



HISTORICAL FARMS

THE JACKSON MORGAN HORSE RANCH

A Century of Ranching and Breeding Morgan Horses

The 1870s were a time of prosperity and change in America. Montana was still a territory, a rough and unsettled frontier that challenged the most fearless and daring of the early pioneers who sought to move westward to seek their fortunes. Among these were two

brothers: Peter Jackson first made his way to Montana Territory to work for the Midas Mining company in what was to become Madison County. Peter's enthusiastic letters drew his older brother Thomas to join him in 1871 where he began teaching school. Both brothers were to found ranches which would endure in their respective branches of the Jackson family for more than 100 years.

The year 1870 would mark the beginning of the cattle industry on the Montana Prairies. Thomas Jackson bought a homestead near Harrison in 1873, building a home and ranch that has sheltered his family for over five generations, as well as becoming the fountainhead of a Morgan horse breeding operation that was to spread across the US and Canada. Yellowstone National Park, less than 100 miles southeast of the ranch, had just been established in 1872. The Northern Pacific Railroad would be another 10 years in crossing Montana completely.

Beginnings—Thomas Jackson founds the Homestead
The pioneer spirit ran deep in the Jackson blood, and the rugged Montana frontier appealed to the young school teacher from

Rochester, New York. At 28 years of age in 1873, he was feeling the urge to settle down, and his college training in business enabled him to quickly recognize the promise that the new land held for raising cattle. Thomas purchased a homestead property of 160 acres—a ¼ section of land—

nestled in a high mountain valley. Nearby, the magnificent Tobacco Root mountain range loomed with old Hollowtop Mountain, its highest peak, stretching to 10,604' elevation. At the time, these glacier-carved mountains were referred to as the "South Bowlder Range," according to the Geological Surveys for Territories' 6th annual report in 1873. The Tobacco Root mountain range contains more than 25 of the highest named peaks in the state. (*State of Montana, Natural Resource Information System*).

Other ranchers were already settling in the area, including Henry C. Harrison, for whom the small town of Harrison was named. Harrison had established a ranch on Willow Creek in 1865; his family was known for their large steam dairy, shorthorn cattle, and interestingly, Morgan horses. Others were also bringing Morgan horses into the Montana territory during these years: most notably S. E. and C. X. Larrabee, W. H. Raymond, and Amsden, Brookman and CO. These were all breeders of light harness horses, fast trotters and pacers. The Morgan registry would not be established until 1894, and any horse able to trot or pace a mile within the 2:30 standard was

By Brenda L. Tippin



(Photo by Diane Farley)

considered “Standardbred.” Thomas Jackson held a deep love for horses, and became intensely interested in raising and selling them—along with beef cattle, hay and grain. He thought there would be some profit in raising fast harness horses and started with a couple mares past racing ability, and a Morgan stallion, whose pedigree unfortunately was lost. Daughters of this Morgan stallion were then crossed with some top Standardbred strains with fast race records to produce solid using ranch horses with speed, endurance, and intelligence on the dam’s side.

In 1880, Thomas Jackson married Emma Gordon, also of New York, who bore him five children. Deeply impressed with the wide open plains of prairie grasses rippling like ocean waves in the persistent winds, and guarded by austere mountains, Emma named the place “Pleasant View Ranch.” Although the ranch is still referred to by this name, in Morgan horse circles it is usually known simply as “The Jackson Morgan Horse Ranch.” The Pleasant View ranch was one of 142 ranches featured, focusing on ranches operated continuously by the same family for 100 years or more, in the 125th Anniversary book published by the Montana Stockgrowers Association (MSGA) in 2009: *The Weak Ones Turned Back, the Cowards Never Started—A Century of Ranching in Montana*. The book is available on the MSGA website, www.mtbeef.org. According to this book, the original home built by Thomas Jackson, who had also studied carpentry, was the first

frame house in the Harrison Valley. Emma died in 1889 when Joel, their youngest baby, was just one-year-old—leaving Thomas with five children. He married Emma’s sister, Catherine “Virginia” Gordon in 1891, who bore him one additional daughter. Thomas Jackson had gradually increased the acreage of his ranch lands, but died of illness in 1901 along with his eldest son. The ranch was later divided between his two remaining sons, Ernest and Joel, with Joel taking the north portion that included the original ranch house built by his father.

Starting with Morgans—Joel C. Jackson

The first registered Morgan stallion owned by the Jackson family was Hal Mercury Jr. #6819, purchased by Thomas Jackson’s son, Joel C. Jackson in 1920. A sorrel stallion bred by William H. Hoff of Bozeman, MT, Hal Mercury Jr (Hal Mercury x Babe) was a grandson of Brown Hal, a full brother of the famous gelding Little Brown Jug for whom the coveted Pacing Classic for harness racing three-year-olds was named. Along with some unregistered mares of Morgan and Standardbred lines from his father’s breeding program, J. C. Jackson’s earliest registered Morgan mares included the full sisters Herrietta and Chiretta (Revelation x Kathleen Mollie O), and Nightengale (Sea Quail x Natka) of CX Larrabee breeding.

