

CHAPTER TWO

AMERICAN BEGINNINGS

It should be noted that the trotting gait is natural to most horses whereas maintaining the gait at speed is not. Therefore the evolution of a breed that can do so comes through a combination of breeding and training. The American standardbred has evolved through a patchwork of purposeful cross breeding.



THE DARLEY ARABIAN

The thoroughbred horse originated in Great Britain in the eighteenth century following the importation of three stallions from the Middle East. While the speedier Arabian horses had been imported since the time of the crusades and bred to the stronger local mares, predominantly Scottish Galloways, these three sires were to have a significant and enduring impact. Although none themselves raced, they sired faster and stronger horses that could carry weight over greater distances and their progeny soon eclipsed all others in the fledgling sport of turf racing. These three stallions were the Darley Arabian, the Godolphin Arabian and the Byerley Turk.

Thoroughbred origins

The Byerley Turk sireline, through his son Herod, descended to Diomed, winner of the first English Derby in 1780. Diomed was exported to America where his descendants, Duroc, Sir Archy, Lexington and Justin Morgan had a significant impact upon both the thoroughbred and standardbred.

The Godolphin Arabian sireline relies mainly upon his grandson Matchem whose progeny were noted for their speed. His most famous is Man O'War, beaten only once in his career and voted by *The Blood Horse* magazine as *Horse of the Century*. The Godolphin Arabian sireline also bred through to the influential French trotting sire Fuschia.

Both the Byerley Turk and the Godolphin Arabian lines have their greatest success on the maternal side of the modern thoroughbred, while ninety five percent descended from the Darley Arabian.

TABLE 2.1 FOUNDATION SIRELINES

BYERLEY TURK (1724)

Herod

Diomed

GODOLPHIN ARABIAN (1724)

Cade

Matchem

DARLEY ARABIAN (1680)

1. Bartletts Childers (1716)

2. Squirt

3. Marske

4. ECLIPSE (1764)

1. Flying Childers (1714)

2. Blaze

3. Sampson

4. Engineer

5. Mambrino

6. MESSENGER (1780)

7. Mambrino

8. Abdallah 1

9. HAMBLETONIAN 10

Most modern thoroughbreds descend through Bartlett's Childers, who was a failure on the racetrack but sired one of the most famous racehorses and sires of all time in Eclipse. This line produced the champion sire St Simon, the undefeated Ribot and hundreds of Classic Winners. The descendants of Flying Childers, undefeated champion racehorse of his time, did not breed on or make any significant impact on the thoroughbred sireline. His fame is immortalised through his grandson Messenger, founder of the standardbred.

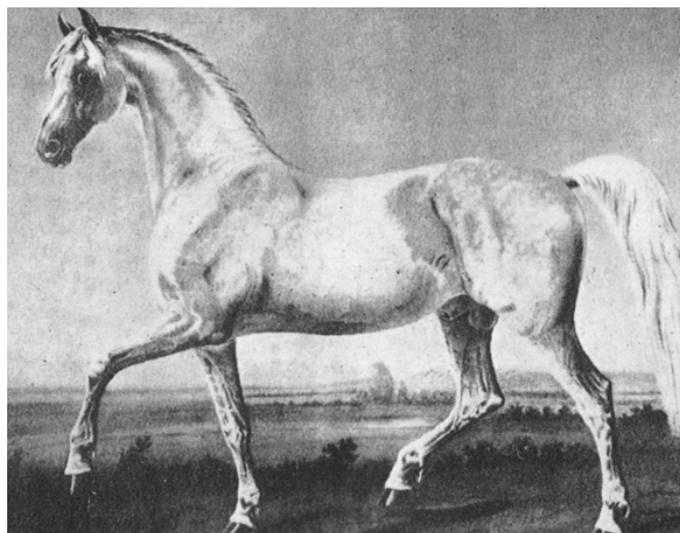
Messenger

In a limited race career in England, the grey Messenger won eight of fourteen starts with seven of these wins being match races against quality horses of his day. Exported to America in 1788 he had success as a sire of celebrated race horses with seven of his sons being among the best race horses of the time. But his impact was not significant when compared to his contemporary, Diomed. However, Messenger was the maternal sire of the undefeated American Eclipse who also appears in the maternal pedigree of both Man O'War and Seabiscuit.

