

≈ HISTORY LESSON ≈

The Sons of Justin Morgan

PART I: SHERMAN MORGAN

By Brenda L. Tippin

In the January 2015 issue of *The Morgan Horse*, historian Brenda Tippin contributed “Justin Morgan: Fact And Fiction,” a remarkable analysis of the genesis of our breed. With this article she begins a three-part series on the major sons of Justin Morgan. Brenda states: “The original Justin Morgan horse left numerous sons and daughters, many of which have been lost to history, although they contributed to the strong reputation that built the Morgan breed. Among the known sons of Justin Morgan, his son Sherman stands alone.”

SHERMAN MORGAN: BREEDING AND BACKGROUND

Sherman Morgan was foaled about 1808 in Lyndon, Vermont during the time David Goss kept the original Justin Morgan horse. Justin Morgan, by that time, was 19 years old and his colts were very much valued. He was possibly one of the best-bred sons of Justin Morgan. He remains one of very few about which it is possible to discover much about the origins of his dam.

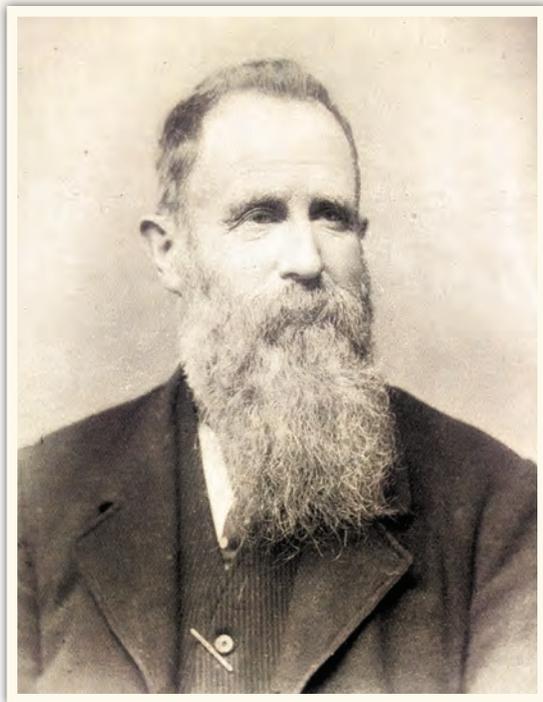
Sherman was bred by Mr. James Sherman and, according to the noted horseman John Dimon, in his book *American Horses and Horsebreeding*, published in 1895, Mr. Sherman had secured the dam for the express purpose of taking her to Vermont to breed to Justin Morgan. In Dimon’s work we find some remarkable details

of forgotten history concerning the background of Sherman, which are unique as they were intertwined with his own family history.

JAMES SHERMAN, BREEDER OF SHERMAN MORGAN

James Sherman was of English ancestry and was born in Rhode Island in 1764. On May 4, 1776, Rhode Island was the first colony to renounce allegiance to King George III. James Sherman fought in the Revolutionary War, joining in 1779 when he was just 15 years of age. Following the war, he married Elizabeth Fenner, whose father, Arthur Fenner, served as Governor of Rhode Island from the time it became the 13th state in 1790 until his death in 1805. James and Elizabeth had six children, all born in Providence, Rhode Island.

ABOVE: Sherman Morgan was the most prominent son of the Justin Morgan horse (*American Horses and Horse Breeding*).



LEFT TO RIGHT: John Dimon, author of *American Horses and Horse Breeding*. According to tradition handed down in his family for more than 175 years, his ancestor brought the horse to America, which originated the Narragansett family of pacers; Stephen Sherman, the oldest son of James Sherman was said to resemble his father, who bred the Sherman Morgan horse. Stephen helped his father in the early years of clearing the Cold Hill farm where Sherman Morgan was born and raised (*The Genealogical History of the McGaffey Family*).

In 1799, just before the turn of the century, Mr. Sherman moved his family to the small town of Lyndon, Vermont, which is located in the Passumpsic Valley, in Caledonia County. Lyndon had been chartered in November of 1780 after a small group of Rhode Island men from his hometown of Providence went to select ungranted territory in which to settle a new colony.

The location of Lyndon is a beautiful spot, and it must have seemed very promising indeed to the settlers from Rhode Island. Covering an area of nearly 40 square miles, the town of Lyndon is carved into beautiful rolling hills and valleys by the many tributaries of the Passumpsic River. The waters of the Passumpsic River are remarkably cold and pure and the land is more or less evenly divided between meadows and upland. The soil is very rich and fertile loam and easy to cultivate, as well as providing excellent grazing for cattle, sheep, and horses.

Settlement of the town began in 1788. Vermont was granted statehood and became the 14th state on March 4, 1791, and the town of Lyndon was finally organized a few months later on July 4th, 1791. Caledonia County was incorporated by an act of legislature in 1792, but was not fully established until 1796 when Danville was made the shire town (in New England at that time, settlers used the English term “shire” to refer to county, and the “shire town” was the county seat). Undoubtedly, James Sherman was urged by his neighbors to come and join them in the new town, which by 1800 showed a population of 542 according to the census. He then began to look for a good piece of farm land to purchase, locating in 1803 on a property that became known as “Cold Hill,” about two miles from Lyndon Corner.

Sherman was a tall, powerfully built man of dark complexion, well known for his hard work, which unfailingly ran from 4 a.m. to 8 p.m. every day, and at all seasons. Among his tasks were clearing the land, burning the wood for charcoal, and then selling the ashes,

which in those days were used to make soap. He built Cold Hill into one of the finest farms in the country.

