



~~ FOCUS ON NEW ENGLAND, THE HOMELAND ~~

# “WE WERE PRINCESSES”— THE FISH SISTERS

*Born in the heart of New England, Sally and Susie Fish (now Longenecker) grew up in Morgandom. They paint a colorful story about the good old days in this candid interview.*

“On a bad day we’re in-laws. On a good day we’re sisters,” Susie (Fish) Longenecker observes. Stated in the mirthful tone that infuses this entire interview, those two short sentences decode the unique nature of the relationship between Susie and Sally Longenecker. They are sisters—the Fish sisters who grew up in central Massachusetts the daughters of Lincoln and Anita Fish. But, interestingly, they are New England sisters who married Southern brothers, Stanton and the late Geoffrey Longenecker.

Let’s state it outright—this confuses a lot of people even in the tight-knit Morgan community where we all tend to know each other. “Some people actually say, ‘You look more like sisters than sisters-in-law,’” Susie acknowledges. And, of course, that’s because they are!

By Stephen Kinney

As is more well-known Sally is the Longenecker behind Saralin Farm. In the ’80s, Saralin, hailing from Louisiana, was a major force in the Morgan show ring. Mike Goebig and Glenn Bouvier both trained there, and they produced a string of horses that was practically unbeatable. Later, Saralin would set up shop in the Lexington, Kentucky, area offering reproductive services to the Morgan community. Sally’s farm was a stallion station hosting the likes of I Will Command, Tedwin Topic, Applevale Boy King, Trophy’s Jade, and Merriehill Chicagoan. Her much loved Troutbrook Hallmark stood there, too. Today, a significant herd of Thoroughbred broodmares calls Saralin home. Sally foals them out for their racing world owners. And, of course, the Morgan stallion No Contest stands at stud there, too.

Saralin was inducted into AMHA’s Breeders Hall of Fame at the 2018 convention held in Lexington.

**ABOVE:** Susie and Sally Fish with Manitoba. **INSET:** Sally and Susie Longenecker at the 2018 AMHA Convention (photo by Kim Oplotnik).

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LEFT (TOP TO BOTTOM): Young Sally and Susie Fish back in the day; RIGHT: Sally and Applevale Spartan with Susie and Manitoba.

Susie was her sister's co-conspirator in their childhood when it came to persuading their family to embrace the Morgan thing! She showed the Fish family's geldings "Toby" and "Dandy" alongside Sally at little shows around Boston and, most memorably, at "The National" in Northampton. And, today, she remains in the support role, cheering on her husband Stanton who shows his pride and joy, the park horse SLB Valedictorian GCH, under the Grove Pointe banner.

Much could be written about the sisters' attachment to the Morgan world. Indeed, Saralin—show stable, breeding farm, stallion station—owns a huge piece of the breed's contemporary history.

But for this issue, with its theme about "New England, The Homeland," we hoped to hear tales of their early days. "We've come to interview the Fish Sisters, not the Longeneckers," we announced. And we were not disappointed.

Except it wasn't really an interview. Myself and associate editor Kim Oplotnik came armed with 17 questions to keep the narrative flowing. Turns out we asked one question and Sally and

Susie needed no further nudging from us. They were off!

Our audience with the Fish sisters took place at the convention hotel in Lexington in February. We snuck into a back corner of the hotel restaurant. Good thing we were secluded as laughter became the dominant tone of the multiple hours we spent together. Indeed, we had to follow up weeks later to fill in pieces of what follows which could not be transcribed from our recording, drowned out by the hilarity.

Yes, Saralin has been a big deal with an impact on our industry. Yes, Susie and Stanton's "Torian" is a winner of big-time awards. But we love that this is the story of young horse-crazy girls who read *The Morgan Horse* magazine back in the day, attended "The National," and got hooked on the breed. As the interview proves, their tale, while it is unique, is also not unlike the adventures of many other young people for whom the Morgan fulfilled what was first a fantasy and then a lifestyle.

Morgan world. You may know the Longeneckers. Now meet the Fish sisters!

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Walter Sloat, a distant uncle on their father's side of the family, posing with buggy and the mare Daisy, about 1922.  
Their father's family were early breeders of Morgans.

