



Justin Morgan

Vermont Horse Hero

By HARLAND MANCHESTER

THERE are in America some twenty breeds of horses, but in the Green Mountain country only two breeds are recognized: Morgans and "other horses." The Morgan, as all Vermonters know, can outpull, outwalk, outlast and out-think any hunk of horseflesh on earth. He is gentle as a kitten, sure-footed as a mountain goat, hardy as a bronco. And as for looks, the most magnificent spectacle on the terrestrial ball is a proud young Morgan, head high, eyes flashing, sleek coat shining, trotting down a Vermont dirt road.

There is every reason why the Morgan should be a great horse.

The only breed on earth descended from a single sire, all Morgans carry the powerful genes of Justin Morgan, the equine Paul Bunyan of Randolph, Vermont. Every Morgan alive is a reincarnation of that game little stallion who stands with Ethan Allen and Mount Mansfield as one of Vermont's proudest monuments. The tireless tribe which sprang from his loins pitched in to build America, clearing land, hauling covered wagons, fighting battles and coralling cattle. Now that gasoline has taken over, they have become America's best-loved recreation horses.

Justin Morgan was a bold, chunky

little horse about 14 hands high, weight about 950 pounds, who plowed fields, hauled logs, took the ladies to meeting and raced the shoes off any horse in the countryside on Saturday nights.

His story begins with a man named Justin Morgan, a frail, itinerant teacher of penmanship and singing who was town clerk of Randolph. In 1791 his wife died, leaving him deeply in debt, with five children to care for. A farmer of West Springfield, Massachusetts, owed him money, and he made the tedious trip to collect it. To Morgan's great disappointment, the man had no money, but offered him a serviceable three-year-old gelding in lieu of payment. In the pasture with the gelding was his inseparable companion, a two-year-old bay stud colt, origin unknown, with black mane and tail, a deep chest and a strong, short back. The farmer threw him in for good measure.

MAKING the best of what seemed a bad bargain, Morgan led the gelding back home, while the colt tagged along toward his great destiny. Later when he became famous, people called him "the Justin Morgan horse," and this was shortened in time to Justin Morgan.

Mr. Morgan rode the gelding on his teaching circuit, and broke the colt to harness, planning to sell him to reduce his debts. Fall came and Morgan had no hay to winter him, so he rented him for a year for \$15 to

a neighbor, Robert Evans, who had a contract to clear some timbered land. With only the half-grown colt for a "team," Evans' outlook was dubious, but when he hooked the chain around the first log and spoke to Justin, the colt threw his shoulders into the collar, dug in his feet and snaked the log to the skidway like a veteran. Soon Evans was boasting at the village tavern that the Justin Morgan colt could outdraw any horse he ever saw.

One night Evans rode Justin to the tavern hitching rail after a day's work in the woods and found that a match had been held in which even 1200-pound horses had been unable to pull a big pine log ten rods to the sawmill. Evans bet a gallon of rum that his colt could do it in three pulls. Then he said he was ashamed to hitch Justin to such a little log, and asked three spectators to get on and ride. The three "least able to stand," according to the chronicler, mounted the log. Justin made it in two pulls.

A few days later the beaten parties picked a fast horse and tried to retrieve the gallon of rum by challenging Evans to a quarter-mile race from a standing start. After his usual hard day's work, Justin was off the mark before the hat hit the dust, and passed the finish line several lengths ahead. Three other entries came forward that evening, and the eager little stallion beat them all. Soon Justin was hailed as the local champion.

"When brought up to the line," wrote D. C. Linsley, one of Justin's early biographers, "his eyes flash and ears quiver with intense excitement, he grinds the bit with his teeth, his hind legs are drawn under him, every muscle of his frame trembles and swells almost to bursting, and at the given signal he goes off like the springing of a steel-trap."

Morgan the man soon sickened and died of consumption. The colt was sold to pay his creditors, and went on clearing forests and racing all comers. Because of Justin's feats of brawn and speed, farmers brought their mares. The foals were the spit and image of the tough little bay, and outworked, outpulled, outran and out-endured all lesser North Country horseflesh.

Few farmers bothered to record pedigrees, and no one knows how many colts Justin sired during the 25 years when he was presumably eligible for parenthood. But by the middle of the century you could hardly enter a barn or pasture in northern New England without recognizing the unmistakable candid, friendly eye; delicate muzzle; short, fine ears; deep, wide chest; short, strong back; and barrel trunk of the old Justin.

THREE famous sons stand out from the Justin brood — Sherman, Bulrush and Woodbury — and the greatest of these was Sherman Morgan, who was foaled in 1808 in Lyndon, Vermont. Like Justin, he

was small but tough. Hitched to a freight wagon with another son of Justin, he made regular trips to Portland, Maine, and the "little team" became famous at every overnight inn on the route, where their owner matched them at pulling or running against horses of any size, and usually won.

