and Monty Moncrief, the man responsible for preparing the Hanover yearlings, were holding forth in the stable area, resplendent in their bright orange Hanover blazers. The Doctors G. R. Greenhoff and Peter Boyce, Hanover's two staff veterinarians, were beaming.

Paul Spears, president of the Standardbred Horse Sales Company and

executive vice-president of the Shoe Farms, roamed throughout the building, nodding his thanks as people, some of them total strangers, began to pump his hand and offer congratulations.

The last of the Hanover babies went under the gavel at about 1:50 P.M., and a weary John Simpson, Sr. climbed down from the rostum and made his way slowly through the crowd to the stable area out in back. He was wearing a smile by the time he arrived, and a long cigar was jutting jauntily from his jaw.

The sale wasn't over yet—the best of Max Hempt's Keystone consignment had yet to sell—but the Hanover figures were in, the trend was firm. The thirty-sixth annual Standardbred Horse Sales Company auction was about to set records. The Hanover Shoe Farms consignment was a smash, leading the way as always.

The gross total for the 687 horses sold by all consignors over the three days and two nights of the sale would reach $7,857,400—an all-time high for a Standardbred public auction. The 687 horses, 456 of them yearlings, would average $11,437.

Hanover's 164 yearlings had brought a staggering total of $2,910,700—or $17,748 per youngster.

The Shoe Farms had sent thirty offspring of its premier trotting sire, Star's Pride, to the sale, and the youngsters had commanded total bids of $781,500—or $26,050 a copy. It was a record for the sport's leading producer of trotting horses.

Hanover's top pacing sire, Tar Heel, had also earned himself a new milestone—$19,219 for each of the thirty-six sibling sidewheelers offered by the Shoe Farms.

Its other stallions, while sending smaller Hanover crops to Harrisburg, had done themselves proud as well. The Speedy Count sons and daughters averaged $22,613, the Best Of Alls $15,700, the Columbia Georges $14,584, the Dancer Hanovers $25,000, the Steady Stars $12,180, the Ayreses $14,245, and the Hickory Smokes $11,188.

The figures for some were also records, records that would stand until the next Hanover consignment boarded the vans and headed for Harrisburg in 1975, when 166 yearlings would average $20,695 for a total of $3,435,500—an all-time record for a single breeding farm.

The prophets of gloom, the grim and brooding individuals who had warned of impending disaster in the harness racing breeding industry, would have to file their dire predictions.

Standardbred breeding was alive and well. Residing in Hanover, Pennsylvania, at the very least.

2

THE HANOVER SHOE IS BORN

FOR WANT OF A SHOE, the Hanover Shoe Farms' fifty-year battle to become and remain *the* world leader in Standardbred breeding would surely have been lost. In fact, it is extremely doubtful that the battle would have even begun.

The "shoe" in question is the handsome, sturdy, conservatively stylish, leather item of human footwear—"A man's shoe," as the advertisements say—that you find in the windows and on the shelves of more than two hundred Hanover Shoe Stores from sunny, smoggy California to the New York Island. You may also see them in the windows of J. C. Penney, Sears & Roebuck, Kinney, and Florsheim Stores, since Hanover has made some of the shoes offered by these and other chains (and sold under their labels) over the years. Direct selling salesmen, lugging sample cases and catalogs, have also helped to spread the Hanover name across the land.

While the Hanover Shoe Farms and the Hanover Shoe Company still share a kindred name, along with some corporate officers and offices, the ties were much thicker in years gone by. The Shoe Farms, plain and simple, owe their very existence to the Shoe Company. And to a pair of pioneers and one latter-day dynamo who constructed the shoe manufacturing and sales firm from as near scratch as you can get.

The year was 1899, and Hanover, Pennsylvania, was a tidy, pleasant

community of 5,302 inhabitants, most of them descendants of German, Irish, English, and Scottish settlers who had crossed the Atlantic for a variety of reasons to build a new life in the southeastern corner of the Keystone State—with Harrisburg thirty-six miles to the northeast and the Maryland border a stone's throw to the south.

Primarily it was a trading center for the lush farm lands surrounding it, but its settlers had brought enough skills with them—and passed them on—to endow it with a galaxy of small industries that yielded, among other products, machinery, wagons, furniture, silk, yarns, gloves, and clothing. Most were thriving, with at least one notable exception: Charles Heiser was in deep trouble with the fledgling shoe manufacturing operation he had launched in 1898.

It was rather strange that Heiser should be failing, in that he was a "shoe man" from way back; had run a shoe store (and made shoes by hand) in Hanover many years earlier, and had headed a pair of shoe factories in nearby Baltimore. But failing he was, slipping badly and taking him a lot of capital that had been chipped in by prominent Hanover citizens.

Heiser, floundering, began to scan the horizon for some individual who might help to keep him afloat with a combination of expertise and cash. He remembered a young man by the name of Harper Donelson Sheppard who had worked for him in Baltimore.

Sheppard, Heiser recalled, had possessed so much confidence in his own ability that he had offered to go to work without pay, letting Heiser set his salary at some future date. Heiser had assigned him to the shipping room, had let him work three weeks without salary. At the end of the trial period, Heiser felt compelled to pay him at the rate of five dollars a week, a healthy sum at that time. A week later he raised the rate to six dollars a week. The young employee deserved it. He was bright, extremely ambitious, and would accept all the responsibility Heiser cared to confer upon him.

Harper Sheppard, slender, medium height, always neatly dressed, was something of a marvel. One of thirteen children, he was orphaned at the age of thirteen and sent to live with an uncle by marriage. The uncle was the overseer of three plantations in the area of Greenville, North Carolina, and Harper was assisting him by the time he turned fifteen. The work was difficult and demanded both maturity and diplomacy, coming as it did during the testy Reconstruction Period that followed the Civil War.

When he was seventeen, Sheppard struck out on his own. He went to Baltimore and worked as a stock clerk in a notions business, proving his worth early and winning steady salary increases. Soon, however, he tired of the stockroom and headed back to North Carolina, where he remained for six months before striking out for Texas in 1888. For a solid year he roamed the Southwest, working here, working there, and acquiring a

broad knowledge of ranching and a strong love of horses. Then he headed back to Baltimore, where he met Charles Heiser for the first time.

Sheppard was twenty-three when his shoe manufacturing career began with Heiser and twenty-eight when he left him, hiring on with the Boston shoe-making firm of Hathaway, Soule and Harrington. He was a traveling salesman with the Boston company, spending more than a little time on the highways and byways since his territory extended from the State of Delaware to Key West, Florida. It was small wonder that the former Henrietta Dawson Ayres, the bride he had taken in 1896, encouraged him to investigate Heiser's offer to rejoin him in the sputtering Hanover operation three years later. Her husband couldn't spend any *less* time at home if he were headquartered in Hanover.

Sheppard arrived in Hanover in February of 1899, intending to investigate the situation before giving Heiser an answer. He found that his former employer had stretched a point here and there. Three shoe manufacturing concerns had already failed in the weary factory that Heiser occupied, and it looked very much like the number would soon be four. Still, the young businessman sensed that salvation might be possible—Heiser's shoes were of high quality, at the very least—and he remained in Hanover to meet and chat with some of the stockholders, gentlemen who had invested up to $1,000 each in the tottering firm.

He had obviously impressed the investors. When he appeared at a general stockholders meeting a short time later, he was offered the position of assistant manager at a salary of $100 a month. There was a catch, however; the offer was only good if he were willing to invest $500 of his own funds in the concern. Sheppard did not hesitate. Intrepid and confident of his own abilities, he accepted, returning to Baltimore to collect his wife and resign from the Boston company. He was soon at work in Hanover.

Over the next ten months, Harper Sheppard's reputation went up in inverse proportion to the decline of Charles Heiser's. In April, only two months after Sheppard had climbed abroad, the directors were suggesting that Heiser make a Southern sales swing for the Hanover firm, not Sheppard. Sheppard's services were needed in the factory, they said.

With the newcomer's personal stock soaring, Heiser became bitter, nasty. The friction between the two executives became so intense that Sheppard, in November, handed in his resignation. The directors refused to accept it. Instead, they invited Heiser to pack it in, to relinquish all rights under his contract, to leave. Bitterly, he did. The date was December 20, 1899. The board then leased the manufacturing business to Harper Donelson Sheppard. And to a young partner he had acquired.

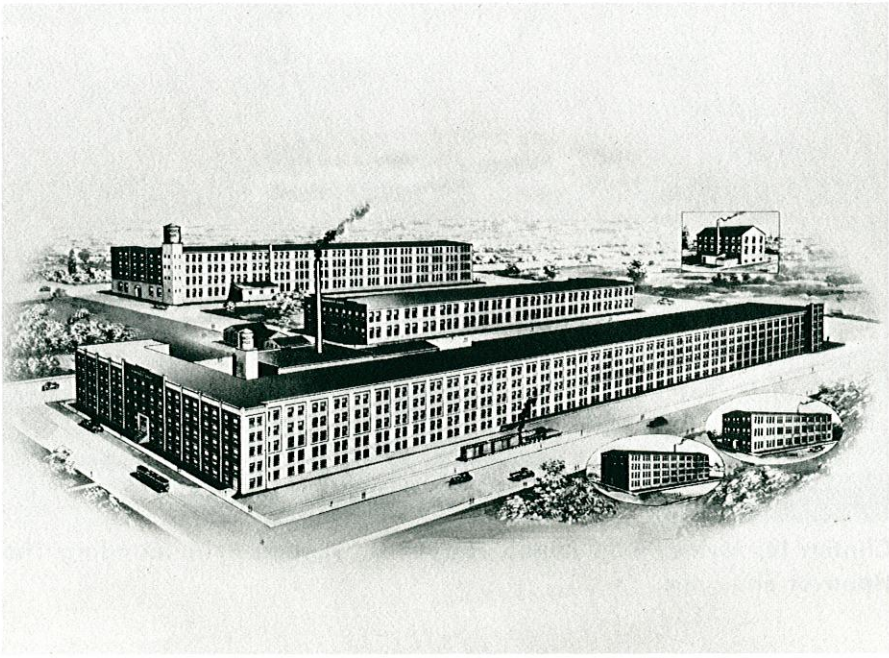
Clinton N. Myers, seven and a half years younger than Sheppard, was a

Harper D. Sheppard, co-founder of The Hanover Shoe, Inc. *Courtesy Hoffman Studio.*

Clinton N. Myers, who joined Harper D. Sheppard in founding The Hanover Shoe, Inc.

native of Bachman's Valley, Carroll County, Maryland. A tallish, heavy-set man with a friendly nature and a sort of perpetual smile on his face, Myers had a background in retail selling. He had apprenticed as a sales clerk in a Melrose, Maryland, store, before moving to Hanover in 1891. Settled in Hanover, he had clerked in a dry-goods store and later sold fertilizer, but was in the general insurance business when Sheppard arrived in town. The two met, liked each other from the start, and became friends.

Myers' father, J. Wesley Myers, was a stockholder in Heiser's shoe manufacturing concern and had spearheaded a move to elect his son treasurer of the company. There was little opposition in that young Myers was very likely to be treasurer of nothing the way things were going. Myers and Sheppard, now joined in the common cause of keeping the stricken company alive, became even closer, and when Charles Heiser was forced out, the senior Myers suggested that the two young men form a partnership and take over the company. Again, the board of directors, impressed with both men and having little to lose, agreed to the move. The Charles Heiser Shoe Company was leased to them a day or two before Christmas of 1899.



The original Shoe Company plants in Hanover.

The first link in the chain of events that led to the formation of the Hanover Shoe Farms was forged. Obviously, the Hanover Shoe Company was on its way, too. But not immediately.

Sheppard and Myers officially took control of the company on December 26. On the evening of December 27, fire ripped through the fitting room of the venerable factory on Railroad Street. It seemed like disaster at the moment, but within ten days temporary repairs had been made and production resumed.

There were scores of shoe manufacturers around the nation, most of them turning out a decent product at a reasonable price, and the two new proprietors of the former Heiser enterprise were convinced that they needed a major wrinkle—a new idea—to catch and pass the opposition. They soon had their merchandising scheme—a solid one that would spell success.

Eliminate the middle man, was the name of their game. Make your own shoes, sell them yourself. Sell them directly to the wearer and keep the price of each pair to an absolute minimum. Of course, it was taken for granted that they would produce shoes of the highest possible quality as well. It was no accident, no stroke of genius by some early Madison Avenue type, that "The Greatest Shoe Value on Earth" became the slogan of the infant company.

Sheppard and Myers were bent upon opening their own store, and quickly. Their policy would be one single price, $2.50, for any pair of fine men's shoes that they made. Their eventual goal was to open four stores a year, increasing production all the while to service the growing chain.

York, only nineteen miles northeast of Hanover, was selected as the site of their first retail outlet, and the hunt for a vacant store at reasonable rent began. Sheppard finally located it and Myers closed the deal, persuading a reluctant merchant named Samuel Small to part with the facility by offering him three months rent in advance, a total of $225. Small, a hardware tradesman, cleared his display of bathtubs out of the quarters, and renovations were started.

A craftsman named J. C. Fallon was hired to construct the shelving, but only after he had warned Sheppard that he did only first-class work and was quite expensive. "What would your estimate of the job be?" a concerned Sheppard asked. "Sixty-five dollars," Fallon said flatly. "When can you start?" Sheppard inquired promptly.

As a business site, the store left quite a bit to be desired—its entrance was on the side of the building, it contained but two small windows, and it was only 24 feet deep. But it was in a busy, thriving area, and the two young entrepreneurs were convinced that it would do nicely.

The first Hanover Shoe Store, located at 5 E. Market Street, York, Pennsylvania, opened on June 30, 1900. It was a warm, sunny Saturday,

and both Sheppard and Myers were on hand for the opening, showing, fitting, and selling shoes along with store manager Frank T. Ziegler and one other salesman.

Sheppard made the trip from Hanover to York by train, while Myers followed with a horse and buggy so that the two would be able to get home that night after the trains stopped running. It was the first of many Saturday trips to and from York, with "Doc," a bay gelding owned by Myers' father, providing most of the locomotion. More often than not, the sun would be rising on Sunday morning when the weary businessmen—and weary horse—reached Hanover.

While Sheppard had experience selling shoes wholesale and Myers was a veteran retail salesman of other items, neither had actually sold a pair of shoes to an individual customer. Business, to them, seemed very brisk that first day, but when the store was closed at 11 P.M. and the sales added up, they totaled only forty-four pairs. The disappointment made the long ride home that much longer.

Their dejection did not last, however. Word quickly spread that Hanover shoes were not only handsome and well constructed, but inexpensive at the same time. The York store prospered and managed a modest but encouraging profit of $290.44 for the first six months of operation.

Sam Small, the man who had rented Myers the space, was so impressed with his tenants that he did not raise their rent for many years despite offers of considerably more cash from others interested in leasing his facility.

In August, Sheppard and Myers opened a second Hanover Store in Reading, Pennsylvania. A third followed in Philadelphia in February. Others sprouted up in Wilmington, Trenton, Harrisburg, and again in Philadelphia. All did well with the exception of the original Philadelphia outlet. In Philadelphia the two had selected a location on swanky Chestnut Street, pitting the inexpensive Hanover shoe against much more expensive competition. It was years before the store generated a profit, but it became the forerunner, the flagship, of many successful Hanover stores in the City of Brotherly Love.

Meanwhile, back at the factory things were humming. The Hanover Shoe Company had inherited some customers—other retail firms—from the Heiser operation, and Sheppard and Myers were anxious to shed them as quickly as possible. The factory's production was limited, and they needed every pair of shoes they could manufacture for their own growing string of stores. Eventually they relinquished their two best customers, Hooper Brothers in Baltimore and William Hahn & Company in Washington, and the initial stage of their grand design was complete. They were self-contained, as it were.

While the company's financial picture did not suddenly light up in the sky, it did brighten not long after Charles Heiser's departure and the advent of Harper Sheppard and Clinton Myers. As early as June 4, 1900, before the opening of their first store in York, the pair was reporting to the Board of Directors that it would be meeting its obligated five percent semiannual dividend to stockholders.

At the same June meeting, the name of the concern was changed to the Sheppard & Myers Company. In the future, the shoe manufacturing division would be known as The Hanover Shoe, Inc. The division that would hunt, find, and lease a steady proliferation of new retail sales locations would be known as Sheppard & Myers, Inc.

3
BUSINESS BOOMS

HARPER SHEPPARD AND CLINTON MYERS had set out to open four new stores a year and rarely strayed from that game plan.

Two more stores were opened in Philadelphia. Others quickly appeared in the central business districts of Lancaster, Allentown, Norfolk, and Brooklyn. In 1903 they invaded the Great White Way, offering Hanover shoes to sophisticated Manhattanites. Outlets were also opened in Paterson, Newark, Richmond, Dayton, Akron, and Indianapolis.

They weren't the plush, spacious shops in handsome Early American decor that you find in today's modern malls and plazas, but they were neat, efficient, and located in high-traffic areas. And they all boasted all-leather Hanover shoes at $2.50 a pair.

By 1915, when Europe was in flames and the United States tottered on the brink of World War I, there were sixty-one Hanover stores sprinkled throughout the eastern half of the nation. And more on the way.

Sheppard and Myers learned early in the game that opening stores and selling shoes would not be the problem that robbed them of their sleep, put touches of gray in their hair. Turning out enough shoes to stock the stores and satisfy their customers was the stickler. The Railroad Street factory could not hope to produce enough footwear to meet the spurting demand, and construction of a second plant was started as early as 1901.

The new factory, located at the corner of Park Avenue and Franklin Street in Hanover, was three stories tall, stark and homely as most

factories of that vintage were. Completed in 1902, the mortar was barely dry when a fourth floor had to be added. Production never ceased while the addition was under way.

And still the shoemakers could not keep pace with demand. American men apparently liked the shoe, liked the price. It was a happy dilemma, but still a dilemma. More manufacturing capacity was needed, so Sheppard and Myers secured another promising factory site on Pine Street—on the outskirts of Hanover. Before actual work could begin, however, the pair had second thoughts. Transportation in Hanover was limited; it would be a hardship on employees, asking them to journey back and forth to the edge of the city. The welfare of Hanover workers was important to Sheppard and Myers, always would be. Plans were scrapped. A site closer in would have to be found.

Headquarters for The Hanover Shoe, Inc., and the former command post of the Hanover Shoe Farms. The building is located at 118 Carlisle St., Hanover, Pa. *Photo by Bill Taylor.*

They settled on a handy spot along Carlisle Street, hard by the Pennsylvania Railroad, and wondered why they had not thought of it earlier. Not only was it ideal because of its proximity to the rails, but

Sheppard already owned a pair of properties nearby. He would sell the land to the company at cost, with no interest asked.

Everything seemed perfect, was working out well, until it came time to deal with William Thomas. Thomas, a recluse, owned and occupied a single-story log house on the key corner of the site. And Thomas wasn't about to sell. It took all of the persuasion that Sheppard and Myers could muster to turn the tide. Finally, after the two shoemakers had pointed out that a large factory would provide employment for hundreds of his fellow citizens, Thomas relented.

Much time had passed, however. It wasn't until April, 1910, that construction of the Carlisle Street factory began. Work continued through that summer, autumn, and winter, with one department after another moving in as each stage was completed. It was hoped the huge building would house the entire Hanover operation under one roof, but by 1915 the plant was crowded and overtaxed. The cutting and fitting departments were shifted back to the Park Avenue plant, which had been abandoned. Four years later a two-story structure was built on Franklin Street, housing the shipping department and providing warehouse space.

While the company's construction projects were both expansive and expensive, it was really only the beginning. More would follow. In Hanover. In Middletown, Maryland. In Franklin, Marlinton, and White Sulphur Springs, West Virginia.

Heading into the First World War, the success of the Hanover Shoe Company and its two co-founders had long since been assured. The company's unusual merchandizing philosophy of selling its own product in its own stores—"Direct from Maker to Wearer"—at the lowest possible price was a gigantic winner. While Harper Sheppard and Clinton Myers did not abandon their efforts to make Hanover one of the nation's largest shoemakers, they began to direct a portion of their energies elsewhere. To good works, good deeds.

In 1917 Sheppard was called to Washington and asked to serve as a member of the Shoes, Leather and Rubber Goods Branch of the Quartermaster Corps. He obliged, with his counsel used in outfitting the American troops who fought in Europe.

Two years earlier, Hanover had been in need of a good daily newspaper, and Sheppard and Myers had provided it with one. They bought an aged publishing firm that had produced a daily known as the Hanover *Independent* and turned it into a modern shop that offered a newsy, well-edited paper called the Hanover *Evening Sun*. Sheppard became its president and served until his death in 1951.

Hanover desperately needed a hospital. Sheppard and Myers provided it, not only paying for the construction, but equipping it, endowing it

with $100,000, and building a companion nurses' home. The original medical center, completed in 1926, had a capacity of fifty beds. Fifteen years later the two shoe company executives and their families financed a new wing to expand the capacity to ninety-eight beds. In 1955, when both had passed on, another half-million dollars would be donated by their sons through foundations.

Hanover and its tiny neighbor, McSherrystown, were in dire need of an adequate supply of pure water. Both communities had suffered terribly in the summer of 1930 when a drought had reduced the existing system's production to a trickle. Sheppard and Myers, working long hours and often battling politics and apathy, saw to it that a giant, totally adequate system was constructed. Heading a citizens' committee, the two determined shoemakers bought the old water company, built an entirely new system, then turned it over to the municipality at cost.

The star of the new water complex was a vast dam measuring 740 feet across that impounded more than two hundred million gallons of the precious liquid at the upper end of the watershed. A grateful Hanover citizenry named the new facility the Sheppard and Myers Dam.

There were other major improvements to the system over the years, and all were spearheaded by Messrs. Sheppard and Myers. Sheppard, his son Lawrence, and Myers would all spend many years as members of the Hanover Municipal Water Works Commission, and each would serve as its chairman.

Later—in 1947—when the Hanover School District was longing for an athletic field, The Hanover Shoe, Inc., would come to the rescue, donating $100,000 to build a stadium on property already provided by Myers and the two Sheppards. The facility would be duly called the Sheppard-Myers Athletic Field.

The two shoe company executives, their wives, and descendants would all be hailed for their contributions to the area. Community service would become a tradition of both families. Hanover, Pennsylvania, had been good *to* them, good *for* them. In turn, they would be good to Hanover, Pennsylvania.

But it was hardly a case of all work and no play for Sheppard and Myers as the years slipped by. . . .

Myers, secretary treasurer of both The Hanover Shoe, Inc., and Sheppard & Myers, Inc., was a man of many hobbies. The bulky, ever-smiling executive was a fancier of English setters, and his Blue Bar Kennels became famous the world over for the string of champions it turned out. And born a farmer, he remained one at heart as he bred prize-winning Barred Plymouth Rock chickens and raised corn that earned him blue ribbons wherever it was exhibited.

Myers was also a tree lover of the first magnitude, and the arboretum

he started grew to include no less than eight hundred specimens.

Sheppard, president of Hanover Shoe and Sheppard & Myers, shared his partner's passion for trees. Sitting as perennial members of the water works commission—and joined by Sheppard's son, Lawrence—the trio was happily responsible for the planting of more than two million trees over thirteen hundred acres of Hanover's watershed.

Harper Sheppard and Clinton Myers shared many interests over the years, but none with more unbridled intenseness then horses. The horse, of course, was the prime vehicle for getting about when the pair was attempting to crack the shoe business on little more than a shoestring. Both owned fine saddle horses as soon as success allowed it, and it was a familiar sight in and around Hanover to see them astride their bays, chestnuts, and roans at dawn or dusk. They kept fine driving horses, too—shades of those early trips to their first shoe store in York—and it was Sheppard's custom to drive a horse to and from work long after the automobile had shunted aside the horse-drawn carriage.

From owning driving horses, it was only one short, simple leap into owning race horses, and the two men were soon involved in the sport of light harness racing. The two raced their horses under the collective name of the Hanover Shoe Stables. They were regulars, often driving the horses themselves, at racing meetings ranging from the county fair circuits of Pennsylvania to the glorious Fall Trots at Lexington, Kentucky. Few major Standardbred auctions were held without one, the other, or both being among the bidding crowd.

Soon the stable had a third partner. Lawrence Sheppard wanted aboard. Actually, Lawrence had been part and parcel of his father's racing interests from about the time he was fitted with his first pair of Hanover shoes. Early on, the Hanover Shoe Stables had to admit him as a member in good standing. Lawrence Sheppard would have it no other way.

His father had given him his first Standardbred, a yearling pacer named June Patchen, when he was eleven years old. By the time he was sixteen, he had already driven in amateur races and was contemplating a career as a trainer-driver, until his father put his foot down. "I want you to study law," the senior Sheppard told him. Dutifully, if a bit reluctantly, Lawrence obliged, earning a law degree from the University of Virginia. But he never practiced law, choosing instead to enter the shoe business. And the racing business. He quickly wedged his way into the Hanover Shoe Stables, starting as a junior partner, but emerging as the prime mover in the racing endeavor before very much time had passed. Lawrence Sheppard was never very happy in the understudy's role.

The senior Sheppard and Myers were in the habit of buying or breeding nice, useful trotters and pacers at modest prices. While the horses never made them rich nor set many records, they were pleasant to drive and to watch, and they managed to win an occasional race to make it

all worthwhile. If one of their horses couldn't quite trot enough to make the grade, or if one suffered a permanent injury, it didn't matter all that much; he would still have a home in the Hanover Shoe Stables. The same was true for a mare who failed to produce worthy offspring.

It was an attitude, an arrangement, an aura that lasted until the summer of 1922, when Harper Sheppard and Clinton Myers left Hanover for their annual vacations. When they departed, the Hanover Shoe Stables boasted twenty-one head of horses. When they returned, their collection of trotters and pacers totaled one. Lawrence Sheppard had sold the balance.

It was a story that the younger Sheppard never tired of telling. "When Dad came home, he saw red, but didn't say much. I told him the trouble with him and Mr. Myers was that they could not stand parting with any horse, no matter how bad he was, and as a result they had a stable full of critters not worth a damn."

When Harper Sheppard had simmered down—Clinton Myers hadn't been very angry, *would never get* very angry at his impetuous young partner—Lawrence was instructed to begin the task of assembling a new string of horses. Young Sheppard undertook the assignment with relish. And with an eye toward class, whatever it cost.

His first major purchase came that same year, 1922, when he brought Baron Worthy, 2:01, into the Hanover fold. Baron Worthy, a free-for-all pacer plucked out of Thomas W. Murphy's star-studded barn, was handled by Harry Corbin. The rugged pacer helped to spread the Hanover name throughout the East and the Midwest because of his fierce battles with some of the greatest pacing stars of the era—Single G, Margaret Dillon, and Hal Mahone.

Young Sheppard was busy in the interim, picking up a trotter here, a pacer there, but next made *major* harness racing waves when he bought aging trotting champion Peter Manning in 1925. Peter Manning, with Tom Murphy in the sulky, had trotted Lexington's mile track in 1:56 ¾ in 1922, setting an all-time trotting mark that would last fifteen years until the immortal Greyhound shattered it with a 1:56 timing in 1937. The tall, rangy Peter later passed into the hands of Edward F. (Pop) Geers, setting half-mile exhibition records for him until Geers was fatally injured in a tragic racing accident at Wheeling, West Virginia, in 1924.

Trotting under the orange and blue colors of the Hanover Shoe Stables, Peter Manning continued to set a variety of half-mile marks over the next few seasons, with Tom Berry and several other teamsters handling the reins. Lawrence Sheppard was in the bike on many occasions, sharpening his driving skills and keeping the Hanover name before the public. The veteran trotter was immensely popular with racing fans wherever they gathered.

Peter Manning, however, was not likely to help the two Sheppards and

Myers in their next Standardbred racing enterprise. Peter was a gelding, and the three Hanover men had decided to launch a breeding operation. It was to be called the Hanover Shoe Farms.

It was in April of 1926 that A.B. Coxe, probably the leading Standardbred breeder of the period, died and left a legacy of sixty-nine of the finest stallions, mares, yearlings, and young race horses assembled anywhere in the world. Coxe's Nawbeek Farm's contingent included Dillon Axworthy, the premier trotting sire of the day, Miss Bertha Dillon, destined to become one of the greatest progenitors the sport has ever known, and Miss Bertha Worthy, a yearling with a stakes-winning career ahead of her before settling down to a spectacular span as a broodmare.

Other names in the nifty Nawbeek band included Sister Bertha, Evelyn the Great, Isotta, The Divorcee, Jane Dillon, The Miss Stokes, Czarevna, Madam Peters, and Helen Dillon, all well known at the time.

When it became known that Coxe's widow was planning to dispose of her late husband's stock, owners, breeders, and trainers from all over the nation descended upon her, offering to buy this stallion, that mare, this yearling, that race horse. Mrs. Coxe hesitated, would not have wanted to see his sterling collection broken up, scattered to the winds.

Only one man had the vision and the courage to offer to buy them en masse, to take the whole sixty-nine in one fell swoop. In June he presented her with a check for $150,000 and took the horses—all of them—away.

4

THE SHOE FARMS TAKE SHAPE

LAWRENCE BAKER SHEPPARD, the man who boldly corralled the entire horse holdings of the late A.B. Coxe in the largest Standardbred transaction in history to that time, was born in Baltimore on December 13, 1897, fourteen months before his father was lured to Hanover by Charles Heiser.

Lawrence was the first of two sons born to Harper and Henrietta Dawson Ayers Sheppard; Richard Harper Sheppard was the second. Clinton and Ethel Hamm Myers had two children as well, a son, Robert C., and a daughter, Henrietta Myers.

But it would be Lawrence Sheppard—"Shep," to his friends—who soared through the ranks to head all the Hanover teams, including The Hanover Shoe, Inc., Sheppard & Myers, Inc., and the Hanover Shoe Farms.

Shep, as he charged through life, would earn himself an army of friends and a collection of enemies. He would be called creative, ambitious, controversial, salty, feisty, brilliant, irascible, charitable, loyal, courageous, dictatorial, opinionated, charming, outspoken, and sentimental. Never would he be called dishonest. Nor boring.

As a boy, he was slender, neither tall nor short, had sandy hair, and boasted eyes and ears of generous proportion. He had a strong will, a

mind of his own, but was generally an obedient son to his parents. His father once "grounded" him for a month after he raced a buggy down the main street of Hanover, but the penalty was imposed for losing a wheel off the carriage, not for racing. It was no sin within the Sheppard family to race a horse anywhere, anytime. While he lived in a large home with all the trappings of wealth around him as his father's success mounted, there was nothing of the snob about him.

He attended Hanover public schools and Philips Andover Academy, then began college at the Haverford School on Philadelphia's Main Line. With his parents' blessing, he spent a pair of summers caring for a string of riding horses at Yellowstone Park in Wyoming.

"Those were the days," he told an interviewer many years later. "I was a horse wrangler and guide, got three bucks a day, loved that life. Then, one day, I noticed a couple of autos driving up the road toward the park. It made me sick, literally sick, to see those cars on virgin land. I left and never went back. I'll always remember Yellowstone as it was on horseback."

Lawrence Sheppard as a wrangler and guide at Yellowstone National Park. *Courtesy Betty Nolt.*

Young Sheppard graduated from Haverford in 1917, only weeks after the United States had plunged into World War I. Patriotically, he joined the fledgling U.S. Naval Air Corps, was an aviation pioneer, and survived the rickety Navy aircraft to continue his education at the University of Virginia after peace arrived. He earned a bachelor of laws degree in 1921 and was admitted to the Virginia Bar the same year. While he would never formally practice law, his legal background would serve him well in a career that would have more tentacles than the average octopus.

Meanwhile, through Haverford, the Navy, and the University of Virginia, he was pursuing, courting, and capturing Charlotte Cassin Newton, the daughter of a San Antonio judge and one of that Texas city's belles.

"Shep was on his way to Mexico and had stopped in San Antonio to visit the Ayres boys, who were his classmates back at Haverford," Mrs. Sheppard recalled. "We were introduced at a Christmas ball, but neither of us was much impressed with the other at first. And we both had other interests at the time—he had a girl and I had a beau."

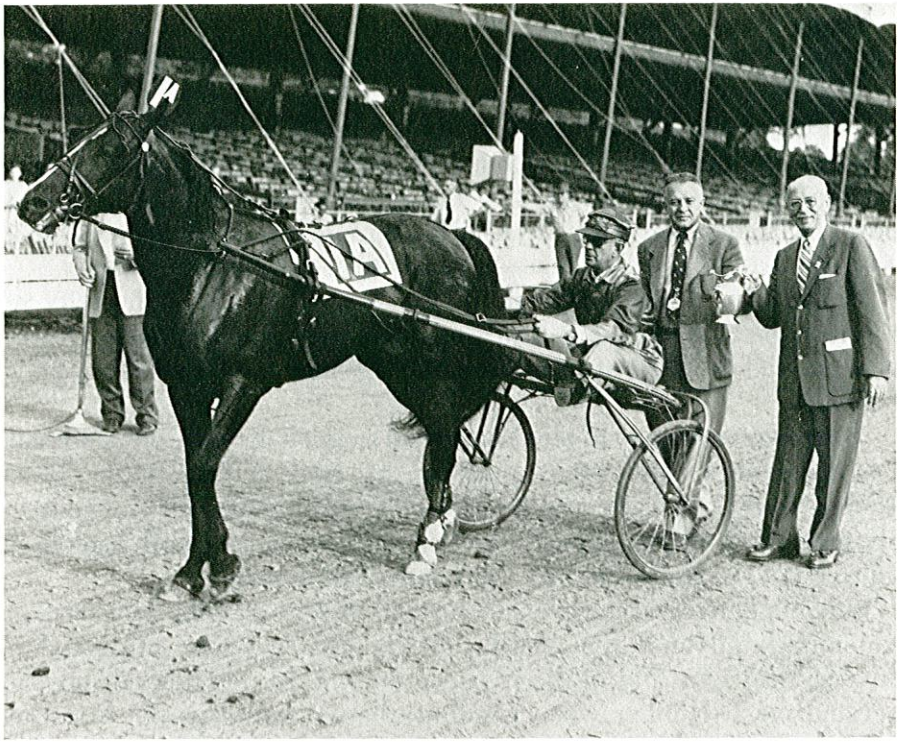
But Sheppard returned to visit his friends Ackley and Bob Ayres in San Antonio several times, renewing his acquaintance with Charlotte Newton on each occasion. And, if the romance did not deepen immediately, it became much handier when Charlotte began attending the Marcum School in Bryn Mawr, Pennsylvania, not far from Haverford.

Young Sheppard began courting Charlotte in earnest then. He was not only persistent, but ingenious in his mission. He once asked her to a holiday dance at Haverford, only to be turned down; Charlotte had urgent business to attend to in San Antonio. Before she headed home, however, she received an emergency wire from one of the Ayres boys informing her that Sheppard was seriously ill, at death's door, and calling for her. She quickly changed her plans and jumped on a train for the short trip to Haverford. When she arrived, there were eight grinning young men to meet her, including the miraculously recovered Lawrence Sheppard.

The Sheppards were married on June 12, 1919, in Philadelphia, while Sheppard was still a law student. Fortunately for Mrs. Sheppard her family had always maintained a stable of horses, and she had grown to appreciate them. When you married Lawrence Baker Sheppard, you had to pledge your unending loyalty to horses and horse racing as well. It was an unvoiced part of the marriage vows.

Sheppard was neck deep in Standardbred racing by then. He was classified as an amateur driver, a person who drives simply for the love of it, but could easily have been a professional.

Townsend Ackerman, still active as a Standardbred trainer at the edge of eighty-eight in 1975, knew Sheppard well, was familiar with his skills as



Shep was a fine driver as well as a breeder. Here he picks up silver after scoring a win with Empire Hanover at Goshen in 1953.

a reinsman. "Shep was not one of those rich guys who drive three or four times a year because it's the thing to do. He could hold his own with the best we had around in those days. He was good, real good," Ackerman said in tribute.

Sheppard started on the fair circuits of Pennsylvania, then widened his driving activities to include most of the Grand Circuit meetings of the day—Lexington, Goshen, Old Orchard Park, and the others. He was a frequent winner, with his victories coming at the expense of some of the best reinsmen of the period—Tom Murphy, Tom Berry, Nat Ray, Marvin Childs, Billy Dickerson, and Walter Cox among them.

(As late as 1975 his name was still in the United States Trotting Association's book of world records. He drove Dean Hanover to miles of 2:00¼, 2:00¾ and 2:00¾ in a three-heat race at Lexington in 1937. No three-year-old trotter before or since has gone any faster—6:00¾—in a three-heat contest. A year later he drove Dean Hanover to a world mark of 1:58½ for four-year-old trotting stallions, although that standard was bested later.)

From his earliest days as an associate of his father and Clinton Myers in the Hanover Shoe Stables, he was pressing the two older men to improve their stock, to weed out the horses that did not add luster to the Hanover name and replace them with ones that would. When he cleaned house in 1922, selling all but one horse, the two senior members of the stable had very little alternative.

It was Lawrence Sheppard who plotted the purchase of both Baron Worthy and Peter Manning. And it was Lawrence Sheppard who urged the wholesale purchase of the Coxe horses. The senior Sheppard and Myers sent him to see Coxe's widow, leaving the price and details up to him. When he returned after buying the entire lot for $150,000—the magnitude of the bargain was evident even then—his father told him flatly, "Young man, you will never do a better bit of business than you have done today."

The *Trotter and Pacer* magazine, a Standardbred journal of the day, concurred, reporting in its June 3, 1926, edition: "Almost overnight Hanover, a small city in Southern Pennsylvania, has become a star-marked spot on the harness horse map of the United States through the purchase, en bloc, of the entire horse holdings of the late A. B. Coxe by the Hanover Shoe Stables, composed of Messrs. H. D. Sheppard, C. N. Myers and Lawrence B. Sheppard. By successfully negotiating this deal, the Hanover Shoe Stable becomes the largest combined breeding and racing establishment in the world."

With the Coxe horses grazing in Hanover's pastures, the nucleus of the Hanover Shoe Farms was formed. The restless, aggressive young Sheppard wasn't satisfied, however. His hungry eyes were still roaming, centering upon a brilliant young trotter named Guy McKinney, who had just won the very first Hambletonian Stake ever held.

Townsend Ackerman plucked Guy McKinney out of the Lexington sale in 1924, buying the yearling for $900 for one of his patrons, Henry B. Rea, a Pittsburgh steel executive. Rea was not particularly fond of the plain-looking colt, and was not distrubed when the youngster became ill and had to be left back in Lexington in the care of trainer Nat Ray. After a year of tutoring at the hands of Ackerman and Ray, Guy McKinney suddenly blossomed. With Ray at the controls, the Guy Axworthy son trotted miles in 2:05¼ and 2:04¾ at the Syracuse, New York, Fairground to win the $73,451 inaugural Hambletonian.

That same fall he was consigned to the Old Glory Sale, one of the biggest auctions of the year, and Lawrence Sheppard bought him for Hanover. Unbeaten as a three-year-old, Guy McKinney brought only $12,000 in the sales ring, a fact that enhanced young Sheppard's growing reputation as a bargain hunter. He also added the sparkling trotting filly Volga, 3, 2:04½, to the Hanover corps before the year was out.

Guy McKinney was a son of Guy Axworthy-Queenly McKinney, giving him excellent blood on both sides and marking him as a promising stud prospect. The Sheppards and Myers used him briefly as a stallion in 1927, then turned him over to Tom Berry, the stable's trainer at that time, for another stint of racing and exhibitions. Berry drove him to a 1:58¾ world record for four-year-olds before he was returned to the Farms. The big trotter also went a 2:01¼ mile over the Shoe Farms' spanking new mile track (and established a state of Pennsylvania record in the process) before he became a permanent fixture in the stud barn.

The Shoe Farms had started on a limited scale in 1926, one all-purpose barn on acreage southwest of the city of Hanover. With the acquisition of the Coxe horses and others, more barns and acreage were needed. Lawrence Sheppard, always planning and prodding, saw to it that growth was rapid. By 1927, the Shoe Farms consisted of six hundred acres, a large stallion barn, three large broodmare barns, dozens of well-fenced paddocks and pastures, a mile track good enough to race horses over, and additional facilities at the Hanover fairground.

Hanover's sales figures for yearlings were modest in the beginning, as well. The Shoe Farms sent only six yearlings to auction in 1926 and received $1,518 for the lot, an average of $253 a colt. The 1927 figures were no better, with six more youngsters going to sale and bringing only $1,350, or $225 each.

In 1928, Hanover offered no yearlings at public sale. Its tiny crop,

The Hanover Shoe Farms, circa 1927.

mostly fillies, was retained by the Farms and handed over to trainer Tom Berry for racing. One of the young misses in the Class of '28 was named Hanover's Bertha, and she would give the Shoe Farms their first Hambletonian victory.

Hanover's Bertha, by Peter Volo and out of Miss Bertha Dillion (one of the prizes in the Coxe package purchased by Lawrence Sheppard), had a sparkling season as a two-year-old, setting a world standard of 2:02 for age, sex, and gait. Racing as a three-year-old the next year, she was even more impressive, winning the Hambletonian at Goshen and the Kentucky Futurity at Lexington.

Her victory at Goshen was worth more than just her share of the $56,859 purse to Hanover. The Hambletonian was broadcast over radio for the first time in 1930, and Hanover received an added dividend in national publicity with its triumph. The exposure gained by the Hanover Shoe Company because of the deeds of the Hanover Shoe Farms' trotters and pacers was one reason why a monthly advertising fee of $5,000 was paid by the shoe company to the Farms in the early years. Another was the fact that it helped to give a little more respectability to the Farms' profit and loss statement.

Unfortunately for the sport of harness racing, the 1930 radio coverage was a disaster. The bulky Hambletonian field fussed, fidgeted, and scored for forty-five minutes before the start of the first heat. The unlucky broadcaster, running out of material as the drivers delayed the race with their antics in trying to gain an advantage over rivals, finally had to resort to reading newspaper clippings over the air. The radio people took a burn that was to last for decades.

The mid-1920s was hardly the time to launch a Standardbred breeding operation. The sport was approaching the doldrums. The glory days of Dan Patch had long since past. The streaking success of the auto had cut deeply into the immense popularity of the horse. Post-World War I competition for the entertainment dollar had been fierce, with auto racing, radio, and baseball climbing fast. People had become bored with the raft of false starts needed to get a race under way. A number of legislative bodies fought over the sport, often acting at cross-purposes, and rarely doing anything to encourage breeding. Scandal had long plagued Standardbred racing, tarnishing its reputation, hampering its growth.

Lawrence Sheppard was well aware of all those factors when he nudged his father and Clinton Myers into breeding. He could not have foreseen, however, the thundering depression that settled itself upon the nation in 1929. Hanover's sixteen colts would bring only $4,064 in 1930. Its thirty-horse consignment would be worth only $6,090 in 1931. And the thirty-two yearlings the Farms sent to auction in 1932 would collect a

mere $4,544—a horrendous average of $142.

Sheppard remained undaunted, undiscouraged throughout the shaky years. Sheppard hadn't coaxed his father and Myers into breeding for the expressed purpose of making money. He—*they*—sincerely wanted to improve the breed. The pursuit of excellence was Sheppard's game. Always would be. Hopefully, the Farms would one day show a profit. Meanwhile . . . .

Besides, the early days were great days, fun days. A nice change of pace from making and selling shoes. Sheppard was always busy, embroiled in a dozen things at once—driving horses, buying land, overseeing the construction of barns and fences, learning the intricacies of pedigrees and breeding, and acquiring stallions such as Calumet Chuck and Mr. McElwyn.

And the Sheppards, Charlotte and Lawrence, were building a family. A daughter, Charlotte N., was born to them on August 30, 1920. A son, Lawrence B., Jr., followed on July 22, 1922. Then came two more daughters, Alma E. on April 21, 1926, and Patricia A. on March 17, 1932. All would be handsome, precocious children, making their parents proud of them. One would make harness racing history.

Alma Sheppard was a delight, a pint-sized thing with curly blonde hair, whose fondness for horses was evident practically from infancy. When she was four she was handling the reins of trotters and pacers, steering from the laps of trainer Tom Berry or her father. Soon she had her own scaled down sulky, circling the big track out behind the stallion barn with a little gray mare. She made friends with most of the horses on the Farms, even the aging, cantankerous stallion Dillon Axworthy. Dillon, a handful for even the hardiest of caretakers, would permit Alma to enter his stall and wrap his legs. Then out they would go, Alma holding the end of his lead shank while the ill-tempered stallion contentedly grazed on green grass outside the barn.

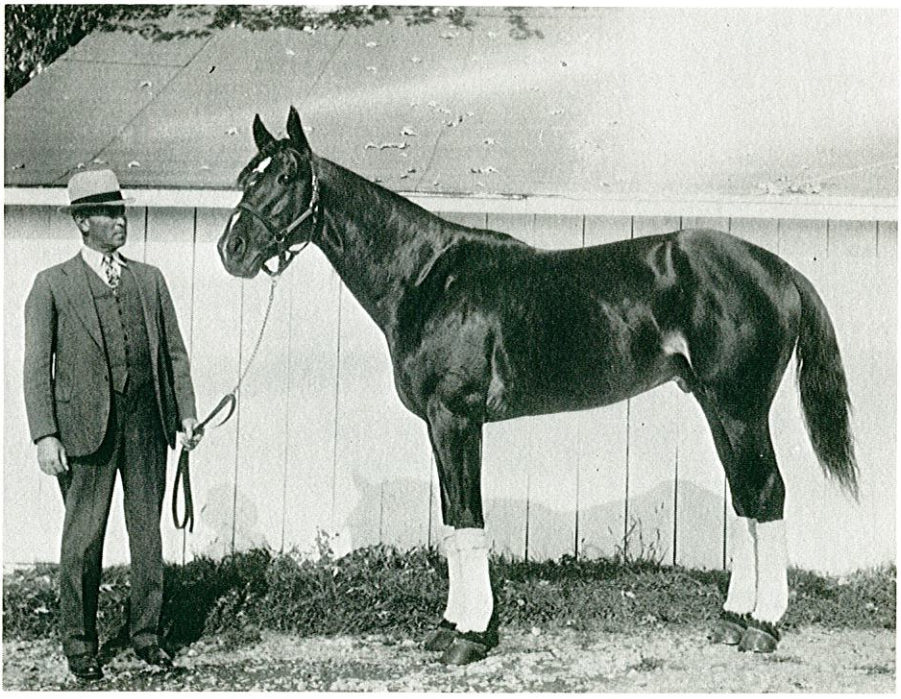
While the Great Depression was still spread across the land in 1933—Franklin Delano Roosevelt was now trying his hand at halting it—things began to look a little better for the Hanover breeders. The Farms sent forty-seven yearlings to the Old Glory Sale in New York, and Lawrence Sheppard came home with receipts totaling $20,868. The $444 average was the best the Farms had managed by far.

There was one excellent reason for the Farms' extraordinary average in 1933. His name was Lawrence Hanover. The yearling son of Peter Volo-Miss Bertha Dillon brought $6,800 at the auction, a dazzling figure for the day. Lawrence Hanover would go on to a fine racing career—he'd win the 1935 Kentucky Futurity, for instance—and eventually return to Hanover as a stallion. But there was also one excellent reason why Lawrence Hanover wouldn't be the absolute king of his racing class. His name was Greyhound.

A year later, Hanover offered a consignment of forty-eight colts and fillies that brought $18,528 back to the Farms. The 1935 contingent was only thirty-five yearlings strong, but it included a colt called Dean Hanover from the final crop of Dillon Axworthy. Harness racing history was in the making.

Dean Hanover was sold to H. Stacy Smith, an amateur reinsman out of Short Hills, New Jersey, on his high bid of $410. Smith renamed the colt Mr. Watt before sending him on to a limited two-year-old campaign that included a 2:05 world record over a half-mile track. Returning as a three-year-old, Mr. Watt raced sensationally for owner Smith and trainer-driver H.M. (Doc) Parshall. He did not win the 1937 Hambletonian—he was not eligible—but he managed to win just about everything else that season. Shirley Hanover, bred and owned by the Hanover Shoe Farms, was the Hambletonian winner, and did it in high style, by trotting the fastest combined two heats in the race's history, the fastest in 2:01 ½. But a day later, over the same Goshen track, Mr. Watt trotted a full second faster.

