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American Morgan Horse Association Registry Records

1911-1981

167 boxes (250.5 linear ft.)

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In 1789, Vermont native Justin Morgan acquired a bay colt in Springfield, Massachusetts, that became the progenitor of a distinctly American breed of general purpose horse. Noted for its stamina, strength, disposition, and beauty, the Morgan became widely popular in western Massachusetts and Vermont, eventually spreading nationally and internationally. To support the breed, the Morgan Horse Club (later the American Morgan Horse Association) was founded in 1909 and today maintains the breed registry, publishes *The Morgan Horse* magazine, and offers a wide range of public information and educational services.

The Registry records of the AMHA are a product of concern during the late 19th century for documenting and preserving the

integrity of the Morgan breed and a means for breeders to certify pedigrees for their stock. In 1894, Joseph Battell published the first volume of the *Morgan Horse and Register* containing nearly 1,000 pages of pedigrees for "any meritorious stallion, mare, or gelding tracing in direct male line to Justin Morgan and having at least 1/64 of his blood," and although standards have been modified since, the registry remains the primary source for documenting the history of the breed. The records in this collection include approved applications for the AMHA registry, including pedigrees and supporting materials.

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Background on American Morgan Horse Association

Popular in all 50 states and more than 30 foreign countries, Morgan horses can be traced back to a single bay colt acquired by Vermont-native Justin Morgan in 1789 in Springfield, Massachusetts. Throughout the 19th century Morgans were in demand due in part to their effortless ability to perform a wide variety of tasks ranging from field work on farms to transportation for commercial stagecoaches. By the 1840s, an effort to concentrate the line was underway and breeders in Vermont and western Massachusetts located second, third, and fourth generation descendants of the original Morgan horse to establish the foundations of the breed. In 1857, D.C. Linsley's book *Morgan Horses* was published, becoming the first book to document to the history of Justin Morgan and origins of the breed.

During the Civil War, Morgans became valued for yet another feature: their ability to serve as capable cavalry mounts and artillery horses. Throughout the duration of the war, Morgans were in high demand and were often viewed as the horse that could accomplish feats that other teams could not. Indeed, the First Vermont Cavalry used only Morgan horses as mounts and quickly earned a reputation as an accomplished fighting unit.

In 1909, the Morgan Horse Club was established and in 1927 the club was incorporated as a membership corporation; this was the first time the club issued certificates of registration. Nearly five decades later in 1971, the Morgan Horse Club, Inc. was renamed the American Morgan Horse Association (AMHA). The headquarters of the AMHA moved to its permanent home in Shelburne, Vermont in 1988 where the association continues to maintain the breed registry, publish *The Morgan Horse* magazine, and offer a variety of public information and educational services.

Scope of collection

As early as the 1840s, efforts were underway to concentrate the Morgan lines and document the breed's history. The urge to preserve the integrity of the breed and to certify pedigrees continued throughout the nineteenth century and into the twentieth. In 1894, Joseph Battell published the first volume of the *Morgan Horse and Register* containing nearly 1,000 pages of pedigrees for "any meritorious stallion, mare, or gelding tracing in direct male line to Justin Morgan and having at least 1/64 of his blood." It wasn't until 1927, however, that the Morgan Horse Club (later the American Morgan Horse Association) first issued certificates of registration. Since then, the association has maintained the registry, which is the only source for purebred registered Morgans in the U.S.

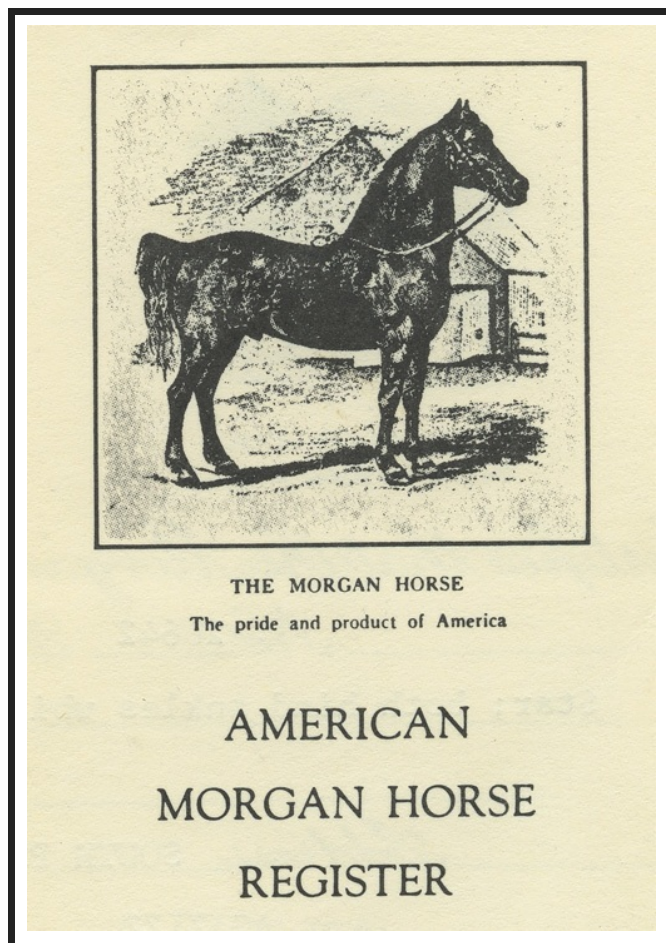
The vast body of registration records from the American Morgan Horse Association includes approved applications along with pedigrees and supporting material for each registered horse.

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1970-1977

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Morgan horse

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Administrative information

Access

The collection is open for research.

Provenance

Acquired from American Morgan Horse Association, 2013.

Processing Information

Processed by Dex Haven, 2014.

Language:

English

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