

Sonoma 8141

The Research of Marsha Valance, 2015



LEFT: Sonoma became Aranaway Farm's first foundation sire; **INSET:** Sonoma at two years old.

Sonoma 8141 (Piedmont Apache 7915 x Rose B 04912) Chestnut, blaze, left front fetlock, right front coronet and both hind stockings white, 14.2 hands, stallion, versatile • **Foaled:** April 22, 1938, Santa Rosa, California • **Bred by:** Commander L.C. Montgomery, U.S.N. • **Died:** August 10, 1965, Grant's Pass, Oregon • 100 percent Old California breeding; sired by Piedmont Apache by Uhlan by Bennington by General Gates; out of Rose B. by Querido by Bennington by General Gates; 25 crosses to Black Hawk; five crosses to Ethan Allen 2nd; 12 crosses to Hale's Green Mountain Morgan • **Eight Generation Coefficient of Inbreeding:** 7.22122192382812 percent
Registered Morgan progeny: nine colts, 14 fillies.

Sonoma was purchased as a two-year-old by teenage Philip A. Morrison, Grant's Pass, Oregon. "With good care the little stallion began to develop into the ideal Morgan—versatile and willing. During his long and useful service to his owner, he has qualified and done a good job as a stock horse, trail horse, roping horse, pack horse, work horse, games horse, show horse, and pleasure horse. As a stock horse, Sonny could cut cows and work cattle and sheep with experts. Unexcelled as a trail horse, he never faltered at obstacles such as walking a log across a swampy creek or swimming a flooded river [or] crossing an old railroad trestle, perched 200 feet over a canyon in a blinding snowstorm.... Sonny also was used to pack bear, elk, and deer. It was not beneath his dignity to sometimes be hitched up to pull a few stumps, haul fence posts, or cultivate the garden." (Ruth Morrison, "The Kid with the Pony," *The Morgan Horse*, June 1959, 8-9, 39-41). At one time, Sonoma was the only registered Morgan stallion in the state of Oregon. His young owner earned his pocket money with breeding fees. Phil rode Sonoma to wherever the breeding mares were, then rode him home again. He was used extensively on grade mares and many good work animals came from him, all great improvements on their dams. One of Phil's first Morgan mares was an Abbott daughter, who produced some lovely daughters from Sonoma. Sonoma also excelled in competition in games and, later in life, was an excellent show horse, both in Western and English classes.

Phil's wife, Ruth, who became a noted breed historian, was riding a Saddlebred when they met, but fell in love with Sonoma. Phil joked she married him to get his horse.

At the age of 17, Sonoma won the Oregon Horseman's Association award as Champion Morgan Stallion for the state of Oregon, and was retired from further competition. Some of Sonoma's daughters did well showing, both in halter and performance, before retiring as broodmares. Sonoma's Serenade and Sonoma's Jezebel both won grand championships in halter classes.

To the end of his life Sonoma stood at service to a limited number of mares, since he was so rich in some of the old, eagerly sought for bloodlines. His five-generation pedigree—Hearst on top and Sellman-Hill on the bottom—had General Gates, three times; Troubadour Of Willowmoor, Allen King, Red Oak, Ethan Allen 3rd, and The Admiral. His health stayed quite good—his step still springy, and his air still jaunty in his late 20s. He was fed on a pelleted, all-purpose feed as his teeth were quite bad. He had a marvelous disposition, was extremely gentle, and safe for anyone, even a small child to ride.

Sonoma was a bit of a peacock, yet very tractable and gentle. He was a rapid walker, very proud, carried his long tail slightly elevated; a trappy parade way of going. He was especially known for his beautiful daughters. He's falling off the back of pedigrees now, but he strongly influenced the working Western family through his descendants bearing the Sonoma and Aranaway prefixes. ■