Lawrence Sheppard was determined to buy him. He had earlier declined to pay $6,000 for the colt, believing that the price was too high



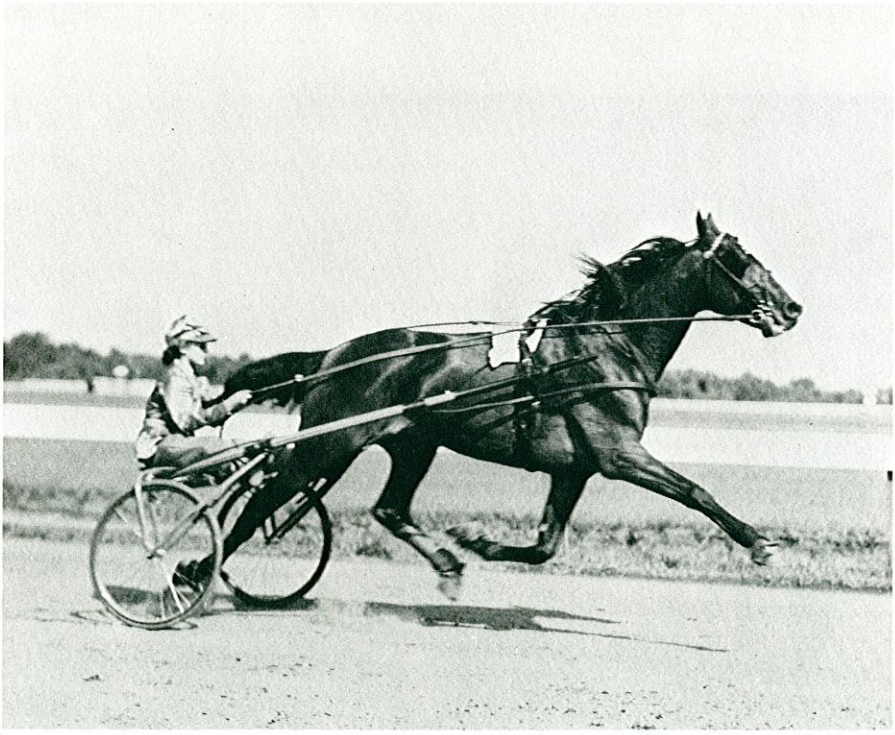
The late Henry Thomas, one of history's greatest horsemen, shows off trotting giant Dean Hanover. The year was 1938.

and thereby proving himself mortal and capable of a mistake now and then. Fresh off his big mile over the Good Time oval at Goshen, the colt's tag had soared to $20,000. Stoically, Sheppard paid it. Then he changed his name back to Dean Hanover.

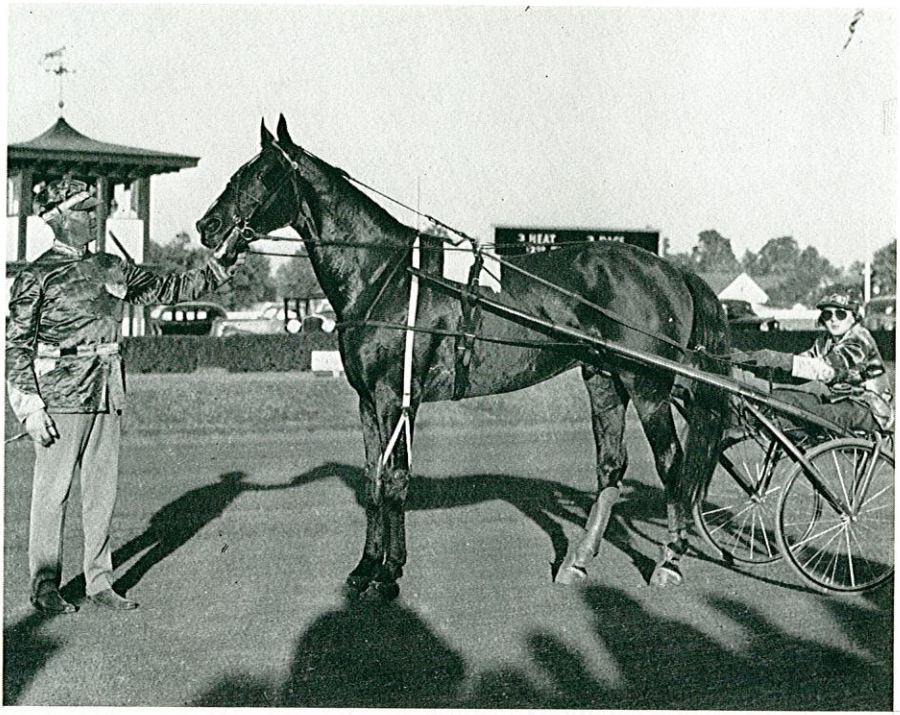
Henry Thomas was the Hanover trainer by this time, and it was Thomas who prepared both Dean Hanover and petite Alma Sheppard for an historic time trial at Lexington on September 24, some six weeks after Lawrence Sheppard had retrieved the great trotter.

John Hervey, harness racing's famed chronicler, covered the event and described 11-year-old Alma with more than a little lyricism. "She was fair of face, with a sweet, childish profile, a rose-leaf complexion, golden hair and her expression not unlike that of some of the cherubs one sees on a Della Robbia plaque."

Hervey was also ecstatic over Alma's feat. An eleven-year-old girl driving a trotter a 1:58 ½ mile, the fastest ever for a three-year-old trotting horse, "strained the bounds of probability to such an extent that it trespassed upon one's credulity," Hervey wrote.



Alma Sheppard and Dean Hanover en route to a world record at Lexington. *Courtesy Betty Nolt.*



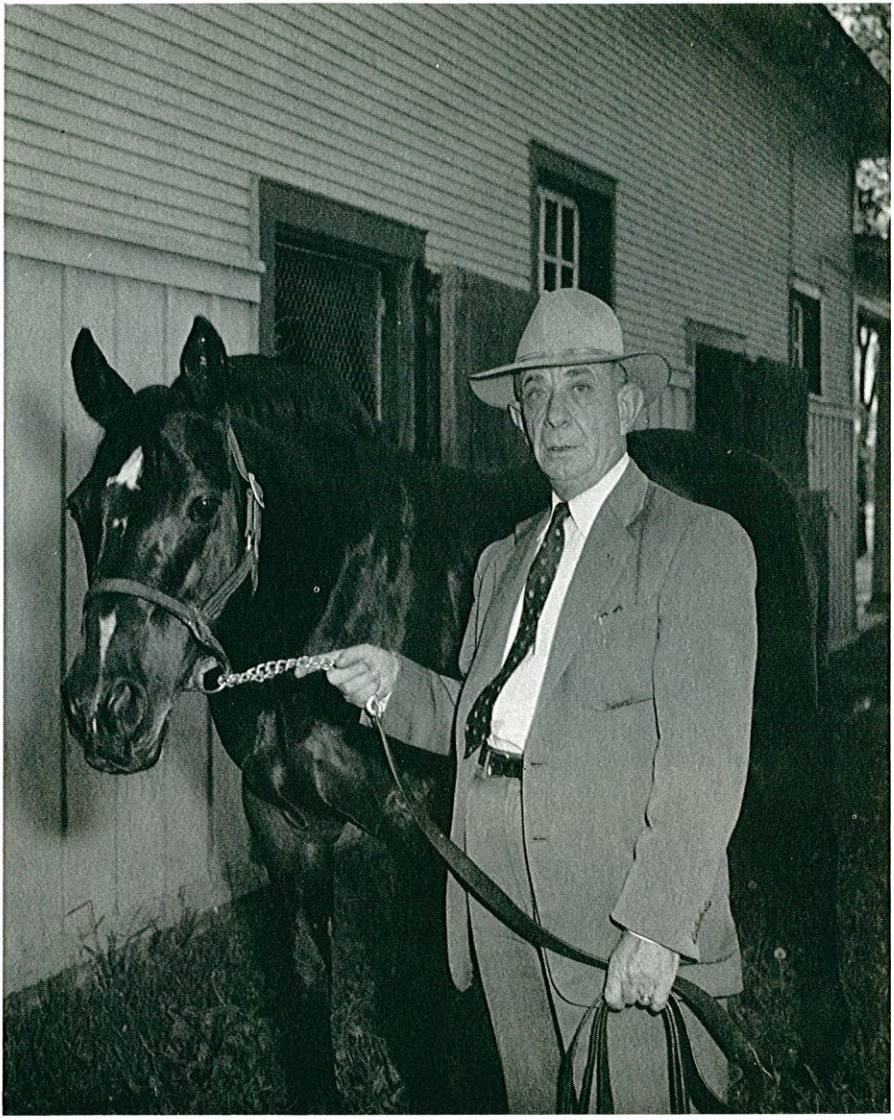
Young Alma Sheppard poses with Dean Hanover and Henry Thomas after setting a world trotting record that is still on the books. *Courtesy USTA.*

It *was* some kind of a happening, a deed that made little Alma an instant national celebrity. Her objective had been to break the teenage harness horse driving record of 2:05 ¾.

The stirrups of the sulky had to be adjusted to accommodate her short legs, and trainer Thomas had to cut down and pin together a set of her father's driving silks—and one of his driving caps—when it was discovered at the last minute that Alma had forgotten her own. But circle the Red Mile in 1:58 ½ she did, with Thomas driving a running horse prompter behind her, yelling both instructions and encouragement. The quarters were in 29 ½, 58 ½, and 1:28 ½.

The Lexington crowd roared lustily when the time was posted, but the roar was partly one of disapproval. Dozens of spectators had clocked the mile as low as 1:58. W. N. Reynolds, the tobaccoman and horseman, circulated a petition calling for Alma's record to go into the books as 1:58, but to no avail. Thirty-eight years later it was still listed in the record book as 1:58 ½, but still the fastest trotting mile ever driven by a female driver.

Alma was blissfully unaware of the racing miracle she had wrought. At the end of the mile she calmly turned her horse, trotted him back to the



Lawrence B. Sheppard, with probably his favorite horse of all time, Dean Hanover. *Courtesy Betty Nolt.*

wire, dismounted, picked up the small rag horse she had brought along for luck, and started to leave the track. Then waves of well wishers and photographers caught up with her. Hours later, when she was being feted at a Lexington hotel, she asked grandfather Harper Sheppard, "Why are they all so excited about it? I didn't do anything. The horse did it."

Which was true, except for the fact that five other drivers—Henry Thomas, Tom Berry, Karl Recor, Doc Parshall, and Alma's father, Lawrence Sheppard—all drove Dean Hanover to world records of one kind or another, and not one was able to beat Alma's 1:58½.

"There was something special about Alma," her proud father said many years later. "A horse would try for her—try hard."

Lawrence Sheppard's lasting world record with Dean Hanover, three heats in a total of 6:01½, was earned at Lexington a week after Alma's epic drive. In 1938, Sheppard drove Dean to a 1:58½ world mark for four-year-olds, and Alma steered him in 1:59¾ over an Agawam Park, Massachusetts, track that was said to be a mile and eighty feet long. Some claimed her accomplishment at Agawam was greater than her feat at Lexington.

Dean Hanover, as gentle as he was swift, remained Lawrence Sheppard's favorite horse throughout the breeder's lifetime. "There has never been another one like him and there never will be another one, no matter how long you go," he was fond of announcing.

Dean Hanover's long and spectacular career in the Hanover stud barn did nothing to diminish Sheppard's devotion. Dean sired 334 trotters and 125 pacers. Three of the trotters, and seven of the pacers took two-minute records, while 130 of his sons and daughters beat 2:05. Eighty-one of the male offspring he produced went on to stallion careers of their own, while his daughters turned out well over a thousand trotters and pacers of their own, many of them two-minute performers.

1938 was a big year for Hanover. Dean Hanover was still setting records, while McLin Hanover was sweeping the Grand Circuit stakes for sophomores, giving Hanover its second Hambletonian victory in as many years. And all the hoopla that Sheppard had created for Hanover was beginning to pay off. For the second straight year the Shoe Farms' consignment of yearlings averaged more than $1,000.

Thirty-seven sons and daughters of Calumet Chuck, Guy McKinney, Peter The Brewer, and Sandy Flash brought a total of $41,825, an average of $1,130. Calumet Chuck was the star of the stallion barn. His eight yearlings averaged out at $2,087.

Hanover seemed to be on the way, heading for the top. Only another world war could possibly interrupt the journey.

5

LAWRENCE AT THE HELM

MEN AND WOMEN throughout the sport of harness racing, from 1930 on, were familiar with Lawrence Sheppard's name, knew him to be the president, the squire, the master of the Hanover Shoe Farms. A scant few, however, were aware that Sheppard had a career—*careers*, really—separate and apart from racing. Every bit as big, every bit as important.

Sheppard, turning his back on the practice of law, joined his father and Clinton Myers in the Hanover Shoe Company in 1921. He was the president's son, and that would not hinder him in his climb up the corporate ladder. But the similarities among him and thousands of other bosses' sons who used their fathers as vaulting poles ended right there.

Lawrence was barely installed in his small office (the Hanover offices were rarely large, rarely plush) when he recommended that the firm throw in the sponge on the line of women's shoes that it had been trying to merchandise without much success. The women's shoes were not made by Hanover, were purchased elsewhere, and the idea that Hanover "was a man's shoe" was apparently etched too deeply in the minds of prospective buyers. Out went the pretty pumps.

He was appointed factory superintendent and a director of the company in 1922, and a year later became vice president and general manager.

Clinton N. Myers, Harper D. Sheppard, and Lawrence B. Sheppard receive awards from an unidentified Hanover citizen.

The promotions, while coming in whirlwind progression, were deserved. From his first day on the job, he waded into every phase of the firm's manufacturing and sales operations, happily accepting every iota of responsibility that his father and Myers were willing to relinquish. He roamed the plants, hunting and finding ways of increasing efficiency. He spent long hours in the purchasing department, searching for methods of buying better leather at better prices. He had a hand and a voice in every decision involving every prospective new sales outlet. He was into styling, employee relations, advertising, warehousing, personnel, and shipping.

He supervised the construction of a five-story addition that extended the main factory to Franklin Street in 1924, and was in charge of every subsequent Hanover building project through the mid-1960s.

He worked a twelve-hour day, generally with Saturdays included, sometimes with Sundays thrown in as well. He was in his office when the factory workers arrived in the morning and was still there long after they had left in the afternoon. Sandwiched in his day, or handled in the

evening hours, were details of the Standardbred breeding empire he was assembling.

It was Lawrence Sheppard who steered Hanover Shoe through the severe depression of the 1930s, keeping it churning along, keeping most of its people employed until the gray days finally ground to a halt near the turn of the decade.

And it was Lawrence Sheppard who sniffed the air and found the aroma of war in the late '30s. He and Archie C. Mudge, who joined the Hanover corporate family in 1939, were among the first American shoemakers to approach both the U.S. Army and the U.S. Navy and offer their counsel on footwear for the Armed Forces as the nation sluggishly girded for war.

Sheppard and Mudge contacted the Army in Boston, the Navy in Washington. They were instrumental in getting both service branches to update their specifications on military footwear, even going so far as presenting them with samples of the type shoe they felt the Armed Forces would need in fighting a war. Then they went to their fellow shoe manufacturers and the leather makers, impressing upon them the importance of keeping styles simple and unadorned in an effort to save as much leather as possible.

Archie C. Mudge, chairman of the board of The Hanover Shoe, Inc., is interviewed by the author. *Photo by Bill Taylor.*

The brass of both the Army and Navy were impressed by their efforts. Hanover soon found at least half of its production going to the military. By March of 1944, the company had completed its millionth pair for the Army. By August of the same year, the Navy had its millionth pair of Hanover shoes. And the company had done its job so fast and so well—only 231 pairs of the Navy's million were rejected—that it was showered with official praise from both branches.

The United States was about two years into the war when the government tapped Lawrence Sheppard on the shoulder and asked him to come to Washington. Sheppard obliged, and for nearly four years he served with the War Production Board. He was deputy director of the Textile, Clothing and Leather Bureau of the Leather and Shoe Division. In February, 1945, still with the government, he toured the European battle front to learn how well the famed combat boot was serving American GIs under actual combat conditions. He came home to make several important recommendations that cut the incidence of "trench foot" among the troops. The hazardous trip and the good that came from it won him the Medal of Freedom, the highest award that a civilian could receive from the War Department.

Sheppard, sensing early that war was inevitable, had done something about it closer to home. Lawrence and Charlotte Sheppard lived in a house on the main farm of the Hanover Shoe Farms complex. It was handsome and it was old—circa 1760—but it was too small for the Sheppards and their four children. Sheppard's father and his partner Clinton Myers had been urging them to expand the house or find something larger in town.

"There's going to be a war soon, I'm sure there's going to be a war," Sheppard told his wife. "You'd better get ahold of a builder and put an addition on, or it'll be too late."

With that, Sheppard moved out of the house, took up quarters in the city. "He couldn't stand commotion of any kind, and he never returned to the house, never looked at the addition under construction, until it was completed and the family had settled in," Mrs. Sheppard recalled.

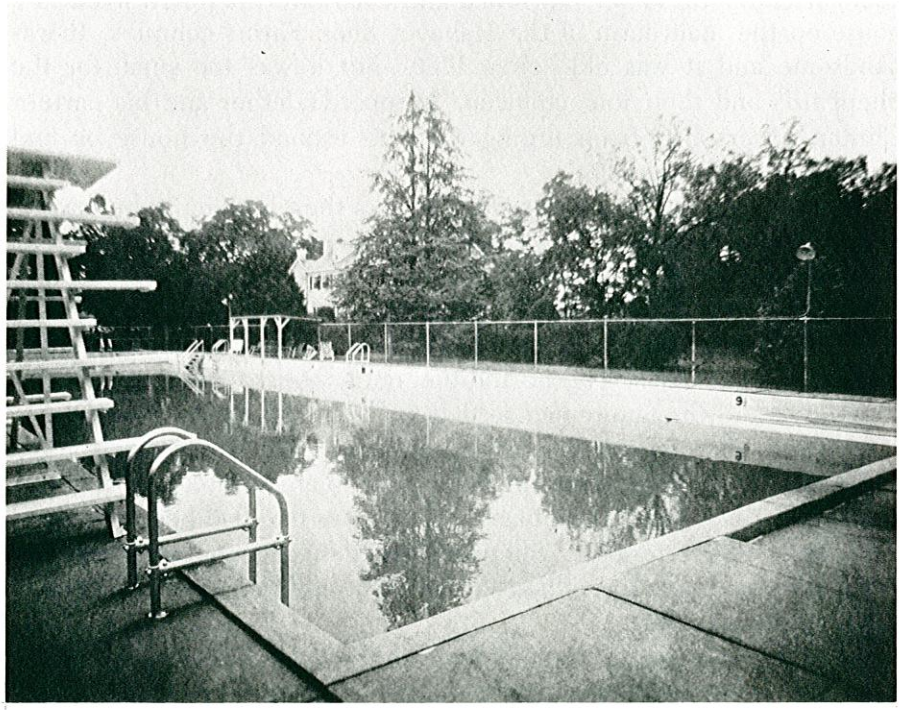
Charlotte Sheppard had sketched out a rough plan for the construction on lined yellow paper, then turned it over to an architect. The Myers family had given her several black walnut trees that had been cut down many years earlier, and Mrs. Sheppard had them taken out of storage and shipped to Baltimore for milling. Much of the addition would be done in black walnut paneling.

When the vast project was completed and all the furniture was in place, Lawrence Sheppard returned to the house for the grand tour. "He took it all in," Charlotte Sheppard reported, "and finally he turned to me and said, 'Well, I've seen a lot of things in my life, but I've never seen the

Goddamn train pulling the engine before,' That's what he thought of my architecture."

Sheppard may well have been joking, since he was a master of the reverse compliment, muttering one thing with a gruff growl and meaning something entirely different. He and his wife, a bright and witty lady in her own right, were fond of communicating with each other in that manner. While Sheppard might have been a candidate for charges of male chauvinism by modern standards, Mrs. Sheppard surely gave as good as she got. Their marriage was a sort of whimsical give and take, with a lot of mutual love involved. The give and take was best illustrated by the saga of their swimming pool.

It happened after the war, long after the addition was completed. Charlotte had asked for a swimming pool for several years; Sheppard had put her off for several years. Finally, after the Shoe Farms had build a new barn and needed dirt fill for the floor, he gave her the green light. "Here's your chance," he told her. "I've got to go to Chicago, but you go ahead and pick a spot for the pool, have it dug, and have them take the fill up to the barn."



The famed Sheppard family swimming pool. Charlotte Sheppard told the workmen to "keep digging until I tell you to stop."

"Well, it made me mad," Mrs. Sheppard recalled with a grin many years later. "Here I'd been asking for a pool for years, and I don't get it until he needs dirt for his precious barn. So I hired some men with a bulldozer and told them to keep digging until I said 'stop.' I had them dig a hole 150 feet long and 50 feet wide. He got all the dirt he needed, and more.

"When he returned from Chicago, he took one look at the hole and said, 'What the hell is that?' 'A hole for a swimming pool,' I said. 'Never will I make enough money to complete that pool,' he shouted. 'Well, that's all right,' I said calmly. 'We'll just let the hole sit there.' And it did. For a year. Until Mr. Sheppard, Sr. (Harper) and Mr. Myers got sick of hearing about it and saw to it that it was finished."

The pool was Olympic-size. One of the largest private pools in the State of Pennsylvania.

Lawrence Sheppard was an individualist, a one-of-a-kind man whose like may not be seen in this country for some time to come. His friends included President Dwight D. Eisenhower and some of the scruffiest grooms on the Grand Circuit, and he wore no more airs for one than the other. He dressed like a sort of high-class scarecrow, favoring rumpled dark suits, tired white shirts with neckties hanging askew from wilted open collars, and wide-brimmed fedoras. But he was a man with seemingly limitless energy, willing to spend that energy and his cornucopia of talents on a horde of industries, commissions, community projects and causes. And when he overreached himself, needed help, he had the knack of finding exactly the right man or woman to aid him. He drew talented, hard-working people like a giant magnet.

Archie Mudge, the man who helped in alerting the U. S. Armed Forces to the need for proper shoes for fighting men, was one of them. Mudge had a long and rich background in shoe manufacturing; had once been in charge of eight factories in the Midwest. He was a top executive with the Brown Shoe Company in St. Louis when Sheppard met him and worked his magic, luring him to Hanover. Mudge, short, stocky, personable, possessed a few doubts when he traveled east to join Hanover in 1939. Hanover Shoe, Inc., was little known in the industry, being family-owned and making shoes for its own stores, and Mudge was wary of the sterling operation Sheppard had described. But not for long.

"I couldn't believe it—their shoemaking, their quality, their detail. All so great. And their price was unbelievable; I couldn't see how they were able to make any profit. And the man, Lawrence Sheppard—why, I'd never met anyone like him in my life. He was utterly plain spoken, thoroughly independent, and he knew shoes backward and forward. His knowledge of detail, his precision, his memory were awesome. He was difficult at times, quite arbitrary. But nine times out of 10 his decisions

Hanover shoes were never far from Shep's mind.

would be the right ones; time would bear him out. And he could be very persuasive, could bring you around to his way of thinking."

Mudge, recruited to help Sheppard as Sheppard's father and Clinton Myers moved toward retirement, remained to become vice president and a director of the company, president of Sheppard & Myers, Inc., and later chairman of the board of Hanover Shoe. And the new executive had barely unpacked his bags when Sheppard began to interest him in harness racing. Once bitten, Mudge would become one of the top Standardbred owners in the country.

Betty J. Nolt was another Lawrence Sheppard "find." Miss Nolt was working as a secretary with the Hanover School District when Sheppard was president of the School Board in the mid-1940s (he once served as

Betty Nolt, long-time personal secretary to Lawrence Sheppard and now the secretary to John F. Simpson, Sr. *Photo by Bill Taylor.*

president of seven companies, associations, commissions, and boards at the same time). Miss Nolt was intelligent, efficient, and attractive, and Sheppard invited her to become his personal secretary in 1945. It was a giant switch for the Hanover chief executive and a tribute to Betty Nolt; all his previous secretaries had been males.

Sheppard had an unusual ability to instill intense loyalty in all the people surrounding him, and he created scores of opportunities to test Betty Nolt's fidelity to the fullest. She worked her first fifteen years for him without a vacation. She worked six days a week and sometimes seven. She worked ten, twelve, or even fourteen-hour days. When he was in the office, he expected Betty to be there. Conversely, when he was missing from the office, traveling as he had to, he expected her there more than ever.

Once, when she wanted to take her mother on a short trip, Miss Nolt asked him for a Monday off to make a three-day weekend. Sheppard, who was about to start a journey to Russia, refused. He not only refused, but called her from Paris, France, on Monday afternoon to confirm that she was in the office and hadn't taken the day off.

He was very particular concerning how his secretary spent her spare

time, going so far as to screen her dates. On one occasion she was invited to spend a weekend at the home of some friends, with the friends bringing a young surgeon home from Washington to meet her. Sheppard hadn't met the young doctor and didn't want Betty to meet him, either. She managed to have dinner with her friends and the surgeon on Friday night, but Sheppard made her return to work right after dinner. Then he insisted that she work Saturday morning. When he directed her to return after lunch, they argued heatedly, and she left in a huff. But she returned, and Sheppard not only worked her that afternoon and evening, but all day Sunday too.

"He told me what to wear, as well," Miss Nolt said years after Sheppard had died. "One weekend I'd bought a new dress, truly beautiful, and I wore it to work on Monday morning. It happened to be the day of a board meeting of the Shoe Farms, and he asked me if I was going home to change before the meeting. 'Why would I do that?' I asked him. 'Well, you're not going to wear *that* to the meeting, are you?' he said. 'I just bought this dress!' I insisted. 'I don't like it,' he said. 'Go home and change.' So I did. He didn't want me in anything but navy or black."

The first ten years were the worst, Miss Nolt reported. Then Sheppard began to mellow some, or she began to understand him better. He trusted her implicitly, and she was a part of all his great battles through the years—with the New York State Harness Racing Commission, with the Internal Revenue System, with the manufacturer of crucial machinery used by Hanover Shoe, with the Pennsylvania Harness Racing Commission, with all the ponderous windmills that he took on and usually defeated.

"People have asked me why I remained with him all those years," Betty Nolt commented. "While he was very demanding, a real perfectionist, he was also a great man, a fascinating man. He was into everything, and he did a tremendous lot of good. Everybody knows of all the things he did for the community, the country and for racing, but he also did many charitable things for people—like helping youngsters through school—that he never wanted anyone to know about. It was always challenging, but he was a fine man and I simply enjoyed working for him."

After Sheppard's death, Betty Nolt transferred to the administrative office of the Hanover Shoe Farms, where life was less hectic and she got to take vacations and dress as she chose. She also had time to miss Lawrence Sheppard, as all his devoted aides did.

Burnell Hesson, the Shoe Farms' corresponding officer and office manager, was still another of Sheppard's kind of people. Hesson, soft-spoken, with a handsome head of wavy, silver hair, started out in The Hanover Shoe, Inc., at its castle-like headquarters at 118 Carlisle Street. In 1954, Sheppard whisked him away from the shoe company, transfer-

red him to the Shoe Farms, and gave him the incredibly intricate job of keeping all the records involved in breeding, foaling, booking mares, and seeing to it that the Farms were paid for their services.

And what endeared him to Lawrence Sheppard? A degree of efficiency that bordered upon perfection. Jim Harrison, Sheppard's top assistant at the Shoe Farms during the late 1950s and early 1960s, put it this way: "In all the seven years I was at Hanover, I never caught Burnell Hesson in a mistake. He was fantastic." A quality like that was not likely to escape Sheppard's notice.

Shep could not lay claim to locating Paul E. Spears, however. Only to giving the nod that made him a pivotal member of the Hanover management families.

Spears was one of a flood of veterans who left the service after World War II and hurried into college. He graduated from Indiana University of Pennsylvania with a business degree, took graduate work at the University of Pittsburgh, then settled for a job coaching football and teaching mathematics at a small high school in New Enterprise, Pennsylvania. It was only a temporary step along the route of his career—his wife was teaching school in Bedford County and needed another year for certification—but Spears enjoyed it. He turned out the best football team the school had ever had, but once had to spend a Saturday afternoon helping his fullback milk cows so that the youngster would be available for a crucial game that night.

Spears was anxious to move on, to put his degree in business to use, and when the nephew of a lady he rode to work with offered him a job in Detroit, he took it. He joined Bob Longernecker, the lady's nephew, in setting up an accounting department for a new gas turbine engine plant for the Lincoln-Mercury Division of the Ford Motors Company. Spears worked hard, met many of the "right" people, and seemed headed for big things in the auto industry. But neither he nor his wife could adjust to the concrete, the noise, the bustle, the pace of Detroit. They were small-town folks, both loved the outdoors, and decided they wanted out. Paul's father-in-law, who ran a confectionery store in Hanover, arranged an interview for him with The Hanover Shoe, Inc.

A man named Clark Schue was the shoe company's office manager and assistant treasurer, and Hanover was anxious for a young man to learn his job because Schue was getting up in years and was not entirely well. Paul arrived in Hanover on a Friday night in February, 1953, and was interviewed the next morning.

Robert Laird, general counsel for Hanover Shoe and the Hanover Shoe Farms at the time, conducted the interview. But midway through the session, a stranger appeared at the door. The newcomer hadn't shaved for three or four days, his collar was open, a twisted necktie hung limply

down his chest, and a cigarette drooped from the corner of his mouth. Laird introduced Spears to Lawrence Sheppard, president of the company.

Sheppard shook hands with Spears, took a seat, and silently puffed on cigarettes while Laird continued the interview. After a long interval, he climbed slowly to his feet, turned to Spears and said, "Young man, there's only one thing I want to ask you. Can you separate the shit from the pumpkin?"

Spears recovered sufficiently to mutter, "Yes, sir, I think I can."

He was hired.

Paul Spears, laboring incredibly long hours without complaint, became one of Sheppard's top-shelf favorites. A long string of promotions eventually gave him the posts of vice president, treasurer, and director of Hanover Shoe; treasurer and director of Sheppard & Myers; executive vice president, treasurer, and director of the Hanover Shoe Farms; president, treasurer, and director of the Standardbred Horse Sales Company; and president of the Lawrence B. Sheppard Foundation.

Archie Mudge, Betty Nolt, Burnell Hesson, Paul Spears—all faithfully pitching in, taking up the slack as Lawrence Sheppard spread his giant

Paul E. Spears, vice-president and treasurer of the Hanover Shoe, Inc., and "financial man" for the Hanover Shoe Farms. *Photo by Bill Taylor.*

wings to provide leadership to The Hanover Shoe, Inc., Sheppard & Myers, Inc., the Hanover Shoe Farms, Inc., the United States Trotting Association, the Pennsylvania Harness Racing Commission, the National Shoe Manufacturers Association, the Standardbred Horse Sales Company, the Hanover *Evening Sun*, the Hanover Municipal Water Commission, the Hanover General Hospital, the Hanover School Board, the Hanover Trust Company, and the First National Bank.

There were other talent-rich people who joined the Hanover teams and served as Sheppard's alter egos, winning his respect and his devotion for their efforts. One was certainly John F. Simpson. But more of him later.

6
DARK DAYS

THE WORLD, NATION, AND SPORT of harness racing were in a state of transition in 1939, all emerging from a kind of drugged slumber, but unwillingly headed for something quite worse.

A madman named Adolf Hitler had already sent his panzer divisions into a defenseless nation called Czechoslovakia and was poised to do the same in Poland. Italy had seized Albania and was about to sign an alliance with Hitler's Germany. England and France had discarded their policy of appeasement—it had failed miserably—and were belatedly stoking up their weak war machines.

The United States had finally shaken off the lethargy of the Great Depression, but only the most optimistic of citizens believed the nation could avoid the horrible holocaust that was brewing in Europe.

Standardbred racing, like everything else, a scarred victim of the depression, was recovering nicely from the malady. Big, important things were happening.

On Long Island a group of men, headed by George Morton Levy, were gathering money and courage for a try at running an extended racing meeting under the lights. There had been various attempts at night racing for fifty years or more, with some of the experiments showing promise. For one reason or another, however, the practice never really got off the ground until Levy and his group, the Old Country Trotting Association, gave it the full chance it needed for permanent success.

Planning well, sinking a lot of money into it, the association selected a former auto racing plant at Westbury, New York, refurbished the tired grandstand, fashioned a half-mile racing oval, lighted it, and called it Roosevelt Raceway. Their first season, a twenty-seven-night campaign in 1940, was a flop. So were the next two, although the group grimly stuck with it until the 1943 meeting, raced at Yonkers because of wartime restrictions, turned up a small profit. Modern harness racing still had a long way to go, but at least it had been foaled.

It was also in 1939 when representatives of three separate governing bodies, the American, National, and United Trotting Associations, sat down in Columbus, Ohio, and put the finishing touches to the formation of the United States Trotting Association. For years the three splinter groups had governed racing in their own territories and in their own way. Each had its individual rules and regulations, and they were rarely the same. The racing sport and the people in it were the losers until cooler heads prevailed.

The move toward a merger had started a year earlier, headed by racing leaders like E. Roland Harriman, Leo C. McNamara, George W. Rittenour, Frank Wiswall, Dunbar Bostwick, and, of course, Lawrence B. Sheppard, who headed up the organization committee. Also approving the formation of the USTA—and throwing their considerable weight behind the new body—were the Trotting Horse Club of America and the American Trotting Register Association.

So, in 1939, the sport had a new, united governing body. And a good one at that, a strong unit with teeth and claws that would not only stand the test of time, but the test of government legal action as well.

The sport also had a pair of race horses, Greyhound and Billy Direct, who were winding down incredible racing careers that had reached headline-building zeniths in late 1938. The pair had sparked both new and renewed interest in Standardbred competition.

Greyhound—the Grey Ghost, as he was called—was a trotter who had been a $900 yearling purchase in 1933, the same year that the Shoe Farms had proudly parted with Lawrence Hanover on a high bid of $6,800. Sep Palin raced Greyhound for Colonel E. J. Baker of St. Charles, Illinois, and he was nearly unbeatable as a three- and four-year-old, winning stakes and smashing records as he went. Soon he was left without any real competition, but thrilled fans with a long series of record-slashing battles against the clock. At one time Greyhound held fourteen world titles at distances ranging from a mile to two miles.

The effort that would gain him racing immortality, however, came on September 29, 1938. He was already history's fastest trotter with a record of 1:56 when driver Palin eased him onto Lexington's Red Mile for an attempt at lowering that mark. The day was cool with the temperature

near fifty, and the winds were so stiff that Palin waited until sunset to take his shot. By the time the big trotter got the go signal, a mist had settled over the track, giving an almost eerie quality to the time trial.

Palin, a veteran of some forty years in a sulky seat, drove him perfectly, rating him the first two quarters in 29¼, the third in 28. Down to the three-quarters in 1:26½, Greyhound emerged from the mist at the top of the stretch and roared down the lane to finish his mile in 1:55¼. It was a record that would stand thirty-two years until a spirited trotting machine called Nevele Pride came along to steal it with a 1:54.4 trip in a race against the clock at the Indiana State Fairground.

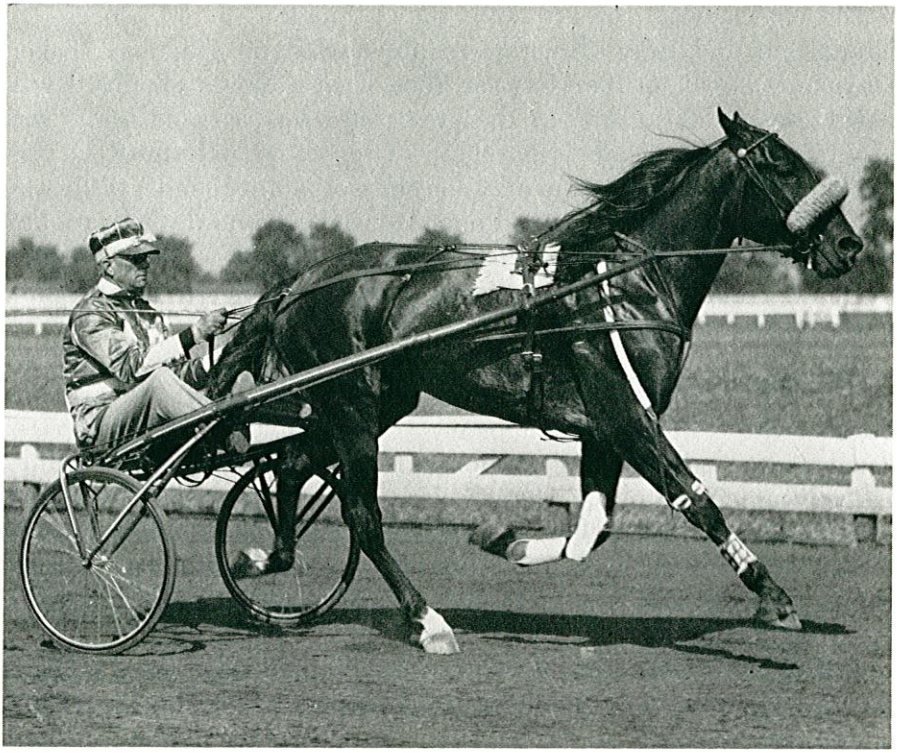
Greyhound's epic mile had come only twenty-four hours after pacer Billy Direct had stood the harness world on its ear with a record-blasting journey over the same track. Billy Direct, a son of Napoleon Direct-Gay Forbes, was a foal of 1934, making him two years younger than this trotting counterpart. He had raced successfully as a two-year-old under two sets of owners, but did not reach his full potential until he landed in the stable of Vic Fleming. Fleming trained him, noticed how pure-gaited he was, and pulled his hopples off. The rest of his career he raced free-legged, earning a raft of victories and a variety of records for the men who owned him then, P. J. Downey of Worchester, Massachusetts, and D. J. McConville of Ogdensburg, New York.

Billy Direct was a four-year-old on that September day when he joined three other pacers in a free-for-all event at Lexington. He already shared the world race record of 1:58, but Fleming had visions of shattering that until he and his pacer were caught in a freak incident at the start of the heat. The "go" signal and the recall bell sounded simultaneously and Fleming chose to obey the latter. He pulled his pacer up and returned to the judges stand only to find that the wise man in the booth had declared it an official start. Billy Direct was out of the race, would be listed as "distanced" in the contest.

Fleming was livid, but soon cooled down enough to request permission to take Billy postward in a time trial. His pacer was in peak condition, full of pace, and his driver was determined to send him after a record while the edge still existed. Chagrined officials were not about to turn him down.

Later in the afternoon, unannounced, Billy Direct and Fleming reappeared on the big, pink track. Two running horse prompters joined them, and the small entourage was on its way. The fleet side-wheeler passed the quarter-pole in twenty-nine seconds, the half in fifty-eight and the three-quarters in 1:26¾. A tremendous effort down the stretch carried him to the wire in 1:55, and the small crowd still in the stands whooped its approval.

Billy Direct had gone the fastest mile in harness racing history and had



Billy Direct, with Vic Fleming driving, died at an early age, yet still had a profound effect upon the sport as a Hanover stallion. *Courtesy USTA.*

erased a 1:55¼ mark that the legendary Dan Patch had set thirty-three years earlier. Billy's record came as a welcome relief to purists in the sport, since Dan Patch's record had been accomplished with the aid of a windshield in front of him, a fact that would have earned him an asterisk beside his name in modern times.

The pair of withering miles, coming back-to-back as they did, was precisely what the harness sport needed as it climbed out of the mire of hard times. Greyhound, turning whiter and more striking looking every year, spent several seasons on the exhibition trail, drawing large crowds wherever he appeared.

There was talk of retiring Billy Direct to stud soon after his big mile, but his owners eventually thought better of it and sent him back to the track in 1939. History's fastest Standardbred also drew sizable throngs as he campaigned from track to track, lowering the world mark over a half-mile track to 1:59¾ along the way. At the end of the '39 campaign, he was leased by J. J. Mooney and stood his first stallion season at Mooney's Peninsular Farms at Fremont, Ohio.

The spectacular careers and the Lexington performances by Greyhound and Billy Direct were not wasted on Lawrence Baker Sheppard, master of the Hanover Shoe Farms. While Sheppard was delighted with the giant stir the grey trotter had created across the country, his interest ended right there—Greyhound, unfortunately, was a gelding. Billy Direct, however, was a horse of another gender. Billy was a stallion, and Sheppard wanted him. He wheeled and dealed with the horse's owners and his lessee, finally getting a commitment to move him to Hanover. Eventually he bought the stallion outright, giving the Shoe Farms its first pacing sire.

Billy Direct's stallion career was short—he died of a heart ailment in 1947 at the age of thirteen—but glittering. He sired six trotters and 179 pacers, with sixteen of them going in two minutes or better. His daughters turned out to be sensational producers themselves, and a Billy Direct mare became one of the sought after prizes in the breeding industry in future years. Sixty-one of his sons went on to breeding careers of their own, with the list including Dazzleway, Dudley Hanover, Ensign Hanover, Norris Hanover, and Garrison Hanover (one of New Zealand's finest stallions).

Still another of his offspring who enjoyed a successful career on both the race track and in the stud barn was Tar Heel, and if Billy Direct had not produced another son or daughter, his lofty niche in Standardbred breeding would have been assured.

Harness racing was indeed bouncing back in 1939—pari-mutuel meetings were also being planned for Saratoga Springs and Batavia, both in New York State—and Lawrence Sheppard felt it was time for Hanover to operate its own yearling auction, rather than sending its youngsters to the Old Glory Sale.

Sheppard chose Harrisburg as the site, believing that the state capital of Pennsylvania was rich enough in hotels, restaurants, and transportation to accommodate a large sale should it flourish over the years. He formed the Standardbred Horse Sales Company, with himself at the helm and Bowman A. Brown, Sr. as general manager.

Hanover's offering was forty-one yearlings strong in 1939, with the consignment including ten each by Mr. McElwyn and Peter the Brewer, eight by Sandy Flash, five by Guy McKinney, and four each by Calumet Chuck and Red Ace.

The initial session at Harrisburg was considered a solid success. Hanover gathered $55,750 for its forty-one youngsters. Both the gross figure and the average, $1,327, were new highs for the Shoe Farms. And Sheppard was especially gratified to see Mr. McElwyn lead the show, with his ten offspring averaging $2,382. Sheppard still had a warm spot in his heart for Mr. McElwyn, although Dean Hanover, yet to send a colt to auction, was number one on Sheppard's popularity chart.

Included in the '39 consignment was a Sandy Flash-Calumet Aristocrat colt called Ashley Hanover who would gain a measure of fame after his name was changed to Bill Gallon. He would also return to Hanover to produce his own speedy children.

Lawrence Sheppard was pleased with the Farms' fine showing, but he uncorked no champagne, threw no parties. The sharp gains by Hanover over the past three years and the encouraging signs within the sport—the plans for new tracks, the formation of the USTA, and the stirs created by Greyhound and Billy Direct—were only temporary reprieves, he believed. He was convinced the rampaging war in Europe and the growing conflict in the Far East would be the next catastrophe to strike all sports, Standardbred racing included.

Germany had already overrun Denmark, Norway, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, and Belgium by the time the 1940 breeding season had rolled around. The Allies had fled Dunkirk, and France had fallen by the time the Hanover crews began to round up the yearlings for final preparation for the 1940 sale at Harrisburg.

The Shoe Farms shipped sixty-one youngsters to the auction and they brought only $45,800, an average of $750 and change. The next year, with America's entry into the war imminent, was little better, although Sheppard's beloved Dean Hanover sent his first crop to market and they topped the sale with a per-head figure of $1,246.

The United States was deeply involved in the war by the time the 1942 vendue arrived, and Americans thought of little else. Gas was being rationed, the draft was decimating the ranks of trainers, civilian auto production was halted, transportation was hard to come by, and racing was being curtailed. Hanover had its worse year since 1935, with its seventy-eight yearlings averaging only $442.

News from the various fronts seemed to be the barometer for colt sales over the next two years. In 1943, with the American-led Allies beginning to check the advances of the enemy, Hanover's eighty-four babies figured out at $1,122 per horse. And with the Allies obviously in charge, rolling back the Axis powers on all fronts in 1944, the Shoe Farms topped the $100,000 mark for the first time. Seventy-three yearlings brought $109,200, or $1,495 each.

The Standardbred Horse Sales auction was moved to York, Pennsylvania, in 1944 and remained there the next year before moving back to Harrisburg.

While harness racing suffered severe bumps and bruises during the war years—Goshen called it quits for three years and the Kentucky Futurity was turned off for four—it managed to survive the trauma. Surprisingly, some formidable trotters and pacers made names for themselves during the period.

Hanover itself turned out such worthy contenders as Colby Hanover,

Lt. Lawrence B. Sheppard, Jr. *Courtesy Betty Nolt.*

Scarlet Hanover, Austin Hanover, Trooper Hanover, Kimberly Hanover, and Ensign Hanover, to say nothing of a small but potent package called Titan Hanover.

Other breeders contributed stars like Worthy Boy, Bombs Away, Jimmy Creed, Darnley, and King's Counsel. And Leo C. McNamara's classy Two Gaits Farm in Carmel, Indiana, served up a chunky bay pacer called Adios, who would change the complexion of Standardbred breeding before he called it a day.

The Shoe Farms were hard hit by the war, and not only on the business front. Standardbred breeding was hardly an essential industry, and the Farms lost personnel to the draft and to more critical industries. Lawrence Sheppard himself, remember, was harnessed to the government and its war machine, shuffling back and forth between Hanover and Washington, with a side trip to the European front thrown in.

Lawrence Baker Sheppard, Jr., the only son of Lawrence and Charlotte Sheppard, spent most of the war as a flying member of the U.S. Air Corps. Sonny Sheppard, light-haired, slender, boyishly handsome, was a sort of chip off the Lawrence Sheppard block, minus the fiery nature. Sonny, one of the most popular young men in the City of Hanover, graduated from St. Joseph's Academy in McSherrystown, then attended the Haverford School, where his father had gone.

Like both his father and his grandfather, his love affair with harness horses began at an early age, and he was driving them on the fair circuit as a teenager. And like both his two forbears, he chose shoemaking as a career, entering The Hanover Shoe, Inc., factory on June 20, 1941. And not unlike his father, he chose the air service when war broke out and he felt compelled to participate.

Sonny Sheppard spent two years in flight training, winning his wings in June, 1944. Advanced air schooling followed in both the U.S. and England before he drew his actual assignment: Ferrying P-58s and P-51s from Britain to Germany, then occupied by the Allies. Everyone who knew him said he was an excellent pilot, one with much skill, tempered with necessary caution. He planned to continue flying for fun and for business when he was discharged and rejoined the shoe company and the Hanover Shoe Farms.

Lawrence Sheppard, Sr. was a happy man in October of 1945. The war was over, his son would be returning in a few short months, his own government service had ended, and Hanover's crop of yearlings had broken records. Colt buyers, brimming with optimism and cash now that the nightmare of war was over, had spent $168,515 on the Hanover's Class of '45—$2,309 a copy. The colts and fillies of all five major Hanover stallions had averaged better than $1,300, with the Billy Directs bringing $3,092 each, the Dean Hanovers $2,480, and the Spencer Scotts $2,096.

Three generations of Sheppards: (from left to right) Harper D., Lawrence B., Sr., and Lawrence B. Sheppard, Jr. (1947). *Courtesy Edmund's Studio.*

In 1946, with financial backing from Roosevelt Raceway, Stephen G. Phillips of Xenia, Ohio, developed a mobile starting gate that was actually reliable—that really worked.

Nothing could stop harness racing now, Sheppard was absolutely convinced.

And nothing would stop the Hanover Shoe Farms.

Nothing.

7

ENTER JOHN SIMPSON

WHILE LAWRENCE SHEPPARD was putting on his rose-colored glasses and plotting a course that would keep the Hanover Shoe Farms at the crest of the new harness racing tide, a young first lieutenant was receiving his discharge from the Army and preparing to pick up the pieces of his prewar career.

John F. Simpson was winding up nearly four years of military service, the final thirteen months of it in Europe. He was itching to return to harness racing; the Army had hardly been his cup of tea. As a twenty-two-year-old buck private he had yearned to serve in the horse cavalry, but had neglected to mention the word "horse" in his request for assignment. As a result, the Army had sent him off to mechanized cavalry school at Ft. Riley, Kansas. And worse, the horse cavalry trained there,too. While Simpson, one of the nation's most promising young horsemen, was learning the intricacies of the Sherman Tank, he would gaze into the adjoining field and wistfully watch nonhorsemen from Brooklyn and the Bronx being tossed in the air by Army horses.

Simpson was eventually transferred to the Baltimore, Maryland, embarkation depot, where he was assigned as a member of the base's cadre. It was decent duty for a time, but it couldn't last. His company commander finally suggested that he apply for Officers Candidate School or

face the possibility of immediate shipment overseas. He chose OCS, emerging as a second lieutenant, but found that his travel orders weren't far behind. In the winter of 1944 he boarded a troopship bound for Europe, joining the 26th Infantry Division as a replacement officer.

The war was winding down by then. The mopping up operation was under way, and he luckily managed to avoid serious combat. He was in Austria in 1945 when the Germans were surrendering in wholesale lots to avoid the Russians, and he was one of the American troops who linked up with the Red Army in Yugoslavia a short time later.

By the spring of 1946 he was headed back to the United States, his mind already refocused on harness racing. And he was worried. The sport, he knew, was bound to be deflated, a partial victim of the war. And how could he hope to put a stable together when a herd of other young horsemen, also fresh out of the military service, had the same thing in mind? Del Miller, Ralph Baldwin, Joe O'Brien, Jim Arthur, Jimmy Wingfield, Jim Hackett, and Bill Fleming were but a few of the youthful trainers who were scurrying back into racing, hustling to build stables.

But Simpson learned that he had little reason for concern. The transition from olive drabs back to racing silks was smoother than he had dared hope. The reputation he had earned during a brief but intense racing campaign before military service had survived the war.

John F. Simpson was born December 26, 1919, in Chester, South Carolina. His father was J. Norris Simpson, a livestock dealer in Chester who also owned, trained, and drove Standardbred horses. His mother was Sarah Frazer Simpson, a gentle lady who hoped her son might turn out to be a livestock dealer, farmer, veterinarian, or preacher. Anything, in fact, but a harness horseman.

