COLORFUL

THE INFLUENCE —AND MYSTERIES— OF VICKY V

By Laura Hornick Behning with Stephen Kinney

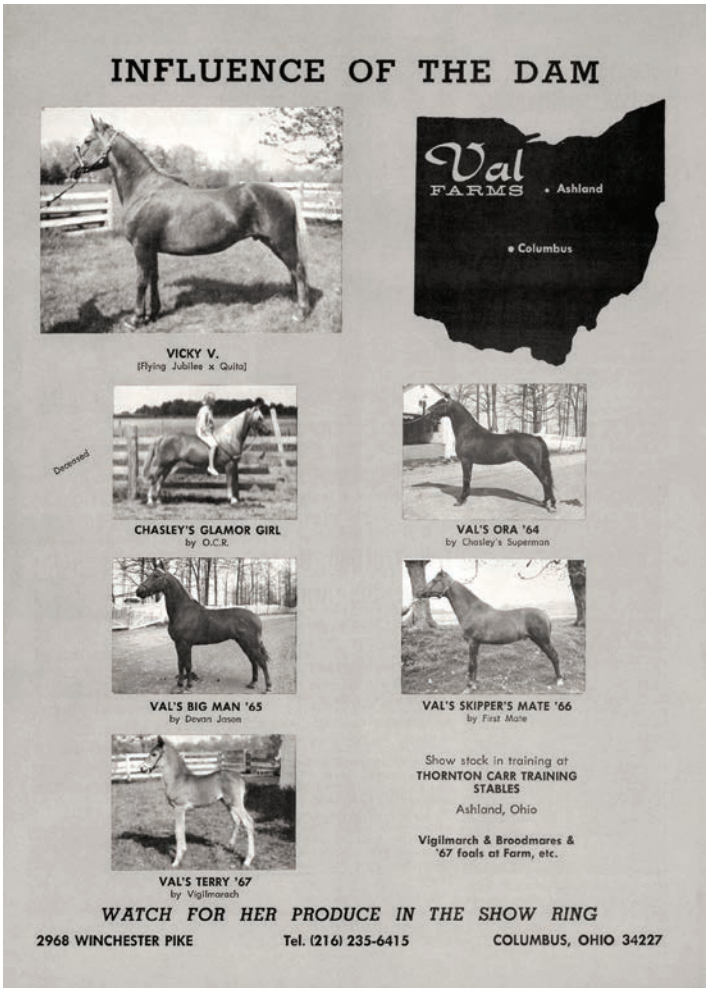
Around the influential and colorful 1952 mare Vicky V lies an enigma. As was customary in the day, she was registered chestnut, though pictures of her and descendants confirm she was a palomino. Modern genetics teach us that the recorded color of some of her offspring are technically unlikely. Then there is her celebrated son Val's Terry, so well-known as a flaxen chestnut, but a modern-day coat color test might indicate he was actually a very dark palomino.

