

# The Building Blocks in Pedigrees

By Denny Emerson



**LEFT TO RIGHT:** Denny at the 1957 Green Mountain Horse Association 100-Mile Ride, mounted on Lippitt Sandy (by Lippitt Sam); One of the Denny's current Morgan mares, DRF All Eyes On Me, makes the author's point. She traces to Lippitt Georgia, also by Lippitt Sam, in the eighth generation where she appears as the dam of Broadwall St Pat by Parade.

A quotation I came across recently spoke to my experience as a horseman: "Every living creature has a chain of ancestors, and if any single one of those ancestors had not existed, the present individual would not exist."

In the 1950s, when I first became involved with Morgans here in New England, there were certain family names of breeders that seemed to dominate, whether in the horse show rings or on the trails. A few prominent names I became aware of in those days included Ted Davis of Wind-Crest Farm, Anna Ela of Townshend Farm, Elizabeth Power of Waseeka Farm, J. Cecil Ferguson of Broadwall Farm, Ruth and Lyman Orcutt of Orcland, and Dr. Bob Orcutt of Burkland, and the man who I later worked for over several summers, and came to know the best, Robert Lippitt Knight.

Even though 60 years have passed since those names were front and center, it is not easy to find a pedigree of a modern Morgan that does *not* trace back to one or more of those bigger mid-twentieth century breeding dynasties.

I was a teenager when I knew Mr. Knight, who himself was in his seventies, so it was not as if I was aware at the time of his breeding theories or the history of how that Lippitt line of Morgans came into being. Much of what I know now comes from research done later. I

do think that current Morgan owners might be surprised to realize that their modern-day Morgan—even the fanciest of contemporary show horses—has some Lippitt ancestry. As that opening quotation suggests, *without* that long ago Lippitt link, often to horses I knew and worked, the modern descendant wouldn't exist.

I became involved with that line of Morgans by pure chance in the fall of 1956, when I had just turned 15. I had been trying to persuade my parents to buy me a Morgan, and we learned that Audrey Carter of nearby Montague, Massachusetts, had Lippitt Sandy for sale. After I had Sandy it was a logical step to visit the Green Mountain Stock Farm, where I met Mr. Knight. Two years later I got a phone call from Art Titus, Mr. Knight's trainer, asking if I would ride Lippitt Rebecca in the 1959 Green Mountain Horse Association (GMHA) 100-Mile Trail Ride, as Mr. Knight wanted to make sure that his breeding program was producing sound, tough stock.

Then, during my college summer vacations of 1960 and 1961, I worked for the farm, and in 1961 I lived on the farm property and got the chance to ride and compete several of the show horses. Then everything came to a sudden stop in the spring of 1962, when Mr. Knight died from cancer.

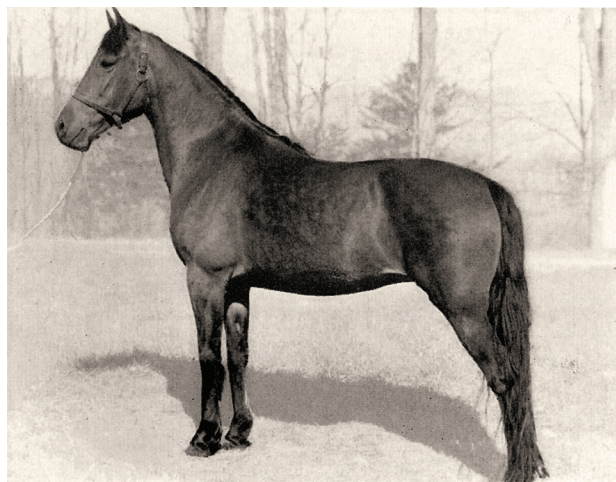
That fall, all the Lippitt Morgans were sold at auction, all the



**LEFT TO RIGHT:** The Morgan breed would never have known the first World Champion Stallion Bennfield's Ace (Bennfield x Cathy Serenity) without the building block of his grandam, Lippitt Robrita (Lippitt Rob Roy x Alrita). The mare sold at the first Lippitt Dispersal Sale in 1952 for \$460, according to Marilyn Childs' handwritten note (photo © Warren Patriquin).



**LEFT TO RIGHT:** The Morgan breed would never have known the first World Champion Mare Hanover Super Lady (by Chasley Superman) without the building block of her dam Lippitt Ethan Georgia, who sold at the second Lippitt Dispersal Sale in 1962 for \$4,500 (photo © J. Livingston).