While Sarah Simpson's influence on her son was potent, (it had muscle enough to push him through his sophomore year at Clemson College) she was actually fighting a losing battle from the very beginning. Simpson's great-grandfather had been a Thoroughbred jockey, his grandfather had been a Standardbred trainer, his father was a harness horseman, and so was his favorite uncle on his mother's side, Joe Frazer.

John sailed through grade and high school in Chester, excelling in no subject "except horses." He was a solidly constructed youngster and possessed both the grace and reflexes of an athlete, but the Chester High School baseball, basketball, and football teams had to meet their rivals without him on their rosters. "The minute school was out, I'd make a beeline for the family's livery stable uptown," he confessed. The stable was always well populated with horses and mules.

John's father and his Uncle Joe were frequent partners on race horses. It was their custom to turn the trotters and pacers over to journeymen horsemen like Herman Tyson and Walter Pearson for winter and spring

training at places like Pinehurst, North Carolina. When the fair circuits opened in early summer, Simpson and Frazer would collect their horses and commence the annual pilgrimage from dusty fairground to dusty fairground. At the age of twelve, young John Simpson began to tour with them, joining the small entourage as a caretaker. It was no piece of cake toiling in the broiling afternoon sun of the Carolinas, West Virginia, Kentucky, Georgia, and other border and southern states, but Simpson relished it, thrived on it, couldn't wait for school to end so that he could join the steamy caravan.

The Simpson-Frazer stable was marching through Georgia in 1937 when John Simpson drove his first race, finishing second with a mare called Athlone Jane. A year later, driving occasionally for his father and uncle, he notched his first win, scoring with My Birthday in 2:10 at Myrtle Beach, South Carolina.

In the summer of 1939, with his freshman year at Clemson behind him, he took a vacation job with trainer Earl Walker and drove every horse that he could pry out of the obliging Walker. When his mother heard that he was a permanent resident of a sulky seat instead of an occasional visitor, she went on the warpath. Young Simpson had to beat a hasty retreat home for a confrontation with the irate lady, who had never wanted her son to work with race horses in the first place.

Mother and son were at loggerheads. John wanted to drive in every conceivable race; Sarah Simpson did not want him to drive at all. The battle raged for an entire weekend. Finally a compromise was reached: John could race trotters and free-legged pacers, but no hoppled pacers. Hoppled pacers were—still are—considered more dangerous to drive, although Simpson's most serious racing spill would come while he was handling a trotter. To clinch the deal with his mother, John had to reaffirm his intentions to return to Clemson College in the fall. The ban on racing fettered pacers and his attendance at Clemson ended the following spring.

It was still the summer of 1939 when a horse called Gold Bars provided an unexpected impetus to young Simpson's budding racing career.

"I was still working for Earl Walker, and the whole bunch of us had moved up to Lewisburg, West Virginia, where they had a big fair and a race meeting," Simpson explained. "Walker had a pacer named Gold Bars, unsound but real fast, and I won with him. That same afternoon my father won with his horse My Birthday in another race. The next week we were all racing at Charleston, West Virginia, and some of the trainers were kidding my dad that I was a better race driver than he was. They razzed him so bad that he finally said to them, 'Look, that kid has Gold Bars in against me and My Birthday this afternoon. I'll tell you what; if he beats me, I guarantee I'll never drive again.' Well, the fellas thought he

was kidding, but he wasn't. I did beat him and he never drove another race."

John got all of the family's horses to drive, and Clemson College was about to lose one student.

Simpson made his move in May of 1940. He completed his sophomore year, fled the campus where he had been lethargically pursuing a major in animal husbandry, and opened a public stable. He never looked back, never regretted his action, although his children would one day see him as a practitioner of the hard sell as far as their education was concerned.

The twenty-year-old horseman had seven horses in his stable, most of them owned by Uncle Joe Frazer. He pretty much followed the same campaign trail that he had traveled with Earl Walker, racing at such spots as Lewisburg, Virginia, Huntington, West Virginia, and Dayton, Ohio. In Dayton he got his first taste of racing under the lights. He found it exhilarating, thought it showed much promise, and incorporated it into his racing plans for 1941.

Boasting a bigger and better string of horses in '41, he headed north for the new nighttime racing operations in New York State, Roosevelt Raceway on Long Island, Saratoga Raceway, and Buffalo Raceway upstate. Pari-mutuel machines were making their debut, replacing hand books, but the physical plants and the racing were still crude, and business was weak. J. Alfred Valentine, one of Roosevelt's founders, told him one night, "You know, Johnny, if we could ever bet $100,000 a night, we'd have a great thing going." "Well, I suppose it's possible," Simpson commented doubtfully. In later years Simpson would compete in single races at Roosevelt that would attract more than $200,000 in wagers.

On June 21, 1941, he took a short break to marry Helen Faulk of his hometown, Chester, South Carolina. John had met Helen when they were classmates at Chester High School. She knew little about harness racing, but that didn't bother her husband. He intended to learn enough for two people.

Simpson also sampled the Grand Circuit at Old Orchard Beach, Maine, and Lexington, Kentucky, that year, racing against some of the legends he had been reading and hearing about for years—men like Tom Berry, Flick Nipe, Fred Egan, Ben White, and Doc Parshall. It was heady stuff for a young man who had just reached voting age, but he held his own, even picked up an occasional catch-driving assignment. Meanwhile, he was pestering the veterans for advice and watching them in action, constantly adding to his racing education. Egan, White, Parshall—especially Parshall—and others stamped him as a "comer" early in his career. Egan and White were especially helpful when Simpson eventually joined them at their winter training headquarters, Ben White Raceway (named for White) at Orlando, Florida. Parshall was

great to him from the start, treated him like a son, gave him horses to drive.

John Simpson's harness career was planted in 1940 and nurtured in 1941. In 1942 it began to blossom. He started north with a strong barn that included his father's and uncle's ageless pacer My Birthday, the former stakes-winning trotter Ed Lasater, and a promising filly named Margamite. Before the trees had shed their autumn leaves, he had scored his first two-minute victory with My Birthday at Old Orchard Beach and set a world record of 2:03¾ for three-year-old pacing fillies with Margamite at Winston-Salem, North Carolina.

At twenty-two, he was the youngest man in harness racing history to notch a two-minute mile. Ironically, My Birthday, at eight years, was the oldest harness horse to stop the clock in two minutes that year.

His driving skills did not go unnoticed in the press. Walter Moore, one of the best of the period's harness writers, witnessed him in action and wrote, "He just looks as if he was out for a ride with his best girl—cool, calm and collected." Four years later an ancient caretaker with his stable, Isaac (Bama) Hill, would dub Simpson "The Iceman," with the press picking it up to seal his image.

Before the '42 season was out, he had the opportunity to repay some of the kindnesses the good Doctor Parshall had conferred upon him during his first two racing campaigns.

Doc Parshall, a veterinarian, was a horseman to be emulated in the early 1940s. Stocky, with round steel-rim glasses to match his round face, Parshall had been racing horses since 1920. Such champions as Chief Counsel, Blackstone, Lord Jim, Peter Astra, Spintell, and Mc I Win had marched through his stable, earning glory for him and themselves. He was a taskmaster, an early Frank Ervin, only more so. In the days before the mobile starting gate, he taught his horses to return from their final score and stand crossways on the track as he waited for instructions from the starter. His trotters and pacers were not permitted to move a hoof, an ear, a hair while they waited.

In the spring of 1942, however, he had a pacer who had had his fill of the regimen. He was aptly named Fearless Peter, and he took Parshall on during an afternoon card at Cleveland, Ohio. Parshall calmly climbed down from the sulky and methodically beat his recalcitrant pacer. Later in the afternoon, the two of them went at it again back at the barn. Fearless Peter was so full of hate for Parshall that he lunged, broke his cross-ties, and would have stomped the trainer had he not tripped in his hopples and fallen. Parshall yelled for his grooms, instructing them to sit on the horse's head. Then he castrated him on the spot. And raced him four days later.

Fearless Peter, who had won sixteen straight races at one stage of his

short career, became a sulking, sour horse, full of rage and dangerous whenever Parshall was around. He hadn't won a single heat all season when Parshall and his stable checked into Delaware, Ohio, for a week of racing in the fall.

John Simpson was a guest at Parshall's home in nearby Urbana, Ohio, at the time. On the way out to the track one morning, Parshall told Simpson he wanted him to drive a horse on the afternoon's racing program. "What horse?" Simpson asked.

"Fearless Peter," Parshall replied.

"I can't drive that outlaw," Simpson protested.

"Yes you can," the older man assured him. "I won't go near the barn. You go down and warm him up, then drive him in the race. You'll be all right."

Simpson was full of trepidation, but he drove the angry side-wheeler, had no trouble with him at all, and won the contest with ease. "I told you you'd be all right," Parshall told him.

The two trainers returned to Urbana that evening. In the morning they climbed out of bed and had breakfast. After a second cup of coffee, Parshall told his protégé, "Come on, we've got to get out to the track."

"What's the hurry?"

"You've got to drive that horse."

"What horse?"

"Fearless Peter."

"You mean he's back in to race today?" Simpson gasped.

"Yup," said Parshall. "In fact, he's in against Little Pat and Senator Abbe."

Little Pat and Senator Abbe were two of the greatest pacers of the day, of almost any day. Simpson and Fearless Peter could not beat Senator Abbe—they finished second in the race—but they did manage to turn back the mighty Little Pat, no small accomplishment in itself.

Parshall was delighted and silently patted himself on the back for having had the foresight to put young Simpson up behind the pernicious pacer. But by now he was convinced that his young friend could handle any horse, outlaws included. He was positive that Simpson was destined for greatness in the harness sport.

It wouldn't be many years later, in fact, when Parshall would approach Simpson and suggest that they form a harness racing team. The doctor was contract trainer for the Hayes Fair Acres stable at the time. He was in the homestretch of his illustrious career, was drinking more than he should, and was not tending to business the way he had at his peak. "I'll get the horses ready and you drive them," he urged the younger horseman.

Simpson, blessed with a growing stable of horses and solid owners of his own by then, gently turned him down. He did drive Parshall's horses whenever he could, however.

In late 1942, Simpson knew his days in racing silks were numbered. The Army was beckoning. He made every moment count in those waning days, spending time with his young wife, who was carrying their first child, driving as many horses as possible, attending the yearling auctions, and visiting breeding farms.

One of the farms he toured for the first time was Hanover. It was nowhere near the vast conglomeration of buildings, fences, acres, and horses that it would be in the mid-1970s, but it was impressive. Most impressive.

He visited the stud barn, admiring the great champions who were housed there—Dean Hanover, Mr. McElwyn, Calumet Chuck, Guy McKinney, and others. He studied the pastures, eyeing the Farms' valuable broodmares, most of them plump from rich grass and early pregnancy. He watched the foals trotting, pacing, and galloping across the big fields, kicking up their small heels as the urge struck them. And he ogled the handsome, smartly groomed mile track out behind the barns.

John Simpson was a young horseman with only three years of operating a public stable behind him, and nearly four years of military service ahead of him. If someone had told him that he would one day head the Hanover Shoe Farms empire, he would have questioned the commentator's sanity.

8

A SULKY STAR EMERGES

IF JOHN SIMPSON had any reservations about accepting the assignment, the car quickly dissolved them.

Simpson was two weeks out of the Army when William E. Miller, a wealthy Washington, D.C., furniture dealer summoned him to his Trenton, New Jersey, hospital room. Miller, aside from his business career, owned, trained, and drove a string of horses, and his trotters and pacers were languishing out at the Trenton Fairground while he recovered from some lingering malady. Miller was one of the men who had spotted Simpson's talents in his brief compaigning before the war. Would Simpson train and drive his horses until he got back on his feet?

"Why, I don't know, Mr. Miller. I'd have to think about about it," Simpson hedged. He was aware that Miller generally had some solid horses in his barn—Mr. Morris Scot and Henry Volo were two good ones who were residing there now—but he was anxious to get his own public stable back on the road. Del Miller, Bill Fleming, Ned Bower, fellas like that were back on the loose, hunting for horses and owners, and Simpson didn't want to be left at the gate.

"You'd enjoy it, Johnny," the furniture dealer pressed. "Seems like it would help to ease you back into racing after all those months in the Army."

"It would do that," Simpson admitted, wavering.

"And, of course, you'd have the use of my Cadillac while I'm laid up. . . "

Simpson, bereft of an auto after his Army discharge, was soon out at the Trenton Fairground, legging up Miller's Standardbreds for the season ahead. He trained them into shape, then raced them until the sixty-seven-year-old furniture tycoon was fully recovered and able to join him. Miller wanted him to stay on, to remain with the stable. But Simpson knew full well the feisty merchant-horseman was determined to stay active in the sport and would be driving many of his horses himself. That hardly fitted into John's grand design; he wanted to run his own show, drive his own horses. Miller, who founded Rosecroft Raceway at Oxon Hill, Maryland, in 1948, was still driving at seventy-five when he was fatally stricken in a race at the Harrington State Fair in Delaware in 1954.

Miller and his stable headed for the fairs. Simpson thanked him for the job—and for the use of the Cadillac—and made tracks for Roosevelt Raceway, where he began the task of rounding up horses for a public stable.

Both 1947 and 1948 were transition years. He campaigned such horses as Make Way, Mighty Dexter, Lorena Hanover, and Tallulah Hanover at race tracks ranging from Roosevelt to Lexington, from Saratoga to Sedalia. His skills as both a trainer and a teamster were both apparent, and several people approached him with offers of private jobs.

Clarence F. Gaines, long one the sport's most faithful patrons and breeders, was one of them. "I met John shortly after he got out of the service and tried to hire him," Gaines recalled. "I was racing a small stable and we talked at some length, but I found that others had more opportunities for him, so we never made a deal.

"Although he didn't have as much experience as some of the other trainers around at the time, John was very, very well thought of," Gaines pointed out. "He was an excellent judge of a horse, could drive one with the best of them, and could certainly train one. There were a lot of eyes on young John Simpson."

Some of the eyes belonged to Horace Johnston and William Strang, two of the very biggest horse owners of the day. They helped to populate his stable with classy students in 1949, and John Simpson did the rest.

He took 291 horses to post that year and came sailing home with eighty-one wins, eighty-four seconds, and thirty-eight thirds. His driving average was a lofty .482, placing him right up among the national leaders, and the horses he steered picked up more than $138,000 in purses. He earned his second two-minute drive, scoring in 1:59.4 with Riley Hanover at Lexington, and he captured the dash-winning crown at Roosevelt.

He was at Roosevelt that summer when he went to bat for a troubled young horseman and cemented a friendship that would last a lifetime. Stanley Dancer was a New Jersey farm boy who was hell-bent upon getting to the top of the racing game. He was young, had just turned twenty-two and was still short on driving experience. He compensated for his inexperience by employing a hustle-bustle, out-and-going driving style that earned him victories, but got him into a couple of scrapes on the track. The presiding judge, accusing Dancer of rough-riding tactics, was ready to banish him from the track when Simpson and Del Miller interceded. "He might be a little over-anxious to win, but he's a talented kid, and he's going to have a big career in the sport," they told the judge. Simpson and Miller were beginning to carry some weight around Roosevelt; the racing official changed his mind, permitted Dancer to stay. Dancer never forgot the gesture by his fellow horsemen.

With rock-solid, affluent owners like Horace Johnston and Bill Strang behind him, John Simpson went to the 1949 edition of the Standardbred Sales Company auction in Harrisburg with visions of picking up several yearlings that would strengthen his band in 1950. He got far more than he bargained for.

Strang, a gregarious, personable man who had quickly built up a high regard for Simpson, was pressing his friends to become patrons of the young trainer. J. J. McIntyre, another high-rolling owner of the era, was at the sale, and since he was a crony of Strang's, was the recipient of his friend's sales pitch. "Johnny's a great boy, a great trainer. Give him a colt to train," he was urged.

McIntyre was agreeable, and came up with $3,600 to purchase a colt by Spencer Scot that Simpson had selected. Simpson thanked the Hollins, Virginia, owner for his faith, told him he would do his best with the yearling, and went about the rest of his business. He had other colts to buy for other owners.

The 1949 sale, like all Harrisburg auctions, was a mixed bag of smoke, noise, cash, confusion, and intrigue. Intrigue, especially, was running high in '49 because Imperial Hanover, a full brother to the illustrious Rodney, was headed for the sales ring, and several parties wanted him. It was obvious that it would take considerable cash to knock him down, and it was thought the eventual price tag might even exceed the $42,000 paid for White Hanover as a yearling.

Owner Strang and trainers Sep Palin and Fred Egan were the principals of one mini-syndicate that plotted the colt's purchase over highballs in the Esquire Bar of the Penn-Harris Hotel. The three decided to throw $10,000 each into a kitty with the hope of purchasing the youngster for no more than $30,000. Palin did the bidding for the trio, but he had not counted on the presence of Hanover Shoe Company executive

Archie Mudge and his frequent horse partner, K. D. Owen, in the war. The Mudge-Owen duo, as game a pair as there was around, went all the way to $71,000 before throwing in the towel. Palin landed the yearling for $72,000.

Then the rhubarb started. Palin had far exceeded the $30,000 limit his partners had agreed on. Egan, in fact, declared himself out, leaving Palin and Strang to resolve the situation. J. J. McIntyre, a witness to the argument, settled it. "Quit your bickering," he told the pair, "I'll buy him myself and let young Simpson train him."

Young Simpson, however, wanted no part of Imperial Hanover. Like everyone else at the sale, he had looked the colt over from nose to tail, had seen him led. But unlike everyone else at the sale, he hadn't liked what he had seen. The yearling did not stand correctly and would not make it as a race horse, he felt. He told McIntyre simply that he did not like the horse's conformation, earning a stare of disbelief in return. The owner accused him of fearing to train the colt because he had cost so much. Simpson shook his head. "I just don't like him," he said stubbornly. McIntyre, refusing to believe him, suggested they discuss it further over dinner at the Penn-Harris.

While they were dining that night, Palin rushed up to their table and announced that he could sell the colt to Mrs. Frances Dodge Johnson (the late Mrs. Fred L. Van Lennep), an important patroness of racing. It was McIntyre's turn to be stubborn. "No," he said, "I'm not going to sell him. Either this young man will train him," he added, nodding in Simpson's direction, "or I'll get someone else." With that he pulled out his checkbook, signed a blank check and handed it to Simpson to make out—$72,000 for Imperial Hanover and about $3,600 for the Spencer Scot colt Simpson had selected for him earlier. As the trainer wrote the check, he stole a glance at McIntyre's checkbook balance. It read $221,000, and Simpson nearly fell off his chair.

Nothing was resolved at the dinner. It was still an impasse. McIntyre continued to insist that Simpson handle the yearling; Simpson continued to resist. The owner suggested that the trainer "sleep on it."

The next morning Simpson was back out to the sales arena, wandering in the stable area, when someone came up to him and reported that Lawrence Sheppard wanted to see him in his office. Simpson shuddered. He had met Sheppard, but barely knew him. He knew of him, however—the colts he produced, probably the single most important man in the harness racing industry. He also knew *why* Sheppard wanted to see him, and he silently cursed the fates that had put him in such a position as he slowly walked to Sheppard's office.

The spirited master of the Hanover Shoe Farms was waiting for him. Was it true that Simpson was balking at training Imperial Hanover? Yes,

it was true. Was he afraid to handle history's most expensive Standardbred yearling? No, he wasn't afraid. Why in hell, then, wouldn't he accept him? Because he didn't like him. Didn't like him? Was he aware that great horsemen like Sep Palin, Fred Egan, and Ben White loved the colt? Yes, he knew that. Well, what the hell did he find wrong with him then? His conformation. His conformation? What in God's name was wrong with his conformation? Both his front legs came out of the same hole. Meaning what? That when he trotted at a good clip, he would hit his knees, break stride.

"Young man," Sheppard said, "I think you're dead wrong. I think you're making a big mistake. A young fella like you, new in the business, could do himself a lot of good with Imperial Hanover. Make a name for himself with all the publicity this colt's going to get."

"I'm sorry, but that's the way I feel," Simpson said weakly.

"We'll see about that," Sheppard said ominously, dismissing the trainer.

Simpson left the small room convinced that he had made an enemy of the sport's most influential figure. He remained convinced of that even after he had a change of heart and reluctantly agreed to train Imperial Hanover for McIntyre. Sheppard, he knew, had a long memory. He was not likely to forget the young man who had stuck his nose up at his prized colt even if the young man did eventually agree to accept him.

Yet, a week later, Sheppard was on the phone to him. "You run a public stable?" the Hanover chief asked. When Simpson answered in the affirmative, Sheppard shipped six horses to the trainer's winter headquarters at Ben White Raceway in Florida.

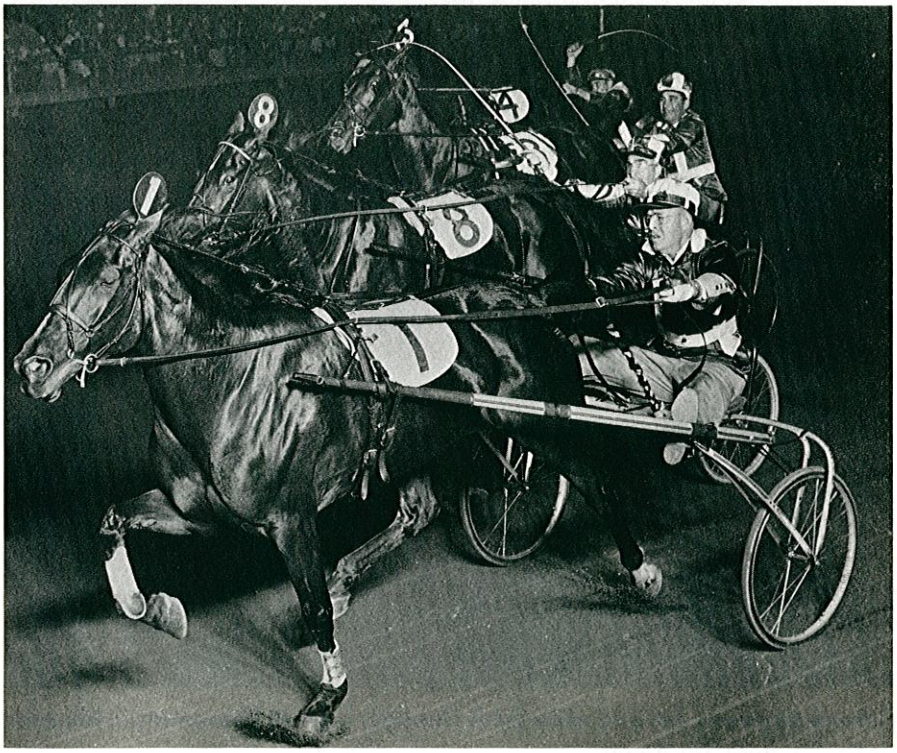
It was the start of one of the closest, more successful relationships ever formed in harness racing.

And Sheppard, until the day he died, was fond of telling how the two had gotten together. "That Goddamn kid" . . . he would cackle . . . "those old-time trainers looked at that colt and said he was so great, and that Goddamn kid looked at him and said he was no account."

The "kid," of course, had proven to be right. Imperial Hanover did hit his knees and was an utter failure as a race horse.

With Lawrence Sheppard's half-dozen youngsters arriving at Ben White, Simpson had a flock of forty-seven horses in his barn as he faced the 1950 season. It was one of the largest aggregations in racing. It was also one of the best. Coupled with his obvious driving skills, it provided him with 111 personal victories and $234,519 in purses. He led the entire nation in dashes won and was second only to Delvin Miller in money earned. He put three more horses on the two-minute list—Ferman Hanover, 1:59.2; Quilla Hanover, 1:59.4; Miss Excellency, 1:59.3—and set several world records in the process. He won more than a dozen races

Painter, with John Simpson, Sr. driving, closes the gap on Thorpe Hanover and reinsman Del Miller.



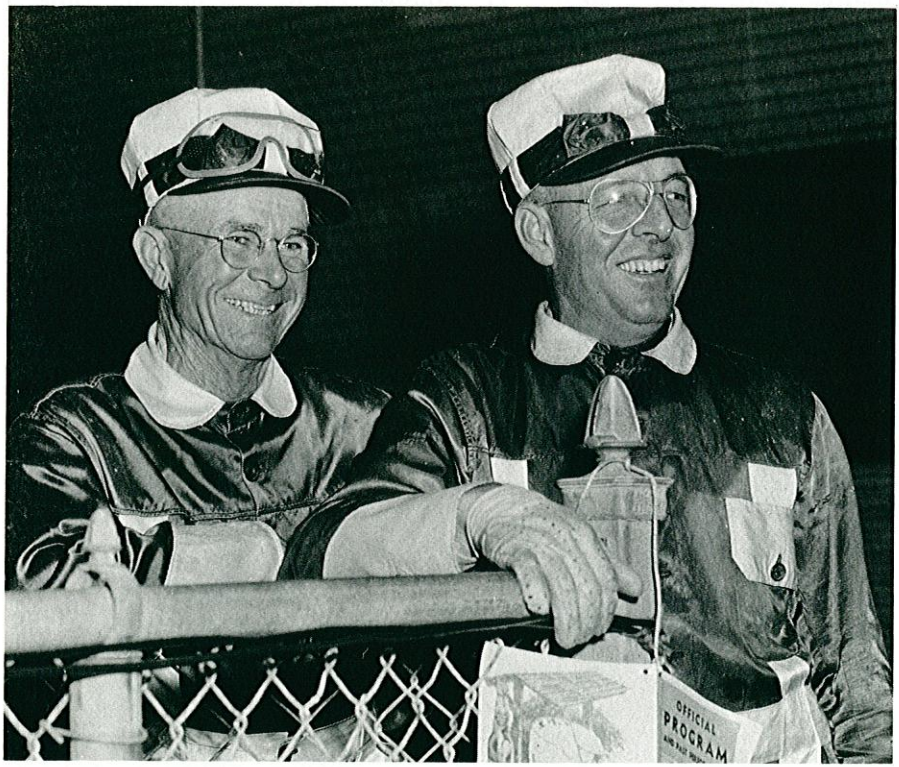
Direct Gal and Johnny Simpson, Sr. score a narrow victory in 1951. Drivers were still wearing soft hats.

that boasted purses of more than $10,000. He was thirty years old at the time.

And success was breeding more success. When he settled at Ben White between the 1950 and 1951 campaigns, his barns bulged with sixty-four trotters and pacers, most of them royally bred youngsters supplied by the top shelf of Standardbred owners—Lawrence Sheppard, Bill Strang, Cleo A. Young, Walter T. Candler, and David J. Johnston among them.

To manipulate and maneuver an enterprise that large was a vast challenge in itself, but Simpson was a pioneer in establishing a systematic approach to training. Everything was done by the clock and the book, with voluminous records kept on each and every horse. *Hoof Beats*, the official magazine of the United States Trotting Association, studied his vast operation during the period and sang its praises:

"If you were a Simpson owner and you suddenly descended on him in Florida with a request for information concerning the progress of your horses, you didn't get an evasive reply and a half promise.



Johnny Simpson, Sr. and aide John Thomas, a great horseman in his own right. *Courtesy Sid Alpert.*

"You got facts compiled by every man who ever had anything to do with your horse, intimate facts pieced together to tell the story of your steed.

"If your horse made a break while he was training one morning, the little chart showed where he made the break and why. It also showed whatever corrective device had been tried and either accepted or rejected in an effort to clear up the trouble if trouble it was.

"From the chart you could tell how many miles your horse had been jogged every day, who had worked him, how fast he had gone, whether he had been tried or was coasting and how he had come out of it after cooling out.

"This was the groundwork that went into the early development of the Simpson horses and the system paid off . . . . "

Hoof Beats also pointed out that Simpson selected excellent help—Johnny Thomas, Ted Carey, Mark Teague, and Foster Walker—and that he ". . . went into winter quarters with sixty-four head and you could have gotten much better than even money at the knocker's bench that he wouldn't get half of them to the races.

"But he brought fifty-four head north in racing condition and throughout the campaign had from forty to fifty going it week in and week out . . ."

It was the largest string of harness horses ever raced to that time. Included in the powerful contingent were:

Duke of Lullwater, a two-year-old trotter owned by Walter Candler who would win fourteen of sixteen heats, set a national season's record of 2:03.4, establish an all-time freshman earnings mark with $59,270, and stamp himself as the horse to beat in the 1952 Hambletonian.

Ford Hanover, an unsound three-year-old trotter owned by Strang, who would remain unbeaten in all eleven of his starts, capturing the $68,000 Kentucky Futurity in the process.

Silent Waters, a two-year-old pacing filly owned by Candler, who would win a pair of major stakes and finish well in others to earn $27,000.

And Kimberly Mine, a freshman trotting filly owned by Mrs. William Hilliard, who would set a season's record of 2:04.3 in capturing the $16,000 Hanover Filly Stake.

Other stakes-winning members of the stable were Garrison Hanover, Honor Bright, Tryhussey, Banker, and Bernie Hanover.

At season's end, Simpson had scored 118 driving victories and earned $333,136 in purses. He led the nation in both categories, with his money-won figure smashing the sport's all-time record, which had been set by Del Miller in 1950.

Ironically, while these figures were being tabulated in December of 1951, Simpson was no longer operating a public stable. A news release coming out of Hanover, Pennsylvania, on August 8 had explained why Mr. Simpson was dissolving his public operation:

The USTA's stock portrait of John Simpson, Sr.

"The biggest Standardbred nursery in the world and one of the most promising young trainer-drivers in the harness racing sport joined hands today as John F. Simpson, 31-year-old Chester, S. C., reinsman became general manager of the vast Hanover Shoe Farms racing and breeding interests. . . ."

The story went on to say that Sheppard was stepping down as general manager of the Shoe Farms because of the pressure of business and his duties as president of the U.S. Trotting Association, an office he had assumed in 1950 and would retain for eight years.

It also said that Simpson would begin his new job in November, giving him time to disperse his public stable, and that the appointment would not disturb the status of Hanover's farm superintendent, the popular and efficient ex-horsemen Marvin Childs. Childs was the latest Hanover superintendent in a line that had included Dr. C. R. Richards, Henry Thomas, Lawrence Brown, Edward Wise, and John Dickerson.

News of the Hanover-Simpson merger, spread across the land by the wire services, may have raised some eyebrows in the racing industry, but came as no surprise to anyone close to Sheppard.

"Shep kept tabs on all the young horsemen breaking into the business, so he'd been watching Johnny for several seasons," said Archie Mudge, Sheppard's top aide in the shoe company and frequent associate in horse matters. "He liked his driving from the beginning and grew to feel that he

was one of the brightest training talents in the sport, too. And that ruckus over Imperial Hanover in 1949? Why, that never bothered Lawrence in the least. On the contrary, it made him think that Johnny had a keener eye for a horse than anyone in the country."

Charlotte Sheppard had even clearer evidence that her husband would one day tap John Simpson on the shoulder and invite him to Hanover. "He talked about him constantly," Mrs. Sheppard remembered. "It was, 'Johnny this, Johnny that. Johnny's the greatest driver in the country, Johnny's the greatest trainer. You've got to meet Johnny,' he'd tell me. 'Wait 'till you meet Johnny.'

"Well, when I finally met him, he wasn't seven feet tall like I'd been led to believe. He looked, instead, like a tired little kid. He'd been racing at Goshen in the afternoons, then flying over to Laurel to race at night, and he was worn out. And I no sooner got to say 'How do you do' to him than Shep pried him away, took him away to talk horses.

"No, I wasn't surprised he named John Simpson general manager of the Farms. He felt Johnny was the greatest horseman in the world. He thought the world of him. He loved Johnny, and he thought of him as a son."

9
A SON IS LOST

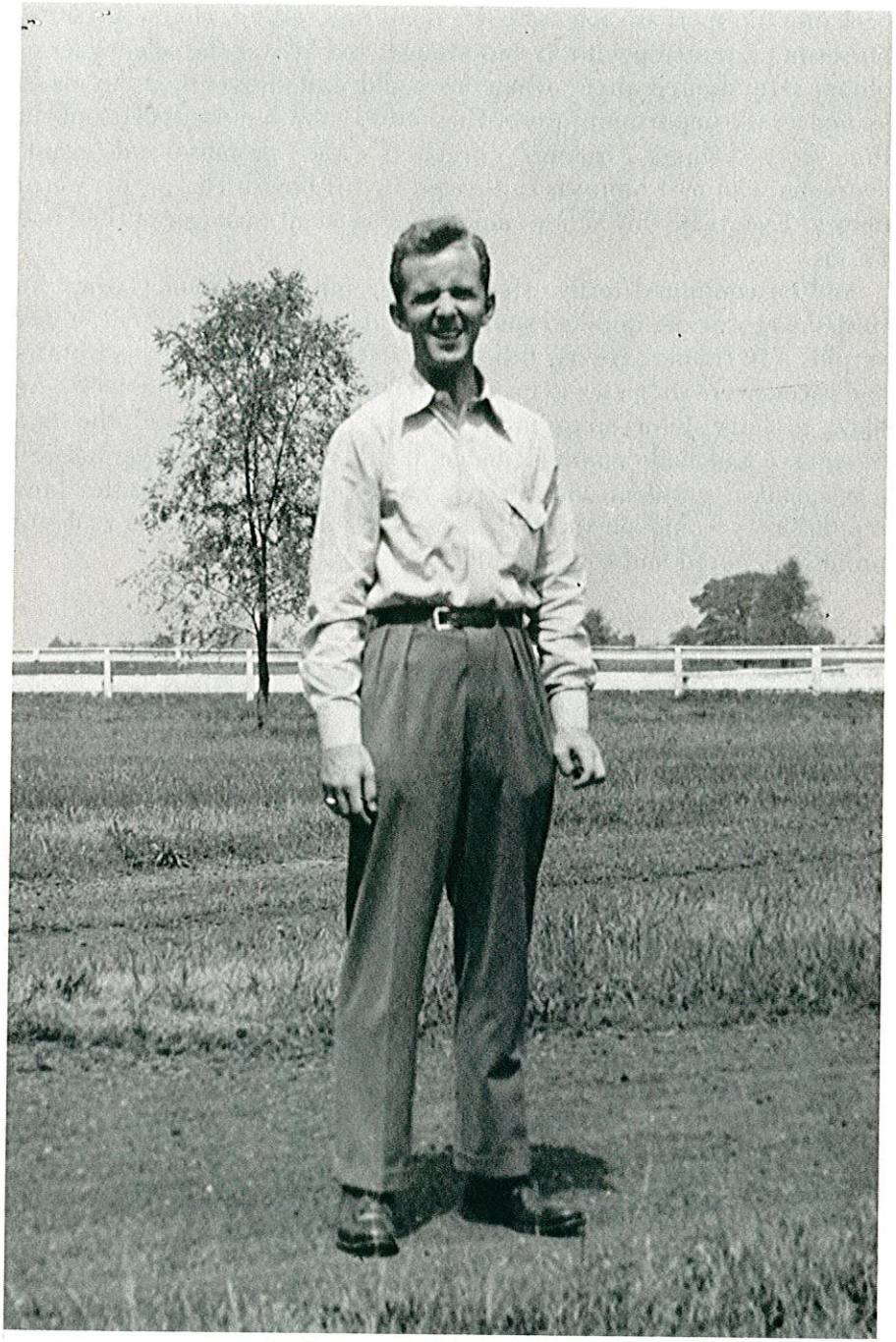
LAWRENCE SHEPPARD needed a surrogate son because he and Charlotte had lost their only male offspring in a tragic, heartbreaking accident two years earlier.

Lawrence B. (Sonny) Sheppard, Jr. was everything that a set of parents could ever hope for in a son. He had never caused them any concern as a youngster, and had grown into a fine man who was respectful, obliging, energetic, and immensely popular—admired by everyone who knew him.

He had returned from the war in June of 1946 and immediately resumed the job he had left in the Hanover Shoe Company factory. You could tell that Sonny was back, they said, by the warm grins that decorated the faces of machine operators. His big smile and sunny personality were contagious as he traveled through the plant.

In June 1948, he was appointed assistant general manager of The Hanover Shoe Inc., as well as a member of its board of directors. Like his father, the promotions had come regularly and quickly, but he had earned them. You didn't pry promotions out of Lawrence Sheppard, Sr. without earning them, even if you happened to be his son.

Sonny Sheppard carried on the family's tradition of service to the community. Interested in sports, he devoted much time and energy to local athletic activities, sponsoring a basketball team and serving as a member of an advisory group that assisted the Hanover School Board in constructing the Sheppard & Myers Athletic Field.



Sonny Sheppard, back from World War II in 1947. *Courtesy Betty Nolt.*

Active as a harness horse trainer and driver before the war, he plunged back into the sport as soon as he was home and settled. He owned some horses in partnership with Archie Mudge, and he was the sole owner of others. He trained them when he could and drove them in races whenever the opportunity arose. He grew to know hundreds of people in the sport—owners, trainers, breeders, and grooms—and again, everyone who met him was captivated by his boyish charm, his warm nature. Eventually his father named him assistant manager of the Shoe Farms.

And he continued to fly. He had come into some money when he turned twenty-one, and had spent some of it on his own aircraft, a war surplus AT6 trainer. He used the plane to fly to sites where his trotters and pacers were training and racing. His father was still flying as well—he liked to ferry John Simpson to driving assignments—and the two Sheppards had made a mutual pledge. If either, at any time, ever noticed a mechanical problem with aircraft they were flying, no matter how minute, they would land at the nearest available airport. It was a solemn promise honored and respected by both.

Sonny Sheppard poses with a Beechcraft. *Courtesy Betty Nolt.*

On June 14, 1949, Sonny Sheppard flew his small aircraft to what was then called Curtis Airport on Long Island, less than a mile from Roosevelt Raceway. Trainer Gene Pownall had four of young Sheppard's horses in his stable at the time, and two of them—fillies Marietta Hanover and Elaine Gantle—were scheduled to compete in early, nonbetting races on the Roosevelt program. Sonny, holding an amateur license, drove Marietta Hanover in her twilight contest, while Pownall took the other filly to post in her race.

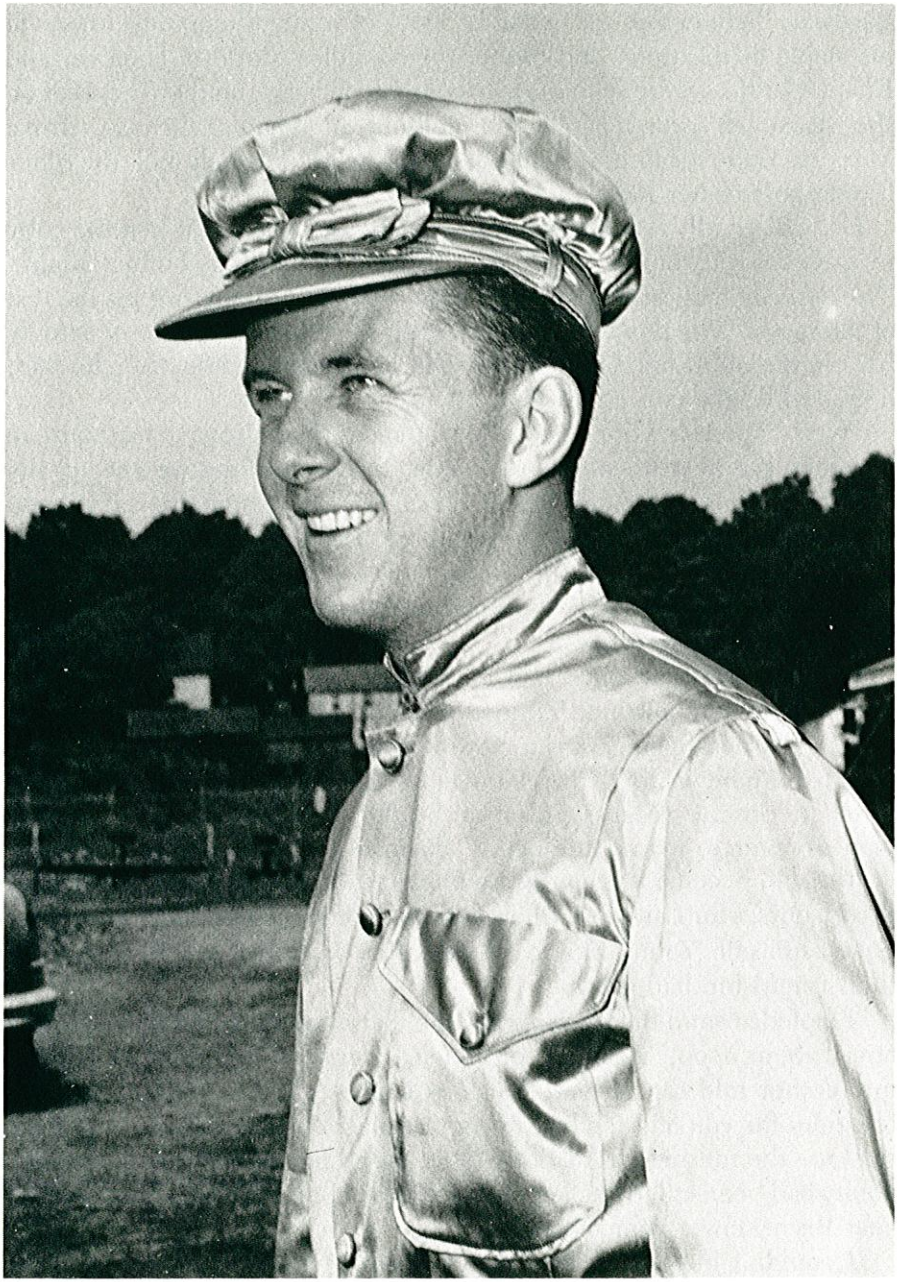
Pownall vividly recalled the next twenty-four hours. "When the baby races were over, Sonny said to me, 'Gene, I think I'll fly home tonight.' 'No, don't do that, Sonny,' I urged him. 'You want to stay and see the rest of the races. Why don't you do that, then sleep over at my house and fly back in the morning?' Well, he thought it over for a while, then he said, 'I guess I'll take you up on that, Gene.'

"We stopped for a bite to eat after the races, then drove to my house in Mineola, the next town down the line. In the morning we got up, my mother fixed us bacon and eggs, and I said to him, 'Sonny, why don't you call Mitchell Field and get the weather?' He did call and was told the weather would be clear in the Hanover area into the early afternoon. No problem. I drove him over to the airport, wished him a good flight, and headed for the race track."

Pownall, who had once had his picture on the cover of *Newsweek* magazine as symbolizing the new breed of trainer-driver in the reborn sport of harness racing, was a close friend of young Sheppard. He had been a frequent visitor to the Hanover Shoe Farms over the years and had watched Sonny progress from a bright youngster to a promising man—"eager to learn, intelligent, down-to-earth, loved by everyone, destined to become a major figure in racing." Gene had also trained and driven horses for Lawrence Sheppard, Sr. from time to time, and later for Sonny himself. Young Sheppard was often around Pownall's barn and their friendship had grown.

"I fooled around the track for a while that morning and got back to the house about noon," Pownall continued. "I was barely in the door when my mother told me, 'Gene, Western Union called you. They've got a telegram for you and it's bad news.' I called Western Union, and they read me the message from Betty Nolt, Lawrence Sheppard's secretary. Sonny had been killed in a fiery crash while taking off from a small airfield near Bryn Mawr, Pennsylvania.

"I couldn't believe it, so I drove down to Hempstead to read the message myself. When I couldn't believe that either I called Betty Nolt and she confirmed it. For some reason, Sonny had landed at the little airport and drained some of the fuel from the tank of his plane. Nobody seemed to know why. Then he roared down the runway, took off, got



Lawrence B. (Sonny) Sheppard, Jr., a promising young horseman who lost his life in a tragic air crash. *Photo by Howard DeFreitas, courtesy USTA.*

about 150 feet in the air, and his engine stalled. He plowed into a string of high tension wires. Practically the only thing left of the plane was the tail and rudder assembly with a Hanover emblem on it. That's how they identified the aircraft.

"It was unbelievable, a genuine nightmare. Here this great young man had flown fighter planes for years, had survived the war, was an excellent pilot, and had been killed in a freak accident on a perfect day for flying. I was staggered."

Sonny Sheppard, at the time of his death, was seven days short of his twenth-seventh birthday.

Lawrence and Charlotte Sheppard wanted to see Pownall at the first possible moment, Betty Nolt told the trainer. Pownall immediately headed for Hanover. Mrs. Sheppard greeted him at the door and broke down. Lawrence Sheppard seemed to be in a state of shock, but managed to question Gene at length about Sonny's final hours. He pressed the trainer for some remark his son might have made about his airplane, some hint of trouble. Pownall could recall none.

Then Sheppard told Gene of the pact he and his son had made—that they would put down their aircraft at the closest possible landing strip at the first sign of trouble. And that had included threatening weather, Sheppard added. Yet the small air strip near Bryn Mawr had reported blue skies at the time of the crash.

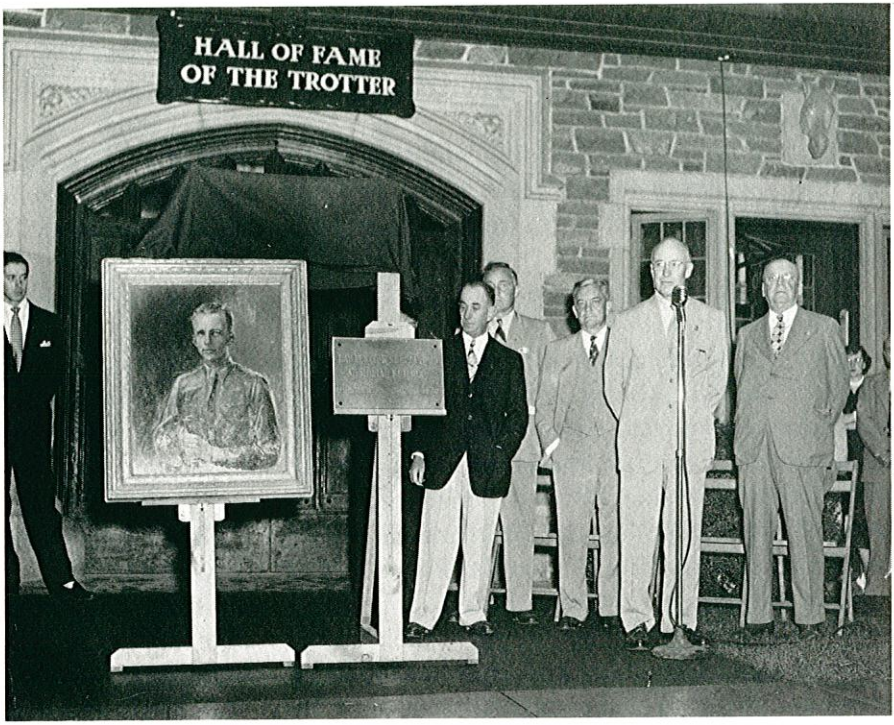
No official cause was ever offered. Pownall theorized that young Sheppard had been the victim of a faulty fuel gauge, that he had inadvertently drained his tank when he thought he was merely removing excess gasoline. But it could only be conjecture.

Sonny Sheppard's death stunned the shoe company, the Hanover community, the business world, and the racing industry. Literally hundreds of notes of sympathy poured into the Sheppard home. From generals, from congressmen, from leaders of industry, from Standardbred breeders, trainers and caretakers, from factory workers, and from school children.

And his death, so horribly untimely, left a scar on the hearts of his family—his parents, his three sisters, his grandfather. It was inconceivable that such a vibrant, warm, promising personality could suddenly be gone.

Had Sonny Sheppard lived, it is likely that he would have followed his grandfather and father to the very top of The Hanover Shoe, Inc. And it is likely that he would have reigned over the Hanover Shoe Farms as well, since he had "delighted his father with his driving, training, and interest in horse breeding," in the words of Charlotte Sheppard.

Yet it is inconceivable that Lawrence Sheppard, Sr. would have failed to find lofty places for the young, bright, and ambitious aides who came



Hall of Fame of the Trotter officials Phil Pines, Octave Blake, E. Roland Harriman, and others join Lawrence Sheppard, Sr. in ceremonies opening the Lawrence B. Sheppard, Jr. Memorial Building at the Goshen, N.Y., Fame Hall in 1951.

later—favorites like Paul E. Spears, the financial officer of the shoe, farm, and horse sales enterprises; E. S. (Ned) Fitzgibbons, the shoe company's president from 1958 through 1974; and for John F. Simpson, the harness horseman. Sheppard admired talent, intelligence, energy, and confidence, and these men had it.

In the case of John Simpson, Sheppard was drawn to him like Simpson were some kind of giant magnet. That would not have changed had Sheppard boasted a dozen sons.

Simpson's attractions were spelled out in the story that announced his appointment as Hanover's general manager in 1951. "In conducting his huge public stable he has shown rare organizational and business ability in addition to being a top-notch trainer, and I am certain that he will bring these talents to bear at Hanover," Sheppard was quoted as saying.

"I view the appointment as the beginning of a long range project," Sheppard went on, "that will carry on and perpetuate the high traditions

of The Farms for another quarter of a century or longer."

