



MARCH, 2019

# HOOFBEATS

**Southern Comfort Gaited Horse Club**

## CALENDAR

**PLEASE NOTE NEW DATES FOR EXPO PRACTICES !**

Monday, March 11<sup>th</sup> Club meeting 6:30 pm

### EXPO PREPARATION: TIMES MAY CHANGE SOMEWHAT

Sunday, March 17 2-6 PM: Both drill teams, 2 sessions

Sunday, March 24 2-6 PM: Both drill teams, 2 sessions

Sunday, March 31 1:30-6:30 PM: Drill teams, 2 sessions  
Any other EXPO riders at 3:30

Sunday, April 7 1:30-6:30 PM: Drill teams, 2 sessions  
Any other other EXPO riders at 3:30

Monday April 8<sup>th</sup> Club meeting 6:30 pm

Friday, April 12<sup>th</sup> Expo: opens 10 am

Saturday, April 13<sup>th</sup> 2 pm ISH: Club breed demo  
plus Spanish at 6 PM show

Sunday, April 14<sup>th</sup> 2 pm ISH: Club mini breed demo

Monday, May 13<sup>th</sup> Club meeting 6:30 pm

**LAST NEWSLETTER IF YOU HAVE  
NOT RENEWED THIS YEAR!**

The following is a reprint of an article about the Rocky Mountain horse, by Judy Brummer. Its long, but has lots of general information related to all our Mountain breeds.

Website:

Membership forms, previous newsletters, articles of interest and lots of photos, plus a fuller calendar are all on our website:  
[www.gaitedhorseclub.com](http://www.gaitedhorseclub.com)

Facebook:

Search for "Southern Comfort Gaited Horse Club" or click [www.facebook.com/groups/636027703108388/](http://www.facebook.com/groups/636027703108388/) and ask to join. Club members, and non-members can post pictures or share quickly and easily with. We also have a PRIVATE page for members only.

Lifelight Insurance:

Group sign up is done in May/June to get a group discount of \$15 off the typical \$60/year cost.  
[www.lifelight.org](http://www.lifelight.org)

# A HISTORY OF THE ROCKY MOUNTAIN HORSE

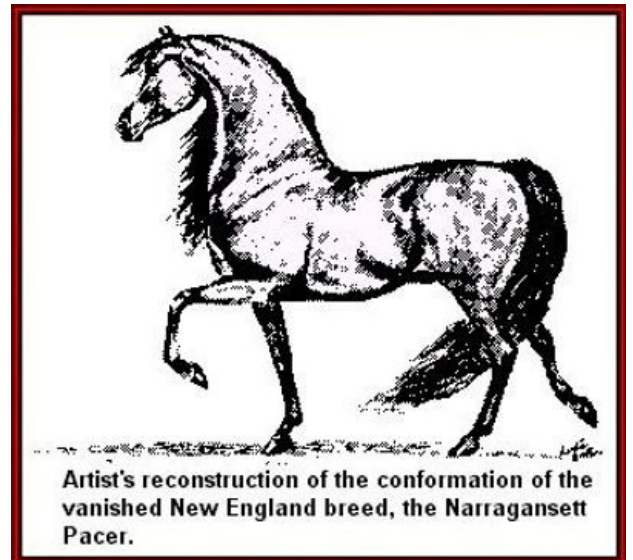
by Judy Brummer, eMDee Mountain Horses

## LEGEND HAS IT

The information we know about Tobe and his sons comes from many sources and can often be traced back to oral histories passed down for generations in Eastern Kentucky. Families of that area know well the stories of extraordinary horses told by their grandparents and great-grandparents around the dinner table, but there was little recorded history of the Rocky Mountain Horse breed until the establishment of the Rocky Mountain Horse Association in 1986. I set out several years ago to gather some of the facts and folklore that make up the legend of Tobe and his Sons, but I soon realized that the legend of the Rocky Mountain Horse began many years before Tobe or Sam Tuttle came into the picture.

