



≈ FOCUS ON NEW ENGLAND, THE HOMELAND ≈

GROWING UP AT GREEN MEADS

Today Jeff Morse is a well-known carriage driving competitor and clinician. That he lives and grew up on the Berkshire farm started by his grandparents, Darwin and Kate Morse, however, attests to his profound knowledge of the Morgan breed then and now. In this article he recalls another era in terms of everything from personal lifestyles to the raising of livestock.

My grandfather, Darwin Morse, said to me many times when I was a young boy, “Your ancestors came over the Atlantic on the good ship ‘Increase’ and I have been trying to increase ever since.” By that he meant the breeding business was in his blood. He is known now as the breeder of Morgan horses for Green Meads Farm, where he and my grandmother, Kate Morse, also bred many dog breeds and a nationally known herd of Guernsey cows. Darwin even bred and raised canaries! Few today know Darwin bred and raised rare chickens and other birds as “the poultry man” for my grandmother’s father, Grenville Winthrop, in Lenox, Massachusetts. It was in Grenville’s chicken coop on his Lenox estate where Kate and Darwin began their relationship that shortly resulted in a scandalous, clandestine double elopement involving lots of

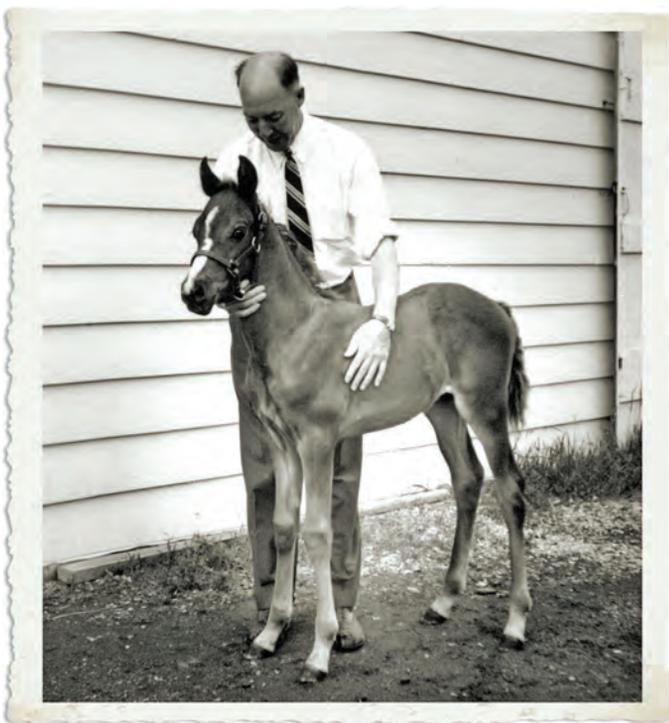
secrecy and palace intrigue. Kate, at age 24, eloped with Darwin, and Kate’s sister, Emily Winthrop, age 34, eloped with their father’s chauffeur, taking their father’s automobile to nearby Lenoxdale where they were married by a sympathetic preacher who was willing to perform the ceremony without telling their father. After a brief escape out of the country to Montreal while the local and New York society press cooled down, and a cross country drive to Santa Barbara, Kate and Darwin returned to Berkshire County with their new baby, my father, Thomas Morse, and set up Green Meads Farm.



By Jeff Morse

I was only five years old when Rod Leavitt, stable manager and trainer for my grandparents sat me on my first Morgan horse, the 1949 National Champion Mare, Abbington Of Shady Lawn. My legs were too short to reach the stirrups, so my feet just went through the stirrup leathers.

ABOVE (LEFT TO RIGHT): Jeff Morse poses with the weanling Green Meads Crescent who was by Gay Cavalier; The foundation mare Abbington Of Shady Lawn, dam of Wind-Crest Ben Davis and Green Meads Marauder, shown with a young Jeff Morse, up.



ABOVE (TOP TO BOTTOM): Kate and Darwin Morse at the entrance way sign at the Berkshires farm; Darwin Morse with the 1956 foal Green Meads Beau (Upwey Ben Don x Windcrest Cover Girl).