THE DAM OF SHERMAN MORGAN

There are many accounts of the dam of Sherman Morgan, but none seemed to have any credible account of her breeding save for the historian John Dimon. All accounts do agree that she was an excellent animal. George Sherman, a son of James Sherman, was born in Providence, Rhode Island in 1797, and was two years old when his father moved the family to Lyndon, Vermont. He recalled the dam of Sherman from his earliest childhood, as it was about 1799 when the mare was purchased and taken with the family to Vermont. He described her as follows, “She was chestnut, of good size, high spirited, and an elegant animal. We called her of Spanish breed.”

The statement of George Sherman that the mare was considered “of Spanish blood” could have referred to the fact that the Narragansetts were so highly prized by the Cubans. The terms “Spanish” and “Narragansett” were often used interchangeably, just as the Morgan horse was often referred to as Dutch.

Dimon states that the dam of Sherman Morgan was bred by Caleb Allen of North Kingston, Rhode Island. She was one of the last of the remarkable breed of Narragansett Pacers which originated in that area, and had been used some years in Providence, Rhode Island by a man named John Brown. The mare was then owned by a Dr. Fiske from whom Mr. Sherman purchased her in 1799 and took her to Vermont with the particular intent to breed her to the Justin Morgan horse.

The mare had already had several owners before she came to the Sherman family, so she was not young. She was a bright sorrel or chestnut, marked with three white feet and a stripe in the face, and had a beautiful and refined head with small expressive ears set upon a long, elegant neck which she carried well up. She was

said to be a very gentle and kind tempered mare, and excellent under saddle with the smooth ambling or pacing gait so prized by the early settlers in being able to travel the rough roads and trails. Her color, markings, and other traits were all very typical of the Narragansett breed. Many of the Narragansett horses also had splash white markings on the body.

JOHN DIMON AND THE NARRAGANSETT STORY

John Dimon was born in 1828 on Mount Hope Farm in Bristol, Rhode Island. He was of English ancestry, born from a family who had been horsemen and horsewomen for many generations.

According to the tradition of his family, John Dimon became well-versed in the handling, care, and breeding of horses from an early age and, at the age of 27, was unanimously appointed judge of the stallion class at the United States Agricultural Society Fair held in Boston, Massachusetts in 1855. Ethan Allen and many other noted stallions of the day were participants in this class. He served in the Civil War as a Lieutenant with the First Rhode Island Cavalry, as the General Superintendent of Horses. Dimon bred and owned many Morgan horses, and happened to be mounted on a Morgan in 1870 when he was acting as mounted escort to U.S. President Ulysses S. Grant on his visit to Woodstock, Connecticut. Grant immediately noticed Dimon's horse was a Morgan, and declared it to be a fine animal. Dimon was, during his life, widely regarded as one of the best horsemen in the country, and began writing his book in 1866, which took some 29 years to complete, representing his life's work with horses.

Many stories were told of the origins of the Narragansett, but John Dimon's account seems most credible as it was a part of his family history handed down from father to son for more than 175 years. Dimon relates the story of his ancestor Daniel Pearce, the son of a well-to-do tenant farmer, who owned a beautiful pure-blooded chestnut stallion, named Rambler, who was to become the progenitor of the Narragansett breed. This horse Rambler was a grandson of the Darley Arabian, who arrived in England in 1704 and became one of the three founding sires of the Thoroughbred.

As it happened, Pearce fell in love with a daughter of the aristocratic Southcote family then living in Hull, England. Since this was an impossible situation for him, he determined to take his colt Rambler and sail for America and, after a long voyage, landed with his horse in Newport, Rhode Island. From there Pearce and his horse set sail on another small boat across the Narragansett Bay bound for Kingston. Somewhere about halfway, the boat was said to capsize, and the horse swam the remaining three miles for shore and Pearce found him several days later running through the woods of Boston Neck. This, Dimon explains, was the origin of the various rumors that the ancestor of the Narragansett breed was a horse found swimming in the sea, and others that he was found running wild through the woods. After the breed became well-recognized, there were numerous tales of this sort, and many who tried to claim that they were the originator of this breed.

Mary Southcote, meanwhile, left her family and inheritance and followed Daniel Pearce to America to marry him. Dimon goes on to say that once settled in the new country, Pearce found the only

roads to be crude trails and rough paths not suitable for galloping, so he was obliged to train Rambler to pace or rack. This was the favored gait of saddle horses in the area at the time and, fortunately, a gait which Rambler easily acquired as trotting horses were then unsuitable to be able to ride any distance over the rough trails.

Pearce kept Rambler as a stock horse for many years and the stallion was widely patronized, especially in the regions of the southern and southwestern counties of Rhode Island, and around Stonington, Connecticut. Rambler's colts were said to be naturally inclined to pace, and his daughters would produce pacers or trotters depending on the gait of the stallion they were bred to. These horses were very sure-footed, and their smooth saddle gait on the stony paths of New England during that era caused them to be in much demand. Descendants of Rambler were crossed upon local mares, which at that time were probably largely of Andalusian descent, and what was then known as the Spanish Jennet. These horses were then bred back to each other, much like the Morgan breed began, in order to fix the pacing gait and other desired traits.