## EARLY AMERICAN GAITED EQUINE HISTORY

The American history of the Rocky Mountain Horse breed began in the 1400s when gaited horses, Spanish Jennets, Scottish Galloways and Irish Hobbies, were brought by the earliest settlers to what was then known as "the New World" and later became Rhode Island. For many years, the lineage of all gaited American breeds is intertwined through their common ancestors. From these horses in 1676, the Narragansett Pacer was developed, a truly American breed prized for its smooth gait, speed and calm behavior at a time when riding, over ground often impassable by carriage or wagon, was the only mode of transportation. *Drawing: Original source unknown*



Narragansett Pacers were often called "saddlers" or "saddle horses". In the 1700s, Rhode Island was the center of the American horse world. Farms with up to 1000 horses existed in the Narragansett Bay region, just for the purpose of breeding Narragansett Pacers. It has been reported that George Washington and Paul Revere owned Narragansett Pacers. *Artist depiction of Paul Revere's ride, original source unknown*



This likely "first American breed of gaited horses" eventually became extinct due to cross-breeding with other breeds and poor foundation stock management (exporting some of the best breeding stock to Canada

and the West Indies). No stud books or early records exist to document the origins, evolution or demise of this breed which apparently ceased to exist in the 1880s. The Narragansett Pacer breed survived for just 200 years. There are lessons here for those who would hope to maintain a small but well-defined heritage breed for generations. Good management of the “herd” is very important to the long-term wellbeing of the breed itself.

## **AN EQUINE MELTING POT DEFINES A LANDRACE**

During the late 1700s and early 1800’s, the Eastern Kentucky region was being settled and several gaited breeds of horses came to exist side by side throughout the area. Travel, east or west, was earliest established through the Cumberland Gap and this became a natural thoroughfare for many different types of horses. As pioneers settled in what would become Kentucky, raising and trading of horses became an important industry. Horses were needed for transportation of people and movement of goods, locally and westward, and for pulling and powering agricultural machinery to provide food for other livestock and for the ever-increasing American population. Until the introduction of the internal combustion engine, horses were a necessary partner in almost everyone's daily life and a valued team member in the development of the United States.

Soon, the American gaited horse began to evolve as it migrated beyond the Blue Ridge Mountains with the early pioneers. There are many thoughts about the lineage of the horses that were first brought to the area. Narragansett Pacers that still existed were probably brought to the area by settlers from the Northeast. Canadian Pacers, offspring of Narragansett Pacer stallions when crossed with French mares, arrived in the Eastern Kentucky region with their owners from the North. (In 1891, some of the imported Canadian Pacers would become foundation sires for what was eventually known as the American Saddlebred Horse Association). Thoroughbreds imported from England, descendants of Justin Morgan’s Figure, horses with Spanish origins from the shores and islands of Virginia and the Carolinas and offspring traceable to all these lines were probably also part of the mix of horses that came to the area before 1792, when it was still a part of Virginia.

In 1800, 92% of all taxpayers in Kentucky were horse owners. The average owner had 3 horses and a farmer might own 10 to 50. Horse breeders often chose to mate their stock based on notable and visible characteristics of the horses or their own personal needs at the time, rather than because the chosen mate was descended from a certain lineage or background. This cross breeding created a unique landrace breed of horses in the Appalachian region of Eastern Kentucky. A landrace develops when a group of animals are bred in a local area. Adaptation to the local physical environment and the common needs of individual breeders in that region define the evolving characteristics of the landrace.

With the Narragansett Pacer influence, it isn’t surprising to hear that these horses were often referred to as “saddlers” or “saddle horses”, almost like a tribute to that lost first breed of American gaited horses. This is where some of the ancestors of what we now know as the “Rocky Mountain Horse” were first known. The horses of Eastern Kentucky began to be referred to as “Kentucky Saddlers” or “saddlin’ horses”. They were versatile horses used under saddle and in harness to assist their owners in every aspect of their frontier life and bred to serve the daily needs of their owners and to produce

offspring desirable by others with similar needs. There were no registries or breed organizations in existence at that time. *Photo: Described as "a saddler at rest" in the book The Horse*

According to legend, horses didn't only come to Eastern Kentucky from the North and East. The tale of an unusually colored gaited colt, brought from the Rocky Mountain region to Log Lick, Kentucky around 1890, might seem far-fetched unless you have read some of the personal accounts from that era. (Google the Hussey manuscripts for more information about these adventures, if you are interested.)

