



An Early Breeder

By Helen Herold, *Director, National Museum of the Morgan Horse*



Elmer A. Darling was a wealthy Morgan enthusiast who ran an active Morgan breeding program in the early 20th century in Vermont. His efforts had a lasting and far reaching influence on the Morgan breed. Darling was one of the founders of the Morgan Horse Club, served as President from 1915 to 1931, but is much less famous than his contemporaries J. C. Brunk and A. Fullerton Phillips.

Mr. Darling was born in 1848 in East Burke, Vermont. He attended MIT where he received training in architecture, and became wealthy through his involvement with the Fifth Avenue Hotel at Madison Square in New York City. His fortune was put to good use back in Vermont by buying Burke Mountain and creating Mountain View Farm in 1883. As his interest in Morgan horses grew, he began buying mares with old Vermont breeding and acquired the stallion Billy Roberts 4550 in 1907. (Billy Roberts had 18.559% Justin Morgan blood, as calculated by Frances Bryant.) He believed in the “absolute importance of the quality of the mare in breeding.”

Elmer never married. His nephew Henry maintained the farm for years after his uncle’s death. The property was eventually sold

and the collections of carriages and equipment were auctioned. Burkly Hall, Mr. Darling’s home at the farm, is now a private residence. Today, the main barn buildings have been transformed into a bed and breakfast, the Inn at Mountain View Farm. The web site for the Inn, www.innmtnview.com, has photos of the beautifully restored property and states, “Built as a gentleman’s working farm by Elmer A. Darling, a visionary Vermonter and graduate of MIT, The Mountain View Farm once supplied meat and dairy products to Mr. Darlings prestigious Fifth Avenue Hotel. A carriage barn and stately Morgan horse barn frame the courtyard. On the cupola of each barn is a weathervane that identifies how each barn was used.” (Mr. Darling is said to have owned 2 of the famous Hale’s Green Mountain 42 weathervanes.)

Sarah McIntosh, who moved back to Vermont from Minnesota a few years ago, now owns another property in the area, built in 1897 by the niece of Mr. Darling and lived in by Henry. Sarah has visited the Museum, and owns a Morgan named Thunder who traces his pedigree back to the Morgans bred at Mountain View Farm. Thunder has found his way back to the “pastoral beauty of the farm pastures his ancestors enjoyed.” ■

Sources: *NMMH Archives, NMMN Fall 2009 newsletter*