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MORGANS RECREATE 1796 HISTORY

The Morgan Mile Road Race created history for the fifth year in a row as Morgan Horses were started from "scratch" and raced a half mile down the same road that Justin Morgan did over two hundred years ago.

On a beautiful Saturday, eight heats were held as Morgan Horses raced in an official race sponsored by the Vermont Morgan Horse Association. Modern-day registered Morgans trotted down the historic Morgan Mile Road where the famous Morgan horse named Figure and later called Justin Morgan or the Morgan Horse raced down this old Vermont road. He was raced against two New York running horses in 1796, defeating both easily. That stretch of road is known as the "Morgan Mile" to this day and is located close to the place Justin Morgan is said to have lived.

Morgan horses were entered into two divisions; two heats were held in harness and six heats were held under saddle. The Morgans were raced in heats of two horses, with the fastest time of each heat recorded.

The harness division started off the day as Althea Holland and Highover Crown Victoria with a time of 1:42:05 showed that they came to race and beat Bruce Marston driving Wawayanda Arielle timed at 2:06:09.

The second heat had Steve Pratt and Highover Oakfield run solo down the Morgan Mile and clocked at 2:09:00.

The Championship race was made up of the two fastest horses, Highover Crown Victoria against Wawayanda Arielle. The race started off very close but Althea Holland raced a very fast race again winning and taking the Championship in Harness with a time of 1:36:47

The saddle races were very exciting with two sisters racing against each other on two very fast horses. Michelle Ellis on 2006 Morgan Mile Champion, Skyway Jamelle, raced against her sister Melissa Wise riding Iko Thru The Storming Sky. This race started out very close and the two horses ran neck and neck through most of the half mile. Iko Thru The Storming Sky won the fast race with a time of 1:46:34

Five other heats followed as Highover Crown Victoria and Althea Holland won their race over her teacher Kathy Rowe and Lady Shalimar with a time of 1:36:09.

Two new people to the Morgan Mile were Debby Hamilton on Barely Legal who beat Heather Pinet on Special Occasion with a time of 2:19:28. Heather and Special Occasion traveled three hours from Maine to compete in this famous race and Special Occasion was also the only Full Lippitt Morgan.

Michelle Ellis on Willowick Solitaire beat Ron Holland On Highover Oakfield with a time of 2:10:78 and Melissa Wise and Skyway Jamelle beat Ariel Blackett and Heyday Rising Sun with a time of 1:47:05. This was the first time Ariel has raced her Morgan down the mile.

One of the favorite races on the Morgan Mile is the husband against the wife race. The wife has always won this race and this year we had great hopes that the husband would win one for the men. Stuart Osha on Sunny raced against Margaret Osha who was on Chadwicks Lady Jewel. The race started out giving the men some hope as Stuart was leading the race but Margaret soon show us who wears the pants in the family as she beat Stuart with a time of 2:31:78.

The end of the day saw eleven year old Althea Holland on Highover Crown Victoria race against Melissa Wise and Iko Thru The Storming Sky as the exciting race started off very fast. Both horses ran neck and neck the first half of the race but Althea Holland wanted a double win on the mile and won the race with a time of 1:30:80.

Althea has won this race three years in a row and this year she took both the saddle and Harness Championships. The only other horse and rider to do this was Melissa Wise on Skyway Jamelle in 2006.

The day was filled with many surprises but one special moment was from Richard Blackburn who was passing through the area on his Canadian Horse. Richard was on his way back from a trip that started in Quebec and finished in Texas. He was on his return trip when he ran into the Morgan Mile Trotting Races. He stayed and enjoyed the race, went on the trail ride and then continued his trip after we all said our goodbyes.

After the race, some competitors went on a one hour trail ride through the hills of Vermont. The North Country Pony Club provided Hamburg's and hot dogs cooked on the grill along with other goodies and fun was had by all.

This race was the fifth time since 1796 that an all-Morgan race took place on the famous Morgan Mile. Justin Morgan won races with regularity and was considered a "fleet runner at short distances." Running horses down public roads for what was generally an agreed upon distance of eighty rods was very common in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Horses were started from "scratch." It was said that Justin Morgan could "toil all day and win races at dusk!"

Justin Morgan is considered to be the founder of the Morgan breed. He was famed for his versatility, willingness, and even temperament. He was able to plow fields, pull a stylish carriage, be ridden under saddle, and win in races. His progeny went on to dominate the trotting race world until the mid-nineteenth century. Morgans left an indelible mark on the establishment of the Standardbred breed, which had considerable influx of Morgan blood.

Modern Morgans are known for their versatility and stylishness. They are used for sport, show, and recreation. The first American breed can be found world wide, but Vermont remains a state where many fine Morgans are found. Go to www.morganmile.com

The official results of the Morgan Trotting Races are:

2009 Morgan Mile Trotting Race

Harness

Highover Crown Victoria	Althea Holland	1:42:05
Wawayanda Arielle	Bruce Marston	2:06:09
Highover Oakfield	Steve Pratt	2:09:00

Harness Championship

Highover Crown Victoria	Althea Holland	1:36:47	CHAMPION
Wawayanda Arielle	Bruce Marston	1:59:22	

Saddle

Michelle Ellis	Skyway Jamelle	1:47:34
Melissa Wise	Iko Thru The Storming Sky	1:46:30
Lady Shalimar	Kathy Rowe	1:52:69
Highover Crown Victoria	Althea Holland	1:36:09
Barely Legal	Debbie Hamilton	2:19:28
Special Occasion	Heather Pinet	2:26:97
Highover Oakfield	Ron Holland	2:38:78
Willowick Solitaire	Michelle Ellis	2:10:78
Stuart Osha	Sunny	2:38:81
Margaret Osha	Chadwicks Lady Jewel	2:31:78
Ariel Bracket	Heyday Rising Sun	2:01:56
Melissa Wise	Skyway Jamelle	1:47:50

Saddle Championship

Highover Crown Victoria	Althea Holland	1:30:87	CHAMPION
Melissa Wise	Iko Thru The Storming Sky	1:41:09	