

≈ FOCUS ON NEW ENGLAND ≈

How Morgan Horses Have **MADE THE GRADE AT** **LAND GRANT UNIVERSITIES**

Following both the Great Depression and World War II, the survival of the Morgan breed depended in no small way on the continuation of the government herds by New England universities. Here is a reminder of that time in history and an update on the state of the programs today.

By Lori Gershun

“**B**esides its breeding work, a major project at the Morgan Horse Farm during the last ten years has been a study of performance in horses. The object of this experiment has been to correlate the horse’s physique with its ability to do useful work.” Earl Krantz, Superintendent, U.S. Morgan Horse Farm, Weybridge, Vermont: *The Morgan Horse*, 1950.

John Bennett, Horse Unit Supervisor at the University of Connecticut’s equine facility, smiles fondly when he tells the story of his long-time mentor and predecessor as director of University of Connecticut’s equine facility, Al Cowan.

Al, a young student at University of Massachusetts-Amherst, had been helping out as a field hand. The sun beat down on Al as he labored in the hay field. He took off his shirt, tossing it aside. When he returned to the barn he realized the shirt lay forgotten in the field. It was a long, tired walk back. Al bridled Abbott and leapt on the Morgan stallion. On his way to the hayfield, Al spied a pretty young woman walking alongside the road. Lean and tan from field work, he sat tall on Abbott, presenting a fine image. He raised a hand, intending to wave, but instead, the motion startled the horse. The stallion bolted, and in an instant hurled a surprised and red-faced Al to the dirt road.

Born in 1930 at the U.S. Morgan Horse Farm in Weybridge, Vermont, Abbott (Magellan x Klyona) was among the several stallions who made the rounds between University of Massachusetts-Amherst (UMass), University of Connecticut

(UConn) from 1931 to 1935, and the Weybridge farm before it became the UVM Morgan Horse Farm. The dark chestnut, 15-hand offspring was considered a splendid result of the joint efforts of an arm of the U.S. Department of Agriculture program as it operated out of the Weybridge farm, and the U.S. Remount Service (1919-1949). Not only was Abbott loaned out to the universities but he was also one of the 20-plus Morgan stallions standing in the U.S. Remount Service, a fair number of whom originated at the Weybridge farm.

Between 1917 and 1950, Morgans were among the minor breeds that traveled the country, Thoroughbreds being most predominant, standing at remount stations for use on U.S. owned and civilian mares. The resulting colts were eligible for cavalry use. Ideally, the cavalry sought a 15.2-16.2 hand gelding that possessed wide, deep girth, well sprung ribs, sufficient bone and a sturdy hoof capable of supporting a 250-pound load on long marches, and subsisting on minimal feed, mainly forage.

But perhaps most importantly, considering that cavalry recruits were often inexperienced horsemen, it was critical that soldiers had capable, willing, and tractable mounts. In other words, a young recruit’s life often hinged on his mount—he needed a horse, wise and steady, one that if pressed combined his speed and agility to carry his soldier into and away from battle. Blending the attributes of several breeds and distilling it into one functional type made sense.



MORGANS AT THE 1951 PUBLIC AUCTION

TOP ROW, LEFT TO RIGHT: Quakerlady; Riviera; Panfield; Fleetfield BOTTOM ROW, LEFT TO RIGHT: Niles; Stellar; Trophy (Photos © Strohmeyer, Hal Hoover)

The undisputed stars were two daughters of Mentor—Quakerlady (x Willys) and Riviera (x Naiad). Penn State purchased Quakerlady at the second highest price of the auction—\$1,751, though by 1958 it appears she was transferred to UConn. The Grand Champion Three-Year-Old, Riviera, known for her “balanced trot square from any angle and hock action equal to any,” attracted the top bid of \$2,525 from Nelson D. White of Massachusetts.

Pennsylvania State College added to their disbursement stock and purchased two fillies, Tuneful (Panfield x Joyce) and Star Dustie (Lippitt Selassie x Oleta), along with the promising yearling colt, Topfield (Panfield x Hermina).

The auction list standout, the five-year-old stallion, Panfield (Canfield x Karina) fetched \$1,600 from Locke Theis of Dodge City, Kansas. Only two years after Theis shipped Panfield to Kansas, drought hit the nation’s midsection, compelling Theis to dismantle his Morgan horse herd. Cecil Ferguson, of Broadwall Farms in Rhode Island, bought the 32-horse herd, and agreed that Panfield, due to a front knee injury, be returned to UConn strictly as a breeding stallion.¹

Al Cowan welcomed his long-time favorite back to UConn. Panfield’s flaxen mane and tail, and flashy good looks, made the 14.3 hand stallion a crowd favorite. One exception was Earl Krantz, ex-army man, who preferred Panfield’s contemporary, the taller stallion, Mentor. In 1966, after siring 27 additional offspring at UConn, Panfield was transferred to Oregon, where he was bred up

to his thirtieth year. Of the stallion’s 138 Morgan progeny, 119 of them were chestnut.²

The stallions Niles (Mansfield x Novice) and Stellar (full younger brother to Riviera), previously at UConn and UMass, went to New York State and Salt Lake City respectively.

Other well spent money was doled out for Trophy (Mentor x Norma), an unproven yearling colt who went on to sire 143 progeny. Trophy’s full sister, Silkoline, dam of UNH Astronaut, was one of the foundation mares at the University of New Hampshire program. While on lease by Orcland Farms, Lyman Orcutt showed UNH Astronaut winning the 1967 Eastern National Grand Champion Stallion title.

Of the remaining auction stock, a substantial group went to Minnesota with Stanley Sahlstrom, Fleetfield went to Montana, while the majority remained in the Northeast.

The rest of the government herd was divided and disbursed to the universities.

UNIVERSITY PLACEMENT

Imagine the complexity of dispersing the remaining herd—a closely related family of 50 horses into five smaller breeding herds. The disbursement stock was leased, not given, to the universities. Only their offspring become university property. Consequently, stallions could service mares from any of the universities and have done so since the 1940s when UConn, UMass and UNH had begun modest breeding programs. For example, UNH already had the

DISBURSEMENT TO UNIVERSITIES

UVM	UCONN	UMASS	UNH	PENN STATE
20 mares	5 mares	11 mares	2 mares	5 mares
Fairytop Inez Jasmine Marionette Naiad Naive Norma Romantic Sugar Symphonee Talura Terranna Teta Willys	Pennyroyal Pennyroyal Quotation Sentana Sheba	Damsel Hermina Mannequin Narcissa Ophelia Optic Oriole Pinup	Trudy Silkolene Existing herd: Kitts Oleta UNH May Star College Vicki Meadowlark	Royalann <i>(bred to Panfield)</i> Noontide <i>(bred to Mentor)</i> Purchased: Quakerlady Tuneful Star Dustie
4 stallions	1 stallion	3 stallions	Existing Stallions:	
US Menmar Tutor Stanfield US Pankid	Mentor	Meade U S Panez Ranier	Melysses Cap Pistol	Topfield <i>(purchased)</i>

UNIVERSITY PREFIXES

University of Vermont	University of Connecticut	University of Massachusetts	University of New Hampshire	Pennsylvania State University
UVM	UConn or UC	Bay State	UNH or College	Penn State or P S

government bred-mare, Kitts (Goldfield x Narissa), who produced at least two offspring before the 1951 disbursement.

