



≈ HISTORY LESSON ≈

# The Sons of Justin Morgan

## PART III: BULRUSH MORGAN

By Brenda L. Tippin

**A**lthough Bulrush no longer survives in direct sireline, his blood is woven indelibly through the fabric of the Morgan breed. Like the quiet iron strength of the horse himself, this thread was something solid, never flaunting itself, yet an integral part of the survival of the breed as a whole. Long taken for granted, one day the direct line came to an end—but somewhere, behind every great Morgan, is a daughter of Bulrush or one of his descendants.

### BULRUSH MORGAN: BREEDING AND BACKGROUND

Bulrush Morgan was foaled around 1812, and was bred by Moses Belknap of Randolph, Vermont, in Orange County. Mr. Belknap, like many of the men in that vicinity and time, was a veteran of the Revolutionary War, and an active farmer with a large family. Bulrush was most often described as dark bay in color, though at some seasons apparently he was called a rich blood bay. He had no white markings save for a few white hairs in his forehead. His mane and tail were heavier than either of his brothers, with his foretop

coming down to his nose and his mane hanging nearly to his knees.

Bulrush had his tail cut off at about nine inches when he was young, which was the fashion of the day, though it remained very thick and full. He stood 14 to 14.2 hands tall, according to different accounts, and weighed about 1000 pounds. The most striking characteristic of Bulrush was his tremendous muscular development. His back was just a little longer than either Woodbury's or Sherman's, though less inclined to be hollow. His hindquarters, like Sherman's, were not as full as those of Woodbury, but his chest was more deep and powerful than either of them.

**ABOVE:** Bulrush Morgan, son of Justin Morgan, foaled in 1812 on the farm of Ziba Gifford, Tunbridge, Vermont (Portrait by artist Jeanne Mellin).



**ABOVE, LEFT TO RIGHT:** The Lebbeus Egerton (also spelled Edgerton) house, built on the main street of Randolph, Vermont, in 1801 by Asa Egerton. Asa Egerton married Emily Morgan, daughter of Justin Morgan, in 1805 and took her to this house as a bride (Library of Congress); Chase-Redfield barn, built by Dudley Chase in 1804, was a typical example of barns in the Randolph area during that time (Library of Congress).

This perhaps accounted for his remarkable power of endurance which had no equal among the Morgan families.

While Bulrush was not considered quite as animated as Woodbury, or even Sherman, he nevertheless was often in demand to be ridden in parades. He was also the fastest of the three best known sons of Justin Morgan, though in his descendants this trotting speed took somewhat longer to manifest.

### DAM OF BULRUSH MORGAN

Mr. Belknap acquired a dark bay mare from a teamster, Mr. Boutwell, who had been using her in a six-horse team hauling freight from Montpelier to Boston. Although described as a rugged, low-built, compact mare of unusual strength and endurance, Mr. Boutwell thought her too small for his work and traded her to Mr. Belknap for a larger horse. She was said to be part French, but her breeding was unknown. Her mane and tail were quite full and heavy, and she had excellent bone with large joints, with wonderful feet and legs. In these traits she was similar to the type of old Justin Morgan and through the Bulrush line these characteristics were well-fixed, it often being said that it would be far easier for an active boy to wear out a rocking horse pony made of wrought iron than it was for a grown man to break down the constitution of a Bulrush Morgan horse.

The neck of Bulrush's dam was long and fine with a head of great beauty, but unlike the Morgans she was not inclined to carry it up very well, and this trait also persisted in the Bulrush strain being somewhat less upheaved than Sherman or Woodbury. Although she could be made to trot fast, she had not the natural spirit of the Morgans, and required urging to produce her best speed and style. The Justin Morgan horse was kept by Samuel Stone the season of 1811, and stood in Randolph, as well as the surrounding areas of Tunbridge and Royalton. His reputation as an excellent stock getter was by then well-recognized in the area.

Mr. Belknap thus decided to breed the mare to the Justin Morgan horse, and used her to work his farm the season of 1811. He then sold her in foal to the Justin Morgan horse later that winter to Ziba Gifford of Tunbridge, Vermont. The agreement of the sale that Mr. Gifford would keep the colt until he was four months old, and then pay an extra \$13 if he wished to keep him, or else return him to Mr. Belknap. Mr. Gifford, thinking at the time the colt was small and would not amount to much, preferred to keep his money and returned him to Mr. Belknap.

### BULRUSH MORGAN—THE HORSE

Mr. Belknap kept Bulrush in the vicinity of Tunbridge until he was seven years old, during which time he was often referred to as the Belknap horse. Tunbridge had early roots, having first been established in 1761 by a royal charter of King George III. In 1780, it was the site of the last major raid of the Revolutionary War, known as the Royalton Raid. Much of the early Morgan history is tied to the small villages and fertile valleys of the White River and its branches. Randolph lies between the second and third branch of the White River, while Tunbridge and Chelsea lie along the third branch. The soils in this region are well-drained, rich dark loam, 20 to 40 inches deep, over bedrock often consisting of schist, gneiss, or granite.

