



~ HISTORY LESSON ~

Drumming Hoof Beats THE STORY OF THE INDIAN RESERVATION MORGANS

By Gail Perlee

PART ONE: BEGINNINGS & THE SOUTHWEST

The 1930s was the era of the “New Deal” in America. Under the leadership of President Franklin D Roosevelt, socially progressive programs were devised to alleviate poverty and improve the lives of ordinary citizens during the Great Depression. A small part of this movement addressed

the needs of Native American peoples. In 1934, the U.S. Congress passed legislation designed to correct decades of neglect and exploitation of American Indians by the Federal Government and others. The new laws confirmed tribal land holdings, encouraged self government, granted religious freedom, created jobs and small

ABOVE: The Ute people are the oldest residents of Colorado, inhabiting the mountains and vast areas of Colorado, Utah, Wyoming, Eastern Nevada, Northern New Mexico, and Arizona (photo © Southern Ute Archives, www.southernute-nsn.gov/history).

business opportunities, and initiated improvements in living conditions, health, agriculture, and education on the reservations. One project inspired by this ambitious “Indian New Deal” was a scheme to upgrade Indian livestock, especially their horses. An article in the journal *Indian Education*, later reprinted in *The Morgan Horse* magazine, explained the need for such a program and suggested Morgans as the ideal horses to carry it out.

“A very large number of Indians are livestock operators and have definite needs for a cow horse. Many additional Indians have small cultivated tracts to supply vegetables, corn, potatoes and grain to grind for their own family needs. Thus, the need of the very great majority of Indians is for a combination cow horse, cart horse and general purpose farm horse. No light horse in America has maintained as much enthusiasm and kept as much loyalty among riders, buggy and light wagon drivers and small farmers as has the Morgan.”

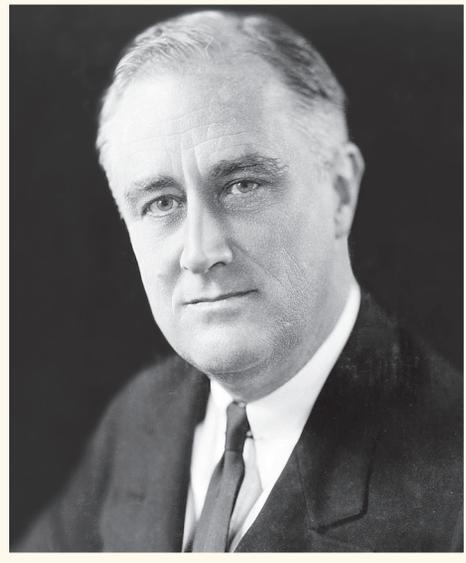
Little is known about the beginnings of Indian Morgan breeding programs. Records were not always kept, and many have disappeared or been destroyed over the years. By the time *The Morgan Horse* (TMH) magazine began publication in late 1941, the program had already been underway for about five years. Some reports and statistics appeared in the magazine starting in 1942 and give clues about the project. Circumstantial evidence points to two men who may have hatched the horse upgrade idea and suggested Morgans as the best breed for the job. W. O. Roberts was superintendent of the Pine Ridge Agency on the Sioux reservation in South Dakota and L. E. Correll was in charge of the Chilocco Indian School in Oklahoma. Mr. Roberts wrote articles in *TMH* and other livestock magazines extolling the Indian horse improvement idea in general, and the use of Morgans in particular. In 1943, he wrote:

“While we are not maintaining that there is any best breed, necessarily, the weight of opinion is very favorable

