



2015 ICHO GAZETTE

International Curly Horse Organization

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www.ichocurlyhorses.org

SPRING GAZETTE 2015

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Happy Spring ICHO members and friends! I would like to introduce the spring gazette with an important Curly Gene Research message from Bunny Reveglia: "The Curly genes research is continuing through ICHO and Dr Cothran, and after much study, with some surprises too, there is a need for more research money to continue the Curly genes isolation project. No report is yet available and Dr Cothran is working on that once we get more research funded. It is very exciting!

I think everyone would love to know what genes make our Curlies curly coated, we are on the right track and need more research testing as it is crucial to know the rest of the genetic story. ICHO and Dr Cothran have covered the cost of this genetic research up until now, we are asking for additional donation help. Our target is \$3500.00 Please help—

http://www.ichocurlyhorses.com/store/p67/Research_Gene%2Fs_Isolation.html

Your donation is tax deductible, just print your copy of your receipt. Thanks for your help! We are so close now to knowing the mystery of the curly coat! "Thank you, Bunny.

On another note, ICHO is interested in your opinion about having an annual "Curly Gathering" of sorts. It would be for ALL persons interested in Curlies, regardless of belonging to a particular registry, group, or belonging to none at all! It could be a single, large, centrally located gathering, perhaps inviting vendors, clinicians, having an inspection, a horse show, registries/groups could hold their annual meetings for their members separately, and most importantly, those who love Curlies could have the opportunity to meet others who share their Curly passion! This type of gathering, would be like a "Curly Congress" where all things Curly would be welcome to attend and share.

It would take considerable planning, help from many, and probably not held as soon as this year, but maybe 2016? It's exciting to think of the potential! Please send us your response and ideas to the ICHO address above, or see us on FB! Sincerely,
Joanie Henning, ICHO President, and Babydoll



Congratulations !

ICHO 2014 Award Winners and Champions!



GAZETTE AD DEADLINE

We now have a new Gazette ad deadline schedule for submitting ads as follows:

WINTER: Dec 15

SPRING: Mar 15

SUMMER: June 15

FALL: Sept 15

Ads that are received after the deadline will be run in the next following issue. Payments must also be made before the deadline. All ads and payment must be sent to the office. Thanks!

ARTICLES- We are always looking for interesting articles for the Gazette. The article could be about training, health tips, an interesting story about a Curly or anything of interest horse related. Please send all articles to the office before the deadlines. Awaken the writer within you!



GAZETTE SCHEDULE

- ❄️ **WINTER February**
- 🌱 **SPRING May**
- ☀️ **SUMMER August**
- 🍂 **FALL November**

Submit Ads & Payment to: office@curlyhorses.org

Ad & Payment Deadlines:
[Winter Dec 15](#) [Spring Mar 15](#) [Summer Jun 15](#) [Fall Sep 15](#)

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

ICHO Annual Awards.....P. 4-7
Gaited Stallion Ads..... P. 8
The Gaited Curly Horse.....P. 9-12
Feature Farm, MO Foxtrotters.....P. 14-17
Curly Horse History by Karen Zierler...P.18-26
Curly Corner.....P. 27

ICHO now offers DNA testing for:

| | |
|------------------------------------------|----------------|
| <i>Ancestral only TX A&M</i> | \$25.00 |
| <i>Parentage Only U of KY</i> | \$30.00 |
| <i>Lp color TX A&M</i> | \$35.00 |
| <i>CA- (Cerebellar Abiotrophy)VetGen</i> | \$35.00 |

Visit the website for more info or contact the office.

To obtain a mailed copy of the Gazette, there is now a \$10.00 yearly fee. You can always view the Gazette online for free on our webpage— <http://ichocurlyhorses.org> in the Members Only section and print a copy for yourself.

Gazette Ad Specials!



Stallion Station Ad— only \$10.00 per issue, \$40.00 for the year, color ad.

Business Card Ad— only \$10.00 per issue, \$40.00 for the year, color ad

All color Ads at Black and White Prices! All Gaz Color Ad fees reduced!!

Full Page Color \$40.00, 1/2 Pg Color \$20.00, 1/4 Pg Color \$10.00, Classified \$10.00

Submitting ads: *Pay for ads online on our webpage— <http://ichocurlyhorses.org>

All ads must be copy ready in word doc format or jpg, png. Since we have reduced our prices we need the ads in ready to print format. For photos png is preferred since it has the best resolution. We can no longer accept pdf format because it does not insert clearly for the Gazette editing process.

All Ads must be sent to the office with payment. Ads also appear on the ICHO webpage.

Thanks! office@curlyhorses.org

Gazette editor— Joan Henning



www.curlyrescue.com



ICHO Feature Farm: MO Foxtrotters!

Morlin and Rebecca Oldham, UT



Kendahl D'Uva
RR Black Rose 402-D
Warriors Spiced Dunzule 1509-D

2014
AWARDS



Grand Champion Youth Rider
Sunny Martin Award

Curlies in Action- Trail Miles 12, Trail points 15
Training Pts 97.5, Event Pts Kendahl 160,
Event Pts Dunzule 100, Event Pts Rose 60
Accumulated: Trail Pts 249.5, Miles 211.5,
Events Kendahl 500, Rose 400, Training 417.5



