



RILLITO RACE TRACK

American Quarter Horse
HISTORICAL MARKER #8

Dedicated January 1996
Rillito Race Track
Rillito Park, Tucson, AZ

This famous track on the banks of the Rillito River was the birthplace of many racing innovations still in use today. The Southern Arizona Horse Breeders Association, the organization that pioneered Quarter Horse Racing in Tucson, had been hosting races at the Hacienda Moltacqua track since 1941. When Moltacqua was sold in 1943, J. Rukin Jelks volunteered to use the training track on his ranch.

Under the direction of Melville Haskell, an American Quarter Horse Hall of Fame inductee, and Van Smelker, who later became head of the AQHA Performance Department, SAHBA experimented with grading races, weighted handicaps, futurities, derbies and stake races, and photo-electric timers. World famous sprinters such as SHUE FLY, JOE REED II, PIGGIN STRING, HARD TWIST, QUEENIE, and MISS PANAMA all ran at Rillito.

American Quarter Horses are now competing in races around the world and are in demand for showing, ranch work, rodeo, recreational riding and many other activities. AQHA is the world's largest equine breed registry, with its international headquarters located in Amarillo, Texas.

American Quarter Horse Heritage Center & Museum, Amarillo,
Texas