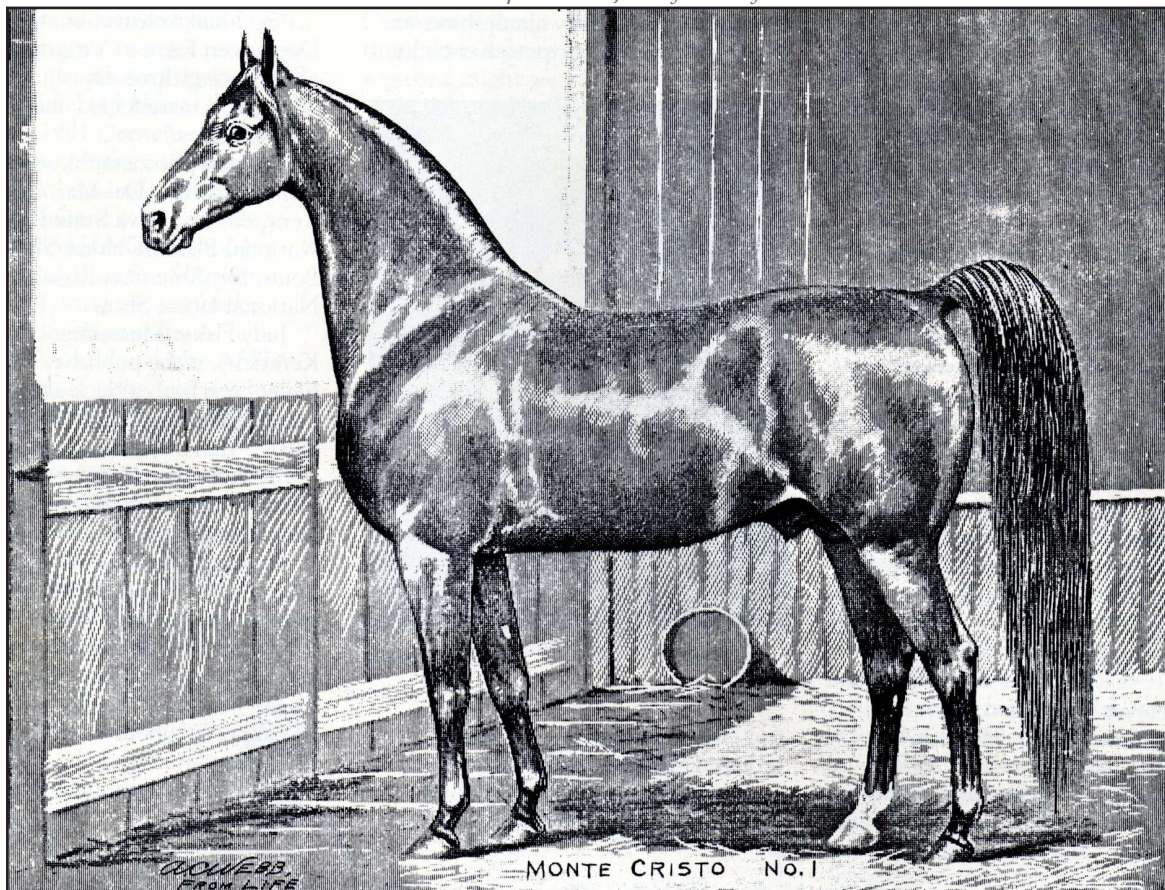


# THE FIRST REGISTERED SADDLEBRED MONTE CRISTO, JR. 1

By Lynn Weatherman

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Monte Cristo, Jr. by A. C. Webb. This reproduction is taken actual size, directly from original Volume One of the American Saddlebred Registry

**J**.T. Crenshaw, a highly respected gentleman who owned a farm at Todd's Point in Shelby County, Kentucky, was a close friend to Col. I. B. Nall, editor of *The Farmers Home Journal*. He was also a Saddle Horse exhibitor, and Nall saw to it that Crenshaw was present at the meeting of horsemen in Louisville on April 7, 1891, to organize the National Saddle Horse Breeders Association. Crenshaw became an enthusiastic supporter of the new organization, and Nall accepted the position of secretary and was the first registrar.