**LEFT TO RIGHT:** Lippitt Sam (Ashbrook x Lippitt Sallie), who sold in the first dispersal for \$370, was the sire of the highly-influential Lippitt Georgia (x Lippitt Gladys Moro), who sold in the second dispersal for \$2,100. Lippitt Georgia's influence shows up in both pure Lippitt and outcross pedigrees.



- 33. GEORGIA 450 (Fog)
- 34. GEORGIANNA 500 (Ria)
- 22. ALITA 350 (R. Parsons)
- 44. Robbta 480 (Bryant)
- 24. Arrowhead 300 (maize)
- 25. BETSY 340 (Denta)
- 50. Sandra 350 (Parsons)
- 26. DARLING 360 (Kelly)
- 31. Flash 400 (Dennis) (A-E)
- 32. Gay Sally 250 (Brent)
- 16. Rob Roy 400 (Tudor)
- 10. Johnny D. 220 (R.T. Parsons)
- 12. Norman 270
- 10. Noneman 210
- 20. Selassie 400 (H. Parker)
- 3. BILLY ASH 160 (Bryant)
- 37. Hepsibeth 400 (Kelly)
- 39. Hippolyta 530 (Hobbs) (Miles)
- 23. Bethal 420 (Fitzgerald) (Hanna)
- 28. DUPLICATE 650 (Denton)
- 30. Ellen 380 (McMullen)
- 35. LADYS MORG 1450 (Knight) (Dora)
- 21. GLORIA 550 (Ferguson)
- 40. NORA 550 (Kelly)
- 39. Zenora 300 (Honey)
- 54. Spearmint 330 (Stebbins)
- 1. Adventure 270
- 19. Sam 375 (Leahy)
- 2. Benjamin 210
- 4. Bob Bundy 375 (Corbin)
- 8. Ethan 585 (Denton)
- 14. Old Glory 625
- 29. DUSKY KATE 1000 (Denton)
- 27. DULCIE 500
- 41. Ramona 550 (Kelly)
- 42. REBECCA 330 (A. H. K.)
- 43. Rhoda 500 (Bryant)
- 53. Trilby Ash 260
- 52. Trilby 456
- 51. Tilly 390
- 48. SALLY MORG 900 (Schilow)
- 46. Rosalie 370
- 49. Samantha 31
- 45. Rosemary 310 (Lange)
- 47. Sadie Ash 290
- 7. Eldon 456
- 9. ETHAN ASH 425 (Ferguson)
- 15. Orphan Andy 370
- 17. Royal 550
- 18. Royal Man 420
- 21. VICTOR 300
- 55. Dyberry Bob
- 56. Spearmint
- 5. Decatur 320
- 6. DICTATOR 360 (Honey)
- 11. Johnny Boy 250 (Kelly)

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Glenmere Rose	\$ 1,900.00	Lot 31	Lippitt Hepsibeth	\$ 1,400.00	Lot 35
June of Glenmere	1,200.00	Lot 30	Lippitt Justarose	1,000.00	Lot 33
Lippitt Albert	800.00	Lot 28	Lippitt Mint Don	2,200.00	Lot 19
Lippitt Alberta	950.00	Lot 18	Lippitt Minty	1,800.00	Lot 22
Lippitt Alertson	900.00	Lot 29	Lippitt Moro Alert	2,500.00	Lot 1
Lippitt Alert	600.00	Lot 10	Lippitt Moro Ashmore	1,200.00	Lot 2
Lippitt Alsibeth	1,900.00	Lot 36	Lippitt Nancy Moro	1,400.00	Lot 6
Lippitt Bethal	3,100.00	Lot 40	Lippitt Pecos	2,500.00	Lot 43
Lippitt Beth Alert	3,900.00	Lot 38	Lippitt Princess	2,200.00	Lot 24
Lippitt Bruce	600.00	Lot 39	Lippitt Reb Alert	800.00	Lot 15
Lippitt Dream Girl	2,500.00	Lot 46	Lippitt Rebecca	2,300.00	Lot 12
Lippitt Dream Star	2,900.00	Lot 47	Lippitt Rebel	650.00	Lot 16
Lippitt Easter Tweed	1,900.00	Lot 41	Lippitt Redman	700.00	Lot 21
Lippitt Ethan Ann	2,200.00	Lot 25	Lippitt Red Mint	1,700.00	Lot 20
Lippitt Ethan Ashbrook	1,300.00	Lot 3	Lippitt Rhoda	2,700.00	Lot 11
Lippitt Ethan Georgia	4,500.00	Lot 7	Lippitt Rhoda's Alert	750.00	Lot 13
Lippitt Gee Whiz	1,000.00	Lot 26	Lippitt Rhodes	650.00	Lot 14
Lippitt Georgia	2,100.00	Lot 4	Lippitt Roscoe	700.00	Lot 23
Lippitt Glenna	1,300.00	Lot 32	Lippitt Spearmint	2,700.00	Lot 17
Lippitt Gloria	2,700.00	Lot 5	Lippitt St. George	700.00	Lot 8
Lippitt Gloriadee	1,500.00	Lot 9	Lippitt Tilly	1,500.00	Lot 42
Lippitt Gregory	800.00	Lot 27	Lippitt Victoress	3,000.00	Lot 48
Lippitt Harmony	3,000.00	Lot 45	Lippitt Victoria	4,300.00	Lot 44
Lippitt Hepalert	750.00	Lot 37	Orland Bold Admiral	3,100.00	Lot 34