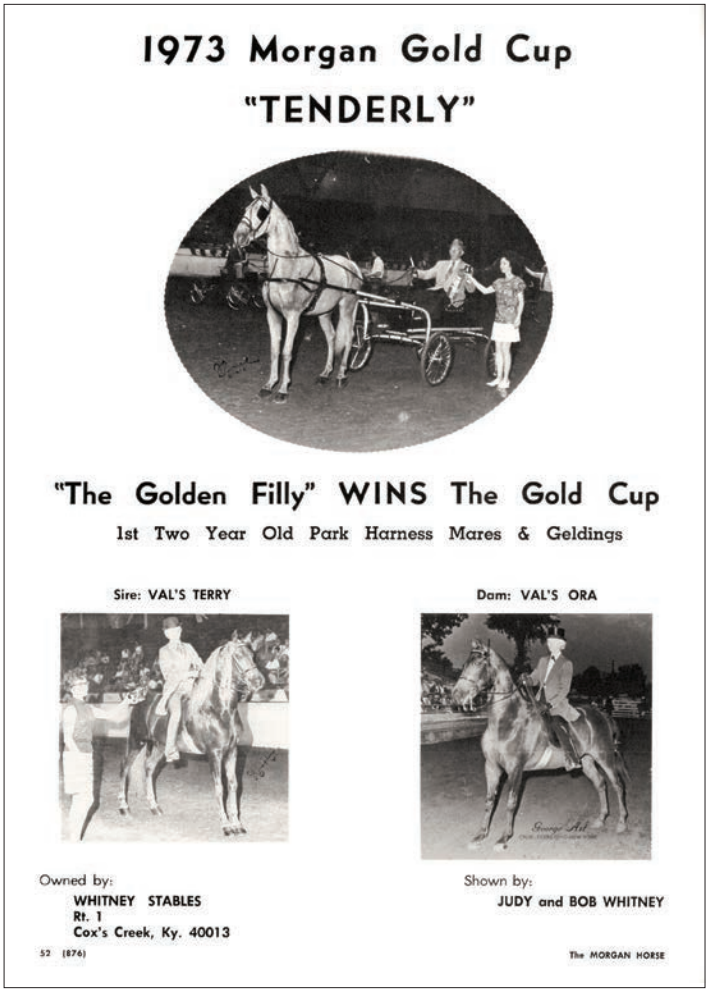
This is all complicated by the fact there are no extant colorful lines to Vicky V. But the enigma compels our attention since her name appears in the pedigrees of so many modern day Morgans. She is the grandam of Serenity Masterpiece, one of the most prominent stallions in show bloodlines today.

VICKY V

Over the years, I have gathered information and photos of Vicky V and her family. Like many colorful Morgans of her day, she was not registered as such. Science had not yet revealed much of what

ABOVE: The photo of Vicky V from the 1967 ad from Val Farms.





ADVERTISEMENTS

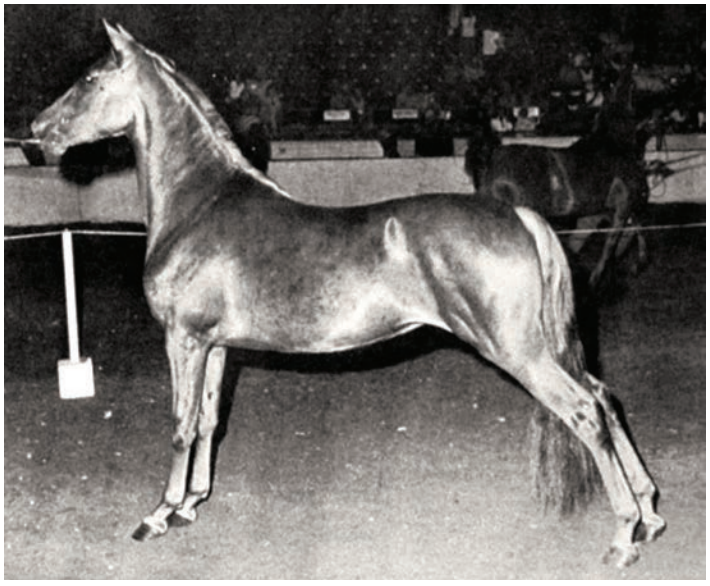
Advertisements from *The Morgan Horse* for Vicky V and her offspring (July 1967) and for Tenderly and her parents (August 1973) provide some of the photographic evidence for their actual colors.

we now know about equine color genetics and, until recently, the more unusual colors were not popular in the Morgan breed. Vicky V, though registered as a chestnut, was actually a palomino, proven via her photo, her produce, and firsthand testimony. She had 15 foals, but only two of them were known to be colorfuls, again proven via photos. Two of her other registered-as-chestnut offspring were bred to each other and produced a palomino, indicating that at least one of them was, in fact, a cream dilute. Statistically speaking, half of Vicky V's 15 foals should have been cream dilutes, but this was nowhere near the case. Why this did not happen remains a mystery.