Among Sherman's many colts was the immortal Black Hawk. Foaled in 1833 out of a peddler's mare in Durham, New Hampshire, Justin's grandson became one of the most celebrated sires of American trotters. Broken to harness and used on the family carriage, he showed an irresistible desire to pass everything on the road. His fame spread to Boston, where he was matched against New England's best in a five-mile, \$1000-stake race, which he won easily in 16 minutes. His owners offered to match him against any stallion in America for symmetry, ease and elegance of action and fast trotting. There were no takers. Soon every horseman had to have a colt by the famous black Morgan.

In his long life, about 2000 mares were bred to Black Hawk. Many of his colts went to Kentucky, Tennessee, Illinois, Michigan and the Far West, there to pass on the fabulous genes of his grandfather Justin. In his latter years the horse was revered like an elder statesman, and not so long ago, living Vermonters could recall a stirring spectacle at the 1852 State Fair at Rutland, when

the 19-year-old patriarch, head high and snorting, was driven around the track by his owner, followed by a glittering retinue of 100 descendants.

The pampered darling of the entire dynasty was Black Hawk's son, Ethan Allen, champion trotter of the world at the age of four (2:25 ½) and winner of 33 out of 55 races. No log-pulling for Ethan—he was owned by several wealthy Bostonians, had personal lackeys, and became the great American pin-up horse. "The handsomest, finest-styled and most perfectly gaited trotter that has ever been produced," said the *American Cultivator*. Ethan was so good that New York and New Jersey tracks offered purses as high as \$5000 for horses to compete with him. General Grant rode behind Ethan and promptly ordered two mares to breed to him. At the ripe age of 21 Ethan was sold for \$7500, and spent an honored dotage on a stock farm at Lawrence, Kansas.

WHILE Morgan stars captured the limelight, their kin by the thousands, recognized as the finest general utility horses in the country, spent their boundless energy doing the world's work. Doctors swore by them—come snowdrift or high water, the little Morgan always got through. In 1853 it was reported that four-fifths of all the horses on New York's Sixth Avenue street-car line came from Vermont and New Hampshire, and nearly all were Mor-

gans. Said the New York *Herald*: "They are remarkable for their great strength in proportion to their size and for their power of endurance, bearing up under hard labor that would break down the strength of the strongest draft horse."

In the Civil War the Morgan covered himself with glory. When Fort Sumter was fired upon, Secretary of War Cameron sent buyers to comb the North Country for 1100 Morgans to mount the crack First Vermont Cavalry. Grouped in companies according to color, they won all hearts on parade in New York, Newark and Washington as they pranced to the front. The regiment fought in 75 battles and skirmishes, and its annals are full of praise of Morgan speed and stamina.

At Gettysburg the First Vermont, already jaded and half shot to pieces, was ordered to make an almost hopeless charge over rough ground on a strongly entrenched enemy force. "The behavior of the horses was admirable," wrote a chronicler, "running low and swift, as in a race, guiding at the slightest touch on the neck; never refusing a fence or breaking from the column." The commander, General Farnsworth, was shot from his horse and 75 Vermonters fell, but the diversion was successful, and eyewitnesses called it one of the most gallant cavalry charges of the war. On a bas-relief at the base of a statue on the battlefield, Vermonters still ride their Morgans in bronze. At Appomattox,

the surviving Morgans were in the middle of a charge when the cease-fire order came through. Two hundred of them outlasted the war; a few got back to Vermont.

Morgans fell on evil days toward the end of the century. The faster "Hambletonians" — with the aid of good Morgan dams — took over the harness tracks. Farmers who could afford them bought strapping Percherons for work, and the shadow of Henry Ford fell across the highways. Their days of glamour gone, Morgans retreated to stony back farms, grew shaggy coats against the cold, and lived on grass.

But they still had powerful friends. One of them, Colonel Joseph Battell, gentleman farmer, conservationist and philanthropist of Middlebury, Vermont, spent a small fortune and most of his life collecting fine Morgans and firmly establishing them as a properly registered breed. He traveled throughout the 48 states and Canada looking at Morgans and listening to Morgan lore, and wrote 100,000 letters tracing Morgan pedigrees. Starting with the stallion, General Gates, great-grandson of Ethan the Magnificent, the Colonel rescued the dynasty from the exhaust fumes of progress, and other loyal Morgan men followed in his train.

IN 1905, Colonel Battell presented his farm and stock to the U.S. Government. Breeding continued under the direction of the Depart-

ment of Agriculture, and in 1951 the 940 rolling acres and 40-odd Morgans were acquired by the University of Vermont. In front of the stallion barn, a heroic bronze figure of Justin overlooks the pasture meadow where a dozen of his saucy offspring frisk around their patient dams.

