

**GAITEDNESS IN THE APPALOOSA:  
A Tribute To The Past**  
By Cheryl Palmer  
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**The purpose** of this article is to raise an awareness and appreciation of the “gait” that some Appaloosa horses have. It is called the Indian Shuffle and it is another dimension of the Appaloosa’s versatility that mostly goes unrecognized.

**The versatility of the Appaloosa is the strength of the breed.** Not a lot of people are aware of the broad array of uses and types of Appaloosas. Appaloosas can range from the Quarter horse color breed Appaloosa to the Foundation blood breed Appaloosa which also includes the emerging gaited Appaloosa. Unlike the other breeds the Appaloosa is the only breed that encompasses all types of body builds and disciplines. Appaloosas have the genetic base for many disciplines ranging from sport horse types to endurance, foundation, gaited, and Quarter Appaloosas.

When the Appaloosa Horse Club started the Appaloosa horse was becoming a vanishing breed. In order to build up the numbers out crossing was allowed to other recognized registered breeds that included the Morgan, Saddlebred, Tennessee Walker, Standardbred, Arabian, Quarter Horse, and Thoroughbred. This practice was continued until the mid 70’s when the books were closed to all outside cross breeding except to Arabians, Quarter Horses, and Thoroughbreds, and that policy continues to this day. Allowing breeding to the gaited breeds is how the Indian Shuffler (gaited) Appaloosa re-emerged. The original Appaloosa (the Spanish horse) had latent gaited genes and the recent infusion of breeding to gaited horses has reinforced and strengthened those original diluted gaited genes.

### **WHAT GAIT IS**

A gaited horse has been blessed with extra gaits or gears that a non-gaited horse cannot perform. Non-gaited horses walk, trot, and canter/lope and are limited to these ranges of gaits. In a gaited horse however, they can trot as well as do one or more of the extra gaits. Where the trot is a 2 beat gait, the intermediate gaits are 4 beat gaits. In the 2 beat trot the diagonal pair of legs are in perfect unison as the horse’s legs leave the ground and come back to the ground transmitting an impact which jostles the rider and produces a bounce to horse and rider. In the 4 beat gaits there are always one or more legs on the ground. Therefore there is no suspension and no bouncing around in the saddle. **The pace gene is the mother gene and it modifies the trot gene and gives you the huge range of intermediate gaits.**

Beverly Whittington, in her article “Gait”, asks “Why is the gait comfortable? The human body will adjust to the movement of a gaited horse much more readily than the movement of the trot. Most gaits are a derivative of the natural equine walk and the motion perceived by the rider causes the human pelvis to move in the same way it does when we walk. As the human being lifts each foot off the ground and swings it forward

there is a corresponding lift and forward shift of the pelvis on the same side. The motion felt from the saddle when riding a horse in gait is the same, a slight lift and forward arc. The trot has a moment of suspension then impact, which has no natural equivalent in the human being. It is also rather hard on the joints and soft tissues of the human body.”

What is gait? What is the Indian Shuffle anyway? The Indian Shuffle is a catchall term meaning a gaited horse. It includes all four-beat gaits which are on a spectrum from diagonal (trotty) to lateral (pacey). This includes the Foxtrot, Stepping pace, Rack, Running Walk, Flat-footed Walk, and Single Foot. It is a fast, ground-covering, smooth moving gait to ride. Strong gaited horses can gait right up to a gallop, and a Running Walk is just that: a fast walk with tremendous speed. All gaited horses and breeds have the same spectrum of gaits. What they all have in common though is a comfortable and smooth 4-beat gait, and all of the above are called the “intermediate gaits.” It’s different from a trot in that gaited horses always have one or more feet on the ground as they do this smooth intermediate gait. It’s between a walk and a lope.