“Abbie” had come to Green Meads Farm as a riding mount for my grandfather so he could join my grandmother on rides on her mare, Windcrest Cover Girl, on their 650 acre farm in the Berkshires. Both mares were bred by and purchased from Ted Davis of Windsor, Vermont, the founder of the National Morgan Show, now the New England Regional.

Mr. Davis originally refused to sell Abbie for any amount of money. Undeterred, my grandfather pestered him repeatedly until 1954 when finally he gave in. By that time, Abbie had been bred to Upwey Ben Don, Mr. Davis’s top stallion. She had a colt by her side and Darwin had to buy both the mare and her foal if he wanted the mare. Unintentionally, Kate and Darwin found themselves headed for the breeding business. Abbie’s foal, Wind-Crest Ben Davis, was the first stallion of any breed I ever knew. He became the stallion by whom I measure all the rest. He was my favorite horse to ride at the farm. A gentler, kinder stallion I have never known. I feel so fortunate to have had this kind of introduction to horses and to the Morgan breed.

Kate was an active participant in running Green Meads Farm. She was a meticulous record keeper and I still have her handwritten breeding records. As a young boy, I watched her ride six mornings a week on Cover Girl. It was as much a part of her life as eating three meals a day. She was an active dog breeder and raised and trained more than 20 breeds of dogs in her lifetime. I don’t remember ever a time when there were not dogs on the farm. In a way, they were as much a part of Green Meads as the Morgan horses. She had a full breeding kennel, as many of the old estate farms did. It was maintained by Andy, an Italian gardener and her kennel man. She also had a small kennel built into their house. She had Andy bring her a house dog to be with her in the evenings at cocktail hour. I loved Andy and his thick Italian accent, probably mostly because if I timed it right, he would share a piece of spice cake he always seemed to have for his dessert at lunch. When I was very young, Kate had Cocker Spaniels and then Weimeraners. At the end of her life, she owned two Miniature Schnauzer lap dogs, Tinker and Midge. To a young boy, both the main kennel and the house kennel were fascinating places, full of curious smells and dog sounds. It must have rubbed off on me as I have always had dogs in my house, too.

My grandfather had built a large and very successful dairy business with Guernsey cows. I barely remember the cows as he got out of the business after contracting brucellosis in the early 1950s. That was just about the time I discovered he had a Bull Barn, one of the most mysterious and exciting places on the farm. It seemed dangerous. No place for a very young boy. Huge bulls behind substantial bars. I snuck in there to see his breeding bulls, one of whom was the magnificent and terrifying King Of The Meads, top sire of Green Meads Farm.

At the time, I was living in Brookline, Massachusetts, and, on the major holidays, my family drove out to Green Meads and I looked forward eagerly to being able to ride Abbie and visit with Davey. I distinctly remember driving out to the farm on the day after the Massachusetts Turnpike had been completed in 1958. I was eight years old.

Although I was unaware of it at the time, my grandmother was steering me towards horses. She grew up in the horse and buggy



ABOVE: Kate Morse handles the weanling Green Meads Starlet. As a broodmare Starlet would produce five with the Green Meads prefix.

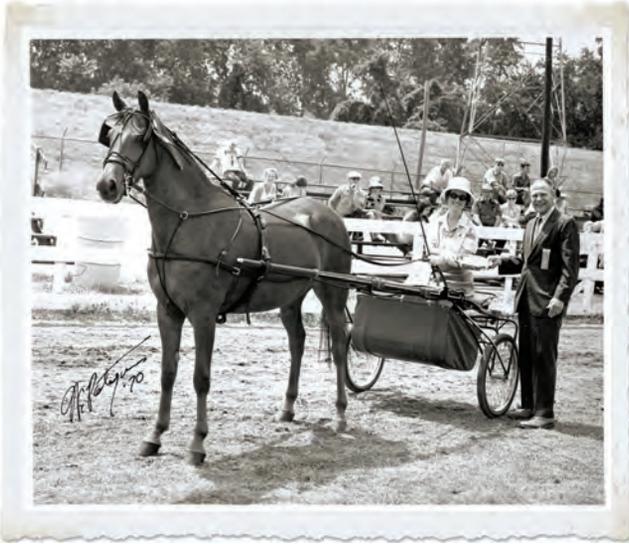
FAR LEFT: Kate Morse on Windcrest Cover Girl and Darwin Morse on Abbington Of Shady Lawn mid 1950s.

