

SAM AIKENS

Wilsonville is loaded with early history. The settlement was first settled by Sylvester Wilson and his brother, Nick. They sold to a man by the name of Hambrick.

Five wagons of Wilsons left Wilsonville in 1883 for Idaho to settle on the Snake River. That same year they went into Jackson Hole, Wyoming, and settled Jackson Hole.

Wilsonville's history sank into obscurity until Sam Aikens and his brother, John, took it over in the early 1900's. It is not know where he came from, but it was apparent that he knew what he wanted to do. His most important purpose other than raising hay and running cattle, was breeding horses. He went to Kentucky and purchased a mare named Lady A. The Government leased him a remount stud. This established him as having the finest thoroughbred bloodline of horses in Emery County. Little by little he dropped almost out of the cow business and commercialized in thoroughbred horses.

He marketed his horses to the Government for what was known as Remount Horses which were used by the pony soldiers or Cavalry in the U.S. Army. Each horse the Government bought netted \$125 to \$200. At that time beef sold for four to six cents a pound.

The ranchers would also pay him a good price so they could get into the thoroughbred bloodline because his horses were beautiful and had a lot of endurance, and the best of the lot in racing. They were fast enough to catch the wild horses that ran the range.

Each summer he would take the brood mares to a pasture he owned in Upper Joes Valley. The sight of the horses in Upper Joes Valley made it the most beautiful valley in the Wasatch Mountains. Sam had a large corral there, and every twenty-five feet he had a young gelding tied up. There they were grained and fed hay. Each day his hired men took the young ponies down to Race Horse Flat, a flat ridge between Cottonwood Creek and Rock Canyon Creek downstream from his ranch. Racehorse Flat was a half mile long and unusually level. There they would gallop their horses to develop their stamina and muscles which would give them the endurance they needed when they were raced at the County Fair. For a long time most of the thoroughbred horses in the area could be traced back to the Aikens bloodlines.

Sam and John remained bachelors for many years. John was a big man who weighed over two hundred pounds, while Sam was very small, weighing less than one hundred forty pounds. John always carried his stomach pump with him so whenever he ate, he would sooner or later have to stick the tube down his throat

into his stomach and turn a little wheel to pump the food back out. When John died, it left SAM all alone except for a hired man or two. Sam sent to Montgomery Ward Catalog for a new house which was shipped postal express in sections. A representative came down to put it together, so Wilsonville had its first and only modern home. The day of the log cabin was over.

It's hard to say what made Sam look around for a mate finally in his middle sixties. Maybe it was when Lady A lost her first race to a horse by the name of Kelton which was owned by Iver Truman of Huntington. He may have lost a little of his love for horses and decided he needed a wife. He married a woman by the name of Hartman. She had three grown sons who were willing to go down to the ranch and do all the hard work there. She lived where the Forest Ranger's house is at the present time at 395 East Main in Castle Dale. Sam bought a lot across the street east of hers. There he built a new home for them to move into. He also had a corral there for his stud horse which his step daughter, Myrtle, rode all over Castle Dale and Orangeville.

He died in Manti after having worked for several years in the Manti Temple.

Written by Owen McClenahan