Liz Mattke
DCC Traveler 142-D



2014
AWARDS
Grand Champion
Adult Eventing

BREED Promotion

awarded to~

**Dr Mitch
Wilkinson**

**2014
Award**



Adult Andrea Schaap Scholarship



Awarded to for 2014

Chrisinda Grant & Sheryl D'Uva

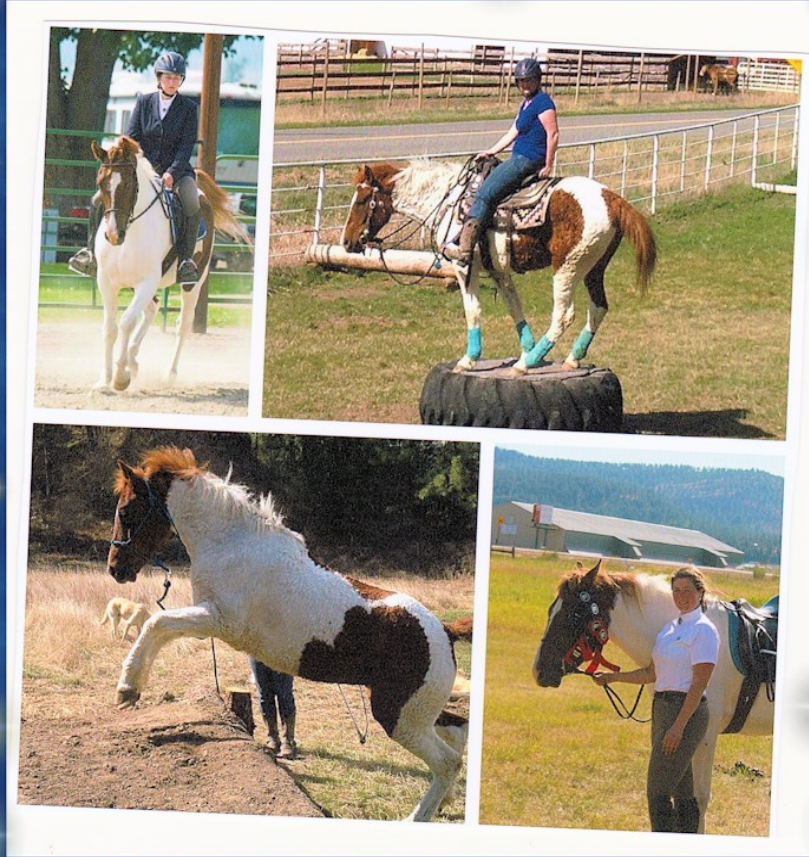


Chrisinda Grant & CNC Orion Stargazer 1239-D



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Grand Champion Adult Western Dressage
Grand Champion Adult Western
Reserve Champion Adult Amateur Eventing
Andrea Schaap Scholarship
Curlies in Action- Trail Miles 61, Trail Pts 300
Training Pts 502.5, Events- Chrislinda 420 Pts, Orion 420 Pts



MO Foxtrotter's Mane Man "ZGC Dallas"

"ZGC Dallas" is a 2006 dual registered dominant curly (ICHO 878-D) fox trotter (MFTHBA 06-89252). "Dallas" is a gorgeous dark chestnut with "medicine" spots. He stands over 15.2 hands and puts long legs and tons of reach on his foals. "Dallas" is tested homozygous for the gait gene and all his foals have smooth ground covering gaits! To date, "Dallas" has produced 70% curly foals when bred to straight haired mares. "Dallas" and his offspring have marcel wave curls and thick double manes and lots of tail! Dual registered curly fox trotters are rare-- about 150 in the world! We love "Dallas's" disposition-- not a mean bone in his body! One awesome boy! "Dallas" is standing in Utah for the 2015 season. Live cover only. STUD FEE: \$650.

MO Foxtrotters www.goldngaitfoxtrotters.com

Morlin & Becky Oldham
10551 South

Covered Bridge

Canyon Drive
Spanish Fork, UT

84660
801-873-3249 home
801-376-9352 cell
oldhambecky@yahoo.com



Look What "Dallas" is producing! **"MO Charm"** (PHOTO) Just Bragging!-- "MO Charm" is a dual registered curly (ICHO 1441-D) fox trotter (MFTHBA 10-96305) mare. "Charm" is a 2010 bay based grey mare that is absolutely gorgeous! She is one of the first year foals out of our stallion "ZGC Dallas". We love what "Dallas" is producing! Sweet, beautiful mare!

MO Foxtrotters 10551 South Covered Bridge Canyon Drive Spanish Fork, UT 84660

[801-873-3249](tel:8018733249) home [801-376-9352](tel:8013769352) cell Email: oldhambecky@yahoo.com

MO Foxtrotters: www.goldngaitfoxtrotters.com



MO Foxtrotters
New Arrivals Coming Spring 2015
(PHOTO)

We are expecting four foals out of our awesome mares starting the first part of April 2015! All the foals are sired by "ZGC Dallas" ! Check our website or contact us for updates availability! We are so excited!

MO Foxtrotters
Morlin & Becky Oldham
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Photo is of "MO Charm"-- ICHO 1441, MFTHBA 10-96305--- at one day old! Cuteness overload!!



**MO
Foxtrotters**



STUD PROSPECT FOR SALE: **"MO Foxfire"** is a 2014 curly (ICHO pending) fox trotter (MFTHBA). "Fox" is a dark chestnut with two white socks, flaxen mane and tail. "Fox" appears to have a sooty gene (inherited from his dam) as his mane is coming in a curly silver grey. This boy is gorgeous and will turn heads! "Fox" has great disposition, bloodlines (sired by "ZGC Dallas") gait, good bone, and conformation. Will mature around 15.2 hands. "Fox" will be a great stud prospect or awesome gelding. \$2,500.

MO Foxtrotters 10551 South Covered Bridge Canyon Drive Spanish Fork, UT 84660

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The Gaited Curly Horse

What could be better than a hypoallergenic Curly horse that also gives a smooth ride! The gaited Curly horse can do both. The soft gaits of a gaited Curly can be any of the intermediate 4 beat gaits that include the foxtrot, running walk, rack and stepping pace. The gaited Curly has been a popular horse for owners and breeders for years.

The Gaited Curly almost always traces back to Curly Jim and this line is often called the gaited Curly Jim line. Curly Jim is the foundation stallion of this line.

He was an unknown horse of unknown pedigree that arrived in Missouri from Tennessee. He was believed to be foaled in 1953. He was trained under saddle at 3 yrs old by Johnny Brooks of MO. Curly Jim looked like a foxtrotter and did a foxtrot gait.



Curly Jim- Unknown sorrel stallion.



Curly Jim was bred to mare called the Bradford Mare and the offspring, a mare named Blaze, who later produced the well known gaited Curly stallion Walker's Prince T.



Walker's Prince T widely used stallion.

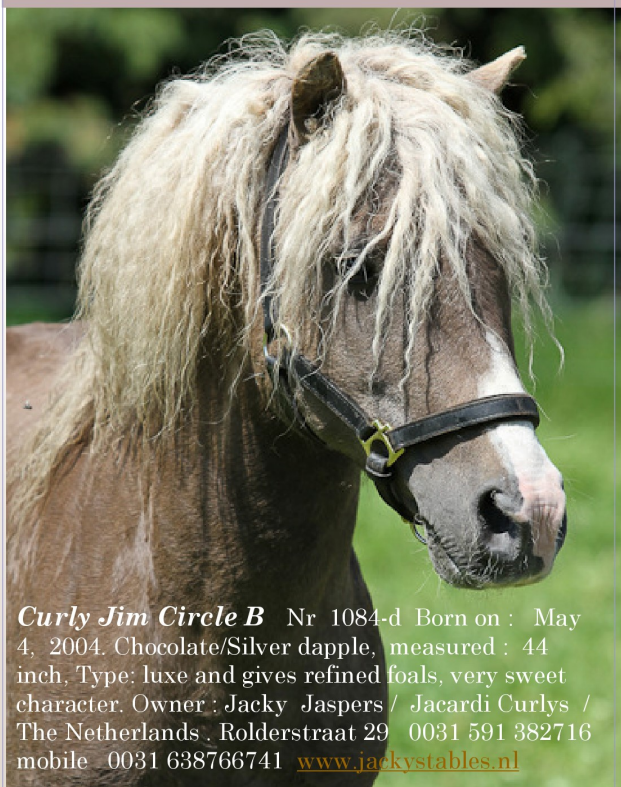
Walker's Prince T was a popular gaited Curly Stallion and was often used to breed with Missouri Fox-trotter mares which continues today. Many Gaited Curlies are also registered as MFTHBA horses as well as Curly registered.



