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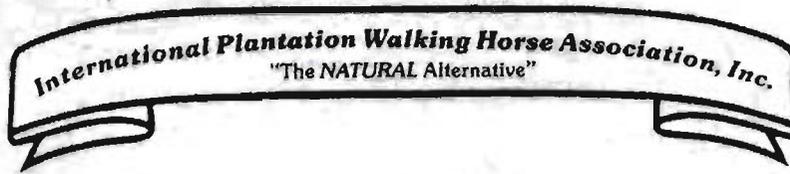


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INTERNATIONAL PLANTATION WALKING HORSE ASSOCIATION
POST OFFICE BOX 18194 - RENO, NEVADA 89511

October 9, 1997

Barbara Ringer
Register of Copyrights
Library of Congress
Washington, D.C. 20559

OCT. 14. 1997

RE: TX 3-633-925

Dear Ms Ringer,

This document is to inform the Register of Copyrights and those concerned, that all exclusive rights of the "The Standard for the Natural Tennessee Walking Horse", Reference number TX 3-633-925. Author: International Plantation Walking Horse Assoc. Inc. have been transferred to Elizabeth Ann Graves, 14537 37th St. Clear Lake, MN 55310. This has been done by way of Executive Committee vote.

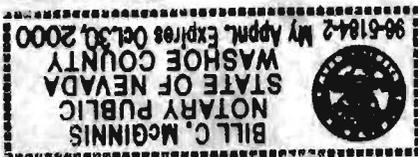
All future correspondence should be sent to Elizabeth Graves.

Sincerely,

Barbara Weatherwax
Barbara Weatherwax, President IPWHA

*Oct 10 1997 Washoe county
State of Nevada.*

Bill C McGinnis



THE STANDARD FOR THE NATURAL TENNESSE WALKING HORSE

Presented by

The

International Plantation Walking Horses Association, Inc.

Copyright submitted by IPWHA, Inc and received by the Library of Congress 1993

Copyright transferred to Elizabeth Graves 1997

A Brief history of this History Making Document

The IPWHA is now gone and has been many years now. Sadly, another victim of human politics that seems to infect so much of the equine industry in some way or another. It's initial intent to create an organization in which was passionate in protecting the TWH from the bad image horsemanship practices that seemed to be running rampant during this time. An organization dedicated to preserving a breed of horse.

A proposal was brought to the board that a standard was needed to define just what that breed was. The Father organization of the breed had no such document and when this standard came in to existence it was very much a threat as the definitions in this document presented a very different representation than was being exhibited in many show rings across the country. The Committee appointed to the development of this document was Chair person Liz Graves, Sami Simons and Rodger Hand Jr. Sami Simons worked on this project diligently in the committee for many months until her life situation changed. Rodger Hand did not participate in its development except praise of work done by Liz and Sami as it developed.

The full weight of this work and its completion falling to Liz Graves

The goal was to get a consensus of agreement in its content from across the country. Not an easy task in that so many definitions and opinions of what the THW was existed.

The task to find a common language that was accepted by all was a challenge in its self.

The unimaginable hours in phone calls, letters written to create a document that would live up to its intended purpose yet please the political pressures from all over the country was a huge task and challenge.

In the end it was simply the naturally gaited horses themselves that gave the best and true meaning to what the standard and definitions should contain. This is where Liz Graves turned to create this document leaving all the internal battles from those outside the committee behind. As passionate as many were around the country in the desire for this document to come into existence the Executive Committee of the time, just kind of passed it over and let it die in their interest no matter how much was presented in its developmental stages. It was the inception of a new President Sharon Corr of NY that was aware it was being worked upon and in a rough draft, final stage creating the last push to finalize and get approval. Liz worked to finish it up and was presented to the Executive committee, Board for acceptance and voted in as the official standard of the Association. The out pouring of its acceptance nationwide and in Canada was over whelming and adopted by most natural clubs and Associations around the country, taking many by surprise how valuable it was at the time to the entire Walking horse industry. When the IPWHA decided to stop its operations once and for all, it was decided the Copyright be transferred to Liz Graves, major contributor and creator of the document.

To this day much of its contents are seen reused in many documents in the Descriptions of gaits and conformation all over the world by gaited horse people of all walks of life.

An important part of history had been made to last the test of time.

It is first and foremost the horses themselves that we thank for what they have contributed to us all.

