

U.S. Range Livestock Experiment Station

The Second Government Morgan Farm

PART VI: The Final Chapter

by RICHARD L. TROWER

IN 1935, the Spear Morgan Livestock Company purchased ten Morgans from the U.S. Range Livestock Experiment Station. Tory Johnson of Busby, Montana is the grandson of Willis Spear, founder of the Spear Morgan Livestock Company. He provided some interesting insight about those early days.

"Spear Ranch's original stock was Thoroughbred-grade crosses," Johnson said. "Much of the Thoroughbred blood traced back to the horses who came from Marcus Daly's Bitterroot Stock Farm and the Remount Station at old Fort Keough.

The only Morgan blood in Montana at that time were the horses bred by C.X. Larrabee of Brook Nook Stock Ranch in Home Park. [Larrabee was one of the largest Morgan breeders and bred such horses as Jubilee de Jamette.] These were horses bred for speed and they didn't make good working horses.

"In the late 1920s, the Livestock Station at Miles City brought in a bunch of Morgans and started using them to work the range," he continued. "Slowly the ranchers began to see that the Morgan had the ability to work the range as good

as the Thoroughbred. In fact, in some ways they were better than the Thoroughbreds. They required less upkeep and they didn't tire as quickly. Their only drawback was that they didn't have the leg under them to cover a lot of miles in a day. So ranchers started crossing Morgans with the Thoroughbreds and found that they got the best of both breeds—the ultimate cow horse.

"In the early 1930s, my grandfather, Willis Spear, decided he wanted a Morgan stallion to cross with his mares," remembered Johnson. "Miles City didn't

have a stallion for sale at the time, so he bought a horse out of Kansas. I don't remember the stud's name, we just called him 'The Morgan.' In 1935, Granddad bought a group of Morgans from Miles City and started the Spear Morgan Livestock Company."

Spear did not breed all purebred Morgans. "We bred a few purebreds," Johnson said, "but mainly we bred part-bred Morgans and sold them to ranches in the area. Most of the purebred mares were put back into the breeding band. The colts were gelded and sold. A few of the colts were used at stud, though. There was a good market at the time for Morgan-Thoroughbred type geldings to work the large ranches. There was not a lot of Morgan blood around, so unless they wanted to go out of state, breeders came to us."

On November 11, 1935, J. M. Venable of Miles City, Montana purchased 34 Morgans from the Miles City Station. Within four months, he sold 27 mares to Ernest Snelling of Musselshell, Mon-

Statistical Review of the Miles City Breeding Program

TOTAL MORGANS RAISED	93
Colts	48 52%
Fillies	45 48%
TOTAL MORGANS Sired	
BY REVERE	29
Colts	16 55%
Fillies	13 45%
TOTAL MORGANS Sired	
BY MONTEREY	60
Colts	31 52%
Fillies	29 48%
TOTAL COST TO PURCHASE	
FOUNDATION STOCK	\$1183.00
TOTAL FROM SALES OF MORGANS	
.	\$6405.00
AVERAGE SALES PRICE	\$76.25

tana. A group of these mares were sold to the Crow Indian Agency to be used in an experimental program to upgrade the existing reservation stock.

In 1940, six of these mares, Dilita, Falita,

Glacier, Grand Slam, Grosbeak, and Gyration, were transferred to the Carson Indian School in Stewart, Nevada. Later that summer, the School purchased the Miles City-bred stallion Euchre from F.C. Ruddy to head their breeding program. Between 1942 and 1945, the School raised 16 foals from these mares.

