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MORGANS RECREATE 1796 HISTORY In 2011

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

On an absolutely beautiful Saturday and what was almost two weeks after hurricane Irene, washed out roads and major damage from the storm is blamed for a less than half spectator attendance of what was usually a hundred people or more.

An expected field of seventeen horses was dwindled down to twelve as longer trips from roads still closed due to flooding from Hurricane Irene caused a vehicle break down and a no show of three horses and also caused two other competitors to show up late after the event. Still The Morgan Mile event continued with horses coming from Maine, Connecticut, Vermont and New York to compete in the event.

Twelve 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.

The Morgans were raced in heats of two horses, with the fastest time of each heat recorded. The two fastest times in harness and also in saddle were then raced in championship races.

Dustin Miller in his first time ever at the Morgan Mile won the Championship in harness as he trotted Black Willow Augustine down the Morgan Mile at a time of 1:41:3 which was just four seconds off last years' time.

There were many new entries in the saddle races also as Jeff Wilson and Black Willow Raina in a time of 2:25:8 beat LBA Liberty Belle and Carol Metayer with her time of 2:43:8.

In other races that followed, Abbie Bemis on Weathermont Ethan with a time of 2:32:8 beat GFM Snapshot crossing the line at 3:07:2.

David Godding on Ragtime Moonraker beat Cheryl Godding and Jules Magic Love in the husband vs wife race. This is the first time ever that David had beaten Cheryl at the Morgan Mile and he just nosed her out by six tenths of a second.

Morgan Mile Veteran Heather Pinet and Brook Hill Amber Ash with a time of 2:58:13 beat new comer Bill Tracy and Special Occasion who ran at 3:19:9. Another veteran of the Mile, Ron Holland and Lady Shalamar posted a time of 2:08:1 beating Rebecca Williams and Umbagog who ran at a time of 2:34:8. The final qualifying race of the day was raced with Julie Atherton and River Run Legend posting a qualifying time of 2:57:3.

The Championship Under Saddle was an exciting match up which saw Ron Holland and lady Shalamar race against Jeff Wilson and Black Willow Raina. Both got a good start off the line and the race was very close the first quarter mile but Lady Shalamar with the fastest time of the day at 2:07:6 beat Black Willow Raina finishing with a time of 2:34:8.

After the race, many who raced went on an hour and a half trail ride through the hills of Vermont and hot dogs, sausage on the grill along with other sandwiches where had by all.

This race was the seventh 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.

The official results of the Morgan Trotting Races are:

2011 MORGAN MILE TROTTING RACES

HARNESS		
Black willow Augustine	Dustin Miller	1:41:03

2011 HORSE AND RIDER	TIME
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Black willow Raina	Jeff Wilson	2:25:08
LBA Liberty Belle	Carol Metayer	2:43:08

GFM Snapshot	Deb Sargent	2:77:02
Weathermont Eathan	Abbie Bemis	2:32:08

Ragtime Moonraker	David Godding	2:34:03
Jules Magic Love	Cheryl Godding	2:34:09

Special Occasion	Bill Tracy	3:19:09
Brook Hill Amber Ash	Heather Pinet	2:58:01

Umbagog	Rebecca Williams	2:34:08
Lady Shalamar	Ron Holland	2:08:01

River Run Legend Atherton	Julie	2:57:03
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2011 Saddle Championship

Black Willow Raina	Jeff Wilson	2:31:09
Lady Shalamar	Ron Holland	2:07:06

