

≈ HISTORY LESSON ≈

# *Justin Morgan,* FACT AND FICTION

*Myths abound about the progenitor of our breed. In this amazing piece of research the author sifts through history to paint compelling portraits of Justin Morgan, man and horse.*

By Brenda L. Tippin

*Author's Note: When I first started in the Morgan breed many years ago, I accompanied my parents and sister on a trip to New England to search out our family history, which my Dad was then actively involved in tracing. The trip was comprised of going through old cemeteries interspersed with stopping at Morgan farms wherever I had opportunity to insist on it. Dad was intent on pursuing a lead of some distant elderly cousin he had corresponded with, who lived far back in a rural area of Connecticut, near Stonington, barely 60 miles from where the Justin Morgan horse first stood for stud in Hartford. We seemed almost to pass into another era of time, through hardwood New England forests and beyond telephone poles and power lines to a section of quiet old farmhouses more than 150 years old. The roads were dirt with not even a car in sight, and the eerie feeling of stepping back in time intensified as we drew up before an ancient old white*

*farmhouse which was supposed to be the residence we were seeking. There was, however, no answer to our knock at the door. Dad did not hesitate to go around back to the barn and I followed, but from that point my attention to genealogy was hopelessly distracted. As we rounded the corner of the house, we heard a welcoming neigh, and out of the barn into the adjoining enclosure, there trotted a little bay stallion, so obviously a Morgan there was no question about it. He was compact and muscular, perfectly balanced in every way, perhaps fifteen hands or a shade under, with an uncommonly beautiful head and neck. His mane and tail were exceedingly heavy and wavy. His tail reached to the ground, his mane hung to his knees, and his foretop hung to his nose. It was easy to believe I was looking at the original Justin Morgan horse, and though I never did learn his breeding, my quest for Morgan history had begun.*

**ABOVE:** Woodcut of the Justin Morgan, said to be a true representation from many who knew the horse in life (AMHA Volume I, taken from Linsley's *Morgan Horses*).

The origins of the first Justin Morgan Horse have often been described as something of a mystery. Some point to indications he was called a “Dutch Horse” and speculate that perhaps he had Friesian origins. Others suggest he was perhaps a genetic mutant. Many errors pertaining to the story have been copied by historians, unwittingly perpetuating the myth that the facts of his breeding are unknown.

In fact, the very full history and even the pedigree of the Justin Morgan Horse, or Figure, as he was called, are quite well documented. He was not, as many suppose, some unknown horse simply procured by Mr. Justin Morgan in payment for a debt who then just happened to go on to become a great sire. As we shall see, Mr. Morgan not only bred the horse, but bred his dam and his second dam, and knew exactly what he was doing.

### JUSTIN MORGAN THE MAN

Justin Morgan the man, was born on February 28, 1747, (or 1746 by some accounts as the old system of starting the New Year on March 25 prevailed until 1752) in West Springfield, Massachusetts, to Isaac Morgan and Thankful Day. Most of the families of that era were quite large and the Morgans were no exception—he was eighth of eleven children. His father, Isaac, was a son of Nathaniel Morgan, the last son of Miles Morgan, and only son by his second wife, Elizabeth Bliss. Miles Morgan was known as one of the pioneer settlers of Springfield, Massachusetts, arriving on the ship *Mary* which docked at Boston in 1636. Miles Morgan was considered a hero of King Phillip’s war in 1675 and a statue of him still stands in the Metro Center of Springfield’s Court Square. He married Prudence Gilbert in 1636, who had sailed with him on the ship *Mary*, and she bore him nine children before her death in 1660. In 1669, Miles married Elizabeth Bliss, who bore one son, Nathaniel, born in 1671. Nathaniel married Hannah Bird in Farmington, Connecticut in 1691. They had nine children, of which Isaac Morgan, born in 1708, was eighth. Isaac Morgan married Thankful Day in 1733. Nathaniel divided his lands between his sons with Isaac receiving his homestead lot of three acres and buildings, ten acres of hillside property, and two parcels of three acres each in his Chickopee field lot.

Little is known of Justin Morgan’s childhood. His mother died when he was not quite nine years old, and his father took a second wife but no further children were born. He received a four shilling inheritance in 1763, when he was 16 years old and his Grandfather Day died.

In 1771, when Justin was 24 years of age, his father Isaac sold him 22 acres and one third of his barn with privileges of going in and out for the sum of 30 pounds. Isaac’s father had given land to his sons, but Isaac required his sons to pay for the land and he made sure to retain rights of use until his death.

West Springfield, where the Morgans lived, was incorporated as a separate town in 1774. Justin was married to his first cousin, Martha Day, on December 8 of that year, when he was 27 and she 21. The tension with Great Britain was increasing and in 1775 the battles of Bunker Hill and Lexington attracted several volunteers from the Springfield area. Justin was not among them. His young wife by then was expecting their first child, Martha, who was born

on May 13 of 1776. Justin and his wife were formally admitted to the church at that time. In 1777 he purchased an additional seven acres of his father’s home lot from his brother William, together with another one-third of the barn, so that now he owned two-thirds of the barn. Various other land transactions would follow. There seemed to be definite purpose in all of this as by May of 1778, Justin Morgan had secured the beautiful and well-bred four-year-old stallion *Sportsman*, son of *Arabian Ranger*. He began to make known his activities in horse breeding by purchasing ads in the *Connecticut Courant*—the longest running paper in American history, first established in 1764 and still in operation. At the time Justin Morgan began to place his ads, the *Connecticut Courant* also had the distinction of being managed by one of the first female publishers in the United States, Hannah Watson, who took over the paper in 1777 when her husband died.

Justin Morgan, through his life, clearly believed in advertising his horses. His ad for *Sportsman* in the *Connecticut Courant* was as follows:

“*Sportsman*, the dapple grey horse, will cover this season at Justin Morgan’s stable in West Springfield, Mass, at eight dollars the season and four the single leap...His excellence for beauty, strength, saddle, harness, and fine colts are so well known that there needs no further description.” He adds that “it is the same horse that covered at Colchester last season.”

*Connecticut Courant*, May 18, 1778.

The reference to Justin Morgan’s “stable” certainly implies he kept more than one horse. As was later determined, he did have at least one mare of his own whom he bred to *Sportsman* that season, and the resulting filly from that cross, a chestnut, was destined to be the granddam of the Justin Morgan horse.

In 1779, a second daughter, Emily, was born on July 4<sup>th</sup>, and a third daughter, Nancy, was born in 1781. During 1781 and 1782, Justin Morgan was licensed to sell retail liquors from his house, but did not keep a tavern as thought by some.

In those days of lean resources, debts were often settled with payments of grain, liquors, flax, or other commodities. Court cases to settle disputes were common and Justin Morgan had his share of them. One particularly noteworthy case occurred in 1783 when Justin Morgan brought action against Isaac Marsh of Stockbridge, Massachusetts. Marsh had signed a promissory note in August of 1782 to pay twenty-five pounds three shillings ten pence worth of good merchantable wheat flour at fifteen shillings, the hundred-weight to be delivered at his store in Stockbridge by the first of January, 1783. According to Morgan’s claim, Marsh did not and would not deliver the flour, although Morgan had hired two teams from West Springfield at a cost of six pounds, and drove 46 miles to Stockbridge in order to pick up the flour and then haul it to Boston for sale.