In 1923, Joel married a beautiful young lady from Texas, Amanda Virginia Ellis, known by her middle name of Virginia. Four



Bill Jackson.

(Photo by Mary Woolverton)

A Yankee Visits the Jackson Ranch

Mary Woolverton details her maiden voyage to the Jackson Ranch in 1961.

By Mary Woolverton

Watching the late afternoon sunset over the Tobacco Root Mountains was a spectacular introduction to my first visit to the Jackson Morgan Horse Ranch. Betty Jackson had picked me up at the Bozeman airport to drive me the fifty plus miles southwest to Harrison. This was our first meeting and my first trip to Montana. Betty apologized profusely for having me wait a day to tour the ranch. The next day was scheduled for branding the 200 plus calves and could not be postponed. To me, a Yankee from MA, now living in CO this was a dream come true. I wanted to see the west in action and this was my first visit to a real working ranch. I asked if I could help, and the next morning I was up at 4:00 a.m. to join the family and neighbors gathered to brand and vaccinate the calves. I had landed in the old west riding a Morgan horse and working with 'real' cowboys. Bill, Dean, J. C. Jackson their father, Betty, Dean's wife, and assorted other cowboys from neighboring ranches quickly showed me the ropes. By the end of the day, I had branded, castrated,

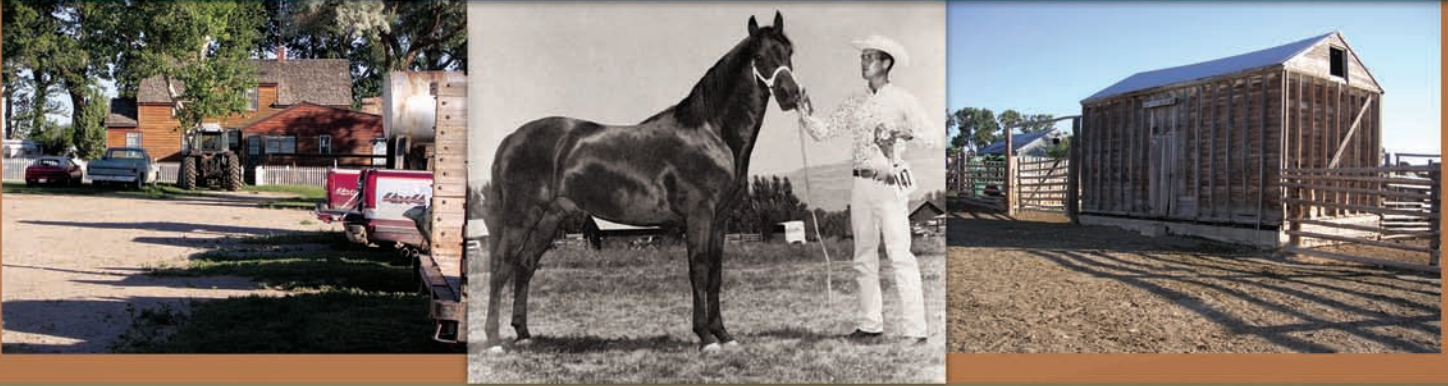
vaccinated, cropped ears and cut waddles on the calves as they were run through the chute. It was a day I would never forget.

The next day Dean gave me a tour of the ranch and their Morgan horses. I owned one Moran mare compared to their herd of close to 100. They had three stallions all running in a large pasture together before going out with their carefully selected band of mares. The stallions were Rosefield, along with Fleetson and Senatefield, both sons of Fleetfield. The ranch was several thousand acres in size with plenty of room for the several hundred cows and their calves as well as the Morgan horses. Everyone in the family worked at ranching, but Dean had a special interest in the Morgan breeding program. The horses were sound, of good Morgan type with sturdy legs and willing temperaments. It was amazing to me to see the ranch management of such a large herd of horses. I reluctantly returned to Denver the next day having made lasting friendships of the Jackson family.

I next met Dean and Betty when they came to the Circle J Western National

Morgan Horse Show. Dean rode the stallion Senatefield while Betty rode a pretty little mare, Joy Kate. They stimulated the interest in the working western Morgan horses and in 1963 several of us formed The Morgan Cutting Horse Association with Dean as President. Later, Dean again spearheaded the Morgan reining class and developed patterns specifically for the Morgan horse. I next met up with Dean when he judged the Mid-Atlantic Morgan Horse Show. His trip to the east coast as a judge and member of the AMHA Board of Directors was a highlight for him as he saw many different breeding programs and horses. Tragically, Dean died in a tractor accident on the ranch the next year and was buried on the ranch.