When early settlers began casting an eye to the possibilities of farming in the region, they had their work cut out to clear their land of the dense woodland forests consisting of such trees as white pine, hemlock, and red spruce mixed with American beech, chestnut, white ash, red and sugar maple, aspen, poplar, oak, and yellow and white birch. In the autumn the surrounding hills and mountains were covered with a riot of brilliant yellow, deeper gold, orange, red and crimson shades with hints of rust and purple standing out against a sharp blue sky. Small villages, carved along the rivers and roads, began to develop for hauling freight.

Mr. Belknap was a farmer with several children, and Bulrush,

like his brothers and sire, knew hard work from an early age. He was regularly used for farming and clearing the land, as well as serving as the all-purpose family horse. In those days a farmer made most of his own tools, raised sheep for wool and meat, and raised flax for linen. Women were adept in the art of not only making clothes for the whole family, but spinning and weaving the very cloth from which the clothes were made. Furniture was also generally home-made, and dishes were often carved from wood. Each farm was generally able to produce most of their own meat, dairy, poultry, fruit and vegetables, as well as the art of tapping the sugar maple trees in winter to make sugar and syrup.

There was always work to be done, and thrifty farmers had soon discovered a single sturdy horse of the old Justin Morgan stock was all the team needed for farming. They were pleasant, enduring, easy keepers and stylish enough for parades, musters, and use as the family driving horse. Bulrush developed tremendous musculature, more than either Sherman or Woodbury, and soon gained a reputation as a hard-working horse who simply did not wear out.

Though Mr. Belknap doubtless offered Bulrush for stud during the time he had him, few records were kept or, of those that were, not many have survived. Just three of Bulrush's registered sons were gotten during the time Mr. Belknap had him. Bulrush had another quality, which he has seldom, if ever, been given credit for, and that is, he was an exceptional sire of broodmares. Many stallions are able to pass on their breeding strength through their sons for multiple generations. Some few may sire both sons and daughters of great prepotency. Perhaps most rare and most easily forgotten are those who are able to provide a lasting influence through their daughters. Bulrush was such a horse.

In 1819, Mr. Belknap sold Bulrush to Abel Densmore, of Chelsea, Vermont. Densmore took Bulrush to Williamstown, Vermont around 1824. After some time he sold him to Darius Sprague of Randolph and Sprague who in turn sold him in 1826 to Smith and Walker of Hartland, Vermont for \$350. By this time, Bulrush was 14 years old. Smith and Walker acquired Woodbury Morgan at the same time—

however, their firm had dissolved by 1829 with Walker taking Woodbury, and Smith taking Bulrush. Mr. Smith took Bulrush to Maidstone, Vermont, at that time.

After this, Bulrush moved around a great deal. Smith kept him one season at Chelsea, and two seasons in the State of Maine, selling him in 1833 to Jesse Johnson and Brothers of Bradford, Vermont.

The next few seasons, Bulrush stood at the following locations: 1834—Bradford, Vermont; Bath, New Hampshire; 1835—Lyme, New Hampshire; Bradford, Vermont; 1836—Burlington, Vermont.

During much of this time he was stabled with his brother Woodbury Morgan, who also was kept at the Johnson and Brothers's stables until he was sent to Alabama in the fall of 1836. Consequently many of the early lines of Bulrush and Woodbury were woven closely together. Later, during the winter of 1836–37, the Johnson Brothers sold Bulrush again, and he went to Blake & Foss of Chelsea, Vermont. Bulrush remained in Chelsea until 1842 when he was sold to Lewis Jenkins of Fairlee, Vermont. Jenkins then sold him sometime around 1844 to Frederick A. Wier of Walpole, New Hampshire, who kept the old horse till he died in 1848 at 36 years of age.

### EYEWITNESS ACCOUNTS

In a letter to *The Cultivator* of 1846, Mr.

Wier, the last owner of Bulrush wrote: "His general appearance, shape and form correspond with Revenge but with a heavier chest, longer gait, and more hollow back, *Author's Note: Bulrush was at the advanced age of 34 years old at the time Mr. Wier gave this description—he had not known the horse when in his prime. Others describing Bulrush when he was younger said that he was less hollow in the back,* in this last respect more nearly resembling the Sherman Horse. His legs quite hairy, height about 14 hands, and weight about 1,000. His style of motion not so good as either of the others, but none of them excelled him in endurance. His colts have been almost invariably dark bays, and have generally inherited his peculiar qualities. Many of them have proved very fast, and they have usually made very valuable road horses, though on the average smaller than the stock of either of the others. There are at this time more stallions of his stock than of all the others put together."

