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DELIVERING BLACK MORGANS

*Exploring the breeding program of
Canada's lauded Janzen Morgan Farm*



In December of 2013, the Morgan world saw the passing of Canadian breeder Dorothy Janzen. Over the span of 37 years she and her husband Will touched many lives through their Morgan horses. Their Janzen Morgan Farm will forever be branded as a producer of high quality, solidly bred, black Morgans. This is their story.

Having known each other for five years before they married on August 2nd, 1958, it came as no surprise to anyone who knew Dorothy that she and Will ended up on an 80 acre farm with a mixed herd of horses outside of Edmonton, Alberta, Canada.

By Melody De Lappe

Dorothy grew up loving horses—her father and brother were well known for being accomplished horsemen. Her brother drove harness horses at racetracks in Calgary and Edmonton, and in Michigan. Will had grown up around horses too, spending some summers haying with them. They always felt that horses suited them best. Despite this, they felt overrun with nine horses on their farm, so Dorothy convinced Will that switching to registered breeding stock would be a wiser business venture. As an added bonus, it would (hopefully) give their three children Kelly, Bruce, and Amber an



The JMF herd running in the snow; INSET: Dorothy and Will Janzen.

interest in remaining on the farm longer.

In 1976 while shopping for breeding stock (and still searching for “the” breed), they were in Rimbey, Canada to see Morgans for the first time with their four-year-old daughter Kelly in tow. While engrossed with another horse, Will just happened to glance back and see that an older child had placed Kelly on a foal! Walking calmly back to take Kelly off of the foal’s back (without incident), both Dorothy and Will thought “That’s a pretty nice breed!” The seed was planted, and soon nurtured into full bloom.

Not long after the visit to Rimbey, their first purchase was completed by bringing home the bay mare Monashee Mischief (Fleetbird x Mon Heir D D Chant) with her colt Spruce Lane Quizking (by Spruce Lane Quiz Boy) at her side, and the yearling stallion Spruce Lane Renegade (Northwinds Quizman x Kilgoran Pembroke). Renegade’s higher price tag kept Will up more than one night, but those fears were alleviated when he later sold him to Rondi Knight of Nig Valley Morgans for four times the price. Undoubtedly this was the moment that Morgans were no longer a hobby and definitely a viable business interest.

With these three horses from Spruce Lane Morgans Dorothy and Will registered 17 foals with the Elk Island prefix starting with Elk Island Quiz Girl (Spruce Lane Quiz Boy x Monashee Mischief) in 1977. Their son Bruce quickly got involved in the family business by buying Mortana Tawny (Broadwall Donman x Mortana Julie) from John Bland and Spruce Lane Quizking from his parents and

registered nine foals with the Here’s prefix. As the family herd grew, it became increasingly challenging to determine which prefix to use, as often the family would attend sales together. They decided to start using the JMF prefix, and in 1981 they registered several foals with the JMF prefix, and a few with JMF as a suffix. The only challenge then was to decide which horses were Bruce’s, and which were Dorothy and Will’s.

According to Bruce, prior to having Morgans, many of their riding and driving stories that involved horses of mixed breeds (many of whom were well-trained) ended with some sort of mishap or another. With the Morgans, however, the stories would start with similar buildup, but would end with, “and then nothing happened.” This started with the young stallion Renegade, “Who took to driving so well that with less than a handful of drives we volunteered to drive him around town with Santa Claus aboard,” remembered Bruce. “The local theater emptied out as we drove by, and when the crowd of kids mobbed the young horse—nothing happened! (Even when one young boy was pushed right under his belly.) Another time we took Renegade to a construction site we were working at. We walked him up a plank over the basement excavation, and he ducked into the house through the fireplace opening cut into the wall—and then nothing happened!”

“The first time I went to drive Quizking,” Bruce continued, “I had just hooked him up to the cart and our dog ran under him and proceeded to wrap his chain around Quizking’s hind legs and



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the cart—and then nothing happened! He never moved, so we untangled him and I drove him down the road as if he was already broke to drive. On one of our early rides we were happily riding deer trails in the bush when to my surprise he bounced off of a sapling that was wedged chest high across the trail—and then something happened! He gave me a shock when he laid back his ears, bared his teeth, and ripped that sapling out and tossed it aside, taking us on our merry way. It takes a pretty good horse to handle those kind of trails—only the special ones help clear them!”