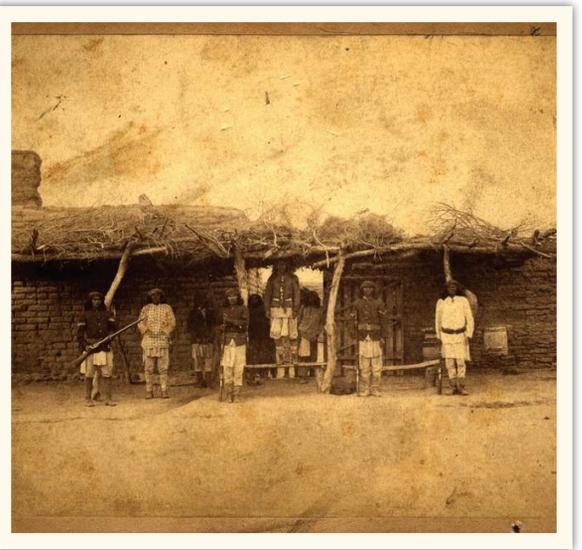
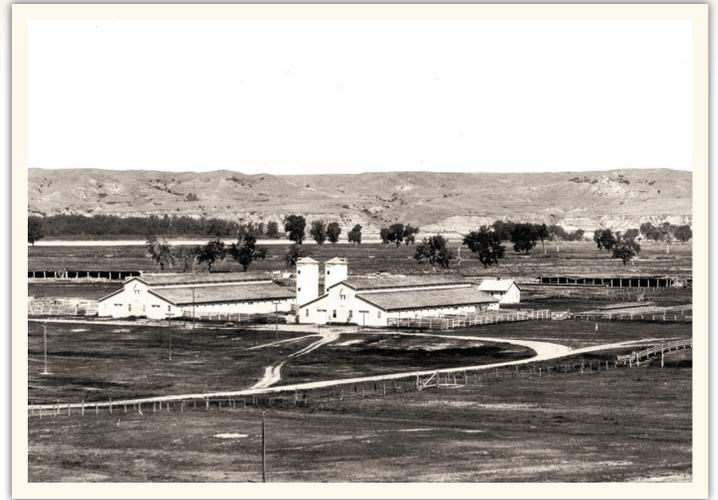
toward the Morgans. Experience seems to show that a Morgan horse can take its place in the cattle herds, is useful as a work horse, and is hard to beat under saddle. In addition, the Morgan appears to be very easily trained, is docile, and at the same time has plenty of endurance and life. The Morgan breed appears to be very prepotent, the half-Morgan as a rule showing definitely the characteristics of the Morgan sire.

Mr. Correll was also strong in his support of the program. An article in the February 1945 issue of *TMH* states that Correll, “traveled extensively throughout the eastern and central parts of the United States inspecting registered Morgans. More than fifty mares and stallions were purchased for various units of the Indian Field Service as a foundation for breeding Morgans.” Whatever the role of Roberts and Correll in starting the program, both men were enthusiastic, long term supporters who took an active part in the Morgan breeding operations at their institutions. Pine Ridge and Chilocco went on to be the most enduring and influential of the Indian Morgan breeders. It probably was not a coincidence that a fine weanling Morgan colt purchased for Pine Ridge in 1940 was given the name Red Correll.

The first Morgans enrolled in the program, six mares bred by the U. S. Range Livestock Experiment Station in Miles City, Montana, arrived on the Crow Indian reservation in Montana in 1937. In 1938, the San Carlos Apache received two young stallions, and the Chilocco Indian School got its first four fillies that same year. The majority of the foundation stock was purchased between 1940 and 1942 and gathered at Pine Ridge and Chilocco for later distribution to other locations. As we shall see, the foundation animals were almost all very well-bred and acquired from some of the most reputable and well-known Morgan breeders of the day. By the spring of 1942, there were 135 registered Morgans on 11 reservations and Indian schools. *The*



TOP TO BOTTOM: Franklin Roosevelt in 1933 (photo by Elias Goldensky, public domain); L. E. Correll on a prize Morgan at Chilocco (photo from Nancy Belzonna's Picture Book by Donna Jones Flood); Red Correll (Will Rogers x Kate Smith) with W. O. Roberts.



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: Miles City 1934 (www.ars.usda.gov); Horse Barns, Ft. Keogh, Montana, early 1900s (www.ars.usda.gov); Guard House in San Carlos, Arizona, circa 1880. These Indian Agency policemen were appointed by the Reservation's Indian Agent to maintain law and order among the tribe (photo by Camillus S. Fly, public domain); San Carlos Apache women posed in profile carrying a pitch covered basket jar with a head strap and wearing patterned blouse and skirt, created between 1883-1888 (public domain); San Carlos Apache Reservation.

Morgan Horse magazine quotes the U.S. Supervisor of Indian Education as follows:

“We have placed Morgans at our institutional farms where we have Hereford cattle. In addition to the eleven places named, we have nine other beef herds, and it is expected that as the numbers of Morgans increase we will place horses at those places. Our future program will include the teaching of horse breeding, management and good horsemanship in conjunction with the beef program.”

The program expanded rapidly and within a few years there were Morgans at 22 Indian agencies and schools in 11 Western states. Many of the breeding programs were small and/or short lived, but others produced registered Morgans for several years and one, Chilocco, lasted for more than 35 years. The heyday of the Indian Morgans was in the 1940s and 1950s, but the final recorded sale did not take place until 1980. In all, almost 800 registered

Morgans and countless partbreds were involved in the Indian horse upgrade program. Most of these horses lived out their lives in obscurity, and their bloodlines were lost to the breed. But some did breed on, and a few had far reaching influence on the Morgan gene pool. Breeders like Stuart Hazard (Funquest), the Brunks, Stan Walker and several Western ranchers would later reap the benefits of the Indians' high-quality foundation stock and selective breeding programs.