Bear in mind that according to D. C. Linsley in his fine work, *Morgan Horses*, and many others who copied him, including Joseph Battell, author of the *Morgan Register*—Justin Morgan, the man, was “frail and feeble of health, unable to do any hard work after he was twenty years old, and supported himself mainly



**LEFT TO RIGHT:** D. C. Linsley, author of *Morgan Horses*, the first comprehensive book on Morgans, published in 1857, was based on his prize winning essay on the Morgan horse (AMHA Registry Volume 1); A page of Montgomery, one of Justin Morgan's most famous tunes.

by means of his singing schools.” This is not exactly an accurate picture, as was demonstrated by the late Betty Bandel (1912-2008) in her excellent book, *Sing the Lord's Song in a Strange Land*, on the life of Justin Morgan. Ms. Bandel notes that in his very first land transaction, Justin Morgan described himself as “husbandman,” and in all other records through the rest of his life, listed himself as a “yeoman,” a term that placed between the status of husbandman and gentleman farmer. A yeoman farmer was one who owned the land and worked it themselves without hiring others to do most of the manual labor as a gentleman farmer did.

The only evidence that Morgan taught music or any other subject lies in the fact that at his death he had a library of fifteen books, including such works as *Dilworth's Arithmetick*, *Scotts Lessons*, *Salmon's Geography*, *Golden Treasury Book*, *2d Part Grammatical Institute*, *Art of Writing & Copper Plates*, and *Benham's Singing Book*—the latter including eight of his own musical compositions. These certainly suggest the books of a teacher, particularly in an era when most men far wealthier possessed a library of only one book. However, Morgan, despite a clear habit of advertising his stallions, never advertised his singing schools. There exists no record of his ever being hired or paid to be a teacher and, as Betty Bandel mentions, one might even doubt he was ever a singing master except for a detailed account as a teacher of singing in Wilbraham when he was in his early twenties.

Consider that at the time of his dispute with Isaac Marsh, he was 35 years of age. He hired four horses and drove them 46 miles to Stockbridge in the dead of winter, expecting to load over a ton and a half of flour onto his sleigh or wagon. From there he was to turn around and drive his load 130 miles in the opposite direction to Boston to sell the flour in evident hopes of making a profit—and then drive another 92 miles back before he could come home again. This would be a tedious enough undertaking even today for a fit and healthy man driving a warm heated truck—let

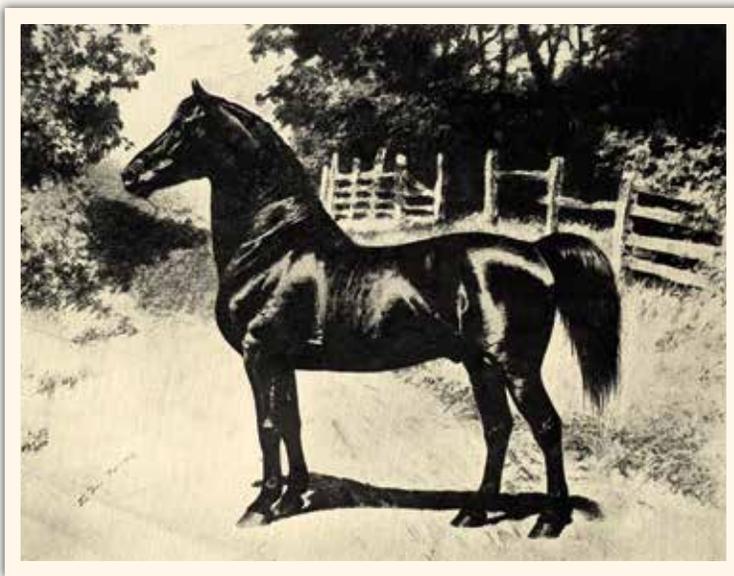
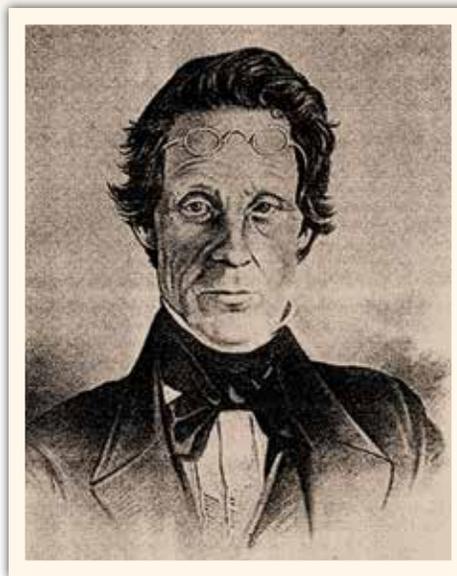
alone anyone driving a team of horses in the open air during the frigid winter. He could have stopped at his home in Springfield on the way from Stockbridge before going on to Boston, but the remaining trip would have taken at least all day, especially at that season, and then he would have to unload the ton and a half of flour when he got there. Not to mention the problem of being sure to keep it dry during the trip. It was hardly a job for anyone who was supposed to have been “frail and feeble” for the past 15 years, but evidently these were the sorts of deals Justin Morgan relied on to support his family during the lean winter months when there were no cash crops. It was evident he thought his main occupation to be “yeoman farmer,” and teaching music and other subjects was evidently something he did more for enjoyment and perhaps earning a small amount, than any great expectation that it would be his primary source of income. Likewise, his other activities, such as breeding horses or selling liquor, were simply supplementary side businesses to bring in a little extra cash now and then.

Interestingly, Justin Morgan apparently placed no advertisements for other stallions until the spring of 1783, at which time he at least still owned a five-year-old chestnut daughter of Sportsman—and this time coincided with his complaint against Isaac Marsh. Such a mare would have been considered valuable, whoever her dam was.

Justin Morgan advertised Diamond in the *Massachusetts Gazette* of April 29, 1783, as follows:

“Will cover this season at the stable of Mr. Justin Morgan, in West Springfield, the horse called Diamond, who sprung from a good mare and from the horse formerly owned by Mr. Church of Springfield.”

His court case won him 37 pounds plus costs the following September when Marsh failed to appear. In the meantime, he did breed the Sportsman daughter to Diamond, obtaining another



LEFT TO RIGHT: Justin Morgan, Jr., son of Justin Morgan, believed to resemble his father (Vermont Historical Society); Justin Morgan, from original drawing by George Ford Morris.

filly, foaled in 1784, who became the dam of the Justin Morgan Horse. Sadly, Emily, the second child of Justin and Martha Morgan, died in January of that year when she was only a little girl of four years old. A fourth daughter, born February 16, a short time after the child's death was named Emily in honor of her sister as was then the custom.

Justin Morgan kept no stallion in 1784, but acquired True Briton the next season, in 1785. The Diamond filly would have been only a yearling. Did he breed her dam to True Briton for a 1786 foal? If so, perhaps she did not settle or maybe he found a buyer for the foal.

A boy, the only son, Justin Jr. was born March 15, 1786. This joy was followed just two months later by the death of the third child, Nancy, who died at five years of age on May 17, 1786.

That must have been a difficult year, and Justin Morgan did not advertise any more stallions while he lived in West Springfield. It is not known whether he ever bred a foal from the season he kept True Briton. Although D. C. Linsley had conjectured Justin Morgan was not in the business of breeding horses, that was clearly not the case, as his pattern up to that point had been to breed his mares and retain the daughters for further breeding to develop the traits or bloodlines he desired. What we do know is that his relative, John Morgan, kept True Briton the seasons of 1788 and 1789. Justin Morgan, knowing his intent to move shortly to Randolph, deliberately took the Diamond daughter, having himself bred both her and her dam, bred her to True Briton—and then left her behind. Possibly he sold the mare in foal as he apparently took no horses with him when he moved to Randolph in 1788.