INTRODUCTION

This detailed work on the conformation and gaits of the natural Tennessee Walking Horse is presented by the International Plantation Walking Horse Association, Inc., as a service to breeders, fanciers, trainers, veterinarians, aspiring judges, experienced judges and those seeking to educate themselves about this unique breed.

Our intent is to describe the conformation of the breed and how it relates to the mechanics of the distinctive gaits. This should provide a better understanding of the role of breeder as well as judge. Furthermore, it will serve as a useful tool for prospective buyers, or the veterinarian who may be asked to do a soundness exam on a Tennessee Walking Horse.

The reader is cautioned that these descriptions are of the "Ideal", and rarely are ideal models seen. Instead, one must select from among variations. The responsibility of breeders, judges and fanciers, is to select animals with the least number of variations from the ideal. Always keep in mind that extremes and exaggerations are the enemies of gait efficiency, and above all else, the Tennessee Walking Horse was developed for efficient gaits!

THE STANDARD FOR THE NATURAL TENNESSEE WALKING HORSE

The TWH is a special breed of horse. He was developed by Man for a specific purpose, to be a utility horse - the common man's all-purpose power source. The horse had to be capable of pulling a plow, carrying the kids to school during the week and driving the family to church on Sunday. Roads were few and of poor quality, not only did he have to be rugged and strong, but sure-footed, with exceptional endurance.

The uniquely smooth, ground-covering intermediate gait was selected and perpetuated through careful blending of long striding pacers, and sturdy, sensible trotting saddle horses. The result was the natural Tennessee Walking Horse (TWH).

At that time a horse was not a luxury, but an absolute necessity. Frequently, he was a topic of conversation and the best were a source of considerable value and pride. Pride in ownership resulted in informal contests and races, with a little wagering on the side. Eventually all of this led to the beginnings of the Saturday night horse show.

The modern judge does well to remember the humble, but important beginnings of the breed in evaluating the horse of today. Form must follow function, efficiency of gait is paramount. Faults that impair efficiency must not be tolerated. To insure these gaits are transmitted to the next generations assuring the future of the breed, the characteristics directly contributing to the natural execution of these gaits must be understood and prized. This standard describes the distinctive traits of the natural TWH.

GENERAL

Height range is 14.2 to 17 hands, the majority falling between 15 - 15.3h. The TWH gives the impression of sturdiness without coarseness, and refinement without frailty. Marked resemblance to another breed is faulty. The Tennessee Walking Horse is unique.

DISPOSITION

While it can be very difficult to evaluate the temperament of a horse at a show, we are cautioned to remember the purpose of the TWH. His bearing should be noble, but never hot or flighty. Neither should he be plodding and disinterested. A quiet, willing horse, with a mild disposition is ideal.

CONFORMATION

HEAD

The head should be in good balance with the size, bone, conformation and sex of the horse. A clean head, wide between the eyes, with flat face, tapering to a neat muzzle and tight lips, is preferred. Ears should be nicely shaped and mobile.

Eyes should be expressive, kindly and large, not bulging. It is not uncommon however, for the white (sclera) to show, sometimes giving a startled expression. This is not faulty. Glass and blue eyes are equally acceptable.

Good large nostrils are desired. Stallions may have a larger, more pronounced jaw. Teeth must be strong and meet level. Parrot mouth (overbite) and monkey mouth (underbite) are unacceptable.

NECK

Neck is set on neither straight up as a Saddlebred nor low as a stock horse. It should be slightly arched, clean at the throat latch, moderately long and full. Gradually larger as it approaches and blends smoothly into the shoulder. Stallions may show more crest than mares or geldings.

The neck is extremely important as a counterbalance in the head nod, especially in performing the flat walk and running walk. It also provides a counterbalance in the canter. A thin, weak neck is as faulty as a short, overloaded one. Free use of a well made neck is very important in the proper execution of all gaits.

SHOULDER

The shoulder has been called the most important element in the conformation of the TWH. Without a long, well angled shoulder, reach of the forelegs will be restricted and overall stride will be impaired. A long reaching front is half of the equation needed for a ground covering stride, the basis for efficiency and therefore endurance. It also contributes to the smoothness of gait.

The ideal shoulder angle is 45 degrees to the vertical. The long blade attaching to a relatively short humerus is a contributing factor in the evenness of foot timing. Neck and shoulder should be well blended, creating a clean withers.

CHEST

The chest should be deep and long, with well sprung ribs to allow for ample heart and lung room. It is important however, that the chest not be too rounded at the girth to allow for maximum freedom of movement of shoulder and foreleg assembly.