Many years later, Betty invited me to the fall round up held in late September. Another first for me. At 4:00 a.m., I rode in the truck transporting horses and riders to the summer range. It was barely light when we all mounted our assigned Morgan horses to climb up a mile or two to find the cattle. The work of gathering had begun. My young horse knew exactly what to do and I was along for the ride. By mid-afternoon we had close to 1000 cattle, belonging to the ranches in the valley, down the mountain and collected in a large field below. The long and dusty trip back to Harrison took the rest of the day. The cattle were penned and then sorted. It was after dark when the Jackson herd was driven back to the ranch. We were all dusty and tired, but I had once again lived the life of the old west. I was fortunate to make this trip a couple more times thanks to the generosity and hospitality of the Jacksons. Bill was managing both the horse and cattle programs and was a remarkable horseman. I had experienced first hand the talents of the Jackson's Morgan horses, the challenging life on a working ranch and the amazing skills of the entire Jackson family. Bill, at 85, still works 7 days a week, rides the horses and oversees the irrigation, combining the wheat, and haying of the fields. He is a true man of the west and has maintained a carefully developed Morgan breeding program that is a credit to the breed. I am so privileged to have experienced the life style of one of the oldest family owned ranches in Montana. ■



Views of the Jackson Ranch including the ranch house (left) and tack shed (right). Dean Jackson and Senatefield (center).

children, Rollin, Bill, Edith, and Dean were born to the Jacksons; all of whom graduated from Montana State University like their father before them, and all of whom were actively involved in the ranch from early childhood. Joel Jackson had inherited his father's deep love of horses, which he passed on to all of the children. Also, like his father Thomas, he was very sharp in his business dealings and remained on the cutting edge of the latest improvements and equipment available to ranchers and farmers. He is credited with owning the first combine and pick-up baler in the valley, and already had a home-installed water pressure and electrical system before the Montana Power line came through (*Montana Stockgrowers Assoc. 125th Anniversary edition*).

Joel felt that Morgan promoters had left out a large part of the Morgan's speed, endurance, and extremely versatile using abilities and thereby missed their chance to have the Morgan breed claim the title of top using stock horse, a corner of the horse market there would always be demand for. Instead, they allowed the Quarter Horse to claim this title. In his early breeding program, Joel Jackson continued to improve his Morgan mares, but retained some registered under Rule II, to the consternation of his friend, well-known California stockman Roland Hill. In letters to *The Morgan Horse* magazine Joel stated, "Like begets like far more accurately than the pedigrees indicate. Mr. Hill thought I should discontinue Rule II, but at that time my trade demanded performance—most

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Bill Jackson

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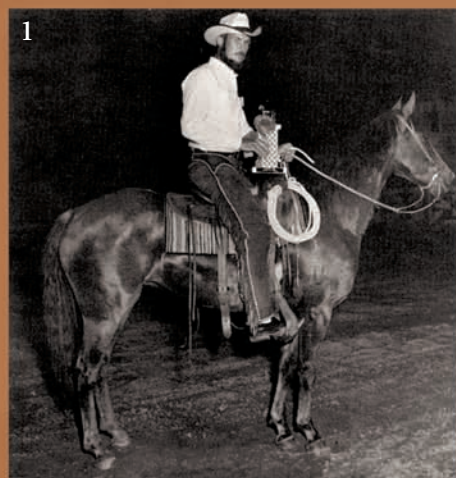


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HISTORICAL FARMS



1. Dean Jackson aboard his mare Marsha. 2. The Thomas Jackson family in front of the first frame house in the Harrison Valley, built by Thomas Jackson in 1873. Left to right: Rollin, Joel, Faith, Grace, Ernest, Edith, Catherine and Thomas. 3. First-generation Thomas Jackson family, circa 1893. Back row, left to right: Faith, Virginia Gordon Jackson (second wife of Thomas, mother of Grace, and stepmother of remainder) holding Grace, Rollin and Edith. Front row, left to right: Ernest and Joel. 4. Three generations of Jackson men, 2007. Left to right: William, Justin, Joal and Nathan. 5. Second-generation Joel and Virginia Jackson family, circa 1947. Standing, left to right: William, Rollin and Dean. Seated, left to right: Joel, Virginia and Edith. 6. 1926 Holt Model 32 combine pulled ten head of horses. J. C. Jackson standing, hired man driving, circa 1930.

of it in using horses, not breeding stock—he had never ridden them or their produce. Pretty Queen, Topsy, Dixie, Clarice, and others had the blood of Hal Mercury Jr. and Chief Bugler with the true Morgan qualities for their offspring. When they went into various parts of the country, the Morgan reputation was justly upheld.” (TMH 1968, *July and September*).

Joel’s second registered Morgan stallion was the black Chief Bugler 6992 (Tyee x Gala Girl), a double grandson of Jubilee de Jarnette (Jubilee Lambert x Lady de Jarnette). Chief Bugler, foaled in 1913, was one of the last horses bred by C. X. Larrabee and registered by his estate in Home Park, MT. The horse passed to Senator C. H. Williams of Deer Lodge, MT in 1915, who later transferred him to Jackson in 1932. Up to that point, only two of Chief Bugler’s offspring had been registered, but Joel Jackson was deeply impressed with the balanced conformation, excellent feet and legs, and the kind and gentle disposition of the nineteen-year-old stallion. In his view, no better bred Morgan existed with speed, endurance, and beauty combined, and the gentle stallion was one who consistently passed on all the top Morgan features to his colts in the true tradition of old Justin Morgan.