Justin Morgan sold the last of his West Springfield property in March, 1788, and was said to have moved his family to Vermont on an ox sled. His oldest daughter, Martha, would have been 12. He had lost two children, Emily the second was four years old, Justin Jr. was two, and his wife was heavily pregnant with the next child, Nancy the second, born after they arrived in Vermont, on

September 3, 1788.

Meanwhile, whether he had sold the Wildair mare by Diamond whom he had bred to True Briton or what exactly the arrangement was is not clear, but he naturally would have maintained an interest in the mare and her resulting foal. Perhaps he had sold the mare intending to gain money for his household in Vermont and the buyer never sent the payment as promised. Or perhaps the “debt” he intended to collect all along was the colt from this breeding, rather than the cash.

### JUSTIN MORGAN THE HORSE, OR “FIGURE”

The Justin Morgan Horse was a bay, varying from a deep rich shade to a darker color. He was of an unusually compact and muscular form, with a well-laid back shoulder that tied into prominent withers and supported an upright neck and head carriage. His back was short with powerful well-rounded hindquarters and strong loins. His ribs were well sprung giving him a deep body and chest with plenty of room for heart and lungs. The limbs of the Morgan horse were perfect and free from any blemish, even up to his old age until he received the kick that ended his long life. His body was so deep and muscular that in profile, the legs would appear short, although in reality it was simply that he was more compact and powerfully built.

### EYEWITNESS ACCOUNTS

John Woodbury, (owner of Woodbury Morgan, one of the most famous sons of the Justin Morgan Horse) described the original Justin Morgan in Volume I of the *Morgan Register* as follows:

“The original Morgan, as I best recollect, was in weight not more than one thousand pounds, and maybe one hundred pounds less; height, about same as Backman horse\* (\*the Backman horse referred to was 15.2 hands); short back, thick shoulder and broad chest; heavy stifle, and, I think, longer body and clear from flesh, with large cords and

muscles: head rather small, wide between eyes, which were full and hazel; extremely large, extended nostrils; jet black flowing mane and tail; dark bay; very fast for both racing and trotting. I once saw him trot at Randolph and win some fifty dollars, matched against a large English horse, called King William, and whipped him easily.”

Another who knew the horse well, Charles Lamb, described him as a sharp going horse at any gait, and said, “The color of the old Justin Morgan is hard to describe, but I will call him a brown bay, dappled when in condition for service, with slightly mealy nose.”

Mr. Solomon Yurann of West Randolph, born there in 1801, described the Justin Morgan Horse as, “bay with mane and tail black and very long; of fair height, fifteen hands or a little less; eyes very prominent; flat legs, big cords, good feet; a horse that was right every way under the heavens and would go very fast; an awful good horse.”

Many were the witnesses encountered both by D. C. Linsley and Joseph Battell who recalled riding or driving the Justin Morgan Horse in their youth, both men and women, and his feats at drawing contests and running and trotting races were repeatedly confirmed. One of the most compelling accounts of the horse’s strength is told by Linsley, an eye-witness account of Nathan Nye:

“At the time Evans had this horse, a small tavern, a gristmill and a sawmill were in operation on the branch of the White River in Randolph, and at this place the strength of men and horses in that settlement were generally tested. ‘On one occasion (says Nye) I went to those mills, where I spent most of a day, and during that time many trials were had, for a small wager, to draw a certain pine log which lay some ten rods away from the sawmill. Some horses were hitched to it that would weigh twelve hundred pounds, but not one of them could move it its length. About dusk, Evans came down from his logging field, which was nearby, and I told him the particulars of the drawing match. Evans requested me to show him the log, which I did; he then ran back to the tavern and challenged the company to bet a gallon of rum that he could not draw the log fairly on to the logway, at three pulls with his colt. The challenge was promptly accepted, and each having ‘taken a glass,’ the whole company went down to the spot. Arriving on the ground, Evans says: ‘I am ashamed to hitch my horse to a little log like that, but if three of you will get on and ride, if I don’t draw it, I will forfeit the rum.’ Accordingly, three of those least able to stand were placed upon the log. I was present with a lantern and cautioned those on the log to look out for their legs, as I had seen the horse draw before, and knew something had got to come. At the word of command, the horse started log and men, and went more than half the distance before stopping. At the next pull, he landed his load at the spot agreed upon, to the astonishment of all present.”

In Volume III of Battell’s *American Stallion Register*, he relates a story told by Charles Morgan, Esq., of Rochester, Vermont, a son of Justin Morgan, Jr., and grandson of Justin Morgan who brought

the horse to Randolph:

“I have often heard my father say that the Morgan horse was first so called on June Training Day of his second season of stud service, when he was five years old. He did not have much patronage the first year. All stock horses were out for show at June Training; other owners laughed at Morgan’s Duckleg, as they called him, until Mr. Morgan finally offered to bet that his horse could out-run, out-trot, out-walk, or out-draw any other stock horse present. The bet was taken and they chose running, not thinking that the short legged horse could run. They went out on the road toward East Randolph, and ran into the village of Randolph Center, to a mark near the Meeting-house. Morgan rode his horse far in advance of the rest, and the crowd cheered and shouted, ‘Hurrah for the Morgan Horse!’ Morgan offered to let his opponents try any of the other tests (trotting, walking, or drawing), but they declined. The horse was always afterwards known as The Morgan Horse; he became popular and had plenty of patronage after that exhibition.”

### BREEDING

Many theories concerning the breeding of the Justin Morgan Horse were circulated and published in the *Albany Cultivator* and other journals of the day as early as 1841, and in fact it became a topic of controversy that was hotly debated for more than a hundred years.

Justin Morgan’s own son, Justin Morgan Jr., who was just 12 years old when his father died, tried to relate the facts, but was mistaken in thinking the horse was foaled in 1792, an error that was copied by Linsley and many others. Stumbling over this date, some critics, such as O. W. Cook, wrote lengthy diatribes attempting to demolish the whole pedigree rather than consider a possible error in dates.

In Volume I of the *Morgan Horse Register*, published in 1894, Joseph Battell meticulously sifted these facts by verifying old stallion advertisements, and tax and ownership records. In Chapter 2 he writes, “This distinguished animal was bred by Justin Morgan, whose name he bore and made famous. He was foaled in 1789. His dam was owned by Mr. Morgan when the colt was begotten, but it does not appear whether he continued to own her or not when the colt was foaled.” Battell lists the Justin Morgan horse as sired by True Briton, dam by Diamond, and second dam by Sportsman, extending the pedigree in great detail in Volume I. This is confirmed by the testimony of Justin Morgan Jr., John Morgan, and others who had the means to know. In a letter to the *National Livestock Journal*, Vol. 12, 1881, additional interesting details were published by C. L. Bristol. Mr. Bristol had obtained full copies of the letters written by John Morgan, which not only verified the breeding of the horse as given, but further stated that John Morgan had returned to Springfield from his home in Lima, New York, where he had moved, and was there for some months at the time when Justin Morgan made his trip back to Springfield. He saw and had opportunity to examine the young stallion whom Justin Morgan told him he was going to keep for stud. Mr. Bristol also published a letter from E. K. Whitcomb, whose father

was a member of the State Legislature in Stockbridge, Vermont, and personally acquainted with Squire Morgan and the original Morgan horse, and had often heard his breeding stated directly from Squire Morgan himself.

