



≈ FARM PROFILE ≈

JACKSON BROOK FARM, BRINGING MORGANS BACK TO THEIR ROOTS

*Pete and Julie White's family finds a Morgan horse
for every purpose on their rural lakeside farm in Maine.*

By Stacey Stearns

Tucked into the woods of rural Brookton, Maine, Pete White and his wife, Julie, are keeping a timeless tradition alive with a distinctly modern twist. On their fifty acres overlooking Jackson Brook Lake, they are bringing Morgan horses back to their roots on trails, in the forest, and on the farm. “I really like roaming around on horseback seeing things, it’s a nice way to see the country,” Pete says.

But don’t mistake it for nostalgia. This is a forward-looking program rooted in versatility, soundness, and quiet power—traits that define the Morgan horse, including the Lippitt and Foundation-bred Morgans in Pete’s herd. With WJD T-A-Mora Star Shooter (Edgewood Moro SonOfAGun x Kustom Dondei Echo), a 2014 bay Lippitt stallion, at the heart of the herd, Pete is raising and

training Morgans for real work in a rural landscape, just like when the breed started.

Jackson Brook Farm sits on land that has been in Pete’s family for generations. They purchased additional acreage behind the original parcel to bring it up to fifty acres. Brookton is near the border of New Brunswick, Canada, in a rural part of the state. Pete works for a paper company, and the farm is focused on keeping a few well-bred Morgans for riding, driving, trail exploration, and pulling firewood.

Pete and Julie both grew up in Maine—Julie on a dairy farm and Pete on the old family land that previously included dairy cows, poultry, horses, and woodland. Pete’s interest in working the land with horses began as a child, watching a neighbor hay

ABOVE: Pete White with Fallen Willow Qetesh and WJD T-A-Mora Star Shooter with a saddle basket hitch; Julie White and Jackson Brook Baxter.

RIGHT: WJD T-A-Mora Star Shooter and the local librarian.





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FAMILY PHOTOS

1. Tanner White and Fallen Willow Qetesh; 2. The White family with Jackson Brook Independence; 3. Julie White with Jackson Brook Baxter and WJD T-A-Mora Star Shooter; 4. Pete and Julie White's children and nieces with Jackson Brook Baxter; 5. Clay White and Fallen Willow Qetesh.

and cultivate his garden with horses. His father also worked with horses in the woods and trained and raced Standardbreds. Pete and Julie made sure their children had horses when they turned ten, although Pete's involvement was limited to trimming up the horses so the kids could ride and drive. He and his sons built a wooden stone boat and his daughter helped rebuild a bobsled that belonged to Pete's father, and the kids used these in the winter. The White children grew up with their horses, riding and driving everywhere, swimming, skijoring, pulling a hand sled or skis alongside the bobsled, and having great outdoor fun.

Once their kids went to college, Pete and Julie downsized to two Morgan mares. One of these was Fallen Willow Qetesh (Cantieglen Loki x Mint Black Midnight), also known as "Tess," who turned out to be a Lippitt. Tess "was always good, no health issues, just sensible. She was able to do everything, ride and drive, and Tess would pack people around if Julie or I had someone new to horses riding with us," Pete says.

Tess sparked Pete's interest in lineage which eventually led to his breeding program as he wanted to contribute a foal back to the breed that did so much for his family. It turned out that Tess couldn't carry a foal, but learning about the Lippitt bloodlines led him to Shooter. When Pete started looking for another horse, he wanted a typey Morgan with enough bone to carry his 6'2" frame.

Shooter has nine inches of bone, type, and a good disposition. His herd has grown again since then, with versatile horses that have good minds.

BUILT TO LAST, BRED FOR THE FUTURE

Today, Pete and Julie go for eight-to-twelve-mile trail rides on the weekends, packing a lunch and exploring the woods, rivers, and lakes around the farm. During the week, Pete focuses on training. In colder months, they go for sleigh rides, move firewood, and participate in skijoring. "When the lake is frozen just right, a horse could pull you forever. It's a magical feeling being in the crisp air with their breath billowing from their nostrils as you cruise quietly through the snow," Pete says. Skijoring is popular in Maine, and introduces both skiers and spectators to horses, in some cases, Morgans.

