



*Lakima Hawk (Top Flight x Bird & Semmy) with Jack Warner, MP.
He was the only chestnut stallion used at the ranch.*

WARNER ANGUS RANCH

Ruby's Project, A First-Hand Account

by ELAINE POHLMAN

Editor's Note: Our author, Elaine Pohlman, is the daughter of John and Ruby Warner of the Warner Angus Ranch.

Annie Johnson rode astride. She spent most of her time outside, raising a garden for the family, milking cows, and managing a flock of pedigreed laying hens. Oscar Johnson farmed, drilled wells for patrons, including Dodge City, and built a house—a Frank Lloyd Wright era bungalow. It is still one of the most unique houses in the area.

It is a natural thing that their middle daughter, Ruby, defines her life not by her other many accomplishments, but by the horses she bred on Warner Angus Ranch (WAR).

LIVESTOCK



Apollo Bird (Like A Bird x Bird's Sentney).

ANGUS CATTLE

Ruby Johnson Warner came with her husband, John, to live permanently at the ranch, located 18 miles northeast of Dodge City, Kansas, in 1943. She brought a daughter, less than a year old, and a medium-sized bright chestnut mare named Redwing. "A little heavy and a little cresty," she says of the mare.

The set-up on the highway that became Warner Angus Ranch featured a house and three-stall barn. The corrals were fenced with broken-down netting and the plan was rudimentary. It remained for John and Ruby to fill in the details, planting trees every spring and setting up the cattle-cutting alley, weaning pens with feed racks, stud pens, and supporting corrals necessary to manage a herd of 500-plus cattle and care for as many as five stallions at a given time.

The first registered Morgan at the ranch was the five-year-old stallion by Doak's Golddust and out of Coney, Ducet (pronounced duck-ut, a European gold coin). He was 11 generations down from Justin Morgan with Goldfinder on the last line of his pedigree. His sire and dam were both by Winterset. A neighbor had told John about Ducet, a black stud to go with the black cattle. He was transferred to the ranch in late 1949. It was at this time that WAR started the policy of raising "quality black livestock."

IOA Morgans

At Stud: WAR Amarak
(Western Mansfield x Kara Bum)



IOA Pollyanna

(Earl Traer x Blue Ribbon Bunny FD)

and her 1998 colt

IOA Nike

(by WAR Amarak)

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It can be speculated that the five-gaited black parade horses ridden in tight collection by the King family in the Dodge City Parade influenced John Warner to emphasize parade suitable horses. With Ducet stabled two miles from the ranch and with his pedigree displayed on a special wood plate by the door, John bought his second Morgan stallion, Billy Lee. His full brother, Bert Lee, was part of the deal, and the three were paraded in 1951 with John and Ruby's nine-year-old daughter riding Bert and the two studs ridden by the teen-age hired men. Three custom-made black and white parade saddles from Frank Vella Saddlery and the 1950 cab-over truck premiered in this parade. The saddles are still used only for parades.

From Ruby's point of view, her husband's desire for two stallions was an impractical excess. "What does he need a registered stud for? He doesn't even have a registered mare!" she told the man who came to the door to tell them the stud was ready for delivery. It has become a famous family quote. Nevertheless, John got Ruby to take him to the place where Ducet was stabled, and he rode the five-year-old stud the eight miles to the ranch and put him in the box stall. Photographs showed Ducet had high hock action and carried his head vertically with a high arch in a long neck. He set the pattern for parade style, and though he died young, he will never be forgotten at WAR. Even in color, he set the precedent: not a white hair on him.

Easter was the first mare in the black horse project. Still, not a registered Morgan. She was descended from a Government remount Thoroughbred with Man O War somewhere in her background.

In April 1950, the five-year-old black mare Bird S Sentney, with her daughter Annie S Sentney (by Juzan), were transferred from J. B. Steele of Arlington, Kansas, to the Warners. Bird was part of the deal—Annie was the one they wanted. John didn't realize that Bird S Sentney had lost one eye until she arrived at the ranch. He called Steele and asked if he would make an adjustment. Steele's response was that he couldn't—Bird was a bargain the way it was.