### TRUE BRITON, SIRE OF JUSTIN MORGAN

True Briton, the sire of the Justin Morgan Horse also had a fascinating history which was well documented. His breeding was always given at the time he stood for service as by imported Traveller (Morton's), or the Traveller kept in New Jersey, and out of "DeLancey's imported racer." Battell's careful research determined this must have been Lloyd's Traveller, (Morton's Traveller x Jenny Cameron by Quiet Cuddy), and out of the mare Betty Leeds, who was a daughter of Babraham by the Godolphin Arabian and out of a mare by Bolton Starling, second dam by the Godolphin Arabian. In Volume II of the *Morgan Register*, Battell published a letter from Edward F. DeLancey, grand-nephew of Colonel James DeLancey from whom the horse was stolen, clarifying many of those details. The DeLancey well-known for importing many famous thoroughbreds from 1760-1775 was Captain James DeLancey. His importations included the stallion Wildair, who figures prominently in the pedigree of the Justin Morgan Horse.

Captain DeLancey inherited his father's farm, the great Bowery estate of 230 acres, where he laid out a half mile track and there kept and trained his horses until the Revolution when he disposed of his stock and returned to England. Captain DeLancey presented True Briton to his uncle, Brigadier General Oliver DeLancey, for his personal use in 1772 or 1773. General DeLancey also returned to England around the time of the Revolution and, in 1775 or 1776, gave the horse to his other nephew James, who was Colonel of the Westchester Light Brigade and a first cousin to Captain James. Colonel James DeLancey was a skilled horseman and, from that time, used True Briton in all his military operations until the horse was stolen in October 1780 and taken to Connecticut. Mr. Edward DeLancey went on to explain that Colonel James DeLancey was in the habit of visiting his widowed mother, whose home Rosehill stood overlooking the river not far from his camp at King's Bridge. This is now the site of the Bronx Park and Zoological Gardens of New York City. One day he tied True Briton in the shade near the house and had been inside for some time when he heard hoofbeats and looking out, saw a man riding his horse rapidly toward the bridge, and they tried in vain to catch him but True Briton's speed and bottom were too great. Numerous accounts were told of this incident, some referring to the thief as a drummer, and some stating his name was Smith. All agreed the horse was taken to Connecticut.

An unusual side-note to this story appeared in the *New England Farmer* for May 1856. A Mr. Howard said he went to visit at Morrisiana and interviewed an aged man by the name of Andrew Corsa. (This was the same Andrew Corsa referred to in Volume I of the *Morgan Register* and other places, who told the story of having seen Colonel DeLancey repeatedly jump True Briton over a five rail fence for the amusement of bystanders.) Corsa told Mr. Howard that True Briton had been stolen by a man by the name of Smith, of Hartford, Connecticut. After peace was declared, Smith paid a visit to Colonel DeLancey who received him cordially and invited him

to breakfast. While he was at breakfast, Colonel DeLancey went out to the barn and got a rope. He then ordered his slaves (for slavery then still existed in New York) to go in the house and put the rope around Smith's neck and hang him and it was done. Mr. Howard asserted that the facts of this story were reliable and believed this same True Briton was certainly the sire of the Justin Morgan Horse.

Justin Morgan advertised True Briton in the *Hampshire Herald* (Hampshire, Massachusetts) of May 3, 1785, as follows:

"The elegant, full-blooded horse, called the Beautiful Bay, will cover this season at Justin Morgan's stables, in West Springfield, at twenty shillings the season, ten shillings the leap, in cash or produce by the first day of January next, and allowance for cash in hand. Said horse is fifteen hands, takes his name from his shape and color, which is as beautiful perhaps as any horse in the thirteen States: trots and canters exceedingly light; is famous for getting fine colts, and very sure. West Springfield, April 25."

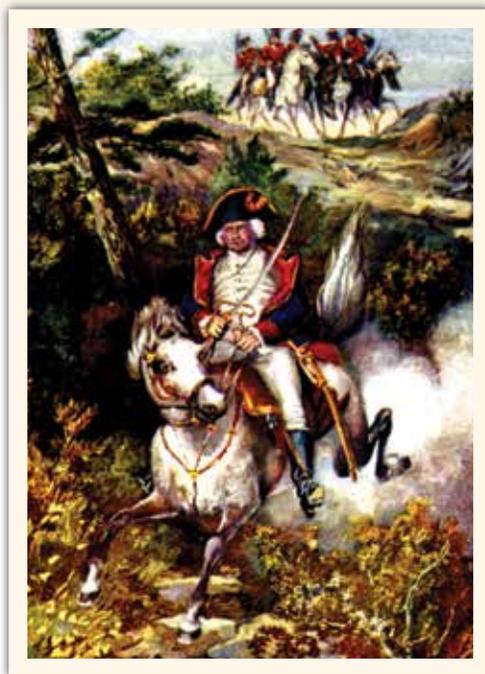
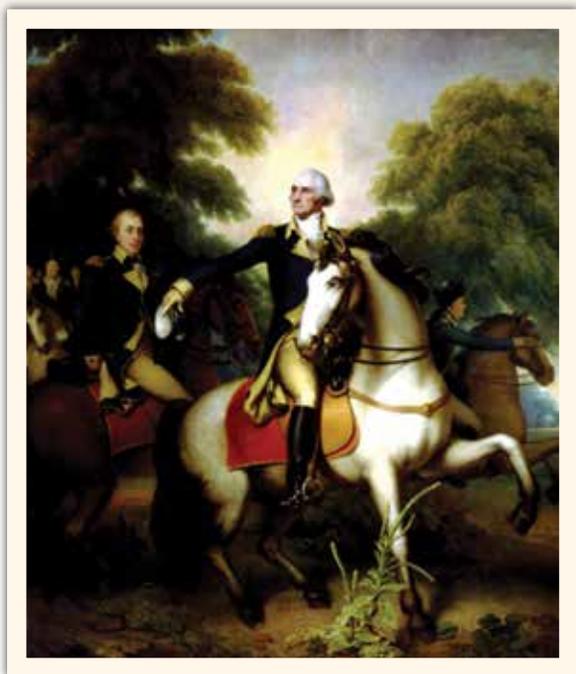
John Morgan, a distant relative of Justin Morgan, stated that he kept True Briton for two seasons, and had him the season that the Justin Morgan Horse was sired. He was a son of Captain John Morgan, born in Springfield, Massachusetts, in 1762, and lived there until the spring of 1791 when he moved to Lima, New York. In his first ad for True Briton, placed in the *Hampshire Chronicle*, he notes, "It is the same horse that was kept three seasons ago by Mr. Justin Morgan, at West Springfield, and got so many fine colts in that, this, and the neighboring towns."

### DIAMOND, SIRE OF JUSTIN MORGAN'S DAM

Diamond was bred in East Hartford, Connecticut, and foaled about 1779. He was sired by the noted horse Church's Wildair, a son of the famous Wildair imported by Captain James DeLancey. Church's Wildair was considered to be one of the best sires in New England. Imported Wildair was foaled in 1753 and got by Cade, a son of the Godolphin Arabian, and his dam by Steady, a son of Flying Childers by the Darley Arabian. He was imported in 1764. Wildair's stock was so highly regarded that he was sent back to England in 1773 when he was 20 years old. The dam of Church's Wildair, owned by Captain Samuel Burt of Springfield, Massachusetts, was also imported, and a daughter of imported Wildair. John Morgan, who knew these horses well, described the dam of Justin Morgan as "of the Wildair breed, of middling size, with a heavy chest, of a very light bay color, with a bushy mane and tail, the hair on the legs rather long; and a smooth, handsome traveler. She was sired by Diamond, a thick, heavy horse of about middling size, with a thick, heavy mane and tail, hairy legs, and a smooth traveler. Diamond was kept by Justin Morgan himself, at the time the dam of the Justin Morgan Horse was sired." Diamond was a bright red bay, while his daughter, known as "The Wildair Mare," was a light shade with mane and tail tending to more of a brownish color.