Sir Patrick MJT, Curly gaited stallion also registered MFTHBA.

The Curly Jim line was also used in breeding some ponies by the McKay's, so many of the Curly ponies also carry Curly Jim line. This line of ponies is still being bred today and often to mini horses.

Jacardi Curlys / The Netherlands / Jacky Jaspers



Curly Jim Circle B Nr 1084-d Born on : May 4, 2004. Chocolate/Silver dapple, measured : 44 inch. Type: luxe and gives refined foals, very sweet character. Owner : Jacky Jaspers / Jacardi Curlys / The Netherlands . Rolderstraat 29 0031 591 382716 mobile 0031 638766741 www.jackystables.nl



The Curly Jim line is the only Curly line that does not seem to shed it's mane and tail. Some Curly Jim line may get a shorter mane in summer but not all.

The micro curly coat is also a coined term to describe some of the Curly coats this line has. A micro curly has a short nappy coat that looks more like fuzz than curls. But on close examination the hairs are very very tightly curled, but often short of ½ in or less. The Brillo Pad hair coat is also a coined term to describe a coarse extremely tight coat found in Curly Jim line. The hair is longer than the micro curl coat and is like tiny tight coarser pin curls. In the Curly hair studies, the Curly Jim line tested the coarsest and the curliest of all other Curly lines.



Kreskin- micro curled coat



Many Curly Jim line horses were also tested for the Gaited Gene- DMRT3, those showing a consistent soft gait were homozygous for DMRT3.

We may never know where Curly Jim came from but what we do know is he gave us a wonderful line of Gaited Curlies that have always been sought after and enjoyed by Curly lovers the world over. Thank you Curly Jim who ever you were, you have impacted the Curly horse for years to come!



Prince Charming T- Curly Jim line stallion from

the past.



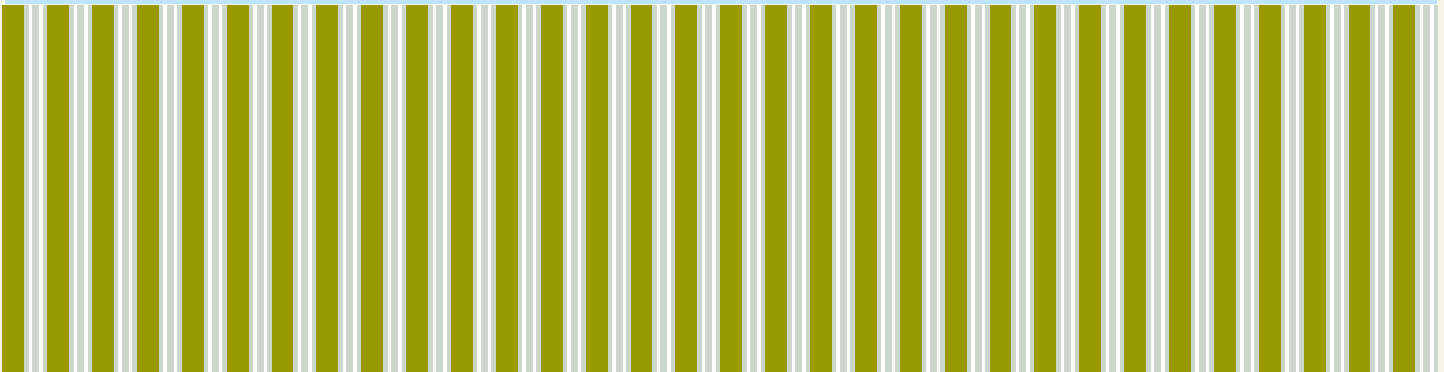
Charming Prince- a well known Curly Jim line stallion.

Below are two definitions from Wikipedia on the foxtrot and the ambling gait known as the "fox trot"....."a four-beat broken diagonal gait in which the front foot of the diagonal pair lands before the hind, eliminating the moment of suspension and increasing smoothness. Ambling is any of several four-beat intermediate horse gaits, all of which are faster than a walk but usually slower than a canter, exception is the high speed rack. They are smoother for a rider than either the two-beat Trot or pace and most can be sustained for relatively long periods of time, making them particularly desirable for trail riding and other tasks where a rider must spend long periods of time in the saddle."



Gaited Curlies

ROCK!



2015 SPRING GAZETTE FEATURE FARM:

MO FOXTROTTERS

MORLIN AND BECKY OLDHAM

SPANISH FORK, UTAH



“I think I was a great disappointment to my mother”

I was a horse crazy tomboy who made paper horses instead of paper dolls.... AND never outgrew being horse crazy! I saved up and bought my first horse when I was about 16 years of age. “Whampus Cat” was a little Appy mare that did an “Indian Shuffle”/ running walk. So I fell in love with gaited horses at an early age!

Luckily, I married a wonderful man who loves to HUNT (Big time!) and ride horses! He has been great in supporting my hobby/ habit! (He always asks—“Why can’t you have parakeets for a hobby?”) REALLY?

After owning several different breeds of horses over the years, I settled on Missouri Fox Trotters. I love that you can find any size, body type, and disposition within the breed. Because I trained (when I was younger), doctor, worm, and vaccinate my own horses, I wanted a horse that was easy to handle, people friendly (Our horses mob you!) and forgiving. AND the smooth ride! (I am old!) Missouri Fox Trotters were a great fit!

Over the past 20+ years I have “collected” some really nice straight haired fox trotter mares. I was putting on miles and spending a lot of time hauling my mares to outside stallions. Always on the lookout for the right stud, I found him in 2006 at Zion’s Gait Curlies aka Lisa Perry. “ZGC Dallas” was a few months old and still on his momma. I really liked the looks and breeding of “Dallas” and his dam--- so I purchased them both! (Thank-you Lisa!) This was the start of our dual registered dominant curly (ICHO) fox trotter (MFTHBA) program.

Right, a Dallas baby, MO Vegas Show Girl.