### HORSES AND CHILDHOOD

**STEPHEN KINNEY:** Give us a little biographical material. Who are the Fish sisters and where are you from?

**SUSIE:** We're from a little tiny town in Massachusetts called Grafton Center.

**SALLY:** It's about ten miles outside of Worcester. We were born in Worcester, Massachusetts.

**STEPHEN:** You mean Woostah.

**SALLY:** We're from central Massachusetts don't have an accent. Now, Susie and I will pull an accent out as we go along, as you will see, depending on what part of the world we're talking about.

**SALLY:** I will take the lead in this. From the time I was hatched I loved horses. Every time there was a pony ride, my father would stop, and we'd go on a pony ride. Now in New England, the only kind of horse I would ever hear about was Morgans. Our father would talk about Morgans. And his family, way back, were early breeders of Morgans.

**STEPHEN:** Who was your father?

**TOGETHER:** Lincoln Fish.

**SUSIE:** His father and his mother were from the Lincolns and the Fishes, both sides. About four generations back his father and his mother were related. One of those ancestors is the one who bred horses in Ira, Vermont. It's a tiny town in Vermont and the most important thing there is the cemetery which is filled with tombstones with the last name "Fish" and "Lincoln."

**SALLY:** So, back when these Morgans were trotters the Fish family raised a Morgan who, in fact, sold for \$37,000 way back then and he broke all kinds of records. It's in the Fish Family Biography.

**SUSIE:** Do you have that book? Because I've got that book.

**SALLY:** Yes, David's got it. So, Daddy just believed in Morgans and didn't know about any other breed.

**SUSIE:** That's the only horse the family would ever own, and every other generation would own a Morgan.

**SALLY:** Except not our generation.

**TOGETHER:** My mother didn't want to have a horse!

**SUSIE:** That was absolutely firm. And I couldn't have cared less. But, when she was about eight, they gave Sally a subscription to *The Morgan Horse* magazine.

**SALLY:** Not yet. You're too fast! We had a summer home. This is ancient history when there was no polio vaccine. The theory was you didn't ever want to be in a crowd in the summer. At the time, they felt like people would go to the beach and catch polio. I don't know whether that's true or not. So, many people who could had summer homes away from the city.

**SUSIE:** And you would leave the day after school got out and come back the day before school started.

**SALLY:** My mother's parents lived in Greenfield, Massachusetts. They bought land after the war at Lake Wyola and built a very modest little cabin—it had running water and you could flush a toilet—but it was small and on the lake. We would go to Lake Wyola every summer and spend the whole summer. It was idyllic. Our father would come up from Worcester on weekends and our grandparents were there the whole time.

The Red Cross offered swimming lessons up at the end of the lake. We could both swim, but our mother wanted us to take lessons. And I heard through the grapevine that there was this girl who was older who had horses. Her name was Jean Footit. I made it my business to make her my best friend. I stalked this girl. Finally, I said, "Do you have horses?" and she said, "Yes, I do." So, I said, "I would love to come help you." She said, "Oh, OK, if you come tomorrow morning you can help me do the stalls." She lived a mile and a half up the hill.

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**LEFT TO RIGHT:** Daddy (Lincoln Fish) holds "Toby" between classes. Note the matching car and trailer in the background; Susie and "Toby" at Northampton with the blue day coat that she and Sally shared.

**SUSIE:** Straight up.

**SALLY:** I told my mother that I was going to go play with Jean Footit's horses. And I get on my bike and go up the hill. It's like Lance Armstrong going up the hill. There were no cars, no people, only woods. And she hands me a pitchfork. So, for the first summer I would clean stalls and brush horses. And I would cry I loved it so much.

**SUSIE:** I thought she was crazy.

**SALLY:** One of the horses—his name was Gateway Robbie—was by U S Panez. He was a half-Morgan. And I thought he was the most beautiful horse I had ever seen. That was my first introduction to Morgans. So, for the whole summer, I would pedal my bicycle up the hill. Of course, coming down was wild. I'm not even sure I had brakes. I got thinner and thinner. And Jean Footit never once let me ride.

**SUSIE:** So, that was the first summer. She had me in on this to talk to my father, because he was the one we could twist into letting Sally rent one of Jean's horses for the summer, so Sally could go to a horse show, because Jean went to horse shows. My father said OK, and my mother wanted nothing to do with it. So, Sally had a little white Western hat and a little white shirt and a little bolo tie and cowboy boots and she learned to ride Western on "Jody," a Quarter Horse type with a shaved mane. We went to a couple of these little shows where Sally hung on to Jody. This went on for a couple of years.