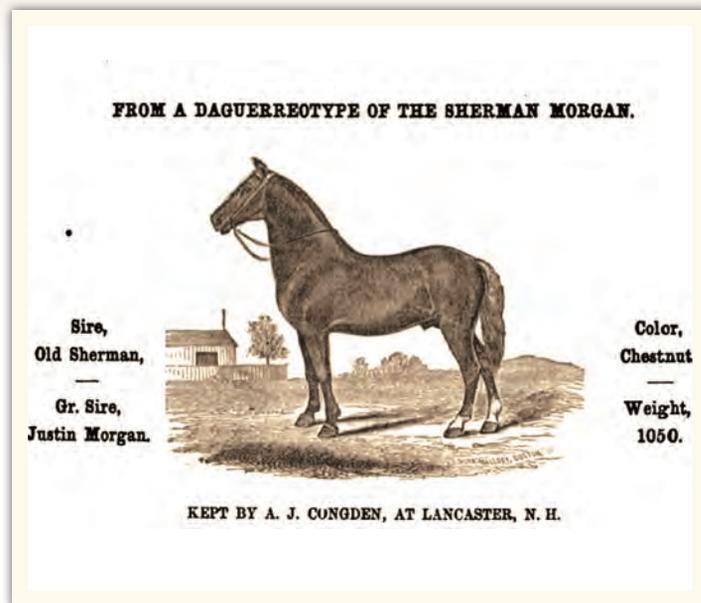
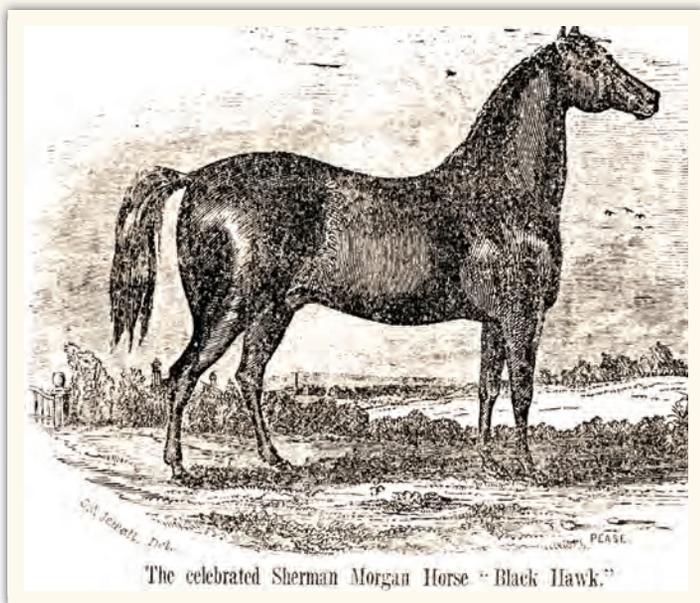
The pacing gait of the Narragansett was unique in that the backbone of the horse remained completely straight with no lateral or side-to-side movement jostling the rider. It was also a gait that was easy and untiring for the horse, and there are many accounts of these horses that describe them as being able to carry a rider weighing up to 250 pounds as many as sixty miles or more per day over the rough stony trails, and some accounts of them even traveling 100 miles per day.

These hardy horses were recognized as a breed and called Narragansett Pacers by about 1725, although there was never any registry or record kept of the pedigrees. Pacing races were already popular at the time, and it was said the Narragansett was able to pace a mile under saddle in a little over two minutes, although it was more than another hundred years later before a Standardbred pacer was able to approach that time. According to the International Museum of the Horse, George Washington owned a Narragansett Pacer, which he raced in 1768. A number of accounts also claim the horse ridden by Paul Revere was a Narragansett Pacer.

After 1760, so many of the Narragansett breed had been exported to Cuba at high prices they began to diminish, and by the turn of the century there were few left as by then the roads had improved and trotters and carriage horses were more in demand. Nevertheless, the Narragansett Pacers were an important part of the early development of the Morgan breed, especially through the dam of Sherman Morgan, and may well be the source of natural gaitedness and the splash gene, which still appears in some Morgan families today.

SHERMAN MORGAN—THE HORSE

Sherman Morgan was foaled on the Cold Hill farm of his breeder, James Sherman, in 1808 or possibly 1809. At that time, Mr. Sherman's youngest son George was about 11 or 12 years old. George worked on his father's farm more or less all his life and took it over when his father died. When interviewed by Linsley for his book *Morgan Horses* published in 1857, George Sherman stated that he had been married for 45 years, which suggests he must have married when he was 14 or 15 years old. Very young marriages were not uncommon in those days. Both George and his



LEFT TO RIGHT: Vermont Black Hawk by Sherman Morgan, as drawn by Solomon Jewett, an influential farmer and breeder of Morgan horses and Merino sheep in Vermont and California. Jewett wrote in a letter to the editor, "Black Hawk has a wide, clean, sinea leg; short from the knee to the pastern; short back; high in the withers; heavy flowing mane and tail; deep in the brisket; eyes bright, lively and prominent; open under the jaws; a lean head, face little dishing; open nostrils; small, delicate muzzle; teeth and countenance savage; action high, proud and graceful, moving bold in harness, and true as the spokes in a hub—combining in every respect strength and beauty, and evincing courage and power from the hind fetlock to the tip of the ear" (Published in the *Genesee Farmer*); An advertisement for Killburn's Sherman Morgan (Sherman Morgan x mare by Justin Morgan). This horse was said to very much resemble his sire, and this portrait has often been mistaken for one of the old Sherman Morgan (*New England Farmer*).

wife recalled that the summer after they were married, his father allowed him to keep and use the Sherman Morgan colt, who was then two or three years old, for work upon the farm.

Thus, Sherman was put to hard work at a young age, which may have been a factor in contributing to his small size. Most accounts agree that he was a good deal smaller than his sire, standing just 13 ³/₄ hands and his weight ranged between 925 to 975 pounds. Like many Morgans, Sherman's coat color varied somewhat during the course of his long life, ranging from a bright chestnut sorrel to a much darker shade. It is not uncommon for the shade of a horse's coat to vary, depending upon age, season, diet, and other factors. He was described at various times by different witnesses, some who remembered him with one white hind foot and some with two, but all agree that his off hind leg was white half-way to the hock and he had a small white strip in the face.

