The Babson Egyptian Stud:

Where Past Meets Present

by Arlene Magid

U.S. national champion stallions Synbad++, Hajababa++, Petit Jean, Galizion, Khemosabi++, Gai Adventure, Gai Parada++, Amurath Bandoler0+ and Ali Jamaal all have it. So do U.S. national champion mares Lallegra, Imarfa++, High Fashion++, Jon San Judizion, Fa Halima, TJs Georgie Girl and VP Kahlua. In performance, U.S. national park champion Faar Ra++, U.S. national park AOTR champion High Jack (now a most successful partbred sire), and U.S. national English pleasure champions Canadian Love and JK Jedi also possess it. What is it? A significant portion of their pedigrees trace to horses imported by Henry Babson.

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Serr Maariner (Ibn Fa Serr x Maarena). A six-time national dressage winner, Serr Maariner is the first Arabian to win the U.S. Dressage Federation gold medal for excellence.

Fa Serr (*Fadl x *Bint Serra I). A true black halter champion, Fa Serr sired four national winners. Nine of his get have produced national winners as well.

Mahrouf (Fabah x Aaroufa). Mahrouf, the 1981 Region XI Park Champion, is a three-quarter brother to three national winners in halter and performance.

Ibn Fa Serr (Fa Serr x Fa Deene). The product of a full sibling mating, Ibn Fa Serr has been a fine sire, with national winners including 1982 U.S. National Park AOTR Reserve Champion Brefny's D'Artagnan (ex Kemah's Mirza) and multi-national dressage winner Serr Maariner.

Roufah (Ibn Fa Serr x Bahroufa). Named a U.S. and Canadian top ten mare, Roufah is the dam of Canadian top ten stallion Na Ibn Monet.

Sabrah (Fabah x Serasab). Sabrah is the dam of four national winners including U.S. national champion mare Fa Halima.
Henry Babson, who was born in 1875, was a successful entrepreneur who was captivated with the Arabian breed late in life. In 1930, he went on a horse-buying expedition to England (where nothing he liked was for sale), France (where he felt the Arabians resembled Thoroughbreds), and Spain, with no luck in buying the horses he envisioned. In 1932, Babson journeyed to Egypt, and his dream of an Arabian breeding program became a reality. He purchased five mares, a colt and a stallion who were to leave their unique stamp on the breed. These horses were used for many purposes, helping to popularize the breed at a time when there were fewer than a thousand registered Arabians in America. The stallion *Fadl* was used as a polo pony and as an endurance mount, besides being a successful show and ring competitor in both halter and performance. The mares proved equally athletic, with *Bint Bint Sabaah* and *Bint Bint Durra* completing distance rides successfully as well. George Cason, one of the early managers at the farm, said it well: “In 1936 and 1937 Arab horses were in open competition. Mr. Babson’s stable did more for the promotion of the breed at this time than did any other stable in America.”

Space does not permit a full cataloging of the influence that the Babson Egyptian imports have had on the breed. A brief discussion of each horse should give some idea of their importance.

**BINT DURRA (Ibn Rabdan x Bint Durra)**

*Bint Durra* was bred by the Royal Agricultural Society. She was by the same sire as *Fadl*. *Bint Bint Durra* was a noted endurance competitor, successfully finishing the Vermont 100 mile ride. Of her five straight Egyptian foals, the most significant in pedigrees today include Fa Durra (whose son Dural sired national winners in halter and park) and Fad Zarka (whose granddaughter Freni produced U.S. national park champion Lewisfield Nizzof).

**BINT SAADA (Ibn Samhan x Saada)**

Also bred by the Royal Agricultural Society, *Bint Saada* is a paternal sister to *Zarife*, grandsire of Canadian reserve national champion mare Habina+++ and U.S. reserve national champion mare Rose of Raswan. *Bint Saada’s* blood is the rarest of all Babson imported Egyptian mares today, as she died young. Her line is carried on only through her son-Faddan. He has done well representing her, with daughters like Fada (dam of Maarena, whose four champions include multi-national dressage champion Serr Maariner) and Fad Roufa (whose daughter Jorami is a U.S. top ten English pleasure and native costume winner who sired Canadian national champion stallion Jora Honey Ku+++).

