

CANADIAN TENNESSEE WALKING HORSE
HISTORY & HERITAGE PROJECT

“CANADIAN TIMES OF THE TWH”

HOW I GOT STARTED IN TENNESSEE WALKING HORSES

by Charis Cooper, Turner Valley, AB

In the summer of 1985 a rider appeared on our ranch, asking permission to ride on our property. He was boarding his horse, a beautiful chestnut mare, just three miles north of our ranch. The rider, Larry Clay, informed me that his mare was a Tennessee Walking Horse, which I knew nothing about. He then proceeded to demonstrate her gaits, which were awesome. Over the next two summers, Larry and ‘Cindy’ were frequent visitors, and I was always amazed at the speed of this beautiful mare. Her registered name was Joie’s Cindy Lady, by Lady’s Captain W. x Walkaway Joie (by Chief Joseph).

In 1987, Larry was transferred to Victoria, and as the riding trails there were very limited compared to this part of the country, he offered Cindy to me. My friend, Lindy Barron, gave me some lessons on how to control Cindy’s gaits, and soon Cindy and I were scooting around the countryside, trail riding and doing ranch work. Cindy became a very good cow horse.

Then I became acquainted with the Alberta Walking Horse Association people, so Cindy and I entered the show ring, garnering some ribbons and trophies. In 1990 Spruce Meadows introduced the first Battle of the Breeds so a Walking Horse team was entered. It consisted of Greta Broholm, Leah Berge, Lara Hack, and myself, with Hilton Hack as Captain. Cindy and I performed in the Trail Class and the Barrel Race, placing sixth in trail and seventh in barrels against 12 competitors. *(Cindy and Charis in the 1990 Spruce Meadows barrels competition, below.)*



Our team placed fourth in the competition overall, showing that Walking Horses can do it all. Cindy was 12 and I was 60 years old at this time. Cindy and I entered four more Battle of the Breeds competitions, always doing well in the Trail Class against all breeds.

Cindy and I went on to travel many mountain trails with other Walking Horse riders and on our ranch. Cindy was my riding horse until she was 21 years old, and then was retired as she was becoming quite crippled. She was a horse that did not know the word “quit”. At 24 Cindy was sent to horse heaven but she will always have a special place in my heart, as she introduced me to this wonderful breed that I am still involved with.



Being almost 81 years old now, I am still riding. Over the years I have become involved in side saddle riding and competitive carriage driving with my current wonderful Walking Horse, D-J’s Peppi Two # 438. She is another model of Tennessee Walking Horse endurance and smoothness. Peppi is now near 25 years old & still a wonderful riding horse. She is by Beauty’s Trail’s End x Miss Stroll-O-Way (by Queen’s Lil Joe).

Now Peppi and I are involved in trying to start a sidesaddle club in Alberta. We hope to have a booth at the Mane Event in Red Deer in the spring, so we may see you there! *(Above: Peppi & Charis riding sidesaddle.)*

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