Each group eventually evolved into its own distinct herd, but for at least the first decade or so, they should be viewed as a single unit, composed of an interwoven group of bloodlines. Tracking the relationships within the disbursement stock pedigrees is like reorganizing a handful of names into varied configurations, all of which are permutations of the first generation offspring from the royal couple or “golden cross,” Bennington and Artemisia. It soon becomes clear that the impending question would be how to widen the gene pool and at the same time retain and improve the integrity of the line-breeding as it developed over the four decades of the government program.

The above chart is an approximation of the disbursement, extrapolated from the registry, articles, and interviews, many of which are incomplete and contradictory. But this provides the general placement and includes Morgan mares that may have already been in residence at or shifted between the universities prior to disbursement:

Particularly in the early years, limitations of university allotted funds to the programs compromised efforts to appropriately

expand the gene pools. At the same time, the expectations and standards were obvious. The university programs required a functional horse, one that could withstand public scrutiny in regard to type, was reproductively viable, suitable for all levels of students participating in a variety of riding disciplines—and all developed on shoe-string budgets. This outcome was critical to justifying the programs’ existence and continuation.

Of the five original programs, three remain active and productive. Thanks in part to the generosity of Morgan horse owners who donated breeding stock, stallion services, and purchased university-bred horses, the programs endured and are a testament to the reciprocal relationships that contributed to the success of today’s programs at UVM, UMass and UConn.

In the six decades since disbursement, the original U.S. Government herd has produced over 1,000 university-bred offspring. University-bred Morgans have contributed to private breeding programs by integrating and sending stock from and to notable farms such as Townshend, Sky Ridge, Orland, Broadwall, Otterbrook, Windcrest and many more.

In 1951-53, the universities prefixed their horses’ names indicating they were bred and born at the respective institutions.



THE “GOLDEN CROSS”
LEFT TO RIGHT: Bennington; Artemisia

UNIVERSITY OF MASSACHUSETTS (UMASS): REVITALIZING THE TRADITION

We want at least 75% of our school horses to be Morgans, bred, born and trained on UMass property,” Cassandra (Cassie) Uricchio, Director of Equine Management, University of Massachusetts-Amherst.

The Hadley Farm facility is the heart of the UMass equine facility. Several well-appointed barns, two indoor arenas, a training track, and the grazing fields sprawl are neatly compacted into the farm’s 131 acres. A half-mile away, university high-rises dot the horizon between the farm and the quaint New England town of Amherst. Considering Massachusetts is the birth-place of Figure, later known as Justin Morgan, it seems a fitting tribute that the university honor the breed through its Morgan breeding program. Prior to the government disbursement, UMass already had such a program in place. Beginning in 1948, the government-bred stallion, Niles, had sired the first of his six Bay State prefixed progeny. Bay State Morgans have been bred there ever since and have produced stallions of national renown.

In 1951, two stallions were disbursed to UMass—Meade (Goldfield x Glady) and the yearling, U S Panez (Panfield x Inez), the little darling of the disbursement stallions. The December 1950 *The Morgan Horse* described Panez as, “...a bay, full brother of the 1950 Junior Champion Filly, Symphonee, and appears to have the type, substance and flash of this cross and should develop into one of the outstanding sires in New England.”

U S Panez lived up to the expectations. He was the poster child of the temperament, endurance and versatility sought during four decades of line-breeding at Weybridge, and fit right into the collegiate environment. In 1956, at the National Morgan Horse Show under the showmanship of UMass trainer, Dick Nelson, Panez won the Justin Morgan Performance Class, placed second in the jumping event, and placed in the Trailer Race and finally in the

Pleasure Horse Stake—all in a single afternoon!

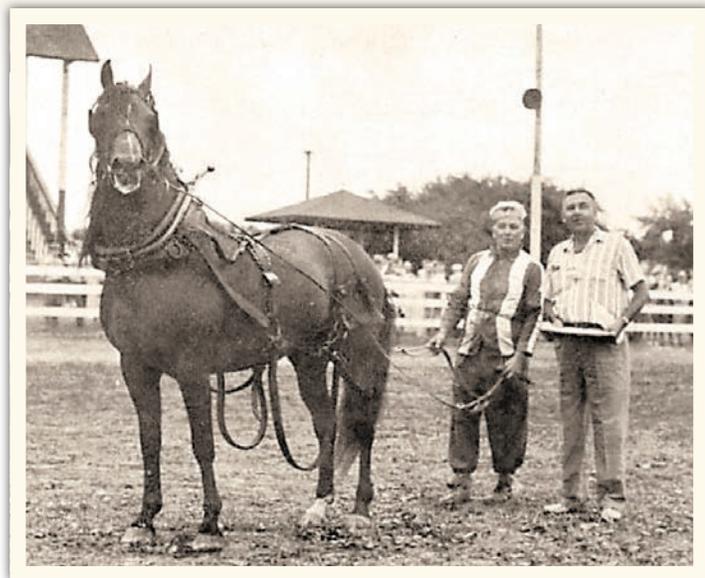
Not only could Panez perform, but Dick Nelson’s successor, Dr. Tony Borton, recalls the stallion had an exceptionally agreeable nature. “Dick Nelson drove Panez directly through the center of town one busy morning. The horse was quiet and unperturbed. When they returned to the barn Dick washed the horse, spraying the hose right in to Panez’s face. The horse loved it.”

U S Panez’s first foal was born in 1953 and his last in 1966. The chestnut stallion sired 37 foals from 1953 to 1965. Besides the Bay State prefixed progeny there were UNH and other offspring.

The second disbursement stallion, Meade, sired 30 foals, including 12 for Bay State. At the 1953 Morgan National, *The Morgan Horse* wrote in its show coverage, “A highlight of the event [Justin Morgan Performance class] was Dick Nelson and Meade. The fiery stallion, out of competition for years, was given a great ride to the delight of the crowd.”

Among the university crowd this sort of fame was not entirely desirable. According to Dr. Borton, “Meade produced a horse a little too hot for the students and was only used from 1952-54.” Meade made up for his failure as sire of usable university horses when he sired Bay State Wardissa (x Narissa). A faithful supporter of university Morgans, Anna Ela, of Townshend Farms, bought the mare and by 1958 had overseen the birth of the mare’s nine offspring. One of Wardissa’s colts, Townshend Warcos by Pecos, became a lead sire for Colorado-based Pegasus Morgan Horse Farm siring 17 Pegasus-prefixed progeny.