With Sonny Sheppard so tragically removed from the scene two years earlier, it was apparent that Sheppard had hand-picked John Simpson as his eventual successor, as the man to be entrusted with keeping the Hanover name alive and growing in Standardbred breeding. While Simpson was aware that the torch would more than likely be passed to him one day, he was hoping that the transferral was many years in the future. There were scores of future colts he wanted to develop, hundreds of more races that he wanted to win. Fixing the time when Simpson would hang up his driving silks and settle at the Farms would constitute the only serious disagreement the two would have.

Terms of the appointment called for Simpson to "supervise the training and driving of horses owned by the Farms and Sheppard family" and to "relieve Mr. Sheppard of the general management duties." The young horseman was, in effect, the contract or private trainer for the Shoe Farms and the Sheppard family, although the arrangement was loose enough to permit him to train and drive for a few additional owners. Generally, Simpson's outside owners also turned out to be cronies of Sheppard or good customers of the Farms, so few problems ever resulted.

The Shoe Farms had grown like Topsy since John Simpson had visited them in 1942. In the autumn of 1951 there were 757 horses on the grounds. Included were 121 Hanover-owned yearlings being prepared for the Harrisburg sale and 171 of the Farms' richly bred, carefully selected broodmares. The seven hundred-plus horses, stallions, broodmares, yearlings, and sucklings, now had two thousand green and good acres in which to roam.

Gone were many of the great stallions of the early 1940s—Billy Direct, Lawrence Hanover, Calumet Chuck, Guy McKinney—all of them victims of time, the aging process, and natural death.

Two more of the Hanover sires, Mr. McElwyn and Junior Hanover, had met premature deaths on a violent Sunday afternoon in the mid-1940s. Junior Hanover, a strapping, handsome stallion with a vicious temper and a penchant for jumping paddock fences, had fled his own enclosure and invaded the paddock of Mr. McElwyn. He then attacked the gentler and smaller Mr. McElwyn, knocked him down, and injured him so severely that Mr. McElwyn had to be humanely destroyed.

Mr. McElwyn, whose colts were bringing Hanover's top average figures at the time, was a particular pet of both Lawrence and Charlotte Sheppard. The Sheppards were away that afternoon, and were horrified to hear of the incident upon their return. While stories differ concerning what happened next, it was Mrs. Sheppard's recollection that her husband was so upset by the death of his beloved stallion that he marched

into the house, picked up a rifle, returned to the paddock, and destroyed Junior Hanover with his own hand.

Mr. McElwyn, Billy Direct, Calumet Chuck—they were missing, but in their stalls were sparkling new stallions, champions like Titan Hanover, 1:58½, the world's first two-year-old two-minute trotter; Nibble Hanover, 1:58¾, the holder of five world records; Hoot Mon, 1:59¼, the 1947 winner of the Hambletonian and Kentucky Futurity; and Bill Gallon, 1:59½, who had swept most of trotting's giant stakes in the early 1940s.

And still holding on, still turning out fleet youngsters with regularity, were two more of Lawrence Sheppard's personal choices, Dean Hanover and Spencer Scott.

With John Simpson in the family, Sheppard was not about to fold the Hanover tent. He was, in fact, thinking of expansion. More stallions, more mares, more acres, more buildings.

One of Simpson's first official acts as general manager of the Hanover Shoe Farms was to join Sheppard in his ambitious plan to purchase the two leading pacers of 1951, Tar Heel and Solicitor. The pair of sidewheelers had finished a nose apart in the Little Brown Jug—Tar Heel had won it—and they were stablemates in a thirty-six-horse consignment to be sold at the Harrisburg auction by the estate of the late W. N. Reynolds of Winston-Salem, North Carolina.

Both had been campaigned by Delvin Miller, although Billy Haughton, Del Cameron, and others had driven Tar Heel on occasion. Both had earned 1:57.2 records at Lexington, co-holding the world mark for three-year-old pacers. Tar Heel, by Billy Direct and out of Leta Long, had earned a record $119,049 on the season, while Solicitor, a King's Counsel-Jane Reynolds son, had picked up $81,237 in racing spoils.

"At first we tried to buy the entire consignment privately, but we couldn't make a deal with the executors," Simpson said, looking back. "Then we talked at length about buying only Tar Heel at the sale, since we both wanted him. But I also pointed out that we might want to grab Solicitor, too, if he didn't go for too much. I told him I didn't believe he'd make as great a sire as Tar Heel, but that he actually had more speed than his stablemate."

"I think you're right," Sheppard informed his general manager. "We'll buy them both, but what do you think we'll have to pay for them?"

"I really don't know, but I'd guess that Tar Heel will bring around $75,000 and Solicitor maybe $50,000."

"Well, Goddamn it, that's a lot of money," Sheppard growled. "Nobody ever paid that much for a stallion at auction before."

"I know it," Simpson admitted, "but I think we might be faced with some syndicates over there."

"We might," Sheppard agreed.

On the morning of November 8—the Reynolds consignment was due to be sold that afternoon—Sheppard and Simpson met with Clinton N. Myers in Myers' office at 118 Carlisle Street. Harper D. Sheppard, Lawrence's father, had died a month earlier at the age of eighty-three, ending an era that had begun with his founding of the Hanover Shoe Company in 1899. Myers, co-founder of the company, was still living, however, and shared the ownership of the Hanover Shoe Farms. Sheppard felt compelled to seek his approval before spending vast sums on the Farms, although he knew in advance what the agreeable Myers' answer would be.

"Johnny and I both like Tar Heel and Solicitor, and we'd like to buy the pair of them," Sheppard told his older partner. "We like Tar Heel the best, but we think we'd better buy Solicitor for insurance."

"Whatever you want to do, Lawrence," Myers offered.

"Well, the thing of it is, we think we're going to have to go $75,000 to get Tar Heel, and we feel Solicitor could run around $50,000," Sheppard said warily. "But we feel we might one day get our money back," he added hopefully.

"That sounds good," Myers commented.

Sheppard and Simpson were going out the door when Myers spoke again. "Lawrence," he said, "you and Johnny buy those horses. You want them, we should have them—whatever the cost."

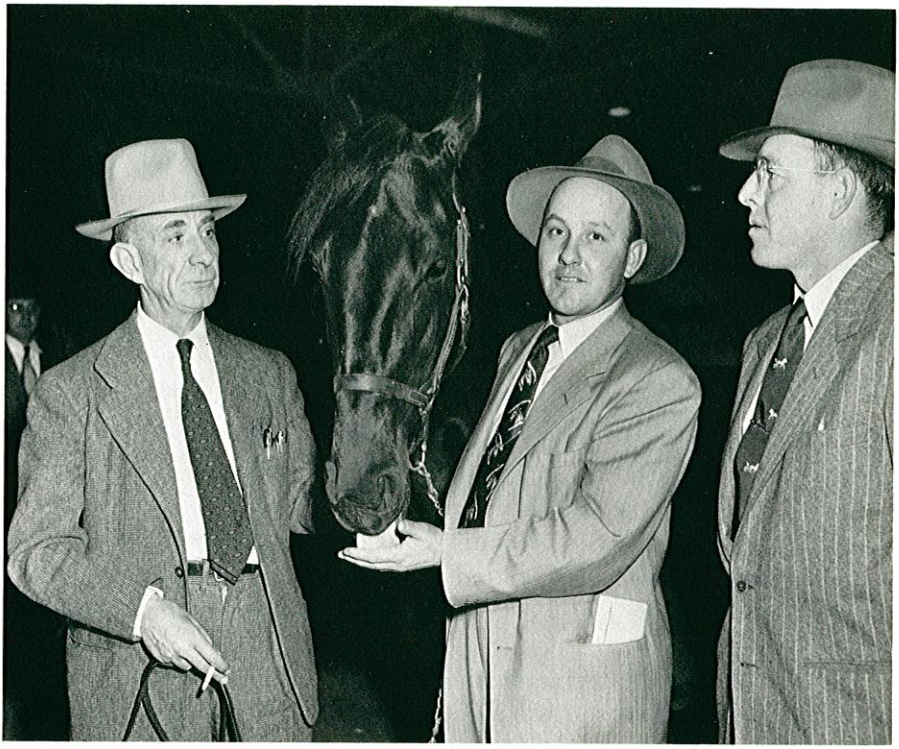
"Yes, sir," said Sheppard.

That afternoon the Hanover pair had to buck some of the wealthiest, most determined breeders in the sport: Mrs. Frances Dodge Van Lennep of Castleton Farm, Lexington, Kentucky, and Walter M. Michaels of the Pickwick Farms, Bucyrus, Ohio. Joining in the spirited war, although it was said he was acting as an agent for Mrs. Van Lennep, was trainer-driver Wayne (Curly) Smart.

When the gavels were finally dropped on the two pacers, Sheppard had parted with $125,000 for Tar Heel and $100,000 for Solicitor. The whole procedure had taken less than ten minutes.

The $125,000 paid for Tar Heel shattered several auction records. It easily topped the $70,000 paid for the stallion Algiers by the Walnut Hall and Gainesway Farms in 1947. It was well above the $72,000 spent by J. J. McIntyre to land the yearling Imperial Hanover, the horse that had served as a sort of introduction for Sheppard and Simpson. And it equaled the price paid by J. Malcolm Forbes of Milton, Massachusetts, for Arion in 1891 in a private transaction.

If Sheppard was disturbed by the astronomical price tags, he never batted an eye during the bidding. Jim Harrison, public relations director of the U.S. Trotting Association at that time, sat with him when he bought



From left, Lawrence Sheppard, Del Miller, and John Simpson look over Tar Heel moments after the Hanover Shoe Farms paid $125,000 for the horse at Harrisburg. *Courtesy Wide World Photo.*

the two pacers. "Which one will make the best sire?" Harrison asked him. "How the hell should I know," he answered gruffly. "All I know is that these are the two best young sire prospects in the country and that Hanover better have both of them."

Harrison said the famous breeder had little knowledge of genetics and little interest in fancy breeding philosophies. "He had absolutely no use for breeding theories other than mating the best to the best and hoping for the best. He simply made sure that he had the best."

Sheppard announced at the sale that John Simpson would race both Tar Heel and Solicitor in 1952, but pointed out that Hanover had bought the pair primarily as stallions. The Shoe Farms would sink or swim on their prowess in the stud barn.

Solicitor, as it turned out, was a journeyman stallion, a decent if unspectacular sort who would produce nice race horses, but few champions (the great Overtrick being one of the exceptions).

10
TRADITION AT THE FARMS

THE HANOVER SHOE FARMS had not owned a race horse for more than a decade until Tar Heel and Solicitor went to post for that ownership in 1952.

Back in the late 1920s, when the two Sheppards and Clinton Myers were striving to get their young breeding operation off the ground, it had made sense to race all their horses under the Hanover banner. The solid horses, withheld from their own consignments or purchased elsewhere, helped to spread the Hanover name throughout the racing industry and the nation. And since the Hanover Shoe Company was paying the new and limping breeding farms an annual advertising fee, it seemed like the least they could do.

But later, when breeding became more important than racing to the trio, the policy was reversed. "Bidders figured that we were keeping the good ones and selling only the culls," Farms superintendent Marvin Childs said with characteristic bluntness in 1948.

The new policy was established in about 1937 and was one reason why Hanover registered sharp sales gains before World War II reared its ugly head, knocking the props from under racing and breeding.

Lawrence Sheppard insisted that every colt produced by Hanover, with the exception of an injured or ill youngster, be sent to public sale.

Tar Heel. *Courtesy Winants Bros.*

Tar Heel, on the other hand, would rule the roost—or at least share it with Adios—for two decades, with his sons and daughters often averaging $20,000 a copy at the sales and going on to win every pacing stake known to man. And his blood, when fused with that of Adios, would produce such unforgettable stars as Bret Hanover, Romeo Hanover, Romulus Hanover, and Nansemond, to merely scratch the surface.

In 1976, when the Hanover Shoe Farms were celebrating their fiftieth anniversary, Tar Heel would still be sending promising pacers off to the sales.

Traditionally, the Farms withheld a few fillies each year—not necessarily the best ones—for limited racing and eventual breeding.

If Sheppard or Simpson developed an affinity for a particular colt, they could only hope that the yearling would be purchased by someone who might be amenable to having a partner—Sheppard. Then Sheppard would buy in at the prevailing rate. Archie Mudge, K. D. Owen, Thomas W. Murphy, and a few other close friends of the Hanover chief would generally oblige him.

Occasionally, when a good looking filly, one Simpson had had an eye on, slipped through the sale and failed to bring what she was worth, Sheppard would make the new owner an offer. A filly called Fiesta Hanover was a case in point.

Fiesta Hanover was a daughter of Hoot Mon, out of a Guy Day mare. Simpson had seen her lead, liked her very much, and was shocked when she brought a lowly $3,500 at the 1951 Harrisburg auction. She was purchased by Charles I. Ruderman of Gouverneur, New York, a frequent patron of the Hanover sale.

"You know, Charlie Ruderman stole one filly today," Simpson told his boss after the sale.

"Which one?" Sheppard asked.

"Fiesta Hanover. Got her for $3,500."

"You think she's worth more?"

"I sure do. Lots more."

"Then go offer him a profit," Sheppard directed.

Simpson did, offering him $500 more than he paid for the young trotter. Ruderman accepted. Fiesta Hanover then went on to earn more than $50,000 at the races before becoming a member of the family's broodmare band. Her offspring would include Filter, 2:00.4, $119,090, and Paddy Wagon, 2:10.3, $49,758.

Ruderman was understandably a little miffed.

Fiesta Hanover was owned by Sheppard's daughter Patricia. The fillies often raced under the name of a family member—his wife, Charlotte, his daughters, Patricia, Charlotte and Alma, or his son Lawrence, Jr., before he died. Frequently they would keep them and breed them to Hanover stallions.

Sheppard was dead set against racing horses under the Hanover name, but he could be persuaded to violate his own edict. When Bullet Hanover wound up his incredible racing career in 1960, John Simpson was hankering to train one of the colts out of his first crop. "Well, hell, keep one if you want to," said Sheppard, who always had trouble saying no to Simpson. Ironically, Simpson's selection never amounted to much.

Dancer Hanover was a different story. One involving Stanley Dancer.

Stan Dancer and Lawrence Sheppard had been friends for several

Shep and friend.

years, dating back to the mid-1940s when Dancer was breaking into the sport. Sheppard was worried that the frenetic Dancer was trying to conquer the sport too quickly, that he would ruin his health with the wild pace he maintained. Once he met him with his airplane, flew him to Hanover, and practically forced him to rest at his home for a few days,

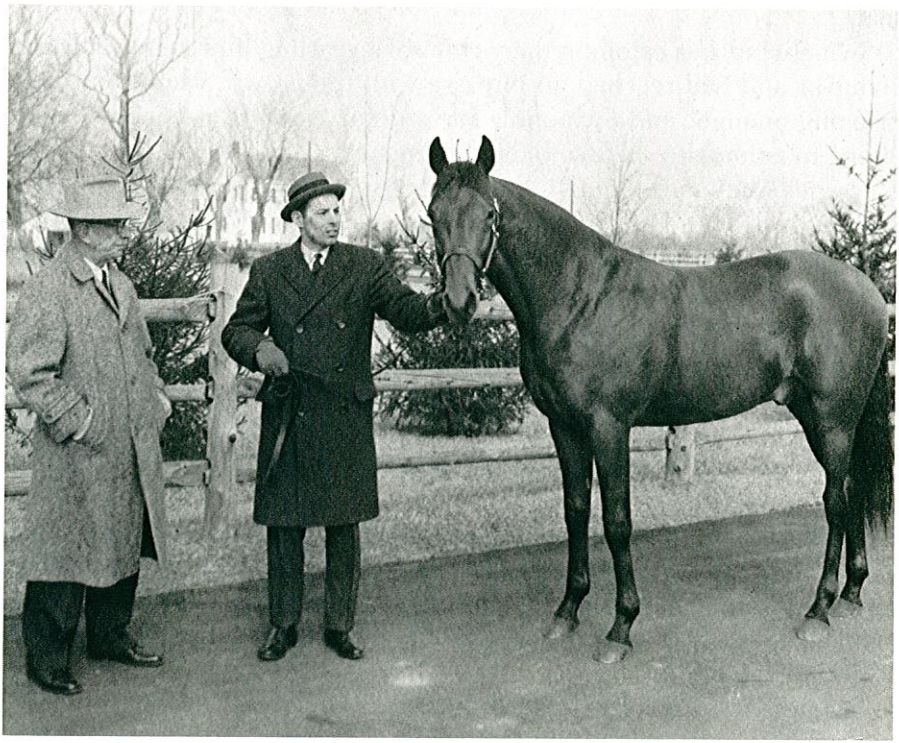
lecturing him all the while. In 1957, Sheppard discovered that he had never named a colt after Stanley, an honor that he had bestowed upon most major figures in the racing business.

"You can make amends by naming that new stud colt out of The Old Maid for me," Dancer told him, waiting for the reaction.

Sheppard jumped to the bait, sputtered a lot. Hanover couldn't call The Old Maid's colt Dancer Hanover because Hanover always took the first letter from the dam's name and used it as the first letter of the colt's name. "You're going to have to let me pick a mare whose name starts with the letter D," the breeder protested.

"No soap," said Dancer. "It's The Old Maid's colt or nobody."

Sheppard fussed and fumed for days. It would be a clear cut break in Hanover tradition to name that particular colt for Stanley, yet he hated to offend the great horseman. Finally he agreed to the request, but sent Dancer a gentle reminder: "You damn well better bid on him when he goes in the ring next year."



Lawrence Sheppard and Stanley Dancer pose with Dancer Hanover, a colt that was named for Dancer in a break from Hanover tradition. (Dancer later reciprocated by buying the youngster for record $105,000.)

Dancer did bid on Dancer Hanover. So did several others, since the yearling was the top colt prospect of the year. Stanley had to go all the way to $105,000, an all-time record for a yearling, to land him. Then the colt turned out to be a disappointment, or at least Stanley had trouble getting him to pace. Sheppard offered to buy him back for $200,000, and Dancer's syndicate agreed.

The colt was given to Del Miller and Jimmy Arthur, and became one of the few modern horses to race under the Hanover Shoe Farms flag. Dancer Hanover won several stakes, ended up with more than $87,000 on his card, and took a time-trial mark of 1:56.4. His real contribution to the sport, however, would come in the Hanover stud barn, where he would sire such children as Romeo Hanover, Romulus Hanover, Dexter Hanover, and Voodoo Hanover, the latter the dam of Albatross.

Lawrence Sheppard frowned on members of the family bidding on Hanover youngsters, and this led to an amusing incident in 1953. George Swinebroad, the famed auctioneer, was holding forth at the annual Harrisburg vendue, and was nearing the end of the Hanover consignment when Mrs. Charlotte Sheppard entered the sales arena and took a seat.

Swinebroad was extolling the virtues of a yearling filly called Leotyne Hanover and had reached an impasse with the crowd. The filly wasn't bringing enough, and Swinebroad was determined to get more. In an effort to stimulate better bids, he movingly described how much Lawrence Sheppard thought of the youngster, how much he loved her, how badly he hated to part with her. The auctioneer was so effective that he actually inspired new interest in the filly. One of the persons swayed by his emotional appeal was Charlotte Sheppard.

"My God I had never heard such an oration in my life," Mrs. Sheppard admitted. "When George got through talking, I thought, my heavens, aside from being as beautiful as she is, Shep loves that horse. It tore my heart out that he might lose her, so I told Sanders Russell, who was with me, to keep bidding on her until we got her. 'I've got to have that filly for daddy,' I told him."

The horse was knocked down to Mrs. Sheppard. Moments later the last of the Hanover class had passed through the ring, and Sheppard and Simpson were headed for the hospitality room and a congratulatory highball. Charlotte Sheppard was right behind them, yelling at Sheppard at get his attention.

"What is it, Charlotte?" asked the weary breeder.

"I can't keep it to myself any longer. I bought you a Christmas present, that filly George Swinebroad said you loved so much."

Although she had been married to him for thirty-four years to that point, Mrs. Sheppard had never heard her husband roar so loud. "He was

Mrs. Charlotte Sheppard (right) and aide Mrs. Helen Bennett discuss yearlings being sold at Harrisburg. Mrs. Sheppard once bought one of her husband's fillies during auction but received little thanks. *Courtesy Winants Bros.*

so upset he toppled into a bunch of sulkies that were on display," she reported.

"You did *what*?" he demanded after Simpson had helped to extricate him from the pile of bikes.

"I thought it was breaking your heart to sell that filly, so I bought her for you for Christmas," Mrs. Sheppard offered tearfully.

"Jesus Christ, Charlotte," her husband exploded. "We just don't do that! It just isn't done!"

"Well, you fellows said she was so great. . . ."

"It's all right, Mrs. Sheppard," Simpson interrupted, trying to calm the choppy waters. "I'll straighten it out later."

Charlotte Sheppard kept the filly, renamed her Miss Laura, and bred her many times. She produced several good race horses, notably Joel, 2:02.2, and Josiah, 1:58.4. Lawrence Sheppard got something else for Christmas in 1953.

Of course, the policy of never buying a yearling out of the Hanover

Charlotte Sheppard chats with Bill and Peter Haughton at Hanover "show days" around 1970.

consignment had its drawbacks, too. Especially if Sheppard developed a yearning to retrieve one of the horses at a later date. Dancer Hanover was one example. Dean Hanover and Nibble Hanover were others.

Dean Hanover was picked out of the 1935 Old Glory Sale for $410. When Sheppard bought him back two years later, he had to pay $20,000, a horrendous sum in those days. Nibble Hanover drew a high bid of $2,000 when he slipped through Old Glory in 1937. Sheppard paid $100,000 to get him back in 1949.

Fortunately for Hanover, all three horses worked out, turned out to be bargains. There were others who didn't.

Sheppard was never known to complain when a yearling brought far less than he had anticipated. "You breed them the best you can, you raise them the best you can, then you send them to the sale. At that stage, it's out of your hands. You have to accept what they bring," he told Simpson at one time.

Cases like Fiesta Hanover were the exception, not the rule.

Over the years scores of bargain youngsters were plucked out of the Hanover consignments—Dean Hanover at $410, Nibble Hanover at $2,000, Romeo Hanover at $8,500, Delmonica Hanover at $5,000,

Lindy's Pride (Galahad Hanover) at $15,000, and Laverne Hanover at $20,000.

In many instances, Hanover personnel—Sheppard, Simpson, Marvin Childs, or the superintendents who preceded or followed Childs—spotted the great potential in a colt or filly many months before the individual headed for Harrisburg and the sales ring. Yet Simpson, who trained the Sheppard family's horses, could only look on enviously as the youngster went on to some other trainer.

The reverse was also true. There were cases of expensive, striking looking animals, admired by everyone, including the Hanover team, who failed to make the grade, most of them victims of injury or illness. Perpetual soundness and lifelong good health were two qualities that Hanover, that no breeder, could guarantee.

There were other Hanover traditions, Hanover customs that Lawrence Sheppard instituted, most of them preserved through the present.

Visitors have been welcomed at the Shoe Farms since Harper Sheppard, Clinton Myers, and Lawrence Sheppard tacked up the first sign in 1926. There are no "Keep Off The Grass" or "Keep Out" posters at Hanover as there are at some breeding farms; guests are permitted to roam pretty much at will. Rarely is there a guided tour, but Farms personnel are ready and willing to answer questions, offer explanations. It's all rather informal and free-wheeling—like the man who started the practice.

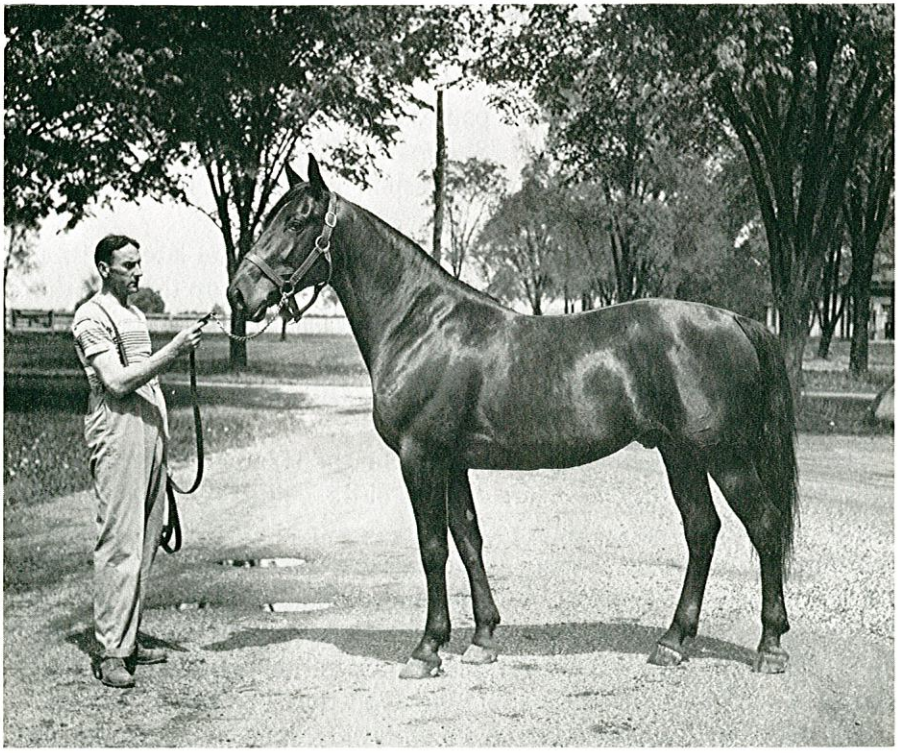
All the Hanover buildings are painted Colonial yellow, trimmed with forest green, two of Lawrence Sheppard's favorite colors. The wood fencing along Route 194 is still whitewashed once a year, the nameplates on the stallions' paddocks still get careful attention.

Harry Moss, superintendent of the Farms during the late 1950s and early 1960s, remembered a day when Sheppard drove up the long drive to the main farm and spotted a touch of whitewash, a spot about the size of a twenty-five-cent piece, on a paddock nameplate. "I'm sure it ruined his day, and it didn't do much for mine, either," said Moss. "He made such a big thing of it."

Hanover has been holding "show days" at the Hanover Fairground for ages. Owners and trainers from all parts of the country—all parts of the world, in recent years—gather there to see the Farms' annual crop of yearlings led to pony. A rider on horseback zips along at a good clip, tugging the trotter or pacer along behind, hopefully at the proper gait. Moving the yearling at a rapid pace gives the horseman a chance to spot flaws in the animal's gait and conformation. Some owners like Clarence F. Gaines would not think of bidding on a colt they had not seen lead.

The whole procedure is carried out with the festive air of a county fair, with food, and drink provided. A few days later the same young horses

K. D. Owen, Glen Garnsey (facing camera), and Monty Moncrief talk horses during a "show day" at the Hanover Fairground.



The late Kenny Hamm, probably the greatest "lead pony" rider ever, poses with Tar Heel, one of the greatest pacing stallions ever.

will be offered in the sales ring. With any luck at all, the men and women who saw them on show day will be trying to buy them.

The Hanover hospitality room at the Harrisburg sales arena is another pleasant institution. If you're thirsty, need an eye-opener in the morning or a bracer in the afternoon, you head for the hospitality room. It's not much to look at, just a narrow room about fifteen feet long, but it contains some of the best booze that money can buy. And some of the quickest bartenders around. It's a great place to celebrate the purchase of a colt. And it's free.

Lawrence B. Sheppard, wearing his famous hat and looking very natty.

Sheppard was always adamant that the men in charge of the Hanover yearlings—Marvin Childs in past years, Monty Moncrief in recent—be truthful in discussing their wares with prospective customers. "Marvin was a great salesman, but he was very honest and very reliable," said Clarence Gaines. "The same is true of Monty today," The late Richard Downing credited Childs with steering him away from other colts and onto Bret Hanover in 1962. Sheppard couldn't lie, and didn't expect anything different from his employees.

The Hanover caretakers were taught to be democratic, to pull a yearling out of his stall for viewing whether the party interested in the colt was wearing a Brooks Brothers suit or blue jeans. "You can't tell a damn thing by the clothes a man is wearing," he was fond of saying. And Lawrence Sheppard was often the ideal model to illustrate that adage.

A handshake or a man's word were enough to seal a bargain with Sheppard. He was a lawyer himself, but he had more faith in a man's integrity—and his own—then all the legal writs that could be prepared.

All of these practices, customs, traditions he pressed on John Simpson in the early years of their association. Doubtless he was preparing Simpson for the day when he would hand him the reins of the Hanover Shoe Farms.

And speaking of that, when was Simpson going to give up all that training and driving and settle at the Farms?

11

SIMPSON BOWS OUT

JOHN SIMPSON was not going to give up all that training and driving and settle at the Farms, John Simpson decided in the autumn of 1954.

Oh, he'd been living there, all right—he and Helen and the kids, four redheads named John, Jr., Sandra, Jimmy, and Charlotte. But that's not what Sheppard meant. Shep wanted him to give up his stable, forget the colts and the race horses, forget the track-to-track travel, forget the bright lights and the excitement, and actually *run the Farms*. Settle down and supervise the day-to-day, the month-to-month, the year-to-year operation. Order the hay and straw, so to speak.

Sheppard, at fifty-six years, was frantically busy as always. He was still president of the USTA, would be for three more years. He was seeing the Trotting Association through its greatest period of adjustment, through changes in bylaws, rules, and representation, and he had guided it to court victories over the federal government and New York State, who had challenged the association's right to rule over the Standardbred sport.

Clinton N. Myers had died on July 23 at the age of seventy-eight, and that had left Shep as the sole proprietor of the Hanover Shoe Farms, as well as the lone eagle at the top of The Hanover Shoe, Inc., and Sheppard & Myers, Inc. Of course, Mr. Myers hadn't been that active in recent years, but he was chairman of the board of both companies, and Lawrence had counted on him for advice and support.

As a past president, Sheppard was still active in the affairs of the

National Shoe Manufacturers Association, played a large role in the National Shoe Foundation for Disabled Feet, and kept his hand in a bevy of local businesses, institutions, boards, and organizations—the First National Bank, the *Evening Sun*, the Municipal Water Works, the School Board, the General Hospital, the Republican Party, the L. B. Sheppard Foundation, and others.

John Simpson could appreciate the fact that Mr. Sheppard was anxious to free himself from some of that burden, and that the Shoe Farms seemed like a good place to start. The Farms were big business now, had topped $300,000 in sales in 1951 and $400,000 in 1953, and were entertaining some three hundred mares each season. Simpson knew that a full-time, working general manager, ready and willing to accept tons of responsibility, was what Sheppard needed. John Simpson did not want to be that man, however. Not at that stage of his life. Not at age thirty-four.

Simpson had enjoyed three reasonably good seasons while racing horses for the Sheppard family and a few outsiders, faithful patrons like Bill Strang, Archie Mudge, Cleo Young, K. D. Owen, and Leonard J. Buck.

He'd raced the veterans Tar Heel, Solicitor, Ford Hanover, Garrison Hanover, and Ferman Hanover during the period, and he'd developed some pretty fair stakes-winning youngsters like Duke of Lullwater, Fiesta Hanover, Scamper Home, Faber Hanover, Trustful Hanover, Lanier Hanover, Columbia Hanover, Doe Hanover, and Lark Hanover. But he'd been restricted to smaller stables, had far fewer drives, and could not come close to the $333,136 national earnings mark he'd established in 1951, the last year of his purely public stable.

Where he'd had 521 trips to post in 1951, the best he could manage during the three years with Hanover were 278, 241, and 364 drives. Where he had led the nation with 118 triumphs in '51, his totals had fallen off to fifty-one, thirty-two, and seventy-eight over the next three seasons. And his record-setting purse total during the peak year had shrunk to $185,148, $106,036, and $180,907 over the next three.

Simpson longed to return to the days of a sixty-five-horse barn, a winter training unit that would yield some forty or fifty horses to campaign across the country. Instead, Lawrence Sheppard was pressing him to cut his stable even further. Preferably, abolish it. Leave the training and driving to someone else. Concentrate on running the Farms.

Simpson decided to quit. In September of 1954 he sat down and wrote Sheppard a letter of resignation. He said he was resigning as general manager of the Hanover Shoe Farms; that he wanted to operate a public stable. He said nothing about quitting as the trainer-driver of the Hanover horses, as well as those owned by members of the Sheppard family, although he feared that Sheppard would strip him of those when

John Simpson grins at something shortly before taking a horse to post.

he received the letter. He wrote instead of telling Sheppard in person because he knew the Hanover president would try to talk him out of it. And failing that, Shep would predictably blow his top and withdraw the horses for sure. Simpson knew that a meeting was inevitable, but hoped the interim might help his cause. He made himself scarce for a few days.

When the two did finally meet, Sheppard drew himself up to his full

five feet, eight inches, sort of rocked back on his heels, and said pregnantly, "I got your letter."

"Uh, huh," Simpson offered carefully.

"I was pretty angry when I read it."

"I thought you might be."

"But I've thought it over. . . ."

Simpson started breathing again.

". . . And I've come to the conclusion that I don't really blame you. You're a young man, you love working with the colts, you love racing horses. I tried to put myself in your shoes, tried to figure what I'd do if I were thirty-four years old, a great man with colts, and maybe the best driver in the country. . . . Hell, I'd do exactly what you're asking to do. I'd like nothing better than to pull off the coat and tie and spend all my time around the race track. . . ."

Simpson was smiling now.

"But I'll tell you, Johnny. There's a day coming when you'll have to make a decision if you want to see this farm continue. I'm warning you right now."

"Yes, sir," said the trainer.

"Not too many years in the future. . . ."

"Yes, sir."

"You think about that."

"Surely will."

"All right."

While Sheppard hadn't mentioned it, Simpson knew he was keeping the Hanover and Sheppard family horses.

The Simpsons—John, Helen, and the four youngsters—were not all that sorry to leave the community of Hanover and head back to the Orlando area, where most of their friends were. The southeastern corner of Pennsylvania was pretty, the farms were huge and attractive. But the Pennsylvania Dutch were hard to get to know, it took a long time to be accepted, and the weather never could match that of Central Florida.

The three-year stint at the Farms had provided the Simpson children with their first real brush with Lawrence Sheppard, and only Johnny, Jr., a carrot-topped preteen at the time, was old enough to really remember the period. "Being a kid of eight or nine at the time, I wasn't all that impressed with him," young John recalled. "He was short, he seemed rough and gruff, but I sensed that he had a heart like a kid. He took me swimming and stuff like that, and he took me around with him. That was my first impression of him, and I never got up tight around him."

Jimmy Simpson's early associations with Sheppard would come years later. Jim would remember him as a "towering, domineering, almost mystical man, bigger than life." He was "the closest man to a genius that I

ever knew, a man who could discuss any subject with a keen, analytical mind," Jimmy added. "As a kid, I was afraid of him. I was always afraid I was going to say or do the wrong thing."

Sheppard would always exhibit a great fondness for the Simpson children, all four of them. And when they were old enough to understand him better, to look beneath the grouchy veneer, they would reciprocate.

The senior Simpson assembled a sixty-horse stable at Ben White

Simpson in cold-weather driving garb. Harness racing is not always a summer sport.

Raceway between the 1954 and 1955 seasons. It provided him with eighty-five victories and $264,393 in purses, sending him right back up among the national leaders in both categories. And it served as a mere prelude to the '56 campaign.

His 1956 contingent included an awesome two-year-old pacer called Torpid, a fleet freshman trotter called Hickory Smoke, a three-year-old full-brother to Adios Harry known as Noble Adios, and a sizzling sophomore trotter named Add Hanover. Simpson had about all the Grand Circuit bases covered.

Torpid, a Knight Dream-Torresdale colt, was owned by Max Hochberg's Sherwood Farm of Irvington, New Jersey. Hochberg was a Johnny-come-lately to the harness sport, a man of modest means who began to frequent Roosevelt Raceway after the war and decided that racing would not be all that difficult to crack. He bought Torrid, Torpid's full-brother, at auction in 1951, then went to owners Percy and Jerry Gray and bought the colt's dam, Torresdale, in a private transaction. He sent Torresdale back to Knight Dream, and Torpid, foaled in 1954, was one result of that union.

Owner Max Hochberg, trainer-driver John Simpson, and phenomenal pacer Torpid.

Torpid was not all that impressive as a yearling, according to *Hoof Beats*. "Brought into the world wearing a pair of unsightly curbs, Torpid represents a tremendous training accomplishment on the part of his gifted young conditioner, Johnny Simpson, who nursed him along slowly in the spring and then, when ready, unleashed him against the bearcats at Roosevelt," the magazine said.

Torpid not only met the bearcats, but defeated them. All season long. He won seventeen of nineteen heats, earned $73,376 on the season, and paced the Roosevelt track in 2:02.3 early in the year to set a world mark for freshman pacers over a half-mile track. On October 1, 1956, he paced Lexington's mile track in 1:59.3 in the first heat, then returned to tour it in 1:58 in the second. He swept the boards of most records for two-year-olds with his effort and was voted Freshman Pacer of the Year, scoring over Frank Ervin's fancy filly Good Counsel, 2, 1:58.1.

Hickory Smoke, the freshman trotter, had come to Simpson late in the '56 season, mainly because little had changed between him and Lawrence

Bowman A. Brown, Sr. (left) and Lawrence Sheppard—co-founders of the Standardbred Horse Sales Co.

Sheppard. Despite the fact that Simpson had quit as Hanover's general manager, he was still closely allied with the Shoe Farms and Sheppard, was still advising the Hanover president on broodmares to acquire, on race horses to buy.

Hickory Smoke, a Titan Hanover-Misty Hanover son, was bred and owned by Bowman A. Brown, Sr., a publisher of *Harness Horse* magazine and general manager of Sheppard's Standardbred Horse Sales Company. The colt was in Billy Haughton's stable, the largest harness racing aggregation in the world, and was making breaks. Simpson felt Hickory Smoke might be the best two-year-old around, but was concerned that the harried Haughton might not have the time to spare to straighten out the erring colt. He told Sheppard as much, but Sheppard took no action.

Weeks later Simpson was in Sheppard's office and reintroduced the subject. "I think he's got a Titan Hanover mouth," the trainer said. "You take the least little hold on him and he shakes his head and makes a break. I think I can strighten him out, and I know he's got a world of speed. I should think you'd be interested in buying him."

"Aw, I forgot," the Hanover president commented. "You want that damn colt?"

"I sure do."

"What's he worth?"

"I don't know for sure, but I'd think $30,000 or $35,000."

"I'll call Bowman Brown," Sheppard said, reaching for the phone. Minutes later he was chatting with Hickory Smoke's owner.

"I got a damn fool horse trainer sitting here in the office with me who likes that Hickory Smoke colt of yours. Would you sell him?"

Brown said he might. What would Sheppard give for him?

"No, I won't put a price on any man's horse," Sheppard protested. "You tell me what you want and I'll tell you whether I want him."

The publisher gave him a figure, and Sheppard said, "All right, we'll take him. I'll mail you a check and you tell Billy to turn him over to Johnny."

At that moment Archie Mudge came bursting through the door. "What's he doing?" he directed at Simpson.

"I'm buying a colt," Sheppard said, fielding the question.

"I'm in," Mudge insisted.

"All right, you're in," the Hanover chief agreed. "You got half of him."

"Who is he?" Mudge asked.

"Colt called Hickory Smoke," Sheppard said, hanging up the phone.

"What'd you have to give for him?" Simpson queried.

"Fifteen thousand."

"My God, you stole him!" the trainer gasped.

Hickory Smoke provided another trophy for the Hanover-Sheppard-Simpson combination in 1957. *Courtesy Edward McGarty.*

And he had. Under Simpson's tutelage, the youngster finished out the season in a blaze of glory and victories, winning his last seven heats on the year, finishing the campaign with earnings of $35,183, and being crowned as Two-Year-Old Trotter of the Year.

That year—and in 1957, too, when Hickory Smoke won the Hambletonian—Lawrence Sheppard, without being asked, sent checks to Bowman Brown. Sheppard felt he owed Brown a percentage of Smoke's earnings because he agreed with Simpson that they had "stolen the colt." But had they paid the $30,000 or $35,000 for him which Simpson had anticipated, it still would have been a case of innocent grand larceny.

John Simpson, heading into the last half of the 1956 racing season, had never won a Little Brown Jug, the sport's most highly regarded stakes event for pacers. Noble Adios changed all that on September 20.

Paul Wixom, a tall, white-haired auto dealer from Chicago, owned Noble Adios, had paid a sale-topping $34,000 for the colt at the Harrisburg auction in 1954. He was by Adios, out of Helen Win, but was

not built as ruggedly as his brother Adios Harry, who had made big headlines in 1954 and would create even larger ones in 1955, cutting the world pacing record to 1:55 at Vernon Downs. Many racing students scoffed at Wixom's purchase, pointing out that expensive full-brothers to world champions had a way and a history of disappointing their owners.

In the beginning, the doubters appeared to be right. As a freshman, Noble Adios won only three heats, earned only $8,651. But Simpson was pretty sure he had a good one in Noble, and Wixom was convinced of it. Coming back as a three-year-old, the colt scored three quick victories at Roosevelt, won an overnight at Yonkers, then knocked off the $71,570 Cane Futurity at Yonkers, pacing the mile and sixteenth in 2:09.2.

Despite his early success, Noble Adios was not the favorite when ten colts lined up on a sunny-but-cold afternoon at the Delaware, Ohio, Fairground. Bachelor Hanover, piloted by Bill Haughton, was the Little Brown Jug choice, but wore himself out trying to slip past Simpson's entry. Noble Adios won the first heat in 2:01, then returned to tour the half-mile oval in 2:00.4, a national season's mark. The $52,666 Little Brown Jug, together with its homely but homey trophy, belonged to Noble Adios, Paul Wixom, and John Simpson.

A month later, he took a time trial record of 1:59.1 at Lexington, and completed the season with a slate that read eight wins and $85,112 in racing spoils. His record was good enough to get him elected Three-Year-Old Pacer of the Year, the third of the Simpson-handled horses to capture divisional honors in 1956.

Add Hanover, owned by lucky Archie Mudge, was nearly the fourth. Add Hanover trailed Nimble Colby and The Intruder in the race for three-year-old trotting honors, but he did walk off with five major stakes, including the $77,170 Yonkers Futurity. The Futurity was Simpson's richest triumph to date, exceeding by $6,000 the Cane Pace purse he had won a week earlier.

When Yonkers Raceway placed a full page advertisement in the horse magazines to salute the winners of its ten most important races of the season, Simpson's name appeared as the trainer-driver of five of them.

Also handling such trotting and pacing stars as Nyland Hanover (Cleo Young, the owner), Rhonda Hanover (Mudge and Charlotte Sheppard), Rick Hanover (Mudge), Elton Hanover (also Mudge), Adios Paul (Wixom), Quick Pick Up (the A.B.C. Freight Forwarding Corporation), and Medal Scotch (Wixom), Simpson soared to 115 victories and $455,301 in 1956. He ranked second nationally in the money-won derby, trailing only Billy Haughton, who had fielded a much larger stable in winning the crown.

The Touchdown Club of Columbus, Ohio, recognized Simpson's achievements and named him its Harness Horseman of the Year. During

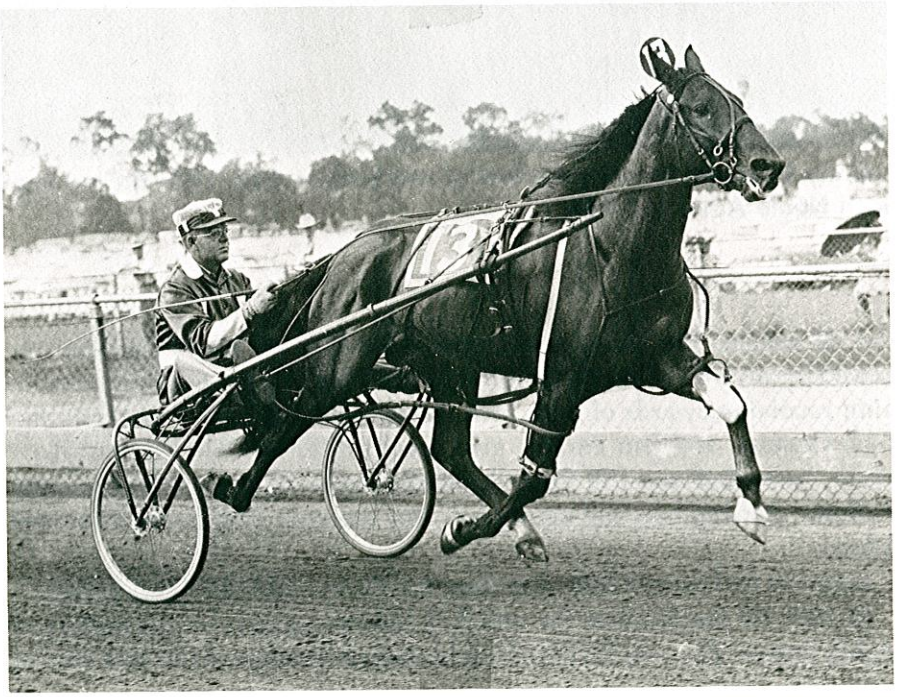
Johnny Simpson, Sr. wins the first of two back-to-back Little Brown Jugs with Noble Adios in 1956.

the off-season, the thirty-seven-year-old native of South Carolina received his award at a lavish banquet in the Ohio capital. On the dais with him, receiving awards of their own, were football greats Paul Hornung, Rich Casares, and Jim Parker, grid coaches Jim Lee Howell and Doyt Perry, basketball star Bill Russell, middleweight boxing champion Gene Fullmer, Yankee baseball manager Casey Stengel, and sportscaster Mel Allen.

Simpson had come a long way from the livery stable back in Chester.

In 1957 he was back on the attack in the racing wars with a battery of eighty horses. He won his first Hambletonian Stake (and the first held at

Sampling a Roosevelt Raceway buffet in 1956 are (from left) Del Miller, Frank Safford, George Morton Levy, John Simpson, and Joe Dowling.



Torpid paces easily at Indianapolis Fairground in 1956.

Du Quoin, Illinois, with Hickory Smoke, won his second straight Little Brown Jug with Torpid, won a flock of two-year-old pacing stakes with Painter, and cleaned house in the freshman pacing filly division with a young miss called Traffic Lady.

His decision in the $111,126 Hambletonian was hailed as a master stroke, since Hickory Smoke was eligible to practically nothing but the Hambo in 1957, and Simpson had to keep him sharp with sparse starts, generally against older rivals. He pointed him toward the fabled stake and grabbed it with heat victories in 2:01 and 2:00.1 and a race-off triumph over Ralph Baldwin's tomboy filly Hoot Song in 2:08.4.

His Brown Jug win behind Torpid was considerably easier, although the super sidewheeler was suffering from a virus on Jug Day. Torpid was undefeated that season until the flu caught up with him in earnest in late October and he bowed to Del Miller's Meadow Lands in the first heat of the Messenger Stake. With blood streaming from his nostrils after the first dash, Simpson scratched from the second.

A mysterious man known as "The Count," who had been following the Torpid-Simpson duo from track to track, pulling as much as $20,000 from a paper sack to bet on them, presumably called it a season and went home when the pacer bowed in the Messenger.

The scorecard for Simpson in 1957: 119 wins, ranking him sixth in the nation; a Universal Drivers Rating System average of .419, tops in the country; and racing earnings of $483,164, second best across the land. He had led the Grand Circuit drivers in both heats-won and money-earned, had set three world records, had won the driving championship at Laurel Raceway, and had added eleven more two-minute miles to his growing collection.

It seemed like old times again, only better.

12

HEADED FOR THE TOP

THE HANOVER SHOE FARMS and the mercurial, craggy-faced sportsman who ran them were hardly standing still while John Simpson was touring the country with his glittering stable, collecting cash and kudos in wholesale lots.

Lawrence Sheppard, with Simpson at his side whenever he could shake free of his busy barn, was constantly on the prowl for promising stallions, prospective broodmares, talented people, and rich, new acres for the Hanover spread. He was hunting anything and anybody who might help to keep Hanover at the summit of the breeding industry.

In August of 1955 he purchased the magnificent Adios, the fifteen-year-old stallion who had brought great prosperity to Delvin Miller's Meadow Lands Farm near Washington, Pennsylvania. John Simpson had laid the groundwork for the transaction some three years earlier.

Sheppard and Simpson were watching the Lexington Red Mile racing from a box in the grandstand when Simpson suggested that Hanover buy Adios. "Will Delvin sell him?" Sheppard asked.

"He might if the price was right," Simpson answered.

"And what's the price likely to be?"

"Maybe $200,000."

"That's a lot of money," Sheppard gasped.

Alvin Weil, the late president of Roosevelt Raceway, presents the HTA trophy to Lawrence Sheppard after Elma was named four-year-old trotting mare of 1964. *Courtesy John Lincoln.*

"Adios is a lot of horse," his assistant said flatly.
"Well, you want him, you go down and talk to Delvin."

Simpson started to leave, then hesitated. "If I have to go to $250,000, will it be all right?"

Sheppard shoved the hat back on his head, stared at Simpson a moment, then nodded gravely.

Miller had finished racing and was heading back to his barn when Simpson caught up with him. After a bit of small talk, Simpson asked the famed Miller, "What'll you take for Adios?"