Mr. J. B. Davis of Barnard, Vermont, born in 1813, gave the following information regarding Bulrush to Joseph Battell in an interview in 1885:

"Bulrush was kept at Williamstown, where my father lived. He was a blood bay with black mane and tail...The Bulrush stock were more speedy as a racer than those from Woodbury. Old Bulrush was a trotter; would pass for a trotter if he was

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## HISTORY LESSON *≈ Bulrush Morgan*

alive now. I have often seen him ridden up the street. He would trot and go like a dart...Figure Eagle was got by Bulrush; bred by Capt. Farnham of Tunbridge. *Author's Note: Figure Eagle was in fact Morgan Eagle, who was sold to Captain Phillip Farnham in Tunbridge as a two-year-old colt, not bred by him. He was actually by Woodbury Morgan and out of the Cheney mare by Bulrush.* He was a bay horse 15  $\frac{3}{4}$  hands, eleven to twelve hundred pounds, a thick-set heavy horse, the proudest of himself of any horse I ever saw, a graceful, beautiful horse of fine color and about as perfect as he could be, he was sold to a man at Barre when not more than ten years old, I think, and poisoned soon after. I think that Figure Eagle looked the best on parade of any horse I have ever seen. Old Bulrush had a very large neck, well put on; not a bit of a ewe neck, he was a bold looking horse, a stout built horse very strong forward, with full tail and very heavy mane." *American Morgan Horse Register, Volume II.*

Mr. Robinson, who was born in Williamstown, Vermont, in 1808, wrote of Bulrush:

"Old Bulrush came to Williamstown and did business there. He was a chunked, monstrous strong built, low, powerful horse. Martin used to ride him on parade."

*American Morgan Horse Register, Volume I*

Judge Lynn, another citizen of Williamstown, recalled:

"The first Morgan horse owned here was Bulrush, from Chelsea, owned by Mr. Densmore; a low, dark horse, fourteen and a half hands, nine hundred and fifty pounds; and a smart trotter."

*American Morgan Horse Register, Volume I*

### SONS OF BULRUSH MORGAN

Of 28 registered sons of Bulrush, the heights of 21 are given. Eight of these were less than 15 hands, with just one at 14 hands and seven others all standing 14.2. At the other end of the spectrum, just three were taller than 15.2 hands, all standing 16 hands. Of the remaining 11 sons, seven stood exactly 15 hands, and four stood 15.2 hands.

#### ALLEN HORSE

The Allen Horse, or Young Bulrush, was bred by Pliny Allen of Lyme, New Hampshire, and foaled about 1828. He was a rich bay in color, with heavy black mane and tail, considered very stylish with fine action. He also was reputed to be a good traveler and had a reputation as an excellent sire. He stood at Windsor and Springfield in Vermont, and Claremont, New Hampshire. When he was 28 years of age, he was among several Morgans owned by Jonathan Currier of Hanover, New Hampshire, who also owned the Dartmouth Hotel and Hanover House where he ran a livery and stagecoach business. The Allen Horse can be found in many Lippitt pedigrees, especially descendants of Moro (Welcome x Polly Rogers) and the great show stallions Orcland Leader and Orcland Vigildon, full brothers (Ulendon x Vigilda Burkland).

#### CLARKE HORSE

The Clarke Horse, also known as Austin's Morgan Bulrush, was a

fine brown bay color with black points and heavy long black mane and foretop. His tail was full but docked. He was compact and smooth, with fine style and action. The Clarke Horse stood about 14 hands tall and weighed 900 pounds. He was bred by Dudley Cabot of Chelsea, Vermont, and his dam was said to be by Fortune, a son of Quicksilver, and out of a daughter of Justin Morgan. Foaled about 1840, he was sold as a two-year-old to Chet Clarke of Chelsea, Vermont, who kept him about four years, then sold him to John Henderson of New York. In 1848 he was sold to Norman Austin of Orangeville, Ohio, and was believed to be the first Morgan taken to Ohio for stock purposes. W.C. Hull of Orangeville wrote:

"Morgan Bulrush was of low pony build, smooth body and long barrel, good head, fine eye and fine ears pricked forward in traveling, gait short but very prompt and easy. He had clean, hard-looking limbs, and his stock generally resembled him in this as well as in having good dispositions, dark color, generally brown bays, similar action, and nearly always sound. He was very popular here during the time he remained. He covered 80 mares the first season, a good many coming 10, 15, and even 20 miles."

*American Morgan Horse Register, Volume I*

The Clarke Horse was the sire of dam of Benedict Morrill by Morrill. His descendants are widespread and found in Lippitt pedigrees through Ashbrook (Croydon Prince x Nancy) as well as the government bred stallion Mentor (Goldfield x Fairytop) sire of 52 colts, 32 fillies including such familiar names as Fleetfield and his full brother Trophy (x Norma), Tutor (x Kona), Stellar (x Naiad) and the great mare Junefield (x Ambition), dam of Kingston by Upwey Ben Don (Upwey King Benn x Quietude). He also appears in many Western working and sport pedigrees through Gay Mac (Mansfield x Dewdrop), and can be found in numerous other breeds such as the British Riding Pony, Welsh Mountain Pony, Rocky Mountain Horse, Saddlebred, Tennessee Walking Horse, and American Warmblood,

#### DUBOIS' MORGAN

Dubois' Morgan was one of the first recorded sons of Bulrush Morgan, foaled about 1817. He was bred by Stephen Fisk of Brookfield, Vermont, from a mare believed to be of the blood of Quicksilver, son of the imported Arabian, Dey Of Algiers. He was dark bay in color, about 940 pounds, quite similar in size and appearance to his sire. He was considered unequaled for bone and muscle, and became well known for his style, action, and speed, and for getting excellent stock. Dubois' Morgan passed through several owners and was advertised in 1828 in the Northern Sentinel in Burlington, Vermont as follows:

"Well known horse, Morgan, at E. Meech's, Shelburne, and at Williston, at \$5."

