

"GOLDEN LADY"

Horse With A High I. Q.

By EVELYN REID GRIFFITH

Photos by Ann Moreton

GOLDEN LADY justifies the expression "horse sense."

This beautiful Palomino can tell you in good, understandable, horsey language that she is 7 years old and there are four quarters in a dollar. When her master drops his hat, and, reversing the code of gentlemen, says to Lady in a conversational tone, "Pick it up for me." Lady daintily picks the hat from the ground between her lips. His next command is to "Shake the dust off." She shakes her head vigorously from side to side. "Give it to me, then," and Lady turns her head and puts the hat in her master's hand.

Joseph William "Bill" Lizana of 426 Main st., Bay St. Louis, Miss., has had Golden Lady as his hobby for four years now. He says Golden Lady is one of the half dozen or so horses in the United States that knows her numbers and colors.

He has rigged up a tablelike stand with numbers from one to five. If you doubt Lady's reading ability just call for a number. She promptly selects it from the group and gives it to Bill, who hasn't said a word. There is no tricky business about this—it's straight from the horse's mouth. Would you like the yellow, red or white handkerchief? Just tell Golden Lady yourself and she will bring the one requested.

These are only a few of Lady's accomplishments. She can give you a horse laugh or say her prayers with bowed head. Her version of a lazy horse in the morning arouses a familiar feeling in us humans.

There is deep affection between Bill Lizana and

Lady. "Do you love me?" he asks, and Lady bobs her head up and down. "Kiss me, then," and Lady munches his cheek with soft lips.

Bill was born in Pass Christian 60 years ago, and being on the go is no novelty to him. When he was a boy he ran away from home with a traveling medicine man. It was an easy jump from that to riding cow ponies out West. He was a regular cowboy, herding cattle on different ranches for a year or 18 months at a time. Then he would get homesick for the Gulf Coast and come back to Bay St. Louis, which has been his home off and on for years.

On one of his trips back home in 1912 he married Lorreta Roemer and she has been right with him in all of his wanderings for 40 years. Bill has trained and handled horses in every corner of the United States. At one time he was in charge of the old Pine Hills hotel riding stables. Another time, when he returned to the Gulf Coast, he ran the stables for the White House and Edgewater Gulf hotels. He has one daughter living in Pass Christian, Mrs. Irvy Ladner.

Golden Lady is from Abilene, Tex. An appreciative Jefferson parish ranch owner, George M. Kerner, gave her to Bill for a birthday present on Nov. 24, 1948. Bill "broke" her and trained her himself. For two years he used her as a cow pony on Kerner's ranch and during this time he was teaching her tricks at odd moments. He says it was about two years before she mastered the number trick.

Golden Lady is not registered as yet because Bill has been unable to get a recognized national inspector to come and pass on her. Palomino is a comparatively new breed and consequently the past history is not always necessary for registration. The color is the primary consideration. The coat must be the color of a newly minted gold coin and free from any white spots. The mane and tail must be white, silver or ivory. It may be a walking horse, gaited, Morgan or quarter horse, just so the color is perfect. Lady easily meets the requirements.

In Bay St. Louis no parade would be complete without Golden Lady and her master. She is a familiar figure at local fund-raising rallies. Everywhere she goes a group of adoring children appear as if by magic. She has won numerous ribbons in local horse shows.

Golden Lady and Bill never appeared professionally until about a month ago. They performed for a week in Biloxi with a carnival. There are rumors of their spending four months in Cuba with a family of bareback riders who are connected with Ringling Brothers-Barnum and Bailey circus. While the circus is wintering in Sarasota, Fla., the family is organizing a small group of horse acts to appear in Cuba beginning in January. Bill also hopes to get Golden Lady on a television show and—who knows—she may give Trigger a run for his money.

How do you train horses? Bill says it's easy—you just have to have more sense than the horse.

One of Golden Lady's smartest show tricks is picking out a number called for by spectators



Under each number on board is leather tab which Lady can pull with mouth



Correctly selecting No. 1 as ordered, Golden Lady hands tab to Bill Lizana