Shooter is 11 years old now; Pete purchased him as a long yearling and has done all the training himself. He mainly uses Shooter as a saddle horse but Shooter has also pulled skiers, been used as a pack horse, and completed two thirty-mile and one fifty-mile endurance rides. Pete describes him as eager to learn and easy to teach. "I hadn't trained any babies, just freshened horses up for our kids. I did a lot of groundwork with Shooter and learned a lot, having fun in the process. I would walk Shooter around town when he was younger, people would roll up a garage door, I would reach



IN THE WATER

1. Pete White with WJD T-A-Mora Star Shooter at age two in pack saddle and T E M Valley Mist; **2.** Molly White Goulet (daughter) and Fallen Willow Qetesh with Pete and T E M Valley Mist; **3.** Molly White Goulet and Fallen Willow Qetesh in Greenland Lake; **4.** WJD T-A-Mora Star Shooter waits in hobbles looking over Tomah stream while Pete is working; **5.** Pete ponying youngsters through a stream; **6.** Mia Moher and Jackson Brook Baxter at a Connecticut beach.

out and hit a road sign—Shooter just stepped back and took it all in. Your typical sound and sane Morgan.”

Recently, they attended a cow clinic with Josh Lyons, and Shooter excelled, showing that those riding Morgans have plenty of horse in a working environment. After the first run he totally dialed in on the job, and Pete says they are working on stopping and turning quickly. Shooter continues to be calm and confident in new situations, a trait Pete values deeply.

With Shooter on the farm, Pete and Julie wanted to breed some mares. T E M Valley Mist (TEM Pride x TEM Avanga), a 1996 chestnut mare, was originally their daughter Molly’s horse. The prefix TEM stands for Trail’s End Maine, Dick Tolman’s breeding program located in Winn, Maine. Dick was a passionate promoter of Morgan horses, a farrier, and an all-around great character. “Misty” is the dam of two foals by Shooter, Jackson Brook Baxter, a 2016 stallion, and Jackson BrookIndependence, a 2018 gelding.

Baxter was the first foal born on the farm; Pete trained him to ride and drive before Julie took over as his rider. “Seeing the magic and wonder of the world all over again through a foal’s eyes is fascinating,” Pete reflects.

They sold Baxter at age six to EmilyAnn Calhoun in Connecticut, where he stands at stud and continues being driven, ridden, and enjoyed. EmilyAnn’s more advanced students are allowed to take Baxter on trail rides and give carriage rides to the public during EmilyAnn’s Christmas events. Baxter’s first offspring, a filly named Ahsoka Tano, out of One Day Tootes Roll, was born last year and is owned by Lindsey Berry of Starberry Sport Morgans.

Currently, Pete and Julie have five horses, including Shooter, KS Bluestem Sula Mith (Kells In Kirby’s Honor x D’s Ebony Lady), and Wachuset Miss Geneveive (Wachuset Thunder x Jazzs Ashley Laura). “Miss G,” as she is known, is a 2019 chestnut mare from Grace Yaglou’s Lippitt breeding program who complements



MAINE WINTERS

1. Pete White and two Little River dogs with Fallen Willow Qetesh and T E M Valley Mist; 2. Pete coming back from an excursion with KS Bluestem Sula Mith and Jackson Brook Hazel (foal); 3. Molly White Goulet and Fallen Willow Qetesh driving the bobsled down a twitch trail; 4. Pete packing ski trails for Julie with Jackson Brook Baxter and their Poor Boy Sleigh.

Shooter well. The pair produced the 2024 filly Jackson Brook Firefly and a 2023 gelding, Jackson Brook El Gato. El Gato's owner, Caitlin Walsh, purchased him after going on conditioning rides with Pete and Shooter to prepare for endurance events. Of Shooter's six get to date, two are mares and four are colts. Sula also paired well with Shooter, producing a bay filly, Jackson Brook Hazel, and a bay colt, Jackson Brook Big Country ("BC"). Hazel is now owned by Julie Bonville in Massachusetts. Both of Sula's offspring have their sire's size and bone, too. Currently, BC is learning about Northern Maine, being ponied around by Pete and Shooter.

