

StarTribune

Legendary bloodlines resurface in Savage

David La Vaque, Star Tribune, June 22, 2005

Dan Patch Days in Savage takes its name from the legendary harness-racing horse owned by the man who gave the city its name.

This year's community celebration, taking place Friday through Sunday, will feature descendants of both the horse and the man -- for the first time.

Greg Lind of the Dan Patch Historical Society got the idea as he researched information for the group's website. He came across pictures of Harold Savage (son of Marion W Savage, who was the owner of Dan Patch) at the 1953 Dan Patch Days, and began thinking about getting the family involved once again.

"I thought, 'That's really interesting,' " he said. "Then I thought, 'Why aren't we doing that now?' "

Lind and Bob Savage, one of Marion Savage's great-grandsons, contacted 12 family members, who will walk in Sunday's parade. Some of the family also will be at the Dan Patch Historical Society booth on Saturday.

"I thought it'd be kind of fun to pull everyone together for this, because I can't remember the last time I went to Dan Patch Days," Savage said.

Lind went one step farther by researching descendants of the horse Dan Patch. The harness racing horse was purchased by Marion Savage in 1902 for \$60,000. On Sept. 8, 1906, Dan Patch clocked a time of 1 minute, 55 seconds in the mile before some 93,000 spectators at the Minnesota State Fairgrounds. The time has been equalled once, but never bettered.

Three of Dan Patch's descendants, Banana Anna, Francis Albert and Hurricane Jekyll -- all verified through pedigrees -- will walk in Sunday's parade.

"To hear the horses will be there piqued my interest, too," Savage said.

In his day, Dan Patch was popular throughout the country. He earned more than \$1 million from races and exhibitions. Marion Savage oversaw the sale of silver-plated Dan Patch horseshoes, Dan Patch pin-up photos and hairs from the horse's tail that sold for \$5 apiece.

The bond between Dan Patch and Marion Savage continued to the end. Both fell ill on July 4, 1916, and the horse died of a heart ailment following an attack of pneumonia. Told that his beloved horse was gone, Savage's condition worsened, and he died July 12, about 32 hours later.

Descendants of the famous harness racing horse Dan Patch and of his owner, Marion Savage, will walk in the annual Dan Patch Days parade.

WHEN: Sunday, 1-2:30 p.m.

WHERE: Community Park, 13500 Dakota Av. S.

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