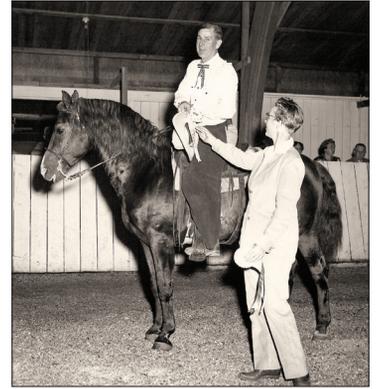


# Sonfield 7952

The Research of Marsha Valance, 2015



LEFT TO RIGHT: Sonfield with Jean Hill; at age 12 in 1947; age 23 in 1958; and with Leo H. Beckley.

**Sonfield 7952** (Mansfield 7255 x Quietude 04271) • Dark chestnut, star, strip and snip, right hind foot white, 14.3 1/2 hands, stallion, 1,130 lbs • **Foaled:** May 11, 1935, Middlebury, Vermont • **Died:** August 1967, Mount Vernon, Washington • **Bred by:** USDA • 43 crosses to Sherman; 19 crosses to Woodbury; 24 crosses to Billy Root; 19 crosses to Gifford; 18 crosses to Hale's Green Mountain; 14 to Royal Morgan; 13 to Black Hawk; five crosses to Ethan Allen 2<sup>nd</sup>; 267 crosses to Justin Morgan, with 12.8 percent of his blood; 100 percent old government breeding • **Eight Generation Coefficient of Inbreeding:** 6.43393993377686 percent  
**Registered Morgan progeny:** 113 colts, 123 fillies, born 1938-1965.

In 1939, Sonfield was sold for \$4,000 to a Polish buyer. After World War II began, preventing shipment across the Atlantic, he was resold to Roland Hill of Gustine, California. After 18 years as lead sire for the Horseshoe Cattle Company, in 1957, Sonfield was sold to Leo H. Beckley, who cherished him until death.

Roland G. Hill, the dean of California Morgan breeders, considered the Morgan to be the best cowhorse he ever used. He said the Morgan, “never came to the end of the road.” (Laura Stillwell Algranti, “The History of the Morgan Horse in California,” *The Morgan Horse*, November 1987, 29-34). Hill rode Sonfield daily on the ranch, and in roping competitions against local stock horses. In September 1947, Sonfield was chosen *Western Livestock Journal's* “Horse of the Month.”

“It was a real thrill to ride him over the hills—especially behind cattle, as he was always alert for a dodging cow or calf. He would turn and be away so fast that all the rider had to do was sit tight.” (Leo Beckley, “Sonfield: a Morgan Sire,” *Western Horseman*, January 1966, 20-21).

Sonfield is the perfect example of how breeders can improve offspring by choosing crosses carefully. Photos of Sonfield show him with a fairly steep croup. One California Morgan breeder described it as, “The steepest croup ever seen in a Morgan.” “When Sonfield was... crossed on the Querido-Sellman mares of Hill's, the croups were short but not as bad as Sonfield's himself, as most were not so sloping as his. The Querido-Sellman mares were nice

big, deep, good-crouped upstanding mares, well put together... and so improved on him in the foals.” —Joanne Curtis.

“For all the criticism of Sonfield... he was a handsome, powerful horse of noble stature and with a beautiful head... [Crosses on Brunk and Sellman-Hill mares] produced Morgans of wonderful prettiness and excellent type, with deep, powerful bodies and good muscling. The Sonfield disposition emerged as toughness and the will to go on forever... [which] has no doubt played a major role in Sonfield appearing in the pedigrees of many modern Morgan sport horses [such as Kennebec Count and Kennebec Russell, three-time World Pair Champions].” Louise Boyd recalled the toughness of her Sonfield grandson, Sheik F Capitan by Sheik F (Sonfield x Princess Sabab). “On the afternoon of the second day of a competitive trail ride, a very steep mountainside loomed before the finish. Most of the other horses gave out, but Capitan went up the mountain with as much energy and enthusiasm as he did at the beginning of the ride. That, she said, was the Sonfield toughness.” (Joanne Curtis, “Sonfield,” *TMH*, July 1996, 44-50). Hill's granddaughter, Rolie Jean Dickinson Graye, said her grandfather felt Sonfield gave his foals “class.”

In January 2000, *The Morgan Horse* published an article on the 20<sup>th</sup> century's most prolific sires. Despite living and dying long before semen transport, Sonfield ranked fourth. “For many years, almost all [Morgan] horses bred in California had at least one cross back to Sonfield.” —Laura S. Algranti. ■