



~ HISTORY LESSON ~

# Past And Present: POINT REYES MORGAN HORSE RANCH

By Brenda L. Tippin

**A** nearly forgotten piece of living Morgan history still remains at Point Reyes National Seashore on the scenic California coast. The Point Reyes Morgan Horse Ranch, located on the site of historic Bear Valley Ranch, is still the home of five Morgan horses owned by the National Park Service. Although concerns have been raised about closing the Morgan horse ranch at Point Reyes, no official decisions about phasing out the program have been made. Support and interest by Morgan owners and especially partnerships with local Morgan clubs could make a difference.

## BEAR VALLEY RANCH

Bear Valley had been named for the giant California grizzlies which were once abundant there. These formidable bears, now extinct, were a much larger subspecies of the grizzlies that remain today, often weighing more than 2,000 pounds. Roping the grizzlies was

a favorite sport of the Mexican vaqueros on the early ranchos. The historic Bear Valley Ranch, which would eventually become the site of National Park Headquarters and the Point Reyes Morgan Horse Ranch, was originally the W Ranch in a curious chain of ranches named for letters of the alphabet.

**ABOVE:** Official 1892 Marin County map (courtesy of the Library of Congress); **INSETS:** A current map of Point Reyes National Seashore and Marin County (photo courtesy of National Park Service [NPS]); Ranch Manager Phil Straub and "Elvis" (photo courtesy of National Park Service [NPS]).

## HISTORY LESSON ≈ *Point Reyes Morgan Horse Ranch.*



**TOP TO BOTTOM:** Drake landing at “New Albion” (Point Reyes, California) in 1590 by Theodor De Bry (photo U.S. Public domain); Stereophoto of Point Reyes lighthouse in 1870 by Eadweard Muybridge (courtesy of the Library of Congress); The famous trotter Oakland Maid (Speculation x Lady Vernon), four generations from Justin Morgan. Owned by Leland Stanford. Her dam, Lady Vernon (Engineer 2d by Engineer by Justin Morgan) was one of the first Morgans brought to California in 1853 (Photo by Eadweard Muybridge, courtesy of the Library of Congress).

It was believed to be the site for the original adobe rancho of Rafael Garcia, who was awarded one of the first land grants in 1836. Garcia’s buildings were demolished by the earthquake of 1868, and the present W Ranch was part of the holdings of Charles Webb Howard. It was rebuilt and designed to be a showplace of the Shafter/Howard dairy empire which dominated the landscape from 1857-1939. By the turn of the century, Bear Valley Ranch included four dairy ranches, U, W, Y, and Z, covering 7,739 acres. It lies at the foot of Mount Wittenberg, edged by a mosaic of forested hills and meadows, ridges and gulches covered with brush, coastal scrub and grass, the rolling pastures which slope gently toward the Pacific, disappearing to the misty fog. The Morgan horses seem a natural part of this magical landscape that is almost a step back in time.

### POINT REYES – DISCOVERY, COAST MIWOK, MISSION ERA

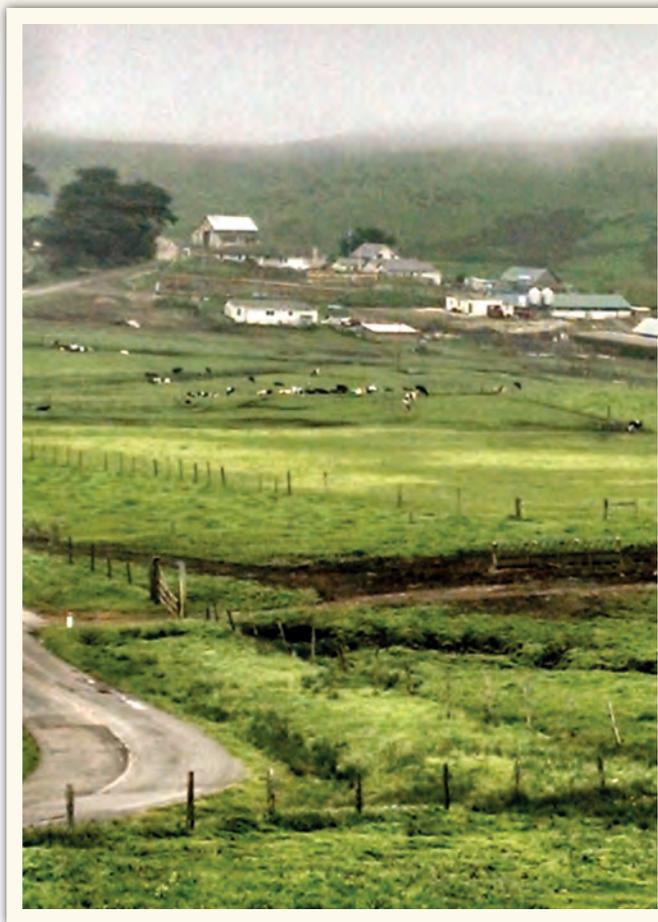
Sir Frances Drake was the first European to land in California, at a small cove near Point Reyes in 1579. He at once claimed California for England. Drake called all of the area north of Mexico “Nova Albion,” or “New Albion.” Long before this however, Point Reyes was the home of the Coast Miwok people who lived in what is now Marin and southern Sonoma counties. The Miwok, whose earliest settlement is believed to date to at least 3,000 years ago with some estimates as early as 8400 B.C., developed a thriving economy by fishing, hunting, and gathering. “Kule Loklo,” meaning Bear Valley, is a replica of a Miwok village created by the National Park Service. California’s first shipwreck was the St. Augustin which sank in Drake’s Bay in 1595, believed to be laden with silver. The name “Point Reyes” was first given by Spanish explorer Sebastian Viscáino in 1603 when he anchored his ship, the *Capitana* on The Day of the Three Kings, or Epiphany, January 6<sup>th</sup>, which is the end of the Twelve Days of Christmas, and named it “Punto de los Reyes.”

Point Reyes lies just 37 miles north of Mission Dolores (Misión San Francisco de Asís) in San Francisco which was founded in 1776 as the sixth mission. Mission Dolores, named for a nearby creek Arroyo de los Dolores (Creek of Sorrows) is the oldest intact building in San Francisco, having survived the 1906 earthquake. It is also the only intact chapel in the chain of 21 missions established by Father Serra. Mission San Rafael Arcangel was established in 1817 as a hospital asistencia, or helper to Mission Dolores. The Franciscan missionaries brought in feral longhorn cattle for tallow, hide, and to feed the neophytes (neophytes were the Native Americans converted to Christianity, and who then lived at the missions.) San Rafael Arcangel was the 20<sup>th</sup> of the California missions, ranked as a mission in its own right by late 1822. Lands owned by the San Rafael Mission Arcangel encompassed all of what is now Marin county, more than 300,000 acres.

