

The Killer Turned Champion

One of the personal true stories from my book titled “But, That’s Another Story”
by William P. Brown

In 1971 we had just moved from Archer, Florida to Brooksville, Florida. We took our three horses, Lady, a nice old mare, Charger, her colt, and a Palomino stallion that we had recently purchased. We had bought the stallion about four months ago when he was not quite two years old. He was a spirited animal and a real handful. We were living in a temporary rented house while we were searching for a permanent home. There was no fenced-in pasture so we had to stake the stallion for pasture.



One day my wife, Elaine, went out to stake Chipper in another area. While she was leading him to fresh grass, Chipper suddenly attacked Elaine. He stood on his hind legs and pawed violently at her trying to hit her with his sharp hooves. Elaine hung on for dear life while he was pawing and jumping trying to get loose. Elaine yelled and screamed for help. Carole, our oldest daughter, was in the two-story house dressing when she heard her mother screams. She ran out of the house dressed only in her panties and bra, grabbed the rope and pulled the horse away from her Mother. Elaine suffered several nasty bruises but was otherwise not seriously injured, thanks to Carole’s quick response.

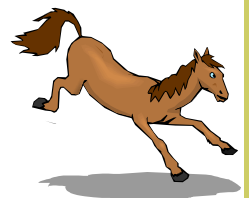
When I got home that night Elaine and I discussed getting rid of the horse. He acted like a wild maniac and we were afraid one of the kids would get seriously injured or killed. But, when we told the kids, Ann, our youngest daughter had a fit. She wanted that horse real bad. We had originally purchased it for her and she wasn’t about to give him up now. After a heated discussion, Elaine and I decided we would have the horse “fixed” into a Gelding too see if he would settle down. If he didn’t, we would have to get rid of him for sure. I called the Vet and he came over the next day. Of course, the horse was quite sore, so he acted calm right away. The proof would be when he had healed.



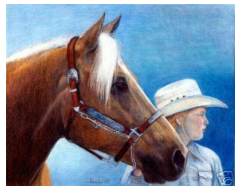
Ann babied that horse like it was a child. She had fed and watered him two or three time a day. She would spend hours brushing and grooming him. She named him “Chipper.” As he healed, he settled down quite a bit but Elaine and I both still worried whether or not he would ever be real gentle. He was a beautiful typical Palomino horse but was not as stocky as most quarter horses. His head was more like an Arabian horse with fine features.

We shortly located an 11-acre piece of property on top of one of the tallest hills around Brooksville, Florida and moved all the horses into a nicely fenced pasture. Our new house wasn’t completed yet so we rented a small house a short distance away.

As soon as Chipper had somewhat healed, Ann started training him right away. He was still hard to handle and as stubborn as any horse we had ever had. Ann’s brother Bill, helped to initially break Chipper to ride. Bill had the physical strength to handle him. Chipper would buck Bill off but he would just get right back on him and kept it up until Chipper finally accepted the saddle and a rider.



In the following weeks, Ann rode him almost every day after school and she spent a lot of time with Chipper on the weekends. As Ann would run him across the field, it was apparent he was a very fast horse. She could make him turn in one step, stop immediately and rear on his back legs on command, like I remember Lone Ranger's horse "Silver" do in the old movies. He was a beautiful thing to behold as Ann would race him across the fields with his light-colored mane and her long blonde hair both flowing in the wind.



Ann wanted to show Chipper at halter in a local horse show but I convinced her that Chipper did not have the confirmation to show at halter. He was more of a "speed" horse. So Ann started training him to run in the horse show "speed" events, such as the "Barrels." Chipper seemed to love to show off for Ann and she soon was asking me to let her enter him in a local horse show. I doubted if he was ready to compete against even the locals, as we lived in "horse country" and there were many excellent horses and riders in our area. But, Ann wouldn't take "no" for an answer so I finally agreed to take her. We had purchased a 2-horse trailer when we move so we loaded it up and away we went.

The show was only about 5 miles away so Chipper took the short trip OK. He didn't like the Horse trailer every since we moved him from Gainesville and had to force him into it. He skinned one of his back legs as he back out of the trailer but seemed OK to enter in the show. We entered him in several events but I didn't anticipate him doing very well. Boy, were we all surprised. He won a 3rd place trophy his first time out.



Well, that did it. From then on Ann wanted to go to all the shows in Florida no matter what the distance. It seems we spent that summer hauling Chipper all over the state. He would turn out to be a real champion. Ann and Chipper won 37 first place trophies and about 60 ribbons that year.

The next year we were forced to curtail our trips to horse shows somewhat, but Ann still won her share of events and piled up even more trophies and ribbons. We were in the process of having a new house built by one of the largest developers in Florida. We had built our last home in Gainesville ourselves, piece by piece over a five-year period, and didn't want to go through that lengthy building process. Then one day we learned the developer had gone bankrupt and our new house was involved in the bankruptcy litigation and all construction was suspended. What a blow! - - - **but, that's another story.**



- *Bill Brown*