

Sculpting Appaloosa History

Artist Shayne Watkins created a bronze sculpture of George Hatley and his prized horse, Toby II. Here, we visited with Watkins to find out what inspired him to create this Appaloosa-history piece and what it took to complete it with accuracy and character.

Question: Tell us a little bit about the finished piece....

Answer: This is a full horse-and-rider sculpture, and the finished piece has a colored patina. It has a chemical patina that has some color, but it's true to the classic bronze look. It is a one-sixth life-size scale, and Toby is in a trot. I have lots of photos of George showing him trotting in the arena. I like to have motion in my artwork. That helps create an emotional response in the viewer of the art—to envision some activity. So Toby is in a trot phase, and George is stepping into his stirrups with a little bit of motion in the reins as the horse's tail is out. They're going somewhere.

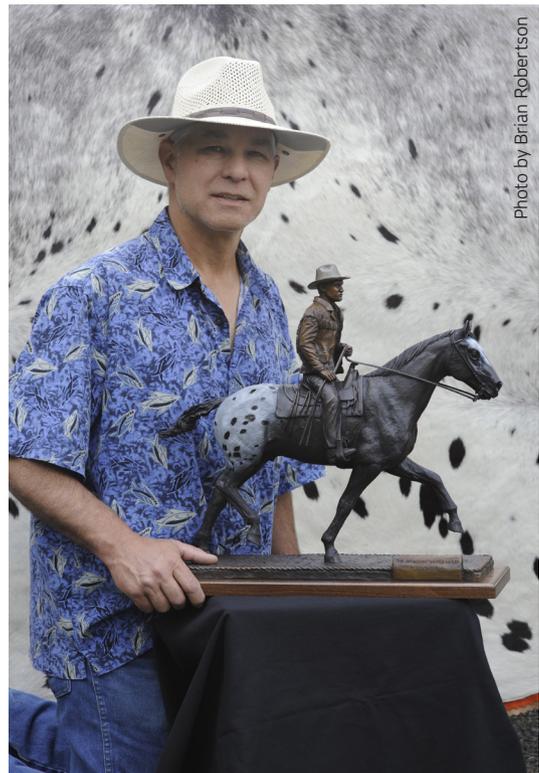
Q: What started this project?

A: It started back in December of 2020. My wife, Alane, had suggested that I do a sculpture of George Hatley. I was in between projects, it was toward the end of COVID, and it was time to get started. People were still concerned about getting out and mingling, so I was able to do a lot of artwork. Part of the goal for me is to honor people and things, events of my local region and cultural heritage. George was a friend of ours. I liked everything about George and what he stood for. He was an author. He was a historian. He appreciated the Nez Perce Native American culture. He loved horse camping and packing.

I started thinking about what pose would be appropriate. I thought about a life-size bust of George. He was so instrumental in promoting the Appaloosa breed that I wanted to highlight his connection with the Appaloosa.

Q: For those who need a history recap, tell us about George. We know he founded this magazine and first named it the *Appaloosa News*.

A: That is correct. I'm glad you pointed that out. He was a co-founder of the Appaloosa Horse Club. He started the Appaloosa Horse Museum. He started the Chief Joseph Trail Ride, which continues to this day. He was a local hero on that ride. He attended so many of them and was always treated like a celebrity when he was there because of his stories. He would talk about the Nez Perce Trail. He would talk about the Appaloosa breed, which originated right here on the Palouse. That's why it's called Appaloosa—it came from the Palouse region here in the Inland Northwest.

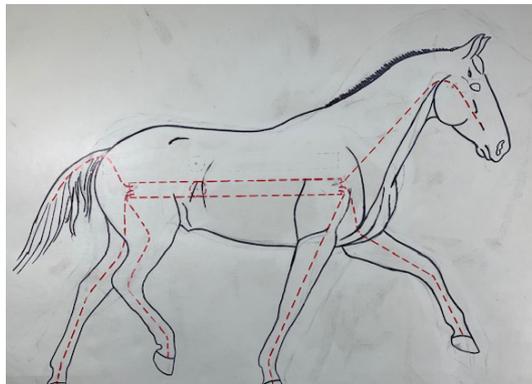


Watkins displays the first limited edition bronze sculpture casting of "Mr. Appaloosa" George Hatley, with the hide of Toby II for the backdrop.

"I like to have motion in my artwork. That helps create an emotional response in the viewer of the art—to envision some activity."

