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# MORGANS ON HAWAII'S PARKER RANCH

*Originally written in 2003, this article shows stallions held in high regard to upgrade working Western stock on what was once America's largest cattle ranch.*

**T**he legendary Parker Ranch on Hawaii's Big Island has been a cattle ranch for almost 200 years. A mild climate combined with vast grasslands extending from fertile lowlands surrounding the 14,000-foot extinct volcano, Mauna Kea in the interior; to far up the slopes of the Kohala Mountains in the north, to the shores of the Pacific on the west, the Parker Ranch is a stockman's paradise. Until 1992 when it was left in trust to the local people, it was the largest privately owned ranch in the United States. In its heyday, the Parker Ranch encompassed more than 400,000 acres, about 1/10th of the Big Island, and had the largest herd of Herefords in the world. Today the ranch contains about 225,000 acres, 850 miles of fence, 35,000 head of cattle, and 250 horses.

The seeds of the Parker Ranch were sown in 1793 when a bull and six cows were presented to King Kamehameha I by a British

sea captain hoping to establish friendly relations and trade with the Hawaiians. In 1803, the first horses arrived in a similar fashion. The islanders, having no experience with large livestock, simply turned the cattle and horses loose to fend for themselves. In 1809, a Yankee sailor named

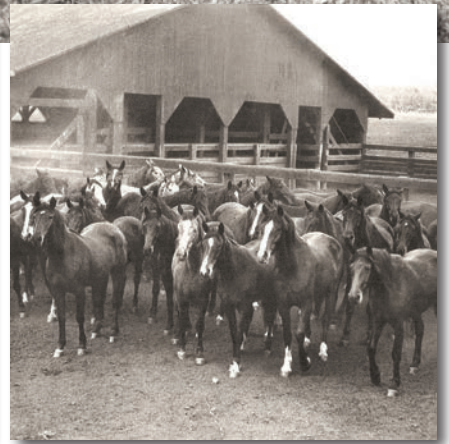
By Gail Perlee

John Palmer Parker jumped ship to gamble his life and future on Hawaii. Soon, he had learned the language and customs of the native people and was befriended by the King. A few years later, he was a successful farmer supplying meat and vegetables to the Hawaiians and to visiting ships. He married Princess Kipikane, the granddaughter of King Kamehameha, in 1816 and thus began the family dynasty of the Parker Ranch.

Meanwhile, feral cattle and horses flourished in a wild land of abundant feed and no natural predators. They were not only useless, but also a menace to the Hawaiians. John Parker was permitted by the King to shoot cattle for meat and hides, but hunting the wild

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**ABOVE (LEFT TO RIGHT):** Alfred Wellington Carter was a successful Honolulu born businessman who for 50 years was the brain, heart, and soul of the Parker Ranch; Carter purchased Querido (Bennington x Artemisia) from Roland Hill in the late 1930s.