Another meeting was held early in June to establish the rules for registering horses, and then the task of registering Saddlebreds began. Because many of the old records were lost in a fire, there is no way of knowing how the first horse

was selected. We do know that the start-up was not easy. Many horsemen were reluctant to participate, so General John B. Castleman, the first president, Col. Nall and other officials of the new association began soliciting people to register their horses.

Herbert Krum, the preeminent Saddlebred writer of the day, described the registration of Chester Dare. One can probably make a similar scenario applicable to many of the first horses to enter the registry.

"About this time (summer of 1891), the first volume of the American Saddle Horse Breeders Register was taking shape, and when the secretary of the Association, the late I. B. Nall, asked E. W. McCormack during the Shelby County Fair what number he wanted in the Register for Chester Dare, Mr. McCormack told him

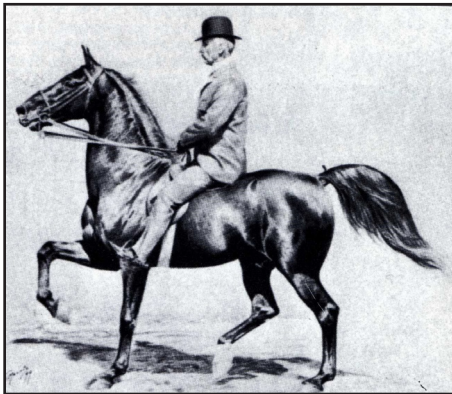
he would like to have the number "10" for him as he was certain Chester Dare would be to the Saddle Horse what Hambletonian 10 had been to the trotting horse."

We suspect that it was at the same Shelby County Fair where it was agreed that Crenshaw's four-year-old stallion Monte Cristo, Jr. would be number 1. Monte Cristo, Jr. was mahogany bay with a white star and snip and right hind ankle. Standing 15.3, he was considered a model horse of his day and said to have pure gaits with great style and action.

It is known that he was inspected by I. B. Nall and his gaits certified by Nall and James H. Morris of Pendleton County, Kentucky. A "six gaited" horse, Monte Cristo, Jr. could perform at the walk, trot, canter, rack, as well as the running walk and fox trot.

Horses accepted for registration in that first stud book:

1. All animals that show five distinct gaits, viz.: (1) walk, (2) trot, (3) rack, (4) canter, (5) running walk, fox trot, or slow pace;
2. Any stallion whose sire, grandsire, dam, and grand dam are strains of blood recognized by this Association;
3. Any stallion that has sired five or more performers under Rule 1;
4. Any mare that has produced two or more performers under Rule 1;
5. Progeny of a standard (registered) horse out of a standard mare;
6. The female progeny of a standard horse when out of a mare by a standard horse.



George Ford Morris' painting of Monte Cristo, Jr. and J. T. Crenshaw. This is probably an accurate depiction of the horse in motion.

Even the gaits of the great Rex McDonald were certified when he was registered.

Monte Cristo, Jr. was bred by Hopkins Brothers, Shelby County, and foaled in 1887. His sire was the very beautiful and famous show horse Monte Cristo 59, owned by J.M. Atkins of Mortonville in Woodford County, Kentucky. Monte Cristo was sired by the great show stallion Montrose by Diamond Denmark. Diamond Denmark was a son of Gaines Denmark by Denmark F.S. and out of Queen by Bald Stockings, the famous running walk horse by Tom Hall.

Monte Cristo 59 was out of the Hall of Fame Broodmare Fannie Giltner who also produced Mark Diamond and King Eagle. She was by Garrett's Black William, a full brother to Mollie 70, the dam of Black Squirrel.

Black William was a line-bred Highlander. The Highlanders were a Thoroughbred family tracing to the Godolphin Barb and made important contributions to the early Saddlebreds because of their popularity with such important breeders as the Garretts and the Graves from Woodford County, Kentucky.