### SPORTSMAN, BY ARABIAN RANGER, SIRE OF 2D DAM

Little is said about the chestnut daughter of Sportsman who became the granddam of the Justin Morgan Horse. However, considering



**LEFT TO RIGHT:** Washington Before Yorktown on Blueskin by Arabian Ranger, by Rembrandt Peale, 1822. This horse was also half-brother to Sportsman, sire of Justin Morgan's second dam (public domain); General Israel Putnam escaping the British on a full brother to Washington's horse, also a half-brother to Sportsman (Gutenberg Project, public domain).

the history of her sire, and the continued effort of Justin Morgan to breed her to a top stallion, he must have thought highly of her. Remarkable stories had a way of traveling quickly even in those days. While there is no mention that Justin Morgan heard of it, the story of the beautiful horse Arabian Ranger landing in nearby Connecticut in 1766, and survived in spite of having broken three of his legs, must have been told. This event, which occurred when Justin Morgan was nineteen years old, would be something that anyone with an affinity for horses might likely remember.

The history of Arabian Ranger was as follows: "For some very important service rendered by the commander of a British Frigate to the son of the Emperor of Morocco, the Emperor presented this horse (by far the most valuable of his whole stud) to the captain, who shipped him on board the Frigate with the sanguine expectation of obtaining a great price for him, if safely landed in England. Either in obedience to orders or some other cause, the Frigate called at one of the West India Islands, where, being obliged to remain some time, the Captain in compassion to the horse, landed him for the purpose of giving him exercise. No convenient (securely enclosed) place could be obtained but a large lumber yard, into which the horse was turned loose. Delighted and playful as a kitten, his liberty soon proved fatal to him. He ascended one of the piles, from which and with it, he fell and broke three of his legs. At this time in the same harbor, the English Captain met with an old acquaintance from our now Eastern States. To him he offered the horse, as an animal of inestimable value, could he be cured. The Eastern captain gladly accepted of the horse, and knowing he must be detained a considerable time in the island before he could dispose of his assorted cargo, got the horse on board his own vessel, secured him in slings, and very carefully set and bound up

his broken legs. It matters not how long he remained in the harbor, or if quite cured before he arrived on our shore; but he did arrive, and he must certainly have covered mares several seasons before he was noticed as first mentioned. He was landed in Connecticut in 1766, then four years of age. His stock was very valuable, and many capital race horses and brood mares descended from him. In Connecticut he was called Ranger." From Edgar's *American Race Turf Register and Stud Book*, 1833.

About three or four years after Sportsman was foaled in 1774, the excellence of the offspring of Arabian Ranger attracted the attention of General George Washington, as many of the officers were mounted on these horses and he wanted one. A Captain Lindsay was sent to investigate and authorized to purchase the horse and bring him back to Virginia if indeed his stock equaled his reputation and he could be bought. This he did. George Washington bred several horses from Arabian Ranger who was thereafter known as Lindsay's Arabian. Among these were Blueskin, the beautiful gray charger who most often appears with Washington in portraits.

Spencer Borden, in his book *The Arab Horse*, 1906, notes this horse was a beautiful dapple grey, 15 hands, and must have been a weight carrier as Washington was 6' 3". He adds that the horse General Israel Putnam rode in a remarkable escape from the British in which he spurred the horse to a tortuous descent down a flight of 100 stone steps and eluded his captors who were unable to follow, was a full brother of Washington's grey charger. General Putnam was also a heavy man, and 61 years old when he made this ride, but his sure-footed horse carried him to safety without missing a step.

Washington also bred Magnolia, a racer who carried many of the same lines as the Justin Morgan Horse. Magnolia was a chestnut

out of a mare by Othello tracing to Curwen's Bay Barb, 2d dam mare by Morton's Traveler, and 3d dam Selima by Godolphin Arabian.

### THE MISSING LINK—THE DUTCH CONNECTION

Who was this mare, the 3<sup>rd</sup> dam of the original Morgan horse which Justin Morgan initially bred to Sportsman? According to John Dimon in his book *American Horses and Horse Breeding*, published in 1895, the 3<sup>rd</sup> dam was a Dutch mare brought over by Dutch Settlers of the Mohawk Valley. This is the only mention anywhere which has come to light about this mare, and the source is credible. John Dimon was a noted horseman of his day, who owned and bred many offspring of Black Hawk Morgan and, in 1855 when a young man of 27 years, he was unanimously appointed a judge of horses in the stallion class at the United States Agricultural Society's Fair, held in Boston, Massachusetts, where Ethan Allen and many other noted stallions of that day were exhibited. His book represented more than 60 years of his life's history and nearly 30 years of actual research.

Much confusion has arisen over the fact that Justin Morgan Jr. and others stated that Justin Morgan called his horse a "Dutch Horse." Some have thought perhaps there was a connection to the Friesian horse. A close examination, however, will reveal that the Friesian horse of today has a very different conformation than the Morgan. He may call to mind a similarity due to his upright head carriage, and heavy mane and tail. Yet, the Friesian lacks the depth of body and proportionately shorter legs of the Morgan, and his action is also different.

In fact, the records show that the early horses of the colonists sent over from England were little more than thirteen hands. The Dutch colonists had at that time a horse that was quite different from the heavier draft horse which many thought of as Dutch. The heavier horses were from Flanders, but the term "Dutch Horse" at that time had a different connotation, and referred to a smaller, but muscular horse with heavy mane and tail, about fifteen hands tall, and known as a "hart-drawer" or "fast-trotter." At that time, these were considered more valuable than the English horses as they were able to both serve as an all-purpose family horse as well as do farm work.

The Dutch settled in New York after Hudson's discoveries in 1609, and brought their horses with them, and continued to bring them until they were ousted by the English in 1664. Dutch horses were shipped to the early settlements in Massachusetts as well as the New York colonies, and were evidently highly prized. These horses were from Friesland or the northern part of Holland as were the Friesian horses, but the Friesian originated from an attempt to develop a lighter horse from the heavy war horse of the Middle Ages, and the Friesian stud book was not established until 1879. Meanwhile, the smaller Dutch horse, or "hart-drawer", was the horse most frequently imported by the Dutch settlers, and these were reputed to have a high concentration of Barb blood. This is significant as both the Godolphin Arabian (grandsire of Wildair) and Arabian Ranger or Lindsay's Arabian (sire of Sportsman) were actually believed to be Barbs. According to Professor William Ridgeway of Cambridge, in his work *The Origin and Influence of the Thoroughbred*, the term "Flemish" or "Flanders" horses referred to the heavier horses of the low countries and was distinct from the term "Dutch Horse" which referred to the lighter, more active

horses of the north part of Holland, and was synonymous at that time with the term "Friesland" or "hart-drawer." John Lawrence, in his *History and Delineation of the Horse*, states these original Dutch Horses, before Friesians, were smaller, the size of Hackneys, and described as "well-shaped, speedy, and able to run a long course."

