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"THE PASTIME OF MILLIONS": JAMES B. HAGGIN'S ELMENDORF FARM AND THE COMMERCIALIZATION OF PEDIGREE ANIMAL BREEDING, 1897-1920

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“THE PASTIME OF MILLIONS”: JAMES B. HAGGIN’S ELMENDORF FARM AND
THE COMMERCIALIZATION OF PEDIGREE ANIMAL BREEDING, 1897-1920

DISSERTATION

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy in the College of Arts and Sciences at the University of Kentucky

By
Amber Fogle Sergent

Lexington, Kentucky

Director: Dr. Ronald D Eller, Professor of History

Lexington, Kentucky

2012

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ABSTRACT OF DISSERTATION

“THE PASTIME OF MILLIONS”: JAMES B. HAGGIN’S ELMENDORF FARM AND THE COMMERCIALIZATION OF PEDIGREE ANIMAL BREEDING, 1897-1920

Called “The Pride of the Bluegrass,” Elmendorf Farm changed the style and substance of commercial pedigree breeding in early twentieth-century America. Between 1897 and 1914, James B. Haggin readily transformed the Kentucky farm first as a nationally preeminent horse stud, famous for its bloodlines and scales, and second as a premier dairy operation, exceptional for its sanitation, science, and size. Here rested the large-scale production of the world’s fanciest Thoroughbreds and finest milk. At the same time, Haggin’s farm reflected a lifestyle that has come to be celebrated and cherished as the ideal Kentucky landscape. A factory-style plant of large scales, of specialization, and vertical integration was disguised with the lavish iconography of portico mansions, rolling lawns, and white-planed fences, behind which million-dollar animals grazed on lush bluegrass. But a crucial, and significant, characteristic of this farm was the wage laborers who performed the back-breaking work. The labor and lives of the farm’s black workers, in particular, shows how Elmendorf helped reinforce a system of labor relations in central Kentucky, one peculiar to horse business and one segmented by race.

Ultimately, this study of Elmendorf Farm shows the unforgettable imprint of Haggin’s complex personality, as well as his modern philosophies of business, but it also demonstrates conclusively the fallacy of an acquisitive nature and aggressive impulses in commercial animal breeding. As a powerful financier in the late nineteenth-century, Haggin’s perpetual objective was ever “large economies of scale.” Haggin made and lost fortunes by creating great industrial enterprises, and his Bluegrass stud proved no different—even if his individual actions meant defying the norm and jeopardizing entire industries. This best explains why the world’s greatest breeding and milking farm, in many ways, failed. When Haggin applied a dual logic of industrial and aristocratic expansion to a Kentucky breeding farm, the pedigree industry, however fragile and vulnerable, was pushed to extremes and instability of both horse and milk industries resulted. Those famed marble columns, the remaining evidence of Elmendorf Farm, now stands in a lush Bluegrass field, representing one of the most spectacular failures in modern agricultural history.

KEYWORDS: James Ben Ali Haggin, Commercial Agriculture, Dairy, Animal Breeding, Kentucky

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June 1, 2012

Date

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Chapter One: Introduction

The Most Famous Stock Farm You've Never Heard Of

As the slope of the hillside grew under my feet, and four stone pillars rose over me, I stood at the ruins of the world's greatest stock farm. Over a century ago these same Corinthian columns had graced a white marble mansion called Green Hills where there was once terraced gardens, stone bridges, flowing streams, rock fences, and climbing vistas so incomparably peaceful and serene that Thomas Clark was inspired to claim, "Bluegrass Kentucky proved to be an ideal place where the romantic and imaginative gentry could play at the gentle art of being English lords of the manor."¹

No American ever portrayed English royalty in Kentucky so well as James Ben Ali Haggin. Among the wealthy and affluent pedigree breeders in the Bluegrass, Haggin proved its most powerful figure, and his stature took a more tangible definition at his Green Hills mansion. In typical Haggin fashion, the southern magnate spared no expense in the creation of his Bluegrass signature. Experts, flown from New York, designed the house and landscape; trees were imported from California and Europe to line lawns; stone was chiseled from quarries on the property to embellish driveways and fences; stone lions were shipped from Italy to munificently guard the south entrance. Indeed, Green Hills, "the whole building, exterior and interior," wrote one reporter, "has the spaciousness and grandeur of some Old World Castle."²

¹ Thomas Dionysius Clark, *Agrarian Kentucky* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1977): 93.

² Nancy Greene, "'Green Hills' and Its Thoroughbreds," *Town and Country* (8 April 1905): 16-18.

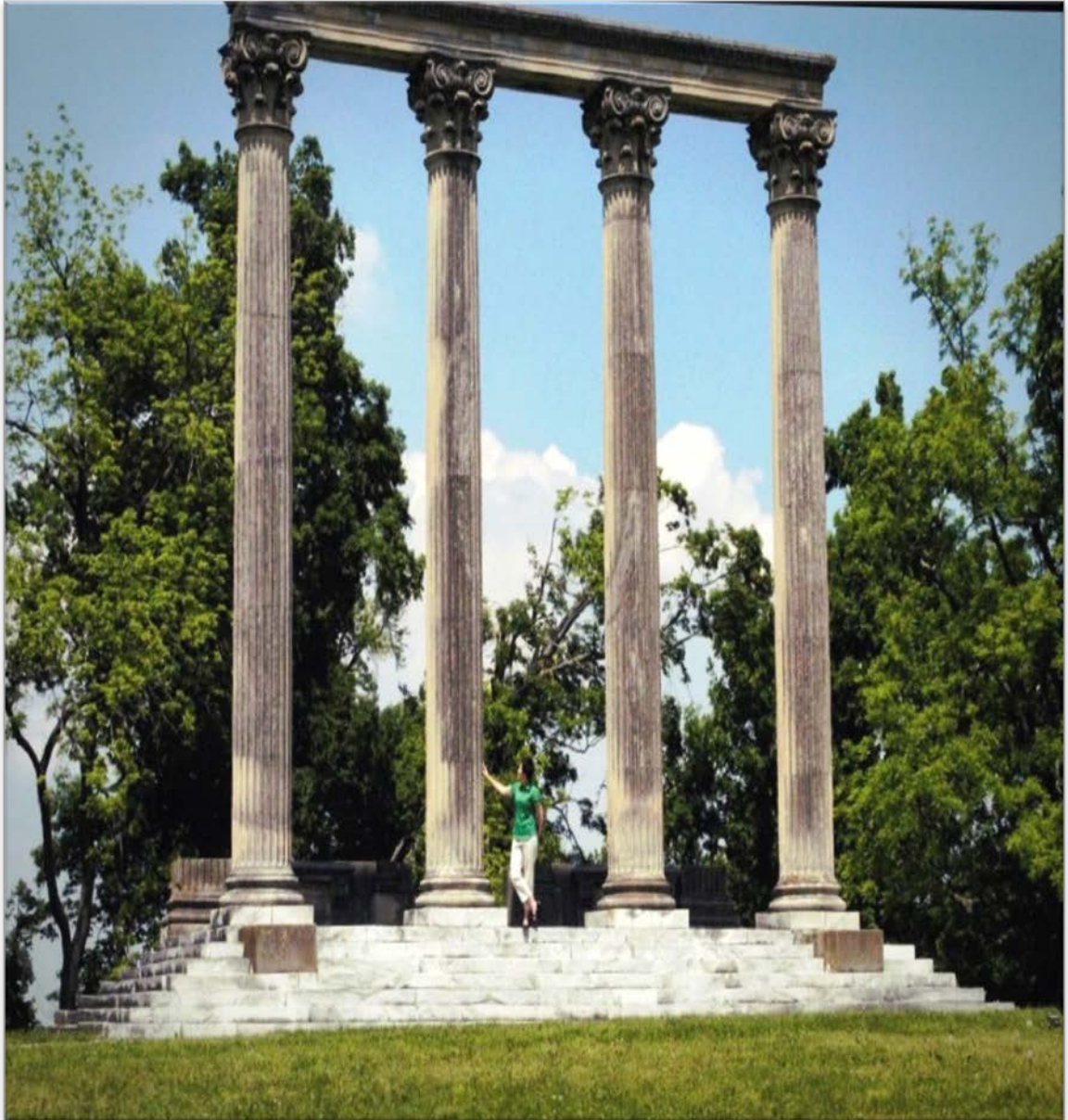


Figure 1.1: The author at the ruins of Green Hills, J.B. Haggin's Mansion. Photograph by Maryjean Wall. A copy in the author's possession. (2009)

The estate surrounding Green Hills was lavished in splendor as well. Set like jewels in a royal crown, the ornamental stables, encrusted with elaborate brickwork and hand-hewn stone walls, were carefully placed with imposing order along the winding walks of a meticulously sculpted landscape. More importantly still, here rested the finest bloodstock in the world. Haggin's magnificent stallions and prized bulls grazed on the verdant and spacious grounds behind the mansion. Many of his animals were described as worth "a king's ransom," with lineages so fashionable that their progeny made a splendid show of pride and performance.³ It was these prizewinning animals which had embodied the qualities that Haggin valued most—dignity, elitism, pride, and power. Although these animals, like the land itself, exuded extreme wealth, Haggin's estate proved extraordinary even among the wealthy in its immense proportions. During the 1890s and 1900s the five-hundred acre farm had grown at what locals considered a frenzied pace which eventually encompassed 13,000 acres of the finest land in Kentucky – a development fueled by the sheer scales of pedigree animals at Elmendorf.

Over the course of two decades Haggin created the largest empire of thoroughbred stock, as hundreds upon hundreds of the finest animals gathered from across the globe came to Fayette County. Described as “The Pride of the Bluegrass,” Elmendorf ultimately made central Kentucky the center of bloodstock breeding in early twentieth-century America. Haggin's farm reflected a lifestyle that has come to be celebrated and cherished as the ideal Kentucky landscape, but as I walked along stone fences, a distance from his stately columns, the stone pillar ruins evoked the ultimate emptiness of Elmendorf's history.

³ "Horse World," *Lexington Leader* (21 September 1903).



Figure 1.2: Elmendorf estate, Haggin glass negative, Louis Edward Nollau F Series Photographic Print Collection, University of Kentucky Special Collections.

In the late nineteenth century, Haggin was a part of a great migration of wealthy landowners, including many from the North, who eagerly sought distinguished Bluegrass acreage on which to breed their prized animals. Haggin, like people of his similar class, seldom took time to appreciate the comforts and splendor of his grand estate. Though he became one of the most prolific global producers of expensive bloodstock, the skills and talents of primarily local employees can be more rightly credited with the creation and expansion of his empire. Workers of different races, ethnicities, and classes played essential roles in the making of Elmendorf's operations for which the northerner gained fame and fortune, but their influences would pass largely unnoticed in their daily relegation to the barns and fields of his massive operation.

At the thought of Green Hill's eventual demise, this study considers the iconic upright symbols; once flanking the entrance to the gilded showplace of Haggin's world-renowned enterprise, the stone pillars spoke loudly of the excess and extravagance that came to define this world-renowned farm. Three years after Haggin's death in 1914, the mansion and adjacent 544 acres were sold to another immensely wealthy outsider named Joseph Widener. The Philadelphia native inherited money as well as an affinity for horses from his father. Widener made dramatic changes to Elmendorf, not the least of which was razing the marble palace known as Green Hills. So costly was Haggin's former residence, it could not be given away. Even children's agencies in Lexington, it was written, graciously declined Widener's gift of Green Hills. Because of high taxes and maintenance, on February 22, 1929, the white mansion was torn down. Widener chose to

leave the four massive columns, six marble steps, and two stone lions to the vanished portico as “a graveyard of the bygone days.”⁴

Like the columns, there was no smallness of scale, of self-sufficiency, of yeoman values at Elmendorf. Haggin never contented himself with a stable of finely bred horses, nor investment in a small herd of milk cattle in famous stock country. His dealt with animal breeding as he dealt with life in late nineteenth-century America. His perpetual objective was ever “large economies of scale.” This was a philosophy he applied to his personal life and his business endeavors alike. Haggin made and lost fortunes by creating great industrial enterprises, and his Bluegrass stud farm proved no different—even if his individual actions meant defying the norm and jeopardizing entire industries.

Haggin was unlike any other breeder in the Bluegrass. The economic realities of pedigree bloodlines realistically prevented successful production of large scales of fancy animals due to the sheer expense and inevitable risk. Breeders who followed a high-quality, low-volume strategy of production generally spent themselves into bankruptcy on pedigree bloodlines. But James Ben Ali Haggin never applied a calculated casualness to his endeavors, even down to his hobbies. What he saw and admired in his horses and his cows was the beauty of the animal, the romance of their ancestry, and the challenge of the breeding business. Passionate though he was by these pedigree animals, he pursued harsh aggressive actions dictated by an industrial logic. And his Kentucky venture of horses and milk cows was the epitome of this philosophy.

Reflective consistently of industrial economies and aristocratic values, Haggin’s system of pedigree breeding at Elmendorf flowed directly out of his own industrial background. As the world’s largest pedigree farm, Elmendorf and the breeding system

⁴ “James B. Haggin’s Mansion,” *Louisville Courier-Journal* (18 February 1965).

the farm exemplified, was complex and grew into a big-business operation of horses and cattle, Haggin's theories instituted a factory-style plant of breeding, of large scales, of specialization, and vertical integration which he disguised with the lavish iconography of portico mansions, rolling lawns, and white-planed fences, behind which million-dollar animals grazed on lush bluegrass. When Haggin applied a dual logic of industrial and aristocratic expansion to a Kentucky breeding farm, the pedigree industry, however fragile and vulnerable, was pushed to extremes and instability of both horse and milk industries resulted. Elmendorf's industrial system ultimately changed the style and substance of pedigree breeding in central Kentucky. Those famed marble columns standing in a lush Bluegrass field would come to represent one of the most spectacular failures in modern agricultural history.

* * * *

At the turn of the twentieth-century, contemporaries saw James B. Haggin's decision to buy Elmendorf as intimately connected to his relationship with Ms. Margaret "Pearl" Voorhies. Just one day before the new year of 1898, Haggin married Pearl Voorhies in Versailles, Kentucky, and Green Hills, it was written, provided a rural escape for the newlyweds. The wedding took place in the home of the bride's parents. Voorhies wore a simple yet elegant gown, adorned in pointed lace, of blue cloth and white silk. But few were in attendance to celebrate what the *New York Times* described as "the most romantic wedding in the small community's history."⁵ It was an almost shamefully modest affair, hardly befitting the extravagant lifestyle of one of the richest men in the world. How deeply Haggin and Voorhies loved one another it remains unknown, but to

⁵ "Marriage of J.B. Haggin: The Turfman Weds in Kentucky The Niece of His Former Wife," *New York Times* (31 December 1897): 1; "Haggin, The Millionaire Turfman and Mine Owner, Weds Miss Pearl Voorhies in Versailles Today," *Daily Leader* (30 December 1897): 1;

outsiders the simplicity of the wedding had much to do with the scandalous circumstances surrounding the couple's engagement. Pearl Voorhies was the daughter of George and Laura Voorhies, a leading Bluegrass family who defied societal conventions of the time and divorced when their daughter was but a few years old. Others gossiped about another subject altogether; Pearl Voorhies was not only almost fifty years younger than Haggin, she was his niece by marriage.⁶ Although it was not uncommon for cousins to marry, the union of a seventy-four year old multimillionaire and his twenty-eight year old niece was quite sensational.

Haggin's marriage to Pearl Voorhies turned out to be a critical event in the history of Elmendorf Farm. His second marriage proved quite significant to his return to central Kentucky as well as to historical interpretations of the Bluegrass estate.⁷ "Mr. Haggin," explained one *Lexington Leader* reporter, "has erected a palace in which to spend his declining years, and, where the ravages of his fourscore years have borne him away, for the enjoyment of his young wife."⁸ The 544 acres of lush meadows seemed ideally suited to the affluent New York couple who wanted to remain near family in Mercer and Woodford counties.

⁶ Some have written that the union "caused trouble in the Haggin family for quite some time until some sort of financial arrangement was made to soothe the upset children and grandchildren of James Ben Ali." See Lois Elaine Mahoney, "California's Forgotten Triumvirate: James Ben Ali Haggin, Lloyd Tevis, and George Hearst," (PhD diss., San Francisco State University, 1977): 161; *San Francisco Chronicle* (15 October 1905): 2/1.

⁷ "Elmendorf," *Lexington Morning Herald* (27 January 1902): 5.

⁸ "Haggin Mansion," *Lexington Leader* (24 March 1903): 1; "Mansion at Elmendorf," *Lexington Herald* (5 April 1902): 7; "Green Hills," *Lexington Leader* (14 September 1902): 1; "Green Hills," *Lexington Leader* (22 October 1902): 1; "Green Hills," *Lexington Herald* (23 October 1902): 6; "Elmendorf," *Lexington Herald* (26 October 1902): 10.



Figure 1.3: "As Others See Us." Newspaper Clipping, Album No. 3, Ben Ali Haggin Materials, University of Kentucky.

Most scholars who study J.B. Haggin and the making of his vast industrial empire in the West have adopted this view, emphasizing the dramatic scales and size of Elmendorf and making an almost obligatory, explicit connection between Pearl Voorhies and the Kentucky operation. Lois Mahoney, author of one of the first academic studies of J.B. Haggin, writes, “The next year James B. Haggin announced that he was planning to give his young bride the handsomest home in the state of their birth.”⁹ When “Haggin married, for a second time to Margaret [Pearl] Voorhies,” Hilary Steinmetz concludes, “This event precipitated his permanent move from California to Kentucky.”¹⁰ Of course, some have downplayed Elmendorf. Ronald Parsons, for example, investigated the growth of Haggin’s California stud farms, otherwise known as Rancho del Paso, maintaining that although “Elmendorf grew to almost 10,000 acres, making Haggin the largest landowner in Kentucky, the size and scope of his operation paled in comparison to the Rancho.”¹¹ Phillip Ardery, longtime writer for Louisville *Courier -Journal*, described the relationship between Haggin and his striking young bride, “It is fair to say Haggin loved his first wife very much. It is equally fair to say he worshipped his beautiful young bride...The center of his life began to shift from California to New York, and with the purchase of Elmendorf, to the building of Green Hills, to Kentucky.”¹²

But to be sure, the purchase of Elmendorf in 1897 was hardly personal; it was a matter of animal business. Scholars of Kentucky history rightly cast Haggin as integral to

⁹ Lois Elaine Mahoney, “California’s Forgotten Triumvirate: James Ben Ali Haggin, Lloyd Tevis, and George Hearst,” (PhD diss., San Francisco State University, 1977): 161.

¹⁰ Hilary N. Steinmetz, “Rancho Del Paso, the World’s Largest Thoroughbred Farm,” (Thesis (M.A., History), California State University, Sacramento, 2009): 59.

¹¹ Ronald Duke Parsons, Jr., “The Irish Khan and His Empire: James Ben Ali Haggin and His Associates.” (MA Thesis, California State University, Sacramento, 2002).

¹² Philip Ardery, “James B. Haggin: Kentucky’s Kubla Khan,” (N.D.) at Filson Club Historical Society, Louisville, Kentucky.

the larger movement of wealthy outsiders into late nineteenth-century Bluegrass. One could make the plausible case, as several historians have done, that Haggin placed immutable roots in a state well known for pedigree horse breeding. Thomas D. Clark, eminent historian of Kentucky, wrote, “Native Kentuckians like Ben Ali Haggin, John E. Madden, Major Foxhall Daingerfield, A.B. Hancock, and Johnson N. Camden struck it rich in other fields in this golden age and returned home to become major sportsmen,” but of course, “James Ben Ali Haggin topped them all.”¹³ Historical geographer Karl Raitz and archeologist Nancy O’Malley called Haggin’s efforts to reshape the land into a “gentleman’s farm” as nothing less than “Herculean.”¹⁴ Such architecture and symbolism reflected a model, as explained by the distinguished professor of historic preservation Dennis Domer, established almost a half century before Haggin’s arrival by prominent Kentuckians.¹⁵

Coloring the social and cultural interpretation of farms like J.B. Haggin’s are recent studies that offer new perspectives on sectional relations and racial ideologies of post-reconstruction in Kentucky.¹⁶ Maryjean Wall’s work, in particular, is invaluable in delineating the role of outsiders in the Bluegrass after the Civil War. Attracted to the memory and myth of Kentucky as the Old South, wealthy horse barons drove the racial

¹³ Thomas D. Clark, *Kentucky, Land of Contrast* (New York: Harper & Row, 1968): 180.

¹⁴ Karl Raitz and Nancy O’Malley, *Kentucky’s Frontier Highway: Landscape along the Maysville Road*, forthcoming publication by University of Kentucky Press, 2012; see also Carolyn Murray-Wooley and, Karl B. Raitz, *Rock Fences of the Bluegrass* (Lexington, Ky: University Press of Kentucky, 1992). For a fascinating study of the importance of landscape, see Warren R. Hofstra, *The Planting of New Virginia: Settlement and Landscape in the Shenandoah Valley* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2004).

¹⁵ Dennis Domer, Unpublished Manuscript concerning the making of Kentucky’s Bluegrass Landscape, at Keeneland Library, in Lexington, Kentucky.

¹⁶ Anne Marshall, *Creating a Confederate Kentucky: The Lost Cause and Civil War Memory in a Border State* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2010); James C. Nicholson, “More Than Just a Horse Race: A Cultural History of the Kentucky Derby.” (Ph.D., diss., University of Kentucky 2010).

and economic reconciliation of the state and the region by creating plantation-like estates for pedigree horses.¹⁷ Over time, as more outsider investors followed the southern movement, these wealthy new barons of the land worked with local boosters to forge a new sense of regional identity in central Kentucky, at once saving the heart of Thoroughbred country at the turn of the century, while simultaneously obscuring the constructed image of a dark and bloody ground while also explicitly pushing African Americans from the front sides of racetracks to the barns of farms. This new focus on Southern identity reveals only a part of Elmendorf's much larger story.¹⁸

Elmendorf's history goes beyond how Kentucky became Southern; Haggin's farm also explains how Kentucky contained an entire vision of national expansion. An industrial philosophy was essential to the rise and fall of one of the most notable stock farms in American history. Previous scholarship has seen pedigree breeding operations like J.B. Haggin's only as an outlet of industrialization of the wealthy showy estates, with their clipped lawns, rolling pastures, ornamental stables, and expensive animals, were generally acknowledged only as showplaces.

By focusing on its origins, developments, and eventual demise, this study analyzes Elmendorf within the context of its owner's industrial empire. Haggin's stock farm witnessed spectacular growth by operating in ways similar to his other enterprises. The stock farm, however vulnerable and unsuccessful it proved, was characterized by an emerging industrial logic: its emphasis on large scales of economies and national markets, its chains of horizontal and vertical production, its philosophy of efficiency and

¹⁷ Maryjean Wall, *How Kentucky Became Southern: A Tale of Outlaws, Horse Thieves, Gamblers, and Breeders* (Lexington, Ky: University Press of Kentucky, 2010): 7.

¹⁸ On the expansive cultural boundaries of the South, see Edward Ayers, *All Over the Map: Rethinking American Regions* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996); Wilbur Zelensky, *The Cultural Geography of the United States* (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1973).

standardization, its reliance on outside capital, as well as its use of scientific expertise and labor segmentation reproduced the same tenets as Haggin's many successful business endeavors. These new means and methods of industrialization were intelligently coupled with more traditional values, attitudes, and rituals, long rooted in past centuries of pedigree breeding. The animals were, and always have been, more than an analogue of a modern farm system. And Haggin took great pride in producing prized horses and cattle, believing in the virtues of fancy bloodlines even while fully integrating his industrial operation in larger market economies.

These deeply engrained values of pride and pedigree shaped not only the types of animals, but also the essence of Elmendorf. The lavish iconography of Haggin's world-renowned estate, what we have come to know as a beautifully-tended Bluegrass horse farm, masked an active force generating tremendous, and sometime debilitating, changes in America and beyond. Attention to the ways Haggin initiated combined values of aristocratic breeding and principles of business enterprise to his stock farm contributes to our understanding of modern agriculture, demonstrating how pockets of industrial farming existed in areas previously neglected during the early decades of the twentieth-century.

For the most part, historians of the modern South have focused on how economic, political, and social developments during the first half of the twentieth-century, brought forth by boll weevils, depressions, and world wars, wrought immeasurable changes on the Southern heartland.¹⁹ Fundamental elements of rural farming—with its dependence

¹⁹ The classic study of the South in the years after the Civil War is C. Vann Woodward, *Origins of the New South, 1877-1913* (Baton Rouge: LSU Press, 1951). On the forces at work in the United States during Reconstruction and Redemption, see Eric Foner, *Reconstruction: America's Unfinished Reconstruction, 1863-1877* (New York, Harper and Row, 1988); and Mark W.

on communal and familial relations, its inextricable ties to culture, its diversity of crops, and its variety of farm power—were thoroughly revolutionized by the ideology and implements of modernized, industrial agriculture. Farmers were immeasurably facilitated by insecticides, machines, and government subsidies, all of which proved essential for profitability in a transformed market. The business of large-scale commercial agriculture came to triumph in the New South by mid-century, but with disastrous consequences for the tenant and sharecropper. Great waves of migration, especially of blacks, forced a Southern exodus across the region, and thereby forfeited a way of life and rural worlds became lost.²⁰

These studies make important contributions to our understanding of agrarian life in the South, attentive to the hard life and rich culture of the small landowner and tenant farmer. These works, however, offer a view of Southern agriculture fundamentally at odds with the industrial paradigm. Elmendorf, by contrast, is not a tale of industrial challenge, but industrial acceptance, and a peculiar one at that. Veiled in a landscape of wealth and privilege, Haggin's operation developed decades before calamities of insects,

Summers, *Railroads, Reconstruction, and the Gospel of Prosperity: Aid under the Radical Republicans, 1865 – 1877* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984). The classic study of the twentieth-century South is George Brown Tindall, *The Emergence of the New South, 1913-1945* (Baton Rouge: LSU Press, 1967).

²⁰ The four major historians who study the industrial transformation of Southern agriculture include Jack Temple Kirby, *Rural Worlds Lost: The South, 1920-1960* (Baton Rouge: LSU Press, 1987); *Mockingbird Song: Ecological Landscapes of the South* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2006); and William Conlogue, *Working the Garden: American Writers and the Industrialization of Agriculture* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2001); Pete Daniel, *Breaking the Land: The Transformation of Cotton, Tobacco, and Rice Cultures since 1880* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1985), and *Lost Revolutions: The South in the 1950s* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press for Smithsonian National Museum of American History, Washington, D.C., 2000); Gilbert C. Fite, *Cotton Fields No More: Southern Agriculture, 1865 – 1980* (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1984); Gavin Wright, *Old South, New South: Revolutions in the Southern Economy Since the Civil War* (New York: Basic Books, 1986), and *The Political Economy of the Cotton South* (New York: Norton, 1978).

depressions, and world wars, further underscoring the idea that industrial ascension in the South was an uneven and halting process.

Equally significant in our examination of the rise and fall of Elmhurst, this study offers a new perspective on an agrarian state with surprisingly little agrarian history. Kentucky has ever served as a cradle of farming, large and small, offering its people a “source of refuge and way of life.” Agriculture, as Thomas D. Clark writes, “shaped the history of the state, flavored the culture and the politics, infused the Kentucky personality, and prospered an impoverished people with a decisive hand.”²¹ Despite the central role agriculture has played in the history of the Commonwealth, no comprehensive study has ever been undertaken.²² Still, among Kentucky authors especially, there remains a rich cultural history of resistance to industrial farming. Wendell Berry, celebrated essayist and poet, has been described as an unwavering “Agrarian Traditionalist,” much in the same traditions of the famous Southern Agrarians of the early twentieth-century. His most famous work, *The Unsettling of America*, takes issue with agribusiness’s unsustainability and irresponsibility with soils and resources.²³ In a similar vein, the historical significance of life on Kentucky’s land has been recorded by the recent works, including *Tobacco Culture: Farming Kentucky’s Burley Belt* and

²¹ Thomas Dionysius Clark, *Agrarian Kentucky* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1977): 11.

²² The exception remains the number of studies that examine the rise and fall of political organizations in tobacco, and a handful of articles that focus on the development of plantation slavery in central Kentucky. See James C. Klotter, “Clio in the Commonwealth: The Status of Kentucky History,” *The Register of the Kentucky Historical Society*, 80 (Winter 1982): 65-88.

²³ Wendell Berry, *The Unsettling of America: Culture & Agriculture* (San Francisco: Sierra Club Books, 1977); Berry, and Norman Wirzba, *The Art of the Commonplace: Agrarian Essays of Wendell Berry* (Washington, D.C.: Counterpoint, 2002); Berry, *The Gift of Good Land: Further Essays, Cultural and Agricultural* (San Francisco: North Point Press, 1981); Norman Wirzba, *The Essential Agrarian Reader: The Future of Culture, Community, and the Land* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2003).

Food and Everyday Life on Kentucky Family Farms, which show, among other things, the historical importance of interviews done on tape and on film.²⁴

For students of American agricultural history, however, part of the difficulty in writing on the topic of modern farming stems from the lack of specificity within the subject itself. Seeking to explain how the countryside has been transformed over the past two centuries, historians have devoted considerable energy to critiquing one another over their definitions of “subsistence,” “commercial,” “agrarian,” or “industrial” farming.²⁵ At the center of these discussions lies academic disparity between definitions of the transitional processes toward modernity in farming and all things agricultural, and, at a

²⁴ John Van Willigen and Susan C. Eastwood, *Tobacco Culture: Farming Kentucky's Burley Belt* (Lexington, Ky: University Press of Kentucky, 1998), and *Food and Everyday Life on Kentucky Family Farms, 1920-1950* (Lexington, Ky: University Press of Kentucky, 2006), use interviews from the Burley Tobacco Oral History Project and Family Farms of Kentucky Project, located at Louie B. Nunn Oral History Center, at University of Kentucky, Lexington, Kentucky. Many of the earliest histories of Kentucky and Southern agriculture were part of oral history works, especially the New Deal Federal Writers' Project. Two of the anthologies include Federal Writers Project, *These Are Our Lives* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1939); and Tom E. Terrill and Jerrod Hirsch, eds., *Such as Us: Southern Voices of the Thirties* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1978). Arguably the most celebrated work of oral history in Southern agriculture remains Theodore Rosengarten, *All God's Dangers: The Life of Nate Shaw* (New York: Alfred Knopf, 1974). For the importance of oral history in agricultural history, see, for example, Nancy Grey Osterud with the assistance of Lu Ann Jones, “Oral History and Rural Women in the United States,” *The Oral History Review* 17, no. 2 (Fall 1989).

²⁵ For historiographical introduction of this debate in early American history, see Christopher Clark, “Economics and Culture: Opening Up the Rural History of the Early American Northeast,” *American Quarterly* 43 (June 1991): 279-301; See also Alan Kulikoff, “The Transition to Capitalism in Rural America,” *William and Mary Quarterly* 3d ser. 46 (1989): 120-145, and *The Agrarian Origins of American Capitalism* (1992); Winifred B. Rothenberg, *From Market-places to a Market Economy: The Transformation of Rural Massachusetts, 1750-1850* (1992). For a summary of the historiographical debate in Southern history, particularly in reference to the capitalist versus precapitalist debate of plantation farming, see Mark M. Smith, *Debating Slavery: Economy and Society in the Antebellum South* (1998) More recent scholarship have suggested that the debate over “capitalist” tendencies have overshadowed more crucial questions of the transitional process itself, in how it affected the people who lived through it, and how in turn these people shaped the process. See, for example, John Majewski, *A House Divided: Economic Development in Pennsylvania and Virginia Before the Civil War* (2000) and Christopher Morris, *Becoming Southern: The Evolution of a Way of Life, Warren County and Vicksburg, Mississippi, 1770-1860* (1995).

more fundamental level, how scholars interpret change and continuity in agricultural history. It seems imperative, therefore, to define terms.

When speaking of an “industrial logic,” this study follows the works of Alfred D. Chandler, Jack Temple Kirby, Steven Stoll, Deborah Fitzgerald, and Charles Postel. As these historians have shown, commercial and industrial farming entailed a conception of land and material progression toward greater productive and less financial loss among other results. Although the term can be characterized by several internal features such as large economies of scale, the use of mechanization, the standardization of processes, the horizontal and vertical chains of production, the reliance on managerial expertise, the evocation of efficiency, and the central role of great capital—it also embraces an ethic of perpetual progress, often by tools, technology, and thinking, which then continually pushes for more possibilities of profit.²⁶ In its most extreme form, industrial farming is

²⁶ The most influential study of the broader impact of industrialization in America is Alfred D. Chandler, *The Visible Hand: The Managerial Revolution in American Business* (Cambridge, Mass: Belknap Press, 1977). For more revisions and reassessments, see Richard R. John, "Elaborations, Revisions, Dissents: Alfred D. Chandler, Jr.'s, "The Visible Hand" After Twenty Years," *The Business History Review* 71, no. 2 (1997): 151-200; Alfred D. Chandler and Thomas K. McCraw, *The Essential Alfred Chandler: Essays Toward a Historical Theory of Big Business* (Boston, Mass: Harvard Business School Press, 1988); Alfred D. Chandler and James W. Cortada, *A Nation Transformed by Information: How Information Has Shaped the United States from Colonial Times to the Present* (Oxford [England]: Oxford University Press, 2000); Alan Trachtenberg, and Eric Foner, *The Incorporation of America: Culture and Society in the Gilded Age* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1982); Robert H. Wiebe, *The Search for Order, 1877-1920* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1967); Phillip Scranton, *Endless Novelty: Specialty Production and American Industrialization, 1865-1925* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997); Martin J. Sklar, *The Corporate Reconstruction of American Capitalism, 1890-1916: The Market, the Law, and Politics* (Cambridge [Cambridgeshire]: Cambridge University Press, 1988). For industrialization as an eastern phenomena, see Walter Licht, *Industrializing America: The Nineteenth Century* (London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1995). For industrialization in the South, see Douglas Flamming, *Creating the Modern South: Millhands and Managers in Dalton, Georgia, 1884-1984* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1992), and James C. Cobb, *Industrialization and Southern Society, 1877-1984* (Lexington, Ky: University Press of Kentucky, 1984). For industrialization in the far West, see David Iglor's survey in "The Industrial Far West: Region and Nation in the Late Nineteenth Century," *The Pacific Historical Review* 69, no. 2 (2000): 159-192.

called agribusiness. The “Farmer in the Business Suit,” John Davis and Kenneth Hinshaw called it at mid-century, agribusiness often takes the form of corporate-dominated operations, giant harvesters, and factory-like management.²⁷ Established on intensive principles of large-scale production with regard to labor, technology, and science, agribusiness is designed to magnify efficiencies, not excluding tax and inheritance disadvantages.²⁸

Historically, industrial farming has often been seen in direct juxtaposition to agrarianism, a kind of farming not to be equated with simplicity.²⁹ Agrarianism embodies a wide range of practices and behaviors, but generally speaking it is characterized by dependence on intimate communal and familial relations of labor, value of cultural customs, small scales of production, and principles of sustainability. It often functions on the margins of broad commercial economies, a point not to be pressed too hard, as Steven Stoll writes, since “profit and permanence pulled the same cart.”³⁰ Agrarianism does not

²⁷ Alan E. Fusonie, “John H. Davis: Architect of the Agribusiness Concept Revisited,” *Agricultural History*, 69, No. 2 (Spring 1995): 326 - 348.

²⁸ On the history of the role of science and technology in the industrialization of agriculture, see Jack Ralph Kloppenburg Jr., *First the Seed: The Political Economy of Plant Biotechnology, 1492-2000* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988); Deborah Fitzgerald, *The Business of Breeding: Hybrid Corn in Illinois, 1890-1940* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1990); Fitzgerald, *Every Farm a Factory: The Industrial Ideal in American Agriculture* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003). On the history of breeding in the American chicken industry, in particular, see Glenn E. Bugos, “Intellectual Property Protection in the American Chicken Industry,” *Business History Review* 66 (1992): 127-68; Kathy J. Cooke, “From Science to Practice, or Practice to Science? Chickens and Eggs in Raymond Pearl’s Agricultural Breeding Research, 1907-1916,” *Isis* 88 (1997): 62-86.

²⁹ See, for example, Grant McConnell, *The Decline of Agrarian Democracy*, (1953), but for recent works that tend to emphasize this juxtaposition, see Monica Richmond Gisolfi, “From Cotton Farmers to Poultry Growers: The Rise of Industrial Agriculture in Upcountry Georgia, 1914-1960,” (Ph.D. diss., Columbia University, 2007); and Jose Guillermo Pastrano, “Industrial Agriculture in the peripheral South: State, Race, and the Politics of Migrant Labor in Texas, 1890 – 1930,” (Ph.D. diss., University of California, Santa Barbara, 2006).

³⁰ On the importance of industrial capital to nineteenth – and twentieth-century developments, numerous studies of American agriculture have addressed the importance of farmers’ practices, beliefs, and values to understanding the “culture” of agriculture; see, Robert C. McMath, Jr.,

see farming as a commercial undertaking only. With links to the long tradition of American republicanism, agrarianism shares a commitment to the way of thinking that people gain sustenance and contentment from a holistic view of land, community, and society.

Industrial farming does not always stand in direct contrast to agrarianism, a point that distinguishes this study of Kentucky agriculture from previous works which emphasize how rural farming was fundamentally at odds with the modern paradigm. In this way, it follows several recent and some traditional studies which discard the agrarian-industrial dichotomy in American agricultural history. Over the past three decades a number of fine studies have paid careful attention to the patterns of everyday farm life in late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century America.³¹ These works show,

“Sandy Land and Hogs in the Timber: (Agri)cultural Origins of the Farmers’ Alliance in Texas,” in Steven Hahn and Jonathan Prude, *The Countryside in the Age of Capitalist Transformation: Essays in the Social History of Rural America* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1985); William Cronon, *Nature’s Metropolis: Chicago and the Great West* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1991); Donald Pisani, *From the Family Farm to Agribusiness: The Irrigation Crusade in California and the West, 1850-1931* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984); Ingolf Vogeler, *The Myth of the Family Farm: Agribusiness Dominance of U.S. Agriculture* (Boulder, Colo: Westview Press, 1981); Christopher Clark, *The Roots of Rural Capitalism: Western Massachusetts, 1780-1860* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1990); Hal Barron, *Those Who Stayed Behind: Rural Society in Nineteenth-Century New England* (Cambridge [Cambridgeshire]: Cambridge University Press, 1984); and “Old Wine in New Bottle?: The Perspective of Rural History,” in Carstensen, Fred V., Morton Rothstein, Joseph A. Swanson, and Wayne D. Rasmussen, *Outstanding in His Field: Perspectives on American Agriculture in Honor of Wayne D. Rasmussen* (Ames: Iowa State University Press, 1993); John Mack Faragher, *Sugar Creek: Life on the Illinois Prairie* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1986); Sally McMurry, *Transforming Rural Life: Dairying Families and Agricultural Change, 1820-1885* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1995); David Danbom, *Born in the Country: A History of Rural America* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1995); Michael D. Thompson, “High on the Hog; Swine as Culture and Commodity in eastern North Carolina,” (Ph.D. diss., Miami University, 2000); for the quote by Steven Stoll, *Larding the Lean Earth*, p. 30; Charles Postel, *The Populist Vision* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007.)

³¹ Mary Neth, *Preserving the Family Farm: Women, Community and the Foundations of Agribusiness in the Midwest, 1900-1940* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1995); Steven Hahn and Jonathon Prude, eds., *The Countryside in the Age of Capitalist Transformation: Essays in the Social History of Rural America* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1985); Deborah Fink, *Agrarian Women: Wives and Mothers in Rural Nebraska, 1880-1940*

quite convincingly, how ideological concepts of modern agriculture are too complex and entangled to fit neatly into opposite ends of a spectrum. As Hal Baron argues, “The truth lies somewhere in between.” Indeed, “the history of the rural experience between 1870 and 1930 is a story of change and continuity, and of accommodation as well as resistance, which took place under conditions and with consequences that were not always chosen or anticipated.”³² More recent studies have contended that an assortment of beliefs and values characterized the lives of the America’s largest producers. Though works like Carey McWilliams’s scathing study of California’s industrialized farms have inspired generations of reformers and scholars, David Vaught has challenged the “factories in the field” paradigm in the richest agricultural state in the union, contending that previous scholarship has “steadfastly den[ie]d that growers had any ideology or culture, except the desire to cut costs and maximize profits.”³³ Vaught does not ignore the ways in which these operators often exploited laborers, but he is entirely correct to point out that growers, like the workers themselves, have to be understood on their own terms. And Elmendorf, one of the largest stock operations at the turn of the century, proved more than a business affair.

(Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1992); Steven Stoll, *The Fruits of Natural Advantage: Making the Industrial Countryside in California* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998); Stoll, *Larding the Lean Earth: Soil and Society in Nineteenth-Century America* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2002).

³² Hal Barron, *Mixed Harvest: The Second Great Transformation in the Rural North, 1870-1930* (Chapel Hill, N.C.: University of North Carolina Press, 1997).

³³ David Vaught has recently suggested not all were “industrial agriculturists,” but large-scale growers’ quests for material, social, and moral gain in an agricultural economy. See David Vaught, “Factories in the Field Revisited,” *The Pacific Historical Review* 66, no. 2 (1997): 149-184; Vaught, *After the Gold Rush: Tarnished Dreams in the Sacramento Valley* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2007); Vaught, *Cultivating California: Growers, Specialty Crops, and Labor, 1875-1920* (Baltimore, Md: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1999). For a nuanced discussion of industrial farming in California, see David Iglor, *Industrial Cowboys: Miller & Lux and the Transformation of the Far West, 1850-1920* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001).

While this study focuses only on Elmendorf, it serves in a broader sense as a microcosm of changes occurring on the face of pedigree breeding throughout the country the turn of the century. Few systems of agriculture embody this complexity of agricultural progress more than pedigree breeding in Kentucky. Historians have described this animal as at once “an invention of modernity” and “a highly cherished symbol of agrarian civilization.”³⁴ Focusing on links between aristocratic values, material progress, and industrial philosophies, my study of J.B. Haggin’s farm relies on the works of Harriet Ritvo and Margaret Derry,³⁵ scholars who put forth the idea that improved animal breeding has always been tied to emerging market economies. European stockowners in the sixteenth century developed practices to perpetuate certain characteristics in their animals, such as strong stamina, healthy constitution, and vigorous fecundity.³⁶ Breeders skillfully mated animals in such a way that led to the concentration of ancestral blood. By the late eighteenth-century this became a more defined system called like-to-like breeding. These practices varied from intense in-breeding, or the mating of animals closely related (father to daughter, mother to son), to line-breeding, or the mating of less

³⁴ Brooks Blevins, *Cattle in the Cotton Fields: A History of Cattle Raising in Alabama* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1998); Clark, *Agrarian Kentucky*, 29.

³⁵ On the social, cultural, and intellectual history of animal breeding in Europe, see Harriet Ritvo, *The Animal Estate: The English and Other Creatures in the Victorian Age* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1987); Ritvo, *The Platypus and the Mermaid* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1998); Ritvo, "Animal Consciousness: Some Historical Perspective," *American Zoologist*. 40, no. 6 (2000): 847-852; Ritvo, "Race, Breed, and Myths of Origin: Chillingham Cattle As Ancient Britons," *Representations*. No. 39 (1992): 1-22; Ritvo, "Pride and Pedigree: The Evolution of the Victorian Dog Fancy," *Victorian Studies* 29, no. 2 (1986): 227-253. For a nuanced discussion of the rise of pedigree breeding, see Margaret E. Derry, *Horses in Society: A Story of Animal Breeding and Marketing, 1800-1920* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2006); Derry, *Bred for Perfection: Shorthorn Cattle, Collies, and Arabian Horses Since 1800* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2003); Derry, *Art and Science in Breeding: Creating Better Chickens* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2012).

³⁶ On the early history of experimental animal breeding in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Europe, in particular, the efforts of middling farmers to “improve” animals, see Nicholas Russell, *Like Engend'ring Like: Heredity and Animal Breeding in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986).

closely related animals, to the breeding of unrelated animals, known as out-breeding.³⁷ The animal's ability to transfer ancestry, form, and beauty to its offspring became its premier commodity, and owners began to derive hefty prices from "improved" breeds and their progeny. By the early nineteenth-century, breeders in Europe and North America devoted great time, care, and money to reproduction which resulted in finer animals. Indeed, high stock breeding in central Kentucky grew directly out of global exchanges that crisscrossed the mighty Atlantic Ocean. Wealthy planters in the Bluegrass imported all kinds of blooded cattle, sheep, swine, mules, and horses directly from England and Ireland, among other countries.³⁸

Pedigree breeding became more sophisticated and commercialized as it evolved. Although a great majority of breeders kept personal records of animals' lineages, the rise of certified recordkeeping gave more stability and new meanings to the system of animal breeding. As Margaret Derry writes, by 1870, "when pedigree could be related simultaneously to purity and inbreeding, the philosophy behind the purebred system had achieved its mature shape. Animals were believed to be 'pure' in bloodline and 'pure' as to breed type—therefore 'purebred'—because they carried pedigrees that certified their ancestral makeup."³⁹ But these pedigrees were not ends in themselves. Rather, they were

³⁷ In-breeding was a riskier venture than line- or out-breeding. Although breeders achieved quicker results in-breeding animals, the system proved no easier to perpetuate good points in an animal's inheritance than bad ones. Line-breeding became a slow but safe means to improving livestock, although breeders rarely resorted to "fresh blood" unless an animal possessed desired characteristics. For an example of breeder discussions of such practices, see *Breeders Gazette* (30 July 1914): 157.

³⁸ Colonel Lewis Sanders, one of the first in the Bluegrass to import English cattle west of the Alleghany Mountains, was "induced" to send for cattle after witnessing \$1000 guineas paid for a single bull in 1810. Alvin Howard Sanders, *Shorthorn Cattle; A Series of Historical Sketches, Memoirs and Records of the Breed and Its Development in the United States and Canada* (Chicago: Sanders Publishing Company, 1918).

³⁹ These social constructs became a mechanism by which the purebred industry remained prestigious and closed. Most herd books competed with one another as private profitable

the means to an end. The pedigree had always existed for the pride, profit, and perfection of the owner, reaffirming themselves and their place in a larger society. Few had ever made a fortune with blooded stock. Smaller farmers dabbled in breed development, applying selective practices to domestic stock, leasing a prized bull, or forming a cooperative to purchase a prized animal, but only the wealthy were able to excel in this enterprise. These animals often served as a symbol of wealth, rather than a source of income. Even fewer pedigree operations in American agricultural history show the extreme amounts of capital, time, and risk involved more than J.B. Haggin's Elmendorf Farm.

* * * *

Between 1897 and 1917, Haggin changed the style and substance of modern pedigree breeding in America, and these changes significantly affected dramatic costs and consequences for Kentucky and beyond. In chapter 1, this study looks at the roots of Haggin's industrial philosophy by investigating the process by which the lawyer from Kentucky built an empire that stretched across North America. Although this period is sparsely documented, Haggin's childhood and adolescence are critical for understanding one of the major influences on his life in the education gained from the marriage of law and land acquisition. Scholars give these early years very little attention but the warp and woof of his Kentucky roots indelibly shaped the whole fabric of his rise to power. Although he rarely spoke of his boyhood years, from these early days in Kentucky Haggin learned a valuable lesson – technical mastery in an unmitigated mess of courts and debt could build a machine for churning wealth. The men in his family were highly

ventures, making some registries easier to gain access than others. For more information about “open” versus “closed” herd books in the cattle industry, see Derry, *Ontario's Cattle Kingdom: Purebred Breeders and Their World*, 37-39.

skilled in the manipulation of state and federal laws, acquiring large amounts of acreage and making lucrative livings under the cover of law. Such legal prowess laid the foundation of prosperity for the young lawyer in the far West. This chapter additionally has a social and economic dimension largely ignored by scholars. The images historians preserve of J.B. Haggin are his exotic ancestry, his slaveholding roots, his horse breeding culture, and his cold pursuit of money. There is indeed very little depth to the man pictured in existing histories.⁴⁰ There exists no formal collection of Haggin's professional or personal papers which might offer some glimpse into thoughts, friendships, marriages, or children. Consequently, major questions of Haggin's life—such as attitude towards politics, religion, and philanthropy—beyond Elmendorf, remain unanswered.

By 1897, when Haggin purchased Elmendorf, his career as a wealthy industrialist had been marked by highs and lows, but over the course of six decades his business life had proven immensely successful and exceedingly diverse. A closer look at the history of his business enterprises seems to explicate a striking pattern that was, largely, created by his and his partner's hands. By studying briefly three of the major enterprises: the Anaconda mine in central Montana; the Cerro de Pasco mine in central Peru; and the Kern County Land Company in central California, we find all three were distinguished by commodity, labor, and geography, so that each reproduced, in their own way, a dramatic story of how ordinary people shaped and were shaped by the industrial processes that Haggin initiated. Collectively, these periods demonstrate the ways in which his industrial operations not only impacted the landscape of the locale and the lives of the workers, but also shaped a modern industrial society.

⁴⁰ This was most likely by design. According to Kimberly Bray, curator of the archival collections at the Haggin Museum in Stockton California, the family tradition states J.B. Haggin left instructions to destroy all personal papers.



Figure 1.4: James Ben Ali Haggin, Courtesy of the Haggin Museum, Stockton, California

At the age of seventy-five, when J.B. Haggin purchased Elmendorf Farm, his decisions and actions affected the everyday lives of hundreds of thousands of people barely known by Haggin. From the silver mines in Montana, copper pits in Peru, and water battles in California, he and his partner drew power and profit from the monopolistic control of natural and human resources. This in turn made their holdings as diverse – telegraphs, real estate, gas lights, food, copper, gold – as they were vast – stretching across North America, from Canada to Peru, and throughout America, from California to Rhode Island, from Montana to Texas, and from New York to Alabama. Their tactics were far from unknown or original. Stock watering, dummy corporations, political maneuvering, acquisitions, and outright fraud, their ventures, like most successful business enterprises of the times, functioned on dominance and expansion. To admirers the firm of Haggin & Tevis served as the highest example of opportunities in America; but to critics there was little admiration for the partners. Cold and calculating, ruthless and devious, the Kentuckians were seen as exploiters of ordinary men and women, rapacious in their wealth while the workers toiled on. Indisputably, Haggin was one of the nation's richest men in the world, owning more land in America and more mines in North America than other at that time. Furthermore, Haggin was the largest Thoroughbred breeder in the world, and in chapter 2, this study examine the ways in which he grew into this position.

Two decades before he purchased Elmendorf, there was Rancho del Paso, home to the greatest collection of racing and breeding horses in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. Located in Sacramento, California, this horse stud farm was undeniably important in the making of Haggin's second operation in Lexington,

Kentucky. Though each differed in background and environment, the industrial practices and philosophies that transformed Rancho del Paso, as we will see, held true over thousands of miles to the extreme east of California in the rich bluegrass pastures surrounding Elmendorf Farm.

When Haggin returned to Kentucky in October of 1897, almost fifty years had passed since the young lawyer had left the Bluegrass in search of greater prosperity and better opportunities. Though he maintained a residence in New York City, he visited his roots periodically, attending horse sales in Lexington and horse races in Louisville. Indeed, his decision to purchase Elmendorf that year seemed a glorious homecoming and allowed him to lead in a larger movement of wealthy horse breeders who established an increasingly complex horse economy. In chapter 3, this study explores the ways in which locals and outsiders actively sought to make central Kentucky a kingdom for the pedigree horse. I follow several recent studies which seek to untangle some of the intersections among pedigree breeding, class, and race in the Bluegrass. The breeding here was as keen as anywhere in the country. Horses with lineages densely populated with famous sires and dams not only increased personal dignity but also regional identity.

The next three chapters examine, in detail, the industrial horse enterprise that came to dominate international market economies at the turn of the twentieth-century. Haggin bred these horses systematically; applying business principles to his pedigree farm, he transformed his Kentucky stud into a mechanized complex for Thoroughbred production. Between Elmendorf and Rancho del Paso, by 1905 he accumulated exorbitant numbers of the very best bloodlines in the world, representing the biggest enterprise of its kind.

With this experience and mentality, J.B. Haggin fashioned a stud unparalleled among his peers, in scale and style, in the heart of renowned horse country. Operating in conjunction with Rancho del Paso until 1905, Elmendorf followed a familiar pattern in his industrial empire, using capitalization and vertical integration to specialize the large-scale production, and thereby helping to solidify Haggin's position as the largest breeder in the world. Chapter 4 explores some of the key characteristics of this industrial enterprise in the upper South including the pivotal component of global equine exchanges which proved instrumental if not vital to the pedigree horse industry because Haggin believed real excellence came from breeding importing stallions to domestic broodmares. Haggin became deeply invested in transatlantic trade from Rancho del Paso and enthusiastically continued at Elmendorf on an increasingly large scale which set Elmendorf on the path to unprecedented expansion. By 1905 Haggin was mingling prized bloodlines that had previously only been available on multiple, smaller operations across the world.

As Elmendorf attained a position of dominance in specialized market economies, the stud helped reinforce a system of labor relations in central Kentucky, one peculiar to horse business and one segmented by race. African Americans were once celebrated as the champion jockeys and trainers of the horse industry, as a host of scholars have shown, but in an increasingly segregated society, they found themselves pushed from the front side of America's racetracks. Chapter 5 adds a new layer to the study of black horse workers, showing how their lives were conditioned simultaneously by the methods of an industrial horse farm and a racialized society.⁴¹ Haggin depended upon wage laborers to

⁴¹ For more about the black sportsmen in the horse industry, see Russell Thomas Wigginton, *The Strange Career of the Black Athlete: African Americans and Sports* (Westport, Conn: Praeger,

perform the back-breaking work of his great estate. This was a crucial, and significant, characteristic of Elmendorf's industrial system. The labor and lives of the farm's black workers, in particular, offered a powerful example of how the racialization of the breeding industry was part cause, part consequence of the larger social and economic changes in America at the turn-of-the-century.

Haggin's estate, like most large-scale farms in the Bluegrass, affirmed the economic, social, and physical separation of the races in central Kentucky.⁴² From the evidence of obituaries, wills, and oral histories, Elmendorf hired large numbers of African Americans to work as wage laborers. For ten or twelve hours a day, six days a week, they labored under low-paying and back-breaking work. They became hostlers, grooms, field-hands, quarry laborers, carriage drivers, cooks, domestics, laundresses,

2006); Michael J. Cozzillio and Robert L. Hayman, *Sports and Inequality* (Durham, N.C.: Carolina Academic Press, 2005); Edward Hotaling, *Wink: The Incredible Life and Epic Journey of Jimmy Winkfield* (New York: McGraw Hill, 2005); Hotaling and Joe Drape, *Black Maestro: The Epic Life of an American Legend* (New York: William Morrow, 2006); Hotaling, *The Great Black Jockeys: The Lives and Times of the Men Who Dominated America's First National Sport* (Rocklin, California: Prima Publishing, 1999). For more biographical studies of turn-of-the-century black athletes, see Andrew Ritchie, *Major Taylor: The Extraordinary Career of a Champion Bicycle Racer* (Baltimore, Maryland: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996); Geoffrey C. Ward, *Unforgivable Blackness: The Rise and Fall of Jack Johnson* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2004).

⁴² The studies that informed my understanding race construction, particularly in the upper South at the turn of the century, see Barbara Fields, "Race as Ideology," in C. Vann Woodward, J. Morgan Kousser, and James M. McPherson, *Region, Race, and Reconstruction: Essays in Honor of C. Vann Woodward* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1982); Ariela Julie Gross, *What Blood Won't Tell: A History of Race on Trial in America* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 2008); Joel Williamson, *The Crucible of Race: Black/White Relations in the American South Since Emancipation* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1984); Glenda Elizabeth Gilmore, *Gender and Jim Crow: Women and the Politics of White Supremacy in North Carolina, 1896 – 1920* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina, 1996); Grace Elizabeth Hale, *Making Whiteness: The Culture of Segregation in the South, 1890-1940* (New York: Vintage Books, 1999); David R. Roediger, *The Wages of Whiteness: Race and the Making of the American Working Class* (New York: Verso, 1991); Matthew Frye Jacobson, *Whiteness of a Different Color: European Immigrants and the Alchemy of Race* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1998); Jack Temple Kirby, *Darkness at the Dawn: Race and Reform in the Progressive South* (Philadelphia, 1972); David Blight, *Blight, Race and Reunion: The Civil War in American Memory* (Cambridge, Mass: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2001).

watchmen, and tenants. There were a few exceptions, of course. Some African Americans occupied the middling ranks of farm management, and as a result, or perhaps because, these individuals had special relationships with the Haggin family who offered privileges to the valued employees. Although their work often crossed barriers of race and ethnicity, their personal lives became more and more segregated. While they tended to his prized horses, many of Haggin's black workers created an exclusive domain for themselves within the segregated communities that lay on the outskirts of the gilded estate. In thoroughly racially-divided hamlets that lay on the outskirts of town and near the farms, black workers maintained close ties to the land, to the family, and to the communities.

With regard to its production methods, marketing strategies, scientific experts, and labor relations, the making of Elmendorf horse stud between 1897 and 1910 reflected not only a determination to establish and maintain an industrial stock farm, but also a desire to fashion an aristocratic breeding estate. In chapter 6, this study examines the elite symbolism of Elmendorf's constructed landscape, a characteristic that had long marked the prominent breeding farms of central Kentucky. Haggin spent vast sums of money, purchasing parcels surrounding his Bluegrass estate, to have enough acreage for pasturage and under cultivation. Between 1897 and 1907 he consolidated major portions of Fayette, Scott, and Bourbon counties, and what could not be bought was leased. He also undertook the necessary steps to distribute and sell his horses. He financed private railroad lines in the area which linked the farm to local cities and distant markets. More important still, such consciousness of pride and privilege attained greater heights and new meanings at the hand of J.B. Haggin.