Dimon's book includes among the illustrations an old time portrait of Sherman Morgan which depicts the horse with both hind feet white, the off hind leg being white halfway to the hock. It is possibly the only one from that era as neither Linsley, nor Joseph Battell, author of the *American Morgan Horse Register*, ever included a portrait of Sherman in their works. Many of the descriptions of older horses came from memories of those who knew or saw the horse at a particular time, and there were often discrepancies in recalling the number of white feet a horse had, as well as other minor details. Most accounts do agree that although Sherman was smaller in size he was exceptionally muscular and powerfully built with strong legs, deep chest, a long hip with deep loins, a beautiful head set on a well-placed neck, eyes not large but bright and full, with a lively countenance, and small expressive ears. His back,

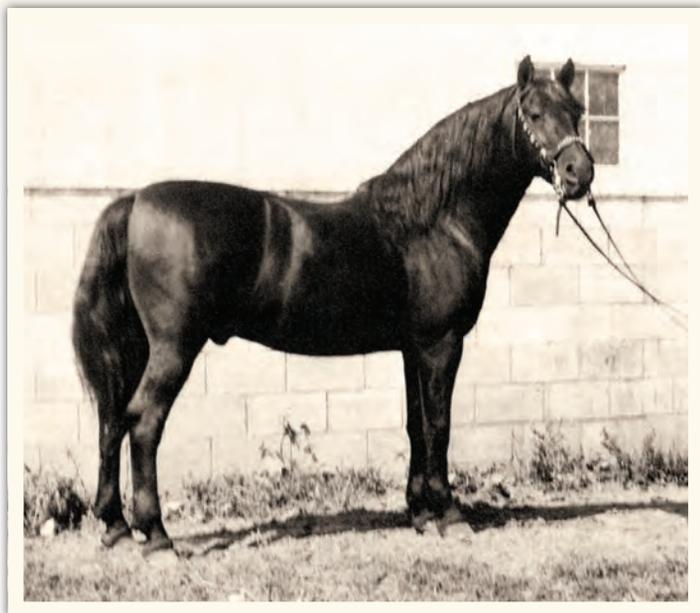
though inclined to be slightly hollow, was short and strong.

An account in the *Albany Cultivator* of 1845 gives the following description:

"A horse called 'Sherman Morgan,' got by the 'old Morgan,' and owned by Mr. Bellows of Bellows Falls, Vermont, is generally believed to have done more towards giving 'character and fame' to the Morgan stock, than any other horse, not excepting the first of that race and name. This horse lived to a great age, and his progeny, which were very numerous, were of unrivalled excellence as roadsters."

The life of Sherman Morgan was similar to his sire's in many respects. By the time he was four years old, James Sherman was working him hard upon the farm, clearing the land. Linsley states that except for about two months each spring when the horse was worked only a little, his labor the rest of the year was very severe. He was kept at work most of the year clearing the farm and, during the winter, Mr. Sherman ran a team from Lyndon, Vermont to Portland, Maine, which for several years consisted of Sherman Morgan and a half-brother sired by the Justin Morgan horse. This was a difficult and rugged route of about 142 miles, passing through the White Mountains. Mr. Sherman was a man of competitive nature, and his little team became famous at every inn from one end of the route to the other. He was in the habit of wagering to match his team at drawing or driving and invariably won his bets until teamsters were unwilling to match horses of any size against the tough Morgan pair.

During the winter, drawing matches were very popular at Lyndon, which consisted of hitching a horse to a sled and filling



LEFT TO RIGHT: Flyhawk (Go Hawk x Florette), taken from an ad titled “Down Memory Lane with Flyhawk” from the July 1974 issue of *The Morgan Horse*. The ad states this photo was taken Sept. 17th, 1940 and the ad was placed by Mrs. Helen Greenwalt. Flyhawk also carried numerous crosses to several sons of Sherman including Black Hawk, Vermont Morgan Champion, Billy Root, Royal Morgan, Green Mountain (Bachop Horse), Batchelder Horse, Cock Of The Rock, and Flint Morgan (AMHA archives); One of the most influential Morgan sires of all time, Jubilee King (Penrod x Daisette), carried multiple crosses to many Sherman sons including Black Hawk, Vermont Morgan Champion, Green Mountain (Bachop Horse), Batchelder Horse, Billy Root, Royal Morgan, and Cock Of The Rock, as well as many daughters of Sherman.

it full of men, then drawing the load up a steep hill just north of the tavern. In these contests, James Sherman would wait until each horse had done his best. Then he would hitch Sherman Morgan to the largest load and add a small boy, for the horse was always willing to try and could almost always move even the heaviest loads at least a little.

Like his sire, Sherman Morgan was also known as a champion runner at short distances; as such contests were still quite popular at that time. His true value as a sire was not recognized until he was past 15 years of age, after the death of his own sire, and he was often used as a teaser for other horses.

In 1819 when Sherman Morgan was about ten or 11 years old, he was sold to Stephen C. Gibbs of Littleton, New Hampshire, and then the next year to John Buckminster of Danville, Vermont, though Gibbs had charge of the horse for two more years. He remained in the Danville area for the next decade.

An advertisement in the *Danville North Star* for 1828, and reprinted in Volume II of the *American Morgan Horse Register* reads: “Notice: For the information of those who may be gratified therewith, the noted and celebrated Dutch, Morgan, or Sherman horse (which is one and the same) will stand for the use of mares ensuing the season on St. Johnsbury Plain on Fridays and Saturdays of each week and the residue of the week at S. West’s on Danville Green. -J. Buckminster.”