A gaited horse is born that way through genetics. Weak or marginal gaited horses often need their gait developed through training and collection. A strong gaited horse however, just gaits naturally and it prefers gaiting over trotting. A strong gaited horse will gait with consistency and speed. The gait ranges from a trotty 4 beat gait to a pacey 4-beat gait. The gait gene is believed to be a dominant poly gene which is a mixture of pace and trot genes. If the horse inherits more trotty genes its preferred gait will be a broken trot or fox trot. The Foxtrot is considered by many to be one of the most balanced and surefooted of the intermediate gaits. The front foot hits the ground just before its diagonal hind foot does. It is the closest gait to the trot. It is highly sought after for trail and competitive riding with its ease and energy efficiency. Most of the Appaloosa Indian Shufflers foxtrot. In fact the Missouri Foxtrotter is known for its Foxtrot gait. This gait is useful when riding on rough terrain and when quick turns and maneuverability are required. On the other end of the spectrum scale you have more of the “pacey” gaits. When the pace gene dominates you get more of the pacey 4-beat gaits called the stepping pace, and the amble. The Paso Fino and the Tennessee Walker of today are more pace based in their movement. In the gait spectrum in the middle you have the nice, even 4-beat gaits which are the single foot and running walk. The original Tennessee Walkers, used to do a nice even four beat Running Walk. However that changed in the 1940’s when speed and exaggerated showiness in the show ring became more valued. Because the pace gene is stronger than the trot gene it took over and today many Tennessee Walkers prefer a stepping pace to a Running Walk. Educated breeders are now going back to breeding for more of an even balanced 4 beat gait with less stride.

I’m not a gaited expert and there’s lots of information on the internet for more in-depth explanations. Suffice to say, that many strong gaited horses are multi -gaited which means they have the potential to do more than one of these intermediate gaits. Most Saddlebreds and Morgan’s inherited more trot genes than pace genes and therefore Foxtrot and Single-foot. The Tennessee Walker and the Paso Fino have inherited more pace genes and do the more lateral gaits such as the Stepping pace and Amble. Horses

that are too pacey throw their weight from side to side and are not balanced for going down hills and for quick maneuvers. Beware of strong lateral gaited horses as many cannot canter very well because the canter is a diagonal gait.

The market for gaited Appaloosa horses is now Buyers Beware! Many sellers want to say their Appaloosa horses are gaited even when many of them are not. Much of this is not due to dishonesty as much as it is due to ignorance. It's important to get a gaited expert to look at your potential horse and gauge its movement and gait. A gaited expert can tell you in short order if the horse is gaited and which gaits it does naturally. Many foals from every breed (gaited and non-gaited) will show a pacey gait at birth due to weak muscles, It's easy for them to gait but this can disappear quickly when the foal gains strength. Just because a foal gaits at birth does not mean it's gaited. It only has relevance if they are still walking laterally or gaiting as yearlings and older. And just because a horse does a pacey walk does not mean that this is its gait of choice when you train it to ride.

### **APPALOOSA HERITAGE**

**“A view of the past, a vision for the future.**

**They are so old, they are new again.”**

**Robert Peckinpah was President of the Appaloosa Horse Club (1952-1961) and was a visionary for what this breed could be.** He believed the Appaloosa to be a separate breed, a difference in type that distinguishes it from the Arabian, Tennessee Walker, or the Quarter Horse. Peckinpah said, “Because the Appaloosa was developed in rough country we recognize he had an excellent saddle back with adequate withers.” Peckinpah pointed out that “the traveling gait of our Appaloosa – the Indian Shuffle is a characteristic of this clean legged horse in all but a few animals. What we must vigilantly guard against is those who refuse to accept the Appaloosa as a breed and what he stands for and who continually exert pressure to convert him into a Quarter Horse, an Arab or a Morgan, etc. with spots.” He further described the Appaloosa as a rough country stock horse with an easy gait.