Even the smallest and briefest of the Indian projects has a place in Morgan history. This article will cover some of the minor programs. The major breeding operations in the Dakotas and Oklahoma will be dealt with later in the series.

ARIZONA AND NEW MEXICO

Not all the Indian breeding programs are known or were recorded. For example, the weanling colt Aros (Ackbar x Redlie by Red Oak), sold in the 1925 Sellman Ranch dispersal, went to

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LEFT TO RIGHT: This stallion, photographed at the Herst farm in 1936, is remembered only by his stable name, Junior. He is likely the horse known as Sir Linsley 7654 (Linsley x Sparta) (*TMH* July 1967); Rex Linsley (Morgan Archives); Painters Pine Ridge & Travis Filipek, 2007 World Champions (photo © Howard Schatzberg).

the La Osa Ranch in southern Arizona along with more than 100 other Morgans. After using Aros at stud for several years, the La Osa “sold him to the Government in 1936 to go into the Indian Service at Gallup, New Mexico.” His papers were never transferred and nothing more is known of him or his get for the Navajo Nation. He may well have been the very first Morgan in the program, but we know of him only through a brief note in a 1946 issue of the *Western Livestock Journal*. The first official Indian Morgans in the Southwest came to the San Carlos Apache reservation in eastern Arizona in 1938. The three-year-old stallions Golden Light (Silver Crown x Mirtle) and Silver Tip (Silver Crown x Edomala) were full brothers-in-blood bred by H. T. Hineman of Dighton, Kansas. They traced largely to a closely bred family of roadsters descended from Golddust and bred by L. L. Dorsey in Kentucky. Once a popular, prolific, and widespread bloodline, the Golddust Morgans are all but extinct today. No Morgan mares were sent with the two studs, so this branch of the family came to a dead end in Arizona. The San Carlos Apache, who are mostly cattle ranchers, must have been pleased with the Morgans, because in April of 1945 they acquired three more stallions. They were: Plainsman (Plains King x Sentola) bred by Helen Brunk Greenwalt, foaled in 1939; Chock L (Chocolate x Nellie Mae Morgan) bred by W. P. Thornhill of Miami, Texas, foaled in 1941; and Pearl’s Allen (Tehachapi Allen x Pearl R M) bred by Elmer Brown of Halstead, Kansas, foaled in 1940. All of them came through Pine Ridge. For whatever reason, no Morgan mares were acquired, and the blood of these well-bred studs was also lost to the breed. Undoubtedly, the five stallions were mated with Indian mares over the years and produced many partbreds for the tribe. This

writer saw a few Indian horses in the 1970s that their Native American owners proudly called “Morgans,” and which clearly showed breed characteristics after 30 years of outcrossing.

The only other reservation in Arizona known to have participated in the horse upgrade was the Hualapai tribe located on the south rim of the Grand Canyon. In 1943, they received a young stallion, Jubilee Ken (King Shenandoah x Illawana Topsy) from Pine Ridge. He was bred in Illinois by F. K. Dzengolewski and foaled in 1942. No mares were sent, and he had no registered get. Nothing more is known of his fate. Although the Arizona tribes did not produce registered stock, the Morgan stallions surely fulfilled their mission of upgrading Indian horse herds.

Aside from the Navajo, whose reservation covers vast tracts in both Arizona and New Mexico, only one New Mexico tribe was involved in the Morgan horse project. In 1946, the Jicarilla Apache Agency in Dulce got a stallion, two mares, and four weanlings. The stud was Sir Linsley (Linsley x Sparta). He was bred in Kansas by Elmer Brown and foaled in 1926. He was purchased for the upgrade program in 1939 and sent to Pine Ridge, then transferred to the Fort Totten Agency in North Dakota that same year. Sir Linsley sired only 12 registered foals, all for Indian agencies, between 1941 and 1948. He lives on in the breed, primarily through three of his get. His sons which bred on were Charlie Sentney, sire of 20 including Honderine; and Dakota Thunder Cloud, sire of 28 mostly for the Cross Ranch in Wyoming. Sir Linsley’s daughter, May Sentney, dam of seven, was maternal great-grand dam of Honor (Triumph’s Leader x Honderine), who sired 82 between 1960 to 1982 mostly for Oak Acres, palomino breeders in North Dakota.