The dam of Monte Cristo, Jr. 1 was said to be a Thoroughbred mare, but nothing else was known of her.

MONTE CRISTO, JR. (1'S'). 1887, BLACK	MONTE CRISTO (59'S). 1881, BAY	MONTROSE (106'S). 1869, BAY	DIAMOND DENMARK(68'S), 1858, BAY	GAINES' DENMARK (61'S), 1851, BLACK
			SALLIE (TH) (900081M)	QUEEN (BHF) (48M), 1852
	FANNIE GILTNER (BHF) (59M), 1871	GLENCoe (TH) (HALL'S) (900074S)	DAUGHTER OF POST BOY (TH) (900075M)	
		BLACK WILLIAM (GARRETT'S) (900078S)	HIGHLANDER (GILTNER'S BROWN) (900076S)	
THOROUGHbred MARE(900080M)	untraced	DAUGHTER OF IMP. WHIP (900077S)	BETTY (69M), 1872, BLACK	IMP. WHIP (TH) (900077S)

J.T. Crenshaw successfully showed Monte Cristo, Jr. all over the country. In 1893 at the Chicago World's Fair, he was third in the class for stallions five years and older. The winner was Green's Hambletonian, owned by Joe Green, Franklinton, Kentucky, with second to Artist Montrose shown by Jefferson Bridgeford. Blood Chief, Jr., High Tide, Rex Denmark, Artist Jr., and Brilliant were also in the class. Monte Cristo, Jr. was second in the stallion sweepstakes, won by Artist Montrose.

The Crenshaw entry of Monte Cristo, Jr., Raven, and Princes Jr. was fourth in the sweepstakes for a "herd." The animals were not required to be related in this class for stallion, mare, and gelding, sponsored by the National Saddle Horse Breeders Association, the winners to receive the Breeders' Cup.

General John B. Castleman was the winner with Claudius Denmark, Emily, and Jefferson, with second to Lee Rose, Miss Rex, and The Mascot, the entry of Joseph A. Potts. The Harrison brothers' herd composed of Rex Denmark, Lady Rex, and King Rex was third.

The next season, Monte Cristo, Jr. was shipped to Missouri to challenge Rex McDonald. He was considered a legitimate rival to Rex, along with Thornton's Star and Ike. In the sweepstakes at Mexico in 1894, Monte Cristo, Jr. was third behind Rex McDonald and Lou Chief. At the St. Louis Fair he was second to Rex in the stallion class, and the results of the championship were



Monte Cristo 59, the sire of Monte Cristo, Jr. This son of Montrose, foaled in 1881, was owned and shown by J.M. Atkins, Mortonville, Kentucky. This rare old photo was taken by McClure.

as they had been at Mexico.

Monte Cristo, Jr. was one of the competitors in the historic Stillwell Stake in Kansas City in 1896, where Rex McDonald met a decisive defeat. Miss Rex was the winner with Tom Bass aboard. They were followed by Thornton's Star, Miss Bartle, Ike, and Rose Denmark. Such horses as Rex McDonald, Monte Cristo, Jr., Highland Denmark, and Indian Boy were out of the money in this class of 22 contestants.

At the Kentucky shows, Monte Cristo, Jr. was a big winner, especially in combination classes. He won so frequently at Florence, Kentucky, that the show had a difficult time getting entries. In 1897, W.S. "Billy" Roberts, famed for the great walk-trot Poetry of Motion, was engaged by Col. John T. Hughes to show Rex McDonald for that season. Roberts took Rex to Florence and beat Crenshaw and Monte Cristo in every class except the model class, where the beautiful bay stallion prevailed.

In the 1930s Roberts was interviewed by Martha C. Moore for her book Memories of Rex McDonald. Roberts related an interesting tale.