She was a Red Correll daughter bred by Oglala Community High School in Pine Ridge, South Dakota, but registered by Sentney. She had Sherman Blackhawk, in four lines the Herod line; through Winter-set on two lines, and Linspar and Lemax. She was named for Red Correll's granddam, Bird L (Linsley x Lemax), an Elmer Brown-bred mare.

While always breeding for performance, meaning parade horses with the bone and

nerve to crawl up muddy creek banks, wade in belly-deep water, and in general go wherever a cow might go, plus color, Ruby and John learned something very special from Bird S Sentney. Some horses have a very special disposition. Ruby and John had found this in the horses of the Herod line of Sherman Black Hawk. Ducet and Bird S Sentney were both Herod horses.

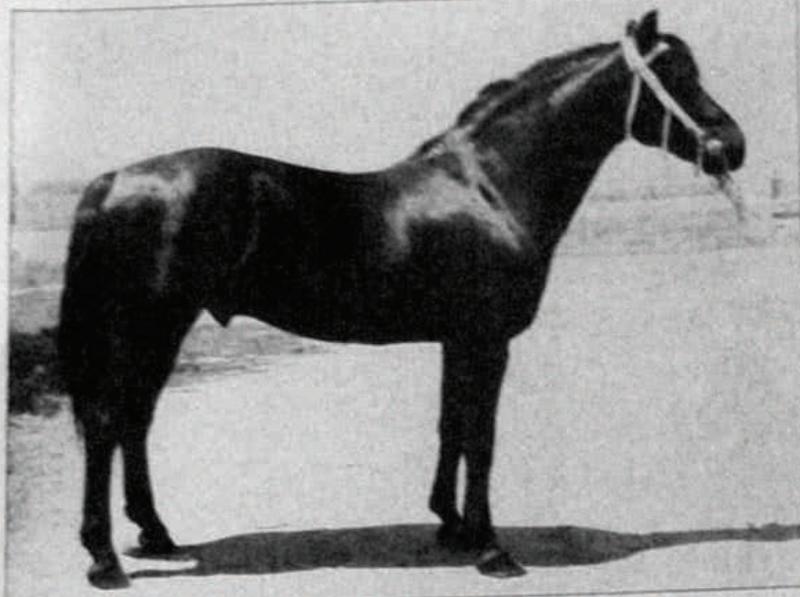
In October of 1958, the ranch was again without a stallion. Helen Brunk Greenwalt had just bought Top Flight back, as his owner had developed health concerns. He looked good, he was black, and he had ranch roots. Top Flight was brought to the ranch with long toes with oil pads in his shoes. The Warners had never seen anything like it before or since, and Mrs. Greenwalt gave them a picture of him pulling a small cart, not a carriage, in a show with his nose up and his mouth open, not looking very happy. He was soon barefoot and under western tack, never complaining about neck-reining, always hurrying to get the job done. When his first foals hit the ground, Warner Angus Ranch entered a new era. Half of them were chestnut! For the first time, the ranch had foals for sale!

One of these chestnut foals, Tequila Bird (Top Flight x Bird S Sentney) was taken to the auction in Estes Park. Would she bring a respectable price? It was a cool mountain spring day. She danced at my side, playing, rearing, cantering, but never tightening the lead rope. I heard the bidding become respectable. It was the most elevated moment of my life. Later she became High-Point Open Western Pleasure Mare of the Circle J Morgan Horse Association.

The family trained most of their own horses, and in 1967 two Top Flight x Bird S Sentney stud colts were sent to Iowa to be trained by the Warners' daughter. Flightbird was to become Ruby's gelding and Yakima Hawk later became the only chestnut stud used on the ranch.

Flightbird was crowd-shy, but quite at home on the ranch. I asked Ruby how riding him compared to riding Annie. "There was no comparison," she said. "Flightbird knew what you wanted before you did. He knew how to drive cattle by himself, anyway. I could now ride the four miles to the east pasture and back and come home fresh. And my favorite gait became the trot, not the lope, as it had been with Annie; he was so smooth. He never gave any impression of moodiness, always willing to please."

This was, of course, excluding parades, which he navigated in the grandest style until he came to the announcer's stand.



WAR Omega Bird (Western Mansfield x Bird S Sentney).