Joel remarked that Senator Williams had bred Bugler to common mares, but was able to sell his colts as saddle horses for \$250 apiece in a time when the average saddle horse would only bring \$30 to \$70 at best. An early photo taken near this time

shows Chief Bugler with all three of Joel’s young sons, Rollin, Bill, and Dean aboard. Another photo shows all four of the Jackson children—Rollin, Bill, Edith, and Dean, all seated bareback on the kind and trustworthy stallion.

Joel showed Chief Bugler a number of times and he was considered to be one of the top ten Morgan stallions in the country. Chief Bugler went on to produce 34 additional registered Morgans for the Jackson family. Several of his daughters, as well as a son, Watch Charm, were retained and used in the Jackson breeding program; some were used for ranch work. Most of his stud colts were sold to neighboring ranchers to sire using stock horses. The cross with daughters of Hal Mercury Jr. invariably produced an animal with “cow savvy,” as well as the speed and endurance needed for working cattle and a hard day’s ride on the range.

Other early stallions used by Joel Jackson included Found At Last #7240 (Glen de Jarnette x Florence), acquired in 1938 who produced 15 registered Morgans for the Jacksons; Delbert #7707 (Revere x Alabirdie), acquired in 1940, who produced 91 registered Morgans; and Monte L. (Major R.M. x Jumina), acquired in 1946 who produced nine registered Morgans for the Jacksons in 1947 before Joel sold him, with some regret, to Mr. and Mrs T. R. Rex of Carta Mesa, CA who were just getting started in Morgans.

Rough Times for Ranchers

Meanwhile, day to day work on the ranch continued. In addition to raising cattle, horses, and hogs, the Jacksons raised hay and grain crops on both dry and irrigated lands. Grade Suffolk and Percheron draft horses were used for farm work into the 1950s. Morgans were regularly used for daily ranch work and working cattle, and are still used for this work today.

The Depression years were difficult times for Montana ranchers, and many did not survive. As Bill Jackson explains, the ranches in southwest Montana are made up of homesteaders. The 4900' elevation arid climate only receives 12-15" inches average of rainfall per year. Homesteading in Montana had experienced a boom during the years 1906-1918, but severe drought from 1917-1923 took its toll. Many of the homesteaders had established their ranches on 160 acres of dry land. In 1929-31, and again in 1934-37, some of the greatest droughts in Montana history struck, and these were known as the Dust Bowl years.

The period from 1928-1939 was the driest on record, and the Palmer Hydrologic Drought index showed the entire state in a water deficit for over 10 years. Those ranches which did not have water and couldn't irrigate could not make it and were forced to leave. Those which had water survived. They grew all their own produce, meat, and milk, and game was also plentiful. The Jackson family's Pleasant View Ranch has a creek, as well as some springs on the property, and irrigation water flowing in the ditches. Bill notes that having access to water was how his family ranch was able to make it through the lean Depression years.

It was during this time the annual tradition of a 12-15 mile fall cattle drive was begun, something which the whole Jackson family and the hired help would participate in. Permits were acquired to use adjacent forest and BLM lands for a portion of the needed summer pasture, and then the cattle would be rounded up in the fall, usually late September. Bill Jackson, who was born in 1924, recalls going on his first cattle drive in 1933 at the age of 7, and has participated in almost every one since, except for a very few occasions when he was in the service, or had injured his back.

Monte Goes East

By Diane Farley



Monte and Erika McLean.

Oh, it was a long trip from Harrison, Montana to East Haven, Connecticut. The big ten-horse van pulled up at Willow Hill Farm, dropped the ramp and off loaded the big chestnut gelding, Mortana Windstar. It was with much anticipation that Joyce Kuczenski waited for the first sight of this horse that we had purchased, but that she had never seen. It was almost dark as he stepped onto the ramp, took a long look around with a sigh and walked to his stall, where he promptly put his foot in his water pail. Signs of things to come we think, as eight years later his foot still goes in the water pail. It was with much fuss and fanfare that he was greeted by Joyce's family.

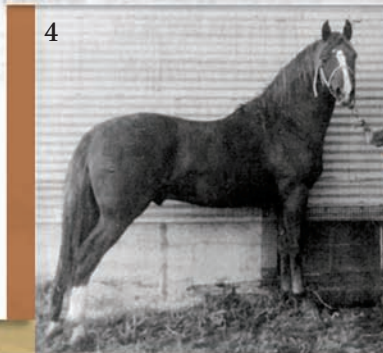
So, that is how "Monte," formerly a working ranch horse at the Jackson Morgan Ranch, started a new career. One look at that beautiful head and soft brown eyes was all that was needed to make everyone fall in love with this sweet tempered gelding.