The Appaloosa was to look like no other breed in color, conformation, and type. *However this was not the way the Appaloosa breed unfolded or progressed.* Dr. William Jones, veterinarian and geneticist, in his article series in the Appaloosa Journal in 1988, “Taking a Closer Look”, said, “Since the ApHC has allowed the out crossing of the Thoroughbred and Quarter Horse breed there has been so much out crossing that the Appaloosa would scientifically be considered a color breed. That was a reason for the start up of the Foundation Appaloosa requiring five generations of Appaloosa to Appaloosa to regain the Appaloosa in form, function, intelligence, disposition, and coloring.” This group is called FAB which stands for Foundation Appaloosa Breeders. They are promoting a Foundation-bred Appaloosa horse who has a high percentage of Appaloosa to Appaloosa bred ancestors and whose pedigree goes back to the more pure bred Appaloosa. An FPD (Foundation Pedigree Designation) program was started in the

last few years within the Appaloosa Horse Club, which measures the number of registered Appaloosas in the pedigree. The Foundation Appaloosa breeders now have FPD sanctioned horse show classes for Foundation Appaloosas. The intent was to exclude excessively bred Quarter and Thoroughbred Appaloosas from competing with Foundation Appaloosas. Foundation Appaloosa people wanted to have their own standard of judging a leaner more rugged body build type of Appaloosa vs. being judged on Quarter Horse conformation.

The Foundation Appaloosa breeders are today preserving the old original lines from the past. In doing that they are bringing back the old gaited blood lines from the Saddlebreds, Tennessee Walkers, Standardbreds, and Morgan's whether intentional or unintentional. Breeding gaited Appaloosas is building up a good genetic gaited pool. As one learns more about the gait and gait genetics, it will be easier to produce more gaited Appaloosa Indian shufflers.

### **Rough Country Stock Horse With The Easy Gaits**

**The Foundation Appaloosa has kept the Appaloosa versatile** by not breeding a specific type of horse and by not breeding for the more heavily muscled Quarter Horse conformation. We know from Yoga that the mesomorph body type (muscular, athletic) have strength but not flexibility. By contrast the more loosely jointed and leaner athletic body build has flexibility but is often lacking in strength. In horses the leaner horses have longer muscles, more free flowing movement, and longer strides that make for distance riding and endurance events. The Foundation Appaloosa has been bred for a more middle of the road body build. There have always been a core group of Appaloosa enthusiasts who have never lost sight of the meaning and the purity of the Appaloosa as an all around athlete and not a specialist.

### **SOME HISTORY**

**Our breeds are just a little more than 100 years old and all that separates them is selective breeding**

This article would not be complete without mentioning the original source of the Appaloosa horse, the Spanish Colonial horse also called the Spanish Mustang. These Spanish horses were brought over to North America by the Conquistadors and explorers. Over time the Spanish horses escaped and fanned out and became the wild herds that the Indians took in as their riding horses. These were streamlined, small (14 hands), tough horses with serviceable conformation and weighed about 900 pounds. Some of these horses carried the latent gaited genes that were passed on. After Chief Joseph and his Nez Perce band of Indians lost their battle with the U.S. Army their horses were mostly decimated and scattered. What was left of these horses probably later mixed with other types especially the remount stallions from the U.S. Government breeding program. The government established a special program from 1908 to 1948 to make government stallions available to farmers and ranchers for a nominal fee. The government horses that were used in the Pacific Northwest were mostly types of Standardbreds (also called Hamiltonians), Thoroughbreds, and Morgans. Pedigree wasn't as important to the Army

as serviceability and function. They needed horses that had a long stride and a brisk, fast walk that could cover ground quickly. The Standardbred type at that time was a strain of early imported gaited Thoroughbred types and mixed with the popular bloodlines of the day. The Standardbred type of horse as it evolved was instrumental in developing other gaited breeds like the Tennessee Walker and the American Saddlebred and they were **loaded** with gaited genes. In other words the Standardbred carried the pace gene in abundance as they could both pace and trot. Almon Manes said in his time and his father's time that this breed descended on the Pacific Northwest and that people loved riding this comfortable mount as a traveling horse.

George Hatley said that the early Appaloosas looked like Thoroughbreds to him and he gave me some pictures of some of these early pre-registry Appaloosas that were tall (15+ hands) and long legged.

The heroic measures of a few horsemen including Claude Thompson resurrected the spotted horse later known as the Appaloosa. The Appaloosa with its rich Spanish gaited heritage steeped in Indian culture became a recognized breed in 1938. For those who want a more in-depth background of the fascinating history of the Mustang -Appaloosa connection you can assess the website <http://www.conquistador.com/mustang.html>.



