

THE PERCHERON HORSE.

FRED WALTERS.



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In treating this subject I shall attempt to take the practical side of it and dwell most upon those points that interest the farmer at present; rather than give a long history of development. The farmer and coachman of today are seeking a heavy with good action, and I will attempt in this paper to show that it is the Percheron they are looking for. It is necessary, in order that you understand the qualities of the Percheron, to give you a short history of this breed, and to tell you what people of England and other places think and have thought for years. I use J.H. Sanders, author of "Breeder's Gazette" and "Percheron Stud Book", as my authority on the points of history quoted here.

It is well known and understood that all modern breeds of horses trace their origin to the same source, that the horse was indigenous in not a few countries, and that his progenitor was the little prehistoric "Hippus" seems to be as generally understood. Hence we must accept, in attempting to write up the Percheron, that originally he was an evolution from the same common source, and that his present degree of excellence is largely due to natural and arbitrary selection. There originally existed in Europe and Asia five distinct races of wild horses. The white, the bay, the black, the piebald, and the dun.

In beauty, spirit, speed, and power of endurance the bay, whose blood now exists in the composition of the horse of Flanders and the true bred Percheron, excelled all others. Centuries before Christ these bay horses had found their way into Egypt, and had become domesticated among the nations of parts of Asia and southern Europe. As Rome, as a nation, had paid no attention to systematizing any breed of horses after her conquests of Northern Europe, they were left as void of any improved breed of horses as they had previously been found. This left open for future development an enterprise that was commenced by Charlemagne, who ascended the throne of France 768 A.D., and who caused to be brought from Arabia, where these fleet footed horses still existed in their purity, these bay horses now called "Arabian". And to establish a strong powerful horse that could easily carry the burly knight of Northern Europe with his coat of mail, his battle axe, and spear, he caused these to be crossed



with the ponderous black horses that were indigenous in the valleys of the Rhine and upper tributaries to the Danube, and the central plains of Europe, -thus producing a magnificent horse that was a success, to a wonderful degree of perfection, for the purpose for which he was bred. This is where we first get our black color.

The fame of these horses for strength and speed soon spread throughout all northern Europe and the result was the infusion of this blood throughout the British Isles, from where the Frenchmen got their horse blood. The facts of the statements can easily be ascertained when we see what the "Gray Arabian Gallipoli" has done for the Percheron.

"The Percheron is an ancient French breed, originally famed for its capacity for rapid locomotion with a heavy load, and especially adapted to draw the heavy diligences or post-chaises used in France before the days of the railway and locomotive. Tradition has long attributed to the Percheron confessedly among the most active and powerful of the heavy breeds of European continent-an oriental origin; but it was not until the researches recently made in the compilation of pedigrees for the first volume of the "Percheron Stud Book" of France that the extent to which the blood of the orient had entered into the formation of the Percheron race was fully realized. What the Darley Arabian was to the English thoroughbred, and the Gray Arabian Smetanxa to the Orloff, the Gray Arabian Gallipoli appears to have been to the Percheron horse of France. Careful research has enabled the compiler of the "Percheron Stud Book of France" to trace definitely a large proportion of the most noted Percheron horses of modern times to this Arabian sire, that was imported about 1820. This Arabian blood wherever introduced, has been a powerful factor for improvement. We believe the Percheron/ like other draft breeds of England, derived its size originally from the large Black horse breed of Flanders. But the fact that many generations show the Gray to be the prevailing color shows us that some other agency has been at work and we trace this to the admixture of the blood of the Arab.

Aside from history and tradition the Percheron horse shows by his form and actions that he is related to the Arab. Great modifications in size, color, disposition



and general characteristics have of course taken place under the influence of the French government which controlled selection of sires. This selection however, made the Percheron horse the wonder of the world, because of his ability to move a heavy load rapidly, his specialty in rapid draft.

Horses of this breed, as well as those of mixed and unknown blood, and from different parts of France, have been extensively imported into the United States and have been variously known as Percherons, Percheron-Normans, Norman Percherons, and French horses; and this multiplication of names, which is very perplexing to the uninitiated, has led to no small amount of controversy. A society for the purpose of securing the publication of a stud book for this breed was organized in February, 1876, and the first volume of its stud book appeared in September of the same year. This society has the honor of being the oldest draft-horse breeders' association in existence; and its stud book of which volumes have been published, antedates all other draft-horse stud books. The Compound Percheron -Norman was adopted by this society as a compromise name at its annual meeting in February, 1878.