Dorothy and Will fell in love with the renowned Morgan disposition. Over time they realized that they were hearing about different bloodlines, families and groups with many conflicting opinions. Realizing that their own opinions were biased according to their experiences, they decided to sit down and look very closely at those horses in their herd they liked best. Their favorites were the ones that were easy to handle, safe, nice to be around and versatile. They were athletic, free-moving and had the intelligence and disposition to handle whatever was thrown at them. Most of their horses that fit into this group were of Brunk lines.

This was a pivotal point in the breeding program. Dorothy decided that by focusing on the versatile characteristics associated with the Brunk lines and by standing well-bred black stallions, their herd would stand out and attract more interest. The search for a black son of Beamington (Mr Breezy Cobra x Ellen Bar by Barberry), with qualities of athletic moves, high intelligence and tractability, had begun.

They found what they were looking for in 1982, buying Whispering High Beam (Beamington x Highover Desiree by Donlyn of Wind-Crest out of a Waseeka's Nocturne daughter) after mortgaging the family farm. In 1983 they found a second black son of Beamington, Windhover Regency (Beamington x The Black Rose by Flyhawk out of a Senator Graham daughter) and used him to cross with the expected High Beam daughters to intensify the traits of Beamington, Flyhawk and Senator Graham.

The next step in their breeding program was to search out the outcross stallions Waseeka's Wildly Royal (Treble's Willy Wild



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x Royal Oaks Marianne), La Loma Landmark Command (Immortal Command x Whitmorr Mademoisell), Rum Brook Immortal Image (Immortal Command x Rum Brook Stardust), Irish Entertainment (Entertainer x Justa Joy), to name a few, to breed to their High Beam and Regency offspring. The results were that their herd was a mixture of Brunk, Government and to a lesser extent Lippitt lines, with the emphasis being on the Brunk lines.

During these years, two more things happened that helped to forge JMF into becoming one of Canada's premier Morgan breeding farms. The economy took a downturn—which reinforced Dorothy's decision to go with well-promoted pedigrees and black stallions, knowing that even in difficult times well-bred, intelligent and versatile horses would always bring top dollar; and Will suffered an injury that would prevent him from going back to work in construction. Dorothy's theory was about to be tested by fire, and it worked better than they could have hoped for. Morgans were their only source of income until they were eligible for OAS (Old Age Security) Pension after reaching the age of 65.

At first their market was mostly in Alberta, Canada. As word of the beautiful black herd of Morgans grew, they found they were expanding their sales to western Canada. Dorothy gained a reputation of pricing the horses fairly, and would work with you if you could not come up with the full amount, allowing clients to make payments. Great care was taken to match the right horse to the right person, and vice versa. Dorothy was not afraid to say no to a sale when a horse was not suitable for the buyer or their purpose. She also believed that just because a person did not have a lot of money didn't mean that they didn't deserve a quality horse. To those folks she would say, "Let me know what payments you can afford and I will decide if we can live with that." Often she would sell horses with little or nothing down, having small payments spread out over several years. Prices quoted included delivery and all incidentals, so there were no surprises for the buyer. Many people could not afford to travel to see a horse and purchase one too. Sales would evolve from long conversations by phone and letter and photos of the horse, to the start of a website www.JMF Morgans.com in 2000 with sales happening via email after that. The horses were guaranteed to be what Dorothy said they were. If they were not what the buyer expected or wanted, their down payment was refunded. With this faith in their Morgans, Dorothy and Will made 1,084 sales (almost all sold by Dorothy), with most of them being delivered by Dorothy and Will.

Stories abound all across the United States and Canada of Dorothy and Will's red truck and trailer (dubbed The Dodge Hilton). The trailer never carried a solo load—it was usually full for long trips, even if not all of the horses were sold or had a potential buyer before they left Alberta! With great pageantry they would arrive at any destination—sometimes stopping at horse shows that happened to be along the trip—to show off their

TOP TO BOTTOM, LEFT TO RIGHT: *Foundation mare, Monashee Mischief; Grandson Bane Janzen visits with a JMF foal; JMF Beam Along with a young Kelly; The Royal Canadian Mounted Police borrow JMF horses for parades; JMF Cruise Control; Irish Entertainment; A JMF crop of foals.*

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beautiful Morgans to any prospective buyers. If you were eagerly awaiting the arrival of your new horse, you were almost guaranteed to get a look-see at what else JMF Morgans had to offer, as did your neighbors and any other interested parties.

