

THE FOUNDING OF THE VIRGINIA CITY 100 MILE RIDE

Andrew K Steen

Cliff Lewis' [account of the founding of the Virginia City 100 Mile in One Day Ride](#) is pretty much the way that it happened. In those days Reno was a much smaller city than now. Cliff [Lewis], Nick [Mansfield], Louie [Henderson] and I often bumped into one another, usually in the coffee shop at the Ponderosa Hotel (where Dean Hubbard worked as a 21 dealer). During those chance meetings, we talked about the idea several times, but not much came of those conversations.

For several months I had stabled my endurance mare, Good Trip, at Nick's 102 Ranch. Four nights each week, Nick and I would ride across the Truckee River and up into the hill towards Virginia City on 20 to 25 mile training rides for the forthcoming Tevis Cup Ride. Our conversation was invariably centered on that event. We both lamented that there was not a second 100 mile venue to allow us to keep their horses in condition and have a second opportunity to compete.

It was Cliff and Louie who finally "took the bull by the horns" and set-up the spur-of-the-moment first meeting. One afternoon Louie called me to say that he and Cliff were planning to come to Nick Mansfield's place the following evening. At 10:30 p.m., after Nick and I un-saddled and fed our horses, we joined them in the 102 Ranch Café and talked for about an hour. (Dean was working that night and couldn't come) We were all enthusiastic about the idea and anxious to get the show on the road. As Cliff mentioned in his memoir, we each called our endurance rider friends and urged them to attend a second meeting the following Saturday night, but as I recall only ten riders showed-up.

It was Nick's idea to name the ride, "The Nevada All States 102 Ride." Since he was the first person to win the Tevis Cup and had a lot more experience and prestige than any of us, no one (openly) objected and we acquiesced. My task was to bring a draft copy of the Articles of Incorporation to file the rides' Charter with the Nevada Secretary of State.

Most of the discussion at the second meeting was about which route the trail would cover and concerns about how we would pay the Vets (\$100 each) to check the horses before, during and after the first ride.

By the time the third meeting rolled around we were pretty well organized. Nick and I marked the trail from Virginia City to his ranch (which was not at all difficult), and Cliff, Louis and Dean marked the other sections of the trail. I was appointed the Judge for the first ride and donated the sterling silver trophy. The rest as they say "is history."

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Andrew K. Steen:

*BTW... "Super Mare" (as she was called on the cover of the first issue of Endurance Digest) Good Trip, my ¾ Arab-Saddlebred bay mare and a *Witez II son we called "George" from the Steen Arabian Ranch were among the 13 horses that finished the first Virginia City Ride.*

Connie Creech:

Andrew, I didn't know you owned Good Trip. She was an awesome mare! I have her record of completing the VC 100 six consecutive years with Dr. Richard Barseleau in 1968, Mark Steen in 1969, Phil Gardner in 1970 & 1971, and Sandra Knox in 1972 & 1973.

Andrew K. Steen:

Thank you again Connie. Yes, in her day Good Trip was a famous endurance mare. I bought her from Dr. Barseleau for \$1,500 for the 1968 Tevis Ride. She was in very good condition at that time and we gave Donna Fitzgerald a good race. We were only 2 minutes behind her coming into Foresthill and 20 minutes ahead of the next horse. I think we could have overtaken Donna, because Good Trip's vet ratings were absolutely perfect, but after an hour she showed signs of slight lameness and I was pulled.

In VC ride she carried my brother to the finish line. He had never ridden her before the day of the ride. Later I let [Phil] Gardner ride her and she was pulled also at Foresthill in first place. I sold her in 1972 to Sandra [Knox] and know that Good Trip did very well with her on several rides.

Of all the horses I ever owned Good Trip was surpassed only by my first purebred, The Electrician, who John Rogers Jr. rode on the 1962 Tevis and was the horse that got me involved breeding Arabians. Good Trip was a very classy and beautiful dark bay mare and the most intelligent horse I ever knew. She saved my life on a practice ride when I came very close to drowning in the North American River, but that's another story.

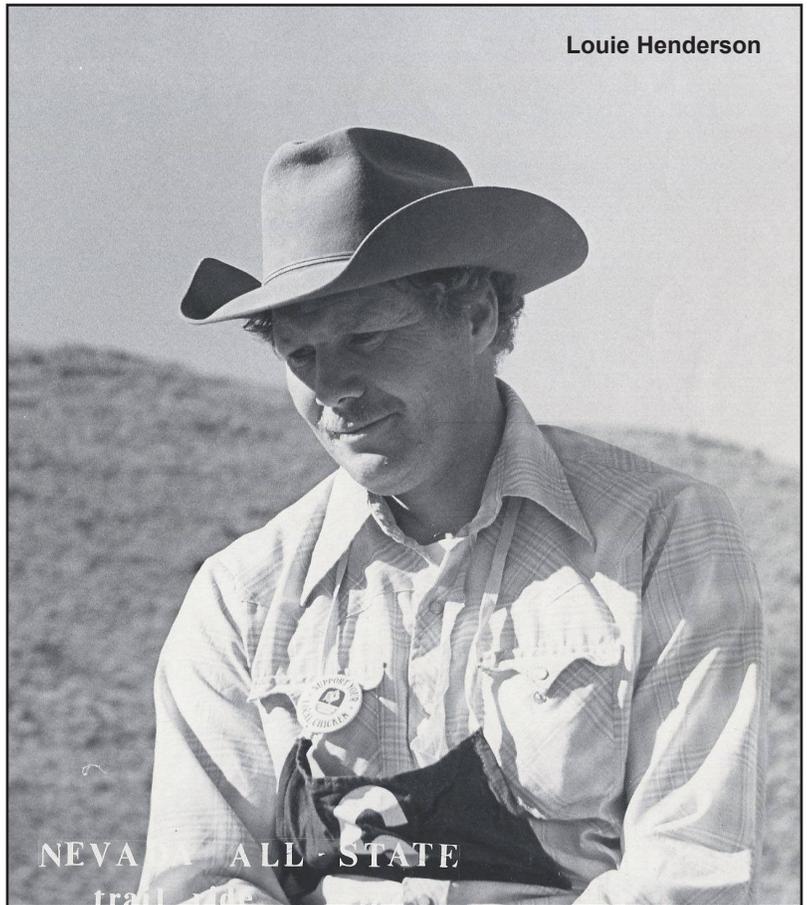
Connie Creech:

By the way, my sister Sharon worked at the Steen Ranch. She married Louie Henderson, who started this all for me.

Andrew K. Steen:

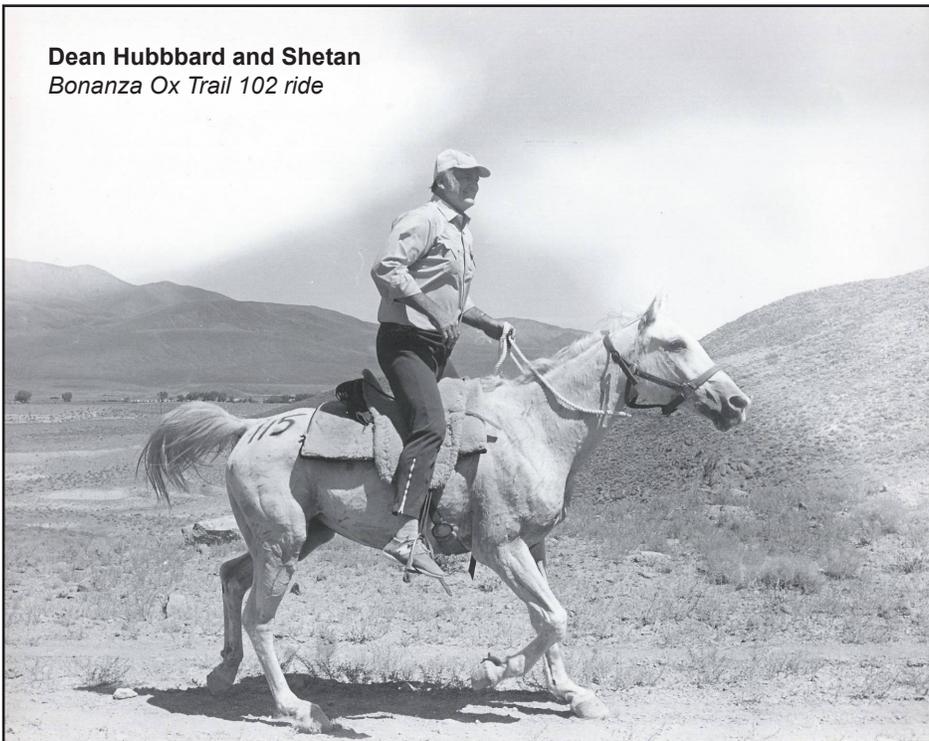
When I knew Louie Henderson he was single; a rather quiet, hard-working young man who liked horses and a heck of a nice guy. I knew Nick Mansfield and Dean Hubbard much better. I saw Dean at the Ponderosa several times a week, because I often ate lunch there. My mother also liked Dean a lot, because of his stories about the time that he lived in Park City, Utah. Dean often dropped by the house for coffee and he had some great (but very sad) WWII stories to tell. His two brothers were killed on the same ship at the Battle of Mid-Way when their destroyer was sunk. The U.S. Navy changed the rules about brothers being stationed on the same ship because of that tragedy.

I could tell you lots of funny anecdotes about several of the old riders. Including one about the time Pat Fitzgerald and I drove to the Bay Area to participate in the 35 mile Mt. Tamalpais Pleasure Ride. Pat rode Ken and I was mounted on The Electrician (who at the time was in jumping training at Sacramento with the legendary Barbara Worth, the only woman that had participated with Will Tevis the famous 300 mile U.S. Remount Ride.) Both Pat and I were disqualified within 30 minutes after that ride started, because as were told by the very straight-laced woman judge, who was dressed in a stylish Mexican riding costume, "This is a pleasure ride not a Rodeo! You two are not living-up to the spirit of this event!" Nevertheless, we rode to the finish three hours before any of the others to load-up our horses and go home.



Louie Henderson

Dean Hubbard and Shetan
Bonanza Ox Trail 102 ride



Donna wasn't even married at the time. She worked as a "car-hop" at Pat's hamburger drive-in, that was situated in front of Reno High School, as I recall it was called "Sloppy Joe's." Donna drove the Steen Ranches pick-up and trailer to the finish line and waited for us to arrive. She didn't even know how to ride a horse back in 1963. It's amazing when you think about how only a few years later, Donna Fitzgerald became the number one endurance rider in the world!