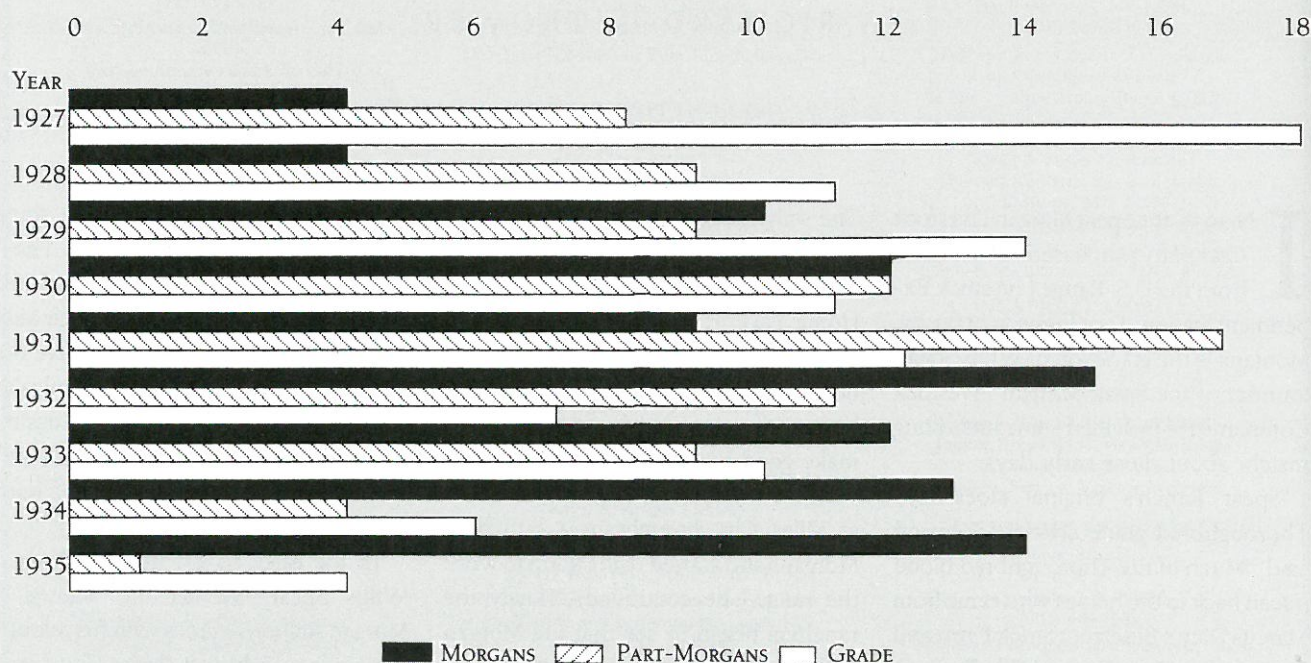
The horses raised from this revived Miles City breeding program were Carson Sonny, Shoshone Chief, Eufala, and Sacajawea (out of Falita); Lander, Paiute Chief, and Redskin (out of Glacier); Smoco (out of Grosbeak); Deuce, Prince Domino, Diamond Princess, and Golden Diana (out of Grand Slam); Nevada Midnight and Carson's Gyp (out of Gyration); and Carson Tangerine and Duke Wellington (out of Dalita).

In conversations with various employees of the Carson Colony Museum, I have been unable to find anyone who remembers the mares or the fact that the Morgan breeding program ever existed at the Carson Indian School.

In 1945, the mares, nine of their off-

Morgans, Part-Morgans, and Grade Horses Raised at Miles City Between 1927 - 1935

NUMBER OF HORSES RAISED



spring, and Euchre were sent to the Wind River Agency in Fort Washakie, Wyoming. While at Wind River, the mares apparently disappeared from the annals of Morgan history.

Of the 93 Morgans bred by the U.S. Range Livestock Experiment Station, only three horses have had any significant impact on today's Morgans. Of these three, Delbert is probably the best known. Originally owned by W.H. Donald, who exchanged a Hereford bull for him in 1931, Delbert was sold to Joel Jackson of the Jackson Morgan Ranch in Harrison, Montana in 1940. Over the next nine years, he sired 91 registered offspring, 64 of which were colts.

Jackson purchased Delbert (Revere x Alibirdie) to cross with his Chief Bugler (Tyee x Gala Girl, both sired by Jubilee de Jarrette) daughters. Ironically, it was a breeding to the Revelation daughter Chiretta for which Delbert would be best remembered. In 1944, the Delbert-Chiretta daughter, Cherye, was born.

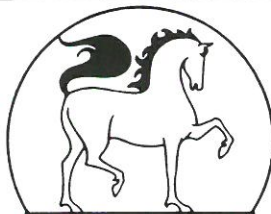
Nine years later, Cherye was crossed to Fleetfield, a full brother to Trophy, and produced Speedfield. Speedfield sired 68 foals in his 26 years of life. From 1975 until his death in 1980, he was owned by James and Donna Turney of Drumlin Morgans in Tees, Alberta, Canada.

"He was a horse who loved to work," said Donna Turney of Speedfield. "He didn't like to be brushed or petted, he just wanted you to put a saddle on him and go to work." She remembers he had a quick, ground-covering walk.