### MEXICAN LAND GRANTS

The Mexican Secularization Act of 1833 was passed 12 years after Mexico won independence from Spain in 1821. There followed a period of several Mexican land grants and ranchos, and the land which now makes up Point Reyes National Seashore is comprised of three of these original grants. These were Rancho Tomales y Baulines, Rancho Punta de los Reyes, and Rancho Punta de los

## HISTORY LESSON *≈ Point Reyes Morgan Horse Ranch.*



Veiled by the famous Point Reyes fog, a typical pastoral scene within the boundaries of the Point Reyes National Seashore—the historic B Ranch, in its 4th generation operating as a family dairy at Point Reyes

(photos by Brenda Tippin).

Reyes Sobrante. In 1836, Governor Nicolás Gutiérrez granted the 8,878-acre Rancho Punta de los Reyes to James Richard Berry, an Irishman who was a naturalized Mexican citizen and colonel in the Mexican Army. About the same time, Rafael Garcia was awarded a 9,648-acre grant along the eastern border of the Punta de los Reyes lands, which he called Rancho Tomales y Baulines. This land encompassed the town of Olema, and the former settlement of Garcia, which was named for him.

Mr. Garcia, who had served as an officer in the Mexican army, was at one time Alcalde (magistrate) of the Mission San Rafael Arcangel. Garcia lived on his land, and was the first to have a family in Marin County, remaining there until his death in 1866, and was buried at the mission. In 1838, Berry's land was re-granted by Governor Juan B. Alvarado to Joseph Snook. Actually, Berry had sold about 8,800 acres of his land along the western shore of Tomales Bay to Snook. However, finding the sale of grant land was not permitted under Mexican law, Snook formally denounced the exchange with Berry's approval, and application was made for Snook to have the land re-granted to him. (Denouncement was a provision under Mexican law which allowed a second party to put in a claim that a grantee was not using all of his land. If this claim was found to be true, the unused portion of that land would be granted to the denouncer.) However, by agreement, Berry kept the money of the unofficial sale. Soon after this, Snook sold the land to Antonio Osio. Finding it too small a tract for his liking, Osio applied for and was granted the adjacent 48,189-acre Punta de los Reyes Sobrante Rancho.

In 1850, California became a state, and Marin one of its original counties. At that time, the white population of Marin County was only 300. Meanwhile, the Gold Rush of California had brought a population explosion to San Francisco, just across the bay to the south. From a population of 850 in 1848, San Francisco grew to 5,000 by July of 1849, and 25,000 by December of 1849.

### DR. ANDREW RANDALL

In 1852, Dr. Andrew Randall, a medical doctor, geologist, naturalist, and entrepreneur and founder of the California Academy of Science, purchased Osio's land and several other holdings. He found he had overextended himself, and the property was foreclosed. Hounded by creditors, Randall was shot and killed by one of them in 1856, and a lengthy legal battle ensued for title to the lands. Robert McMillan, a wealthy lienholder on Randall's property, hired the law firm of Shafter, Shafter, Park and Heydenfeldt to represent him against a Marin County sheriff who had been duping him and others in the foreclosure proceedings. Senior partner Oscar Lovell Shafter was, at that time, considered the foremost title lawyer in California, and the combination of his expertise and McMillan's wealth proved a formidable one. The case was won by McMillan in 1858, and the Shafter's then bought him out, along with other remaining landholders, and controlled well over 75,000 acres, or one third of Marin County including all of the Point Reyes peninsula.

### EARLY CALIFORNIA MORGANS

The Gold Rush brought many settlers and not just for gold. Many came from Vermont, and with them came Morgan horses. A



The Red Barn—Point Reyes Morgan Horse Ranch (photo by Brenda Tippin).

few notable early Morgans taken to California included: Miles Standish, a son of Black Hawk who was taken across the plains by a Mr. Bush from Shoreham, Vermont in 1848; old St. Clair (Young Morgan x Canadian mare tracing to Tom Hal by Justin Morgan), who crossed the plains in 1849; and Lady Vernon, who like the famous mare Lady Suffolk, was a daughter of Engineer 2d by Engineer by Justin Morgan. Lady Vernon herself had a record of 2:28 1/2 and was the winner of 14 races. She was taken to California in 1853 and owned for a time by Charles Miller, cattle baron and partner of Henry Miller. Lady Vernon was also the dam of the famous trotting mare Oakland Maid (x Speculation), record 2:22 1/2, owned by Leland Stanford and one of the subjects of Eadweard Muybridge's photographic experiments. Other examples were Green Mountain Morgan Jr (Green Mountain Morgan x mare by Gifford), brought to California in 1857, and Redfield's Vermont (Independence x mare by Royal Morgan) who was taken to California about 1859 and sold in San Francisco for \$2,000. These were just a few examples, and there were many more Morgans brought to California during those years whose records were lost.

### THE SHAFTER BROTHERS

Oscar L. Shafter was born in 1812 in Athens, Vermont, the son of Judge William R. Shafter. His grandfather James Shafter had been a soldier of the Revolutionary War. The Shafter family were farmers and avid horsemen in the heart of the area where the Morgan breed developed, and although their horses are not specifically mentioned, doubtless the Shafter brothers owned Morgans and brought some to California as well.

Oscar Shafter was a graduate of Harvard Law School and began to practice law in Wilmington, Vermont. He came to San Francisco in 1854 and served as Associate Justice of the California Supreme Court from 1864-1868.

James Shafter, born in Athens, Vermont, in 1816, was also

a lawyer. He was a graduate of Wesleyan University and was admitted to the bar in 1841. He served in the Vermont House of Representatives from 1842-1849 and was Secretary of State of Vermont. Oscar encouraged his brother to join him, and in 1856, James also came to San Francisco where he practiced law and became judge of the San Francisco County Superior Court. James was a regent of the University of California and also served as one of the original trustees of the Leland Stanford Jr. University.

As the Shafter brothers acquired the Point Reyes lands, rich in grass and clover, and abundant springs of excellent soft water, they envisioned dairy farms supplying butter and cheese, cream and milk to the hungry population of San Francisco and beyond. The cooling sea fogs and proximity to the sea created a unique temperate climate rarely subject to extreme heat or cold. It was a coastal prairie, prepared by at least two thousand years of careful tending by the Coast Miwok people, planting, weeding, pruning, harvesting, and burning the lands to enrich the soil. The lush native grasses stayed rich and green from early spring to late fall, nourished by moist fogs during the driest summer months.

One enterprising woman, Clara Steele, started making cheese from her grandmother's recipe and found a ready market in San Francisco. Her success was instrumental in helping her husband Rennselaer and his cousins Isaac, Edgar, and George, establish the Steele Brothers dairy, which was the first successful commercial dairy on 6,000 acres of leased land in Point Reyes in 1857. A few other small dairy farms were successfully operating on the point, including brothers George and Charles Laird who were leasing 3,000 acres on the tip of Tomales Point, and their dairy rivaled the Steeles' in quality and production. The Shafter brothers signed new leases for several of them, including the Steeles and Lairds, but most of these families moved to other locations within a few years as the Shafter brothers bought out the remaining lands.

