



DENNIS and CINDY THOMPSON

Founders of the Gypsy Vanner Horse Society

On a trip to England in 1995, the sight of a colorful stallion at pasture captivated the Thompsons. The height of an average horse, but built like a draft horse, the stallion had piebald (black and white) markings, an elegant head and very hairy legs. Fascinated, the Thompsons stopped to discover who owned this striking animal. Adding to the sense of magic and mystery, the farmer who was temporarily keeping the horse told them that a Traveler owned the horse and that he also had a hidden band of mares that looked just like him.

Fascinated and smitten by this personable, colorful horse, the Thompsons spent the remainder of that day in a Gypsy camp listening to words of passion from a man about his special horse. To their delight, they learned that the Gypsy owner was willing to sell this special stallion, but it would be at least a year before he had finished with his breeding plans. The Thompsons returned to the United States brimming with curiosity and after reviewing a multitude of breed books, they were stunned to find that this intriguing horse was not recognized as a breed. Four calendar years followed with an obsession to understand what the breed was and was not. Their journey would include choosing a name for the unknown breed. The choice was between Romany Horse and Gypsy Vanner Horse and with the blessings of dedicated British Gypsy breeders, the name Gypsy Vanner Horse was chosen.

On November 24, 1996, the Thompson's established the world's first registry for a selectively bred horse developed by British Gypsies, The Gypsy Vanner Horse Society. At that time, they brought the first 16 Gypsy Vanner horses to North America. They established Gypsy Gold Farm in Ocala, Florida to breed and promote these horses. There they produced foundation bloodlines to solidify what the Gypsies had started.

Cindy Thompson passed away in 2002 from an accident. Dennis Thompson continues her legacy at Gypsy Gold. The Gypsy Vanner Horse Society is pleased to honor both Cindy and Dennis with a permanent place in the GVHS Hall of Fame.