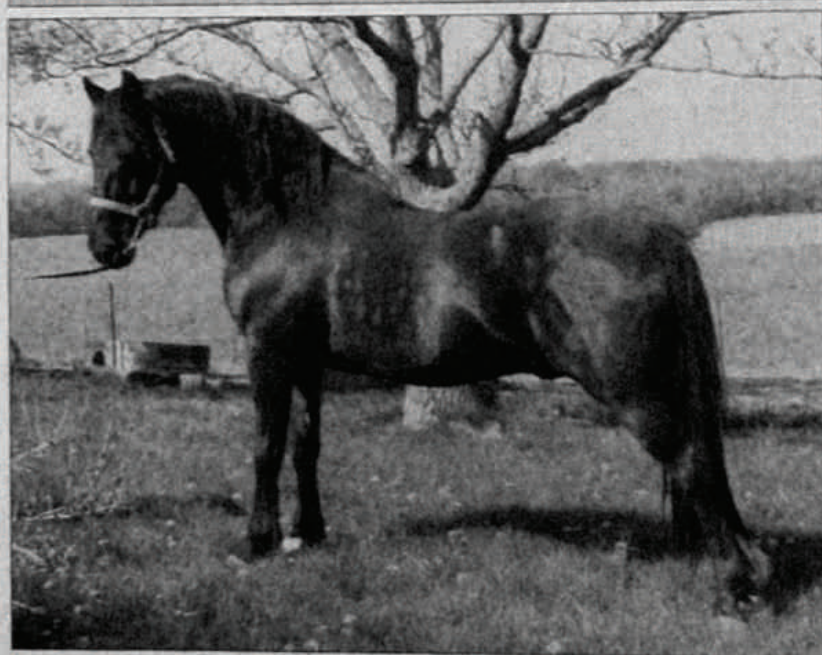
where he would stop, contemplating what horrors lay in store. Ruby would dismount, put his cheek, and lead him calmly to a quieter part of the route farther on where she remounted and continued in style.

Like A Bird (Top Flight x Bird S Sentney) was the only black stud of that cross to be used as he was the one with the least white. He had an even disposition, a smooth-looking way. His daughter from Duchezanne was Kara Rum. Sold to Ruby's

sister, Eileen, because her socks were too high, Kara Rum was bred to the chestnut Yakima Hawk. The result was Kara Kazan. With only one white sock and a kid-horse disposition, she stayed, although most of her offspring were sold, having white feet. WAR Indy Penny stayed, the only WAR line back to Yakima Hawk. Big front ends and athletic ability run in the Kara line.

The Kara line may be the most

WAR Amarak (Western Mansfield x Kara Rum), pictured here at age 15.



widespread of the WAR breeding. This is in great part due to the efforts of Leslie Kossely and the Morgan-Friesian project. WAR Zanzadee was a daughter of WAR Zanzadee (WAR Omega Bird x Kara Rum), and was his favorite mare. Despite the white markings that made her "not a gentleman's horse, but a circus horse," he showed her with a Caduceus-prefix Morgan in team carriage classes to be a carriage pleasure champion, always showing in open classes. He says of the project, "The Friesian is bigger and stronger; when you look at a Morgan and a Friesian together, you say the Morgan is the little nephew. But the Morgan has endurance. The Morgan-Friesian cross would have both." Mr. Kossely came to the ranch for his first purchase and was impressed with it and with the old black Mercedes car in which Ruby drove him across the Kansas prairie "like a tank" to show off the herd. Convinced of the honesty of her descriptions, he took the next shipment sight unseen. Though Ruby sent him measurements, including distance between front legs and circumference of the girth, Leslie was breeding for power, avoiding small girths or any whose front legs "came out of the same hole." From New York to Colorado, where he now lives, the Kara line of Morgans have found homes as a result of his Morgan-Friesian project.