On Elmendorf, a visitor could wander along a constructed landscape of civilized and refined vistas which only enhanced the industrial logic which helped create the magnificence. Haggin made his views plain in other ways that Elmendorf represented something more than markets. The estate was designed to symbolize the ideals he prized most. His wealth took the form of not only the fanciest of animals, but the finest of estates, with its rolling countryside, beautified grounds, massive Colonial-style mansion, and substantial barns. To what end did he fashion this place of comfort and liberality? From a personal perspective, Haggin spent lavishly at Elmendorf, in part, to indulge his own acquisitive instincts. Like his extravagant mansion in San Francisco and his modern brownstone in New York, he often ignored frugality when it came to personal living space. The forty-room mansion at Elmendorf was fashionable and spacious, embellished with crystal chandeliers, antique furniture, painted ceilings, and furnished with modern technologies, such as elevators and electricity. If Haggin's farm shows us that early industrial farms were more complicated than previous scholarship reveals, his operation also emphasizes a well-known scenario in high modern agriculture.

Indeed, Haggin's industrial logic proved Elmendorf's undoing. The wealthy horse baron made plans to create bigger and better holdings at the Bluegrass estate, but as the farm enlarged scales and deepened ties to market economies, its ties to land and culture began to unravel. While pedigree breeding, generally speaking, always existed more for pleasure than profit, Haggin's strategy for big-business breeding threatened to undermine core principles regarding pedigree animals, especially when larger political and economic circumstances influenced farm sales. Anti-gambling movements, in particular, exposed

the farm to sudden drops in prices and threatened the privileged society of pedigree breeding in Kentucky and beyond.

In chapter 7, this study focuses on how early twentieth-century social reforms in New York play an important role in the fall of Haggin's stud in Kentucky. Outraged by progressive efforts to reform track gambling, Haggin refused to accept what he believed to be an assault on the elite sport of Thoroughbred racing followed the world over. The dissolution of the sport for which owners bred led Haggin to seek better markets for his specialized commodities abroad. His aggressive tactics, however, only contributed to troubles in global markets and politics and European breeders restricted the sale of Haggin's animals, as we see in chapter 8. What first became a global movement to restrict American-bred horses was neither foreseen nor intended but became unavoidable when Haggin, the largest breeder of Thoroughbreds in the world, responding to the provocative reforms of the New York's racing industry, decided to move quickly and sell directly the bulk of his Kentucky estate in foreign markets.

The final chapters collectively represent an untold story of Haggin's Bluegrass estate. While Haggin was shipping his horses overseas, he was importing another kind of pedigree animal to Kentucky, the milk cow. He transformed what was once the world's largest stud into "The Modern Dairy of the Southland." Few had attempted anything like it at the turn of the century, and none attempted the scale or grandeur of Elmendorf. Though the dairy was one of the largest in the world in those years, the longest published scholarly account of the business is only fifteen pages long.

In chapter 9, this study explores the ways in which a new kind of scientific and mechanized operation emerged in the wake of Haggin's decision to sell his horses

overseas. He still remained dependent on trade in international commodities. Like his Thoroughbreds, Haggin's new milking herds became yet another irresistible opportunity to acquire the best strains of high stock in the world. Haggin, motivated by progressive milk reforms, began to integrate pedigree breeding with "certified" milk production at Elmendorf. To do so, he not only purchased fancy cows, expanded markets, and introduced machinery, but also forged important links with the state land-grant institution.

In chapter 10, a closer look at the specialists hired offers a better understanding of the historical significance of Haggin's clean milk. Striking an industrial bargain of sorts with Kentucky A&M College, the administration, faculty, and students played a critical role in crafting Elmendorf's dynamic system of proven hygienic and scientific milk production. With the land-grant at the helm of the dairy, the scale and scope of Haggin's modern dairy were limitless, so it seemed and the interrelationship with Elmendorf offered the possibility of methods and means greater than what the land-grant institutions could offer. However difficult faculty and students found the relationship, the fact remains that Haggin benefited tremendously from the efforts of the college's agricultural expertise. Indeed, the college's oversight helped address the single greatest fault of Haggin's industrial logic—sustainable development.⁴³

⁴³ For more information about the early history of Kentucky's white land-grant institution, see J. Allan Smith, *The College of Agriculture of the University of Kentucky: Early and Middle Years, 1865-1951* (Lexington, Ky: Kentucky Agricultural Experiment Station, 1981): 86; Linda Raney Kiesel, "Kentucky's Land-Grant Legacy: An analysis of the administration of John Bryan Bowman and James Kennedy Patterson, 1865 – 1890," (Ph.D. diss., University of Kentucky, 2003); Ezra Gillis, *The University of Kentucky: Its History and Development : a Series of Charts Depicting the More Important Data, 1862-1955* (Lexington: The University, 1956); James F. Hopkins, *The University of Kentucky: Origins and Early Years* (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1951). On the historical development of agricultural science and the early land grant institution in America, see Margaret Rossiter, "The Organization of Agricultural Sciences,"

Ultimately, Elmendorf left a complex, even contradictory, legacy. Its owner was the architect of the nation's if not the world's greatest breeding and milking farm at the turn of the twentieth-century. For a man who micromanaged million-dollar enterprises across North America, keeping tightfisted control of details, always striving to rationalize his businesses, Haggin showed exceptional carelessness in planning his estate. He wrote a will that contained nothing about the Kentucky farm. With no direction for its future, the effects of the owner's passing was disastrous for the world's largest breeding operation, as the majority of the 12,000-acre farm shortly went to the auction block. Elmendorf, the Bluegrass estate that had witnessed nearly two decades of unprecedented growth and unbridled expansion, was ultimately never constructed to last. The twin themes of Haggin's great farm—a celebration of a signature landscape and a lack of sustainability—proved eerily reminiscent of the economic and social challenges that face the inner Bluegrass a century later.

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in *The Organization of Knowledge in Modern America, 1860 – 1920*, ed. A. Oleson and J. Voss (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1979); and Charles E. Rosenberg, *No Other Gods: On Science and American Social Thought* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1997), chaps. 8 - 12.

Chapter Two

The Rising of James Ben Ali Haggin, 1850 – 1897

Near a small cluster of trees, in the well-tended section of Spring Hill Cemetery, in Mercer County, Kentucky, surrounded by funeral urns, weeping statues, and small obelisks, is a large stone monument that bears the name “HAGGIN.” In August of 1912, at the age of ninety, J.B. Haggin had commissioned the memorial in honor of his family in Kentucky. It was constructed in his usual fashion. So large and heavy was the grey stone monument, local workers found it impossible to find a wagon in town to haul the pieces to the cemetery.¹

There were, of course, important meanings associated with its design. On the left wall, the names of J.B. Haggin’s paternal grandparents and their children were listed, with “TERAH TEMPLE HAGGIN” in a larger setting to commemorate his father. On the right wall, the matriarch of the family, Adeline Ben Ali Haggin, was inscribed on the bronze tablet, illustrating the importance of her memory in Haggin’s life, followed by a list of his brothers and sisters. At the foot of the memorial were three large granite blocks, with no more lettering than their names, age, date of death, and a single biblical scripture, covering the graves of Captain John Haggin, Nancy Haggin, and Sally Haggin McMurtry. A year earlier Haggin had decided to locate and honor his ancestors, deeming

¹ “Haggin Monument,” *Lexington Leader*, 9 August 1912, p.11.



Figure 2.1: Haggin Family Stone, Spring Hill Cemetery, Kentucky. Photograph by the author. (2008).

it necessary to collect the bodies together in one plot. Their remains once lay peacefully in a cemetery at the old family farm off Buster Pike, a few miles outside of town, were now reinterred in the Mercer County cemetery, ensuring the presence of their graves and memory. At ninety years of age, the elderly man had time to think about his life and to come to terms with his past. He had erected the monument in honor and memory of his family, signifying a gesture of genuine respect for his deep roots in Kentucky.

* * * *

In the small town of Harrodsburg, Kentucky, on December 22, 1822, Adeline Haggin gave birth to her second son. With what would be considered unusual prescience, the new mother christened this future tycoon, James Ben Ali Haggin.² The name Ben Ali remained a matter of curiosity throughout Haggin's life. With the assignment of this remarkable namesake, Adeline Haggin gave him her father's name, Ibrahim Ben Ali, and set her son apart.

An ancestry including a Turkish grandfather would garner little discussion had his striking features not passed to his grandson. High cheekbones, olive-colored skin, and wide, dark eyes gave a distinct and indisputable ethnicity.³ "Kentucky's Kubla Khan," one reporter dubbed him. "He looked like a Turk," he wrote, "And if he wore a red fez instead of an American headpiece, he would have passed for a true son of the Prophet,

² Adeline Haggin to Dr. Joseph Haggin, July 1886, in Haggin Papers, Haggin Museum, California; Adam Clarke, "Extract From Appendix of An Account of the Infancy, Religious and Literary Life of Adam Clarke, LL.D., F.A.S.," (New York: D. Appleton & Co., 1833); Haggin Family Bible, Haggin Collection Research Files, Haggin Museum, California.

³ Quoted in "Character Study of Sporting Financier," *Oakland California Tribune*, October 4, 1914, page number unknown. Copy of article found in a family scrapbook, Elmendorf Farm Photographic Collection, University of Kentucky Special Collections, Kentucky.

and nobody would have been surprised to see him spread his carpet in the judges' stand at the Old Bay District Track and say his prayers to Allah."⁴ His enemies, on the other hand, used his ancestry to direct racial barbs toward Haggin. Some public figures went so far as to interchange accusations of Islamic profiling with racial stereotyping. In a clear reference to Haggin's "roots," William A. Clark, a Montanan capitalist publicly announced that he possessed "no wish to meet with a member of the Ethiopian race."⁵

Whatever Haggin's internal thoughts with regard to being called "a nigger" or a "genuine Turk," there is clear evidence that Haggin was possessed of great pride in his own lineage, as sons and his stallions alike carried the name Ben Ali. Indeed, his exotic origins proved to be a shadow of sorts that enveloped the legacy of Haggin because the grandson resembled the grandfather not only in a distinguished appearance but in a life consumed by wanderlust. Although the experiences of Ibrahim Ben Ali remain shrouded more in folklore than fact, a letter from his daughter confirmed that her father lived an extraordinary life. He survived the Turkish campaigns against the Russians as a prisoner of war.⁶ Captured by an English officer named General St. Clair, Ben Ali somehow arrived in England as a free man, whereupon he left the country for Ireland, then Italy,

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Michael Malone, *Battle for Butte: Mining and Politics on the Northern Frontier, 1864-1906*, (Montana: Montana Historical Society, 1999).

⁶ Most studies focus on this romanticized notion of Haggin's ancestry. See, for example, Daniel Alef, "James Ben Ali Haggin: A King for All Seasons," in *Titans of Fortune*, (Santa Barbara, California: Meta Publishing, 2008; Lois Elaine Mahoney, "California's Forgotten Triumvirate: James Ben Ali Haggin, Lloyd Tevis, and George Hearst," (PhD diss., San Francisco State University, 1977); Charles Kerr, et al, "James Ben Ali Haggin," in *History of Kentucky*, (Louisville, Kentucky: The J.A. Clarke Publishing Company, 1928); James Burnley, *Millionaires and Kings of Enterprises: The Marvelous [sic] Careers of Some Americans Who By Pluck, Foresight, and Energy Have Made Themselves Masters in the Fields of Industry and Finance*, (Harmsworth Brothers, Limited, Philadelphia: J.B. Lippincott Company, 1901). The most reliable evidence concerning his grandfather's origins comes from a letter written by Adeline Haggin to Dr. Joseph B, Haggin, July 1886, in Haggin Papers, Haggin Museum, California Adeline's letter, Haggin Museum.

France, Spain, Greece, Rome, and finally America.⁷ In the city of New York, Ibrahim Ben Ali married Susan Colvin, from a family of higher social standing than her new husband.⁸ Soon after the couple moved to Philadelphia where they remained only a short time before Ben Ali became restless and wanted to return to Europe. After selling their possessions, they arrived in Baltimore where in city and country yellow fever raged. Having studied medicine at Dublin College, Ben Ali practiced as a physician for short time, awaiting the arrival of his daughter, until one night he carried the disease home. With “my mother in her bed, not able to do anything for him,” Adeline’s father died.⁹ She was but three weeks old.

That Ibrahim Ben Ali died in Baltimore marked a turning point for his daughter as for history. Adeline Ben Ali never left America and eventually made her way to Kentucky. Soon after the burial of her father, her mother returned to a place where she had friends, New York City. When her daughter was five years old, Susan Ben Ali remarried a man several years older named Martin. A limner “in a good business,” Adeline’s stepfather sent her to “much approved” boarding schools in New Jersey, Philadelphia, and Washington, D.C. Sometime around 1816, she moved to Philadelphia to help care for her ailing mother, and at the age of eighteen, with her younger brother and a sister in tow, Adeline Ben Ali moved to a small town in Kentucky.¹⁰

⁷ There, he came under the influence of a Methodist minister named Adam Clarke. The two formed a lifelong friendship and Ibrahim Ben Ali converted from Islam to Christianity. See Clarke, “Extract From Appendix of an Account of the Infancy, Religious and Literary Life of Adam Clarke, LL.D., F.A.S.,” 2-5.

⁸ Adeline Haggin to Dr. Joseph B, Haggin, July 1886, in Haggin Papers, Haggin Museum, California Adeline’s letter, Haggin Museum.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Her mother remarried when Adeline Haggin was five. She recalls her stepfather as “Mr. Martin,” a “limner and in good business.” Ibid.

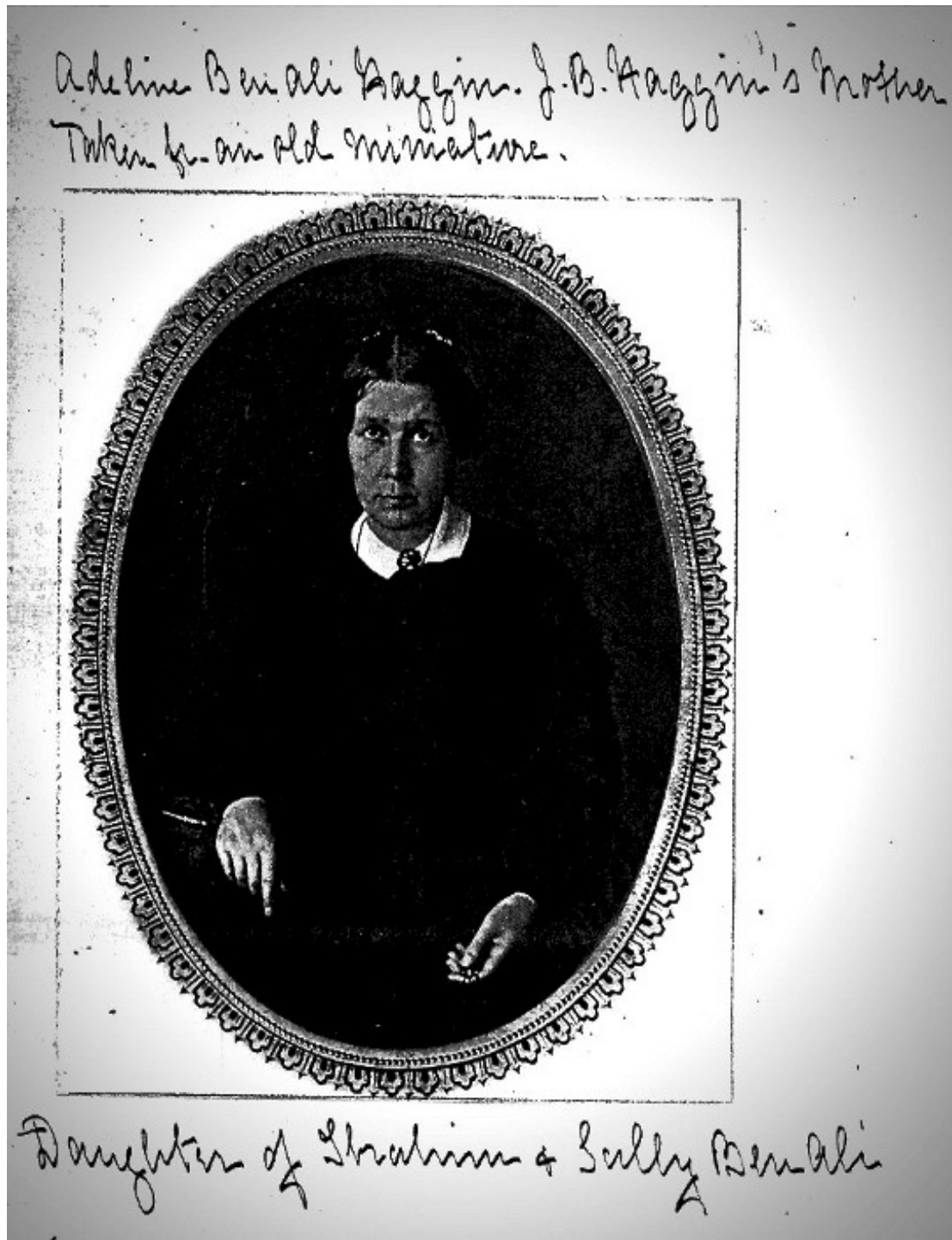


Figure 2.2: Adeline Ben Ali Haggin, Album No. 3, Ben Ali Haggin Materials, University of Kentucky.

The arrival of a single, quite striking, and educated woman must have caused a stir among rural Harrodsburg. Situated on a small branch of the Salt River, the attractive little town enjoyed a reputation for its mineral waters. Adeline Ben Ali began teaching at a small, private school in response to a letter from a certain “Mrs. Holcomb,” who was the new principal of a female academy in Harrodsburg, Kentucky. Interestingly, extraordinary female by the standards of the day, she brought with her a piano, a most unlikely luxury indicative of “quality” and refinement in her education which, in addition to her other virtues, gave her special consideration in the local community. “Men on court day,” a local historian writes, “would assemble in front of her house to catch the music that tinkled from her fingers.” Significantly, one such admirer of her melodies was Terah Templin Haggin, a man Adeline Haggin described years later as, “one of the very first young men in the country in point of talents.”¹¹

Terah Haggin, a second-generation Kentuckian, came from a relatively prosperous family who thought of wealth in the fashion of old-style aristocrats, in terms of land and slaves rather than hard money. This had great significance for understanding the larger forces that shaped J.B. Haggin’s life. Kentucky, a decidedly precarious place of chaotic land dealings in the late eighteenth-century, offered opportunities for moneyed men. And little underscored this reality more than the settling of Captain John Haggin, J.B. Haggin’s paternal grandfather.

¹¹ “The Fabulous James Ben Ali Haggin,” *Louisville Courier-Journal*, May 8, 1983; Adeline Haggin to Dr. Joseph B. Haggin, July 1886, in Haggin Papers, Haggin Museum, California Adeline’s letter, Haggin Museum. For the quote of Adeline Haggin’s music abilities, see Maria T. Daviess, *History of Mercer and Boyle Counties*, (Harrodsburg, Kentucky: Harrodsburg Herald, 1924); George Morgan Chinn and Rebecca Wilson Conover, *Through Two Hundred Years: Pictorial Highlights of Harrodsburg and Mercer County, Kentucky*, (Harrodsburg, Kentucky: Mercer County Humane Society, 1974) 146.

When Captain Haggin first arrived in Kentucky in 1775, he was a hunter with a questionable reputation, who some labeled a troublemaker and others described him as aggressive and domineering.¹² Over the next two decades, from the 1780's to 1820's, with the measured and deliberate purchase of verdant acreage of Kentucky farmland, Haggin crossed the threshold into a different world predicated on status and distinction.¹³ In 1798, Captain Haggin was appointed as justice of the peace, a major office in the local community. He also became a church elder, helping build one of the first churches in Kentucky, New Providence Church, on his property. As Captain Haggin grew in public prominence and prestige, he simultaneously established his rightful position in this new social order with the accumulation of a small fortune in land. The ownership of nearly

¹² By all testimony, the Haggins' first years in trans-Appalachian West were filled with bloody warfare, painful isolation, and near starvation. From 1776 to 1780, Captain Haggin traveled to various stations in several states, carrying supplies, gunpowder, and messages. Haggin, a man who was once described as so "aggressive and domineering," it was the consensus of the "others [Simon Kenton] that John Haggin would not last long in this country. If the Indians didn't kill him, some angry settler was sure to." See Allan W. Eckert, *The Frontiersmen: A Narrative*, (Boston: Little, Brown, 1967) 135. Historian Thomas D. Clark is kinder to Haggin, calling him "hot-tempered" but a "dependable" scout. See Thomas D. Clark, *Simon Kenton: Kentucky Scout* (New York: Farrar & Rinehart, 1943), 184-185. If a climate of fear, anger, and difficulties defined life in early Kentucky, Nancy Haggin endured it without a husband. Her story, what little can be discerned, shows great resilience. During this period Haggin's grandmother carried the tremendous burdens of raising children at Harrod's Station, which one settler described as no place for a "growing family." See State Historical Society of Wisconsin, *Frontier Defense on the Upper Ohio, 1777-1778; Compiled from the Draper Manuscripts in the Library of the Wisconsin Historical Society*, (Wisconsin: General Books, LLC, 2010), 181-182. For more about the physical and social terrain of the "frontier," which perpetuated ideals of masculine power, individualism, and status in early Kentucky, see Stephen Aron, *How the West was Lost: The Transformation of Kentucky from Daniel Boone to Henry Clay*, (Baltimore, Maryland: The John Hopkins University Press, 1999) and Elizabeth Perkins, *Border Life: Experience and Memory in the Revolutionary Ohio Valley* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1998).

¹³ Historians have argued that nowhere was a vision of a yeoman, agrarian republic—a political and social space where small farmers become independent, responsible property owners—more flawed and contradictory than in central Kentucky. Fredrika Johanna Teute, "Land, Liberty, and Labor in the Post-Revolutionary Era: Kentucky as the Promised Land," (PhD, John Hopkins University, 1988), 185; Neal O'Hammon, *Early Kentucky Land Records, 1773 – 1780*, (Louisville, Kentucky: Filson Club, 1992) 63; Willard Rouse Jillson, *Old Kentucky Entries and Deeds: A Complete Index to All of the Earliest Land Entries, Military Warrants, Deeds and Wills of the Commonwealth of Kentucky*, (Louisville, Kentucky: Standard Print. Co., 1926, Filson Club Publications, no. 34, 1926), 182.

8000 acres placed his family in the minority of Kentucky households; by 1800, only 49 percent of the state owned property.¹⁴ The wherewithal to provide the manpower to work this vast acreage further elevated Captain Haggin in Kentucky society. He owned at least twenty-five slaves, of whom fifteen were valued at \$5300.¹⁵ Human property provided a cruel but lucrative currency in the cash-poor society of Kentucky and set the seal, as it were, on the family's emerging aristocracy.

Terah Haggin followed in his father's footsteps and bequeathed to his second son two important and intertwined tendencies: first, a passion for acreage, and second, an understanding of law. During the 1820s and 1830s, he made a name for himself with a "large and lucrative" law practice in Louisville and Harrodsburg. Profits from his legal ventures helped establish and maintain sizeable landholdings throughout central Kentucky, enough for him to impress contemporaries as a "respectable" Southern farmer.¹⁶ Public opinion dictated that a truly genteel landowner would also possess the means to generate wealth from his land. The ownership of human laborers to wrest profit from the land ensured a landowner's position. Like his father, Terah Haggin represented a "planter" in most historiographical definitions; he owned more than five slaves and

¹⁴ For the full listing of Captain John Haggin's land records at Mercer County Courthouse, Harrodsburg, Kentucky, see Appendix A, Haggin Land Records in Kentucky. See also Michael L. Cook, *Mercer County, Kentucky Records*, (Evansville, Indiana: Cook Publications, Kentucky Records Series, Vol. 1, 1988) 146, 200, 489, 492. Hammon, *Early Kentucky Land Records, 1773-1780*, p. 107. For discussion of the church, see William Heth Whitsitt, *Life and Times of Judge Caleb Wallace*, (Louisville, Kentucky: J.P. Morton & Co., 1888) 111; Robert H. Bishop and David Rice, *Bishop's Rice, An Outline of the history of the church in the state of Kentucky, during a period of forty years : containing the memoirs of Rev. David Rice, and sketches of the origin and present state of particular churches, and of the lives and labours of a number of men who were eminent and useful in their day*, (Lexington, Kentucky: T.T. Skillman, 1824) 148, 149.

¹⁵ Based on acreage, Captain Haggin, more than likely, hired out the bulk of his twenty-five slaves to work on farms. "Inventory and Appraisalment of the Slaves and Personal Estate of John Haggin, Deceased," Mercer County Will Books, Mercer County Courthouse, Harrodsburg, Kentucky, p. 34. John Haggin's Will, Mercer County Will Book 8, Mercer County Courthouse, Harrodsburg, Kentucky, p. 30-34.

¹⁶ Daviess, *History of Mercer and Boyle Counties*, 70; G. G. Clift, *Kentucky Soldiers of the War of 1812: With an Added Index*, (Place: Genealogical Publishing Com, 2010) 242

more than two hundred acres of land.¹⁷ It remains unclear if Terah Haggin's labors or the work of his wife and children were required on the farm to ensure the profitability of their little "plantation," but little bolstered the respectability of any "planter" more than his subscription to the financial benefits of human bondage. And there is certainly no question regarding the fact that Terah Haggin owned twelve slaves throughout his son's youth and that human labor force placed his family in the middling to upper strata of slaveholders in the South.¹⁸

Though J.B. Haggin never publicly discussed his Kentucky childhood, it is sufficiently evident that Terah and Adeline Haggin gave all their offspring the benefits befitting the upper echelons of society. For a period of J.B. Haggin's young life, the family lived in a genteel home in downtown Harrodsburg, Kentucky. The ample two-story brick home reflected Terah Haggin's place among Harrodsburg's elite. As a matter of course, like many of Kentucky's wealthier sons, J.B. Haggin attended Centre College, a burgeoning private school in nearby Danville, whose enrollment included the likes of the future fifteenth Vice President of United States, John C. Breckinridge, and future Chief Justice Fred Vinson. Young J. B. Haggin, however, proved something of a

¹⁷ "Inventory and Appraisalment of the Slaves and Personal Estate of John Haggin, Deceased," Mercer County Will Book 8, p. 34. The exception would be scholar Stephanie McCurry who argues the best conceptual definition between yeoman and planter is "self-working," as farmers themselves offered to distinguish degrees of Old South households. See Stephanie McCurry, *Masters of Small Worlds: Yeoman Households, Gender Relations, and the Political Culture of the Antebellum South Carolina Low Country*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995) 46-49.

¹⁸ U.S. Manuscript Census, Schedule of the Whole Number of Persons, 1830, Mercer County, () Census of the U.S., 1830 (Washington: Gov. Printing Office, 1830): 365; U.S. Manuscript Census, Schedule 1, Free Inhabitants in Harrodsburg, 1860, Mercer County, Eighth Census of the U.S., 1860: (Washington: Gov. Printing Office, 1865): 8; U.S. Manuscript Census, Schedule 2, Slave Inhabitants, Franklin County, Seventh Census of the U.S., 1850 (Washington: Gov. Printing Office): 905. Haggin's wealth was further magnified in a state with a diminutive number of slaves per owner. Kentucky slave-owners held less than 5 slaves per owner, one of the lowest in the South. Darrel E. Bigham, *On Jordan's Banks: Emancipation and Its Aftermath in the Ohio River Valley* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2006): 19; Ivan E. McDougale, *Slavery in Kentucky, 1792-1865* (Westport, Conn: Negro Universities Press, 1970): 8-9; L. C. Gray and Esther Katherine Thompson, *History of Agriculture in the Southern United States to 1860* (Washington: The Carnegie Institution of Washington, 1933): 656.

wayward student. There is no proof that he graduated from Centre. Possibly impatient with the coursework which he deemed unnecessary or useless, Haggin decided to pursue instead a more practical route toward the legal profession. Sometime around 1843 he left school and took a position as a clerk in his family's law firm.¹⁹ From the men in the Haggin family, he became schooled in the practices of manipulating the law in avid pursuit of acreage.

Members of the Haggin family were quite methodical in their quest for land, similar to that of “land jobbers” who, as early as the 1750s, had successfully used various laws and rites of public policy to gather large tracts of land in the western territory. So unsettling was the rule of law in Kentucky that settlers petitioned Virginia assembly. As scholar Fredericka Teute points out, “Many believed that if they emigrated to the frontier, settled on vacant land, and improved it, they too would--or should--qualify for a headright to their land under the ‘ancient cultivation law.’”²⁰ Legislators tried to remedy

¹⁹ For Terah Haggin's home in Harrodsburg, see Rexford Newcomb, *Architecture in Old Kentucky* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1953); Clay Lancaster, *Antebellum Architecture of Kentucky* (Lexington, Ky: University Press of Kentucky, 1991): 135; James D. Birchfield, *Clay Lancaster's Kentucky: Architectural Photographs of a Preservation Pioneer* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2007). Centre College provided a quite extraordinary atmosphere during the 1830s and 1840s. John Dean Wright, *Transylvania, Tutor to the West* (Lexington, Ky: University Press of Kentucky, 1980); Craig Thompson Friend, *Along the Maysville Road: The Early American Republic in the Trans-Appalachian West* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 2005). Some reports say that J.B. Haggin clerked with his uncle and namesake James Haggin, but he died in 1835. More than likely, J.B. Haggin clerked for his other uncle John Haggin and his father Terah Haggin. Ronald Duke Parsons, Jr., “The Irish Khan and His Empire: James Ben Ali Haggin and His Associates,” (MA Thesis, California State University, Sacramento, 2002) 7-8; Lois Elaine Mahoney, “California's Forgotten Triumvirate: James Ben Ali Haggin, Lloyd Tevis, and George Hearst,” (PhD diss., San Francisco State University, 1977) 18. For Terah Haggin's law practice in Louisville, see J. Stoddard Johnston, *Memorial History of Louisville from Its First Settlement to the Year 1896* (Chicago: American Biographical Pub. Co, 1896): 87.

²⁰ For more about the state's land system, which was mired in a tangled web of different claims—settlement, preemption, treasury, military, and certificate—compounded by an “unbelievably snarled maze of overlapping boundaries,” see Teute, “Land, Liberty, and Labor in the Post-Revolutionary Era: Kentucky as the Promised Land,” (PhD, John Hopkins University, 1988) 199. Scholars of early America convincingly demonstrate that land speculation was an ingrained facet of commercial activity since colonial times. See Bernard Bailyn, *The People of British North America: An Introduction* (New York: Vintage Books, 1988): 65 – 86.

the mess with a series of land laws but such attempts failed. The laws of 1779, in the words of Kentucky historian Thomas D. Clark, “opened the way for speculators to plaster Kentucky with vast claims.”²¹

This “great rash of speculation” included J.B. Haggin’s grandfather, who wrested upward mobility from the chaotic land system.²² Captain Haggin acquired over 7,500 acres in Kentucky by using cumbersome land laws and fellow settlers to mutual advantage.²³ Although Captain Haggin, like other speculators, became ensnared in tedious, expensive litigation associated with accumulation of land, J.B.’s grandfather obtained and retained his real estate holdings because of his sons’ knowledge and skills in litigation. Contemporaries described Captain Haggin’s eldest son, Judge James Haggin, as having “no superior in Kentucky” in land court.²⁴ In fact, Judge James Haggin’s holdings further underscore how lawyers themselves joined the grab in that by the 1830s, Judge Haggin completed the accumulation of 25,000 acres in Kentucky.²⁵ The Haggins ultimately exhibited the speculation and hard-drive for acquisition that, early on, ensured

²¹ Thomas D. Clark, *Agrarian Kentucky*, (Lexington, Kentucky: University of Kentucky Press, 2003): 8. As historian Craig Friend writes, “Kentucky proved the least egalitarian of the western settlements in land distribution, and the state ranked with the more stratified societies of New York, South Carolina, and Georgia as having the most inequitable distribution of wealthy and property in the nation.” Friend, *Along Maysville Road*, 107.

²² Clark, *Agrarian Kentucky*, 8.

²³ For the full listing of Captain John Haggin’s land records at Mercer County Courthouse, Harrodsburg, Kentucky, see Appendix A, Haggin Land Records in Kentucky. See also Michael L. Cook, *Mercer County, Kentucky Records*, 146, 200, 489, 492. Hammon, *Early Kentucky Land Records, 1773-1780*, 63. Jillson, *Old Kentucky Entries and Deeds*, 182.

²⁴ Frank Furlong Mathias, “The Turbulent Years of Kentucky Politics, 1820-1850.” (Ph. D. diss, University of Kentucky, 1966); Hammons, *Early Kentucky Land Records, 1773-1780*, 92. In the winter of 1780, Haggin attended two sessions of the Virginian land commission at Bryan’s Station and Harrodsburg and testified in nine cases that John Haggin had secured and claimed preemptions for these individuals. For more about the land commission’s marathon of 79 sessions, see Stephen Aron, *How the West was Lost*, 100-101, 240. For quotation regarding Judge James Haggin, see George Washington Ranck, *History of Lexington, Kentucky: Its Early Annals and Recent Progress, Including Biographical Sketches and Personal Reminiscences of the Pioneer Settlers, Notices of Prominent Citizens, Etc., Etc.* (Cincinnati: Robert Clarke & Co., 1872): 334.

²⁵ For a full listing of Judge Haggin’s land records see Appendix A, Haggin Land Records in Kentucky.

that Kentucky was no “poor man’s country.” Although the family experienced difficulties in surveying, patenting, and clearing land titles on their way to becoming major landowners in the Bluegrass, the Haggins used legal skills to craft a pattern that would prove highly beneficial to the younger J.B. Haggin during his time in California.²⁶ His land acquisition in the far West, therefore, was in keeping with past generations of Haggins who made names for themselves as noted landowners as well as successful land lawyers in the first West.

There was a second aspect to the pursuit of legal endeavors among the Haggins that shaped J.B. Haggin’s rise to power. Although the Haggins were respected and connected—Judge Haggin worked with Henry Clay; Terah Haggin’s law partner in Louisville was Preston Loughborough, who was appointed first U.S. postal inspector—the men seemed to exert little, if any, real power in state politics. J.B. Haggin’s father served one term as state representative of Mercer County, where his uncle was elected sheriff.²⁷ While Judge Haggin played only a minor role in the political movement known as the Old Court/New Court struggle, a controversy impacted significantly his career and family. Ensuing repercussion from political vendetta and prolonged litigation over debtor relief measures bankrupted him, and upon his death in 1835, J.B. Haggin’s uncle left his wife and children insolvent.²⁸

²⁶ A series of court cases ensued between the children of Captain Haggin over the partition of land. *Haggin v Haggin*, Fayette Circuit Court, (1842), 317-320.

²⁷ For the Haggins’ connections to Henry Clay, see Johnston, *Memorial History of Louisville*, 87.

²⁸ To punctuate how far Haggin fell, younger brother Terah Haggin put down his inheritance in Mercer County as security on Judge Haggin’s note, only to lose the land when the elder brother’s estate was settled. His widow petitioned the Kentucky General Assembly. Kentucky Acts (1840-1841), 107; Lowell Hayes Harrison and James C. Klotter, *A New History of Kentucky* (Lexington, Ky: University Press of Kentucky, 1997): 109, 111; Perrin, *Kentucky: A History of the State* (Place: Publisher, 1887) 313; Frank F. Mathias, “The Relief and Court Struggle: Half-Way House to Populism,” *Register of the Kentucky Historical Society* Volume 87 (1989): 171-176; Thomas Dionysius Clark and Robert W. Scott, *Footloose in*

During this period, J.B. Haggin also became involved in politics. At the age of twenty-three, the younger Haggin ran for deputy sheriff of Shelbyville, Kentucky and met with complete defeat.²⁹ This unsuccessful bid for a mediocre office, if true, marked a transformative moment in Haggin's life, as it would prove the only time he ever pursued a political office. The distaste for recent political and public defeat brought about an important period in Haggin's life. He would now leave Kentucky and his family. The next ten years proved to be a period of wanderlust for the young lawyer, as he began searching for "opportunities of making money." He remained headstrong, if not impatient, moving five times in less than ten years to five states. Haggin's search led him from Shelbyville Kentucky, to St. Joseph, Missouri, to Natchez, Mississippi, and down to New Orleans, Louisiana, and finally, west to Sacramento, California, "He [Haggin] would leave," contemporary Alonzo Phelps wrote, "when a locality was not advancing his interests sufficiently."³⁰

Paradoxically, during this period, Haggin married, started a family, and launched a legal career. In Natchez, Mississippi, he befriended Eliza Jane Sanders who also came from an influential family in Shelby County, Kentucky.³¹ In December of 1846, the

Jacksonian America: Robert W. Scott and His Agrarian World (Frankfort, KY: Kentucky Historical Society, 1989): 219; E. Polk Johnson, *A History of Kentucky and Kentuckians; The Leaders and Representative Men in Commerce, Industry and Modern Activities* (Chicago: Lewis Pub. Co, 1912): 242; James Haggin, Mercer County Deed Book 8, Mercer County Courthouse, Harrodsburg, Kentucky, 19, 36.

²⁹ William Connelley and E.M. Coulter, *History of Kentucky* (New York: The American Historical Society, 1922) 569; Parsons, Jr., "The Irish Khan and His Empire: James Ben Ali Haggin and His Associates," 7-8; Mahoney, "California's Forgotten Triumvirate: James Ben Ali Haggin, Lloyd Tevis, and George Hearst," 18.

³⁰ Alonzo Phelps, *Contemporary Biography of California's Representative Men with Contributions from Distinguished Scholars and Scientists* (San Francisco: A.K. Bancroft and Company, 1881): 325.

³¹ Eliza's father, Lewis Sanders, Jr., was a nephew and ward of a noted gentleman farmer and hemp distributor. Sanders Junior served as Secretary of State under Governor Breathitt before relocating to Mississippi to continue his legal practice in the same arena as Haggin. Anna V. Parker, *The Sanders Family of Grass Hill* (Madison, IN: 1966), 25-28.

couple married and the following year they welcomed their first son, Louis Terah Haggin.³² Soon thereafter the entire family, including Lewis Sanders, Jr., moved to New Orleans. Here, it was written, “Nothing came wrong” to Haggin.³³ He and his father-in-law established a flourishing law practice, handling a wide assortment of commercial cases with striking success.

But J.B. Haggin remained restless. He had heard the rumor of a need for lawyers in California. In 1850, he left his family in his father-in-law’s care, traveled across the isthmus, boarded a ship, and sailed to Sacramento. After one year in California, Haggin met another young Kentuckian—Lloyd Tevis, whose interests, temperament, and ambition matched his own in dynamic ways. They conjoined individual desires for wealth and shared knowledge of land and law of their native state. From the beneficence of these experiences in Kentucky, the pair built a landed empire in California that surpassed that of the bluegrass world they left behind.

* * * *

³² As Patricia Sanders points out, there exists conflicting evidence concerning Louis Terah Haggin’s birthplace. In the *Book of Enduring Names*, L.T. Haggin listed Mississippi as his birthplace, as compared to the 1852 census, which states his birthplace as Louisiana. See Patricia B. Sanders, *The Haggin Collection* (Stockton, California: Haggin Museum, 1991), 18.

³³ Phelps, *Contemporary Biography of California’s Representative Men*, 325; Burnley, *Millionaires and Kings of Enterprise*, 266-267.



Figure 2.3: James Ben Ali Haggin, Photocopy in Album No. 3, Ben Ali Haggin Materials, University of Kentucky.

On a cool morning in February 1850, J.B. Haggin stood alone on the deck of the *Tennessee*. The paddlewheel steamer was destined for California, and the thousand passengers, including Haggin, were part of the stream of people journeying farther west in search of new economic and social opportunities. Making this journey had been emotionally and physically difficult.³⁴ He had left behind his young wife, two children, and a flourishing law practice in New Orleans, to sail from New Orleans, landing on the Isthmus at a small place called Navy Bay, where he took a small rowboat across the Chagres River. He then walked on foot to Panama, his baggage being carried by mules. After waiting nearly a month, enduring mosquitos and a bout of yellow fever, after witnessing riots between “emigrants and natives,” Haggin finally boarded the paddlewheel steamer off the Isthmus of Panama.³⁵ Following twenty-two days at sea, Haggin’s boat arrived off the Golden Gate on a “glorious Sunday morning.” The city was in a “high state of excitement, emigrants arriving and departing in all directions,” he later wrote.³⁶

The trip abroad the *Tennessee* marked a momentous turn in Haggin’s life. Recalling his first impressions of California, he noted, “Everybody supposed [I] would make money and return East in two years. I don’t suppose one percent did that. I thought

³⁴ Evelyn Duggan, Interview by Patricia Sanders, 28 February 1987, Haggin Research Files, Haggin Museum, California. Duggan was the private duty nurse for Margaret “Pearl” Haggin in New York.

³⁵ Louis Lee Haggin II, Interview by Mary Jane Gallaher, 7 February 1980, Horse Industry in Kentucky, Louie B. Nunn Oral History Center, University of Kentucky Special Collections, Lexington, Kentucky.

³⁶ Carleton F. Burke, “Pastime of Millions,” *Thoroughbred of California* (August, 1945) 16, 17; Debra Ginsburg, “A Determined Era,” *California Thoroughbred* (June, 1999) 34.

I should remain two years; instead, I made my home in California from 1850 to 1890.”³⁷

But in less than a year’s time he would meet a fellow Kentuckian named Lloyd Tevis, and this relationship would herald in many ways the making of Haggin’s industrial empire.

Born in 1824, Lloyd Tevis came from a middling, slaveholding family from Shelby County, Kentucky.³⁸ Five of his brothers chose the pulpit; three chose law; but Tevis chose money.³⁹ Like Haggin, the young Tevis was restless and ambitious. Before the age of twenty-five, Tevis worked as a lawyer and a circuit court clerk in Woodford County, a dry-goods merchant in Philadelphia, a banker in Louisville, an insurance actuary in St. Louis, and a miner in El Dorado.⁴⁰ It is unclear when Haggin and Tevis met, possibly when Haggin first practiced law in Shelbyville, but the pair had much in common. As sons of respectable, if not prominent Bluegrass families, each were men who had read the same law in Kentucky. They shared a common disdain for indolence, and an equal passion for making money. They were in-laws by marriage, having married

³⁷ Interview with Louis Lee Haggin II, Interview by Mary Jane Gallaher, 7 February 1980, Horse Industry in Kentucky, Louie B. Nunn Oral History Center, University of Kentucky Special Collections, Kentucky. Burke, “Pastime of Millions,” (August 1946) 16; Ginsberg, “A Determined Era,” 34.

³⁸ Lloyd Tevis’s mother, Sarah Greathouse, was among the prominent slaveholding families of central Kentucky. His younger sister married well as his brother-in-law was John Witherspoon Breckinridge, son of the fifteenth Vice President. William Edward Raily, eds., *History of Woodford County, Kentucky* (Baltimore: Genealogical Publishing Company, 1938) 48, 68, 410-411; Rodman Paul, *The Far West and the Great Plains in Transition, 1859 – 1900* (Norman: The University of Oklahoma Press, 1988) 81; Phelps and Bancroft, *Contemporary Biography of California’s Representative Men*, 27-31.

³⁹ Quoted in Oscar T. Bench, *Bench and Bar in California: History, Anecdotes, Reminiscences* (San Francisco: The Occident Printing House, 1888) 250.

⁴⁰ Oscar T. Schuck, ed., *Representative and Leading Men of the Pacific* (San Francisco: Bacon and Company, 1870); Phelps, *Contemporary Biography of California’s Representative Men with Contributions from Distinguished Scholars and Scientists*, 27-31; Mahoney, “California’s Forgotten Triumvirate: James Ben Ali Haggin, Lloyd Tevis, and George Hearst,” 26-34; Parsons, Jr., “The Irish Khan and His Empire: James Ben Ali Haggin and His Associates,” 12-41; H.H. Bancroft, *Chronicles of the Builders of the Commonwealth* (San Francisco: The History Company, 1891-1892) 322-323.

daughters of a leading Kentucky family.⁴¹ Moreover, they became two of the leading industrial barons in nineteenth-century America, financing a broad range of enterprises, including timber, telegraph, banking, mining, water, real estate, ranching, railroads, and Alaskan furs, to name but a few. Their operations, as we will see, though distinguished by origins, labor, and production systems, collectively illustrate the Kentuckian's extraordinary abilities to make millions upon millions at dramatic human costs.

In 1850, common interests and objectives found fruition in the utilization of Tevis's position in Sacramento County government. As clerk in the land recorder's office, Tevis was privileged with useful, often ostensibly confidential, information. With their combined insider's knowledge of land and law undergirding their joint understanding of the enormous returns to be gained through land acquisition, the pair opened a land and loan office in downtown Sacramento in 1851, which paid them high dividends on the vehicle of boomtown frenzy. At first, the partners lent money at high rates on sound collateral. They discovered early on that a substantial profit was to be made in corporate enterprises. Their real estate and mortgage office provided the legal means to charge usurious rates on property loans—10 percent, per month—over 120 percent per year, not including compound interest.⁴²

In the mid-1850s the partners left Sacramento for San Francisco in pursuit of a much larger venue in which to pursue their dreams. Symbolizing their rising advance,

⁴¹ Sometime in the early 1850s, Eliza Haggin, her children, and the Sanders family came to Sacramento, settling in the same household. Eliza's father, Lewis Sanders, acclimated well, becoming the city attorney of Sacramento. It is unknown who, possibly Haggin or Eliza. *San Francisco Daily Alta*, California, 20 April 1854, 2.

⁴² Parsons, Jr., "The Irish Khan and His Empire: James Ben Ali Haggin and His Associates," 12; Bench, *Bench and Bar in California: History, Anecdotes, Reminiscences*, 249. For the growing power of the urban elite, see Peter R. Decker, *Fortunes and Failures: White Collar Mobility in Nineteenth Century San Francisco* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1978).

Tevis and Haggin built mansions on Nob Hill, a prestigious community where they found people of similar class.⁴³ This theme of extravagant mansions designed to showcase Haggin's fabulous wealth and achievement would be replicated a half-century later at Green Hills on Elmendorf Farm. Ultimately, it was the partnership of Haggin and Tevis, not the individuals, which emerged as a symbol of fantastic wealth. In 1881, Alonzo Phelps wrote:

There is scarcely a work or project of magnitude on the Pacific Coast, from the western slope of the Rocky Mountains to the ocean shore, from the Mexican boundary line to the British dominion, in which they are not largely or materially interested; but neither Mr. Haggin or Mr. Tevis ever engages in any of the many mere speculative schemes which have not the merit of solid foundation or intrinsic worth."⁴⁴

Although no single model explains fully the processes of industrialization in the far West, the brothers-in-law financed ventures that became initiators of institutional change. They increased production and profit by reducing risks, rationalizing and segmenting labor, and constructing horizontal and vertical systems of production. They helped pull the hinterland's resources—minerals, cattle, timber, water, fur, foundries, and factories—into the city and on to distant markets.⁴⁵

⁴³ On historical growth of Nob Hill, see Neil Shumsky, "Tar Flat and Nob Hill: A Social History of San Francisco in the 1870s," PhD, University of California, Berkeley, 1972; Gary Brechin, *Imperial San Francisco: Urban Power, Earthly Ruin* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997) 42, 43, 127; Samuel Colville, *Colville's San Francisco Directory for the Year Commencing October 1856* (San Francisco: Monson, Valentine & Co., 1856) 89; Parsons, "The Irish Khan and His Empire: James Ben Ali Haggin and His Associates," 12-41.

⁴⁴ Phelps, *Contemporary Biography of California's Representative Men with Contributions from Distinguished Scholars and Scientists*, 325-326.

⁴⁵ David Iglar, *Industrial Cowboys: Miller & Lux and the Transformation of the Far West, 1850 – 1920* (Berkeley: University of California Press 2001) 14; Alfred Chandler, *The Visible Hand: The Managerial Revolution in American Business* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1977); Gray Brechin, *Imperial San Francisco*, 38, 143. For more information about the railroads, for example, see Robert Orsi, *Sunset Limited: The Southern Pacific Railroad and the Development of the American West, 1850 – 1930* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2005); David Howard Bain, *Empire Express: Building the First Transcontinental Railroad* (New York: Penguin Books, 2000); or, for more information about Wells Fargo, see Philip Fradkin, *Stagecoach: Wells Fargo and the American West* (New York: Simon and

Over time the firm of Haggin & Tevis was considered by contemporaries as “the foremost private business association of the Pacific coast,” but in the end their differences towards business strengthened the partnership.⁴⁶ The blending of skills and temperaments proved long and lucrative for scarcely a half-century. Tevis’s cautious and conservative approach balanced Haggin’s aggressive and speculative tendencies. They did more business together than went separate ways, that is, until the 1890s. Tevis passed away in 1899, but his role had been willfully reduced in the making and securing of the partners’ financial affairs for several years before.

By 1880 Haggin and Tevis practiced little law, spending their time instead in the boardrooms, smoke-rooms, and cloakrooms of the elitist circles in California. They rarely, if ever, had to concern themselves with money, but they did. The partners continued to invest together in highly capitalized operations that had enough land, labor, and money to generate large scales of production and superior organization until Tevis’s passing. Their landholdings, mostly accumulated from the manipulation of federal and state laws, exceeded over 1.3 million acres in America alone. Again, historical records of the more controversial operations afforded glimpses into the aggressive philosophy, obvious talent, and cold realism in which the partners conducted business affairs.

Schuster, 2002); David Perera Massell, *Amassing Power: J.B. Duke and the Saguenay River, 1897-1927* (Montreal: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2000): 84.

⁴⁶ Alonzo Phelps, *Contemporary Biography of California’s Representative Men with Contributions from Distinguished Scholars and Scientists* (San Francisco: A.K. Bancroft and Company, 1881): 88.

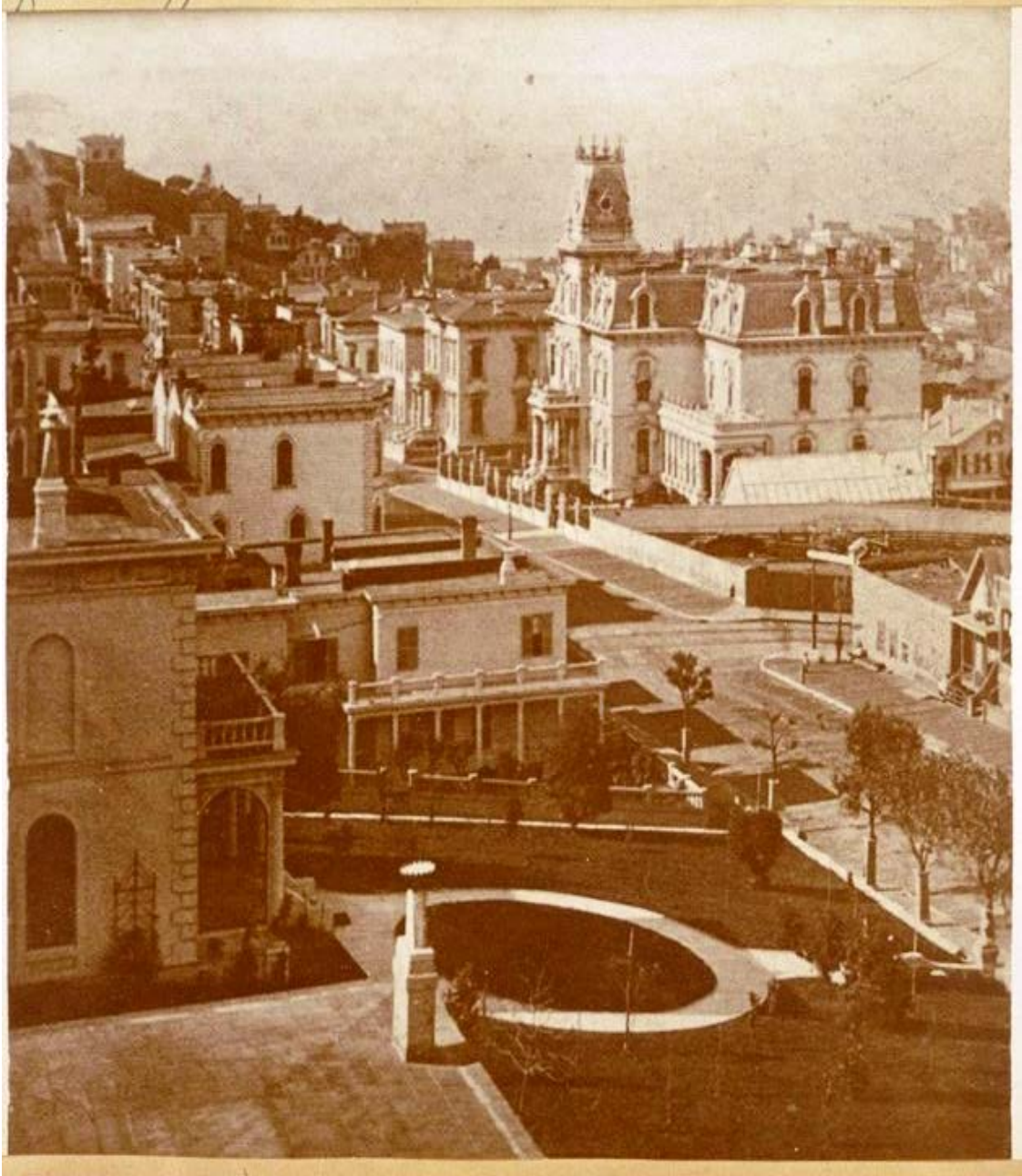


Figure 2.4: “North East from Sacramento St. on Taylor St. about 1877. The large house is Hagginhouse [Haggin House], east side Taylor St. between Washington & Clay St.,” Jesse Brown Cook Scrapbooks, Bancroft Library. Haggin’s home covered an entire square block. This imposing structure included 4 stories, 50 rooms, 9 baths, 18 carriage-stable, an 86-foot observation tower—the total cost an estimated million dollars in 1857.

Their interest in earth's metals, however, pulled into the Haggin-Tevis partnership a third, more sensational, figure, George Hearst. He, his young wife, Phoebe Apperson, and their son, William Randolph Hearst, moved to San Francisco in the 1860s. It was often said that the senior Hearst possessed an uncanny ability to discover untapped mines and to buy shares when prices were low.⁴⁷ After making a small fortune in the Comstock rush of 1850, Hearst approached Haggin and Tevis about becoming his partners. For nearly four decades, the triumvirate dominated American mining industries, with Hearst serving as "chief field manager, examining, purchasing, and operating such properties as he desired," and Haggin and Tevis fronting the capital and handling the litigation.⁴⁸ The partners held shares in Ontario, the richest silver mine in Utah. By 1893, their Sheep's Head in northern California yielded over four million dollars in gold production. And in the Black Hills, the Homestake proved their most productive gold mine, as well as the largest body of ore, in North America. These operations were dwarfed, however, by the powerful Anaconda, which would later account for a third of the world's copper reserves and 20 percent of the world's copper production.⁴⁹

⁴⁷ James Ben Ali Haggin papers at the Bancroft; Malone, *Battle for Butte*, 27; Brechin, *Imperial San Francisco*, 209-211; George Hearst, *The Way It Was* (New York: The Hearst Corporation, 1972) 18. For more information on George Hearst, see Judith Robinson, *The Hearsts: an American Dynasty* (University of Delaware Press, 1991); Ben H. Procter, *William Randolph Hearst: The Early Years, 1863 – 1910* (Oxford University Press, 1998); and *William Randolph Hearst: Final Edition, 1911 – 1951* (Oxford University Press, 2007); Phoebe Hearst Papers, at Bancroft Library, University of California Berkeley, California.

⁴⁸ George Hearst to J.B. Haggin, (6 letters between 1878 and 1879) in James Ben Ali Haggin Papers, University of California Berkeley, California; Richard Peterson, *The Bonanza Kings: The Social Origins and Business Behavior of Western Mining Entrepreneurs* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1971) 112; Isaac F. Marcossou, *Anaconda* (New York: Dodd, Mead & Company, 1957) 33.

⁴⁹ "Anaconda Mining Company, Stockholders Record," 8 May 1905, Reel 1, in J.B. Haggin Papers, at the Bancroft Library, University of California Berkeley, California; Watson Parker, *Gold in the Black Hills* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1966) 196-197; Thomas Arthur Rickard, *A History of America Mining* (Johnson Reprint Co, 1966) 220. Barrie A. Wigmore, *The Crash and Its Aftermath: A History of Securities Markets in the United States, 1929-1933* (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1985) 58; Parsons, "The Irish Khan and His Empire: James Ben Ali Haggin and His Associates," 46.

In totality, the Haggin-Tevis-Hearst syndicate controlled some 160 mining operations during the last half of the nineteenth-century. From Alaska to Chile, their metallurgic coups covered the Pacific seaboard, encompassing the most lucrative gold, silver, and copper mines ever. Two of these ventures cast light on some of the ways in which J. B. Haggin became one of the most powerful people in the world.

* * * *

In the 1880s and 1890s, Butte, Montana, was at once thriving and decaying. Dashiell Hammett, a novelist, depicted Butte as “an ugly city of 40,000 people, set in an ugly notch between two ugly mountains that had been dirtied by mining.” Other commentators were even less positive. One newspaper writer described it as “simply an outpost of hell.” The clearest sign of its industrial sickness was the heavy fog that enveloped the city. Laced with sulfur and arsenic, the smoke ascended from the smelter furnaces and open roasting pits surrounding Butte. The fog was so dense at times, one reporter recalled, the “traveler from South Butte traces his way not by landmarks, for these are utterly invisible, but by the hacking cough of his forerunner, who though a few feet away is veiled in smoke.”⁵⁰

A decade later and over four thousand miles away, an American traveler arrived in a mining town in central Peru. When Henry Stephens, a U.S. traveler, came upon Cerro de Pasco, he called it “a bum town.” “There are over 15,000 people in the place, and all making a living by following the mining trade, as here are the great copper and

⁵⁰ For quote of “ugly city,” Malone, *Battle for Butte*, 62; for quote of “outpost of hell,” Ibid, 58; for quote of “traveler from South Butte,” see Ibid, 62.

silver mines with their innumerable chimneys, furnaces, and smelters.”⁵¹ Two American professors described the miners’ housing conditions as “almost incredible and indescribable. Whole families, together with all their domestic animals, live in a one-room hut no larger than an average room in our houses.”⁵²

Widely separated in geographical locale, these disparate mining operations eventually came to represent a dominant theme expressed in the person of James Ben Ali Haggin who subsequently owned and exploited both endeavors. A careful but brief study of these mining operations reveals how Haggin’s metallurgical empire personified the speculation and rationalized coordination of mineral extraction which swept North and South America during the second half of the nineteenth century. The Anaconda and Cerro de Pasco were tied together in a remarkable expansion of trade and a growing web of industrial mining that spread across the globe.