Volume II of the *American Morgan Horse Register* lists another ad for Sherman, who was also known in some locations under the name “The Lord North”:

“Lord North otherwise called the Sherman horse and formerly owned in Lyndon, Vermont, was sired by the

old Morgan horse, well known at Randolph, Danville, Montpelier, and through the center and north part of Vermont. Some of his stock are among the finest horses in New England and bear the highest prices of any breed of horses, which are offered in Boston market. Inquiries may be made at Spurr’s and Soaper’s livery stables in Boston, where some of the stock may be seen. The famous mare formerly owned by Adams and Redfield in Londonderry and sold in Boston for \$250, was sired by the same horse and may be seen at Spurr’s stable.”

Sherman was purchased by John Bellows of Lancaster, New Hampshire in 1829. Stephen Gibbs kept him again at Littleton for the 1829 season, and in 1830 he stood at Dover and surrounding area, then at Colonel Jaques’ Ten Hills farm in Charlestown, Massachusetts for the season of 1831. Colonel Jacques tried to get him again the season of 1832 but did not and Sherman was kept instead at Dover, and Durham, New Hampshire, then at Lancaster in 1833, and again at Dover and vicinity in 1834, which was his last season. Sherman Morgan died at Mr. Bellows’s stable on January 9, 1835, having been left in his stall about 10 a.m. in apparent good health, and was found dead of unknown causes when checked again at 1 p.m. He remained sound and free from any blemish or infirmity up to the day of his death, and his skin was preserved, stuffed and exhibited at the stable of Mr. George Bellows in Lancaster.

SONS OF SHERMAN MORGAN

There are 44 sons of Sherman Morgan listed in the Morgan Registry. Of these, there were 18 chestnuts, 12 bay, four black, four brown, three gray, and three of unspecified color. Time and space

will not permit discussing all those who have descendants today, but here we will attempt to cover a few of those whose names may be found when tracing many Morgan pedigrees.

1) BLACK HAWK

Most of the surviving sirelines in the Sherman family today pass through his best-known son Black Hawk. These include the family of Daniel Lambert (Ethan Allen by Black Hawk x Fanny Cook) and descendants of U.S. Government Farm foundation sire General Gates (Denning Allen by Ethan Allen x Fanny Scott), and Sherman Black Hawk (Black Hawk x Peacock mare by Liberty). Foaled in 1833, Black Hawk sired 270 registered foals, an astounding number since there was no registry during his lifetime, and the first volume of the *American Morgan Horse Register* was not published until 1894. For more information on Black Hawk, see “Significant Sire Series: Black Hawk,” *The Morgan Horse*, January 2014.

2) VERMONT MORGAN CHAMPION

The only other son of Sherman Morgan whose sireline survives today was Vermont Morgan Champion; a stylish and powerfully built black stallion foaled in 1826. He was bred by a Mr. Woodward of Jefferson, New Hampshire and out of a mare called Fanny Ann who was described as a full-blooded English hunting mare, though nothing is known of her pedigree. Vermont Morgan Champion stood 15 ½ hands and weighed 1,150 pounds. He was sold to Mr. Knight of Concord, Vermont in 1830, after which he went to Maine for some years, finally being sold back to Concord where he died in 1848.

Harvey Judevine of West Concord, Vermont wrote:

“His stock here proved superior to that of any other horse in this locality. I knew him well when he was taken to Concord, four years old—the best four-year-old I ever saw excepting some of his colts. Mr. Knight lived about one mile from my home. The Billy Root was sometimes on the same route with Knight’s Horse. They were gaited very much alike. Knight’s Horse had no training for speed; a good roadster, and style was the rage then; a powerful horse, good knee action, square trotter, quick motion, not as long gaited as the standard of to-day; a hard horse to beat on the road; kind and easily managed; had very heavy fore parts, Roman nose; was called black, but was not a coal black. I recollect many chestnut-colored colts. His colts were remarkable for kindness of disposition.”

American Morgan Horse Register, Volume I

Although he only sired ten registered offspring, Vermont Morgan Champion left a strong Morgan family which survives today in direct sireline, the family of the great Brunk stallion Knox Morgan, bred by Augustus Dunlap and foaled in Brunswick, Maine in 1891.

Knox Morgan (Mountaineer Morgan x Augustus Dunlap mare by Sagadhoc) traced his sireline to Sherman Morgan in five generations through Sherman’s son Vermont Morgan Champion. Knox Morgan was a rich mahogany bay or seal brown in color, standing 15 ½ hands and weighing 1,100 pounds. He was later purchased by F. G. Chandler who registered him, and won Grand Champion Stallion at the 1904 World’s Fair held in St. Louis,

Missouri. Knox Morgan remained with Chandler until he was 24 years old, and sired 42 foals during that time. The last four years of his life he was owned by J. C. Brunk, siring 11 more foals and leaving behind a huge legacy. His son Senator Knox (x Senata by Senator) was sire of the dam of the great Jubilee King (Penrod x Daisette), and his daughter Florence Chandler (x Senata) was second dam of Flyhawk (Go Hawk x Florette by Allen King). The direct sireline continues through the great Senator Graham (Senator Knox by Knox Morgan x Fanita [Tiffany x Benita by Knox Morgan]), who was bred by Elmer Brown through an agreement with Helen Brunk Greenwalt. Senator Graham, in turn, sired Starfire (x Wanda), the sire of the hugely popular show horse Waseeka’s Nocturne (Starfire x Upwey Benn Quietude). The line to Sherman through Vermont Morgan Champion is well represented by Morgans in all disciplines of the breed, and could easily have assured his place in Morgan history even without the powerful family of Black Hawk.