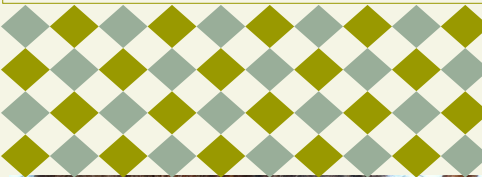


“ZGC Dallas”---ICHO 878-D, MFTHBA 06-89252, has matured into an awesome dark chestnut stallion! He is super easy to handle—I, by myself, breed him to the mares. “Dallas” is the right combination of heart and go, with a great disposition. He has an amazing smooth ground- covering gait. (He was tested homozygous for the gait gene) Because dual registered curly fox trotters are rare (About 150 in the world) most of the mares that “Dallas” is bred to are straight haired. “Dallas” is producing about 70% curly foals! All with great gait, conformation (long legs included) and disposition! Also this outcrossing of straight haired fox trotters to “Dallas” brings new bloodlines into the curly fox trotters.

When “Dallas’s” first curly palomino colt shed out his yearling year, dark spots were showing up. Because he was out in a large mountain pasture with his dam, I thought the spots were dirt or rub spots. More spots started showing up in patterns and similar size, even on his head! The curly palomino colt looked like a leopard Appaloosa! But I knew that this was a “Dallas” colt as I, myself, had bred his mom to “Dallas”!



Dallas as a foal, right, with his dam, Sassy, above and right.



Dallas curls!



After looking this up on the internet, I concluded that “Dallas” has “Bend Or” / “medicine spots”! Because “Dallas” is a dark chestnut with tons of curls, it was hard to see his spots! So this was “Icing on the cake”—“Dallas” puts medicine spots on his chestnut and palomino offspring!

I am especially excited about curly fox trotters because of their hypoallergenic properties. Since my five children have grown up, moved away and married, two have become more allergic to horses! Also, several of our grandchildren have negative reactions to horses. (What we do for our grandchildren! Don't you just love them!?) They have no reaction to my curly fox trotters!

It is so rewarding to introduce horse allergic people to our wonderful curly horses---- the joy and excitement they feel when they can include curly horses in their lives. One horse allergic gentleman even cried as he had his arms wrapped around “Dallas's” neck and he had no allergic reactions.

We as a family, mainly use our horses for trail riding and hunting. Our mature horse can be ridden, packed, and will haul out game. (DEAD stuff—most horses freak at the smell of blood). Some of our familys' fondest trips have been weeklong pack trips into the Wind Rivers, Wyoming mountain range. I think this is my favorite spot in the WORLD! It is such a blessing to be able to ride into places that would be hard to get to by foot. Miles of gorgeous mountains with valleys dotted with pristine lakes and meandering streams! Just amazing!

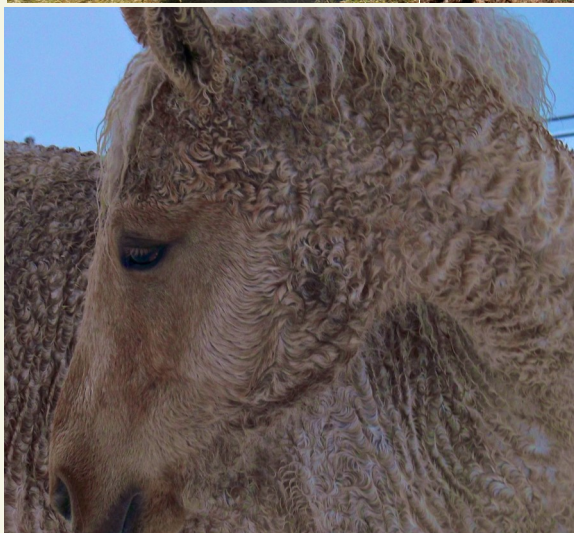
Below left, Dallas, gaited stallion and below right and next page is his lovely filly, MO Star Fire.





We live up Spanish Fork Canyon in the state of Utah, at 5,500 feet with mountain trails around us. This gives us an opportunity to ride our horses in the mountains all summer! Morlin, my hubby, uses our horses to ride and pack on deer and elk hunts from September to December. This puts good work and miles on them. We are excited for this summer as “Dallas” first foal crop will be 5 this summer! Ready to ride hard! Fun!

I thought fox trotters were the best ... until I added CURLY to my fox trotters! We love giving horse people the “curly bug” and now have a waiting list on some of our unborn curly foals! Yes--- CURLY FOX TROTTERS are the BEST! Love those curls! Becky Oldham



We are:

MO Foxtrotters

www.goldngaitfoxtrotters.com

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801-873-3249 (home) 801-376-9352 (cell)

The North American Curly Horse – Buffalo Pony to Modern Working Horse

by Karen Zierler

Curlies in History

The question: where did the North American Curly Horse come from, is still being debated today. In the early years, some ranchers/newspaper columnists believed that it was a native breed to North America related to the Russian Bashkir. One theory went that the Curly horse migrated over the Bering Strait and in very few numbers lived remotely throughout America. Then, when the Spanish and the settlers came, they released horses to run wild which then mixed with the native Curly population. And, thus, every once and a while, in the wild Mustang herds one could find a rare curly coated horse. Or, so it was initially thought. This theory, however, was called into question¹.

With modern research into the origins of the Curly Horse, it was discovered that curly horses existed in North America in the 1700's (The name Bashkir actually became linked due to a 1938 article, "The Evolution of the Horses," in which a Lokai horse showing curls was wrongly called a Bashkir.). Light could be shed on some of the mystery surrounding the Curly Horse by studying Indian Sioux Tribe records. Three records in particular provided new information on the Curly Horse, the sacred "Buffalo Hunting Pony."

The first record is a Lakota Winter Count. Each winter, the Lakota (a sub-tribe of the Sioux) recorded major events by writing (with symbols, like the Egyptians) on a large buffalo hide. The hides are called Winter Counts and were faithfully copied when worn out. The Winter Count in the Museum of the South Dakota State Historical Society drawn by Lone Dog begins in the year 1800 and ends in 1877. The symbols for the year 1803-1804 show that the Sioux Peoples stole Curly Horses from their enemy, the Crow².

Oral tradition from the Sioux confirmed this, and was told to Ernie Hammrich. Hammrich when he purchased the last of these Native American bred Curly Horses from Slim Berndt and the Sioux man, Eli Bad Warrior, in South Dakota. Slim Berndt faithfully "pure bred" his Curlies. Hammrich, though, was a renowned Quarter Horse breeder and at one time President of the AQHA using the Hard Twist and foundation bloodlines which he introduced into the Curly³. Today, there are very few pure Native bred Curlies from the old lines, which had the letters NTS, such as NST Strikes His Enemy or NTS Pipestone Woman, or the title Berndt in their names, Berndt Range Stud or Berndt Sorrel Curly, most have been mixed with foundation QH blood which includes Hard Twist, Chuckaway Reed, Tom Cat, and occasionally ponies, appaloosas, draft horses, paints etc. Descendants of these horses are some of the best quality Stock-horse Curlies today and were used by such famous trainers as Gawani Pony Boy in shows and clinics regularly up until the 2000s, his one-time stallion, Warrior Lynx, now breeding in England.