"Hell, Johnny, I don't want to sell Adios," Miller responded firmly. "I'd rather give up my right arm than sell that horse. Mary Lib and I love him. See him every day. We just couldn't part with him."

"Not for $200,000?"

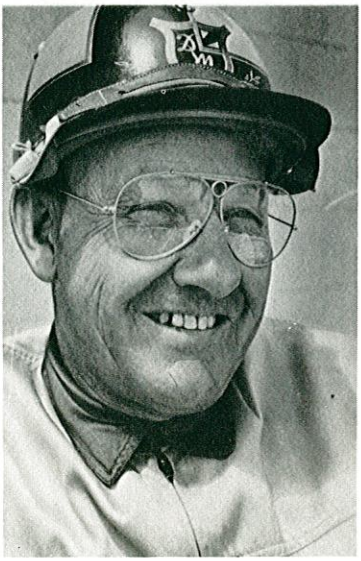
"No, Johnny. Not for $200,000."

"Would you take $250,000?"

"No," Miller insisted. "But I'll tell you what I will do," the master of Meadow Lands added. "If I ever do decide to sell him, I'll give Hanover first refusal rights."

"Fair enough," said Simpson.

Three years later—in 1955—Simpson and Miller were chatting at the Springfield, Illinois, Fairground when Miller happened to mention that a syndicate from Kentucky had offered $500,000 for Adios, but wanted to pay for him over a period of several years. "And if the horse should die



Delvin Miller, who sold Adios to the Hanover Shoe Farms for a record $500,000.

before they complete the payment, they don't have to pay any more on him. What do you think of a deal like that?"

"Now wait just a minute there, Delvin," Simpson interrupted. "Don't you remember that you gave the Hanover Shoe Farms first refusal rights on Adios if you ever decided to sell him?"

"By God, Johnny, you're right," an embarrassed Miller admitted. "I do remember that."

"And the price is $500,000."

"That was the offer," Delvin confirmed.

"You going back to your farm this weekend?"

"I plan to," Miller said.

"Could you swing over to Hanover if Mr. Sheppard wants to talk business?"

"Sure."

"I may be calling you," Simpson said. "That is, I hope I'll be calling you."

"Fine."

At the first possible moment, Simpson was on the phone to Lawrence Sheppard, telling him that Delvin would part with Adios for a half-million dollars. Although the price had climbed substantially in the three years, Sheppard was interested. "Let's get him," said the master of the Hanover Shoe Farms.

Miller was invited over to Hanover and the transaction was quickly consummated. Sheppard paid $500,000 for the stallion. Then he turned around and sold a third interest in the horse back to Miller and another third to Max C. Hempt, a wealthy contractor and harness horse owner-breeder-amateur driver out of Mechanicsburg, Pennsylvania.

The $500,000 paid for Adios was the richest transaction involving a single horse in Standardbred history up to that time. It may well have been the greatest bargain in racing annals as well.

Adios was a foal of 1940, a son of Hal Dale-Adioo Volo. He was bred by Leo C. McNamara, Sr.'s Two Gaits Farm in Indiana and was sold as a yearling for $2,000. While he was not a large horse, he was a fast, tough campaigner, racing out of the stable of Rupert (Rupe) Parker until Parker's death in 1944, then out of the barn of Frank Ervin.

Adios' duels with King's Counsel, 1:58, were the talk of the sport in the early 1940s. The two rivals met no less than sixty-seven times over a five-year period, with the King proving triumphant on thirty-four occasions and Adios the rest. In all, Adios raced eighty-seven lifetime heats, gaining forty-three wins, thirty seconds, and ten thirds. He earned only $33,329 in those years of paltry purses, but took a time trial mark of 1:57½. Many horsemen felt he might have gone even faster had a habit of sulking on occasion not hampered him.

Two harness racing "greats"—Adios and Delvin Miller. Miller sold Adios to the Hanover Shoe Farms for $500,000, then bought a third of him back. *Courtesy USTA.*

He was racing in California when he closed his career in 1946, and stood two seasons of stallion service out there before his two West Coast owners grew tired of the breeding business and decided to sell him. Del Miller, heeding the advice of John Simpson's early teacher, Doc Parshall, decided to buy him. Parshall had raced King's Counsel against Adios and

was sure the Hal Dale son would make an excellent sire. Miller had to beg and borrow most of the cash to land him, but finally won the horse on his high bid of $21,000. (Miller actually thought he was bidding $20,100, and almost rejected the horse over the difference.)

Adios was installed at Miller's farm, and over the next few years produced a steady stream of sizzling pacers like Queen's Adios, 1:58.1; Adios Boy, 1:58.3; Amortizor, 1:59.1; Meadow Pace, 1:59.3; Meadow Gold, 1:59.4; Adios Harry, 1:55 (the world record holder for fifteen years); Shadow Wave, 1:56.3; Adios H, T1:57.4; Meadow Ace, 1:59; Meadow Lands, 1:59.2 (the pacer who would end Torpid's long win skein in 1957); and Adios Butler, T1:54.3.

When Hanover bought into Adios in 1955, Sheppard insisted that the stallion remain at Meadow Lands. Miller and his wife Mary Lib loved the horse, had constructed his paddock so that they could keep a constant eye on him from the house when he was exercising. "We'll ship our mares to him," Shep told them.

With one-third of Adios belonging to Hanover, and with Tar Heel already at stud, the Shoe Farms boasted the greatest one-two punch in the breeding of pacing horses, although a number of years would have to pass before the true magnitude of the tandem would truly be known. And when the blood of the two sires was merged—Adios to a Tar Heel daughter or vice versa—the pacing gait would never be quite the same. The record books would have to be revised again and again as products of the "golden cross" rolled off the assembly line.

Adios, until his death in 1965, would sire 478 pacers and twenty-two trotters. Seventy-eight of his pacing offspring would crack two minutes, 322 would beat 2:05. One of his trotting get would take a two-minute record, while six would shade 2:05. A total of 137 of his sons would go on to stallion careers of their own, some of them with spectacular success. His daughters, through 1974, would produce more than one thousand pacers, and over one hundred of them would break two minutes, nearly six hundred of them 2:05. And the list was bound to grow, since many of the daughters were still relatively young mares with years of productivity in front of them.

From his earliest days at Miller's farm to the time he bred his last mare there, his stud fee rose from $300 to $15,000. Several of his sons and daughters would bring more than $100,000 at auction, breaking records as they marched through the sales ring. The rugged yearling prices would be warranted. Through 1974 his offspring would earn twenty million dollars over the race tracks of the world. His grandchildren would pick up millions more, with the final results not due for many years.

When Adios died, countless writers marked his passing with glowing eulogies. None said it better than Jim Harrison in the August, 1965, edition of *Hoof Beats*:

"Those of us who lived in his time lived in the presence of greatness for, at the mille-second of his conception, nature had contrived to reproduce in this animal the ultimate in prepotency.

"I firmly believe that Adios was the greatest procreative animal that ever lived. I believe him to have been not only the best harness horse sire of all time but superior in any and every way to any running horse stallion as well as to any bull, boar, ram, stag or any other male of the animal kingdom."

When Adios joined the team in 1955, Hanover already possessed the trotting stallion of the future, although Lawrence Sheppard, proving that he was not necessarily infallible, came close to selling him before the horse had even commenced his stud career. The trotter's name was Star's Pride, and the squire of Hanover co-owned him with E. Roland Harriman, the famed New York State philanthropist and leading citizen of the Standardbred world from the days of Dan Patch to the present.

Star's Pride, by Worthy Boy and out of Stardrift, was bred by Henry E. Warwick of Westfield, Indiana, and purchased by Harriman, who then invited Sheppard to share his ownership. Harry E. Pownall, Sr., the Brooklyn-born trainer who handled Harriman's Arden Homestead Stable's horses after the death of Billy Dickerson, brought the colt out in 1949, giving him a two-year-old record of 2:06.2.

The youngster was one of the top trotters in the land in 1950, one of the favorites to capture the $75,209 Hambletonian Stake at Goshen. Harriman had another Hambletonian hopeful that year, Florican, and Pownall chose to steer him in the sport's most illustrious contest. Lawrence Sheppard toyed with the idea of driving Star's Pride himself, but finally turned the reins over to John Simpson. The colt went a pair of fine trips, but could not catch the Hayes Fair Acres' Lusty Song, driven by Del Miller, and had to settle for second money. Florican and Pownall finished fourth in the summary.

It was about this time that Jim Harrison, a member of the USTA's publicity staff in those days, was in Pownall's office at Historic Track, scene of the Hambletonian, and overheard an interesting telephone conversation.

"I heard Harry say, 'Well, they've offered $60,000,' " Harrison reported. "Then I heard him comment, 'Aw, I don't believe they'd go to $75,000, but I'll ask them.'

"When Harry got off the phone, he turned to me and said, 'Now, Jim, you haven't heard that.' 'I don't know what you're talking about,' I told him. 'Well, Castleton wants to buy Star's Pride and they'll give $60,000. But Shep says if they offered $60,000, they'll go to $75,000. And if they go to $75,000, I'm supposed to sell him.' "

But Castleton Farm, the showcase breeding headquarters outside of

L. B. Sheppard warms up Star's Pride before a contest at Goshen in 1949. Star's Pride is doubtless Standardbred racing's most illustrious trotting sire.

Lexington, Kentucky, and Hanover's chief rival for dozens of years, presumably would not raise the ante to secure the son of its own magnificent trotting stallion, Worthy Boy.

Star's Pride—or at least half of him—remained in Sheppard's hands and the horse wound up at Hanover.

Harrison was also present years later when John Simpson phoned Sheppard from New York City to tell him some foreigners were interested in the stallion. Did Sheppard have a price on him? "Yep," said Sheppard, "the price is $250,000." But nothing ever came of it.

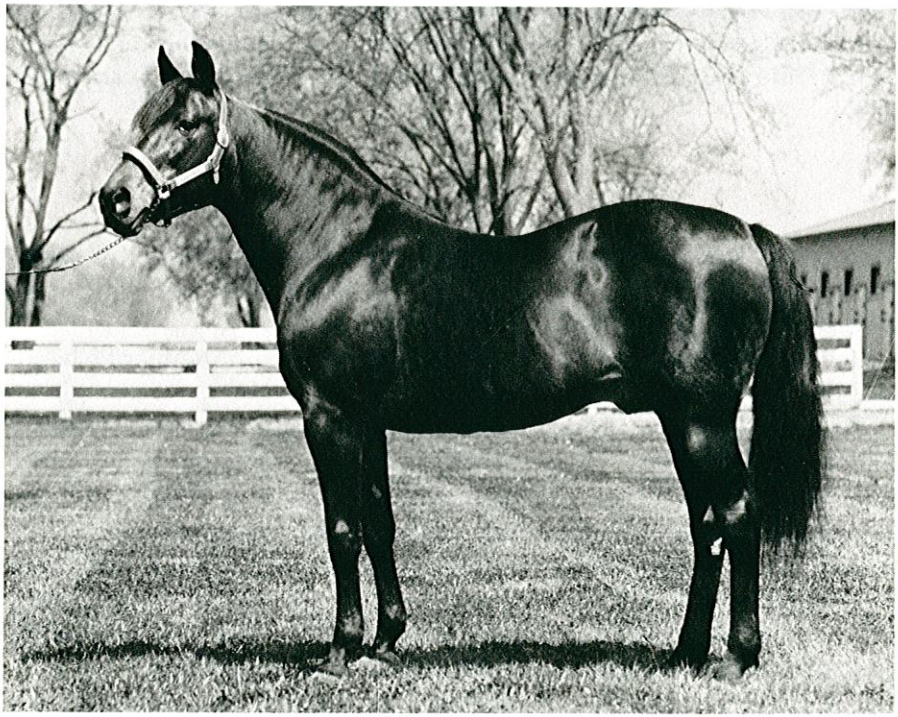
Star's Pride retired from the track in September 1952, shortly after Pownall gave him a 1:57.1 racing record at Du Quoin, Illinois. It was the fastest mile ever trotted by a stallion at that time, and remained in the record books for a decade until the advent of Speedy Scot.

The Hanover Shoe Farms eventually gained sole ownership of Star's Pride, but not before Lawrence Sheppard became embroiled in the kind

of colorful, complicated, and controversial situation that always seemed to swirl around him.

It started innocently enough in 1959, when Sheppard sought to purchase Roland Harriman's fifty percent share of the trotting stallion. Harriman was agreeable, and terms of the deal were soon worked out. Hanover would pay Harriman $100,000, plus it would grant him four free services to Star's Pride for five years running, then two free services for the succeeding five years. At the conclusion of ten years, Harriman would also have the right to a pair of services each year as long as the horse remained at stud, but these would be paid on the basis of his advertised stud fee at the time.

It was a trifle complicated, but not all that bad until Harriman and Sheppard introduced a new wrinkle. Harriman would contribute his share of the stallion to the New York Chapter of the American Red Cross (he was president of the American Red Cross at the time), while Sheppard would donate one-third of his share of Star's Pride to the School of Veterinary Medicine at the University of Pennsylvania.



Star's Pride. *Courtesy Winants Bros.*

The Red Cross readily accepted Harriman's gift and, since it had no intention of plunging into Standardbred breeding, just as quickly accepted the Hanover Shoe Farms' $100,000 check for its large chunk of the stallion. The service fees mentioned in Sheppard's earlier discussion with Harriman were still guaranteed to Mr. Harriman. The fees were valued at $50,000. Coupled with the $100,000 paid the Red Cross, half the horse was now worth $150,000, the entire horse $300,000.

The Pennsylvania Vet School was a little more cautious about accepting its share of Star's Pride, but Dean Mark Allam finally informed Sheppard that its lawyers and financial advisors had cleared the transaction. Sheppard then donated the sixth-interest, with the Shoe Farms immediately purchasing it from the University for $50,000.

Up to this point, the Hanover Shoe Farms had paid $150,000 for a half, or three-sixths of Star's Pride. Another sixth interest in the horse was involved in the service fees owed Harriman, and Lawrence Sheppard still held two-sixths or $100,000 worth of the horse.

Then Charlotte Sheppard came to her husband with a shocking and melancholy story. The Sisters of St. Joseph in Philadelphia were faced with the forced closing of their St. Joseph's Academy in McSherrystown, right outside of Hanover. State fire safety officials had found code violations at the school, were threatening to padlock it unless the Sisters came up with some $50,000 worth of corrective improvements. The Sheppard's four children had all attended St. Joseph's. Could the family fail the school and the beloved people who ran it in their time of dire need?

Certainly not, said Lawrence Sheppard, donating one of his two remaining shares in Star's Pride, and putting the good Sisters in the horse breeding business before they could say "Saint Francis of Assisi." The Shoe Farms just as hastily removed the religious order from the industry, purchasing the share for $50,000.

Then Sheppard sold his final sixth interest to the Farms, and Hanover owned the stallion in his entirety, excluding the services owed Mr. Harriman.

The episode, however, was not over. Not by a longshot. When the Sheppards filed their joint federal income tax return for 1959, they claimed $50,000 charitable contribution deductions on each of Lawrence's gifts to the Pennsylvania Vet School and the Sisters of St. Joseph. But the Commissioner of Internal Revenue reared his authoritative head and disallowed both deductions in their entirely on the ground that they were not valid gifts.

Sheppard and Paul Spears, the man who traditionally prepared the Sheppards' return, decided to pay the additional tax assessed by the IRS, then sue for a refund. The suit dragged on for years, but when the U.S.

Court of Claims finally handed down a decision on June 10, 1966, it ruled in favor of the Sheppards. They not only received a refund of the additional tax they had paid, but interest on it as well.

Paul Spears, by now, was a seasoned veteran of Lawrence Sheppard's frequent skirmishes in the various courts of the land. It was Spears who did the groundwork and the legwork for Shep's fifteen-year battle with the United Shoe Machinery Corporation, a war that raged through the Federal District Courts in Scranton, Wilmington, New York, and Harrisburg, the Third Circuit Court of Appeals in Philadelphia, and the United States Supreme Court in Washington.

The Hanover Shoe, Inc., with Sheppard, Spears, and a battery of competent lawyers pressing its case, brought an antitrust suit against the Boston-based shoe machinery firm, charging that it had refused to sell to Hanover machinery necessary in the manufacture of welt shoes. Hanover sought damages, claiming it had cost the company far more to lease the machines than it would have, had they been available for purchase.

The lengthy suit, full of Hanover victories, disappointments, then ultimate victory, started in 1955 and ended in 1969, after Lawrence Sheppard's death. It closed with an out-of-court settlement of $6.1 million to The Hanover Shoe, Inc.

Spears was doing an excellent job for Sheppard at the shoe company, handling much of Shep's personal finances and financial records while also putting in grueling hours as a young executive moving up the corporate ladder. He was often in his office at one or two in the morning when Sheppard would stop by, bleary-eyed from driving or flying back from the harness races somewhere. "What the hell are you doing here at this hour?" he would demand of Spears, knowing full well what Spears was there for: catching up on work that Sheppard had given him.

With John Simpson's departure as general manager of the Shoe Farms, Sheppard looked around for a qualified young man to join Marvin Childs in running the burgeoning operation—a sort of Paul Spears in horseman's boots. He settled on Leo C. McNamara, Jr., who had thoroughly learned the breeding business at his father's busy Two Gaits Farm, where the mighty Hal Dale had stood.

McNamara, tall, rather handsome, with a rather quiet brand of humor, turned up at Hanover about the time that the Shoe Farms were shifting into high gear. Or maybe overdrive. They were easily the biggest and best in the business, and had been for many years. But still another corner was being turned. Titan Hanover, Dean Hanover, Knight Dream, Hoot Mon, and Nibble Hanover were still holding forth, commanding healthy stud fees and turning out youngsters who drew big money at the sales before going on to prove themselves at the races. And now the Farms were also offering the promising genes of such stallions as Adios, Tar Heel, Star's Pride, and Solicitor.

Hanover's yearlings had averaged better than $5,000 for the first time in 1955, a couple of months before McNamara arrived on the scene. In 1956, the Farms maintained that average, then earned a per-colt figure of $5,564 for the 115 babies they sent to Harrisburg in 1957.

It was not surprising at all that the Farms' products should be worth more in 1957. In that year horses sired by Hanover stallions won $91,479 of the Hambletonian's net purse of $108,903, and $68,000 of the Little Brown Jug's pot of $73,000. All heat winners in both classic races were Hanover-sired.

In 1958, the Farms sent the largest contingent of yearlings ever to the sale (129), and they drew the highest gross ($894,000) and average ($6,934) in Hanover's thirty-two-year history. It was a fair piece of business, but it did not entirely satisfy Lawrence Sheppard. While he wasn't scowling, neither was he smiling as he stepped down from the dais in the Harrisburg arena.

A year later, 125 fledging trotters and pacers gave the Farms their first million-dollar handle, attracting a total of $1,109,850 in bids. A slashing grin ripped across Shep's wrinkled face as someone whispered the figure to him. That was the milestone he'd been shooting for.

Leo McNamara was given much credit for the record-busting 1958 consignment. McNamara had huddled with Sheppard in Shep's downtown office and planned the matings that had resulted in such a high-priced batch of youngsters, including the $105,000 Dancer Hanover. He had supervised the actual breedings, and he had helped the venerable Marvin Childs in applying spit and polish to the colts and fillies as they were prepared for auction.

Shortly after the sale, however, he served notice that he was leaving Hanover. His father's expanded Standardbred nursery in Indiana needed him, and he felt duty-bound to answer the call. Eventually he would turn up as the vice-president and general manager of the Pine Hollow Stud Farm near Goshen, New York, a flashy new entry in the breeding farm derby that hoped to cash in on the newly established New York Sires Stakes program.

Sheppard was again in the market for a farm superintendent. He wasted no time, throwing out his hook and landing Harry Moss, a native of England, whose equine background was a mixed bag of hunters, jumpers, Thoroughbreds, and Standardbreds.

Moss had brought considerable experience and a soft British accent to the United States in 1947, accompanying a friend who was bringing a shipment of hunters and jumpers to sell in this country. Moss remained in the U. S. to train hunters and jumpers, then accompanied our equestrian team to the 1952 Olympics in Helsinki as stable manager. Back after that duty, he went to work for Cedar Grove Farm, a Thoroughbred breeding establishment in Media, Pennsylvania, and stayed with it until the farm

called it quits in 1952. In the meantime, he had met harness horseman Delvin Miller.

Moss rejoined the jumper circuit for a brief period, but the luster had worn off; he was bored and dissatisfied. One day he met Miller in Washington, Pennsylvania, and casually mentioned that he was disenchanted with the jumpers. Miller, a matchmaker along with all of his other roles in harness racing, put him in contact with Mr. and Mrs. Sherman Jenney, who ran the busy Walnut Hall Stud in Donerail, Kentucky.

Moss got the job as farm manager in 1953 and was still there in 1958 when Lawrence Baker Sheppard asked him to join him in a bit of bird shooting. Between blasts of their shotguns, Sheppard persuaded him to sign on with the Shoe Farms.

Moss arrived at Hanover on December 16. There he was reintroduced to another man whom Sheppard had recently lured to the Farms: Jim Harrison.

13

NEW FACES JOIN THE TEAM

JAMES C. HARRISON, tall, bulky, with a head of close-cropped steel-gray hair . . . native of Port Jervis, New York, and ex-sports editor of the nearby Middletown *Times-Herald* . . . public relations and publicity director of the U.S. Trotting Association . . . dedicated student of Standardbred breeding . . . nearly as outspoken as the man who hired him, Lawrence Sheppard.

Sheppard and Harrison were old friends, held a vast mutual respect for each other. Harrison, public relations chief of the USTA through all but a small fraction of Sheppard's reign as president of the body, had helped Shep wage all his great battles with George Monaghan and the New York State Harness Racing Commission, the federal government, and a variety of race tracks that resented the USTA's solid grip on the sport and wanted to weaken it. Together, they had seen national harness racing attendance climb from 6,500,000 in 1950 to 20,000,000 in 1957, national pari-mutuel handle soar from $205,000,000 to $615,000,000 over the same period, and the states' share of that handle fly from $11,700,000 to $42,700,000.

Though Harrison adamantly disclaimed it, he was an expert on breeding, and Sheppard often turned to him for counsel, just as he often sought the opinion of Charles W. Phellis, a noted owner, breeder, and man-about-racing throughout the first half of the twentieth century.

James C. Harrison.

Sheppard had given Harrison a valuable broodmare in appreciation of his efforts. And he had advised him against accepting a job as publicity director of Buffalo Raceway when Harrison had a shot at that position in 1950. "You can do better than that," Sheppard had said bluntly.

In 1957, at the height of his war with Monaghan and the New York Commission, Sheppard turned to Harrison one day and asked, "Don't you ever get tired of this USTA stuff? Why don't you come to work with me?"

"What would I do? What would my job be?" Harrison probed.

"Goddamn it, I can't think of a title for you; I've already got a farm

superintendent. But since you'd be working directly with me, why don't we call it 'assistant to the president?' "

"Sounds good," said Harrison, who then resigned from his USTA post and moved to Hanover in March of 1958.

While Sheppard had outlined no specific duties for Harrison other than a vague "You'll be helping me," the former USTA staffer was soon helping to administrate the Farms. He had a small nook of an office next to Sheppard's in the Hanover building downtown, and even smaller office quarters in the main stud barn out at the Farms. "What I had," said Harrison many years later, "was a desk in a stall."

Since the founding of the Farms in 1926, Sheppard had conducted all their business from The Hanover Shoe, Inc., headquarters at 118 Carlisle Street, some five miles away. "All the business was transacted downtown," Harrison related. "All the office girls were there. You called Hanover Shoe Farms and there was no answer."

It was a curious practice, extremely awkward and unhandy for personnel like Harrison and Leo McNamara, who had to spend a good deal of their time shuttling back and forth from downtown to the Farms. Harrison complained until Sheppard grudgingly permitted the addition of a small room onto the barn, which then became the assistant's office. Construction of an administration building—and transfer of the office staff to the Farms—was still a few years in the future.

The new assistant to the president, more or less with the blessings of Lawrence Sheppard, began to create his own duties, his own areas of responsibility. Sheppard eventually permitted him to handle the sensitive task of accepting or rejecting outside mares going to Hanover stallions, and Harrison had several chances to test his authority in that area.

"I found that Shep would back you up a thousand per cent," Jim reported. "Of course, you didn't go out of your way to create those situations; you didn't force him into a crisis all the while."

Harrison's sphere of responsibility did not stretch to selecting stallions for the Farms—that was the province of Sheppard and John Simpson—but he was granted a day in court in the realm of stallion management. It was Harrison who took it upon himself to cut down Tar Heel's activity in the stud barn.

"He was breeding about 120 times a year, and I cut him back to about 60 covers," he recollected. "Tar Heel was always a slow breeder and I thought all that activity was hurting him. I put him on a Monday-Wednesday-Friday basis, and they haven't strayed much from that pattern over the years."

While Tar Heel might have been difficult to breed at times, his semen was extraordinarily potent, making it unnecessary for the Farms to use him every day.

Neither Tar Heel nor Star's Pride had cut much of a swath in breeding circles by 1958, the year that Harrison came to Hanover. In fact, some of the top trainers in the land were critical of the pair, grumbling that they would not allow another son or daughter of the two in their barns.

"I was down at Rosecroft Raceway, standing there and talking with one of the biggest stars in the business," Harrison recalled. "It was 1958 and Star's Pride's second crop was racing. The trainer had a Star's Pride son who had problems, and he said to me, 'Boy, I don't ever want another of those Star's Prides, the way they hit their shins.'

"Then another big name in the sport who was standing nearby, came up and said, 'And while you're at it, you can go on back and geld that Tar Heel, too.' "

Harrison, who was prone to remind the two famous horsemen of their remarks in future years, had some trouble defending the two stallions at the time. The early Star's Prides were having problems in the beginning, just as their great sire had in his racing days. And Hanover's problem with Tar Heel was that it owned few pacing mares, an Adios or two, and a few Billy Directs. The rest were trotting mares that the Shoe Farms were breeding to pacers, a practice that was not designed to produce the ultimate in pacing horses. Sheppard, prodded by Harrison and Simpson, was already at work on the problem.

(The two famed horsemen who were down on Star's Pride and Tar Heel in their early years at stud later enhanced their reputations by handling dozens of sons and daughters of the two stallions.)

The call for Star's Pride's services was decidedly a muted one in his early seasons at Hanover, Harrison reported. "I can remember Roy Amos calling me in 1958, cancelling a booking to him. 'Let me out of that Star's Pride, I want to book to Kimberly Kid,' Amos said. Kimberly Kid was just entering service down at Walnut Hall Stud. Reluctantly, I released Roy and sent his mare to Kentucky.

"Then that August I was out in the Midwest and looked on as Emily's Pride won the Hambletonian at Du Quoin and Diller Hanover won the Horsemen's Futurity at Indianapolis. When I got back to the Farms, there was a stack of bookings *that* high. And from that moment on, Star's Pride's book was always full."

Harrison, Leo McNamara, and later Harry Moss all learned that you did not get Lawrence Sheppard to act promptly by way of a frontal assault, even if you were acting in his best interests. John Simpson already knew that you had to plant an idea in his head, let it simmer for two or three weeks, then let it emerge in a slightly altered form as though it were an original thought.

"You never could push Shep," Harrison agreed. "I remember a time when we had a chance to pick up a batch of about ten good mares—Pebble

Hanover, One Adios, Claim Lady, and Quick Pick Up among them—for $150,000. It was truly an attractive package and I was adamant about buying it. But he kept shaking his head. I gave him an awful time, but he wouldn't give in. Finally he left for Florida without doing anything about it, and I was really steaming. I guess he must have talked to John Simpson about it, because he called me a few days later. There were no preliminaries and the conversation was short and sweet. 'Boy,' he said, 'I bought those damn mares for you.' And he hung up."

Watching Sheppard in action, whether buying an expensive stallion, a cluster of worthy broodmares, or a piece of equipment, was always an intriguing treat for his new assistant.

"When I arrived at Hanover, most of the yearlings were put in individual stalls at night. This was foolish, they belonged out in the pasture all the time, with sheds for protection if they needed it. I began to nose around for some acreage and discovered that we could buy a nice farm a few miles away for $100,000. I told Shep about it, but all he'd say at the time was, 'I wouldn't buy anything out there.'

"About three weeks later, however, he had a change of heart and suggested that he, Clyde Sterner, and I go out and look the place over. When he got there, he decided he liked it. 'What did you say the price was?' he asked me. 'A hundred thousand,' I told him. He said, 'Well, I'm going to show you boys how you buy a farm, how you beat a tough Dutchman.' With that, he headed for the farmer's door.

"He was back in about ten minutes and we drove off. I said, 'Did you buy it?' He said, 'Yeah, I bought it.' I said, 'Did you negotiate with him?' He said, 'Yeah, I negotiated with him.' I said, 'What did you have to give for it?' He said, 'Goddamn it, never mind that; we'll get to that later.'

"Well, it turned out that he'd paid $100,000 for the farm."

Jim Harrison rapidly learned that Lawrence Sheppard would spare no expense to keep the Shoe Farms head and shoulders above the balance of the Standardbred breeding farms in the world. He also learned that Sheppard was not above making a mistake, and that he would own up to an error and try to correct it. Whatever it cost him.

Scotch Victor was one of the stallions who came to Hanover during Harrison's early days. The trotter had sired a good three-year-old called Double Scotch who had won a heat of the 1957 Kentucky Futurity, and Sheppard decided that Hanover had to have the stallion. He and Harrison went to Harrisburg one year and paid Saul Camp of the S.A. Camp Farms, Shafter, California, $150,000 for fifty percent of Scotch Victor. Also included in the deal was first refusal rights on trotter Scott Frost when he retired.

"We didn't have any specific formula, but you knew Scotch Victor wasn't going to make it," Harrison said later. "We kept him for five years

before Shep said get rid of him. I sold the whole horse for $20,000, and Shep told me I'd done a hell of a job."

Harrison, at the time, asked Sheppard if he had any bitter thoughts about the horse and the money he had lost on him. "Boy," said Sheppard, actually breaking into laughter, "when you make a mistake, admit it and bail out as fast as you can. In this case, just be thankful that we didn't get in any deeper than we did."

And as Harrison was about to leave, Sheppard stopped him and asked, "Do we have any mares by that horse? Because if we do, get rid of them, too."

While Scotch Victor might have made a decent enough stallion for some other breeder—he did go on to a stud career in Sweden, as a matter of fact—he did not measure up to the standards that Sheppard had set for Hanover. Solicitor and Newport Dream were among others that would leave the Shoe Farms for creditable breeding stands elsewhere. But they were not what Lawrence Sheppard and his successor, John Simpson, had in mind for their pace-setting establishment.

Caleb was still another of the sires that did not make it at Hanover—and he was bred by Charlotte S. DeVan with Hanover blood on both sides. Simpson trained the Hoot Mon son and he was simply a very nice trotter in the eyes of Lawrence Sheppard until he managed to take a 1:58.1 mark as a three-year-old in 1961. Then Sheppard's eyes got big.

"You know," Harrison informed Simpson, "the old man's red hot on Caleb and wants to put him into stud."

"You're kidding," Simpson said.

"No, I'm not. He's going to do it."

And Caleb did go into the Hanover stud barn. But not for long, although he did produce a number of sons and daughters that would have satisfied most breeders. Eventually the young stallion ended up in Sweden as Scotch Victor had before him. He simply wasn't Hanover quality.

Jim Harrison found early on that Sheppard would pay anything, absolutely anything, for a stallion that he felt Hanover had to have. A broodmare, however, was another matter. It might have been his feeling that a great stallion could turn out seventy-five or more colts and fillies each year, while a mare's total production could only be a lone son or daughter. And there were occasional years when a mare failed to catch or was given a vacation from motherhood, which meant she yielded nothing. Whatever it was, Sheppard never quite grew accustomed to paying horrendous prices for broodmares, although he would grit his teeth and do it if he felt it was necessary.

Harrison recalled a time in 1964 when a great Walnut Hall Stud broodmare band was sent to auction. Sheppard asked him what he

Sheppard and Simpson in conference at Standardbred Horse Sales Co. auction in Harrisburg.

thought the best of the band would sell for, and his aide hazarded a guess that a couple of them would top $50,000.

"I'll be damned if I'll ever pay $50,000 for a broodmare," he grumbled to Harrison and Simpson shortly before the sale got under way. His two assistants laughed and advised him to "go game." And he did, paying $78,000 for a mare called Duke's Dutchess. A month later he went to $92,000 to land the illustrious Sprite Rodney at the Eaton Ridge Farm dispersal. When Stanley Dancer, who knew of his aversion to paying large sums for broodmares, kidded him about the latter purchase, he told Dancer, "It's only money." And he actually managed to chuckle when he said it.

"He might quibble a little about the price of poker going up, but when they delt the cards he was always the man who kept saying, 'I raise,' " Harrison wrote in a moving eulogy to Sheppard at the time of the breeder's death.

When Harry Moss joined Hanover in late 1958, his knowledge of

Standardbred bloodlines was limited, so Jim Harrison drew the chore of sitting down with Sheppard and planning the matings for the season. It was a two-or three-day job, generally carried out in the board room of The Hanover Shoe. Shep sat at the head of the table, surrounded by a profusion of carefully sharpened pencils, with Harrison and Betty Nolt or Burnell Hesson at his right and left.

"We started with the mares whose names began with 'A' and worked down the list," Harrison reported. "He'd name a mare, I'd recommend a stallion, and he'd say 'okay.' After about fifty mares, however, Shep would get bored and want to fight. We'd have a terrible go-around, and he'd finally announce, 'That's enough for today.' We'd start the next day, run through fifty or sixty more, and the same thing would happen. Eventually, he'd tell me, 'The hell with it; you finish them.' I don't think we ever got down to the letter 'Z.' "

When the list was finally completed, it was sent on to John Simpson in Florida for his perusal and suggestions.

Harrison confirmed that while Sheppard knew Standardbred bloodlines like few other men in the world, he wasn't a very philosophical breeder. "He was a bread and butter breeder, a market breeder. 'Don't get too technical, don't talk about fancy crosses and all that stuff,' he'd say. 'Breed the Adioses to the Tar Heel mares and the Star's Prides to the Hoot Mon mares, and you'll get your money.' "

And, as John Simpson testified, the master of Hanover rarely, if ever, complained about the prices that his yearlings brought. "I never heard Mr. Sheppard cry, I never saw him peeved or disappointed after a sale," Harrison remarked. "Even when a whole consignment sold flatly, you got no reaction out of him. He wasn't that kind of man. He'd complain more, yell more, about a board being missing from a fence then he would over a colt that brought thousands less than he should have."

Both Harrison and Harry Moss found their employer to be unreasonable and testy at times, but both agreed his bristly nature was balanced by a heart that was big and magnanimous. "If you told him somebody's daughter wanted a doll for Christmas and the fellow couldn't afford to buy her one, he was liable to go get the girl a hundred dolls," Harrison said.

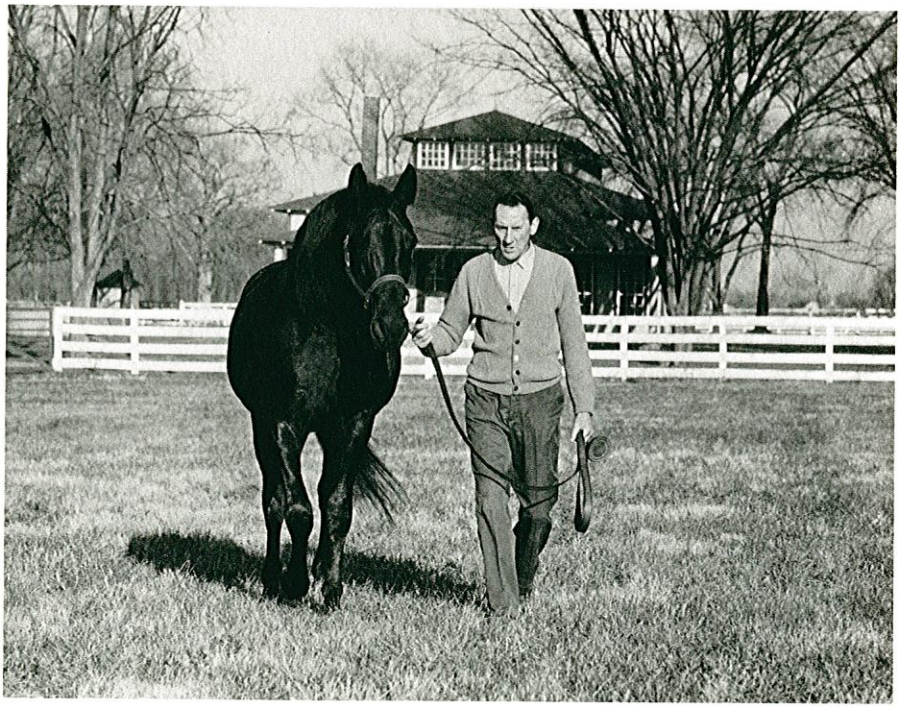
Actually, Harrison and Moss saw very little of Lawrence Sheppard at the Farms in the late 1950s and early 1960s. "He already had a dozen different things going, and then he got into the fight to bring harness racing to Pennsylvania," Moss pointed out.

"Saturday mornings were really about the only time that he came out," Harrison added. "He liked to sit around and reminisce, usually about Dean Hanover. I think I only saw him in the breeding shed once in all the years I was there."

By then, Sheppard had a thoroughly professional staff to run the racing

stable and the Farms: John Simpson, Johnny Thomas, and others on the Grand Circuit with the colts, never out of touch, ready to offer advice and counsel at any time; Jim Harrison, there at the Farms, booking the mares, plotting the matings; Harry Moss, overseeing the stallions, heading the breeding operation; Marvin Childs, preparing the yearlings, getting them sold; Burnell Hesson, running the office, handling the mountains of paperwork; Clyde Sterner, heading the maintenance team, keeping the buildings and the fences in repair; Dr. A. W. Patterson, Jr., keeping a careful eye on the health of every horse on the grounds; William H. Melhorn, serving as treasurer, making sure the ink remained black; Harry Hahn, T. S. (Dyke) Sentz and Clarence Mummert, efficient in their roles as foremen. . . .

And then, too, there was Kenny Hamm, one of the most faithful of the Hanover faithful. Hamm had been an employee of the Farms almost since their inception in 1926, moving through the ranks to become head stallioneer. It was Kenny Hamm who broke and led the yearlings to pony, handling almost every great youngster produced by Hanover through his long tenure. He was a master at his trade—a lost art at many breeding



Kenny Hamm, a Hanover staff member for more than forty years, leads a Hanover stallion to his paddock. *Courtesy Winants Bros.*

farms—and his patience with the young horses, his ability to communicate with them, gained him fame throughout the industry. Prospective patrons of Hanover yearlings sought and respected his opinion until death ended his forty-five-year career with the Farms in 1974.

And there were more veterans, men like Crawford (Jockey) Wagaman, who tended to all the newborn foals, handyman Albert Reese, and great grooms like Elmer Coppersmith and Ralph Russo.

The racing stable and the Farms were in good hands. Lawrence Sheppard could afford to spend some time on a dream that he had long held—bringing major league, pari-mutuel Standardbred racing to the state of Pennsylvania.

14
POLITICS AS USUAL

IT WASN'T that Lawrence Baker Sheppard was a complete novice in politics, a babe in the political arena.

He'd spent considerable time in Washington during World War II and had seen plenty of political maneuvering, even as the nation was prosecuting the war.

He'd been a lifelong Republican, a rather conservative member, and had been active in various compaigns, especially those of his friend Dwight David Eisenhower, who had purchased a handsome farm in nearby Gettysburg.

But Lawrence Sheppard was hardly prepared for the Pennsylvania brand of politics that he encountered when he accepted the chairmanship of the Keystone State's brand new three-man Harness Racing Commission in early 1960.

Sheppard and other influential Pennsylvania horsemen like Delvin Miller, Max C. Hempt, Hugh A. Grant, and others had been trying to bring big league, pari-mutuel racing to their state for years. But Pennsylvania's two hundred-year heritage of Protestant morality and Quaker severity had blocked the passage of a legalized betting law until December 6, 1959, when the State Legislature, influenced by Democratic backers from the big cities, managed to slip one through. The margin of passage was a single vote.

So pari-mutuel Standardbred racing was headed for Pennsylvania, and

L. B. Sheppard, seated next to Mamie Eisenhower, listens to his friend, the President. *Courtesy Jules Schick.*

David Lawrence, the state's governor at the time, wanted "as high-class a commission" as possible to run it, a unit that would "keep racing as above reproach as Ceasar's wife." Lawrence wanted, he said, "people who know something abour racing" sitting on the commission.

When the governor appointed Lawrence Sheppard to chair the commission, the news media of Pennsylvania lauded his selection. *Greater Philadelphia* magazine said of Sheppard, "There's a cracker-barrel honesty in him, a love of the outdoors and a no-sass mien that rips through phoniness and pretention like a crackling whip through cold wind. . . . If the governor had scoured the country he could not have come up with a more qualified man."

Governor Lawrence, a Democrat, then named two men of his own political persuasion as members of the commission, and the battle was on.

Sheppard scrapped with his two fellow commissioners, Martin J. Cusick and Edward Kane, but the bulk of his war was fought against a noncommission member, James P. Clark. Clark—"Big Jim," to his friends—was the head of the Democratic Party in Philadelphia, a man

who had spent thirty years in creating a powerful political organization in that city.

The first of Sheppard's many skirmishes with Clark had to do with licenses to operate harness tracks. The state's laws had called for a maximum of four harness tracks, four licenses to operate. There were far more applicants than there were potential licenses, and most of the

Shep—telling it like it was. *Courtesy Wide World Photo.*

hopefuls wanted to operate in the population-rich Philadelphia area.

Sheppard learned that he was no match for Clark and his machine, and soon found himself fighting a rearguard action at best. He attempted to extract a pledge from all licensees that their tracks would devote up to forty-five percent of the mutuel handle to race purses. Big purses, he argued, would attract top horses and horsemen and guarantee fine racing in Pennsylvania.

As he fired his salvos in the direction of Clark and his associates, Clark and his associates fired back. Lawrence Sheppard was a harness horse breeder, the largest in the world, and wouldn't bigger purses result in better prices for Standardbred horses? they asked. Wasn't there a little conflict of interest involved in Sheppard's actions?

The master of Hanover Shoe Farms vehemently denied the allegations, and managed to convince most of the news media that his cause was indeed noble, not self-serving. It was, however, one of the rare victories he scored in his more than three years as chairman of the commission. He had little or no voice in the eventual awarding of the licenses, and his

Lawrence Sheppard chats with William Scranton, then governor of Pennsylvania.

mission to secure pledges of forty-five percent of mutuel handle for purses went for naught.

On July 30, 1963, he submitted his resignation to Governor William Scranton, a Republican who had been elected in the interim. In November of that year, however, John H. B. Carter, a Philadelphia lawyer and noted sportsman, who had been appointed to succeed him as chairman, asked the Hanover president to serve as a special nonsalaried consultant to the commission. Sheppard's "long experience and high repute in the sport" were needed, Carter said.

Sheppard, with most of the mental wounds he had suffered in the political arena healed, mulled the offer for two weeks. Then, never able to turn his back on harness racing, he accepted.

Later, when such excellent racing plants as Liberty Bell Park and The Meadows were constructed, and when the caliber of Pennsylvania racing

Sheppard and Simpson receive a trophy from members of the Pennsylvania Harness Racing Commission after the victory by Ayres at The Meadows. Sheppard was the first chairman of the Pennsylvania Commission. *Courtesy E. Tom Beedle.*

turned out to be first class, Sheppard grudgingly admitted that things had not turned out so badly after all. He never ceased to be a booster of the Standardbred sport in the Keystone State, and even grew friendly with some of the gentlemen he had fought with during his term as commission chairman.

If the politicians of Pennsylvania were deflating his spirit during his span with the commission, the horses he was breeding and racing pumped it right back up again.

Dancer Hanover, of course, was the *big* colt in Hanover's 1958 yearling consignment, the youngster that helped the Farms to their first million-dollar handle. But included in the same class was another Adios son, Bullet Hanover, and Marvin Childs had persuaded Sheppard to make the colt a five-star special in his sales catalog. (Childs, according to Jim Harrison, looked upon Shep as just another customer and would unleash his sales pitch on him as though he were a stranger.)

Sheppard, watching the proceedings from his seat at the dais, was not about to bid on Bullet Hanover, but was hoping fervently that one of his charitable chums would be the successful bidder. He was relieved when the colt was knocked down to the venerable Thomas W. Murphy for $30,000. Murphy, tall as a tree, thin as a toothpick, was not only a friend of Sheppard's, but a patron of John Simpson's as well. In fact, Murphy had bought Bullet at Simpson's urging. Sheppard asked Simpson to sound Murphy out, to ask him if he might be willing to sell a portion of the colt.

Murphy obliged him in the spring of 1959, when John Simpson was rounding the colt into shape at his Orlando winter training quarters. He sold half the youngster to Sheppard.

Through the early stages of Bullet Hanover's education, railbirds were convinced that Murphy had gotten the better of the deal. Bullet was a rather typical Adios offspring—hardly a self-starter, a little on the lazy side, and needing a lot of work. The folks who sat on the fences at Ben White Raceway said he was awkward and sprawly-gaited and that his incredibly long stride would never do on the tight turns of a half-mile track. Bullet had but three boosters, trainer Simpson, sharp-eyed Delvin Miller, and caretaker Charlie Coleman, as he finished his Florida training and was vanned north.

Simpson, Miller, and Coleman had little more to go on than instinct and faith, and both of those intangibles were strained when Bullet went postward in his early schooling races. He won at Monticello Raceway, but did little at Yonkers. Then he paced a half in 59.3 (the mile in 2:04.4) in his final contest there to rekindle the embers in the hearts of his three supporters. And then he hit the Midwest as a member of Simpson's traveling Grand Circuit band.

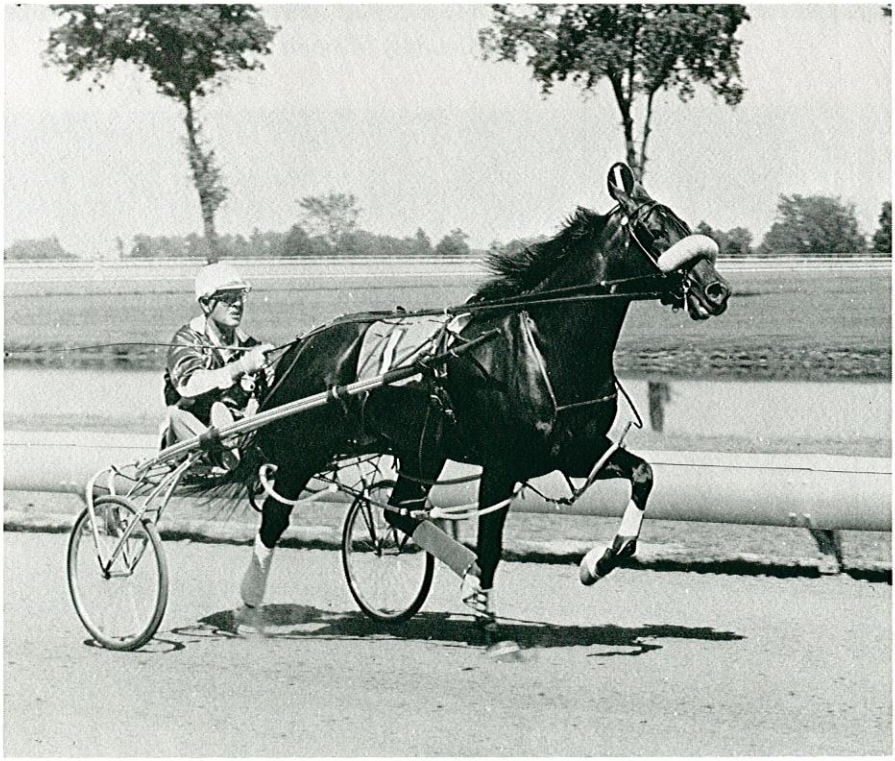
At Springfield, Illinois, in his first start over a mile track, he paced to a

Dancer Hanover. *Courtesy Winants Bros.*

Bullet Hanover. *Courtesy Winants Bros.*

1:59.1 victory, defeating the sensational little powerhouse Muncy Hanover, and setting a Little Pat stakes record in the process. The Geers Stake at Sedalia, Missouri, was next, and Bullet came roaring home in 1:59.1 to set another stakes mark. He lost a heat of the McMahon Memorial at Du Quoin, Illinois, to rival Muncy Hanover, but went on to win the race, his best trip in 2:01.4 And then it was on to Indianapolis, Indiana, and the most prestigious of the two-year-old events, the Fox.

If Bullet and Simpson were to win the richest Fox Stake to that time ($50,469), it wouldn't be through luck of the draw. The pair earned fourteenth position in a fourteen-horse field, trailing Muncy Hanover away from the gate. Bullet was seventh and parked out at the quarter-pole and fifth and still parked out at the half. Simpson tapped him a couple of times a few feet beyond the half-pole, and the Adios son spurted to the top and opened up some eight or ten lengths on his thirteen rivals. At the wire he had six lengths on his foes, and the timer read 1:57. He had set a world record for two-year-old pacers that would last thirteen years, surviving the onslaughts of such champions as Bret Hanover, Adios Vic,



Bullet Hanover—some kind of great pacer. *Courtesy Edward McGarty.*

Romeo Hanover, Meadow Skipper, and Overtrick. The stopwatches of several observers, including Simpson, had caught him in 1:56.3.