Uriah Dubois

Dubois' Morgan spent most of his life in Chittenden County, and died the property of Eli Chittenden in 1834 at about 17 years of age. Descendants of Archie O, Winterset, and Red Correll, are among those tracing to Dubois' Morgan.



**LEFT TO RIGHT:** The Admiral was one of the top stallions for Richard Sellman's famous Mountain Vale Ranch in Texas. The Admiral brought in a lot of Bulrush blood through his famous dam, Morrill Queen, who carried three direct lines to Bulrush through old Morrill (AMHA Archives); Raven Chief, bred by Sellman and foaled in 1917, was the source of the last surviving Bulrush sireline in the Morgan breed, which became extinct in the 1980s (Sellman historical photo, courtesy of David Ladd, Sellman Morgan History Project and Nancie Shelden, great-granddaughter of Richard Sellman).

### KNOWLTON'S MORGAN TIGER

Knowlton's Morgan Tiger was described as a light yellow bay in color. Some have thought it was buckskin or dun. He was bred by Chester Pike of Cornish, New Hampshire, and out of a Morgan mare. The horse was sold to a Mr. Knowlton, who took him to Ohio in about 1854. He must have been one of the last sons of old Bulrush, foaled around 1846 or 1847.

Harry Dearmond from Harrison, Ohio, who knew the horse well wrote, "I knew Bulrush, brought here from Vermont, also Little Gifford. Both horses were kept here, owned by one Knowlton. Bulrush was said to be Morgan on both sides. They were about 15 hands, solid, good-looking horses. These horses were brought here about 1854. Bulrush was then six or eight, and Gifford four or five; Bulrush was a very fine-formed horse. They left the best of stock."

Another eye-witness, Erastus Robinson of Venice, Ohio, wrote, "He was very heavy made; disposition good; quite speedy. The best horse ever kept here." *American Morgan Horse Register*, Volume I.

Interestingly, a known source of the blood of Knowlton's Morgan Tiger comes through Zelica (Wilkesberry x Abdallah Belle) the dam of the famous pacer Dan Patch—whose sire Joe Patchen (Patchen Wilkes x Josephine Young) was a registered Morgan, and both Dan Patch and his dam could have been registered as well. This line comes back into the Morgan breed through a son of Dan Patch who stood at the LU Sheep Ranch in Dickie, Wyoming, and is widespread throughout the breed. Most Western working and sport Morgans carry several crosses to this blood, as well as all show Morgans tracing to Waseeka's Nocturne (Starfire x Upwey Benn Quietude).

### TIGER (PURDY'S BULRUSH MORGAN)

Another son of Bulrush who went to Ohio was also called Tiger, or Purdy's Bulrush Morgan. He was black, with a heavy, wavy mane and tail, weighing about 950 pounds. He was brought to Ohio

from Vermont in 1853, and went through a succession of owners, including Mr. Purdy, and later was sold to Michigan. His stock were said to be good-sized and some were noted as fast quarter horses, but he left no Morgan descendants that are known.

### MORGAN EMPEROR

Morgan Emperor, foaled about 1829, was bred by a Mr. Hough of Lebanon, New Hampshire, from a mare said to be by the imported stallion Prince William. He was bay in color, with very heavy black mane and tail, about 15 ½ hands and weighed 1025 pounds. He was the sire of several which were notable at that time. Among them were the Tillotson Horse who trotted a mile in 2:40 at the Cambridge Park course in September 1843, and North Star, who won first premium at the Connecticut State Fair, and second premium at the National Horse Fair in Springfield, Massachusetts in 1854, where he was known as the Flying Morgan of Petersham.

The Currier Horse bred by Richard Currier of Enfield, New Hampshire, and foaled in 1832 from a black Morgan mare was also a son of Morgan Emperor. He was a bay, 15.2 hands tall, and weighed 1060 pounds. Jonathan G. Currier (who also later owned the Allen Horse by Bulrush), son of Richard Currier, wrote:

"The Currier Horse was treated like most of the old Morgan stock, run on the stages and worked on the farm. The Emperor, Currier Horse and Jackman Colt I consider as valuable stock horses as have ever lived in Vermont or New Hampshire. Dam of the Currier Horse was one of the most remarkable mares on the road between Burlington and Boston. Richard Currier, my father, began keeping an inn in Enfield, New Hampshire, over 80 years ago. He kept it 50 years. Currier's tavern was well known by the traveling public before the days of railroads. He, like myself, was a great admirer of good horses, and to find them thought it necessary to go to Vermont, and was



LEFT TO RIGHT: Sun Down Morgan (Raven Chief x Texsky) with Merle Little (AMHA Archives); Midnite Sun (Sun Down Morgan x Dawnglo) (AMHA Archives).

fortunate in getting one very fine gray horse of William Connor of Williamstown, Vt., and looked some time to find a mate, and finally purchased a fine mare of Nathan Blake of Corinth, Vt. These were as good a pair as there was between Montpelier and Boston. I have owned a great many horses, having from 30 to 90 some years, of different kinds, and from many States, but for general purpose horses, hitched to the carriage or plow, I have never yet seen the equal, all things considered, of the Morgan horse. For doing two days' work in one, living to old age and keeping sound, they have no superiors. Of the three old noted horses, viz.: Woodbury, Bulrush and Sherman, their stock varied; under the saddle, the Woodburys rather excelled, but in harness I should prefer the Sherman or Bulrush. The Bulrush had extraordinary strong and lasting feet, and in my judgment were faster trotters than either the Woodburys or Shermans."