The second document that refers to the Curly Horse is the collection of historical drawings by Red Horse, an eye witness and participant in the famous Battle of the Little Big Horn (1876). This was the final successful battle the Native Americans would stage against the U.S. Cavalry. In it, General Custer's troops were partly destroyed at the Last Stand. Red Horse's drawings show Sioux Warriors riding Curly Horses and leading away captured Army horses. The distinct difference in coat when compared to a straight-haired horse is pronounced⁴. Interestingly, the Custer Battlefield Historical Museum has determined a roster of Native American warriors in the battle. A Lakota Sioux named, Bad Warrior, is listed⁵. Maybe it is just coincidence, but one wonders if Eli Bad Warrior then inherited his Curlies from Custer Battlefield warriors?

A third source, the colourful ledger drawings depicting the Lakota – Sans Arc way of life by Black Hawk, Chief Medicine Man of the Lakota, includes images of a particular curly-coated horse⁶. Strangely, both this horse and the one drawn at the Battle of the Little Big Horn by Red Horse have the same colouring and markings and almost appear to be the same horse, the horse is drawn with sacred feathers and it would appear that Black Hawk had high respect for her.

After the Battle of the Little Big Horn, Sitting Bull, leader of the joint Native American allies, was forced in 1877 to flee into Canada⁷. Taking his tribe northward, he took some of his horse herd with him. It is possible that he brought the first Curlies to Canada. After four years, starvation forced Sitting Bull to give up and return his tribe to the Standing Rock Reservation in South Dakota. Legend has it that a Native American family at U.S. Fort Berthold traded for two Curly mares from Sitting Bull's band as they passed en route, founding a small population there⁸. The Curly Horses with NTS in the name are said to be of the Fort Berthold stock.

Back at Standing Rock, Sitting Bull and his tribe remained until the battle of Wounded Knee at which time Sitting Bull was murdered and Big Foot's band and horses killed. Because they were forced on to Reservations, some of the horse herd was turned out on the range at Standing Rock. In the aftermath of Wounded Knee, starvation and years of war took its toll, and the Native horses dwindled in number. To this day, beautiful Nakota wild horses can be found at Standing Rock, descendants of Sitting Bull's herd, however the Curly is absent. Being so rare, few numbers are likely to have survived and possibly the Sioux families treasured the remaining Curlies and kept them in the family rather than setting them free, as did Eli Bad Warrior.

Although no Curly Horses today are found in the Nakota Horse population, the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) rounds up wild Mustangs in Rock Springs area of Wyoming (south of Montana) for culling, and each year when the Mustangs are brought in, several Curly Mustangs are amongst the herd⁹. One theory is that the Northern Arapaho or Southern Cheyenne, allies with the Sioux and participants in the Battle of the Little Big Horn, received Curlies in trade and eventually released them into the wild herds of Wyoming.

However, a rancher named, John Knappes, gives credit to his uncle, Ike and the Brooks family, for the introduction of the Curly to Rock Springs. According to letters written to researchers for "Myth & Mystery – The Curly Horse," his uncle purchased a black Curly stallion at Fort Laramie, Wyoming between 1942-1945. The Brooks and Mr. Knappes continued to range breed and use a son of the Laramie Stud, Rocket, running him with Morgans, Standardbreds, Army Remount Thoroughbreds, and Tennessee Walkers. The Rock Springs horses then are considered descendants of the Laramie Stud¹¹. Given Fort Laramie was central in managing the "Plains Indians", it might be speculated that the stallion came from Native Lakota stock, even possibly from those said to be traded by Sitting Bull.

Sitting Bull was not the only Native American believed to propagate the Curly Horse. On May 31st, 1877 in response U.S. demands to give up lands and confine themselves to the Reservation, Chief Joseph's Nez Perce Tribe in Oregon also fled to Canada only to be stopped 40 km before the border. September 30th saw the Battle of the Bear's Paw Mountains in which Chief Joseph surrendered. However, his brother, or other relatives of his, escaped and took horses and a band of 200 people onward into Canada¹⁰. As time went by, they migrated further northward. During their migration, they are said to have left Curly Horses by the Aishihik Lake in Yukon Territory, Alaska. According to Joe Mead, a breeder of Curlies inherited from the Dameles, he discovered and used the Curlies of Aishihik many years ago. None pure from this strain are left now, however Mead crossed the Aishihik horses with the Damele strain (see below)¹². Horses with the Ashihik title in the name generally show Appaloosa characteristics.

How the first Curly Horses came to Canada is unclear. As mentioned, possibly Sitting Bull brought some as the Fort Berthold legend supports. However, what is known is Ole Skjonsberg and his family were big horse breeders at around 1900 and Skjonsberg and his uncle brought Curlies to Alberta from South Dakota where they had a stock herd¹³. Skjonsberg always told the story that his father, Hans, "stole his first Curly Horse in 1890 from an Indian at a water hole!"¹⁴ Most likely in South Dakota. It is speculated that this Curly came from the Sioux or Crow, however, other Curlies in their herd may have come from Nevada. Curlies in Canada are also known to have come later from the Nevada area, North Dakota and Montana, and oral tradition suggests that the Skjonsbergs were rustlers or ranchers and took a large herd north over the border¹⁵. Some of these lines were then bred to the Canadian's beloved racing, Jockey Club stock to develop unique bloodlines such as the Cypress and Buck Mnt. Curly Horses. Sadly, due to restrictions placed by the new Curly registry in 1971, which was against the introduction of racing blood, the names of the outcross stock were never officially recorded. Mares from these bands were later crossed to Damele/Mead strains using stallions such as Snowey's Golden Opportunity by Sunnybrook Stables, Sockeye by Rosebud River Curlies and Elko Nevada by the DKH Ranch.