LEFT: Darwin and Kate Morse and a four-legged companion enjoy a sleigh ride on the 650-acre Berkshire farm. The pair is made up of Green Meads Marauder (off horse) and Windcrest Ben Davis (near horse).

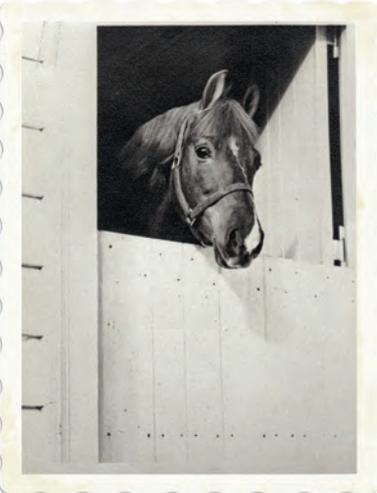
era of the early 1900s and it was inconceivable to her that anyone should grow up without the essential skills of horsemanship. Between visits to the farm, she insisted on sending me for regular riding lessons at a nearby stable. When I visited the farm, each morning began with a trip to the stable right after breakfast. The framing timbers of the stable at Green Meads are from a Shaker sheep barn that Darwin bought and moved from a nearby Shaker

Community in the 1930s. Usually, we'd saddle up and ride out on the trail with the stable dog, Dottie the Dalmatian. Darwin admonished me early on: "Don't call it a barn. It's a stable. Barns are for cows." I can hear him saying that like it was yesterday. The stable hands took me under their wings and taught me how to clean horses and care for tack and, most important, they taught me to be proud of doing it all "the right way."

FOCUS ON NEW ENGLAND, THE HOMELAND ≈ GROWING UP AT GREEN MEADS



ABOVE (LEFT TO RIGHT): An active horsewoman, Kate Morse drives Green Meads Spring at the Eastern States Exposition in West Springfield, Massachusetts (photo © Warren Patriquin); Darwin Morse driving the royally bred Gay Cavalier (Gay Dancer x Vigilda Burkland) at Northampton in the 1960s.



ABOVE (CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT): Wind-Crest Ben Davis was part of the package when the Morses bought his dam Abbington Of Shady Lawn. He became a foundation sire for Green Meads; The Morses bred dairy cattle as well as horses, dogs and canaries at Green Meads (photo © Strohmeyer); Green Meads important bull King Of The Meads (photo © Strohmeyer & Carpenter).

When I was about ten, my father, a pediatric surgeon who was finally finished with his internship and residency in Boston, got his first big job at the Columbus Children's Hospital in Ohio and we moved 12 hours away from Green Meads. That meant our visits were to become less frequent. It was then that Grandmother hatched a plan. What if I were to come spend a few weeks at the farm in the summer? I have to say, there is nothing like spending time on a farm with grandparents! My grandparents got to spoil

me rotten. And I got free run of the farm and had a horse of my own to ride every day. She was a young bay mare named Green Meads Starlet. She must have been a very safe and trustworthy mare because I was riding her when she was quite young and I was able to stand up on her back without fear! Maybe I was in more danger than I knew, but I lived through it.

By the late 1950s, there were probably 30 Morgans on the farm. It was a full-fledged Morgan breeding farm. Ben Davis and

GROWING UP AT GREEN MEADS ≈ FOCUS ON NEW ENGLAND, THE HOMELAND



Windcrest Ben Davis 11283

GREEN MEADS MARAUDER 11303
 Bay — 6 years old — 14.3 hands
 Sire: Upwey Ben Don Dam: Abbington of Shady Lawn
 8843 Stud fee \$200

GAY CAVALIER 12369
 Dark Chestnut — 4 years old — 15.0 hands
 Sire: Gay Danes 11012 Dam: Virginia Burkland 06040
 Stud fee \$200

WINDCREST BEN DAVIS 11283
 Chestnut — 9 years old — 14.3 hands
 Sire: Upwey Ben Don Dam: Abbington of Shady Lawn
 8843 Stud fee \$200

Green Meads Farm
 Richmond, Massachusetts

MR. and MRS. DARWIN S. MORSE, Owners ROD LEAVITT, Horseman

HAPPY NEW YEAR



ABBY GAL 05928 (Favourite + Goodheart)
GREEN MEADS MR. BROWN 14450 (Jambon + Abby Gal)

At this time we look back on the successes of 1963 with pride, and look forward with hope to 1964. May the New Year bring happiness and prosperity to you and yours, and an "Ere of Good Feeling" to all Morgan Owners!