The majority of mares sent to Messenger had short breeding, or were used for light harness work. While their progeny excelled beyond expectations on the race track, none gained distinction on the trotting track. This can in some measure be explained by the fact that they predated organised racing. They did, however, display speed and gameness in impromptu road races.

This extraordinary propensity to produce strong performers from ordinary mares rapidly gained him a reputation as the premium sire of trotters. Consequently, as a sire of both gaits, Messenger has no parallel in breeding history. The significance

of his contribution to the standardbred became evident two and three generations later, particularly when duplicated through sire and maternal lines.



MESSENGER

Trotting heredity

A closer look at the pedigree of Messenger shows that his ancestors had shown a propensity to trot for at least four generations. Blaze, the great grandsire of Messenger sired Shales, the foundation sire of the Norfolk Trotter. Messenger's sire Mambrino, was an excellent racehorse and winner of ten of his fourteen races, many over four miles. While he was a failure at stud, it was claimed that he could trot fourteen miles in an hour. This is supported by the fact that he earned a reputation in England as a sire of top harness horses for road work.

It should also be noted that Messenger, as well as being a direct male line descendant of the Darley Arabian, also carried crosses of the Byerley Turk while his dam was inbred to the Godolphin Arabian on both sirelines.

By far his most famous son was Mambrino, who provided the direct male line through Abdallah 1 to both Mambrino Chief 11 and the greatest ever standardbred progenitor, Hambletonian 10, the focus of the next chapter.

While the Messenger line overpowered all others in the evolution of the standardbred, there were other breeds that contributed to their development. Although these are now relegated to the large and varied maternal ancestries, they do warrant mention.

Maternal families

Although not recorded in their pedigrees, it is almost certain that the patchwork of early maternal families of the standardbred included a mixture of the following breeds.

The Spanish horses

During the Spanish Conquest of America, horses were integral to the military offensive against the Aztecs. Spain was regarded, at the time, as the world's premium producer of fine horses and it is likely the imports were well bred. There are records of them being used for racing among the cavalry in Mexico before they were abandoned to run wild and create the American prairie horse.

The Friesians

This trotter is one of the earliest known and traces to Roman origins. It was adopted by the Dutch who refined the breed with Arabian blood during the Crusades. The horses were used for work purposes and accompanied the Dutch settlers to America.

The Narranganset pacers

These pacers from England arrived in America courtesy of a shipwrecked cargo bound for the West Indies. Most likely Scottish Galloways, their American name derives from the bay where they swam ashore. As natural pacers they became popular as saddle horses and were used for racing under saddle in the latter half of the eighteenth century. They were extinct by 1830 and their place

as a means of transport was taken over by the Canadian horse.

The Canadian horse

Initially imported from France, these animals were adapted to both saddle and harness work. The first sire to gain recognition was Copperbottom, a natural pacer that was exported to Kentucky. Although bred widely, his sireline failed to breed on.

Non Messenger sirelines

Among other families of this evolutionary period were a number of stallions that rose briefly to prominence, only to disappear under the dominance of Messenger and his descendants. The maternal families of the standardbred owe much of their success to these non-Messenger influences. These included the Hals, the Copperbottoms and the Hiatogas whose influence was so short lived that they do not warrant further discussion here. Eight sirelines, however, made significant and lasting contributions. Each of these is analysed with tables indicating sires producing five or more Classic Progeny.

Reading the tables

The sireline tables are shaded in blue and follow the same structure throughout the book. Each stallion is preceded by a number indicating the generations removed from the foundation sire. In some instances where there is more than one sire with the same name the sire registration number is added after the name. The letter (NS) means that the sire was non standard and not included in the sires register.

For inclusion on the tables in this chapter, sires will need to have five or more Classic Progeny, unless they are included simply to signify the demise of a sireline.

In later chapters this figure will be increased to thirty, then fifty, Classic Progeny so that tables remain a manageable size.

