

# Bennington 5693

The Research of Marsha Valance, 2017



## Bennington 5693

(General Gates x Mrs Culvers)  
 Dark bay, 15.1 hands, 1,100 lbs  
**Foaled:** April 2, 1908, Middlebury, Vermont  
**Bred by:** the USDA, Vermont  
**Loaned to:** the US Army Remount Service, 1913-1920, then returned to the government farm to serve as chief sire  
**Died:** of old age, June 11, 1936, Middlebury, Vermont  
 26 crosses to Justin Morgan  
**Eight Generation Coefficient of Inbreeding:** 1.48072242736816 percent  
**Registered Morgan Progeny:** 89

Beginning in 1907, the US Department of Agriculture managed, on the Middlebury, Vermont, farm given to the federal government by Colonel Joseph Battell, a breeding program to produce the perfect cavalry horse. The base was the Morgan, because their Civil War record proved they had the needed intelligence and endurance, and were low maintenance. Saddlebred and Thoroughbred blood was introduced to add size. The resulting horses, performance tested before breeding, proved superb athletes, and were bred to be prepotent in the Remount program. “Bennington was a dark bay horse of excellent conformation, finish, and action, standing about 15.1 hands and weighing approximately 1,100 pounds. He was well broken to harness and saddle and was a good show horse. Among his more important accomplishments in a limited show career, were the winning of championship awards for Morgan stallions at the Eastern States Exposition [Springfield, Massachusetts] in 1923 and 1924. He sired numerous colts that have stood well among the prize winners in various New England shows and fairs.” (*Vermont Horse & Bridle Trail Bulletin*, January 1943, p. 11). Some longtime Morgan breeders felt that his Saddlebred and Thoroughbred blood gave Bennington his straight hind legs which were vulnerable to hock/stifle problems. Fortunately, crossing Bennington on the farm’s high-percentage mares, such as Agatha, Artemisia, Carolyn, Eudora, Florette, Juno, Lady Sealect, Rose Leaf, Ruth, Scotanna, Sunflower Maid, and the daughters of Troubadour Of Willowmoor, overcame this flaw. Bennington became renowned as a broodmare sire, and ranked third among the eight most influential sires at the government farm, with 25 of the 74 offspring he sired at the farm retained in the breeding program. (MacDonnell, Michael, “It Was the Best of Times, It Was the Worst of Times: the Government and the Morgan Horse, Part III,” *Classic Morgan Admirers*, Volume 3, No. 3, Spring 1991, pp. 28-36).

After several successful seasons of remount service, during which he sired many good saddle-type colts in various sections of Vermont, “Bennington succeeded his sire General Gates as the senior stallion at the U.S. Morgan Horse Farm. The most successful mating for Bennington appears to have been with the grand old mare Artemisia 02731, daughter of Ethan Allen 3<sup>rd</sup>. There were 10 from this mating, [including] four outstanding sons—Mansfield 7255, Querido 7370, Ulysses 7565, and Canfield 7788. Two daughters were retained at Middlebury—Redfern 04360 and Willys 04622, both excellent producers.” (F. B. Hills, “Thirty-five Years at Middlebury,” *The Western Livestock Journal*, January 15, 1943, pp. 84-86). From these offspring, crossing the stallions with their brothers’ daughters, the government farm embarked on a program of line-breeding that produced athletic using horses that excelled in show, endurance, sport, and as working ranch horses.

Bennington is the highest-ranking (629.00) sire to whom FEI Morgan dressage horses have been line-bred. Bennington is behind 13 Grand Prix Morgans, including all of the first 10 to reach that level (seven descended through Mansfield, two through Ulysses, and one through Audrey); six were linebred to him. “Government lines have been the choice of many programs focused on the production of Morgan sport horses, and the results of the current study strongly support this decision.” (Jack Stang, “Significant Sires in the Pedigrees of Morgan FEI Dressage Horses,” *The Morgan Horse*, September 2016, pp. 79-85).

Bennington is in the pedigrees of two thirds of the Morgans alive today. Descendants of Bennington may be found in Australia, Austria, Canada, France, Germany, Great Britain, Ireland, New Zealand, Puerto Rico, Sweden, and the United States. Offspring also were sold to Brazil, China, Cuba, Guam, Peru, and the Philippines, but it’s unknown if they bred on. ■