FRONT LEGS

Front legs support 60 - 65% of the horse's total weight. Their importance cannot be overstated. Strong straight legs, with good bone and a large round hoof are required. The front legs are set well under the mass of shoulder and neck, with a muscular chest visible in profile. The front legs may be somewhat closer together than in other horses of the same size, due to the slight flattening of the ribs directly behind the humerus allowing for freedom of the foreleg assembly.

The scapula should be as long as possible and at a 45 degree angle to the vertical, forming a 90 degree angle with the humerus. The cannon tends to be longer than in other breeds. The pastern is strong, moderate in length and at a 45 degree angle. The cracked, weak or deformed hoof must be faulted.

Unique to the TWH is the contribution proper front end assembly makes to the quality of gait, by appearing to pull in the ground the horse is covering. This is actually a pushing effect as the horse shifts its weight to the forehand.

BACK

The back of the TWH appears shorter than that of other breeds, due to slightly leggy proportions and the well angled croup. Angle of the shoulder and mounting of the neck contribute to the illusion. The back receives and transmits the powerful drive of the hindquarters and to do so effectively, it must be strong and muscular.

RUMP

When standing naturally, the point of the rump is level with the withers. The rump is long with a croup dropping off at a 45 degree angle. The angle of the pelvis is as important as the shoulder angle, for this determines the ability of the hindquarters to reach under the horse.

REAR LEGS

Playing the major role in propelling the horse forward, the hind legs of the TWH are key to his conformation. Although many individuals of the breed exhibit what are commonly termed sickle hocks, the angulation and bone length ratios which produce this type of conformation are not necessarily desirable for an efficient gait. In a well conformed hind leg, the femur should be slightly longer than the tibia/fibula. The femur should fit into the pelvis at an angle no less than 60 degrees and the angle formed by the femur/tibia at the stifle should not exceed 110 degrees. There will be some variation from the ideal, but decisions should be based efficiency of gait.

Muscling of the hind legs should be strong and flat (rather than bulging at the inner gaskin), resulting from a sweeping forward motion with little upward action of the hocks.

When viewed from the rear, the hind legs should be straight, with the center of the heels, hocks and hips aligned. Cow hocks, splayed hocks, excessive toe in or out, and base narrow hind legs are faulty and should be penalized. Asymmetrical hind legs, one appearing straight and the other displaying some deviations, should be penalized as well.

COAT COLOR

A TWH can be any color or combination of colors. White markings on the legs, face and body are quite common. Tobiano, overo, roans, etc. and all solid colors are equally acceptable.

MANE AND TAIL

The mane should be natural. A bridle path may be clipped, and the forelock trimmed for showing.

The tail should also be natural. It is common for the TWH to carry its tail somewhat elevated and out from the body when gaitting.

For show purposes, braided ribbons are placed into the forelock and the forward-most portion of the mane adjoining the bridle path. Ribbons are not allowed in western classes.

BALANCE

In evaluating the TWH, emphasis must be placed on those traits distinguishing this unique breed. This in no way minimizes the importance of sound conformation. Another equally important consideration is balance of parts. A horse must be a pleasing blend of parts, never so exaggerated in one trait destroying the harmony or balance of the whole. This is particularly true of balance in angulation of fore and hind. A horse slightly deficient in both, would be preferable to the horse extreme in one aspect and lacking in another. Fore and hind must work in perfect harmony, producing an ideal ground covering, smooth and efficient gait. Balance must be given due consideration.

Remember the purpose for which this breed was developed. In assessing conformation, we must understand and appreciate how certain characteristics contribute or detract from execution of prized gaits. We must be careful to place emphasis on traits which are inherited, and directly affect the future of the breed. To quote Dr. J.H. Jones, a veterinarian with over 50 years of experience with the TWH:

1 "Horses tortured to man-make an exaggerated or artificial gait cannot transmit that gait to their progeny because they do not have it naturally. The breed itself could be virtually eliminated in time if artificially-gaited horses were to win show stakes and become major factors in the breeding of Tennessee Walking Horses."

WEIGHTED SCALE FOR CONFORMATION JUDGING

Head	5%
Neck	15%
Forequarters	15%
Hindquarters	15%
Back	10%
Legs and Feet	20%
Balance	10%
Condition	5%
Presence	5%

THE GAITS OF THE NATURAL TENNESSEE WALKING HORSE

DESCRIPTION OF THE FLAT WALK

The fundamental gait is the flat walk. An evenly timed four-beat gait, with the same footfall sequence, timing and support sequence, as the ordinary walk of other breeds, it is the basis for the Running Walk.