Horses were always delivered in top-notch condition, regardless of the distance they had to travel to get there. As Will explained, "If you sell a horse and have it delivered by someone else, you don't know what condition it is in when it arrives. That is why we always delivered the horses ourselves. Going across the border to the United States always had a lot of restrictions, but if you have all your paperwork done, then you are OK. Once we got across the border, we could go anywhere. Coast to coast, we have been to all states delivering horses, except Hawaii. It was so interesting all those years, our vacations were always with the horses. Vermont is my favorite, it is neat to drive through there. I love the farmsteads, so many have lanes between the houses and the barns. It was always an adventure!"

Dorothy and Will would stop every three hours to allow the horses to rest. They always had plenty of fresh hay, water, and the trailer was cleaned out regularly. Regardless of where they were going or how long it took them to get there, (sometimes it would be weeks) the horses were full of energy upon their arrival and ready to put on a show. Very few people were ever disappointed.

Although they did not deliver overseas personally, sales have been made to other countries. JMF Royal Secret (Windhover Regency x Appleton Debutante) and JMF Beam Song (Whispering High Beam x TS Atlantic's Ebony by Great Hill Atlantic) went to New Zealand's Morgan Foundation Stock in 1985. JMF Irish Wildflower (Irish Entertainment x JMF Wild Mayflower) and the Rum Brook Immortal Image daughters JMF Black Shadow (out of Ebony Queen O'Spades), JMF Black Ivory (out of JMF Black Magnolia), both bred to JMF Cruise Control (Windhover Regency x JMF Beam's Misbehaven) were exported to Germany in 2009. The stallion JMF Hot Ice Black Fire (Rum Brook Immortal Image x JMF Royal Whisper) followed in 2010. Most recently JMF Cruise Control was sold to Australia in 2013 and has started a new breeding/working career there with his new family John and Kelly Kozicka of Kozi Morgans.

From their humble beginnings with the purchase of three Morgans from Spruce Lane Farm, JMF has grown to a legacy that includes: 581 foals registered with the Canadian Livestock Registry (547 JMF prefix, 8 JMF suffix, 17 Elk Island, 9 Here's, and still counting); 1,700 mares on stud reports over the years that were mostly hand bred; 31 stallions having stood at Janzen Morgan Farm over the years; 1,000 foals registered in Canada from breedings at JMF; many more foals are registered in the United States only from JMF breedings; 1,084 Morgan sales; sales to 39 states in the United States; sales to 10 of the Canadian provinces/territories; and international sales.

In 2009, Dorothy and Will pushed to reduce their stock and thus their work load. They sold 31 horses travelling as far as Newfoundland and California delivering them. Will is left now with a handful of horses, and is especially pleased with his young stock. His up and coming young colt JMF World Beater, is the product of Dorothy's last purchase, JMF Izzy (returning Dorothy's favorite mare to JMF) and Dorothy's last sale, the stallion JMF Ice And Irish.



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His 2013 filly JMF Can't Touch This is the last JMF Cruise Control foal to be born from breedings in Canada and is out of Rum Brook Immortal Image's last foal JMF Wild Shadow.

For nearly four decades Dorothy shared her passion for Morgans with the world, and our breed is better for it. Her gift for producing Morgans and matching them with the right people has given so many the opportunity to see how truly wonderful, special and exceptional this breed is. Her hopes that the farm would keep her children involved have also been realized—son Will is still very involved with breeding and working with the young stock. Bruce's wife Kari started working for JMF in the early 90's as a trainer, and has also assisted with breeding, buying, photo sessions, selling and delivering. Daughter Kelly when at home helped with everything as needed, and daughter Amber has brought JMF into the 21st century by designing and maintaining the JMF website and switching all pictures to digital photography. Thankfully, the JMF story is not over, with Will and Bruce continuing the breeding program on a much smaller scale. Will says he may even make a few more deliveries too. Keep your eyes peeled for that red Dodge Hilton! ■



TOP TO BOTTOM, LEFT TO RIGHT: *The famous Dodge Hilton, loaded and ready to go; JMF Dewberry Beam with JMF Firestorm; Rum Brook Immortal Image, one of the three stallions who influenced the herd the most; Dorothy driving mountain trails; Spruce Lane Quizking, son of Monashee Mischief and one of JMF's foundation herd; Bruce with two JMF horses, packing in the hills; Windhover Regency is another one of the three stallions who influenced the herd the most, with Will; JMF Snowbird with Dorothy and Will's grandchildren Bane and Kita Janzen; JMF Windigo Beam & JMF Beam Song; Will trimming hooves, one of his many responsibilities on the farm while Dorothy did the accounting and sales; Whispering High Beam is another one of the three stallions who influenced the herd the most; Spruce Lane Renegade kept Will up at night worrying about how much he paid for him. Selling him for four times the price he paid, those fears were put to rest.*

