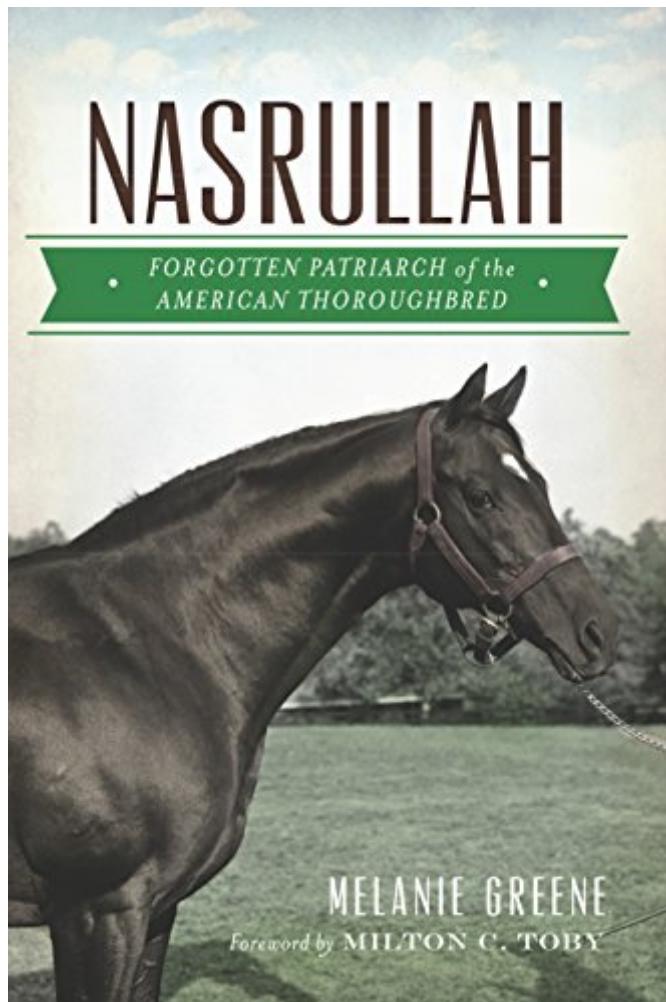


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Nasrullah: Forgotten Patriarch Of The American Thoroughbred (Sports)



Synopsis

Nasrullah arrived in Kentucky in 1950 and forever changed the modern American thoroughbred. Bred in royalty by the Aga Kahn, Nasrullah's journey from Europe to America was one of glorious victories and grand potential. He was the first horse to lead both the American and English sire lists, which led to a legendary line of descendants that includes nine U.S. champions, three Hall of Famers and ninety-eight stake winners like Bold Ruler, Noor and Nashua. Nasrullah is even grandsire of the famed Secretariat. Ride along with author Melanie Greene as she recounts the compelling history of a truly remarkable horse that is sure to take any equestrian fan beyond the bluegrass.

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Customer Reviews

The writer of this book was clearly enthusiastic about the topic. However, it is a pity that her enthusiasm was not matched by the accuracy of the research, for the book gives little new insight into its subject and is riddled with so many errors that its main interest to a thoroughbred horse breeding enthusiast swiftly becomes spotting the next one. These are particularly evident when it comes to coverage of European races, of which the author's knowledge seems to be sadly

lacking. To take just a few: - Nasrullah's grandam, Mumtaz Mahal, is described as lacking the 'middle distance abilities of her dam, Lady Josephine' (who was actually a sprinter bred from sprinters and a strong influence for speed); - Mirza II is described as 'Nasrullah's aunt', which casts new light on the old adage that "If my aunt had ****s she'd be my uncle", because he clearly did, as is evidenced by the numerous foals 'she' sired; - In contrast, the Irish-bred Nashua (1949) is described as 'the first of two sons of Nasrullah to be named Nashua'. One might have thought that 'his' reported win in the Irish 1000 Guineas would have given any writer with the faintest idea what she was talking about a valuable clue that 'he' was in fact a 'she'. - Halo and Saint Ballado are cited as being exceptions to a tendency for 'US champion sires from the Sir Hercules line of Eclipse' to be descended from Nearco, which they aren't; ; - Gregor Mendel, who first enunciated the principles of genetics, is described as 'infamous', whereas one would have thought that fame rather than infamy would have been the result of his scientific endeavours. I hesitate to ask, but surely Gregor Mendel has not been confused with Joseph Mengele? Et cetera etcetera.

I became a fan of thoroughbred racing in 1963; Nasrullah died in 1959. I never knew him, even from a distance, as a living, breathing horse; I knew him as a legend, a larger-than-life name in the best pedigrees of the era. When I learned that there was a book about him, I wanted to get to know him as a real horse. Sadly, that didn't happen. This book is written in narrative form, but essentially it's a collection of facts and statistics. There are few anecdotes about his illustrious life. We learn that Bull Hancock tried for seven years to purchase Nasrullah and bring him to the United States, but when the day finally came, we simply learn in a few paragraphs that he arrived. There is no discussion of the feelings that that moment must have inspired. The author refers many times to the horse's infamous temperament, but she doesn't provide any stories about it. She tells us that "He'd get up on his hind legs and take out light bulbs," and "Bull himself reportedly threatened the stallion with a broom in the breeding shed after he got out of the control of his handlers," but she doesn't elaborate. The Hancock family must have wonderful reminiscences about this great horse, but the book doesn't include them. Nasrullah's sudden death in his paddock is vividly and movingly related by William Nack in his book about the horse's grandson Secretariat, but this author relates the facts of the sad event with very little feeling or color. Another reviewer criticized the book for factual errors. Most of us do not have the knowledge necessary to dispute a lot of the information--if we did we wouldn't need this book. But I did pick up on two incorrect statements. On page 69 of my edition Ms.

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