*At this point Sally produces on her phone a video, taken from an old eight-millimeter film, of her riding Jody at Jean Footit's.*

**SALLY:** One summer, when I was maybe 12, Jean said we're going to go to the National Morgan Horse Show. We get there and—I'll

never forget it—there was a driving class in the ring and I took my little Brownie Instamatic camera, and the first thing I saw was Broadwall St Pat and Broadwall Drummerboy in their white bridles. Remember how Mr. Ferguson had the white bridles? Their heads were so beautiful, and I started crying. And Jean was like "What are you crying about?", and I said, 'I've never seen anything more beautiful than those horses with the white bridles.' And that's where I said, "I can't ever have any horse unless I have one of those."

### A SURPRISE FOR MUMMY

**SUSIE:** The next summer, my mother and father sat us down in the late spring and said, "We have a big surprise for you. Mummy is going to France to finish off her master's degree and Daddy and you girls are going to France for two weeks after she's done." Sally had set me up for anything. We had the summer all planned. Or she had it all planned, and I had to go along with it. She said, "We don't want to go."

And our father said, "This is a chance of a lifetime, you get to go to France for two weeks." And Sally says, "We don't want to go."

So we didn't go. And my father didn't get to go over and be with his wife for two weeks in France, because we had an agenda. We had gone to the National the summer before with our father, Mummy didn't go. I had seen all the riding habits. I liked the clothes. But the whole plan was to talk our father into getting a horse.

**SALLY:** A Morgan.

**SUSIE:** So, we could show, and I could get the clothes. So, my mother gets on the plane and we say, "OK Daddy, we've got something we want to show you." We spent the whole summer talking him into getting a horse.

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**TOP TO BOTTOM:** Lincoln and Anita Fish out for a drive in 1977 with their gelding Manitoba. "Toby" is 22 in this photo; Susie with "Dandy" on the Plymouth Valiant, the first car the sisters got to drive; Sally with Dana Harlow, who did the sisters' hair at horse shows, in front of the matching green truck and trailer.

*At this point the sisters talk practically in unison. The following is a rough translation!*

**SUSIE AND SALLY:** We went to the National. We went up to Vermont.

**SALLY:** I saw Upwey Ben Don, he bit me.

**SUSIE:** Beautiful

**SALLY:** We went to Waseeka and we saw (*Waseeka's*) Nocturne.

**BOTH:** Beautiful

**SALLY:** We went all over and looked at horses.

**SUSIE:** We finally found...

**SALLY:** No we didn't.

**SUSIE:** We found him before Mummy got off the plane.

**SALLY:** Yes, because I had found a classified sale ad in the back of *The Morgan Horse*.

**SUSIE:** That's right.

**SALLY:** It just sounded perfect. Absolutely perfect. There were two ads. One of them Bonnie Sogoloff owned and the other one was owned by the Barngroves from Rutland, Vermont.

I wrote to Bonnie and said I was interested in this horse—I'm a kid, right, 12 years old—she writes me back like a seven-page letter—I wish I had kept it—about this horse. And she can tell you what the horse's name was. She said she wanted to tell me everything about this horse. And one of the things she told me was that one of his legs was shorter than the other. I will never forget that as long as I live. Would that horse be completely sound? (*laughter*) So we passed on the one with the leg shorter than the other. But the other horse was meant to be—"Toby"—Manitoba—like the province—by Lippitt Mandate and out of Flicka Hawk.

**SALLY:** Our father has given permission to look and probably buy a horse.

**SUSIE:** So, it's August and we had gone to the National already and Mummy flies home, coming down the stairs off the plane and Daddy has said, "I want to tell her."

**SALLY:** We blurted out in unison, "We're getting a horse. Daddy says we can get a horse." Susie and I knew we better strike while the iron was hot before Mummy came home. At this point, my mother turned around to my father and said, "What do you mean we're getting a horse?" and my father said, "I was going to tell you by yourself—I told them they could get a horse."

**SALLY:** We get my father—Mummy didn't come—and we went up to Rutland, Vermont, to the Barngrove family's and they had two horses. We went in and that was it.

