



Mosaic of the Month September 2024

Mosaic of the Month for September is the *Indian Pony* themed glass tile work of art. This mosaic was inspired by the horse used by many American Indian Tribes of the Great Plains of the United States.

The history of the horse began some forty million years ago. Horses first emerged in North America, but after migrating to Asia over the Bering land bridge, horses disappeared from this continent at least 10,000 years ago. For millennia, Native Americans traveled and hunted on foot, relying on dogs as miniature pack animals.

When Christopher Columbus brought two dozen Andalusian horses on his second voyage to the New World in 1493, he couldn't have imagined how reintroducing the horse to North America would transform Native American life, especially for the buffalo-hunting Plains Indians, for whom the swift and loyal horse was a marriage made in heaven.

As more Native tribes encountered the horse, that initial fear gave way to awe for the animal's speed and power. With the dog as their closest reference, Indians gave this mythical new creature names like "elk dog," "sky dog" and "holy dog."

Buffalo are big, strong and fast. Before horses came to the Plains, Native hunters pursued large herds on foot, but it was dangerous, difficult work with low odds of success. One technique was to startle and chase an animal toward a cliff or drop-off called a "buffalo jump." Once wounded, the buffalo was easier to kill.

For the Plains Indians, the newfound speed and efficiency of hunting on horseback provided an abundance of high-quality meat, hides for tipis and clothing, and rawhide for shields and boxes. With the help of a druggable wooden sledge called a travois, horses could now transport entire villages and their possessions to follow the seasonal hunt.

Not only did tipis get bigger, but it lifted some of the daily burden from women, giving them more time to create works of art and sacred objects, many of them inspired by the horse.

The iconic image of the war-painted Plains Indian chasing down buffalo—or U.S. soldiers—on horseback, rifle raised at full gallop, belongs to a surprisingly short period of Native American history. The full flowering of Plains Indian horse culture lasted little more than a century, roughly from the 1750s to the 1870s, when it was ended by the Indian Wars and forced relocation to reservations.

This *Indian Pony* themed Amazing Mosaic is available for purchase for \$2,400.00 along with other Amazing Mosaics on my website: www.amazingmosaics.net.