In county after county, state after state, country after country, the circumstances proved different, but the methods of acquisition remained the same: Haggin and his partners purchased an existing mine and then dug with more money, men, and machines than smaller operators. This form of horizontal consolidation had been going on for years in mining enterprises in different Americas, but unlike smaller operations, which were often funded with local money, the triumvirates’ mines operated on larger economies of scale and greater consequences.⁵³ He and his partners vertically expanded, investing or owning stores, mills, timber, and railroads. They often controlled the judicial system, law

⁵¹ Henry Stephens, *South American Travels*, (New York: The Knickerbocker Press, 1915) 66-67.

⁵² Joseph T. Singewald Jr., and Benjamin LeRoy Miller, “The Cerro de Pasco District, Peru,” *Eng. And Min., Jour.*, Vol. 101, (1916) 849; Adrian W. DeWind Jr. “Peasants become miners: The evolution of industrial mining systems in Peru.” (Ph.D. diss., Columbia University, 1977) 176.

⁵³ Various forms existed in early nineteenth-century. For information about earlier absentee landowners at Anaconda, for example, in the 1830s, see Malone, *Battle for Butte*, 157-158.

enforcement, and labor relations. Collectively, this study of two mines demonstrated some of the ways in which Haggin's industrial operations not only impacted the landscape of the locale and the lives of the workers, but also the shape of modern industrial society.

On the basis of this success, in the late 1870s, Haggin was first approached about the Anaconda silver pits by a former Comstock foreman, Marcus Daly, who sold 75 percent interest to the three-pronged syndicate, but personally retained 25 percent ownership. Subsequently retained by the triumvirate as Anaconda's supervisor, Daly implemented the massive expansion of Anaconda's silver works. Because the partners possessed capital in abundance contrasted to smaller competing operations, this financial backing provided for sheer vertical growth in development of the Anaconda. According to historian Michael Malone, the group initially spent over fifteen million in acquiring adjacent mines, properties, and facilities.⁵⁴

Any money made was reinvested in the Anaconda: in 1883, the mine grossed over 1.7 million from copper alone, but operating costs the following year totaled over 1.6 million. Although Tevis began to question Daly and the investment, Haggin did not waiver. After a visit in July of 1883, Haggin penned one letter to Daly, "When you need money, draw and keep on drawing," and a second to Tevis, "I will see Daly through."⁵⁵ The investment eventually paid off. By the 1890s, fortune smiled in the syndicate's direction in the form of technology. Once electricity arrived in America's cities, streets,

⁵⁴ Malone, *Battle for Butte*, 204. See also, White, *It's Your Misfortune*, 266; Rodman W. Paul, *Mining Frontiers of the Far West*, rev. ed. (Albuquerque, New Mexico: University of New Mexico Press, 2001) 270. Charles Vincent Mutschler, *Wired for Success: the Butte, Anaconda & Pacific Railway, 1892 – 1985* (Washington: Washington State University, 2002).

⁵⁵ Patrick Morris, *Anaconda, Montana: Copper Smelting Boom Town on the Western Frontier* (Bethesda, MD: Swann Publishing, 1997) 27, 39.

and homes, the price of copper skyrocketed and suddenly, the Anaconda was no longer famous for its silver deposits. Haggin was now a partner in one of the richest sources of copper sulfur in the world.⁵⁶

The cornerstone of Anaconda's systems of production was the massive copper reduction works built twenty-six miles west of Butte. Historians have described its Washoe Smelters as "the greatest of its kind in the world," but its processes and consequences fit a larger pattern of industrial development that transformed other mining communities across America. As work commenced at the new smelter, the company formed an instant town, Anaconda. At its center was company superintendent and partner, Marcus Daly, who "invested in grand public buildings and services not ordinarily found...water and sewer systems, lighting, paved streets, and streetcars."⁵⁷

Like towns in the mountains of the upper South, the Anaconda Copper and Silver Mining Company initiated striking economic, social, and physical changes in the valleys of the far West.⁵⁸ Anaconda daily life revolved around the copper mine and works while the absentee landowners drove industry and profits through horizontal and vertical

⁵⁶ Malone, *Battle for Butte*, 204.

⁵⁷ Little demonstrates copper's importance than the proposed first name of Anaconda, "Copperopolis." For first quote, see Malone, *Battle for Butte*, 204. Morris, *Anaconda, Montana*, 27-28. Laurie Mercier, *Anaconda: Labor, Community, and Culture in Montana's Smelter City* (Chicago: University of Illinois, 2001) 10.

⁵⁸ This was also demonstrated in the rapid evolution of Homestake Company, a major mining community of the nineteenth-century far West. The Haggin-Hearst-Tevis syndicate transformed the Black Hills of South Dakota. As historian Richard White writes, "neighboring mines exhausted rich ore bodies on the surface and had to raise capital to go deeper and get less lucrative ore, [then] the Homestake bought them out, thus enlarging its own ore reserves." The Homestake Company purchased the timber rights that surrounded their silver pits, denuding the long slopes of valuable trees. In their attempts to maximize profit, Haggin, Tevis, and Hearst owned railroads and waterworks, and thereby controlled paths in and out of the Black Hills. Moreover, the wealthy investors protected their Homestake investments by constructing auxiliary industries, such as refineries, stamp mills, stores, utilities, and hotels, and by creating political machines. White, *It's Your Misfortune and None of My Own*, 266-278. For more information on the social, cultural, and economic impact of mining in Appalachia, see Ronald D Eller, *Miners Millhands Mountaineers: Industrialization Appalachian South* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1982) and *Uneven Ground: Appalachia Since 1945* (Lexington: The University Press of Kentucky, 2008).

integration. The partners' company not only owned the world's largest reduction works and modern refinery in central Montana, as historian Richard White deduces, "it owned farmland and city lots; it owned railroads and hotels; it owned waterworks and electric works."⁵⁹ Indeed, company records show that by 1891, Haggin's "old" Anaconda company controlled 28 different mining ventures in Anaconda, not including two water companies, a lumber mill, four boarding houses, one hotel, a railway, and an electric company.⁶⁰

The partners extended their authority over the area through the election of local officials. Included in "sundry" disbursements was a category called "election expenses"; in Anaconda, the company spent in 1891 over \$20,000 to defend its interests and to protect its mining investments.⁶¹ Moreover, the tales of violence, bribery, and jury tampering that flowed out of other mining communities reinforced the stereotypes of mighty and impervious "robber barons." In Lead, South Dakota, for example, a mining community four hundred miles east of Butte, four of Haggin's employees at the Homestake mine shot and killed neighboring mine owner Alexander Frankenburg. The jury, one writer notes, was "obviously bribed," as the company men were acquitted and released. Surviving documents point to this conclusion. George Hearst had written to Haggin about the court case, noting "I fear a hard fight...as we have to get twelve men to get a verdict."⁶²

⁵⁹ Mercier, *Anaconda*, 10-11; Malone, *Battle for Butte*, 42; Morris, *Anaconda, Montana*, 31.

⁶⁰ "List of Sundry Disbursements," 31 March 1891, in J.B. Haggin Papers, Reel 1, at Bancroft Library, University of California Berkeley, California.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*

⁶² Historian Watson Parker describes the fatal misfortune of neighboring mine owner Alexander Frankenburg. Watson Parker, *Gold in the Black Hills* (University of Nebraska Press, 1982) 197. For Hearst's quote, see George Hearst to J.B. Haggin, 6 March 1879, in James Ben Ali Haggin Papers, at Bancroft Library, University of California Berkeley, California.

How Haggin and his partners treated mining workers in Montana remains a different matter. Historians have tended to interpret them at Anaconda as parochial and prejudiced, and yet many have venerated the syndicate for their “benevolent” treatment of mine workers. Their measures were paternalistic, subversive, and manipulative—Daly made it clear that he would “break anyone in Anaconda who didn’t follow his lead in the political sphere”—but, as some scholars point out, work relations between owners, managers, and laborers were relatively stable and secure in Montana’s mines under the partners’ ownership.⁶³

Any number of reasons helps to explain why relations between Anaconda’s owners and workers were a contradiction to all generalizations of western mining communities. Of its three thousand employees, many received a daily wage of \$3.50 to \$4.00, a respectable pay among miners in late nineteenth-century America.⁶⁴ Some credit partner-supervisor, Marcus Daly, for the mining town’s good relations. Dubbed, “the miner’s miner,” the gregarious and domineering Irish immigrant was largely sympathetic to demands, “arguing that contented employees meant safer profits and bigger gains than could be had by exploiting labor.”⁶⁵ Others point out the strong labor presence at Haggin’s mines as a possibility for stability among workers. During the 1870s and 1880s, Butte stood as America’s largest organized mining community, although these groups were hardly immune from ethnic prejudices of the day. The Butte Miners Union, the strongest of mining unions, extended sympathy to western European and native-born miners alone, ignoring “European Chinamen,” the Slavs, Italians, Greeks, Hispanics,

⁶³ Morris, *Anaconda, Montana*, 149.

⁶⁴ Malone, *Battle for Butte*, 207; White, “*It’s Your Misfortune and None of My Own*,” 278.

⁶⁵ Malone, *Battle for Butte*, 153, 156.

Chinese, and Japanese who labored in Haggin-Hearst-Tevis mines.⁶⁶ With no commitment to interracial organizing, however, union opposition was largely defused by racial disharmony which not only undermined worker solidarity, it bolstered reputations as benevolent mine owners. Haggin and his partners experienced little threat when multiple ethnic groups did not share a common cause which could motivate them to rebel against the owners' powers.

Another significant factor in the perceived benevolence of Anaconda was the poor reputation of Haggin's successor. When Haggin and Daly sold their interests to J.D. Rockefeller in 1899, the Standard Oil Company swallowed the entire mining industry in Butte, Montana. Over time, the consolidation aroused intense protest among mine owners and workers alike, and the giant conglomerate met stiff violent and bloody opposition from Anaconda workers. As such, some scholars characterize the Haggin sellout as a dramatic turning point in western mining, when "the industry that dominated their economy had passed out of the benevolent control of Marcus Daly and J.B. Haggin and into the hands of a group of corporate executives who were already notorious for their ruthless dealings."⁶⁷

For all their differences, however, Haggin and his successor shared a common trait of disinterest in the well-being of Butte, Montana. Over two decades the powerful Anaconda smelted its ores in a landscape of human indifference. Like most of the town's silver and copper mines, the bulk of Anaconda's mines were underground. Over time they became abandoned and forgotten, forever leaking toxins beneath the earth's surface. The most dangerous pollutant, however, was smoke. Billowing thick and heavy from

⁶⁶ White, "*It's Your Misfortune and None of My Own*," 289; Malone, *Battle for Butte*, 156.

⁶⁷ White, "*It's Your Misfortune and None of My Own*," 266; Malone, *Battle for Butte*, 138, 159.

stacks of furnaces and open roasting of ores, the yellow smoke contained the refuse of industrial mining—lead, arsenic, cadmium, bismuth, zinc, and sulfur dioxide—which poisoned wildlife, stock, land, and people.⁶⁸

By 1890, the local newspaper reported only four trees alive in Butte.⁶⁹ The citizens of Butte, Montana, were far from apathetic to the destruction. Between the 1890s and 1930s, bitter contests over air pollution, also called the “smoke wars,” took place between the Anaconda owners and the urban, rural, and agricultural citizens of Butte, Montana.⁷⁰ And while Haggin and the partners were not solely responsible for great damage to forest, water, and human resources, their Anaconda Copper Mining Company perpetuated its environmental degradation. When Haggin sold his giant mines, furnaces, and smelters in 1899, the Anaconda was the biggest copper producer in the world, and ultimately, the partners left Montanans with the enduring legacy of a scarred landscape. With two partners now deceased, Haggin and Daly sold the Anaconda to J.D. Rockefeller and his Standard Oil Company of New York, in what the *New York Times* called, “the biggest financial deal of the age”; for his part, James B. Haggin pocketed over fifteen million.⁷¹ The famous Anaconda’s engorged silver and copper veins had snaked far beneath the Montana soil, into the stock markets of New York, and the San Francisco partners made a fortune.

⁶⁸ Jared Diamond, *Collapse: How Societies Choose to Fail or Succeed* (New York: Penguin, 2011) 36.

⁶⁹ Malone, *The Battle for Butte*, 62.

⁷⁰ Donald MacMillian points out that the bitter controversy over the Washoe fumes arose after Haggin sold his interests to the Standard Oil Company. See Donald MacMillian, *Smoke Wars: Anaconda Copper, Montana Air Pollution, and the Courts, 1890 – 1924* (Helena: Montana Historical Society, 2000) 85; Malone; *Battle for Butte*, 204.

⁷¹ Haggin and Daly reorganized the stockholding company after the passing of Tevis and Hearst in 1895. See Malone, *Battle for Butte*, 168. For quotation, see “The Anaconda Company,” *New York Times*, 18 June 1899: 12.

Events occurred and places of enduring significance assumed priority after Haggin sold the Anaconda mine. He took the profits from this Montana masterpiece and invested in metallurgical operations south of the nation's border. According to company legend, Cerro de Pasco was founded at a dinner party hosted by Haggin in 1902. Here, the most powerful men in the world, including J.P. Morgan, William Henry Clay Frick, William Randolph Hearst, and Twombly of the Vanderbilt family, gathered to hear Haggin's pitch about a mining operation in a distant land. The dinner was an apparent success in casting visions of new riches and thereby igniting the rush of wealthy developers to new markets in Peru. The cadre of American investors pooled over ten million of their monies into the newly formed Cerro de Pasco, with Haggin himself investing \$3 million to obtain the controlling 34 percent interest. Between 1902 and 1920, Cerro de Pasco, the largest American industrial enterprise in South America, underwent many of the same developments associated with Haggin's mining operations in the states.⁷²

In Peru, Haggin acquired a single claim and expanded horizontally and vertically, and in less than a year he had additionally secured over 1,180 *pertenencias*, or claims, which encompassed about 75 to 80 percent of the mining district in central Peru.⁷³ Many of these claims were concentrated in the hands of local elite with over 70 percent of Cerro de Paso's mines being purchased from only thirteen sellers. Because Haggin paid considerable fortunes to these owners, a total of almost a half million dollars, his

⁷² Charles H. McArver, Jr., "Mining and Diplomacy: United States Interests at Cerro de Pasco, Peru, 1876 – 1930," (PhD. diss., University of North Carolina, 1977) 99-102, 188; DeWind, "Peasants become miners: The evolution of industrial mining systems in Peru," 10 -14.

⁷³ McArver, Jr., "Mining and Diplomacy: United States Interests at Cerro de Pasco, Peru, 1876 – 1930," 97; DeWind, "Peasants become miners: The evolution of industrial mining systems in Peru," 19, 111.

foresight and vision resulted in large dividends so that in 1916, the company grossed over 20 million dollars, of which 12 million was profit to investors.⁷⁴

As in his American enterprises, Haggin profited from not only digging minerals, but also from the manufacture of metals. By 1916, the company had bought and owned a vast array of factories, refineries, ranches, stores, hydroelectric dams, as well as some of the largest *haciendas* in South America.⁷⁵ Large amounts of capital—over thirty million dollars—had been invested in the vertical integration of metal manufacturing. Consequently, Cerro de Pasco secured a considerable monopoly over fuel, water, and transportation systems high in the Peruvian Andes.

Perhaps the most salient feature of Cerro de Pasco was its labor relations. No facet of the company was more disturbing than its treatment of workers. It contradicted the relatively harmonious relations between workers and owners in Haggin's domestic mines. The villages of Andes region had endured varying forms of absentee, exploitative control for nearly a century, and Haggin's Cerro de Paso only escalated the egregious imbalance of power.⁷⁶ By 1914, *La Compania*, as workers called it, employed over

⁷⁴ Rosemary Thorp and Geoffrey Bertram, *Peru, 1890-1977: Growth and Policy in an Open Economy* (Columbia University Press, 1978) 87.

⁷⁵ In various ways the Peruvian government aided Haggin's venture. In 1904, for example, the national government granted Haggin's firm nearly 70,000 acres of which the American firm built its massive smelter operation. The more essential role, however, was the use of Peruvian troops. The American mining company often summoned military officials to maintain order and control over the mining workers. For more information, see McArver, "Mining and Diplomacy: United States Interests at Cerro de Pasco, Peru, 1876 – 1930," 109, 140, 189; DeWind, "Peasants become miners: The evolution of industrial mining systems in Peru," 34; Florencia Elizabeth Mallon, "The Poverty of Progress: The Peasants of Yanamarca and the Development of Capitalism in Peru's Central Highlands, 1860-1940," (Ph.D. diss., Yale University, 1980) 237, 344.

⁷⁶ Long before his arrival, local peasants worked for a diverse mixture of large-scale capitalists in the region. Some were residential, others from Britain, Switzerland, Italy, and Spain, all who attempted to colonize the mining region. Among the first American industrial firms included Singer Sewing Machine Company, the United States Shoe Machine Corporation, and Swift and Company. But the more prominent, and consequently, the more combative enterprise was a syndicate of Lima investors, called *Empressa Socavonera*. See DeWind, "Peasants become miners: The evolution of industrial mining systems in Peru," 16-22. Mallon, "The Poverty of Progress: The Peasants of Yanamarca and the Development of

10,500 workers. For all its revolutionary technologies and extraordinary infrastructure, Cerro de Pasco foisted a brutal work schedule on its employees. Laborers completed three twelve-hour shifts in a forty-eight hour period. They often dug for over thirty-six hours, followed by 12 hours of rest, during which they worked in their village's fields.

To further the inequities between owner and workers, *La Compania* relied upon a traditional labor system called *enganche*, or the “hook” as described by company leaders. Similar to the Southern debt peonage system that developed after the Civil War, the *enganche* captured peasants in inescapable cycles of debilitating debt. As scholar DeWind writes, the company relied upon “economic, social, and political mediators” called *enganchadores*, who served as commissioned, native recruiters supplying large numbers of rural workers to company mines.⁷⁷ *Enganchadores* went into villages and persuaded peasants to leave homes, in exchange for company scrip, housing, medical care, and store goods. These recruiters often arrived in a village just prior to a fiesta, where they offered the people a loan in the form of desirable cash, from \$25 to \$150, in exchange for their signature on a company contract. Although some achieved upward purpose the *enganche* remained notoriously exploitative and abusive. In 1908, an American engineer described the system as highway robbery: “I believe this is one of the

Capitalism in Peru's Central Highlands, 1860-1940,” 180 - 213. Mallon's dissertation was published as *The Defense of Community in Peru's Central Highlands: Peasant Struggle and Capitalist Transition, 1860 – 1940* (Princeton University Press, 1983).

⁷⁷ DeWind, “Peasants Become Miners,” 155, 157, 169. For more information about the local element of pressure and negotiation, see Mallon, “The Poverty of Progress,” 286 – 310. It is fascinating the parallels with other exchanges of mineral rights that occurred far from Peru in the industrial era and the hard-pressed families in the Appalachian mountains and the broad form deed. See Ronald D. Eller, *Miners, Millhands, and Mountaineers: Industrialization of the Appalachian South, 1880-1930* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1982); Eller, *Uneven Ground: Appalachia Since 1945* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2008).

most lucrative businesses in existence. The miner, once ‘enganchado,’ is practically a slave.”⁷⁸

Once the peasant began working in their mine, the company paid the *enganchador* the loan and its commission value, all of which were then deducted from a worker’s wages, often in scrip exchangeable at the company store. Wages were so low that miners found it nearly impossible to pay their *enganche* debts and monthly living costs.⁷⁹ Moreover, neither disability nor death expunged an *enganche* debt. When the worker signed a contract, so did a *fiadore*, a fellow villager who would guarantee repayment of the loan if the contracted worker failed to do so. And if a *fiadore* sought compensation from the family members, it often came in the form of child labor or family lands.⁸⁰

Workers were by no means apathetic. They mainly resisted the *enganche* with their feet. Most violated their contract, migrating often to their village, tending to their fields, harvesting their crops, and celebrating significant festivals. When worker migration threatened company production, the company, in connection with various levels of government, sought to break the seasonal exodus. The American firm sent agents to recover “runaways,” upon which a “worker-turned-fugitive” was charged by the company and the courts with huge fines, as much as 70 percent of the original *enganche* loan. During this period, workers also protested against the American company and the

⁷⁸DeWind, “Peasants Become Miners,” 157, 159; McArver, “Mining and Diplomacy,” 235. For quote, see J.C. Pickering, “The Mining Districts of Central Peru,” *EMJ* 85 (May 16, 1908), and “Recent Developments at Cerro de Pasco, Peru,” *EMJ* 85 (April 11, 1908); Dirk Kruijt and Menno Vellinga, *Labor Relations and Multinational Corporations: The Cerro de Pasco Corporation in Peru (1902 – 1974)* (Assen: Van Gorcum, 1979) 43-45.

⁷⁹Dora Mayer, *The Conduct of the Cerro de Pasco Mining Company*. (Lima: Imp. “El Progreso,”) 1913. In 1905, Peruvian laborers received .25 to .50 daily wage in the mines, while Anglo Americans received \$2.50 to \$4.00 per day. McArver, “Mining and Diplomacy,” 237; DeWind, “Peasants Become Miners,” 159.

⁸⁰DeWind, “Peasants Become Miners,” 278; Mallen, “The Poverty of Progress,” 286-310.

Peruvian authorities by abandoning work, destroying machinery, and launching multiple strikes, which called for better wages, shorter days, and cheaper food prices. The workers' strikes in the late 1900s, although unsuccessful, and a grassroots movement by a cadre of intellectuals, capitalists, and engineers demonstrated how Haggin's mines in central Peru were among the world's worst working areas.⁸¹

Even worse, mining disasters in *La Compania* were frequent and ignored. In January of 1910, for example, at the Goyllarisquisga mine, an explosion killed 29 workers; seven months later, 67 of 310 miners died in an underground cave-in, followed by 12 more workers in September and October.⁸² The significant mining tragedies affected miner morale, until 1929, so that resistance remained isolated and fragmented by obstacles outside and within the workers' ranks. Scholars of Peruvian mining history point out that the lack of worker cohesion, among other factors, provided foreign investors with insurance against worker resistance; the more the miners migrated, the less likely it was that workers could successfully organize against the company.⁸³

There is little doubt that J.B. Haggin was acutely aware of such human injustices in Montana and Peru. With his domestic enterprises, Haggin was obsessed with information and required monthly reports from upper level management, and it is difficult to believe that he did not demand the same from his overseas investments. Of course, Haggin spent little time in either of the mining communities of Anaconda or Cerro de Pasco. He was said to make the trips to Montana "under protest" and only

⁸¹ DeWind, "Peasants Become Miners," 161; McArver, pp. 245-246; Association Pro-Indigena, Cerro Poverty, 310.

⁸² Ibid, 158-179; Mayer, *The Conduct of the Cerro de Pasco Mining Company*, 21-33.

⁸³ DeWind, "Peasants Become Miners," 164-69, 316; Thomas O'Brien, *The Revolutionary Mission: American Enterprise in Latin America, 1900 -1945* (Cambridge University Press, 1996) 109 - 137.

“liven[ed] up when shown the trout that was being caught in nearby Warm Springs Creek.”⁸⁴ He made even fewer journeys to the Peruvian mining town that Henry Stephens, the American traveler, called a “desolate place.”⁸⁵ His presence was nonetheless deep and powerful on the quality of life in both arenas.

Although his need for control shaped every aspect of his life, especially his business relationships, the significance of these labor systems in Haggin’s mining enterprises long outlived its original investor. While other American companies came to dominate its oil, sugar estates, manufacturing, and public utilities, Haggin’s corporation remained the largest and most powerful investments in Peru and Montana for over seventy-five years. He and his partners vertically expanded, investing or owning stores, mills, timber, and railroads. They often controlled the judicial system, law enforcement, and labor relations. And these vast mining enterprises demonstrated convincingly Haggin’s abilities to capture markets, coordinate production, segment labor, and dominate industries.

* * * *

In May 1874, a coarse, plain-faced man arrived by stage in Bakersfield, California, and excitement filled the town. The *Courier* announced that William “Billy” Carr, better known as “the political Napoleon of the Railroad Company,” had come to Kern County with plans for a hotel, an irrigation system, and vast agricultural improvements. The

⁸⁴ Morris, *Anaconda, Montana*, 4.

⁸⁵ James A. Wood and John Charles Chasteen, eds., *Latin American History: Sources and Interpretations*, Third Ed. (Lanham, Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2009) 143-145.

editor congratulated the people of Kern County “on the fact that Billy Carr feels himself identified with them, and proposes, in future, to champion their interests to the utmost.”⁸⁶ To judge by what other papers recorded, however, Carr represented the worst aspects of mass corruption in California business and politics. In a scathing indictment, the San Francisco *Bulletin* charged, “No man who has a particle of self-respect cares to be [found] in Carr’s company.”⁸⁷ W.B. Carr, a rough-hewn businessman from Indiana, made a fortune digging ditches in Sacramento and supplying brick for most of its city buildings. His critics described him as crude, brash, and even ruthless, but they also admitted that he was astute. By the 1860s and 1870s, he was considered the all-powerful boss of the state Republican Party, and the boss of the “Ring” of “remorseless land pirates.”⁸⁸ The San Francisco Chronicle, one of his fiercest critics, elaborated:

The most influential politician among us is a man who has no idea of politics apart from the money he can obtain by the business...He is a power in the primaries; he designates our public officials; he makes and unmakes laws in our State Capitol; he essays to elect Congressmen and United States Senators; he orders them to vote as he chooses upon public measures; and they must allow him to name the men who are to fill the Federal offices of the State...From the highest to the lowest and all along the line the commanding influence of this mighty potentate is felt and feared. If a man shows any independence, he is put down at once.”⁸⁹

⁸⁶ *Courier* (California), May 9, 1874.

⁸⁷ Quoted in Donald J. Pisani, *From the Family Farm to Agribusiness: The Irrigation Crusade in California, 1850 -1951* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984) 194.

⁸⁸ Pisani, *From the Family Farm to Agribusiness*, 194. For quote of “remorseless land pirates,” see Paul Gates, *Land and Law in California: Essays on Land Policies* (Iowa State University Press, 1991) 260;

⁸⁹ Quoted in Pisani, *From the Family Farm to Agribusiness*, 194.



Figure 2.5: W.B. Carr (Sitting on the left) with farm superintendents and cook, Kern County Land Company, Carleton Watkins, Box Title: Kern County, Beale Memorial Library, Bakersfield, California.

But Carr did answer to others more powerful in California. In 1874 Boss Carr arrived in Bakersfield as the land agent for J.B. Haggin's newest endeavor, the Kern County Land Company (KCLC).

Over the next two decades Carr made Haggin one of the largest individual landowners in the United States. Few business or personal records of either Haggin or Tevis survived, but a low estimate in the 1890s of KCLC's broad swath was a million and a half acres. Beginning in upstate Oregon, through the heart of California, and bending into Arizona and New Mexico, KCLC crossed the Rio Grande, where the San Francisco lawyers owned hundreds of thousands of acres in Mexico.⁹⁰

The centerpiece of KCLC, however, rested in Bakersfield, California. Here, Haggin and Tevis owned over 400,000 acres in Kern County. As one contemporary wrote, "If you don't curry favor with them [KCLC] they can tell you to go chase yourself if they want to."⁹¹ How the San Francisco partners amassed an agricultural empire in the

⁹⁰ "Report of Kern County Land Company to Its Stockholders," 1950 – 1975 in Kern County Land Company Annual Report, California State Library, Sacramento, California; Dean Witter & Co. "Kern County Land Company: A Story of Science and Finance," (San Francisco: The James H. Barry Company, 1939); Norman Berg, *A History of Kern County Land Company* (Bakersfield, California: Kern County Historical Society, 1971); Wallace M. Morgan, *History of Kern County, California, with biographical sketches of the leading men and women of the county who have been identified with its growth* (Los Angeles, California: Historic Record Company, 1914); "Report on Irrigation and Drainage of Chewaucan Ranch, Lake County, Oregon," in Water Resources Center Archives, at University of California Riverside.

⁹¹ Of his multiple holdings, the Kern County Land Company (KCLC) has received the most scholarly attention. Though there is no comprehensive work of the company's origins and evolution over two centuries, scholars have investigated the legal, political, economic, and environmental ramifications of Haggin's industrial farm that was centered in Bakersfield, California. Many viewed its rise as part of the beginnings of corporate farming in the far West during the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. See Margaret A. C. Zonlight, *Land, Water, and Settlement in Kern County, California, 1850 – 1890* (New York: Arno Press, 1979); Paul W. Gates, "Land Policies in Kern County," in *Land and Law in California: Essays on Land Policies*, ed. Richard S. Kirkendall (Ames: University of Iowa, 1991); David Iglar, *Industrial Cowboys: Miller & Lux and the Transformation of the Far West* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001); Donald J. Pisani, *From the Family Farm to Agribusiness: The Irrigation Crusade in California, 1850 -1951* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984); Donald Worster, *Rivers of Empire: Water, Aridity, and the Growth of the American West* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992); Marc Reisner, *Cadillac Desert: the American West and Its Disappearing Water* (New York: Penguin Books, 1986). For quote, see the "Farming Necromancy," in *Railroad Trainman: Official Publication of*

far West, and how this enterprise influenced the people who lived through it were of decisive importance in understanding the history of Elmendorf Farm. The manner which Haggin controlled property rights on first industrial farm in central California, KCLC—predicated on an industrial logic of expansion—was one he would apply in different ways in central Kentucky.

W.B. Carr, more than anyone, initially made it happen. As a railroad lobbyist, Carr secured vast tracts of railroad land for the Kern County Land Company. One of his first acquisitions was the “Gates Tract.” Lying in six townships, this tract consisted of 59,000 acres of the “most fertile and desirable lands in the valley.” Tevis and Haggin’s connections were critical to these undertakings. Tevis acted as a trustee for the Southern Pacific and Central Pacific. In the 1870s, when Central Pacific acquired the San Francisco & San Jose Railroad, of which Tevis held a one-twentieth interest, the partners traded in their ownership in exchange for tens of thousands of acres, mostly in the San Joaquin valley. Additionally, the partners also leased massive amounts for little more than ten cents per acre, per year.⁹²

Haggin and his partners never broke the law. And from a larger historical perspective, he might appear no more dubious than any other nineteenth-century absentee speculators, all of whom took advantage of the confusion that marked America’s land system. Such activities have never been relegated to one ethnicity, nationality, or period of our nation’s history. Decades, even centuries, before Haggin’s arrival in California, privileged Spanish, Mexican, and Anglo elites accumulated huge tracts through rapacious

the Brotherhood of Railroad Trainmen, vol. 36 (Cleveland, Ohio: The Britton Printing Company, 1919) 270.

⁹² Gates, “Land Policies in Kern County,” 277; Zonlight, *Land, Water, and Settlement in Kern County, California, 1850 – 1890*, 63, 79; Orsi, *Sunset Limited*, 109; *Tulare Times*, May 5, 1877.

litigation.⁹³ As tales of abundance in the far West pulled at homesteaders during the 1850s and 1860s, the majority of landholdings gave way to large-scale, absentee owners.⁹⁴

But it is clear that Haggin and his partners stretched the law considerably. With the aid of Carr, there were clear misuses of a multitude of federal acts—Preemption (1841), Mexican Land Grant (1851), Homestead (1862), Timber Culture (1873), Desert Land (1877) Timber Stone (1878)—in the making of Kern County Land Company. Carr, as a close business associate of Haggin, manipulated legislators and legislation alike. The most instructive example of this business was Carr’s close relationship with Senator A.A. Sargent, the primary architect and mover of the Desert Lands Act. Passed by Congress in March of 1877, this federal act permitted homesteaders to receive grants of 640 acres at \$1.25 an acre provided that they irrigated part of their holdings. As typical in most federal land sales, fraud ran rampant with the Desert Land Act. The Haggin/Tevis/Carr partnership employed dummy entries to acquire the fertile soil along the Calloway Canal, all 150,000 acres. Many of these so-called “settlers” worked for the original partner’s Wells Fargo office in San Francisco, of whom few, if any, intended to live and work the lands of Kern County.⁹⁵

⁹³ See Vaught, “A Tale of Three Land Grants on the Northern California Borderlands,” *Agricultural History*, Vol. 78, No. 2 (Spring, 2004) 140 – 54.

⁹⁴ By 1872 over six hundred of the largest farms in California averaged over 22,000 acres. Among the more noted landholders, William S. Chapman owned over a million acres, as did Henry Miller and Charles Lux. Pisani, *From the Family Farm to Agribusiness*, 7; Gates, “Land Policies in Kern County,” 290; Zonlight, *Land, Water, and Settlement in Kern County, California, 1850 – 1890*, 57 – 67.

⁹⁵ Parsons, “The Irish Khan and His Empire: James Ben Ali Haggin and His Associates,” 60; Pisani, *From the Family Farm to Agribusiness*, 195, 196; Gates, “Land Policies in Kern County,” 24 - 63, 156 – 84, 260 – 68.

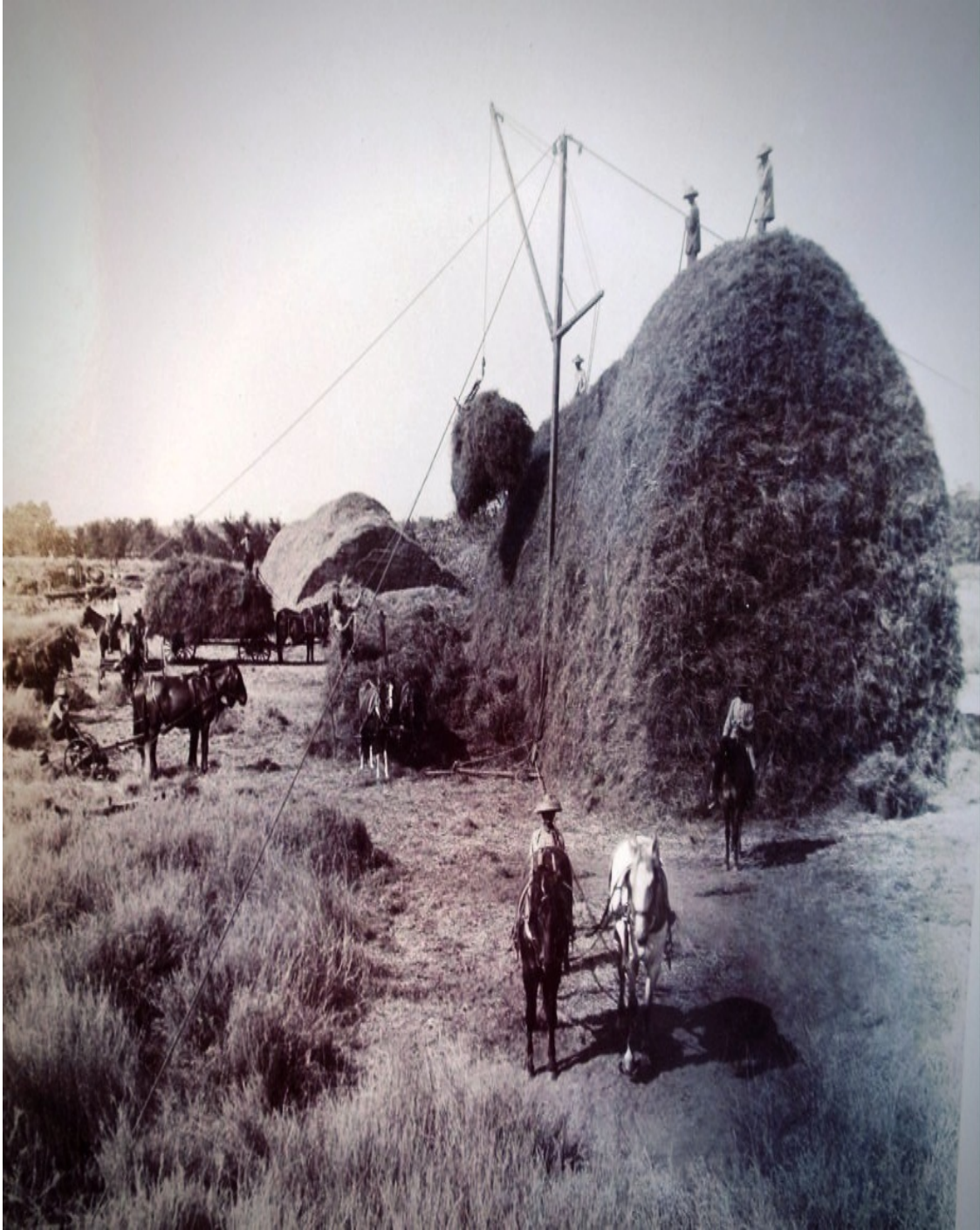


Figure 2.6: "Haying at Buena Vista Farm," Carleton Watkins, Box Title: Kern County, Beale Memorial Library, Bakersfield, California.

Haggin's roots, however, made landholding a big business. In Kentucky, he had been well versed in the rule of land and law under the tutelage of his grandfather, father, and uncles. Drawing heavily on this background, he used a medley of land laws to accumulate property in California, and in doing so he replicated in the far West, the same land jobbing of his childhood in the first West.⁹⁶ Indeed, the economic difficulties of many small farmers contributed further to the expansion of his land empire. As historian Paul Gates notes, foreclosures increased the size of Haggin and Tevis's land venture by 162,000 acres.⁹⁷

Extreme climates of western geography presented certain drawbacks not encountered by his Kentucky relatives, however. But the lack of irrigation practically doomed Haggin's aggrandizement of Kern County. Indeed, the salient feature of this land monopoly in the far West was its symbiotic relationship with water, a feature that helps define its growth in the history of industrial farming.⁹⁸ Much of this land was

⁹⁶ Pisani, for example, writes about Haggin's "prominent Kentucky family" but makes no link between his beginnings in a landed Bluegrass and his rise to extreme wealth in California's "high society." See Pisani, *From the Family Farm to Agribusiness*, 193.

⁹⁷ Gates, "Land Policies in Kern County," 252.

⁹⁸ The politics of water occupies a longstanding historiographical debate in western American history. In *To Reclaim a Divided West*, Donald Pisani offers a clearer portrait of the struggles between local, regional, and state levels over the politics of water. His discussion of the evolution (devolution, depending on your opinion) of prior appropriation, as opposed to riparian rights, illustrates that individual rather than communal rights only came to dominate water policies after the 1850s. This understanding of individualism concerning water rights is evident in Robert Kelley's *Battling the Inland Sea*. Whereas Pisani argues that decentralized party politics in the courts and on the local and state levels contributed to the individualistic style of water rights, Kelley argues that centralized party politics initiated federal control of natural resources. This says nothing about the long march of Native Americans from their land and removal of their water rights. As Michael Meyer's *Water in the Hispanic Southwest* illustrates, indigenous cultures experienced numerous conflicts among themselves and their conquerors over water. Meyer draws a distinct line between conflicts among native populations and the conflicts between native populations and their soon conquerors. Native populations viewed water as more communal and more spiritual as compared to their conquerors who viewed water as a commodity and an instrument of control. Norris Hundley's *The Great Thirst* revises Meyer's discussion by demonstrating how native inhabitants and Spanish and Mexican intruders both viewed water as a communal property to be manipulated, although the later used water for national survival. Donald J. Pisani, *To Reclaim a Divided West: Water, Law, and Public Policy, 1848-1902* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1992); Robert Kelley, *Battling the Inland Sea: Floods,*

considerably arid, and for an agricultural company where commercial crops and stock were difficult to grow and raise, KCLC's success depended heavily upon reclamation. But water rights were exceedingly difficult and expensive to acquire and maintain in the 1870s and 1880s. Therefore KCLC obtained much of their water rights piecemeal; some came with the land, others required alliances, and a few resulted in serious struggles. Some were so intense that twenty-five of Haggin's men stood armed with Sharps rifles, patrolling the Kern Island Canal.⁹⁹

By 1877 Haggin and his partners controlled the major irrigation ditches along the Kern River but it came at the expense of rival landowners Henry Miller and Charles Lux. Their San Joaquin County ranch contained over 450,000 acres, and 160 miles of fence row, of which 160,000 acres were situated in Kern County along the Buena Vista slough.¹⁰⁰ When sixteen thousand head of Miller & Lux cattle died from dehydration because of KCLC's project at the Calloway Canal, the partners, along with six other riparian landowners, filed a monumental lawsuit against Haggin.

Public Policy, and the Sacramento Valley (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997); Michael Meyer, *Water in the Hispanic Southwest: A Social and Legal History, 1550-1850* (Tucson, Arizona: University of Arizona Press, 1984); Norris Hundley, *The Great Thirst: Californians and Water, 1770s-1990s* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992).

⁹⁹ Pisani, *From the Family Farm to Agribusiness*, 208.

¹⁰⁰ KCLC initially promoted cooperation among residential ranchers by taking the lead in developing struggling irrigation systems for smaller landholders. In 1873 power shifted to the major landowner in Kern County. The company staged a coup, as Carr acquired majority stock in six canals. See Norman Berg, *A History of Kern County Land Company*.



Figure 2.7: "Calloway Canal," Carleton Watkins, Box Title: Kern County, Beale Memorial Library, Bakersfield, California.

In 1887 the California Supreme Court affirmed Miller's riparian right over Haggin's appropriation stance. Scholars have analyzed the legal, environmental, and social significance of *Lux v. Haggin*, as it represented in many ways a distinctive regional campaign to change not only agriculture but nature.¹⁰¹ This historic case also served as a public forum over the role of the government in the process of reclamation, by centering on the priority of riparian rights over prior appropriation. Though water rights were never static in nineteenth-century western courtrooms, *Lux v. Haggin* overturned the Colorado Doctrine, which asserted prior appropriation, and in the words of western historian Richard White, "laid the basis for the California Doctrine, an uneasy marriage between riparian rights and prior appropriation."¹⁰² Haggin's legal team did its best to portray Miller & Lux as "archmonopolists bent on preserving Kern County as one huge pasture," while Haggin's "pro-settler" intentions validated the company's appropriation rights. In 1887 the California Supreme Court affirmed Miller's riparian right over Haggin's appropriation stance. Though water rights were never static in nineteenth-century western courtrooms, *Lux v. Haggin* overturned the Colorado Doctrine, which asserted prior appropriation, and as historian Norris Hundley writes, "Put simply, both systems were legitimate, and timing determined which prevailed in a conflict."¹⁰³

¹⁰¹ For various interpretations about one of the most important legal cases in twentieth-century American history, see Worster, *The Great Thirst*, 90-100; Pisani, "Lux v. Haggin: The Battle of the Water Lords," in *From the Family Farm to Agribusiness*, 191-249; Catherine Miller, "Riparian Rights and the Control of Water in California, 1879 – 1928: The Relationship between on Agricultural Enterprise and Legal Change," *Agricultural History*, v. 59, no. 1 (Jan. 1985): 1-24; Miller, *Flooding the Courtrooms: Law and Water in the Far West* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1993); Eric T. Freyfogle, "Lux v. Haggin and the Common Law Burdens of Modern Water Law," *University of Colorado Law Review* (Spring 1986): 485 – 525; David Iglar, "Lux v. Haggin: Reclaiming the San Joaquin from Nature," in *Industrial Cowboys*, 92 – 121; Gordon R. Miller, "Shaping California Water Law, 1781 – 1928," *Southern California Quarterly* (Spring 1973): 9-37.

¹⁰² White, "It's Your Misfortune and None of My Own."

¹⁰³ Scholar Norris Hundley surmises the essential points as: (1) riparian rights inhered in all private lands, including public lands when they passed into private ownership; and (2) an appropriation could possess a

Haggin lost rights to Kern River in the courtroom but regained control of the waterway in the boardroom. The following year, rivals struck a much sought-after agreement, thereafter diverting the mighty Kern to suit their respective needs. That “the land barons emerged from the courtroom unscathed and in possession of water and estates” was representative of what historian David Wortser calls “a hydraulic society—a social order based on the intensive, large-scale manipulation of water and its products in an arid setting.”¹⁰⁴

By 1890 KCLC controlled over 31 major canals and ditches in Kern County. They claimed over three times more than the major waterway and its tributaries could ever carry, meaning Haggin’s investment was protected when rain clouds were absent, and [consequently] the smaller ranchers were bare and vulnerable. Many who suffered from heavy droughts and monopoly sold out and moved away. School enrollment was decimated by KCLC machinations in Kern County, as student population went from 649 children in 1879 to 246 in 1886.¹⁰⁵ Some complained of underhanded tactics by KCLC. The *San Francisco Chronicle*, in particular, was relentless in its criticism, publishing names of “loafers and vagabonds” pressed into service and “exalted to the dignity of

right superior to a riparian if the appropriation had begun using water from a stream before riparian had acquired his property.” Hundely, *The Great Thirst*, 93-99. For all their differences, as David Iglar points out, Miller and Haggin parties shared and articulated a static perception of nature. Iglar, *Industrial Cowboys*, 92-121. For quote, Pisani, *From Family Farm to Agribusiness*, 201.

¹⁰⁴ In *Rivers of Empire*, Donald Worster uses the term “hydraulic societies,” a concept created by the studies of Julian Steward and Karl Wittfogel, to mean a social order founded on the intensive management of water. Limited by this structural framework, Worster’s argument defines the politics of water as a struggle between capitalistic interests and the people, which revealed the limitations of democracy in an industrial capitalistic order. Worster, *Rivers of Empire*, 7. For quote, see Donald Worster, *The Great Thirst*, 98-99. Many historians have correctly criticized this “deterministic approach” to western water, Pisani in particular, pointing out the various systems of power, such as American values, cultures, and institutions, as well as climate and geography, shaped the possibilities and perils of water use in the far West. See Pisani, *From Family Farm to Agribusiness*, 197; Pisani, *To Reclaim a Divided West*, xvi, 332.

¹⁰⁵ Zonlight, *Land, Water, and Settlement in Kern County, California*, 75, 259, 316, 406; Pisani, *From Family Farm to Agribusiness*, 197.

desert reclaimers.”¹⁰⁶ Although many were angered and appalled at KCLC’s control, they found themselves in a difficult situation. Eminent western scholar Donald Pisani points out that many chose not to protest because KCLC was the largest employer, and most were dependent upon the workings of its vast system of subsidiaries.¹⁰⁷

Interestingly, Haggin never saw himself as a monopolist. He rationalized his dummy homestead entries to obtain land tracts as smart business. “I wanted nobody who had any adverse interest to me to come in and demand large sums for rights of way and [thereby], blackmail my operations.” He wrote, “Any man with a hundred and sixty acres could stop the ‘Calloway Canal’ a year; could impede its progress a year or more, perhaps two years.”¹⁰⁸ The large bodies of land and water, he reasoned, were temporary since his ultimate goal was colonization. He pressed further: “My object has not been, nor do I wish to monopolize large bodies of land, but I desire to make valuable and available that which I have, by extending irrigation ditches over my lands, and when these lands are subject to irrigation, to divide them up and sell them out in small tracts with the water rights necessary for irrigation.” Haggin concluded, “I have already built houses upon many tracts and have many industrious farmers to occupy and cultivate them, and I expect to continue to do the same, and to be as populous and fertile, if not more so, than any other part of the state.”¹⁰⁹

Haggin’s critics scoffed at him, and with good reason. Throughout the 1870s and 1880s, a minuscule acreage was devoted to colonization, in part because Boss Carr was a

¹⁰⁶ Quoted in Pisani, *From Family Farm to Agribusiness*, 200, as found in *San Francisco Chronicle*, 28 September 1877 and *San Francisco Chronicle*, 29 January 1878.

¹⁰⁷ Pisani, *From Family Farm to Agribusiness*, 200-201.

¹⁰⁸ US v. James B. Haggin. *Testimony Taken Before the Register and Receiver of the United States Land Office, at Visalia, California* (3 December 1877): 26-27.

¹⁰⁹ US v. James B. Haggin, (3 December 1877): 6.

vehement critic of land subdivision. Under the guidance of its second company manager, S.W. Fergusson, the company began investing heavily in colonization. Glasgow, London, New York, and Chicago land offices were created across the world to funnel people into Kern County. These efforts gained considerable attention, especially when KCLC exhibited at the World's Columbian Exposition in 1893.¹¹⁰ For a brief period, it seemed Haggin had exonerated himself. His claims of irrigation and settlement had materialized, as 45,000 acres in Kern County were devoted to colonization.

But the fate of these colonies told another story. Of the four major colonies in Kern County, Rosedale was perhaps most illustrative. Between 1891 and 1892, KCLC sold 5,625 acres to over a hundred investors.¹¹¹ The Rosedale settlers, many of whom were immigrants from England, found the company's terms inviting. Land was sold for \$60 to \$100 an acre, in 10, 20, and 40 acre plots. Putting one-fourth cash down, the settler paid the remaining balance over the next five to ten years.¹¹² "The first two years," a local newspaper recounted a decade later, "things at Rosedale went fairly well. The people built cottages, and planted orchards and vineyards as they had been instructed to do." When they found their trees and vines "leafing out prettily, they wrote home such letters as brought other colonists."¹¹³ The colonists learned that they were expected to pay for water from the Calloway Canal whether it was used or not.

¹¹⁰ "The Greatest Irrigated Farm in the World," (1893) Promotional Pamphlet sent to the 1893 World's Fair in Chicago, in Kern County Historical Collection at Bakersfield Public Library, in Bakersfield, California.

¹¹¹ *The Bakersfield*, 30 April 30 1892.

¹¹² *The Californian*, 17 February 1892.

¹¹³ "Colonists Lured to Kern Only to be Starved Out by Haggin-Tevis Gang," San Francisco *The Bulletin*, 14 February 1908.

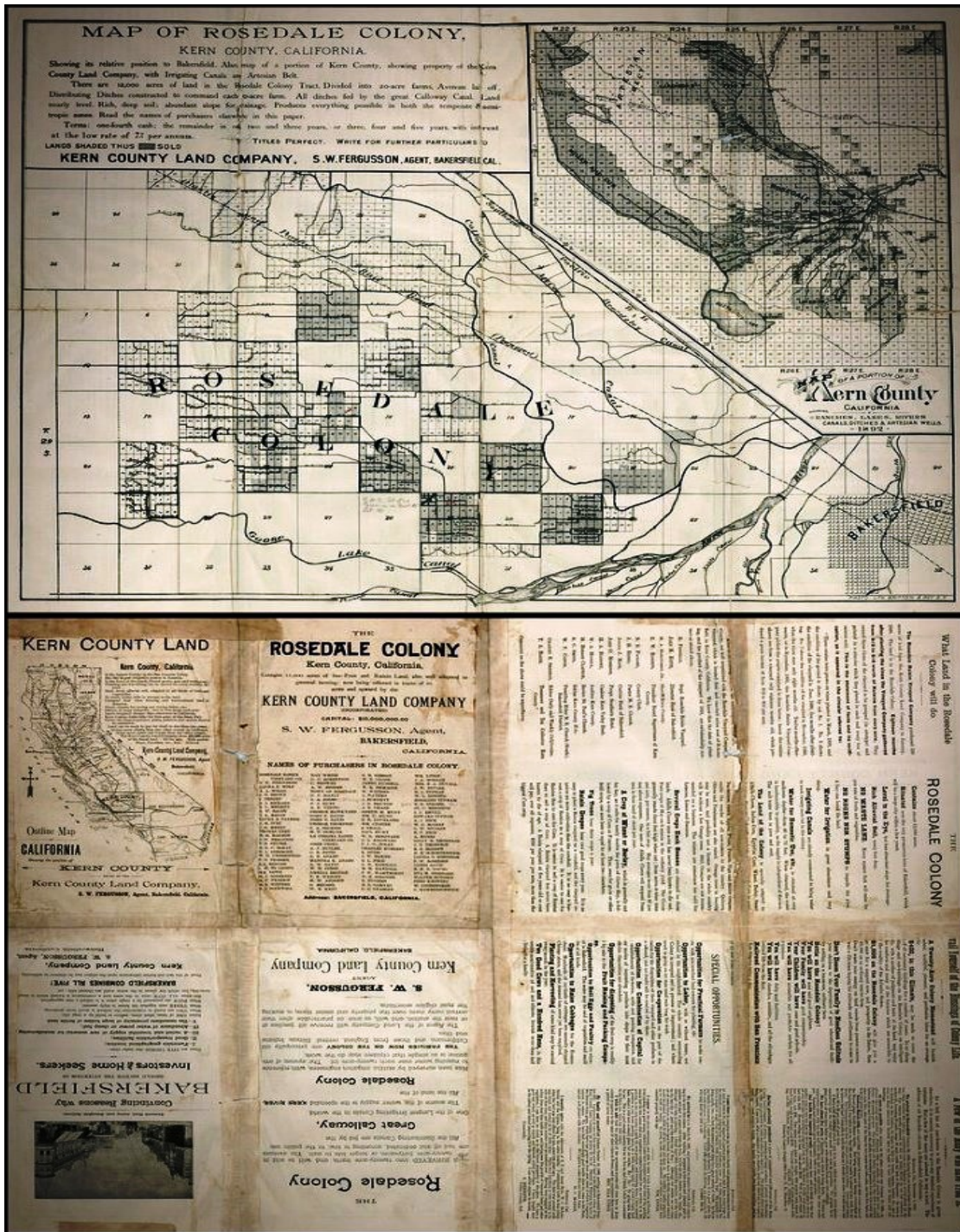


Figure 2.8: “Map of Rosedale Colony,” Kern County Photographic Collection, Beale Memorial Library, Bakersfield, California.

Contributing to water problems was KCLC's ranching operations. The massive cattle operation pulled from the dam to irrigate the vast alfalfa fields and subsequently the Calloway Canal ran dry. Colonists were expected to pay nonetheless. Complicating the Rosedale woes was the depression of 1893, as most farmers were unable to make payments and lost their lands.¹¹⁴ KCLC's colonies, subsequently, showed an early industrial corporation caught between an almost mythical vision of settlement farming and the economic reality of their own needs. When colonies threatened the central facet of its operation—stock farming—the partners abandoned colonization for more profitable ventures.

As the 1890s and 1900s unfolded, KCLC emerged as a vast, well-capitalized conglomerate. In 1890 Haggin and his associates reorganized KCLC through incorporation for a reported ten million dollars. This new form of legal organization offered a financial solution to “the common-law prohibition against one corporation owning stock in another without a specific sanction in law to do so.”¹¹⁵ In particular, Haggin's grand enterprise operated in ways similar to modern enterprises by embracing a modern approach to farm management. Like their mining enterprises, KCLC relied on the division of responsibilities in what historian Alfred Chandler called the “middle manager.” They first employed William B. Carr, the railroad lobbyist, and later S.W.

¹¹⁴ Dr. William Harland Boyd Research File, in Kern County Historical Collection at Bakersfield Public Library, Bakersfield, California.

¹¹⁵ Maury Klein, *The Genesis of Industrial America, 1870 – 1920* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007): 127; Norman Berg, *The History of the Kern County Land Company*; Dean Witter & Co., *Kern County Land Company: A Story of Science and Finance*, 25 – 31.

Ferguson as their farm superintendents, intermediaries who oversaw the daily activities of then thirteen ranches that formed the basic structure of Kern County Land Company.¹¹⁶

The San Francisco partners obtained controlling interests in the new holding company, and expanded KCLC vertically and horizontally, continuing to absorb direct competitors and dominate supplying and finishing processes. Existing enterprises were enlarged, such as land, canals, cattle, and crop production. New ventures were created, such as oil drilling. In 1899 its workers discovered oil, and four decades later the company's oil holdings valued over eighty-nine million dollars. KCLC, by this time, was building its own barrel factories, warehouses, and pipelines, manufacturing machines and performing research. By mid-century, the company leased over 112,000 acres to farmers and opened a fruit and canning business. In 1939, cotton alone made up 10,000 acres in agricultural productivity, yielding \$100,000 annual profit; a decade later over 19,500 acres increased company profits ten-fold. Although KCLC's profits were derived from oil, real estate, machinery, and chemicals, the principle business of Haggin's company remained general ranching.¹¹⁷

¹¹⁶ See, for example, W.B. Carr of Kern Island to C.L. Conner, Green Field, 25 April 1884, in Kern County Historical Collection, at Bakersfield Public Library, in Bakersfield, California; W.B. Carr to Kern County Superintendents, May 1885, in Kern County Historical Collection, at Bakersfield Public Library, in Bakersfield, California; W.B. Carr to C.L. Conner, Greenfield, March 1885, in Kern County Historical Collection, at Bakersfield Public Library, in Bakersfield, California; Chandler, *Visible Hand*, 4.

¹¹⁷ These industrial patterns were also clear in the company's crop production, oil, machines, and research divisions. Witter, *Kern County Land Company: A Story of Science and Finance*, 23-28. Walker and J.I. Case. See, for example, "Report of Kern County Land Company to Its Stockholders," 1939 – 1975 in Kern County Land Company Annual Report, California State Library, Sacramento, California.



Figure 2.9: “Bellevue Ranch Cattle Branding,” Carleton Watkins, Box Title: Kern County, Beale Memorial Library, Bakersfield, California. Of significance was its cattle operation, which ranked among the largest in the world. The large desert ranches in Arizona, New Mexico, and Oregon were breeding grounds, while calves at eight months were shipped to ranches at Kern County. Here, they were concentrated in massive feeding pens for final fattening, just prior to sale in major markets across the West.