**STEPHEN:** What was it about him that was special?

**BOTH:** What was special was we could have him!

**SALLY:** There was no other criteria. He was a red chestnut and he did anything. Figure eights, pull a toboggan, whatever you wanted Toby would do. And we were like "This is what we want" and then—Nothing! Remember that? Nothing!

So this guy, Paul Ruggeri, invites me to the Christmas dance at Deerfield Academy. I think I was 13.

**SUSIE:** You were in eighth grade.

**SALLY:** Turns out, my father said, we're going up to get Toby. And I said, "I don't want to go to that dance, I want to go get Toby." And my father said, "You have to go to that dance, you've promised



**LEFT TO RIGHT:** Susie drives Applevale Spartan in a four wheeled cart on loan from the Parker family. The grandstand is still there in Northampton today; Susie shows "Dandy" in Fitting & Showmanship in 1967 at "The National."

him." So Susie got to go up to Vermont in the winter. Daddy bought a trailer and had it painted to match the car. And I went to this dance. All Paul Ruggeri heard was, "I am getting a horse. I wanted to go get Toby, but I had to come to this damn dance."

In the meantime, we had met Janie Needham—Jane Morrell—her mother had a boarding stable. So that's how we became friends with Jane. She had Bayfield Bonnie Lass.

**SUSIE:** We rode all over Holden, Massachusetts. We boarded him there. We started to go to shows every weekend.

**SALLY:** And we would show in everything.

**SUSIE:** Because high point was important.

**SALLY:** We'd show park, pleasure, driving, in-hand.

**SUSIE:** No we didn't show park, remember, because Toby wasn't a park horse. Remember that's when we started working on the fact we needed a park horse.

**SUSIE:** We showed in absolutely everything. And I would get off and Sally would get on.

**SALLY:** And then I'd get off and she'd get on.

**SUSIE:** Everybody had a black saddle suit from Beckwiths in Boston with red lining. We had those. But if it wasn't an equitation class or a fitting and showmanship class, we had a pale blue linen jacket. I would come out of the pleasure class with this pale blue jacket and take it off, Sally would put it on and go into the road hack class. Road hack then was different, it was a big deal.

**SALLY:** Of course, I'm horrified now when I look back at the pictures. We didn't know anything about biting a horse. We'd get a new bridle and we didn't know to make it darker instead of that horrible color. We didn't know anything. But Toby would be, "OK, here we go," and we'd win a lot.

**SUSIE:** We won a lot because we went in a lot.

### DOES YOUR TRAILER MATCH YOUR CAR?

**SALLY:** Daddy had a trailer and a station wagon. My mother was in charge of the clothes and the flowers. We always had carnations with blue around the edges.

**SUSIE:** We were princesses.

**SALLY:** Do you think?

So, Daddy always had this station wagon. We hated the station wagon and we finally talked him into getting a convertible. So, Daddy would get a new car every two years. He found this Plymouth convertible. It was cordovan brown. He'd never get a car in the winter because he didn't want to get salt on it, so he'd get it when the spring came. And then he would repaint the trailer to match the car. So, the first time we go he was so proud of his brown and white convertible and matching trailer, and Daddy put the top down. We said, "Oh my God, our hair." And we never put the top down again. Daddy was so mad at us. We ganged up on our parents. God bless them.

**SUSIE:** We were going to all these shows around Boston. I don't know how we found out about them.

**SALLY:** Janie knew.

### DESTINATION: THE NATIONAL

**SUSIE:** And we would go to The National. We stayed in the stalls. You would have a stall for your horse and then you'd have a stall for you. It was Janie, Sally and me. And we would have the horses and we would be all together. And my mother would decorate. We had little cots and sleeping bags. Our stalls were right across from the Parkers.

**SALLY:** The only black person who had ever shown a Morgan before that time was Gil Carr. He was such a showman. He would put on a show and was a very elegant man. When the Parkers came, they were show people. Four of Joe Parker's sons. Nice young men. And how can you not know Janie, Susie and me if you've been around us for five seconds? They would come around and say, "You can't go in the ring looking like that!" They would wipe down the horses. They would fix a bit. They would fix everything. They were changing the way everything looked in the Morgan show ring.

**SUSIE:** We were, thank you God, across the way. For years we were across from each other. Joe Parker had a wheel man named Uncle

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"Toby" and "Dandy" in front of their little two stall barn.