The mares were a two-year-old, Girlie Chief (Swanton x

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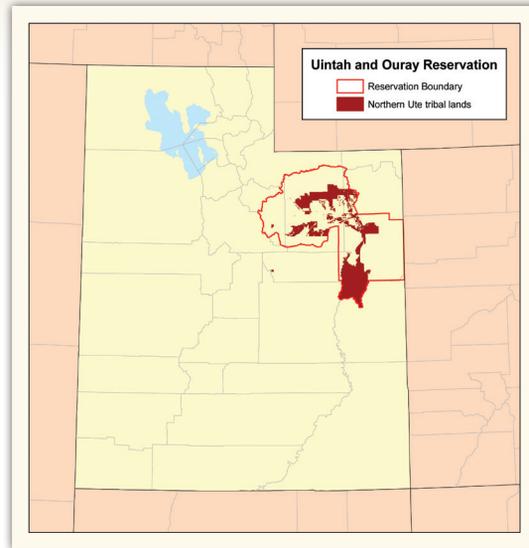
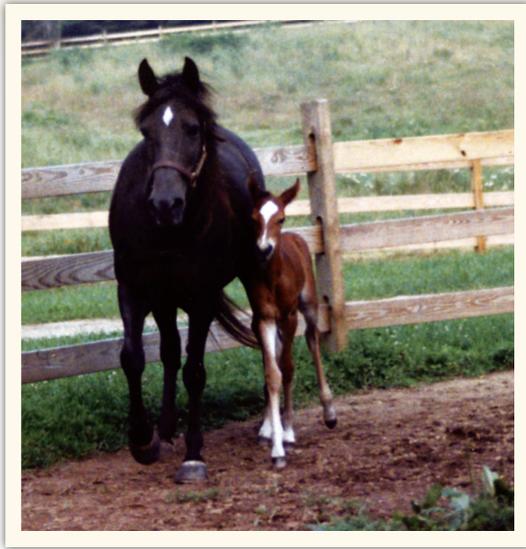
TOP TO BOTTOM: Triple S Wings Of Wind; LBF Gay Enchantress; LBF Gay Isabella 2nd Level 1995.

Bonny Jean) bred by Pine Ridge, and Rarette (Jubilee King x Nella), a twelve-year-old bred by J. C. Brunk in Illinois. Girlie Chief had one colt by Linsley for the Jicarilla in 1947. She and her foal were sold to a private party in Oregon that same year. Girlie Chief went on to produce seven more foals, including two fillies and a colt, all by Varagraph and Red Vermont, both sons of Jubilee King, all of which bred on. Rarette is a familiar name in Morgan circles. She had ten foals, four before she was sold to the Indian Service in 1942, four for Pine Ridge and two for the Jicarilla Apache. Two of her early foals, Shenandoah Queen (1939) and Pride Of King (1941), both by King Shenandoah, carry her genes forward in the breed. Shenandoah Queen was dam of 12, including Shenandoah Red (by Red Correll) who sired Lady Rockwood, the dam of Lady Brigadier, Lady Eager, and Blackwood Correll. He also sired Red Nellie the dam of sport horse progenitor BL Independence. Shenandoah Queen was also the dam of Yellow Cat (x Morgan Gold) a palomino reservation bred stallion that bred on. Pride Of King sired 18 including Cynthia, foundation mare for Mel Frandsen in Utah and Choquita, the dam of Kings Haven Senator (x Senator Graham), sire of 96 foals in Colorado. Rarette's 1947 filly, Ute Lady, and 1948 colt, Ute Brave, (both by Sir Linsley) were bred by the Jicarilla but registered and owned by the Consolidated Ute Agency in Ignacio, Colorado. Nothing more is known of the fates of Sir Linsley and Rarette. Perhaps, they went to Colorado with their offspring, but there were no more transfers or registrations for any of them. Like so many others in the program, they simply disappeared. They probably continued to reproduce, but not for the Morgan breed.

Of the four weanlings, all bred by Pine Ridge, that went to New Mexico in 1946, only one had registered foals. That was Apache Maid (Highland Glen x Brick by Swanton), the only registered produce of her dam. Apache Maid was registered and owned by a woman at the Jicarilla agency. In 1952, she was sold off the reservation, and in 1966 and 1968 she produced two fillies by Rex Linsley. One of them, El-Mira Rexanne also produced only two registered foals, but one of them was Primavera Ramona (x Juan Bravo). She was a blue hen mare for the Western working family who produced 13 foals, mostly for Little Brook Farm in Vermont and the Triple S Ranch in Nebraska. Some of her best-known offspring are the stallions Painters Pine Ridge (by Blackwood Correll), a sire and champion reiner and Triple S Wings Of Wind (by Triple S Red Wind), sire for Triple S and LBF. She was also the dam of sport horse broodmares LBF Gay Enchantress and LBF Gay Isabella, both by Gay Vaquero. It is amazing that such a thin family line survived to produce so important a broodmare as Primavera Ramona. Although the Indian breeding programs in Arizona and New Mexico were brief and minor, they managed to have an influence on both local horse populations and the breed.