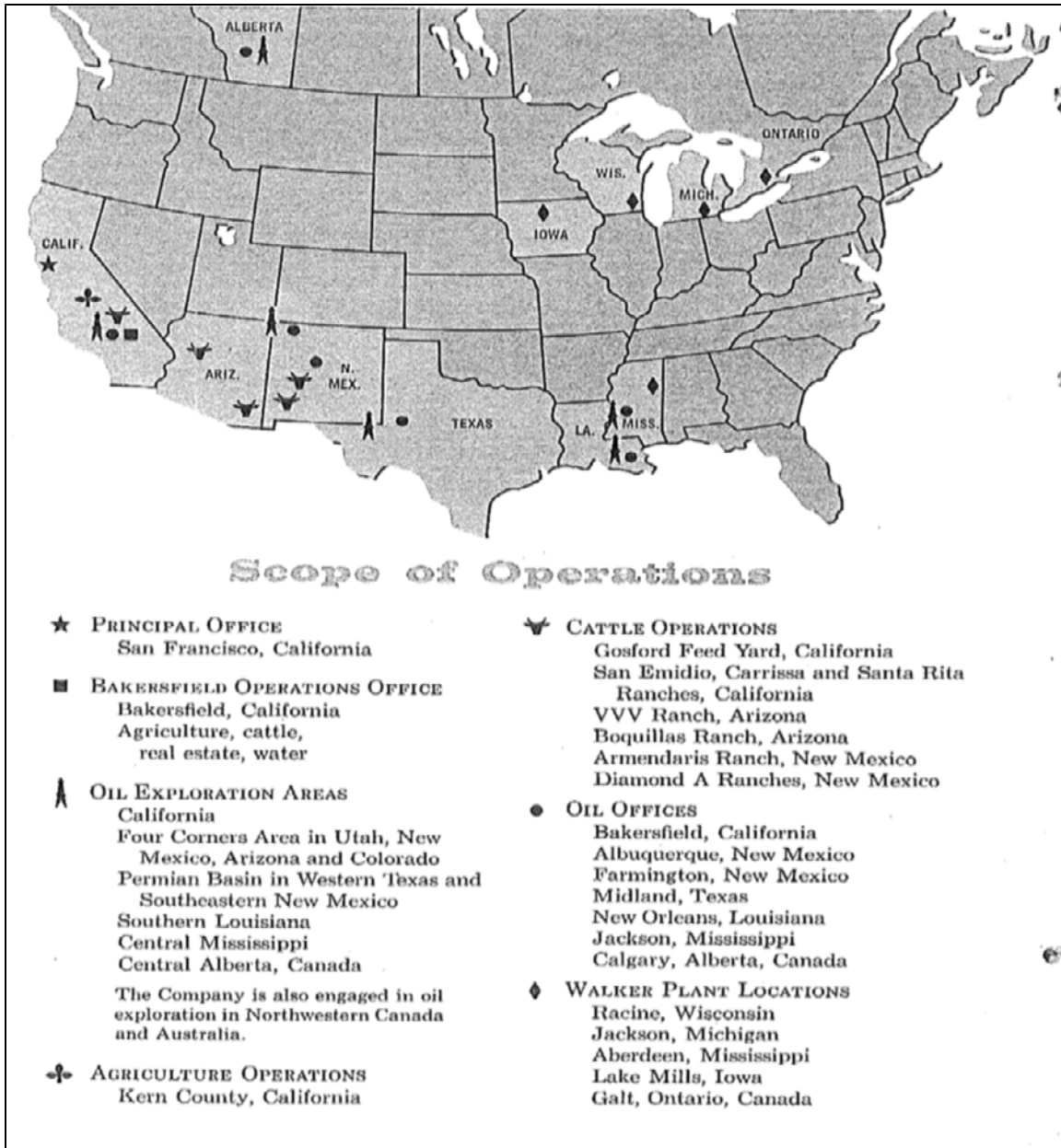


Figure 2.10: “Scope of Operations,” Kern County Land Company Annual Report (1959), California State Historical Society, Sacramento, California. Ironically, its inability to adapt, in part, led to its corporate takeover by Tenneco West in 1967. The directors were reluctant to make large investments in technology, instructing their specialists to “Go sell off so more land. Go punch another oil well. That’s what we are here for.” Udayan Gupta, *Done Deals: Venture Capitalists Tell Their Stories* (Boston: Harvard Business School Press, 2000): 204.

Thus, J. B. Haggin's first and largest agricultural endeavor represented, not a predecessor to agribusiness, but a huge multilayered corporate enterprise, the type famed journalist Carey McWilliams dubbed "factories in the field."¹¹⁸ His operation in central Kentucky did not involve the draining of rivers, the manipulating of federal laws, nor the making of meat markets. Over thirty ranches operating in five states, Oregon, Nebraska, Arizona, New Mexico, and California, covering over 1.8 million acres, processed hundreds of thousands of cattle each year.¹¹⁹ And like the earlier network of stock ranches, the twentieth-century operations operated as self-sufficient entities that reported to corporate office in San Francisco, which coordinated the firm's breeding, fattening, and processing activities.¹²⁰ As historian David Igler surmises, "The Kern County Land Company...did not represent the norm for western agriculture as a whole...Nonetheless, it symbolized the increasing power and presence of industrialized agriculture in the late nineteenth-century West, as well as the fact that agribusiness thrived on its ability to engineer the natural environment."¹²¹ And the operation in Kentucky nonetheless shared this similar principle of design: bigger is better.

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¹¹⁸ Carey McWilliams, *Factories in the Fields: The Story of Migratory Farm Labor in California* (Hamden, Connecticut: Archon Books, 1969).

¹¹⁹ Witter, *Kern County Land Company: A Story of Science and Finance*, 27; "Report of Kern County Land Company to Its Stockholders," 1939 – 1975 in Kern County Land Company Annual Report, California State Library, Sacramento, California.

¹²⁰ "Report of Kern County Land Company to Its Stockholders," 1950 – 1975 in Kern County Land Company Annual Report, California State Library, Sacramento, California.

¹²¹ Ibid; For quote, see David Igler, "Industrialism and Environment in the West," in William Francis Deverell, ed., *A Companion to the American West* (Malden, MA: Blackwell Pub., 2004): 102.

Chapter Three

“Mr. Haggin’s Horses”: The Making of Rancho del Paso

One golden afternoon in 1905, Haggin rode on horseback across his magnificent stud farm. He galloped past the massive oak trees, training tracks, and green pastures of wire-lined fences where over 500 Thoroughbreds grazed.

¹ He rode past the rail yard and station that he constructed to handle the growing freight of his horse commodities. As he approached the outcropping of buildings which housed his dairy, slaughterhouses, and grain mills, he briefly slowed his horse to study the separate structures which were, each, a solid and essential component of his operation: each operation both justifying its individual existence while contributing to the whole. Nothing wasted on this vast empire and that knowledge had to bring a smile to his face.

Haggin picked up speed again as he passed the massive fields of silage crops, hops, and vegetables where he seldom ventured, leaving its daily management to his mid-level managers. He followed the lines of the telephone, past the houses, hotel, and offices, about an eighth of a mile where he came upon the most expansive accommodations of his holdings—the elaborate barns for prized horses. The complex, described as “second to none in the country,” with over twenty-six barns, of the largest reaching over a block long, housed his massive Thoroughbred population.² Walking back

¹ Debra Ginsberg, “A Determined Era,” in *California Thoroughbred* (June 1999): 34.

² “Southern Pacific R.R. Station,” “A Barn on the Haggin Ranch,” “Mosquito Camp Barns on Haggin Estate,” “Indian Cemetery on the Ben Ali Haggin Estate Grounds,” “Old Barns of the Haggin Estate,” “Ruins of a Building on the Haggin Ranch,” “House on the Rancho del Paso,” “Barns and Horses on the Haggin Ranch” Photographs in Eugene Hepting Collection, (1939), in Sacramento Archives Museum, Sacramento, California; Barbara Austin Highly, “Race Horses on

and forth, Haggin, pensive and silent, inspected the long columns of the most spirited and fancy horses. He then ended his daily horseback ride near his residence on a bluff, which commanded a spectacular view of the tens of thousands of acres below, all gently sloping along a river that flowed on the borders of his farm.³ The setting was picturesque with young colts frolicking in the grassy fields of pastures below.⁴ Haggin must have felt deeply satisfied. What he once recognized to be a “very costly hobby” was, now, anything but a leisured pastime.⁵ He was looking at the finest and largest stud farm in America.

The actualization of Haggin’s magnificent horse empire begins, not in central Kentucky, but in central California, where he first fashioned a breeding operation of industrial importance. Called Rancho del Paso, this operation offered the first glimpse into Haggin as a pedigree breeder. From the late 1881, when he first purchased a Thoroughbred stallion, to 1897, when he purchased Elmendorf, Haggin bred and sold pedigreed horses in a way no specialized owner in America had ever done. His system of pedigree breeding flowed directly out of his own industrial background. Whether his fierce ambition or growing passion for the Thoroughbred, the financier was driven to own the most expensive of racehorses and to attain the largest economies of scales. For two decades the California farm showed what a determined Haggin could do with massive capital. His aggressive pursuit of industrial breeding was coupled with an instinctive migration toward the physical landscape which would provide a home for his equine ambition.

the Rancho del Paso,” *Golden Notes* (October 1969): 2; “Surgeon to Race Horses,” *Sacramento Bee* (1 January 1942).

³ “Surgeon to Race Horses,” *Sacramento Bee* (1 January 1942).

⁴ Carleton F. Burke, “The Pastime of Millions,” *Thoroughbred of California* (February 1946).

⁵ *Ibid.*

* * * *

In 1862 Haggin acquired Rancho del Paso the same way he and his partner Lloyd Tevis had accumulated over a million acres in the far West. Drawing on their financial and legal acumen, the San Francisco law partners became the owners of a 44,000-acre rancho along the American River that had long been associated with large-scale operations. Haggin and Tevis had manipulated the land from a certain Samuel Norris, a relatively prosperous cattle rancher. According to his lawyer, Norris acquired Rancho del Paso when the family of the first claimant, Elijah Grimes, fell on hard times and sold the Spanish grant to the Danish immigrant who expanded the beef, hide, and tallow markets of Rancho del Paso.⁶

After acquiring the property from Grimes, Norris made lucrative deals with Indian tribes confined to the reservations nearby to help sustain the property.⁷ Although he endured the gutted markets, floods, and droughts of the mid-1850s, he could not withstand the arrival of a settler with a particular background—the well-financed and the

⁶ The first claimant of Rancho del Paso was a prosperous cattle rancher named Elijah Grimes who succeeded in opening the Californio lands to larger markets. Scholars often portray Grimes as an absentee landowner, emphasizing the role of Scottish immigrant John Sinclair who attended to Rancho's large quantities of beef and who utilized a labor system of servants, slaves, Indians, and field hands who tended to the vast herds of cattle. "Plat of Del Paso Rancho Finally Confirmed to Samuel Norris," (1857) at Sacramento Archives & Museum Collection, Sacramento, California; Allen L. Chickering, "Samuel Norris: Litigious Pioneer," *California Historical Society Quarterly*, Volume 25: 219-228; Kenneth Owens, *Gold Rush Saints: California Mormons and the Great Rush for Riches* (Spokane, Wash.: Arthur H. Clark Co., 2004): 164; Jordan, 152-157. On trade and property ownership in Mexican California, see David Hornbeck, "Land Tenure and Rancho Expansion in Alta California, 1784 -1846," *Journal of Historical Geography* 4 (Fall 1978): 371-90; Ramon A. Gutierrez and Richard J. Orsi, *Contested Eden: California Before the Gold Rush* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998).

⁷ Chickering, "Samuel Norris: Litigious Pioneer," 223.

well-connected.⁸ The possibilities of land attracted, among others, certain members of a commercial elite who used the legal system as an effective tool to consolidate their holdings and further their interests. Norris became embroiled in legal wrangling in the effort to retain ownership of his ranch and so secured Haggin and Tevis as his legal counsel. The partners helped Norris complete the time-consuming process of the private land claims when the California Land Law of 1851 and a similar measure in 1855 compelled Norris, and other claimants of the predecessor Spanish and Mexican governments, to prove titles to their rancho lands.⁹

Norris was unlike other rancho owners who lacked the financial resources to navigate the bureaucratic maze of courts, trials, hearings, and legal fees.¹⁰ As payment for their services, Norris gave Haggin and Tevis a property note for \$64,000 through a mortgage on Rancho del Paso. A year later the law firm foreclosed. Norris challenged this take-over, claiming that Haggin and Tevis manipulated him when he was physically and mentally impaired, but decades of litigation had no effect.¹¹ By using the series of

⁸ David Iglar, *Industrial Cowboys: Miller & Lux and the Transformation of the Far West, 1850 – 1920* (Berkeley: University of California Press 2001) 106.

⁹ Historians have long discussed critical issues that shaped Spanish and Mexican grants in the far West. See Leonard Pitt, *The Decline of Californios: A Social History of the Spanish-Speaking Californians, 1846 -1890* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1966); A. Camrillo, *Chicanos in a Changing Society* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1979); Douglas Monroy, *Thrown Among Strangers The Making of Mexican Culture in Frontier California*. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990; Iglar, *Industrial Cowboys*; Paul Howard Gates, “The California Land Act of 1851,” *Land and Law*, 159; Hornbeck, “Land Tenure and Rancho Expansion in Alta California, 1784 -1846,” *Journal of Historical Geography* 4 (Fall 1978): 371-90.

¹⁰ Chickering, “Samuel Norris: Litigious Pioneer,” 224; Grants of Land in Sacramento County, p.167.

¹¹ According to Norris’s lawyer, a fight left Norris with a blind eye, failed hearing, and impaired nervous system. Buckley-Gerber Abstract and Title Company, *Abstract of the Title of Rancho Del Paso: Subdivided by Sacramento Valley Colonization Co.*, (Sacramento, Calif: Buckley-Gerber, 1910); Lloyd Tevis v. Samuel Norris, 1859. Suit No. 7236; Chickering, “Samuel Norris: Litigious Pioneer,” 224; Raymond Oliver, *Rancho Del Paso: A History of the Land Surrounding McClellan*

land laws passed at mid-century to further their interest, Haggin and Tevis proved, once again, that the legal system was a most effective tool for acquiring valuable farmland in the far West.

Under the partners' ownership, Rancho del Paso initially took the shape of their other agricultural operations in California. The Spanish rancho was developed as a colony. In 1869, Haggin and Tevis organized a company called the Sacramento Farm Homestead Association to supply settlers with land.¹² But like the irrigated colonies of Rosedale in Bakersfield, California, the business of improved land never materialized because of a lack of water.¹³ When their attempt to lay out colony tracts at Rancho del Paso failed to take shape, Haggin and Tevis converted the rancho into a diversified crop and stock operation. The greatest portion of the land was used for raising cattle, sheep, horses, and work stock. Their importations of twenty-thousand head of sheep were in keeping with their reputation for breeding large scales of stock animals.¹⁴ The partners also rented the richest portions of the land to growers who cultivated and harvested fruit orchards and vegetable gardens and who annually paid twenty dollars per acre and twenty-five percent their bounty as rent.¹⁵

The more telling pattern that was characteristic of Haggin & Tevis's agricultural ventures was the division of operational responsibilities. For over two decades the San

Air Force Base (McClellan Air Force Base, Calif: Office of History, Sacramento Air Logistics Center, 1983).

¹² Parsons, "The Irish Khan and His Empire: James Ben Ali Haggin and His Associates," 16.

¹³ In 1869, they formed a partnership with Leland Stanford, investor and politician, called the Sacramento Farm Homestead Association. *Sacramento Bee* (California) (19 November 1869): 2/3; *Sacramento Bee* (California) (13 July 1877): 3/1

¹⁴ Highly, "Race Horses on the Rancho del Paso," 2.

¹⁵ Ibid; *Sacramento Bee*, (1894): 36; Richard Steven Street, *Beasts of the Field: A Narrative History of California Farm Workers, 1769-1913* (Stanford, Calif: Stanford University Press, 2004): 363.

Francisco partners shared the costs and profits of Rancho del Paso. Though partners in business, they would not share the responsibilities of the Sacramento operation. Haggin, more so than Tevis, proposed the changes that transformed the California diversified stock farm into the world's most famous Thoroughbred breeding operations. Indeed, one Rancho del Paso employee never recalled Tevis even visiting the Sacramento ranch.¹⁶ When it was all said and done, it was Haggin's personal interest in pedigree animals and his aggressive business decisions which spurred the move toward breeding on the Sacramento rancho, and it all began not with racers, but pacers.

Among the many reasons why Haggin began breeding pedigree horses, the chief motivation seemed to emanate from his desire to uphold and enlarge upon the stylish standards of the urban elite. As a member of the San Francisco elite, Haggin could often be seen driving expensive four-in-hands through the streets of the city, taking a fashionable drive from his mansion on Nob Hill, through Golden Gate Park, down the Peninsula, and onto San Mateo and Burlingame. The pastime, otherwise known as coaching, proved most fashionable because of the circumstance and pomp. As scholar Clay McShane writes, "The public wanted to see the latest in horses, the latest in carriages, and the latest in women's fashions."¹⁷ And Haggin's four-in-hand parties were no exception. Embellished by the devoted coachman, the faultless footman, and harnesses trimmed in silver, which he ordered from Europe, his four-in-hand were lavish even for the upper class of San Francisco society. Indeed, the stables Haggin built in downtown

¹⁶ "Surgeon to Race Horses," *Sacramento Bee* (California) (1 January 1942).

¹⁷ The annual cost to maintain a coach and four trotting horses in Boston was \$27,000, and most owned more than four coaching horses to allow relays on long runs. Clay McShane and Joel A. Tarr, *The Horse in the City: Living Machines in the Nineteenth Century* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2007): 87.

San Francisco were so expensive that visitors often compared the horse accommodations to the renowned Palace Hotel.¹⁸

His handsome high steppers were another matter, however. The horses reared on Haggin's farm would become a defining characteristic of his equine endeavors. In 1872 Haggin purchased his first pedigree trotter and within two decades he owned well over a hundred of the finest standardbreds in America on Rancho del Paso.¹⁹ Many of them were the sons and daughters of Hambletonian, the famous trotter who covered over 1900 mares and got 1300 foals during the second-half of the nineteenth-century.²⁰ Their distinctive qualities proved quite attractive at the select standardbred sales in New York, where Haggin sold hundreds for large sums of money in the 1890s.²¹ Though initially trotter sales were held in California, in 1890, at the first annual sale of Rancho del Paso stock, 92 head of colts, yearlings, and fillies were sold in the distant but burgeoning market of New York.²²

More significantly, for both personal and business reasons, Haggin's interest in fancy trotters introduced him to the individual who had a profound impact on the world's largest horse operation. Described as one of "the ablest horseman of his time," John Mackey would serve as Haggin's horse expert for nearly forty years.²³ Although little is known or recorded of Mackey's earlier years, the Irish immigrant gained Haggin's

¹⁸ Lucius Morris Beebe, *The Big Spenders* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1966): 172; Burke, "Pastime of Millions," 13; McShane, *The Horse in the City*, 90.

¹⁹ Burke, "Pastime of Millions," (1946): 70.

²⁰ *Ibid*; Hervey, *Racing in America*.

²¹ Though initially trotter sales were held on the California stud, in 1890, the first annual sale of Rancho del Paso trotting stock, comprising 92 head of colts, yearlings, and fillies, took place in the distant but burgeoning market of New York. "Rancho del Paso," *Salt Lake Herald*, (14 March 1890): 5; "The Second Annual Sale over 129 Head of Trotting Stock." Rancho del Paso Sale Catalogue (1891) at Bancroft Library, University of California Berkeley, California.

²² *Ibid*.

²³ Burke, "Pastime of Millions," (July-August 1944): 13.

attention in Sacramento where the former owned a successful trotting stable in the downtown district, behind the Golden Eagle hotel. Here, a trotting horse named *Patchen* helped make known Mackey's abilities as "marvelous judge of conformation and finer points of breeding."²⁴ Haggin must have been impressed by Mackey; when the Rancho superintendent passed away, the San Francisco owner offered the stable owner the job. In 1880 Mackey sold his successful trotting business on Seventh Street and moved to Haggin's operation at Rancho del Paso.²⁵ By the late 1890s, the *Sacramento City Directory* listed him as Haggin's farm manager and superintendent. For over three decades, he oversaw the dramatic rise of Haggin's horse empire, advising the San Franciscan on the horses to purchase, sell, and ignore. "His knowledge of pedigrees was uncanny," wrote one turf historian, "He (Mackey) memorized without apparent effort the complete genealogies of the ranch's 40 stallions, and he could click off without hesitation the top and bottom lines of hundreds of mares back to the sixth remove."²⁶

There is reason to believe that Haggin's trotter superintendent influenced his decision to shift from pacers to racers.²⁷ It was very few years after Mackay began his employment with Haggin that Thoroughbred stallions were advertised for service on Rancho del Paso.²⁸ A few surmise that Haggin's change in the direction of his equine

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ *Sacramento City Directory* (Sacramento: F.M. Husted, 1892-1893): 356; Ronald Duke Parsons, Jr., "The Irish Khan and His Empire: James Ben Ali Haggin and His Associates." (MA Thesis, California State University, Sacramento, 2002.); Highly, "Race Horses on the Rancho del Paso," 2.

²⁶ Burke, "Pastime of Millions," (July-August 1944): 13.

²⁷ It has been written that Haggin "always acted under the advice of and through his excellent superintendent." *Outing* (1892): 476. Burke, Austin, and Parsons also write that John Mackey influenced Haggin in the latter's decision to turn the Rancho into a breeding facility.

²⁸ *Breeder and Sportsman*, Vol. 4 (26 January 1884): 60. Others surmise that Haggin did not want to compete with Governor Leland Stanford, whose horse farms—first in Sacramento and then at Palo Alto—had emerged as the state's leading harness racing operations. Hilary N. Steinmetz,

operations stemmed from his reluctance to compete with Governor Leland Stanford, whose horse farms—first in Sacramento and then at Palo Alto—had emerged as the state’s leading harness racing operations. Most scholars of the sport, however, concluded that Haggin—a native Kentuckian—would inevitably and naturally choose to breed and raise racing horses.²⁹ The evidence of this logic lay in the oft-recited influence of Haggin’s paternal grandfather, Captain John Haggin, who started one of the first racetracks in early Kentucky near the town of Harrodsburg.³⁰

These are among the possible influences affecting J. D. Haggin’s gravitation toward the realm which encompassed racing and the pedigreed production of racehorses and all that that world signified, but the decision to raise Thoroughbreds was undoubtedly influenced by the inherent expectations of his growing reputation as an industrialist. Like most thoroughbred owners, Haggin owned, bred, and raced fast horses primarily for the cultural capital it offered. The prestige and far-reaching acclaim accorded to the owners of these prized animals, as we will see, was a far greater priority than the fact that Haggin’s expenses often exceeded his winnings.³¹

A good trainer could easily command ten thousand dollars a year and a percentage of the purses; good jockeys generally received ten or twelve thousand beside their mount fees; and aside from the expense of the animal itself, the daily maintenance, such as feed bills, totaled an enormous sum over the years. Owners did not count the cost

“Rancho del Paso: The World’s Largest Thoroughbred Farm,” (California State University, Sacramento, 2009): 10.

²⁹ See, for example, Steinmetz, “Rancho del Paso: The World’s Largest Thoroughbred Farm,” 10; Parsons, “The Irish Khan and His Empire: James Ben Ali Haggin and His Associates,” 5; Burke, “Pastime of Millions,” (July-August 1944): 13; Highly, “Race Horses on the Rancho del Paso,” 2.

³⁰ Karen Mauer Green, *The Kentucky Gazette, 1901 – 1820: Genealogical and Historical Abstracts* (Baltimore: Gateway Press, Inc., 1985):

³¹ *The Sacramento Union* (26 June 1890): 1-2.

of their racehorse; implicit in the equation was the widely-held belief that racehorses appropriately reflected their owner's growing wealth and reputation; ownership of pedigree racehorses lent the ultimate mark of social respectability. This was particularly evident in the late nineteenth-century, as more and more industrialists, financiers, and business people increasingly became the owners of pedigree racehorses. Haggin's decision to raise large scales of Thoroughbreds reflected his material, social, and economic ambition.

It was no accident then, that in 1881, when Haggin shifted equine production from pacers to racers, he became one of the first Western breeders to make this change. He initially acquired horses from local markets; his first Thoroughbred was a California-bred stallion called Langford. In the 1880s and 1890s, pedigree horse breeding had entered a new era of expansion in California. They included Commodore Robert F. Stockton, a naval commander and U.S. senator from New Jersey who shipped a number of important horses to his Portero de Santa Clara in the 1850s; Elias Jackson "Lucky" Baldwin, the notorious miner and developer who loved his fast horses and trained at the beautiful and popular racetrack that he built on his 4000-acre Rancho Santa Anita; Leland Stanford, the former California governor and Southern Pacific Railroad magnate, who devoted his 11,000-acre Rancho San Franciquito, otherwise known as Palo Alto, to his trotters and racers, which included the great Electioneer, the horse that sired nine world record holders; and Theodore Winters, who made his fortune from the Comstock Lode and invested it in the champion Norfolk, which was the foundation sire for his Rancho

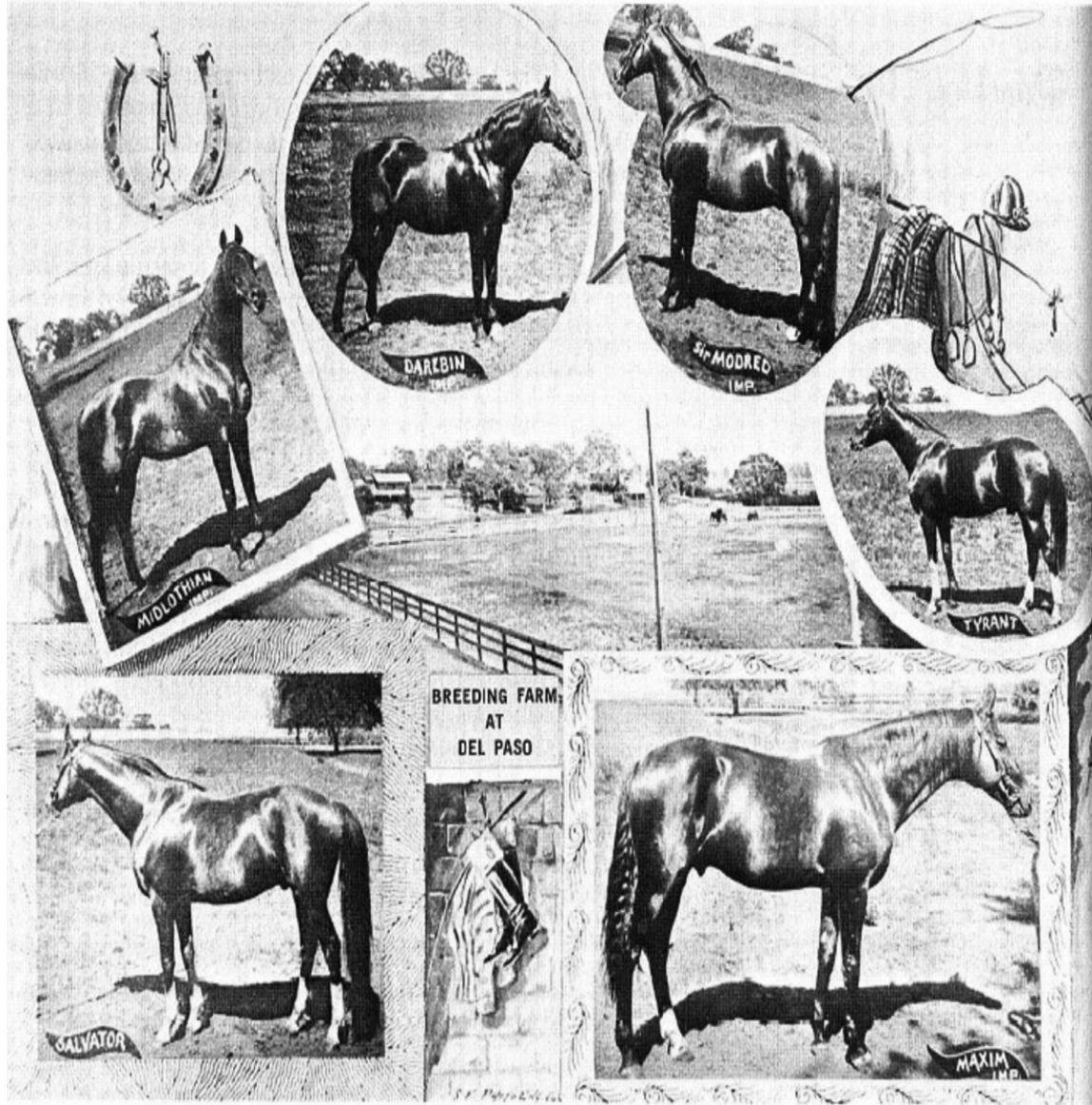


Figure 3.1: Del Paso Advertisement, *Sacramento and Its Resources: A Souvenir of the Bee* (1894): 75.

del Rio.³² However Haggin quickly realized that the western region did not compare to the selection of pedigree stock in the east.

Consequently, across the nation, from New York to Louisiana, Haggin aggressively engaged in the purchase of prized Thoroughbreds without slackening his pace. Among the various eastern sales he attended were those of Bluegrass breeders. Not uncommon was an Easton horse sale in Lexington, Kentucky, in 1896, where on the first day of sales Haggin secured 17 head for Rancho del Paso, for which he paid \$64,875.³³ In particular, he was a liberal client of Daniel Swigert, the original developer of Elmendorf Farm, who sold the California breeder several of his prized racehorses, including Ben Ali, Salvator, and Miss Woodford.

By 1891, Haggin owned well over 300 thoroughbreds for which he had paid hefty prices. Many of these pedigree horses were to play a decisive role in the building of Elmendorf's horse population, and Haggin's system of breeding is the subject of a later chapter, but he early staked his claim for pedigreed lineage as he consistently purchased only the very best sires and broodmares. The following year Rancho del Paso featured 12 prized stallions, most having been imported from New Zealand, Ireland, England, and Australia, and the average broodmare handled at the California ranch was valued at \$6000 to \$18,000.³⁴ He invested money, time, and attention to the Thoroughbred industry

³² R. John Brockmann, *Commodore Robert F. Stockton, 1795-1866: Protean Man for a Protean Nation* (Amherst, N.Y.: Cambria Press, 2009); Tom R. Underwood, *Thoroughbred Racing & Breeding; The Story of the Sport and Background of the Horse Industry* (Coward-McCann, 1948); Norman Tutorow, *Leland Stanford: Man of Many Careers* (Menlo Park, CA: Pacific Coast Publications, 1971).

³³ For more sales from other breeders, "The Belmont Stud," *Salt Lake Herald*, 17 October 1891, p. 1; "A Phenomenal Horse Sale," *Daily Racing Form*, 6 December 1896; "Mr. Easton's Closing Sale," *Daily Racing Form*, 12 December 1896; Burke, *Pastime of Millions*, May 1946, p. 12.

³⁴ *Ibid*; *Overland*, January 23, 1892, 83/2.

in a way that no breeder in the far West had ever done, while providing his personal racing stables with premium bloodstock.

* * * *

In November of 1882, only one year after J. B. Haggin purchased his first thoroughbred, he debuted racing silks of orange and blue at the Old Bay District track, and within five years Haggin had entered his stables in over 700 races across the nation.³⁵ His participation continued to increase substantially so by 1886, Haggin had one hundred horses in training, three different trainers, and three different jockeys. This immersion augured great success for Haggin such that, in the 1887 and 1888 race seasons, Haggin's horses secured 139 first place finishes, 119 second places, and 103 third places.³⁶ That last year, his stables won more purses than any other in America, over \$125,000, in part because a "hardy and enduring little" mare named Firenze, a horse bred on Haggin's California place, captured over \$34,000.³⁷ The Swigert-bred filly met and defeated the kings and queens of the American turf of that era, including Hanover, the Baird, Tenny, and Exile.

³⁵ A week later, *Premium* redeemed itself capturing his owner's first victory on the turf. In 1886, Haggin entered his horses in over 117 races and captured 37 first place, 19 second places, and 13 third places. Burke, "Pastime of Millions," (July 1946): 16; Highly, "Race Horses on the Rancho del Paso," 7.

³⁶ Steinmetz, "Rancho del Paso: The World's Largest Thoroughbred Farm," 25; Highly, "Race Horses on the Rancho del Paso," 7; "Firenze: Queen of Haggin's Mare," *Daily Racing Form*, (14 March 1907): 6.

³⁷ Highly, "Race Horses on the Rancho del Paso," 8; "Firenze: Queen of Haggin's Mare," *Daily Racing Form*, (14 March 1907): 6; Mahoney, "California's Forgotten Triumvirate," 135; John H. Davis, *The American Turf* (New York: Printed by the John Polhemus Printing Company New York, 1907): 37.

The following year, another horse bred by Haggin pushed him to the forefront of the racing world. Called the “Idol of the American Turf,” Salvator, won 16 of 19 starts, including two Futurities, and earned more than \$113,000. He also set the world mile record of 1:35 ½ down the straight course at Monmouth. Yet, Salvator became a national icon after his triumph race against Tenny on June 25, 1890, what some described as “one of the most ballyhooed events yet in American sports history.”³⁸

The handsome chestnut four-year-old by Prince Charles had captured the Suburban at Sheepshead Bay before a crowd of 25,000, but some believed the horse that came in third was a superior animal. A special match was set at the Coney Island Jockey Club track the following week. Salvator, ridden by the famous black jockey Isaac Murphy, faced the well-known white rider Snapper Garrison on the “swayback” with undistinguishable lineage named Tenny. The famous match took on another dimension when Ella Wheeler Wilcox, a syndicated columnist, gave great attention to the mighty race. Her popular poem, “How Salvator Won,” expressed their sentiments.

One more mighty plunge, and, with knee, limb and hand,
I lift my horse first by a nose past the stand;
We are under the string – the great race is done –
And Salvator, Salvator, Salvator won!
Cheer, hoar-headed patriarch; cheer loud, I say;
Tis the race of the century witnessed to-day!”

³⁸ The race, and subsequently Haggin’s horse, became well ensconced in mainstream folklore when Ellen Wheeler Wilcox, a syndicated columnist, romanticized the match in a widely known poem, “How Salvator Won.” Hotaling, *Wink: The Incredible*, 15, 134. John Hervy, *Racing in America*, 147, 148; John H. Davis, *The American Turf* (New York: John Polhemus Printing Company, 1907); “The Turf,” *The Salt Lake Herald* (29 October 1894): 1; “The Late David Tenny Pulsifer,” *Daily Racing Form* (17 November 1910): 2; “David Tenny Pulsifer Dead,” *New York Times* (16 November 1910): 11; “The Great Tenny,” *The Illustrated American*, (30 May 1891): 72; “The Passing,” *New York Times* (8 October 1905). In 1918 Salvator received votes as one of the greatest performers on the American turf from thirty-three “experts” interviewed by the Daily Racing Forum. See “Turf Achievements of One of the Greatest Race Horses in the History of the American Turf,” *Daily Racing Form* (7 September 1918): 1; “Career of the Mighty Salvator,” *Daily Racing Form* (4 September 1918): 1.

The poem also earned Haggin's horse bigger headlines.
"Though ye live twice the space that's allotted to men,
Ye never will see such a grand race again.
Let the shouts of the populace roar like the surf,
For Salvator, Salvator, king of the turf!"

Her "How Salvator Won" made a powerful impression on the public imagination and helped make Haggin's, as John Hervey wrote, "among the best advertised horses in the country."³⁹

By the early 1890s, Haggin stood as a central figure on America's biggest racecourses, and his successes on the turf played an important role in promoting the best-bred horses in the California fields. That the racetrack provided Haggin a national showcase was best illustrated with the following statistics. During the 1889 race season, nearly 180 horses bred at Rancho del Paso placed in winner brackets, earning well over \$200,000.⁴⁰ In 1892, horses bred on Rancho del Paso won 117 of 500 races; the following year, 180 races; and in 1894, 177 of 600 races.⁴¹ Indeed, just two years later the accumulated winnings of horses reared on Haggin's western operation grew to over \$1.4 million on recognized tracks alone.⁴²

To efficiently care for his pedigreed racers, Haggin built facilities in the east that were highly organized, well-considered in their efficacy, and which provided a means to lessen the significant cost of transferring these highly-strung racing horses from the fields to the tracks. In addition to his early training grounds at Rancho del Paso, Haggin

³⁹ Hervey, *Racing in America*.

⁴⁰ Burke, "Pastime of Millions," (July 1946): 17.

⁴¹ Highly, "Race Horses on the Rancho del Paso," 12.

⁴² Rancho del Paso Sale Catalogue (1896) at Bancroft Library, University of California Berkeley, California. The winnings were only compiled to the close of 1896 and did not include money earned in 1895 or 1896 season on non-recognized tracks, where "such old campaigners as Brooklyn, SoSo, Fagin, Dr. Helmuth, Dr. Wilcox, Marie Lovell, Grand Prix, etc., have added and are still adding to the amount of their earnings."

purchased eighty-nine acres at Sheepshead Bay on the east coast. Opposite the Coney Island Jockey Club racetrack, Haggin's stables provided winter quarters where the training and caring of horses was more feasible, and where horses could be prepared for coming engagements the following spring. These facilities were described by contemporaries "as fine a plant as there is in the East," including "commodious barns, stalls, and a complete equipment for a breeding farm and training quarters," and employing a sufficient labor force of trainers, groomers, and stable boys to stable as many as 44 racehorses.⁴³

But Rancho del Paso's horseracing enterprise revealed much beyond the monetary success and the massive scales on the racetrack itself. To these racehorse owners, one of the most charming facets inherent in the racehorse industry was the frequent opportunity to socialize. It reflected one of the enduring attractions of the spectator sport. Ownership meant invitations to a number of formal and elite occasions that were held by fashionable society. Like almost everything else in Haggin's equine life, his soirees were considered some of the finest. In 1890 a luxurious clambake was thrown at the home of Haggin's trainer, Matthew Byrnes, in Eastontown, New Jersey, to honor Salvator. This soiree to celebrate the achievements of Haggin's horse attracted a group of men who had garnered a substantial amount of money in the backing of Haggin's horse.⁴⁴ A photograph of the affair demonstrated that while the leading horsemen of their time dined on clams, their interaction simultaneously reflected an impressive mixture of men from widely diverse backgrounds and ethnicities, from old and new wealth, united by their common interest in money and horses. Horseracing, as a common passion, strengthened the industrial

⁴³ "Harvard Freshmen Hold the Varsity," *New York Times* (22 October 1914): 9; "Notes of the Turf," *Daily Racing Form* (20 July 1897).

⁴⁴ "A Monmouth Sensation," *New York Times* (27 August 1890): 3.



Figure 3.2: J.B. Haggin's Clambake, New Jersey. Ben Ali Haggin Junior in the front left, J.B. Haggin in the far left. Courtesy of Keeneland Library.

development of the breeding stud farms, but it also reinforced older social and cultural patterns long associated with the pastime of the sporting animal. Its world remained bounded by lines of class, the exclusive preserve of wealthy, many of them the beneficiaries of new industrial fortunes.

It was not difficult to understand why the system of racing proved so appealing to Haggin—particularly once it became clear, as it quickly did, that he would breed and race on such extravagant scales. A fierce competitor, he loved to see his horses win. He raced where the attendance was heavy, the competition stiff, and the purses large enough to attain some kind of profit.⁴⁵ An episode at Churchill Downs in 1886 Kentucky Derby, in particular, demonstrated how profit and pride overlapped in his racing stables. Upon his arrival at the Kentucky track, just prior to the race, Haggin found the bookmakers were on strike, engaged in protesting what they believed were exorbitant licensing fees. Haggin made known his desires to bet on his own horse, Ben Ali, even offering to absorb the costs of the betting fees. He offered a personal donation to make up the difference between what the bookmakers had offered and what the track had demanded. Officials finally relented and took steps to accommodate Haggin. By the time his horse trotted onto the track, twenty-three bookmakers stood ready to take his bets. Haggin’s horse defeated what one reporter described as “one of the finest fields of three-year-olds” in the country, but he was far from thrilled. As the story goes, he learned that Derby officials had

⁴⁵ “Gloomy View of Situation,” *Lexington Leader* (24 July 1908). As Carleton Burke writes, “Haggin was prepared to wager up to \$50,000, if so large a sum could be placed at satisfactory odds. Such a sum, he realized, would drive Ben Ali to odds-on in the mutuels and nullify his plans; he would be betting against himself, so far as the price was concerned, and instead of receiving an average of 10 to 1 and winning some hundreds of thousands, as he had confidently expected in event Ben Ali won, he would receive only 5 to 10 cents on the dollar.” Burke, “Pastime of Millions,” 74.

complained about his requests, questioning, “Who did Haggin think he was?”⁴⁶ The next morning, Haggin loaded his horses, trainers, and jockeys on the farm’s private train and returned to California, publicly declared that neither he nor his horses would ever return to the Louisville race.

J.B. Haggin’s dramatic exit from the Kentucky Derby was quite telling. As historian Jamie Nicholson points out, this was not the first time Haggin threatened to pull his horses from the track. A few years later, he made a similar scene in St. Louis when his jockey was banned for impudence.⁴⁷ Like most horse owners he believed that betting was the life of the turf. But just as he took the business of racing horses seriously, Haggin obviously interpreted the officials’ comments as an affront to his position in the sporting world. Even more significant for the future of the Kentucky Derby was his protest of subsequent races. For the next twenty-five years, major racing enthusiasts—the notable exception being Michael Dwyer in 1896—followed the Californian’s lead and chose not to race at Churchill Downs.⁴⁸ Their decision to avoid the Kentucky racetrack was a sign of Haggin’s growing influence in the horseracing world.

Five years later, another case of impulsive action showed the softer side of Haggin’s racing interests. Fast horses had always been a family affair for J.B. Haggin. He

⁴⁶ “The Derby,” *Salt Lake Herald* (30 May 1886): 9; Nicholson, “More than just a Horse Race: A Cultural History of the Kentucky Derby,” 28-29; James Robert Saunders and Monica Renae Saunders, *Black Winning Jockeys in the Kentucky Derby* (Jefferson, N.C.: McFarland & Co, 2003): 58; Peter Chew, *The Kentucky Derby, the First 100 Years* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1974): 26 -31; Burke, “Pastime of Millions,” 74.

⁴⁷ Jamie Nicholson, *The Kentucky Derby: How the Run for the Roses Became America's Premier Sporting Event* (Lexington, KY: The University Press of Kentucky, 2012).

⁴⁸ Though Churchill Downs race faced poor management, political discord, and financial worries on their part, the break solidified nonetheless that the Kentucky Derby in the late nineteenth-century was far from the greatest two minutes in sports. “Haggin’s Stables go to Latonia,” *New York Times* (17 May 1886): 4; “The Spectacular Derby of 1886 Recalled,” *Daily Racing Form* (20 January 1913): 2; Saunders, *Black Winning Jockeys*, 58; Nicholson, Nicholson, “More than just a Horse Race: A Cultural History of the Kentucky Derby,” 28-29.

had been reared with a long tradition of gambling and dirt tracks in central Kentucky. He understandably shared the pastime with his eldest son, James Ben Ali Haggin Junior, who managed the racing division of his father's breeding establishment at Rancho del Paso.⁴⁹ Nothing portrayed the intimate connections between Haggin racing interests and family ties than his son's untimely death in 1891. A victim of pneumonia, Junior's passing was fast and unexpected, and it shook the father to the core. Haggin, then in his seventies, called into question one of his largest investments and greatest passions, fast horses. Following this period of self-examination, he announced his retirement from racing just months after his son's death.⁵⁰ Some newspapers suggested that Haggin retired because of miserly prize monies or some conflict with partner Lloyd Tevis, but it became clear over the next two decades that the year 1891, the year of J. B. Haggin Jr.'s death, marked a turning point in the history of the nation's largest horse empire.⁵¹ Over the next two decades, America's racetracks rarely saw the blue and orange of Haggin silks. Haggin Senior kept a small hand in national racing circles, especially after he purchased Elmendorf, but his interest never returned to the depth and scale attained before his son's death.

* * * *

⁴⁹ When the judges hung out Salvator's number, Haggin, who was said to have been leaning forward over his son's shoulder, breathed, "That was too close for comfort." "Dominant Power of American Turf," *Lexington Herald* (4 October 1903).

⁵⁰ *Sacramento Bee* (25 October 1891): 5/1.

⁵¹ "The betting operations of Mr. Haggin and of his son Ben Ali finally reached such proportions that Mr. Tevis called a halt." "Del Paso Stud will be Sold," *San Francisco Call* (19 September 1905): 1.

After Haggin decided to retire from the national racetracks, the breeding industry which emerged on Rancho del Paso represented a new phase of commercial development in a way that powerfully impacted the physical landscape of his California rancho. As demand escalated for Haggin, the demand likewise required the construction of additional facilities necessary to the growing operation. By 1890, Rancho Del Paso represented a burgeoning industrial landscape. It housed its extensive thoroughbred population in twenty-six separate barns, which included two stables, each accommodated fifty horses; a number of other barns, alike, contained sixty-four stalls; and several others described as “small” contained half as many housing compartments. The largest stable was filled with imported stallions; two others sheltered yearling fillies with one for trotting bred colts, and one for broodmares. Some of the newly constructed buildings indicated the del Paso operation’s requirement for facilities to process its specialized needs. Near the superintendent’s home was the “pedigree house,” which contained a complete printing press that reproduced thousands upon thousands of printed pedigrees for distribution at national and regional sales.⁵²

Alongside these structures Haggin built large-scale facilities to accommodate his workers. The 1900 census recorded at least 21 full time employees working on Rancho del Paso, including four farriers, four cooks, a maid, six hostlers, five day-laborers, a veterinarian, and a superintendent. Separate dwellings were built for approximately a third of del Paso’s workforce, mainly those who oversaw production or were considered skilled laborers, including managers, trainers, and jockeys. The army of handlers, grooms, and stable boys often quartered with their charges in the massive stables. Camp

⁵² “Rancho Del Paso,” *The Sacramento Bee* (22 November 1890); Burke, “Pastime of Millions,” (February 1946): 12.

dwellings, including a dining room and washrooms, were constructed for much of the remaining workforce in the Bottoms.⁵³ Such division of living quarters reflected the careful logistics of separating workers for convenience, utility, and efficiency during work hours. It is interesting to note that many of the workers depended upon the rancho for other basic necessities, including education. According to Dr. James R. Cowan, the former superintendent of Arcade, the local school district began as a school for Haggin's jockeys but in 1885 it was converted to a public school where at least twenty-eight sons and daughters of del Paso workers attended its first year.⁵⁴

The gently rolling landscape of the Bottoms showed an orderly scheme in other dynamic ways. Thousands of acres had been divided into a wire-lined network of four- to ten-acre plots, which segmented Thoroughbreds in different stages of development. After being weaned, colts and fillies were placed in certain fields depending upon their gender, foal, and sale date, which allowed for easier access during feeding and sale time. The colony tracts, fruit orchards, and hops crops covering the hills and valleys of Haggin's 44,000 acres had been carefully designed as an industrial landscape that was efficient, complex, and standardized.

Although the physical landscape demonstrated a burgeoning and flourishing enterprise, the economic catalyst of Haggin's Thoroughbred enterprise in California, and one he transplanted to Kentucky, was his domination of national markets. Haggin initially sold his stock on Rancho Del Paso ideally near the present day Arcade Station. The sales catalogue of 1882 and 1883 listed large numbers of Thoroughbreds, Standardbreds, and

⁵³ Highly, "Race Horses on the Rancho del Paso," 4; Burke, "Pastime of Millions," (February 1946): 12.

⁵⁴ James R. Cowan, *History of the Arcade School District, 1885 – 1960* (History Committee, California: California Retired Teachers Association, Division V, 1990): 9 - 12.

work horses for sale.⁵⁵ For the next four years Haggin continued to sell hundreds of these horses in Sacramento and San Francisco but prices were dismal. In 1884 Rancho del Paso sold a total of 142 horses for a marginal \$22,000. The following year, six thoroughbreds brought only \$920, and Haggin found the prices for his prized commodities lower than he could bear.⁵⁶ Unwilling to waste his investment in pedigree bloodstock, he withdrew the remaining animals from the regional sale rings and began to reassess his rancho's relationship to local markets.

Beginning in the late 1880s and throughout the 1890s Haggin was among a handful of pedigree horse owners who took advantage of the railroad and shipped their fancy horses to the nation's largest money market, New York.⁵⁷ Products from Rancho del Paso were at a distinct disadvantage among Haggin and his competitors as his horses had to come the farthest distance. Haggin, therefore, created a private transportation system unlike any of the time. He used every available instrument, including rail yards

⁵⁵ *Golden Notes*, Volume 15, No. 5 (October 1969): 9; "Thoroughbreds of the Rancho Del Paso Stud : the property of J.B. Haggin, San Francisco, Cal." Rancho del Paso Sale Catalogue (1882) at Bancroft Library, University of California Berkeley, California.

⁵⁶ Between 1884 and 1888, he sold large numbers of trotters, pacers, and racers in California, but they did not come close to the later sales in total volume and sale prices. The following year, Haggin moved the sales to the railroad stables in San Francisco. "Thoroughbred mares, property of J.B. Haggin, Esq., Rancho del Paso : to be sold at public auction, Friday, Nov. 23 1888 at 11 a.m. at railroad stables, cor. Turk and Steiner Sts," Rancho del Paso Sale Catalogue (1888; 1889; 1890) at Bancroft Library, University of California Berkeley, California; "Catalogue of thoroughbreds, stallions and brood mares ..." (1891) Rancho del Paso Sale Catalogue (1882) at Bancroft Library, University of California Berkeley, California; "Catalogue of thoroughbred horses : yearlings, two-year-olds, etc. bred at Rancho del Paso, property of J.B. Haggin," Rancho del Paso Sale Catalogue (1895) at Bancroft Library, University of California Berkeley, California; Highly, "Race Horses on the Rancho del Paso," 9; *Sacramento Daily Record-Union*, Advertisement, (6 April 1885); Parsons, "The Irish Khan and His Empire: James Ben Ali Haggin and His Associates," 69. "Colts at Open Auction," *San Francisco Call* (18 December 1895): 11; "Poor Prices for Colts," *San Francisco Call* (19 December 1895): 5.

⁵⁷ Haggin, of course, was not the only breeder who traveled vast distances to participate in the northeast market. Other prominent breeders began to do so as well. Kentucky Day, for example, first commenced on May 14, 1889 and exhibited Daniel Swigert and Leslie Combs's investments. See "Yearling Sales," *Daily Racing Form* (31 May 1898); Wills, *The History of Belle Meade*, 232-233.

and waiting stations constructed on Rancho del Paso, to provide speedy and efficient transit, but he also owed much to the specially designed freight cars that could overcome obstacles of travel and break new grounds in distant markets. Lined in leather and containing rubber planks, these freight cars contained water and feed troughs specifically designed for the safety and comfort of sixteen Thoroughbreds. Assigned to each railcar was a corps of employees, including a trainer, veterinarian, and grooms who lived in the quarters with their charges.⁵⁸ Shipping Thoroughbreds to New York in such a manner, however, was expensive; he paid at least a hundred dollars per horse.⁵⁹ He justified the costs and risks of such extravagant train travel by the potential profits from such a fancy animal.

Haggin's participation in distant Thoroughbred auctions created a situation ripe for larger payoffs, in large part, because he sent enough volume to consistently secure respectable prices for his horses. The inaugural sale of Rancho del Paso Thoroughbreds in New York underlined how the California breeder initially reaped the benefits of distant markets and distant customers. His sixty-four yearlings showcased in 1889 brought more than \$112,000 for an average of \$1,752 each. This high dollar pointed to a phenomenal increase in prices of Haggin's pedigree stock when one considers that at the first Rancho del Paso sale in California five years earlier, the price per horse averaged but \$155.⁶⁰ By 1892 Haggin sold double the number of pedigree thoroughbreds that he had first sent to Saratoga Springs at high prices of \$1,154 each. The following year, just 15 of the 148

⁵⁸ Burke, "Pastime of Millions," (March 1946): 16; Reports of the California Legislature (1891): 101; *Breeder and Sportsman* (20 November 1905).

⁵⁹ "Horses and Their Owners," *New York Times* (5 April 1893): 2.

⁶⁰ Ibid; Highly, "Race Horses on the Rancho del Paso," 10; similar prices the following year. See "Brings Long Prices Under the Hammer," *St. Paul Daily Globe* (17 June 1890).

yearlings from Rancho del Paso netted over \$57,000.⁶¹ One of the fine producers was Maud Hampton, the dam of champions Ban Fox and King Fox. Haggin haggled her from Major B.G. Thomas for \$10,000, what was described as an “absurdly high” price in 1887. Within four years, Maud Hampton produced four yearlings that fetched a combined \$69,000 at New York sales.⁶²

Haggin’s strategy of vast scales, however, appeared to falter in the mid-1890s when prices for Rancho del Paso commodities plummeted. The first rumblings of trouble occurred in 1895. Newspapers reported that low prices forced 53 of the 148 Rancho del Paso yearlings to be pulled from the sale ring and sent back to Sacramento.⁶³ The following year, Haggin’s transportation system was far from successful. “Many of the young horses,” one reporter commented, “were in such wretched condition that no bids of any kind could be obtained for them.”⁶⁴ Yet, Haggin continued to send more and more horses to New York even while advantage continued to turn to the buyer. At the 1897 auction Rancho del Paso sent 130 yearlings to Saratoga Springs; the average price per horse came in at only \$394.⁶⁵ “No one seemed to care to boom the stock,” as one horsemen commented.⁶⁶

⁶¹ “Horses and Their Owners,” *New York Times* (5 April 1893): 2; *The Record Union* (18 May 1893): 1; *Salt Lake Herald* (16 May 1893): 3; *The Record Union* (11 August 1893):4; *The Record Union* (2 June 1893): 1; *St. Paul Globe* (3 June 1893): 5.

⁶² “Mr. Haggin Intends to Bred Only Gilt-Edged Stock,” *Sacramento Daily Record-Union* (30 September 1891).

⁶³ Highly, “Race Horses on the Rancho del Paso,” 10; “Crack Youngsters from Rancho del Paso Bring Good Prices,” *San Francisco Call* (18 December 1895); “Poor Prices for Colts,” *San Francisco Call* (19 December 1895).

⁶⁴ “Low Prices for Yearlings; Little Demand for Rancho del Paso Thoroughbreds,” *New York Times* (17 May 1896): 3; “Did Not Go,” *Sacramento Record-Union* (12 May 1894): 4.

⁶⁵ “Young Racers at Auction,” *New York Times* (15 May 1896): 6; “Haggin Yearlings Sell Low,” *Daily Racing Form* (22 October 1897); “Young Racers at Auction,” *New York Times* (10 June 1899): 4.

⁶⁶ “Low Prices for Yearlings,” *New York Times* (17 May 1896): 3.

When expectations exceed results, wise business practice would be to either cut back the volume of stock output or stop raising Thoroughbreds altogether. But J.B. Haggin operated differently. In 1891 Haggin owned over 300 broodmares; six years later he had 600, and he made plans to expand production thousands of miles away. Just when his operation in central California had almost reached the peak of its industrial production in the midst of falling prices, Haggin proceeded purchased another breeding farm in the heart of Thoroughbred country.

In October of 1897, when Haggin returned to central Kentucky and bought 544 acres along Elkhorn Creek, he returned not only one of the wealthiest men in America, but the largest thoroughbred horse breeder in the world. In California, he had already fashioned what can be considered a forerunner to his Kentucky estate, with all its possibilities and problems. From start to finish, Rancho del Paso adopted industrial means and methods of production. It was based on developing large amounts of pasturage, investing in infrastructure, and greatly increasing the population of animals. What may appear to be a typical stock venture, however, represented an extreme contrast to most commercial animal enterprises. Having recognized the need and desire of imported bloodlines, Haggin assembled a breeding farm and a racing stable of international importance. Within the expansive confines of this 44,000-acre spread near Sacramento was a collection of expensive sires from distant parts of the globe. Although it was commonplace for stock enthusiasts to invest significant amounts of time and money, few, however ambitious, could afford to risk capital so extreme a scale in so little time. Hundreds upon hundreds of prized horses grazed peacefully Haggin's California pastures, representing one of the largest collections of prestigious bloodlines from across

America. The breeding world had the highest regard for Haggin's horses, but such scales, as huge and spectacular as they were, spelled failure.

What motivated Haggin to run simultaneously large-scale horse operations, thousands of miles apart, for nearly a decade? The legendary partnership with Lloyd Tevis played a part. Though Tevis stayed quiet in the press about the ranch and horses, he was nevertheless Haggin's partner at Rancho del Paso. By the late 1890s, this lifelong business relationship was coming to an end, and Haggin was now moving into closer contact with the East Coast operators, and venturing into new regions far beyond California. The decision to purchase the Kentucky farm, in that sense, was a logical step after Haggin's decision to distance himself from the far West. Then, there was the philosophical issue of markets. According to the general view of animal sales, whether it pedigree or common stock, prices would fall and eventually recover, and in the meanwhile those with money could afford to wait out sluggish profits, and then recoup investments. But Haggin never played it safe or small. By expanding aggressively and integrating vertically, he sought to make money at the very point when others folded. His greatest asset then proved to be his financial independence. When his animals sold at dismal prices, as we will see, as others had feared, there was never a remote possibility that Haggin would lose his holdings.

If hard figures demonstrate the Rancho's horse sales were far from successful, how do we account then for his decision in 1897 to purchase yet another breeding farm in Kentucky? Most scholars have come to regard this decision in personal terms. As a triumphant horse breeder and a bridegroom to a Versailles lady, Haggin was returning to his native soil. More significant, however, was the social and financial logic behind his

decision. Haggin would transplant his unique principles of industrial breeding first implemented in central California to central Kentucky. Both of his operations specialized in pedigree Thoroughbreds at massive scale, however fragile and vulnerable. Both shared a high-price, high-volume strategy of bloodstock production, raising an expensive and valuable commodity at dramatic economies. Elmendorf, too, was to become a self-sufficient and important operation, as Haggin was the largest landowner by far in Fayette County. Both California and Kentucky farms produced large crops of specialized yearlings, which Haggin shipped to a common destination in distant markets. Yet, for all the commonalities in Haggin's east coast and west coast operations, the principal difference between the two was notable. Unlike Rancho del Paso, Elmendorf was shaped by a flourishing horse economy and culture that had been long revered in central Kentucky traditions. In these traditions and excellences we find a burgeoning economy in central Kentucky. In the three decades after the Civil War, horse breeding in the Bluegrass had witnessed a renaissance of sorts, as wealthy outsiders moved their breeding farms from New York and New Jersey to Kentucky. By purchasing a farm in the heart of this country, Haggin was joining a long tradition of elite stock fanciers who wanted the prestige and status that the iconic Bluegrass had to offer.