Joe. Daddy went to Joe Parker and asked if he gave Uncle Joe a little money would he keep an eye on us. Our parents would stay in a hotel, but we all slept in a stall.

**SALLY:** In those days, Bill Brooks was there with the Elm Hill horses. I dated Dana Harlow. Then there was Mrs. Bird—Esther Bird.

**SUSIE:** She had Green Mountain Twilight and Green Mtn By By Bird and Green Mt Song Bird. She loved Sally. She was the breeder of all those horses with the "Bird" in their names. Dana Harlow and Barry Caisse bought many of Twilight's offspring.

And there was Mrs. Ela of Townshend.

**STEPHEN:** What decade are we talking here?

**SALLY:** Late '50s, the '60s, through 1970.

**SUSIE:** When we first started going to the National, Doctor Orcutt and Ruth and Lyman Orcutt, they were professionals, but they had other things they did. Johnny Lydon was a real professional. What I thought was a real professional. And the Parkers were real professionals. They made their living with horses.

**SALLY:** And Fred and Jeannie Herrick.

What I'm trying to say... I remember a five and over stallion class at The National. That is back when there would be 25 studs. Johnny Lydon was in there and the Orcutts. And Bob Baker comes in with UVM Flash. Flash was imperfect but could put on a show. And Johnny Lydon passed the lead to whoever was helping him and said, "That's the way a horse ought to show." My point is that Johnny really believed in putting the show into a horse show. Johnny believed in a horse show at a time most of us were doing command classes.

**STEPHEN:** Did you have horses and riders that you looked up to?

**SALLY:** At the local shows it was always Marsha (Henry-Shepard).

**SUSIE:** It was more the guys. Like Dr. Orcutt. And the Parkers. And Joe Parker was in the ring. Those were the people where we'd say "Oh, my goodness. They are unbelievable."

**SALLY:** I thought Lyman and Ruth Orcutt were very nice people.

**SUSIE:** I loved Gay Dancer and Dr. Bob Orcutt.

**SALLY:** There's a picture of him riding Gay Dancer down the road. It's the most beautiful thing. I'll never forget that horse.

### THE FARM WITH NO FUTURE

**SUSIE:** Toby taught my father to drive. We would take Toby in pleasure driving classes. And my father said whoever it was down the street had an old sleigh in their barn. "I bet if we clean that up a little, you girls could drive it." Literally, they came up with the sleigh and the harness and the first snow we hitched up Toby. My parents went to church early and we drove them in the sleigh. By the time that church was over, they had plowed the roads and my parents had to walk home.

**SALLY:** Poor Toby.

**SUSIE:** He loved it.

**SALLY:** You don't know if he loved it.

**SUSIE:** He never put an ear back.

**STEPHEN:** Where did he live?

**SALLY:** We had him in the back barn.

**SUSIE:** That was when we moved.

*They produce a picture (see above) of a little barn that was in their then-new backyard. It has two horses standing in front of it.*

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**LEFT TO RIGHT:** Susie and Manitoba execute a jump in a trail class; Sally and Manitoba clear the big jump in Northampton's versatility class (photos © Freudy Photos).

**SALLY:** That's Toby and that's "Dandy"—Applevale Spartan, our second horse. Our park horse. He was by Pecos out of Tivoli.

**SUSIE:** In 1963 he was Reserve National Champion gelding and then we bought him. This is our little barn in the background.

**SALLY:** It had two stalls and Daddy took care of the geraniums. Mummy said she took care of the geraniums, but it was Daddy.

**SUSIE:** After our second National we said to our father, "This is not good, we can't go in park classes." We said, "We've got classes we can't go in. We need a park horse. We could ride him in equitation, too." And I said, "I could show in park harness," but my father said we didn't have a four wheeled buggy and I said, "Not a problem, we'll train him in a two." So, we talked my father into a park horse. My father said to my mother, "The girls want a park horse and they've picked him out—he's on the cover of the Morgan magazine."

So, Mummy came this time and said, "What if the girls don't like him?" We went up and he was taking a nap and Sally and I went in and Dandy had his head in our laps. It was all over.

My father called it "The Farm With No Future." Because we had only two geldings.

**STEPHEN:** Now there's an advertising slogan.

**SUSIE:** We did everything. We mucked the stalls. We fed (Daddy did the morning feed because we had to go to school). I never had a real date until I went to college.