**BINT SERRA I (Sotamm x Serra)**

*Bint Serra I* was the only mare in the Babson importation bred by Prince Kemal El Dine. Her sire Sotamm was an *Astrale* son bred at England’s Crabbet Stud, and her dam Serra was called “a flawless pearl” by Dr. Branch of the Royal Agricultural Society. Serra was also one of noted authority Carl Raswan’s favorite mares in Egypt. *Bint Serra I* was noted for her exceptional withers. All living Babson Egyptian horses today have at least one line to *Bint Serra I*, chiefly because of her heavily-used sons Fa El Dine and Fa Serr. Fa El Dine (by *Fadl*) sired 10 national winner producers (two sons and eight daughters) from only 55 registered get. Fa Serr, a full brother to the grey Fay El Dine, was black and a halter champion. He sired four national winners himself: U.S. top ten park Bint Aaroufa, Canadian top ten mare Aarouser, U.S. top ten mare Serr Ra, and Roufias, whose national titles include U.S. national English pleasure reserve champion and top ten park. *Bint Serra I’s* daughter Fa Zaula is the dam of national winner producer Tobruk, and another daughter, Fa Deene, is the dam of Hadbeh and Ibn Fa Serr (both sires of four national winners apiece).

*Photo #8: Faddan (*Fadl x *Bint Saada). Faddan sired notable broodmares like Fada and Fad Roufa, and is the only source of *Bint Saada blood in modern Babson horses.*

*BIINT BINT SABBAH (Bayyad x Bint Sabah)*

*Bint Bint Sabaah* was a successful endurance mare who produced 13 straight Egyptian foals. She founded one of the most successful tail female lines in Babson breeding. Three of her offspring produced national winners. Her daughter Faaba (by *Fadl*) is the dam of U.S. national pleasure driving reserve champion and top ten English pleasure winner Farood++ (himself a national winner producer). Her son Khebir (a full brother to Faaba) sired U.S. top ten stallion Khizan. Another full brother, Faab, sired U.S. top ten native costume winner El Ibn Fahab+++ (himself the sire of 1988 Canadian national western pleasure champion Cassarina) and British national champion stallion The Shah (sire in turn of British national champion stallion Shahpoor). Faabah sired eight producers of national winners, including Sabrah, dam of four national winners including U.S. national champion mare Fa Halima. Other notable *Bint Bint Sabaah* progeny include Fa Abba (granddam of U.S. top ten park winner Serr Bruk) and Fadahma (dam of multi-halter and performance champion and national winner producer Risab). So predominant was *Bint Bint Sabaah* that there are now (according to Joe Ferriss) just four living horses that do not carry a line to her among living Babson Straight Egyptians.

*Photo: Fay El Dine (*Fadl x *Bint Serra I). Fay El Dine was the first foal of his parents, and sired 10 producers of national winners from only 55 registered get.*

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MAAROUFA (Ibn Rabdan x Mahroussa)

Maaroufa was a full sister to *Fadl, who was imported along with her. Babson inbred the two by mating Maaroufa to Fadl’s son Fay El Dine, and he also did some experimental outcrosses with her. She had 15 straight Egyptian foals, and was bred at the end of her breeding career to Fay El Dine’s full brother Fa Serr. Maaroufa proved to be the most successful broodmare of the importation in the number of her offspring to produce national winners. Her son Baarouf (by the British-born import *Aldebar) sired U.S. reserve national champion gelding Baarhan++. Another son, Faaris (by Fa Serr) sired U.S. national park champion and top ten mare Faar-Ra++. Four Maaroufa daughters, all by Fay El Dine, produced national winners. Fay Ufa produced U.S. top ten English pleasure winner Fayhan. Bint Maaroufa’s son La Ruh is a U.S. top ten stock horse. Maarouf’s son Maardan++ won top ten titles in western pleasure and cutting. Maaroufa’s three national winners Aarouser, Bint Maaroufa, and Roufas, have already been mentioned.

FADL (Ibn Rabdan x Mahroussa)

Fadl, the only full-grown stallion of the Babson importation (*Bint Serra’s colt *Metsur died shortly after arrival), is found in all Babson Egyptian pedigrees. Of his 74 registered get, 34 were Babson Egyptian. Eleven of Fadl’s get produced national winners. The six Fadl sons who have sired national winners are: Fa Serr, Fabah, Khebir, Ibn Fadl, Fa Turf and Fadheilan. Fadl’s national-winner producing daughters are Arafay, Fa Rahna, Dinah, Faaba and Turfara. Fadl lived to be 25 years old.