The next generation of Bay State horses produced two stallions that elevated the image of university bred Morgans and their value as show stock. In order to widen the herd’s gene pool, compliments of Ted Davis and Anna Ela, outside stallions were used on the disbursement mares. The results include Bay State Flintlock (Upwey Ben Don x Damsel), born in 1958, and Bay State Gallant (Orcland Leader x Narcissa) born the following year.



UMASS MORGANS

LEFT TO RIGHT: U S Panez; Bay State Flintlock produced 60 progeny, 29 of them Bay State-prefixed, proving himself as a 2nd generation herd sire for UMass.

During the next few decades (1963-1998) Dr. Tony Borton and his staff kept the program going despite challenges.

As would be the case for the universities other than UVM, Morgan mares were expected to earn their keep as school horses, limiting their availability as brood mares. Because the Morgan is a long-lived breed this was not an insurmountable problem. After the mares were retired from active school duty, they were bred, often having their first foals in their teens. This is still the case today.

The problem of breeding a closely related herd continued. Dr. Borton recalls the staff-brainstorming sessions when outside stallions were suggested as possibilities. Dr. Borton describes the process, “We’d all sit around a big table and talk about which stallions would best suit a mare. Since we couldn’t pay for a breeding, we’d discuss who knew who well enough to ask for a donated breeding.” He chuckles and shakes his head at the memory, “We could never pay for a breeding.”

Dr. Borton ticks off a lofty list of supporters: The Tompkins with Orcland Leader, sire of Bay State Gallant; Mark Hanna and Windcrest Highlander, sire of many productive Bay State broodmares; Ted Davis with Upwey Ben Don, sire of Bay State Flintlock. Anna Ela’s donated breedings to Orcland Vigildon resulted in three Bay State horses.

Dr. Borton continues, “At the same time, the equine program had no incentive to market and sell Morgans. Not only did the budget exclude the cost of breeding fees, but selling a Morgan did not directly benefit the equine budget. Sales profit went directly to the university’s general fund.”

Borton goes on to say that when the Bay State Flintlock son, Bay

State Ideal (x Bay State Debbie), returned to UMass from Matilija Morgan Farm at ten years of age and after siring 20 progeny, they faced a hard decision. “Ideal was too closely related to the herd,” he says. “So we gelded him and put him in the lesson program,” and Ideal was added to the school horse herd.

Today’s Bay State herd includes seventeen-year-old HR Clearly Legal, a timely donation and welcome addition from the Sebring family at a time when focus on increasing Morgan numbers is a high priority. Cassie Uricchio describes her as, “a typey, refined mare.” Two younger broodmares, Bay State Roberta and

Bay State Odyssey, will continue the Windcrest Highlander line that goes back to Upwey Ben Don, Ulendon, and the prolific government stallion, Mansfield (Bennington x Artemisia). Up until his thirtieth year and death in 2004, Highlander was a main herd stallion, siring 28 Bay State foals.

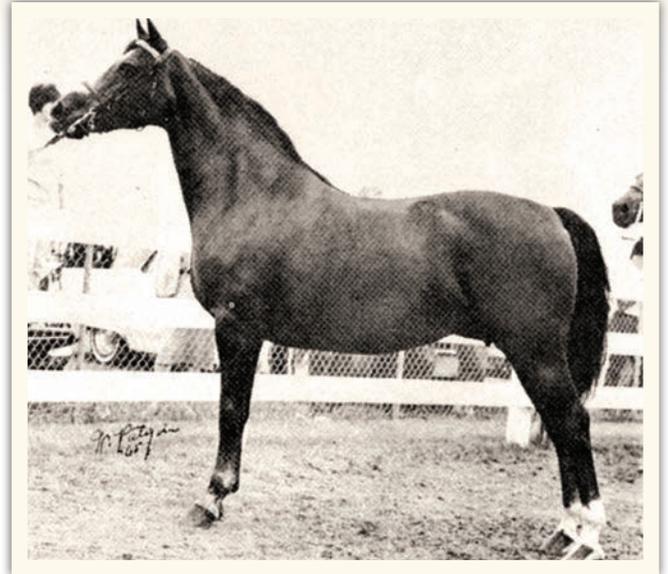
Donated breedings still play a role in increasing the herd numbers. UVM donated two breedings by Otterbrook Xenophon and UConn has offered UC Doc Sanchez (UC Doc Daniels

x UC Tee Time), UConn’s lead sire. Commenting on the use of other university stallions, Assistant Dean Mitchell, considers, “the united strength of maintaining government lines,” is one aspect that makes the program valuable.

In the meantime, Ulenfield Elation, on lease from Josh Merritt, remains the main herd sire and if he takes after his predecessors, this 24-year-old son of UVM Elite (UVM Watchman x UVM Tea Time) will continue to contribute foals to the UMass herd. Josh is a UMass program graduate and owner of Meadowmere Farm.

Cassie says adding Morgans to the herd stems from the

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UMASS MORGANS

LEFT TO RIGHT: Meade; Bay State Wardissa (Photo © Warren Patriquin)

university's revised equine program. With the focus on a student-run facility, it makes sense that the Morgan is the most suitable partner for student and university aims. Of today's 42-horse herd, 24 are Morgans, 11 of which are part of the lesson program. Four broodmares, producing two or three foals a year, and a herd stallion, comprise the breeding stock.

Regenerating the role of Bay State Morgans within the UMass herd will be a challenge, but one, much like the breed it represents, that has the bones to overcome obstacles. Supporting Cassie is Assistant Dean of the Stockbridge School of Agriculture, Bill Mitchell, and Jill Smith, recently appointed Director of Equestrian Training at UMass. Jill is a Morgan horse convert. "School horses need a good mind," she says. And her experience with the Bay State Morgans has convinced her that the breed has just that.

The Assistant Dean is also a recent convert not only to horses, but to Morgans in particular. Given the choice, the barn is his favorite site for meetings with Cassie and support staff. "Being around horses is revitalizing," says Mitchell, who also appreciates Morgans for what they contribute to the program. According to Cassie, "The Morgan temperament provides students with the confidence they need in a learning environment." Mitchell adds, "We want students to experience all aspects of equine care within a student-led program."

Following a budget-tightening hiatus from the show ring and participation in local events, a renewed interest in Morgans will promote UMass Equine students' participation with Bay State Morgans at area shows and events such as Equine Affaire.