**SALLY:** I graduated in 1965 and went to college. But I would come home in the summer and we would show every weekend.

### NO OBSTACLE TOO LARGE

A show and tell ensues of old photos. Among other things it shows Mr. Fish sitting in a lawn chair holding a horse, the sisters talk about

sitting on the cars between classes, eating sandwiches and feeding the horses beer and bologna. There is a mention of Dana Harlow who Sally was dating at the time and who did their hair. Sally is showing a picture of her jumping with Toby in a versatility class...

**SALLY:** I had pushed my derby off as I entered the ring. It interfered, and it sat a little high because Dana had just done my hair. The versatility class was big—like 25 horses—everybody was in it. We were not strong in the harness portion—I never understood what a martingale was for.

**SUSIE:** I drove better than you. You rode better, I drove better.

**SALLY:** OK, but we weren't strongly placed by the end of the driving. Then we rode, and we were better. Then they had the jumping portion. And if you notice in the picture someone did not measure. It was supposed to be 12 inches and was more like 36. So, we're all lined up, and I'm like 23<sup>rd</sup> to go. And the first 20 horses approached the jump and would not do it. I mean would not. And you get three tries and it's going on four hours and my mother's going "Oh, my God, Lincoln, look at that jump, and my kid doesn't have a helmet on." Nancy Caisse goes before me and she swears she's making it over the jump and on the third try she does, but she has no form at all, it's like a kangaroo jump. And then it's my turn and I've made up my mind that I'm jumping this son of a bitch. And Toby is the horse that would do anything. And I say, "Toby we've got to do this." And Mummy is going like, "Lincoln, she's going down." And I think in the whole group there were three horses that cleared it and Mummy's going, "Lincoln, Sally's going to get a ribbon," and I think I was third as I was not strong on the driving part as I mentioned.

**STEPHEN:** I've heard that the pleasure class used to take hours.

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**SUSIE:** Yes, because there were 40 exhibitors and each one had to do the obstacles after the rail work. Then you get off and you go back in to the trail class. And then you get off and you go back in to road hack. Most of us did that. Bonnie did, and Janie Needham did.

### HOW SISTERS BECAME SISTERS-IN-LAW

**SALLY:** So, I went to College in 1965.

**SUSIE:** And you told me I had to keep showing every weekend. She was in Boston and was telling me, "If I can't get to the shows you have to keep going and you have to show both of the horses in all the classes."

**SALLY:** Back in my day, you went to college, your first job was to find a husband. And the second job, and these were my mother's words, was to have a fall back profession in case you didn't find a husband and it was either a teacher or a nurse. So, Wheelock, where I went to college, was referred to as "Wheelock To Wedlock." If you were not engaged by Christmas of your senior year you might as well sign up for the nunnery because it was hopeless. I had dated a guy who nobody approved of, so I entered my junior year of college without a boyfriend. Not good. So, my roommate and I went out on a blind date with these guys from Nichols College. It did not go well. We got back, and my roommate Connie said, "I met a guy named Sam Mitchell. I'm going to write him a letter and tell him we'll come down next weekend and to get you a date." So, she writes this letter to Sam and we snuck out of the dorm in the middle of the night and mailed the letter and the next morning, when we sobered up, we were horrified that we had done this. Wednesday night, damned if he doesn't call, he says, "You're coming down, that's good, I got Sally a date. I can't promise anything. He's six-foot, four. He's a redhead.

And his father is president of Tulane." Well, I thought Tulane was a shirt company. So, we get down to Princeton which is a beautiful place. And we're sitting there, and Sam and Connie are together. In comes Geoffrey (Longenecker) and he's in a morning coat that he bought at a flea market in Paris. He had bright red hair. And he said, "Which one of you is mine?" And I go, "Oh crap!" He said, "c'mon." He would walk so fast that I would run to keep up. And that's how I met Geoffrey. Ups and downs later, we got engaged Christmas of my senior year! Geoffrey was in law school at Tulane University in New Orleans. We got married that summer after I graduated.

**SUSIE:** And when you went down to meet his family you met Stan.

**SALLY:** Right, I met Stan, Geoffrey's little brother. He was at Tulane also. And he was a cute guy.

**SUSIE:** And Sally came back and said, "Too bad people don't marry their brothers-in-law because you should marry Stan."