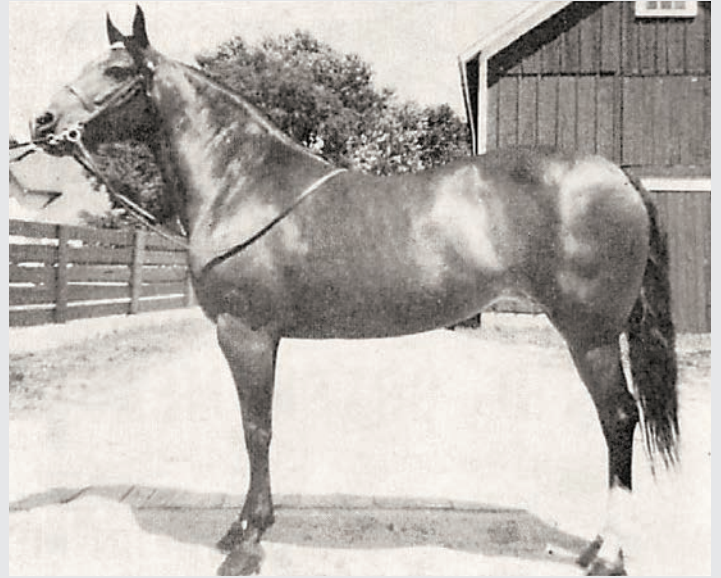
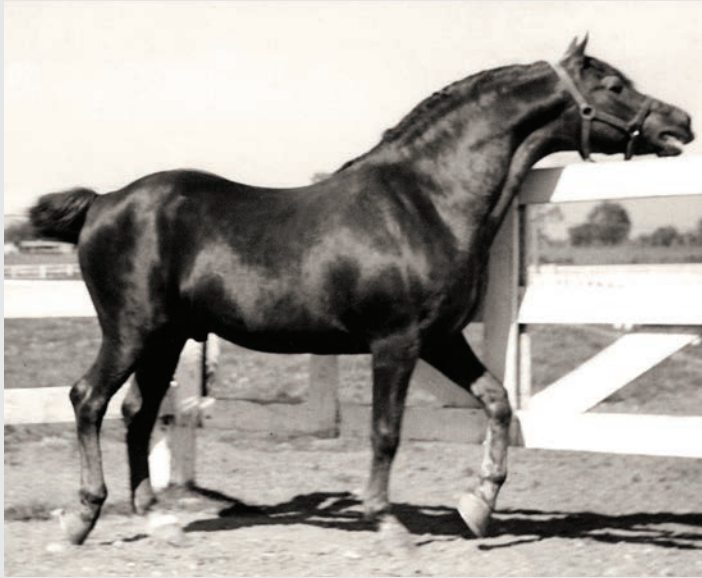


ones was a risky and unpredictable business. Parker shot hundreds of them and soon realized that he needed to domesticate the cattle to efficiently supply his growing trade with merchant ships. Knowing that there was no one on the Island with the skills needed for the job, he sent to California for three vaqueros in 1823. These men were called Espanols, a term that sounded like “*paniols*” to the locals, and that became the Hawaiian word for cowboy. The first job of the vaqueros was to catch and break the wild horses and then capture the feral cattle. At the same time they were teaching

the skills and traditions of the California mounted stockman to the Hawaiians. Soon the young *paniols* were riding, roping, branding, and herding cattle. They learned to make their own equipment including braided horsehair bridles and leather quirts, lariats and saddles. Over time, they developed into some of the best cowboys in the world. To this day the working methods, lingo, equipment, and clothing of the *paniolo* are steeped in the vaquero tradition. Small wonder if their taste in horseflesh was shaped by the proud, agile, colorful mounts preferred by the Californios.

**ABOVE:** Morgan stallions were imported from the mainland to breed the ranch’s broodmares. Eventually many of those broodmares would carry Morgan blood and new stallions would be imported to perpetuate the blood into future generations.

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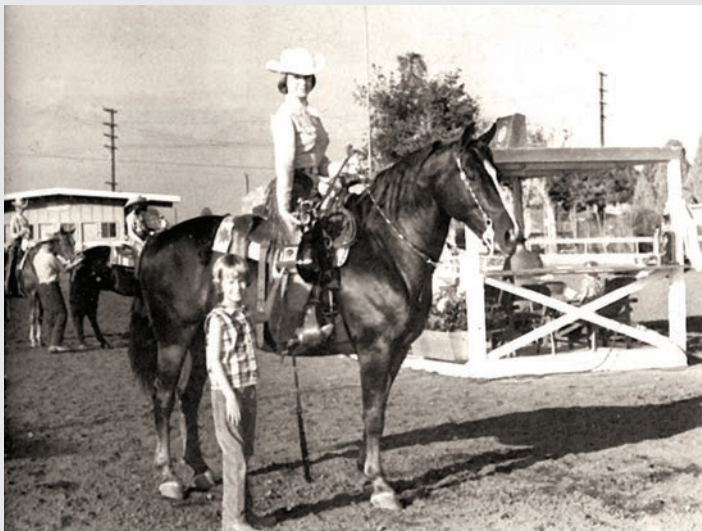


ABOVE: Sonfield (Mansfield x Quietude), age 25; Memphis Belle (Blackman x Belle McClure).