More is known of the early Nevada Curly Horse. In 1898, the Damele family purchased their first ranch in Eureka, Nevada. They would become one of the most influential breeders of Curly Horses in the 20th century. Having seen the Curly Horse running wild with the Mustangs, two sons of Damele captured a sorrel Curly stallion in 1931, broke him to ride and sold him. In 1932, a devastating winter hit, and much of the Damele working horse herd perished. When the Damele's rounded up the remains of their herd in spring, among the few survivors were three Curly Horses. Able to withstand the hardship, these tough horses were respected by the ranchers. Benny Damele, on a second ranch, was won over and began using the Curly as the base for ranch stock. Although at this time there was no direct intent to breed Curlies, they ran with the herd and were sold to California, Oklahoma, Texas and New Mexico. The 1950s would see a similar, even more harsh Winter in which out of a herd of 300 head only one Curly horse colt, Copper, and 40 broodmares survived (among them Curlies). To rebuild the herds the Curly colt, and a Saddlebred stallion brought out of Idaho, were used as herd stallions. In order to avoid inbreeding, Benny Damele then chose to introduce to high quality Arabian horse, named Nevada Red, and later a high quality working Morgan, Ruby Red King into the Curly bloodlines. The Damele lines carry their blood to this day.

Now, how the Curly Horse initially came to the Nevada wild herds is not entirely clear. But, in the book, *Mustang: Life and Legends of Nevada's Wild Horses* by Anthony Amaral, published in 1977, credit is given to a man named Tom Dixon. Albert Laird described how as a boy he worked for Dixon, and said that Dixon imported Curlies from India, after hearing they could withstand cold weather.

“The horses were called Bashkirs, or wooly ones. He brought two mares and one stallion and brought them back with him. Both mares were in foal. After Tom had them safe in Eureka, two stallion colts were born.

When the two stud colts were old enough to be turned out on the range, he took one into the Buckskin area and turned it loose with the mustangs in the valley there. The other he turned loose in Long Valley, White Pine Country. It was not long until curly horses were showing up around the valleys in the Buckskin Mine area, in Pete Hanson Canyon and that area; also Long Valley, Newark Valley, Fish Creek Valley, and Six Mile.¹⁷

To date, it is hard to prove the Curly legend of Tom Dixon. Dixon had a large ranch and his lands covered most of Eastern Nevada, and he did have a herd of 10,000 horses. An Irish immigrant that landed in California and then moved to Nevada in 1869, he also had mines and other businesses. His horses were famous in the area, and he preferred mixing in heavy draft stock such as Pecheron and Clydesdale, and sold his horses to California, Kentucky and Texas. His land claim was extended into Long Valley and the Fish Creek, Spring, Diamond and Monitor Valleys.²² Hard evidence such as shipping records, or sales receipts, or ranch accounting books have not yet been found to support the claim. There is also little genetic evidence due to the years of cross breeding. Tall tale, or truth? Like much of Curly history, the truth lies in the depths of Cowboy legends. What is known is that the Curly was already documented in California, South Dakota, Oregon all about the same time period, as settlers were moving west for the California Gold Rush. This puts the Dixon story to question, and it remains to be seen whether evidence will some day confirm it. To this day, wild horses roam the lands of Tom Dixon, and a famous Curly extreme stallion, Fishy Boy, from Fish Creek Valley contributes to the wild population.

Modern breeders have taken two different routes with the Damele line, some breed true to the Classic Curly which retains the original characteristics of the Damele bred horses with Morgan, Arabian and Appaloosa based bloodlines. Jim Washington was influential in establishing horses for the Rosebowl Parade which added to the exposure and popularity of the Curly Horse, as they were invited back as a riding group many years in a row. While, others have chosen to develop a Sport Curly for dressage and jumping using the Damele line as its base. One particular stallion has made a strong mark in the Sport Horse development with a Dressage career is Spartacus. He has two lines of Arabian blood (one being Nevada Red and the other Kishtee Raylas), while most of his successful get still competing in Dressage are from a Morgan mare named, Magdalena. The Spartacus line often has a Baroque quality. Subsequently, over the last 20 years, this line has been outcrossed and improved through the introduction of Warmblood outcrosses.

While the numbers of Curly Horses began to slowly increase in Nevada, the Dakotas, Montana and Canada, another Quarter Horse Breeder, Francis Fredell, in Boulder, Colorado began to experiment with the Curly. Having received one as a gift from his father, most likely a Damele, he began by breeding the small feral horses. Upon his marriage, Mrs. Fredell had other ideas. She viewed the Curly as stemming from the Spanish Mustang herds, and quickly began incorporating as much Quarter Horse blood as possible. After 40 years, in 1983 when the Fredell's retired from breeding, their Curly herd consisted from 75% to 90% Quarter Horse blood, mostly from Mc Cue and Oklahoma Star. The Fredell line has had a dramatic influence on Curly breeding with an influential stallion going to Sweden to become a foundation sire in the 1990s (Shanondoah Cherokee), while the stallion Rush River Slash bred by Elmer Johnson in 1996 carried the Arabian Damele line with Fredell through his dam Boulder Beauty, which has now been crossed to the Bad Warrior line (also QH based). Although very few pure Fredell bred horses exist today, their blood flows in many Curly Horses world-wide.

The West wasn't alone. In the Southeast, a horse name Curly Jim began breeding Missouri Foxtrotter mares in the 1950s. The origin of this stallion is completely unknown. And, unlike the other lines of Curly Horses which tend to shed their mane and top of the tail in summer, the Curly Jim line of horses generally keep a full mane and tail. It is thought that this line may be genetically a different sort of Curly Horse¹⁶. Gaited horses were initially mixed into the Western Curly Horse lines at the founding of the registry. One main stallion out of this line is Walker's Prince T, who goes back to Curly Jim via his dam and a Missouri Foxtrotter stallion Walke's Merry Lad. Walker's Prince T went on to found various lines of Curly Horses, including the pony Curlies of the McKay's, the Missouri Foxtrotter Curlies which are gaited and were imported later to Norway and Sweden to establish the main focus in Scandinavia both through crossing to Western Curlies and also pure gaited breeding, and other bloodlines such as the almost lost Sunshine line.

All of this does not answer, however, the question about the prehistoric origins of the Curly. One theory suggests that Norse and Celtic Iberians brought them to the continent during their North and South American landings in the 1500's. This is supported by the existence of large numbers of Curly Horses in Paraguay at the turn of the century. These are described in several historical reference books, and were culled by the 1930s. Another theory is that Russians brought them to Alaska during the 1700s, and yet another theory is that they wandered over the Native American trade routes from South America to North America. Genetic studies by Gus Cochran assisted by Mitch Wilkinson, show the North American Curly Horse (Bashkir Curly) is related to the Mustang and other North American breeds, and influenced by breeding practiced followed in the 1800-1900s, which were used to develop the modern Curly: Morgan, Arabian, Quarter Horse, Missouri Foxtrotter, Spanish Mustang, Draft, and American Shetland, and so on.