*American Morgan Horse Register, Volume I*

Morgan Emperor is found today in descendants of the rare gray line through Miss Frosty Shadow (TOFR Blackwing x Saycrest Frosty Miss), including several gray Morgans owned by Ellen Feld, author of several children's books about Morgans. One of these, *Frosty: The Adventures of a Morgan Horse*, is based on one of her rare gray Morgans. Other descendants of Morgan Emperor are found tracing through descendants of the versatile endurance mare Sue Travelmore (Wysox x Lippitt Miss Nekomia), as well as among the Standardbred, Saddlebred, and Tennessee Walker breeds.

#### MORGAN ONE EYE

Also known as the Billy Morgan or Kilburn Horse, Morgan One Eye was bred by Moses Chamberlain of Bradford, Vermont, and foaled in 1834. He was a dapple brown in color, marked with a star, and white hind feet. Like most of the Bulrush stock, he had a very heavy mane and tail. He stood 14 ½ hands tall and weighed 975 pounds. He lost an eye when he was a two-year-old colt due to

a boy throwing a stone at him, and afterwards became known as Morgan One Eye. He passed through several owners, and many of his colts sold for as much as \$500 or \$600, a remarkable price for a colt in those days. He died at Pompton Plains, New Jersey, in 1857 at 23 years of age. Morgan One Eye may be found in many Lippitt pedigrees through Croydon Prince.

#### RANDOLPH HORSE

The best known son of Bulrush, the Randolph Horse, also known as Morgan Bulrush and several other names, was said to be most like him. He was a dark bay 14.2 hands tall and weighing 950 pounds. His mane and tail were very heavy, and he was much like his sire in appearance except for a small star. The Randolph Horse was bred by a Mr. Weston of Randolph, Vermont, and foaled about 1820. Both Linsley and Battell say the dam of the Randolph Horse was untraced, although some sources say she was a daughter of Justin Morgan. Battell does state that from his type and character, and the area where he was bred, it is likely he did inherit Morgan blood from his dam. In the American Stallion Register, Battell rates him as one half Morgan blood, meaning both sire and dam were offspring of the Justin Morgan horse.

Among his advertisements was one given by H. C. Babcock:

"Morgan Bulrush. H. C. Babcock would inform the public that he has the celebrated Morgan horse, called the Morgan Bulrush, or better known by the name of the Randolph Horse. His stock is too well known by all in this vicinity to need any recommendation. Will Stand at Bliss's Inn, Cabot; Farrington's, Walden, and Warner's, Hardwick."

Danville, May 29, 1839

Moses E. Cheney, for years a leading citizen of Barnard, in Windsor County, Vermont, who had held every office in that town, was an ardent supporter of the Morgan horse. Born about 1810, he was well acquainted with the earliest Morgans, and he,

as well as other members of his family had owned and bred many of them. Like Justin Morgan, the man, he was also a singing master. He was one of twelve children born to the highly regarded Elder Moses Cheney, a Free Will Baptist minister. Most of the Cheneys were very gifted in music, and Moses E., with three of his brothers and one sister, formed the Cheney Family Singing Troupe, which became quite well-known. Mr. Cheney wrote of the Randolph Horse:

“Young Bulrush, alias Weston Horse, alias Randolph Horse, when I knew him twenty years ago, was a little old Morgan ‘keen as a brier’, knees a little sprung. The keeper said the old horse had drawn two men in a chaise eighty miles in a day.” (from an 1866 letter, published in *The Morgan Horse magazine*, November 1944. Other references to this same story indicate the Randolph Horse was accustomed to making this trip frequently and did so when he was past 24 years of age.)

Mr. Jennison, breeder of the Jennison Colt, said of the Randolph Horse: “He could trot like the wind and was a beauty” *American Morgan Horse Register*, Volume I.

### JENNISON COLT

The Jennison Colt was bred by Abijah Jennison of Walden, Vermont, and foaled in 1841 from a large and powerful mare of untraced breeding. His coat ranged at various seasons from a bright cherry bay to a dark blood bay. In form and appearance he was very much like his sire, except taking the larger size of his dam, while maintaining the Morgan type and proportions. He stood nearly 16 hands and weighed 1,224 pounds. The dam of the Jennison Colt was black or seal brown, with lighter brown or orange shading about the muzzle and flanks. She stood about 16 hands tall and was believed to weigh close to 1,300 pounds. She was inclined to be flat-ribbed, mane and tail rather thin, but her feet and legs were excellent. Her ears were rather long and she was said to be generally a dull and lazy driver but could pace fast when woken up, and was so powerful she would break chains when logging.