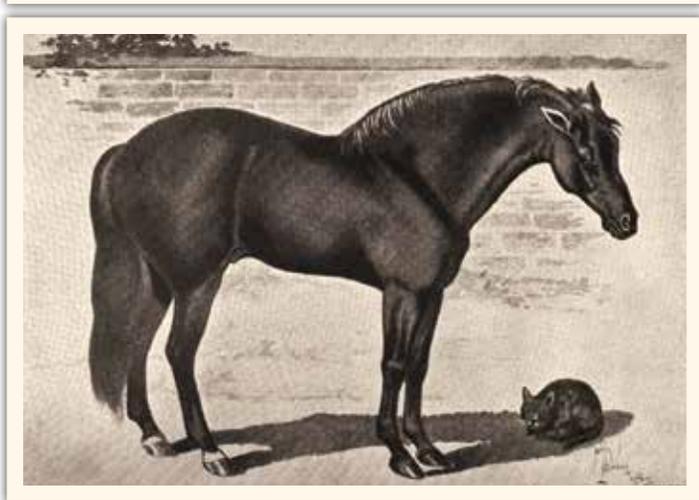
The Dutch colonists were singular in that they believed in feeding their horses grain and specifically raised it for this purpose, a practice not adopted by most New England horse breeders until many decades later. The Dutch Horses also had great bottom and muscular development. In going from the Schoharie and Mohawk valleys to and from Albany some 250 years ago, the Dutch were in the habit of running their horses up a good share of every hill. Starting the team as they neared it, they dashed on at a furious rate, thus gaining an impetus which carried them nearly to the top of the hill, arriving at which they often halted to rest or feed. So fond were the Dutch of their horses that it was often said, "A Dutchman thinks more of his horse than of his wife."

By 1646 the colonists were estimated to have about 200 horses, but these multiplied rapidly and they began exporting them within 40 years. The first racing in North America was established by Governor Richard Nichols at Hempstead Plains in 1665 on the western edge of what is now the Belmont Park Thoroughbred race course. These races were mostly comprised of Dutch Horses and attended by the Dutch colonists who were quite enthusiastic in this sport. There were matches between two or three horses at usually a distance of three to four miles and the horse had to participate in at least two heats to win. Note that the first stallion considered to be a Thoroughbred was Bulle Rock imported in 1730, and it was not until nearly 100 years after these first races that Thoroughbreds began to be imported in any significant numbers. Further, by the mid-1700s, and some forty years before Messenger (credited with being the father of all trotters and pacers), trotting and pacing races were so common that both Maryland and New Jersey enacted laws prohibiting them. Most of the pacing horses at that time were of the Narragansett breed of Rhode Island, which survived only about one hundred years, while the trotters were Dutch Horses.

According to John Dimon, it was one of these Dutch mares which was the original mare owned by Justin Morgan that became the third dam of the Morgan horse. And given that the dam of Diamond was untraced and described simply by Justin Morgan as, "a good mare," and given the descriptions of Diamond and the Wildair mare, very likely this mare or her dam also carried some of this Dutch blood. This would certainly explain why the Morgan horse was sometimes called a Dutch Horse, and would also explain why, this particular strain of Dutch blood which carried a strong element of Barb far back in the pedigree, would produce such an unusually prepotent cross when bred to horses that had it close in the pedigree.

### ORIGINS—THOROUGHbred ANCESTRY

As may be seen, the Justin Morgan horse was strongly bred with close crosses to the same Oriental horses which founded the Thoroughbred. He traces in direct sireline in six generations to the Byerley Turk, who was Captain Byerley's charger in the wars of 1689. Captain Byerley brought him to England that year when William and Mary ascended the throne. The Byerley sire line, which



**TOP TO BOTTOM:** Byerley Turk by John Wooton, one of the three founders of the Thoroughbred. The Justin Morgan horse traces his direct sireline to him in six generations and the Morgan is now the main representative of this family (Wikimedia Commons); The Darley Arabian by John Wooton, the main surviving sireline of the three founding Thoroughbred sires. The Justin Morgan horse has several crosses to the Darley through Diamond, sire of his dam (Wikimedia Commons); The Godolphin Arabian, by Murrier, a true portrait from life. Last of the three founding Thoroughbred sires and bears a strong influence on the Justin Morgan horse on both his sire and dam's side (*The Horse of America* by Wallace).

was dominant for nearly 200 years, produced Diomed, first winner of the Epsom Derby in 1780. He also traces to the Byerley Turk in six generations and his blood was often crossed into the early Morgans, especially through his sons Sir Archy and Duroc, and grandson American Eclipse. The great stallion Lexington, foaled in 1850, was the greatest four mile racer in history, setting a record for that distance of 7 minutes, 19 <sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub> seconds. He became blind and was thereafter called the Blind Hero of Woodburn, remarkably leading the sire list for 14 consecutive years. Among Thoroughbreds, the Byerley sireline is represented by only a handful of sires and is nearly extinct in North America, leaving the Morgan horse as the primary representative of this famous family.

The Darley Arabian was the property of Mr. Darley of Buttercramb and was brought into England about 1705 by his brother. This line became famous through the legendary racehorse Eclipse, who was so named because he was foaled during the solar eclipse of April 1, 1764. Eclipse traced directly to the Darley Arabian in four generations and, on his dam's side, was a great-grandson of the Godolphin Arabian. His owner, Captain O'Kelly, proclaimed he could predict the entire order of finish of the race and won his bet when Eclipse distanced the field and the Captain was found to have written on a slip of paper, "Eclipse first, the rest nowhere!" He was undefeated in 18 races, and the vast majority of Thoroughbreds today trace their sireline to the Darley Arabian through him. The Justin Morgan Horse carries several crosses to the Darley Arabian through Diamond. Numerous crosses to Eclipse come back into the Morgan line through a number of sources, including through the dam of the U.S. Government Farm foundation stallion, General Gates. Other important Oriental horses who figured strongly in the pedigree of the Justin Morgan horse as well as the best early Thoroughbreds of the day include Bloody Buttocks, D'Arcy's Yellow Turk, D'Arcy's White Turk, Place's White Turk, Old Bald Peg, Selaby Turk, White Legged Lowther Barb, Holderness Turk, St. Victor's Barb, Fenwick Barb, the Helmsley Turk (who was reputed in some old accounts to have lived to the remarkable age of sixty years), Browlow Turk, Pulleine's Chestnut Arabian, Leedes Arabian, Chillaby Barb, and Paget Arabian, to mention a few.

The Godolphin Arabian, or Barb, as experts determined, was the latest of these three main stallions of Oriental influence. He was foaled in 1724 and imported into England by Mr. Coke in 1730. His exact origins are unknown, but the stories that he was one of the eight Barbs presented to the King of France, had a deaf mute groom and was found pulling a wood cart through the streets of Paris are said by authorities to be romantic fiction. The turf records show the horse in Mr. Coke's possession at least as early as 1730, while it was not until 1731 that the Bey of Tunis sent his gift of eight fine Barb stallions to Louis the fifteenth. The Godolphin Arabian was a brown bay in color, about 15 hands, powerfully built with a fine head and unusually prominent crest. His mutual attachment to a favorite cat was true, and when the horse died in 1753, she sat upon the carcass until it was buried, then crawled mournfully away and was found dead in the hayloft soon after. The family of the Godolphin Arabian is represented today by a small remaining sireline through the great racer Man O' War, who traced to him in 14 generations. The Justin Morgan Horse was strongly influenced by this blood, as Betty

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**HISTORY LESSON** ~ *Justin Morgan*

Leeds, the dam of his sire, True Briton, was a double granddaughter of the Godolphin. Diamond, the sire of his dam, carried four close crosses to the Godolphin Arabian, and 18.75 percent of his blood.

**JUSTIN MORGAN—THE MAN  
AND HIS HORSE**

Returning to Justin Morgan the man. He had arrived with his young family in Randolph, Vermont, sometime during the summer of 1788, settling in a log house near the northern edge of the town. Here he would spend the remaining decade of his life, but, although the records indicate he continued to work at farming and entered into various land transactions, he did not own any home farm during those years. At a town meeting in March of 1789, he was chosen “lister” (the lister is responsible for composing the “Grand List” of people’s property for tax purposes), a town official of importance, earning him the title of Squire. The next year, 1790, he was elected Town Clerk, a position which he held through 1793. He seemed, for a time, to have forgotten his interest in breeding horses and remained busy, but more sorrow was to plague his little family.