Certainly life at Willow Hill Farm was to be different than on the ranch in Montana, but never could Monte imagine how his life would change. The following day, Joyce's six-year-old twin grandchildren came to meet him with all of the noise and excitement that one would expect. Monte, standing in cross ties, was relatively certain that they could be coyotes, as he stood bug-eyed as they clamored for his attention. It is doubtful that he had ever experienced the likes of noisy twins on the ranch.

You must have guessed what came next. Yes, the twins wanted to ride Monte, and ride them they did, as they accomplished a variety of obstacles, and even entered a horse show with leadline Gymkhana. Next was a trip to a couple of 4H shows where the twins would ride Monte. Here is a horse that had never seen flapping tents, banners or crowds of spectators. But he took great care of his twins; he went through the obstacles in timed events earning numerous ribbons and a championship.

Monte would then compete with a ten-year-old friend to achieve a reserve championship through obstacles and barrel turning. How fun was it to watch this Western working horse take his first jump with his ears pricked forward without hesitation for his delighted rider.

Fast-forward eight years at Willow Hill, Monte continues to give his owner and riders hours of pleasure including trail rides, hunter paces and the challenging courses of gymkhana. He has been able to restore the confidence of a young rider who wanted to give up her passion of riding, now her fear of riding is gone because of a horse named Mortana Windstar. Only the versatility and wonderful loving temperament of this Morgan gelding could have transformed him from a working ranch horse to a trusted child's horse, proving to a grandmother and all of "Monte's kids" how much fun a Morgan can be. ■



1. Bill Jackson and Mortana Virtue.
 2. Fleetfield. 3. Mortana Leetafield.
 4. Mortana Kenfield. 5. Spring work, circa 1940.

Joel C. Jackson and Sons

Rollin, the oldest son of Joel and Virginia Jackson, was born in 1923; he earned a degree in Engineering from Montana State in Bozeman, and moved to the Seattle, Washington area. Edith, the daughter, was born in 1928 and graduated from Montana State as well; she married a man in the Air Force, and traveled all over the world. Bill and his younger brother Dean, born in 1929, decided they would continue the family ranching tradition, and formed the partnership Joel C. Jackson and Sons with their parents, Joel and Virginia. Both earned Agricultural degrees in Animal and Range Science from Montana State, Bill in 1951 and Dean in 1955, and afterward returned to the ranch. Dean had married Betty Albro in 1949, and their daughter Debra was born in 1953 while he was attending college. A son, Joel Dean, was born in 1956.

Following the difficult Depression years and World War II, The 1950s marked a decade of new prosperity for Montana as well as most of the nation. The Jacksons became more actively involved in showing their horses as well as ranching. They purchased the government bred stallion Fleetfield #10572 (Mentor x Norma), foaled in 1950. Although Fleetfield had only a short career at stud due to an early death from colic, he produced 45 registered Morgans for the Jacksons between 1953-1958. Bill Jackson recalls Fleetfield as being the stallion who had the most profound impact on the Jackson breeding program, especially through his son Senatefield #12271, who produced 165 registered Morgans for the Jacksons. Senatefield's dam was Parka #06740 (Senator Graham x Lupine).

Ray Ellsworth, of Ida-Ho Morgans started their program in 1953 with two Jackson bred mares, Luck #06692 (Delbert x Chance by Chief Bugler) and her daughter Luckie Nugget #09685 by Ken Carmen. Ray recalls seeing Dean Jackson showing Fleetfield in 1955 at Pullman, WA in a big all-breed show, where he won the working cow class. He liked Fleetfield so well, he made a trip to the Jackson ranch the following spring and purchased Dedrick #11278, (Fleetfield x Detta) who became the sire of their foundation mares. He returned in 1971 to the Jackson ranch in search of a stud colt to breed to Dedrick's daughters, and selected Mortana Pat #21288, (Senatefield x Lisa) who was many times champion cutting horse in both Morgan and all-breed shows, and the mainstay of the Ida-Ho Morgans breeding program for 33 years. The cross of Senatefield x Lisa #011832 (Broadwall St Pat x Felicity) also proved to be one of several golden crosses for the Jacksons, producing 14 full siblings including several mares which were retained for the Mortana breeding program.

The Jacksons also acquired Rosefield #8568 (Sonfield x Rose Mala) in 1958 who went on to produce 63 registered offspring for the Jackson program. Meanwhile, Dean Jackson was very involved in promoting the Morgan breed during the 1950s and early 1960s. He showed the Jackson's Morgans at Morgan and all-breed shows throughout the northwest, and became an AHSA accredited judge of light horse breeds himself, judging at shows all over the country. In addition, Dean served as director of the Pacific Northwest Morgan Horse Club, Circle J Morgan Horse Club, and the American Morgan Horse Association. He also formed and was



1. Bill Jackson presenting NMCHA trophy to Ray Ellsworth on Ida-Ho Mary Lynn by Mortana Pat double great granddaughter of Fleetfield.
 2. Fleetfield. 3. Mortana Denim. 4. Dean Jackson and Senatefield.

president of the National Morgan Cutting Horse Association.