In 1847, the Parker Ranch was officially established and by 1859 there were about 12,000 wild cattle and 8,000 tame ones, as well as about 1,200 horses on the range. The ranch grew and prospered until John Parker died in 1868. None of his heirs took a practical interest in the operation of the ranch and it gradually went into decline. In 1899, in an attempt to save the family fortune and the ranch, a manager was hired and made guardian to the heir, a fatherless five-year-old girl named Thelma Parker. Alfred Wellington Carter was a successful Honolulu born businessman who for 50 years was the brain, heart, and soul of the Parker Ranch. Carter was largely responsible for building the Parker Ranch into one of the great American ranches. Among his first priorities was repairing the physical plant and upgrading the livestock. He began a series of trips to the mainland to select and purchase purebred

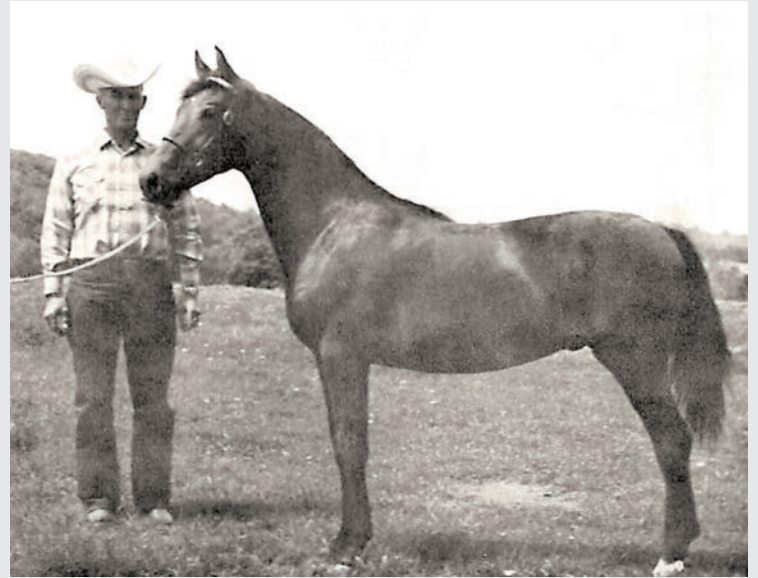
pigs, poultry, dairy cattle, beef cattle, as well as draft and light horse stallions. He wanted only the best and was known to pay up to \$50,000 for top breeding animals. One of his first purchases was a Percheron stud. Later he brought in Thoroughbreds, Standardbreds, Palominos, and Morgans.

Alfred Carter's name appears on the transfer record of the first Morgan stallion known to have been brought to the Parker Ranch. In the late 1930s, Carter's search for a top cow horse sire brought him to the California cattle ranch of Roland Hill, where he purchased the herd sire, Querido. Hill had acquired Querido (Bennington x Artemisia) from the US Government Farm as a yearling, in 1924, to cross with his band of Sellman Ranch mares. But now Hill was looking for a new stallion. Although he was well pleased with the get of the 14-year-old stud, he had so many



ABOVE: Ramona Warrior (Otto McClure x Jipsey Allen) and Robin Roth in 1965; Ramona Brave (Otto McClure x Jean Mary) (photo © Gorja Axt).

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**ABOVE:** Waer's Don Juan (Rex's Major Monte x Belle Romanesque) with Frank Waer; Windcrest Yankee (Upwey Ben Don x Belle McLinsley), as a yearling, with Neal Silver.

Querido daughters in his brood mare band that he needed new blood. In 1939, after trying several stallions, Hill finally settled on another Government stallion, Sonfield (Mansfield x Quietude). Today the Sellman/Querido/Sonfield cross is one of the major branches of the Western working family. Querido left 149 registered get on the mainland before he was shipped to Hawaii in 1937.

Alfred Carter retired as Parker Ranch manager in 1937, but he continued to work with his son, Hartwell, who took over from him. The Carters must have been well-pleased with Querido because they returned to the mainland in 1944 and purchased another Morgan stallion. This time it was Linsley Romanesque (Romanesque x Jypsy L by Linsley). He was a foal of 1939 and had been bred by Elmer Brown in Kansas, but was owned by E. O. McClure of Santa Anna, California, at the time of his purchase

by the Parker Ranch. Linsley Romanesque was a royally bred working Western stallion, but he left only one Morgan offspring, Belle McClure (out of Linsley Belle by Linsley). She produced eight foals, including Memphis Belle, Otto McClure, and three with the Shawalla prefix, who can be found in both Eastern and Western Morgan pedigrees today.