Chapter Four

“Bred in the Bone”: A Bluegrass Kingdom for Haggin’s Horses

When J.B. Haggin purchased Elmendorf Stud on October 22, 1897, the sale garnered little attention in the national press. A reader of bylines in the *New York Times* would have overlooked the news of the sale, which was given a single line in the middle of an article concerning a New Jersey brood mare auction at Morris Park.¹ It remains unknown how much Haggin paid for Elmendorf, but the purchase itself may have gone largely unnoticed because it seemed so obvious for the largest breeder of the finest horseflesh to return to his roots. After all, central Kentucky was a world of lush valleys, fertile soils, and clusters of permanent springs, where Haggin’s Thoroughbreds would roam in luxury, nourished on limestone pastures of this uncommonly rich landscape. “Being a Kentuckian,” they believed, “the love of horses” was “bred in the bone.”²

Strictly speaking, this was true; as Timothy Flint, a famous visitor from the Connecticut Missionary Society, observed in 1832, “A handsome horse is the highest pride of a Kentuckian.”³ And Haggin’s avid pursuit of fancy horses was typical of the elite stock breeder of the Commonwealth. Although pedigree breeding had always attracted people of widely different backgrounds and all classes in the state, the more influential tended to be lawyers, merchants, and other professionals, most of whom

¹ “Brookdale Stud Sale,” *New York Times* (23 October 1897): 4.

² Thomas Nelson Page, *Bred in the Bone* (New York: Scribner, 1904).

³ Timothy Flint, *The history and geography of the Mississippi Valley : to which is appended a condensed physical geography of the Atlantic United States, and the whole American continent* (Cincinnati: E.H. Flint and L.R. Lincoln, 1832): 355.

possessed the money, land, and proclivity to raise and sell blooded stock.⁴ Few substantial breeders were farmers who performed a full day's work in the fields. Rather, the occupation of fine stock breeding appealed to the genteel because of its expense, profit, science, pride, and status.⁵ But Haggin's decision to buy Elmendorf was less about his Kentucky roots and more about his New York connections.

Among the multiple reasons for Haggin's purchase of the 544 acres along Elkhorn Creek, one was paramount; namely, other prominent breeders from the North were also purchasing land in central Kentucky. In the 1880s and 1890s, Haggin was a single player among a number of breeders who were well-established in the Thoroughbred trade and who decided to establish an expensive and extravagant operations where land was considered the richest in America. This collection of enormously wealthy people carved out of the rolling valleys of central Kentucky prominent studs with the manners and trappings of a commercial aristocracy. Though many of them rarely attended their property more than once or twice a year, alongside a smaller class of locals, these breeders helped immortalize the fancy Thoroughbred as an indispensable source of profit and pride for the Bluegrass.

Whether because of his fierce ambition or growing passion for the Thoroughbred, Haggin bred and sold horses in a way no specialized owner in America had ever done. His system of pedigree breeding flowed directly out of his own industrial background. From 1881, when he first purchased a Thoroughbred stallion in California, to 1897, when

⁴ A full accounting of this early group would carry our story astray of its proper objective, which is the arrival of outside breeders in the late nineteenth-century. For more information about the middling and wealthy families of the Tidewater, many of whom help five status and prestige to horse breeding in late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century Kentucky, see T.H. Breen, *Tobacco Culture: The Mentality of the great Tidewater Planters on the Eve of Revolution* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2001).

⁵ Henry Clay.

he returned with his horses to Kentucky, he was driven to own the most expensive of racehorses and to attain the largest economies of scales. His aggressive pursuit of industrial-style breeding was coupled with an instinctive migration toward the physical landscape which would provide a home for his equine ambition.

For two decades the California and Kentucky studs showed what a determined Haggin could do with massive capital. Indeed, Rancho del Paso and Elmendorf were founded on a seemingly simple objective: to acquire and breed the finest horses in the world. Haggin's breeding rationale in Kentucky, like in California, was largely predicated on twin principles: famous, often imported, bloodlines, combined with large economies of scale. This philosophy worked according to a carefully conceived system modeled after concepts he successfully established within other areas of his business empire. By applying an industrial logic of expansion to his pedigree operation, J.B. Haggin could boast of owning the two largest studs in the world, both of which produced equally fast and equally famous racehorses, although they certainly differed in details.

Yet, for all the commonalities in Haggin's east coast and west coast operations, one of the principal differences between the two studs was notable. Unlike Rancho del Paso, Elmendorf was owned by Haggin alone. And this made a tremendous difference. A small portfolio of family letters between Louie Lee Haggin, a grandson, and Haggin himself revealed a wholly different perspective to the significance of family at Elmendorf. Louie Haggin lived at the Kentucky farm, and the grandson, it would seem, remained wholly dependent on the grandfather for his livelihood. In these letters between the grandson and grandfather, we find a personal, more private side of the owner, not in the way contemporaries saw "the Haggin," but the way his family viewed him, and a

more complicated picture of an operation, not in the extreme example of acquisition and accumulation, but the issues of people and personalities.

* * * *

In 1891 Daniel Swigert put up his famous stud farm, Elmendorf, for sale.⁶ Here, one turf writer declared, "There is not a better stud farm in America."⁷ Within his stables, twenty-six mares and four stallions descended from Lexington, the most successful sire in turf history.⁸ And though Swigert struggled as a businessman, he made his way as a

⁶ The land was named Elmendorf for his wife's family. Although Swigert came from a relatively prosperous family in central Kentucky, nothing he ever did had a greater influence on his life than marrying Annette Magdalene Brodhead. At eighteen years of age Swigert married into one of the wealthiest families in Kentucky, and accepted the management position of the renowned stock estate, Woodburn Farm. He served as R.A. Alexander's superintendent for nearly three decades until he purchased his own farm along the Elkhorn, naming it after his wife's paternal family. For early history of the Swigerts, see Russell Hatter and Gene Burch, *A Walking Tour of Historic Frankfort* (Frankfort: R. Hatter, 2002): 40; L.F. Johnson, *The History of Franklin County Bar, 1786 – 1931* (Frankfort: F.K. Kavanugh, 1931); Anne Goodwill, eds., *The Brodhead family: the story of Captain Daniel Brodhead, his wife Ann Tye, and their descendants, Volume 5*; Bowmar, *Giants of the Turf: The Alexanders, The Belmonts, James R. Keene, the Whitneys*, 22-29.

⁷ Swigert had purchased the 544 acres from a New Jersey cotton manufacturer and horse breeder named Milton Sanford, who had spent a quarter of a million trying to improve the land called Preakness for his Kentucky-bred horses. Unfortunately, Sanford's health began to fail and his sold the farm in 1880. "The Passing of Jerome Park," *Outing*, Volume 38 (1901): 514; *New York Times* (28 June 1878): 8; Annual report on the statistics of manufactures ..., Volume 5 By Massachusetts. Dept. of Labor and Industries, Massachusetts. Bureau of Statistics (1890): 36; Edward Hotaling, *They're Off: Horse Racing at Saratoga* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1995): 114-115; "Death of T.J. Nichols," *Lexington Daily Press*, (4 October 1885): 3; *Outing*, Volume 19 (1892): 497; Suchrey, "Legacy of the Land," *The Thoroughbred Record*, 48; Robert Wickliffe Woolley, "Old Kentucky and the Thoroughbred," *Outing*, Volume 36 (September 1900): 649.

⁸ Suchrey, "Legacy of the Land,"; "Status of American Turf," *Outing*, Volume 19, (1892): 477; Connellley, eds., *History of Kentucky*, 437; "Outing for January," *Outing*, Volume 21 (1893): 80; Leigh Gordon Giltner, "Famous Kentucky Stock Farms," *The Olympian*, Volume 2 (December 1903): 525; Giltner, "The Home of the Thoroughbred," *Munsey's Magazine*, Volume 27 (Year): 105-112; Woolley, "Old Kentucky and the Thoroughbred," 649; Hollingsworth, *The Kentucky Thoroughbred*, 75. For contemporary articles of Swigert's sales, see, for example, "D. Swigert's Thorough-breds," *New York Times* (15 May 1884): 8; "Elmendorf's Yearlings," *New York Times* (13 May 1886): 2; "The Elmendorf Yearlings," *New York Times* (5 May 1888): 3; "Horses and

breeder, culling some of the greatest racehorses of the nineteenth century. Four colts won the Kentucky Derby in less than ten years. Elmendorf's sales attracted buyers from across the country. Indeed, one of his most liberal clients was a man with seemingly endless capital and a feverish desire for fancy horses. J.B. Haggin had bought from Daniel Swigert the prized stallions Spendthrift, Firenze, Ben Ali, and his favorite Salvator, and on October 22, 1897 Haggin even bought the farm, where the world's largest Thoroughbred breeder intended to build a new kingdom for his horses.⁹

But what was Elmendorf's attraction for someone like J.B. Haggin who dominated the American Thoroughbred industry late in the nineteenth century? To hear natives and experts explain it, two major features of this uncommonly rich environment produced the world's finest horseflesh: bluegrass pastures and decaying limestone. *Poa of the meadows*, or bluegrass, made "the best pastures by far of any other grasses."¹⁰ This fine-textured perennial endures close grazing without injury and grows best in hot, humid Kentucky summers. Because the rich, waxy fertility of bluegrass can be traced to the small shells and minute crustaceans deposited in the Cincinnati Arch over millennia ago, it is further documented that animals feeding on pastures grown in limestone, dolomite, and shale ingest large amounts of phosphates, calcium, and other minerals, to build

Their Owners," *New York Times* (22 February 1894):6; "Thoroughbred Yearlings Sold," *New York Times* (11 July 1890): 8; "Business Troubles," *New York Times* (28 December 1895): 12.

⁹ Haggin purchased Elmendorf from Cornelius J. Enright who had purchased Elmendorf from Swigert six years earlier. "Will Sell His Stud," *Kentucky Leader*, (Aug 1897); "The Status of the American Turf," *Outing: Sport, Adventure, Travel, Fiction* (Vol. 19, March 1892): 477.

¹⁰ Bluegrass made the commonwealth famous, but the resilient grass was neither peculiar nor distinctive. Its seed originated, as conservationist Aldo Leopold wrote, from "a particular mixture of forces represented by the cow, plow, fire, and axe of a pioneer." Robert Morgan, *Boone: A Biography* (Chapel Hill, N.C.: Algonquin Books of Chapel Hill, 2007): 98; John E. Kleber, *The Kentucky Encyclopedia* (Lexington, Ky: University Press of Kentucky, 1992): 89; Aldo Leopold, *The River of the Mother of God and Other Essays* (Madison, Wis: University of Wisconsin Press, 1991): 183; G.S. Dunbar, "Henry Clay on Bluegrass," *Agricultural History* 51, no. 3 (1977): 520-523.

healthy constitutions.¹¹ James Lane Allen, a popular writer native to the region, described the effect of the fertile valleys and rich soil on the Kentucky thoroughbred as, “The muscular fibre [sic] of the blue-grass animal” drew from the Bluegrass fields, “form and quality and organization: hardness and solidity of bone, strength of tendon, firmness, and elasticity of muscle, power of nerve, and capacity of lung.”¹²

The natural influences—soil, air, and climate—gave the region its reputation and nickname, but the social environment within Kentucky succeeded first in fashioning a distinct economy and culture as prestigious as anywhere in the country. There is, of course, no single profile for this Thoroughbred breeder in the Commonwealth, but in the first half of the nineteenth-century patterns for pedigree stud farms in central Kentucky are reasonably clear. Within the more prominent establishments were breeders whose ancestral legacies left them deep reserves of land, animals, and capital from those who came before them.¹³ Like their ancestors, many constructed pedigree operations that were

¹¹ Nathaniel Southgate Shaler, *The United States of America; A Study of the American Commonwealth, Its Natural Resources, People, Industries, Manufactures, Commerce, and Its Work in Literature, Science, Education, and Self-Government* (New York: D. Appleton and company, 1894): 106; Carolyn Murray-Wooley and Karl B. Raitz, *Rock Fences of the Bluegrass* (Lexington, Ky: University Press of Kentucky, 1992): 51. The origins and development of the Bluegrass soils much discussed by geologists and archaeologists; A. G. Norman, *Advances in Agronomy* (San Diego [etc.]: Academic Press, 1949): 223

¹² James Lane Allen, *The Blue-Grass Region of Kentucky And Other Kentucky Articles* (New York: Harper & Bros, 1899): 8-19.

¹³ Captain Willa Viley, for example, owned one of the greatest racing horses in antebellum Kentucky, Richard Singleton. His sons, John and Warren Viley, continued the family’s successful breeding business, selling yearlings in distant markets, as did his grandson, Breckinridge Viley, a half-century later, on their family estate, Stonewall Farm, in Woodford County. Charles Kerr, eds., *History of Kentucky* (Chicago and New York: American Historical Society, 1922): 57-58. See also the story of Henry Clay’s son and daughter-in-law. Letterbook of Josephine Russell Erwin Clay, in Clay-Russell Family Papers at University of Kentucky Special Collections Library, at University of Kentucky, Lexington, Kentucky; Remini, *Henry Clay: Statesman to the Union*, 473; Henry Clay Simpson, *Josephine Clay: Pioneer Horsewoman of the Bluegrass* (Louisville: Harmony House Publishers, 2005); Louisiana Wood Simpson and Harriett McDonald Holladay, *The Colonel’s Lady: The Lives and Loves of Josephine Russell, an American Heorine and Daughter-in-Law of Henry Clay* (Lexington: S.N., 1981).



Figure 4.1: Inner Bluegrass Region. Courtesy of the Lexington Visitor and Convention Bureau.

diversified; in addition to selectively-bred horses, breeders raised rare collections of Shorthorn bulls, Jersey cattle, Southdown sheep, and Berkshire pigs. Most were not considered “purebred” by later standards, but they represented the high value of imported bloodlines.¹⁴ The more compelling evidence which testified to the dominance of Kentucky horses was the numbers. In 1859 the *Spirit of the Times* reported that 1200 pedigree horses were born in United States, of which “Kentucky alone contributed 450.”¹⁵

The rapid progression of high stock breeding by the mid-nineteenth century can be attributed largely to one breeder, Robert Aitcheson Alexander of Woodburn Farm. In the three decades before the Civil War, Alexander contributed most to the establishment of the pedigree Thoroughbred in Kentucky, although his passion for horses grew out of his experiences across the Atlantic. Having spent his childhood and young adulthood among European wealth and privilege, his European sojourn culminated in the completion of a Cambridge education and in 1849 Alexander returned to his family estate of Woodburn Farm, where he became, for a time, the most famous and popular horse breeder in America.¹⁶

¹⁴ Alexander Keene Richards, for example, one of the richest southerners in the mid-century, brought to his Blue Grass Stud, in Scott County, Kentucky, the first direct importation of distinguished Arabians. Richards inherited a vast fortune from his father’s cotton and sugar interests in the deep South. Scholars often underline Richards’ influence as the foremost patron of famous Swiss-born portraitist Edward Troye. But Richards also traveled through Morocco, Egypt, and as far as Damascus, to purchase stallions and mares celebrated by the Tarabene and Anazeh tribes, which revises scholar Margaret Derry’s stance that the earliest importations of Arabian blood in America took place in the 1880s. John Hervey, *Racing in America: 1665-1865* (New York: The Jockey Club, 1944): 229, 262. On Troye, see Gerald Ackerman, *American Orientalists* (Courbevoie: ACR, 1994): 221-223; Margaret Derry, *Horses in Society: A Story of Animal Breeding and Marketing, 1800 – 1920* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2006).

¹⁵ Quoted in Wall, “Guns and Horses, Money and Myth: How the Bluegrass Became Southern,” 27; John Dizikes, “Revival of Racing at the North,” *Spirit of the Times*, (3 September 1859): 355.

¹⁶ His father, Robert Alexander, a noted bank president, landowner, and legislator in central Kentucky, descended from European wealth and privilege. R.A.’s father worked as Benjamin

Unlike most high-stock breeders, Alexander was not content with breeding fine-blooded horses as a sideline of his diversified farm. He bred single-mindedly for the commercial market by offering greater variety, larger scales, and higher quality than the limited ventures of the past.¹⁷ As the *Turf, Field and Farm* noted, “Mr. Alexander has done more to improve the bloodhorse of America than any other man in this country...he has brought the thoroughbred prominently before the public, and created a demand for him.”¹⁸ Much of this is created to Alexander’s aggressive business approach. He charged hefty fees of \$100 to \$200 to prospective buyers hoping to mate broodmares with his most sought-after stud, Lexington. In 1856 he paid \$15,000 for the blind racehorse. But the gamble paid off. The most successful stud in turf history, Lexington sired over 600 offspring, a third proven race champions, a record five Derby and four Preakness winners.¹⁹ Indeed, after 1864 the sage businessman refused to hire out the prized stud in a

Franklin’s private secretary. When Alexander’s uncle, Sir William Alexander, died in 1842, the young man’s life took a decisive turn. He inherited his uncle’s most valuable coal and iron estates in Scotland, became a British citizen, and emerged as one of the richest men in Europe. William Preston Mangum, *A Kingdom for a Horse: The Legacy of R.A. Alexander and Woodburn Farm* (Louisville: Harmony House Publishers, 1999): 6.

¹⁷ *Spirit of the Times; A Chronicle of the Turf, Agriculture, Field Sports, Lite...* 20 December 1856, 26, 45, 537. He was not a follower of in-and-in breeding, but in-and-out breeding, that is, mating of common stock with animals perpetuated certain good qualities, which he then documented, deliberately and carefully, in journals. A contemporary once described Alexander’s philosophy as: “Knowing what was good, when he found it in other blood than what was represented in his herd, instead of claiming it to be impure he purchased it and incorporated it with what he already had.” Alexander focused on the reproduction of “purely bred” animals whose pedigree, (or “the long list of names” that described and identified the individual’s ancestry,) included “none but good animals.” Alvin Howard Sanders, *Short-horn cattle; a series of historical sketches, memoirs and records of the breed and its development in the United States and Canada* (Chicago: Sanders Publishing Co., 1900): 265.

¹⁸ “Mr. Alexander’s Stable,” *Turf, Field and Farm* (13 January 1866): 24.

¹⁹ The litany of sons and daughters includes, among others, Asteriod, Kentucky, Maiden, Bay Dick, Norfolk, Kingfisher, Belmont, Henry Bassett, Preakness, Tom Bowling, Saxon, Harry O’Fallon, and Star Davis. Alexander sold Norfolk for \$15,001 to Theodore Winters. Wall, “Guns and Horses, Money and Myth: How the Bluegrass Became Southern,” 30-50; Domer, Unpublished Manuscript, at Keeneland Library, Lexington, Kentucky, 9; Lowell Hayes Harrison and James Klotter, *A New History of Kentucky* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1997):

tactical move, highly resented by some, but one that greatly enhanced the ensuing value of the Thoroughbred's bloodlines and Woodburn's sales.²⁰ Stock men from all parts of the United States traveled great distances and paid high prices for Alexander's stock.²¹

But fancy animals were not the only reason for Woodburn's fame; his estate also acquired a reputation as the "foundation for American country gentlemen life was laid," and it had consequences for later generations of substantial breeders.²² Having spent much of his youth in England and Scotland, Alexander was determined to reinvigorate his Kentucky countryside to reflect the park-like pastures he had seen, visited, and enjoyed in Europe.²³ Alexander kept the English style in mind, constructing stables built

137; Dan M. Bowmar, *Giants of the Turf: the Alexanders, the Belmonts, James R. Keene, the Whitneys* (Lexington: The Blood-Horse, 1960): 9.

²⁰ "Correspondence regarding horse breeding, 1856 – 1859," Subseries 4: Horses and Livestock, 1850s – 1867, Robert Spruel Crawford Aitcheson Alexander's Papers, at Kentucky Historical Society, Frankfort, Kentucky; "Notebook," Folder 63, Box 9, Subseries 4: Horses and Livestock, 1850s – 1867, Robert Spruel Crawford Aitcheson Alexander's Papers, at Kentucky Historical Society, Frankfort, Kentucky; "'Ned Forrest,' Breeding Book" Folder 65, Box 9, Subseries 4: Horses and Livestock, 1850s – 1867, Robert Spruel Crawford Aitcheson Alexander's Papers, at Kentucky Historical Society, Frankfort, Kentucky; "Stud Book – 'Osceola' and 'Bob Johnson,'" Folder 66, Subseries 4: Horses and Livestock, 1850s – 1867, Robert Spruel Crawford Aitcheson Alexander's Papers, at Kentucky Historical Society, Frankfort, Kentucky; "Mares that Arrive," Folder 68, Box 10, Subseries 4: Horses and Livestock, 1850s – 1867, Robert Spruel Crawford Aitcheson Alexander's Papers, at Kentucky Historical Society, Frankfort, Kentucky; "Pedigrees – Horses," Wall, "Guns and Horses, Money and Myth: How the Bluegrass Became Southern," 79; Bowmar, *Giants of the Turf: the Alexanders, the Belmonts, James R. Keene, the Whitneys*, 9; Robert Wickliffe Woolley, "The Old Thoroughbred," *Outing* 36: 642.

²¹ *Spirit of the Times; A Chronicle of the Turf, Agriculture, Field Sports, Literature and the Stage*, (21 July 1860, Vol. 30, Iss. 24): 289; *Spirit of the Times* (New York: 11 Aug 1860. Vol. 30, Iss. 27): 326; *Spirit of the Times* (New York: 27 October 1860. Vol. 30, Iss. 38): 461; *Spirit of the Times* (New York: 15 December 1860. Vol. 30, Iss. 45): 545; *Spirit of the Times* (New York: 19 January 1861. Vol. 30, Iss. 50): 605; *Spirit of the Times* (New York: Jan 25, 1861. Vol. 30, Iss. 51): 617; *Spirit of the Times* (New York: 23 February 1861. Vol. 31, Iss. 3): 45; *Spirit of the Times* (New York: Apr 13, 1861. Vol. 31, Iss. 10): 157; *Spirit of the Times* (New York: 20 April 1861. Vol. 31, Iss. 11): 172; *Spirit of the Times* (New York: 4 May 1861. Vol. 31, Iss. 13): 205; *New York Times* 31 August 1860, 5.

²² For quote by Alvin Sanders, *Short-horn Cattle*, 252. For quote of "American country gentlemen," see Carolyn Murray-Wooley and Karl Raitz, *Rock Fences of the Bluegrass*, 80.

²³ As Domer writes, "Based on his careful study of European landscape ideas, Alexander transplanted a developed aesthetic and moral vision that was perfectly suited to the nature of the

of cut stone and distinguished facades, protected by plank fences, and stonewalls, but never at the cost of efficiency.²⁴ He established different departments on Woodburn according to the animal's function, separating thoroughbreds, standardbreds, sheep, and cattle into geographical units for efficient management. As a result, "the business of this vast estate goes on with the regularity of clockwork."²⁵ Still, many acknowledged here, in Alexander's estate, the refined of the distinctive Bluegrass countryside.²⁶ Alvin H. Sanders, well-known agricultural correspondent, wrote, "The far famed Lothians of his native land afford no rural scenes so fair as those presented by the woodland pastures of this 'old Kentucky home.'" ²⁷

By the mid-1860s R.A. Alexander had established such dominance within the Thoroughbred industry that nation saw him as a leading symbol of Bluegrass horseflesh. His contribution to Kentucky's reputation as an aristocratic haven for superior horse breeding was perhaps best surmised three decades later by noted turf writer John H. Wallace: "There have been great enterprises on similar lines before, and there have been even greater ones since, but Mr. Alexander's Woodburn Farm, of Kentucky, may always

Bluegrass and the lofty moral requirements of gentlemen." Domer, Unpublished Manuscript, at Keeneland Library, Lexington, Kentucky, 30.

²⁴ Alexander had removed the traditional split rail worm fences, as historical preservationist Dennis Domer notes, "Because they were unsightly, protected weeds, were prone to rot and represented the home spun vernacular, the opposite of high breeding." Oak planks, what would become another Bluegrass icon, was used for his paddocks, lanes, and pastures. Domer, Unpublished Manuscript, at Keeneland Library, in Lexington, Kentucky, 8.

²⁵ As historical geographer Dennis Domer points out, houses for managers and workers were clustered with buildings for specific animals. Dennis Domer, Unpublished Manuscript, at Keeneland Library, in Lexington, Kentucky, 30. For quote, see *Cincinnatus* (June 1857): 268.

²⁶ Alexander relied on large numbers of slaves to build this distinctive landscape. Although British citizens were prohibited from owning chattel, the master of Woodburn Farm circumvented the question with Kentucky slave codes and leasing agreements, and on the eve of the Civil War he owned an exceptional number of enslaved people, over 117. *Slave Schedule in the County of Woodford*. (17 July 1860): 43-45.

²⁷ For quote by Alvin Sanders, *Short-horn Cattle*, 252. For quote of "American country gentlemen," see Carolyn Murray-Wooley and Karl Raitz, *Rock Fences of the Bluegrass*, 80.

be looked upon as the real pioneer in stock breeding on a large and methodical scale, and without limit as to resources.”²⁸

But Alexander’s attitude towards horse breeding changed dramatically during the Civil War. After Confederate guerillas twice raided Woodburn Farm, stealing and ransoming a number of his fancy horses, R.A. Alexander put his renowned horseflesh for sale in March of 1865.²⁹ “With the unsettled condition of Kentucky having compelled me to remove from thence,” his newspaper advertisement newspaper read, “I now offer at private sale all my horse stock, consisting of Stallions, Brood Mares, horses in training, and young stock.”³⁰ Alexander was not unique in his response to the devastation of Civil War. Physical violence, personal loss, and hard times caused by the dreadful war, disrupted breeding operations, as thievery from both sides struck the distinguished Thoroughbred farms of the Bluegrass. Soldiers desperate for horses robbed Alexander Keene Richards’s plantation with little feeling of remorse. Henry Clay’s estate attracted the attention of infamous John Hunt Morgan, whose hard-riding regiment stole over \$25,000 of pedigree stock.³¹ Yet, the repercussions of this bloody regional conflict were not finished.

While conditions and chaos of war brought destruction in a border state like Kentucky, paradoxically, the Civil War helped reinvigorate the Thoroughbred industry above the Mason Dixon line. Not since the 1820s had New York and New Jersey enjoyed

²⁸ John H. Wallace, *The Horse in America in His Derivation, History and Development*. (New York: J.H. Wallace, 1897): 416.

²⁹ For a full account of the raids at Woodburn Farm, see *Ibid*, 45 – 128.

³⁰ 1865 Advertisement, in Subseries 4: Horses and Livestock, 1850s – 1867, Robert Spruel Crawford Aitcheson Alexander’s Papers, at Kentucky Historical Society, Frankfort, Kentucky. Alexander survived the trials of the “dreadful war,” only to pass away two years later at the age of forty-eight.

³¹ Harvey, *Racing in America*, 344-345.

such prosperity and popularity, as postwar years proved a period of remarkable economic and social progress for Northern horse enthusiasts.³² For several reasons, the emergence of the northern horse breeder in New York and New Jersey after the Civil War dovetails with our story of Thoroughbred breeders in Kentucky in the late nineteenth-century. First, we find prime examples of elite breeders who briefly established a virtual monopoly over racing interests, building a series of opulent and extravagant tracks in northern states, and thereby challenging the South's mid-century supremacy over the sporting side of the Thoroughbred industry.³³ These tracks drew breeders, owners, and enthusiasts from great distances and dazzled them not only with an elaborate clubhouse, but also luxurious ballrooms, dining rooms, gambling houses, and art galleries.³⁴ Second, these changes on the front sides of the turf seemed to confirm a shift in northern supremacy as a distinctive group of Thoroughbred breeders who exerted a powerful influence over the whole of America's horse industry.³⁵ Like breeders in Kentucky, people of vastly different

³² Though various reasons helped explain the waning interest of Thoroughbred racing and breeding in the North—low attendance, poor track management, sectional tensions—perhaps the most influential factor was the political and social assaults on gambling. Steven A. Riess, *City Games: The Evolution of American Urban Society and the Rise of Sports* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1989).

³³ John Morrissey first established thriving races at Saratoga in 1863; Leonard W. Jerome devised the luxurious Jerome Park in 1866; In 1879, Civil War entrepreneur, William Engeman, built the Brighton Beach racetrack at the same time that Pierre Lorillard established Sheepshead Bay at nearby Coney Island. Three years later, his brother, George Lorillard, led a syndicate to rebuild and reopen Monmouth Park, near Long Branch, New Jersey, in 1882. But there were also challenges further west. In the 1870s western racing became a well-established institution, thanks in part to the opening of San Francisco Bay's District track, followed by Washington Park, a Chicago track opened in 1884, considered one of the richest races in America. John Dizikes, *Yankee Doodle Dandy: The Life and Times of Tod Sloan* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000): 20; Dale A. Somers, *The Rise of Sports in New Orleans*, (2002): 103-106; John Sterngass, *First Resorts: Pursuing Pleasure at Saratoga Springs, Newport & Coney Island* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001).

³⁴ Case in point was Saratoga, where attendance swelled to over ten thousand people a day. See Sterngass, *First Resorts*, 148.

³⁵ One wonders about the presence and proliferation of middle class breeders. No complete study of the fluidity of ownership among America's thoroughbred owners. In Britain, for example,

circumstances bred and owned pedigree horses throughout the nineteenth, and well into the subsequent century. They differed in most respects save one, and this one exception was critical and powerful to the development of the national industry.³⁶ That is, their membership in the American Jockey Club. By the 1890s, this organization, centered in New York City, exercised considerable authority, controlling over 300 active tracks across the nation, establishing new classifications, arranging meets, licensing jockeys and trainers, and publishing the American Stud Book, the only accepted listing of Thoroughbreds by the late nineteenth century.³⁷ Finally, as racing regained popularity in the North, several of these northern breeders designed stud farms in the countryside of New York and New Jersey which strove to create an atmosphere of wealth and privilege. These operations, with their extravagant mansions, stables, and tracks, helped expand and

historian Mike Huggins argues that during the interwar years, between 1919 and 1939, the bulk of racehorse owners were middle-class. Mike Huggins, *Horseracing and the British, 1919-1939* (Manchester, U.K.: Manchester University Press, 2003): 7, and chapter 7.

³⁶ Some came from what would be considered “old money,” like August Belmont or the Lorillard brothers, while others made theirs in real estate, banks, mining, and other capital ventures, such as Cornelius Vanderbilt or James Keene. A few, John Morrissey, for example, managed to come from working class. W.S. Vosburgh, *Cherry and Black: The Career of Mr. Pierre Lorillard on the Turf* (New York: Printed for P. Lorillard, 1916); Jennifer Beisel, “The American Upper Class and the American Horse Industry from 1865 to 1929,” (Ph.D., Middle Tennessee State University, 2005): 49; Bernard Livingston, *Their Turf: America’s Horse Set & Its Princely Dynasties* (New York: Arbor House, 1973); David Black, *The King of Fifth Avenue: The Fortunes of August Belmont* (New York: Dial Press, 1981); Bowen, *Legacies of the Turf*, 39; T.J. Stiles, *The First Tycoon: The Epic Life of Cornelius Vanderbilt* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2009); William Harding, *John Morrissey: His Life, Battles, and Wrangles* (New York: 1881); Jack Kofoed, *Brandy for Heroes: A Biography of the Honorable John Morrissey* (New York: Dutton, 1938).

³⁷ Although the American Jockey Club, like jockey clubs that appeared in various places and times throughout the nineteenth-century, began largely as a social organization whose membership offered far less status than the older, elite men clubs, by the 1890s the dynamics of the AJC changed. Reiss, *City Games*, 25. Their reform activities ultimately represented both an expansion of the influence and power of elite eastern patrons and a confirmation of it. *Ibid*, 171-187; Wall, “Guns and Horses, Money and Myth: How the Bluegrass Became Southern.”

secure regional horse markets by producing proven champions.³⁸ As historian Maryjean Wall points out, the brothers Lorrillard “so dominated the turf by the latter 1870s that they could hardly avoid racing against each other.”³⁹

Kentucky’s horse breeders faced serious competition from elaborate stud farms in the North. Meanwhile, national perception was festering that portrayed the Commonwealth as a living place of dark lawlessness. Real and perceived, reports of vigilantes, from KKK to bloody feuds to assassinations, reached all areas of the country, and local boosters were concerned.⁴⁰ As scholars have shown, local writers, businessmen, and agriculturists deliberately laid aside the violence and vigilantism in Kentucky which was part of its growing reputation.⁴¹ Anxious to charm and disarm, they pushed to

³⁸ In the 1860s, August Belmont’s Nursery Stud Farm, near Babylon, Long Island, included twenty-seven stalls, a separate bunkhouse for its hands, a trainer’s house, a gristmill, a blacksmith shop, indoor training arena, and one-mile racetrack with its own grandstand. Robert B. Mackay, et al. *Long Island Country Houses and Their Architects* (New York: Society for the Preservation of Long Island Antiquities in association with W.W. Norton & Co., 1997): 1823; “Turf Market Brightens,” *New York Times* (12 April 1913); Beisel, “The American Upper Class and the American Horse Industry from 1865 to 1929.”

³⁹ Among the glamorous improvements made available on Pierre Lorillard’s Rancocas Stud in New Jersey was an enormous crystal palace of seventy thousand square feet so that the foals and yearlings could be exercised in winter months. John Garland, “The Legacy and Fall of Westbrook Farms,” (M.A. Thesis, Hofstra University, 1994): 13-15; Black, *The King of Fifth Avenue*; “Glass palaces and glamour at heart of the Lorillards’ training revolution,” *Independent* (15 January 2001); Wall, “Guns and Horses, Money and Myth: How the Bluegrass Became Southern.” 61, and for quote, 181; “Preakness Stud Farm,” *Turf, Field, and Farm* (21 July 1866): 41; “The Preakness Stud,” *Turf, Field, and Farm* (1 June 1867): 339.

⁴⁰ For more about Kentucky’s reputation as a place of violence, see James C. Klotter, *Kentucky Justice, Southern Honor, and American Manhood: Understanding the Life and Death of Richard Reid* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2003); William Goebel: *The Politics of Wrath* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1977); George Wright, *Racial Violence in Kentucky, 1865-1940: Lynchings, Mob Rule, and “Legal Lynchings,”* (Louisiana State University Press, 1996); Robert M. Ireland, *Little Kingdoms: The Counties of Kentucky, 1850 -1891* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1977); Altina L. Waller, *Feud: Hatfields, McCoys, and Social Change in Appalachia, 1860 – 1900* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1988); Tracy Campbell, *The Politics of Despair: Power and Resistance in the Tobacco Wars* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1993).

⁴¹ Anne Elizabeth Marshall, *Creating a Confederate Kentucky: The Lost Cause and Civil War Memory in a Border State* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2010); Wall, *How Kentucky Became Southern*. David Blight, *Race and Reunion: The Civil War in American*

popularize, and often politicize, the image of Kentucky as part of the “Old South.” The Commonwealth, after all, was the epitome of Bluegrass gentility, they wrote, a land of idyllic relations, plantation-style mansions, mint juleps, steaming burgoo, green pastures, hard bourbon, and colonelships.

But such nostalgia enthralled the wealthiest of horse breeders to the Bluegrass. Beginning in the 1870s, a small but important collection of northerners came to central Kentucky in search of acreage for stud farms. Here, the entrance of Milton Sanford, August Belmont, James Keen, and Lamon Harkness come to mind as pertinent examples of absentee owners who preceded J.B. Haggin, and who built breeding estates at great expense that made themselves, and consequently, the Bluegrass dignified and unique.⁴² Substantial breeders from the area also constructed palatial mansions at exorbitant sums, including B.J. Treacy at Ashland Park Stock Farm, H. Price McGrath at McGrathiana, and General Abe Buford at Bosque Bonita, what *New York Times* once described “as the most princely residence in the blue grass region.”⁴³

At the turn of the twentieth-century, however, more and more joined the swelling ranks of eastern horse breeders in Kentucky, including W.C. Whitney, Perry Belmont, A.H. Morris, and finally, James B. Haggin. Some, naturally, viewed the arrival of these

Memory (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2001): 211. Recent scholars underline that horse industry, among other forces, helped re-forge this Southern identity among Kentuckians. In addition to Maryjean Wall’s recent work, *How Kentucky Became Southern*, see James Christopher Nicholson, “More than just a Horse Race: A Cultural History of the Kentucky Derby,” (Ph.D. diss., University of Kentucky, 2010).

⁴² Nancy Greene, “August Belmont’s Blue Grass Nursery,” *Town and Country* (21 November 1903): 10; quote in R.E. Hughes, eds., *Kentucky the Beautiful* (Chicago: Corbitt Railway Print Co., 1901): 30. Kent Hollingsworth, *Kentucky Thoroughbred* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1985): 67; Nancy Green, “Castleton, A Kentucky Stock Farm,” *Town and Country* (8 October 1904): 16-18. Ken McCarr, *Kentucky Harness Horse* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1978): 44; J. Frazer Smith, *Plantation Houses and Mansions of the Old South* (New York: Dover, 1993): 55; Nancy Greene, “Mr. L.V. Harkness’ Kentucky Stock Farm,” *Town and Country* (28 March 1903): 18 – 20.

⁴³ *Ibid*, 64; “Suicide of Abe Buford,” *New York Times* (10 June 1884).

breeders with suspicion and apprehension. “There has been a severe weeding-out in the breeding ranks of the Old State in the last decade, and few Kentuckians figure prominently,” Robert Wickliffe Woolley complained. “New York’s millionaires are crossing England’s best with the cream of the Bluegrass, and raising the thoroughbred is once more strictly becoming a rich man’s game.” Their presence in Kentucky brought decline. “The old Kentucky breeder is passing; the romantic is dead.”⁴⁴

The shift from local to absentee-owned breeding farms in the late nineteenth-century Kentucky was neither sudden nor complete as Woolley believed, but it was transformative. And J.B. Haggin proved it. His substantial contemporaries, local and absentee, in the early decades of the twentieth-century, most of whom maintained landscapes neatly manicured, constructed miles of first rock fences, and later white-washed fences, and built barns and houses so lavishly, emulated the lifestyle of the aristocratic gentry. But Haggin did so in a more extravagant fashion than any other. His famous stud had no problem conflating tradition and aristocracy with industry, efficiency, and progress—the mantle of the vigorous industry economy that became known as the “New South.”

* * * *

When an *Illustrated Sporting News* reporter from New York visited Kentucky’s famous Elmendorf in December 1903, the stud he encountered was dazzling and unprecedented. Within the Haggin’s stone and brick stables, the reporter noted, represented “the choicest strains of English and American blood, from a stud from which will come future kings and queens of the turf.” Haggin was praised for the horses’

⁴⁴ Woolley, “Old Kentucky and the Thoroughbred,” *Outing*, Sept. 1900.

beauty, temperament, and breeding so sincerely that the New York visitor concluded, “No other thoroughbred breeding farm in America can compare with this in the perfection of its [Elmendorf’s] appointments.” Not even the stud owned by Haggin in California. According to the turf reporter, Haggin’s champion horses in the far West, whose very names carried a potent charge at the tracks, would benefit from his most recent acquisition. “Watercolor, one of the most beautiful thoroughbreds that ever raced, after many victories on the turf has been placed in the stud...this exquisite son of Watercress will be given the benefit of Kentucky air, soil, water and grass.”⁴⁵

Most of Haggin’s horses were “made” horses, or stallions and dams with lineages so fashionable that the progeny made a splendid show of pedigree and performance.⁴⁶ He “selected the very best, taking blood lines and family history as a guide, and allowed none to escape that he thought would be of value to him.”⁴⁷ Horses were also culled, in part, on the basis of their performance on the turf. After their glorious racing days were over, a horse was purchased with the intentions of turning a racing champion into a stallion prospect.

Though this breeding characteristic indicated an animal’s predisposition for size, speed, and soundness, it was the paper lineage which ordained genetic constitution. It was no broad jump for the pedigree to become the instrument for shaping the modern breeding system. This paper record promised power through human control of the Thoroughbred’s evolutionary development. It also illuminated the way to alter results as

⁴⁵ *Illustrated Sports News* No. 31 (12 December 1903): 28.

⁴⁶ Interview with Louis Lee Haggin II, by Mary Jane Gallaher, (7 February 1980) in *Horse Industry in Kentucky Oral History Project*, at Louie B. Nunn Center for Oral History, University of Kentucky, Lexington, Kentucky.

⁴⁷ Burke, “Pastime of Millions,” (March 1946).



Figure 4.2: "Drinking Time," J.B. Haggin's Kentucky Farm. J. Soule Smith, *Art Work of the Blue Grass Region of Kentucky*, 1898: University of Kentucky Rare Books.

opposed to the forced acceptance of the results of natural animal reproduction. Horse breeding founded upon carefully selected and fully documented lineage did not simply signify value and prestige in documented bloodstock, but heralded a means of redefining value and prestige in breeding.

Haggin's search for "new blood, and the best blood, all the time" took his advisors to distant places.⁴⁸ He operated on the belief that excellence in offspring came from the coupling of imported European stallions to American broodmares. The stallion, Watercress, was a pertinent example. Far from the most attractive racehorse on the English turf, the Son of Springfield-Wharfdale was taller and heavier than most of his competitors. It was said that "seeing him coming down through the stretch at full speed, suggests a great, powerful, domineering piece of mechanism, propelled by some unseen power."⁴⁹ Though Watercress captured a few important victories on the British turf, including the Princes of Wales Stakes and Hardwicke Stakes, he was considered only a modestly performing racehorse in England. What Watercress lacked in performance, however, was fully remedied by the performance of his offspring: across the Atlantic, the powerful brown stallion sired Preakness winners, Watervale and Rhine Maiden, and Watercress' more successful son, Waterboy, pushed the sire to fourth place on America's leading list of prolific sires in 1903 and to fifth in 1906. The following year, twenty-five of Watercress's progeny secured over \$100,000 in purse monies.⁵⁰

⁴⁸ Rancho del Paso Sale Catalogue (1897) at Bancroft Library, University of California at Berkeley; "Rancho del Paso," *Sacramento Daily Record Union* (30 September 1891): 5.

⁴⁹ *Outing* Vol. 43 (1903): 363.

⁵⁰ "Watercress Fifth in Sire List," *Daily Racing Form* (15 January 1907); Avalyn Hunter, *American Classic Pedigrees (1914-2002): A Decade-by-Decade Review of Kentucky Derby, Preakness, and Belmont Winners, Plus Kentucky Oaks and Coaching Club American Oaks* (Lexington, Ky: Eclipse Press, 2003): 50-55, 112.

One explanation for the striking dichotomy between Watercress's mediocre performance as a racehorse contrasted with his superiority as a stud lay in the horse's breeder, Haggin.⁵¹ His Watercress, for example, was acquired as a four-year old for the nominal sum of \$2400 from financier and philanthropist, Baron Maurice de Hirsch. The horse was then shipped across the Atlantic, first to the Rancho del Paso stud, and later to the Elmendorf, where he joined the largest collection of imported sires in the world. This early backstory of Watercress' evolution was far from an anomaly in the histories of Haggin's horses. That Watercress was bred and raced in England, then shipped across the Atlantic, demonstrated a key characteristic of the pedigree breeding system that came to define the renowned horse operation at Haggin's Elmendorf Stud.

Many of Elmendorf's finest descended from sires Haggin had already imported from overseas. In the two decades before he came to Kentucky, he invested heavily in a transatlantic trade that was unprecedented in the scope of American Thoroughbred history. He started by successfully shipping valuable stallions from the stables of Ireland and England in the 1880s. Among his first imports were Kylre Daly (1883) and King Ban (1883). More shipments arrived from further south in the 1890s, including Australia, New Zealand, and Argentina. Haggin brought Sir Modred (1885), Darebin (1886), Maxim (1892), and St. Gatien (1894) to his renowned stud in California.⁵²

⁵¹ Before sailing east to Haggin's estate, Watercress had been owned by two well-known members of the British turf. His breeder was Lord Falmouth, who enjoyed considerable success at his Mereworth Castle stud, including sixteen classics between 1863 and 1883. Shortly after his mighty Springfield stallion sired Watercress, Falmouth passed away, and Watercress was sold to Hirsch. Mike Huggins, *Flat Racing and British Society, 1790-1914: A Social and Economic History* (London: Frank Cass, 2000): 50; "Sale of Baron Hirsch's Stud," *The Leeds Mercury* (England) (1 July 1896).

⁵² It was not necessarily a new idea that wealthy breeders import pedigree animals from the other side of the Atlantic Ocean, but until that time very few purchased prized bloodstock on a larger scale. In the late nineteenth-century, pedigree animal importations were inherently



Figure 4.3: Watercress, Album No. 3, Ben Ali Haggin Materials, University of Kentucky.

disproportionate, isolated, and expensive, with horses accounting only for a fraction of this industry. Indeed, during the 1920s Britain, the country considered the leading exporter of European pedigree stock, sold abroad but 150 mares. Huggins, *Flat Racing and British Society, 1790-1914*, 193; Hunter, *American Classic Pedigrees, 1914-2002*, 15, 45, 53, 75, 193.

He also acquired several sons of prominent British families, including the descendants of St. Simeon, Bassetlaw, and Greenan.⁵³ By the time Haggin purchased Elmendorf, he owned the largest band of imported stallions in America—sixteen total—representing hundreds of millions in today’s value.⁵⁴

Importing celebrity stallions was not without its difficulties, however. Overseas bloodlines could well prove both at the same time fashionable and worthless. Haggin paid over \$20,000 for Maxim, a horse that headed the list of winning sires in New Zealand for four years, but after a few short years at stud, the horse died. Dieudonne and Greenan raced superbly in England but performed without note in Kentucky.⁵⁵ This ambition for his horses ultimately led him to take steps which protected and increased the value of his stallions. More often than not, Haggin’s sires were inaccessible to outside mares; by 1910, for example, his four stallions Watercress, Waterboy, Star Ruby, and Goldfinch were strictly private, serving only Elmendorf mares, thereby raising the financial value of their get.⁵⁶

Clearly, the transmission of genetic traits factored largely in the process Haggin considered essential for breeding and marketing. His faith in the value of imported male bloodlines factored largely in the breeding process and paid large dividends over the

⁵³ Charles E Trevathan, *The American Thoroughbred* (New York: Macmillian Co, 1905): 60-61; Hunter, *American Classic Pedigrees (1914-2002)*, 56, 201.

⁵⁴ By 1904 the stallions in Haggin's barn were estimated to be valued at over two million dollars. The Irish sire named Tacitus cost Haggin \$30,000 in 1890, while the stallion Maxim was valued at 10,000 pounds, the largest paid in the British colonies at that time. He was also part-owner of the \$50,000 import Nasturtium. *Union* (19 November 1905): 5; Barbara Austin Highly, “Race Horses on the Rancho del Paso,” *Golden Notes* (October 1969): 2-4; Burke, “Pastime of Millions,”; “Secured the Prize,” *The Record Union* (4 January 1892): 3. “Another Prize,” *The Sacramento Daily Union Record* (23 August 1890): 8; “Dominant Power of American Turf,” *Lexington Herald* (4 October 1903).

⁵⁵ “Horse World,” *Lexington Leader* (October 1902).

⁵⁶ “Seventeen Stallions at Elmendorf,” *Daily Racing Form* (6 March 1910).

years. Sir Modred, for example, the famous New Zealand racer, became the first stallion in American Thoroughbred history to produce the winners of over 200 races in one season. In 1894, he was the nation's leading sire both in runners and monies won, with 47 winners of 208 races and progeny earnings of \$127,000.⁵⁷ By the early 1890s, Haggin had supplanted Sir Modred with other top-class stallions of fashionable bloodlines. In 1894, over 4,000 guineas was paid for Goldfinch, and a decade later the stallion stood seventh on the leading sire list in America, siring a number of important winners, including, among others, Old England, Cunard, and Tradition.⁵⁸ Equally influential was Star Ruby, the English import by Ornament who produced sires in high demand, including Cairngorm, a Preakness Stakes winner.⁵⁹ The extravagant Watercress became one of Haggin's more successful investments, siring a number of star performers, including Watercooler, Nasturium, Watervale, Rhine Maiden, and best of all, Waterboy.⁶⁰ Little wonder Haggin's Thoroughbreds were described as worth "a king's ransom."⁶¹

⁵⁷ It seemed that spring, as reported by the *Breeder and Sportsman*, almost every day a horse by Sir Modred or out of one of his daughters won a race somewhere on the east coast. In 1895 he was off the top ten list, although still high in the stallion rankings, with winners of \$64,435, and in 1896 with progeny earnings of \$52,900. Suffering the infirmities of old age, Haggin put down Sir Modred in May of 1904. *Daily Racing Form*, 4

⁵⁸ Supported by Haggin's huge band of broodmares, he was a useful sire of a number of winners, including Old England (\$20,000, Preakness Stakes), Cunard (\$20,610, Kenner Stakes, later a sire at Idle Hour Stock Farm, making the top 20 in the leading sire's list several times), Tradition (\$40,470, winner of the Gazelle, Mermaid and Brighton Oaks Stakes), Song and Wine (\$24,105, Sheepshead Bay Double Event Part I, Belmont Juvenile Stakes), Sweet Lavender, Killashandra, and a number of others, including Gold Van, a stakes winner at age three, and a winner over jumps at age five. The National Sporting Library: A Research Center for Horse and Field Sports, "Thoroughbred Heritage," <http://www.tbheritage.com/Portraits/SirModred.html> (Accessed January 2011).

⁵⁹ His progeny also went on to win national championships abroad. His son, Rubio, shipped from Elmendorf to England as a yearling, captured the Grand National at Aintree in 1908. *Ibid.*

⁶⁰ Some of the foals in the 1903 season featured the get by the great Kinley Mack, the winner of both the Suburban and Brooklyn handicaps, and other several Futurity winners, which Haggin acquired in 1901. Golden Garter did not possess the class and rank of Haggin's best stallions, but

The American-bred stallions of Haggin's Kentucky operation were likewise an exceptional lot. Several came from the distinguished Kentucky breeder Daniel Swigert, including, among others, Ben Ali and Salvator.⁶² Haggin purchased the champion Longstreet, who made its name with the Dwyers, from General Jackson's Belle Meade Stud in Tennessee.⁶³ A few of Haggin's best sires were of his own making. Of the prized sires shipped from California to Kentucky was Africander, who wore the colors of five different owners, capturing the Belmont Stakes, Suburban Handicap, Saratoga Cup, and Lawrence Realization Stakes, before retiring to Kentucky in the fall of 1905.⁶⁴ When this son of Star Ruby came to Elmendorf, he made a poor show as sire at first. In 1907, six of his twelve foals died. The next year Africander proved himself to be a successful sire when his get of 29 foals were sold in high demand.⁶⁵

among the get of this English import were several winners of \$15,000 and upwards. Golden Maxim, Mechanus, Artvis, Girdle, and Golden Rule. "Sale of Kinley Mack," *New York Times* (12 March 1901); Thomas B. Merry, *The American Thoroughbred* (Los Angeles, California: Commercial Printing House, 1905): 110.

⁶¹ "Horse World," *Lexington Leader* (21 September 1903).

⁶² Remarkable in speed and stamina, Salvator proved himself to be a good, but not great, sire. He got just one exceptional racehorse, Salvable, who won the Futurity of 1903, and one great stallion, George Kessler. Merry, *The American Thoroughbred*, 119.

⁶³ "Turf News: Recent Death of Longstreet," *Lexington Leader* (3 March 1906); "Quits Turf: Hamburg Belle Will Never Race Again," *Lexington Leader* (7 September 1906).

⁶⁴ The Rancho del Paso yearling was one of the few to reach \$100,000 in stakes and prize monies. In the 1903 campaign, he won or placed in 12 of his 15 starts and compiled over \$70,000 in prize money, including the Belmont Stakes, Saratoga Cup, Metropolitan Handicap, and numerous others of America's greatest races in the early 1900s. He was described by racing historian Vosburgh as, "about as perfect an ideal of a Thoroughbred has ever been seen...so beautifully-balanced, not too large nor small, not heavy or light at all." Walter Spencer Vosburgh, *Racing in America, 1866-1921* (New York: Priv. Print., the Jockey club, 1922); Debra Ginsberg, "A Determined Era," in *California Thoroughbred* (June 1999): 34-36; "Africander at Elmendorf," *Lexington Leader* (8 July 1905); The National Sporting Library: A Research Center for Horse and Field Sports, "Thoroughbred Heritage," <http://www.tbheritage.com/Portraits/SirModred.html> (Accessed January 2011).

⁶⁵ Ginsberg, "A Determined Era," 35-36.

Unlike many breeders in the horse industry, Haggin never measured his stable's performance on stallions alone.⁶⁶ Equally striking in pedigree, performance, and progeny were the females. Haggin's studs placed great importance on breeding top-class matrons of fashionable American bloodlines, as he believed that real excellence in horse breeding was achieved when mating this quality of seasoned and untried daughters to imported sires. "I get better results by breeding American mares to imported stallions," he once explained.⁶⁷

This philosophy set Haggin's studs apart from the gendered method of Thoroughbred breeding at the turn of the century. John Madden, one of the more prolific and notable breeders in American turf history, once wrote, "As to breeding, a stallion is 75 percent of the stud. The mare contributes the vitality. Her control of form is slight."⁶⁸ European breeders often emphasized the dam. Such breeding theories confirmed the concerns of one Thoroughbred expert who complained, "Most men are willing to pay a big price for a stallion, without grumbling, but when it comes to purchasing a really good mare, and the daughter of a great producing matron at that, for \$1500 or \$2000, they button up their breeches' pockets and say 'Nay' to the man who has the mare to sell."

Haggin filled his Kentucky stud with great sire-producing mares that were good as could be found in America and that descended from champion stallions. This included a number of females that carried the ancestries of Glencoe and Leamington, two of the

⁶⁶ Merry, *American Thoroughbred*, 9. Merry also cites Belmont, Keene and Camden as breeders who "see the necessity of excellence in both sexes."

⁶⁷ Charles Trevathan, "Why the American Race Horse Deteriorates," *Outing* (1904): 624.

⁶⁸ Kent Hollingsworth, *The Wizard of the Turf: John E. Madden of Hamburg Place* (Published by the author, 1965) 98.

more influential stallions in American turf history.⁶⁹ As significant was the Kentucky-bred, most notably, the daughters of Lexington and Spendthrift. As one reporter pointed out, “Mr. Haggin’s limitless command of money has made it possible for him to buy the richest blooded mares on the market.”⁷⁰

When it came to breeding, those closest to Haggin believed the master of Elmendorf “paid little attention as to what others say in regard to profit.”⁷¹ Indeed, his philosophies of breeding were made more complex when we consider that the pedigree industry at the turn of the twentieth-century was shaped immensely by modern systems of analysis. Like many influential horsemen at the turn of the century, such as August Belmont, Haggin was influenced by Bruce Lowe’s figure system.⁷² The Australian turf researcher and bloodstock agent proposed a new statistical system for organizing and analyzing Thoroughbred breeding late in the nineteenth-century. Lowe observed that horses listed in the General Study Book could be traced to one of fifty mares. He made detailed statistical evaluation of these families, categorizing them by female-tail lines from which they descended and subsequently assigning them based upon the number of winners in each family.⁷³ Although Lowe’s emphasis on superior female lines has been largely discredited by critics who see pedigrees as but a minor element to individual

⁶⁹ The stallion who sired 481 foals in his twenty-two years at stud, and Glenelg, the stallion who dominated the sire list four times in 1884, 1885, 1886, and 1888, which included his descendants Longfellow, the winner of thirteen races and the leading sire of 1891; Hyder Ali, a good racehorse and sire; and Onondaga, the sire of winners in 169 races in 1892 season. Hunter, *American Classic Pedigrees, 1914-2002*, 15, 24; Hervey, *Racing in America*; Merry, *The American Thoroughbred*, 27, 50, 96, 102-103.

⁷⁰ “Status of American Turf,” *Outing*, Volume 19 (1892): 475.

⁷¹ J.B. Haggin to Louis Lee Haggin, (21 March 1914).

⁷² Rebecca Cassidy, *Horse People: Thoroughbred Culture in Lexington and Newmarket* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2007): 38.

⁷³ Steven A. Roman, *Dosage: Pedigree and Performance* (Neenah, WI: Russell Meerdink Co, 2002); Frank J. Mitchell and Steven A. Roman, *Racehorse Breeding Theories* (Neenah, Wis: Russell Meerdink Co, 2004); Keith R Binney, *Horsemen of the First Frontier (1788-1900) and the Serpent's Legacy* (Neutral Bay, N.S.W.: Volcanic Productions, 2005).

selection, the system nevertheless produced generations of breeders committed to the scientific study of animal breeding lines, including J.B. Haggin.⁷⁴ Many seized upon the 1895 posthumous publication of Lowe's *Breeding Racehorses by the Figure System* as justification for their deep and abiding faith in paper genealogies.

The breeding of horses, therefore, became an exercise for Haggin in careful, rational, and systematic management. He hired experts to meticulously trace the lines of blood he offered to sell and he employed secretaries to record and print gold-embossed catalogues, which helped to not only authenticate the animals' ancestries, but to popularize, and thus sell, his Kentucky commodities.⁷⁵ He even contracted Lowe as a bloodstock agent, selecting two outstanding racehorses—Sir Modred, who came from Lowe's No. 17 family, and Darebin, from No. 14 family—for his multimillionaire dollar client.⁷⁶

Like all his businesses, Haggin did it on a large scale. By 1905 the number of Thoroughbreds between Elmendorf and Rancho del Paso was staggering by any standards of the day. Haggin kept well over 1000 pedigree broodmares and 40 stallions between his two operations. Of these, at least 350 grazed the pastures of his Bluegrass estate. And when he sold one part of his empire, Rancho del Paso, in 1905, he still did not relinquish the title of the world's largest Thoroughbred breeder. In 1908, almost 700 horses, including 34 sires, resided on Elmendorf, making it the most extensive establishment in the world.⁷⁷

⁷⁴ Joseph A. Estes, *The Estes Formula for Breeding Stakes Winners* (Neenah, Wis., USA: Russell Meerdink Co, 1999).