"I remember the fair at Lawrenceburg years ago, in a class for combination stallions, when Mr. J.T. Crenshaw was exhibiting Monte Cristo, Jr. That horse always won the combination stallion class and all other classes, and, knowing Rex McDonald, I told them that the next year I would bring a horse there that would beat Monte Cristo, Jr.

"Of course, they did not know which horse I had in mind. The next year, and on the day before the show, I started out with Rex (from Lexington) and walked him 14 miles at night to the show. When I got there we put him in a stall, and I instructed the groom to keep the doors closed and under no consideration let anyone see him or open the door.

"We pulled the buggy up near the stall, and after the class was called and Monte Cristo, Jr. and the others had gone into the ring, we hitched Rex McDonald, and within a few minutes we were in the ring too.

"Imagine Mr. Crenshaw's surprise when he saw Rex McDonald. He worked fine for me that day, and we unhitched him and

I rode him around the ring where he was the center of attraction and the favorite with the audience.

"When we lined up, Rex McDonald and Monte Cristo, Jr. were side by side. The judge awarded the blue to Rex McDonald, and no sooner had he done it than Monte Cristo, Jr. reared on his hind legs and struck at Rex McDonald, who remained as calm and placid as if the incident had not happened and never made an attempt to strike back.

"It was an act of almost human intelligence, for it seemed as if Monte Cristo, Jr. knew he had lost the class."

The fate of the first registered American Saddlebred is unclear, but we have some clues. J.T. Crenshaw acquired the good stallion Kentucky's Artist from Jefferson Bridgeford, replacing Monte Cristo, Jr. as his show horse. Crenshaw also moved from Todd's Point to Falmouth, about 30 miles south of Cincinnati, Ohio.

Monte Cristo, Jr. was made a gelding in 1899 after having sired 15 foals. None of them appears to have been remarkable. Stablemate Kentucky's Artist was apparently the better sire. Perhaps Monte Cristo, Jr. inherited his famous grandsire's temperament. It has been documented that Montrose transmitted his hot, temperamental attitude, and although Montrose bred horses made outstanding show horses, they were difficult to work. His rearing and striking after the combination class at Lawrenceburg in 1897 may have been an indication of bad temper rather than "human intelligence," but as we frequently see in the show ring today, perhaps he was startled by the crowd reaction.

Nonetheless, some American Saddlebreds of today can be traced to



Charcoal drawing by George Ford Morris entitled "Five Gaiters. J. T. Crenshaw On Monte Cristo, Jr." The face on the rider at right resembles Morris' other depiction of J. T. Crenshaw, therefore the black horse could be Rex McDonald.

Monte Cristo, Jr. 1, primarily through his daughter Roxy May. Some of her descendants include the get of Allen Blessman's stallion Melody's Proud Peacock.

About the time the registry was being formed, a Nashville, Tennessee, artist, A. C. Webb, toured Kentucky to draw famous Saddlebred stallions, Monte Cristo, Jr. among them. This drawing was published as a steel engraving in the original Volume One of the registry, labeled Monte Cristo No. 1. The "Jr." was left off, but there is no doubt as to which horse was represented.