Polly, the last child of Justin and Martha Morgan, was born on the tenth of March in 1791. What might have been a happy occasion soon turned to disaster as ten days later, Martha Day Morgan died at just thirty-eight years of age. Some of Justin Morgan’s musical compositions are believed to express his grief over this tragic event. He was left with five surviving children and it must have fallen on his oldest daughter, Martha, then fifteen, to care for her ten-day-old baby sister. Emily had barely turned seven years old the month before; Justin Jr., the only son, had celebrated his fifth birthday five days before, and Nancy, the next to the last child, was two and a half. Squire Morgan bowed his head and, somehow, life went on.

No one knows why he seemed to have left horse-breeding behind when he moved from Springfield. Perhaps having lost two young children, he and/or his wife, felt the need to focus more on his family. At any rate, the interest in horses was still there. D. W. Cowdry, whose father was well acquainted with Squire Morgan recalled in a letter to C. L. Bristol, published in the

*National Livestock Journal*,

“I most distinctly recollect that Justin Morgan told my father that he (Morgan) was the owner of some of the best breed of horses in the world, called the Wildair breed; and that he was going back in the fall and should bring back some of the breed to Vermont.”

Squire Morgan did not make a trip that fall, but there is some evidence that he hired a horse and spent several of the winter months traveling and teaching a singing school or schools somewhere on the Susquehanna River in Pennsylvania and/or New York. Andrew Adgate published another tunebook in 1791 which included five of Morgan’s tunes that had appeared in *Benham’s Tunebook*, plus a new one called “Despair.”

When Squire Morgan returned home, he could not have failed to notice an ad which appeared in the *Connecticut Courant* the spring of 1792 and ran for three weeks:

“Figure, a Beautiful bay Horse, fifteen hands high, will cover this season at the stable of the subscriber, at Twenty Shillings the season or Two Dollars the single leap.”

Samuel Whitman,

Hartford (West Division),

May 5: *Connecticut Courant*,  
running weekly May 7 to May 21

It was at this time Squire Morgan was seized with the sudden desire to return to his hometown of West Springfield which happened to be some 29 miles from where this horse was standing. The advertisements for Figure in Hartford abruptly ceased and according to the Grand List of Randolph Vermont, Justin Morgan was being taxed for a stallion by June 20 of 1792, so he must have retrieved the colt by that time. Further, as noted by C. L. Bristol in the same *National Livestock Journal* article, John Morgan had left a young son in Springfield, and was visiting there for some months at the time Squire Morgan made his trip back to that area. He saw the young Morgan horse at that time, and helped Squire Morgan start the colts back to Vermont.

The only testimony that the purpose of Squire Morgan’s his trip was to “collect a debt” and that he reluctantly accepted this

## HISTORY LESSON *≈ Justin Morgan*

colt instead came from the letter of his son, Justin Morgan Jr., which was published in the 1841 *Albany Cultivator*. It is not surprising that some of the statements of Justin Morgan Jr. later proved to be incorrect since he was trying to recall events that occurred when he was no more than six years old. Squire Morgan may have sold the mare in foal, or perhaps had left before he was even certain that she was in foal, and may not have received payment, or possibly an extra amount was supposed to have been due should she prove with foal, and that had not been paid to him. Given the timing and the facts concerning these events, it does seem quite probable that having carefully bred the second dam, the dam, and the colt himself, Squire Morgan was not very reluctant to take the colt in payment, and it may well have been the outcome he was hoping to receive for whatever debt was due him.

From these facts, Joseph Battell determined that the Justin Morgan horse must have been foaled in 1789, rather than the date of 1792 as initially thought by Justin Morgan Jr. in his letter to *The Cultivator*. It is also interesting to note that the horse was already called Figure when Squire Morgan went to get him, and he kept that name in all his later advertisements for the horse. This also introduces the possibility that, if Squire Morgan sold the dam before moving to Vermont, and the colt turned up standing for stud in Hartford, Connecticut, he may in fact have been foaled there rather than in West Springfield, Massachusetts, which has always been assumed. Randolph, Vermont, lies more or less 179 miles north of Hartford, with West Springfield in between, about 29 miles north of Hartford. Hartford was close enough that Squire Morgan had done a good deal of his business there, especially that concerning horses. If he retrieved the colt from Hartford as he obviously did, and later confirmed in his advertisements, he would have had to pass through West Springfield on his way there and on his way back, and it would have been natural for him to visit with family and friends while he was there.

Exactly what he did with the colt for the remainder of the 1792 season when he returned to Randolph is not clear, but very likely he spent time training the horse. Justin Morgan Jr. believed his father had trained the horse himself, and he may not have been entirely wrong, as standing for stud did not necessarily mean that he was fully broken for saddle or harness.

In 1793, Squire Morgan broke up housekeeping and placed his young children with friends and neighbors whom he thought most likely able to provide them the best advantages. His oldest daughter Martha was then 17 and, although the date of her marriage to Bliss Thatcher was not listed in the records, it seems likely that it may have occurred around this time. Emily and Justin were placed with David and Elizabeth Carpenter, while Nancy went to stay with Ezra and Anna Egerton. It is not clear where Polly went but possibly Martha may have continued to care for her baby sister. All the children seemed to remain in close contact with one another and to see their father frequently, but at that time he was apparently unable both to properly care for them and provide a living.

By the next spring, however, he was promoting his horse in earnest. Squire Morgan advertised his horse in *Spooner's Vermont Journal* of Monday, April 15<sup>th</sup>, 1793—published in Windsor, Vermont:

Will cover this season at Captain Elias Bissell's stable

in Randolph and at Captain Josiah Cleveland's stable in Lebanon, the famous Figure horse from Hartford, Connecticut, at fifteen shillings for the season, if paid down, or eighteen shillings if paid in the fall, in cash or grain at cash prices. Said horse's beauty, strength and activity the subscriber flatters himself the curious will be best satisfied to come and see. Said horse will be in Lebanon the second Monday in May next, there to continue two weeks and then to return to Randolph, so to continue at said Cleveland's and Bissell's, two weeks at each place, through the season. JUSTIN MORGAN. Randolph, April 8, 1793."

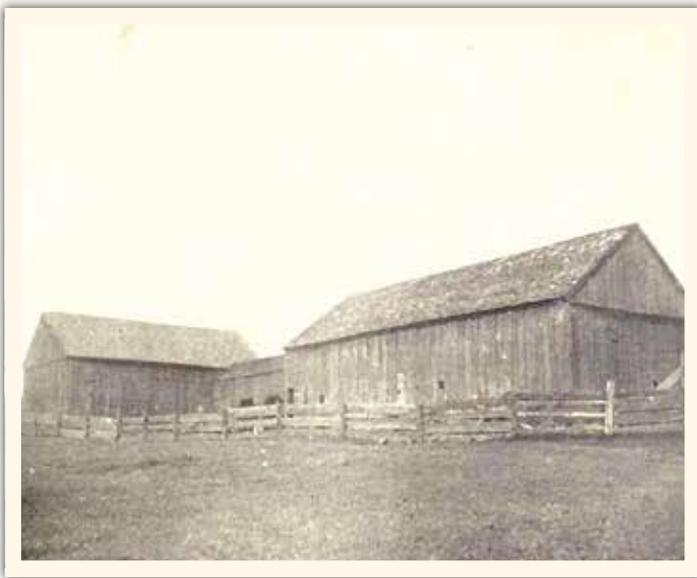
It appears he spent time traveling with his horse, and in between times, worked at farming and composing music. Betty Bandel notes that one of his tunes, "Montgomery," is the only tune by a Vermonter to be included among the 100 psalm and hymn tunes "most frequently printed in American collections during the eighteenth century." Morgan's tunes continued to appear in various tunebooks, sometimes credited and sometimes not, but it was evident that even during his lifetime he had achieved a measure of respect for his music. His work has been rediscovered in recent years and he is considered a composer of some note and very probably is the only man to become famous both for his musical works and for founding a breed of horses. Nine of his pieces were known to survive but there may well be others.

