

# *The Orcutt Family Legacy*

The Museum show chronicles one family's profound intermingling with Morgan history.

By Helen Herold



One hundred and sixty years is a very long time ago, but that is when our story of the Orcutt family legacy begins. Samuel Orcutt spent his life in West Burke, Vermont where he hauled freight with Morgan horses. His son, Harrison, also spent his life at the West Burke farm where he owned, used, and bred the Morgans behind Artemesia, Welcome, Moro, and Vigilda Burkland.

Harrison had five sons, three of whom stayed involved with Morgans. Irving farmed in Orleans where he used Morgans on the farm. Frank stayed at the West Burke farm and Wallace made his home in West Newbury, Massachusetts after graduating from Yale, where he set up a medical practice in 1922. Their stock was interchanged over the years as their breeding programs grew. Frank was the father to Dr. Bob Orcutt who settled in Rowley, Massachusetts and became a veterinarian and established Burkland Farm. Dr. Wallace was the father of Lyman and Joyce and built Orcland Farm.

The middle decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century—the 30's through the 70's—were an exciting time for the Morgan breed. The breed was rapidly increasing in numbers and popularity and the “all-Morgan” horse show came into being. The first National Morgan Horse Show was held in 1939 in Woodstock, Vermont to celebrate the 150<sup>th</sup> birthday of Justin Morgan. The Orcutt Family and their horses made a grand entrance at that first “National” and the victory passes would continue with regularity for another 40 years. Ulysses was Grand Champion

Stallion and won the Justin Morgan Class in 1939. Wonderman, with Bob Orcutt, won the Roadster Class. at that first National. Both of these historic trophies reside in the National Museum of the Morgan Horse's archives and are on display as part of the current exhibit.

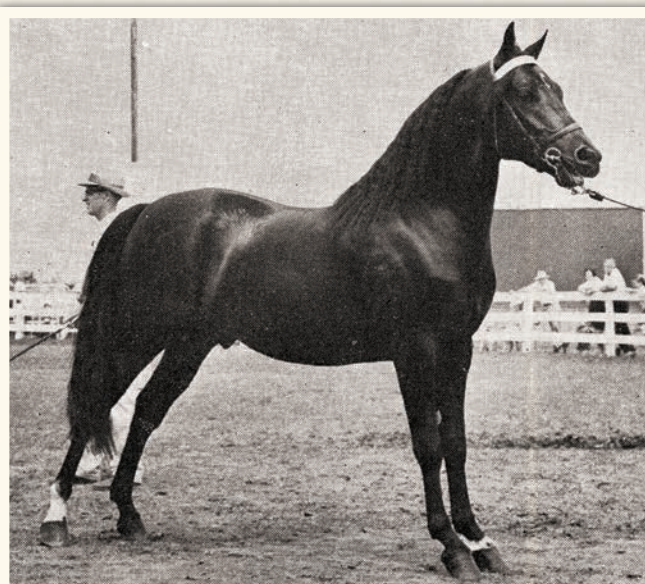
Every breeder of Morgan horses is excited by the possibility of creating a “golden cross.” They are few and far between, and when they occur they are magic. This family can lay claim to participation in several. The first occurred between Bennington and Artemesia at the Government Farm in Middlebury. In this case the Orcutt connection was through Artemesia, and the cross resulted in 10 registered Morgans including Mansfield, Palmyra, Querido, Redfern, Willys, Ulysses and Canfield. The great black horse Ulendon was, of course, sired by Ulysses and out of Dr. Wallace Orcutt's mare Allenda. Ulendon and Vigilda Burkland, bred and owned by Frank Orcutt, provided another golden cross producing Orcland Leader, Orcland Vigildon, Vigilda Jane, Orcland Vigileen, and Vigilendon. It can be argued that a third golden cross occurred between Ulendon and Westfall Bold Beauty, who produced Orcland Bold Admiral, Orcland Bold Fox, and Orcland Bold Lancer.

A fourth great pairing must also be noted—that of Ulendon and Anna Darling. Anna Darling was a wedding gift to Lyman and Ruth Dickson in 1946. This event also marked the expansion of the extended Orcutt family, which would now include the Dicksons of Massachusetts

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*Lyman and Chip Orcutt with dignitaries at a University of New Hampshire Alumni Weekend.*





and Vermont. Ruth Dickson Orcutt's sister was Anna Dickson Ela of Townshend Farm, the home of the great Orcland Vigildon.