Nez Perce Encampment; Photo by Jane Gay, 1889-1892

Courtesy of National Park Service

An example of a pure bred Appaloosa and it's Appaloosa-Paint colt

North America was a melting pot of people and horses. All of our American made breeds have a common ancestry and therefore share bloodlines from one another. Morgans, Saddlebreds, Appaloosas, Quarter Horses, and other breeds, all share a common gaited ancestry. They are all a conglomeration of different bloodlines as there were no breeds in the beginning of colonial times. Early horses of North America trace

back to Europe and their blood mingled and mixed in varying degrees with the Spanish Colonial horse, Canadian Pacer, and Narragansett pacer blood. For more detailed information there are many books out now detailing the history of the first horses brought over here from Europe. Especially useful is Dyan Westvang's new book, "Of Royal Blood: The Missouri Foxtrotter" which is compelling and well written.

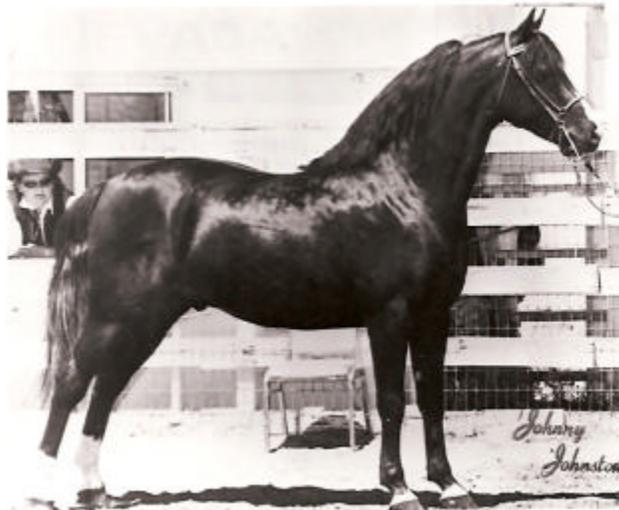
It was the norm during colonial times to ride gaited horses as they were smooth, comfortable and possessed fast ground covering gaits. The gaited horse was the preferred mount in Europe and in Colonial America. Gaited horses were also called Saddle horses, single footers, amblers, travelers, shufflers, or pacers.

Colonial people depended upon their horses for a major part of their life from plowing their fields to providing transportation so that they needed versatile, utilitarian horses with a good temperament and they knew a good horse when they saw one. Almost all of these horses brought over from Europe were gaited. Dyan Westvang in her book estimated that there were 14 gaited horses for every non-gaited horse. People needed and valued smooth, ground covering gaited horses to get where they were going. During these times there was no motivation to classify the breeds in a systematic way.

**Dyan Westvang** said that the designation of a breed was a new concept that began to evolve based more on bloodlines. In 1893 the Morgan registry was formed and this was the first attempt to classify breeds and was used for tracking, pacing and trotting speed horses. Then other registries followed. In 1894 the Jockey Club formed records. In 1935 the Tennessee Walker registry formed, and in 1938 the Appaloosa Horse Club was formed followed by the Quarter Horse registry in 1940. Only with the advent of wide roads and motorized vehicles did the gaited horses become passé. With the proliferation of the automobile horses were now used more for recreation and entertainment so the utility of gaited horses faded away.

### **The Appaloosa-Morgan Connection The Morgan Horse was a source of gaited genes.**

Many people don't realize that most horse's have a history of gaitedness in their background. Gaited horses are not newly invented but today are being rediscovered. 80% of all Morgans at the turn of the century were gaited, and since Morgan's were used in the development of all of our American made breeds there were still remnants of the gait in the initial Quarter Horse breed. When line bred you will occasionally find outcrops of gaited Quarter Horses in the KING P234 line. You might want to check out this informative but controversial 1960 article," KING was not a Quarter Horse, by Franklin Reynolds, the famous Quarter Horse Historian, who says that KING P234 was 25% Saddlebred. This article was supposed to have been published in the Quarter Horse Journal but was protested by some of the Quarter Horse Board of Directors who said they would print the correct pedigree later but that never happened. Interesting information about Morgan ancestry in the development of other breeds can be found in the Morgan Horse Club information. Quite a few Morgans were used in the development of the Appaloosa's before and after the inception of the ApHC.