⁷⁵ John H. Wallace, in *The Horse in America in His Derivance, History and Development*, 416.

⁷⁶ Binney, *Horsemen of the First Frontier*, 462.

⁷⁷ "Dominant Power of American Turf," *Lexington Herald* (4 October 1900); "Horse World," *Lexington Leader* (October 1902); "Record for Haggin Entry," *New York Times* (3 January 1908).

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That Haggin attempted to raise such expensive and fine Thoroughbreds on such an extensive scale made him a phenomenon. Historically, breeders with few mares and few stallions generally proved more successful than those who attempted large scales, in large part, because of the need for ample pasturage, a fact not lost on the visiting New York reporter from *Illustrated Sporting News*. When he made his tour of Elmendorf in December of 1903, the reporter was quite impressed with Haggin's environmental grandeur and proportion. "While the owner of Green Hills and Elmendorf has gathered to his Kentucky farm nearly three hundred horses, they will not be crowded together, as is sometimes the case at extensive breeding establishments," he wrote, "for the thousands of acres furnish ample pasturage and the brood-mares have a wide range on which to graze at will."⁷⁸

The reporter recognized Haggin's purchase of Bluegrass meadows as pivotal in the making of Haggin's stud. Without vast amounts of grazing pastures, the massive scales of production were for naught, as hundreds of Thoroughbreds required huge tracts of rural countryside for proper development. "In this way," the reporter from *Illustrated Sporting News* noted, "all danger of a lack of success, owing to congestion, will be done

Sale catalogues give impressive numbers of stallions and broodmares at Elmendorf. See Elmendorf Catalogue (1903) at Bancroft Library, University of California Berkeley, California; Elmendorf/Rancho del Paso Sale Catalogue (1905) at Bancroft Library, University of California Berkeley, California; Elmendorf/Rancho del Paso Sale Catalogue (1906) at Bancroft Library, University of California Berkeley, California.

⁷⁸ *Illustrated Sporting News* (12 December 1903).

away with...each mare and foal will have an abundance of room in which to roam and run at will.”⁷⁹

In 1902, Elmendorf Stud had multiplied in acreage such that its numbers staggered the imagination. One local reporter began to speculate, “If Mr. J.B. Haggin keeps on buying Blue Grass land he will have a corner in that commodity after a while.”⁸⁰ Haggin had bought land so fast, the farm manager complained that he had “hardly been able to keep pace with him in the way of tearing down and remodeling to suit the requirements” of his New York owner.⁸¹ By 1908, Elmendorf contained over 700 Thoroughbreds and 8000 acres of Bluegrass meadows, making the estate more than four times the size of any other similar establishment in the region.

But the accumulation of Bluegrass acreage was neither simple nor easy. Haggin discovered rather quickly that acquiring land in central Kentucky was a challenge, in some ways far more difficult than acquiring land in California. This might seem surprising considering the scale of Kern County Land Company and Rancho del Paso, which far surpassed the size of Elmendorf. KCLC encompassed over 1.5 million acres, spreading across the entire western seaboard, while Rancho del Paso covered 44,000 acres in Sacramento County. Though a fraction of the size of Haggin’s holdings in the far West—roughly twelve thousand acres and twelve square miles—Elmendorf proved much more costly per acre. Much of land in the far West cost \$1.45 per acre, while the land lying between Russell Cave Road and Paris Pike came to well over \$100, the equivalence

⁷⁹ Ibid.

⁸⁰ “Horse World,” *Lexington Leader* (October 1902).

⁸¹ Ibid.

today of roughly \$30 per acre to \$2,400.⁸² Unlike KCLC, there were no federal laws in Kentucky that made it possible for Haggin to acquire hundreds of thousands acres at little cost. And unlike Rancho del Paso, which he acquired in one fell swoop, Elmendorf was pieced together much like a quilt, stretched across an eighteen-year period, and pieced together from a variety of former landowners, large and small.

The two studs, however, shared one clear pattern. Both reveal a specific strategy of land ownership based on natural resources. Haggin bought large and small tracts, all contiguous to the original estate and all offering a plentiful source of pasturage and water for the farm's expanding production of pedigree animals. This philosophy was based upon the hard lesson Haggin took from his massive landholdings in the far West. He refused to be caught again in a position of geographic vulnerability. As he once stated, "I wanted nobody who had any interest adversarial to me to come in and demand large sums for rights of way and blackmail my operations."⁸³

Nowhere was this process of industrial consolidation more evident than in the concentration of the heart of Thoroughbred country in the hands of Haggin. Between 1897 and 1908, he acquired Kentucky land tracts small and large by offering considerable amounts of his money for the arable soil, good water, and precious grass adjacent his Bluegrass estate. "My dear Louis," Haggin wrote to his grandson, "My judgment is that \$150 per acre, or even \$200 per acre, would be an extravagant price, but

⁸² My estimate of price per acreage in Kentucky is based upon land deeds as recorded between 1897 and 1908 at Fayette County Courthouse. After 1908 the price paid was not recorded. My estimate of Rancho del Paso is based upon court documents and secondary sources in regards to water and land rights.

⁸³ United States, and James B. Haggin. *Testimony Taken Before the Register and Receiver, of the United States Land Office at Visalia, Cal. United States Vs. James B. Haggin. Investigation As to Desert Land Entry ... Commencing December 3, 1877* (San Francisco: C.H. Street, 1878): 26.

I would rather pay that than not get it.”⁸⁴ Although his neighbors in Fayette County were reluctant to sell their precious land parcels at low prices, a control of natural resources not only provided important advantages for commercial breeding, it also eliminated the potential threat of instability and consequently, retention of money was secondary to the considerations of land acquisition for his stud.

To make land acquisition happen, Haggin’s assistants first personally approached landholders adjacent to his property. Most of these ensuing parcels were purchased from what should be considered some of the leading families of the Bluegrass.⁸⁵ By 1902 Haggin had accumulated over 5,200 acres generally from large landowners for little over \$100 an acre. Locales, in part, made this dramatic growth possible. The work of one resident, in particular, helped Haggin to purchase much of the countryside of northern Fayette County. George H. Whitney was a longtime resident of the community who owned several hundred acres at Melrose Stud. Between 1897 and 1901, Whitney purchased an additional 600 acres in the northeast corner of the county, which he then sold to Haggin. The single tract of 1,240 acres was a major real estate deal for Haggin. Purchasing large parcels of land for pasturage was no easy feat, especially for a fairly low price.

⁸⁴ J.B. Haggin to L.L. Haggin, (10 July 1911).

⁸⁵ All land deeds between 1897 and 1902 located at Fayette County Courthouse, Lexington, Kentucky: C.J. Enright to J.B. Haggin, 544 acres, Deed Book 112 (1 November 1897): 162; Thomas Muir to J.B. Haggin, 614 acres, Deed Book 114 (12 November 1898): 405; George and Ann Muir to J.B. Haggin, 273 acres, Deed Book 117 (7 August 1899): 63; W.M. Kenney to J.B. Haggin, 276 acres, Deed Book 118 (17 October 1899): 225; Alice M. Smith to J.B. Haggin, 149 acres, Deed Book 120 (21 July 1900): 44; George H. Whitney to J.B. Haggin, 1240 acres, Deed book 120 (30 March 1901): 47; A.B. Leach to J.B. Haggin, 152 acres, Deed Book 120 (21 July 1901): 45; Jas Kerr II to J.B. Haggin, 543 acres, Deed Book 123 (21 July 1901): 66; R.R. Early to J.B. Haggin, 567 acres, Deed Book 122 (31 July 1901): 623; David Harp’s to J.B. Haggin, 267 acres, Deed Book 130 (13 December 1902): 162.

Haggin's land holdings, as large as they were, still did not suffice for the stud of his dreams. By 1902, seven and eight colts of "richly bred thoroughbreds" were still being forced to share a single paddock. With an overstocked stud, Haggin proactively pursued the accumulation of land tracts near his estate. Over the next three years Haggin acquired an additional 1,000 acres in three different counties, bringing his total to over 6,000 acres. Many of these properties were much smaller in size than previous acquisitions, averaging only 150 acres, but several owners found there was profit to be made from selling land to Haggin. Recognizing the precarious position of the world's largest Thoroughbred breeder, a few of these tracts cost Haggin \$200 or \$300 per acre.⁸⁶

Of course, not all land purchases came at a high price. Haggin accumulated significantly from attending estate auctions, and bankruptcy proceedings. In 1906, for example, Ella and William Spears Rogers finalized their divorce and sold two tracts of land containing 335 acres, which Haggin purchased at public auction.⁸⁷ When J.H. Tucker's furniture business went bankrupt, the bank foreclosed on his properties. The 70-acre farm along Russell Cave Road went to public auction, and the determined Haggin easily acquired.

After exhausting all possible purchases of land, the subsequent best that could be secured was in the form of leased lands. Haggin added at least 1,500 acres in surrounding counties through contracts. Among those renting their property to Haggin were two heirs of the reputed Woodburn Farm, Mrs. Simms and Mrs. A.J. Alexander, who rejected Haggin's repeated efforts to purchase the land before entering into a lucrative leasing agreement. They were reported to have charged Haggin seven dollars per acre, what is

⁸⁶ Ibid.

⁸⁷ Ella B. Rogers by commissioner to J.B. Haggin, 334 acres, Deed Book 148 (28 November 1906): 12; "J.B. Haggin," *Lexington Leader* (9 June 1906): 8; *Lexington Herald* (10 June 1906).

presumed as a monthly rate, for one of the most famous sections of bluegrass grazing pastures.

What was once 547 acres situated in a northern enclave of Fayette County now stretched over a third of the county, spilling into three adjacent counties. Indeed, by 1908 J.B. Haggin had amassed a landholding in the Bluegrass without precedent in the twentieth-century. He owned over 8,000 acres of the richest soil in central Kentucky, accumulated expeditiously in the same way as the establishment of much of his industrial endeavors.⁸⁸ To many observers, “Mr. J.B. Haggin will, it seems, soon own the entire county of Fayette.”⁸⁹ And he was not content with the amount already accumulated. Haggin continued to purchase, among other properties, over 12,000 acres of rural countryside in northern Fayette County. He also bought huge slices of downtown real

⁸⁸ George Muir to J.B. Haggin, 10 acres, Deed Book 130 (14 May 1903): 560; Clifford Porter’s by Administrator to J.B. Haggin, 18 acres, Deed Book 132 (28 September 1903): 346; Colbert W. & Dennis Mahoney to J.B. Haggin, 17 acres, Deed Book 134 (30 May 1904): 537; E.B. Drake to J.B. Haggin, Deed Book 135 (27 July 1904): 410; George T. Graves to J.B. Haggin, 456 acres, Deed Book 137 (19 December 1904): 65; Sallie L. Wallace to J.B. Haggin, 176 acres, Deed Book 142 (1 November 1905): 32; Henrietta DeLong by Commissioner to J.B. Haggin, 241 acres, Deed Book 142 (13 November 1905): 246; C.B. Nichols to J.B. Haggin, 144 acres, Deed Book 145 (15 June 1906): 328; D.A. Coyle to J.B. Haggin, 96 acres, Deed Book 146 (25 June 1906): 129; Bryant & Rogers to J.B. Haggin, 1.2 acres, Deed Book 147 (26 November 1906): 543; Ella B. Rogers by Commissioner, 334 acres, Deed Book 148 (28 November 1906): 12; Margaret Pryor to J.B. Haggin, 96 acres, Deed Book 148 (24 January 1907): 331; Hannah Boswell to J.B. Haggin, 52 acres, Deed Book 148 (29 January 1907): 367; Crenshaw & Logan to J.B. Haggin, 2.5 acres, Deed Book 153 (26 March 1907): 265; Alexander’s Heirs to J.B. Haggin, 121 acres, Deed Book 149 (6 March 1907): 126; R.R. Early to J.B. Haggin, 471 acres, Deed Book 149 (6 March 1907): 22; Eliza B. Coyle to J.B. Haggin, 57 acres, Deed Book 150 (26 July 1907): 559; Thomas W. Moore to J.B. Haggin, .12 acres, Deed Book 149 (22 March 1907): 177; John Tucker to J.B. Haggin, 70.5 acres, Deed Book 153 (26 March 1908): 194; A.J. Coles to J.B. Haggin, 10 acres, Deed Book 158 (18 February 1909): 567; Estella Carson to J.B. Haggin, 258 acres, Deed Book 158 (19 October 1909): 490; Mars Ford’s Heirs to J.B. Haggin, 155.6 acres, Deed Book 158 (28 October 1909): 549; “Sunnyside to be Sold,” *Lexington Leader* (9 September 1903); “Buying up Fayette,” *Bourbon News* (16 July 1907): 1; *Lexington Herald* (8 October 1905); “Part of Boswell Farm,” *Lexington Leader* (31 January 1907): 1; “Deeds,” *Lexington Leader* (15 March 1907): 12; “More Land,” *Lexington Leader* (13 August 1910): 1; “More Elmendorf Land,” *Lexington Leader* (28 October 1909): 2; “Boswell Passes Away,” *Lexington Leader* (13 August 1910): 1; K.A. Harrison, “The Pride of the Bluegrass,” *The Country Gentlemen* (24 February 1912): 2; Advertisement for the Haggin Sale, *Lexington Herald-Leader* (25 September 1919).

⁸⁹ *Bourbon News* (5 March 1907): 4.

estate, which proved essential for the production of farm subsidies.⁹⁰ What he paid for these holdings after 1910 remains unknown because purchase prices in court records were undisclosed.⁹¹ Haggin may have owned the largest estate in central Kentucky but he was far from a public man. “Mr. Haggin’s representatives in Lexington,” noted one writer, “when appealed to for confirmation or denial of the rumors afloat maintained their usual silence in regard to Mr. Haggin’s business affairs and nothing could be learned from that quarter.”⁹²

This consolidation of land had dramatic consequences for the region. Haggin continued to piece together over 12,000 acres of Kentucky meadows, making it the largest holding in the area. He continued to push deeper and deeper into Fayette County until his engrossment ultimately reshaped the heart of America’s Thoroughbred country. Upon his passing, where a judicious and diverse mixture of people had once lived—large and small, local and absentee, country and city—would now contain mostly a class of commercial elite, primarily absentee. And former landowners would become employees of Elmendorf, passing their remaining years as workers of their former lands, helping to divide the acreage into pasture lands for Haggin’s prized animals.

Only one landholder succeeded in permanently separating Haggin’s vast estate between Russell Cave Road and Paris Pike in northern Fayette County. His name was

⁹⁰ By 1914 Haggin owned two major blocks of commercial real estate, including the streets bounded Main, Short, Limestone, Walnut, Cheapside, and Mill streets, which provided the marketing and distribution centers for Elmendorf’s milk, grain, and feed commodities. *Lexington Leader* (29 December 1911): 1; *Lexington Leader* (30 October 1911): 1; “Haggin and Berryman to Erect 5-Story Main Street Building,” *Lexington Leader* (16 May 1914): 7; “Haggin Interests Purchases Mrs. Clark’s Property,” *Lexington Leader* (31 December 1913): 1; “Big Realty Company Formed By Haggin and Berryman,” *Lexington Leader* (25 May 1914): 1. See also the advertisements for the public auction of Haggin’s urban investments, *Lexington Leader* (4 January 1920): 4.

⁹¹ See Chapter Eight for a full listing of deeds after 1910.

⁹² “Cheapside Hotel Rumors,” *Lexington Leader* (12 June 1904).

John T. Hughes, a son of a prosperous slaveholding family, who made a name as a reputable animal breeder. Hughes owned over 1,700 acres, most of which adjoined Haggin's property about five miles from Lexington. The two neighbors were far from friendly. Over the years they became firmly estranged. In Haggin's words, he never had "any positive intercourse" with Hughes, who kept "getting in the way" of the "ground I wanted."⁹³ Hughes consistently resisted Haggin's efforts to purchase or lease.

At one point Hughes offered his land for \$500 per acre, to which Haggin responded with the complaint that, "I certainly wouldn't begin to pay."⁹⁴ Neighborly relations only worsened over the years. In 1903, Hughes outmaneuvered Haggin for a desirable, 746 acre piece of land bordering Elmendorf, belonging to Governor James McCreary. The situation worsened seven years later when Hughes initiated a court injunction against Haggin to prevent the construction of a sewer on Elkhorn Creek. Hughes fought against the diversion, stating, "Its value would be entirely destroyed and the creek would be rendered a great and continuous nuisance" to himself and his neighbors.⁹⁵

Hughes's story must be carefully considered, however, for three major reasons. First and foremost, he was far from representative than most native landholders. Hughes criticized Haggin and refused his cash advances in part because he was independently wealthy. Upon his passing in 1924 his estate was worth a half-million.⁹⁶ Secondly, Hughes's lifestyle gave evident to the conclusion that Hughes was far from conventional in his actions and ideology. The fact that the prominent landholder left his entire estate to

⁹³ J.B. Haggin to Louis Lee Haggin II (10 July 1911).

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*

⁹⁵ *Lexington Herald* (1 March 1903): 3; "McCreary Disposes of Property," *Richmond Climax* (30 July 1902) 2;

⁹⁶ "Stops a Sewer," *Lexington Leader* (22 November 1910): 3.

Ella Davis, his former slave and mistress of forty years demonstrated his willingness to break with traditions and test the segregated boundaries of Kentucky society.⁹⁷ Finally, when Hughes dismissed Haggin's offers and initiated court action against his improvements, Hughes was neither advocating reform nor attempting to stop the growing presence of outsiders in central Kentucky. Hughes contradicted Haggin's actions only when Haggin's advances threatened Hughes's personal objectives.

That Haggin's concentration of landholding had a dramatic impact on the landholders of Fayette County was perhaps best illustrated by another neighbor, an Irish immigrant named Dennis Mahoney. At first the stonemason was delighted when Haggin began purchasing large amounts of land near him. Mahoney owned a small plot of seventeen acres just 6 miles from Lexington on Russell Cave Road, bordering the famous Elmendorf, with its grand mansion, elaborate stonewalls, and ornamental entranceways, all of which meant a steady supply of work for the Irish stone mason.

Seven years later, however, Mahoney's views of Haggin had changed drastically. The famous horse breeder approached the stonemason several times, wanting to purchase the seventeen acres that adjoined his property on Russell Cave Road. But Mahoney declined. The small homestead was his home place, he reasoned. Haggin, ever the hard-driven man, persisted. In 1904 he finally made an offer the Irish stonemason could not

⁹⁷ The relationship between Hughes and his black servant remained hidden under a segregated veil of a Southern society. According to court evidence, the relationship between Ella Davis and John T. Hughes was born out of slavery. Ella was the slave of Hughes's mother. And in his name Hughes acknowledged his son. But only in his passing did she inherit the colonial home where she served the Hughes family for over fifty years. Robert Henry Hughes, their son, received a farm over two hundred acres. Census, Schedule 2, District no. 2 (12 July 1860): 41; Census, Schedule 1, District no. 3, (1870): 48; *Lexington Herald Leader* (19 August 1924): 1/3; *Lexington Herald Leader* (28 May 1925): 1; *Lexington Herald Leader* (16 December 1929): 1. Robert Hughes's certificate of death lists John Hughes as his father. See Robert Hughes, Certificate of Death, Fayette County, Commonwealth of Kentucky, File No. 14251 (21 June 1935).

afford to refuse. Haggin offered Mahoney a walloping \$1,764 per acre, roughly equivalent to \$36,000 per acre today, and Mahoney accepted with much regret. As he was leaving his small homestead, he was heard to say, “What does a man in my fix want with money?”⁹⁸

Dennis Mahoney’s story served as but one example of how the making of Elmendorf had profound impact on the people of central Kentucky. Mahoney’s seventeen acres represented but a small slice of Haggin’s massive estate, but the stonemason’s response demonstrated how the accumulation of extensive holdings had a tangible effect on people’s lives. As Elmendorf expanded industrially, many faced dramatic changes and difficult decisions, as land mattered economically and emotionally to them. They did so, in large part, because hard cash was not only tempting considerable amounts of cold, hard cash was very difficult to refuse. But Mahoney remained connected to his neighbor, since the addition of land meant more work for the stonemason. He numbered among the “small army” of “factory” employees employed on the place who were engaged in building roads, constructing buildings, and beautifying the grounds with its park-like scenery.

Indeed, this system of large-capital breeding developed in close connection with a larger system of management that, by the turn of the twentieth-century, had begun to define the pedigree horse industry in central Kentucky. As previously noted, Haggin owned the land and the horses but others in the Bluegrass were primarily responsible for managing his estate. As he constructed a symbolic and extravagant landscape intimately

⁹⁸ *Bluegrass Blade* (21 May 1905): 2. For more about Charles Chilton Moore and the *Bluegrass Blade*, see John Sparks, *Kentucky’s Most Hated Man: Charles Chilton Moore and the Bluegrass Blade* (Nicholasville, KY : Wind Publications, 2009). Courthouse records confirm that a certain Dennis and Colbert W. Mahoney sold seventeen acres to Haggin for an undisclosed amount. Colbert W. & Dennis Mahoney to J.B. Haggin, 17 acres, Deed Book 134 (30 May 1904): 537.

tied to the modern logic of industrial farming, he relied upon a hierarchical work system that showed a similar dynamic.⁹⁹ To oversee production of the world's largest stud necessitated systematic management systems, people were employed to supervise various facets of the farm's operations, including specific and essential functions to any such large-scale stud such as veterinary activity, bookkeeping, and thoroughbred production, as well as conduct the farm's everyday operations. People were employed to oversee various departments, including the thoroughbreds, dairy, slaughterhouse, fruit orchards, crops, livestock, blacksmith, veterinary, and bookkeeping, helping conduct the farm's everyday operations. All under the direction of the farm superintendent, Charles Berryman, this managerial class was tied to the segmented nature of the industrial stud farm in various ways.¹⁰⁰

Though the nature of hierarchical work at Elmendorf is riddled with questions, there is one perspective afforded by the correspondence between the grandson and the grandfather to better understand the lines of authority on an industrial breeding farm, especially among family members who lived at Elmendorf and managers who handled its daily work. Indeed, if business and personal was inextricably linked at the Bluegrass stud, it presented a number of problems for the managers of the absentee-owned estate.

* * * *

In 1905 J.B. Haggin gave to his grandson, Louis Lee Haggin, and his bride, Emma Jackson, a wedding gift of a home at Elmendorf. Known as Mt. Brilliant, the big

⁹⁹ Deborah Kay Fitzgerald, *Every Farm a Factory: The Industrial Ideal in American Agriculture* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003): 111-123.

¹⁰⁰ Burke, "Pastime of Millions," (February 1946): 12.

house along the beautiful macadam road of Huffman Mill Pike was over a century old and considered one of the finest homes in the region. Here, the grandson established a pedigree operation that was written to be “same vim and energy that has marked all of his grandfather’s undertakings.”¹⁰¹ Louie Haggin seemed to understand the business of pedigree animal breeding, having taken with almost obsessive interest in fancy chickens and pigs as J.B. Haggin did with horses at the Kentucky estate. The younger Haggin followed Elmendorf’s line, importing animals from across the Atlantic for fancy prices, and within short time, producing systematically at Russell Cave Poultry Yards hundreds of pedigree chickens and pigs.¹⁰² Within a few short years, Louie Haggin had proven himself as a collector of the finest bloodlines and a champion breeder in Kentucky, having won numerous prizes at state fairs and international competitions across the country. But any success the grandson enjoyed he owed almost exclusively to his grandfather’s benevolence.

J.B. Haggin provided Louie Haggin with not only a home but his livelihood. The grandfather provided him with a monthly allowance of four hundred dollars—\$200 for himself, \$100 for his wife, and \$25 per child—to support his family and his lifestyle. But \$4800 a year, a total of \$112,000 in today’s value, was far from enough to support Louie Lee Haggin’s breeding operations. Louie Haggin’s father, Ben Ali Haggin Junior, passed away in 1891 when Louie was but eleven years old. The grandson leaned heavily on his grandfather to support his breeding operations, constantly writing for extra money to purchase animals, build barns, raise crops, and employ people. “I have absolute confidence that I can carry this through in a successful manner and am sincerely hoping

¹⁰¹ “Louis L. Haggin’s Russell Cave Poultry Farm in the Russell Cave Pike is the Finest in the Whole United States,” *Lexington Herald Leader* (17 December 1911): 4/1.

¹⁰² *Bourbon News* (5 January 1909).

that you let me have the money.”¹⁰³ This financial dependence, naturally, proved something of a norm for Haggin’s immediate family.

Far from a harsh figure in their lives, J.B. Haggin routinely made gifts of money, homes, clothes, and cars to his children and grandchildren.¹⁰⁴ Louis Haggin’s younger brother, Ben Ali Haggin Junior, for example, was notoriously inept with his financial affairs but his situation became dire in 1913. The struggling artist had contracted malaria and the disease spread to intestines and spleen. “He thinks he is all right and I suppose he is, but I am very much afraid of the trouble that I spoke to you about,” the grandfather confided.¹⁰⁵ The grandson was not only sick but mired deeply in debt. Haggin offered the young man a place to live and money for debts. Perhaps he deemed it necessary, as such actions would not only protect his grandson but also his own credit, as there always seemed to be confusion owing to the name being the same.¹⁰⁶

But the letters between grandfather and grandson hint at the tender side of Haggin, a view much needed and conspicuously absent from newspaper articles, the farm records, and previous histories of the Kentucky farm. Most know well the difficulties and the longing to say certain things to loved ones, and Haggin seemed no different. At times he was lost on how to deal with his family’s behavior. The elderly financier related his

¹⁰³ Louis Lee Haggin to J.B. Haggin (21 March 1914).

¹⁰⁴ Letters show that he sent small presents of designer handkerchiefs, to large oriental rugs, to fur coats, to tailored suits, to toys for the children. Some of the requests, however, dealt with his daughter and son’s medical conditions; of these Haggin always said yes. See, for example, J.B. Haggin to Louis Lee Haggin concerning the granddaughter Betty’s medical bills, (14 November 1913); J.B. Haggin to Louis Lee Haggin (30 August 1913); E.M. West to Louis Lee Haggin (22 November 1913); E.M. West to Louis Lee Haggin (13 February 1914); J.B. Haggin to Louis Lee Haggin (11 April 1912).

¹⁰⁵ J.B. Haggin to Louis Lee Haggin (20 May 1912).

¹⁰⁶ Louis Lee Haggin to Allen McCulloh, (17 October 1913).

concerns of Ben Ali Haggin, for example, to the elder brother, confiding, “I did not talk to him about it, for I do not think it is for me to broach the subject.”¹⁰⁷

The family depended financially on Haggin but the letters also showed how many of these relatives treated the patriarch of the family with respect and deference. When he paid off the artist’s mounting troubles in New York, Haggin’s daughter-in-law, Faith Haggin, shouldered the burden of her son, writing to her father-in-law, “I am sorry for Ben Ali’s disappointment and sorry to have had to bother you.”¹⁰⁸ Striking is the loving and affectionate memory in which some members of the family remembered him. Louis Lee Haggin II, who was two when his great-grandfather passed away, recalled that his parents described J.B. Haggin as “a wonderful, kind, sweet person.”¹⁰⁹ Indeed, the man dubbed the “Croesus of California” was called “Opa” by his great-grandchildren, showing that the man they knew was regarded as a sage grandfather.¹¹⁰

Deference, naturally, was evident in Louie Haggin’s letters. When it came to matters of Mt. Brilliant, there was always an insistence of need in his letters, but he never demanded money from his grandfather. His letters were carefully crafted to offer an accounting of how the money would be spent, the animals that would be purchased, and the architectural plans that would be constructed, suggesting that securing money from

¹⁰⁷ J.B. Haggin to Louis Lee Haggin (20 May 1912) ; Louis Lee Haggin to E.M. West (29 October 1913). One wonders of Haggin’s thoughts if he had lived to see the demise of his youngest grandson. Newspapers from New York to Kentucky carried reports that Ben Ali was bankrupt. Just a few short years after his grandfather’s passing, the grandson was bankrupt again. That the grandson had gone through over twelve million in less than five years. See, for example, “Ben Ali is Declared Bankrupt,” *Bourbon News* (15 April 1919);

¹⁰⁸ Hotel Schanna. Faith Haggin to J.B. Haggin (20 May 1912)

¹⁰⁹ Interview with Louis Lee Haggin II, by Mary Jane Gallaher, (7 February 1980) in Horse Industry in Kentucky Oral History Project, at Louie B. Nunn Center for Oral History, University of Kentucky, Lexington, Kentucky.

¹¹⁰ J.B. Haggin to Louis Lee Haggin (3 April 1912); Interview with Louis Lee Haggin II, by Mary Jane Gallaher, (7 February 1980) in Horse Industry in Kentucky Oral History Project, at Louie B. Nunn Center for Oral History, University of Kentucky, Lexington, Kentucky.

the grandfather was never a foregone conclusion. More important, there was also a tone of reluctance and humility in Louis Haggin's requests. "I hardly know how to thank you enough for your great generosity in again giving me what I asked for," he wrote to J.B. Haggin in 1914. "It is difficult for me to express my deep appreciation for your gift, and I sincerely hope that it will not be many days before I can thank you personally."¹¹¹

Perhaps he felt the weight of obligation as family, but Louie Haggin clearly felt that Elmendorf lacked proper management and that the New York office needed his opinion. He wrote the New York office numerous times about the conditions at Elmendorf. There was the problem of workers at the estate. "All I know is that if I wish to have any repair work done by plumbers, tinsmiths, or carpenters, I am constantly being informed that the men are in town. It seems to me that as the men are being paid by Elmendorf they should be here," the younger Haggin wrote to the elder Haggin's financial advisor E.M. West. "It seems to me that if it is necessary to have work in town done for Mr. Haggin that it would be cheaper to employ men in town, instead of having the men out here lose the time."¹¹² When Galveston fell and broke its leg, the grandson wrote to his grandfather, "If a little foresight had been used at the Elmendorf office, this would have never happened." He pressed the issue further. "To me this is a typical example of the way things happen down here. It is only a wonder to me that a greater number of accidents do not occur with the gross negligence that exists in all branches of your farm."¹¹³ Little demonstrates the younger Haggin's growing impatience with management than his insinuation of ethical misconduct. He took direct aim at the

¹¹¹ Louis Lee Haggin to J.B. Haggin (2/16/1914).

¹¹² Ibid.

¹¹³ J.B. Haggin to Louis Lee Haggin (27 January 1913).

supervisors when he dictated to West, “I think it most important to have the books audited and for you to know more or less about the farm.”¹¹⁴

The fact that Haggin granted his grandson’s requests for money was perhaps less revealing as much as the fact that he eventually disregarded his advice in regards to Elmendorf ‘s management. A striking example of this difficult relationship took place in the spring of 1912. Haggin had asked his grandson to take a look at his Thoroughbred mares at the Early place, “and give me some idea as to what you think of them, particularly whether they are in foal or not, or any of them, and see that they are properly looked after.” Haggin’s horse advisor, John Mackey, had expressed some concerns about the breeding philosophy of Jim Stinnett, Elmendorf’s Thoroughbred manager. Mackey believed Stinnett needed to be brought under “some control,” Haggin wrote. “Jim is rather bull headed in having his own way, and he certainly has not been a great success in breeding lately.”¹¹⁵

Louis Haggin came to believe he was now in charge of his grandfather’s Thoroughbreds. In his new position, he walked the paddocks and stables at Elmendorf “to see if they [workers] were following instructions...and orders were being (given) out.” Much to his dismay, however, the grandson found the Thoroughbred manager infuriating. “In the first place Jim will never let anyone know the names of the mares, etc., for the simple reason that he is so jealous and afraid of losing his position, thinking, in his narrow-minded way, that it will be necessary to keep him on this account.”¹¹⁶ Louis

¹¹⁴ E.M. West to Louis Lee Haggin (17 November 1913).

¹¹⁵ J.B. Haggin to Louis Lee Haggin (15 May 1912); Louis Lee Haggin to J.B. Haggin (17 May 1912).

¹¹⁶ Louis Lee Haggin to J.B. Haggin (17 May 1912); Louis Lee Haggin to J.B. Haggin (20 May 1912); Louis Lee Haggin to J.B. Haggin (19 May 1912); Louis Lee Haggin to J.B. Haggin (22 May 1912).

Haggin felt that he had good reason to write his grandfather, criticizing the thoroughbred manager and suggesting dismissal. After all, his grandfather had initially given him authority to manage the Thoroughbreds and to even fire workers like Stinnett. Louis Haggin received a letter from his grandfather stating: “I note what you say of Jim Stinnett. If he does not do what is wanted, let him go, and tell Mr. Berryman that is my instructions. I won’t have any man around the place who cannot obey orders.”¹¹⁷

That power was quickly rescinded. To those closest to J.B. Haggin, who advised him for decades in matters of pedigree breeding, evidence that his grandson had overstepped his bounds was made clear in a telegram I.C. Stump sent to Louie Haggin. “As long as Berryman is in charge of management,” the New York advisor wrote the younger Haggin, “you should try to work in harmony with him, which would be better for the Haggin and better for yourself and between for Elmendorf.”¹¹⁸ Stump implored Louis Haggin to “meet difficulty and antagonisms face to face and tell your grievances to no one outside its source.” Possibly feeling betrayed by the comments, Louie Haggin continued to voice criticisms of Berryman to his grandfather. But Haggin had enough. In the winter of 1912, he sent a telegram to that effect, admonishing Louie Haggin to “Let the matter rest.”¹¹⁹ The grandfather made clear the grandson’s place within the hierarchy of the estate. The younger Haggin could pursue his breeding plans at Mt. Brilliant, where he exercised certain influence over its operations, but the farm superintendent, not family, had the complete confidence of the owner.

Louie Haggin grudgingly accepted his grandfather’s order, but the grandson still had doubts about the farm management at Elmendorf, especially their treatment of the

¹¹⁷ Louis Lee Haggin to J.B. Haggin (3 June 1912).

¹¹⁸ I.C. Stump to Louis Lee Haggin (8 June 1912).

¹¹⁹ Louis Lee Haggin to J.B. Haggin (10 January 1913).

black workforce. Earlier that year, Louie Haggin had voiced his criticisms about the decision to use Elmendorf equipment and money to haul black farmworkers to the polls. He minced no words in calling the use of “Roosevelt voters at the Republican convention” an “outrage.” Louie Haggin was not necessarily concerned about workers’ rights. Far from it, he believed the farm superintendent, who was very active in the local party, was taking advantage of his grandfather, and his absence from the farm, to use farm equipment, employees, and wages for political gain. It is unknown if the accusations were true, but the grandson’s criticisms made clear his thoughts about the possibility of black political activity on Elmendorf. As he explained to his grandfather, “I hate to bother you about these affairs but I do believe as you as no politics have on the farm, that it would be a devil around the bush.” He implored J.B. Haggin to take action against management. “If you have not given instructions for transportation in farm wagons, rigs, etc. for colored employees, I urge you to prevent the same by your immediate order.”¹²⁰

Even though conflicts between management and family divided the farm, Louie Haggin was well aware of the critical role that black workers played at Elmendorf. When explaining his selection of managers at Mt. Brilliant to a fellow bird breeder, Haggin noted, “When I first started in the poultry business I had considerable amount of trouble in getting the right kind of a person and was extremely worried about the same.” But quickly the master at Mt. Brilliant learned that his most trusted workers were black. “I took at that time a colored man who had been for years working with horses for us. He knew absolutely nothing about chickens and I was surprised to learn that in very short time he not only became a good judge of birds, but extremely efficient. A little while

¹²⁰ Louis Lee Haggin to J.B. Haggin (4 April 1912); Louis Lee Haggin to J.B. Haggin (25 March 1912).

afterwards I took another colored boy and trained him and I really believe that he is as good a poultry conditioner and feeder as I know of.”¹²¹

Though much about Louie Haggin’s attitudes towards black workers is hidden from our view—in letters he made only few references regarding his “colored” employees—his comments Haggin’s racial perceptions of workers at Elmendorf pointed to larger dynamics at work on his grandfather’s farm. To some degree, Haggin’s thoughts provided a view typical of his time and his class. Rarely were the black workers referred to by names. That he was genuinely surprised in their ability to care for pedigree chickens further underscored his initial prejudices of black workers. But his comments also showed the power of persistent interaction among races. As indicated in the letter, interracial contact altered some of his perceptions and the younger Haggin came to identify some black employees, particularly at Mt. Brilliant, as capable and efficient workers. Indeed, any discussion of this stud farm must trace back to the labors of the employees who made possible such world-class stock on a scale of grand proportions. Although many identified with different ethnicities, races, and backgrounds were employed at Elmendorf, the labor force at Haggin’s Kentucky estate, like many of the breeding farms in the Bluegrass, was segmented by its racial composition. The black workforce was seen as particularly critical to the production of superior horses from the world’s greatest stud. Without these workers the creation and maintenance of his vast stock operation would not be possible. By taking a closer look at the labors of these workers, we can better understand how race and community served as powerful tools in the making of Haggin’s world-famous operation.

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¹²¹ F. Blanchard Jr. to Louis Lee Haggin (9 September 1912).

Chapter Five

“Boy, We Were the Horse”: The Black Workers of Haggin’s Horse Empire

Born to former slaves in Bourbon County in 1881, Frank Keller was nineteen years old when he was hired on Elmendorf Stud. The second oldest of fourteen children, Keller remembered vividly the hard times of these days. Like his parents, he had no choice about working in the fields surrounding his home in Paris, Kentucky. “I never got to go to school,” he once explained. “There weren’t any schools in those days for Negro children, and anyway, I had to work to help feed and clothe my brothers and sisters.” At nine years old, he was cutting wood for fifty cents a week, trying to care for his family. He continued to labor on neighboring farms until he married in 1911 when he and his wife Florence moved from Bourbon County to Fayette County to work for Mr. Haggin. The young black man quickly discovered the work at Elmendorf to be extensive and tiresome. “No running water, no electricity, and no tractors,” Keller labored from daylight until dark, tending the animals, as well as plowing and harvesting crops on the massive estate.¹ Having come from horse people, Keller understood the duties of a world renowned stud. He would later feel the ceaseless pressure of responsibility that burdened the manager. As he later told his grandson, “Boy, we were the horse.”²

¹ “A Brilliant Overseer,” *Lexington Herald* (26 January 1966).

² *Ibid*; Oral History Interview with Frank Jackson, conducted by the author (22 December 2008), in Blacks in Lexington Oral History Project, at Louie B. Nunn Center for Oral History, University of Kentucky, Lexington, Kentucky; “Schedule 1, in the County of Bourbon,” Federal Census (4 June 1880): 57; “Twelfth Census of the United States, Schedule No. 1 Population,” Bourbon County, District No. 7 (14 June 1900): 224; “Thirteenth Census of the United States, Population,” Centerville Precinct, District No. 7 (25 April 1910): 213.



Figure 5.1: "Mt. Brilliant Overseer, Frank Keller, To Retire," Lexington Herald Leader (26 January 1966).

Working for one of the richest men in the world was not a solitary experience for Frank Keller. Family ties ran deep on Haggin's land. For Keller's sisters, the stud became an important source of employment. At least five women in his family—Amanda, Hannah, Eliza, Henrietta, all sisters, and his wife, Florence—at one time worked for the Haggins. For the youngest sister, Henrietta, it was described by a family member as “her first and last job.”³ Still, the oldest brother had a deeper commitment to Elmendorf. For over fifty-five years and three generations, Keller worked the Haggins' lands, eventually retiring as overseer of Mt. Brilliant Farm, the only piece of J.B. Haggin's 12,000 acres that remained in family hands.

Keller's life bore the indelible marks of Haggin's industrial farm, making his story an important one for many reasons. Because few Elmendorf farm records survived, it is difficult to know completely what it meant to labor on Haggin's land and to work with his pedigree animals. To fill its needs between 1897 and 1908, Elmendorf employed an “army” of at least a thousand laborers. when the New York reporter visited Elmendorf nearly six years earlier, he made note of the more vital elements of Haggin's breeding system. “Since the beginning of the establishment of Elmendorf,” he wrote, “the pauper list in Fayette County has been virtually abolished.” According to this outsider, “Every man who wants to find work can find it there.”⁴ But we are left with basic and crucial questions—where they came from, how much they were paid, what skill level was required, how long they stayed, or how they adapted themselves to the structure of Elmendorf. As in so much else of Haggin's life, more attention was given by

³ Oral History Interview with Frank Jackson, conducted by the author (22 December 2008), in Blacks in Lexington Oral History Project, at Louie B. Nunn Center for Oral History, University of Kentucky, Lexington, Kentucky.

⁴ Kentucky Farmer and Breeder, 1903.

contemporary and historical writers to his prized possessions than was given to the everyday people who sustained his farms.

The little evidence we have demonstrates the crucial role African Americans continued to play on the farms, despite their disappearance from the front tracks, including J.B. Haggin's famous horse empire. According to newspapers, oral history, and contemporary literature, many of these workers were fragmented along lines of race and class.⁵ Most found themselves in low wage, labor intensive work with little upward mobility, but not all blacks on Haggin's payroll were powerless. During an era of entrenched racism and Jim Crow laws, largely withholding opportunities from African Americans, a few black workers at Elmendorf came to occupy midlevel management positions, a characteristic of an industrial enterprise, and according to oral history, they used their positions within an increasingly segregated world to protect themselves and fellow black workers.⁶

⁵ Elizabeth Simpson, *Bluegrass Houses and Their Traditions* (Lexington, Ky: Transylvania Press, 1932): 65.

⁶ For background of race relations in late nineteenth-century and early twentieth-century Kentucky, see George C. Wright, *Life Behind a Veil: Blacks in Kentucky, 1890 – 1930* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1981); Marion Brunson Lucas, *A History of Blacks in Kentucky: From Slavery to Segregation, 1760-1891* (Frankfort: Kentucky Historical Society, 2003); and Marion Brunson Lucas and George C. Wright, *A History of Blacks in Kentucky* (Frankfort: Kentucky Historical Society, 1992).

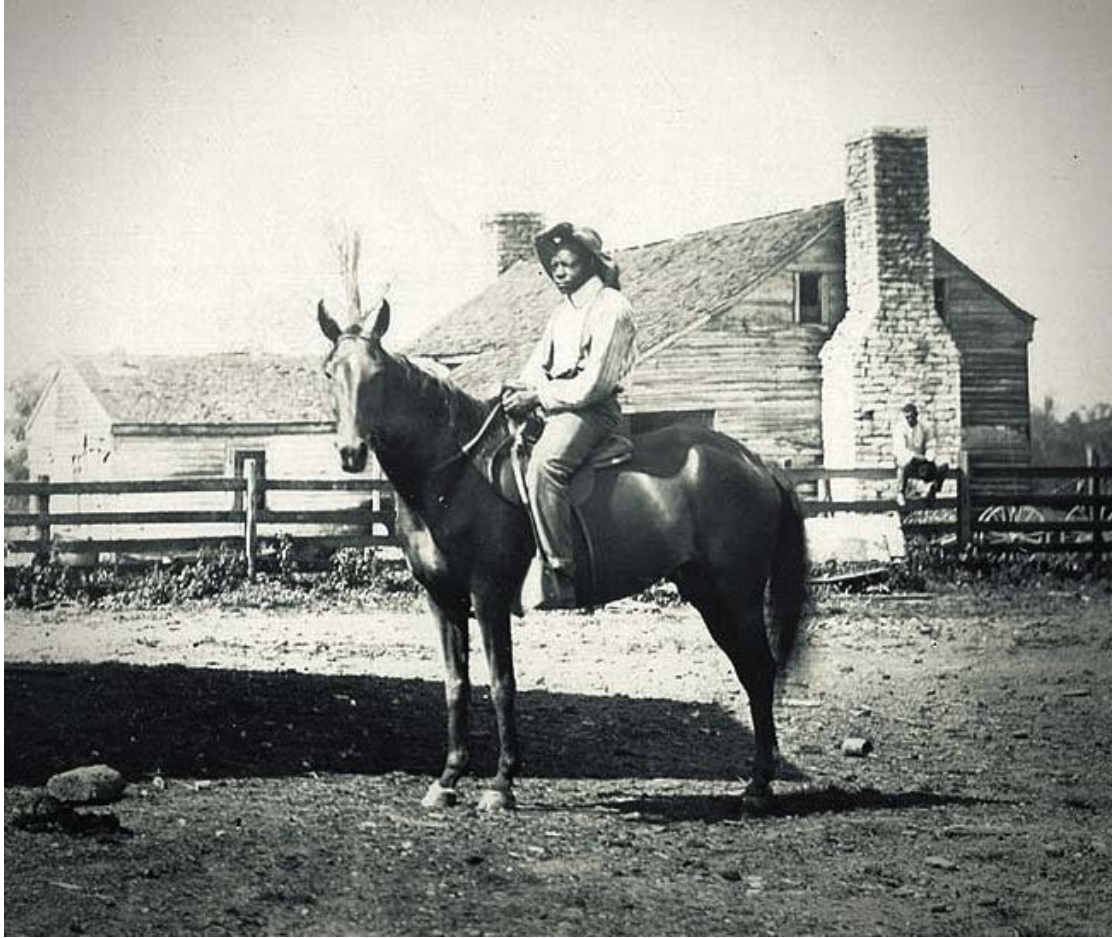


Figure 5.2: “An African American man sitting on a horse.” Elmendorf Farm Photographic Collection, University of Kentucky.

This facet of work relations reflected a larger pattern in the Thoroughbred industry, as many came to see African Americans as a permanent fixture of Bluegrass stud operations. “Those African Americans were good horsemen,” as a son of estate owner once recalled. “I mean, they knew what a horse was thinking.”⁷ Like most owners in central Kentucky, Haggin came to rely on black jockeys, trainers, and laborers, hiring hundreds of black workers when building his estate at Elmendorf. Laboring successfully in his stables, fields, and houses sustaining and expanding a New Yorker’s commercial operations in central Kentucky, many lived far away from the colonial mansion which magnificently crowned the natural land.

In segregated communities which lay adjacent to the massive horse farms, many black workers at Elmendorf who performed much of the day-to-day work managed to create a distinct space for themselves and their families. Some critics have associated these hamlets with the high age of Jim Crow in America. Here were segregated places in central Kentucky that not only united workers but existed in the interest of landowners. But the construction of these communities, especially at the edge of Elmendorf highlighted the “agency,” or control, that black workers exerted to some degree upon their own lives. This is not to imply that Elmendorf’s workers evaded the pressures, tensions, and restrictions of an increasingly segregated society. Quite the contrary. This emphasizes the farm as a space where racial identities collided and interacted, overlapped and intermingled, and segregated from one another. That these workers did not derive their identity from their day jobs alone, as it were in their essential capacities on Haggin’s massive operation, helps explain how race is intimately connected with the growth of

⁷ Interview with Ted Bates, conducted by Kim Lady Smith (15 April 2008) in Horse Industry in Kentucky Oral History Project, at Louie B. Nunn Center for Oral History, University of Kentucky, Lexington, Kentucky.

industrial farming in the Bluegrass. Indeed, these communities arose out of very specific circumstances in central Kentucky. They grew in tandem with the development of not only the world's great stud but the world's greatest Thoroughbred country.

Understanding some of these stories allows us greater insight into the human experience of industrial farming.

* * * *

Born a free black in 1861 on the outskirts of Lexington, “little Ike Murphy” rode some of the most famous horses in the country, including J.B. Haggin's. “I am as proud of my calling as I am of my record,” Murphy once stated, and “I believe my life will be recorded as a success, though the reputation I enjoyed was earned in the stable and the saddle.”⁸ And Haggin would have agreed. According to newspaper accounts, Haggin paid Murphy a living to ride his fancy horses, at least \$15,000 a year, over \$350,000 in contemporary value.⁹

On June 25, 1890, Murphy rode the “race of the century” on a Haggin horse, defeating the white rider, Snapper Garrison, on a “swayback” named Tenny at the Coney Island Jockey Club. To any jockey, it was a joyous celebration to be standing in the winner's circle, amidst voices cheering and corks popping. To a black man in the last decades of the nineteenth-century, it was not only unspeakable; it was unthinkable, as

⁸ Quoted in Maryjean Wall, *How Kentucky Became Southern: A Tale of Outlaws, Horse Thieves, Gamblers and Breeders* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2010): 133-134.

⁹ *Cleveland Gazette* (16 August 1890); David Kenneth Wiggins, *Glory Bound: Black Athletes in a White America* (Syracuse, N.Y.: Syracuse University Press, 1997): 21-33; Edward Hotaling, *The Great Black Jockeys: The Lives and Times of the Men Who Dominated America's First National Sport* (Rocklin, Calif: Forum, 1999): 239 – 276; Wall, *How Kentucky Became Southern*, 111.

Murphy went from a famous jockey to a national celebrity. As scholar Maryjean Wall describes, “His adoring fans would not permit him to climb down from the floral shoe on his own but carried the arrangement, with him still enthroned, to a place where he and other jockeys gave interviews to the newspaper reporters.”¹⁰ That Isaac Murphy had run one of the greatest races of his life, and one of the greatest races in American turf history, was not only a triumph for him, and for Haggin, but for his race. Isaac Murphy, the “Prince of the Jockeys,” the *New York Age* wrote in 1890, demonstrated that the “Afro-American is acquitting himself as ‘a man and a brother.’”¹¹

As scholars have shown, African Americans exposed, in many ways, the complex racialized world of racing and breeding.¹² Since the earliest days in the late eighteenth-century, black southerners, as slaves and free laborers, figured prominently in the riding, rearing, and training of prized horses, laboring as jockeys, trainers, groomsmen, and stable hands.¹³ They were highly visible in local communities, enjoying considerable

¹⁰ Wall, *How Kentucky Became Southern*, 137.

¹¹ “The Prince Of Jockeys. Isaac Murphy Of Kentucky In And Out Of The Saddle,” *New York Age* (5 July 1890): 1; “Isaac Murphy, Colored Jockey,” *New York Sportsman* 15 (January 1883): 33.

¹² Their place within an increasingly segregated society shows a much different perspective of black labor relations in the South’s system of bound labor in the late nineteenth and early twentieth-century. For more about debt peonage and this racialized system of agricultural labor, Pete Daniel’s work on this element is indispensable. See Pete Daniel, *The Shadow of Slavery: Peonage in the South, 1901-1969* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1972).

¹³ For more about the black sportsmen in the horse industry, see Russell Thomas Wigginton, *The Strange Career of the Black Athlete: African Americans and Sports* (Westport, Conn: Praeger, 2006); Michael J. Cozzillio and Robert L. Hayman, *Sports and Inequality* (Durham, N.C.: Carolina Academic Press, 2005); Edward Hotaling, *Wink: The Incredible Life and Epic Journey of Jimmy Winkfield* (New York: McGraw Hill, 2005); Hotaling and Joe Drape, *Black Maestro: The Epic Life of an American Legend* (New York: William Morrow, 2006); Hotaling, *The Great Black Jockeys: The Lives and Times of the Men Who Dominated America’s First National Sport* (Rocklin, California: Prima Publishing, 1999). For more biographical studies of turn-of-the-century black athletes, see Andrew Ritchie, *Major Taylor: The Extraordinary Career of a Champion Bicycle Racer* (Baltimore, Maryland: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996); Geoffrey C. Ward, *Unforgivable Blackness: The Rise and Fall of Jack Johnson* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2004).

amounts of prestige and status. Ed “Brown” Dick, for example, was a well-known black jockey for R.A. Alexander’s Woodburn Farm, who became even more successful as a free man after the war; by 1869 Brown Dick trained two horses destined to win the Kentucky Derby. Raleigh Colston, the horseman for Colonel Phil Chinn in Harrodsburg, Kentucky, was described by a national turf magazine as an “able, negro trainer,” which added, “is always a pleasure to listen to a first-class horseman relate incidents of his exciting career.”¹⁴ Aside from Isaac Murphy, top black jockeys included Shelby “Pike” Barns, Tony Hamilton, Alonzo “Lonnie” Clayton, “Soup” Perkins, Monk Overton, George Anders, Isaac Lewis, Felix Carr, Tom Britton, and Willie Simms, to name a few. By 1891, as one editor for the *New York Age* noted, “Colored men are now regarded in all parts of the country as America’s representative riders...this is handwriting on the wall.”¹⁵

Black riders and black trainers were indicative of a growing number of a newly emergent middle class in the post-war South.¹⁶ Some began to acquire considerable amounts of property that reflected opportunities for upward mobility. “Soup” Perkins, at the age of thirteen, earned \$4,000 a year as a jockey, making it possible for him later on to own two homes in downtown Lexington. William Perkins, one of the more well-known black trainers at the turn of the century, owned a residence in nearby Louisville

¹⁴ “Most Skillful of Colored Trainers,” *Daily Racing Form* (28 April 1908).

¹⁵ *New York Age*, 28 February 1891.

¹⁶ For more on the racial and economic complexity of this time period, among others, see Glenda Elizabeth Gilmore, *Gender and Jim Crow: Women and the Politics of White Supremacy in North Carolina, 1896 – 1920* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina, 1996); Kevin Gaines, *Uplifting the Race: Black Leadership, Politics and Culture in the Twentieth Century* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996); Stephanie Shaw, *What a Woman Out to Be and to Do: Black Professional Women Workers in the Jim Crow Era* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996); William B. Gatewood, *Aristocrats of Color: The Black Elite, 1880 – 1920* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1990).

that was described as being “the most brilliant and richly furnished home” by any of the city’s forty thousand black citizens.¹⁷ Of course, black jockeys enjoyed racial privilege, but they were not impervious to racial discrimination.¹⁸ Black jockeys held their own in Thoroughbred racing, even exceeded in respect to skill in the saddle, but fame was fleeting for this American in an increasingly segregated society.

At the same time some of these individuals rose in fame and wealth late in the nineteenth century, racial segregation took a stronger hold in the pedigreed horse industry. The most visible changes could be seen from the racetracks, as allegiance shifted at the turn of the century to Irish jockeys of the East. Beginning in its final decade, talented riders and trainers found themselves further distanced from the horse economy and culture that they had helped forge. Black jockeys, in particular, were criticized, neglected, and eventually dismissed, forced to seek employment abroad. The loss of such prominent positions within the horse industry reflected the larger forces at work in a divided America.

No one better illustrated the promise and peril of black riders than the most famous of Haggin’s black employees, Isaac Murphy.¹⁹ His was a life at once exceptional

¹⁷ Marion Brunson Lucas, *A History of Blacks in Kentucky: From Slavery to Segregation, 1760-1891* ([Frankfort]: Kentucky Historical Society, 2003): 12; Randolph Hollingsworth, *Lexington, Queen of the Bluegrass* (Charleston, SC: Arcadia, 2004): 150.

¹⁸ For violence against black riders, see the lynching of black jockey John Hathaway in Clark County. “John Hathaway,” *Lexington Leader* (16 July 1904); “Broken,” *Lexington Leader* (1 January 1905).

¹⁹ For evidence of Haggin’s black horsemen on the front of the tracks, see “Gossip of the Turf,” *Daily Racing Form* (24 February 1900); “Death of Isaac Murphy,” *Daily Herald* (19 February 1896); *The San Francisco Call* (1 September 1902). For evidence of Haggin’s white jockeys and trainers on the front of the tracks, see “Highest Paid Jockey in America,” *The Times* (10 November 1901); “Noted Trainer’s Wanton Crime,” *San Francisco Call* (3 April 1902); “Life in Prison Shatters Mind,” *San Francisco Call* (8 January 1903); “Notes of the Turf,” *Daily Racing Form* (20 July 1897); “Notes of the Turf,” *Daily Racing Form* (5 December 1896); “Gossip of the Turf,” *Daily Racing Form* (16 March 1900); “Sporting News,” *Salt Lake Herald* (12 March 1893); “Notes of the Turf,” *Daily Racing Form* (20 July 1897); “Gossip of the Turf,” *Daily*

and yet also common that of almost every other successful black jockey of his time. Indeed, Murphy's life was hardly a fairy tale. On August 27, 1890, less than two months after his famous race abroad *Salvator*, the headlines of a national newspaper read, "A Monmouth Sensation: Isaac Murphy Suspended Until Further Notice." A "popular idol was shattered yesterday," the *New York Times* reported, when "Isaac Murphy, who has always been considered the most gentlemanly as well as the most honest of jockeys," made an "exhibition of himself." The rider, it was rumored, was drenched in liquor. The *Times* reported, "Murphy's disgraceful exhibition was due to overindulgence in champagne," in part, because he partied two days earlier at a clambake with a "gang of politicians," which included, among others, his employer, Haggin.²⁰ As much as some defended the Kentucky jockey, questioning whether Murphy had been drugged or the scapegoat for a major conspiracy involving bookmakers, the majority tittered mercilessly about his lifestyle.²¹ The *New York Sun* observed, "It is no secret that Isaac has ridden many races when his wits were befogged by the insidious juice of the grape."²² His display on Haggin's *Firenze* may have been, as the *Sun* believed, "the most eloquent temperance lesson ever preached to man who is paid \$10,000 to ride twenty or thirty times a year, and who is entrusted [sic] with thousands and thousands of dollars of public money [wagered] on his mounts."²³

Racing Form (24 February 1900); "Hewing to the Line at Belmont Park," *Daily Racing Form* (4 June 1913);

²⁰ "A Monmouth Sensation," *New York Times* (27 August 1890): 3.

²¹ For the bookmaker, see "Demise of Isaac Murphy. Was America's Premier Jockey and Winner of Laurels," *Freeman* (22 February 1896): 7.

²² Maryjean Wall, "Kentucky's Isaac Murphy: A Legacy Interrupted; the Intersection of Race and the Horse Industry in the Bluegrass," (M.A. thesis, University of Kentucky, 2003): 100.

²³ *Ibid*; "Kentucky Leader," *New York Sun* (29 August 1890).