In 1858, Oscar and James Shafter, with Oscar's son-in-

## HISTORY LESSON *≈ Point Reyes Morgan Horse Ranch.*

law Charles Howard, moved their families to Point Reyes to what became known as the Shafter Home Ranch. This served as headquarters for all the Point Reyes tenant ranches until 1869. By 1865 they had bought out the remaining shares from their law partners. The Shafter brothers and Howard taking two, so each could manage their own string of ranches. Oscar Shafter and Charles Howard named their ranches after letters of the alphabet, with the A ranch at the tip of Point Reyes and the Z ranch near the top of 1,407 foot Mount Wittenberg on Inverness Ridge, the highest peak on the peninsula. James Shafter used imaginative names such as Muddy Hollow, Sunnyside, and Drakes Head. Many of the tenants were immigrants from Germany, Sweden, Ireland, Switzerland, and Portugal. They hired Peter Heinrich Claussen, a German immigrant and native of Schleswig-Holstein to oversee the building of nearly identical houses, creameries, sheds, and large roomy barns. The Shafter brothers brought in select purebred Devon and Durham cattle which they imported from New England and from Europe. Later Jerseys, Guernseys, and eventually Holsteins were added. The cows were also leased to tenants at \$20-\$25 per cow per year. Buildings and land were included in the lease but tenants provided their own home furnishings, dairy and farm implements, horses, and pigs. Part of the contract agreement allowed tenants to sell only two products, which were butter and hogs. The Shafter ranches became famous for production of the highest quality butter, and it was said that “the grass growing in the fields on Monday is the butter on the city tables on Sunday.”

The Shafter brothers sold 2,200 acres on Tomales Point to Solomon Pierce, an old friend from Vermont, who developed a productive dairy farm rivaling their own. Meanwhile, Congress had appropriated \$25,000 for construction of a lighthouse on Point Reyes in 1854. However, due initially to the litigation over title, and further delay in negotiating a price with the Shafter brothers, the sale of 83 acres to the U.S. government was not finalized until 1869, with the present lighthouse constructed in 1870. James Shafter sold several small contracts for summer cottages near Inverness in 1889, and another small parcel of 12.21 acres was conveyed to the U.S. Government for a Lifeboat Station in 1913. Other than this, the Shafter brothers controlled the entire peninsula and no lands were sold outside the family until 1919. The eventual sale of the lands was done in three transactions ten years apart, beginning in 1919. When Charles Howard died in 1907, and his wife a decade later, their four children could not come to an agreement about the property, and so were the first to sell their shares in 1919, most of the ranches going to tenants. When James died in 1892, he was deep in debt and his daughter, Julia Shafter Hamilton, did her best to sell enough of the smaller ranches to cover these debts, but was ultimately forced to sell the Home Ranch to Leland Murphy in 1929. Oscar Shafter had died of failing health in 1873, but the ranches from his estate were the last to be sold in 1939.

### POINT REYES — BATTLE FOR A NATIONAL PARK

The National Park Service had considered acquiring Point Reyes as early as 1935, but the idea was initially rejected in favor of other

locations. In the years following the final sale of the Shafter lands in 1939, the peaceful dairy farms on the coastal prairie, and the miles of beaches and unique habitat were soon threatened by developers. In the late 1940s, the National Exploration Company purchased rights to drill for oil on Point Reyes, and within a decade, the Sweet Timber Company was felling giant firs and redwoods in the Olema Valley at an alarming rate. Developers were building estates on Drake’s Bay with another development area being planned on Inverness Ridge. It was a matter of time before it became just another tightly packed suburb of San Francisco, now much more accessible with the opening of the Golden Gate Bridge in 1937. Congressman Clem Miller, who owned a home in Inverness and represented California’s First District, became a passionate supporter, as did Secretary of the Interior Stewart Udall. However, many ranchers and dairy farmers were upset and feared losing their livelihood, and even park officials were conflicted about what the plans for developing the park should be.

### BOYD STEWART — MORGAN RANCHER

A surprising champion for the cause of turning Point Reyes into a National Park was influential Olema Rancher Boyd Stewart. Boyd Stewart was born in 1903 to a dairy ranching family in Nicasio. He rode his horse five miles each day to the San Geronimo Valley where he caught the North Coast Pacific Train so he could attend Tamalpais high school in Mill Valley which was another 16 ½ miles. He attended Stanford for a while, but returned home to manage the family ranch when his father was killed by a horse. In 1932, he moved his family to the historic Nelson Olds Ranch in Olema, built in 1864, and known as the Woodside Ranch. Although the Stewarts did not begin breeding registered Morgans until the 1950s, according to old-time Vaquero Ray Ordway, Boyd once told him that Morgan horses had been in their family a hundred years. The Marin County Board of Supervisors also noted when honoring Boyd for a century of agricultural achievements and service to the county on his 100<sup>th</sup> birthday in 2003, that Stewart ranches had managed dairies, Angus beef herds, and Morgan horses since the 1880s. With keen foresight, Boyd recognized the irresistible power of urban development and saw that the only hope for maintaining the ranchlands and the seashore was to partner with the National Park Service and he saw that it could work. Boyd Stewart was also the driving force in establishing the Morgan Horse Ranch at Point Reyes, and was chairman of the Northern California Morgan Horse Advisory Committee which served to provide support and advice for the development of the Morgan horse breeding program. A small part of Boyd’s land became part of the Point Reyes National Seashore, but most of the historic Stewart Ranch became part of the adjacent Golden Gate Recreation Area, also established by the National Park Service in 1972. The Stewarts continued to operate the land by lease agreements with the Park Service similar to other ranchers. Boyd Stewart continued to be a strong supporter of the Morgan Horse Ranch at Point Reyes until his death in 2004 at the age of 101.