Green Meads Farm
 Richmond, Massachusetts

MR. and MRS. DARWIN S. MORSE, owners PERCY LOCKE, horseman



GAY CAVALIER 12369

CHAMPION HARNESS HORSE
 North Shore Horsemen's Association

CHAMPION JUNIOR MORGAN SADDLE
 North Shore Horsemen's Association

CHAMPION HARNESS HORSE
 All-Morgan Horse Show, Syracuse, New York

1st JUNIOR SADDLE CLASS
 Eastern State Horse Show, Springfield, Massachusetts

Green Meads Farm
 Richmond, Massachusetts

MR. and MRS. DARWIN S. MORSE, owners PERCY LOCKE, horseman

GREEN MEADS FARM



SYNDICATE'S BALLERINA 09284
 Upwey Ben Don + Pavilion

Syndicate's Ballerina had a very successful show season, winning the four year old and over Mares that have lasted Class at the National, among other good wins, and finishing the season at the All-Morgan Show in Syracuse, N. Y., with three blues and a red. Her full sister sold at the Bon Edge Farm dispersion for \$5,600 and her three quarter sister sold at the same sale for \$1,600.00. We feel very fortunate to have Ballerina and her dam, Pavilion. When Ballerina's show days are over, she will make a valuable addition to our band of brood mares, which now includes three other Upwey Ben Don daughters, with a two year old and a yearling coming along.

Green Meads Farm
 Richmond, Massachusetts

MR. and MRS. DARWIN S. MORSE, owners PERCY LOCKE, horseman

Season's Greetings



Merry Christmas
 From the Horses and their Morgan Owners

Green Meads Farm
 Richmond, Massachusetts

Mr. and Mrs. Darwin S. Morse, owners Percy Locke, horseman

Happy New Year to You All!



GREEN MEADS RICHMOND 13135
GREEN MEADS BELLE 09284

This day that will, by Gay Cavalier out of Green Meads, Belle, a daughter of Upwey Ben Don, will see his first New Year's Day at the highest level, in England, Cambridge, the home of Mr. Brown of Burroughs. Mr. Brown's family made the selection for Mr. Brown, and we believe that in breeding, type, conformation and disposition, Green Meads Richmond stands with the best. We sincerely hope that in 1964 years to come, he will prove to be an excellent sire.

Green Meads Farm
 Richmond, Massachusetts

Mr. and Mrs. Darwin S. Morse, owners Percy Locke, horseman



GAY CAVALIER 12369
 Sire: Gay Danes 11012 Dam: Virginia Burkland 06040

Champion Morgan Horse — Massachusetts Horsemen's Council
 Champion Morgan in Harness — Massachusetts Horsemen's Council
 Champion Open Morgan — North Shore Horsemen's Association
 Champion Morgan in Hand — North Shore Horsemen's Association
 Champion Morgan in Harness — North Shore Horsemen's Association

Site of Green Meads, Jay, top of the Wampanoag in 1964.

Green Meads Farm
 Richmond, Massachusetts

Mr. and Mrs. Darwin S. Morse, owners Percy Locke, horseman



GREEN MEADS MARAUDER 11303
BAY STALLION 14.3 HANDS, FOALING 1967
 Sire: Upwey Ben Don Dam: Abbington of Shady Lawn

Grand Champion Stallion, N.E.M.H.S., 1963
 Reserve Grand Champion Stallion N.E.M.H.S., 1963

Green Meads Marauder is "All Morgan" in type, conformation and disposition. His progeny are uniform and very pleasing. He seems to have the same ability that his sire has to produce his get with beautiful heads, large, bold expressive eyes and small, well placed ears. He matures to a well balanced, fine and soft and fast to get on. He has, and will continue to have an important place in our breeding program.

