

LIPPITT LINES - SPLITTING HAIRS

Tell me if you can, who was the really the typiest - Sealect, Lippitt Rob Roy or was it John A. Darling? Who had a better temperament - Ashbrook or Moro? And who had a better front - Lippitt Sam Twilight or Cornwallis? And who moved better - Lippitt Ethan Ash or Lippitt Sam? And if we know the answers to these questions concerning these prominent Lippitt Morgan sires, do we wonder about the "why's"? I mean, what is this so called, "Nekomia" breeding anyway? Can it be characterized and distinguished from other Lippitt Lines? Should it be? Are we splitting hairs to attempt it - to define even in general terms, not only what a "Nekomia" influence is, but IS there such a thing as a "Sallieline" influence, etc? Some no doubt would say that we should stick to the basics when breeding these Lippitts, i.e., Breed the sire to the best line in his dam and let it go at that. That we don't need more complications, and let's keep it as simple and as basic as we can. Maybe. But for a few of us, there appears to exist to this day, evidence perceivable, of the presence of distinct breeding lines within the Lippitt family. And the way for us to go, it seems, is the judicious crossing of these lines whenever and wherever possible thereby lowering coefficients of inbreeding each step of the way. In the not too distant future this discussion will become academic because as our large breeders gradually lose control or the majority of breedings in the Lippitt herd, the art at which the "blurring" of these lines occurs will continue to accelerate dramatically. For the most part the lines that I am going to mention in this article will be diluted finally to the point of being barely recognized. However, they are recognizable today, thanks only to the stubbornness of some of our most successful, former large breeders. The kind of breeders convinced that they, alone, were breeding the very best stock. There is nothing wrong with an attitude like that, and in fact, it is the kind of attitude that most probably saved the "Lippitt Morgan" and a lot of "Old fashioned Morgans" from extinction.

Anyhow if we are going to split hairs within the Lippitt family, where do we start? When the Lippitts of Mr. Knight were dispersed in 1962, two of the breeding lines mentioned were the "Nekomia family" and the "Sallie family". Basically, and in order to make it all fit I have come to regard "Nekomia breeding" as 'that which comes from a combination of the blood of Moro (Welcome x Polly Rogers) and the blood of Bridget (Bob Morgan x Mare by Mountaineer). This would then have to be the deepest and most basic of all Lippitt lines and in fact contributes to the success of some others. It would include as some of its most notable contributors, Lippitt Miss Nekomia (Lippitt Moro x Nekomia), her full sister, Lippitt Gladys Moro, (featured in TLC Historical Issue '92), and John A. Darling (Moro x Bridget), for example. It should be noted that JAD has nearly become the "figure-head" of his own line not to unlike the relationship between Upwey Ben Don and Government breeding. (*Both Ben Don's parents were bred by the Government Farm but he went on to establish his own line of breeding.*)

The Nekomia line is easily the largest and most influential in the Lippitt population. And for good reasons. This is very much a "doing" bunch and one has only to touch upon some individuals with strong Nekomia lines to be reminded of their great and strong character - Dyberry Ethan, Equinox Royalty, Lippitt Miss Nekomia, and some of the Dyberry Buddy progeny bred by Harriet Hiltz, like High Pastures Eudora. And what about the strong Nekomia influence in 3 time Champion Lippitt Stallion, Stillwater Indigo? In spite of these impressive in-hand wins, owner Lester Welch remains proudest of Indigo's wins in "doing" events. Many owners of Lippitts strong in Nekomia breeding are apt to be that way - like their horses, they want to go out and "do it". The bold, aggressive style of some of the Nekomia horses is part of the reason we sought out and bred a very strong Sallie-line mare to a stallion with a heavy Nekomia influence. (3 times.)

The Sallie-line mare that we acquired has a very high co-efficient of inbreeding to Lippitt Sallie and she is quite typical of that line. She is well-made, no leg faults, travels low but very square and straight. She is sweet to be around (some call this child safe), and in general is adored by all who know her.