Abijah Jennison described him as follows:

“When the Jennison Horse was foaled, well, the best description of him that I can give is that he was perfect and he grew perfect. He weighed over twelve hundred pounds, and was a bright bay, no white on him but a little star, and he had the same little, short, sharp, quick ear of the little Morgan. His mother had pretty long ears and they lapped some; and he had a wide forehead, and his eyes were large and stood out, and he had just such a foretop, mane and tail as the little Morgan. Oh, he was the Little Randolph all over except his size; and that he took from his mother. I had the colt when he was two years old and that was the season he sired old Morrill.”

It was not until several years later, when Morrill was about six years old and began to be rather famous, someone started to circulate the story that the Jennison Colt was not sired by the Randolph Horse at all, but rather by a horse called the Dan Dana horse who traced to Messenger blood. Tellers of this tale claimed the story had originated with Abijah Jennison, who allegedly told someone the mare did not take when bred to the Randolph Horse, and so he bred her to the Dan Dana horse late in the season.

The so-called reason for this belief by some was that Old Morrill resembled the Dana horse in size and color. It never occurred to them that the dam of the Jennison Colt was also this same size and color, and in fact very much resembled the Dana horse herself. Both were dark brown or black with lighter muzzle and flanks, had rather long ears that tended to lop, thin mane and tail, flat-ribbed, and were about 16 hands tall and weighed around 1,300 pounds. Neither did the originators of this tale stop to think how, if this mare had been bred to the Dana horse, the Jennison Colt would not resemble either of his parents—but instead would have the same beautiful head with short sharp ears, the long deep body and well sprung ribs, the lively countenance and spirited stylish action—in all particulars exactly the same Morgan character and appearance of the Randolph Horse except for being larger. No one was more surprised than Abijah Jennison when he heard the story. He declared firmly that he never had said anything of the kind, had never even seen the Dana horse, he had worked the mare all season and was positive she had settled from the breeding to the Randolph Horse and no other horse had been anywhere near her. Further investigation showed the Dana horse had been taken to Illinois in 1836, and as the Jennison Colt was foaled in 1841, the story was simply not possible.

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**TOP TO BOTTOM:** Tio Lalo, with Dick Nelson, was another important source of Bulrush blood in California. He was the only foal of the Bulrush line mare Palomesa by Midnite Sun, who traced directly back to Bulrush through Raven Chief. Many colorful Morgans also trace their dilution gene through this line; Red Flash was among the last famous Bulrush stallions. He was the sire of 33 registered foals, and in 1948, swept the Morgan Stallion Championships at the Los Angeles County Fair, San Fernando Valley Fair, and the Santa Barbara Fair. He was also the *Western Livestock Journal* Horse of the Month for September 1949; (*The Morgan Horse* magazine).

## MORRILL

Old Morrill, got by the Jennison Colt and foaled in 1843 or 1844, was founder of the large Morrill family. Jet black in color except for a hint of orange about the flanks and muzzle, he stood 15.3 hands and weighed 1,225 pounds. Although in outer appearance Morrill did not have as much of the old Morgan type as some other strains, he faithfully passed on many other Morgan traits. In kindness, strength and endurance, he was unequalled but his career was cut short due to a tragic event that caused his death at about 18 years of age. Like Black Hawk of the Sherman family, and Gifford Morgan of the Woodbury line, Old Morrill is deserving of his own story which must be addressed in more detail at a later date as time and space will not permit including it here. However, virtually all Morgans today carry the blood of Bulrush through this line. The last Bulrush sireline also traced through Old Morrill to the Randolph Horse, and became extinct sometime in the 1980s.

## BULRUSH MORGAN—INFLUENCE

The influence of Bulrush Morgan, though perhaps not as immediately obvious as that of Sherman or Woodbury, is nevertheless strong and widespread. Much of this comes through his daughters, who were never registered, and many of them not even their names were recorded. Their existence is only known in the quiet testimony that may be found hidden in the pedigrees of other registered horses and traced to descendants of the present day. Time and space would not permit mention of them all, but here we will give just a few examples.

One of the most widespread, but little known, lines to Bulrush comes through the second dam of Hale's Green Mountain Morgan, considered one of the most beautiful Morgans who ever lived and whose likeness was long ago chosen as the logo for the Morgan breed. Likewise, the second dam of the famous Ethan Allen, the Bemis mare, was sired by a son of Bulrush

A variety of Morgan descendants as well as Standardbreds and Trotters may all be traced to a black daughter of Bulrush. These include the champion cutting horse Chesty (Congo x Judy) foaled in 1949 and owned by Joseph Olson of St. George Utah, as well as Black River Dandy (Fleetwing x Lovely Melody), Grand Champion Stallion of the 1969 Eastern Nationals, undefeated in-hand during his lifetime, and his full brother Reata's Encore, Grand Champion Stallion of the 1971 Western Nationals.