UNIVERSITY OF CONNECTICUT (UCONN): KEEPING THE FAITH

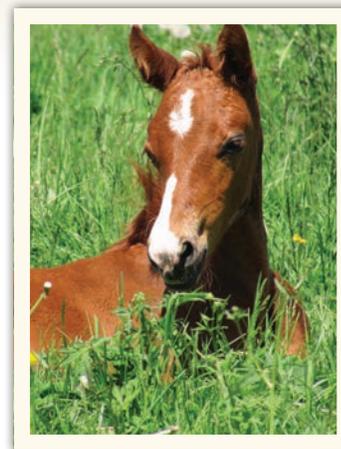
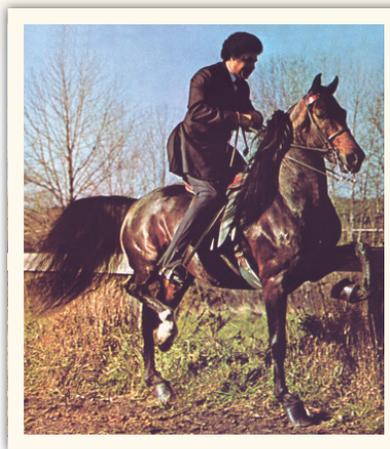
Genetics plays some pretty interesting games...it's a crapshoot." John Bennett, Horse Unit Supervisor, Department of Animal Science, University of Connecticut.

Horsebarn Hill Road curves and climbs up a gentle rise, ending at the UConn equine facility, a complex of barns and an indoor arena amidst white-fenced fields. Among them, overlooking the university fields, is the equine barn. Just within its entrance, two placards line the wall, each listing the horses that were bred and born on university grounds. Abbott (1931-1935) tops the first placard entitled, "Morgan Herd Sires at UConn, 1931 to Present," Next is Goldfield (Mansfield x Juno) from 1941-43, then Panfield (1948-50), and Mentor (Goldfield x Fairytot) from 1950-1962. And again, wrapping up the government-bred stallions, is Panfield from 1954-65. These four share common origins, descending from Bennington and Artemisia, their similarity in names indicating their close relationship. The number of foals sired runs alongside each stallion. Between 1931 and 1965, seventy-eight foals descend from mostly Panfield and Mentor, and out of a group of similarly related government-bred mares.

So it is no surprise that in 1963-73, the Upwey Ben Don son, Windcrest Don Again (x Mademoiselle of Windcrest) takes up the role of lead sire. His unrelated and impeccable pedigree contributed to diversifying the herd. He sired 32 foals at UConn including UC Marquis (x Cannie) in 1967. From 1973-76, Marquis sired 17 UC foals before going to James Wigle, former president of AMHA and AMHI, owner of Intrepid Farms in California.

But Don Again's greatest progeny might be UC Lyric (x UC Melodie). This Panfield grand-daughter would produce ten UC prefixed foals, including the legendary UC Ringmaster.

Despite Bennett's observation that breeding is a risky business, selecting the much admired UC Lyric to breed to Johnny Lydon's champion stallion, Waseeka's Showtime, turned out to be genius. Dr. William "Al" Cowan, who as professor and head of Animal Science at UConn oversaw the breeding program for nearly three decades until 1985, bestowed the red chestnut colt with the name UC Ringmaster. A sixth generation descendent of Abbott, it seems



UMASS MORGANS

LEFT TO RIGHT: Bay State Gallant, driven by Joe Parker, owned by John and Jean May, sired the renowned powerhouse, show horse, and sire, Gallant Lee, shown here with Bill Parker. Both stallions were trained and shown by the Parkers; A recent addition to the UMass herd, bred and born at the UMass Hadley Farm Equine Center, is Bay State Jewel, by RNH How Do U Like Me Now, and out of Bay State Notorious (Windcrest Highlander x Bay State Winsom). This filly can trace her government bloodlines back to U S Panaz and original government mare Narcissa. Cassandra Uricchio, Director of Equine Management at the University of Massachusetts-Amherst, anticipates the playful, inquisitive chestnut filly will mature into the Morgan the program seeks to produce—a typey horse of good height and bone with a tractable mentality. (Photo © Anne Wiktor)

Ringmaster inherited a talent for garnering the limelight.

After undergoing student directed saddle and harness training, and shown successfully, Ringmaster proved he was indeed destined for greater glory. At six years of age, he was sold to Lyman Orcutt, renowned horseman, breeder and judge, though Cowan was wise enough to retain breedings to the red chestnut stallion. Eventually Ringmaster, shown by long-time trainer, Leslie Parker, won World English Pleasure Championships in 1991 and 1993. Afterward he stood at the farm of Richard and Andrea Haas in Newtown, Connecticut. Ringmaster was retired from the show ring and returned to UConn in 2001.

At Ringmaster's induction into the Connecticut Hall of Fame, Bennett drove the 32-year old stallion into the coliseum. Ringmaster, puffed up with the vigor of a three-year old, carried himself with an air of well-deserved entitlement. It is clear why Bennett is oft-quoted as saying, the stallion, "was always a horse that thought highly of himself, with pretty good reason."

Bennett is a believer in the qualities that the government herd brought to UConn. He says, "It's better to breed our own due to the government line. They have soundness, temperament and correctness of gait." He adds that Ringmaster, even in advanced age, never showed signs of arthritis or illness or frailty normal for a horse in advanced years.

UConn Equine student, Michelle Grant, had the opportunity of working with Ringmaster, and says, "Despite his age, he continued to enjoy getting out of the barn to tease mares in the spring and he allowed some of the less experienced students to gain experience handling stallions."

Like Cassie at UMass, Bennett appreciates the breed's longevity.

Ringmaster continued breeding until 2008, siring 13 more foals, for a total of 32 UC-prefixed offspring. In Ringmaster's 34-year lifespan, he left behind 84 progeny. After his passing in the autumn of 2012, his ashes were laid to rest beside the barn of his birth.

Another prolific stallion on the placard list is UC Doc Daniels (UVM Elite x UC Topaz). Not only was this bay stallion beloved and popular among the students, he also sired 44 offspring between 1987 and 2010. His pedigree is impressive, combining the best of the government lines, UVM Cantor, UVM Tea Time, and two top and bottom crosses to Panfield. His other outside bloodlines are the

notable sires Petalbrook Sigmalect, Ledgemere Bounty, and Windcrest Don Again.

UC Doc Daniels was used as a herd sire until he developed testicular cancer at 22 years of age. He was gelded and went into retirement under the care of former UConn student, Mary O'Donovan, DVM,

who through her practice has kept up her passion for Morgans as she helps care for the UVM herd.

Due to the closeness of the herd Bennett has kept up the tradition of going to outside stallions and appreciates the easy relationship that makes UVM stallions such as UVM Elite, UVM Tennyson, and UVM Abington available to the UConn breeding program.