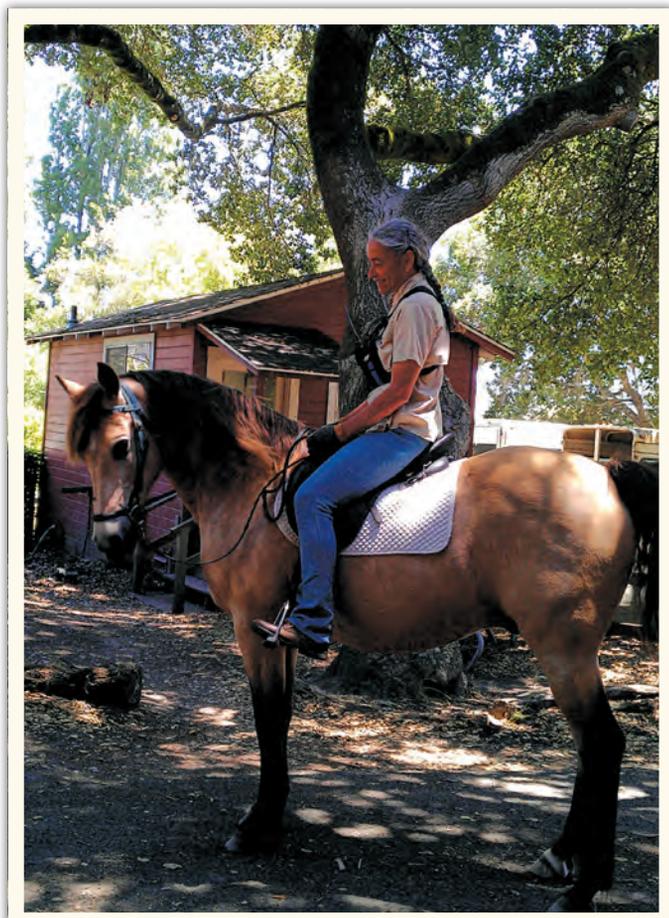
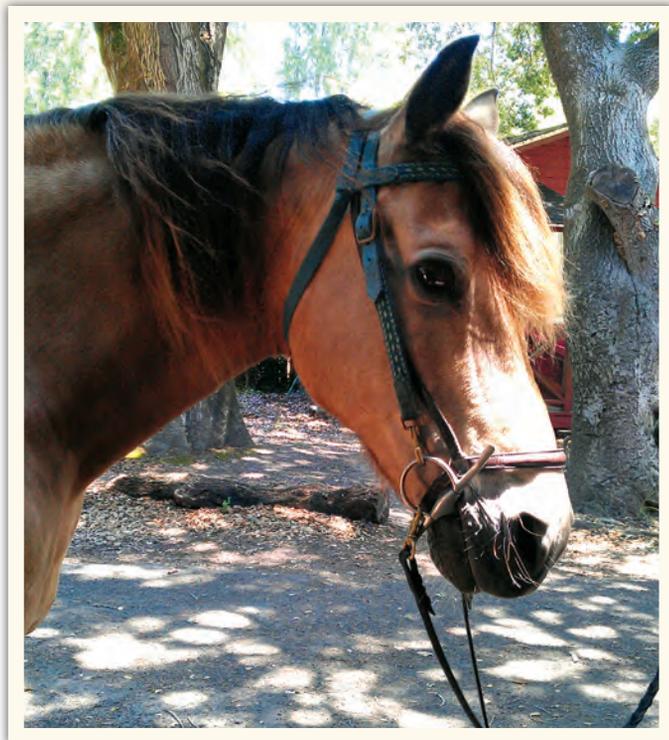
### POINT REYES LEGISLATION SIGNED

On September 13, 1962, President John F. Kennedy signed legislation authorizing Point Reyes National Seashore, “to save