Vicky V (Flying Jubilee x Quita) was foaled in 1952 on the L. U. Sheep Ranch in Worland, Wyoming. She was largely Brunk-bred with several lines to those Brunk pillars Flyhawk and Jubilee King. Her cream gene came from her dam, Quita (Highview King x Luxury), registered as dun but known to be palomino via photos and her produce. The color line continued back through Quita's dam, Luxury (Night Tide x Mallow), a buckskin who is registered as dun. Luxury was one of four daughters of Night Tide with cream dilution lines down to the present day. Vicky V was a good-looking mare with quality far above most other colorful mares of her generation. Unfortunately, she did not live during a time when color was tolerated, much less appreciated or actively sought after.

Kathi (Rutledge) Hummel remembers Vicky V as a broodmare at her family's Serenity Farm in Ohio. "She was a palomino," Kathi confirms. "Not an unattractive mare, but not a classically beautiful Morgan mare either. She was good-bodied, put together well, tough as nails, and very smart."

Vicky V's first four foals were for breeder CL Rutherford of Mobile, Alabama, who bred Morgans under the Chasley prefix. Her production record begins with the palomino (registered chestnut) mare Chasley Glamor Girl (by O C R), who died in 1965 at age six, having produced two foals, neither of them colorful. She was followed by Chasley Dapper Man in 1960 (a gelding also by O C R and registered as chestnut, no offspring); Chasley's Queen in 1961 (a mare by Chasley Don Dandy, registered as chestnut, no offspring); and Chasley's Scoot in 1963 (a mare by Chasley Superman, registered as palomino).



VICKY V OFFSPRING

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: Offspring of Vicky V include Serenity Intrigue, Serenity Victoria, and the palomino Chasley's Scoot, whose daughter, Sage Brook Sarah (by Figure's Defender), was also a palomino (photos © Bebe Redwing, Bob Moseder).

CHASLEY'S SCOOT AND HER DAUGHTER, SAGE BROOK SARAH

Chasley's Scoot was unique among Vicky V's 15 offspring because she was the only one who was actually registered as her correct color of palomino. And with her, the story of Vicky V takes its first interesting turn, because Chasley's Scoot produced six foals—one brown, four chestnut, and one palomino. It is quite possible one or more of the chestnuts or the brown were actually cream dilutes, though none of their progeny was registered as such, so the hunt for color ends there. But the palomino daughter Sage Brook Sarah, was a good one. Sarah was Chasley's Scoot's final foal and arrived in 1982. She was sired by Figure's Defender, making her a double Chasley Superman granddaughter. Sarah took the New England show circuit by storm, being the first colorful in the area to be shown in park classes. Later in her show career she switched to hunter pleasure and was successful in that division as well. This beautiful mare was owned by Maureen Jagodowski of Belchertown, Massachusetts. Unfortunately for Vicky V's color line, Sage Brook Sarah never produced a foal.

TENDERLY, DOUBLE GRANDDAUGHTER OF VICKY V

Vicky V was sold in late 1963 or early 1964, back in foal to Chasley Superman, to Virginia Fletcher of Mount Gilead, Ohio, who produced Morgans with the Val prefix. In 1964, Vicky V foaled the registered-as-chestnut mare named Val's Ora. Ora continues the mystery behind the actual colors of Vicky V's offspring. As a four-year-old she was purchased by Judy Whitney of the famous Whitney Stables in Cox's Creek, Kentucky. I have heard from many breeders who saw Val's Ora that she was a bay, not chestnut as she

was registered. Old black and white photos of her show a very dark horse who indeed looks dark bay or brown, complete with pangare on her muzzle, not uncommon on dark bay and brown horses. But bay or brown would be impossible if her sire was the chestnut Chasley Superman, as two chestnut-based horses can never produce a black-based offspring. If the color discrepancy was not a parentage issue, a possibility was that Val's Ora was simply a very dark black chestnut that appeared black or dark bay. There are several examples of such dark chestnuts in Vicky V's immediate family.