Setting it apart are: length of stride, overstride, head nod and looseness.

Length of stride in the flat walk is greater than the ordinary walk of other breeds, because of the special conformation of the TWH.

Overstride is tied directly to this feature. It is, technically, the distance the hoof print of the hind foot steps past the hoof print of the fore foot on the same side. There is a moment during the reach of the hind foot when the front foot has just left the ground: both legs travel forward with the back foot close behind the front until it reaches its maximum stride and is set down, while the front foot continues its reach. In evenly timed footfalls, at the moment the hind foot is set down, the corresponding fore is halfway through its stride. This can be identified by the front foot in line with the shoulder. At the moment of overstride the horse's weight is supported by the opposite foreleg directly contributing to the smoothness and length of stride of the gait. The croup moves smoothly, the legs independently, creating a "square" gait, with neither diagonal or lateral pairs appearing to move in unison.

The head nod is critical, supplying counterbalance. This is not a simple bobbing up and down of the head, but the effective use of the head and neck as a productive feature of the gait. Head nod in the flat walk is distinct and rhythmic. It causes a "whipping" back and forth of the mane, up and down flopping of the forelock, and in some horses, the ears. It lends to the bold quality of the flat walk and may tend to diminish as speed increases into the running walk.

Looseness is evident in the slower speeds and diminishes with increasing speed. "Looseness" is the most difficult quality to define. It may be interpreted as suppleness, or a complete absence of tension. This relaxation includes muscles and joints.

In the flat walk, the horse must exhibit all elements: evenness, four-beat, head nod, overstride, length of stride and looseness. In addition, the ride must clearly demonstrate the smoothness of the gait. Exaggeration is not to be prized. The truly balanced and effortless horse is so well coordinated that attention is not drawn to any one feature of the gait. Ease and fluidity in execution of the gait is paramount.

OVERSTRIDE Measurement of the distance the hoof print of the hind foot steps past the hoof print of the fore foot on the same side. At the flat walk it can vary from a few inches to well over a foot, depending on the conformation of the horse and the development of its gait. With practice the overstride can be easily observed.

LENGTH OF STRIDE Distance from the toe print of the right hind, to the toe print of the next right hind. It is a very important element because the longer the stride, the more ground is covered with fewer footfalls. Therefore, it is less effort for the horse. This is efficiency of gait.

LOOSENESS Perhaps the most difficult quality to define and observe. It is partly a product of conformation and partly relaxation. It is more evident in the slower gait of the flat walk. Looseness may be observed as motion of the head and neck into the shoulders. It may also be indicated in some horses by the relaxed flopping of the ears, or even lips and teeth, in rhythm with the head nod. Looseness contributes to a fluid rhythm of the gait. The horse should display a content expression of eye and ears, while moving actively forward without resistance.

Swingyness, another term for tending toward the pace, must not be accepted for looseness. As the horse is pushed into faster speeds, the looseness diminishes. A horse that is tight, stiff, short strided or choppy, cannot be exhibiting the desired looseness of the flat walk.

DESCRIPTION OF THE RUNNING WALK

Signature gait of the Tennessee Walking Horse, it is an accelerated flat walk. The difference may be a less pronounced head nod and some loss of the characteristic looseness, owing to the increased effort in executing the running walk. Overstride and stride, are increased. The horse covers more ground in less time, by taking longer steps, not necessarily faster ones. The running walk is the "glide ride" for which this breed is so famous. Often the horse will appear to lean into the gait, much the way a horse leans into a harness to pull a load. The hind legs are reaching under and driving, while the the front legs are reaching out and pulling in the ground. The horse should remain square, with an even four-beat rhythm.

JUDGING THE RUNNING WALK

The running walk differs from the flat walk as a matter of degrees, much like shifting gears. Unlike the changing of footfalls when a non-gaited breed changes gaits, the running walk retains most elements of the flat walk with the possible exception of looseness. Depth of the head nod may lessen. Stride must increase significantly while overstride increases proportionately. The horse must show a noticeable increase in speed from the flat walk to the running walk, but form must not be sacrificed for speed. Any gait variation such as the rack, stepping pace or fox trot must be faulted.

GAIT VARIATIONS Judges must be familiar with these four-beat variations and how they differ from the true running walk.