Larry Evans, the veteran U.S. Trotting Association writer, had barely seen an effort to match it. "Only twice in our years with *Hoof Beats* have we been at loss for words in reporting a race," wrote Evans. "The first time was last fall in Lexington when Merrie Annabelle trotted her two-minute mile. The second was at Indianapolis a few days ago when the Visu-matic timer flashed 1:57 as Bullet Hanover crossed the finish line. . .

"It's hard to recapture the magic of the moment, the electrifying tenseness of that first heat with ten thousand spectators forgetting to cheer as the bay colt battled the clock down the homestretch with Simpson swaying back and forth in the sulky to add momentum and flicking his whip lightly along the shafts. The rest of the field was far back—game but overmatched this time. . . ."

In the second heat, Simpson permitted Bullet to loaf around the big track in 1:59, but the timing was quick enough to allow the strapping sidewheeler to crack the freshman standard for a pair of heats.

Three weeks later he paced the Lexington Red Mile in 1:59.4 to earn his fifth victory in less than two minutes. No freshman pacer before him had accomplished that feat.

Despite his unparalleled success in 1959, Bullet's detractors were still rapping him in early 1960, claiming that his huge stride would prove his undoing over the twice-around ovals later in the season. Smaller horses like Muncy Hanover would eat him up over the half-milers, they asserted.

Simpson took it as long as he could. Finally, fairly seething, he announced flatly, "Bullet Hanover will pace a half-mile track faster than any horse ever paced before."

Bullet started the '60 season by bowing at Monticello Raceway, a half-miler, and the knockers had a field day, snickering and muttering, "I told you so." He suffered a loss over Vernon Downs' roomy three-quarter-mile oval, too, but came back to score in two minutes flat over the same track in his next start. He then shipped to the Midwest and, after an initial loss at Springfield, began to win everything he entered over the mile tracks at Sedalia, Du Quoin, and Indianapolis.

The big one, the Little Brown Jug, was next, and a lot of people were hunting crow for John Simpson to dine on; the Fairground track at Delaware, Ohio, was a half-mile saucer with the traditional tight turns of a twice-around oval.

Simpson, long a master at pointing a horse for a specific race, shipped Bullet to Delaware with plenty of lead time, working him six trips over the little track, the fastest in 2:02. The forty-one-year-old horseman in the

maroon and white silks was satisfied. He was confident, too, but had his confidence undermined in the first heat of the Jug. Straining for the lead going into the first turn, Bullet popped high into the air and came down off-stride. Muncy Hanover, with veteran Earle Avery driving, joyfully took the occasion to win the heat in the world record time of 1:58.3. Simpson, knowing he was beaten, made the most of his misfortune. He maneuvered his horse to finish ninth so that he would be starting behind the rail horse in the second heat.

Hundreds, perhaps thousands, of tongues were wagging among the 38,000 souls who were risking heat prostration to witness the most famous of all pacing races. The skeptics appeared to be correct: *apparently Bullet Hanover couldn't handle a half-mile track*!

Simpson, disappointed, sweating profusely in the scorching September sun, sought out Muncy Hanover's driver between heats. "Congratulations, Earle; you're going to be tough to beat now."

Avery, with more than forty years of harness driving behind him, knew horses and horse racing. He was far from convinced. "Thanks, but you're gonna be pretty tough yourself. You know somebody's still got to win two heats to win a Jug."

In the second dash, Bullet followed Muncy away from the gate, and Simpson settled him in third. They remained in that order—Muncy, Betting Time, and Bullet—to the three-quarter pole, where Simpson decided to make his move. Bullet was out and around Betting Time, taking aim at the pace-setting winner of the first heat. Avery went to the whip and Muncy Hanover had two lengths of daylight on Bullet as they straightened for home. Then Simpson rapped Bullet, and the big pacer, looking like his muscles were going to come bursting through his hide, responded with a rush that carried him past the leader and to the wire in 1:58.3. The clocking, identical to the first heat, matched the world record for three-year-olds over a half mile track.

Simpson, jacketless, mopping his brow, was sipping a soft drink outside the paddock when *Sports Illustrated* reporter Bill Leggett reached him. Was he satisfied with the way his horse had performed? "Well, I think Bullet almost proved to some people that he might have just a speck of ability on a half-mile track," Simpson offered with a small smile.

The son of Adios-Barbara Direct proved it again in the third heat. Six horses were stretched across the track as the field turned for home, but it was Bullet Hanover who emerged from the pack a hundred yards from the wire to win it by a length in 1:59.3.

It was Simpson's third Jug victory, since he had already won it with Noble Adios and Torpid. And Bullet Hanover was the fifth son of Adios to capture the famed stake.

Simpson's flat statement that Bullet would pace a half-miler faster than any horse before him was a hair off target, but not enough to spur anyone to call him on it. Muncy Hanover owned a share of the record, too. Together the pair of Adios colts had smashed six world standards in the three heats. Nobody could quarrel with that output, nor with Bullet's ability over a small oval.

A week later, Simpson raced his colt against time at Lexington, and Bullet whipped around the pink track in 1:55.3 to snip a fifth of a second off the world mark for sophomore pacers set by Adios Butler a year earlier. Four races later, the Bullet's career was ended. Lawrence Sheppard and John Simpson, who had received a slice of the great pacer from a grateful Tom Murphy, were positive that he would make a great stallion. Time would prove them correct.

1960, the year of Lawrence Sheppard's baptism in Pennsylvania politics, was also the year of Romola Hanover and Caleb, two more of Hanover's glittering products who were owned by the Sheppard family.

Romola Hanover, a Tar Heel-Romola Hal daughter, was owned by Shep himself, and raced well as a two-year-old, taking a time trial mark of 1:59.4 at Lexington. With Johnny Thomas at the controls, she came back as a sophomore to win at Vernon Downs in two minutes flat, then turned in clockings of 1:59.3 and 1:59 for John Simpson at Lexington.

The filly was not raced hard, because the Hanover brain trust felt her true impact on the Standardbred sport would come in the role of a broodmare. And the trust was *so* right. Her children would include Romeo Hanover (3, 1:56.1f, $658,505), Romulus Hanover (3, 1:57.1f, $485,000), Nevele Romeo (3, 2:01.2h, $141,821), Romano Hanover (1:58.4f, $133,676), Nevele Bigshot (TT1:59, $29,360), Dexter Hanover (3, 1:58.3, $329,050), and Romalie Hanover (3, 1:57.3f, $394,385). She would become the first broodmare, Standardbred or Thoroughbred, to produce offspring who would win in excess of $2,300,000. And she was still hale and hearty in 1975, still sending potential champions to the sales.

Caleb, a homebred son of Hoot Mon, was owned by Charlotte S. Devan, the eldest of Lawrence and Charlotte Sheppard's daughters. Simpson broke and educated the colt at Ben White Raceway, as was his custom, then took him north with his big stable. Caleb won a baby race at Saratoga Raceway, then captured a pair of pedestrian heats at Goshen. He tangled with his Grand Circuit rivals in a juvenile event at Yonkers Raceway on July 21 and could do no better than fifth, but showed enough promise to earn himself an entry in the $114,118 Hilltop Trot at the New York track nine nights later.

Simpson wasn't expecting much from his young charge in the Hilltop—he had drawn tenth position in a ten-horse field—and neither

were the bettors among the crowd of 24,000-plus; they sent him away at odds of 22 to 1.

Simpson nursed him away from the starting gate, found a comfortable spot along the rail right behind the pace-setting Mr. Pride, then looked on as trotters all around him began to break stride. In all, seven of the ten entries jumped it off, with the list including favored Meadow Farr, Matastar, Duke Rodney, and Orbiter. Mr. Pride, with Bill Haughton up, became the horse to beat, and Simpson began to think he might be able to do it as the field turned for home. He worked on his trotter at the sixteenth pole, and Caleb shot past the leader to win easily in 2:07.2.

The giant throng was stunned. A youngster with only $1,593 in earnings on his card had just beaten the best freshman trotters in the nation, picking up a winner's pot of $62,765 with his effort. When his mutuel payoffs appeared on the board, they read: $46.20, $13, and $7.10.

The shocking win was easily the high point of his season. He came back

John Simpson, Sr. (third from left) receives 1957 leading driver award from Laurel Raceway officials in 1957. Johnny Simpson, Jr. is at left. *Courtesy Sid Alpert.*

as a three-year-old in 1961 and raced exceeding well, posting eight wins, finishing second in the Hambletonian, picking up $114,146 in prizes, and setting a world record of 1:58.1 in the first heat of the Kentucky Futurity. His sizzling mile in Kentucky earned him a stall in the Hanover stud barn. But he proved to be no Dean Hanover, no Hoot Mon, no Star's Pride, and he was soon on his way to Sweden.

Touring from track to track in the mid and late 1950s, John Simpson was often accompanied by a smaller version of himself—son John, Jr. Young Johnny's primary interest at the time was athletics—indeed, he would command awards and interest in a pair of Dodgers' baseball camps—but harness racing was working its way into his system, too.

His father did him no favors as he strived to learn the racing ropes. The youngster's initial assignment was caring for the stable's running horse prompter, a job somewhat lacking in glamour. The next year his father saddled him with three Standardbreds to rub; the rest of the barn's caretakers had two. "I figured," said the senior Simpson, "that I'd give him the acid test, make it as tough as possible. If he really loved it, he'd stay with it. Otherwise, he'd get out. Well, he stood the gaff, he hung in there."

In 1961, John Simpson, Jr. made his pari-mutuel driving debut at Vernon Downs, handling a sophomore trotter named Don Hanover. Before the season was very far along, he had his first mutuel victory. He had just turned eighteen, and a fifth generation of Simpsons in horse racing was assured.

His father was still the king in the early 1960s, however, and Thor Hanover helped to keep the crown planted firmly atop his head.

Thor Hanover, another Adios son, was owned by Lawrence and Charlotte Sheppard, Thomas W. Murphy, and John Simpson. He was a decent enough pacer as a freshman in 1961, bouncing back from a virus to take a 1:59.4 record late in the campaign. Simpson barely let him down between seasons, pointing him toward history's richest harness race to date, the $169,430 Messenger Stake at Roosevelt Raceway on May 18.

The trainer sent Thor to Roosevelt early in the spring, well before the rest of the eighty-horse caravan left Orlando. Joe McFadden, a Simpson aide, was in charge of the sophomore at the New York track, with the boss flying up to drive him in his pre-Messenger contests. He started three times in April and early May and raced poorly in all three. "He has a thick hide and a short memory," Simpson said in disgust after his third unsatisfactory effort.

Only a week remained before the rich stake, and Simpson decided to remain in New York to train Thor. "I had to wake him up, so I sort of hung his hide on the fence, so to speak. I trained him five heats, a couple of them pretty good ones. Then I dropped him in the box. He was going to

Thor Hanover (10) roars out of the pack to score a thumping upset victory in the 1962 Messenger. John Simpson, Sr. was in the sulky.

race in the Messenger come hell or high water."

John Cashman, Jr. was the Roosevelt racing secretary at the time, and he about did a double-take when he received the entry on Thor Hanover. "Why in the world would you start him in there with those horses?" he asked Simpson. *Those* horses were undefeated Adora's Dream, Lehigh Hanover, Ranger Knight, Leader Pick, and five others of that classy ilk.

"Well, he's had a few starts, and I trained him pretty good. He should be better, and he just might do in there," Simpson replied.

More than 37,000 fans, Roosevelt's largest crowd of the season, thought otherwise. Compared to Thor Hanover, Caleb had been an odds-on choice at 22 to 1 odds. Thor was straining the Roosevelt calculator at odds of 71 to 1. Lawrence Sheppard was in New York City on business at the time, but was tired and felt his colt had no chance in the contest. He headed for Hanover instead of Roosevelt Raceway.

A pity, too, because the man who regarded John Simpson as the world's greatest harness horse driver would have seen John Simpson drive the

race of his lifetime. He left out of the ten-hole, got away ninth, bided his time in the early going, threaded his colt through traffic, took advantage of two small holes that opened in the latter stages, and ended up with a fresh horse in the middle of the pack that was charging down the stretch

Small wonder Mr. Simpson is smiling. He and Thor Hanover have just won the $169,000 Messenger Stake for 1962, scoring one of the biggest upsets in harness racing history.

toward the wire. At the finish he had a half-length advantage on 3-to-10 favorite Adora's Dream, halting Dream's two-season unbeaten string of thirteen races.

The time of the mile was 2:01.1, second best in Messenger history. Thor Hanover had earned his owners $84,715, or $700 a second, according to the New York *Herald-Tribune's* Bill Wallace.

His payoff for win was a gargantuan $144, the third largest return in Roosevelt's annals.

"The Iceman Delivereth" headlined one metropolitan newspaper.

The Iceman also delivered another sparkling colt for the Sheppard family in 1962, the Hoot Mon trotter Isaac, owned by Charlotte Sheppard and Patricia S. Williams. A $9,700 winner as a two-year-old, Isaac rounded into form nicely for Simpson the next year and went on to finish second in the Hambletonian, win more than $50,000, and take a time trial record of 1:59.4.

And then there was Ayres.

15
AND THEN CAME AYRES

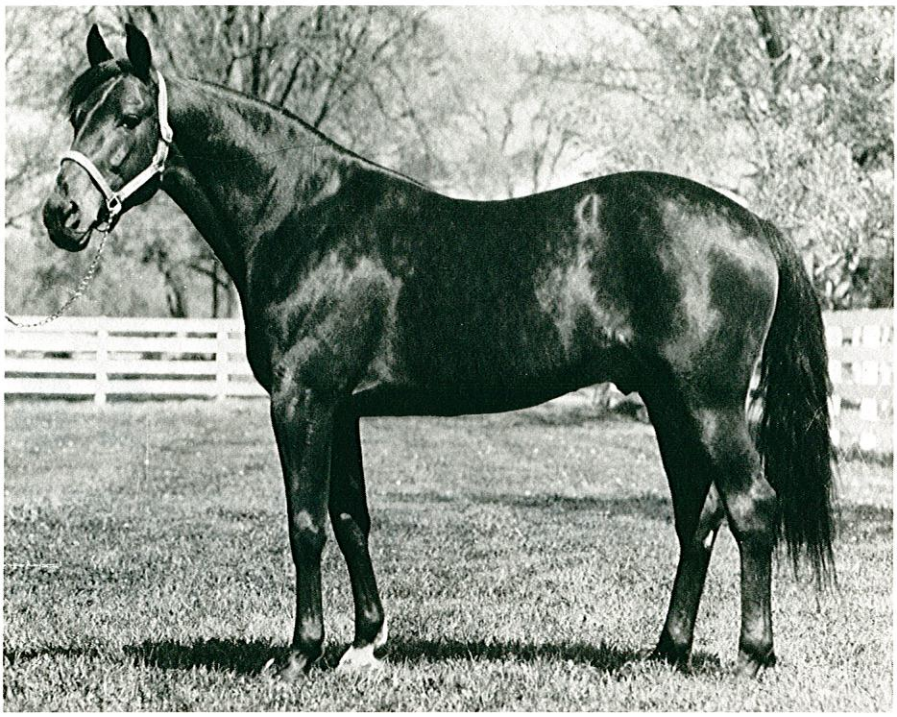
CHARLOTTE SHEPPARD was prone to give her horses biblical names (Isaac, Joshua), or borrow the name of a friend (Elma, Hazel), or confiscate the name of a relative (Trowbridge, Dawson).

When her good young mare Arpege gave birth to an exceptional looking foal by Star's Pride in 1961, she reached back a pair of generations to pluck the name Ayres off her husband's family tree. Ayres was the name of Lawrence Sheppard's grandfather on his mother's side, a courtly man who had earned the devotion of Charlotte Sheppard when she joined the Sheppard family.

The colt was one of the many youngsters who were shipped to Florida to attend Professor John Simpson's annual college of trotting and pacing knowledge, although it was colt specialist John Thomas who presided over his earliest lessons. Neither Thomas nor Simpson considered him the most promising pupil in the class, at least in the beginning.

"He showed a little trot early, but nothing that was outstanding," reported the gentlemanly Thomas. "At first, I didn't like him too well because he seemed to go wide behind, but that disappeared as he trained along."

"It was a strange thing," recalled Simpson. "When he was a two-year-old in Florida, we had two or three other nice trotting colts that showed a



Ayres. *Courtesy Winants Bros.*

little better. Ayres did everything right, stayed on the trot, didn't make mistakes. But he didn't do anything that would make you say, 'Well, hell, here's a world champion.' "

Still, he got a press notice, and a good one, as early as December 26, 1962. "The trotters in this barn [Simpson's] are a joy to watch, with the leaders a pair of colts, Cahoot, brother to Caleb, and Ayres," reported *The Harness Horse*. "If the plug were pulled out, these colts could trot in 2:30 handily."

As the winter turned to early spring, Ayres's two instructors became more and more impressed with his manners and his ability to learn, but neither "got real high on him" until late in the training season, when he suddenly developed that one ingredient that all champions share—speed. By the time the Simpson aggregation had moved up to Lexington in May, Ayres had moved to the head of the class. When Joe O'Brien, jogging along with one of his own trainees, asked Simpson if the young trotter he was handling was a good one, Simpson replied, "I think he's the best one we've got." He was, of course, jogging Ayres.

Ayres faced the starter for the first time in a qualifying race at The

John Simpson, Sr. with Triple Crown winner Ayres. *Courtesy USTA.*

Meadows in Pennsylvania on June 26, finishing fourth in 2:14 and a piece. Then he beat a field of older horses in a $700 overnight contest, and captured a nonbetting baby race in 2:08.4.

It was his first stakes race, a $12,000 affair at Liberty Bell, when trainer Simpson truly discovered what a trotting jewel he had in Ayres. "He woke me up. I knew I had something, a firecracker," Simpson remem-

bered. "When the gate left, he was immediately on top by three lengths. He had them all scattered out behind him, trying to keep up. I thought sure Billy Haughton would catch us with Speedy Count, but Ayres wouldn't hear of it. He trotted away to win 2:03.2."

While Simpson was happily impressed with swiftness of his colt, he was soon concerned about his deteriorating manners. Ayres was the perfect race horse until the gate left, then he caught fire, sped away like a scared rabbit, was virtually uncontrollable. Simpson could not rate him.

He was third in the Hanover-Hempt Stake at The Meadows, won at Brandywine, and won the first heat of the Hoosier Futurity at Indianapolis in 2:02.3 before bowing in the second dash. Then he finished third in the mud at Washington Park, Chicago.

"He was getting progressively worse," Simpson said. "Whenever the gate left, he was gone, and I couldn't stop him, couldn't change him. At Delaware, Ohio, he was like a crazy horse. In the first heat, we had to score from the back tier. I got him to the front and he never quit; trotted that half-mile track in 2:00.1 to win by twelve or thirteen lengths. I caught him in 1:59.4. Hell, I never meant to win by a margin like that. I never meant to go a mile like that!"

With no help from John Simpson, Ayres had smashed the world mark for freshman trotters over a half-mile oval. He had, in fact, equaled the fastest time ever turned in by a trotting stallion of any age. And he still had two more heats to race on the afternoon.

Simpson, in desperation, changed his rigging between dashes. He put a blind bridle on him for the first time and plugged his ears, hoping to quiet Ayres. It only made matters worse. "Why, he damn near ran out of the draw gate," Simpson recollected. "He got mad—not crazy, just mad, and I couldn't hold him."

The timer was a silent testament to his incredible speed. He flew down to the quarter in 28:4, roared past the half in 57.4 (faster than the Brown Jug entries had paced), and arrived at the three-quarters in 1:28.2. By then, he was understandably out of gas. Smart Rodney collared him in the stretch and went on to win in 2:01.4, completing a world standard for two-year-olds winning divided heats.

Simpson admitted later that he should have scratched him from the third dash, but he didn't. Instead, he removed the blind bridle and hoped for the best. He did not get it. Ayres was still angry, keyed up, full of fight. He trotted down to the half in 1:01.1, then pulled himself up. He was through for the day, and his driver couldn't do a thing about it.

His performances had been watched by thousands of fans, hundreds of horsemen, and dozens of writers. He had earned himself a reputation as an uncontrollable colt, "a bad actor." One reporter labeled him "Peck's Bad Boy," and it was hard for John Simpson to fault the writer's judgment or choice of words.

Simpson was reluctant to start him at Lexington after his behavior at Delaware. He conferred with the Sheppards, and Lawrence suggested that he give Ayres a two-minute record in a time trial, then call it a season.

The trainer tried twice. On September 25 he got him down to the three quarters in 1:28.4, but the colt quit on him, finishing the mile in 2:00.4. A week later he tried again, but Ayres would have none of it, trotting in 2:02.2.

The colt was weary, sour, and off his feed. Simpson went no further with him. It was back to Florida for Ayres.

His trainer stewed, fretted, lost sleep over him in the early weeks at Orlando. How could he preserve his speed, spirit, and gait, yet make him manageable? If you put anything severe on him, even a blind bridle, he was prone to give up his trot or run out the draw gate.

"It came to me in the middle of the night," Simpson offered. "I was pretty damn sure I had the solution. I took a lip cord and made it about twice as long as your normal cord. I put a Stalker leather bit in his mouth so that his gums wouldn't be hurt. Then I took the long lip cord—they call it the Ayres lip cord now, and a lot of people use it—and wrapped it around the Stalker bit, then buckled it under his chin. And it worked! When I took ahold of Ayres, I had the pressure I wanted, but not where he'd fight it.

"I jogged him myself most of the winter. I had Joe McFadden working for me, and Joe had a back about two yards broad. Joe, wearing a huge jacket, would work Royal Hanover, another three-year-old, and I'd stick Ayres's nose right into Joe's big back. I never took him out from behind Joe, but kept him tight to him the whole mile. Pretty soon I could drive him with two fingers. After a while I put another colt up alongside him so that he was boxed in. He got used to that routine and we had no problems."

Simpson was reasonably sure he had straightened out his prospective champion, but looked upon his first start in 1964 as the acid test. Waltzing around the Orlando training track on a bright and quiet morning was one thing; pulling away from a gate with seven other horses, hearing the screams of the crowd, racing under the bright lights was quite another.

Ayres started his sophomore season in a $3,500 Open Trot at The Meadows on June 12. The gate left, Simpson guided him gently over to the rail, and there he remained. Between the five-eighths and the three-quarters, the driver pulled him off the wood, took him to the outside, chirped to him, and the colt accelerated smoothly to pass all the foes in front of him. He was perfect in every way, winning by a length and a quarter in 2:03.1, the last quarter in twenty-nine seconds.

A week later he whipped older horses in 2:00.1, then trotted another 2:00.1 trip—the final half in 58.3—to win an early closer. Sent to Sportsman's Park, Chicago, Simpson admittedly underestimated the zip

of Marco Hanover, and Ayres was a head shy at the wire. A week later he met some of the best trotters in the nation in a $10,000 invitational and beat them easily in 2:01.

Shipping to Yonkers and going to post in the $116,691 Yonkers Futurity, the first jewel in trotting's Triple Crown, Ayres was fourth going away and leading the pack at the half in 1:03.4. At that point Speedy Count roared up to challenge and Simpson had to let him have his head. Ayres sped the last half in an astounding 57.4 to win by more than three lengths in 2:01.3.

Veteran trainer Jim Jordan was but one of a host of horsemen who thought it was time for an appointment with an eye doctor. "It was the greatest speed I ever saw by a trotter on a half-mile track," he said in praise. "It was just unbelievable. I couldn't believe the board when that half was flashed up."

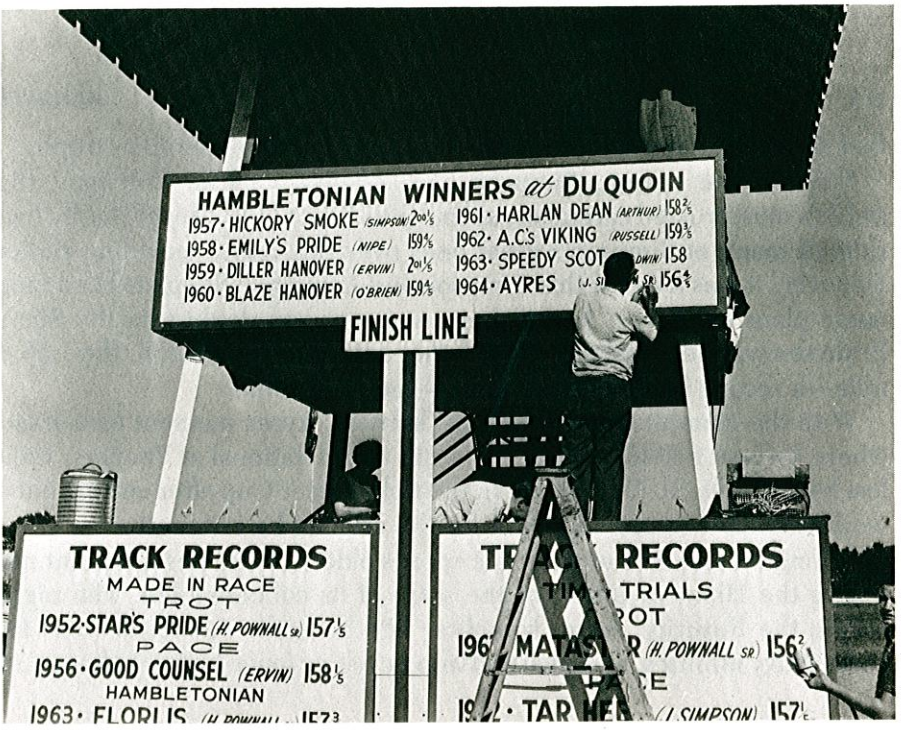
After another victory back at The Meadows, Charlotte Sheppard's headline-hunting youngster was sent on to Springfield and the Review Futurity. He captured the first heat with a breezy mile in 2:01.2, then Simpson decided to give him a two-minute record in the event something came up and he couldn't earn one later. He went a comfortable first half, then stormed home in 57.3—the last quarter in 28.2—to take a speed badge of 1:59.

Simpson, as it turned out, could have waited thirteen days for the Hambletonian to give the colt his two-minute record. It was September 2, 1964, and a real sizzling afternoon at the Du Quoin Fairgound. Television, radio, newspapers, and magazines were all there in force to cover harness racing's showcase contest. It was as gala and splashy as always, and Ayres helped to turn it into a "happening."

Ayres left from the seven-post in the first heat and was just gathering momentum when he spotted a shadow on the track, a shadow cast by a long television cable overhead. Its shape and form were new to him, and he was frightened. He tried to jump over it. Simpson had an anxious moment, but the youngster landed right back on the trot as though nothing had happened. Then he went on.

He was fifth at the quarter, fifth at the half, and fourth on the outside at the three-quarters. He was third at the head of the stretch, trailing by three and a half lengths, but closing the gap with every powerful stride. Halfway down the lane, the grandstand crowd became aware that he would win it, leaving only this question to be satisfied: How fast would he go? The crowd soon had the answer—1:56.4—and it roared its approval. Early bobble and all, Ayres had matched the all-time mark for sophomores that Speedy Scot had set at Lexington a year earlier.

In the next heat, Simpson raced him with restraint, winning by half a length in 1:58.1. Charlotte Sheppard's homebred fireball, the ex-Peck's



Up goes a new trotting record after Charlotte Sheppard's Triple Crown-winning Ayres captured the 1964 Hambletonian. John Simpson, Sr. was the driver.

Ayres, John Simpson, Sr., and veteran Simpson aide Charlie Coleman walk back to Victory Lane after winning a heat of the Hambletonian at Du Quoin in 1964.

Bad Boy, had earned her a year's lease on the Hambletonian trophy.

Early in the season, Simpson had assigned Charlie Coleman, the stable's most trusted caretaker, as the groom on Ayres. Since Charlie had rubbed many of Simpson's great ones over the years, including Bullet Hanover, it was a signal that Simpson and Lawrence Sheppard had long range plans for Ayres. And if there was ever any doubt that the Star's Pride son was destined to join his father as a Hanover stallion, the 1:56.4 mile—a record for the famed stake—removed them.

With the Hambletonian under his harness, Ayres was sent back East, where he beat a field of older horses in an Invitational at Yonkers, then lost by a whisker to Dartmouth in the rich Dexter Cup after cutting out a world standard timing of 2:08.4 for the mile and a sixteenth.

Lexington and its Futurity, the sport's oldest stake, was next, but not before the Hanover team got the scare of its collective life. The night before the Futurity, Ayres somehow fled his stall, wandered loose for some thirty minutes, and smashed into a cyclone fence in the darkness. At

Picking up the silver after the 1964 Hambletonian. Jim Simpson, younger of the two Simpson boys, is at far right.

some point during his freedom he must have bumped into something else, as well, because he was sporting a filled rear ankle.

"Some son-of-a-buck must have turned him out, I'm sure," Simpson complained bitterly. "I had a second trainer sleeping in a tack stall right next to him, and we had the door closed on the colt and the screen across the top. There was no way he could have gotten out of there without help."

It was the talk of the Lexington grounds the next day. Everyone, it seemed, had heard of Ayres's midnight escapade with the exception of one person—owner Charlotte Sheppard. Simpson, Lawrence Sheppard, Charlie Coleman, everyone connected with the horse and the stable, did their level best to keep the news from her, and succeeded. Then minutes before the race, while she was nervously sitting in her grandstand box, someone innocently offered her their condolences. "For what?" she asked, and the secret was out.

Her husband worked hard at calming her. "Now, the colt is all right, he's all right," Sheppard insisted. "Johnny was a little concerned about whether he could get a shin boot over the ankle, but he managed it. It's just a bruise, nothing more. Charlie has had ice on it since early this morning, and it's coming along fine. He's absolutely sound on the leg. You'll see."

And he was sound on it, to Simpson's vast relief. Ayres captured the Kentucky Futurity—and clinched trotting's Triple Crown—with extraordinary miles of 1:58.1 and 1:59.2 on an afternoon that was raw, bleak, and windy. In fact, Simpson swore the youngster was sharper for the Futurity than he was for the Hambletonian. Only the weather had prevented what could have been a pair of historic trotting trips.

Ayres, in winning the Yonkers Futurity, Hambletonian, and Kentucky Futurity, was unwittingly striking an early blow against male chauvinism. He was the first Triple Crown winner to be bred by a woman.

Mrs. Sheppard was honored for her accomplishment at a Triple Crown luncheon in one of New York City's poshest hotels the following winter. The harness racing hierarchy who attended the affair were still talking about it years later. Mrs. Sheppard made it an event to remember.

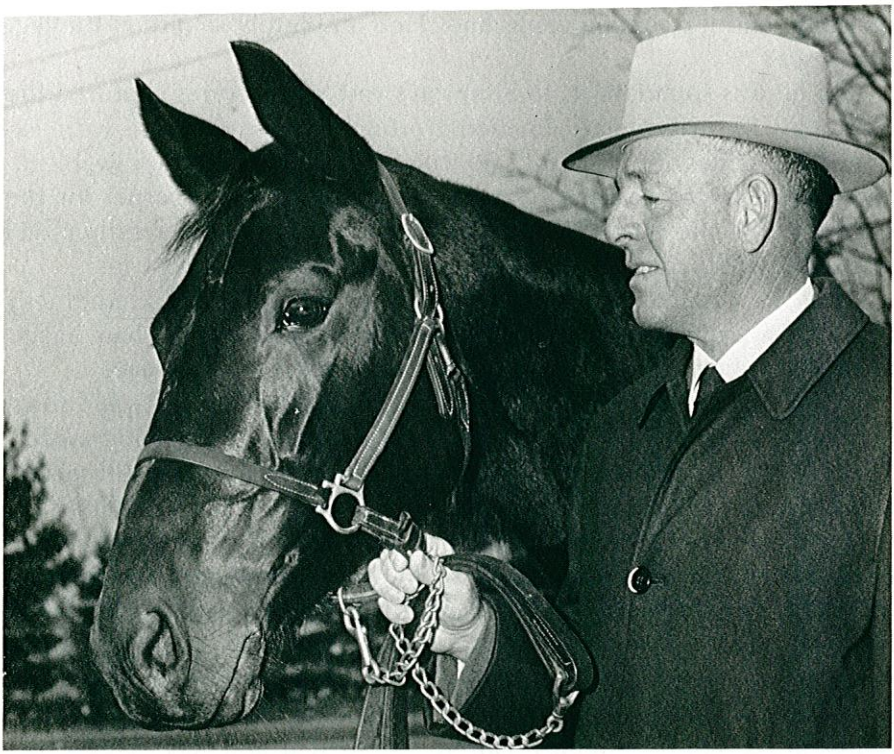
"I had made my little speech and had sat down," she explained. "Then Jacob Javits, the senator from New York, was introduced and began a little talk. I was bedecked and bedamned, all dressed up and tickled pink to think that I was the first woman to breed and own a Triple Crown winner. Suddenly I remembered that I had neglected to say thank you. Javits was talking—he was very nice—but he didn't mean anything to me; I thought I was the one being honored. I jumped up and said, 'Excuse me, please, I'll have that,' and I grabbed the microphone away from him and proceeded to thank everyone for coming.

"Everyone in the room roared except Shep. He kicked me under the table. When I'd said my piece and had sat back down again, he said, 'My God, Woman, do you know who that is?' 'No,' I said, 'and I don't really care.' "

Ayres had helped John Simpson to one of his best seasons in the sulky in some time—sixty-one victories, nine two-minute miles, a UDRS average of .382 and $425,376 in purses. Ironically, for all practical purposes, it was his last hurrah. Lawrence Sheppard's long-postponed ultimatum had finally arrived.

Sheppard's health was failing. The Pennsylvania politicians, he said, had given him an ulcer, but that wasn't the worst of his problems. He was suffering from congestive heart failure and emphysema. The heart muscle was losing its efficiency, couldn't pump the fluids out of his tissues, especially in his lungs. He knew the condition would certainly worsen as time went on.

Simpson had checked into their room at the Phoenix Hotel in



Simpson bids a farewell to Elma shortly before the mare was shipped to France for a series of races. *Courtesy Roosevelt Raceway.*

Lexington just prior to the Futurity. Sheppard walked in, accompanied by the Hanover pilot, Bob Turner. Without any preliminaries whatsoever, he shot at Simpson, "Well, what did you decide?"

"Decide about what?" the puzzled trainer asked.

"You know damn well what I'm talking about—that *farm*. When are you going to come up and run it."

"I haven't really thought any more about it," Simpson hedged.

"Well, I'm telling you this: you've got to come up and take over or I'm putting it in my will that it's to be sold. Sold lock, stock, and barrel."

"Why, you can't do that," Simpson protested. "You don't want to destroy the farm; you've got to keep it going."

"And I want to keep it going," Sheppard said grimly, "but I'm warning you, I'm ordering my executors to get rid of it if you don't agree to get up there and run it."

"All right," Simpson capitulated.

"Then you'll come?"

"I will."

"Good," said Sheppard. "I've found you a house."

"Already?"

"Certainly. Ned Fitzgibbons is moving into town. I'm going to buy his house. That'll be your home."

"All right," agreed Simpson, about putting the lid on his driving career. From 1965 on, he drove fewer and fewer races, handing more and more of the lines to his son, Johnny, Jr. When the U.S. Trotting Association offered career driving statistics on John Simpson, Sr. in 1971, it showed him with 1,467 triumphs, ninety two-minute drives and purses totaling $4,717,021.

Now he had to prove himself as a breeding farm manager.

16

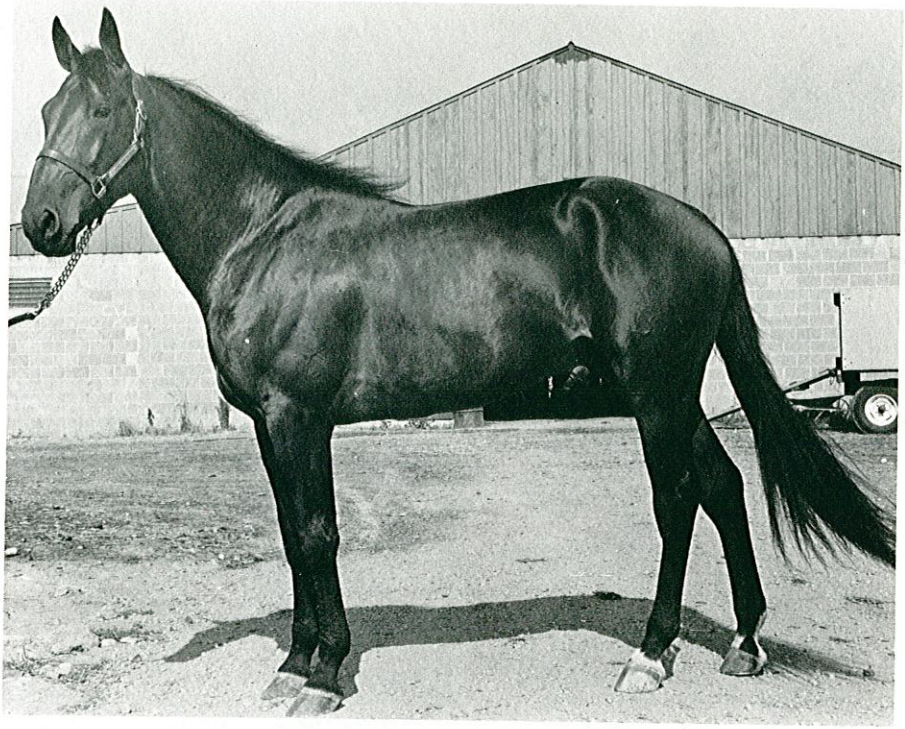
HIGH STANDARDS TO MEET

ADIOS BUTLER . . . Diller Hanover . . . Blaze Hanover . . . Henry T. Adios . . . Lehigh Hanover . . . O'Brien Hanover . . . A. C.'s Viking . . . Matastar . . . Overtrick . . . Steady Beau . . . Tarquinius . . . Adios Vic . . . Vicar Hanover . . . Hoot Frost . . . Tar Boy . . . Cold Front . . . Lyss Hanover . . .

Those were the kind of race horses the Hanover Shoe Farms and its stallions had been turning out in the early 1960s, and those were the kind of race horses that Lawrence Sheppard expected the Farms to produce under the general managership of John Simpson.

And if Simpson ever got to feeling complacent, smug, or even cocky, there was yet another Hanover product that might keep him on his toes, might force him to keep his sights elevated. The horse's name was Bret Hanover, and there hadn't been another like him since the gaudy days of potent and popular Dan Patch.

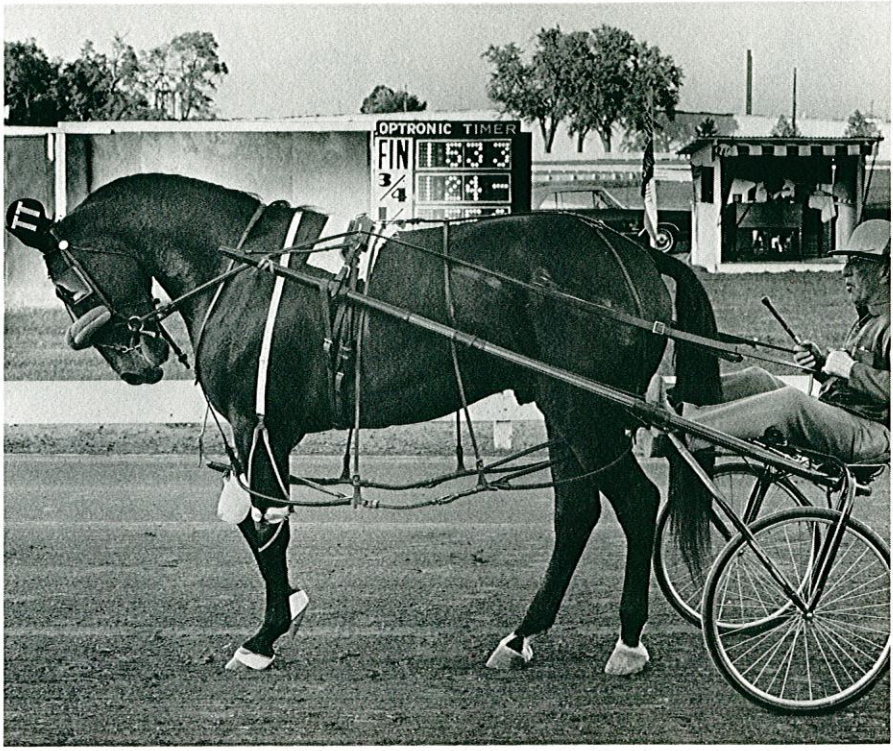
Bret, a tall, barrel-chested result of the Adios-Tar Heel cross, was currently stumping the country, beating everybody, smashing speed marks, drawing record crowds, causing minus pari-mutuel pools, and charming the public and the press with his personality while Simpson was moving his family up to Hanover and getting his feet wet in the day-to-day affairs of the Farms.



Bret Hanover, one of the greatest pacers history has ever known.

Bret Hanover, Frank Ervin's beloved "Big Bum," was owned by Cleveland, Ohio, industrialist Richard Downing, who had paid the year's top yearling price, $50,000, for him in 1963. Bret's three-year reign at the race tracks of the United States and Canada would yield sixty-two victories, thirty-one two-minute miles, eleven world records, $922,616 in earnings, and election as Harness Horse of the Year all three years he raced. He would be sold to Castleton Farm in a two million dollar transaction, and from the day he stepped off the race track for the last time, he would become the yardstick against which future pacing horses would be measured. Is the new pacing champ as fast as Bret? Does he have Bret's manners? Bret's conformation? Bret's brains?

The mating that had resulted in the creation of Bret had been planned by Lawrence Sheppard and Jim Harrison. It was no big deal. Bret's dam was Brenna Hanover, a young Tar Heel mare. It was obvious that she should go back to Adios, a union that had already produced Baron Hanover, a much heralded colt whose career was cut short by injury. Harrison, sitting in Sheppard's office, had simply said, "Brenna Hanover-Adios," and Sheppard had responded, "Right. Next mare."



Bret Hanover bows after setting 1:53.3 time trial mark at Lexington. *Photo by Ed Keys, courtesy USTA.*

Never in the ten years that Hanover owned a third of Adios did it ever sell an outside booking to the mighty stallion. "People were forever coming to us and asking, but we always turned them down," Harrison reported. The bookings were all used to create Hanover colts and fillies destined to be sold at Harrisburg. Some 365 Adios colts offered by Hanover and other breeders over the years would bring an estimated $6,750,000, an average of more than $18,000.

John Simpson had the "nuts and bolts" of the Shoe Farms' operation to learn when he checked in, more or less for keeps, in 1965. The rest—the policies, the philosophy, the structure, the personalities—he knew well. He had been part of all the important decisions Sheppard had made for more than a decade.

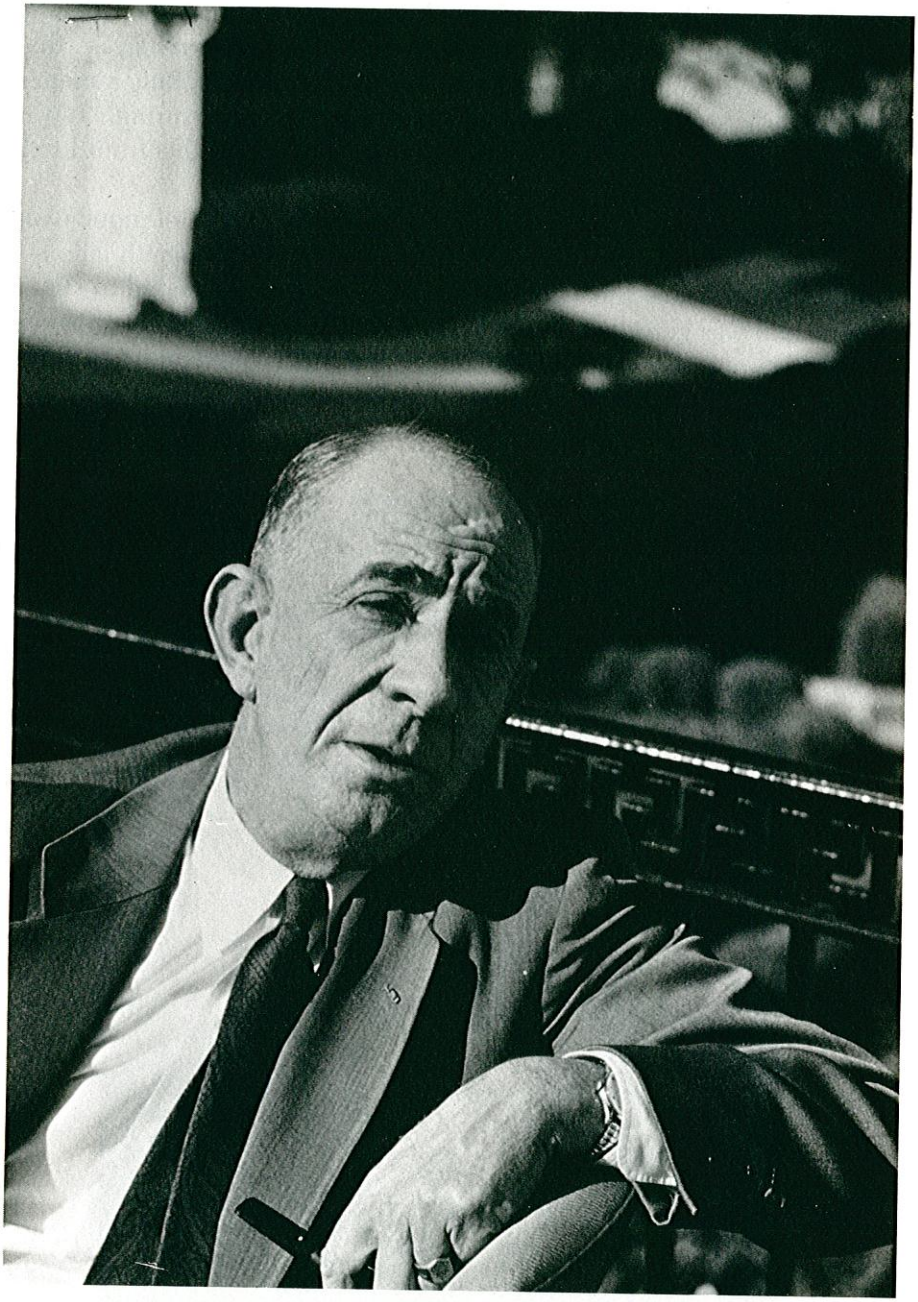
Lawrence Sheppard was not bowing out as the prime force behind Hanover, even with Simpson's arrival. Sheppard was still the figure at the top of the totem pole, still extremely active in Shoe Farms' affairs, although his health was slowly but steadily deteriorating. Simpson,

Bret Hanover (5) and driver Frank Ervin are off and flying in a heat of the Little Brown Jug. *Photo by Ed Keys, courtesy USTA*

Harrison, Harry Moss, Charlotte Sheppard, everyone connected with the Farms, looked on with concern as he suffered the growing ravages of emphysema. And they looked on with increasing vexation, too, because Sheppard patently refused to do anything of any consequence to help himself.

Lawrence Sheppard congratulates E. S. (Ned) Fitzgibbons as the younger man becomes president of The Hanover Shoe, Inc. *Courtesy Poist's Studio.*

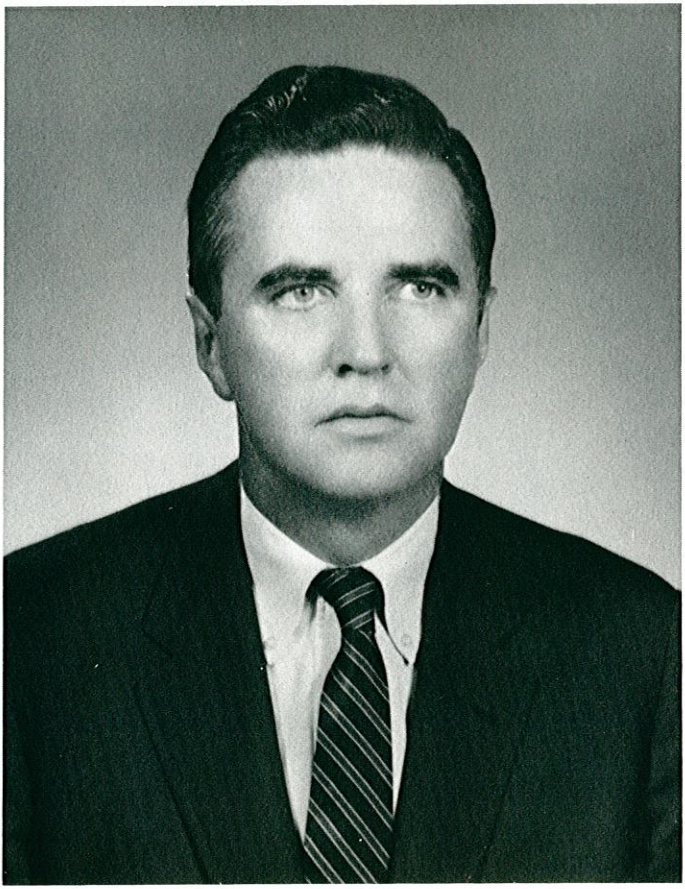
Simpson bought him a succession of briar pipes, hoping to get him to cut down on his consumption of cigarettes, but he could have saved the expense; Shep continued to polish off two packs of nonfiltered Pall Malls each day. His few brief attempts to reduce his smoking generally sent his aides scurrying for cover; his temper could be something to behold at such times.