One of Speedfield's sons, Drumlin Super Speed (out of Correll's Mae) stands 16 hands. When asked how a 14.3-hand stallion could sire 16-hand offspring, Donna said, "Speedfield's get tended to be the size of the mare. What Speedfield gave his offspring was his type."

Another Miles City stallion who can be found in the pedigree of modern Morgans is Euchre. After being transferred from the Carson Indian School to Wind River, he was crossed to the Silver Range daughter Easter Fine S. This union produced Buckles.

Ab Cross (see related story in March, 1990) bred Buckles to four of his



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Taproot Remember Baker (raf), '90, b, S, (Taproot Green Mt Boy x Casland Erin), very attractive 1st foal by Taproot Green Mt Boy.

Reference Sires:

Taproot CommandPilot, '86, b, Stallion, 15.3h., (Deer Run Command x Taproot Copper Iris), In Command grandson, out of UVM Dexter and UVM Harmony daughter. Very athletic and producing same.

Deer Run Command, one of Waseeka's In Command's best breeding sons who has made a remarkable record in crossing to Taproot mares.

Kingston, sire of Casland Erin, one of Upwey Ben Don's best-known sons.

UVM Flash, by Upwey Ben Don, now deceased, long-time leading sire at UVM.

Equinox Benn Adam, outstanding breeding sire at East of Equinox Farm.

Taproot Green Mt Boy, '87, b, Stallion, 15.2h., (Deer Run Command x Taproot Copper Iris), Res. Ch. Jr. Park Saddle Horse at Vt. in 1st show, full brother to Pilot.



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Warhawk daughters, including Black Charmer, who produced the filly Cree Woman. It is only through Cree Woman that the blood of Euchre is passed down to present days. When bred to Chingadero, Cree Woman produced Cree Charmer, who went on to become an important broodmare at Bill and Louise Green's Greentree Ranch. In the March article, Bill Green said, "Cree Charmer produced superior foals with pleasant dispositions, substance, versatility, stamina, soundness, and conformation." It is fitting that in recent years, the Cross Ranch has added the blood of Delbert and Kenfield (Speedfield x Lora Lie) to their program.

The third line which traces back to Miles City comes through the Roosevelt daughter Gay Girl. Her only registered offspring was the stallion Stormy H, who was sired by the Revere son Sunshine R. The Stormy H son, Ko-Wala, played an important part in the breeding program of Millard Ulch of Susanville, California. It is clear that Ulch was impressed by Revere. In the pedigree of my mare, Satin

Doll (Ko-Wala x Roe Star), we find Revere listed no less than seven times.

The U.S. Range Livestock Station conducted many projects involving livestock. Between 1924 and 1940, the Station completed four equine-related research projects. These projects were: Observations on Sleeping Sickness in Horses; Estrus—Ovulation and Related Phenomena in Mares; Fertility of Range Horses; and Growth of Range Horses.

Some evidence indicates that the Morgan breeding program at the Miles City Station ended because of the Station's decision to breed Nonius Horses. Nonius Horses were developed in Austria and used primarily as calvary horses and prime movers of light artillery. These horses were similar in size and conformation to the Morgan and were predominantly bay and brown in color. The original herd of six Nonius Horses came to Miles City from the U.S. Government Morgan Horse Farm in Middlebury, Vermont. In 1937, the Nonius herd was hit with an outbreak of Western Equine Encephalomyelitis (sleeping sickness).

As a result of this outbreak, the Nonius herd was shown to be more susceptible to sleeping sickness than the other breeds. In 1940, the Nonius Horse breeding program was ended and all remaining Nonius Horses were transferred to the U.S. Forest Service.

As I end this series and think back over the past eight months one thought keeps coming to me. With the increasing popularity of the Morgan as a sport horse, the loss of much of the Miles City blood has been a devastating blow. To those of you lucky enough to be granted guardianship over the few remaining shreds of Morgan history, I can only say use it wisely.

AUTHOR'S NOTE: I received more information from Mary Krausz of Miles City about eight geldings I reported as having no records available. As of December 31, 1939, the following geldings were still owned by the Miles City Station: Baron (M37), Fieldspar (M82), Gumbo (M94), Gramlich (M95), Holbrook (M101), Halpin (M104), Hamlet (M108), and Hermit (M111).

J'ST CHARISMA

D.O.B. 2/27/86

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Waseeka's Killarney
Windcrest's Delight
Wing Ding
Fleetwing
Reata's Supreme Lady
Lovely Melody
Waseeka's Nocturne
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