Bennett, the second major administrator of UConn's equine unit, followed shortly after Dr. Cowan's retirement in 1985. For 28 years Bennett has overseen approximately 150 students per year pass through the barn, working, studying, or riding and at some point, having contact with the Morgans. Like Al Cowan, Bennett considers Morgans as the program's cornerstone, their versatility and agreeable nature accommodating the students' varied talents and interests.

Bennett smiles when he recalls a recent memo, "You can buy fencing for the horses as the cows are milking pretty well."



UConn Morgans

LEFT TO RIGHT: Mentor (Photo © Bert Clark Thayer); Goldfield, born 1936, died in 1944 at Storrs of an internal hemorrhage. In his short career, he sired notable horses such as Mentor, Magellan, Meade, Kitts, and Kona (dam of Tutor).

Bennett says, “The Morgan contributes to the education of young people, enabling them to make a living in all aspects of the horse industry.” His goal is to develop a Morgan with, “temperament...one any student can get along with.” Because Bennett teaches the hands-on courses, Training and Developing the Driving Horse, and Light Horse Training and Management, a steady, suitable horse, one that encourages and allows student involvement is critical.

When a horse is not student-suitable, Bennett will work with it and market the horse to a potential show home. The sales revenue is funneled back to the program though much of the program funding comes from fees associated with the community-wide summer and winter lesson programs and the agricultural college’s joint account. Bennett smiles when he recalls a recent memo, “You can buy fencing for the horses as the cows are milking pretty well.”

Support also comes from fees and promotion resulting from seven of the university equine teams. Morgans are an integral part of the university equine programs, participating in the Equestrian, Dressage, Polo, and Western teams. But the legacy and tradition of U C Morgans is showcased in the UConn Morgan Drill Team and the Morgan Horse Show Team.

The Drill Team, formed in 1987, uses approximately 10-12 Morgans. According to the team website, Drill Team events promote the Morgan’s versatility, intelligence, presence, and constant friendship with their riders. Through numerous on- and off-campus events, such as parades, horse shows, and Equine Affaire, the Drill Team not only brings the herd into the public eye, but represents a uniform band of user-friendly mounts suitable for lively occasions.

The Morgan Horse Show Team is a student centered team,

coached and facilitated by Bennett. Students take part in preparing, grooming and even showing at Morgan shows throughout New England. The versatility of the Morgan is evident as the students compete in hunt seat, driving, and saddle seat, often showing stallions.

Of the 45 Morgans at UConn, Bennett says, they aim to, “breed six mares per year, due to increased enrollment—up from three or four when I got here.”

UNIVERSITY OF VERMONT (UVM): PERPETUATING A HERITAGE

“I’d be a fool not to follow Don’s recipe.” Steve Davis, Director, UVM Morgan Horse Farm referring to his predecessor, Dr. Donald Balch, professor emeritus and former farm director.

UVM rounds out the trio of land grant universities that continue breeding Morgan horses. Unlike the other university settings, the UVM Morgans are located 35 miles south of the main campus at the UVM Morgan Horse Farm. The ornate and stately two-story barn is the centerpiece of the farm’s pastoral setting and reminder of Battell’s regard for his Morgan horses. Before turning the farm over to the government in 1907, Joseph Battell, philanthropist and publisher of the first *Morgan Horse Registry* in 1894, devoted the property to breeding and promoting Morgan horses.

Today, the UVM Morgan Horse Farm is open to the public, providing informative tours, a glimpse into the daily life of a working farm and, most importantly, yielding the greatest numbers of Morgans among the three universities. The farm’s location in Weybridge, makes daily student inclusion impractical. Still, some students make an extended and exclusive commitment to learning the ropes of horse care and the equine industry as part of the farm’s internship program.

TOWNSHEND FARM'S NANCY CAISSE DISCUSSES THE UNIVERSITIES' ROLES

One person with a long-standing relationship to the university programs is Nancy Caisse of Townshend Farms in Bolton, Massachusetts. In Nancy's words, "My family was always interested in the university programs as a way to promote Morgan horses and serve youth. We want those programs to succeed. Young people remember their experience and it is big exposure for the Morgan horse. These people come back to Morgans."

According to Nancy, the goal of these outcrosses was not entirely about introducing different bloodlines. "Any program can use outside blood, but keeping the same type and attitude was what was important." Of the government stock Nancy says, "These horses were made of iron and were very strong-using horses." She adds, "At the same time, you knew they were Morgans—they looked like Morgan horses."

Today, Nancy has 48 horses on her farm. She and her mother, the late Anna Ela, have bred Morgan horses for more than 60 years and hundreds carry the Townshend prefix.

Still, Nancy readily and fondly recalls a few of her university mares and their contribution to her herd. "The old government blood is still here and is very definitely important to the herd." First came Bay State Wardissa (Meade x Narcissa) bought at auction in 1958 after Dick Nelson determined she did not fit into the Bay State program. "I showed her and had some interesting rides," Nancy says. Wardissa produced ten offspring for Townshend Farms. Another mare, Bay State Rapture (Bay State Flintlock x Bay State Helena) was sold to Anna Ela in 1979. Nancy says, "I won everything on Rapture, especially Road Hack." And still, the bay mare found time to add seven offspring to the Townshend herd.

Nancy speaks of UC Cover Girl (UVM Trophy x Merwin Black Beauty) as one of her mother's favorite driving mares. In 1988, Ana Ela convinced harness-maker, Bill Duffy, to sell the mare to her. "We used her for years. That mare taught a lot of kids to ride and drive."

Like her mother, Nancy continues her support to keep Morgans in the public eye and educate youth. Her stallion, Townshend Rob The Wave, by Tug Hill Whamunition and out of Townshend Roberta, granddaughter of Bay State Wardissa, is on lease to the WH Miner Agricultural and Research Institute in Chazy, New York. Through this stallion's bloodlines, top and bottom, the original government disbursement herd lives on.

Not to be forgotten is Orcland Farm's loan of Orcland John Darling to the University of Connecticut in 1974. John Darling, owned by Lyman and Ruth Orcutt, sired five UC progeny. Ruth was Nancy's aunt, sister of Anna Ela.