SALES RESULTS: Prices from the handwritten notes of Marilyn Childs from her copy of the 1952 Lippitt Morgans Dispersal Sale catalog; Denny Emerson's notation of prices from the final 1962 dispersal.

tack and equipment, as well as the entire property with houses, barns, pastures, hay meadows—lock, stock, and barrel. I drove up from Dartmouth College in Hanover, New Hampshire, where I'd just begun my senior year, and all these years later my memories are of a pervading sense of sadness and loss at the closing of an era. More so for those like me who had direct contact with the horses and thought of them as personal friends.

Just recently I was sent the results of that 1962 final dispersal, and when I posted something about it on my Facebook page Marilyn Childs' daughter-in-law sent me the results of the 1952 dispersal sale, which took place ten years earlier. It seems that for some reason, unknown to me, Mr. Knight decided to get out of the horse breeding business, did so, then missed his horses so much that he set about to buy as many of them back as he could.

In each of the two historic dispersals a similar number of horses were auctioned: 47 in 1952 and 49 a decade later. I think there's a degree of mystery, if that's the right word, because in just a ten-year interval, the prices of those Lippitt horses took a quantum leap. What influenced that?

In 1952, the sale grossed \$20,805, with an average per horse of \$420.76, with the top seller fetching \$1,450. Adjusted to 2023 dollars those sale results would be an overall total of \$234,888 which comes to an average price per horse of \$4,998. The sale topper would have brought \$16,370 in today's dollars.

The 1962 actual prices recorded were \$86,550 total for the auction; average per horse of \$1,713.54, with the sale topper bringing

\$4,300. Those results adjusted to 2023 dollars would translate to 49 horses selling for \$857,710, which comes to an average price per horse of \$16,981 and the top selling horse's price would adjust to \$42,613.

That is almost three and a half times as much per horse in just ten years, and I have a couple of possible theories as to why that should be. In 1952, getting to see the Lippitt Morgans in Randolph, Vermont, was as easy by dogsled as by car on those terrible roads. By 1962, construction of Interstate 89 had made travel fast and easy. Also, in 1952 I don't think Mr. Knight did much, if any, showing, whereas by 1961 we were on the road in the big yellow van almost every weekend, so the public got to see the Lippitt Morgans at many New England shows.

Here's what you can do to find out if the Morgan that you have today traces back to that long ago breeding dynasty that Robert Lippitt Knight began 105 years ago, when he bought Lippitt Sallie, a foal of 1918. (Of course, you can also explore for an ancestor with a Windcrest, Townshend, Broadwall, or Waseeka prefix or some other of those mid-twentieth century dynasties.) Google the All Breed Pedigree website, and enter the name of your Morgan. You can scroll back all the way to Justin Morgan, and while I can't promise you that your horse traces back to one or more of those New England breeding farms, it will be a rare modern Morgan that wasn't influenced by breeding decisions made by a Knight or Orcutt or Power or Ela or Ferguson or Davis. Those breeders had a common mission, the preservation and perpetuation of the Morgan breed.

We are their inheritors. ■