By 1971 enough horses had accumulated that a group of breeders and enthusiasts under the direction of Sunny Martin formed a registry, the American Bashkir Curly Horse Registry. All of the sources listed above from all of these bloodlines discussed here were used as founding stock to develop this new breed. Included in the founding were Native, Damele, Fredell, Warrior, Canadian, Curly Jim and Mustang horses of unknown origin. Together with horses that were used for outcrossing by all the various breeders. Combined, they formed a mixed pool of horses as a base through which the modern American Curly Horse is derived.

Over the years then, various sources were responsible for the creation of the American Curly Horse. Like the Appaloosa, the Quarter Horse, Paint Horses, and other American breeds, the breeding practices of the Old West ranchers influenced the Curly. Ranchers traditionally used a good stallion imported from the East mixed with local feral horses, followed by selecting out the “good ones,” and then running the next generation with more horses, in herds from 1000 to 10,000 horses. Through this method a unique gene pool formed. American Curly horses always ran in a larger herd of non-curly horses made up of various American or European imported breeds. This system worked well and produced very usable stock up until the Taylor Grazing Act of 1934 started to fence the range in.

By the 1970s, as the last of the old ranchers started to retire and the large herds of the Old West had disappeared, a few Curly Horses here and there, some from the wild, and the last of the large breeding programs were collected together in a registry. This change from large herds run by ranchers who needed and used the horses to work cattle, to small 10-50 horse herds run by hobby breeders, had a dramatic impact on the Curly. Without the large numbers being produced from which only the best could be taken for breeding, the breeders in the 1980s onward were restricted to using nearly every horse available. The problem was, there was no form of quality control to assist them. Modern breeding, a small population, and the loss of knowledge that the old ranchers had about horses, created problems for registries, breeders and owners alike. Differences of opinion in a small community divided the few remaining dedicated breeders by the 1990s. With the closing of the ABCR books, the International Curly Horse Organization was formed to provide an open book for horses possibly missed, or for out crossing with the idea to stop inbreeding. Still, without a fundamental quality control mechanism or guidance system to follow, that took into consideration the history, bloodlines and types of horses, the future of the Curly was left open

Curly Horse Characteristics

The original Curly Horse was small being depicted and photographed as 2/3's the size of an U.S. Calvary horse. It had a long shaggy, curly coat, that ranchers (and probably Native Peoples) noticed was hypoallergenic, a thick, spiralled double-mane and came in many colours. Hard hooves, primitive elliptical eyes set to the side, shorter backs, heavy bone, and an uphill build were beloved traits in addition to the rare horse that had a very easy going gait called the “Indian Shuffle” which could travel long distances quickly and with more ease. The Curly Horse has traditionally had a very mild temperament, curious and very people oriented. The average Curly is quiet, highly intelligent, and does not spook easily. It is not hard to understand why the Native Peoples and these few ranchers so loved the animals.

There are also two types of Curly genes, a dominant gene and a recessive gene. In this discussion we are presenting Curlies, which pass on their characteristics in a dominant genetic fashion. The recessive Curly is a purebred horse (Arabian, Quarter Horse, etc.) that develops a Curly coat even though both of its parents are straight-haired. This trait is not carried over to the offspring in a visible phenotype and these horses are not related to the North American Curly Horse.¹⁹

Today's Curly Horses retain most of the original Curly characteristics, although they have generally increased in height and size for modern work and riders, or else been reduced in size as ponies. Curly Horses have a height range of between 82-162 cm, and come in Classic (Damele), Stock-horse (Quarter Horse/Appaloosa), Sport Horse (Morgan/Arabian/TB base), Missouri Fox-trotter, Native American, Mustang, Pony, Mini and Draft lines and a mix of all of these. Each of these types has a quality blend of Curly Characteristics. The body styles of these different types vary, however all should share substantial/heavy bone (good cannons), primitive elliptical eyes, good withers (although there is a tendency in many lines toward mutten withers), well-sprung ribs, a deep jaw, short mouth, and of course, curls – although there are straight Curlies too!

The Curly of the Curly Horse are quite varied. Some are extremely curly with short manes and tails, while others have wavy coats and long spirally or fuzzy manes and tails, sometimes with double manes and sometimes not. Horses obtaining a curly gene from both parents will often display “Extreme” curly characteristics: a very curly coat, with very sparse mane and tail hair. These horses are considered homozygous for curl and generally produce 100% curly offspring even from an out-cross. Breeding heterozygous horses generally produces 50% heterozygous offspring (curly), 25% homozygous offspring (extreme curly), and 25% smooth-coat (straight-haired offspring). Interestingly, many of the smooth-coat horses produced by two curly parents are hypoallergenic, with a “bunny-hair” coat.

Curly Horse Success

The American Curly Horse owes its success to a small number of American and International breeders who fell hopelessly in love with the Curly’s charm and character. The breed is still very rare today, taken up by both Hobbyists and Professionals. At this time the American Bashkir Curly Horse Registry has a semi-closed studbook (recently reopened) and tends to breed toward a uniform horse, while the International Curly Horse Organization (ICHO), has an open registry, the ICHO has been developing consistency via voluntary inspections and selected outcrossing via ICAMS (International Curly Approved Mare and Stud Book). Internationally, the Curly horse is registered in studbooks which require inspections. The Curly Sporthorse International (CSI) is a registry specifically designed for promoting and registering Curly Horses that compete in various sports.

The American Curly Horse is a product of old American tradition. Even the controversy today in America about how to breed a Curly Horse stems from the old ranchers who used to breed their own horses the way they wanted to. They took pride in the horse they produced, and competed with their neighbours or people in other states to produce a better horse and they had strong opinions on what that horse should be. This tradition is deep within the core structures of the registries. In one case, the freedom to do with a breeding program what one wants to do. In the other case, the ideal uniform animal with the same heritage as a particular rancher envisioned. The American Curly Horse does have a heritage. A heritage of diversity, as diverse as the people who make up America. And in that diversity is vitality.

The American Curly Horse is then a product of all these people, their hopes, their desires, their knowledge or lack of it in breeding and creating a unique animal. The American Curly Horse was spared the fate of modern horses that were over-bred for specific high earning competitions that eventually replaced ranch work, and instead is a furry jewel of the Old West. The American Curly Horse and the genes that create its unique characteristics are stubborn, coming through generation after generation. And, like the old ranchers, quality comes from pride in breeding a proper working horse. In the end, it does not matter what the source of the American Curly Horse had, where it came from, or who it was who first discovered the Curly. What is important is that the American Curly Horse is a living legend where Americans took pride in their horses and their breeding. The future, then, of the American Curly Horse lies in that educated, crafted and immense pride.