Two Belle McClure (Linsley Romanesque x Linsley Belle) daughters were sold to Windcrest Farm in Vermont and used in their breeding program. They were Belle Gales (x Monterey) and Belle McLinsley (x Blackman) who was the dam of Windcrest Yankee, sire of 32 get. Another daughter, Belle Romanesque (x Blackman) was the dam of Waer's Don Juan (x Rex's Major Monte), sire of 82.

In 1957, the Parker Ranch returned again to California and bought two more Western working Morgan stallions, Otto



**ABOVE:** Chachita (Memphis Beau Brummell x Cruz) and her filly by Waer's Play Boy; Shawalla Buck (Memphis Beau Brummell x Bettina Allen).



ABOVE: Francis Tito (Harold Roberts x Francis Lizita); Mont Francis Claire Triton (Pecoson x Francis Lizita) and Steve Elfers in 1994 (photo © Rick Osteen).

McClure and Memphis Beau Brummell. Both were bred by E. W. Roberts on his ranch in San Diego County and sold by him to the Parker Ranch. Both left a lasting legacy to the Morgan breed in their brief careers at stud in California. Otto McClure (Red Gates x Belle McClure by Linsley Romanesque) was a chestnut foal of 1951 and sired just four Morgans before he went to Hawaii. Two of his sons were breeding stallions for Marjorie Hazelwood in California. They were Ramona Warrior (out of Jipsy Allen by Tehachapi Allen) who sired 12 and Ramona Brave (out of Jean Mary by Monterey) who sired 27, including Richwood Morgan and Richwood Bravado. The get of these two crossed with Farceur Morgan blood was the foundation of the Hazelwood working Western program.

Memphis Beau Brummell (Sparbeau x Memphis Belle by Blackman) was a bay colt foaled in 1952. His dam was out of Belle McClure, the daughter of Linsley Romanesque mentioned above. Beau Brummell sired only three Morgans before he was sold to Hawaii, but one of them was Shawalla Buck, who was a major herd sire for the Shawalla Ranch in Washington State and sired 170 registered Morgans. Another was the mare Chachita (out of Cruz by Blackman). She was a bay foal of 1958, bred by Glen and Sophie Francis in California. Like her sire, she produced only three. One of them was Francis Lizita (by Waer's Playboy) who was the dam of Francis Tito, foundation sire for Dorothy Hallock's Antigua Morgans in Arizona. Francis Lizita was also the dam of Steve Elfer's good reining mare, Mont Francis Claire. Another son of Chachita was Ditto Red (by Harold Roberts). He was a bay colt of 1963, bred by Glen and Sophie Francis and sold by them to the Parker Ranch in 1967. Ditto Red was the last Morgan to go to the Parker Ranch. He left two Morgan foals which did not breed on, which is a shame since they were classically bred California working Western horses.

Since Otto McClure was a grandson, Memphis Beau Brummell a great-grandson and Ditto Red a great, great-grandson of Linsley Romanesque, it appears that the Parker Ranch may have been attempting to line breed their cow horses. These stallions were the

flower of the Western working family. Their ancestors had been bred to work cattle since the 1880s and it is understandable that the Parker Ranch used them to upgrade their cow horses. It seems likely that, in the 30 years the Parker Ranch pumped Morgan blood into their remuda, they had developed a line of handsome, useful cow horses uniquely suited to their needs. Since they didn't import Morgan mares, the Parker Ranch never produced registered Morgans.

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The Morgan era at the Parker Ranch came to an end in the early 1970s when a mainland management company was hired to run the Ranch. New people were brought in and they decided to go to Quarter Horses. By 1978, six Quarter Horse stallions had been purchased to run with the mares. The new livestock manager admitted that the *paniolos* preferred their Morgan bred cow ponies, but felt that modernization of the horse breeding program was necessary. Still, unless they have since imported QH mares, the Parker Ranch *paniolos* may still be working cattle on horses with a lot of Morgan blood in them. ■

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