The black press in 1896 recalled the Firenze race as the event that “disgrace broke his heart and really ruined his career.”²⁴ Later that spring, he returned to Louisville’s track aboard Kingman, securing his third and final Kentucky Derby. To date, this ride marked the only win by a black jockey and black owner; Kingman was trained and partly owned by Kentuckian Dudley Allen. But the Murphy who rode Kingman was a far different jockey from the celebrity who had been carried off by adoring fans. Murphy took fewer mounts over the next few years, his popularity as a jockey “on the wane.”²⁵ He even purchased a few horses but none bore him great success. Debts mounted and he was forced to sell off a number of properties in downtown Lexington. At the age of thirty-six Murphy passed away, young and broke.

The “Prince of the Jockey” was not the irresponsible alcoholic Murphy’s critics thought him to be. If alcohol was involved in his death, Murphy’s drinking was symptomatic of the pressures and stress of his occupation. Like most, he tortured his body, with near fasting and dehydration, to make weight. He had reportedly dropped thirty pounds, from 140 to 110, to ride Salvator. That year, Murphy gave repeated interviews to Kentucky newspapers, admitting to suffering stomach problems.²⁶ In horse racing, alcoholism and crash dieting were common denominators, exchangeable among white and black jockeys. But Murphy illustrated, as turf historian Edward Hotaling describes, the “first great victim” of the racing establishment.²⁷ His fall reflected an

²⁴ “Demise of Isaac Murphy. Was America’s Premier Jockey and Winner of Laurels,” *The Freeman* (22 February 1896): 7.

²⁵ Wall, “Kentucky’s Isaac Murphy: A Legacy Interrupted,” 104.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 102-103.

²⁷ Hotaling, *Wink*, 15. Byrnes, Haggin’s trainer for Salvator, commented that he believed that had Murphy rode Salvator, his time would have been two or three seconds faster. See “Roamer and Salvator: Merit of Record-Breaking Performances Considered by an Expert,” *Daily Racing Form*

important moment not only in the making of Haggin's horse empire, but in the making of an increasingly segregated America. In no less than two decades the black rider would virtually disappear from the front of American race tracks. Although their names remained deeply intertwined with the annals of the sport, the prominent turf had become a place for whites, as these jockeys were now riding the best horses.

And Murphy was not alone in illustrating who did and did not belong on Haggin's horses. During the 1890s and 1900s tobacco companies, among other commercial enterprises, began producing collectible cards with graphic representations of the nation's most prominent jockeys. Although it was Isaac Murphy who rode Emperor of Norfolk in the 1888 American Derby, the jockey chosen to represent Haggin's colors of blue and orange in the Allen & Ginter series of promotional cards was considered a more "appropriate" representation. Effeminizing the jockey with delicate smooth features, and full figure, as historian Gregory Bond has contended, this Haggin jockey not only reinforced Victorian notions of a "civilized" gentleman athlete, but also suggested white manhood.²⁸

Little showed this racialized shift more than what became the most famous two minutes in sports, the Kentucky Derby. In the first twenty-eight years of the Derby, black athletes enjoyed great success, winning half of the first sixteen Derbies, and fifteen of the first twenty-eight. But one of the last great black jockeys was Jimmy Winkfield, an extremely capable finisher who captured two consecutive wins at the Kentucky Derby in 1901 and 1902, before he immigrated to Russia the following year where he continued

(7 December 1918): 1; *The San Francisco Call* (25 August 1901); Hery, *Racing in America*, 148.

²⁸ Gregory Bond, "Jim Crow at Play: Race, Manliness, and the Color Line in American Sports, 1876-1916," (Ph.D. diss., University of Wisconsin--Madison, 2008). For more about card collecting, see John Bloom, *A House of Cards: Baseball Card Collecting and Popular Culture* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997).



Figure 5.3: J.B. Haggin #12 - "Racing Colors Of The World" - Allen & Ginter - Series of 50 - (1888).

his brilliant career.²⁹ The next ninety years at the Kentucky Derby testified to the increasing whiteness of America's dirt tracks, as only two black riders—Jess Conley in 1911 and Henry King in 1921—would jockey up and stir up dust on the most famous racetrack in the world.³⁰

Historians and writers suggest many reasons to help explain why black jockeys and trainers, many of whom had Kentucky roots, disappeared from the front sides of America's tracks. Jockeys and trainers made good livings and enjoyed substantial fame, and too much success brought obvious peril. Black writers saw the loss of these horsemen as “steady and systematic,” the result of a “freeze out” by whites against black “heroes of the track.”³¹ The Supreme Court certainly validated the discrimination in *Plessy v. Ferguson* (1896), reinforcing the constitutionality of *de facto* segregation. One scholar points out, in particular, the influential role of wealthy white Northerners. “The Northeastern moguls of the turf who had changed the sport so radically,” Maryjean Wall writes, “brought cultural changes that eventually began to affect Kentucky racing as well. Northeasters were sufficiently powerful to alter the face of the sport from one of mixed races to one of entirely white faces.”³² Of course, the racism that pervaded northern cities and circles was not a regional phenomenon. As the Kentucky Derby became increasingly prominent and popular early in the twentieth-century, as historian Jamie Nicholson writes, “Blacks still played indispensable roles in the lives of racehorses and

²⁹ *Courier Journal* (30 April 1901); Hotaling, *Wink*.

³⁰ Jess Conley, a black rider, finished third in the Kentucky Derby, on a horse owned by Raleigh Colston, while Henry King on Hal Price Headley's Planet in 1921, Marlon St. Julian finished ninth on Curule in 2000. The same could be said of black trainers and owners. As with black jockeys, fewer and fewer black trainers were evident in the sport after 1930. Only three black trainers have been featured in the Kentucky Derby.

³¹ “Whites Force Negro Jockeys into Back Ground Freeze out Colored Boys Who Formerly Were the Heroes of the Track,” *Plaindealer* (28 February 1930): 4.

³² Wall, *How Kentucky Became Southern*, 113.

the sport of racing...but grooms, hotwalkers, and stablehands operated far from the spotlight that would shine even brighter on top athletes, like jockeys.”³³

Clearly, black jockeys like Isaac Murphy had performed important roles, directly and indirectly, that were instrumental to the survival of Haggin’s breeding and racing enterprises, but Murphy was only one of hundreds on the payroll. Elmendorf employed a large number of black workers who had come to the massive estate to labor in the fields and care for the animals. They were part of a larger labor force who represented a motley collection of different races, ethnicities, class, and gender, all laboring under different conditions in this industrial endeavor. Their stories of life and labor on the farm, while far from complete, show nonetheless that the segregation of black workers within the Thoroughbred industry was an uneven and halting process.

* * * *

Frank Keller occupied a curious position in Haggin’s operation. From one perspective his job as overseer marked a defining characteristic of an industrial operation. Keller represented what scholar Alfred Chandler called “the new sub-species of economic man—the salaried manager.”³⁴ This position, among others, was not necessarily a recent development in the general history of business organization, but it did symbolize values of a larger industrial ethic based upon a rational and efficient employment of human resources. The salaried farm manager established the first tier of

³³ Jamie C. Nicholson, “More Than Just a Horse Race: A Cultural History of the Kentucky Derby.” (Ph.D. diss., University of Kentucky, 2010): 56.

³⁴ Alfred Chandler, *The Visible Hand: The Managerial Revolution in American Business* (Cambridge, Mass: Belknap Press, 1977).

an administrative organization which controlled the flow of information, goods, and resources within a multi-unit enterprise of departments and divisions. The farm manager, in an ordinary Elmendorf day, was intimately involved and responsible for supervision of specialized departments, facilitation of both animal and crop production, and the general oversight of all farm operations.

That Frank Keller, a black man of immediate slave heritage, advanced into the ranks of upper management by the mid-1910s with a world famous, fully self-sufficient stud makes his story exceptional. Few blacks were placed in such positions of authority. According to farm records and newspaper articles, the hierarchical system of management was run usually by middle-class, native-born whites.³⁵ More important still was his ability to use his position of authority to help his family and friends. According to Keller's grandson, who was raised by his grandfather and grandmother on Mt. Brilliant Farm, "Daddy Frank" used his position on the Haggin estate to help black citizens of several segregated communities, including Maddoxtown, Jimtown, and Centerville, to find work and to enjoy wages they never before experienced. At times, Keller struggled with being a black manager on Elmendorf stud. He often refused to set conditions for black workers to receive only one paycheck per week. "Boys, he would pay them all on

³⁵ Newspaper articles offer one source for understanding the makeup of white managers. See, for example, "John Mackay Passes Away," *Lexington Leader* (28 April 1913); "C.L. Thomas in the Meat Dept.," *Lexington Leader* (24 May 1910): 8; "Daniel Combs superintendent of Shorthorns," *Lexington Leader* (29 September 1910); "Thomas Haggard Dead," *Lexington Leader* (22 February 1901); "Shot With His Own Gun," *Lexington Herald* (10 October 1909): 1; "J.C. Berryman," *Lexington Leader* (25 August 1907), "Martin O'Neill," *Lexington Leader* (24 January 1910): 8; "Clarence Fleming, Engineer," *Springfield Sun* (23 February 1910); "Elgen E. Price," *Lexington Leader* (20 August 1903); W.C. "Goodloe to Retire," *Lexington Leader* (17 January 1906); "Mr. Voorhies," *Lexington Leader* (28 December 1904); George Belle, "Marriage, Social-Personal," *Lexington Leader* (17 March 1914); "George L. Swann," *Lexington Leader* (28 January 1915): 8 "Manager Named," *Lexington Leader* (22 April 1901): 1; "Herbert H. Wilson," *Lexington Leader* (11 July 1913); "Horse World," *Lexington Herald* (16 August 1904); "Enright: Offers Resignation," *Lexington Leader* (5 February 1904).

Friday,” his grandson remembered, “and by Sunday, they’d come to church and they’re broke.” Keller gave them a “talking-to” and “fussing at them,” but they’d “listen to the sermon and get the money.”³⁶

The manner in which Keller used his position of authority to advance black workers embodied something larger as well. Though the job outlook worsened for these horsemen, many blacks found work as mostly unskilled laborers in the barns and fields of the most exclusive of central Kentucky studs, including Elmendorf. As evidenced by photographs and newspaper articles, many found work in Haggin’s stables as grooms, stable hands, and exercise boys, who tended and trained the owner’s fancy horses, seven days a week.³⁷ Newspaper articles from the 1900s and 1910s suggest these workers made roughly \$35 a month, or \$25 a month including board; one third the rate of some laborers who were white and also worked with pedigree animals on Elmendorf.³⁸ Although responsible for the horse’s care, these duties were nevertheless viewed as somewhat menial, especially compared to the public perception of jockeys and trainers. But handling horses required skill nevertheless. As Tom Harbut, son of the legendary black trainer, Will Harbut, and famed horsemen in his own right, once remarked, “There were millions of dollars’ worth of horses in there and that’s a whole lot of responsibility.”³⁹

³⁶ Oral History Interview with Frank Jackson, conducted by the author (22 December 2008), in Blacks in Lexington Oral History Project, at Louie B. Nunn Center for Oral History, University of Kentucky, Lexington, Kentucky.

³⁷ “Colored Notes,” *Lexington Herald* (20 October 1911): 12; “Colored Notes,” *Lexington Leader* (28 October 1901).

³⁸ M.A. Scovell to J.F. Middleton (2 August 1912) in Kentucky Agricultural Experiment Station Collection, Box 265, Volume. 93, at University of Kentucky Special Collections, University of Kentucky, Lexington, Kentucky.

³⁹ D. Cameron Lawrence, “The Freetown File,” *Kentucky Humanities* (October 2006): 7.



Figure 5.4: Posed photo of a horse. (1900) Elmendorf Farm Photographic Collection, University of Kentucky.

No less important were the difficulties involved. Handling the spirited animals was “a dangerous and rough job,” one worker of a neighboring estate learned.⁴⁰ The role played by black horsemen was reinforced by older cultural patterns, as younger boys were taught the means and methods to handle a yearling by older, seasoned employees. Isaac Murphy learned the tricks of his trade from a slave jockey named William Walker, one of the leading black riders in America, and Eli Jordan, one of the leading black trainers during the 1860s and 1870s. It was certainly not uncommon in central Kentucky that black grooms, trainers, handlers, and exercise boys, working for different employers, were related by family. “See, colored at that time dominated all horses,” recalled Luther W. Figgs, who worked twenty-seven years for James and Foxhall Keene’s Castleton Stud. Another veteran of the turf, Thomas Embry recalled that his great-grandparents to his great uncles, “all of them, they always worked with horses.” To Embry, it was “nothing but black help during that time...African-American were the horse people.”⁴¹

That the “horse people,” in Embry’s words, were mostly African Americans, working almost “everywhere” on the Bluegrass studs was certainly evident on Elmendorf. Most performed demanding, tiring, and dirty work in Haggin’s massive tobacco, hemp, and silage fields. Among the teams were black workers employed to construct fifty-some tobacco barns, some built at a cost of \$35,000.⁴² A great many set,

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ Oral history interview with Thomas P. Embry, conducted by Kim Lady Smith (5 October 2007) in Horse Industry in Kentucky Oral History Project, at Louie B. Nunn Center for Oral History, University of Kentucky, Lexington, Kentucky; Oral history interview with Thomas P. Embry, conducted by Kim Lady Smith (16 November 2007) in Horse Industry in Kentucky Oral History Project, at Louie B. Nunn Center for Oral History, University of Kentucky, Lexington, Kentucky.

⁴² “Work is Begun on 30 Tobacco Barns,” *Winchester News* (5 April 1909); “Big Crop of Tobacco,” *Lexington Leader* (1 February 1909): 1.



Figure 5.5: "Fayette County, Kentucky. Elmendorf Farm. Harvesting bluegrass seed on Elmendorf Farm in Ky." C. Frank Dunn Photographs Collection, University of Kentucky.

hoed, and cut the sticky, grimy stalks of the largest crop of tobacco in the state, well over 500 acres of tobacco after 1910.⁴³ They were also employed to harvest large crops of bluegrass seed, earning in the neighborhood of \$1.50 to \$2.50 per day.⁴⁴ Some worked in the farm's several quarries as stone laborers, where their duties were not without risks. In November 1903, for example, several workers barely avoided death at Haggin's stone quarries when nearly two hundred sticks of dynamite exploded.⁴⁵ They also utilized harvesting machinery, as depicted in photographs, serving as mowers, hayers, pitchers, and stackers related to the large-scale production of pedigree animals.⁴⁶ They also cleaned, mended, and repaired the miles and miles of stone and plank fences.

Oral history shows some degree to which they themselves took particular pride in their duties. Blacks labored in Haggin's mansion, where they swept floors, dusted furniture, produced meals, collected eggs, hung pork, and maintained the physical surroundings with which they had little interaction except for job duties.⁴⁷ Caroline Hayes, a black woman who was described as an "accomplished cook," was in charge of Haggin's kitchen.⁴⁸ Some of the servants lived on the farm, not in their own housing. As

⁴³ "Tobacco Crop Report," *Lexington Leader* (26 June 1910).

⁴⁴ "Laborers Demand Higher Wages," *Bourbon News* (4 June 1912): 1.

⁴⁵ "Close Call," *Lexington Leader* (23 November 1904).

⁴⁶ Bettie L. Kerr, and John Dean Wright, *Lexington, a Century in Photographs* (Lexington, Ky: Lexington-Fayette County Historic Commission, 1984): 51, 69, 166.

⁴⁷ Oral History Interview with Frank Jackson, conducted by the author (22 December 2008), in Blacks in Lexington Oral History Project, at Louie B. Nunn Center for Oral History, University of Kentucky, Lexington, Kentucky..

⁴⁸ "Famous Cook Dead as Result of Accident," *Bourbon News* (27 September 1918): 5



Figure 5.6: "Photo of a Horse," Elmendorf Farm Photographic Collection, University of Kentucky.

one nephew of a black Elmendorf employee remembered, “They took care of it just like it was their own,” which included yelling at the small boy for sliding down the banister at the Haggin mansion.⁴⁹

For these workers, it would be difficult to draw rigid boundary lines on the basis of ethnic and national considerations at Elmendorf, for black workers often labored alongside workers of other nationalities and ethnicities. A number of European immigrants, including Irish, Italian, and German, were employed on Haggin’s stud. This also included a small number of Asian laborers. The *New York Times* reported in 1906 that two Japanese boys, “sons of M. Hayshi of Tokio [sic],” came to Haggin’s Bluegrass estate under specific instructions from their father to learn the method of breeding horses. A cousin followed a few years later.⁵⁰ On the face of it, the Japanese workers demonstrated that labor positions represented a much different place on the stud than most Asian workers in agriculture during a period of extreme prejudice in America, as these three workers occupied positions of management and skill. One helped oversee the development of the poultry department, one of the largest in America, while another Japanese employee served as a veterinarian.⁵¹

But that immigrants employed at Elmendorf could not escape the perceived stereotypes of their origins was quite evident in some farm correspondence. Louie Haggin, the grandson of J.B. Haggin, commented on the dangers of boarding immigrants at problematic boarding houses on the farm. “If you bring a hard working boy and put

⁴⁹ Oral History Interview with Frank Jackson, conducted by the author (22 December 2008), in Blacks in Lexington Oral History Project, at Louie B. Nunn Center for Oral History, University of Kentucky, Lexington, Kentucky.

⁵⁰ “Japanese Expert,” *Lexington Leader* (23 February 1908): 1.

⁵¹ *Ibid*; “Japanese at Elmendorf,” *New York Times* (23 July 1906).

him there,” he wrote to his grandfather, “he will, in a very short time become worthless, and the danger is greater on account of his being from another country.”⁵²

Still, an ethnic immigrant would not have faced the same circumstances as a black worker in the upper South at the turn of the century. Though it may not have been their intentions, an ethnic immigrant would not likely be distinguishable, especially in terms of physical appearance, from another white person. That option was not available to the black employees. Though much is unknown about the day-to-day experiences of these workers, there were clear instances of race prejudice among farm managers. In January 1905, for example, Ned Gorman, the manager in charge of Haggin’s stallions, quit his post after he believed the farm superintendent undercut his authority. Berryman refused to accept the order to fire the unknown black worker, stating, “He saw no occasion for the discharge of any good workman in any department at Elmendorf.” Still, the manager’s actions thereafter served as a counterpoint to the superintendent’s decision to support a black worker at the expense of his white manager. When Gorman learned of Berryman’s reply, the white manager was surprised and furious. And upon receipt of the letter he promptly resigned.⁵³

The racial incident was one of the few articles discussed in the local newspaper about the black workers at Elmendorf; indeed, whether they labored in the stable, mansion, or fields, the only public acknowledgement of their work was often found in “colored” obituaries.⁵⁴ When Sarah Smith passed away in July 1907, for example, her obituary underlined the significance of her position of domesticity on Haggin’s stud.

⁵² Louie Haggin was referring to the dangers of boarding at the Waldorf boarding house where it seemed that “any one that gets to that boarding house thinks more of getting to town than doing his work.” Louis Lee Haggin to J.B. Haggin (6 December 1912).

⁵³ “Racing World,” *Lexington Herald* (15 January 1905): 3.

⁵⁴ “Martin-Richie Wedding,” *Lexington Leader* (18 September 1914): 9.

Smith was the chief baker for the farm superintendent. As such, she affected the essentials of daily life. “The sudden death of this good woman,” the *Lexington Leader* noted, “was a sad blow to friends and neighbors as she was respected by white and colored people.” Smith’s death announcement echoed the importance of family relations on the stud. Smith was found in the bathroom at the superintendent’s home on Elmendorf, “where she and members of her family were employed.”⁵⁵

Even these notices had their limits; the local newspaper often covered the deaths of black employees only if circumstances seemed peculiar. The stories of William Falkner, who died from injuries sustained when he was run over by a mule car, or Ferrel “Son” Smith, who “dropped dead” in Elmendorf’s rock quarry at the age of forty-two, or Shelton Brooks and Al Jones, who came to blows on Elmendorf, the argument reportedly over the merits of Haggin’s horses, highlighted how reporting lent itself to the whims and peculiarities of a particular incident.⁵⁶ Of course, the appeal of violence on Haggin’s estate was not limited to black employees. The paper also reported on the Christmas Day shooting of two white farmers, one of whom was employed as a tobacco tenant on Haggin’s estate, in 1913.⁵⁷ Nevertheless, the reporting of violence was perhaps best illustrated by the death of Gene Morris, another black Elmendorf worker. At the age of thirty, Morris was shot in the abdomen on the eve of his wedding, the license still stuck in

⁵⁵ “Colored Notes,” *Lexington Leader* (30 July 1907); “Dies Suddenly,” *Lexington Leader* (28 July 1907).

⁵⁶ “Murder Charged,” *Lexington Herald* (18 June 1907): 9; “Colored Notes,” *Lexington Leader* (20 October 1911): 12. This reporting of black farm workers was not an isolated event. The newspaper’s printing of racial violence was quite common, offered just a glimpse at the lives of Elmendorf’s black laborers. “Shot with his Own Gun,” *Lexington Leader* (10 October 1909): 1; “Four Shootings Affrays” *Lexington Herald*; “Killed By Car,” *Lexington Leader* (19 August 1910): 9; “Colored Notes,” *Lexington Herald* (30 August 1914); “Dies at Work,” *Lexington Herald* (29 August 1914): 8.

⁵⁷ “JC Bechanan,” *Lexington Leader* (26 December 1913).

his pocket.⁵⁸ Although the local paper had reported the celebration of marriage between and among Elmendorf white workers, Morris was seen as an exceptional affair because of its byline of death.⁵⁹

Still, there was another perspective which gives insight into the ways in which black communities in the area were intimately connected to Elmendorf's industrial production. This racially divided system of power went far beyond production of horses. Central to the experiences of many black workers at Elmendorf, and of elemental importance to the history of the horse industry in Kentucky, was their lives away from the Bluegrass estate. Although some lived on the stud, as illustrated in farm photographs and evidenced by oral histories, others chose to live in nearby segregated communities. These settlements adjoined the Haggin's land, largely hidden from view, but nevertheless were intimately connected to the making of the modern horse farm.

⁵⁸ "Shot on Eve of His Wedding," *Lexington Leader* (19 October 1911).

⁵⁹ "Wed. Tuesday Afternoon, John O'Malley and Miss Lucy Franzier, both residing at Elmendorf," *Lexington Leader* (5 October 1910); "Elope To Nicholasville," *Lexington Leader* (30 July 1914): 7; "Social-Personal, George K. Bell," *Lexington Leader* (17 March 1914): 5.



Figure 5.7: “An African American couple in front of their house.” Elmendorf Farm Photographic Collection, ca. 1900, University of Kentucky.

* * * *

Frank Keller's position at Elmendorf had become a double-edged sword. He came to cope with responsibilities and benefits as a black manager on Mt. Brilliant by separating himself and his family from the black community. Other children were allowed on Mt. Brilliant, and were in fact welcomed at the Keller kitchen table, but Keller's children and grandchildren were not allowed to attend the social functions in Maddoxtown, which boasted as one of the centers of black social life in Fayette County, with its small clubs and restaurants. Keller's daughter once told, "We knew that we were special, although we didn't want to be." But the pressures and responsibilities as a black manager kept the Keller children largely isolated from the surrounding black communities. "He was very conscious of his role as supervisor of the farm. He was very conscious of his role as prominent in the community."⁶⁰ Consequently, as Keller's children and grandchildren point out, the farm was not only segmented along lines of class and race, but the black communities themselves were divided.

Frank Keller ultimately could never extract himself from the world that Haggin made. At one point he was given the option to purchase his own piece of land, a small sliver of J.B. Haggin's massive estate. But Keller could not bring himself to buy the land, in part, because he understood well the difficulties of balancing responsibilities as a foreman and as a landowner. He was also well aware of the difficulties of a segregated society. He questioned whether he could get the funding to purchase the land. But he still regretted the consequence of this decision. "Son," the grandson recalled the

⁶⁰ Oral History Interview with Frank Jackson, conducted by the author (22 December 2008), in Blacks in Lexington Oral History Project, at Louie B. Nunn Center for Oral History, University of Kentucky, Lexington, Kentucky.

grandfather saying, “If I had to have the foresight and didn’t have the fear, you would’ve been way better off.”⁶¹

Over a half century later, the black manager lived in the same house rent-free since the first day he started work in 1911. He raised his own cows and gardens. He had served as the foremen, available at all times. While the Haggins lived in New York or vacationed in Europe, he handled the intimate details of the farm. And in the fifty-five years of service, Frank Keller never earned more than \$100 per week. For all intents and purposes, Keller gave his life to the remaining piece of Haggin’s Elmendorf, Mt. Brilliant Farm, and the descendants of J.B. Haggin understood this. After three generations, the family continued the practice and let the retired foremen and his sister live on the estate until they passed away. When Frank Keller passed away in 1971, the employer covered the funeral cost. The Haggin family, the grandson remembered, “Until he died, they took care of him...I have to give them credit for that.”⁶²

The lives of workers like Frank Keller show that there is much more to tell. His words and experiences tell only a small part of the story of how the making of Haggin’s horses not only built upon the racial barriers well established in the Thoroughbred industry, but helped further illustrate the foundations of an increasingly segregated society. But it is a larger story repeated among workers and communities of color

⁶¹ Ibid.

⁶² Ibid; “A Brilliant Overseer,” *Lexington Herald-Leader* (26 January 1966).



Figure 5.8: “Log cabin near site of Elmendorf; later torn down.” Elmendorf Farm Photographic Collection, ca. 1900, University of Kentucky.

throughout the heart of Thoroughbred country. Black laborers were crucial in propelling the central Bluegrass and the well-heeled horse owners into fame as the greatest concentration of pedigree horses in the world. They created their own rural spaces on the outskirts of the city, achieving some level of economic independence and elevating their status. Their economic and personal interests, however, remained intertwined in the complicated web of pedigree animals, white owners, and race relations that defined central Kentucky.

Children of white landowners remembered that many of the servants lived in nearby segregated communities. Henry White recalled years later, “Daddy always had a bunch of big guys from Maddoxtown. Good horsemen that broke yearlings.” He also had learned that the segregated community was also “home of a lot of good cooks.”⁶³ If black residents desired an escape from white control, living in segregated rural communities often meant inclusion rather than separation from the wealthy horse studs, as job opportunities proved quite limited at the turn of the century and many commuted to work on a neighboring farm. The communities were in walking distance, one or two miles, of some of the most reputable horse operations in America. As geographer Karl Raitz notes, “This arrangement was satisfactory to the estate owners. They paid only a small wage for laborers and were no longer responsible for the upkeep and well-being” of African American workers and their families.⁶⁴

⁶³ Interview with Henry White, conducted by Kim Lady Smith (30 October 2007), in Horse Industry in Kentucky Oral History Project, at Louie B. Nunn Center for Oral History, University of Kentucky, Lexington, Kentucky.

⁶⁴ Not all established by white landowners. See the development of Bracktown, Jonestown, and Willa Lane. Peter C. Smith and Karl Raitz, “Negro Hamlets and Agricultural Estates in Kentucky’s Inner Bluegrass,” *Geographical Review* 64, no. 2 (1974): 229.

The black communities near Elmendorf's estate demonstrate how the making of Haggin's industrial operation, in some ways, did no more than confirm what had already become widespread practice in central Kentucky before the end of Reconstruction.⁶⁵ Some of these communities were established prior to the Civil War, but the larger communities of free African Americans came in existence when the war ended. As happened in cities throughout Reconstruction America, Lexington and Fayette County experienced a rapid growth of black citizens after the Civil War. Indeed, by 1870 African Americans made up half of the city's population.⁶⁶ Here, they believed, offered what they could not find in the countryside, opportunities for work, education, property, and a better life. But race determined largely where they lived.

Some chose to live in black neighborhoods in Lexington, which were often developed by white landowners. These clusters were often found on poorly drained bottomland, abutting railroad tracks, cemeteries, or stockyards, including Kinkeadtown, Goodloetown, Brucetown, and Smithtown.⁶⁷ As historian Marion Lucas noted, "Some white landowners, recognizing the benefit of having a ready labor force at hand, divided

⁶⁵ Kellogg points out three interrelated factors that helped explain the formation of the black hamlets. The first factor, demographic change, was accelerated with the end of the Civil War and the migration of slaves to the city. The second factor, social change, points out the shift in social attitudes of whites towards black and vice versa. Politics and legal tools of segregation become more pronounced during this period, and segregated neighborhoods served purposes of distinct boundaries between and among the races. Third, Kellogg emphasizes the role of white, affluent, and well educated landholders who were motivated by many reasons to establish subdivisions for segregated communities. John Kellogg, "The Formation of Black Residential Areas in Lexington, Kentucky, 1865 – 1887," *Journal of Southern History* (1982): 21-52; Kellogg, "Negro Urban Clusters in the Postbellum South," *The Geographical Review* 67:3 (1977): 310-21.

⁶⁶ James Duane Bolin, *Bossism and Reform in a Southern City: Lexington, Kentucky, 1880-1940* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2000): 6.

⁶⁷ Kellogg, "The Formation of Black Residential Areas in Lexington, Kentucky," 38.

small tracts of marginal land into lots which they gave or sold to freedmen, creating street-front settlements.”⁶⁸

Others chose to live in the rural countryside, where they built schools, churches, and stores. Landowners, in the three decades or more after the Civil War, proposed to alleviate labor shortages by offering small lots, often consisting of a quarter of acre to five acres, to free blacks.⁶⁹ These planned areas, which rarely numbered more than fifty residents, grew hand-in-hand with a segregated society and modern horse production of central Kentucky. As geographer Karl Raitz noted, “At first glance the hamlets appear to be the result of segregationist housing policies, but on closer examination a distinct *raison d’être* emerges: the settlements house agricultural and domestic laborers for the large estates.”⁷⁰

⁶⁸ The hamlets on the outskirts of the city had their roots in plantation economies of antebellum South. Most masters, who shared an interest with slaves in family formation, provided dwellings on their landed estates for their enslaved laborers, who spent most of their, but not all of it, tending animals and working tobacco and hemp fields in central Kentucky. Lucas, *A History of Blacks in Kentucky*, 274; Raitz and Smith, “Negro Hamlets and Agricultural Estates in Kentucky’s Inner Bluegrass.”

⁶⁹ Some were formerly Irish districts, like Davis Bottom and Irishtown. Some were rooted a reform sensibility which arose from Lexington’s development as a urban destination for former slaves. Others were planned efforts of white entrepreneurs, like Bracktown, Jonestown, and Willa Lane. Some arose from what Raitz describes as “unique” circumstances, including the hamlet called Keene, which evolved from a failed medicinal spa. Raitz and Smith, “Negro Hamlets and Agricultural Estates in Kentucky’s Inner Bluegrass,”; Lucas, *Blacks in Kentucky*, 274.

⁷⁰ Raitz and Smith, “Negro Hamlets and Agricultural Estates in Kentucky’s Inner Bluegrass.”

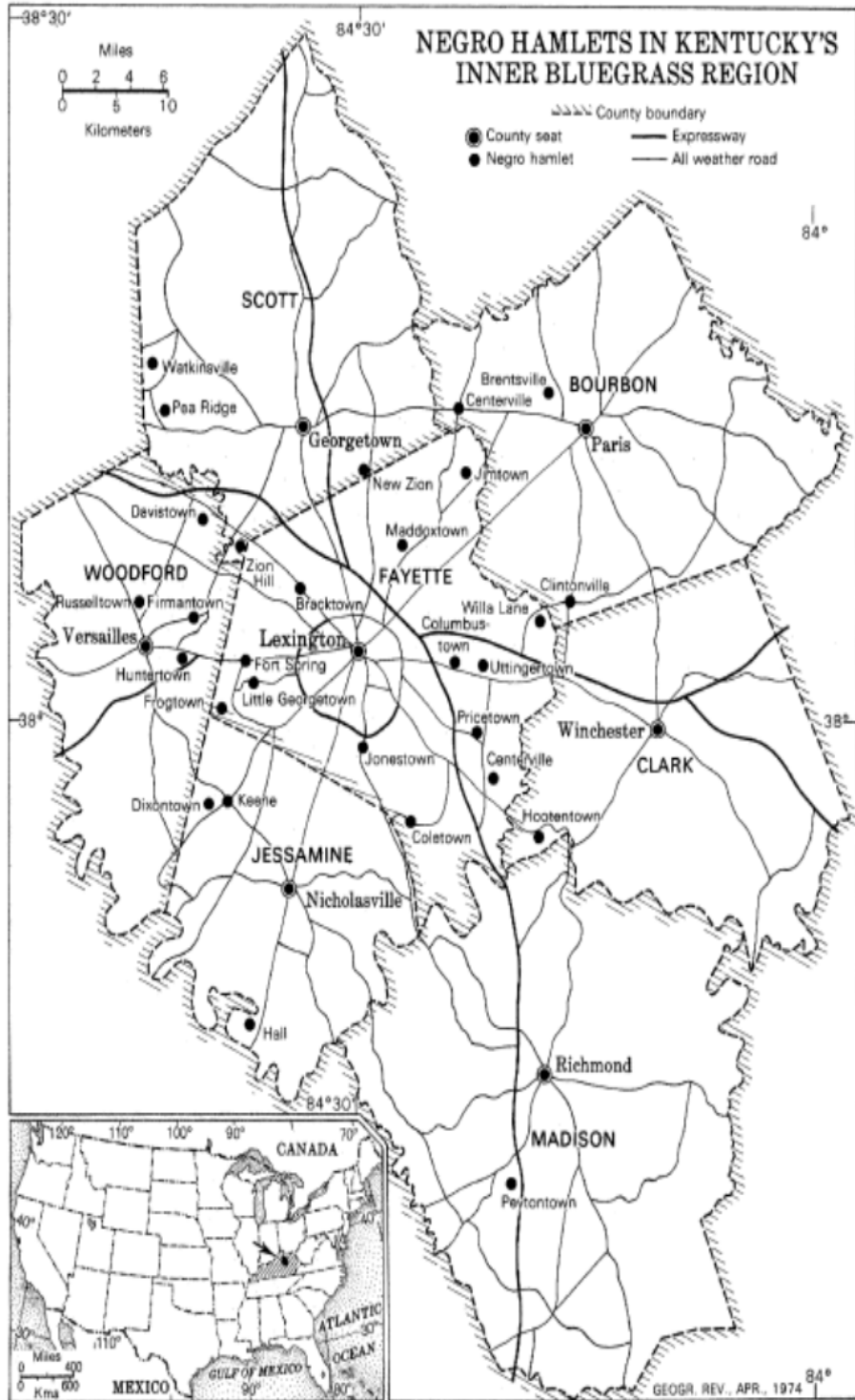


Figure 5.9: "Negro Hamlets in Kentucky's Inner Bluegrass," Negro Hamlet, Courtesy of *Geographical Review*, (Apr., 1974): 219.

Conceivably, had these segregated communities not developed and flourished on the outskirts of the city, the most expensive and extensive of absentee-owned horse studs in Kentucky may not have flourished as they did in Fayette County. Of the 30 “freetowns” that emerged in central Kentucky during the late nineteenth-century, half were established in Fayette County and four—Maddoxtown, Jimtown, Cadentown, and Warrentown—were located near Elmendorf.⁷¹ Although some lived on the stud, as illustrated in farm photographs and evidenced by oral histories, others chose to live in nearby segregated communities.

In particular, Maddoxtown, located on Huffman Pike, adjacent to Haggin’s stud, became known as home of “good horsemen.”⁷² Obituaries from the first decades of the twentieth-century suggest the importance of their choice of occupation, as several Maddoxtown residents were remembered for their abilities at the stud.⁷³ The more famous of black horsemen from this community were the Harbuts; Will Harbut groomed the iconic racehorse Man O’War, and his son, Tom Harbut, became an exercise rider for War Admiral, the Triple Crown Winner. To some degree the fame of the Harbuts has overshadowed the other reputable, lesser known, African Americans trainers. As Thomas

⁷¹ Warrentown is one of the smaller and least known of the black communities in central Fayette. Composed largely of a single row of houses set close to the Maysville Road, about a mile from Lexington, it was positioned on the same side of the track as the interurban line. “Warrentown,” *Lexington Leader* (11 October 1913): 8.

⁷² Interview with Henry White, conducted by Kim Lady Smith (30 October 2007), in Horse Industry in Kentucky Oral History Project, at Louie B. Nunn Center for Oral History, University of Kentucky, Lexington, Kentucky.

⁷³ See, for example, “Colored notes” *Lexington Leader* (8 April 1925): 7; “Fred Gordon,” *Lexington Leader* (28 October 1940): 11; “James Medley,” *Lexington Leader* (22 October 1940): 13; “Samuel Harbut,” *Lexington Leader* : 7.

Embry noted, the families of the Gordons, Carrs, and Rankins, all members of Maddoxtown, “These were all good horsemen.”⁷⁴

To the black workers who resided there, however, these hamlets meant a different kind of freedom from white control. Here, they built small shot-gun style homes, with fences, farm animals, and small garden plots, usually in the area where they had been slaves or [other] less than attractive surroundings.⁷⁵ Since their homes were removed from work, their experiences often centered on the activities of church, schools, and stores. Even water was provided from a communal well. As a result, residents remained there for years and for generations, and consequently developed the social and cultural bonds of a cohesive and close-knit community.⁷⁶

Take, for example, Frank Keller who was a devoted member of Centerville Baptist Church which was a considerable nine miles from Keller’s home on the Elmendorf estate. Though the Centerville Church was far from the closest congregation to Elmendorf, Keller remained fully devoted to the church of his childhood. Like many, he took refuge in the dignity and decency of church functions and his church family.

⁷⁴ Oral history interview with Thomas P. Embry, conducted by Kim Lady Smith (5 October 2007) in Horse Industry in Kentucky Oral History Project, at Louie B. Nunn Center for Oral History, University of Kentucky, Lexington, Kentucky; Oral history interview with Thomas P. Embry, conducted by Kim Lady Smith (16 November 2007) in Horse Industry in Kentucky Oral History Project, at Louie B. Nunn Center for Oral History, University of Kentucky, Lexington, Kentucky.

⁷⁵ Céline Finney, “A Place to Call Their Own: The Cultural and Historic Landscape of Cadentown, Kentucky” (Thesis (M.S.), University of Kentucky, 2003); Cadentown Neighborhood Association (Ky.), Greater Lexington Convention and Visitors Bureau (Ky.), and University of Kentucky Program for Archaeological Research, *Preserving the African American Heritage of the Commonwealth: The 705 Caden Lane Property, Cadentown, Fayette County, Kentucky.*(2001); Lexington-Fayette County Planning Commission. *Historical Survey: Rural Settlements in Fayette County* (Lexington, Ky: The Commission, 1980); Lucas, *A History of Blacks*, 274. As O’Malley demonstrates, there were unique housing examples among the first generation of landholders in Kinkeadtown. Nancy O’Malley, *Kinkeadtown: Archaeological Investigation of an African-American Neighborhood in Lexington, Kentucky* (Lexington, Ky: University of Kentucky, Program for Cultural Resource Assessment, 1996).

⁷⁶ O’Malley, *The Pursuit of Freedom*, 195.

With his corduroy suit and his Stacy Adams shoes shined, Keller weekly assumed his respected position as a deacon of the church. He often arrived hours before the service to stoke the oven fires and to prepare the building for its members. The church also gave Keller the opportunity to help members of his own race. At one point all male parishioners of Centerville Baptist Church were employed at Mt. Brilliant.⁷⁷ Keller gave orders to workers, toiling in the fields of the Haggins' estate through the week, and sat next to the same worker in church on Sunday.

The black churches of Fayette County were marked in another way by the employee-employer relationships of Haggin's stud. In 1909, a chapel was erected on Elmendorf, near the intersection of the Maysville and Iron Works pikes, a short distance from the superintendent's home on Russell Cave Road. Mrs. Haggin had taken charge of its construction. A Unitarian church, it was designed "for the benefit of its several hundred employees."⁷⁸ Without church records, it is much easier to suggest who was more likely not to attend services than to identify who made greatest use of this social service. It is doubtful that the stud's church provided any real competition for the allegiance of the black workers, since the great majority worshipped with members of their own race in their own communities.

Of course, nearby black churches were not subject to Elmendorf's indifference. In 1909, the Warrentown Methodist Church gave a "jubilee and religious feast" for over

⁷⁷ Oral History Interview with Frank Jackson, conducted by the author (22 December 2008), in Blacks in Lexington Oral History Project, at Louie B. Nunn Center for Oral History, University of Kentucky, Lexington, Kentucky; "A Brilliant Overseer," *Lexington Herald-Leader* (26 January 1966).

⁷⁸ "Church at Elmendorf," *Lexington Leader* (4 August 1909).

eight days in the beautiful woodland belonging to Haggin.⁷⁹ The land, opposite of Warrentown, was filled with people, drinks, food, music, and sermons for its annual revival meeting. The church charged admission of 50 cents per member to help repair the building.⁸⁰ Over the years, some of the black churches felt the presence of the Haggin family, especially in times of need. As Frank Jackson, former pastor of Maddoxtown Church and grandson of an Elmendorf employee, recalled, “When the church had financial difficulties, the Haggin family made sure that didn’t happen long.”⁸¹ On July 4, 1931, for example, Louie Haggin, offered the use of the famous land for a “county fair” for the benefit of the Maddoxtown Baptist Church. Bettie Graves and James Perkins, employees of Haggin’s Mt. Brilliant, were placed in charge of the festivities.⁸²

It is no simple matter ascertaining why wealthy employers helped fund black churches during a time of divisive segregation. From the perspective of Haggin’s industrial empire, lending his assistance to the black church in the rural South, an institution with deep roots in culture and society, made perfect business sense. As he did with other agricultural operations in the far west, the Haggin’s support of the community endeavors of his black employees helped bind the futures and loyalties of both employer and employees. And Haggin, one of the most powerful industrialists in the world, was

⁷⁹ Other wealthy breeders and landholders offered assistance to the black churches in times of need. The Rev. Mr. Bush, in charge of the Cadentown Church, thanked John E. Madden, owner of Hamburg Stud, for a ton of coal. “We thank God for such men as Mr. Madden and pray for more with his generosity.” Rev. Charles Lewis, pastor of St. Mary’s Tabernacle at Cadentown, asks the Leader to thank Col. John E. Madden of Hamburg Place for a generous donation of coal for the use of the church. “Colored Notes,” *Lexington Leader* (21 February 1909); “Colored Notes,” *Lexington Leader* (14 April 1910).

⁸⁰ “Colored Notes,” *Lexington Leader* (1 August 1909): 14.

⁸¹ Oral history interview with Frank Jackson, conducted by the author (22 December 2008), in Blacks in Lexington Oral History Project, at Louie B. Nunn Center for Oral History, University of Kentucky, Lexington, Kentucky.

⁸² “Colored Notes,” *Lexington Herald* (30 June 1931).

well aware that such assistance to commitments enhanced his workers' quality of life, while improving his reputation, so that he earned his workers' support, cultivating their loyalty, and discouraging competition from neighboring farms. Yet, white assistance to the black workers, no matter the amount, could not diminish the strength of the black church, which, in the words of historian Gerald Smith, "served as resourceful refuge for African Americans worn by the daily ritual of racial oppression."⁸³ (Need more – Levine)

Whereas Haggin and his descendants helped strengthen the black churches in outlying areas, other buildings on the stud reinforced a commitment to an increasingly segregated society. By 1908, a model public school for white children had been established on Elmendorf. Much is unknown about this school, including its students, backgrounds, and curriculum. Two photographs did, however, illustrate the ways in which the conditions of Elmendorf's white school and Maddoxtown's black school were marked by sharply contrasting conditions.

Elmendorf's school building was in keeping with the rest of the stud—modern, efficient, and aristocratic. Two columns supported the porch of this brick building, while white children, assumed to be the sons and daughters of his workers, enjoyed an environment that promoted learning. The full blackboards on the wall, the books on the shelves, the heating appliances, the wood floors, and the staff of assistants, all suggests that the segregated school on Elmendorf offered teaching tools not found in most schools in Kentucky, white or black.

By contrast, the black school at Maddoxtown, which was located on Huffman Pike near Mt. Brilliant, was described in 1913 by Nannie Faulconer, superintendent of

⁸³ Gerald L. Smith, *Lexington, Kentucky* (Charleston, S.C.: Arcadia, 2002): 8; Smith, *A Black Educator in the Segregated South: Kentucky's Rufus B. Atwood* (Lexington, Ky: University Press of Kentucky, 1994). See also Levine, *Black Culture and Black Consciousness* (MORE)

Fayette County schools, as “best colored rural school house in the south.”⁸⁴ In a 1929 photograph, the Maddoxtown school featured two rooms and full service kitchen, which was qualitatively different from the crude, rough one-room school that black students of other areas in Fayette County endured. The disparity between Maddoxtown and Little Georgetown, a black school on the west side of Lexington, was not lost on Superintendent Faulconer. Handwritten on the back of the portrait, she noted, “This poor school is praying to grow into a fine colored school like Maddoxtown in the same county.”⁸⁵

A black child of Elmendorf workers attending Maddoxtown School in the 1900s and 1910s, insulated by the geographical boundaries of Haggin’s estate, learned under good teachers, and enjoyed relatively nice surroundings in a woefully under-funded school system. Other black workers, however, were painfully aware that schoolwork would always play second fiddle to fieldwork. Having never been given the opportunity to attend school, Frank Keller always had a thirst for education. As his grandson

⁸⁴ Nannie Faulconer, Superintendent, to Hon. Barksdale Hamlett, “Public Instruction Report,” (20 August 1913) reprinted in *Biennial Report of the Superintendent of Public Instruction* (Frankfort, KY: The State Journal Company, 1913): 293-295.

⁸⁵ Nannie G. Faulconer, and Besse B. Barker. “Barker and Faulconer Fayette County Public Education Photographs.” (1869 – 1920), at University of Kentucky Special Collections, University of Kentucky, Lexington, Kentucky.



Figure 5.10: “Students outside Old Elmendorf School, also known as ‘Little Brick.’” (1929) Barker and Faulconer Fayette County Public Education photographs, University of Kentucky.

recalled, he first realized “Daddy Frank” was illiterate one Sunday morning at Centerville church. When the preacher referenced a particular scripture, Keller looked down at his ten-year-old grandson and asked him, “Son, read that back to me.” Keller emphasized the importance of education, believing it a springboard for greater opportunities. Without it, he understood that his children and grandchildren had few economic alternatives beyond farming and domestic work.

The question was not whether Haggin would hire African Americans, as the most talented of black jockeys and trainers, including Isaac Murphy and Frank Keller, worked for his racing stables at the turn of the century, but his larger thoughts of black workers and the world they made at Elmendorf. Haggin had always been secretive about his public ventures, and he proved even more sensitive about his private thoughts. No memoirs or personal papers exist. Haggin was increasingly detached from the experience of living and work at Elmendorf. Yet given his need for control, he was scarcely unaware and indifferent to the dynamics of a labor force whose work in fields, barns, and households proved of lasting significance to the growth of his grand estate.

Of course, the choices made by individual workers followed much different logic, as is illustrated by the legacy of the most famous black groom of mid-twentieth-century, Will Harbut. Born and raised in Maddoxtown, Harbut came from horsepeople but he was more widely regarded for the last two decades of service to Faraway Farm where he cared for the legendary Man O’War. Leading Big Red from his special stall at Faraway Farm, the groom thrilled his audience with tales of Man O’ War’s exploits on and off the track. “Jes’ let ‘im take it easy all day ‘cept his morning under saddle o’ five miles,”

instructed Harbut, as described a *New York Times*.⁸⁶ In 1946 a *Time* reporter recalled Harbut's charge, "Heah he is, ladies and gen' men. Come heah, Red...Stands 16 and one-half hands high...I say, come heah you old Red."⁸⁷ Visitors and journalists alike were entranced almost as much with Harbut as they were his charge. After listening to Harbut's account of Big Red, Lord Halifax, the English ambassador, stated, "That was worth coming halfway round the world to hear." The red horse and the black groom were seen as constant companions, even sharing meals, walks, and even the front cover of a national magazine, the *Saturday Evening Post*.

Truly, Will Harbut was a memorable presence in the life of the most famous horse but how people came to understand Harbut is historically significant and pertinent to the story of Haggin's Elmendorf Stud. To later generations of horse people in Kentucky, the racialization of the industry seemed insignificant. "We liked them not because they were black but because they were good horsemen," recalled Harry B. Scott.⁸⁸

⁸⁶ "Man O'War 22 Years Old," *New York Times* (30 March 1939); "Man O'War, Big Red," *New York Times* (26 December 1943) "Will Harbut is Dead: Man O'War's Groom," *New York Times* (5 October 1947).

⁸⁷ *New York Times* (1 April 1946).

⁸⁸ Interview with Harry B. Scott, Jr., conducted by Kim Lady Smith (1 April 2008), in Horse Industry in Kentucky Oral History Project, at Louie B. Nunn Center for Oral History, University of Kentucky, Lexington, Kentucky.



Figure 5.11: Cover of *The Saturday Evening Post* (13 September 1941).

But newspapers not only showed how Harbut possessed certain natural talents as Man O' War's trainer, but they came to understand him in racialized terms.⁸⁹ They often assigned a set of racial traits to the black groom as a loving dependent of the horse. His speech, in particular, became a topic of considerable interest, as newspapers depicted Harbut as the "aged Negro groom" who served as Man O' War's constant companion, whispering to the champion sire in a "familiar, tender drawl," reciting daily to the throngs of visitors the tremendous feats of "the mostest hoss in de wuld."⁹⁰

The media's rendering of Harbut's language, now seen as objectionable, often evoked the magical sights and sounds with a visual aspect of race making. The truth was, as one local observed, "He [Harbut] evidently reads quite a bit and his English and grammar are much better than generally portrayed. The soft slurred accent so characteristic of the Bluegrass is there, but he does not use the double negatives and more tortured grammar often credited to him."⁹¹ Harbut was very much aware of the highly charged impression that newspapers conveyed. "They make me talk ignorant," he once

⁸⁹ Not unlike Aunt Jemima, Uncle Tom, and later Amos and Andy, Hale, as scholar Grace Elizabeth Hale describes, this has been described as the "emotional logic of minstrelsy." Grace Elizabeth Hale, *Making Whiteness: The Culture of Segregation in the South, 1890-1940* (New York: Vintage Books, 1999). For more "whiteness" studies, see David Roediner, *The Wages of Whiteness: Race and the Making of the American Working Class* (New York: Verso, 1991) and *Working Toward Whiteness: How America's Immigrants Become White* (New York: Basic Books, 2005); Matthew Frye Jacobson, *Whiteness of a Different Color: European Immigrants and the Alchemy of Race* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1998); George Lipsitz, *The Possessive Investment of Whiteness: How White People Profit from Identity Politics* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1998) and "The Posses Investment of 'Whiteness': Racialized Social Democracy and the 'White' Problem in American Studies," *American Quarterly*, vol. 47, no. 3 (September 1995): 369-387; John Hartigan, *Racial Situations: Class Predicaments of Whiteness in Detroit* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999).

⁹⁰ "Will Harbut is Dead," *New York Times* (5 October 1947): 68.

⁹¹ Dorothy Ours, *Man O' War: A Legend Like Lightning* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2006): 270; "Extol Man O' War at Burial Service," *New York Times* (5 November 1947): 40.

complained. “I know my language ain’t the best in the world, but it ain’t like they make it out.”⁹²

To Will Harbut’s son, Tom, other forces were at work. A well-respected groom in his own right, Tom Harbut noted, “He told the truth, but it was like cooking. You can cook a good meal, but, see, you have to know how to put the right seasoning in it.”⁹³

From this perspective, Will Harbut recognized the divisive power teeming through racial perceptions and bias. To outsiders, however, the black groom personified the seemingly idyllic race relations that appeared to characterize the horse farms of central Bluegrass.

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⁹² Ours, *A Legend like Lightning*, 270.

⁹³ Byron Crawford, *Kentucky Stories* (Paducah, Ky: Turner Pub, 1994): 42.

Chapter Six

“The Biltmore of Kentucky”: The Making of Elmendorf’s Gilded Estate

Early in the morning on May 15, 1905, the International Railway Congress arrived at James B. Haggin’s estate. Including representatives of prominent railway systems across the globe, many of the 250 officials enthusiastically anticipated their visit to the most “beautiful specimen” and the “undulating pastures” of the famous stock farm. As the French official gazed at the surrounding countryside, he told a reporter, “I would rather have seen this than all the damn shops in the country.”¹ As the delegation of foreign officials toured the world’s finest stud, Elmendorf evoked significant nostalgia for the “eminent guests from many lands.” The VIP’s were mesmerized by the highly visible symbols of the bluegrass estate—fancy horses, green fields, palatial mansion, black servants, and bourbon—readily recognizing that the horse farm was invested with deep emotional and cultural significance. Upon their arrival they were escorted first to the stallion barn where all the famous sires of Elmendorf were on display. “The show was imposing,” one visitor reported, and the men “were enthusiastic over their first glimpse of Kentucky thoroughbreds.” They grew increasingly excited as they continued the tour of Haggin’s “magnificent stretches of green fields, modern houses, and equipment,” ending their visit with a sprawling luncheon on the spacious lawn.²

¹ *Lexington Leader* (17 May 1905): 1.

² *Ibid.*

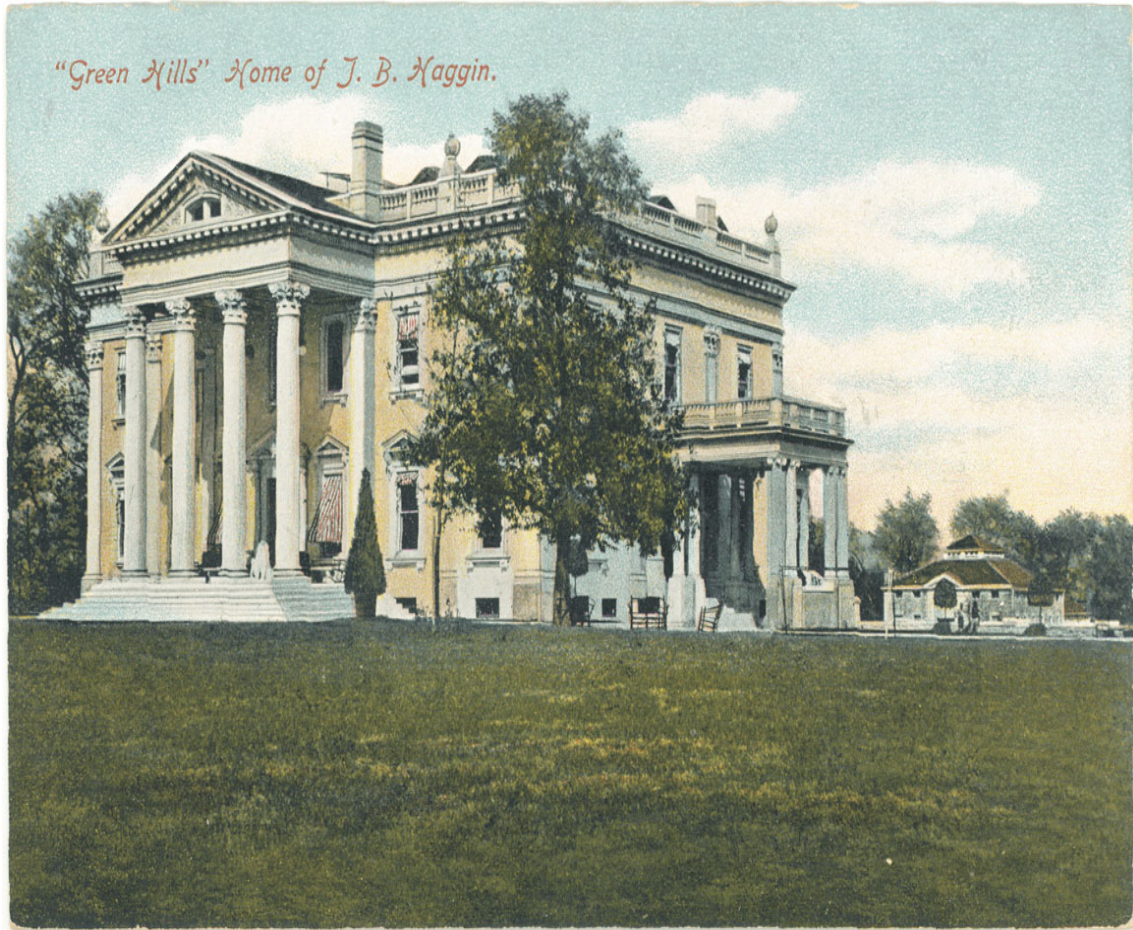


Figure 6.1: "Green Hills: Home of J.B. Haggin, 1905, Postcard Collection, circa 1890-1990, University of Kentucky.

With Haggin's mansion majestically in the background, the international delegation drank mint juleps under the French Linden shade trees while a "Negro string band" performed an assortment of Southern melodies. When "My Old Kentucky Home" played, several stood and joined in the chorus, singing the words of a white slave-owner's wife who wept the loss of her enslaved. As the day was winding down, another in the crowd asked, "Where are the real Kentucky Colonels?" A local reporter answered by pointing to some "colonels," twenty-some men who represented the elite of Fayette County.³ Before their departure the foreign officials received part of the uniform of a Kentucky colonel – a bottle of Old Elk bourbon.⁴ This was no land of dark vigilantes; as one visitor concluded, but reflected "something of the abandon of plantation days."⁵

This "gleaming white mansion," with "great supporting columns and façade," rose far above its environs, much as Haggin himself, but the gleaming crown was ultimately an empty façade which symbolized his troubling cross purposes in his central Kentucky estate.⁶ In literature, newspapers, and turf journals, images of a violent and bloody Kentucky were contrasted with images of plantation-style mansions, mint juleps, cigars, and colonelship in the Bluegrass. And the horse industry played a critical role in reshaping a culture of violence. Most weren't "forgetting" the bloodiest role in the history of the nation, or their difficult role as a border state in the 1880s and 1890s, but they chose to "remember" nonetheless a different version of their past. They began to re-

³ Ibid. For a history of the Kentucky Colonels, see Anne E. Marshall, *Creating a Confederate Kentucky: The Lost Cause and Civil War Memory in a Border State* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2010).

⁴ *Lexington Leader* (17 May 1905): 1; Gerald Carson, *The Social History of Bourbon, An Unhurried Account of Our Star Spangled American Drink* (New York: Dodd, Mead, 1963): 58.