Registered gaited Morgan stallion, Omar Sherrif, and a stellar son and great grandson of Fly Hawk

Today the American Morgan Horse Association now embraces their gaited segment of registered Morgan's and has incorporated the Single Footed Morgan under the umbrella of the Morgan Horse Club. According to Mimi Busk-Downey, "The Morgan breed has had the foresight to include a **'gaited division'** in their registry to preserve the heritage that has endured from the previous centuries." The Morgan Horse Club has recently gained in popularity in large part due to the demand for gaited Morgans.

Louie Armstrong, an old time Appaloosa breeder associated with the Coffee Cup ranch in Montana, told me that in the 1940s Morgan Horses were not selling as well as Quarter Horses, and so many Morgan Horse owners registered their Morgans as Quarter Horses so they could get a better price and they could be raced on the track. John Hutcheson said, "The QH registry was virtually open for many years. Many, many horses were accepted by visual inspection only, pedigree was not considered." And why not? The Morgan's fit the prototype of the Quarter Horse.

When the ApHC first formed in 1938 out crossing to Morgans was permitted and continued until the middle 1970's when the ApHC closed the books to that breed. Many early Appaloosa breeders used Morgans in their breeding program. The ULRICH Appaloosa horses have Morgan ancestry in their backgrounds. SIKANI CHIEF and QUEEN were of Morgan extraction. Today it is unofficially estimated only 10 to 20% of



Ulrich Kitten III Verified Indian Shuffler

Morgans are still gaited according to the Gaited Morgan breed information. See <http://www.msfa.com/index2.htm>. Two of the more popular bloodlines of gaited Morgans are FLYHAWK and JUBILEE KING. In fact JUBILEE KING (born 6/29/27) was considered one of the greatest Morgan's of his time. His bloodlines are in many Morgans and Quarter Horses and can be traced to many other breeds. "JUBILEE KING was the herd sire for the Matador, 666 and many more great western ranches that gave us the Quarter Horse" according to John M. Hutcheson in an article "Where have all the Morgans gone?"

A famous black leopard Appaloosa stallion, MAY'S SURPRISE T3, was out of a gaited Morgan mare, SOX. MAY'S SURPRISE created a whole line of gaited Appaloosas, and some of his get such as WIGWAM, and CASPER SQUANTO, carried strong gaited genes. Some will recognize his name as the KAW LIGA line. Another Morgan bred to Appaloosas' was EL CORTEZ, a famous Morgan show horse, and a few Appaloosa breeders bred to him. Some of you may have GAY LADY in your horse's pedigree. She was a famous show horse and a daughter of EL CORTEZ. QUERIDO and REDWING were also registered Morgan's used in Appaloosa breeding especially by Myrtle Brown. FLYING SARGEANT F2098 was a product of the Coffee Cup ranch in Montana and was one quarter Morgan going back to racing bred Morgans and has a strong Morgan presence about him. He produced SUN SPOT J #10766, who had an additional line of Morgan ancestry.



Gaited Neemepoo Shuffle Feathers, Manes Blue Eagle and Ulrich ancestry

### **Arabian Influence**

Many people don't realize there were some gaited Arabian bloodlines bred to our Appaloosas. In fact, in the 1920's, there were gaited Arabian show classes. RASEYN, RONEK, RALET, RISSLETTA, were all gaited Arabians going back to MESAOUUD. Even the famous Foundation stallion, RED EAGLE, carried gaited genes. RILEY'S PURPLE DOLL grand-daughter of RISSLETTA and also grand-daughter of the gaited GEORGE WEBB LEOPARD (pre-registry) is an example of gaited Arabian-Appaloosa exquisiteness. (See [www.crabbet.com/articlepics/raseyn2.html](http://www.crabbet.com/articlepics/raseyn2.html))