Back to Anna Darling! Ulendon, then 25, and Anna Darling survived a tragic fire in 1958 and went on to produce six offspring: Orcland Dondarling, Orcland Donanna, Orcland Darling, Orcland Donlendon, Orcland Ann Darling, and Orcland Darling.

Burkland Farm (so named in honor of Vigilda Burkland) and Dr. Bob Orcutt in Rowley, Massachusetts were also producing and training great Morgan horses. Command Performance, Gay Dancer, Burkland Lady's Man, Burkland Rafinette, Vigildon, and the great mare Westwold Dona Resa (by Orcland Dondarling, owned by the White family in Dover, New Hampshire) all showed under the Burkland banner. Bob and Phyllis Orcutt raised three children who have a presence in the industry to this day—Bob, Helen (Noble), and Mary Jane (Wahl).

The next generations of Orcutts continue the tradition. Louise

and her daughter, Lark, at Bobbin Hollow Farm in Naples, Florida, Chip and his daughter, Christine, are still active in New England, and Helen's sons, Josh and Caleb, are continuing the Burkland banner at their grandfather's farm.

The current exhibit, "The Orcutt Family Legacy" is now being presented in the gallery at the National Museum of the Morgan Horse in Middlebury, Vermont.

The Museum, at 34 Main Street, is open Wednesday through Saturday from 10 to 5.

This exhibit presents more than 80 images—photo reproductions and paintings—as well as historic trophies, awards, and family artifacts. We are grateful to members of the Orcutt family and Nancy Caisse for their assistance in preparing the exhibit. Thanks also go to Laura Tatro of Denlore for her expert restoration of several of the photographic images. ■

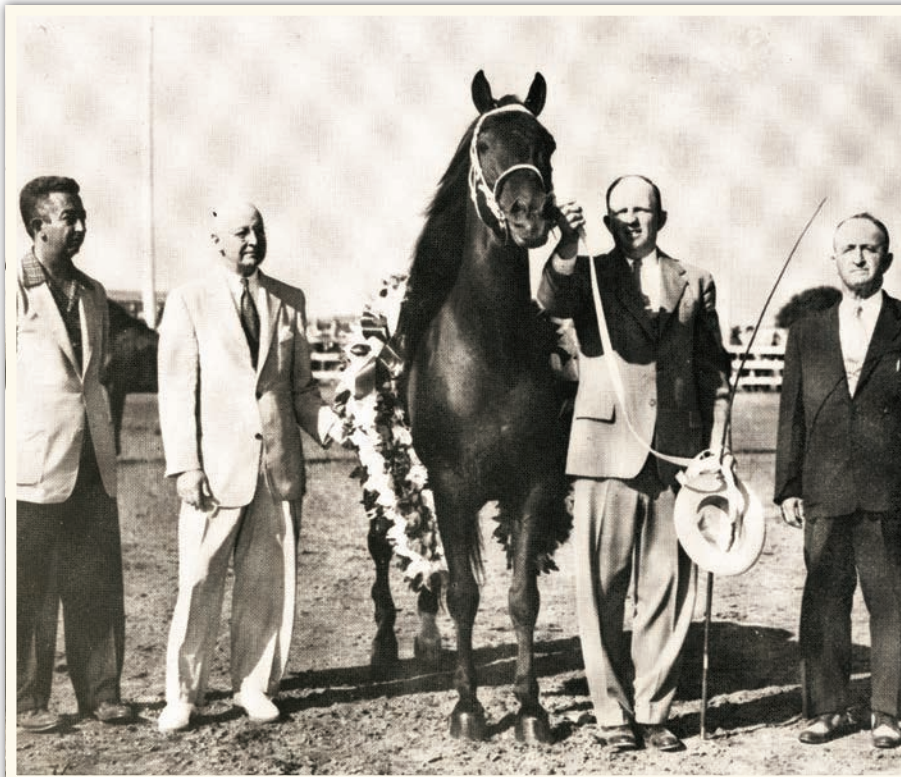
(Clockwise from top left): Orcland Bellendon and Judy Nason were a great team and promoters of the breed, competing at both All-Morgan shows and open shows; Orcland Dondarling (Ulendon x Anna Darling) was foaled in 1958. He was the winner of the Sire and Get at the National Morgan Horse Show four times—1965, 1966, 1967, and 1968. Many times a champion and a proven sire of champions; from coast to coast he sired 122 offspring; Frank Orcutt, with Dana Wingate Kelly, driving his team in the rugged terrain of northern Vermont.