RACK

- Usually faster, sometimes approaching 35 mph.
- There is no body-based head nod.
- The motion of the front and hind legs is usually elevated (high action), causing the croup to bob up and down.
- A smooth bi-lateral four beat gait in which the fore leg and the hind leg on the same side, are paired in their movements. Timing of the paired laterals is not precisely in unison because the hind leg leads the movement. Sequence example: 1. right hind, 2. right front, 3. left hind, 4. left front. Sounds like Ta-pit.
- The horse takes a jumping step between transverse pairs of legs (both front, both hind), leaving at alternate moments, both front or both hind clear of the ground.
- The horse travels with a hollow back and flexes up and down at the sacro-lumbar junction.

Although the rack is smooth to ride, it requires a great deal of energy on the part of the horse and significantly increases stress on its legs. Most TWH can execute the rack, but this gait is not acceptable when the running walk is asked for.

STEPPING PACE

- It is a broken lateral gait, with the hind foot of one side setting down noticeably before the front of the same side.
- The head and neck motion will tend to be a side to side sway.
- The footfalls are not evenly timed. Its one / two / / three / four, with the beats closest together in timing coming from the set down of the lateral pair of hooves.

FOX TROT

- It is a broken diagonal gait, with the front hoof setting down noticeably before the opposite hind.
- There will be head nod, up and down with the motion of the front legs.
- There is an up and down croup motion producing a bobbing of the tail.
- The hind legs reach forward with a trotting motion, breaking at the hocks. Not required to do more than deface the track.
- The footfalls are an unevenly timed one / two / / three / four, with the beats closest together in time coming from the set down of the diagonal pair of hooves.

DESCRIPTION OF THE CANTER

The canter is a three beat gait: one hind, followed by the other hind and diagonal fore; the second fore, followed by a moment of suspension. The horse is said to be on the "lead" of the last front and hind foot to set down. At no time in the true canter is there any appearance of the horse walking with the hind legs or rearing with the front ones. The head and neck will rise as the hindquarters lower, pushed upwards by the thrust of the leading foreleg. This body action helps the horse to move forward with an economy of energy.

The canter should be no faster than 10 mph, with no tendency to become a four beat gallop or a ground hugging lope. The gait should be smooth and enjoyable.

JUDGING THE CANTER

The canter is a collected, three beat rhythmical gait. It must be executed easily on the correct lead, both front and back. Head and neck are lifted by the action of the leading front leg, but this rising motion must not become so extreme as to resemble a horse rearing. The forward motion must be preserved. The canter should never appear a stationary, "go nowhere" gait. Pumping the reins to raise the head or jerking on the bit to lift the front end are prohibited and must be penalized.

GENERAL

In judging the natural Tennessee Walking Horse, exaggeration must be faulted. It is the enemy of gait efficiency - the very basis and purpose for the running walk. A utility horse, whether evaluated at a show or on the trail, must be prized and rewarded for those inherited traits which distinguish and define the breed. While it is easy to be distracted by high leg action, or extreme speed, the TWH must be judged on the basis of enduring smooth and properly executed gaits over mere showiness or style. At all times, the horse and rider must give the impression that the gaits are natural to the horse and as a team, the two could perform any of the three gaits smoothly, with minimum effort and great endurance.

FAULTS

Flat Walk

1. Lack of any of Six Elements
 - a. Evenness of foot timing
 - b. Distinct four beats
 - c. Head Nod
 - d. Overstride
 - e. Length of Stride
 - f. Looseness.
2. Lack of Efficiency of Gait
 - a. Exaggerated knee action
 - b. Upward Hock Action
 - c. Winging
 - d. Wringing of Hocks
 - e. Lack of harmony and balance in reach and drive
 - f. Short, choppy gait
 - g. Lack of "Naturalness"
 - h. Lack of consistency.

Running Walk

1. Same as Flat Walk 1. A-E
2. Same as Flat Walk 2. A-H
3. Failure to show distinct increase in speed from Flat Walk
4. Excessive motion of rider indicating lack of smoothness
5. Gait variations - rack, stepping pace, fox trot, pace, trot.

Canter

1. Other than a three beat gait
2. Fast, runaway gait
3. Incorrect leads - front, rear, or both
4. Rider pumping reins, jerking on bit
5. Unnatural gait - half rearing, half walking.

Rider

1. Over-riding the horse in any gait
2. Excessively tight rein
3. Pumping reins
4. Stiff unnatural posture
5. Slumped hunch-back posture.