Pete doesn't breed heavily, instead focusing on a few foals to keep the line going and ensure they go to good using homes. Pete values their soundness, bone, and versatility. While he doesn't focus on just one bloodline, he appreciates the contributions of using horses with work in their background. Pete noted in researching Morgans who participated in endurance events that many had the popular sire Upwey Ben Don (Upwey King Benn x Quietude), in their pedigree. He learned that many Lippitts completed events in endurance in the past but has not seen many recently; he would like to see more Lippitts competing in endurance and knows many Lippitt owners are working to get their horses conditioned this year. Overall, he's focused on functional, good-minded horses.

Pete believes that nature and nurture are each fifty-percent of what the horse becomes. He weans foals late, at seven or eight months, as long as the mare is maintaining her weight. During

weaning, mares and foals are kept where they can see each other, but the foals can't nurse. Once the mare is dried off, the foal goes back in with its mother; there is never stress or calling during the process. Young horses are raised on rugged, varied pasture that includes woods and streams, terrain that builds strength and resilience. Pete emphasizes good bone, balance, a compact build, about 15 hands tall, a sound mind, and the "three thirds" of the horse. Motion is medicine for a horse, but especially for a young horse building bone.

TRAINING FOR THE LONG HAUL

In all his training, Pete emphasizes a quiet demeanor and teaching the horses patience. "We try to keep everything very calm. A working gait is a walk; we do a lot at a walk. You want a horse to know to put its head down and pull a tree, you don't trot off with it. You want a horse to be calm and relaxed. When I let loose on the line, I want the horse to stop. If I pick up contact, the horse gets ready, but he waits for me to signal, we could go backward, forward, or sideways. You don't want hard contact but need to take up slack because you want them to be patient and wait for you while you're working or doing something else. Whoa is important. If you're trying to hook to a log, you really need a horse to stay calm and wait for you to tell them to go. We do a lot of training to remind them to wait. A few extra seconds once you hook to the tree or once you settle in the saddle go a long way to letting a horse wait for your signal."



ON THE FARM

1. Pete White and Fallen Willow Qetesh (left) and T E M Valley Mist with a King Split Log road grader; 2. WJD T-A-Mora Star Shooter waiting patiently in woods; 3. Pete with T E M Valley Mist and Jackson Brook Independence (foal).

Pete has developed his own style with influences from draft horse work and is continuously learning and studying the latest research. He introduces foals to ropes, dragging objects, ponying miles on dirt roads, and ground driving. He works young horses lightly in winter, when bugs are absent and they're eager for stimulation. "We just do stuff with them, explore new and interesting things, work in the barn aisle; horses are bored in the winter and are looking for something to do," he observes.

Young horses are ponied once they are leading well with just the float in the line and then taught to pack later. The foals are allowed to run alongside the mares while he or Julie are riding until they become too bold, then he introduces them to being ponied from the dam or sire. His line is about nine feet long and he carries a dressage whip with a small flag to keep the horse being ponied from forging too far ahead of his leg in the saddle. Foals are given leading practice in the woods, and they quickly learn to follow so they don't become wrapped around a tree; they learn that following Pete leads to the best path, with grazing breaks that reinforce positive behavior. Family outings include Shooter, one of the mares, and that year's foal as they all go for a ride together.

THE DAY MISS G WENT SWIMMING

As with any equestrian pursuit, there are adventures and misadventures along the way. For example, after purchasing Miss G, Pete unintentionally discovered that she is an excellent swimmer and

unafraid of the lake. "Upon Miss G's arrival, I spent time hand walking her around and letting her graze. I was able to tell quite quickly that she led well but she did not like it when a line touched her hind end or legs. Miss G would react quickly if a rope wrapped behind her while grazing. I was not overly concerned, just something to work on later once she settled in more."

Pete uses grazing breaks with his horses as a reward and incentive at various stages in their training, from a foal learning about pressure in their girth area to a horse learning to pony on a float line alongside Pete and another mount. The weekend after Miss G arrived, Pete took her for a longer hand walk on the nearby dirt road down to the lake, with grazing interspersed. His friends own the nearby camps, so he took Miss G down to the water to see what she thought of it, as many horses are apprehensive. But Miss G was unperturbed, ate some marsh grass, and then walked into the lake. Pete was pleased.

"She went out a little deeper and started to turn. Since I did not want the lead rope to wrap around behind her, I let it drop in the water. That was my mistake, but I didn't know it yet! I actually did not think anything of it as, in my experience, horses unfamiliar with lakes will turn back to firm ground quite quickly. I was well positioned to grab the long line once she came out of the water. But Miss G continued to slowly walk out from shore showing no signs of stress. She was now past her knees!"