Green Meads Farm
 Richmond, Massachusetts

Mr. and Mrs. Darwin S. Morse, owners Percy Locke, horseman

"School Days, School Days!"



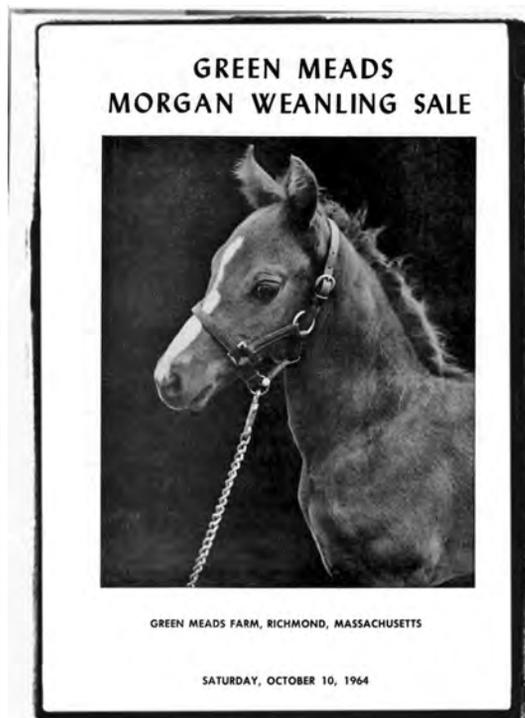
GREEN MEADS GLAMOUR 012872
 Sire: Gay Cavalier 12369 Dam: Green Meads Belle 09284

Now that the Show Season is nearly over, the harvesting completed and the Eighth Annual Morgan Weanling Sale is a thing of the past, we will have more time to devote to the schooling of our youngsters. The two year old pictured above, having graduated with honors from his early harness training, will begin work under saddle. We have three weanlings to begin ground training, three yearlings to start harness work and four two year olds to begin saddle lessons, plus several older horses that must be worked regularly lest they forget! Busy days ahead!

Green Meads Farm
 RICHMOND, MASSACHUSETTS

MR. and MRS. DARWIN S. MORSE, owners PERCY LOCKE, horseman

ABOVE: The Morses were consummate promoters and their back cover ads were mainstays of *The Morgan Horse* magazine in the 1960s.



TOP ROW (LEFT TO RIGHT): Darwin and Kate Morse observe the annual weanling sale at Green Meads Farm (photo © Warren Patriquin); The cover to the catalogue for the 1964 Green Meads weanling sale featuring Green Meads Beau. **BOTTOM ROW (LEFT TO RIGHT):** Jeff Morse today, an avid competitor and clinician on the subject of carriage and CDE, shown with his Morgans SBS Risky Business with Jennifer Morse and driving Heyday BlackHawk with the late Peter Webster at the 2016 New England Morgan Horse Show (photos © Blue Moon Images [Bluemoonimages.smugmug.com, Facebook.com_danabluemoonimages] and Denlore Photography).

his full brother Green Meads Marauder were the senior stallions. Critically, for Darwin, in his new found breeding venture, he knew about how to sell cows having had much success in his dairy business. He started the Green Meads Farm Weanling Sale. It took place each fall on Columbus Day weekend. Auctions of young dairy stock had worked for the dairy business, but had never been tried with Morgan horses. Over the years it ran, the sale was responsible for raising the prices of all Morgan horses. He told me many times, “I didn’t want the horses the breeders wanted to sell. I convinced them to send me the ones they wanted to keep.” Kate and Darwin bought Gay Cavalier at the 1959 sale when I was nine years old. To this day, I meet new people who tell me they were at one or more of those sales. I don’t think

he made any money directly with that sale but what an effective advertising tool for the farm. Unfortunately for me, I never attended one. I was in school in Ohio and it was too far to travel just for the weekend.

Kate and Darwin had their show horses trained and shown by Dr. Bob Orcutt and Pat Tataronis. I looked forward to staying at the Hotel Northampton and sitting on the hood of their car at ringside watching their horses, like Cavalier, be shown by Pat and Dr. Bob and my grandfather. I have missed few years at that show since then but not very many.

So, here I am 60-plus years later, living on the farm, still with Morgan horses. What a glorious childhood. I have not one unhappy memory of my days at “Camp Green Meads.” ■