Those sires exported from America into Australia, New Zealand or Europe are followed by a letter (A,N,E respectively) indicating this fact. Where a stallion has operated as a sire in more than one country an asterix will also be added. In all such cases the number of Classic Progeny shown will indicate only the progeny foaled in the country under discussion.

The Morgan Horse

For a lengthy period during the nineteenth century, the Morgan horse was the most respected and widely spread harness horse family in America. The foundation sire, Figure, was foaled in New England from an obscure, mostly thoroughbred, background that has been the subject of continued dispute. He was later known, and registered, by his owner's name of Justin Morgan.

TABLE 2.2 THE MORGAN SIRELINE.

	Classic Progeny
Justin Morgan (NS)	
Sherman Morgan (NS)	
1. Black Hawk 5	83
2. Black Flying Cloud 378	2
2. Ethan Allen 43	28
3. Daniel Lambert 102	36
4. Aristos 771	8
3. Honest Allen	8
2. Flying Cloud 134	13
3. Star of the West	6
4. Joe Young	5

His descendants were regarded as courageous and fast. They were remarkable in the uniformity of type that was transmitted by both sires and dams.

Twelve sons of Justin Morgan were stallions but only Sherman Morgan, bred on through Black Hawk 5 who was the first sire in the land to have three performers in the 2:30 list. His greatest fame remains as the sire of USTA Hall of Fame immortal, Ethan Allen 43.

Ethan Allen



With his T2:28 in 1858, the four year old Ethan Allen became the first horse to take a record in under T2:30. He later lowered this to T2:25½ in a career of race victories that saw him become the celebrity horse of the nation. This included nineteen wins in less than T2:40, a great achievement for these times.

Ethan Allen 43 was inbred 3x3 to Justin Morgan, a constant theme among the successful Morgan descendants, especially to Ethan Allen himself. In the first published 2:30 list Ethan Allen was in fourth position among the sires, only one behind Pilot Jr. 12 and Volunteer 55. Hambletonian 10 topped the list with fourteen progeny. The Morgan sireline finally succumbed to that of Hambletonian 10 and his sons but their place in the history of the standardbred was secured through their role in developing the breed's maternal identity.

Black Flying Cloud, one of the favored sires of trotters in the mid west for many years, is

fascinating because of his breeding. He was incestuously inbred to Black Hawk 5 while his grand dam Poll was by Hambletonian 2, incestuously inbred to Messenger.

The Clays

The foundation sire of this line, Grand Bashaw, was a Barb imported from Tripoli in 1820. His first crop included Young Bashaw from Pearl, an outstanding thoroughbred race mare of the time whose grand dam was by Messenger. He was an outstanding natural trotter and in turn sired Andrew Jackson 4, who was superior on the track to any other stallion of his day.

As an entire, [Andrew Jackson 4](#) won national fame as the greatest racing stallion of his time. He produced three outstanding sons but, as the table indicates, only two bred on.

The first, [Black Hawk 24](#), was noted for his ability to pull heavy loads in races and in one such race defeated the famous mare Jenny Lind. He produced thirty eight Classic Progeny but died at the age of thirteen and his branch of the line was extinct within four generations.

The second son, and greatest of the Clay family sires, was Henry Clay 8. He was never raced but produced Cassius M Clay 18. He extended the sire line through his sons and grandsons with the best considered to be [American Clay](#). Their gait was said to be 'free going' and between the long-striding Messengers and the short-stepping Morgans.

The Clay sireline was initially a formidable rival to Hambletonian 10, but many of them died young before they could develop extensive siring lines while others were branded as quitters and ignored. Bashaw 50 moved west where his daughters proved successful.