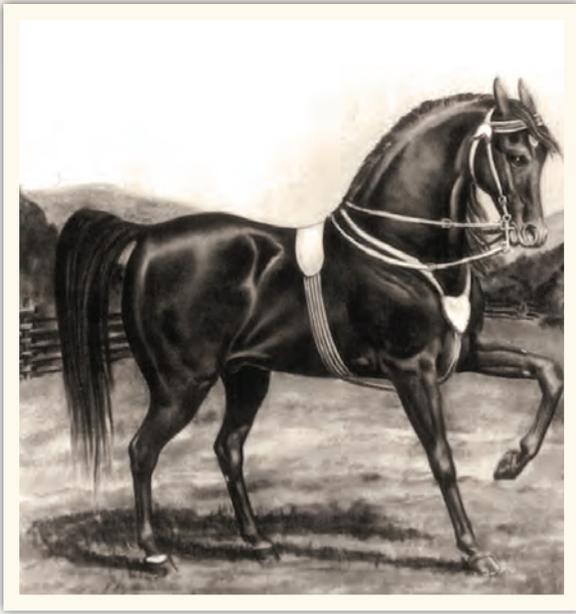
3) BILLY ROOT

Billy Root was a small dark chestnut horse, weighing 942 pounds, marked with a small star, and a little white on his off hind foot. He was bred by Hezekiah Martin of St. Johnsbury, Vermont, and foaled in 1829, out of a daughter of Justin Morgan. This mare had a record of being driven from Portland, Maine to St. Johnsbury, Vermont in a single day on three different occasions, though it was a rugged trip of 120 miles. Billy Root was her only colt. Billy Root passed through many owners, and was kept by W. H. Hoyt of Lyndonville, Vermont for six years, during which time he was bred to an average of 100 mares per year, getting three-quarters of them in foal. Elmer Brown’s foundation stallion Dude Hudson (Fred Hudson x Velma) foaled in 1908 was the last survivor of the direct sireline to Billy Root, however multiple crosses to him may be found in the pedigrees of most Morgans today.

4) ROYAL MORGAN

Royal Morgan was believed to be the longest-lived son of Sherman, and lived to a remarkable age of 37 years. Also known as Morgan Rattler, he was foaled in 1821 and bred by Mr. Aldrich of St. Johnsbury, Vermont. His dam was a dark bay daughter of Justin Morgan known as the Aldrich mare, highly regarded for her beauty, speed, and endurance. Royal Morgan was similar in size to his sire, standing 13 ¾ hands and weighing 1,000 pounds. He was dark bay with black points, heavy black mane and tail, and marked with a small star. Royal Morgan was exhibited at the State Fair in Burlington, Vermont, when he was 37, but he was still sound and vigorous. He was said to have jumped a three-foot stone wall, the day before he died, to get in with other horses.

In a letter to the “Spirit of the Times” in 1859, reprinted in Volume I of the *American Morgan Horse Register*, Solomon Steel, who owned Royal Morgan during the last years of his life wrote, “The first time I ever saw Royal Morgan was at Derby Line, Vermont, when he was five years old...Having seen the original Justin Morgan, I then regarded him as nearly a fac-simile of that horse. This circumstance is easily accounted for when we consider that Royal Morgan was a grandson of old Justin on the side of both his sire and dam. At this time he possessed a greater combination



LEFT TO RIGHT: Billy Root (Sherman Morgan x daughter of Justin Morgan) (Publicly shared photo from allbreedpedigree.com); Finley's Morgan Tiger (Dr. May's Morgan Tiger by Royal Morgan x mare by Gen. Hibbard) (*American Morgan Horse Registry*).

(in my judgment) of good points than I had ever seen in any other horse, that is, a horse for all work. His head, ear and eye were excellent, and every other point fully equal to Mr. Linsley's account, with all the important muscles much larger than I have ever seen upon any other horse of his size except old Justin."

Royal Morgan is also frequently found in the extended pedigrees of most Morgans today.

5) FLINT MORGAN

Flint Morgan was a dark chestnut of 15 hands and 1050 pounds, foaled in 1823. Sired by Sherman Morgan and out of a Morgan mare, he was bred by John Bolton of Danville, Vermont. He had several owners, and was sold in 1830 for \$35 to John Bellows, who also had Sherman Morgan at the time. Bellows advertised him in 1836 as follows:

"Flint Morgan is a beautiful chestnut, stands 15 hands, now 11 years old; was got by old Sherman Morgan, and from his appearance, size, matchless strength and performance, coupled with the fame of the stock and blood of his dam (who was a descendant of the old Goss Morgan), justifies the assertion that he presents a fairer prospect than any horse now extant of perpetuating the fame of his illustrious sire."

American Morgan Horse Register, Volume I

Although he left only three registered offspring, Flint Morgan left a strong impact on the Morgan breed through his son Napoleon Morgan, whose dam was out of the Sherman son Cock Of The Rock. Napoleon Morgan was a dark chestnut standing 15 hands and weighing 1,000 pounds, foaled in 1840 and bred by Daniel Watson of Sandwich, New Hampshire. His dam was said to be unsurpassed for beauty and speed by any other Morgan mare in New England. He won the stallion sweepstakes premium at the Ohio State Fair in 1852, The Tennessee State Fair in 1859, and it was claimed he won

all premiums he ever competed for, and was never beaten in harness except for one race on the ice. He was owned for several years by Stephen French who drove him in harness on a hilly road, 14 miles and back in one hour and 54 minutes. He was ridden throughout the Civil War by a Confederate officer, although he was then in his 20s, and evidently survived the war, for it was said that he still looked like a colt at the age of 28, which would have been 1868. Napoleon Morgan was the sire of many fast trotters, some of which sold for as much as \$3,000, which was a large price for a horse at that time. He was the sire of Jennie, the dam of Fearnought (by Young Morrill) who was Champion Trotting Stallion of the World in 1868, when he won a \$10,000 race in Buffalo and set a new record for the mile of 2:23 ¼. This line has many descendants today through Flyhawk (Go Hawk x Florette), and his sire Go Hawk (Sunny Hawk x Bombo), both used by J. C. Brunk; as well as Sellman breeding through The Admiral (Jubilee De Jarnette x Morrill Queen).

