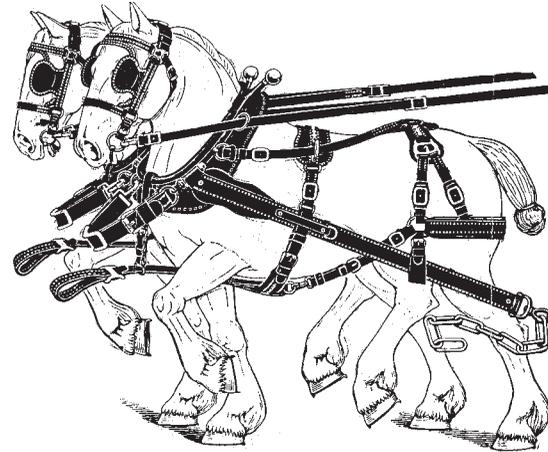


ARDENWOOD'S HORSES

The draft horses you see at Ardenwood are used in very much the same way they were used in the early 1900s. These versatile animals were the only means of travel and crucial to the heavy work needed on a farm.

The main means of long-distance travel included both horse-drawn rail cars and wagons. A horse-drawn, narrow-gauge spur line of the South Pacific Coast Railroad ran between Newark and Centerville (now part of Fremont). From 1877-1906 people in southern Alameda County used this horse-railroad system to get around. Currently Ardenwood has a mile and a half of narrow-gauge (36") track laid to simulate this mode of travel for visitors to our farm.

Every farm had a horse-drawn wagon for travel. Generally, these were drawn by more than one horse. You can ride back in time on Ardenwood's wagon. The horses at Ardenwood also plow, disk, harrow, spread manure, bring in the crops, and provide horse power for many other farm tasks. Check the schedule to discover what their job might be today.



Horses have contributed to the productivity of our farms throughout history. At Ardenwood they continue to provide the horsepower necessary to sustain a working farm our size. While visiting Ardenwood Historic Farm, be sure to admire the horses, whether they are pulling wagons, trains, farm equipment or simply resting in the farmyard.

If you have any further questions about horses, contact an East Bay Regional Park District Naturalist at:

ARDENWOOD HISTORIC FARM
34600 Ardenwood Boulevard
Fremont, CA 94555
(510) 796-0663
awvisit@ebparks.org

The Park District is a special district operating over 97,000 acres of parkland in Alameda and Contra Costa Counties. The East Bay Regional Park District is chartered to preserve open space and provide educational and recreational opportunities to area residents.

Text by Jessica Sheppard

This brochure is provided as a public service of the Interpretive and Recreation Services Department of the East Bay Regional Park District. For more information call (510) 544-2550.

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10/06

Draft Horses



Ardenwood Historic Farm

 East Bay Regional Park District

www.ebparks.org



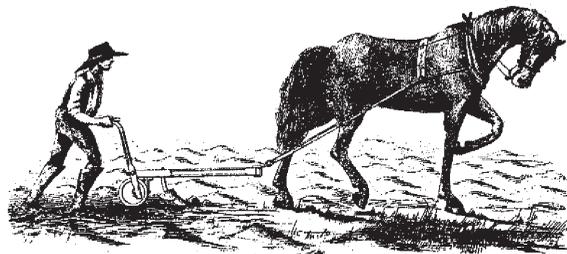
Ardenwood invites you to experience life on the farm as it was in the early 1900s. In this unique setting you can imagine you are walking through the gardens of an affluent Victorian family, taste food freshly cooked in the style of a bygone day, and help with the daily chores that kept a farm running smoothly. Back then, farm animals provided the family with meat, milk, and eggs, but the most valuable animal on the farm was the horse.

HORSE HISTORY

Although it was once commonly believed that all horses could be traced back to one breed – the Prjevalsky's horse – it is now known that modern breeds of horses can be traced back to four distinct different geographical breeds of horse, as well as hybrids. Today, there are more than 300 breeds of domesticated horses.

USEFUL COMPANIONS

Horses have been humans' most useful companions since the beginning of their long and colorful relationship. They have contributed more to the progress and pleasure of human beings than any other animal. In the early efforts to express themselves, humans captured the form of horses on cave walls 10,000 years ago in southern France. Sometime between 3000 and 2000 B.C.E. (Before Current Era), horses were first tamed and bred in captivity. They were the last of the five most common livestock animals to be domesticated and are still most like their wild ancestors. Originally horses were probably kept for meat and milk. It is still disputed whether horses were first put in harness or ridden.



Horses have been utilized historically for their strength, stamina, and speed. As agriculture became a widespread way of life, the horse's strength enabled a farmer to be more productive: most often these were draft horses, mules or hybrids. After the increase in mechanization following World War II, the use of horse power in agriculture dropped dramatically. Today, few horses are used on American farms.

DRAFT HORSES

Draft horses, as a group, are typically called "cold-blooded" breeds. This term refers to their calm and quiet temperament, not to their body temperature. These "Gentle Giants" once dominated the horse-breeding scene, in some countries comprising 80% of the equine (horse) population. These horses have medium to heavy bodies, strong legs, and large hooves, usually covered with hair called "feathers." Their short, muscled necks carry their bulky, and very expressive heads. France has been the most influential country in the breeding history of the cold-bloods. Though there are many breeds, five of the most popular and well-known are Shire, Belgian, Percheron, Clydesdale, and Suffolk. We have some of these breeds at Ardenwood.

SHIRE: The world's largest breed can weigh up to 2,860 lbs. (1300 kg). They were originally bred to carry knights into battle with heavy armor and are very strong, but far from clumsy.

BELGIANS: One of the most powerful of the draft breeds for their weight, and can pull the heaviest loads. They can weigh over 2,200 lbs. (1000 kg). Mostly chestnut-colored or red roan (reddish brown), occasionally dun (light tan).



Percheron

PERCHERON: Can weigh up to 2,200 lbs. (1,000 kg.). Relatively small, fine head and freedom of movement betrays their Arabian ancestry. Color is usually black or grey and a few are sorrel.

CLYDESDALE: Originated in Scotland in the 18th century, still very popular especially in the United States, Australia, New Zealand, and South Africa. Became well-known through beer commercials. The colors are bay, brown, and black with white on the face and legs.

SUFFOLK: From the English county of Suffolk. Known for their ability to thrive on meager rations, unlike the Shire. They are chestnut colored, short-legged, very strong, and compact.