**SALLY:** Susie is dating a very nice fellow named Billy Fallon. Geoffrey and I get married and Stan is in the wedding and Susie is

in the wedding and that is how they met. Stan is dating someone else and Susie is dating Billy Fallon, but they really liked each other. So, Susie dates and Stan dates and they both marry other people.

**SUSIE:** We (*Susie and Stan*) both had terrible marriages and they didn't last long. No kids, no money, no anything.

**SALLY:** Stan was in the navy at this point. And I called Stan when I found out Susie was getting a divorce. Stan was dating a girl who had a child and the Longeneckers had gone up to meet her because there was going to be a proposal.

**SUSIE:** No, no, no, no. Stan had written his mother before I announced I was getting divorced and he said, "Yes mother, I want to get married again, but I need to find somebody who is just like Susie." So, he had a girlfriend who his parents absolutely hated, and she was with him over Christmas vacation. On New Year's Eve I called Sally and said, "I can't stand this anymore, I'm leaving."

And Sally said, "Get on a plane and come to New Orleans."

**SALLY:** I called Stan and said, "We cannot relate like you can to what Susie is going through. Can you please call Susie and help her through this time of trauma? She'll be at my house tonight."

**SUSIE:** So he called me. He was in Virginia and I was in New Orleans and we talked for like seven hours. And when he hung up, his girlfriend was packed and ready to go. She wasn't sticking around for this. A year later we got engaged and we got married.

### THE MAKING OF A MORGAN BREEDER

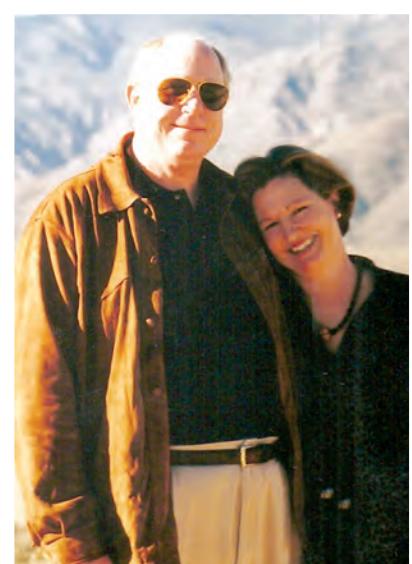
**SUSIE:** When Sally first got interested in horses and wanted to start having Morgans, my parents wanted her to get over it. But they ordered her a subscription to the Morgan magazine. We used to share a bedroom in Worcester. We had the whole upstairs. It

was the attic and they turned it into a great bedroom. And Sally would sit, as soon as the magazine came, and she read it cover to cover. She would get scissors and she would cut out pictures of stallions and pictures of mares and pin them up on the walls with thumbtacks. And then the next magazine would come. And after a year or two had gone by and she had bloodlines and who they should have bred the stallions to.

**SALLY:** I would cut out a picture of a stallion and a picture of a mare and then I'd find the most beautiful picture of a foal and say, "This is the offspring." I had a whole fantasy land of families of Morgans, which didn't have much to do with bloodlines, but had to do with my taste looking at these Morgans. I still kind of do that in my head.

**SUSIE:** And she comes up with weird names.

(*Horses bred by Saralin have had names like "Mine," "Brave," The Artisan," "The Couturier," "Personal Shopper," and "Gotti" to name a few.*)



Geoffrey and Sally Longenecker.

## THE FISH SISTERS ~ FOCUS ON NEW ENGLAND, THE HOMELAND

**SALLY:** I have a granddaughter Kyle, who you'll meet. Jane's daughter. From the time she was a tiny little person whatever book she'd be reading she'd be looking for horses. I didn't matter if it was the Neiman Marcus catalog. She's obsessed. But she is like me in that riding was good, but it wasn't any better than cleaning a stall or brushing a horse or doing a tail.

I feed at 3:30 every morning. My greatest pleasure is walking in that barn when it's so quiet and it's just me and the horses. And the Morgans all chat with me. And I feed, and I talk to everyone and I think if the people who own these horses had a video of this they'd think I'd absolutely lost my mind.

**SUSIE:** I will never get in the show ring again. When Stan got Torian (SLB Valedictorian GCH) he said, "You can drive him." And I said I never want to do it. But what I do is I spoil them.