Although Babson focussed on breeding straight Egyptian Arabs based on his 1932 imports, other blood was introduced to the stud and used for a time. In 1938, Babson was on the road again, this time touring Poland, Hungary and Germany. In Poland he selected three mares and a stallion. *Rybitwa (Almanzor x Jaskolka II) later became one of the foundation broodmares for the Mekeel Ranch in California. She is best known as the maternal grandsdam of U.S. top ten park winner Muzamar++. Kasztelanka (Koheilan I x Bialogradka) became the dam of Fadheilban (by *Fadl), sire of U.S. reserve national champion stallion Fadjur, one of the breed’s all-time leading sires. Fadheilban is the double grandsire of U.S. national English and western pleasure.
reserve champion Jurneeka++, dam of the breed's leading living sire of champions, U.S. and Canadian national champion stallion Khemosabi++. *Kostrezowa (Koheilan I x Dziwanna) was also bred to *Fadl, producing Fa Gazal, who became the third dam of U.S. and Canadian national champion mare VP Kahlua (who also carries Babson blood through her sire's granddam). Perhaps the most influential mare of the 1938 Babson group from Poland was *Azja IV (Landsknecht x Asra), who later produced Azraff. Azraff, the leading son of *Raffles both in number of foals (500) and number of champions sired (87) became a cornerstone of the Gainey breeding program. 1991 U.S. National Champion Mare Gainiea is out of the Azraff granddaughter Gai Dream. The stallion of the 1938 Polish group was the exquisite *Suleiman Fetyx x Fastila), sire of the Babson-bred national winner producer Tobruk, and later of U.S. top ten mare Al-Marah Waltzing Matilda.

Babson also incorporated three other horses into the herd for a time. *Aldebar (Dwarka x Amida), bred in England, is chiefly known as the sire of national winner producers Durrat and Baarouf. *Turfa, a desertbred mare acquired in 1941, founded a very special subgroup in the Babson herd. Her nick with *Fadl was exceptional, producing three national winner producers: Ibn Fadl, Fa Turf, and Turfara. Today, the Babson/Turfa horses are no longer bred directly at the Babson farm, but have a dedicated following who value them for their action at the trot and extreme presence, elements unique to the stock that is *Turfa related. The final Babson import, *Nimrod (Champurrido x Nautch Girl), was obtained in 1958 from H.V.M. Clark in England. The *Nimrod outcross with the Egyptian horses tended to produce horses of greater size, but with no loss of type and elegance. *Nimrod get were talented performance horses, and included U.S. national pleasure driving reserve champion and top ten English pleasure winner Farod++, U.S. national western pleasure champion and top ten English pleasure winner Bay Rod++, and U.S. top ten park winner Khenim.

Horses descended from Babson imports have helped establish breeding programs of major American farms such as Cedardell, Gainey Fountainhead and Al-Marah. The Babson Egyptian horses have proven to be ideal outcrosses with later imports of Nazeer lines. The all-time leading Egyptian dam of champions, RDM Maar Hala (who has produced eight champions) is by the double Nazeer grandson El Hilal out of the all-Babson mare Maar Hala, who traces in tail female to *Maaroufa. The only straight Egyptian mother/daughter team to produce four national winners apiece are the Babson mare Sabrah and her daughter Ansata Sabiha. Sabrah is also the dam of Ansata Sabiha's full sister, the gorgeous Fa Halima, named 1980 U.S. National Champion Mare. The Babson Egyptian gene pool is irreplaceable, having proven its worth both in pure form and as an outcross. However, this precious legacy is in extreme danger of extinction — there are just some 200 odd straight Babson horses left. If we are to have mares of the quality of RDM Maar Hala and Fa Halima in the future, we must preserve a genetic nucleus from which to outcross. Sabrah, the top-producing straight Babson mare, died in 1991 without leaving a straight Babson foal to carry on for her. For those breeders who have straight Egyptian Babson mares, or for those who wish to start breeding Arabians by saving blood already proven so valuable, breeding Babson Egyptians is a rewarding quest. 

Arlene Magid, senior editor of ARABIAN HORSE TIMES, owns a gelding whose grandsire was bred by the Babson farm. He lives in Owatonna, Minn., original home of Gainey Arabians, while she lives in Wascoa, Minn.