Another influential daughter was the Charles Hubbell mare by Bulrush and said to be out of a daughter of Justin Morgan. This mare was the dam of Chittenden County Morgan by the Putnam Horse (Woodbury x Nancy by Chanticleer, son of Justin Morgan). The Chittenden County Morgan was then bred to his half-sister, another daughter of Putnam Morgan, and got Goff's Comet. Comet in turn was bred to a daughter of Brinker's Drennon by Davy Crockett and out of another daughter of Bulrush, producing Octoroon from this cross. Octoroon carried a very high percentage of Morgan blood, including 18.75 percent of the blood of Bulrush. The majority of the foundation mares of Texas rancher Richard Sellman were daughters of Octoroon. Major Gordon, his foundation stallion, was by Young Octoroon, a son of Octoroon. Sellman continued to use horses with the thread of Bulrush blood





Discreet Lee sired the last born son of the Bulrush line, WTF Stormy Knight, who was foaled in 1982 and gelded with no registered offspring.

sirelines tracing to Bulrush Morgan were through the Morrill grandson Winnebago Chief (Mountain Chief x Nell Weldon). By a conservative estimate, there could have been perhaps between 50 and 80 registered Morgan stallions from this line still living and able to breed. However, it was likely many of these stallions had died, been gelded, or else sold to owners who had no interest in raising registered stock, for after 1910 there were fewer than 20 other Bulrush stallions foaled tracing through this line, with the last one, Mack McGregor by Julius foaled in 1918, leaving no registered offspring.

Why the Bulrush line suddenly diminished at this particular time was probably due to several reasons. It was a lean time for the Morgan breed as a whole. The country was involved in World War I from 1914-1918 which severely limited resources. The eccentric Joseph Battell who established the Morgan registry and had spent tireless hours traveling around the country by horse and buggy (he hated automobiles) collecting pedigrees, died suddenly in 1915. The newly established Morgan Horse Club was still in its fledgling stages, and the U.S. Government Farm did not use any Bulrush stallions in its main breeding program. The Hambletonian strain had by this time established dominance in the Standardbred breed, though not without substantial help from Morgan mares. With increasing use of automobiles and improved farm equipment, the Morgan horse was losing its niche, and the Bulrush strain, which had once been so numerous, was the hardest hit.

This left only Sellman's line from Morgan Chief, which produced only four registered foals, three stallions and one mare, all foaled in 1917. Sellman initially kept the black stallion Raven Chief (Morgan Chief x Baby Girl by The Admiral) and the bay stallion Dot #7115 (Morgan Chief x Dot N. by the Admiral). He bred nine foals from Dot including three stallions and one gelding. He bred four foals from Raven Chief, but his health was failing. Douai, a son of Dot by Morgan Chief out of Daisy K. by Headlight Morgan, bred by Sellman and foaled in 1921, was the only Bulrush stallion used in the remount program. He was kept mostly in North Dakota, and from 1936-39 in Nebraska, after which he was destroyed, having reportedly sired about 250 remount foals. However, none of these were registered, and neither of the other two stallions by Dot left any registered progeny either. Raven Chief was sold to F. A. Fickert in Tehachapi, California, and sired a total of 21 registered offspring including eight stallions.

For the next several decades, the Bulrush line, though slender, remained popular in California, most being used for ranch work. A son of Raven Chief, Sun Down Morgan (x Texsky), produced 29 registered foals, including the beautiful crème stallion Midnite Sun (x Dawnglo). Many colorful Morgans trace their dilution gene through this line, including the beautiful palomino Tio Lalo, whose dam Palomesa was a daughter of Midnite Sun (x Baby O). Tio Lalo in turn was the sire of the buckskin mare Tia Margarita (x Gay Berta), dam of 14 foals, among them three buckskin champion reining stallions: Primavera Valdez (x Primavera Vaquero), Brass Buckle (x Kennebec King), and Montana Harvest (x Triple S Red Cedar). Midnite Sun produced 19 registered foals, and five of his six stallion sons were beautiful palominos. Colorful Morgans were far less popular in those days among breeders of registered

woven in. The Admiral (Jubilee De Jarnette x Morrill Queen), Headlight Morgan (Ethan Allen 2d x Lady Stratton), and Red Oak (General Gates x Marguerite) all carried lines to Bulrush.

The Croydon mare, a daughter of Bulrush, was the third dam of Peter's Morgan (Peter's Vermont x Wilson Partridge mare). Another daughter of Bulrush was the second dam of Morgan Hunter 2d—sire of the Wilson Partridge mare who was dam of Peter's Morgan. The Lovering Bulrush mare by Morgan One Eye, son of Bulrush was third dam of Croydon Prince (Peter's Ethan Allen 2d x Doll). The list goes on, and the horses carrying this blood are repeated and interwoven with others carrying similar crosses, and so the influence continues.

### THE LOST THREAD OF BULRUSH

Sellman later purchased the stallion Morgan Chief (Chief Morgan x Maude Morgan), a dark bay or brown stallion foaled in 1912 and bred by J. F. Parks of Meade, Kansas. Morgan Chief carried four direct lines to Morrill, two through his sire and two through his dam. Sellman was concerned about preserving the old Morgan bloodlines, and it is likely he realized that Morgan Chief was one of the last stallions available in a sireline that was rapidly disappearing. At the time Sellman bought Morgan Chief, the only remaining

Morgans, and none of these horses bred on.