### **Saddlebred Influence**

There were some early breeders who liked breeding their Appaloosas to Saddlebreds and Tennessee Walkers for a more refined look and smooth gaits. Lee Manes was one of these breeders and was breeding Appaloosas to gaited breeds and also to other gaited Appaloosas in the 1930's before the Appaloosa registry formed. He was a volume breeder and purposely bred his Appaloosas to gaited breeds, and wrote an article ("Indian Shuffle") in the Appaloosa News (Dec.1978) about his "fast, ground covering horses" that he called the "traveling horses." He says in his article that many of the gaited Indian Shufflers came from his herd. Almon and Lee Manes in their youth rode Standardbreds (also known as Hambletonians) to school and they knew gaited horses when they saw them. Standardbreds were in the area and were commonly used for transportation. The Mane's property in Idaho bordered the Nez Perce Indian Reservation., and Almon Manes, now 84, an astute horseman with a photographic memory, told me the Indians loved all spotted horses. But he didn't see any Appaloosas on that particular reservation except for one mare but he saw plenty of Pintos and Paints. He expanded the information that Lee Manes had already mentioned in his article. Don Johnson also collaborates that

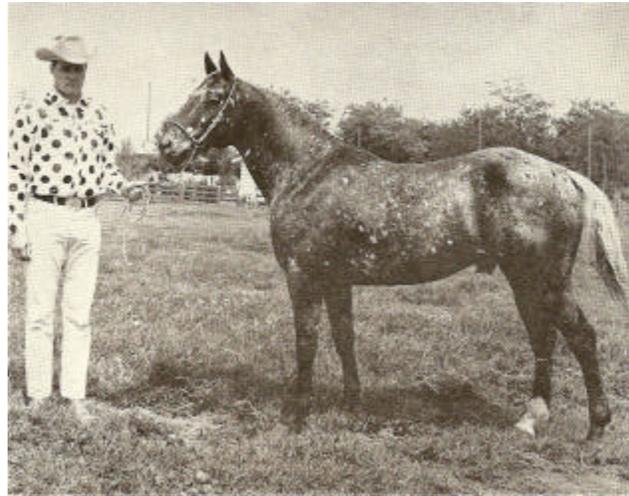
there were no Appaloosas on the Nez Perce reservation that he observed on one of the first Chief Joseph rides which went through the Nez Perce Reservation. Later on in the late 1980's the Nez Perce Indians from that particular reservation obtained 50 or more of Les Sauer's Foundation Appaloosa herd and brought in the Appaloosa spots. The Manes bought some strong gaited Sabino gened TWH's from John Anderson, a Nez Perce Indian, who brought these champagne colored bald faced horses from Oklahoma. They had splashes of white up to their stifles. Almon Manes also bought an old leggy blue roan gaited Saddlebred looking Appaloosa stallion from Herb Camp named OLD SILVER. These horses were the seed stock for Manes gaited herd of Appaloosas. This information from the Manes also substantiated what Palmer Wagner said in a letter to me dated Dec. 6, 2002, "I do have some conclusions on this issue that may interest you. I leave room for the thought that this trait (gaitedness) comes from outside the Appaloosa gene pool. When I was a boy in the 1920's I remember a breed of saddle horses that moved in this way. They were dark in color, and known as Hambletonians. I know of no other probable source."

Some of the famous Appaloosa stock horses from the Manes herd were BUCK 404, MANES BLUE EAGLE F1874, STEWART'S SHEIK #384, OLLICUT T87, EASTER LADS LADY #1043 by Mc DONALDS EASTER LAD (Saddlebred), and MANES STEWART SHIEK JR T5368. All were outstanding gaited Appaloosas.

EL MORROCCO was considered the most famous Appaloosa in 1954. He was born in South Dakota and was a black leopard shuffler and was half Saddlebred. He was born in 1935 before the ApHC was formed. His gaited offspring filled a substantial number in the ApHC early stud books. He ended up in California at the Spiller Ranch and there produced over 200 offspring before being sold to Gene Autry. Later, he made his way back to the Midwest where he spread his gaited genes from California to New York City. See article "El Morocco" in the April 1974 edition of the Appaloosa News.