The ranch and Morgan horse business flourished for the Jacksons during these years. Joel Jackson, with his sons Bill and Dean, decided upon the prefix “Mortana” as a combination of Morgan and Montana, for registering all their Morgans. This prefix was first used in 1963. Tragically, Dean was killed in a tractor accident in 1965 at just 36 years of age. His favorite Morgan, Fleetson, with empty saddle and boots turned, headed the procession from his widely attended funeral to the Harrison cemetery near the ranch; he was led by Dean’s nine-year-old son Joel. Dean’s brother Bill and father Joel continued to work the ranch, and his widow, Betty, remained actively involved in the Morgan breeding program in addition to raising their two young children.

In 1974, Bill Jackson and his brother’s widow Betty were married, and Joel and Virginia retired from ranch work the next year and moved into Bozeman. Dean Jackson was posthumously inducted into the AMHA Hall of fame in 1990,

and Bill was inducted in 2003. Bill and Betty were also among the founding members of the National Morgan Cutting Horse Association. Although interest in the western working Morgan had considerably tapered off between

the 1970s to mid-1980s, they remained actively involved, helping to bring about renewed interest in the Morgan stock horse in the later 1980s. They continued showing Morgan cutting and reining horses until Betty’s death in 1996.

Congratulations to the Jackson Morgan Horse Ranch for over a century of preserving the true Morgan Horse in all its beauty and versatility. The Blankenship families have used Mortana stallions for over fifty years and remember the wonderful horses sired by sons of Fleetfield and Senatefield.

Special appreciation and best wishes to Bill Jackson for continuing the family tradition into a third century.

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Leigh Ann adds her memories to the story: "From the time we were married, I remember Cary talking about Dean and Bill Jackson and their beautiful horses. He showed alongside Bill's stallion Mortana Rosaro in the late 1980s with our foundation stallion and National Champion (Reining and Cow Cutting), Cream Ridge Mirzay (Mortana Pat x Ida-ho Mary) and was always very impressed with the horses and the people associated with them. So, when we decided in 2004 to take two of our Mirzay daughters to Bill for breeding, I was very excited to see the ranch and meet the legendary man behind this historical line of Morgan horses. I was not disappointed.

The scenery around the ranch house and farm buildings is breathtaking and encompasses rolling hills, green pastures and the ever present mountains. As we drove down the mile long drive way to get to the ranch house, we started to see the unmistakable presence of the Morgan horse in the surrounding pastures. It was like stepping back in time pulling into their wide open barn yard to see the wooden tack shed and out buildings as we were greeted by a flock of vibrant peacocks and geese.

And then, out of the ranch house walks Bill Jackson himself. I was a little bit in awe to finally meet the man who carries on the Mortana Morgan legacy single-handedly. Even though he was just turning 80 at the time, he walked with purpose and energy. Bill is a very quiet man who speaks only after thoughtful pauses to digest what has already been said, adding his comments sparingly to a conversation and only when necessary. You have to be patient and listen carefully, but doing so is priceless. He articulates his love and knowledge of these wonderful horses eloquently.

Our first meeting in 2004 with Bill had him in irrigation boots ready to take us on a tour of his herds in his pickup. I had no idea of the thousands of acres that encompassed the Mortana farm until we headed out to see all the horses. We started by taking a look at that year's foal crop, each outstanding representative these babies are of the Morgan breed. They love people and were intensely curious of us. We then went on to see a herd of two-year-old mares and a herd of older mares. Each herd was bigger than the last, with one containing what seemed like more than 50 horses. These were the same horses we would later have the opportunity to visit