TABLE 2.3 THE CLAY SIRELINE

	Classic Progeny
Grand Bashaw (thor)	
1. Young Bashaw	4
2. Andrew Jackson 4	7
3. Black Hawk 24	38
4. Jupiter	14
4. Mohawk	3
5. Elmo	9
4. Vernols Black Hawk (NS)	3
5. Bashaw 50	30
3. Henry Clay 8	12
4. Cassius M Clay 18	17
5. Cassius M Clay Jr 20	14
6. Clay Pilot	3
7. The Moor	14
8. Sultan	30
9. Stamboul	22
6. Harry Clay 45	31
5. Cassius M Clay Jr 22	53
6. American Clay 34	54
7. Magic	7
6. Crittenden	12
7. Chatterton	7
6. Durango	8
6. Kentucky Clay	13
5. George M Patchen	30
6. George M Patchen Jr	27
6. Godfrey Pachen	9
6. Hamlin Patchen	15

The daughters of the Clay sireline excelled, producing early World Champions such as St Julien T2:11¼ and Sunol T2:08¼, fastest two year old and three year old of his year and Hall of Fame immortal.

The Chiefs

[Mambrino Chief 11](#), the greatest sire rival to Hambletonian 10, also descended from the same grandsire, Messenger. The career of Mambrino Chief is recounted more fully in the next chapter.

Mambrino Chief sired only six progeny in 2:30, and as Table 2.4 shows, his sire line was short lived. This was mainly due to the supremacy of the sons of Hambletonian 10. They, above all others, possessed the ability to transmit speed consistently.

The daughters of Mambrino Chief, however, were superior to those of Hambletonian 10 in both racing performance and enduring maternal lines.

His daughter Lady Thorn set the world record of T2:18¼ for mares in 1869. She won one hundred and six heats in T2:30 or less, was the only horse to defeat the champion Dexter and also downed Goldsmith Maid on all six occasions that they met. The careers of Dexter and Goldsmith Maid are discussed later.

Mambrino Chief is also sire of foundation mare Jessie Pepper. Her family was the leading two minute producer when this time was regarded as the benchmark of success. The family is currently third on the 1:50 performers list. Other champion stallions from Mambrino Chief mares are; Director, Onward, Red Wilkes, Almont and Childe Harold. The latter had a huge impact as a sire in Australia with one hundred and sixteen Classic Progeny.

The sons of Mambrino Chief were also noted maternal sires. [Mambrino Patchen](#) produced the premier mares of his day, including among them Alma Mater, dam of eight Classic Progeny including six in 2:30 as well as three sire sons.

TABLE 2.4 THE MAMBRINO CHIEF SIRELINE

	Classic Progeny
1. Mambrino Chief 11	119
2. Alcalde	16
2. Ashland	14
2. Ashland Chief	11
2. Bourbon Chief	9
2. Brignoli	16
2. Brown Chief	7
2. Clark Chief	43
3. Kentucky Prince	50
4. Dexter Prince	15
2. Ericsson 130	21
2. Idol 177	18
2. Mambrino Chief Jr	11
2. Mambrino Patchen	134
3. Doctor Herr	12
3. Homer	10
3. Mambrino 1789	8
3. Mambrino Boy	19
3. Mambrino King	72
4. Elyria	14
4. Heir at Law	12
4. Prince Regent	7
3. Mambrino Time	13
2. Mambrino Pilot 29	25
3. Caliban	9
4. CF Clay	17
3. Mambrino Gift	8
2. Mambrino Star	6
2. Woodford Mambrino	46
3. Abbotsford	5
4. Poindexter	8
3. Mambrino Russell	16
3. Pancoast	12
3. Princeps	48
3. Princeton	11

The Stars

There is also controversy surrounding the breeding of [American Star 14](#). Wallace claims his sireline descends from the Byerley Turk through Diomed and Stockholms American Star while Joseph Battell claims descent from the Byerley Turk through Justin Morgan and Coburns American Star. His trotting ability most probably derives from Messenger on his maternal side. Despite being lightly framed, the greatest attributes of his descendants were gameness and determination.

TABLE 2.5 THE AMERICAN STAR SIRELINE

	Classic Progeny
1. American Star 14	70
2. American Star 37	12
2. American Star Jr	4
2. Magnolia 68	5

Of his seventy Classic Progeny, sixty five were mares. The same theme recurred with his sons, explaining why the line was short lived. They did, however, make a significant contribution to the maternal side of the standardbred. American Star sired only four Standard Performers and his sons added a further eight while his daughters accounted for forty nine in the 2:30 list.

