



2019 – July – Shorty

“He’s a little nippy,” Vickie was told, “but he pulls a cart really well.” “We would have to work on manners,” Vickie thought. The family selling Shorty planned on moving out of the country for a couple of years. They loved Shorty and wanted him to go to a good home. Vickie thought it would be fun to give cart rides at True Vine, so after praying about it, she decided to buy Shorty.

Shorty was moved to True Vine in March of 2016. His size fit his name and he settled in with his little herd of miniature horses. Shorty established himself as the one in charge right away with not too much drama. Vickie and the volunteers began Shorty’s ground work at once, as he was quite naughty. When the gate was opened during feeding time, Shorty would try to run over the top of whoever was in his way. He had no respect for anyone’s space. In his mind he was not only in charge of his little herd, but also any human that tried to give him boundaries. The first time Vickie tied Shorty to the post to be groomed, he was constantly pawing at the ground, rearing up or swinging his body from side to side. He was throwing a temper tantrum because Vickie did not tie him long enough to eat grass. He bit Vickie and kicked out at her. Twice he almost knocked her over. There were no hand-fed treats that came his way and he was not happy. After grooming he was asked to go forward. He balked, refusing to obey. When Vickie finally did get Shorty to walk and trot around her in a circle, he threw a temper tantrum by dropping to the ground to roll. Vickie got him up and continued. The next day Shorty did much better at the hitching rail. He continued to improve in all areas except his nipping and biting. “I don’t think he is used to rules and structure,” Vickie thought.

The cart was soon fixed and Shorty began giving children cart rides. He was steady and very good at this job. By June Shorty was doing much better at respecting people’s space, but he often had his own agenda. We could only allow experienced volunteers to work with him. Ginger, Vickie’s granddaughter, began working with Shorty over the summer, but no matter what she did he continued to nip and bite. One day when Ginger was working with Shorty he was especially naughty. How could she help him stop biting? Then she had an idea, “I wonder what would happen if I put a blindfold on Shorty when he is naughty?” Ginger promptly found a neckerchief and tied it on Shorty’s halter. She pulled it over his eyes and began to lead him. He immediately bulldozed ahead of her, hitting the side of the barn. “I told you, Shorty,” Ginger said, “you need to walk nicely next to me. Walk on.” Again Shorty tried to go the opposite direction and met the side of the barn. “Come on, buddy,” Ginger tugged on the lead rope. Shorty walked beside Ginger. He listened to her. He became obedient and stopped trying to bite her. After about ten minutes, Ginger slipped the blind fold above his eyes so he could see. “Walk on, Shorty,” Ginger said. Shorty walked on obediently and respectfully. This was the turning point for Shorty. For the rest of the summer, Shorty had a bandana on his halter. When he became naughty, he was blindfolded for a few minutes to remind him who was in charge. Shorty’s biting and nipping became less, but we still could not trust him around small children.

During the winter Emma, one of the stable management team volunteers, worked with Shorty, but he continued to nip and bite.

In 2018 Ginger decided to show Shorty in the miniature horse classes at the VanBuren County Fair. She consistently worked with him and he developed a good work ethic. She also discovered that Shorty loved to jump! With Ginger at his side he would fly over the jumps with enthusiasm.



Shorty continued to give pony cart rides at True Vine Equestrian Center over the summer, but the biting continued to be a problem. At the end of the summer Ginger, Vickie, and the True Vine Equestrian staff prayed about what to do. Because of Shorty's biting problem, he could not be trusted to allow children to groom or lead him. It was decided to find someone who was old enough with experience and wanted a miniature horse to show and drive. We would not sell him to a novice family or a family with small children. Finally, we were contacted by a family with a twelve-year-old girl who wanted a miniature horse to show in 4-H. She had a larger horse that she rode and showed. She was also experienced with dealing with nippiness. She had been searching for a miniature horse and wanted to name it Shorty. She could hardly believe it when I told her the name of the miniature horse we had for sale. "I think this is meant to be," she said. We had been praying for the right family for Shorty and God answered out prayers!