But very few were satisfied with the unwieldy compound. People continued to call them Norman-Percherons, Percherons, and Normans. But in July 1883 the French association was formed and then the name was clear as they called them simply Percheron. In November 1883 the American society met and ruled that no animals imported after January first, 1884, should be recorded in the stud book of the Society unless previously recorded in the Percheron Stud Book of France. All draft horses imported as Percherons or Normans prior to that date are eligible and all animals bred in this country showing five top crosses to recorded stock may also be recorded. Foals from recorded dams get by recorded sires are also eligible". So much for the history. Now as to the opinions of popular breeders on important points of today.

In seeking information on this race of horses many letters were written to the most popular breeders and I here give a summary of the answers received.

In answer to the questions, Mr. Robinson says, "(1). Why do we select the Percherons? Because they are the best sellers, are the hardiest and easiest to raise to maturity, will sell at any age and always command the top price of the market.



(2). What are their superior and weak qualities? Their superior qualities are their good disposition, good eyes and feet, little hair on legs, and good workers and feeders, being marketable at any age. (3). What do I think of the 1800 pound draft horse? The 1800 pound draft horse is probably the most satisfactory for all purposes but the 2000 pound ones command the higher prices especially for breeders. A good registered draft stallion should weigh never less than 1800 and the 2000 pound one is much to be preferred on account of maintaining the size of the colts.

To maintain that weight the colts should be taught to eat at the side of the mare before weaning and should have extra care the first winter after weaning. Horses need no grain after good grass pasture comes in the spring, and not much in the winter when alfalfa is fed."

Below is a list of the weights of some of our best Kansas Percherons, weight, age and all considered. This list was prepared by going over all registered Percherons in Kansas and selecting what the writer considers the best ones. Most are Kansas bred, but some are imported stock.

Dalophon	4 years stallion	2200 pounds.
Brillianta	9 " mare	1900 "
Casino (45462) 27830	6 " stallion	2150 "
Florenta	7 " mare	1800 "
Rosa Bonheur (10382) 11324	17 " "	2000 "
Fine (26998) 13085	16 " "	1900 "
Bijon 18372	9 " "	2000 "
Carnotta 28268	3 " "	1700 "
Zaza 24618	2 " "	1500 "
La Rosa 24619	2 " "	1500 "
Fauvette 27223	1 " "	1100 "
Diamond 25896	2 " stallion	1550 "
Perfection 25404	2 " "	1500 "
Nicodeme 27758	1 " "	1100 "



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Spring Colt	5 months	mare	700 pounds.
Fantoine (43683) 25973	3 years	stallion	2000 "

It seems to be the popular idea of our American breeders that black is purely and American color and that grey or bay would be a better color but they must grow black to sell at best prices. And also these breeders like the breeders of shorthorn cattle are trying to agree on one color which would undoubtedly be a great advantage and there is no doubt but that black will be chosen altho this is not the best color for our work horses. Since it is our hot summers more than our winters that we must guard against and black is the greatest color to absorb heat, hence our hot summers affect our black horses more than they do the bay or grey ones. Personally I like the bay much the best for its ease of care and conductor of heat.

The breeders of this race of horses claim early maturity as a strong point in their favor; stating that they reach maturity for breeding purposes at three years. They are the horse in general used in France and rapidly growing popular in America. They are the great plow horse, their tremendous strength enabling a team of them to handle with ease the farm implements usually considered for three of our common Kansas farm horses, and the same team goes to the commodious carriage and carries its owner safely and swiftly to market, or over the country at a cheerful, easy ten-mile-an-hour gait, and again he goes to the ponderous four-wheeler, city, heavy transfer wagons and draws to the factories, going away in a slashing walk, with 10,000 to 15,000 pounds on paved roads.

After looking up the breeding of the genuine Percheron draft horse, had I an opportunity to select my sire I would be found serving my best now common farm mares with Percheron stallions, and making out of the off-spring, not alone my heavy draft horse for my hard farm work but also a horse for my hauling and marketing.

In a word the Percheron draft horse is a great breed of horses fast coming to the front in America to fill the long felt need, the vacant spot. He is the



oasis in the heretofore too barren plain of American draft horse breeding. We call him "the draft horse". As we have said, he is the road horse, carriage horse, and all-work horse of Germany and France and his pedigree is based upon the right foundation. He will make a good horse for our heavy artillery and ambulance wagons.

Having great, in fact, unlimited faith in this breed of horses and the success of American horse breeders at heart, I request you to have the breed at heart, and import no common or inferior animals; buy the best and only the best. Do not allow yourself in a single instance, to purchase a big, over-grown, cold-blooded looking animals. Buy alone blood-like active, sweet, clean horses that have with all these qualities one essential point more and that is size and strength. They must have good feet under them and strong constitutions with clean, good action.

Size and strength is what we want in our coming horse and by the use of Percheron stallions, well selected, plenty of alfalfa, our wants will be fulfilled. Alfalfa and Percheron horses I consider two best lines for advancement and profit for the Kansas farmer.