6) GREEN MOUNTAIN (BACHOP HORSE)

Green Mountain, also known as the Bachop Horse, was bred by William Bachop of Barnet, Vermont and foaled in 1828. He was a handsome black chestnut in color, and powerfully built, standing 15 ¼ hands and weighing 1,125 pounds. His dam was a black mare by the Dean Horse Of Danville, also believed to be a son of Sherman. He was the sire of Black Morgan (x mare by Levi Wilder colt, son of the Batchelder Horse) and was black, 15 ½ hands, and weighed 1,000 pounds. This is another line that may be found in most Morgan pedigrees today. The second dam of the famous mare Artemisia (Ethan Allen 3rd x Lady Laura) was a granddaughter of Black Morgan, and so was the second dam of her sire, Ethan Allen 3rd.

7) COCK OF THE ROCK

Cock Of The Rock was foaled in 1822 or 1823 and bred by Oliver Bowers of Danville, Vermont, out of a daughter of Justin Morgan.



LEFT TO RIGHT: Ripton (Sherman Morgan x granddaughter of Justin Morgan), July 19, 1842, beat Confidence, in a match for \$500 a side, 2-mile heats in harness over Centreville course, L.I. winning in two straight heats, time 5:10 - 5:14 1/2 (Library of Congress); The great reinsman, Hiram Woodruff, driver and trainer of Ripton (*The Trotting Horse of America*).

He was one of the most striking sons of Sherman, a beautiful light golden sorrel color with a heavy white mane and tail, one or two white feet, and his face was white below the eyes. He was 15 ½ hands, and weighed 1,100 pounds, and was an elegant carriage horse. He was the sire of Coburn’s American Star, bred by Judge Frederick Sumner of Charlestown, New Hampshire, and out of a daughter of Justin Morgan. He was also a beautiful golden sorrel with star, white mane and tail. Cock Of The Rock and his son were purchased as a driving pair by Ira Coburn of New York. Mrs. C. C. Bradford, a daughter of Ira Coburn recalled, “I can remember American Star and Cock Of The Rock; it was the talk of the town how beautiful these horses were, and every one came to see them from far and near” (*American Morgan Horse Register*, Volume I).

Coburn’s American Star in turn was the sire of the well-known trotting sire, Seeley’s American Star, whose daughters contributed much to the success of Rysdyk’s Hambletonian as a sire. This line also survives today through Brunk breeding, and may be found in the pedigrees of Flyhawk and Jubilee King. It also may be found in the pedigrees of many racing Standardbreds of today, including Trixton, winner of the 2014 Hambletonian, the premier trotting race for three-year-olds.

8) BATCHELDER HORSE

The Batchelder horse was bred by David Batchelder, North Danville, Vermont. He was a beautiful dapple gray in color, 14 ½ hands, taking his color from his dam who was a fast trotting mare of half French blood. He was advertised to stand at Danville and Barnet, Vermont for the season of 1833, and in Danville, Walden, Hardwick Hollow, and Greensboro, Vermont for the season of 1835. George Bellows of Lancaster, New Hampshire, who knew the horse well recalled, “I was well acquainted with the Batchelder

horse, and I think he was a fine Morgan stallion. He was of a beautiful gray color, standing 14 ½ hands high, a stylish, spirited, fast trotter, and his colts were very good and fast. The Morgan horses are celebrated for their longevity and soundness over any breed of horses of which I have knowledge.” Although he left no registered offspring, the Batchelder Horse may be found in the extended pedigrees of most Morgans today.

9) RIPTON

Although Joseph Battell, author of the *American Morgan Horse Register*, was passionate about ferreting out the fastest trotters of the day and proving they were Morgans or at least had a strong component of Morgan blood, he never discovered the true pedigree of the great trotter Ripton. Ripton’s breeding as given by John Dimon, is different from what Battell was able to find and the history of this remarkable gelding may be a new story for many Morgan readers. Ripton was a striking bay horse of 15 hands, with four irregular white stockings and a blaze in the face, built after the Morgan pattern. He was bred in Ripton, Vermont, and foaled in 1830. Ripton was a son of Sherman Morgan and his dam was a granddaughter of Justin Morgan. Because of his white markings, he was gelded when two years old and sent to the race course at five, trotting a mile in 2:42 the first time he ever stepped on a track. Ripton was very much like Ethan Allen in his smooth trotting action. The great reinsman Hiram Woodruff began training Ripton when he was ten years old and noted,

“His style of going was very fine—as near perfection as anything I have ever seen...He went as level as the flow of a smooth stream that is swift and deep.”

