

Gay Vaquero

By Vaquero Mac X Gay Berta

Foaled 1969, Bay, Bred by Richard and Phyllis Nelsen.

So reads the American Morgan Horse 1993 CD. Gay Vaquero was indeed bay, and a most impressive, smooth, well balanced Bay horse he was. He had a striking presence, a great deal of charisma and the physical attributes to back up the charisma and striking presence. Gay Vaquero , very deservedly, was the fountainhead of Little Brook Farm. For the current day breeders of Working Western Family (WWF) horses, the names of Richard and Phyllis Nelsen and their Primavera prefix are very highly renown. The Primavera horses are among the very foundation of the WWF as we know it today.

Vaquero Mac, (sire of Gay Vaquero) himself sired only 15 Registered Morgan horses, some of whom went on to be breeding horses, but for the most part his line has died out. Vaquero Mac was also bred by the Nelsens. He was a very handsome chestnut horse and his son Gay Vaquero resembled him strongly. Vaquero Mac was a solid, well balanced individual, with powerful hindquarters, and the same overall smoothness his son inherited. Vaquero Mac's sire was the chestnut Ro Mac, bred by Dr. CC Reed of California. Ro Mac was 14.3 hands and Vaquero Mac was very obviously his son- the body of all three horses, Gay Vaquero, Vaquero Mac and Ro Mac are almost interchangeable. Ro Mac was by the well known Gay Mac . Gay Mac in turn was by the US Government Morgan Horse Farm premier stallion Mansfield. Mansfield was by Bennington by General Gates out of Mrs. Culvers. It is almost impossible to find a Morgan Horse today without Mansfield on the papers. So wide an influence has Mansfield had. Mrs. Culvers the dam of Bennington was brought into the Government Farm breeding program from KY, in an effort to increase size in the herd. She was a great granddaughter of Gist's Black Hawk Morgan by Blood's Vermont Black Hawk, by Black Hawk , son of Sherman Morgan- one of the three most famous breeding sons of Justin Morgan. General Gates was by Denning Allen out of Fanny Scott, a mare of primarily Thoroughbred breeding.

Denning Allen, however was all Morgan, with multiple crosses to Sherman Morgan through Black Hawk. Denning Allen also carries a cross to Woodbury Morgan, and one , more rare to Red Robin, another son of Justin Morgan, though a lessor known son.

Artemisia was the dam of Mansfield, and through her is a link to what is considered as Ancient Morgan lineage breeding. She was by Ethan Allen 3rd out of the Harrison Orcutt Mare. Ethan Allen 3rd (Borden's) was by Ethan Allen 2nd (Peter's) son of Peter's Vermont by Green Mountain Morgan and going back to Gifford Morgan by Woodbury Morgan, another of the three most famous breeding sons of Justin Morgan. The cross of Bennington and Artemisia has long been considered a “golden cross” and it is one which has produced the backbone of not only the WWF, but of all of today's Morgans who can be considered of Government breeding. This then is the top sire line of Gay Vaquero- pure old US Government Farm breeding. On Artemisia's pedigree one finds the names that rank among the most famous in the early years of the breed – Cushings Green Mountain, Billy Root, Hale's Green Mountain, Black Morgan, The Batchelder Horse, The Levi Wilder mare, and yet another of Justin Morgan's lessor known sons-The Hawkins Horse.

Dewdrop the dam of Gay Mac was by General Gates out of Ellen. Ellen was a Vermont bred mare, standing 15.2 hands with nine crosses to Justin Morgan, through all three famous sons, Sherman, Woodbury, and Bulrush. She was owned and registered by Joseph Battell and kept as a broodmare at the Government Farm. She produced 14 foals, 13 of whom were filly foals. She was a big, smooth, up-headed mare and beautifully bred. She was one of the best of the Government broodmares. Ellen carried her line to Bulrush through Morrill, by The Jennison Colt a grandson of Bulrush. Gifford Morgan by Woodbury is on her pedigree as well as Motion by Daniel Lambert going back to Sherman Morgan.