In 1963, Bud DeBaun of Black Ayre Farm in Danville, Indiana, purchased Columbine Tom and his daughter, Miss Tomahawk (out of Utosca [Top Flight x Duchezanne]). Having become a part of the WAR consciousness, and an important part it turns out, he returned in 1966 to purchase Annie S Sentney and Duchezanne. But if he caused any loss, he made up for it when he negotiated the purchase of a weanling colt from Ralph and Harriet Ulery of Anderson, Indiana, in October of 1969. The Ulerys were the best kept secret in Morgandom. They allowed Ruby Warner to name the weanling herself. Looking over his pedigree, seeing 21 percent Mansfield, she called him Western Mansfield.

The ranch needed the type and gait that Western Mansfield (by Jody's Ace Of Spades) gave his get. His homozygous black didn't hurt a bit. Even with Bird S Sentney, he got black feet. 1971 was Western Mansfield's first breeding season and Bird S Sentney's last. The colt they produced was a keeper, only one white heel and a star and roan strip. He was named WAR Omega Bird. His cross with WAR Tosca Tola (Like A Bird x Utosca) pro-

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Ronbo Morgans
 WARNER ANGUS RANCH
WAR Gallant Bird
 (WAR Omega Bird x Aristo Gigi)
Ronbo's Blackhawk Buddy
 (WAR Sky King x Judge B Ann Bolin)
 Buddy is now residing at Coffee Creek Riding Center for the Handicapped, Edmond, Oklahoma, and is in training for a career as a therapy horse.
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duced four of the current breeding mares at the ranch.

Two mares in particular were added to the herd around this time: Funquest Pukancy and Aristo Gigi. In 1979, an Illinois trip resulted in the purchase of Golddust Miner M C from Maurice Jacobs, his breeder P. F. Hanebutt. He was strong and athletic with an elegant neck. Golddust's first seven colts were black; then he started getting too many chestnuts. Out of a total of 51 offspring, 24 had the WAR prefix. Golddust stood at Ellen and Noel Jones' until his death.

A stallion named Cedarest Dynamic from Iowa was leased for a season and two of his daughters, WAR Justina out of Funquest Pukancy; and WAR Dandalena, out of WAR Indy Penny, stayed in the breeding program until their deaths last summer.

In all, the ranch used some 21 different stallions in the first 50 years. Was it this flexibility of attitude that kept them going? Maybe it was the continuing need for ranch horses—Ruby and John made it a project to give each grandchild a horse, so more were needed as time went on.

In 1983, a big ranch sign was erected in preparation for the celebration of the centennial year of Warner Angus Ranch. It was produced by John Warner and designed by his family. It expresses the WAR philosophy: "Quality Black Livestock," in a gentle, old fashioned way. Ruby attended the installation, although it must be admitted, she held some reservation to the inclusion of a pig and sheep in the design; the pigs had been kept south of the garden with the south summer winds, and the sheep had eaten the bark off her apple trees.

Son Jack Warner's dedication to the breed is still as strong as ever—no foreseeable plans for a dispersal. It was Ruby who showed Jack how it was done, taking him on the Morgan trips as he grew up. His camera produced some of the best photographs of the ranch horses and their ancestors off the ranch.

John Warner passed away at 90 in the spring of 1996. One of the last things he did before his short three-month retirement (he never did admit to being retired), was to lead his 24-year-old stallion, WAR Omega Bird, the son of his first mare, back to the barn from the "north pasture," about a half-mile after driving the feed wagon to help move the weanling calves to pasture.

WAR intends to keep on being a source of horses with good bone, good disposition, parade balance, smooth gait, and the color black.



Where Are the WAR Morgans Today?

Here is just a small sample of where some of the WAR Morgans have gone.

Bird S Sentney's line has continued off the ranch, something pleasantly discovered when the Warners purchased Cody Delight (Colonel Mac Marlm x Apollos June Ann) from Orin Black in Iowa. Cody is a great-grandson of Like A Bird through Apollo Bird, who produced size, something that surprised all of us. He was 3/4 Bird S Sentney. The Mitchells of Newton, Iowa, had him at stud.

Kara Rum's colt by Western Mansfield, WAR Amarak, is a 22-year-old stud who went to a sale at Waterloo, Iowa, in October, 1978, and was purchased by Becky Fevold of Gladbrook, Iowa. His first colt is still standing at stud at DJJ's and IOA Black Amor, Amarak's 16-hand son, was champion hunter at the 1997 Grand National in Oklahoma City.