-Shayne Watkins

➔ **Top Left:**
Watkins first drew a one-sixth life-size sketch of Toby II in a trot gait to help align the internal placement.



➔ **Bottom Left:**
Watkins applies wax to a pipe and wire armature to rough out the body of Toby II.



➔ **Top Right:**
Watkins finishes the basic model of Toby II to ensure the correct stance, proportions and muscles.



➔ **Bottom Right:**
George Hatley and Toby II's sculpture becomes identifiable and is ready for ears, arms, reins and a hat.



Q: How did you know George Hatley?

A: This is crazy. It goes back to when I was a teenager and still living at home south of Lewiston, Idaho. There's a place called Redbird Creek that flows down into the Snake River. My dad and I met a man named Norman Hatley who ran cattle there. That canyon land was owned by George Hatley. We started getting permission—written notes and letters from Norm and George—allowing us to deer hunt on that property. We were great friends with Norm Hatley as a cattleman, and George was his uncle.

Eventually, through horses and events, we got acquainted with George. He owned property up here in Deary, Idaho, called the Pony Club Grounds, which he leased or loaned out to all kinds of equestrian events.

One event was something he called the Sunday Drive. During the summertime, people would bring horse-drawn vehicles and drive trails through the woods. In the wintertime, there were cutters and sleighs. My dad collected wagons, buggies and sleighs, and even sold one of his sleighs to George at one point.

Another connection was family. We found out we had a family connection going back to the mid-1800s. My relative James Hartley married a Hatley descendant. There was an unfortunate shooting that caused family strife for generations. George's great-uncle shot and killed my fourth great-grandfather. When we later met George and Norm, my dad would joke, holding his hands out, saying he wasn't armed. They laughed about it. The hatchet had been buried.

Q: So what was the first step to creating this bronze?

A: The first step was deciding on pose and form. I decided to go mounted. Then I needed photos. My

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“[George Hatley] was so instrumental in promoting the Appaloosa breed that I wanted to highlight his connection with the Appaloosa.”
—



Watkins draws spots freehand on a rubber template, using Toby II's actual tanned hide and photos for reference.

dad had kept photos, newspaper clippings and *Western Horseman* articles about George.

I wanted to meet with Iola Hatley, George's widow, to get her blessing. COVID delayed that, and then health issues delayed it further, but we eventually had a long phone conversation. She told me that although people remembered George later in life as bent over from a stroke, she wanted him portrayed upright, as a handsome younger man with broad shoulders. Craig Hatley, George's son, confirmed those broad shoulders were characteristic. I asked Iola about George's favorite horse, and she said Toby II. Toby II lived from 1939 to 1962 and was George's prized stallion.

That informed my timeline: George as a younger but mature man, on Toby II, in his prime.

I gathered photos from the Appaloosa Horse Museum, from online sources and especially from Craig Hatley, who had boxes of photos from his mother's house. He spread them out on the table and let me photograph them for reference.

Craig was very supportive. He gave written permission to use George's likeness, and when the sculpture was complete, I gifted him one casting.

From there, I sketched the scale, built an armature with wire and wood and sculpted in wax. I finished the sculpture almost exactly on what would have been George's 100th birthday, July 18, 2024.

George Hatley, "Mr. Appaloosa," and Toby II

George B. Hatley's work helped shape both the Appaloosa Horse Club (ApHC) and the early development of the Appaloosa Journal.

The Appaloosa Museum's website features George Hatley, saying, "In 1947, George Hatley was appointed executive secretary of the ApHC, and the club's records, contained in a shoebox, were moved from Moro, Ore., to the Hatleys' house in Moscow, Idaho. At this time, there were 200 registered horses and 100 members. Over the next two decades, the ApHC grew by leaps and bounds, necessitating four moves to larger quarters. George Hatley continued to lead the ApHC for 31 years until his retirement in 1978. At this point, over 300,000 Appaloosas had been registered, and the ApHC was the third largest registry among light horse breeds."

Hatley oversaw publication of the first stud books and helped organize the first National Appaloosa Horse Show in Lewiston, Idaho. He helped establish the Appaloosa Museum.

Hatley married Iola Golden in 1947, and the two built a well-known Appaloosa breeding program. One of Hatley's most significant horses was Toby II, a dark blue roan stallion foaled in 1939 and acquired



George Hatley considered Toby II his prized stallion but chose not to promote him once he held an official role with the ApHC so that he could remain neutral and serve the breed as a whole.