The versatility of the Curly Horse has been proven in the dressage arena, the working ranch, in mountain rescue, riding clubs, hunts and rodeos. From a top quality pirouette to the fastest barrel racing time, to searching miles of wilderness in the Rockies while in foal to save downed mountain climbers, the Curly gives heart and soul to please. While other breeds have lost their mental capacity or their bone to over breeding and intense selection for the show ring, the Curly has a strong healthy mind and body, mild temperament, perseverance, guts and a sturdy build. Additionally, the hypoallergenic coat has opened doors to some allergy sufferers to the sport of riding. Selected breeding over the years has produced some fine quality animals that are something very special and unique. Something the Northern Plains Native Americans appreciated centuries ago.

1. *Myth and Mystery: The Curly Horse in America*, Thomas, Shan, CS Fund, Inc., 1989
2. From the [Museum of the South Dakota State Historical Society](#) and the Smithsonian Institute Lakota Indian Winter Count Exhibits. "...explanations of the entries in this exhibit are from information published by Garrick Mallery in 1893. This information came to Mallery from Lt. Hugh Reed, who got it from Basil Clement, an interpreter at Ft. Sully, Dakota Territory, who had gotten the explanations from the original keeper, Lone Dog," according to records kept at the Smithsonian Institute.
3. "Ode to Ernie Hammrich" a short biography published as a eulogy by the International Curly Horse Organization, 2000.
4. The Chief Red Horse (Tasunke Luta) ledger drawings (41 in total) documenting the Battle of the Little Big Horn, 1881. From the Tenth Annual Report of the Bureau of Ethnology, Smithsonian Institute.
5. *Indian Warriors at the Battle of the Little Big Horn, 25-26 June 1876*, Custer Battlefield Historical & Museum Association.: the Cheyenne Agency 1926 and the Crazy Horse's Surrender Ledger. Also, Friends of the Little Big Horn Battlefield *Warriors at Little Big Horn* list with the additional reference: "Ledger", p 167; "Craig Letter".
6. The Chief Black Hawk ledger drawings (79 in total) documenting a dream and Lakota ways of life, 1880-1881. Smithsonian Institute.
7. *The Lance and the Shield: The Life and Times of Sitting Bull*, Robert M. Utley. [Henry Holt and Company](#), Inc. NY, New York, 1993.
8. The legend comes from three sources: The Niedhardts of Neidhardts Training Stall who received Eli Bad Warrior/Slim Berndt bred horses from Ernie Hammrich; Sharon Williams, who interviewed Ernie Hammrich for the report, *Myth and Mystery: The Curly Horse in America*.; and Donna Vickery who regularly spoke with Ernie Hammrich and received a large portion of his herd upon his death.
9. Bureau of Land Management (BLM) records. The BLM routinely gathers wild horse herds at Standing Rock (as well as other locations), culling out selected horses for adoption to reduce herd populations. The culled horses are listed on the BLM webpage during the adoption process, and generally several Curlies are in the group after each roundup— these are considered Curly Mustangs, or BLM Curlies.
10. *Following the Nez Perce Trail*, Cheryl Wilfong, Oregon State University Press, 1990.
11. Sharon Williams, letters from John Knappes describing the Curly Horses of his herd, the Laramie Stud and his son, Rocket.
12. Verbal tradition, Joe Mead, renowned Curly Horse breeder who was married to a Nez Perce woman, Corrinne.
13. Article: *History of the Curly Horse*, By Sandy Hengstler (date unknown), sources listed: *The Curly Horse in America - Myth and Mystery*, Shan Thomas, with special assistance from David Gaier & Dr. Ann Bowling. 1989 C. S. Fund, Inc. This is a summary of the research project conducted in 1988 by the C. S. Fund Conservancy of Freestone, California, USA.
14. Verbal communication from Ole Skjonsberg to several Curly Horse breeders, including the published version by Deanna Johnson upon visiting the breeder, 2003.
15. ABCR pedigrees; and Canadian Curly Horse bloodline histories as personally communicated to the author, by sources wishing to remain anonymous.
16. ABC Registry records.
17. *Mustang: Life and Legends of Nevada's Wild Horses*, Anthony Amaral, 1977, University of Nevada Press. Pages 100-101.
18. *Mustang: Life and Legends of Nevada's Wild Horses*, Anthony Amaral, 1977, University of Nevada Press. Pages 20-23.
19. "Dominant Curly Coat in Horses." D.P. Sponenberg. Letter to Sunny Martin, ABCR. October 20, 1986.

Background Notes: The popularity of the Curly Horse grew in the 1950s-1970s as more ranchers and breeders became involved with the Curly Horse. During these years, a movement to form a registry began and focussed mainly on the Damele Family stock due to the registry being located nearby. Outcrosses to the Quarter Horse were discouraged in the registry as there was a preference for Morgan/Arabian blood and thus several pedigrees are incomplete due to omission of Quarter Horse ancestors by breeders wishing to register but not wanting to disclose the pedigree or registration numbers of the horses used, especially in Canada. Historically, the Damele's have been given credit for the discovery and development of the Curly breed, although later research in *Myth and Mystery* shed light on other Euro-American breeders and their contribution to the Curly Horse. Only recently, have breeders begun to examine the Native American origins of the Curly Horse and give credit to the breeding skills of the Northern Plains and Central Basin Tribes. This article presents the first in-depth look at Native American relationships to the North American Curly Horse and shows that a sweeping arch from the Crow in Northern Wyoming, to the Sioux in the Dakotas and the Cheyenne in Southern Wyoming, to the Nez Perce in Idaho on down to Nevada can be drawn. Most likely, the distribution of the Curly Horse followed Native American Trade routes.


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About the Author: Karen Zierler studied Chemistry, Genetics, Biochemistry, at various University institutions, ultimately choosing protein structure determination using Nuclear Magnetic Resonance at the University of Cambridge, U.K. She has worked in Germany and Austria, and is presently in Austria. She is a breeder of Curly Horses since 2003 importing Western lines from Cypress, Bad Warrior, Damele, Fredell, and Aishihik to Austria. She was Director of Research for many years at the ICHO, was International Representative and served as ICHO President in 2009. Together with European Curly Horse breeders, the Swedish, French, Bavarian and Austrian studbooks, she assisted in developing uniform Stud Book rules for Europe.



Dedication

This article is dedicated to the memory of Sharon Williams.



The Curly Corner



Top photo, Shesa Magic Charm and Sandman's Serenade, breeder Shelly White of www.curlystandardplace.com, standing at Stud: *Sandman's Magic—Homozygous Sporthorse Stallion and *BCF Icon, Black and White Tobiano Sporthorse Stallion.

Bottom photo, Windriver, WY Pack Trip, MO Foxtrotters, Morlin and Becky Oldham. Standing *Dallas, gaited foxtrotting stallion.