Bessie Ro was the dam of Ro Mac. She was by Querido (full brother to Mansfield) and out of Roboss by Red Oak. Bessie Ro was bred by Roland G. Hill of California, and again is considered pure WWF. Roland G. Hill bought many of his mares from Richard Sellman of Rochelle, TX. The Sellman name is revered by breeders of the Working Western Family, and horses of his breeding's lines are highly sought to this day. After the death of Richard Sellman, his horses were dispersed, and as in the case of Roland G. Hill, some of the mares went to California breeders, becoming in turn the basis for the Morgans we now call old California bred. Others went to Quarter Horse breeders in Texas, lost to the Morgan breed, but a goodly part of the Foundation Quarter Horse as we know it today.

Roboss was a 1920 mare who is among the most highly sought. She was out of Bossie A , also bred by Richard Sellman. Bossie A represents the very heart of Sellman's breeding program- she by Major Antoine out of daughter of Major Gordon. Major Antoine was by Meteor Jr. by Meteor by Young Rix who was a son of Chieftain, who was a son of Black Hawk by Sherman Morgan. For the most part these were 16 hand horses either black or brown in color, and from Vermont. From Major Antione on this is considered solid mid-western breeding which is the basis of Sellman's breeding. Most go back to Sherman Morgan, some through Black Hawk. Some go to Woodbury and Bulrush such as Octoroon who is behind Bossie Gordon, the dam of Bossie A. Major Gordon who has the blood of Octoroon also has a line to The Hawkins Horse by Justin Morgan through Joe Brown by Davy Crockett by The Hawkins Horse. Major Gorden also had a line to Woodbury through Comet who was by The Chittendon County Morgan by Putnam Morgan by Woodbury. Comet has this exact breeding on both the top and bottom of his pedigree. In his day Comet was undefeated as a show horse and after he left his home state of Vermont, and went to Kentucky – was considered one of the very best sires in that state. Again, a strong blend of the three famous sons, with lines to lessor known sons , which was characteristic of the Sellman breeding program as the horses were known to be and bred to be sound, hard using stock.

Red Oak the sire of Roboss, was by General Gates out of Marguerite, who was by White River Morgan who traces to Woodbury Morgan on both top and bottom of this pedigree. Red Oak was bred by Joseph Battell, and some say he was the best son of General Gates. Certainly the the Ancient Vermont blood of his dam Marguerite was a contributing factor in that. For in addition to Woodbury Marguerite also has the blood of an unnamed daughter of Justin Morgan behind her.

This then is the very top line of Gay Vaquero's pedigree through Vaquero Mac. It is from the dam of Vaquero Mac that a divergence from the very top line begins. While still heavily Sellman breeding in nature, one begins to see more Sherman Morgan and Bulrush Morgan blood added. Oh-Cee's Gift (bred by R.N. Nelson , foaled in 1956) was the dam of Vaquero Mac, and while her sire line Montabell, by Montecrest Sellman by Joe Bailey by Headlight Morgan is pure Sellman breeding- her paternal dam line goes back to the famous cross of Bennington and Artemsia, through Querido. This line – that of Jinglebells dam of Montabell brings in more Bulrush Morgan through Morrill and doubles up on Headlight Morgan through his son Easter Allen Morgan.

In addition there is a line to Black Hawk by Sherman here through Easter Allen Morgan's dam-Bessie Morgan. These were all robust horses, some like Bessie Morgan as large as 15.2 hands, others of the 14.3 hand range with weights of 1100 lbs.

It is through Oh-Cee's Gift's dam Jane Abbey , bred by J.C. Brunk, that we see far more of the Sherman Morgan blood. It is here in abundance through Jane Abbey's sire Raragraph by Jubilee King and out of Nella by Allen King. Allen King and Penrod, the sire of Jubilee King were full brothers by Allen Franklin out of Black Bess. Allen Franklin was by Jasper Franklin by Ben Franklin by Daniel Lambert. Jasper Franklin's dam was Twilight by Daniel Lambert. In the fourth generation sire lines of Jasper Franklin, Black Hawk by Sherman Morgan appears four times. Heavy Sherman blood concentration indeed.

