

## WHITE ROCK STABLES

-Sara Gallagher



At this Lake Highlands institution customers are like family. They range in age from 1 to the 101-year-old whose horses were shown by Tex in the 1930's. Unique because it is family-run, it has literally been a second home to generations.

Developed around 1940 by Tex Oddson, and located higher on the hill then, White Rock Stables has been at its present location at Goforth and Lanshire since 1950. Neighbors know they are welcome to stroll the 14 acres (one city block) among the peacocks, guineas, chickens, and rabbits (galore!). When Tex bought the property in 1948, it was in the county (not city) of Dallas. Used as a dump ground, there was not a blade of grass. The whole family had a hand in ridding it of auto bodies and other debris to bring it from a trash site to a natural and beautiful respite.

"I halter-broke them early," Tex says of his two sons. But he always encouraged them to find out what they enjoyed doing most. Terry is a radiologist in Little Rock, and Tex Jr. now runs the stables. Looking years younger than his nearly 78 years, Tex is still active in the operation and can always be seen exercising the horses early in the morning. "The people make the business," says Tex. His loyal customers and rapport with the city officials have reflected his attitude that "Man's greatest asset is his ability to get along with people".

In the beginning Tex wanted to make a living training American Saddlebreds. Until his sons went to college, White Rock Stables was an academy that taught equitation for many years to Hockaday, Highland Park High School, and private students. Sixty horses are currently boarded there and hayrides are a booming business. Five wagons carry customers from kindergartners to fun-lovers from the Golden Acres Home. "We help them on because they're too little, and we help them on because they're too old," laughs Tex.

Saying that "the best thing for the inside of a man is the outside of a horse", Tex has many stories of people who have overcome problems by riding horses. He explains that in most sports the feet are on the ground, but learning to ride a horse produces perspective and sense of accomplishment of a different and unique sort.

Loyal and lifelong customers of the stables are witness to the history of integrity with which White Rock Stables has been run. Often children brought to the stables for the first time will hear the remark, "Tex taught me to ride when I was your age".

And another generation is born to the tradition of White Rock Stables.