A bonus is her size and we think she is ideally suited for an Ethan Ash/Nekomia stallion, such as my friend, Lester's Indigo. Of all the Lippitt farms that have influenced our present day population, the one that put the most Sallie-line animals on the ground was the farm of Mrs. E.P. Rice. The Twilight and Meredith Lippitts represent some of the strongest concentrations of that blood still available. Mrs. Rice's acquisition of Lippitt Moro Ashmore resulted in some wonderful breeding crosses that have been the basis for several breeding programs around the country. (Consider just two: Meredith Knight and Meredith Bruce.)

Another Lippitt line that exerts influence on today's population would be the Allen's major line. Horses like Ashwood Majestic and Hiker Joy should need little introduction to anyone following modern-day Lippitt breeding. Gerald and Anne Ashby in New York, have bred the Allen's Major blood both intensely and crossed it out with other lines with success. In very general terms, the line's contributions include type (a lot of them are as good in the front as there is), showiness and great trots. A brief look at 19 year old Ashwood Majestic will serve as a blunt reminder of what a real "Old Type Morgan" used to be. I have only seen a videotape of this stallion that could be a lesson for us all on this subject. Amazingly on the same tape was actual footage (taken from a movie), of Sealect and JAD, in-hand and in motion! The resemblance of Majestic to Sealect was nothing short of incredible.

The fourth line that I consider is still with us is what I call "Old Vermont" line. Ethan Eldon would be its logical figurehead. This was a very popular line years ago among Vermonters, and resulted in some of the best Morgans around. Frank Orcutt, father of Dr. "Bob" Orcutt, was responsible for producing some of this family's best individuals on his farm in East Burke, Vt. In later years, the Orcutts used some of this blood to produce excellent individuals by crossing it with Government breeding. We have Dana Kelly, Harriet Hilts and Harrison Miles, among a few others to thank that it survives to this day. In addition to Ethan Eldon, Trilbrook Joel and Nabob Morgan are examples of this "Old Vermont" breeding. Honest and intelligent, members of this line were used in Dana Kelly's breeding cross with Lippitt Ethan Ash and JAD breeding. The results have been around for years and have given us some of the best Lippitt Morgans ever. The tremendous intelligence of this line is passed on to us today through, among others, the likes of Royalton Ashline and Royalton Ebenezer. Can anyone who "knows" those two dispute that? Ashline exhibits more traits additionally of the JAD line (where did we think that backside came from?).

The last line that I feel is still exhibiting a strong influence on today's Lippitts is the Lippitt Ethan Ash line. He was one of the best sires of sires that we have ever had in our Lippitt population. He sired stallions that went on themselves to produce outstanding offspring. Consider that he has the sire of Dyberry Ethan's sire, the sire of Lippitt Moro Ashmore's sire, and he was the sire of the stallion that sired Royalton Ashline, Royalton Minette, Royalton Minelda and Ryegate Keziah. Additionally, he sired both Lippitt Duplicate and Lippitt Dusky Kate! He was, by: anyone's estimation a great source of beauty in our Lippitt population. My good friend, Lester Welch, who knew many, many of the "old ones", chose to build his own small program around Lippitt Ethan Ash. The coefficient of inbreeding to Ethan Ash is, in Lester's herd, relatively, very high. And it is no accident. Everybody likes a pretty horse. Indigo, Hope, and Amora, full siblings, (Moro Hill's Adonis x Natick Moro Independence), are heavy Ethan Ash and Nekomia breeding.

How many of us have coveted this bunch? How could they miss?

And so I have described, *in extremely abbreviated form*, what I believe to be some distinguishably different Lippitt lines. Of course it's true that the vast majority of animals are mixtures of these lines to varying degrees and maybe this is good news. If we like the animals we're looking at today. And maybe we should stop "splitting hairs". But tell me if you can. WHO is the typiest - Ryegate Moro Magic, Meredith Bruce, Ashwood Majestic or Horton's VT Standard? And please tell me why. Tell me if you can, why is it that Meredith Tiger moves so well for a compact, typey individual? And is it true that Lippitt Georgiana's babies were prettier than Lippitt Nancy Moro's? If so, why?

Enough said except whatever you do, BREED A BETTER LIPPITT if you can. Do it your way or mine but for all of us...DO IT!

This feature ran in the Jul/Aug '86 issue of TLC. Jim, hope you'll consider giving us an update 10 years later.

by Jim Alexander