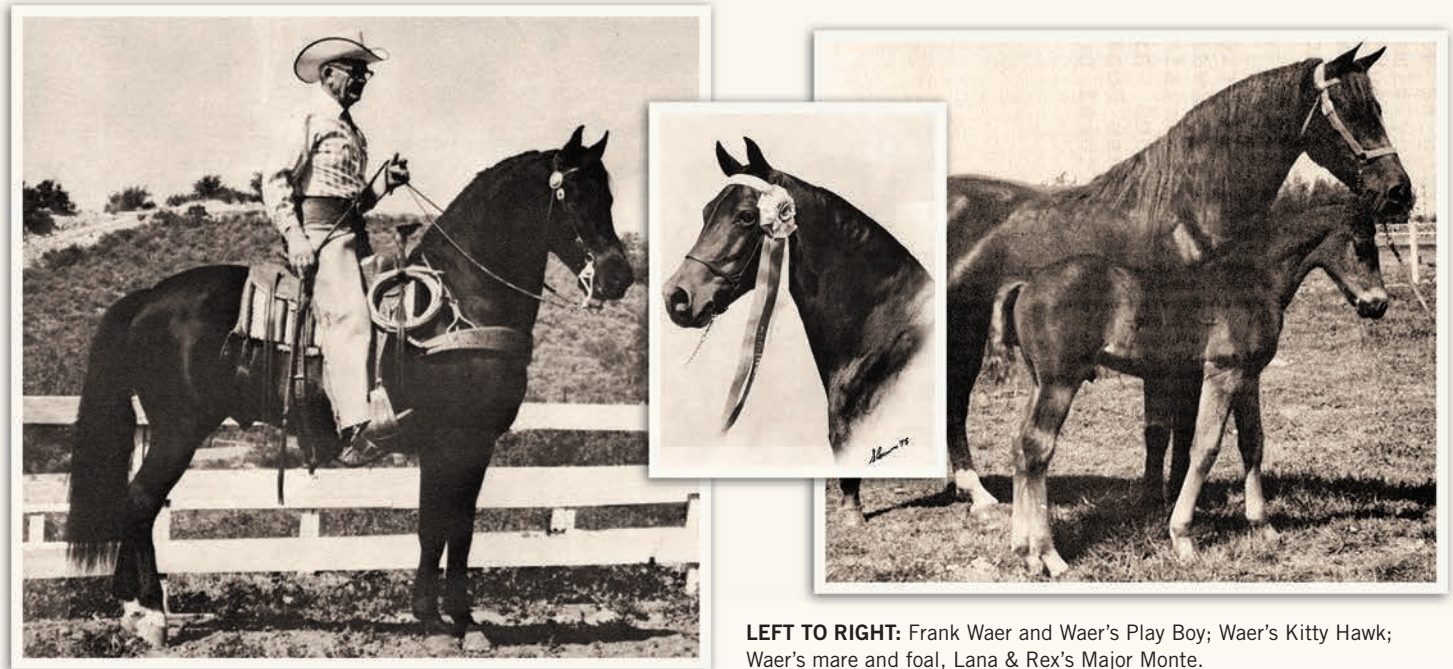




# A Brief History of Wear's Morgan Horses

By Helen Herold, *Director, National Museum of the Morgan Horse*



LEFT TO RIGHT: Frank Waer and Waer's Play Boy; Waer's Kitty Hawk; Waer's mare and foal, Lana & Rex's Major Monte.

Frank Wellington Waer was one of four children, born in Missouri in 1895. His father, Robert, was a veteran of the Civil War serving in Company C, 79<sup>th</sup> Illinois and had been captured in the South. His mother, Emerett Mae, was part of a large family in Wisconsin. Frank's family moved several times, living in Missouri and Kansas, before moving to California in 1911. Robert taught Frank to "love and handle horses" and owned Morgans and Hamblteonians which he liked to cross.

*The Morgan Horse World Of Frank Wellington Waer*, his autobiography as told to Linda L. Ford, was published in 1978. The stories he told of his early life recall fond memories of his interactions with farm animals and his motivation for hard work. He had many odd jobs including newspaper delivery, picking oranges, buying and selling cattle, growing vegetables to earn extra money during the Depression, and training horses. He owned his first horse at age six, a sorrel mare named Ginger, who he rode to school each day for five years. His formal education ended in fifth grade.

In 1912 Frank began working for the Murphy Oil Company, which later became Standard Oil Of California, where he stayed for 44 years. His first job there was driving their team of horses until the arrival of trucks, when he started working on the oilrigs. Frank married in 1914, had two children, Roy and Helen, and began

buying parcels of land near Huntington Beach. Here he owned his own horses and took horses in to be trained for \$25 a month. He and his first wife separated in 1939 and he first met Frieda, who would become his second wife, that same year.

Frieda was already involved with Morgans. Her husband T. R. Rex died in 1949, leaving his Morgans to Frieda, which included Rex's Major Monte (Monte L x Lana) who became a breeding stallion for Waer's Morgans. Frank and Frieda married and started raising Morgans with five horses—Monte L, Rex's Major Monte, and three foundation mares; Lana, Ruthven's Kathryn Ann, and Gontola. They bred a total of 164 Morgans, most of them carrying the Waer's prefix. Morgan horses from their program were sold throughout the United States, and also went to Canada, Old Mexico, and Guatemala. Frank and Frieda were part of the movement that reflected a rapidly growing popularity of Morgan horses in California during the 1950s and 1960s.

**Note:** *Morgan horses first appeared in California as part of the Gold Rush of 1849, and had to endure difficult journeys on ships or overland through the Rockies. Many of the first to arrive were Black Hawk descendants and became popular as noted trotters. The numbers decreased until the 1920s and 1930s when large cattle ranches appeared. Reginald Parsons was one of the first ranchers to bring Morgans back to California in the 1920s.* ■

Source: *The Morgan Horse World Of Frank Wellington Waer*, Linda L.Ford, 1978.