CREAM RIDGE RITA M, MORGAN, 2009

CREAM RIDGE RITA b 2009 MORGAN	CREAM RIDGE MARTY b 2006 MORGAN	IDA-HO MR T b 14.2 1997 MORGAN	MR R S TNT bk/br 14.3 1973 MORGAN	KINGSTON b 1957	UPWEY BEN DON b 1943	
			IDA-HO MARY LYNNE 1978 MORGAN	MORTANA PAT dkb/br 15 hands 1970	JUNEFIELD lv ch 14.3 hands 1947	
		CREAM RIDGE MARTINA b 15.0 1994 MORGAN	CREAM RIDGE MIRZAY br 15.1 1984 MORGAN	IDA-HO MARY ch 1963	DEVAN VERONA dk ch 1964	DEVAN TIP ch 1949
				MORTANA PAT dkb/br 15 hands 1970	DEVAN ARDEN bk 1958	
		MORTANA SUSANNA b 14.3 2003 MORGAN	CADUCEUS MONTOUR b 1992 MORGAN	BEAVER STATE PENNANT b 14.3 1976 MORGAN	SENATEFIELD b 15.1 hands 1958	LISA dk ch 1961
				TRIPENNY ch 1958	DEDRICK ch 1954	ELLA GATES ch (flaxen) 15 hands 1946
	MORTANA SANDY MORGAN		MORTANA REMINGTON b 1983 MORGAN	DOMINO JOE bk 15.1 1965	SENATEFIELD b 15.1 hands 1958	LISA dk ch 1961
				LILY BLACK bk 16 hands 1955	DEDRICK ch 1954	ELLA GATES ch (flaxen) 15 hands 1946
	MORTANA SANDY MORGAN		MIR-ROY SANDY MORGAN	SHINE ON dk ch (flaxen) 1963	WAERS BLACK RASCAL bk 1951	HEDLITES KITTY CLOVER bk 1950
				RACHEL KNOX ch 1975	TRINANGO b 1948	TRINANGO b 1948
				SANDEA ch 1945	STETSON dk ch 15.2 1944	
				WARHAWK bk 1942	MIDNIGHT bk 1944	
			GEEGEE dkb/br 1938	WARHAWK bk 1942		
			SENATOR GRAHAM ch 1940	GEEGEE dkb/br 1938		
			MISS HOLLIDAY bk 1955	SENATOR GRAHAM ch 1940		
			MERRY KNOX ch 15 hands 1954	MISS HOLLIDAY bk 1955		
			FUNQUEST FALCONIDAE bk 1963	MERRY KNOX ch 15 hands 1954		
			FLEETFIELD ch 15 hands 1950	FUNQUEST FALCONIDAE bk 1963		
			PARKA ch 1945	FLEETFIELD ch 15 hands 1950		
			WINDCREST MONTEREY ch 1957	PARKA ch 1945		
			CHERYE ch 1944	WINDCREST MONTEREY ch 1957		
			HURRICANE LAKE ch (flaxen) 1955	CHERYE ch 1944		
			CHI CHI ch 1955	HURRICANE LAKE ch (flaxen) 1955		
			SHINE ON dk ch (flaxen) 1963	CHI CHI ch 1955		
			LITTLE WITCH ch 1960	SHINE ON dk ch (flaxen) 1963		
				LITTLE WITCH ch 1960		

Discovering Pleasant View Ranch

Cary and Leigh Ann Newman of Cream Ridge Morgans provide a recent summary of their 2004-2006 visits to the Jackson ranch which aptly describe the profound influence the Jackson Morgans have had on the breed, as well as the great store of knowledge and kindness displayed by Bill Jackson himself.

Cary writes:

"Many of the Morgans in our herd, had roots in the Mortana Morgans of the Jackson Morgan Horse Ranch. Also, I remembered enjoying my visits with Bill Jackson and his family when I was showing my foundation Stallion, Cream Ridge Mirzay in the Morgan Reining classes during the period 1987-1990, and being impressed with the horses he brought to the competitions. In 2004, 2005, and 2006, my wife Leigh Ann and I decided to make trips to Montana and visit Bill. We bred two mares, Cream Ridge Martina and Cream Ridge Coalette to Mortana Rosaro in 2004. Martina foaled a nice colt by Rosaro; however, Coalette

did not settle. We returned to the Jackson Ranch in 2005 with Coalette and made arrangements to breed her to Caduceus Montour and later Mortana Ceali.

After encountering problems with getting Coalette to settle, we decided to purchase a three-year-old filly. Bill offered to take us on a horseback ride to the pasture where he was keeping the herd of 25-30 mares, so that we could pick out a filly. Getting to ride with Bill on his ranch and on his horses will be a memory Leigh Ann and I will fondly remember forever. Bill impressed us with his unique knowledge of the Morgan breed, his high quality of horses and his always being a patient, gracious host."

on horseback with Bill as our guide in 2006.

Each time Cary or I would point to a mare and ask about her breeding, Bill would take out a small 3" x 5" ringed notebook, flip methodically through the pages and then tell us what year she was born and who her sire and dam were. He had every horse on the place catalogued in that notebook including their coloring, markings, date of birth and parentage. It was amazing.

Even more amazing was the horses' reaction to Bill himself. In one of the fields, the mares were spread out over a large expanse of hundreds of acres of grass. We stopped the pickup and got out. Bill took off his old cowboy hat and started to wave it in a slow circle over his head and shout, "Come On! Come On! Come On!" in a low steady rhythmic tone. Within seconds, those mares came at a fast trot to greet the patriarch of their family, Bill Jackson. It brought tears to my eyes to see the gentleness in his touch, and love that was evident between him and every single member of his herd. He wasn't there to feed them, since they were on free range grass. It was just a greeting between friends.

After three years of visiting Bill, we knew we would never forget our time with him. We had the opportunity to visit with him during our horseback ride across the acres of his beautiful farm as well as have a quick soda in his home before our long drive home. His home is tastefully decorated with Morgan horse memorabilia, pictures of his horses and a few of their winnings collected over the years, including a framed copy of the cover of *The Morgan Horse* magazine featuring the Mortana farm in an earlier issue some twenty years ago.