## POINT REYES TRANSFERS (1972-1977) TO OTHER NATIONAL PARKS

TRANSFER DATE	REQUESTING PARKS	NAME OF HORSE	COLOR	SEX	BIRTH	BREEDING
May 1972	Navajo National Monument	22752 Golden Nugget	chestnut	gelding	1971	Justa Nugget x Nita Of Dickie
June 1972	Sequoia & Kings Canyon National Parks	153350 Commanche Warrior	chestnut	gelding	1964	Dickie's Pride x Gay Jipsej
July 1972	Sequoia & Kings Canyon National Parks	17842 Frosty Chocolate	palamino	gelding	1967	Aranafeld x Honey Gold
July 1972	Whiskeytown National Recreation Area	18676 Triton Victorious	black	gelding	1968	Orcland Bold Fox x Princess Victoria
July 1972	Whiskeytown National Recreation Area	17708 Triton Black Fox	brown	gelding	1967	Orcland Bold Fox x Marcelita
October 1973	Hawaii Volcanoes National Park	21237 Sunreigh Sultan	chestnut	gelding	1969	Viking Justin x Shawnto
October 1973	Hawaii Volcanoes National Park	20885 Jaunty Juanito	chestnut	gelding	1970	Waer's Don Wan x Corder's Tinkerbelle
October 1973	Haleakaia National Park	Los Reyes Sonador	chestnut	gelding	1970	Cap's Nugget x Impala Bay Blossom
October 1973	Haleakaia National Park	21165 Woodside Nimrod	chestnut	gelding	1970	Beckridge Sunfield x Nimbus
April 1973	Petrified Forest National Park	13523 Sir Blaze	chestnut	gelding	1961	California King x Bea Nickerson
October 1973	Petrified Forest National Park	20666 The Artful Dodger	bay	gelding	1969	Beau Linn Adam x Linn's Mont*
September 1973	Rocky Mountain National Park	20785 Los Reyes Terremoto	chestnut	gelding	1970	Cap's Nugget x Impala Clauden
September 1973	Rocky Mountain National Park	21539 Los Reyes Aquila	chestnut	gelding	1970	Angle's Victor x Pongee Princess
May 1974	Lassen Volcanic National Park	21541 Los Reyes Chico	chestnut	gelding	1970	Cap's Nugget x Impala Claudia
May 1974	Lassen Volcanic National Park	201017 Rosemont Black Sambo	black	gelding	1970	Gay's Cinco de Mayo x Carolyn Seiters
March 1975	Golden Gate National Recreation Area	012566 Girlie's Diane	bay	mare	1962	Que Dan x Girlie Chief
October 1975	Golden Gate National Recreation Area	15369 Clover Jim	chestnut	gelding	1964	Broadwall St Pat x Shasta Daisy
April 1975	Rocky Mountain National Park	22122 Eco Flight Cadet	chestnut	gelding	1971	Flight Admiral x Gertrude Mae
April 1975	Rocky Mountain National Park	22977 Los Reyes Miguel	chestnut	gelding	1971	Angle's Victor x Pongee Princess
May 1975	Yellowstone National Park	22260 Eco Flight Skipper	chestnut	gelding	1971	Flight Admiral x Sue Manica
May 1975	Yellowstone National Park	23205 Cimerron King	chestnut	gelding	1970	El Dorado King x Donna Ines
May 1975	Theodore Roosevelt National Monument	021840 Los Reyes Calypso	chestnut	mare	1971	Triton El Capitan x Impala Claudia
May 1975	Theodore Roosevelt National Monument	24613 Los Reyes Valiente	chestnut	gelding	1972	Triton El Capitan x Viking Vanity
May 1975	Grand Teton National Park	21381 Bar Bee Bandido	chestnut	gelding	1969	El Dorado King x Impala Starlet
May 1975	Grand Teton National Park	23206 Los Reyes Chevron	chestnut	gelding	1971	El Dorado King x Impala Starlet
July 1975	Lassen Volcanic National Park	14168 Chi Dan	chestnut	gelding	1962	Que Dan x Chista-Graph
May 1975	California State Parks	22978 Los Reyes Lomo	chestnut	gelding	1971	Triton El Capitan x Beckridge Cameo**
October 1975	California State Parks	17114 El Rilee	chestnut	gelding	1966	El Don x Risquee**
December 1975	Bandelier National Monument	021839 Los Reyes Bahia	bay	mare	1971	Triton El Capitan x Impala Claudia
December 1975	Bandelier National Monument	020666 Shawndell Of Skylark	bay	mare	1971	Orcland Bold Fox x Kota Lady Bird
June 1976	Bandelier National Monument	24615 Los Reyes Cid	chestnut	gelding	1972	Triton El Capitan x Lady Fiona
June 1976	Bandelier National Monument	20666 The Artful Dodger	bay	gelding	1969	Beau Linn Adam x Linn's Mont
May 1976	Theodore Roosevelt National Monument	24616 Los Reyes Bandido	black	gelding	1972	Triton El Capitan x Impala Claudia
May 1976	Theodore Roosevelt National Monument	24614 Los Reyes Juan Poco	chestnut	gelding	1972	Triton El Capitan x Rhed's Felinity
May 1976	Theodore Roosevelt National Monument	023756 Los Reyes Montara	chestnut	mare	1972	Triton El Capitan x Beckridge Montebelle
May 1976	Theodore Roosevelt National Monument	022399 Salem Anne	chestnut	mare	1972	Chi-Nug x Girlie's Diane
June 1976	Bighorn Canyon National Recreation Area	023835 Los Reyes Rosita	chestnut	mare	1972	UNH Vickelect x Rose O Sharon
June 1976	Bighorn Canyon National Recreation Area	18877 Ideal Bay Champ	bay	gelding	1968	Bay State Ideal x Slower Nell
March 1977	Golden Gate National Recreation Area	12707 Red Rogue	chestnut	gelding	1959	Waer's Lucky Hawk x Judy Guy
March 1977	Golden Gate National Recreation Area	018669 Cavatina	chestnut	mare	1969	Waer's Play Boy x Caven-glo Christina
March 1977	Pinnacles National Monument	023757 Los Reyes Flora	bay	mare	1972	Triton El Capitan x Impala Bay Blossom
March 1977	Grand Teton National Park	024381 Los Reyes Lady Jane	chestnut	mare	1973	Triton El Capitan x Tamet
March 1977	Grand Teton National Park	25604 Los Reyes Road Runner	brown	gelding	1973	Triton El Capitan x Impala Bay Blossom
March 1977	Grand Teton National Park	25173 Woodside Gentle Ben	chestnut	gelding	1973	Beckridge Sunfield x Viola Vermont
March 1977	Theodore Roosevelt National Monument	024385 Los Reyes Mariposa	chestnut	mare	1973	Beckridge Sunfield x Rhed's Felinity
April 1977	Badlands National Monument	024383 Los Reyes Littlelynn	chestnut	mare	1973	Great Hill Atlantic x Sonata's April
April 1977	Badlands National Monument	29018 Los Reyes Mystery	chestnut	gelding	1975	Triton El Capitan x Caballine
April 1977	Bent's Old Fort National Historic Site	30096 Los Reyes Caballero	chestnut	gelding	1976	Beckridge Sunfield x Caballine
April 1977	Bent's Old Fort National Historic Site	29016 Los Reyes Hombre	chestnut	gelding	1975	Triton El Capitan x Secret Charm
April 1977	Capitol Reef National Park	024382 Los Reyes Magic	chestnut	mare	1973	Triton El Capitan x Viking Vanity
April 1977	Capitol Reef National Park	024384 Los Reyes Dixie	chestnut	mare	1973	Beckridge Sunfield x Willow Glen Tonette
May 1977	Gila Cliff Dwellings National Monument	29017 Los Reyes Favorite	bay	gelding	1975	Triton El Capitan x Easter Bunny
May 1977	Gila Cliff Dwellings National Monument	27599 Los Reyes Abraxas	chestnut	gelding	1974	Triton El Capitan x Willow Glen Tonette
May 1977	Gila Cliff Dwellings National Monument	27597 Los Reyes Montego	bay	gelding	1974	Big Bend Top Notch x Caballine
May 1977	Gila Cliff Dwellings National Monument	27594 Los Reyes Ocean Fury	chestnut	gelding	1974	Beckridge Sunfield x Sonata's April
May 1977	National Elk Refuge	023680 Los Reyes Locura	chestnut	mare	1970	Rhed Spartacus x Rhed's Felinity
May 1977	National Elk Refuge	017537 Sonata's April	chestnut	mare	1968	California King x Windswept Sonata***
October 1977	Bandelier National Monument	026282 Montego Foxey Lady	chestnut	mare	1974	Big Bend Top Notch x Miss Foxey
October 1977	Bandelier National Monument	26519 Pine Brooks Diablo	chestnut	gelding	1973	Royal Rebel x Susie Ann
December 1977	Hawaii Volcanoes National Park	27598 Los Reyes Lad	chestnut	gelding	1974	Triton El Capitan x Tamet
December 1977	Hawaii Volcanoes National Park	27596 Los Reyes Tom Cat	chestnut	gelding	1974	Beckridge Sunfield x Rhed's Felinity

NOTES: \*returned 7/75; \*\*on loan; \*\*\*dam of 3 Los Reyes foals



**TOP TO BOTTOM:** Los Reyes Veradez or “Buck” (Primavera Valdez x Ran Mar Shadolyn); Los Reyes Veradez and with National Park Service volunteer Lindsay on Los Reyes Veradez (Primavera Valdez x Ran Mar Shadolyn). Both photos at Point Reyes in 2012 (photos by Brenda Tippin).

and preserve, for purposes of public recreation, benefit, and inspiration, a portion of the diminishing seashore of the United States that remains undeveloped.” At that time, 64,000 acres were planned to be included. However, the battle for the National Seashore was just begun.

### SAVING POINT REYES

Just three weeks after Congressman Clem Miller had smilingly stood by and watched President Kennedy sign the legislation he had worked so hard for, he was killed in a plane crash off the coast of Eureka, California. Miller’s burial plot, a 50-acre site overlooking Drake’s bay was donated to Point Reyes, and became the first federal land acquisition for the new national seashore. Kennedy himself would be assassinated little more than a year later, just as he was making plans to visit the new national seashore in which he had been deeply interested.

By 1969, the government had only acquired ten scattered parcels within the designated boundaries of the 70,000-acre park, and the money had run out. Active logging operations were at work on Inverness ridge, felling primeval Douglas-fir, and subdividers were easily obtaining building permits from Marin County. Nineteen million dollars had already been spent and the money had run out.

### THE MORGAN HORSE RANCH

Even while the battles continued to obtain the necessary funds to secure title to the remaining park lands, the Northern California Morgan Horse Association, led by Boyd Stewart, was diligently working to establish a Morgan Horse Ranch at Point Reyes. Many members made plans to donate horses, tack, and equipment. The first Morgan received by the ranch was the mare Rhed’s Felinity (Red Flash x Falene), donated by Jerry and Leena Rhine of Oakdale, California, in February of 1970. She was in foal to Rhed Spartacus (Red Flash x Sparlu) and delivered a chestnut filly, Los Reyes Locura, one month later. Locura traced directly to Bulrush both through her sireline and her dam’s sireline, and was the first foal to bear the Los Reyes prefix.