**SALLY:** She's the worst client I have. (laughing) If she wasn't such good pay, she wouldn't be in the barn.

**SUSIE:** The only thing I missed about not having Toby and Dandy was being in the barn. I do love brushing their manes and tails and I love loving them. My big job of the day when I'm up here is I cut up a lot of carrots and I start at the front and everyone gets a carrot and a kiss.

**SALLY:** The horses recognize her car. She is forbidden to give "Buddy" (*Buddy is the yearling colt Ancient Oracle (No Contest x Boxford Retro Chic)*) carrots, you know how they get nippy.

**SALLY:** I think ultimately, people who are real Morgan people and I mean we'd own a Morgan if we had 54 cents, it's an addiction. And they're not vehicles to blue ribbons although blue ribbons are very nice. It's the relationship we have with the horse. It's possible to have relationships with Morgans and it's a two-way street. I am blessed to take care of a wonderful group of Thoroughbred mares, reproductively, and they are really nice horses. But they don't care to have a relationship with me. Now, they trust me, and I deliver their babies and they find peace in our relationship. But they don't prefer me over anyone else as long as you show up and do your job. To me, my experience with Saddlebreds is pretty much the same. They do not seek out a relationship. I think a lot of Morgans desire to have a relationship with us because we are the source of food. They are practical little horses. If I walk into a Thoroughbred pasture they all run the other way. I walk out to a pasture full of Morgans and they all run up to me. It's a different mindset.

### THE EVOLUTION OF SARALIN

**SALLY:** We got married in '69. We lived uptown in New Orleans. Geoffrey was finishing law school and I taught first grade. We didn't have a horse. That summer I got a \$400 raise. So I went and found a place to keep Dandy and we brought Dandy down to New Orleans. And Dandy died at 17 because he cribbed and got colic. Toby

lived to be 35. And Geoffrey said, "We have to get Sally another horse." And I say, "Geoffrey, you don't just get another horse." And he said, "Why not?" He got out *The Morgan Horse* magazine. He goes, "That's a nice one. Bonnie Sogoloff owns that horse. She's in Vermont, give her a call." So, I called and said, "Bonnie, my husband wants to buy Cedar's Snowflower." And Bonnie said, "Oh she'd be perfect for you." So, we flew up to Vermont and bought Snowflower who was in foal to UVM Watchman.

So, Snowflower comes and she has her foal—the first foal for Saralin Farm—Saralin Reveler. We used to go up to Massachusetts every summer for a month and stay with my family with the children. Geoffrey would come up for a week. It was a ritual every night that we'd sit out on the front lawn and have drinks and my father and Geoffrey would hit golf balls. Now, I have Snowflower and Reveler. And Daddy tells Geoffrey that, in my day, I was pretty good at golf. Geoffrey says, "Oh yeah." And I get up—now I had not had anything to drink—and I say, "Alright, you see that pine tree, if I can hit that pine tree with a golf ball in three swings will you buy me another horse?" And he said "yes," but what are the odds? I mean the pine tree was that big around and you could barely see it. So, the first swing I take takes half the lawn with it. I hadn't hit a golf ball in ten years and I wasn't any good to begin with. And the second one I hit, hit that son of a bitch, hit that pine tree, ricocheted back and almost took my mother's head off. So, my father goes "Oh, Oh." Geoffrey says "We Longenecker's pay our bets." So we went to New England and Stevie Davis had this picture of this horse Glenallens Daisy T who someone had given to the University. We went up to UVM and saw her and she was a cute bay filly in foal to UVM Flash and we bought her, so now we have four horses.

In addition to that, we had restored a landmark house on the edge of the garden district in New Orleans. Two streets back from this house was a pretty rough district. The kids would get their bicycles stolen periodically. And Georgiana, our housekeeper, was watching Geoffy (Geoffrey, Junior) one day and damned if this kid didn't come along and knock him off the bicycle and Georgiana says, "We can't live here anymore" and Geoffrey said "I agree. We need to move across the lake and have a horse farm." So we started looking for a horse farm. That was the first farm that was Saralin.

We name the first farm Mystic Morgans. And we named Reveler Mystic Reveler. Then the registry comes back and says you can't have that name. Somebody already has the name. And coming up with a name is desperate. And my mother says name it Saralin. And I said, "It's tacky to name a farm after yourself." My name is really Sara Lincoln after my father's name Lincoln. That's how the farm was named.

And it's been an interesting journey. ■



Susie and Stan Longenecker.