The master of Hanover Shoe Farms relaxes with a pipe, although he much preferred cigarettes.

Harrison was pleasantly surprised to see him turn to glasses of milk in lieu of the highballs he cherished, but became less enthusiastic when he caught Sheppard lacing the milk with Scotch. Harrison was aware that Shep, who was proud of his iron-man image, was now grabbing a snooze in his Carlisle Street office each day, which was a little reassuring. "It was supposed to be a secret, but everyone in the world knew that from 1 to 2 P.M., Shep had his nap."

Harry Moss noticed the change in his boss—the bursts of pique over little things coming with increasing frequency as Shep's health failed—and decided to leave the Shoe Farms. Moss had not intended to stay a lifetime and was getting itchy feet. He wanted to visit Australia, maybe settle there one day, and he was interested in the new and rich Sires



E. S. (Ned) Fitzgibbons, who succeeded Lawrence Sheppard as president of The Hanover Shoe, Inc.

Stakes program that was growing like weeds in New York State. Eventually, he joined Martin Tananbaum, president of Yonkers Raceway at that time, at Tananbaum's new White Devon Farm at Geneseo, New York.

Moss had received a great education in Standardbred breeding from Sheppard and was not reluctant to admit it. "If someone sold him on an idea that would benefit the farm, he never asked what it would cost. He'd say 'Okay, go ahead and do it.' I think that's what made Hanover so great. He never spared a nickel to make it what it is," Moss said years later.

The departing farm superintendent had handled a variety of assignments for Lawrence Sheppard over his six-plus years at Hanover, including one passed on by the late President Dwight Eisenhower. Sheppard sent for Moss one day and told him, "Boy, I got you in a lot of trouble yesterday."

"How's that?" Moss inquired.

"I told Ike Eisenhower that you'd break a couple of saddle horses for his grandchildren."

The two horses, both half Thoroughbred, half Quarter horse, were called Quinine and Iodine. Moss picked them up at Eisenhower's Gettysburg farm and spent weeks working on them. Quinine, he decided, was too temperamental to mold into a safe riding horse, but Iodine was a gem. Moss broke Iodine so that a child could walk under his belly or even slide down his rump. He was foolproof, and Eisenhower was delighted when he drove over to the Shoe Farms and watched Harry put the horse through his paces. Quinine was sold, but Iodine was sent to Valley Forge, where the Eisenhower youngsters enjoyed him thoroughly, even using him as a polo pony.

When Moss left Hanover, a treasured letter of appreciation from the former President was among his luggage.

The veteran horseman L. W. (Monty) Moncrief, who had served as assistant farm superintendent in 1964, was moved up to the top job when Moss departed.

Jim Harrison also decided to leave the Shoe Farms later in the year. Harrison, easily the sport's leading technical writer, returned to the U.S. Trotting Association as its director of racing information. Too busy with a thousand other details to pursue his writing career during his seven years at Hanover, he soon had the opportunity to make up for that deficiency. The USTA, with his happy consent, assigned him to write the sport's most definitive work, the sport's "bible"—*Care & Training of the Trotter & Pacer*. With the assistance of twelve famed horsemen, a veterinarian, and a farm manager, Harrison wrote a one thousand-page volume that was almost the equal of a college education in training the Standardbred, if such a course existed.

Sheppard was a strong backer of President Dwight D. Eisenhower. *Courtesy Lane Studio.*

There was some hard feelings on both sides when Harrison left Hanover, although Harrison would never waver in his admiration of Sheppard's role in Standardbred breeding: "In my opinion, Lawrence B. Sheppard exercised a greater influence on the improvement of the harness horse breed than any man who ever lived."

Harrison's leaving created a void at the Farms. His responsibilities had been heavy, his duties vast. It increased John Simpson's workload. He had to dig in harder, deeper.

Lawrence Sheppard did not believe in vacations or even recreation for himself or his staff—a good day's work was recreation enough—although

John Simpson managed to alter his point of view somewhat during the period.

For years, Ben White Raceway trainers like Simpson and Frank Ervin had leased an eighty-six hundred-acre spread called the Bull Creek Preserve during the winter training season. With their morning work done, or with a weekend coming up, they would make tracks for the preserve, wandering through the wild bush country by foot, Jeep, or on horseback in pursuit of quail, deer, wild turkey, or wild pig.

Sheppard had always turned down Simpson's invitation to join him, claiming that Simpson could lose his life to a rattlesnake if he chose, "but no Goddamn snake is going to take mine." Simpson persisted, however, and one autumn, promised a pair of snake-proof leggings, Sheppard grudgingly acquiesced, more to get Simpson off his back than for any other reason. One day of roaming the bizarre but beautiful preserve and bagging a few of the elusive quail and Sheppard was hooked.

Simpson was not above stacking the deck in Sheppard's favor. If he knew the Hanover chief was coming, he would sometimes direct his son, Johnny, Jr., to round up some commercially grown quail to populate an area of the preserve to guarantee that Shep would have success. The practice backfired on one occasion, however, when young Simpson loaded a shipment of five hundred birds in the trunk of his car. When he arrived down at the preserve and opened the trunk, the birds were all dead, the victims of suffocation. "We ate a lot of quail that winter and spring," young John explained. "They were good, too; no shot in them."

The Simpsons kept their hunting dogs in Florida, and Sheppard had a favorite among them, a dog named Joe. "One afternoon Mr. Sheppard and I were out hunting—we had Joe with us—and ran onto a covey of birds," the senior Simpson related. "I shot once and got a bird and he fired twice. 'I got two birds,' Mr. Sheppard told me, but Joe could only find two—mine and one of his. Well, we hunted and hunted, but we couldn't find the third one. 'Maybe you only winged him and he got away,' I suggested. 'No, no, I got him all right,' he insisted, 'he's around here someplace.'

"We hunted until it began to get dark, then we hopped up on the ponies and headed back to the trailer. Joe was still back there sniffing around, and Shep was concerned about him. 'Oh,' I said, 'don't worry about him; he'll be coming along shortly.' We were just climbing off the horses back at the trailer when Joe came trotting up. And in his mouth was that other damn bird that the boss had shot. Well, I don't think you could have given Mr. Sheppard $100,000 and he'd have thought any more of it. 'I told you I got two birds,' he crowed. And from that moment on, he loved that Joe like he was the only dog we'd ever had."

Later, Simpson and Sheppard moved their hunting headquarters to a

four thousand-acre site known as the Shingle Creek Preserve, closer in to Orlando. Shep, Simpson, Ervin, Mudge, and Del Miller were all members. "Mr. Sheppard would relax when he was hunting, really let his hair down," Simpson said.

Sheppard was gruff to start with, gruffer as his health failed. But if he liked you, he'd give you the world, and he particularly appreciated John and Helen Simpson's children. In 1963 he directed Simpson to pick a nice filly out of the yearling crop and gave it to John, Jr.; it was high time the young man had a horse of his own. Simpson did as he was asked, but earned a touch of Sheppard's wrath when he selected a filly by the unheralded stallion Newport Dream instead of the solid gold Star's Pride.

"Mr. Sheppard came to Orlando just before Christmas and I was out on the track with Lullaby Hanover, the filly I'd been given, and you never saw a worse gaited horse in your life at that stage of her training," young Simpson remembered. "Well, he took one look at her and yelled for my father. 'You take that filly back and give Johnny something else; she'll never make it to the races,' he said. 'I can't take that filly back,' my father told him, 'Johnny's crazy about her.' And I was. Luckily, she turned out to be a pretty fair kind of trotter, taking a record of 2:02.4 as a three-year-old."

A year later Johnny, Jr. was courting Lois Dancer, the daughter of trainer-driver Harold Dancer, Sr., and Sheppard made it a point to become acquainted with her. He was obviously impressed. One night when he was dining with young Simpson in the clubhouse of Liberty Bell Raceway, he leaned across the table and said out of the blue, "You know something, you ought to marry that girl." And when John did indeed marry Lois at Freehold, New Jersey, later in the year, he attended the wedding and gave them a thousand-dollar check as a present.

"He was absolutely great to me," John, Jr. recollected. "I saw him flash his temper lots of times, but he wasn't half as tough as he made out he was. Something might go wrong, and he'd be swearing away when his little poodle Sweetie would come up and nuzzle him, and he'd get mellow, go to petting the dog. He loved all animals, but Sweetie was his absolute favorite."

Jimmy Simpson, Johnny's younger brother, was a slender, carrot-top, highly impressionable youngster in his early teens when the family moved back to Hanover. He was awed by both Lawrence Sheppard and the vast collection of farms and acres he had assembled under the Hanover flag.

Sheppard, to Jim Simpson, was a complicated man "who would unmercifully chew a guy out if the fellow had forgotten to put a salt lick in a paddock," yet had a heart soft enough to finance and hire some of the most hopeless derelicts in a race track's stable area. "He was forever

telling some of the most down-and-out guys in the business to report to Dad for work at the farm," according to Jimmy.

Shep took an active interest in Jim Simpson's education, counseling him on courses to take and encouraging him to prepare early for college. Once, when the youngster had barely made it through Algebra I, Sheppard advised him to repeat the subject rather than move on to the next level. Jim ignored his advice and promptly flunked Algebra II. "From that point on, I listened to him. I learned that he knew what he was talking about, and he could talk about any subject you could think of. I grew to respect him immensely."

Jimmy Simpson would eventually graduate from the University of New Mexico, but he would prove susceptible to the same "disease" that has been claiming male members of the Simpson family for five generations. He would forsake his goal of gaining a law degree for a career with the horses.

The Simpsons' first full year back at the Farms—1965—was a big one for Hanover. Colts and fillies topping the money-earning list in all four major categories were either bred by Hanover or were sired by its stallions.

Romeo Hanover, trained by young Jerry Silverman for the Lucky Star Stable and Morton Finder, all of New York City, was the scourge of the freshman pacing ranks, scoring thirteen wins and hauling in $146,947 in purses. The Dancer Hanover son had cost his owners $8,500 as a yearling.

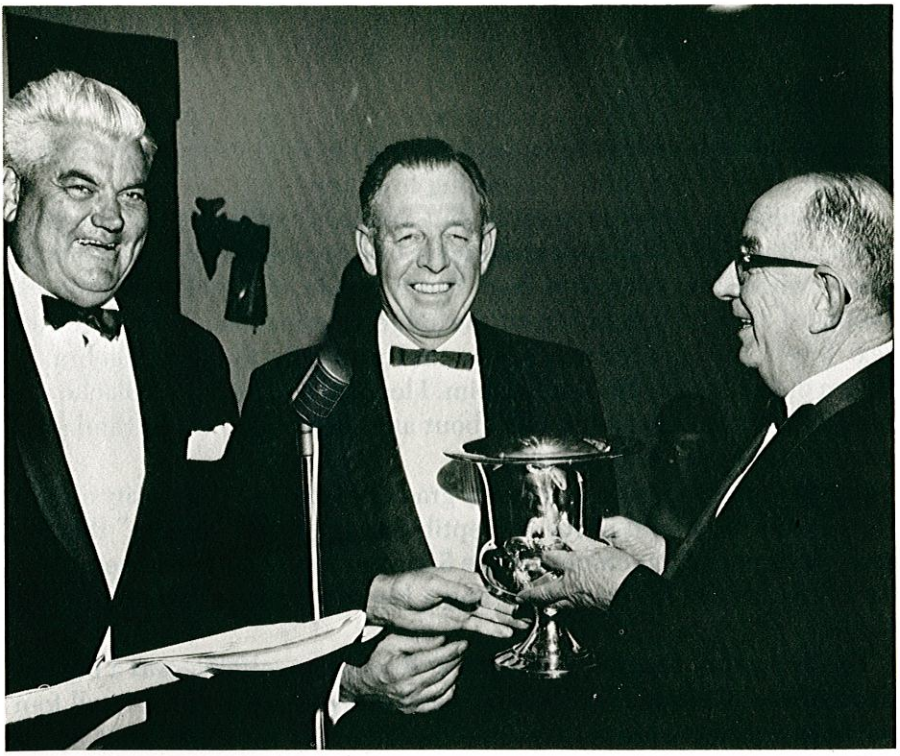
Bret Hanover was in the second of his three giant years at the races and easily led all the three-year-old pacers with a resounding $341,784 in race earnings.

Kerry Way, bred by the Gainesway Farm, but sired by Hanover's Star's Pride, led the freshman trotters, colts included, with $116,549 in racing spoils for Clarence and John Gaines. In 1966 she would bring more cash and glory to her owners and trainer-driver Frank Ervin by winning the Hambletonian, among other stakes.

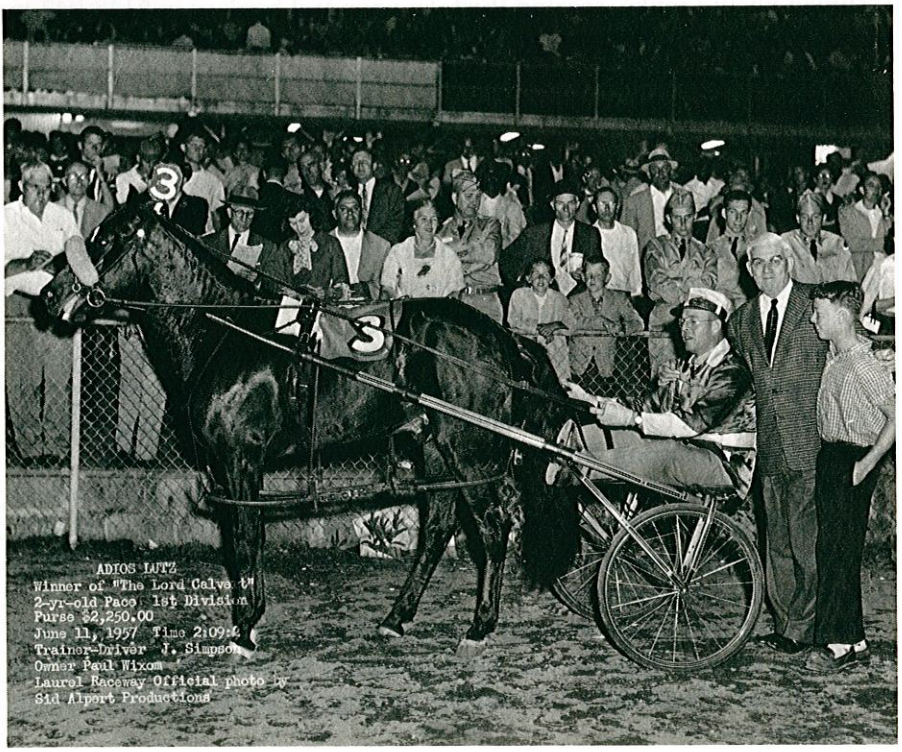
A Star's Pride filly—Armbro Flight—rounded out the sweep by heading all sophomore trotters, colts again included, in the money derby with $232,200. The fleet Flight was handled by Joe O'Brien for her breeders-owners, the Armstrong Brothers of Brampton, Ontario, Canada.

In all, 172 Hanover-bred two- and three-year-old colts and fillies went to post in 1965 and came waltzing home with total earnings of $1,266,702. The Shoe Farms' closest rival was Castleton Farm, whose 128 youngsters picked up $713,649 in spoils.

There were 543 Hanover-bred horses of all ages facing the starting gate during the season, and the vast herd collected $2,968,804 of the racing prizes offered. Castleton's 418 starters were good for $2,079,079 during the season.



John Simpson and Lawrence Sheppard collect Harness Tracks of America silver from Donald D. MacFarlane.



Two Simpsons—John, Sr. and Jr.—get congratulations from owner Paul Wixom after victory by Adios Lutz at Laurel Raceway in 1975. *Courtesy Sid Alpert.*

(Hanover-breds have actually led all earnings categories since records began being kept.)

On the sales front, the Shoe Farms sent a classy group of eighty colts and seventy-nine fillies to the annual yearling auction at Harrisburg, and eager bidders parted with $1,696,800 to take them home. The average was a whopping $10,672. Adios, as usual, showed the way, with his ten sons and daughters averaging $27,000.

Lawrence Sheppard had laid the law down to John Simpson, Sr.—come up and run the Farms or they would be sold—and Simpson had taken him at his word. But, like a diver emerging from the deep seas, Simpson tried to make his withdrawal from training and racing chores a gradual thing. He still managed to handle 107 driving assignments over the season—down from 233 in 1964—and finished the year with $141,764 in purses won.

John Simpson, Jr., wearing the maroon and white silks like his dad, took up the slack. Junior went to post 160 times—up from 116 in '64—and added $85,291 to the stable's earnings.

In 1966, the senior Simpson, with Sheppard's eagle eye upon him, would start only forty-eight times, while Junior would get the call on 244 occasions.

The transition would please Lawrence Sheppard no end.

17
THE END OF AN ERA

"OLD SIMPSON, he doesn't know what he's getting into. He thinks he's worked hard all his life, but wait'll I'm gone and he's left with all of this."

That was Lawrence Sheppard talking, directing his comment at Archie Mudge, or K. D. Owen, or Paul Spears, or some other close friend or associate. He made the same remark several times in both 1966 and 1967, aiming it at Mudge, Owen, or Spears, but actually for the benefit of John Simpson, who was invariably present when it was voiced.

The message was delivered in jest—Sheppard would always end it with a sort of joyful snort—but it was a clear indication that he was fully cognizant of the seriousness of his illness. His worsening condition did not seem to concern him that much—not to the point of changing his lifestyle to any degree—but he was obviously worried about the future of the giant Standardbred breeding empire he had constructed.

In 1966 he insisted that Simpson read his will. "I don't want to do that," Simpson protested.

"You read it," Sheppard said firmly, handing him the document. Then he asked, "How old are you now?"

"I'm forty-six."

"That gives Hanover about twenty more years; then that'll be the end of it."

"Oh, hell, there'll be somebody to come along and carry on after I'm gone," Simpson commented.

Two great friends—Simpson and Sheppard—in the stable area of the Harrisburg sales arena.

"Well, if it ever gets to the place where you don't want to run it, or it's not economically sound, or the horse business goes to hell, just disperse it."

"You wouldn't disperse it; you wouldn't sell those horses."

"I know it," Sheppard agreed, "but you can."

"No," Simpson said flatly, "I'm not, either."

Then Sheppard smiled, clearly relieved. Simpson knew that any other answer would have broken Shep's heart. "He could never have seen this farm dispersed, the horses sold," Simpson stated years later.

Charlotte Sheppard said her husband was in failing health for ten years and in the process of dying the last three of them. "But he never complained, as long as he could get to John Simpson. He could be the

sickest person you ever saw, and yet walk right out of the house to go and see John and the horses."

Helen Bennett, Sheppard's private nurse during the last year of his life, learned of Shep's devotion to Simpson the hard way. Sheppard was in the Hanover General Hospital, his lungs filled with fluid, his heart not doing its job. He was in oxygen, his breathing badly impaired, when Charlotte Sheppard arrived to visit him. "Don't let her get too comfortable, she'll stay too long," he cracked to his nurse.

"He wanted me there in the hospital, but I don't think he wanted me to know just how sick he was," Charlotte Sheppard commented. "He made a joke out of it to hide his illness."

Mrs. Sheppard was barely out of the room when John Simpson arrived in a rush. In the past, when Simpson heard that Sheppard was hospitalized, he would simple locate his room and barge in. This time when he tried it he was greeted by a very stern Helen Bennett, who was new on the job and didn't have the vaguest idea who John Simpson was. "He's very, very ill, and he can't have visitors," Mrs. Bennett reported.

"Please tell him I was asking about him," Simpson said.

The nurse returned to her patient and told him that a man named Simpson had inquired about him. Oxygen tent and all, Sheppard rose from the pillows and growled disgustedly, "Jesus Christ, lady, don't you know who John Simpson is? He's the best Goddamn horse driver in the world."

"Then I guess you want to see him."

"You're damn right I do!" Sheppard yelled.

Helen Bennett, recalling the incident, was afraid that Sheppard would suffer another heart attack, all because she'd left Simpson standing out in the corridor.

Sheppard was in and out of the hospital several times during his last three years, but he always managed to follow the careers of the colts and fillies his farms and stallions had produced. He followed them at the tracks where they performed when his health allowed, and he followed them from his sick bed.

He was very proud of Bret Hanover, who continued on his merry way in 1966, terrorizing his rivals, swooping up record earnings, reducing the all-time pacing record to 1:54, then slicing it again to 1:53.3. He took sustenance from the success of Dancer Hanover, whose sons Romeo Hanover and Romulus Hanover, full brothers, were easily the class of the sophomore and freshman pacing ranks. He thrilled to Kerry Way's victory in the Hambletonian, knowing full well that she was the fifth offspring of Star's Pride to capture the great trotting stake. (Star's Pride youngsters finished one, two, three in the 1966 Hambo.) And he was much pleased with the progress of other fine products like Armbro Flight

(Star's Pride), Bonjour Hanover (Adios), and Elma (Hickory Smoke), the latter owned by the Sheppards and the winner of the $50,000 Prix de France in Paris.

In 1967, Romeo Hanover and Romulus Hanover were still dominating their classes, Golden Money Maker (Tar Heel) was winning the Fox Stake, Sunnie Tar (Tar Heel) was proving the best of freshman pacing fillies, Ole Hanover (Star's Pride) topped her two-year-old trotting rivals, and a big, strapping colt called Nevele Pride (Star's Pride) gave every sign of becoming the best trotter Stanley Dancer had ever handled. Before the season was out, Nevele Pride, owned by the Nevele Acres Stable, would win twenty-six of twenty-nine heats and earn a record $222,923.

Members of the U.S. Harness Writers Association, recognizing Shep's gigantic contributions to the sport, not only in 1967 but for the preceding thirty-seven years, paid him their highest tribute in November: they elected him to harness racing's Living Hall of Fame. At the time, he was the honorary life president of the U.S. Trotting Association; vice-

Famed columnist Drew Pearson is hosted by the president of the Hanover Shoe Farms in 1959.

Nevele Pride and Stanley Dancer. Pride was by Hanover's Star's Pride.

president of the Hambletonian Society; vice-president and trustee of the Hall of Fame of the Trotter; and steward of the Trotting Horse Club of America.

Sheppard had expected a big year on the sales front in 1967—the final crops of Adios and Hoot Mon, both of whom had died in 1965, were in the consignment—and he got it. A total of 188 yearlings, averaging $12,137,

netted a gross total of $2,281,800. The seven Adios youngsters put through the sales ring attracted $367,000 in bids, a staggering average of $52,429.

Bart Hanover, a full brother to Bret Hanover (both were named after characters in the Maverick television series), topped the sale at $105,000. Close behind were Pecos Hanover (Star's Pride-Pebble Hanover) at $100,000, Supreme Hanover (Adios-Susie Hanover) at $90,000, and Spring Hanover (Star's Pride-Sprite Rodney) at $70,000. Pecos Hanover and Spring Hanover later gained fame under their new names, Nevele Major and Spritely Way.

Residents of the Hanover stallion barns at the time—with Adios and Hoot Mon gone—included Star's Pride, Tar Heel, Torpid, Bullet Hanover, Dancer Hanover, Caleb, Hickory Smoke, Lehigh Hanover, Sampson Hanover, Gamecock, Knight Dream, Ayres, and Speedy Count. The first crops by Ayres and Speedy Count had not reached market yet.

Sheppard was in bad shape at the time of the sale—"He was sick, so sick," his wife remembered—but he attended, nonetheless. He rode an electric golf cart as he moved from the Hanover stable area to the sales arena and back. Simpson was often a passenger as the cart traveled back and forth, and Sheppard was generally in deep conversation with his lieutenant, animately discussing affairs of the auction, ignoring his infirmities. Friends who saw him at the sale thought he looked terrible, but then he hadn't really looked well for years.

The end of his life was not far off—the people close to him knew it and so did he—but he had no special instructions for John Simpson, his chosen heir as Hanover's head man. "You and Charlotte are going to have horses up to here," he said, pointing to his neck, "but you'll be all right. You're the boss, and that's the way Charlotte wants it. You'll get along."

He told his wife that she would have no worries concerning the Farms. "You've got John Simpson and Paul Spears to run things for you, and they're all you need."

In January of 1968 he quit smoking, but it was much too late to do him any substantive good. His heart and lungs were too far gone to save, and when he was admitted to Hanover General Hospital—the hospital his family and the Clinton Myers family had founded and funded—it was for the last time.

He lingered for three weeks. On Monday, February 26, 1968, at 8:46 A.M., Lawrence Baker Sheppard died at the age of seventy. Charlotte Sheppard was at the hospital with him. So was John Simpson. He had died of congestive heart failure, of emphysema, "of everything," according to his widow.

An era had ended, an institution had departed. The sport of harness

racing would never be quite the same. Neither would the shoe manufacturing industry. Nor the Borough of Hanover, Pennsylvania.

The eulogies, formal and informal, written and spoken by the people who knew him best, told the story of Lawrence Baker Sheppard.

Charlotte Sheppard: "I said to him one time, 'Doesn't anyone ever come up to you, slap you on the back, and say, 'How ya doin', Shep?' 'Hell, no,' he answered, 'they wouldn't dare!' . . . He was as funny as a crutch, as dear as anyone in the world. His heart was bigger than he was. He was so proud of his horses. . . . He made the kids be obedient. He'd tell them, 'Do anything, but don't worry the old lady'. . . . He was a man's man. He loved Johnny Simpson like a son. . . . If there was one thing you weren't supposed to do, it was lie to him. And he never lied to anyone himself."

John Simpson, Sr.: "He was dead game and always went first class. If he was your friend, he was your friend. But if he wasn't your friend, you knew that, too. . . . He was a strong-minded individual with immense intelligence. He was one of the rare few sons of wealthy, successful fathers who actually went on to improve and enlarge the business his father had started, the Hanover Shoe Company. . . . He was a great boss and a great horse owner. He never told me how to train or drive a horse, although he could do both very well himself. When I had a bad year, he sympathized with me instead of getting angry or disgusted. One particularly bad year he told me, 'You didn't have any luck this year. Go ahead and buy whatever two-year-olds you want; I want you to have a big season next year'. . . . He treated me more like a son than an employee. . . . He was a softee, one of those soft-hearted people. He liked to give the impression he was a mean old man, but he really wasn't that at all. Some malcontent that really didn't deserve help, he'd go out of his way to help a person like that. Try to reform them. We've had them here at the farm. Many were beyond help, but he'd try to help them."

Paul Spears: "He was a great guy. He was good to people, he was honest, he was loyal. If you were his friend, he'd stick by you right to the bitter end, and it didn't matter who he had to take on along the way. If he told you something, that's the way it was going to be—you could count on it. . . . He always had something going on; sometimes three or four things at a time, our antitrust suit, a fight with the New York Racing Commission, a battle with the Pennsylvania Commission, the local School Board. Always something. He enjoyed controversy. He wasn't the kind of fellow who went looking for it, but when a fight came up, he got in it. . . . There will never be another like him, never."

Jim Harrison (from his obituary on Sheppard in *Hoof Beats*): ". . . He spent more than 40 years piecing together a giant jigsaw puzzle of breeding that overlapped the boundaries of race tracks, countries and

continents and which, at his death, cast a shadow so large that no trotter or pacer raced anywhere in the world without falling unders its heady influence. . . . No roster of season's champions, stakes winners, money earners or high-priced yearlings ever appeared in recent years without being dominated by the Hanover name and breeding. And if ever one man accomplished all this by himself, Lawrence Sheppard was that man. How did he do it? I offer testimony as one who sat at his right hand for seven years that he did it by being brainy, practical and courageous; by outthinking the competition, by putting his money where his mouth was and by refusing ever to push the panic button when he made a mistake. . .

He has now joined the ranks of the great trotting horse breeders who went before him and he stands as the giant among them. . . ."

Archie Mudge: "Lawrence Sheppard was a rugged individualist, plain spoken, thoroughly independent. His knowledge of the shoe industry was phenomenal, his knowledge of Standardbred breeding unbelievable. . . . He could be difficult at times, but he did so many great things for his company, for his community and for individuals, that I couldn't begin to recount them. Any time any of our employees got into trouble of any kind, he was always the first to see what could be done to take care of their problems. He helped many young people to go to college and never wanted any credit for it. . . . He was a great man in every respect."

Funeral services for Sheppard were held at the Annunciation of the Blessed Virgin Mary Church in McSherrystown. Burial was in Mt. Olivet Cemetery. Bearers were from among his close friends and associates at both the Shoe Company and the Farms—Ned Fitzgibbons, Gordon King, Archie Mudge, Paul Spears, John Simpson, and Clyde Sterner.

Survivors included his widow, his three daughters, Mrs. W. Todd (Charlotte N.) DeVan, Mrs. Lorne (Alma E.) Tolhurst, and Mrs. Patricia A. Winder, his brother, Robert H. Sheppard, and ten grandchildren.

His final will, a twenty-page document dated May 25, 1967, described an estate worth something between five and six million dollars. Included were seventy percent ownership of the Hanover Shoe Farms, fifty thousand shares of The Hanover Shoe, Inc., and twelve thousand shares of the National Central Bank. Most of the estate was bequeathed to the family, but Sheppard did not forget some of his favorite institutions. A gift of $750,000 went to the Delone Catholic High School in McSherrystown for construction of a gymnasium as a memorial to his son, Lawrence B. (Sonny) Sheppard, Jr., while another $500,000 in Shoe Farms' stock went to the University of Pennsylvania to fund a chair in the School of Veterinary Medicine.

Nowhere in the document was there any hint that Lawrence Sheppard desired anything but a continuation of the Hanover Shoe Farms. He was satisfied that John Simpson, with help from Paul Spears, Horace E.

Always a strong supporter of the University of Pennsylvania and its Veterinary School, Sheppard received an honorary degree of Doctor of Humane Letters in 1964. Dr. Gaylord P. Harnell, U. of P. president (left) and Gov. William Scranton presented the award. *Courtesy Jules Schick.*

Smith, and the Farms' staff, would pursue the standards of excellence that he had set and doggedly stalked for so many years.

His death left a cavernous void at the Harrisburg auction in the autumn of 1968. His name was on the lips of hundreds of persons who wandered through the vast sales complex and participated in the bidding. "What a shame Shep isn't here to see it," they said.

What Shep did not live to see was Hanover's first three million-dollar yearling sale. One hundred seventy seven colts and fillies produced by Sheppard's beloved Farms sold for a momentous $3,222,200, an all-time record for a single farm's consignment, whether Standardbred or Thoroughbred.

More than one hundred of the youngsters brought $10,000 or more. Nine of them brought from $50,000 to $115,000. The overall average was $18,204, a record for a large Standardbred consignment.

The mark of Lawrence Sheppard was on every one of them. John Simpson, the new president and manager of the Shoe Farms, had some large shoes to fill. Hanover shoes, of course.

18
CARRYING ON

"BOTH HARNESS RACING and Hanover Shoe Farms have suffered a great loss with the passing of our beloved president and founder, Lawrence B. Sheppard. Mr. Sheppard, the great man that he was, recognized this eventuality, and established and staffed his organization so that it would continue to function, guided by the same high standards which he represented.

"Hanover Shoe Farms is proud of its contributions to Harness Racing and its revered status in the Standardbred World. Our experienced personnel, our facilities and most importantly, our great Band of Broodmares and Stallions are without equal throughout the world. We pledge to maintain the same principles and high standards which for the last forty-two years have made the name HANOVER the GREATEST NAME IN HARNESS RACING."

One of John Simpson's first actions as the new president of Hanover was to pass on the above message to all the Shoe Farms' "friends and customers." Simpson was serving notice that he and his staff had every intention of carrying on the tradition of superiority that Lawrence Sheppard had created.

Yet, in the privacy of his office in the new administration building at the main farm, the new chief executive brooded over just how he was going to meet the challenge of those brave words. He knew that Hanover had bred, or its stallions had sired, the winners of thirteen of the last twenty

Hambletonian Stakes. And he knew that on the pacing side, Hanover and its sires had produced the winners of sixteen of the twenty-two Little Brown Jugs raced to that time, including eleven straight during a span that started in 1956. How do you keep a record like that alive? How do you improve on it?

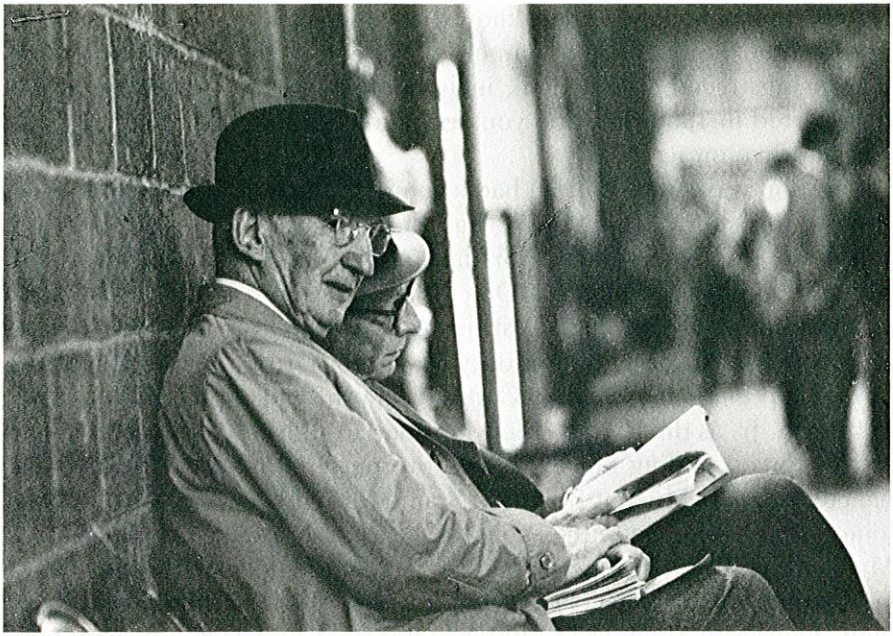
Simpson was aware that he had a competent, thoroughly professional staff behind him. Paul Spears was the executive vice-president and treasurer, the "money man" for the Farms. Horace E. Smith was still secretary and general counsel. Don Millar, the taciturn, former executive vice-president of the U.S. Trotting Association, was now the general superintendent, succeeding Monty Moncrief. Dr. G. R. Greenhoff, the former top medicine man for Castleton Farm, had replaced Dr. A. W. Patterson, Jr. as the Farms' chief veterinarian. Burnell Hesson remained as the corresponding officer. Clyde Sterner continued as the maintainance foreman. Murray Brown, a Standardbred breeding student, had joined the team as public relations director, replacing Charles C. Marshall, Jr. Monty Moncrief had moved over to become the supervisor of yearling preparations, succeeding the late Marvin Childs. And Betty Nolt, Lawrence Sheppard's ultraloyal personal secretary, was now John Simpson's ultraloyal personal secretary.

Don Millar, the ex-USTA executive, was an extremely valuable addition to the staff, in Simpson's view. Millar, used to handling the myriad affairs of the giant trotting association, brought with him a quiet efficiency and the ability to wrestle successfully with a dozen diverse details simultaneously. His precision was appreciated.

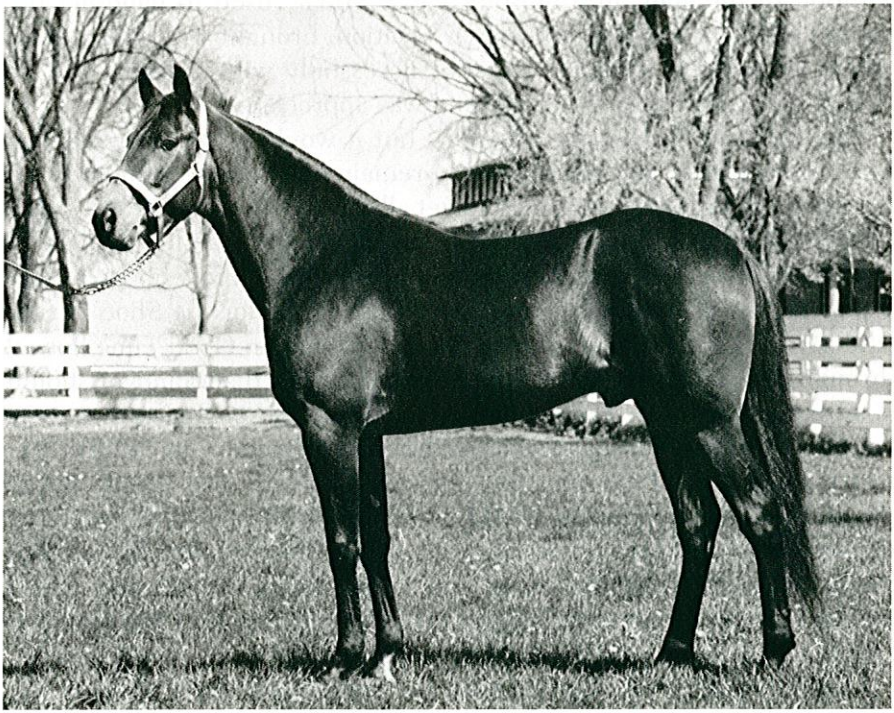
Hanover had the people, all right, but it would need new stallions, fresh broodmares, and more acres to remain out front in Standardbred breeding, and Simpson resolved to get all three as years went by. That's the way Shep would have wanted it, and that's the way it would be.

The new Hanover president made his first major move in late 1968, acquiring the devastating young pacer Best Of All for the Shoe Farms' stud barn. The rich blood of small but potent stallion Good Time flowed through the veins of Best Of All, and Simpson felt that Hanover should possess a supply of it. The young sire's dam was Besta Hanover, tracing back to the Shoe Farms' great Bertha Hanover and Guy McKinney, which made him all the more attractive in Simpson's eyes. And, like all the stallions John Simpson would ever bid for, Best Of All boasted a racing record inferior to very few. Raced by the late Jim Hackett for owner Samuel Huttenbauer of Cincinnati, Best Of All had paced twenty-six two-minute miles (placing him behind only Bret Hanover and Dan Patch at the time) and earned $548,899 over his three-season career.

Simpson was of the opinion that no horse would make a great sire unless he had been a great race horse. Best Of All passed that test with flying colors.



Clarence F. Gaines, one of the sport's top owners and breeders, takes a break in the stable area of the Harrisburg sales arena.



Best Of All. *Courtesy Winants Bros.*

The new Hanover chief made no radical moves in 1969, yet the year turned out to be an excellent one. Nevele Pride captured Harness Horse of the Year honors for the third straight time after being sold to the Stoner Creek Stud Farm at Paris, Kentucky, in a $3,000,000 transaction that set a record for the sale of a Standardbred horse. Simpson and Hanover had expressed an interest in purchasing Pride, but had dropped out of the running after talking with the colt's owners—the Slutsky family and Louis Resnick, all of Ellenville, New York. It was obvious the price tag was going to be steep, and, after all, Hanover already owned the original Nevele Pride mold, the venerable Star's Pride himself.

While it was true that Star's Pride had some age on him—he was twenty-two at the time—the sire of Nevele Pride was still hale and hearty and gave every indication that he would be around for many more years, that he could be counted upon to turn out scores of other great trotting colts and fillies.

And there was another reason that Simpson, à la Lawrence Sheppard, did not go hunting Nevele Pride with a blank check. Hanover also had a son of Star's Pride in its stallion barn, Mrs. Sheppard's Triple Crown-winning Ayres. And, unless Simpson's thirty-plus years in racing had all been in vain, had yielded no knowledge whatsoever, that young stud looked like a winner. Ayres's first crop had sashayed through the sales ring in 1968 and had brought $19,353 a copy, a stunning figure for a green stallion.

One of the Ayres's sons who did not make the journey to Harrisburg was Timothy T., a youngster out of farm superintendent Don Millar's and John Thro's great broodmare Flicka Frost. John Simpson, Sr. held the registration papers on this one, having purchased him privately as a yearling, with son Johnny, Jr. doing most of the training and driving. Timothy T. would enjoy a fine freshman season in 1969, then blossom into a great champion with another year under his harness.

Simpson's first year at the Hanover helm also saw Lindy's Pride (originally Galahad Hanover) and Laverne Hanover win the 1969 Hambletonian and Little Brown Jug respectively to keep Hanover's virtual stranglehold on the two classic races intact. Lindy's Pride, a Star's Pride son handled by Howard Beissinger, was a fine two-year-old, and an even better three-year-old, winning trotting's "Big Five" races and earning election as Trotter of the Year for his age. Laverne Hanover, a Hanover-bred offspring of Tar Heel, won twenty-two of twenty-three starts as a freshman for Billy Haughton, and became the first two-year-old to win in better than two minutes on a half-mile track, capturing the Battle of Saratoga in 1:59.4 in June. Then he returned in 1969 to sweep up $290,668 in purses and sophomore pacing honors. Laverne was owned by Thomas W. Murphy, Jr., the son of the famous horseman who had been Lawrence Sheppard's partner on horses like Bullet Hanover.

Laverne was but one of the young horses who had helped to make Tar Heel the world's leading pacing sire now that Adios had gone to his just reward. In 1969, Tar Heel became the first sire in harness racing history—and the first stallion of any breed—to send out sons and daughters who won more than two million dollars in a single season. He had already passed Adios in the race to produce two-minute two-year-olds, leading the late stallion seventeen to fourteen, with many great years ahead of him in which to stretch his lead. In 1969, he also became the leading sire of 2:05 and 2:10 two-year-olds, sending on twenty-four of the former and forty-three of the latter. Five of his freshman sons and daughters took two-minute records during the year, and no Standardbred stallion had done that before.

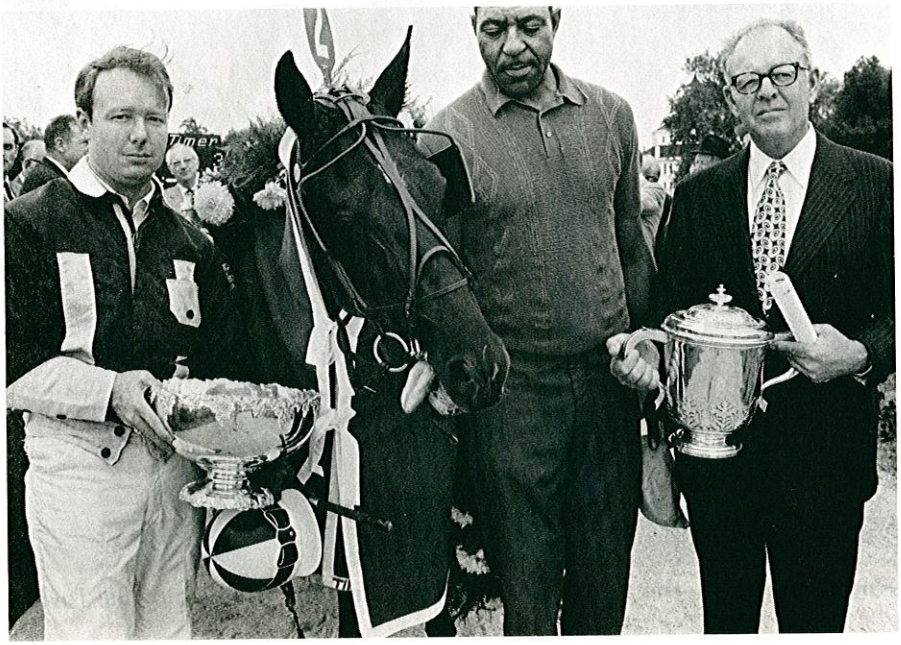
It was small wonder that Tar Heel's yearlings brought prices like $57,000, $50,000, $47,000, $45,000, and $40,000 at the Harrisburg sale that fall. Yet, it was Dancer Hanover who made the headlines, who led the entire parade. A Dancer Hanover colt called Froehlich Hanover drew a high bid of $125,000 to smash the yearling sales record hung up only a year earlier by his full-brother, Romunda Hanover ($115,000). Just as the Nevele Acres had changed Romunda's name to Nevele Bigshot, the successful bidders on Froehlich Hanover, Thomas A. and Mildred Dexter, sent their colt to the races under the name of Dexter Hanover. A week later the Dexters sold quarter interests in the colt to both John Simpson, Sr. and Jr. John, Jr. became the colt's trainer. Both Dancer colts were out of super-broodmare Romola Hanover, one very large factor in making them so expensive.

John Simpson, Sr. kept his hand in training and driving during the '69 campaign—he started forty-four times, won ten races, and earned $63,713 in purses. But it was Johnny, Jr. who was the "main man" in the sulky now, racing 249 times, steering sixty-eight horses into the winner's circle, gathering up $244,449 in prize money, and posting a .406 UDRS average. The senior Simpson, his time consumed by duties at the Farms and beginning to suffer vision problems, would take only seven more horses to post in his career—two in 1970 and five in 1971.

The senior Simpson had driven Ayres to victory in the 1964 Hambletonian, but new generations of both man and horse were standing in Victory Lane at Du Quoin in 1970. Johnny Simpson, Jr. was the man and Timothy T., the son of Ayres, was the trotter who stood patiently in the flower-bedecked lane while photographers asked for "just one more." Timothy T. also listed the rich and prestigious Colonial and Kentucky Futurity among his stakes victories as he trotted to a division-leading $204,738 in racing salaries and easily won Three-Year-Old Trotter of the Year laurels. John Jr., at twenty-seven the youngest man to ever win the Hambletonian, finished the year with fifty-four triumphs and $410,849 in purses.

Family portrait—the two John Simpsons, Jr. and Sr. *Photo by Bill Taylor.*

To the victor of the Gold Cup Trot at Vernon downs go the spoils. Johnny and Lois Simpson accept trophy, while caretaker Charlie Coleman holds Timothy T.'s head. *Photo by Mike Taylor.*



The two Simpsons and faithful caretaker Charlie Coleman pose proudly with the fleet Timothy T. after Timmy and young Simpson won the 1970 Kentucky Futurity. *Courtesy* **Lexington Herald-Leader.**

Hanover's stallions enjoyed a big year across the racing spectrum. When the smoke had cleared on the '70 campaign, 302 miles in two minutes or better had been recorded in North America and horses by Hanover sires had accounted for fifty-eight of them.

Columbia George, with Roland Beaulieu up, is a promising young sire at Hanover Shoe Farms. *Photo by George Smallsreed, courtesy USTA.*

John Simpson, Sr. made his second solo stallion purchase during the year, spending Hanover's money to land the fleet, game, and popular Columbia George. Columbia George, by Good Time and out of The Widower daughter Mitzi Eden, had been bred by Dr. and Mrs. George A. Smith, Jr. of Byram, Connecticut. George was the star of a one-horse stable campaigned by Roland and Blondie Beaulieu, a husband and wife team that traveled from track to track in a small camper, tugging the colt along in a small two-stall trailer. George had tendon problems on both front legs, injuries that often send horses into early retirement, but the Beaulieus kept him going from week to week with some of the most lavish, loving care seen in the sport in years.

George reciprocated by winning stake after stake, setting a world record of 1:58.4 en route to earnings of $108,829 as a two-year-old, and collecting a mark of 1:56 and $289,445 as a three-year-old. The only thing stopping him from sweeping the boards of divisional honors in his second year at the races was a colt called Most Happy Fella, a Meadow Skipper pacer owned by Stanley and Rachel Dancer's Egyptian Acres Stable. The two rivals each notched sixteen victories in the 1970 racing wars, although the Dancer colt had a small edge over his foe, especially in the king-sized stakes.

While Simpson was the man who selected Columbia George for the Hanover stud barn, he first discussed it with his "cabinet"—Paul Spears and Horace Smith. He expected no argument from the friendly pair and he received none. Columbia George would quickly make all three look good.