For Nancy Caisse, first-hand witness to the evolution of government stock in the university programs and inheritor of the tradition of cooperation, the university programs are, "Extremely important." She and her family are among those Morgan owners that shaped the profile of the breeding programs. ■



(Photo © Shane Shiflet)



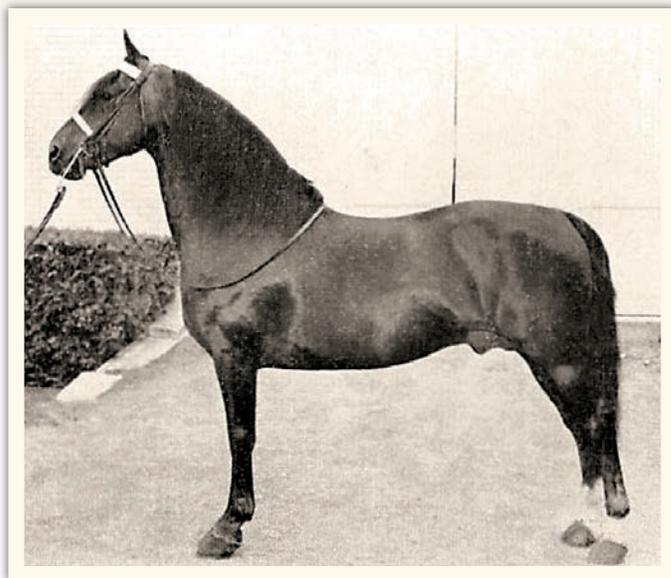
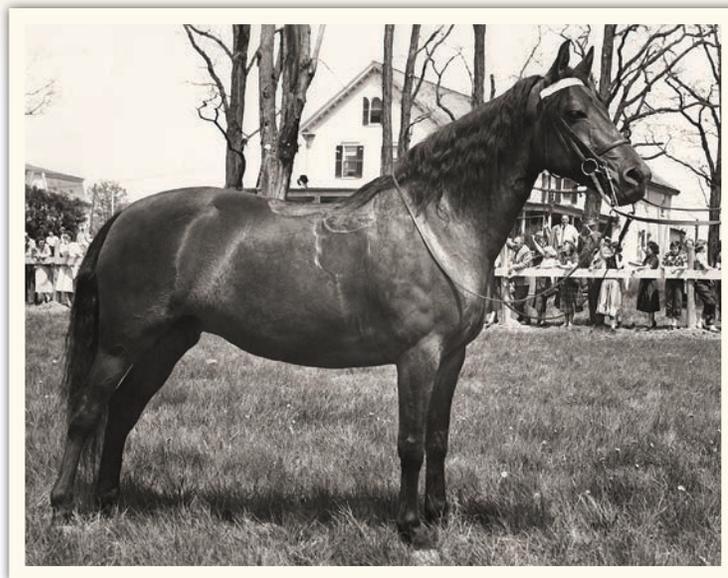
UConn Morgans

TOP TO BOTTOM: UC Ringmaster and Leslie Parker (Photo © Howard Schatzberg); A recent product of the UConn program: A 2014 colt by UC Doc Sanchez (Photo courtesy of UConn)

According to long-time director, Steve Davis, "It's a great teaching model for students to take away requirements for the industry. It's valuable for the university, the breed, and the public." He adds that it provides access for UVM Equine students to see a well-maintained farm and well-bred animals.

Since 1951 and the departure of Panfield, U S Panez, Mentor, Meade, and the band of government mares, the UVM Morgan Horse Farm has produced over 60 percent of the combined Morgan progeny bred at the universities. At least 833 of the 1,330-plus combined university offspring have held the UVM prefix since 1953.

Over the decades, the farm's main purpose has remained consistent: To carry on the basis from which the farm stock descends—government bloodlines, and breed Morgans equipped to meet the marketplace. For over 60



UVM MORGANS

LEFT TO RIGHT: Symphonee (Photo courtesy UVM Farm Archive); Stanfield stood at UVM in 1954 for \$35. He was the sole sire of the 1953 UVM foal crop.

years that vision has endured under only two directors, Dr. Donald Balch and Steve Davis.

One of the earliest challenges the UVM program faced was finances. The farm had to be, and still is, self-sustaining. The sale of stock, breeding fees, donations, and visitor admissions, and the efforts that numerous volunteers offer helps cover the farm's operating expenses. The greatest contributor is the sale of stock. Therefore, Dr. Balch says he devised a system where he sold the majority of each year's new crop of Morgans, selecting and retaining "the best individuals to keep from each sire line, so by 1960 our group of Morgans was becoming more uniform." At any given time since 1953, approximately 20 or so mares make up the broodmare herd and three or more stallions rotate among them, with the steady flow of carefully selected outside bloodlines added to the mix. That system is still in place today.

In the 1970s and 1980s, Dr. Balch said 40 to 50 percent of the farm's revenue came from horse sales. That includes the need to sell a few quality horses that he would have liked to keep in the herd. Today, endowment funds help shore up the farm's operating costs.

Outwardly, little has changed in the appearance of the 130-year old barn under its three owners, Battell, the U.S. Government, and UVM.

But the site was not always worthy of its current designation on the National Register of Historic Places. According to Dr. Donald Balch, in the interim, if not before the acquisition of the property in 1951 and his appointment as farm director in 1953, the place had gone into disrepair.

Dr. Balch writes, "The first year or two the money appropriated

to run the entire farm [Morgans, sheep and cattle] was \$17,500 per year." Money was needed to upgrade fencing and buildings, much due to government neglect. "However, they [UVM] were interested in selling the farm but the terms of the deed required UVM to keep the property for at least six years. This made it difficult to get support from within UVM."

Recently, Dr. Balch spent an afternoon reminiscing about the "old gang" and times past. At 92 years of age, reflection casts a contemplative view of his tenure as farm director and his work at turning the government stock he inherited into a uniform

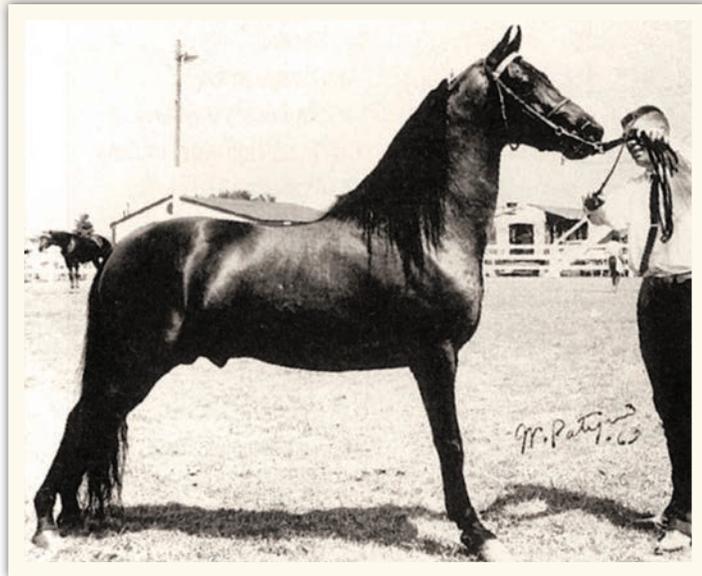
herd of Morgan type, athletic ability, and quality.