The Trotting Horse of America, Hiram Woodruff, 1871

In May of 1842, he raced best of three, two-mile heats over the

Sherman Morgan ≈ HISTORY LESSON

Beacon Course against the good horse Confidence and the famous mare Lady Suffolk (by Engineer 2d, son of Engineer by Justin Morgan). Confidence was the favorite, but Ripton, driven by Hiram Woodruff won easily in 5:10 ½ and 5:12 ½. Later that season, Ripton faced Lady Suffolk at the Huntington Park Course in Philadelphia, and taking the lead in the first heat, won in the then unheard of time of 5:07. In the second heat, the check-piece of the bit got in his mouth and he couldn't trot but Woodruff managed to pull the bit straight and save his distance. Finally, in the third heat Ripton and Lady Suffolk went head to head for nearly the entire two miles. Lady Suffolk's driver was using the whip for all he was worth as they neared the finish, while Woodruff rallied Ripton with the bit, and the courageous little horse managed to pass the Lady and win by just two feet in a time of 5:17. On July 19th 1842 Ripton beat Confidence in a match race for \$500 a side, two mile heats in harness at the Centerville Course, Long Island, winning two straight heats in 5:10 and 5:14 1/2. Ripton trotted fourteen two-mile heats and five three-mile heats that season, altogether winning thirteen of those races.

10) SHERMAN MORGAN (KILBURN'S)

Kilburn's Sherman Morgan was believed to be the last colt of old Sherman Morgan. He was bred by Moses Cook of Campton, New Hampshire, out of a daughter of Justin Morgan and foaled in 1835 after the death of his sire. He was dark chestnut in color with two white hind ankles and a light colored tail; 15 hands tall, 1,050 pounds. He was said to strongly resemble his sire except he was larger and somewhat heavier in build. An old daguerreotype of this horse was published in an advertisement in the *New England Farmer*, as well as in Linsley's work, where it has been confused by some with his sire. This advertisement describes him as follows:

"This horse, of known pedigree, as above, was 19 years old in August last. He was raised in Campton, New Hampshire, and has been kept in New Hampshire, Vermont and New York. He now stands at the stable where the celebrated 'Old Sherman' died, in 1835. Of him he is almost an exact pattern, on an enlarged scale. He is considered, by judges who have known both, a worthy successor to so distinguished a sire.

"Of great docility, spirit, energy, speed and endurance; of beautiful color; of elegant form and action, he possesses an unusual combination of desirable qualities, and his well-known stock is fully proved to be of the highest excellence.

"Very few studs sired by the 'Old Sherman,' the most famous of the Morgans, still live—the 'original Vermont Black Hawk' being one. The Sherman, some years younger than any other, is believed to be the only one east of Connecticut."

Kilburn's Sherman Morgan left only two registered offspring, which did not breed on, but interestingly, has a number of living descendants through several different lines in the Standardbred breed.

IMPACT ON THE BREED

The influence of several sons of Sherman Morgan, though not surviving in direct sireline, is woven in through the dam lines over



Senata (Senator x Daisy), bred by J. C. Brunk, was Grand Champion mare at the 1904 St. Louis World's Fair; Artemesia (Ethan Allen 3rd x Lady Laura) was another influential Morgan, best known as the dam of Mansfield (x Bennington) and several full siblings bred by the U.S. Government Farm in what was considered the "golden cross" of the day (AMHA photo archives); Quietude (Troubadour Of Willowmoor x Ruth), dam of Upwey Ben Don and Upwey Benn Quietude (x Upwey King Benn), as well as dam of Sonfield (x Mansfield) (AMHA photo archives).

HISTORY LESSON *≈ Sherman Morgan*

and over again. Almost every Morgan alive today has multiple crosses to these horses, whether Lippitt, Lambert, sport, Western working, show, or simply backyard Morgan. One might suppose these horses were too far back in the pedigree to have much of an influence, but when the crosses are repeated, and horses are bred to others having similar crosses far back in the pedigree, the influence can be handed down through many generations. Consider, for example, the great old foundation mare Daisy (Billy Bodette x mare by Billy Folsom), owned by J. C. Brunk. Registered in Volume I of the *American Morgan Horse Register*, Daisy was chestnut with strip in face, foaled in 1884, and bred by Lemuel Hunt of East Haven, Vermont. Her sireline goes back to Sherman Morgan in five generations through Green Mountain (Bachop Horse). She also has three crosses to Billy Root, as well as crosses to Royal Morgan and Vermont Morgan Champion, and her tail female line goes back to the Atkins mare by Sherman. Altogether, Daisy carries more 26 percent of the blood of Sherman Morgan, even though she was born 76 years later. Daisy's daughter Senata (x Senator), foaled in 1898, carried more than 29 percent of the blood of old Sherman.

Among the sons of Sherman, which can be frequently found in the pedigrees of most Morgans today through the female lines, are Billy Root, Royal Morgan, Green Mountain (Bachop Horse), and the Batchelder Horse. Just a few important Morgans which have carried these bloodlines forward include:

- Artemisia (Ethan Allen 3rd x Lady Laura) a foundation mare for the U.S. Government Farm and best remembered for several full siblings she produced when bred to Bennington (General Gates x Mrs. Culvers), including Mansfield, Canfield, Querido, and others.
- Quietude (Troubadour Of Willowmoor x Ruth), dam of Roland Hill's famous Western working sire Sonfield (x Mansfield), as well as the great show stallion Upwey Ben Don (x Upwey King Benn) and his full sister Upwey Benn Quietude, who was in turn the dam of Waseeka's Nocturne (x Starfire). Merriehill After Hours (Mizrahi x Merriehill Dusk To Dawn), 2014 World Champion

Stallion, carries at least 15 crosses to the mare Quietude.

- Jubilee King (Penrod x Daisette)
- Flyhawk (Go Hawk x Florette)

All of these horses carry multiple crosses to the sons of Sherman mentioned above, woven in repeatedly through the dam lines. Several daughters of Sherman may also be found in the extended pedigrees, and additionally all have crosses through Black Hawk as well as other sons. Through these and many others too numerous to mention, the influence of Sherman on the Morgan breed remains strong today. ■

RESOURCES

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