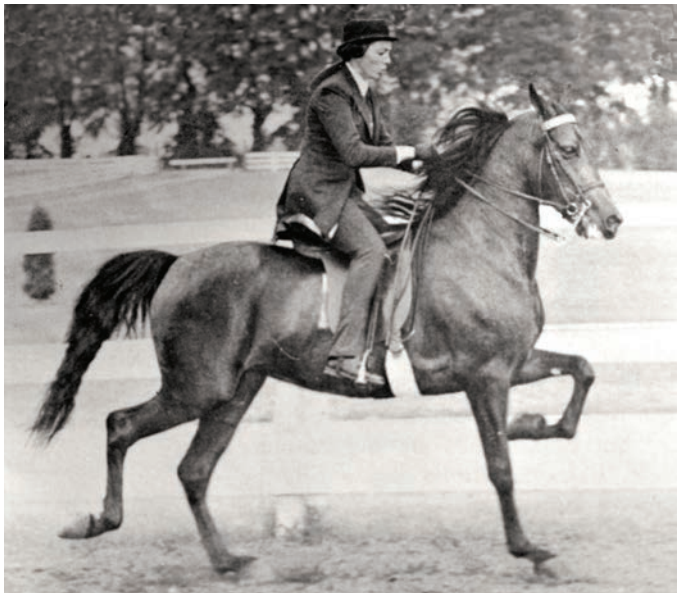
Val's Ora produced only one foal, by her half-brother Val's Terry (Vigilmarch x Vicky V). This mare was Tenderly, registered as chestnut, but instead was most definitely palomino. But without a cream dilute parent, where would her cream gene have come from? Tenderly's sire, Val's Terry, was a beautiful animal who won the World Champion Gelding title a record eight times. He appeared to be a flaxen chestnut in some pictures and a dark palomino in others. Tenderly was also the only offspring of Val's Terry as he was gelded in 1970 as a three-year-old. Could he possibly have been a palomino? Some palominos are indeed very "red" appearing. Or could Tenderly's dam, Val's Ora, have actually been a very dark, brown-based buckskin or a smoky black, thus contributing a cream gene to her daughter? Genetic science dictates that one of these suggestions has to be fact, but the final answer will always remain a mystery!

Tenderly produced six offspring, all registered as bay (one), brown (one), or chestnut (four). Longtime Morgan breeder and historian Renee Page told me she remembers seeing the bay, Jeopardy (by UVM Promise) at Whitney Stables and that he was actually a buckskin. Jeopardy was gelded and sired no offspring. And then there was Beamingly (by Beamington), a 1981 brown gelding. Before he was gelded, Beamingly produced palomino and buckskin when bred to non-colorful mates, indicating that he too must have been a dark buckskin or smoky black, not brown as he was registered. His colorful offspring are Marbo's Creampuff, a 1985 palomino mare out of Marbo's Miss Glory, and THM Friendship, a 1986 buckskin stallion out of Manessa Lu. Neither horse bred on.

TRANSITION TO SERENITY FARMS

Vicky V's 1965 and 1966 offspring, Val Big Man (by Devan Jason) and Val Skipper's Mate (by First Mate), respectively, were registered as chestnut geldings who left no progeny. Val Skipper's Mate looks as though he may have been palomino in the one black and white photo I have seen of him, but it is too small to determine that for sure.

Vicky V foaled the previously mentioned Val's Terry (by Vigilmarch) in 1967. She did not have a foal for the next two years. In 1970, once again in foal to Vigilmarch, Vicky V was sold to the Rutledge family of Serenity Farm in Medina, Ohio. In May of that year, she produced Serenity Intrigue, a beautiful black chestnut stallion who left his mark on Morgans in the southeast for many years. In 1990, at age 20, he was sold to Catherine Sampson of Trillium Morgans in Ontario, Canada, where he sired his last foals and lived out his days in the company of the smoky black Chingadero daughter, H Loli.



TENDERLY

When the Vicky V son Val's Terry was bred to the Vicky V daughter Val's Ora, the resultant offspring was the palomino Tenderly, advertised in a 1973 ad as "The Golden Filly." (top photo © Bob Moseder)

Serenity Intrigue was followed by a full sibling in 1971, the chestnut mare Serenity Victoria. She was a prolific producer of 14 offspring, none of them colorful, so we can guess that Victoria was not a misregistered palomino. Her picture shows a horse that appears flaxen chestnut.