Diaries and letters document first hand stories of horses rounded up by "horse-hunters" in the Southwest part of the United States and brought through Eastern Kentucky on their way to the East to be traded. This was a very profitable but dangerous part of American history that many know little about. *Photo: Original source unknown*

Valued for his unique characteristics, the legendary "Rocky Mountain Stallion" from the Rocky Mountain region was undoubtedly bred to Narragansett Pacer, Canadian Pacer, Canadian Pacer-Thoroughbred cross and "saddle horse" mares to achieve calm, well gaited, easy keepers, who were hardy, speedy, comfortable to ride, good in harness and had a good work ethic. These "saddle horses" were bred to traverse the hills and valleys of eastern Kentucky and to share in all aspects of the lives of their owners, the mountain people of the region. The horses they sought and bred for were valuable in meeting the demanding needs of their rural lifestyle. Some have said these were called "Rocky Mountain Horses" long before the association was founded. A record, I found, of the taxes paid on a "Rocky Mountain Horse" in the late 1800s in West Virginia certainly seems to support that.

## EVOLUTION OF AMERICAN BREEDS OF GAITED HORSES

The Civil War shaped the evolution of several evolving American breeds during the mid- 1800s. Horses were valued for their superior service on the battlefield whether ridden by Northern or Southern forces. The number of horses in the United States grew to around 7 million in 1867. The 1870 Census documented 350,000 in Kentucky alone, but this was down 60,000 horses in Kentucky from just a decade earlier, as many "Kentucky Saddlers" had been exported to the Atlantic states, both North and South.



Gypsy Queen, a good saddler



Photo of a Narragansett Pacer



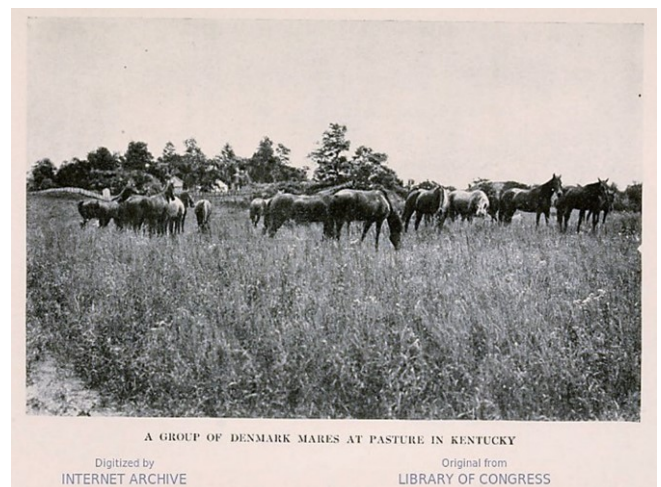
After the Civil War, interest in developing breeds for special purposes and establishing separate breed registries and associations began. By the late 1800s, Kentucky's "saddlin' horses" were playing a part in the development of several breeds in existence today.

In 1891, the first equine breed registry was established in the United States. That first registry was for American Saddle Horses and was established by breeders at a meeting in Louisville, KY. Denmark, who was foaled in 1839, was designated in 1908, by the founders of the organization, as the foundation sire of their breed. By the time the fourth edition of the American Saddle Horse Registry was published over 60% of the registered horses reportedly included Denmark in their lineage through crosses with a mixture of Narragansett Pacers, Canadian Pacers, Thoroughbreds, Morgans and Standardbreds. This breed's name has evolved over the years to become what we know as the American Saddlebred today. Some of the horses registered as American Saddle Horses also appear in the pedigrees of other gaited breeds.

Reportedly, the first horse to "running walk" was noted in 1837, but no Walking Horse breed registry was developed until 1935. 17 foundation stallions were identified when the registry was established. Their lineage can be traced back to a mixture of Narragansett Pacers, Canadian Pacers, Thoroughbreds, Morgans, Saddlebreds and American Standardbreds. By 1945, 13,000 horses were included in the first Walking Horse registry and 10,000 could be traced back to Allan F-1, born in 1886 in Lexington, KY and declared the first founding stallion of the Walking Horse Breed. Other gaited breed registries may include some of the names of horses registered as Walking Horses in their pedigrees, as well.