As described by then Park Superintendent John L. Sansing, the purpose for a Morgan Horse Ranch at Point Reyes was twofold: “to provide an interpretive experience for youngsters and adults of the Bay Area and the nation of seeing and watching these beautiful animals and to provide Morgan horses for ranger patrol and backcountry work in National Parks.”

John Strong was the first Ranch Manager and it was he who developed the Morgan Horse living history exhibit which was first implemented in May 1970 with one donated stallion and two loaned mares on sixty acres of pasture at the beautiful historic Bear Valley Ranch which was now park headquarters. Triton El Capitan (Lippitt Pecos x Princess Victoria by Lippitt Morman), a handsome four-year-old chestnut stallion was donated by W. Robert Morgan of Gilroy, California. W. Robert Morgan, a respected litigation lawyer in Santa Clara County, was passionate about the history of the Morgan horse. He donated several horses over the years and was a strong supporter of the Point Reyes Morgan Horse program until his death in 1999.



**ABOVE:** Los Reyes Don Primero or “Honcho” (Primavera Valdez x Los Reyes Centenna) enjoys the lush pasture at Point Reyes (photo by Brenda Tippin).

One reason Strong and other staff at Point Reyes felt they could be successful with a Morgan horse ranch was due to the emphasis placed by the National Park Service on living history programs. While they were developing ideas in 1969, they had chosen a model for their plan to use Morgan horses in a living history demonstration: The George Washington Birthplace National Monument. George Washington’s Mount Vernon, in fact, had some very old history in breeding Morgans for the National Park Service and had re-established an active program at that time (1968-1972) considered ideal by the Park Service. Mount Vernon’s original Morgan breeding program had been forgotten in recent years, but was rediscovered in 2013 when staff at Yellowstone National Park began trying to research the history of using Morgan horses at Yellowstone as many old photos depicted rangers there riding Morgans.

After some digging in the National Park Archives, it was discovered that Yellowstone began a breeding program in 1941 using three Morgan stallions, Wakefield Duke, Black Baron, and Gypsy Chief. All three turned out to be sons of the black stallion Gypsy King (Kenney’s Morgan x Gypsy Queen) bred by C. C. Barlow of Wilmington, Vermont, and foaled in 1917. In 1937, John D. Rockefeller, Jr. donated the 20-year-old stallion to the National Park Service, and he was stabled and kept at George Washington Birthplace National Monument for breeding purposes. At the same time, Rockefeller also donated two mares bred by the U.S. Government Morgan Horse Farm, the full sisters Minerva (foaled 1919) and Nunda (foaled 1920) by Scotland (General Gates x Highland Mary) and out of Minnehaha (Troubadour x Doris), as well as their daughters Gipsy Princess (x Minerva) and Gipsy Lady (x Nunda), both sired by Gipsy King and foaled in 1938. Wakefield Duke (Gipsy King x Nunda) was a black, 16h foaled in 1939; Black Baron (Gipsy King x Minerva), also black, foaled in 1940; and Gipsy Chief (x Minerva), black, foaled in 1941. None of

their offspring were registered however.

Although the Morgan Horse Farm at George Washington Birthplace National Monument had a successful history, many in the Western Regional Office of the National Park Service doubted whether a similar program at Point Reyes could work. As it turned out, the Morgan Horse Ranch was wildly popular with the public and soon became the central attraction at Point Reyes. The dedication of the Point Reyes National Seashore Morgan Horse Farm took place on June 27, 1970. It was a momentous occasion with many dignitaries participating in the opening ceremonies. Among these were Deane C. Davis, then Governor of Vermont (1969-1973) and former president of the American Morgan Horse Association (1963-1964); California Senator George Murphy (1965-1971); Congressman Don Clausen of California’s First District (1963-1975) who succeeded Clem Miller in that position; and Mr. Harthon L. Bill, Deputy Director of the National Park Service, Washington, D.C. Altogether, the event was attended by 475 individuals.

A “barn warming” followed the opening ceremonies in which members of the Northern California Morgan Horse Association and other guests brought numerous gifts to equip the empty stable tack room. These included everything from curry combs to horse blankets, some new and some antique. By this time several additional mares had been loaned for breeding by Mr. and Mrs. Bud Sahr, Oak Hill Farms; Mr. and Mrs. J. William Jones, E-J Corrals; Mr. and Mrs. Walter Kellstrom, Kellstrom Morgans; Mrs. LaVonne Houlton, Viking Morgans; and Mr. and Mrs. E. Ray Baker, Bar-Bee Morgans. Horses were selected by the Advisory Committee which consisted of park officials and members of the Northern California Morgan Horse Association and was chaired by Boyd Stewart.

By 1971, twenty acres of pasture for mares and foals had been specially seeded with a mix of Harding Grass, Orchard Grass,

## HISTORY LESSON *≈ Point Reyes Morgan Horse Ranch.*



**ABOVE, LEFT TO RIGHT:** Retired Ranch manager Harold Geritz and Los Reyes Veradez at Hog Island, with Tomales Bay in the distance (photo by Frank Binney); Point Reyes Morgans Los Reyes Don Primero with his dad Los Reyes Veradez with Olema Valley in the background (photos courtesy of National Park Service [NPS]).

Mt. Barker Sub-Clover, and Tallarook and Woogenellup Sub-Clover. Seven yearlings, all gentle and halter broke were receiving 12 hours of training per week, all time donated by one volunteer. These included two fillies: Los Reyes Locura, and Los Reyes Gitana (Dapper Dan x Amber Lady) donated by the Kellstroms, and five geldings, Los Reyes Aquila (Angle's Victor x Pongee Princess), Los Reyes Terremoto (Cap's Nugget x Impala Claudeen), Rosemont's Black Sambo (Gay's Cinco de Mayo x Carolyn Seiters), Los Reyes Sonador (Ca's Nugget x Impala Bay Blossom), and Los Reyes Chico (Cap's Nugget x Impala Claudia).

Two geldings had been donated for riding patrol, both donated by Steve Reeves of Oregon. These were the palomino SR's Gold Nugget (Merry Warlock x Honey Gold) and the chestnut Comanche Warrior (Dickie's Pride x Gay Gipse). Rhed's Felinity was still the only mare owned by Point Reyes while nine mares on loan included Pongee Princess (Muscle Man x Lorinda Lady), Honey's Camille (Ramona Black Hawk x Honey Bun), Impala Bay Blossom (King Bob x Bay Blossom), Beckridge Cameo (Montey Vermont x Skagit Camas), Impala Claudia (California King x Miss Taylor), Impala Claudeen (California King x Lois Morgan), Impala Starlet (California King x Rose Eastman), Lady Fiona (Dubna-A x Princess Mac), and Viking Vanity (King Bob x Gimma).