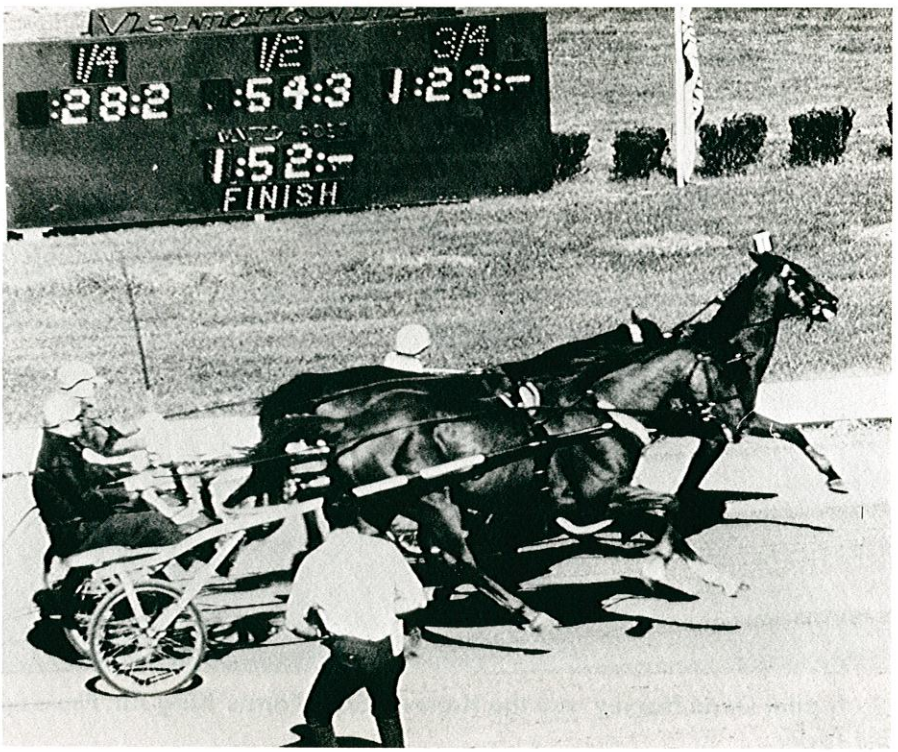
The same was true a year later when Simpson and Hanover corralled history's fastest harness horse, Steady Star. Steady Star, by Steady Beau (a son of Hanover's Tar Heel) and out of Avaway, was handled by Joe O'Brien for the Dave L. Brown Estate (principally Mr. and Mrs. Chester V. Ault). He had taken a two-year-old record of 1:58.4, then stunned a Lexington Red Mile crowd in 1970 by pacing a 1:54 mile in a time trial.

Steady Star raced well as a four-year-old in 1971, but no one, with the possible exception of little Joe O'Brien, could have predicted the mile he turned in at Lexington late in the season. On a hot, dry, autumn afternoon, the free-legged champion shot around the roomy Red Mile in 1:52 in a race against the clock, not merely breaking, but crushing the 1:53.3 standard hoisted by Bret Hanover over the same track in 1966.

Unequaled speed, an absolutely pure gait without the aid of hopples, and the fact that his sire, Steady Beau, was proving to be one hell of a stallion were attributes that Simpson and his brain trust found irresistible. When his harness was removed for the last time, Steady Star headed for Hanover.

Simpson, like Lawrence Sheppard, kept a mental file on every colt and

Joe O'Brien and Steady Star return to the winner's circle after making harness racing history over Lexington's Red Mile.



Two running horse prompters accompany Steady Star (Joe O'Brien) on his miraculous 1:52 time trial at Lexington. Steady Star now resides in the Hanover Shoe Farms' stud barn. *Photo by George Smallsreed, courtesy USTA.*

filly turned out by Hanover, as well as most of the youngsters sired by Hanover stallions. He knew who was training each colt (and like Sheppard, grieved when they landed in inept hands) and how well the animal was doing.

He was especially interested in how the Hanover-bred fillies—and those of other breeders—were progressing because he and the Farms were constantly in the market for prospective broodmares. "If you're not careful, you have a tendency to pay too much attention to your stallion roster, and too little to your broodmare band," he pointed out. "But no breeding farm is going to reach the top, or remain on top, unless it consistently strives to improve its band of mares."

(Simpson has practiced what he preached. Through 1976, he has added nearly two hundred mares and fillies to the Hanover band, spending millions of dollars in the process. Some were already great producers. Others were top race fillies. All boasted impeccable breeding. In the quest of excellence, Simpson has also trimmed the band, disposing of over one hundred mares that failed to meet the Farms' standards. Hanover's broodmare band is every bit as impressive as its stallion roster, which is as high a tribute as can be paid.)

Staff pilot Gene Harvey and the Hanover Shoe Farms' King Air. *Photo by Bill Taylor.*

To keep abreast of the racing situation, he followed the Grand Circuit closely, flying from track to track with new staff pilot Gene Harvey, a genial jack-of-many-trades, in the Farms' handsome Beech King Air aircraft. Lawrence Sheppard had bought Hanover's first airplane back in the early 1960s—he claimed it was his wife's plane—then replaced it with the King Air, seating eight, five years later. The Hanover planes were not only used to ferry Sheppard and Simpson to the races, but, more importantly, to fly Hanover colt cutomers into the Farms for presale inspections of the yearlings.

The new Hanover chief was also prone to fly in to wherever Johnny Simpson, Jr. had the racing stable headquartered, whether it was Vernon Downs, Saratoga Raceway or some other track that catered to stables with young, Grand Circuit-type colts. The younger Simpson was well aware that his barns had better be in tip-top shape when the boss arrived, even if the boss happened to be his father. The elder Simpson had always run a first-class ship and expected no less from his son. He accepted no excuses, even valid ones like the fact that solid, dependable help was becoming harder and harder to find and hold as the years slipped by.

"He was tough on me, no question about it," Johnny, Jr. said several years later. "While I might have resented it at the time, I've grown to appreciate those lessons over the years. You can't operate a Grand Circuit stable and have success with it if you run a sloppy outfit. My father was probably the greatest 'detail' man in the business, and I hope some of it rubbed off on me. He was a great teacher, and when he wasn't around, there were always great horsemen like Mr. [John] Thomas and Joe McFadden to show me how it was done."

Young John Simpson would head the stable through the 1973 season, then leave it to open his own public outfit. Glyden Willis, a youngish veteran who had spent several seasons with famed horseman Earle Avery, and Jimmy Simpson, fresh out of college and now shooting for a career with the horses, would campaign the horses owned by Simpson, Sr. and the Sheppard family. A year later, the capable Jimmy Arthur would succeed Willis as the Hanover trainer, with Willis joining Johnny Simpson, Jr. in his public stable.

And why did young Johnny Simpson leave the nest to hang out his own public sign? "It was a matter of timing, I guess," he reported. "Jimmy was coming up, wanting to go with horses, and I thought there would be a little too much family involved. My dad had prepared me, had educated me, and I felt it was time to make the break. I was anxious to go out on my own, and I told him that. Now that I do run a public stable, I get along better with him than I ever did. I still train some horses for him."

Johnny, Jr. was still the Hanover-Simpson-Sheppard man in 1971, however, when Timothy T. was winding up his three-year span at the

races. Timothy earned more glory for Hanover, as did Laverne Hanover, Kentucky, Nansemond, Savoir, Super Bowl, Delmonica Hanover, and Romalie Hanover—all either Hanover-bred or by Hanover sires.

But even such prejudiced and partial observers as John Simpson, Sr. and Murray Brown had to admit that the Harness Horse of the Year was a non-Hanover product by the name of Albatross. Albatross, completing his second spectacular season at the races, was a son of the Stoner Creek Stud's young stallion Meadow Skipper (although he was out of the Hanover-bred Voodoo Hanover, a Dancer Hanover daughter).

Albatross, bred almost as a lark by five star-crossed individuals who later sold him, his dam, and a full sister in a package deal for $11,000, had won fourteen of seventeen starts as a two-year-old, pacing to $183,540 worth of riches for trainer-driver Harry Harvey and owner Bert V. James of Windsor, Ontario, Canada. Shortly before he started his second season in 1971, James had sold the colt in a $1,250,000 transaction, with the new ownership, the Albatross Stable, transferring him to the Stanley Dancer Stable.

Dancer and the new owners had enjoyed incredible success with Albatross in 1971. The colt had won twenty-five of twenty-eight contests, earned a record $558,009, and lowered the all-time racing record to 1:54.4. The only thing worth winning that he failed to capture was the Little Brown Jug, bowing to Tar Heel son Nansemond and driver Herve Filion in the pacing classic.

Ironically, Simpson and Brown were delighted that an offspring of a Hanover stallion had won the Brown Jug, but they suffered from a bad case of envy the rest of the season. Albatross was obviously a super horse, sporting perfect conformation, excellent breeding, and unheard of speed. The two Hanover men were utterly convinced that Albatross was destined for an outstanding stallion career when his racing days were over. They were also utterly convinced that Albatross was beyond their grasp, that he could not and would not enjoy that great stallion career on the grounds of the Hanover Shoe Farms.

Alan J. Leavitt controlled a large piece of the Albatross Stable, and Leavitt was a Standardbred breeder himself, owning Lana Lobell Farms, a large spread only a skip and jump away from the Shoe Farms in Hanover. The agreement setting up the Albatross Stable called for Albatross to retire to Leavitt's farm at the conclusion of his racing span.

There was no way that the ambitious and astute Leavitt would let Albatross slip through his hands. There was no way that Albatross could conceivably end up at the Shoe Frams rather than at Lana Lobell.

Or was there?

19

A BONANZA NAMED ALBATROSS

ALBATROSS started his third and final racing season with a loss at Liberty Bell Park on March 11, 1972. He was only a pair of noses in arrears, but the chart showed him finishing third behind tough and tested pacing stars Isle Of Wight and Miss Conna Adios.

Some members of the Albatross Stable, loyal Stanley Dancer patrons like Hilda Silverstein, Hazel Shriner, and John W. Rollins, took the loss in stride. They knew that Albatross could not be expected to be in mid-season form in his first start of the campaign and thought it was no disgrace to bow narrowly to two fleet veterans who had several 1972 races under their harnesses.

Other members of the syndicate, mainly Bert James, Alan Leavitt, and Dr. Glen Brown (who represented the Armstrong Brothers' interest), were not only disappointed, but a bit disgruntled over the fact that the colt had tasted defeat in his seasonal debut.

And then Albatross lost his second start, bowing again to Isle Of Wight in a $50,000 event at Windsor Raceway, Ontario, on March 19.

The natives—James, Leavitt, and Brown, and now joined by stable partners Ira Helman and Leon Machiz—were not only restless, but downright surly. They were, in fact, threatening to withhold the horse from further competition unless Stanley Dancer could guarantee that he would win his next start.

Unfortunately, this message was delivered to Dancer while Dancer was flat on his back in the University of Pennsylvania Hospital, trying to recover from a painful fracture of the tip of his spine. Dancer, long the victim of injuries and illnesses that would have sent the average trainer-driver into retirement years before, had hurt his spine in a freak accident at Pompano Park, Florida, on March 17. A fence he was sitting on had collapsed, sending him crashing to the ground, the tail of his spine landing on a broken rail. Outfitted in a "traveling cast," ignoring his doctor's advice, Dancer had left the hospital long enough to fly up to Windsor to drive Albatross in the Provincial Cup, his second unsuccessful start of the season.

A meeting of Albatross Stable members was arranged in Dancer's hospital room following the loss at Windsor. The dissident faction, which controlled a majority of the syndicate, was insistent that Stanley not race the horse again until he was positive he would win. Dancer, supported by the feisty and faithful Louis Silverstein, husband of Hilda Silverstein, argued that no driver in the history of harness racing could flat out guarantee that a given horse could win a given race.

The matter was finally resolved after a long and bitter argument in the sick room. Dancer would start Albatross in a $40,000 Free For All at Liberty Bell Park that Saturday night. Chances are, Albatross would win and the argument would prove academic.

Albatross did not win, however. Dancer and his horse were bounced around in traffic, practically interfered with on two occasions, and could not catch Isle Of Wight after they emerged from the racing congestion. The super pacer had dropped his third contest, and the dissidents were after Stanley Dancer's scalp.

A meeting of syndicate members was hastily arranged at the Hampshire House Hotel in New York City on Monday, March 27. James, Leavitt, Dr. Brown, Helman, and Machiz were there. So was Louis Silverstein, accompanied by his attorney, S. Jay Cooke of Philadelphia. Against Silverstein's vehement protests, the group voted to oust Dancer as the trainer-driver of Albatross and replace him with New York City-based horseman Lee Broglio. Herve Filion, it was hoped, would drive the horse in subsequent races.

Silverstein, a scrappy, self-made millionaire, who loved Stan Dancer like a son, emerged from the meeting with an anger about as tall as the New York skyscrapers around him. He directed lawyer Cooke to secure an injunction that would prevent the James-Leavitt group from removing Albatross from the Dancer stable—based on the ground that it was clearly understood from the inception of the syndicate that Dancer would train and drive the horse as long as he raced.

Then Silverstein went a step further. He decided to buy the horse, whatever the cost, to preserve him for Stanley Dancer. When Cooke pointed out that Silverstein had no farm where he might stand Albatross as a stallion, the Philadelphia industrialist shot back happily, "If worst came to worst, I'd just have to tell Hilda to clear the furniture out of the living room and we'd have to keep him there."

Actually, Silverstein was hoping he could interest a major breeding farm in purchasing a large chunk of the new syndicate he was bent upon forming. As negotiations to buy out the dissidents sputtered along that week, Silverstein asked Dancer to help in the hunt to find a breeding establishment with desire and cash enough to join the new ownership. Dancer immediately called an old friend.

John Simpson knew nothing of Stanley's problems over Albatross until he got the phone call. And then, because Dancer had a fondness for kidding the Hanover president, Simpson refused to believe him. "Why, in all my years in the business, I'd never heard of a great horseman like Stanley being replaced under such circumstances," he commented.

Once he had convinced Simpson that he was not putting him on, Dancer posed the big question: Would Hanover be interested in purchasing a substantial piece of Albatross?

Would it ever! shouted Simpson.

John Simpson, Murray Brown, and other members of the Hanover brain trust had long ago given up on Albatross, grimly positive that he was headed for a competitor's stud barn. And here he was, being offered to Hanover on a silver platter. Or, more accurately, a golden platter, since the price was liable to be on the steep side.

The figure $2,500,000 turned up early in Silverstein's negotiations with the James gang—and was duly related to Simpson. When the James-Leavitt team balked at selling the colt at that figure, Silverstein offered to sell the minority's interest to the dissidents at that rate. He had no intention of actually selling—he wanted the horse, not the cash—but felt it might spur his opponents to action. The small ruse worked. James, Leavitt, Brown, Machiz, and Helman agreed. They would sell their seventy percent interest in Albatross for $1,750,000, making one hundred percent of the Meadow Skipper son worth $2,500,000. Happily, Silverstein accepted. Then he had to scurry around to round up the huge hunk of cash that James & Company demanded instantly.

Hanover, of course, wanted a controlling interest in Albatross, since he would be standing at the Shoe Farms at the conclusion of his racing days. Perfect, said Silverstein and the rest of the loyal Dancer patrons—Hilda Silverstein, Hazel Shriner, and John Rollins.

The new syndication of the champion divided the ownership into fifty

shares. Twenty-seven were purchased by the Hanover Shoe Farms. Hilda Silverstein increased her holdings to eight shares. Five each were retained by Mrs. Shriner and John Rollins. Dancer and Simpson bought two each, with Hal S. Jones, Hanover's farm superintendent, picking up the last of the shares.

Stanley Dancer puts the champion Albatross through his paces. *Photo by George Smallsreed, courtesy USTA.*

The contract named Dancer as the trainer-driver of Albatross, the Hanover Shoe Farms (Simpson) as the manager of the horse in stud. The new ownership chose the Amicable Stable as its name, a none-too-subtle dig at the disgruntled, bickering-prone old ownership.

Albatross, with Stan Dancer at the controls as usual, then reeled off ten straight victories, snapping track marks, obliterating stakes standards, and breaking world records as he went. One of his victories included a 1:56.2 world record at Liberty Bell Park, with Isle Of Wight a badly beaten entry in the contest. "Say," a rejuvenated Dancer told Philadelphia sports writer Jack Kiser, "how about sending a couple of wires for me. To Bert James and Alan Leavitt. Just say, 'Having a wonderful time. Wish you were here' "

Another of the triumphs during the long victory span was Albatross's epic 1:54.3 mile at Sportsman's Park, Chicago, on July 1. It was harness racing's fastest race mile ever by a pacer or trotter of any age or sex. And it was turned in over a five-eighths-mile track, not a mile track where the vast majority of such records were traditionally made.

Dancer had protested that there was nothing wrong with Albatross, and he had more than proved it.

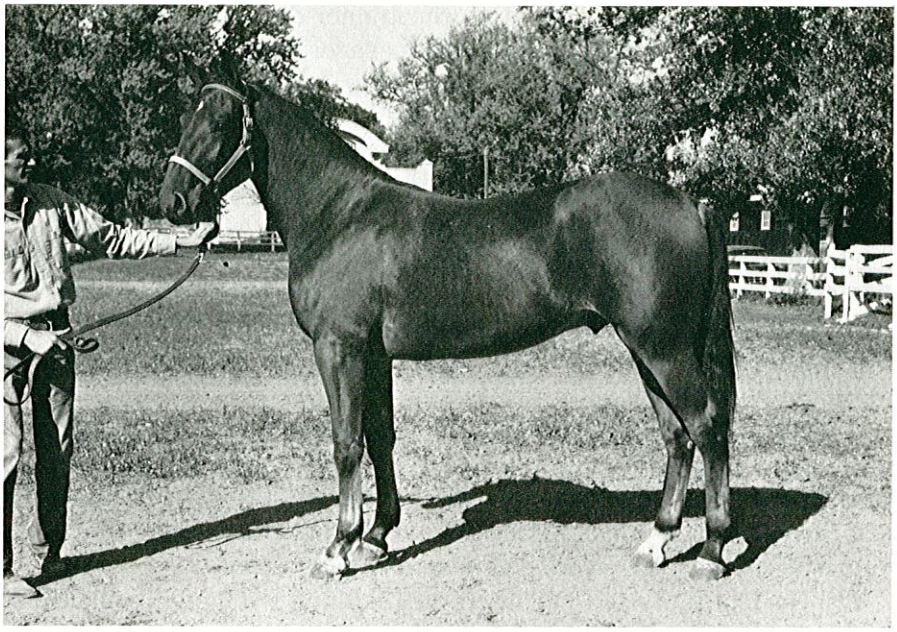
The young champion wound up the 1972 season—and his racing career—with a record of twenty-six starts, twenty wins, four seconds, a third, and $459,921 in earnings. He was a landslide victor as Harness Horse of the Year for the third straight time.

His career mark reflected seventy-one trips behind the starting gate, fifty-nine victories, eight seconds, three thirds, and life earnings of $1,201,470. No pacer before him had ever reached that plateau in racing prizes.

John Simpson, in pondering Hanover's involvement in the purchase of Albatross, had not spent much time on the problem. He had simply asked himself what Lawrence Sheppard would have done under the circumstances. Then he had "gone game" as Sheppard most assuredly would have.

Simpson established Albatross's stud fee at $5,000. Then he set the number of mares to be bred to him at 110, a figure high enough to fulfill the contractual obligations to the shareholders and still leave a number of opportunities for outside-owned mares. The stallion's book was filled about the time that Hanover was advertising him.

The Hanover chief, with the aid of Murray Brown and Hal Jones, sat down to select the broodmares that the Shoe Farms would mate with the new stallion, and decided to go all-out in the effort to launch his stud career. Included in the star-studded cast were Romola Hanover, Brenna Hanover, and Lavish Hanover. The trio's offspring had included Romeo Hanover, Romulus Hanover, Romalie Hanover, Bret Hanover, Bonjour Hanover, and Laverne Hanover.



Romola Hanover. Through 1975 her sons and daughters had won more than $2,300,000.

It was obvious that Hanover was expecting giant things from its new stallion. And it got them, with the Farms' first batch of twenty-four Albatross sons and daughters bringing $709,200 at the 1975 sale, a thumping average of $29,550. One—Ben Hur Hanover—brought $82,000.

Albatross was not the only new stallion entering service at the Shoe Farms in 1972. Stanley Dancer had another world champion in his stable that year, Super Bowl, and Hanover paid a flat million dollars to add his illustrious name to its roster.

Rachel Dancer, Stanley's wife, and Hilda Silverstein, a heroine of the Albatross struggle, had paid $20,000 for the son of Star's Pride-Pillow Talk (by Rodney). Super Bowl had won $605,609 in his two years at the races, a record $441,711 of it coming in his three-year-old form. Racing as a sophomore, the colt had swept the Triple Crown en route to eighteen straight wins, twelve of which were trotted in two minutes or better. He had won the 1972 Hambletonian with miles of 1:57.2 and 1:56.2, smashing five world marks in the process.

Super Bowl was more royal insurance against the day when the monarch of trotting sires, Star's Pride, had to call it a day. Armbro Nesbit,

a 1:56 pacing son of Bye Bye Byrd—Armbro Impel, was one more hedge against the day when the mighty Tar Heel had to close shop.

Armbro Nesbit, purchased from Duncan MacDonald of Fresh Yankee fame, was a 1974 acquisition and the most recent of the super pacers to

Armbro Nesbit, with little Joe O'Brien in the sulky, enjoyed a magnificent racing career before settling in as a stallion at Hanover. *Photo by George Smallsreed, courtesy USTA.*

tour the tracks of North America. Again, he boasted all the characteristics that Simpson—and Sheppard before him—desired in a stallion. He had breeding, conformation, smooth gait, gameness, and, above all, high speed. And he had Volomite, Billy Direct, Hoot Mon, and Adios in his family tree, still another feather in his cap as far as Hanover was concerned.

None of the new stallions—Best Of All, Columbia George, Steady Star, Albatross, Super Bowl, and Armbro Nesbit—was purchased as a Hanover stallion until John Simpson had had an opportunity to consider the mares the Shoe Farms possessed that would logically cross with them.

"You have to do that; it's imperative," Simpson told an interviewer. "Otherwise, it's all up hill for the breeder. Where are going to find great mares to buy in this day and age? It's very difficult. People who have good ones are obviously going to hold onto them if they intend to stay in the breeding business. You can start with fillies—and we do—but it takes a long time to turn them into valuable, producing broodmares. You have to have a nucleus of mares that fit the new stallion's pedigree or you're in trouble."

Simpson and the Farms were, of course, adding well-bred mares to the band whenever and wherever they could find them. They were also adding to the Farms' land holdings, buying several hundred acres in the years following Lawrence Sheppard's death to bring the total to something in the neighborhood of 4,000. Thousands of acres were also purchased in Central Florida, but that land, for the most part, was wild, wet, and woolly, suitable for hunting or possible development in the future.

John Simpson was proving himself to be as talented and intrepid at running the world's largest horse breeding farm as he had been at training and driving harness horses. And that was a tall order, as the U.S. Harness Writers Association indicated when it voted him into Standardbred racing's Living Hall of Fame in 1971.

He and Ralph Baldwin, the famed head trainer for such racing organizations as Two Gaits Farm, Castleton Farm, and the Arden Homestead Stable, were inducted together during impressive ceremonies at the Hall of Fame of the Trotter in Goshen, New York.

Lifelike statuettes of both were put on display at the Fame Hall. Already there was a statuette of Lawrence Sheppard, and some said you could spot a satisfied smile forming on Sheppard's likeness as Simpson's replica was set in place.

The early 1970s were big years for Hanover on all fronts, the all-important sales front included. Shoe Farms' yearlings totaling 170 went to Harrisburg in 1971, drawing bids of $2,310,900 for an average of $13,594. A year later, 185 head toured the sales ring and drew

John Simpson, Sr, views his statuette after being installed as a member of the Standardbred sport's Living Hall of Fame. *Courtesy Mike Cipriano of Yonkers Raceway.*

$2,543,300, an average of $15,414. The 1973 totals were 163 youngsters, $2,716,600, and $16,666. In 1974, doing the second best business up to that time, Hanover's 164 youngsters enthralled buyers to the tune of $2,910,700, an average of $17,748.

All those years, however, were merely a prelude to 1975, when a crop of 166 Hanover babies brought $3,435,500, or a record $20,695 per youngster.

Statistics from the 1972 season showed why the Hanover colts and fillies could command such prices. A total of 601 Hanover-bred trotters and pacers of all ages competed during the year, winning 1,347 dashes and $4,389,576. The second breeding farm, Castleton, sent 396 starters to post, and the Castleton-breds came home with 954 triumphs and $2,724,359.

Of Hanover's 601 starters in 1972, 198 were two- and three-year-olds, and the youngsters picked up 409 victories and $1,580,684 in cash. The 147 freshman and sophomore colts and fillies bred by Castleton who

raced in 1972 captured 335 heats and garnered $1,122,581.

And Hanover's edge would show no signs of shrinking over the next three years.

Clearly, the years had proven John Simpson a worthy successor to Lawrence Sheppard. Every bit as knowledgeable. Every bit as shrewd. Every bit as bold and daring.

But then Sheppard had anticipated all that. After all, who had selected Simpson?

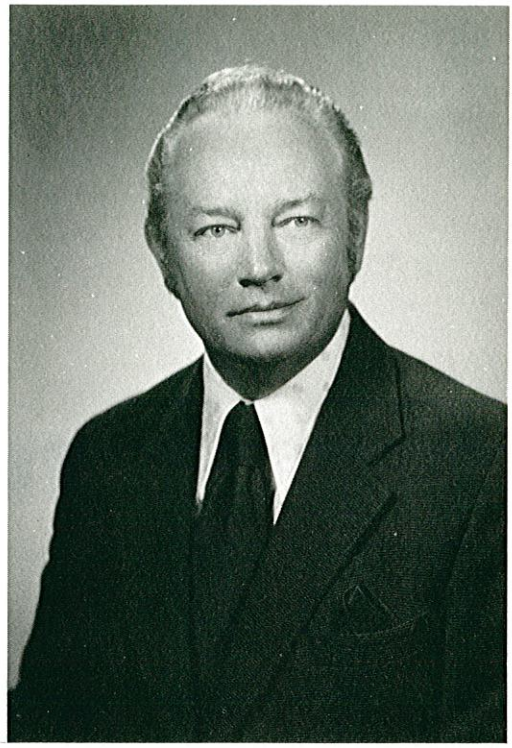
20
TODAY

IN 1976, as this book was going to press, The Hanover Shoe, Inc., was in the process of opening eighteen new stores and closing six old ones, giving it a total of 235 active outlets across the nation. Doubtless, all the new ones will be tastefully decorated, ultramodern shops in tastefully decorated, ultramodern shopping centers and plazas. And doubtless a harness horse logotype will be spread liberally throughout all the new Hanover stores.

Gordon P. King, a gray-haired, distinguished-looking Ivy Leaguer, who helped Hanover to spread its product to all fifty states with the Direct Sales Division he pioneered for the company in 1963, is the firm's president—only the fourth chief executive it has known in all seventy-seven years of his history. King was elected to the post in November 1974, succeeding Edward S. (Ned) Fitzgibbons, who departed to accept a high post with the Melville Shoe Company of Harrison, New York.

Archie Mudge is still chairman of the board; Paul Spears chief financial officer.

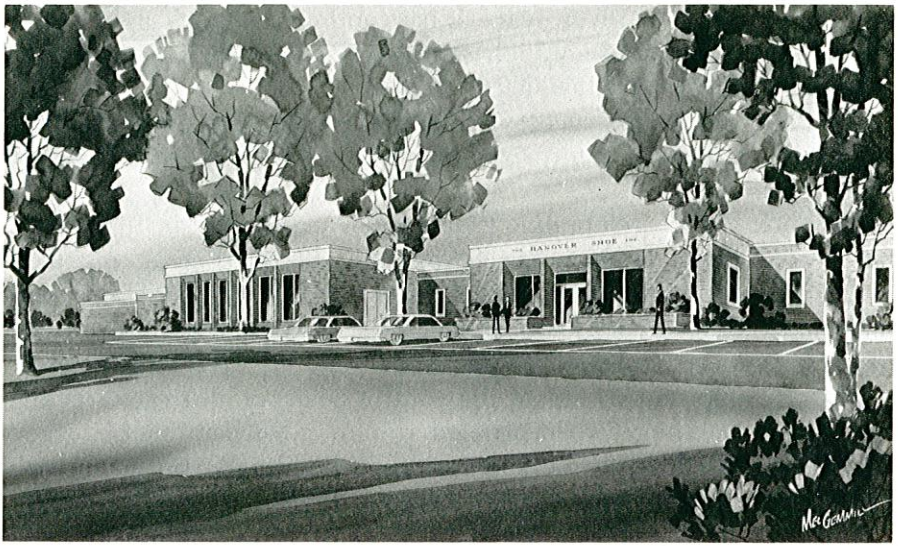
The Hanover Shoe, in 1976, is still manufacturing a conservatively handsome man's shoe, generally resisting the far-out styles that were born in the early 1970s and already show signs of perishing. The few "mod" fashions that do rest on the shelves of its stores—the kind that would have raised the eyebrows of company founders H. D. Sheppard and C. N. Myers—were manufactured overseas, merely stocked by Hanover for competitive reasons.



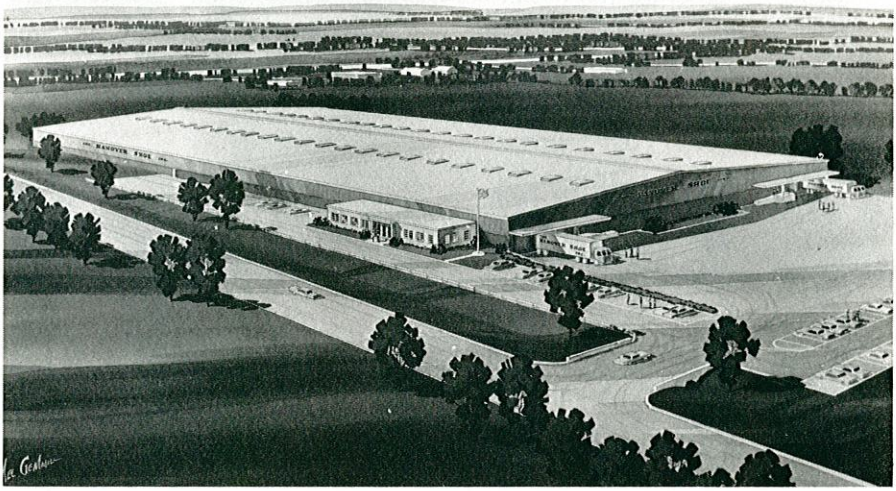
Gordon P. King, the president of The Hanover Shoe, Inc.

Hanover boasts a string of plants and operations in several states, but the majority of its shoes are now manufactured in the new (vintage 1974) facility on Kindig Lane on the outskirts of the city of Hanover. While the vast plant is totally modern in every way, Hanover's mode of manufacturing has not changed all that much over the years. There is no long, mechanized assembly line where a sheet of leather is fed into a machine at one end of the line and a finished shoe emerges at the other. Each Hanover shoe passes through dozens of pairs of hands, and those hands perform dozens of different tasks—cutting, stretching, coloring, shaping, sewing, buffing. Each pair of shoes is virtually handmade. It is all remarkably archaic, yet it is the only to manufacture a quality pair of calfskin shoes. And Hanover is only interested in making quality calfskin shoes.

The Hanover Shoe, Inc., obviously must be doing something right, if not everything right. It has weathered every slump, recession, depression, inflation, police action, and war this nation has lumbered through



The Hanover Shoe Company's handsome new Conewago Plant at Hanover, Pa.



One of The Hanover Shoe, Inc.'s modern facilities—the Warehouse Distribution Center in Hanover, Pa.

over the past seventy-seven years. It has continued to grow and prosper through those calamities until it has arrived at a point where it expects to enjoy sales of some $54,000,000 in 1976.

The Shoe Company's success has paralleled the progress of another, not totally unrelated, enterprise some four miles away—the Hanover Shoe Farms.

The Shoe Farms, celebrating their golden anniversary in 1976, are a vast conglomerate of thirty-five farms, four thousand acres, eighteen hundred horses (at the peak season), forty horse barns, fifty houses and apartments, thirty-five to forty miles of fences, twenty trucks, seventeen tractors, nine cars and station wagons, and one hundred employees.

John F. Simpson, Sr. sits at the control board of all that, directing operations from a huge, wood-paneled, trophy and oil painting-bedecked office that was added to the administration building at the main farm when Simpson came back to take charge in 1968.

Also commanding office space in the administration building are some

Through these portals have passed many of the greatest harness horses the world has ever known.

John F. Simpson, Sr. at his desk in the administration building at the Hanover Shoe Farms. Photos, paintings, and trophies abound in Simpson's office. *Photo by Bill Taylor.*

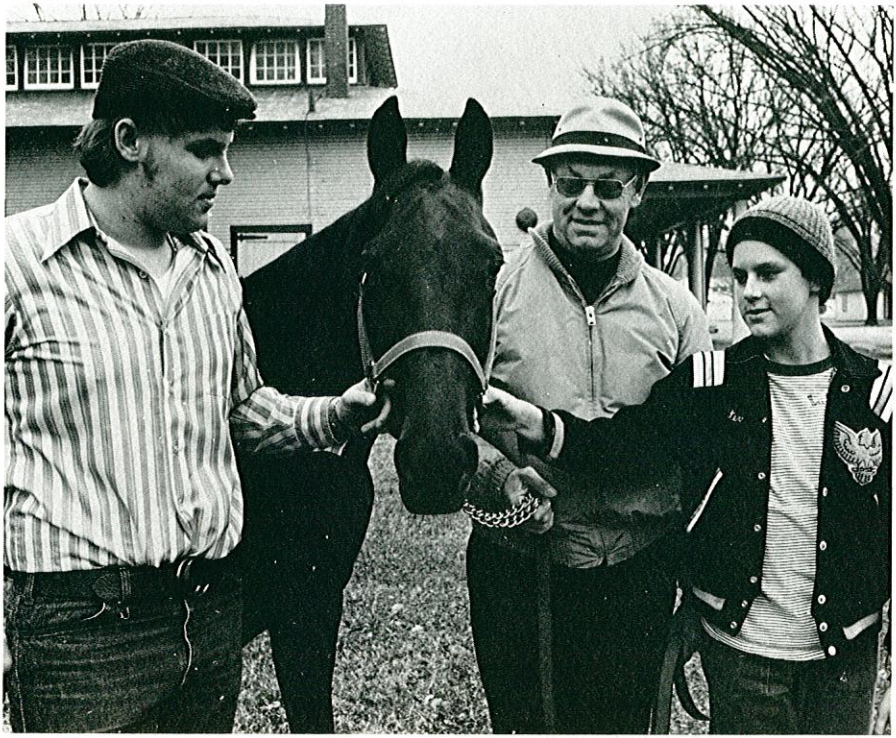
of the key members of his staff—public relations director Murray Brown, corresponding officer Burnell Hesson, pilot Gene Harvey, and secretary Betty Nolt.

Farm superintendent Hal S. Jones, veterinarians Drs. G. R. Greenhoff and Peter H. Boyce, and maintainance chief Clyde Sterner have their own nooks and crannies about the vast grounds, while executive vice-president Paul Spears works out of The Hanover Shoe, Inc., headquarters on Carlisle Street, and secretary and legal counsel Horace E. Smith has an office in nearby York.

Each and every staff member is about as knowledgeable and as efficient and dedicated as you can find in the Standardbred breeding industry.

Hal Jones, who arrived at Hanover in 1971 after a long stint at the Pickwick Farms in Bucyrus, Ohio, and a shorter stay at Blue Chip Farms, in Wallkill, New York, brought with him modern breeding techniques that have become standard operating procedure at Hanover.

The Shoe Farms had long practiced artificial insemination—all major breeding farms have been into it for many years—but Jones took it several



Hal Jones, current superintendent of the Hanover Shoe Farms, checks horse with sons Mike (left) and Steve. The horse happens to be world champion Albatross, now at stud at Hanover.

steps further by introducing the artificial vagina and, later, the "phantom mare."

Stallions at Hanover no longer mount a mare in the act of breeding. They are allowed to become aroused by nosing around an actual mare in heat, but then are quickly led to the phantom mare—a converted teasing chute covered by a mattress and a canvas that has been permeated with the urine from a mare in season—and fitted with an adjustable artificial vagina. The stallion mounts the phantom, performs his act of love, and ejaculates into the rubber vagina. His semen is then collected, drawn into syringes, and used to impregnate a series of well-tested mares then in season. The semen reaches the mare's uterus by way of a pipette that has been inserted into her.

While the practice may seem like cruel deception as far as the stallion is concerned, all the Hanover studs seem to enjoy it, some even preferring it over the natural method of breeding. There is no question, says Hal

Jones, that the modern, "no touch" practice is far safer than the old, saving much wear and tear on both the stallion and the boodmare. It has prolonged the useful breeding life of such aging stallions as Tar Heel and Star's Pride, and has prevented injury to mares who were scheduled to go to violently romantic studs like Speedy Count, who was prone to treat his partners like rag dolls during the sex act.

Anywhere from one to a dozen mares are impregnated with the semen of a single stallion, depending upon the amount of semen and its richness in terms of sperm. Each mare is bred twice, three times, as many as twenty times, until she is declared in foal or her season is over. Mares being bred for the first time generally require more breedings than veteran broodmares.

The semen is usually delivered to the mare, rather than bringing the mare to the stud barn. U.S. Trotting Association rules make it mandatory that mares be inseminated on the premises of the farm—or contiguous farms, in Hanover's case—and broodmares housed at such places as the Fairgound in downtown Hanover must be trucked in to be bred. The USTA also prevents farms from preserving semen—holding it over—by freezing or other means.

When a mare is pronounced in foal, she is transferred to the 640-acre Hartlaub Farm (it was purchased from a man named Hartlaub), with some twenty-five mares assigned to each fifty-acre pasture. A huge shed is located in each of the pastures.

The mare remains at the Hartlaub complex or at other farms until autumn. Then, according to her estimated foaling date, she is progressively moved through barns to the main farm. She starts in barns five through eight, then with roughly twelve days to go to her foaling date, she is moved to one of two barns used for foaling during the peak season. There she remains until she brings another Hanover-bred or Hanover-sired trotter or pacer into the world.

Three of the Shoe Farms' most trusted men, veterans of thousands of foalings work the night shift, punching time clocks as they roam through the foaling and stud barns. If any problem develops, they quickly call Dr. Greenhoff or Dr. Boyce, whoever is on standby duty that evening. A mare, after dropping a foal, is generally bred back to a stallion within nine or ten days.

With hundreds of young horses roaming the pastures, Hanover must make a special effort to correctly identify each; mistakes could be embarassing and costly. Moments after birth, a pair of metal tags is affixed to their tails. And their markings—a star on the forehead, a blaze, a white ankle—are duly recorded. At the time of their weaning, when they're taken from their mother, the markings are rechecked. Then they are painlessly branded on the foot with a hot iron. There is no room, no opportunity for error.

The sucklings are weaned at about six months. Some breeders are now removing the foals from their dams as early as two months, but Hal Jones and John Simpson believe that there is no substitute for mother's milk in getting a colt off to a good start, so they stretch the period. Once weaned, the youngsters are transferred to the Bonneville Farm, a 750-acre giant some ten miles down the road from the main farm. Colts reside on one side of the road, fillies on the other. Twenty-five of the babies generally share a fifty-acre pasture, with November and December foals housed together in one area, January-February foals in another.

"Our colts run free," reports Hal Jones. "The only time we catch them is every sixty days for worming and to trim their feet. They've got all the oats, alfalfa, and mineral block that they want. They've got an automatic water tank, and they're all checked twice a day. They're not hothouse horses, they're raised naturally and in a competitive atmosphere like an athlete."

Whatever their actual birthdates, all the youngsters officially turn one year of age on January 1. The following August, Farms personnel begin to gather them up, some fifty yearlings a week, for transfer to the Fairground downtown, where handlers commence to prepare them for the Harrisburg Auction in November. Working under the supervision of Dr. Peter Boyce, who succeeded Monty Moncrief, each handler is in charge of six yearlings. The youngsters are broken to leading and are religiously groomed. After a couple of weeks' residence at the Fairground, the colts are shod in front.

While the Fairground crew is laboring hard to make the Hanover colts look their best at that crucial moment when they enter the sales ring, the actual process started eighteen months earlier or more. "It's like building a house," Jones comments. "You start from the ground and build up. It's the grass they eat, the oats, the minerals, the wormings they had that make them healthy, give them that glossy look."

As sales time approaches, Clyde Sterner, who is always busy at the Farms, grows busier. It is Clyde's duty to head for the Harrisburg Arena a week prior to the sale to prepare the stable area. He supervises a crew of twelve men who annually come down from the Buffalo, New York, area to help him. Clyde and his men line up the hundreds of stalls needed at sales time. They bed all of them down with straw, and they remain there at the arena until every horse has been sold and has been picked up by his purchaser. It's a tough, two-week job, with Dave Welk minding the store back at Hanover while Sterner is in Harrisburg.

Sterner, a low-key, soft-spoken native of the Hanover area, has been working at the Farms since 1939. He was once the groundskeeper for the Sheppard family home that adjoins the main farm, but has been maintainance superintendent of the Farms since 1947. He is responsible

for the upkeep of the pastures, the fences, the buildings, and the vehicles.

It is a monumental, never-ending job to keep some thirty miles of wooden fencing in good repair, something akin to keeping fresh paint on the Golden Gate Bridge. The fences must be whitewashed each year, and Hanover has had trouble securing replacement boards in recent years, one reason why it has turned to wire fencing where it is practical to use it.

Sterner has charge of building repair, although John Simpson traditionally hires a group of high school teachers who descend on the Farms each summer to apply Colonial Yellow and Forest Green paint to any structure needing a new coat. Sterner and Simpson must also concern themselves with the Hanover-owned farm houses and apartments that are occupied by employees of the Farms and their families. The Shoe Farms offer the dwellings on a rent-free basis in an effort to lure and retain competent help.

It is Clyde Sterner who purchases the horse feed for the Farms—100,000 bushels of oats a year, as many as three trailer-loads of hay (mostly mixed clover and timothy) a day.

Dr. G. R. Greenhoff, the Farms' top veterinarian, and Monty Moncrief, the former superintendent of yearling preparation, pose by one of Hanover's many vehicles.

The health of the horses on the Farms—every stallion, broodmare, yearling, weanling, and suckling—is the awesome responsibility of the Doctors Greenhoff and Boyce. The two veterinarians are involved in everything from parasite control to pronouncing mares to foal, from planning diets to devising ways and means of keeping venerable stallions like Star's Pride and Tar Heel productive. More often than not, Greenhoff, the vet in charge, and Boyce, his associate, are dealing with horses that are extremely valuable—some worth millions of dollars—and the pressure can be great.

Greenhoff, an Ohio State Vet School graduate, works closely with the Large Animal Hospital and Clinic at the University of Pennsylvania's New Bolton Center, a facility that received expertise and dollars in wholesale lots from Lawrence Sheppard during his lifetime as well as at the time of his death.

Since breeding and foaling seasons coincide, the two Hanover vets are extremely busy men during the early months of each year. In breeding, the name of the game is to assure all the conceptions possible. In foaling, the goal is to preserve the life of every conceivable newborn. Both are percentage things all the way, and Hanover has always received top grades in both crucial areas. The Doctors Greenhoff and Boyce, along with alert, seasoned foaling men who staff the barns, have helped the Farms to maintain those high figures. Peter Rhulen, probably the largest horse insurer in the industry, says Hanover's mortality rate is easily the lowest of all major Standardbred breeding establishments.

Murray Brown not only handles public relations and advertising for the Shoe Farms, but also serves as vice-president and general manager of the annual Standardbred Horse Sales Company auction at Harrisburg. And when horsemen like Stan Dancer, Bill Haughton, and Herve Filion pore over the intricate pedigrees in the yearly Harrisburg catalog, chances are they're wading through research assembled by Brown during long days and nights before the catalog went to press.

Paul Spears, bearing a list of titles with the Shoe Company and the Shoe Farms as long as Dancer Hanover's tail, is also president and treasurer of the Standardbred Horse Sales Company. He has brought efficiency and streamlining to the sale—although few could fault the success of the auction under the late Bowman A. Brown, Sr., the publisher of *Harness Horse* magazine, a leading horse breeder and owner, and co-founder (along with Lawrence Sheppard) of the Horse Sales Company. Nor could they detract from the growth of the vendue under the direction of Brown's son, Bowman A. Brown, Jr., who headed it between the reign of his father and that of Spears.

Burnell Hesson still retains his reputation as the mistake-proof paper work specialist, and Betty Nolt, as John Simpson's secretary, has a chance

Three key people in the Hanover story—Paul Spears, Burnell Hesson, and Bill Melhorn.

to catch her breath nowadays since Simpson only demands that a report be completed today, not yesterday, as Lawrence Sheppard sometimes did. But Betty still has to withhold an angry letter for a couple of days to see if the mood of her boss has changed in the interval.

Nolt, Hesson, Spears, Brown, Greenhoff, Boyce, Jones, Sterner, Smith, Simpson, a dozen other key individuals—pitching in, laboring hard, to make the Hanover Shoe Farms purr along in 1976.

Star's Pride, Tar Heel, Dancer Hanover, Albatross, Ayres, Super Bowl, Armbro Nesbit, Bullet Hanover, Columbia George, Hickory Smoke, Knight Dream, Steady Star, Speedy Count, plus the greatest broodmare band ever assembled—stock horses that keep the Shoe Farms open lengths ahead of all rivals in the contest to produce the world's finest trotters and pacers.

The cast has changed somewhat since Lawrence Sheppard presided over the Farms, ruling the equine empire with fits of sour temper, caustic wit, native shrewdness, a storehouse of breeding knowledge, the pluck and derring-do of a riverboat gambler, and a secret heart not much firmer than your average marshmallow. But the legacy that Sheppard left, the absolute, unyielding, no-compromise drive for excellence, has not been altered one iota.

The mystique of Hanover—what it means to the world of Standardbred racing—was probably best summed up by one of its own employees, superintendent Hal Jones. "When I went to work for Hanover," said Jones, "I felt like a kid who had been watching a game through a knothole in a fence, then was suddenly called in to pitch for the first team."

Had Lawrence Sheppard heard that remark, he would have nodded approvingly. He would have shoved the big hat back on his head, squinted to avoid the smoke curling up from his cigarette, and said, "Goddamn right, that's what the last fifty years were all about."

ANNUAL HANOVER YEARLING SALE

Year	*Number*	*Gross*	*Average*
1926	6	$ 1,518	$ 253
1927	6	1,350	225
1928	None	None	None
1929	15	3,975	265
1930	16	4,064	254
1931	30	6,090	203
1932	32	4,544	142
1933	47	20,868	444
1934	48	18,528	386
1935	34	10,914	321
1936	34	17,510	515
1937	38	42,294	1,113
1938	37	41,825	1,130
1939	41	55,750	1,327
1940	61	45,800	751
1941	74	58,525	791
1942	78	34,515	442
1943	84	94,250	1,122
1944	73	109,200	1,496
1945	73	168,575	2,309
1946	77	236,800	3,076
1947	78	264,900	3,396
1948	72	264,800	3,677
1949	100	389,550	3,895
1950	83	233,350	2,811
1951	102	325,200	3,188
1952	97	343,400	3,540
1953	134	418,950	3,126
1954	109	413,650	3,795

1955	111	563,100	5,073
1956	106	537,100	5,067
1957	115	639,850	5,564
1958	129	894,500	6,934
1959	125	1,109,850	8,879
1960	120	1,150,900	9,591
1961	125	1,126,600	9,013
1962	117	1,080,144	9,232
1963	131	1,204,600	9,195
1964	124	1,210,500	9,762
1965	159	1,696,800	10,672
1966	176	1,770,200	10,058
1967	188	2,281,800	12,137
1968	177	3,222,200	18,204
1969	165	2,512,600	15,227
1970	161	2,084,100	12,957
1971	170	2,310,900	13,594
1972	165	2,543,300	15,414
1973	163	2,716,600	16,666
1974	164	2,910,700	17,748
1975	166	3,435,500	20,695

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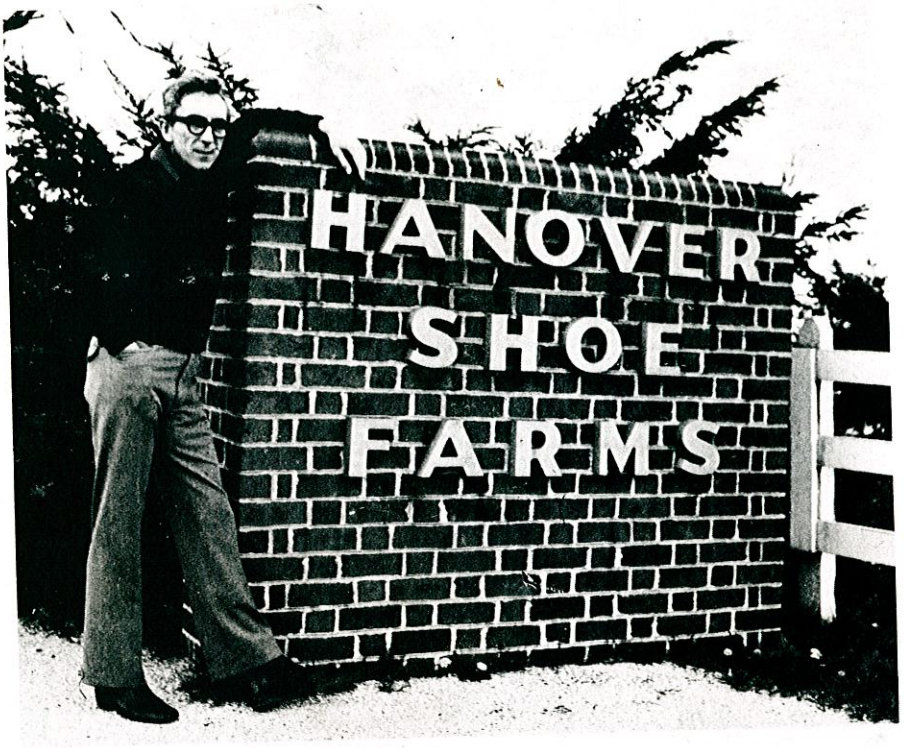

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