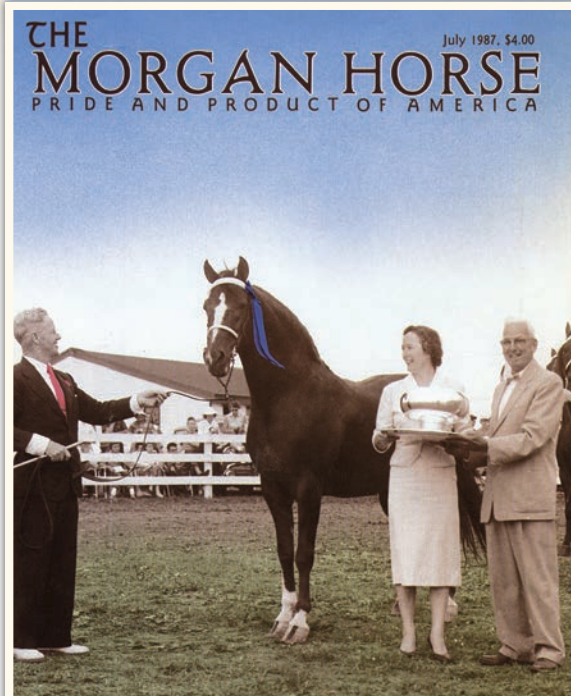
(Top to bottom, left to right): Vigilida Burkland (*Vigilant* x *Lucinne*) was best known as a great producer. She is shown here at her retirement ceremony at the National in 1956 with her owner and breeder, Frank Orcutt, West Burke, Vermont; Ruth Orcutt with *Sadwin* and Willard Lebouef with *Lippitt Mormon* at an early Green Mountain 100-Mile Trail Ride; *Ulendon* and kids; *Vigilant* 7352, foaled in 1918, bred by A. Fullerton Phillips and owned by Wallace Orcutt, M.D. from West Newbury, Massachusetts. *Vigilant* was the sire of the great mare *Vigilda Burkland* who was owned by Frank Orcutt of East Burke, Vermont. Research shows *Vigilant* to have 16.1% Justin Morgan blood with 135 crosses to Justin Morgan; *Orcland Ike* with June Brockett, a respected exhibitor, breeder and Orcutt family friend. She also owned the great mare, *Mayphil* and was the breeder of *Vigilmarch*; *Ulysses* as a yearling.





(clockwise from top left): Campers at the four week horsemanship camp for girls eight to 14 years old held at Orcland Farm each summer. The 20' x 40' swimming pool was popular on warm days; Orcland Donlendon (Ulendon x Anna Darling) with John Lydon. Foaled in 1962, he was a true pleasure horse—in harness and under saddle. He was owned by Mary Dewitt, Stonecroft Farm in Dalton, Pennsylvania; The great horse Ulendon at his Retirement Ceremony in Northampton; Johnny Appleseed, owned and shown by Louise Orcutt Henry, was known for his great versatility and athleticism; Ulysses (Bennington x Atremesia) with Lyman Orcutt. Ulysses is the produce of an Orcutt bred mare and the full brother to Mansfield, Canfield, Querido, and the two sisters, Redfern and Willys. He is shown here in 1939 at the first National in Woodstock, Vermont, winning the Justin Morgan Class.





(clockwise from top left): Orcland Vigildon (Ulendon x Vigilda Burkland) pictured with his owner, Mrs. Roger Ela of Townshend Farm, Bolton, Massachusetts, receiving the trophy for Sire and Get at The National in Northampton, which he won in 1961 and 1963. He was well known for his "tremendous air of presence"; Orcland Leader (Ulendon x Vigilda Burkland) was the first horse to carry the "Orcland" prefix. Leader was owned and shown by Steve Tompkins, Bar-T-Farm, Rowley, Massachusetts; S. Robert Orcutt, DVM, was the son of Frank Orcutt and a top trainer and veterinarian. He is shown here with his particular favorite, Gay Dancer, in 1960; Vigildon (Ulendon x Vigilda Burkland), with Pat Tataronis, was a Road Hack, Pleasure and Trail Horse Champion who was owned by Dr. S. Robert Orcutt, Rowley, Massachusetts; Orcland Ann Darling (Ulendon x Anna Darling) was foaled in 1964. She was a great pleasure mare who was rarely out of the ribbons. During the 1970 show season Ann Darling was shown by 12-year-old Liz Orcutt.