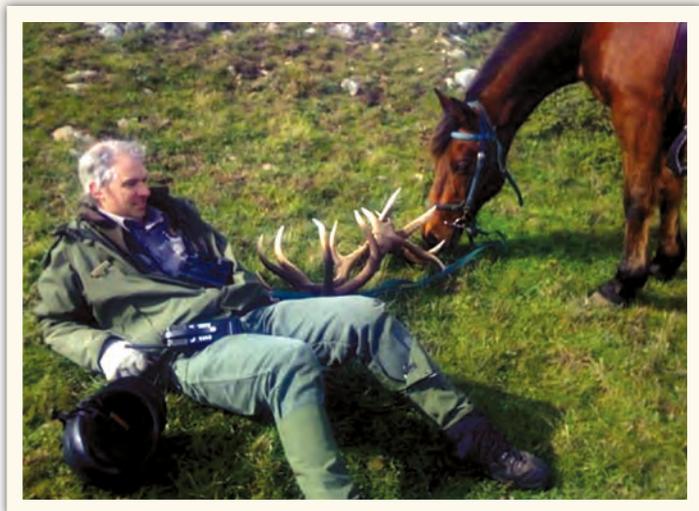
The next year, 1972, plans were made for a representative committee from the American Morgan Horse Association to evaluate the mares and grade them according to those most ideal for breeding based their quality as representatives of the breed as well as likely ability to produce horses most suitable for National Park Service needs. Park Superintendent John Sansing named four goals felt to be most important for evaluation purposes:

1. A good "people liking" disposition: Our horses will be used often on trails that have a considerable number of hikers and bicyclists. Many of our visitors are from an urban environment and they think nothing of suddenly surrounding and touching a horse. In addition, many school groups

visit the horse farm and usually some children get into the corrals or crowd the horses during our demonstration programs. Needless to say, from our point of view the horses must be of an easy disposition and we consider this trait the most important above all other characteristics.

2. Conformation: Since we do need to be able to send our adult horses to other parks if we are to indefinitely continue our breeding and exhibit program, a good conformation is important. In other words, the better a horse looks, the easier it will be to build our reputation and persuade other parks to take our horses.
3. Minimum height: We would like to aim for a minimum height of 15 hands with 15.2 hands perhaps being a little better. Many of our rangers are 6-foot-tall or better and the visual impact is better if the horse they are riding is reasonably large.
4. Trail and patrol use: The horses will be ridden in hilly and mountainous terrain. Consequently, they should have strong straight sound legs and good, well-formed feet. This is very important as many of our horses will go to mountainous parks where the combination of steep trails and hard granite make sound legs and feet imperative.

The evaluation was conducted in July 1972 by Dr. C.D. Parks, V.D.M, W. Robert Morgan, Boyd Stewart, Dr. H. P. Boyd, D. V. M., John Sansing, Ranch Manager, and Duane Irving, Horse Handler. As Mr. Morgan could not stay for the entire weekend, they were joined by local veterinarian Dr. John Zimmerman who had agreed to donate his services for the park's horses. All the Morgans on the property, about 50 total, were evaluated. Most of the horses were found to be rich in the blood of old working ranch stock from Texas breeder Richard Sellman and California breeder Roland Hill. While generally of good disposition, and sound with excellent feet and legs, and good travelers, adequate for Park Service needs,



**ABOVE, LEFT TO RIGHT:** Ranger Tim Bernot and Los Reyes Forrest Fox or “Huck” (Cedar City Penbrook x Los Reyes Katy Fox [Orcland Bold Fox x Los Reyes Centenna]) February 2009, studying shed antlers of the Tule Elk. After studying and recording the information, shed antlers are returned to the elk range so wildlife can benefit from the minerals they depend on—but in pieces too small to be of value to poachers (photo by Frank Binney). Ranch Manager Phil Straub and “Elvis” (photo courtesy of National Park Service [NPS]).

several were considered to be too much on the plain side to be ideal representatives of the breed for the large numbers of people who would be visiting them yearly. Recommendations were made to discard a few of the mares and improve type through strategic use of quality stallions available through donated breedings, which would be most likely to complement individual mares.

### FINAL ESTABLISHMENT OF POINT REYES NATIONAL SEASHORE

President Nixon had announced in November of 1969 that he would make funds available for the Point Reyes project. At long last, in March of 1970, Congress cleared bill HR 3786 authorizing an additional \$38.4 million to complete land acquisition for Point Reyes National Seashore. This increased the total authorization from \$19.1 million to \$57.5 million to permit acquisition of the remaining 36,000 acres needed to complete the 64,546-acre park. President Nixon signed the bill on April 3, 1970. The official establishment ceremony was held on October 20, 1972, recognizing that sufficient land had finally been acquired to make the Seashore efficiently administrable as required by enabling legislation. This unique area includes an 18,000-acre pastoral zone comprising 20 percent of the Point Reyes National Seashore, that is both a working agricultural landscape and exceptionally rich in cultural history. The pastoral zone also includes 10,000 acres of the North District of the Golden Gate National Recreation Area. Twenty-four families hold current lease/special use permits for cattle and dairy operations. The area includes 80 miles of seashore as well as a growing herd of Tule elk that were reintroduced to the decommissioned historic Pierce Point Ranch on Tomales Point, now part of designated wilderness.

Tule elk were the dominant grazers on the Point Reyes peninsula and in the Olema Valley until their extirpation in the 1850s. In 1874, cattle baron Henry Miller discovered a small herd of the elk on his ranch near Bakersfield, and made the effort to

preserve them. All surviving Tule elk populations are descendants of Miller’s herd. Today, the total acreage of Point Reyes National Seashore is 71,028 acres.

### OBSTACLES AND CHALLENGES FOR THE POINT REYES MORGAN HORSE RANCH

Between 1972 and 1977, the Morgan Horse Ranch at Point Reyes supplied more than 60 registered Morgans to other National Parks, some of which had been donated to the Park Service, and others which had been bred at Point Reyes. Over a million visitors had come to the Point Reyes National Seashore in 1970 and this number steadily climbed to over 1.7 million in 1977. The Morgan horse exhibit was a focal point for most visitors. Nine full-sized interpretive panels provided a detailed history of the Morgan breed from the original Justin Morgan horse to its role at Point Reyes. A blacksmith shop and various historic farm implements were part of the interpretive demonstration. Additionally, the horses were very visible from the parking lot, and visitors hiking the trails would also typically encounter rangers or volunteers riding the Morgans.

On October 18, 1976, President Gerald Ford signed Public Law 94-544, designating 25,370 acres of the Point Reyes National Seashore as wilderness. This was named the Phillip Burton Wilderness Area in 1985, in honor of California Congressman Phillip Burton who served from 1964 until his death in 1983. The Morgans had already proved valuable for mounted patrol and maintenance on the trails, and would be even more needed with wilderness area inaccessible by other means.

The Point Reyes Program was also unique in that it provided training for rangers from the many parks around the country who had little opportunity otherwise to learn skilled horsemanship. Two classes of three weeks were offered each year, which were well attended.