The golden cross of the age was Hambletonian 10 over American Star mares. The most famous were Dictator, the founder of a significant sire line, and the World Champion trotter Dexter T2:17¼.

[Dexter](#) won fifty races and bettered T2:30 in eighty seven heats. He sired the dual gaited World Champion Jay Eye See, the first horse to trot in T2:10.

The Morse Horse

[Morse Horse 6](#) was sired by an imported French thoroughbred from a daughter of Hambletonian 2.

He was a fast natural trotter and defeated Black Hawk 5 in a heat in T2:52½ in 1847.

TABLE 2.6 THE MORSE HORSE SIRELINE

	Classic Progeny
1. Morse Horse 6	5
2. Norman 25	31
3. Blackwood 74	27
4. Blackwood Jr	6
3. Swigert	16

He produced only one Standard Performer, a leading trotter of the day in Grey Eddie, plus General Taylor who held the world record for thirty miles in under two hours. Both were geldings.

His greatest siring son was [Norman 25](#) but his sire line was short lived and did not see out the century. His only contribution to the breed was as foundation sire to three outstanding mares; the dam of Lark (U76) whose descendants produced forty one Classic Winners, Sarah Robinson (U85) with fifty three Classic Winners, including the sire Florlis, and Lula T2:15.0 (U82), great rival of Goldsmith Maid. Her branch of the family produced twenty four Classic Winners including U Scott and Boyden Hanover.

The Pilots

The most famous of the Canadian horses was Pilot, also a pacer and therefore less respected at the time. His standardbred son [Pilot Jr 12](#) was from a thoroughbred dam but, after an unsuccessful galloping career, was trained as a trotter. He imparted this gait to most of his progeny. His reputation at stud was immediate with eight 2:30 performers foaled before 1860.

As Table 2.7 shows, he failed to establish a sire line and would have passed into obscurity but for his role as the foundation sire of three famous maternal

families; Midnight, Miss Russell and Flora plus the sub-family of Kathleen.

TABLE 2.7 THE PILOT SIRELINE

	Classic Progeny
Old Pilot (NS)	
1. Pilot Jr 12	50
2. Bayard 53	24
2. Clifton Pilot	7
2. Pilot Mambrino	4
2. Roscoe	5
3. Roscoe Jr.	4
2. Tattler	11
3. Indianapolis	9
2. Woodburn Pilot	4

The most famous progeny of Midnight was Jay Eye See while others close up are; Emily Ellen (1907) T2:09¼ and her sons Harvest Tide (1914) and Lee Tide (1918) T2:05, sire of the champion Spencer.

Miss Russell produced the World Champion mare Maud S (1874) T2:08¾ and leading sire Nutwood 600. Other champions from her family include Lee Worthy (1919) T2:02½.

Other Pilot Jr mares included Kathleen, grandam of [Extasy](#) whose descendants include Hambletonian winner McLin Hanover T1:59¼, USA Harness Horse of the Year Stenographer (1951) T1:59.1TT, and Little Brown Jug winner Good Time (1946) 1:57.4.

The Blue Bulls

Wilson's [Blue Bull 75](#) gained a reputation as one of the great sires of his day with many of his progeny competing on the Grand Circuit. In 1884, four years after his demise, his forty Standard Performers outnumbered those by Hambletonian 10 by two. For that year he dethroned his rival as the leading sire of America.

TABLE 2.8 THE BLUE BULL SIRELINE

	Classic Progeny
Merrings Blue Bull	
1. Prudens Blue Bull	
2. Blue Bull 75	62
3. Blue Bull Jr 2878	2
3. Blue Vein 5466	2
3. Jim Wilson	6
3. Kimo	3
3. Little Wonder	5
3. Prompter	5
3. St Omer	2

Not only did Blue Bull finish with sixteen more Standard Performers than Hambletonian 10, but he also produced more and faster horses in the 2:20 list. And all this was achieved from far fewer foals. The problem, however, was that although he had forty nine sons that entered the stallion register and thirteen that contributed to the breed, the sire line did not survive the nineteenth century.

