

## Registration Photos: The Importance Of and Tips for Good Ones

By Sharon January

Few people stop to consider how important good pictures can be down the road for identification purposes. Whether it is for a potential buyer to be reassured that the horse is the one being considered or bought, to get lost paperwork re-issued, or to recover a stolen horse, "bad pictures" and "bad descriptions" can thwart the needs.

On Appaloosa registration papers the descriptions are taken from the pictures, not from the owner's drawings and descriptions on the application (which more often than not are woefully inaccurate or not done at all). The owner's drawings are merely a tool; the pictures are the proof.

The pictures are copied onto the back of the certificate. Appaloosa papers do not have the horse diagrams on the back with every little hump, dip and curve of the leg and face markings (or scars or brands) drawn in like some other registries do. So to "prove" that *this* set of papers goes with *this* horse, a person can only go by what the description says and by looking at the pictures on the back. The clearer the pictures, the better the proof.

The Appaloosa is the only breed of horse that can change so dramatically over time (gray horses change considerably, too, but gray is a color, not a breed). The only things that don't change on an Appaloosa are the face and leg markings. Appaloosa spots don't change very often, though occasionally they, too, may "migrate". If you have a loud colored leopard or a great blanket with big definitive spots, you will probably never have a problem with changes. But over time, especially after a lot of roaning has occurred, it can look like a *completely* different horse.

Papers get lost. To get duplicate papers, new pictures have to be submitted to prove that this is the same horse as was originally registered. What happens next? The old pictures are taken out and compared to the new pictures. Often, because of the changes through roaning, the *only* thing to prove they are the same horse is to be able to see that the humps, dips and curves of the leg markings are the same on both sets of pictures (or to prove there never were any markings). Due to the roaning that can take place on an Appaloosa's face, many times even the face markings can be very hard, if not impossible, to determine and match up.

Never worry about sending too many pictures. Sometimes that extra shot of a heel marking can be the determining factor



*BCA Chats Yamahawk F6-2699  
Owned by Charles Potts, Blue Creek Appaloosas.  
Mr Potts always sends good pictures of his horses  
and that is very much appreciated! Notice how all  
four legs can be seen clearly for a good description.  
This baby is also very clean.*

someone needs someday to prove that this is indeed the same horse as was originally registered. Yes, it's hard to get a horse to stand still sometimes, especially a baby. But take the required shots for the pictures on the certificate and then keep that camera clicking to get good, *clear* shots of feet and legs, especially if there is some "hard to see" little partial coronet or inside heel or tell-tale scar (if only one leg shows in a picture then please label as to which foot it is). Although these extra photographs won't appear on the certificate, they will be on file *and* the description on the certificate will be accurate.

### Important Pointers

- It's hard to see the markings on a dirty horse so please clean them up, at least brushing the mud off (especially those legs!).
- Pictures of light colored horses need to be taken out of the bright sun, or the glare is too bright to see anything. Sometimes even a good blanket on a light palomino can't be seen if it's taken in the bright sun. An overcast day outdoors is the best.

- Palomino and chestnut foals are sometimes especially hard, even in person, to determine if they have leg markings due to the extremely light colored foal hair on their legs. If you find later that a foal has leg markings that couldn't be seen when it was originally registered then send in more pictures later and have the certificate corrected.
- I've found it best to wait until a foal is about four months old to take registration pictures. By then, they've shed their foal hair so their color is more accurate, as well as the leg markings show up well on lighter colors such as chestnuts and palominos.
- Do not cut off any body parts! The horse needs to take up most of the picture frame to be seen easily. But we crop them so it's okay if there is some space surrounding them. Cutting off body parts may cut off those important markings that are so important to see.
- Take side shots directly from the side to avoid distortion of the head or butt.
- Be sure to try to get all four legs showing in the side shots so as to be able to see the inside markings as well.

Don't think you're being harassed about providing good pictures. There are reasons why you need to get good, clear shots of the whole horse, tips of the ears to toes, nose to tail, with the insides and outsides of all four legs showing, front and rear, cleaned up and out of the grass. Besides, that certificate will go with the horse for the rest of its life. It's nice to have good pictures you can be proud of to go with the horse.

With digital cameras in wide use nowadays, it makes it easy to go out and take a few hundred pictures. You can almost always find a few out of that many that are really good ones. You can go to the ICAA website and lay your cursor over the Registration page's navigation tab and you will see there are two other pages, one of which is "Photo Do's & Don'ts". It's worth a look!



Hobos Heart (ICAA Pending)  
2017 Bay Dun Colt  
Owned by Anna Larson