NEVADA AND UTAH

Nevada is home to the Washoe and some groups of the



LEFT TO RIGHT: Primavera Ramona and 1987 filly LBF Gay Enchantress by Gay Vaquero; Uintah and Ouray Indian Reservation.

Shoshone and Paiute peoples. The Carson Indian School near Carson City served these tribes. In 1940, the Carson Indian School received eight Morgans. Six of the mares and the nine-year-old stallion, Euchre, were all bred by the U.S. Range Livestock Experiment Station in Miles City, Montana. Euchre (Monterey x Bronita) had no registered get before coming to Nevada. He had been privately owned in the Billings, Montana, area and probably was used as a sire of ranch horses. The mares came to Carson from the Crow Agency in Montana. Six had been sold in the 1936 dispersal of Miles City stock. They were bought by a horse dealer and, within a year, purchased for the Indian horse upgrade program and sent to the Crow Reservation. They were Dalita (Revere x Alita), a ten-year-old, Falita (Monterey x Alita), an eight-year-old, and Glacier (Monterey x Alaska), Grand Slam (Monterey x Bronita), Grosbeak (Monterey x Alibirdie), and Gyration (Monterey x Qualification), all seven-year-olds. The other mare, a two-year-old, Montana (Roosevelt x Eskimo) was 100 percent Miles City breeding and bred by the Crow Agency, but owned and registered by Carson City. This herd was the final flowering of the Miles City program. All were straight up Government and Sellman stock. They were as well-bred a group of Western Morgans as could be found in the country. Between 1942 and 1945, the Carson Indian School bred 16 registered Morgans, ten colts and six fillies. Sadly, not one of them produced registered stock. In 1945, the foundation stock and eight of their offspring were transferred to the Wind River Agency on the Shoshone reservation in Wyoming. There the trail goes cold on the mares and their produce. Euchre sired the last of his 17 get in 1946 at Wind River, a colt named Buckles who eventually bred on. Then Euchre too faded into obscurity.

In 1942, the Uintah/Ouray Agency at Fort Duchesne and the Uintah Indian School at Whiterocks on the Ute reservation in eastern Utah received four Morgans. Two were three-year old stallions. Copper Chief (Tehachapi Allen x Ella Linsley) was bred by Hiebert Bros. in Kansas and was purchased from a private

party. Texas Rain Bow (Silver Ranger x Baby Dix) was bred by W. P. Thornhill in Texas and came to Utah from Pine Ridge. The mares were Reva (Heather Bloom x Glen Gary), a three-year-old and Montana Dawn (Sea Gull x Montana Maid), a six-year-old, both bred by Thomash W. Adams in Montana and acquired from Pine Ridge. The Utes are breeders of record of only one Morgan, a colt born in 1947. He was owned and registered by a man in Whiterocks and had no registered get. The foundation stock was never again transferred. All of this suggests that the Utes were breeding their Morgans, but not registering their stock. The Morgans that went to the Indian tribes of Utah left a legacy to the breed only through Montana Dawn who had produced two fillies before she entered the program. Her 1941 daughter May Dawn (by Adam's Black Oak) was the dam of five including Dakota Dawn Mills, Dawn Schumacher, and Red May Walker, all by Dakota Thunder Cloud, and May Gold Berlie (by Yellow Gold). All of these mares went on to be excellent producers and are found in Western working family bloodlines today. Montana Dawn's other filly, Wise River Dawn (x Heather Bloom) was foaled in 1939 and was the dam of six, of which a few bred on.

In many ways, the story of the Indian horse upgrade project in the Southwest is a sad story for Morgan folk. While the Morgans undoubtedly improved the quality of Indian horses, it was at the expense of a small and struggling breed. At a time, during the Great Depression and World War II, when the need for working horses of all kinds was declining and the post war demand for pleasure and show horses had not yet begun, the Morgan breed faced an uncertain future. Many of the best of the Western using Morgans found their way onto Indian Reservations, where most slipped into obscurity and more than a hundred years of selective breeding was nearly lost to the breed. ■

“Drumming Hoof Beats” will be an ongoing, five-part series in *The Morgan Horse* magazine. This is part one.