With the great national surge toward the outdoors, the smart, willing, unfussy Morgan has found a new career as a pleasure horse. Women and children love him for his gentle personality and close rapport with his owner. Their sure-footedness and good temper have made them popular on dude ranches. As President Benjamin Harrison once pointed out, in an emergency the Morgan always consults his rider. Yet he has stuff enough in him for a man to ride, and is famous for his "bottom," which in horsey talk means guts. Every year this is demonstrated in the 100-mile trail ride of the Green Mountain Horse Association held at Woodstock, Vermont, open to all breeds. Morgans are always among the leaders, and last September in the 19th annual ride they swept the field of 66 horses from ten states and Canada, taking first place in all three divisions.

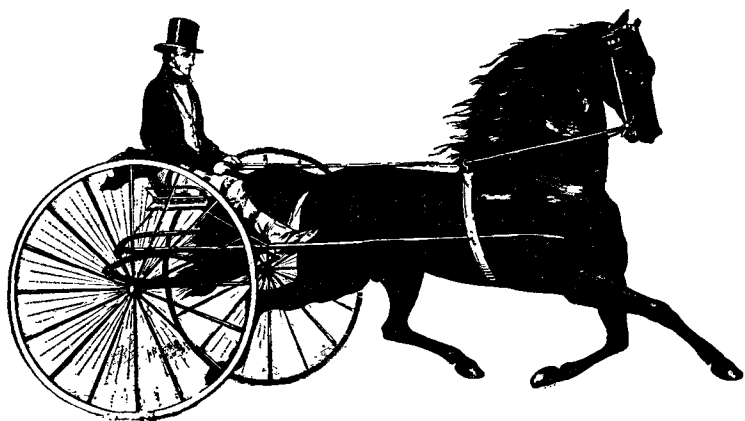
There are approximately 7500 registered Morgans in the country today, and there are probably at least as many perfectly good high-grade Morgans who never made the Register. California now leads in breeding Morgans, with Vermont running

second and Illinois third. New England has been exporting Morgans for more than a century, and there is some concern lest this migration deplete the local stock. Last year J. Cecil Ferguson, Rhode Island breeder, went to Kansas and brought back 51 fine Morgans to redress the balance.

There are now two politely warring schools of Morgan breeders: the "old Morgan" or "purist" minority who pride themselves on high percentages of old Justin's blood, and the "new Morgan" group who believe that the breed is improved by discreet admissions of less exalted ancestry. The whole argument would bring a horse laugh from Justin, who never had a pedigree. Many earnest historians have tried to supply him with one, and there are at least six conflicting accounts of his origin. The one most often printed is that he was sired by True Briton, an imported English Thoroughbred stolen

from a British colonel during the Revolution.

IT WOULD be pleasant to report that Justin Morgan spent his final years in green pastures, suitably honored. Such was not the case. The world did not know him for what he was, and he was batted from pillar to post like most old horses of the day. Again and again he was sold, each time for a lower price and to a lower station. At the age of 22, he was working on a six-horse freight team, with his ribs showing. In 1821, when he was 32, he was seen on a farm in Chelsea, Vermont, still hale and vigorous and without a blemish. He spent that winter in an open yard with other horses. One of them kicked him in the flank. The wound went untended; inflammation set in and he died. But his indomitable genes persist. Wherever a Morgan canters through the morning mist, Justin lives again.



The Specter of RAPALLO

BY FRED A UTLEY

WHEN we lost China by default, we opened the way to the Communist conquest of the Far East. If we should lose Germany, there is little doubt that the whole continent of Europe would eventually become a part of the Soviet Empire.

It was while our eyes were fixed on Berlin during the 1948-49 blockade that the Communists completed their conquest of China. This last year, while we have been pre-occupied with Indo-China, and with our efforts to cajole, or compel, France to permit Europe to be defended, we have paid little attention to the danger signals which have been raised in Germany since the failure of the Berlin Conference.

True, the apparent success of the London Nine Power Conference in October strengthened Dr. Adenauer's hand, and temporarily allayed the political crisis which threatened to destroy his government after France killed and buried EDC last August. But, if France stalls again by delaying or refusing ratification of the London agreements, there is little doubt that the grand old man from Cologne, who has brought Germany out of hunger and despair and humiliation into a respected place in the Western com-

munity of nations, will either be forced out of office, or compelled to abandon his cherished aim of European integration and a firm alliance with America.

Dr. Adenauer's government is now threatened not only by the growing strength of the Social Democrats, who imagine that Germany can win unity, sovereignty and freedom from occupation by negotiation with Moscow; it also has to reckon with the increasing number of conservatives and Ruhr industrialists who think that, thanks to French and other appeasement, or "Hate Germany" influences in Europe and America, there is no hope of success for Dr. Adenauer's policies, and who are therefore advocating a return to the "Rapallo" policy of playing East against West.

The world situation, and that of Germany, are radically changed since the spring day, nearly thirty-five years ago, when German Foreign Secretary Rathenau met Peoples Commissar Chicherin at the beautiful seaside resort of Rapallo, while, a few miles away at Genoa, Britain and France were discussing how to extract more reparations from a defeated, hungry and desperate Germany. In those days, Russia and Germany were both