Dr. Balch recalled the farm's precarious start. The future rested on a group of 20-plus mares and four stallions. Their closely related bloodlines were unfortunate, at least from a breeding point of view. In general, the stallions were too young, and with the exception of Symphonee (full-sister to U S Panez)

and Sugar (Olympia x Lillian), the mares too aged. The renowned mare, Willys, dam of Quakerlady, and daughter of Bennington and Artemisia, had her thirteenth and last foal, UVM Alicia (x Stanfield), in 1953.

The stallions, Stanfield (Panfield x Jasmine), U. S. Menmar (Mentor x Marionette), and Tutor (Mentor x Kona) were all under three years of age. Their pedigrees were interlinked like a jigsaw of commonality. Though Dr. Balch says, "[U. S.] Menmar was a pretty horse and his buyers showed him at Northampton and won, I decided upon Stanfield [Panfield x Jasmine] and Tutor as herd stallions." A fourth young stallion, probably Whitefield (Stanfield x Naiad), was also sold shortly after 1954.

"I'd be a fool not to follow Don's recipe." Steve Davis, Director, UVM Morgan Horse Farm referring to his predecessor, Dr. Donald Balch, professor emeritus and former farm director.



UVM MORGANS

LEFT TO RIGHT: UVM Highlight (Photo © Warren Patriquin); Tutor at age 23 in California

Some mares were too closely bred and mentally unstable. “I still had to get rid of the horses that were undesirable.” Dr. Balch shakes his head. “I sold some for \$150 to \$200.”

Yet there were some good ones. As Balch mulls over the individual mares he pauses and smiles. “Symphonee was the best type mare. She won the foal class at Northampton Nationals in 1948. Sugar was a good mare. Fairytop was a small, older mare. Norma was small mare with a thin neck and a pony head as some folks said.” Old or young, all four would prove invaluable in building a quality herd of stock in the coming decade.

Norma, nearly ten years old when UVM took over, produced ten more offspring, adding to her previous five. Fairytop, born in 1935, was another mature mare. Not only had she proven herself as the dam of Mentor, but she also produced 15 foals, among them UVM Arletor and UVM Fairetor, both by Tutor. In turn, Arletor foaled 16 offspring, including UVM Flirt by Stanfield. UVM Flirt, a feminine and determined bay, produced 18 offspring, 12 of them for UVM. UVM Fairetor produced 15 UVM offspring.

Dr. Balch knew it would take, “twelve to 15 years to establish the right kind of Morgan horse to adhere to the Morgan standard.” After an initial settling in and observing breeding outcomes, he realized, “We needed some outside blood.” But they had no money. Ted Davis donated a breeding to his stallion, Upwey Ben Don who was put to 15-year-old Norma and the next lead sire, UVM Flash, was born in 1958.

According to Dr. Balch, Ted Davis, “was mighty proud of Ben Don and rightly so.” Flash had a “drop-dead beautiful head and good qualities from Norma. Some criticized the X [Ladelle] in

Ben Don’s pedigree and said this was wrong. They wanted pure Morgan breeding.” In response, he says, “I had no interference in my decisions, so it all was my fault.” Whatever was his fault, it had great impact. Flash was one of the farm’s most prolific sires, leaving behind 210 progeny. His portrait on letterheads and farm advertisements become synonymous with the type of Morgan bred at the farm.

Collectively, the government herd represented what Earl Krantz and previous directors had sought in a functional cavalry horse—sharp withers, size, strong bone and topline, endurance, and deep bodies. What they sacrificed was Morgan type. To obtain a typey horse with balanced motion, Dr. Balch accepted the generosity of Anna Ela and picked Symphonee to put to Orland Vigildon. The result was UVM Highlight, sire of 176 progeny. The three stallions, UVM Flash, UVM Highlight, UVM Cantor (Tutor x Sugar), would become the leading sires for the next decade. During

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those formative years, Dr. Balch set a plan to, “rotate three lines through these sires. It worked out very well.” He says, “Guess you can call it pretty lucky. Flash and Highlight were great sires.”

Eventually, UVM Cantor replaced Tutor as a herd sire. Dr. Balch considered Cantor a better fit to carry on the Mentor line of breeding. “Cantor was taller, and had a much typier Morgan head and his gait was truer and more ground covering.” Tutor was sold in 1963 to Harry and Virginia Kintz from New York State. Dr. Balch recalls, “I was in my office at UVM when Harry came in. He had seen Tutor at the farm and said he would buy him if he could afford him. When I told him the price he smiled and said, ‘I’ll have to sell my stamp collection but I’ll take him.’”



UVM MORGANS

LEFT TO RIGHT: UVM Promise at age 26 (Photo © Suzy Lucine); UVM Unchallenged, a recent product of breeding outside the gene pool, holds great promise for the future at the famous farm. (Photo courtesy UVM Morgan Horse Farm)

When Bob Baker and Dr. Balch unloaded Tutor from the old van they had, “Virginia was waiting with a saddle and immediately rode him around the yard with a huge smile on her face. She was a petite, pretty woman and they made a great pair.”

Another product of a donated outside breeding was UVM Minuet, out of UVM Fairetor, and by the Upwey Ben Don son, Wind-Crest Abner. Minuet was eventually added to the broodmare herd. But first, Dr. Balch took the young mare to a show. UVM Cantor was pegged as the horse Dr. Balch, an inexperienced rider,

would show in a Pleasure Saddle Class for Riders over 40 years of age. The other ladies entered in the class objected to being in the show ring with a stallion. Dr. Balch then opted to ride Minuet. The class was put through their paces by Judge Lyman Orcutt, and all was going well. But when a lively gait was called for, the effects of the wet, muddy ring became apparent when Minuet, disturbed

by the mud splattering her belly, became agitated. Spooked, she flipped Dr. Balch onto the muddy ring. In Dr. Balch’s words, “he saw stars!” Assured that Dr. Balch was not injured, Lyman Orcutt berated him, “Why did you have to go and fall off? I had you at number one and now I have to start all over again.”

Besides Dr. Bob Orcutt, Bob Baker, the colorful trainer responsible for taking UVM horses to show ring wins, also guided Dr. Balch’s thinking. He says, “I learned a lot from Baker on the art of showing horses. I can still see [UVM] Jason at the Eastern National. Bob said go last and make lots of noise so everyone sees what’s coming. And that’s what happened.”

Of the farm’s objective, Dr. Balch says, “As director, my main purpose was to produce a uniform herd of horses that fit

the standard of the American Morgan Horse Association—athletic, people-oriented, and easy to work with. And consistently reproducing their image and good characteristics.”

To obtain such a herd, Dr. Balch writes, “The only way to do that was to introduce some form of inbreeding.” Computer analysis helped devise a careful and slow growth in relationships increasing the breeding coefficient to 10 percent but keeping it lower than 12 percent. “This made for a uniform appearing herd. Careful and rigid selection must accompany this inbreeding or it could be

disastrous. One must start with goals and stick with them, not change every few years or you get nowhere.”