TOBY I #F-203 and TOBY II #F-113 were gaited shufflers that created standing applause with their fast animated ground covering gaits. George Hatley said his gait was a "moving one." George believes the gait came from "Rex" in their pedigree. The Toby's with their flat croups and their four beat Fox Trot gait suggests a Saddlebred ancestor. There was a well know Saddlebred farm in Washington and many Saddlebreds were used to refine the Appaloosas and give them size and the gaits. The gaited stallion CHIEF JOSEPH REX # 688 was used a lot in the Pacific Northwest by such volume breeders as Ferguson, Carl Briley and Robert Taylor from Wolf Point, Montana.



Gaited Appaloosa, Ollikut T-87, Top Performance Horse

PONDERAY FANCY PANTS T887 ( a Toby I stallion), bred by Harold Tibbs out of a Saddlebred mare, sold to Kenneth Perrent of Madison, MT produced many smooth moving offspring before being killed by lightning. GOLDEN LADY A'DARE #567 was also bred by Harold Tibbs. She was by Ardis Roscoe's Saddlebred stallion MARVELS DANNY A'DARE. Harold Tibbs was friends with Fern Schmidt and Ardis Roscoe and these breeders used TOBY I and shared bloodlines with each other. Ardis Roscoe's first love was her Saddlebreds. In talking about TOBY I F-203 Ardis said, "Under the saddle he was the perfect saddle horse. Out of the saddle he was a big loud mouth. Appaloosas are not my favorite breed but I like Toby I. He was an elegant Appaloosa who differed some in build from the average Appaloosa. He had a flat croup and an exceptionally long neck for an Appaloosa, good legs, good solid feet and black spots and he was blue in front." She also loved his gaited son THUNDERBIRD #466 and another gaited horse GREY BONNIE (5 gaited) who caused quite a stir. She rode these horses in many shows and parades. Some other famous shuffler horses with Saddlebred ancestry were W-MS COPPER DOLLAR F-3187 and CHOCOLATE SUNDAY #485 by KING CAMBUSCAN (Saddlebred).

### Conclusion

**"The farther backward you can look the farther forward you are likely to see"**  
**Sir Winston Churchill**

Dyan Westvang told me, "In America, ALL the horse breeds stem in part from ancient gaited stocks. Therefore there is latent pace in each of them. When crossed to a 'gaited' horse that tendency can come back to the foreground. Much will depend upon how much pace is packed into a given pedigree." **From all of the above mentioned gaited influences, it is clear that the Appaloosa has gaited ancestry.** This gaitedness has not generally been valued or recognized, and in fact the ApHC currently only sanctions Walk, Trot, and Lope classes. There has been a resurgence of gaited Appaloosas spearheaded by Foundation breeders as they have been crisscrossing these old foundation bloodlines with their gaited ancestry. It is a growing but as yet untapped market. There is a huge interest in gaited horses. New gaited breed registries have sprung up out of

nowhere. Trail riding is now the number one pastime and interest of the horse enthusiast especially the older rider who wants and needs a smooth ride.

Gaited registries have all been going through a metamorphous and have re-emerged in a more vital and versatile way. Such breeds as the Tennessee Walker, Missouri Fox Trotter, Rocky Mountain, Paso Fino, Morgan, Saddlebred, etc. are fast rising in popularity and their clubs are now expanding what a gaited horse can do. Gaited horses are having a makeover as they are now entering all the disciplines that were dominated by non-gaited breeds. These gaited breeds now have stock horse, reining, gymkhana, gaited dressage, jumping and hunter classes in addition to endurance and competitive trail rides. Even your open shows are now allowing gaited horses in their classes.

We have come full circle from the time the gait was predominant and valued in colonial times to its decline, and now the gait has re-emerged as a prized and important trait in our horses. We are once again valuing the gaited treasure that got lost in the shuffle (no pun intended). So what's in your pasture?

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