The great downfall of Blue Bull was that he was a natural pacer, as were his progeny, and this gait was resisted in a time when the trotting gait was far more highly favored. His sire line was extinct by the end of the century and his only contribution beyond that is in the maternal line of Lady W through his son Kimo. It is remarkable that, almost fifty years after his birth, he was still twenty third on the all time broodmare sires Standard Performers list. (Refer to Table 3.6 in the next chapter).

The Tom Hals

The original Tom Hal was a Canadian Horse. His grandson Kittrells Tom Hal was exported to Tennessee around 1850 and earned eternal fame as the grandsire of both Little Brown Jug and the first ever standardbred to enter the two minute list, Star Pointer (1:59¼TT). Although Star Pointer won

twenty two of his thirty two races, he proved a failure at stud and his sire line was soon extinct.

TABLE 2.9 THE HAL SIRE LINE

	Classic Progeny
Boswells Tom Hal	
1. Bald Stockings (NS)	10
2. Sorrel Tom (NS)	3
3. Tom Hal 3000	10
2. Kittrels Tom Hal (NS)	8
3. Tom Hal Jr	19
4. Brown Hal	43
5. Argot Hal	21
5. Hal Dillard	11
6. Hal B	13
5. Hal Mercury	6
5. Star Pointer	9

The Kentucky Hunters

This thoroughbred line produced Edwin Forrest 49 who was a popular and successful sire prior to the arrival of Hambletonian 10. His sire line failed to breed on and his only contribution is on the maternal side of the pedigree. His single credit was World Champion So So (T2:17¼) who won the Kentucky in 1875 and was the first two year old trotter to better T2:40 in a race.

TABLE 2.10 THE KENTUCKY HUNTER SIRE LINE

	Classic Progeny
Kentucky Hunter	7
Bay Kentucky Hunter	2
1. Edwin Forrest 49	48
2. Joe Downing 710	22

Hambletonian 2

[Hambletonian 2](#) was incestuously inbred to Messenger with both his sire and dam being by that horse. He was a prominent early sire with twenty two Classic Progeny, all but one being mares. His

only son sired the dam of foundation mare Miss Copeland (U12) while he himself sired the fourth dam of the great foundation mare Minnehaha (U2).

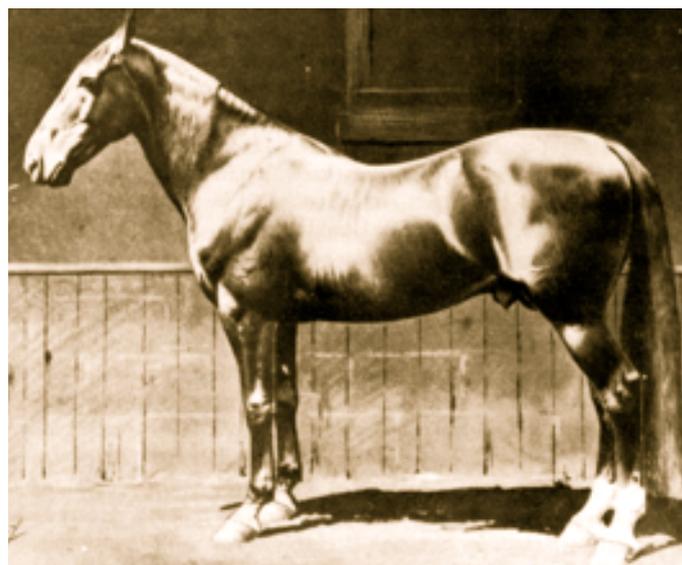


TABLE 2.11 THE HAMBLETONIAN 2 SIRELINE

	Classic Progeny
Messenger (thor)	43
Bishops Hambletonian (thor)	13
1. Hambletonian 2	22

The Royal Georges

This sire line originated in Canada with the first registered standardbred foaled in 1842. It produced eleven registered stallions, the standout being Toronto Chief, but was extinct within two decades and had no lasting impact.

TABLE 2.12 THE ROYAL GEORGE SIRELINE

	Classic Progeny
Tippoo	
Black Warrior	
1. Royal George 9	10
2. Toronto Chief 85	17
2. Royal George 83	8