One example of close breeding combined with outside blood is the most well-known, long-lived, and beloved UVM stallion. UVM Promise (UVM Highlight x UVM Empress) was one that was reluctantly sold. He went to Darwin Morse in 1969 until he went to the Eppersons in 1975

until 1980. From there he went to the Wailes until he was retired back to the UVM farm. Balch considers Promise to be “one of the most exciting Morgan stallions in a half century.” When asked if he regrets selling the multi-champion stallion he shakes his head. “He had that verve—and great athleticism.”

On that topic Steve Davis says, “Promise was an example of Doc Balch’s mission—to reclaim refinement, beauty, and athletic ability. For the farm, Promise’s value came from being given the best chances, best resources, people and money.” Both men agree that Promise did more for the farm under Darwin Morse and the Eppersons than he ever could have had he remained.

One stallion that personifies Dr. Balch’s vision of developing a herd of a desirable gene pool of horses to be dispersed throughout

“Careful and rigid selection must accompany this inbreeding or it could be disastrous. One must start with goals and stick with them, not change every few years or you get nowhere.”

the country is UVM Elite (UVM Watchman x UVM Tea Time). This grandson of Petalbrook Sigmalect is an outcome of close government line-breeding, an outcross that also traces back to government breeding. A showy bay, Watchman sired 94 progeny, and is grandsire to the UMass stallions—Homeward Middlebury and Ulenfield Elation—and UConn’s UC Doc Daniels.

Currently, the UVM Morgan Horse Farm has 50 horses on site, a group that includes 15 broodmares, nine geldings, weanlings, yearlings, and ten stallions. UVM Abington (x UVM Nightstar) represents the UVM Promise legacy and is a favorite of UVM trainer, Kim Demars. “He’s a gentleman and easy to work around.”

Steve Davis has devoted 42 years to the UVM Morgan Horse Farm, first under Bob Baker’s wing, then as the UVM farm trainer, and finally as director following Dr. Balch’s retirement in 1985. He intends to, “stay the course of Don’s” UVM project, at the same time striving for refinement and size. Like Dr. Balch, he recognizes that the “core families are wonderful but limited to use with one another.” The challenge then is maintaining a breeding coefficient that is not outrageously close.

UVM continues to benefit from donated breedings. Former owners of World Champion MEM Bailamos, Gerry and Mary Anne Nau, donated a breeding to UVM, resulting in UVM Unchallenged (MEM Bailamos x UVM Oneida). This combination joins outside bloodlines, yet continues the lineage of the early foundation stallions. The MEM Bailamos (Futurity French Command x Nobelle) pedigree reaches back to Trophy, while UVM Oneida, stands on UVM Flash and UVM Promise blood that is founded on the government stallions, Tutor and Stanfield. For Davis, the bay stallion represents support from the industry and at 16 hands, the three-year-old supports the farm’s mission.

Davis says their goal is to, “breed a serviceable horse for every individual,” hence the use of a taller, sporty horse such as MEM Bailamos. At the same time, Davis says, “Maintaining integrity and service to the industry is very important.”

Currently, the farm is producing six to seven foals per year, down from the ten-14 in past decades. Today, UVM is focused on “developing horses for its place.” Davis says, “UVM promotes to new owners. Most people want to experience the horse themselves.”

The University programs shared an implied directive—to continue and maintain the qualities inherent in government bloodlines while improving type. The Morgan breeding programs at UNH and Penn State no longer exist. Penn State discontinued the Morgan program in the 1950s and the last UNH prefixed Morgan horse foaled in 2004. However, the legacy originated by the UVM, UConn and UMass herds is seen today in prominent show and performance horses. As evidence, the pedigree of CBMF Clear Victory goes back

to Abbott, Norma and Tutor. CBMF Ruling Class, 2007 World Champion Ladies Pleasure Driving, is also a descendent from Norma and Mentor. Likewise, CBMF Crown Prince, 2013 World Champion Park Harness stallion, goes back to Norma and Abbott.

A few years ago, Dr. Balch accepted an IBM programmer’s offer to run a genetic study as test for a new program. The report was door-stop thick, pages and pages of pedigrees. A little over 29,000 Morgans traced back to the little government mare, Norma. Fortunately, the consistency and dedication of university directors, leaders, and administrators combined often seemingly opposing interests into enduring and productive programs. By maintaining the best of the government bloodlines and combining top outside blood, legends such as UC Ringmaster, UVM Promise, Bay State Gallant, Gallant Lee, and UNH Campus Kid dazzled the Morgan world. At the same time, echoes of the characteristics necessitated in cavalry stock—a steady intelligence founded on soundness and willingness—still resonate in the university herds and continue to educate generations of future horse people.

In the early decades, university program directors collaborated to shakeout a vision. Two years following the disbursement, four universities—UNH, UMass, UConn and UVM—ran trial and error experiments to evaluate the progress of the herds with respect to Morgan type and uniformity of herds. University representatives devised a system of judging. The tabulated results helped directors and advisors plan breeding programs. Dr. Balch recalls, “This was of some help to all of us horse people as we scored each horse and in the evening we discussed the scores verbally. Agreed upon scores were Ex., V.G., G., F., P.” Keeping it in good humor, sometimes over dinner at the nearby Dog Team Tavern, it seemed that the judges, Dr. Balch, Cy Terrill, Al Cowan, and Dick Smith, “were not in accord on what makes a better Morgan.”

In perhaps a more formalized and objective evaluation, the 1954 Eastern States Exposition held a class for Morgan Breeding Classes limited to Morgans from the Land Grant Colleges. Curiously, Mentor won the 3 & Over Stallion class, Meade coming in fourth, while Get of Stallions ranked Meade first, and Mentor third.³

Despite the competitiveness this might have generated among the directors, the continued good relations and cooperation currently in place steers the original directive to provide a gene pool of Morgan horses derived from government breeding. That they have done so for over 60 years speaks to the dedication and passion for the objective and breed as well as the undeniable legacy fueled by the generosity and support of individuals ranging from the Ferguson, Orcutt, Ela, and Davis families to the Merritt, Sebring, and Sogoloff families and university alumni. These small, but vital herds of university Morgans owes their existence to the past six decades of sustained belief in their value. Hopefully, these programs will continue far into the future. ■

ENDNOTES

¹ *The Morgan Horse Magazine*, June 1954, relays Cecil Ferguson’s fascinating, first-hand account of the train journey escorting his herd of Morgans to Rhode Island.

² Number of Progeny refers only those listed in the *Morgan Horse Registry* and does not include unregistered or Remount-bred offspring.

³ *The Morgan Horse Magazine*, November 1954.