Soon, Pete watched with alarm bells in his head as her front



ON THE FARM

1. Pete White and WJD T-A-Mora Star Shooter at a 2025 cattle clinic at Whispering Pine Riding Stable;
2. WJD T-A-Mora Star Shooter with high grade white pines; 3. Fallen Willow Qetesh and Jackson Brook Baxter (foal).

legs left solid ground and she started swimming for the far shore. Pete tried calling, walking the shore, and jumping up and down, but Miss G kept swimming for the opposite shore. The forest on the far shore is vast and leads into Canada—Pete knew he needed to get Miss G back before she disappeared into the woods, becoming harder to find. Unfortunately, it was late in the season, and most of the cabins were packed up, but Pete found a canoe, and then a paddle. By that point, Miss G turned around and started swimming back towards Pete's shore, but a little further down. He sprinted in that direction, only to watch in dismay as she changed her mind when she saw how rocky the shore was and headed back to the middle of the lake again. He ran back to the canoe. Then, Miss G changed her mind again, and headed back towards the same rocky shore, but further down.

"I ran back down the road and cut in toward the lake beyond my last attempt. I forgot about the wet run in this area and got mud up to my knees in a couple of places. Using my hands and arms to clear the dense underbrush I made way to the last cradle knoll and scrambled down the seawall to the lake's edge. I looked out and saw nothing. Then I turned to the left and before me was a wonderful sight, Miss G walking towards me down the shore trailing the lead-line behind in the water. Geneveive was calm, not even breathing hard after her long lake swim. She looked at me curiously with a look of 'Hey, what's next?' I reached out and wrapped my fingers around the line and held on very tight."

Pete laughs as he recounts this story, saying it was a misadventure, and calling Miss G his Mark Spitz, the famous swimmer from the 1972 Olympics. But Miss G is now an integral part of the herd and no longer sensitive about ropes touching her rump or hind legs. She's helping train "Fly" alongside Pete and Julie as the adventures continue, and Shooter is part of many of those adventures as well.

ROOTED IN TRADITION, BUILT FOR THE FUTURE

The training program Pete uses works, his horses are calm, versatile, and willing. Pete likes that he can ride, drive, pack, or skijor with the same horse. He sees a lot of potential for Morgans to fit

into modern homesteading or Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) type farms, where people want one or two all-purpose horses. "That's an area where I see a lot of opportunity for Morgans, there are a lot of people with CSAs that are using a horse or two. You could fit in a Morgan really easily in the growing your own food movement and still take the kids for a ride, too."

Although Pete is taking the Morgan horse back to their roots in the trails, woods, and on the farm, he is also helping build the Morgan breed's future. Pete serves on the Lippitt Club board, and they support promotional activities and events like the annual show in Tunbridge, Vermont. He sees value in being visible at clinics, on trails, or pulling logs, as a way to draw people into the breed. "Whether at a barefoot trimming clinic or working cows among Quarter Horses, I see how Morgans draw attention. People often come up afterward to share stories about Morgans or express interest. A horse standing in a lake can be a powerful, approachable image for social media, too."

The Lippitt Club has also seen a decline in youth interest and involvement, similar to many equestrian disciplines and breeds. One reason for the declining participation is increased barriers to accessing horses. There were small dairy farms everywhere where Pete and Julie grew up in northeastern Maine. Now, many of those farms are gone as people moved to urban areas for jobs. "It wasn't hard to add a horse when you had a farm, but there are fewer opportunities now. As more jobs can be done remotely," he reflects, "this may allow more people to return to the rural landscape again, which may lead to more rural horse ownership. Time will tell."

Pete and Julie plan to keep a few horses, raise the occasional foal, and work with them around the farm and explore the natural world on family rides. He hopes one of their grandchildren will become horse obsessed. Breeding and then training a horse himself and watching everything come together is all part of the journey for Pete. He says, "It's rewarding to know I trained a horse to ride and drive." And in Brookton, Maine, where forests stretch wide and lakes shimmer, Pete White is quietly proving that the Morgan horse is still the best partner for work, wonder, and the wide-open trail. ■