Daisy, the dam of Allen Franklin has no less concentrated Sherman blood, but hers comes through the famous 'Billy's'- Billy Bodette, and Billy Root- she also carried a line to Royal Morgan by Sherman and one to The Atkins Mare by Sherman. This much blood of Sherman through Daniel Lambert especially was the hallmark of the earlier JC Brunk breeding program- which is indeed another equally important contribution to the foundation of the modern Working Western Family.

Black Bess, the dam of Penrod and Allen Franklin, was by Jubilee De Jarnette, the only son of the very famous and undefeated show mare Lady De Jarnette. She was so famous that after a little while nobody would show against her, and she did exhibitions only. She was a five gaited mare. She was a great granddaughter of Black Hawk. Jubilee Lambert was the sire of Black Bess, he was by Daniel Lambert himself, out of a Black Hawk granddaughter. The bottom side of Jane Abbey's pedigree is a virtual repeat of the top side of her pedigree with the addition of Knox Morgan by Mountaineer Morgan who goes back to Sherman, close up on both sides of his pedigree. Knox Morgan was the maternal grandfather of Jane Abbey's dam- Betty Barr. Betty Barr was by Penrod out of Daisy Knox, who was also the dam of the famous Jubilee King son- Red Vermont. Daisy Knox was out of Daisy De Jarnette by Jubilee De Jarnette X Ben's Daisy by Ben Franklin. The dam of Ben's Daisy was the same Daisy as mentioned above as the dam of Allen Franklin.

This is the heart of the JC Brunk breeding program. Knox Morgan crossed onto the Daniel Lambert blood brought to that line more elegance and more compactness of form. This is the top side of Gay Vaquero's pedigree- a blend of US Government Farm, the best of Sellman, Ancient Vermont blood, and the best of Brunk breeding.

Gay Berta, dam of Gay Vaquero was by Gay Mac, out of Roberta Ro. Roberta Ro was a full sister to Bessie Ro who was the dam of Ro Mac the sire of Vaquero Mac. Gay Berta had six progeny, and won her class of Mare and Foal at age 17- she was a very pretty mare, very smooth, and very correct, with a lovely expression and eye. She was owned by The Nelsens, and was very much a prized broodmare.

Four of her produce were Gay Vaquero, Panzarita Ro by Ro Mac, Seranita Ro by Senator Gift, and Tia Margarita by Tio Lalo. All of whom were very well known, and highly regarded. This is what is considered as California breeding despite it being based on the old US Government Farm in Vermont at Middlebury.

To get Gay Vaquero, we have a classic example of excellent inbreeding. That of breeding a grandson of an excellent horse to a daughter of that same excellent horse.. In this case the grandson was Vaquero Mac, the grandson of Gay Mac, bred to Gay Berta, the daughter of Gay Mac. It is a pattern used by many a good breeder, including JC Brunk. It strengthens the good traits, and in the case of Gay Vaquero it most certainly did do that. In his case it worked beautifully bringing all the breeding strength of great past horses, all the stamina, all the soundness and using ability to Gay Vaquero. Who put it to good use with Polly Smith in Dressage, Carriage Driving, and Western Pleasure as well as his job as a breeding horse.

Gay Vaquero sired a total of 18 foals, seven colt foals, and eleven filly foals. Among them six carrying the LBF prefix. They are LBF Gay Melodie, LBF Gay Enchantress, LBF Long Tall Sally, LBF Gay Isabella, LBF Gay Jamboree and LBF Gay Catalina. He also sired Rocking M Vaquero, who stands at stud at Roy Foote's Treasure Morgans out west in Superior, Montana.

Thus in Gay Vaquero we see a blend of the very best Morgans of Old Vermont, the Midwest, California and The US Government Farm. He truly was a foundation bred Morgan and a foundation bred Working Western Morgan.

This evaluation done by:

Ina M. Ish

January 2008