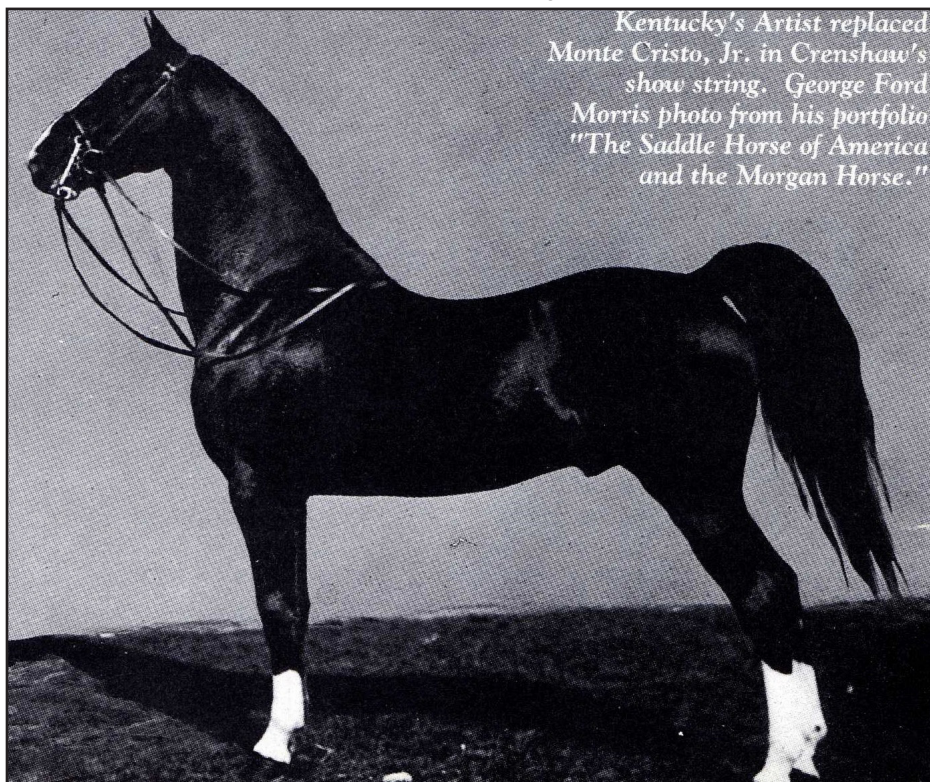
This omission led to an apparent error that has persisted over the years. In 1900, when ASHA needed a horse for its logo on registration certificates, applications,

stationery, and other documents, the Webb image of Monte Cristo, Jr. was used. The horse was reversed and the background removed, but comparison with the original shows that the ASHA horse is the same. This is a fitting tribute to Monte Cristo, Jr. 1.

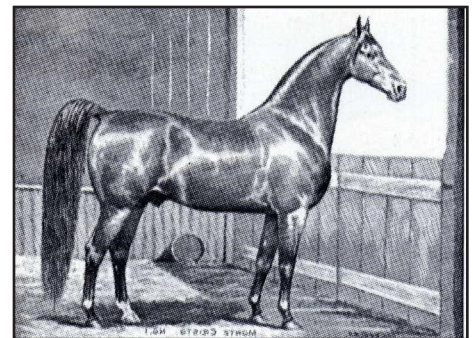
Because he was probably referred to as Monte Cristo during his lifetime and because Webb failed to indicate "Junior" on the drawing, Susanne wrote that the logo was Monte Cristo. Also, because most Webb drawings had great similarity (differences in the horses easily become apparent when the drawings are placed side by side), many people thought the logo came from the Webb drawing of Montrose, a mistake that persisted over the years. There is little doubt the longtime ASHA logo horse is the first registered horse, Monte Cristo, Jr. 1.

George Ford Morris recalled as a young artist the kindness and support he received from J.T. Crenshaw. He painted Monte Cristo, Jr. at the slow gait with Crenshaw up and published a copy of the work in *Portraits of Horses* in 1952. The painting is probably not exaggerated and depicts a horse that would not be an attractive show horse today. The book also contains a reproduction of an exciting charcoal drawing of two five gaited horses, done when Morris was an art student in Paris. It is entitled "Five Gaiters. J.T. Crenshaw on Monte Cristo, Jr."

Monte Cristo, Jr. may have been sold, but we'd prefer to think that the first registered Saddlebred spent the remainder of his years as J.T. Crenshaw's pleasure mount, died quietly, and is buried somewhere near Falmouth, Kentucky.



Kentucky's Artist replaced Monte Cristo, Jr. in Crenshaw's show string. George Ford Morris photo from his portfolio "The Saddle Horse of America and the Morgan Horse."



The logo used by ASHA on registration certificates until 1984 was a steel engraving that evolved from A. C. Webb's original rendering of Monte Cristo, Jr. The image was reversed, the background dropped out, and the configuration changed slightly.