In late 1976, a sudden crisis arose when an influential park



**ABOVE:** Phil Straub with Los Reyes Don Primero (photo courtesy of National Park Service [NPS]).

official wrote to Superintendent John Sansing with direction that the Morgan Horse Ranch must be shut down and the horses disposed of by November of that year. Urgent letters to Senators and Congressmen managed to circumvent this, however, continued pressure forced the program to be scaled back. Altogether, Point Reyes bred more than 70 horses with the Los Reyes prefix. An average of six to eight Los Reyes foals were born per year from 1970-76, while in 1977, only one was born. During the years 1978-85, the park produced one to three foals per year. After this the breeding slowed even more with no more foals produced for several years, then one per year 1989-91, none in 1992, one in 1993, none in 1994, one in 1995, and finally the last in 1999.

John Strong continued as Ranch Manager until his retirement in 1981, but remained a strong supporter as a member of the Redwood Morgan Horse Club. By the time he retired, a total of 76 patrol Morgans were shipped for use in regional parks, most of which had been foaled, raised, and trained at Point Reyes. The next Ranch Manager, Hank Ilenberger, although he remained for only two years, moved forward with goals to see that all Morgans trained as ranger mounts were schooled thoroughly in simulated traffic hazards, a variety of obstacles and jumps, carrying double riders, and remain calm and tractable in large crowds or when approached closely by children.

In 1982, AMHA President Dr. Albert Lucine, Jr. contacted Henry Boyd, D.V.M. about forming an advisory committee to act as a liaison between Point Reyes and the AMHA. The earlier advisory committee comprised of the Northern California Morgan Horse Club had been discontinued after the first three years by direction from the regional office of the park service. However, the AMHA recognized the value of the Point Reyes program and felt it would benefit from more support at this time. Dr. Boyd agreed to

serve as chairman for the new committee.

Gina Muzinich, who had started working at the Morgan Horse Ranch in 1976, and worked her way up from stable hand, became the ranch manager in 1983, assisted by Harold Geritz as the horse handler. Gina's goal was to develop larger horses, standing a minimum of 15.2 hands. She hoped Dr. Boyd might be able to help her find good stallions of 16 hands or taller to help achieve this goal. Gina retired in November 1997, and Harold Geritz then served as ranch manager until his retirement in 2012.

### **POINT REYES TODAY AND TOMORROW**

The current ranch manager is Phil Straub, who attended the Ranger Academy at Santa Rosa Junior College after four years in the Marine Corps. Under Phil's direction, Point Reyes Morgans participated in the Rose Parade for the first time, marking the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the National Park Service. Phil discovered that "Elvis" had never had his registration completed, although the paperwork had been started. Elvis, foaled in 1999, was sired by Indiana Red River (Roland G Hill x Mariner Liberty G. R) and out of the mare Ramul's Bunny (Ramul's Justin x Shawnee's Pam Pam). Phil contacted the AMHA and found Elvis could still be registered, so he is currently working on finishing up that process. The original name picked was Los Reyes El Rey, which translated literally means "The King's King (el rey meaning King and los reyes, the kings)—perhaps how he got a nickname of Elvis.

Somewhere along the way, Elvis's training had also been neglected, which made volunteers reluctant to ride him, so he had not been able to progress until Phil arrived. Something in this tough little Morgan struck a chord with Phil—they were good for each other. Like many veterans, Phil has had to face PTSD, and he feels that working with the Morgans has been a very therapeutic

and healing experience. Phil is involved in a documentary film called "Thank You For Your Service" which he explains focuses on the problems of PTSD and the military and the possibility of establishing a central command system for behavioral health in the military, or, what the film calls a Behavioral Health Corps. The film which debuted at the New York Film Festival last November, was most recently shown at the 9<sup>th</sup> Annual Sebastopol Documentary Film Festival in March 2016.

No one at Point Reyes would have believed that Elvis could be ridden on New Year's day in the second largest parade in the country, before a crowd of more than 700,000 onlookers, but he did great. Also appearing in the Rose Parade was Los Reyes Veradez, or "Honcho," who Phil refers to as a rock star, out of one of the best mares bred at Point Reyes, Los Reyes Centenna (UNH Vickelect x Willow Glen Tonette). Foaled in 1995, Honcho will be 21 this year. He is also unique in that he shares the pasture with his dad, Los Reyes Veradez, or "Buck," a buckskin son of the great reining champion Primavera Valdez out of Ran Mar Shadolyn (Nemours Black Shadow x Purissima Baacamanta). Buck was not gelded until he was four so he could sire another patrol mount.

Foaled in 1991, Buck will be 25 this year, and is in good health, but can no longer be ridden due to an injury to his hock. The remaining two horses are Los Reyes Forrest Fox, or "Huck" (Cedar City Penbrook x Los Reyes Katy Fox) foaled in 1990. Huck's Second dam was Los Reyes Centenna, so he is also related to Honcho. Los Reyes Liberty Rose, or "Rose" (Indiana Red River x Fairylady by Rhed) is a half-sister to Elvis, and the only mare remaining at the ranch. In addition to parades, demonstrations, and patrolling the trails, the Morgans are still sometimes used for search and rescue, and can be invaluable in quickly reaching areas to assist someone

that might otherwise be inaccessible or difficult to reach.

John Dell'Osso, Chief of Interpretation and Resource Education at Point Reyes, notes that for the past several years, the park has received an average of 2.5 million visitors per year. There are currently 23 volunteers donating an average 3,500 hours per year to work with the horses, and without their help, the program would never have been possible. There are 150 miles of trails in the park, most of which are open to horses, except some of the trails are restricted on holidays and weekends due to the large numbers of visitors. What is the future of the Morgan Horse Ranch at Point Reyes? John explains that nothing has definitely been decided, but the park is open to ideas and would welcome support and involvement from local Morgan clubs in considering possible partnership agreements that might help the program continue.

The Morgans at Point Reyes are probably more visible to the general public than any other horses within the breed and the horses are still hugely popular with the 2.5 million visitors per year. The information display they have about the breed is highly impressive. The Morgans have, in a sense, carved their own history at Point Reyes since they have been with the Park since it

was established and they have truly become a part of the park service image. Beloved by visitors and rangers alike, the Morgans remain both a part of living history, and a valuable part of the of the workforce.

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Please visit [www.ptreyes.org/activities/morgan-horse-ranch](http://www.ptreyes.org/activities/morgan-horse-ranch) to learn more about the Point Reyes Morgan Horse Ranch, or to offer tax deductible donations through the Point Reyes National Seashore Association 501(c)(3) nonprofit. ■



2016 New Year's Day Rose Parade. Superintendent of Yosemite National Park Don Neubacher (second from left), National Park Service Director Jon Jarvis on Honcho (second from right), Point Reyes Morgan Horse Ranch Manager Phil Straub (far right) (photo courtesy of National Park Service [NPS]).

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