Floyd and Janet Dudney of Lorimer, Iowa, took four stallions from Warner Angus Ranch during the 1990s and have kept two from the mare WAR Toscadero (WAR Omega Bird x WAR Tosca Tola), one sired by Caduceus Jesse, and one by Rimlo Black Talent, a stud Jack obtained from the Dudneys. These two are at stud with the Dudneys, who pick for cattle work and pleasure. Disposition is number one; they want a thick chest, medium height, good heavy bone, good color.

Gerald Coffey (Pecatonica Morgans) in Darlington, Wisconsin, is breeding a WAR mare and a Black Ayr mare (with WAR blood). Recently his Pecatonica Toronado earned himself a star rating as an American warmblood.

The one foal by Bradys Black Label on Warner Angus Ranch was a filly from Kara Kazan and she became the first WAR Morgan to leave the U.S., now part of Tom and Audrey Williams's Trajan Morgans project in Clinton, British Columbia, Canada.

Suzanne Avery says you can recognize WAR Morgans anywhere. She has championed WAR Morgans as carriage horses since she took a son of WAR Justin (Western Mansfield x Funquest Pukancy), Burchtree Barbeau (x Sweet's Tonga), to the 1992 AMHA Open Competition Carriage Driving Singles Championship. She says, "We started from scratch learning the art of carriage driving from the veterans in New York. They all commented on how calm, big, and nice natured our Morgans were. I guess we didn't know any different until we started competing. The horses would always place in the ribbons even with their greenhorn drivers and against New York veteran carriage drivers. We even took them to Walnut Hill and still placed in the ribbons."

WAR Justin stood at Kent Burch's in Gypsum, Kansas, for many years and has just been purchased by Brian Blatt, whose assistance with this article must be acknowledged.

Dr. and Mrs. Elmar Frangenberg took the Averys advice to obtain a team of WAR Morgans to show in New York. They told of ponying the youngsters, all sons of Cody Delight, with his calm disposition.

Dr. Lowell Hughes has a son of WAR Indy Penny by Caduceus Jesse. Two other WAR sons of Jesse were sold by Hughes to Karl Morris of Boise, Idaho. Their drive and athletic ability has won them recognition in open combined carriage events against Friesians and Percherons, and other breeds.

Among the most exciting things done by a WAR Morgan is what WAR Mistidero (Golddust Miner M C x WAR Toscadero) does. She is a respectable barrel horse, part of a remuda of horses from several breeds, and who just foaled healthy twins for

Ronald and Debra Jackson of Groton, New York.

Judy McCullough is breaking in WAR Ebony Jess (Caduceus Jesse x WAR Ebony Dragon) as a cowhorse on her Empire Ranch, calving 400 this spring in Moorcroft, Wyoming.

WAR Black Centavo (Niobrara Centennial x WAR Indy Penny) has found a good home with Tina Leja in Fort Collins, Colorado. His sire came to WAR from the Wallace Mills dispersal. Centennial was by a grandson of Topside Eager Beaver and had Bambi Moon in his papers (a harness mare with spectacular floating action shown at the first Morgan Show in Estes Park, Colorado). Centavo shows some of that action.

WAR Wind Walker (WAR Monzda x WAR Justina) is now "Buddy" to Daniel Paugel of Clayton, Wisconsin. He's training him for team penning.

Timothy and Tamara Culp are using WAR Song Bird's filly by Caduceus Jesse with an Waseeka's In Command stud in Kingsville, Missouri.

David Masland says of WAR Black Indy (WAR Monzda x WAR Indy Penny), "I'm 75 years old and Indy is my only horse. She's easy to handle. I ride once a week and drive her two or three times. She's the first horse I have ever driven."

Two Omega Bird daughters out of WAR Dandalena are owned by Veronica Minch of Hotchkiss, Colorado. They have two first-place awards from Steamboat Springs Carriage Classic CDE, Training Level Pairs. Veronica is hosting a "Non-A-Thon" at her farm on May 16 for novice carriage folks, inspired by the fun she realized she was having as soon as she got over her first-time fear at Steamboat Springs. A foal by WAR Monzda (Western Mansfield x DD's Dina Belle) is expected next spring.