In 1894, a stallion from the Rocky Mountain region reportedly arrived in Eastern Kentucky and some local breeders chose to cross their "Kentucky Saddler" mares with him. His exact identity has been lost to us and, just as the breeders of Denmark and Allan F-1 did not know that they owned the foundation sires of other breeds, those who bred to the Rocky Mountain stallion did not know that they were breeding the ancestors of the Rocky Mountain Horse breed. They did not breed to establish a registry. They bred for what was valuable to them at the time.

There was no registry for the descendants of the Rocky Mountain stallion established until 1986 and he wasn't declared a foundation sire for the breed. No one created a permanent record of how many sons he produced, and no one knows how many of the unregistered mares and stallions of Eastern Kentucky, born after 1894 carried the Rocky Mountain stallion's bloodline. The Rocky Mountain Horse Association was, however, named for this legendary stallion. *Photo: Mares descending from Denmark (foundation sire of the ASB) published in The Horse in America, 1905*



All of these American gaited breeds, and others not included here, share a common heritage to the "Kentucky Saddler", a landrace established in Eastern Kentucky over two centuries ago before any horse registries were created. Like the other registries noted above, the RMHA was established many

years after the beginning of the breed occurred. By identifying and defining certain sire lines, the heritage of Tobe and his five sons was established as the breed's foundation. The Rocky Mountain Horse Association was formed, by enthusiasts for the breed, to preserve the traits of the horses descended from those foundation stallions and the Kentucky Saddlers to which they and their offspring were bred.

## A BREED WITHOUT A REGISTRY

Without the dedication of Sam Tuttle and his enthusiasm for the descendants of Tobe, the Rocky Mountain Horse, as we know it today might have never come to be. In the 1800s and early 1900s, a horse's primary value was as farm labor and transportation but by the mid-1900s, the horse had become more of a companion animal with lesser value ascribed. The numbers of horses in Kentucky, and throughout the US began to decline dramatically. Many horses were sold to slaughter or were turned loose on public lands. Many owners went from owning a large herd to only owning one or none. Mr. Tuttle, however, maintained a herd of 30-50 horses on his farm even through the Depression and World War II.

According to the US Census Agriculture Special Report, prepared by Bureau of the Census, US Department of Commerce in cooperation with the US Department of Agriculture in 1945, the number and worth of horses in the US changed dramatically between the late 1800s and the mid-1900s.

1867	6820 thousand head of horses	valued at average \$57.66
1909	19731 thousand head of horses	valued at average \$95.1
1916	21834 thousand head of horses	valued at average \$101.45 (PEAK)
1945	8715 thousand head of horses	valued at average \$64.90

Information gathered by the Estill Development Alliance and found on their website (<http://www.estillcountyky.net>) indicates that Samuel O. Tuttle was born January 12, 1902 in Estill County, Kentucky where he grew up in a farming family.

Sam would have been very familiar with the gaited horses bred and raised in Eastern Kentucky in the early 1900s. Horses were used in every aspect of the daily lives of everyone back in that time. Sam, like many other children of the day, may have ridden horseback to school every day as a child. Mr. Tuttle reportedly purchased his first "mountain horse", a mare, in 1918 from a neighbor. Sam had known the legend of the "Rocky Mountain Horse" from its earliest beginnings and this, his first "mountain horse" was a descendant of the legendary Rocky Mountain stallion from his uncle Frank Tuttle's stock.

Sam graduated from the University of Kentucky with a B.S in agriculture and married Laura Harvey Riddell in 1935. They lived at Spout Springs, Ky for most of the years of their marriage and both taught school in the local school districts. Sam was very active in local agricultural events through his involvement with the 4-H, Farm Bureau, Southern States Advisory Board, and the Estill County Fair Board. By 1941, he was running the trail riding concession at Natural Bridge State Park in Slade, KY

and he needed a supply of reliable trail horses. 1941 was also the year that Sam bred one of his mares to “the Hinds’ stud” (reported by some to be born in 1927 and known as Old Tobe). In 1942, Tobe, the “sire of sires” when it comes to the Rocky Mountain Horse, was born.