Again, the following advertisement appears in *Spooner's Vermont Journal* for April 28<sup>th</sup>, 1794:

"The beautiful horse Figure will cover this season at the moderate price of \$1 the single leap, \$2 the season if paid down by the first of September next. If not paid down, it will be 16 shillings. Said horse will be kept at the stable of Ezra Edgerton, in Randolph, and Lieut Kurdee or E. Steavens, in Royalton. He will be kept at Randolph till the second Monday of May, when he will be taken to Royalton, there to be kept every Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday; then return to Randolph, where he will continue Thursday, Friday and Saturday, and so alternately during the season. The subscriber flatters himself that the horse's strength, beauty and activity will bear examination by the Curious. Constant attention will be paid at each of the above places. JUSTIN MORGAN Randolph, April 21, 1794."

The next year, Squire Morgan advertised his horse in the *Rutland Herald* of May 1795 as follows:

"Figure will cover this season at stable of Samuel Allen in Williston, and at a stable in Hinesburgh, formerly owned by Mr. Munson. He will stand at Williston till the eighteenth of May; then to Hinesburgh, where he will stand one week; then back to Williston, to continue through the season, one week in each place. With regard to said horse's beauty, strength and activity, the subscriber flatters himself that the curious will be best satisfied to come and see. Figure sprang from a curious horse owned by Col DeLancey of New York, but the greatest recommend I can give him is, he is exceedingly sure, and gets



**LEFT TO RIGHT:** David Goss barn where Justin Morgan was kept, 1805-11 (AMHA Registry Volume I); The David Goss home in St. Johnsbury, Vermont, which was built before 1803 (AMHA Registry Volume I).

curious colts. JUSTIN MORGAN, Williston, April 30, 1795.”

Perhaps one of the most bizarre of Squire Morgan’s court cases uncovered by Betty Bandel was a claim he brought in December of 1795 against Ephraim Tucker of Moretown for “trespass.” Apparently three years earlier, in 1792, Squire Morgan had 207 shocks of good wheat valued at 50 pounds lawful money, and eight shocks of good oats valued at four pounds lawful money. He still had this grain in his possession on 2 April 1793 when suddenly, in the peculiar language of the court, he “casually lost” the grain, which “by finding came into the hands and possession of the said Ephraim who well knew the same to belong to the Plaintiff.” Obviously one does not happen to casually lose 207 shocks of wheat. Mr. Tucker seemed to have helped himself to the grain which he knew belonged to Squire Morgan, and Morgan was not going to put up with it, although why he waited such a long time to bring suit is not known. Perhaps he had tried to reason with Mr. Tucker to no avail and decided on court as a last resort. At any rate, he won 12 pounds, three shillings eight pence plus costs of 20 pounds, 19 shillings, and four pence as a result of this trial, although it still sounds like he got the short end of the deal.

Meanwhile, Battell thought the 1795 ad was the last ad pertaining to the original Morgan horse, but Betty Bandel uncovered one more:

“Figure will cover this season at the stable of Peter Benedict, Esq., in Burlington—at 12 shillings the single leap—4 dollars the season—and 6 dollars to ensure a foal. I shall omit the customary encomiums in advertisement of this kind—Suffice it to say—He is a beautiful Bay—15 hands three inches high, and grandson to the famous imported horse, Wild-air. I would wish every Gentleman, that has a mind to put their mares to him, to call and see him. He is high spirited and remarkably good natured—Has covered two seasons at Hartford, in

Connecticut, and two at Randolph, in this state, to great satisfaction, as he is very sure and his colts has proved Fine. Good pasturing for Mares, and constant attendance given by Samuel Allen. N. B. The pay will be expected next January, in cash or any kind of country produce. February 29 1796.”

Note that in the April 1795 ad, the Justin Morgan Horse is standing at the stable of Samuel Allen in Williston, so Squire Morgan is no longer taxed for a horse in Randolph—but he is still listed as the owner. The 1796 ad is signed by Samuel Allen. The land records show that in May of 1795, Squire Morgan paid twenty pounds for a one hundred acre parcel of land in Moretown. The records also show that a number of proprietors were letting their land go when taxes were raised, and Samuel Allen had been buying it up. Evidently Morgan sold his prized horse to Allen and was paid in land. He was perhaps aware by that time that his health was declining and was making an effort to leave something for his children. Squire Morgan died at the Carpenter home where two of his children were living, on March 22 of 1798. His plan to provide an inheritance almost worked except that for unknown reasons the probate court disallowed various debts that were owed to him.

### THE JUSTIN MORGAN HORSE— REMAINING YEARS

Sometime after this last advertisement, Jonathan Shepard of Montpelier, who built the first blacksmith shop in Montpelier village, bought the Justin Morgan horse for \$200, a high price at that time, and kept him about one year. He then went to James Hawkins in 1797 and where exactly he was kept the next four years is unclear, but it is thought he may have been taken into Canada. Robert Evans, who had used the horse before, went and got him in 1801 and kept him until 1804 when he was sued for debt. Colonel John Goss of Randolph became his bail and took the horse, but not being much

of a horseman, gave him to his brother David Goss of St. Johnsbury, who kept him for seven years, or until 1811, except for the season of 1807 when he was sent back to John Goss in Randolph, the only time he was known to have been advertised as “the Morgan horse”:

“The Morgan horse will stand for covering this season at the stable of John Goss in Randolph. Randolph, May 4, 1807.”

*Randolph Weekly Wanderer*, May 4–June 15, 1807

John Goss also took him to Claremont, New Hampshire, for a short time during the 1807 season. In 1811 he went back to Randolph, Tunbridge, and Royalton and was kept by Samuel Stone. 1812 and 1813 are unclear, but it is thought that Stone may have used him in the Randolph area those years as well. In 1814, 1815, and 1817 he was kept by Joel Goss and Joseph Rogers. During 1816, he was owned by William Langmaid, who worked the old horse, then 27 years old, severely in a six-horse team hauling freight from Windsor to Chelsea, a distance of 45 miles each way. He grew thin and poor under this treatment. During 1818 and 1819 he went back to Samuel Stone at Randolph, and finally, from then until his death, was owned by Levi Bean at Chelsea. During his long life he was ridden and driven by men, women, and children of all ages, and was always popular for parades and military reviews. Once he was ridden by the Governor of Vermont, and another time by United States President James Monroe (this occurred during Monroe’s tour of 1817. The Justin Morgan horse was then 28 years old but still possessed of such fire and brilliance he was said to have attracted the President’s attention. Monroe, a Revolutionary War veteran and excellent horseman and judge of horseflesh, chose to ride him in the procession, which he led). He was 32 years of age, still sound and active, when he was injured from a kick by another horse, which caused his death.

Direct sirelines to the Justin Morgan horse survive strongly today through his sons Sherman and Woodbury, with lines from many other of his sons and daughters woven in. His remarkable beauty, strength, versatility, prepotency and most of all his inimitable spirit continues to be passed on from generation to generation. ■

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*The research for this article was drawn from the resources listed. Previous TMH articles were not consulted. The position that Justin Morgan, the man, bred the horse and his dam comes directly from Battell’s Vol I of the register. Even though the present article is more than 10,000 words, it is by no means the final or only word on the subject—a subject about which much more could be (and has been) written.*