

## The American Horse/ The Morgan Type

### Diamonds or Iron Pyrite?

“The Morgan type’ has been mentioned so frequently of late that it is evidently considered of great value. It refers, of course, to the old-fashioned Morgan horses, but chiefly to the original Justin Morgan, his sons and grandsons, and their immediate descendants.

A novice is liable to get the idea that the great excellence of the Morgan family of horses was due to their conformation, shape or proportions, and that by reproducing a close image of the old time Morgan, that is, an animal shaped after the same pattern, or run in the same mold so to speak, as will be accomplished that is desired. Practical horsemen, especially such of the old guard as have had experience with the old time Morgans, know better, however.

The conformation of the old time Morgan was really only one of the factors that made the family famous, and was perhaps the least important of all the many factors which, combined, made him the most noble, most useful and most valuable animal of the equine species to the farmers, the business men and the professional men of the day and location in which the Morgan flourished.

There may have been other horses that filled the same exact measurements, weighed the same number of pounds and ounces, were of the same color, carried their heads and tails the same as the original Justin Morgan and yet were as unlike him as to the genuine diamond, or iron pyrites to pure gold dust.

It was the immense amount of **nerve force** which he possessed, rather than his conformation, that enabled the original Justin Morgan, founder of the Morgan family, to out- pull, out-walk, out-trot, and out-run any horse in the section where he was kept.

It was the quality of his brain rather than the size and shape of his head, or the length or depth of his body, that caused Justin Morgan to cheerfully obey the commands of his rider or drivers, whether they were stalwart men, invalid women or half-grown children. It was the physical and mental qualities of this wonderful horse, rather than his size, shape, style and pose, that made his stock so immensely valuable.

When horsemen speak of the "Morgan type" they have in mind the qualities, both physical and mental, which Justin Morgan possessed and transmitted, quite as much as the size and shape of the horse, and probably far more than those. It is impossible to predict with absolute certainty what qualities any untried animal will stamp upon his offspring. As a rule, however, it is most likely to be those qualities for which the family is noted of which the stallion in question is a member, especially if he be inbred to that family.

Morgan blood as it exists today must necessarily be greatly diluted, yet the influence of atavism is such that some animal which, according to mathematical reckoning has inherited only one one-hundred-and-twenty-eighth part of that blood may possess the marked characteristics which distinguished the genuine Morgan, more strongly than does the average of those which have inherited, according to mathematical calculations, one-eighth of the original Morgan blood. Selections of stock should be governed by the strength of the Morgan characteristics shown rather than by the apparent mathematical percentage of the Morgan blood possessed.

To restore the Morgan type, including the characteristics, so that it may be transmitted with a fair degree of certainty and uniformity will require many years of patient, persistent effort and experiment, saving only the choicest and rejecting all animals for breeding purposes that do not approximate the Morgan standard in characteristics, no matter how strongly the animals may be bred in Morgan blood.

American Horse Breeder

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