A SHOW RING LEGACY

The remaining five offspring recorded from Vicky V were born between the years of 1972 and 1976, and all were sired by the chestnut Fleetwing son, Black River Major. All were registered as chestnut and, with the possible exception of Serenity Majorvictry, who died as a yearling (thus leaving no progeny to give us a clue as to his actual color) and Serenity Vicky, who only had one foal (also chestnut), that is most likely the actual color of these offspring. Perhaps the most notable of this final group was the 1975 chestnut mare Serenity Remember Me, dam of Park Saddle World Champion Serenity Masterpiece (1982 bay stallion by Serenity Grandmaster) and the 1980 chestnut mare Serenity Kimberly (by Serenity March Heir), dam of Minion Valentino, the sire of Minion Millennium. Thus, Valentino is a double grandson of Serenity Remember Me with a double dose of the blood of Vicky V.

The fact Vicky V is the grandam of such a significant sire as Serenity Masterpiece makes exploring her influence all the more compelling. In the much-quoted article "Morgan Show and Sport Bloodlines: A Comparison" (*The Morgan Horse,* January/February 2021), author Jack Stang states "…the second significant show line is represented by horses having the Serenity prefix—Serenity Masterpiece, Serenity Grandmaster, and Serenity Remember Me…" (By "second," Stang is making a cross reference to the statistically-first most significant sire line in Morgan show pedigrees, that of Waseeka's In Command.) Charts accompanying the article indicate that Morgan horses who won world titles over a decade in the major park and pleasure show ring disciplines are linebred to Serenity Masterpiece, with an average range of 21 to 26 percent of his bloodline in their pedigrees, depending on the specific discipline.

There are many bright and flashy colored chestnuts descending from the prolific Serenity Masterpiece bloodline, including the Hall of Fame Broodmare Pompp And Pazzaz and her double Masterpiece son Minion Millennium. And while there are colorful descendants of Serenity Masterpiece, they do not get their color from the famous stallion or his grandam, Vicky V. Cream is a dominant gene, so for a horse to be a heterozygous cream dilute (palomino, buckskin, or smoky black) at least one parent must be a cream dilute themselves; cream cannot skip generations (homozygous cream dilutes—cremello, perlino, and smoky creams—have parents who are both cream dilutes). As an example, the striking palomino EQE Maker's Mark CH (Minion Millennium x Excel's Elusive Dream) inherits his color from his palomino dam, a daughter of the creme stallion Nashboro Sir Galahad, and not from his Serenity Masterpiece relatives.

The last foal from Vicky V, born in 1976 when the mare was

MASTERPIECE BLOODLINE

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: The prominent show horse sire Serenity Masterpiece is a grandson of Vicky V through his dam, Vicky V's daughter, Serenity Remember Me. The Masterpiece son Minion Valentino is a double grandson of Serenity Remember Me, thus a double great grandson of Vicky V. The top-rated contemporary sire Minion Millennium has three crosses to Vicky V, the additional one through his dam, Pompp And Pazazz, BHOF. However, as the author explains, these stallions do not pass on the cream dilution as they themselves are not cream dilutes. For example, the palomino EQE Maker's Mark CH, sired by Minion Millennium, gets his color from his dam's sire, the cremello Nashboro Sir Galahad (photos Howard Schatzberg, Stuart Vesty).

24, was Serenity Heather (by Black River Major). Interestingly, she is listed in the Registry as expunged. An inquiry to the AMHA Registry garnered the information that she was expunged in 1982 due to a parent verification problem.

Articles on colorful genetics are easier to write when there is data, and better validated when there are colorful descendants. While neither exists in the case of Vicky V, the ambiguous records of both her own color and that of her produce, combined with her prominent presence in Morgan pedigrees, has made her story one that was waiting to be explored. In the words of playwright Tennessee Williams, "Life is an unanswered question, but let's still believe in the dignity and importance of the question." ■