Q: How did adding color to the bronze lead to more historical accuracy?

A: I wanted to add color to the buckskin jacket—that was George’s trademark for when he competed and showed his Appaloosas. I wanted a color there that would look like buckskin. Then the spotting pattern of the Appaloosa. Toby II had a distinctive rump with spots. Some people still breed and have Toby II bloodlines and might appreciate the historical value of Toby’s actual spotting pattern.

Craig offered me the tanned hide of Toby II, which George had saved. I used it to create a rubber template to reproduce the exact spotting pattern on every bronze casting. I don’t know of another artist who has done that, but it mattered to me historically.

I’m proud of the spots but also of capturing George’s expression. Craig told me, “That’s Dad,” especially noting the eyebrows, shoulders and posture.

Craig has one sculpture at his home and may loan it to the Appaloosa Museum. I have number three of a limited edition of 50 available.

The main takeaway is honoring George Hatley’s legacy: his authorship, his role in the Appaloosa Horse Club, his reverence for Nez Perce culture and the lasting importance of Toby II. This sculpture is meant to keep that legacy alive and accurately interpreted.

Find out more at ShayneWatkinsArt.com. ■

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Photo by Henry Sheldon

Officially registered as Toby II F-113, Toby II sired a total of 47 registered foals.

by Hatley in 1941. Toby II became Hatley’s first ApHC-registered horse and is recognized as an influential foundation sire with offspring noted for consistent color and type. The Hatleys raised their son, Craig, while continuing to expand their horse breeding program.

Toby II didn’t build his legacy through a long winner’s list though he was shown successfully at the National Appaloosa Show. He earned recognition by producing horses that won. Toby III remains the most influential and successful direct son of Toby II. He was a national champion and his sons—including Chief Eagle and Toby IV—were national halter champions. Today, many foundation-bred horses trace their lineage to Toby II. His horses perform well at halter and performance events.

Join in the conversation and share memories of Toby II’s line of horses at tinyurl.com/TobyIIMemories. ■



Photo courtesy ApHC Archives

George and Lola Hatley were married for over 60 years. Lola knew of the sculpture and asked that Watkins show George as a younger man with an upright posture.

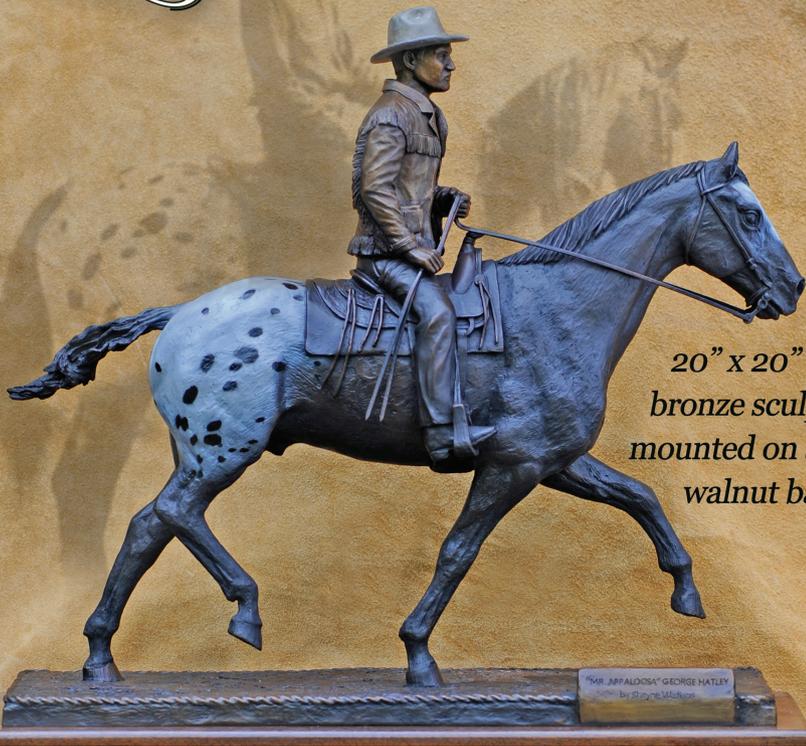


Photo courtesy of the Appaloosa Museum & Heritage Center Foundation

Toby II was foaled on May 15, 1939, and died on September 26, 1962. His death was the result of a freak accident when he ran into equipment.

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