One of the strongest lines that continued for a while was through Red Flash (Colorado by Raven Chief x Louisa by Woodrow Wilson, son of Headlight Morgan), sire of 33 registered offspring, which were among the last surviving lines. Red Flash was bred by the Berman Stock Farm and foaled in 1940 in Pacoima, California. He was Champion Morgan Stallion at the Los Angeles County Fair, the San Fernando Valley Fair, and the Santa Barbara Fair in 1948, and was Horse of the Month for the September 1949 Western Livestock Journal. Between 1951-58 he produced no registered foals, and turned up in Montana in 1959. The Jackson Ranch used him between 1959-62 during which time he sired six registered foals—four mares and two geldings. One of his daughters, Julee Star (x Juleena), became the dam of 18 foals bred by the Jackson Ranch. Afterwards, he went back to California. Gold Country Madrone (Page Boy x Hilitte Sammy), foaled in Pine Grove, California, 1977, left no registered offspring and was the last of the Red Flash line to Bulrush in California.

The last Bulrush stallion in California, Forever Gusto, (Cholame Stepper x Burnt Sugar) was bred by Lois Anderson and foaled in 1980 at her Tanglewood Farms in Bakersfield, California, and left no registered offspring. Lois now breeds Miniature Horses, but recalled Forever Gusto, “He was a wonderful horse. I rode him for many years, always English. He, to my great sadness, was killed in a trailer accident. His color and disposition were outstanding.”

Discreet Lee (Rhed’s Fable x Donna Lee), foaled in 1970 was taken to Washington and had two sons but both were gelded, also leaving no registered offspring—the last, WTF Stormy Knight out of Mary Of Dickie foaled in 1982.

Although the sireline of Bulrush slipped suddenly away before anyone thought to save it, the influence of these lines, as well as the many lines stemming from the Bulrush daughters, will continue to be a vital part of the Morgan breed. ■

## DAUGHTERS OF BULRUSH MORGAN

from *American Morgan Horse Register*, Volume I

1. Cheney Mare by Bulrush—dam of Morgan Eagle by Woodbury v1 p 215
2. Coolidge mare by Bulrush—3d dam of Whitcomb’s Morgan Tiger by Barden Morgan v1 p 315
3. Mark Clark mare by Bulrush—dam of Braley Horse by Kilburn’s Sherman Morgan v1 p 345
4. Mare by Bulrush—dam of Young Sherman by Sherman p 345
5. George Thomas mare by Bulrush—dam of Rossman Horse by Sherman Black Hawk v 1 p 387
6. O.L.R. White mare by Bulrush—dam of Joe Hooker by Prophet son of Black Hawk v 1 p 443
7. Lady Morgan, bay by Bulrush, bred by Henry E. Davis—dam of Phillip Allen by Black Hawk v1 p 510
8. Mare by Bulrush—dam of Jones Horse by Black Hawk out of Comet Morgan son of Sherman v 1 p 511
9. Mare by Bulrush—3d dam of Ogden’s Morgan Prince son of West’s Morgan Prince by Black Prince by Black Hawk v1 p 545
10. Charles Jackman mare by Bulrush—dam of Jackman Colt by Currier Horse by Morgan Emperor by Bulrush v1 p 616
11. Mare by Bulrush x mare by Kasson Horse—3d dam of Walker’s Morrill by Winthrop Morrill v1 p 632
12. Goodwin mare by Bulrush, black 1000 lbs, 1 white hind foot, heavy wavy mane & tail—2d dam of Hutchinson Morrill v1 p 654
13. Charles Hubbell mare by Bulrush x mare by Justin Morgan, dk bay 1,100 lbs—dam of Chittenden County Morgan v1 p 670
14. Mare by Bulrush—2d dam of Octoroon 302 by Goff’s Comet by Chittenden County Morgan v1 p 672
15. George Whitney mare by Bulrush x mare by Morgan Eagle by Woodbury—dam of Cowdry’s Putnam Morgan Jr by Putnam Morgan by Woodbury v1 p 672
16. Isaac Baldwin mare by Bulrush—3d dam of Avery Horse by Hubbard Horse by Bailey Horse by Woodbury, v1 p 677
17. H. Purrington mare by Bulrush, 2d dam of Morgan Hunter 2d by Morgan Hunter by Gifford by Woodbury, v1 p 684-5
18. Mare by Bulrush, dam of Morgan Trustee by Gifford by Woodbury, v1 p 688
19. Thomas Mosley bay mare by Bulrush—2d dam of Montpelier by Lawton Horse by Hale’s Green Mtn v1 p 693
20. Peter Wiggins mare by Bulrush—2d dam of Densmore Horse by Green Mountain by Hale’s Green Mtn v1 p 696
21. Croydon mare by Bulrush, bay—3d dam of Peters Morgan v1 p 699
22. John A.S. White mare chestnut by Bulrush—dam of John Stark by Hale’s Green Mtn Morgan v1 p 726
23. Ed Rankin mare by Bulrush, black—3d dam of Bold Morgan by Golden Forrest by Indicator, v1 p 733, also 2d dam of Maggie by Corbin’s Flying Cloud by Black Flying Cloud v1 p 826

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