I have thought of those moments often and of how I hope Cream Ridge Morgans can in a small way help preserve the legacy of the Jackson's and Mortana Morgans through our continued incorporation of their bloodlines into our horses. We have been overjoyed with the babies we are getting out of our Mortana Susanna, who we purchased from Bill in 2006. Her second foal was born May 18, 2010; a little bay stud colt who we have decided to name Cream Ridge JC (Cream Ridge Marty x Mortana Susanna) in honor of Bill's father, Joel C. Jackson and the Mortana farm. We have continued to correspond with Bill over the years although time goes too fast and the contacts grow fewer. If I could give him one message it would be to say "Thank you" for sharing a small part of his home with us and letting us see a glimpse of what it is like to be a part of something bigger than ourselves." ■



Chief Bugler and the Jackson children.

Bill Jackson and the Ranch Today

Steadfast, Bill Jackson continues to live and work every day on the ranch where he was born. He works through the knife sharp bitter cold of winters and the blazing heat of summers, patiently planning around the curves Mother Nature throws at him. The ranch has withstood drought, grasshopper plagues, and fires raging in the nearby forests. The reintroduction of the gray wolf to Montana in 1995 has been a problem for many Montana ranchers, but so far the wolves have not bothered the high mountain valley in which the Jackson Ranch is situated—yet Bill expects this problem will come in time. His family has been fortunate over the years so far in not losing much stock to cougars, bears, or other predators.

The Jackson Ranch has produced well over 1,000 registered Morgans which have been sold to breeders and individuals in nearly every state across the US, as well as many Canadian provinces. Bloodlines tracing to Jackson Morgans are found in almost every Western Working Morgan today, and in performance and pleasure Morgans across the country.

Five generations of the Jackson family have been involved in the breeding of Morgans, involving a time span of more than a hundred years. Bill's grandfather, Thomas, used an unknown Morgan stallion to cross with his early mares, and some of these bloodlines were still present in the old mares that his father, Joel, began with when he purchased his first registered stallion, Hal Mercury Jr. Many of these were simply registered under the name of the Jackson Ranch. Joel continued breeding Morgans, later forming a partnership with his sons, Bill and Dean, registering the horses under the name "Joel C Jackson & Sons." Betty Jackson, wife of Dean, and who later married Bill after Dean's death, was very involved in the breeding, and registered many of the horses under her name. Betty and Dean's children, Debra, and Joel Dean represent the fourth generation of Jacksons, and their children, the fifth generation. Debra's daughter Kelsey is attending college in Portland, but is actively interested in the ranch breeding program and has registered several horses. Joel Dean's sons, Justin and Nathan live in Bozeman and help out at the ranch when they can; Nathan has also registered a few of the Jackson Ranch Morgans.

At 85, Bill Jackson continues to manage the ranch with amazing efficiency. He runs a Hereford and Black Angus crossbreed for the market and notes that he currently has about 330 mother cows which have just about finished calving, and recently moved over some Angus bulls to start the first round of calving next February. Branding is

HISTORICAL FARMS



1. Mortana Pat cutting. 2. Jackson mares. 3. The AMHA board took a break from the Bozeman, MT meeting on the Jackson Ranch in the mid '80s. 4. Bill and Cary foals. 5. Bill Jackson and Mortana Cody, 1989. 6. Mortana Madison (left) and Mortana Ranger (right).

mostly finished for the year also—the cattle are branded simply with the letter T; the horses are not branded.

Generally, Bill explains, the calves are run on summer pasture and sent to market in the fall, usually October or November. Occasionally, they may keep them over to sell as yearlings, but this requires feeding over the winter and would cut the profits. There are a number of ways to market the cattle, such as taking them to live auctions or feed lots to sell, or through a Cattle Order Buyer, who purchases the cattle for individuals or businesses and works with them and the producer to reach a contracted price agreement. What has really become popular, Bill adds, is internet video sales. People will buy the cattle sight unseen, just from the video. He has tried this for the last couple of years, and it has worked very well for him.

Bill also has 70 head of Morgans, of which he would like to sell quite a few. He has both breeding stock, young horses, and a

number of working horses started under saddle available. Currently he is riding a four-year-old filly to get her started for ranch work, and says she is coming along very nicely. Bill is expecting a couple of Morgan foals this year, and plans to breed a couple next year as well. Mortana Ceali #158037 (Caduceus Montour x Mortana Meadow), bred and owned by Bill's granddaughter Kelsey Jackson, is the present ranch stallion.

Bill Jackson has spent his entire life on this ranch, and plans to continue for quite a spell—the work keeps him much too busy to think of anything else. Grounded deeply in the roots of the rugged land where he was born, he has known and survived almost every kind of hardship a rancher could imagine, but remains strong in his purpose. He is driven by his love for the Morgan horses which have always been a major part of helping him accomplish the work he needs to do every day. ■