A few years later, Tobe joined Sam’s other horses at the trail riding concession, where reportedly he pleased customers for many years. Tobe was said to have a wonderful disposition, a natural four beat ambling gait, great endurance, a strong heart, and a much-admired chocolate color. Many gaited horse registries, created in the 1800s, included gaited horses from Eastern Kentucky in the original blood lines registered. Some of the gaited horses in Eastern Kentucky weren’t ever included in any of those registries. Those unregistered horses, of the 1800s, became members of the landrace that was another part of the foundation of the Rocky Mountain Horse breed. The names of their owners are familiar to many who love the Rocky Mountain Horse today, because they were ancestors of the early breeders of “Rocky Mountain Horses”.

Censuses collected in the latter third of the 20th century indicate that the number of horses in the US began to rise again around 1950 and grew as the US human population grew and the economy improved. Many of these horses may have been bred with different uses in mind than those who were bred in the 19th century, but Sam Tuttle reportedly continued to breed for the disposition, gait, endurance and heart that he valued in the first “Rocky Mountain Horses” that he ever owned and bred. Sam is considered by many to be the reason the “Rocky Mountain Horse” breed survived throughout the years when the saddlin’ horses in Eastern Kentucky became a luxury that some could simply not afford. While others turned to the use of automobiles and tractors in their daily life, Sam was busy maintaining a herd for use in his business at Natural Bridge State Park. What he couldn’t possibly know was that he was also creating a herd that would become an important part of the foundation for the Rocky Mountain Horse breed.

Sam and Laura lived on their family farm in Spout Springs, KY for 50 of their 53 years together. They raised their children there, Laura Louise (1938 - 69) and Joe (1941 - 98). Sam lived to see the beginning of the Rocky Mountain Horse Association. Many of the founders of the association knew him and had met Tobe and Sam’s other horses. Tobe has been credited with siring offspring into his 34th or 37th year (depending on who you believe), he died before the RMHA began but he is the sire upon whom the Rocky Mountain Horse breed was built. Sam died in August 1988 and is buried in West Irvine, Ky. Laura survived to 1994. They are both inducted members of the Estill Development Alliance Hall of Honors.

Legend has it that descendants of the Rocky Mountain Stallion were called Rocky Mountain Horses long before 1986, but it wasn’t until that year that the registry was formed to record them, to preserve their pedigrees and to ensure their future. This was a step apparently never taken in the 200 years that the Narragansett Pacer breed existed. No stud books or registry records have ever been found for that first American gaited breed and we all know what happened to them.

## REFERENCES

Statistical Information <https://www.agcensus.usda.gov> and <https://www.census.gov> History of the American Saddlebred <https://www.asha.net>

History of the Tennessee Walking Horse <http://www.twhbea.com/>

History of many American gaited breeds <http://www.walkerswest.com/History/History.htm>

### Illustrations

(1912). The horseman's handbook: a compendium of useful information for every horse owner. Chicago, Ill.: M. Flaws & co. <https://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/009558930>

Speed, J. Gilmer. (1905). The horse in America: a practical treatise on the various types common in the United States, with something of their history and varying characteristics. New York: McClure, Phillips & Co. <https://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/006563951>

Roberts, I. Phillips. (1833-1928). The horse. New York: The Macmillan company. 5th ed., published 1917 (Illustration, A saddler at rest) (Illustration, A saddler at rest) <https://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/002025129>

Information about Sam Tuttle from several sources <http://www.estillcountyky.net/sam-tuttle.html> <http://www.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~kyestill/comm/spoutspring.htm> <https://www.horsetopia.com/articles/breeds/rocky-mountain-horse.html> <http://www.estillcountyky.net/laura-tuttle.html> [http://www.wow.com/wiki/Old\\_Tobe](http://www.wow.com/wiki/Old_Tobe)

There are many other bits and pieces I have gathered over the past 15 years, for which I can cite no single source. Some are supported by information I have found in the references noted above, others are undoubtedly only a part of the oral histories surrounding the origins of this breed.

This information was first published on my own farm website and later shared (in 2018) for publication in The Rocky Mountain Horse, the official publication of the Rocky Mountain Horse Association in 2018.

Copyright © 2018 eMDee Mountain Horses - All Rights Reserved.