⁵ "Green Hills and Its Thoroughbreds," *New York Times* (8 April 1905); "Marble Lion," *Lexington Leader* (19 November 1908).

⁶ Greene, "'Green Hills' and Its Thoroughbreds," 16-18.

envision their countryside and identity as part of the “Old South” which had managed to preserve southern gentility and grandeur, filled with the opulent and refined.⁷

Since its early days of settlement, those of affluence in the bluegrass had looked for refined ways of life to set themselves apart. They fashioned country estates that expressed their elite status and republican civility.⁸ Some of its more fundamental elements—the rock fences, the palatial homes, the manicured park-like landscapes—were well rooted in Kentucky’s agrarian past, all evolving from English traditions of the Tidewater and Piedmont society. By mid-century an increasing number of Kentuckians sought to make themselves and the Bluegrass dignified and unique. With the English style in mind, they incorporated brick exteriors, impeccably groomed lawns, and ornamental woodlands on their breeding estates.⁹ At the turn of the twentieth-century,

⁷ Anne Elizabeth Marshall, *Creating a Confederate Kentucky: The Lost Cause and Civil War Memory in a Border State* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2010); Wall, *How Kentucky Became Southern*.

⁸ These genteel values were particularly visible in David Meade’s of La Chaumiere de Prairies, which impressed distinguished visitors of the impressive estate in 1790s. It has been called as the “first lordly home in Kentucky.” As Dr. Horace Holly described in 1814, Meade “brought home with him English notions of a country seat.” He designed gardens, lawns, lakes, water falls, bridges, walks, benches, and fences of stone, all carefully laid out in the manner of an English park. Clay Lancaster, *Antebellum Architecture of Kentucky* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1991): 142; James D. Kornwolf and Georgiana Wallis Kornwolf, *Architecture and Town Planning in Colonial North America* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 2002): 1491; See also Karl Raitz’s discussion of Brutus J. Clay in Raitz, *Rock Fences of the Bluegrass*, 108 - 122. For more about Republicanism in early Kentucky architecture and social life, see Craig Thompson Friend, *Along the Maysville Road: The early American Republic in the trans-Appalachian West* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 2005).

⁹ Nancy Greene, “A Noted Kentucky Stock Farm, Woodburn, The Home of the Alexanders,” *Town and Country* (11 July 1903): 20. R.A. Alexander’s innovations in business organization and landscape design have been called “revolutionary” by historical geographers. Among its commercial and scientific developments, Woodburn Farm came to symbolize the growth of European designs on commercial breeding farms in central Kentucky. As Dennis Domer writes, “Based on his careful study of European landscape ideas, Alexander transplanted a developed aesthetic and moral vision that was perfectly suited to the nature of the Bluegrass and the lofty moral requirements of gentlemen.” Domer, Unpublished Manuscript, at Keeneland Library, in Lexington, Kentucky, 21-23; Domer, “Inventing the Horse Farm,” *Kentucky Humanities* (October 2005) 3 – 12.

affluent landowners, particularly, those from the north, would also devoted themselves to the perpetuation of estates that reflected the dignity of their status and the region in which their estate was located. They too adopted the refined style of English park-like estates. But many also constructed every inch of their farms to operate as efficiently while appearing as entirely natural and pleasing to the eye as the most wondrous southern estate.¹⁰ Thus, plantation-style mansions were constructed with distinguished facades, but protected by gates, stonewalls, and fences, hedged with broad, blossoming vistas, facing avenues of widely scattered trees, all of which was carefully designed to anchor their estates into the natural and southern landscape in the Bluegrass country.

Although seldom present to enjoy the comforts and splendor of his grand estate, J.B. Haggin spared no effort or expense in the construction of his Elmendorf. The alluring iconography, including the aristocratic architecture, elaborate stonewalls, ornamental entranceways, and high woodlands, produced a setting described as picturesque and baronial. Within a few years, it was described by another visitor as “a colony of its own.”¹¹ These stately stone fences, well designed and well kept, not only gave the appearance of imposed order; the immaculate fence-lined pastures and rustic limestone walls offered the luxury of genteel and beautiful protection for Haggin’s prized Thoroughbreds who grazed peacefully in the lush bluegrass fields. It was built so lavishly, as one scholar notes, “No medieval duke ever had a finer estate than James Ben

¹⁰ When Lamon V. Harkness, for example, came to Fayette County, the wealthy grain distributor and merchant constructed one of the more distinctive breeding barns in the South. While the 470 foot-long stables were impressive from sanitary, practical, and scale standpoints, its brick façade and styling was equally attractive in the landscape. Greene, “Mr. L.V. Harkness’ Kentucky Stock Farm,” 18-20. *Breeders Gazette, Farm buildings. A compilation of plans for general farm barns, cattle barns, dairy barns, horse barns, sheep folds, swine pens, poultry houses, silos, feeding racks, farm gates, sheds, portable fences, concrete construction, handy devices, etc.* (Chicago: *The Breeder’s Gazette*, 1919): 71-72.

¹¹ S.A. Smith, “Elmendorf,” *The Morning Herald* (April 1901).

Ali Haggin.”¹² Neither historians nor contemporaries have drawn into sharp focus, however, the other forces at work beneath the surface at Haggin’s Elmendorf.

What separates Haggin from other wealthy landowners in central Kentucky was his desire and his ability to construct an “Old South” landscape for a “New South” economy. With its large scales of production, specialization of commodity, and absentee ownership the “Biltmore of Kentucky” represented a vigorous industrial farm, with one notable exception: it looked nothing like it. Examining the Elmendorf’s landscape design, one saw, instead, an industrial farm that was constructed and designed to be a fitting symbol of the glamour and grandeur in the Kentucky Bluegrass country.”¹³ The breeding farm functioned as a signifier of modernity and wealth in the early decades of the twentieth-century gloriously depicting the modern principles of large scales and efficiency but in the full symbolic regalia of traditional class, status, and race.

* * * *

In 1902 J.B. and Pearl Haggin celebrated the completion of their Kentucky mansion in grand and elaborate style. “An army of servants invaded the place,” noted one guest, “as the greenhouses sent their blossoms to the great house, electric lights were strung five miles along the public turnpike to brighten the way for guests coming out of

¹² Thomas Dionysius Clark, *Kentucky, Land of Contrast* (New York: Harper & Row, 1968): 180; James C. Klotter, *The Human Tradition in the Old South* (Wilmington, Del: SR Books, 2003); Klotter, *The Human Tradition in the New South* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2005).

¹³ Harkness’s Walnut Hill remained one of the oldest, successful trotting farms in America and is now the site of the Kentucky Horse Park. Ken McCarr, *Kentucky Harness Horse* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1978): 44; J. Frazer Smith, *Plantation Houses and Mansions of the Old South* (New York: Dover, 1993): 55; Nancy Greene, “Mr. L.V. Harkness’ Kentucky Stock Farm,” *Town and Country* (28 March 1903): 18 – 20.

Lexington; a pavilion was erected for dancing, and the brilliantly-lighted hilltops presented a scene of beauty and enchantment.”¹⁴

An imposing structure, visitors believed Haggin’s new home exuded luxury and ease of the “big house.” Haggin’s mansion, “the whole building, exterior and interior,” wrote one reporter, “has the spaciousness and grandeur of some Old World Castle.” Combining the “charming effect of the Renaissance with the typical Southern style,” a reporter commented, the white palace “must be the delight of all beholders for generations to come.”¹⁵ Another wrote, “I viewed Green Hills, the present mansion, an imposing gray stone pile perched high on an eminence overlooking thousands of fertile acres, hundreds of grazing kine, and mile upon mile of the smiling, rolling Kentucky landscape.”¹⁶ The hilltops surrounding his residence appeared “so vividly green that the place seems to have been christened by Nature itself.”¹⁷

Fashioned as the “Biltmore of Kentucky,” Green Hills fulfilled the great planation of myth in its structure, if not its lavishness. Constructed of white marble and native stone and designed in fashionable neoclassical style, the forty-room mansion was by a team of well-known architects, H.I. Copeland, E. S. Hall, Latham Mollen, and J.L. Wells, who specialized in domestic architecture for wealthy, northern elite. The estimated construction cost of this Bluegrass Biltmore was, in 1902, a cool \$300,000, making its

¹⁴ “Green Hills and Its Thoroughbreds,” *Town and Country* (8 April 1905): 16; “Dominant Power of American Turf,” *Lexington Herald* (4 October 1903).

¹⁵ “Green Hills and Its Thoroughbreds,” *Town and Country* (8 April 1905); S.A. Smith, “Elmendorf,” *The Morning Herald* (April 1901).

¹⁶ “Country Life Goes West,” *Country Life* v. 26 (August, 1914): 65.

¹⁷ “Green Hills and Its Thoroughbreds,” *Town and Country* (8 April 1905); S.A. Smith, “Elmendorf,” *The Morning Herald* (April 1901).

contemporary value close to eight million dollars.¹⁸ And Haggin spared no expense inside. He hired the Herter brothers, the famed artisans who catered to the homes of the affluent and who, also, designed the interior of Haggin's brownstone on Fifth Avenue in New York City.¹⁹ Decorated in predominantly Louis XVI-style, beautiful tapestries, splendid sculptures, frescoed paintings, and decorative arts filled the ballrooms, dining rooms, entrance halls, salons, and billiards rooms.

The mansion also reflected Haggin's desire for modern comforts. It possessed new technology, including lights, elevators, and a call system for summoning servants, providing new examples of the application of scientific management to the home. Telephone lines, a direct-dial system, made for instant and revolutionary communication between managers, foremen, and laborers in distant places, as did a massive pumping system, which featured a 40,000 gallon tank that channeled water from the nearby limestone streams to the mansion. Although telephones and pipes tied together thousands of acres, both were erected a far distance from the mansion, so neither marred the picturesque view from his pillared columns.²⁰

¹⁸ *Lexington Herald Leader* (30 April 1919): 8; Karl Raitz and Nancy O'Malley, TITLE CHANGE forthcoming publication by University of Kentucky Press, 2011.

¹⁹ Katherine S. Howe, *Herter Brothers: Furniture and Interiors for a Gilded Age* (New York: Harry N. Abrams in association with the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, 1994).

²⁰ Telegraph, more so than the telephone, was used more for commercial than social purposes. It connected the stud more closely to distant places. The farm manager in Kentucky and the farm owner in New York were bound together by the phone. From his Fifth Avenue office, Haggin could receive time-sensitive information, which granted him some semblance of control over his Kentucky operation. Such a system made possible the large-scale production of pedigree animals across large distances. Menahem Blondheim, *News Over the Wires: The Telegraph and the Flow of Public Information in America, 1844-1897* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1994).



Figure 6.2: "Dining Room; Interior of Elmendorf Farm." Elmendorf Farm Photographic Collection, ca. 1900, University of Kentucky.

The south entrance embodied the lavish nature of the mansion as a whole. Four Greek Revival Corinthian pillars, rising some twenty-five feet from the topmost of large stone steps to the portico, and flanked by massive marble lions from Italy, presented a commanding view of the Kentucky countryside, befitting only a palatial mansion.²¹ Laborers were required to move several hundred yards of dirt to fashion the great hill for the mansion. From here, however, at the rear of the mansion, on hillsides below, Haggin could see over eighty feet of stone, piles, mortarless fences, all of which gave the appearance of a distinguished country estate.

Quite fashionable in the area, the tradition of rock fences emerged in central Kentucky in the 1830s, as geographers Murray Wooley and Karl Raitz explain, and became increasingly popular on affluent Bluegrass estates by the 1870s.²² Haggin had miles of well-crafted rock walls constructed on Elmendorf Farm. He invested a tremendous amount of labor and capital to build the miles of long rock porticos. He also utilized a number of rock quarries on the farm and “an army of workers,” many of them Irish immigrants.²³

Built in conjunction with rustic stonewalls were another trademark of the central Kentucky landscape, the rows of white plank fences. Often built behind a formal rock fence, high plank fences formed the internal systems of Elmendorf. The plank-fence square that fenced in the Thoroughbreds were often made of solid oak planks and locust posts. They offered a more efficient building material than traditional split post and rail. They restrained the stock, reduced the consumption of lumber, and initially made for

²¹ “Marble Lion,” *Lexington Leader* (19 November 1908).

²² Carolyn Murray-Wooley and Karl B. Raitz, *Rock Fences of the Bluegrass* (Lexington, Ky: University Press of Kentucky, 1992).

²³ S.A. Smith, “Elmendorf,” *The Morning Herald* (April 1901); Cherie Suchy, “Legacy of the Land,” *Thoroughbred Record* 213, no. 1 (7 January 1981): 48-51.

better use of labor. More important, the planked fences protected fancy and expensive animals from sharp edges of stone.²⁴

To produce this ordered vision of natural beauty so central to Elmendorf's overall aesthetic, Haggin solicited the efforts of gifted and trained experts and, in 1897, Haggin hired famed landscape architect, Samuel Parsons Jr., to develop the basic landscape design for his horse stud.²⁵ Parsons apprenticed with two of the more famous architects in nineteenth-century America, Frederick Law Olmstead and Calvert Vaux, who had had plotted and planned the most famous "natural" park in America, Central Park in New York City.²⁶ Like his mentors, and so many romantic designers of the day, Parsons believed in pastoral aesthetics provided a moral and social respite from the grim aspects of modern life. In many designs of parks and projects in various cities, he strove to maintain natural qualities of the physical environment, and therefore proposed minimal planting, removal, and alteration to achieve the goal of a physical space that appeared to be entirely natural.²⁷ As he suggested in his *The Art of Landscape Architecture*, "Everything that was done was conceived with the view of increasing the beauties already existing, or some unusual angle of vision."²⁸ Thus, a beautiful landscape came to mean a natural landscape, with the appearance of little or no human touch at all.²⁹

²⁴ Alvey, *Kentucky and Bluegrass Country*, 46.

²⁵ "Job Files, 5770, 1863-1971," in Olmstead Associates Records, 1863 – 1971, at Library of Congress, Manuscript Division, at Washington, D.C.

²⁶ Roy Rosenzweig and Elizabeth Blackmar, *The Park and the People: A History of Central Park* (New York: H. Holt and Co, 1994).

²⁷ For example of Parsons's work, aside from the famous Central Park, see Matthew F. Bokovoy, *The San Diego World's Fairs and Southwestern Memory, 1880-1940* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2005): 50-51.

²⁸ Samuel Parsons, *The Art of Landscape Architecture, Its Development and Its Application to Modern Landscape Gardening* (New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1915): xlv.

²⁹ For more about the construction of landscapes, see D. W. Meinig and John Brinckerhoff Jackson, *The Interpretation of Ordinary Landscapes: Geographical Essays* (New York: Oxford



Figure 6.3: ““Elmendorf” -- J.B. Haggin -- Fayette County.” (1898) J. Soule Smith, *Art Work of the Blue Grass Region of Kentucky*, 1898: University of Kentucky Rare Books.



Figure 6.4: Landscape, Elmendorf, n.d. Louis Edward Nollau Nitrate Photographic Print Collection, circa 1866 – 1958, University of Kentucky.

University Press, 1979); and John Brinckerhoff Jackson, *A Sense of Place, a Sense of Time* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994).

Of course, reality opposed this ambition; the landscape of Elmendorf required a tremendous amount of human labor. Large oak trees, some three feet in diameter, were shipped from California, as were French Linden trees, to fashion meticulous groves of beautiful shady woodlands.³⁰ A stone bridge across the swift flowing narrows of Elkhorn Creek added to the appearance and feel of an English estate. The quarries on the farm, for example, supplied the stone for this purpose, as well as the construction of the miles of macadamized roads, illustrating the impact of vertical consolidation. Nearby, workmen dug an expansive lake, a ready-made feature of natural beauty, and stocked it with fanciful birds and fish. According to oral history, tunnels ran from the main house to the greenhouses and the carriage houses, one as short as three to four hundred feet, five feet high, and lined with white brick, the remnants of which still exist today.³¹ Elmendorf workmen constructed over fifteen miles of macadamized roads, all of which required large expenditures of effort to pack and bind together, and all of which were lined with embellished gardens, winding byways, shaded terraces, and wild flowers. Against this “veritable Eldorado of scenic variety and harmony” the personal residence of Haggin’s estate appeared refined, civilized, and picturesque.³²

Allowing for variations, most of the buildings on Elmendorf shared a distinctive architectural style that not only conformed to the standards of the Thoroughbred elite by refining the physical landscape, but the aesthetic continuity of exterior of various estates buildings also established the personal identity of the estate. The exterior of most buildings on Elmendorf was constructed of three specific building materials – rustic

³⁰ K.A. Harrison, “The Pride of the Bluegrass,” *The Country Gentlemen* (24 February 1912): 3. “California’s Trees for Haggin’s Place,” *New York Times* (14 April 1902).

³¹ Interview with Phyllis Rogers, (19 May 2004), at Keeneland Library, Kentucky; Interview with Thomas Brady, former manager of Elmendorf Farm, conducted by the author, (October 2007).

³² E.D. Seymour, “County Life Goes West,” *Country Life in America*, vol. 26 (August, 1914): 65.

stone, formal brick, and red Spanish tile – the influence of Rancho del Paso. The private stables and breeding barns, the front office, the gatehouse, even the interurban waiting station embodied the same features of stone, brick, and red tile as the buildings of the animals. However extravagant they were, these structures bore the mark of an industrial operation. A closer look at these buildings defined the combined effects of an efficient workplace wedded to an aristocratic landscape. The second most impressive building on the stud, aside from Haggin’s personal residence, were the structures devoted to the training and breeding of his horses. His barns were thoroughly functional and thoroughly extravagant. Haggin had commissioned H.I. Copeland, the prominent architect who had designed his palatial mansion, to plan and construct many of the buildings where his animals resided. They adopted manorial features such as wooden structures, Palladian, or arched windows, large roof cupolas, and cross-barred doors.³³ The broodmare barns, for example, consisted of three rather unique barns, with 12 sides and 33 stalls, which were utilized during foaling and weaning periods and valued at \$6000 each.³⁴ As a result, these structures were of size, grandeur, and stylistic features appropriate for the status of the world’s finest Thoroughbred breeder.³⁵

More commodious were the facilities for Haggin’s prized stallions, which were quartered “in all the luxury befitting their importance.”³⁶ The combination coach and stallion barn was in keeping with more traditional designs of Bluegrass breeding farms, featuring a typical center-aisle stall barn with two wings which was devoted solely to the

³³ Raitz, *America’s First Highway in the Trans-Appalachian West: Kentucky’s Maysville Road*, 69.

³⁴ “Live Stock and Crop News,” *Bourbon News* (7 April 1908).

³⁵ “James Ben Ali Haggin Barn,” in Historic American Buildings Survey Collection, at Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division, Washington D.C.

³⁶ Andres G. Leonard, “J.B. Haggin’s Beautiful Kentucky Estate,” *Illustrated Sporting News* 2, no. 31 (12 December 2003): 28.

sires. But its façade was not of folk tradition in any sense. The exterior was constructed of expensive building materials. Walls were constructed of limestone and brick with red-roof tile. Spaced at least one hundred yards from other structures, the high-quality construction made the stallion barn as nearly fire-proof as possible. Even stall partitions were made of brick, so that no ordinary fire would harm the fancy animals.³⁷

Very few could afford to build such farm buildings. As Karl Raitz, historical geographer, notes, “Buildings designed by Haggin’s architects were either out-of-scale or so idiosyncratic that they were copied by few other farms.”³⁸ Indeed, when the eminent actress Madame Rejane paid a visit to Elmendorf, she was reported to have been surprised that a stud “of such elegant appointments and conveniences could be found so far from the city. ‘You would not find it thus in France,’” Rejane declared.³⁹

The stallion barn may well have been the most symbolic farm building on Elmendorf, but the nerve center of Haggin’s empire was actually the power plant. Hidden beneath the aristocratic façade of Spanish tile, behind walls of red brick and limestone stone, black smoke billowed from the stacks of a privately owned plant. The resulting electricity provided energy for grinding grain, washing laundry, pumping water, generating heat and light. More importantly, the stud was made functional seven days a week, twenty-four hours a day by this self-contained plant.⁴⁰

³⁷ Breeder’s Gazette, *Farm Buildings. A Compilation of Plans for General Farm Barns, Cattle Barns, Dairy Barns, Horse Barns, Sheep Folds, Swine Pens, Poultry Houses, Silos, Feeding Racks, Farm Gates, Sheds, Portable Fences, Concrete Construction, Handy Devices, Etc.* (Chicago: The Breeder’s gazette, 1919): 61.

³⁸ Karl Raitz and Nancy O’Malley, *Kentucky’s Frontier Highway: Landscape Along the Maysville Road* (forthcoming publication by the University of Kentucky Press, 2012, 69.

³⁹ “Madame Rejane,” *Lexington Leader* (22 December 1904).

⁴⁰ Only 600 electric light and power stations existed in the New South by 1902, an average of 46 per state. Edward L. Ayers, *The Promise of the New South: Life After Reconstruction* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992): 73.

Photographs of Elmendorf revealed more ways in which the farm was designed to please the aristocratic eye. Haggin demolished a half-dozen functional barns because they interfered with the view of his mansion, a quarter of a mile above. Many of these structures were new, having only yet were “condemned” to be rebuilt far from the gleaming white house.⁴¹ Of course, not all of the buildings were destroyed on the farm. A crumbling slave cabin far removed from Haggin’s mansion bore the marks as being influenced by industrial forces. The cabin, consisting of two rooms separated by a hallway, or a “dogtrot,” once built by slaves, now sheltered black tenants. It was in essence an “Old South” structure in a “New South” landscape. Haggin may have been made a business of breeding and enjoyed the sport of racing, and who owed much to these black employees who helped fashion the finest horses and the picturesque landscape, removed from the view of his palatial home, nonetheless were left with no housing of their own.

⁴¹ S.A. Smith, “Elmendorf,” *The Morning Herald* (April 1901); *Bourbon News* (17 February 1906): 8.

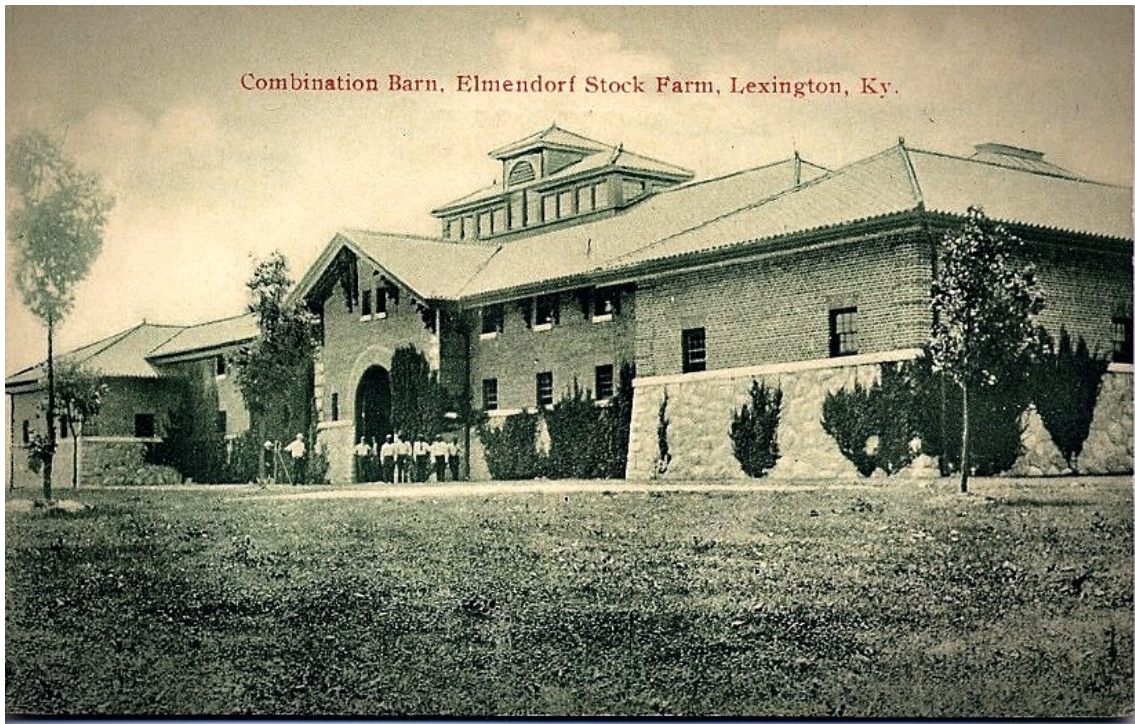


Figure 6.5: "Combination Barn," Lexington History Museum, Lexington, Kentucky.

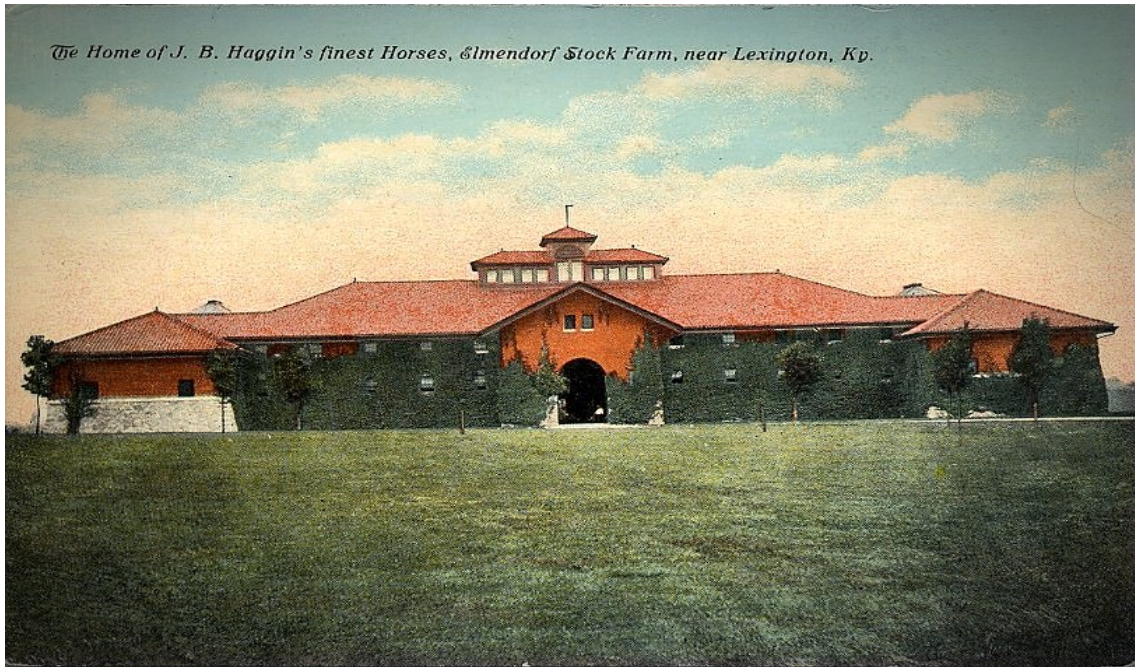


Figure 6.6: "The Home of J.B. Haggin's finest Horses, Elmendorf Stock Farm, near Lexington, Ky." Postcard Collection, circa 1890-1990, University of Kentucky.



Figure 6.7: "Office and Power Plant," Lexington History Museum, Lexington, Kentucky.

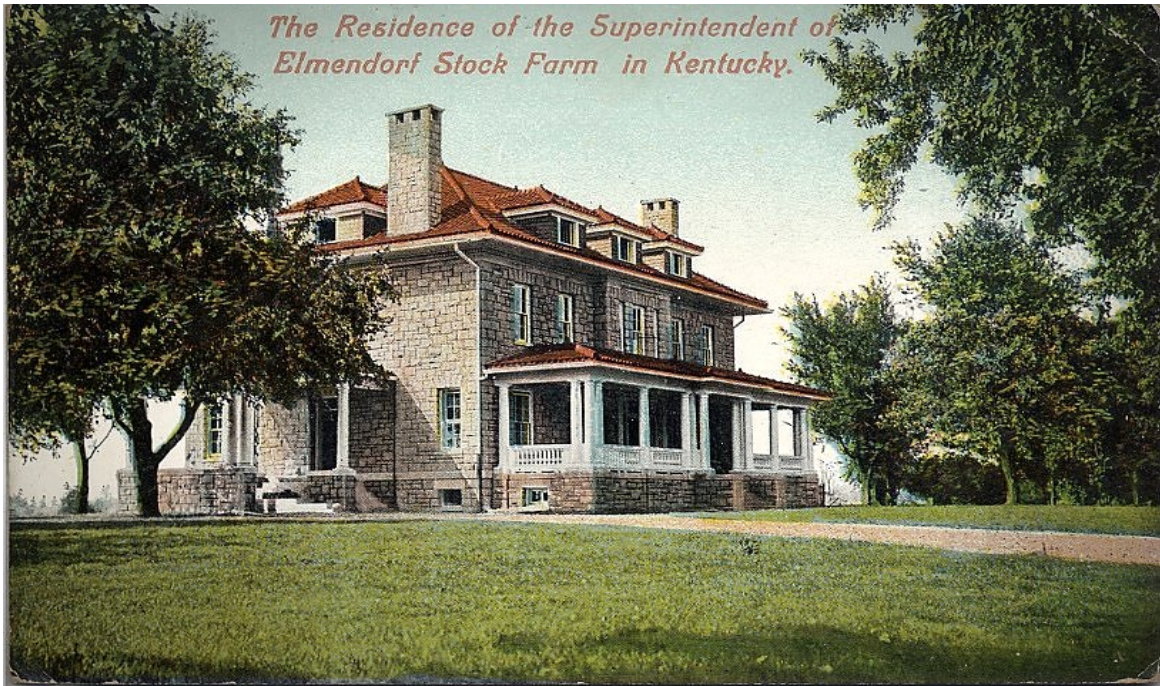


Figure 6.8: "The Residence of the Superintendent of Elmdorf Stock Farm," Lexington History Museum, Lexington, Kentucky.

Photographs also document the mandatory elegance and refinement of Haggin's structure but maps of Elmendorf demonstrate the ways in which the stud was planned as carefully for efficiency. To facilitate large scale production, Haggin had constructed all kinds of buildings, including sheds, tobacco barns, stallion barns, blacksmith, laundry, paddocks, offices, sheds, gate lodges, power plants, loading docks, and silos. Haggin even expanded vertically, building a feed and grain elevator to process and manufacture his own feed for the animals. Within a few years, Elmendorf was described by a visitor as "a colony of its own."⁴² This construction was executed with efficiency and segmentation. The networked of roads enabled a worker easier access to hay sheds, paddocks, and grain elevator when cutting, stacking, and loading heavy grains.⁴³

This execution of industrial activities included the adoption of time-saving devices. Each night fifteen men rode over the farm, walked the buildings, and registered their visit at one of the seventy- five hourly Hausburg clocks. Their sole duty was to guard and protect the gilded estate. Throughout the night watchmen were instructed to "punch," twice, the dials of the buildings, with the exception of the stallion barn, which was checked three times. Their job was to watch the premises, disallow any loitering of employees or trespassing of visitors, as well as report all "bad" gates and fences.⁴⁴ These "timekeepers" underscored how the rhythm of work on Elmendorf, like the landscape itself, was monitored in part by a machine, segmenting life and labor into minute particles.

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ "Elmendorf," *Sanborn Map Company. Insurance Maps of Lexington, Fayette Co., Kentucky* (New York: Sanborn Map Co, 1907).

⁴⁴ "Arson Trial," *Lexington Leader* (October 1905).

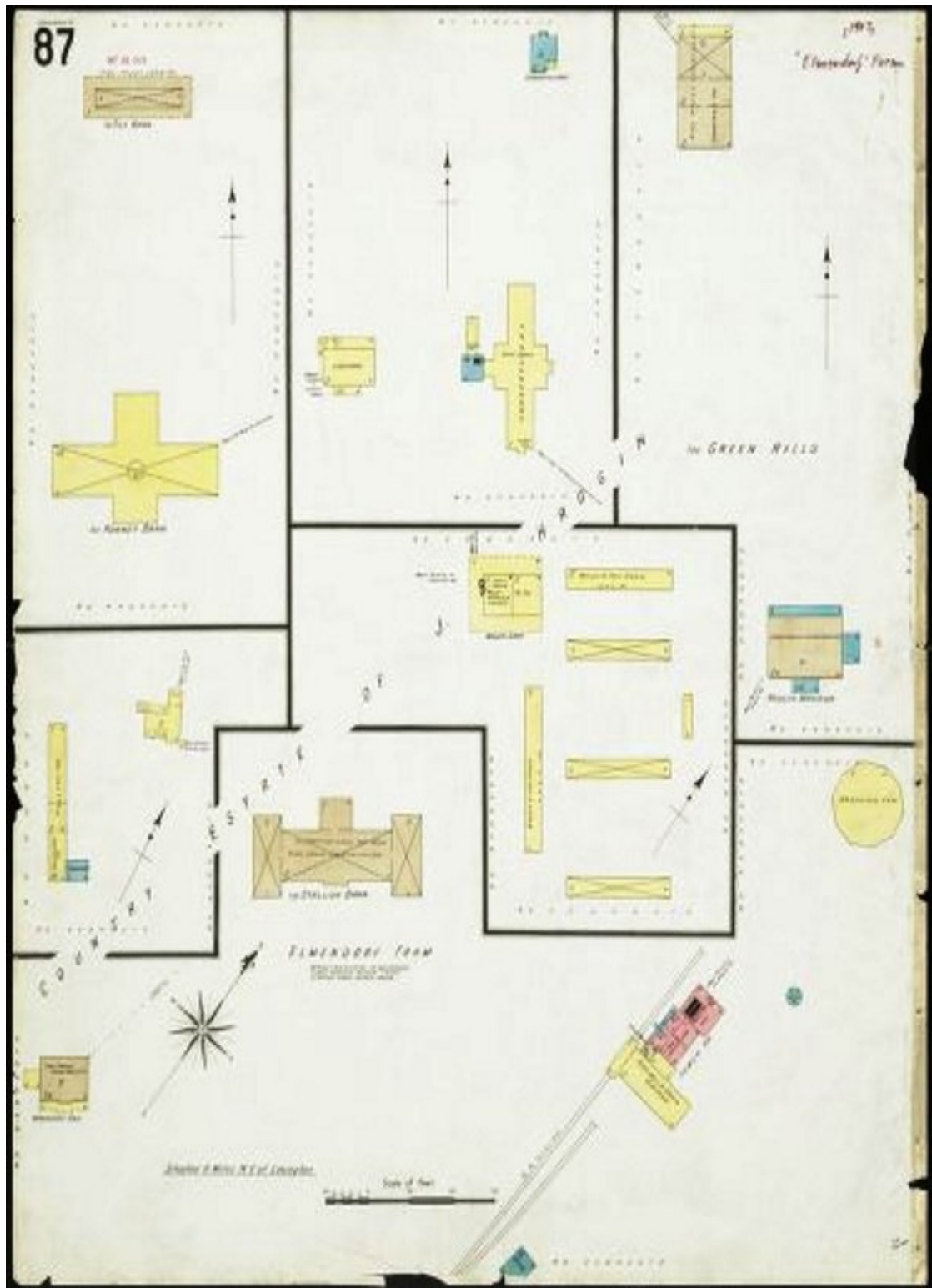


Figure 6.9: Insurance maps of Lexington, Fayette Co., Kentucky. (1907) University of Kentucky.

Another arbiter of time and speed on Elmendorf was the railline. Haggin poured large amounts of capital in private interlacing rail lines that gave his farm and his workers access to distant markets and places. He built a series of spur tracks and waiting stations that connected the Kentucky estate to a Louisville and Nashville line, known colloquially as the “Thoroughbred,” which ran from Lexington to Paris, traveling along some of the wealthier farms in the Bluegrass.⁴⁵ He also invested in interurban electric lines that ran adjacent to his farm. Long lines of trolley were laid on the outskirts of the estate, running parallel to Paris Pike, altering the rural countryside in a ubiquitous way. By 1903, these tracks tied Elmendorf to the cities of Lexington, Paris, and Versailles, offering Haggin’s workers a low fare and speedy commute. The interurban cars, however, struggled at times, and the farm began to employ other forms of transportation to haul workers to the farm.⁴⁶ The “Hands’ Wagon,” was actually a motor bus with wooden spokes that carried twenty-five to thirty workers at one time.⁴⁷ Eventually Elmendorf purchased two passenger buses to transport its urban employees from the farm.⁴⁸ With a total capacity of eighty passengers, the motorized vehicles were considered an expensive but worthwhile investment in mechanized transportation, offering considerable savings in the maintenance and fare of the interurban line.

⁴⁵ *Bourbon News* (17 June 1904): 1; Elmer Griffith Sulzer, *Ghost Railroads of Kentucky* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1998): 167-168.

⁴⁶ See, for example, Scovell’s criticisms of the interurban cars to Elmendorf.

⁴⁷ “Remember Back When,” *Lexington Herald Leader* (8 November 1973).

⁴⁸ “Elmendorf Puts on Auto Buses,” *Lexington Leader* (14 October 1914).

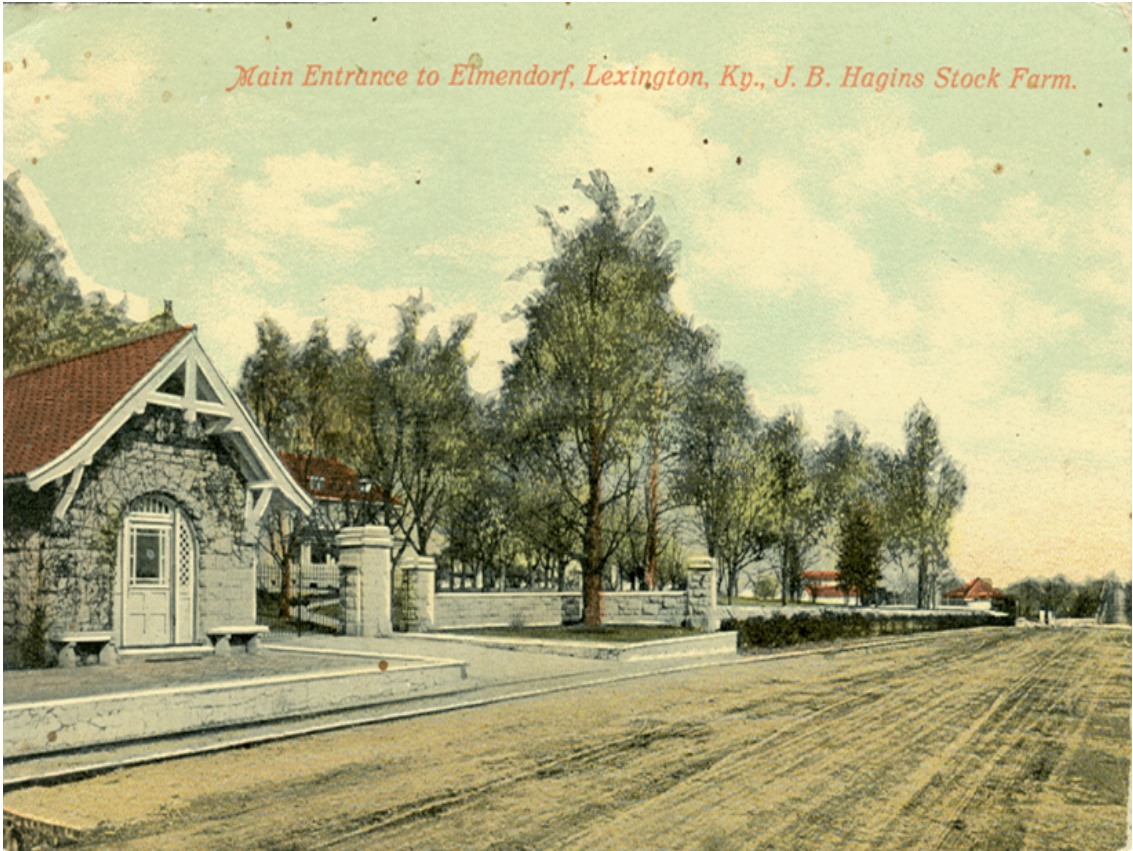


Figure 6.10: "Main Entrance to Elmendorf," Lexington History Museum, Lexington, Kentucky.

In Haggin's view, however, the personal experience of an efficient and expensive transportation system served more than the larger good of his stud. He and members of his family, of course, never used the "Hands' Wagon," enjoying instead a private chauffer and two Packard limousines, with the interior "as of the library or living room."⁴⁹ Private tracks and spurs dramatically reduced the time necessary to travel to Kentucky from New York, meaning the multi-millionaire no longer switched trains when visiting his Bluegrass estate. By 1904, Haggin boarded his posh railroad car, rumored to be one of the finest in the land, including an attached dining car, near his Fifth Avenue brownstone in New York City, and remained within its plush and private interior until he arrived at Gate Lodge, the ornamental stone gateway and lodge of Elmendorf.⁵⁰

Against the setting of terraced gardens, rolling lawns, perfectly graded driveways, stone bridges, flowing streams, and superb vistas, the landscape testified that Haggin had "spared no expense" to develop it "to the highest point of which art and invention was capable."⁵¹ To locals and visitors alike, it had become an imposing symbol of grandeur and success, a princely estate, not an enclave of vigorous industrial production. "Haggin's invasion of Kentucky," many argued, "rendered his native State a great service." Consequently, "No country in America, or perhaps in the world, is more susceptible of being transformed into a veritable fairyland than central Kentucky; and

⁴⁹ Residents of Lexington, however, kept a more sentimental, aristocratic memory of Haggin and his personal transportation. When Haggin came to Lexington, he would "drive through the city in his carriage drawn by four bobtailed horses, with a coachman and a bugle blower." "Remember Back When," *Lexington Leader* (13 September 1972); "Two Beautiful Limousines," *Lexington Leader* (11 September 1912).

⁵⁰ A switch engine took private interurban cars from the farm to the intersection of the Lexington-Paris line, which reached the L & N line traveling from New York to Lexington. *Bourbon News* (17 June 1904): 1.

⁵¹ "Green Hills and Its Thoroughbreds," *Town and Country* (8 April 1905); S.A. Smith, "Elmendorf," *The Morning Herald* (April 1901).

Nature, under the touch of the landscape gardener and the forester, completes a picture at Elmendorf and Green Hills that must be the delight of all beholders for generations to come.”⁵²

* * * *

The year 1905 marked the first time following the construction of Green Hills that Haggins did not summer at their Bluegrass home. Except for the comings and goings of a staff of black servants, the mansion was closed, and the decision to stay away from central Kentucky was the talk of Bluegrass society. Some believed Haggin was retiring from the Thoroughbred business. After all, he had sold his famous California stud that year, and the locals feared that the Kentucky operation might be next. The *Lexington Leader* dismissed the worries as gossip, calling it “Without Grounds.” Improvements were going on at Elmendorf on an “elaborate scale,” the *Lexington Leader* pointed out, and “Mr. Haggin is constantly adding more land to his possessions.”⁵³

But Haggin was estranged from Kentucky, and this estrangement was public fodder. In the fall of 1905, he became embroiled in a court battle with the Kentucky revenue department over back taxes. At trial, prosecution asserted that Haggin owed for five years of state and county taxes, totaling over \$386,000.⁵⁴ Armed with five counsels, including the former chief justice of Kentucky, they claimed that Haggin, as a resident of Kentucky, omitted to list his stocks, bonds, mortgages, and notes valued at 6.5 million

⁵² Leonard, “J.B. Haggin’s Beautiful Kentucky Estate,” *Illustrated Sporting News* 2, no. 31 (12 December 2003): 28 “Green Hills and Its Thoroughbreds,” *Town and Country* (8 April 1905).

⁵³ “Without Grounds,” *Lexington Leader* (15 October 1905): 1.

⁵⁴ “James M. Haggin,” Box 8, located in Scott Family Collection, at University of Kentucky Special Collections, University of Kentucky, Lexington, Kentucky.

dollars, subject to governmental assessment for taxes.⁵⁵ Haggin disagreed, and his team of lawyers sought to represent the world famous stud as a place whose chief functions involved recreation and relaxation. Haggin further expressed his intentions to change residency to New York when writing his will and issuing affidavits of titles.⁵⁶ However, the prosecution argued, Kentucky could require Haggin, as a resident of Kentucky, to list for assessment that part of his personal estate, tangible or intangible.⁵⁷

The Commonwealth of Kentucky had a relatively strong case against Haggin. In a number of legal and financial proceedings involving his other business endeavors, the financier declared his citizenship as a Kentuckian.⁵⁸ In December 1899, for example, he executed a bond for Wells Fargo & Company in which he stated that his residency was in Fayette County.⁵⁹ The following spring, in the suit of the *Cascade Water Co. v Homestake Mining Co.*, in the U.S. district court in South Dakota, Haggin testified, “My residence is in Kentucky.”⁶⁰ In a suit he singularly prosecuted in the district of West Virginia against the Flemington Coal & Coke Company, the bill of complaint states,

⁵⁵ *Commonwealth of Kentucky v. Haggin*, Amended and Substituted Petition, in “James M. Haggin,” Box 8, located in Scott Family Collection, at University of Kentucky Special Collections, University of Kentucky, Lexington, Kentucky.

⁵⁶ *Desento v. Haggin; The Mercantile Trust Company; Wells Fargo, El Paso, Texas; The Equitable Trust Company*, 1903;

⁵⁷ “*Commonwealth of Kentucky v. Haggin*, Amended and Substituted Petition,” in “James M. Haggin,” Box 8, located in Scott Family Collection, at University of Kentucky Special Collections, University of Kentucky, Lexington, Kentucky.

⁵⁸ “R.A. Thornton to J.B. Haggin,” (20 April 1909), in R.A. Thornton Letterbooks 1906-1909, Box 8, located in Scott Family Collection, at University of Kentucky Special Collections, University of Kentucky, Lexington, Kentucky.

⁵⁹ “*KY v. Haggin*, Memorandum as to Defense’s Domicile,” in “James M. Haggin,” Box 8, located in Scott Family Collection, at University of Kentucky Special Collections, University of Kentucky, Lexington, Kentucky.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

“That your orator is a citizen, resident, and inhabitant of the State and District of Kentucky.”⁶¹

But Kentucky had little success. The prosecution against Haggin failed for a number of reasons. As a veteran lawyer, Haggin had experience in manipulating the legal system. He stayed away from his Bluegrass estate, and thereby delayed the proceedings. He gave a deposition, emphatically stating that his home had been in New York continuously since 1892, but Haggin refused to testify at his trial in person. Ultimately, in both county and circuit courts, the defense ultimately showed that Haggin’s domicile was in New York, not Kentucky.⁶² They acquired several key witnesses, including the Honorable A. E. Richards of Louisville, who not only testified to Haggin’s residency in New York, but also attempted to persuade the state revenue agent to drop the case.⁶³

Equally critical to success was the battery of shrewd lawyers he employed. Alexander & Green in New York represented Haggin’s interests in domestic and foreign affairs. The able attorneys spent a considerable amount of time with the tax trial, taking

⁶¹ Ibid.

⁶² The decision was appealed to the Fayette County Circuit Court, where the case came before Judge Watts Parker, who supported the lower court’s decision in Haggin’s favor, citing want of jurisdiction, but never settling the issue of his domicile. The court of appeals in turn refused to rule in the case, saying that the circuit court, over which Judge Parker presided, should not have dismissed the case. Rather, he should have tried the case *de novo*, and itself should have adjudicated the question of Haggin’s residence. Although Settle did not reverse the case on the grounds of domicile, stating that the circuit court should have taken jurisdiction, he ruled decidedly in Haggin’s favor. Since the question of residency had been made the central issue of Haggin’s case, it needed to be returned to the lower court for a ruling. See R.A. Thornton to J.B. Haggin, (17 February 1907), in Letterbooks 1”James M. Haggin,” Box 8, located in Scott Family Collection, at University of Kentucky Special Collections, University of Kentucky, Lexington, Kentucky.

⁶³ A.E. Richards to R.A. Thornton, (21 March 1907), Box 9, located in Scott Family Collection, at University of Kentucky Special Collections, University of Kentucky, Lexington, Kentucky.

depositions, proofreading trial transcripts, and interpreting opinions.⁶⁴ The chief lawyer spearheading the fight was a Kentuckian named R.A. Thornton, a man seasoned in Kentucky politics and courtrooms, who proved integral to Haggin's triumph over the charge of back taxes. In 1907 Thornton wrote to Haggin that he had caught the state in a position, "where I could force them to trial" before the state counsel had investigated important affidavits, and thereby "I could keep them from getting in their most important testimony—a testimony while it would be difficult to explain and would have given up the greatest trouble."⁶⁵

Haggin hoped the court case marked the "end of my troubles on the subject of taxes" in Kentucky but his legal troubles did not go away. The following spring, he faced another kind of setback in Fayette County when local supervisors reassessed property taxes. Haggin's property values were a fraction of their market worth. The county assessor, for example, valued his pedigree horses—over 575 fancy Thoroughbreds—at a mere \$40,000.⁶⁶ To remedy the low taxes, the Board of Supervisors asserted their influence and proposed a more accurate assessment of the stud. In doing so, Haggin's property taxes increased almost \$350,000 in valuation over the previous year, almost \$8.5

⁶⁴ Green to R.A. Thornton (24 October 1905), and Green to R.A. Thornton (29 November 1905) in Box 8, located in Scott Family Collection, at University of Kentucky Special Collections, University of Kentucky, Lexington, Kentucky.

⁶⁵ R.A. Thornton to J.B. Haggin (20 April 1909) in Letterbooks, 1906-1909, Box 8, located in Scott Family Collection, at University of Kentucky Special Collections, University of Kentucky, Lexington, Kentucky.

⁶⁶ "Haggin Real Estate Hard Hit," *Lexington Leader* (12 August 1905); Such low assessments were common for the Elmendorf estate. In 1900 over 250 mares, colts, and fillies were assessed for \$22,000, an assessment of less than \$100 a horse. This ratio persisted for the next three years. See "Tax Worksheets," in C.J. Enright's Deposition, located in Scott Family Collection, at University of Kentucky Special Collections, University of Kentucky, Lexington, Kentucky.

million in contemporary value.⁶⁷ Coming at a time when the local governments, particularly in the far eastern valleys of the state, were enabling the growth of absentee landholding, the willingness of Fayette County to challenge Haggin in this manner was significant. It made for a unique moment whereby the local community sought to make the wealthier pay a greater share of taxes, shifting the burden for greater public services from the smaller landowner.⁶⁸

Haggin was furious. The tax assessment, like the residency suit, constituted acts of “blackmail,” and he was fed up with local officials who attacked his business and assaulted his reputation. Frustrated by the Board’s sudden turn in policy, he called the new assessment “unfair, excessive, and unjust,” especially in comparison to neighboring farms. Had he lost this case, the Haggins would have left Kentucky. His ire was typified in a note once dashed off to his lawyer, “I would take the Atlantic than to travel through the state.”⁶⁹

As it was, Haggin was never forced to take the ocean route to avoid Kentucky. His resident lawyer, R.A. Thornton, managed to put the local officeholders in a difficult position among their peers. By assessing Haggin’s broodmares at double the value of those of neighboring owners, Thornton wrote, the Board indirectly but publicly declared

⁶⁷ This figure took into account the construction of his palatial mansion and other expensive buildings, raising the cost of the Number #4 tract almost \$130,000. It also increased substantially the valuation of his animals. Haggin’s fancy horses went from \$40,000 to \$81,000. *Ibid.*

⁶⁸ For more about this pattern of absentee ownership in eastern Kentucky, see Ronald D Eller, *Miners, Millhands, and Mountaineers: Industrialization of the Appalachian South, 1880-1930* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1982); and Eller, *Uneven Ground: Appalachia Since 1945* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2008).

⁶⁹ J.B. Haggin to R.A. Thornton (March 15, 1905) in Box 9, “Jan-June 1905,” Box 8, located in Scott Family Collection, at University of Kentucky Special Collections, University of Kentucky, Lexington, Kentucky.

that the local breeders in Fayette County were inferior to Haggin.⁷⁰ Nevertheless, the residency and tax case changed the nature of Haggin's relationship with the Bluegrass.

In the midst of the court case, and throughout his depositions, Haggin often described the Kentucky stud as a place of rest and relaxation. "I enjoyed the air of Kentucky," he once explained. But after the residency and tax suit, never again did he consider it a place of retirement. Haggin confessed to his lawyer, "The truth of it is, I made a mistake in ever buying a foot of land in Kentucky or expending a dollar."⁷¹ The statement was vintage Haggin, never a man to be bullied. Having become completely disenchanted with Bluegrass society, Haggin and his wife joined the northern privileged flocking to Newport for summer retreat. He eventually purchased an extravagant country house called Villa Rose. With its neoclassical façade, including a circular marble gazebo that mirrored Marie Antoinette's Temple of Love by Mique at Versailles, the Newport estate was typical among Haggin's possessions, symbol of his social and economic prominence at the turn of the twentieth-century.⁷²

Ultimately Green Hills described as the "charmed effect of the Renaissance with typical Southern style," became a blatant symbol of absenteeism in central Kentucky.

Haggin hired competent and well-qualified locals to run his estate with crisp managerial

⁷⁰ Petition in Box 9, "Jan-June 1905" in Scott Family Collection, at University of Kentucky Special Collections, University of Kentucky, Lexington, Kentucky. Others landholders in Fayette County saw in increase in their property values. Some filed complaints with the county judge and the board of supervisors. Major Dangerfield, manager of Keene's Castleton farm, called their assessment "excessive and double that at which similar property owned by breeders in Fayette County" was valued. "Protests Filed," and "Judge Bullock," *Lexington Leader* (16 February 1905) and *Lexington Leader* (25 August 1905).

⁷¹ J.B. Haggin to R.A. Thornton (March 15, 1905) in Box 9, "Jan-June 1905" in Scott Family Collection, at University of Kentucky Special Collections, University of Kentucky, Lexington, Kentucky.

⁷² James L. Yarnall, *Newport Through Its Architecture: A History of Styles from Postmedieval to Postmodern* (Newport, R.I.: Salve Regina University Press in association with University Press of New England, Hanover and London, 2005); Paul Miller, *Lost Newport* (Applewood Books, 2010).

efficiency. Thus, the stud remained a kingdom for Haggin's horses, but one without a master. From his perspective, no one was to blame except the state of Kentucky.⁷³ But the greatest transformation, the tsunami of commercial chaos that wrought tremendous change throughout America's horse industry, was yet to come. These changes would not originate from judicial rulings but from the combined effects of structural changes in the marketplace followed by political decisions in the legislature. As a result, J.B. Haggin took it upon himself to rid himself and the Bluegrass of his prized horses, and in doing so nearly bring the entire Thoroughbred industry to its knees.

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⁷³ Leonard, "J.B. Haggin's Beautiful Kentucky Estate," *Illustrated Sporting News* 2, no. 31 (12 December 1903); J.B. Haggin to R.A. Thornton, (17 October 1905) in Box 9, "Jan-June 1905" in Scott Family Collection, at University of Kentucky Special Collections, University of Kentucky, Lexington, Kentucky.

Chapter Seven

An Empire Falls: The Sales of Elmendorf Stud Farm

On December 8, 1905, a huge stallion paraded into the central sales ring at Sheepshead Bay. The sixteen-year-old sire was the main attraction at a sale that drew so many monied buyers that they overflowed in the big hall. The current champion who possessed bloodlines from winning imported stock was the son of Springfield, one of the fastest stallions of the day, and Wharfedale, a daughter of the influential broodmare, Queen Mary; the breeder of this impressive equine specimen was Lord Falmouth, Duke of Westminster, who was of impeccable pedigree himself. Bothered by the leather halter, the magnificent stallion pushed his nose in the air while bidding was encouraged by the rapid chatter of the auctioneer's chants. Poker-faced buyers signaled their bids to the auctioneer, touching their chins, using upraised fingers, or nodding their heads. When the hammer came down, the stallion had been sold back to his former owner for the staggering sum of \$71,000, over \$1.5 million in today's value, the third-highest price ever paid at auction to that date. This single re-purchase signified a greater cost than some attending buyers had paid for their entire breeding estate.¹

While extraordinary transactions were ordinary events for James B. Haggin, his re-purchase of Watercress in 1905 marked a portentous moment in his horse empire. Six months earlier, the New York multimillionaire had announced the decision to liquidate his California Thoroughbred holdings. Much of America paid attention to the fateful

¹ *Breeder and Sportsman* (20 November 1905).

decision. Newspapers across the country carried reports of the “most notable sale of Thoroughbred horses in history.”²

What prompted Haggin to liquidate his renowned California stud? Louie Lee Haggin II, great grandson of James Ben Ali Haggin and subsequent owner of Mt. Brilliant Farm, believed that the creation and pull of Elmendorf prompted his decision, but in truth Haggin faced a real dilemma with his California operation.³ His partner Lloyd Tevis fought increasingly poor health during the 1890s until he passed away in 1899. Although Haggin easily oversaw the massive development of the California stud, an estate auction to clear the slate seemed the best course for dissolving the famous partnership.

From a larger perspective, the truth behind the famous horse sale appears to be more complex. When he announced the sale of Rancho del Paso, Haggin complained of the poor returns of the Thoroughbred business. He told a *New York Times* reporter that both studs brought meager returns to its owner. “My regret over parting with them,” he explained, “is more sentimental than practical, for, generally speaking, neither the California nor my Kentucky property has ever yielded an adequate return in dollars and cents.”⁴

² Example of the newspaper cross-sections, see ; “The Sale of Thoroughbreds,” *The Richmond Climax* (4 October 1905): 1; “Horses Go East,” *Palestine Daily Herald* (Texas) (24 November 1905); “Rancho del Paso Sale,” *New York Daily Tribune* (27 November 1905): 12; quote from *Breeder and Sportsman* (20 November 1905).

³ “All goes back to the Kentucky background,” the grandson later told a turf reporter. “As mother always said, ‘It [Kentucky] is like honey attracting bees; they’re [Kentuckians] always coming back.’” Interview with Louis Lee Haggin II, by Mary Jane Gallaher, (7 February 1980) in Horse Industry in Kentucky Oral History Project, at Louie B. Nunn Center for Oral History, University of Kentucky, Lexington, Kentucky.

⁴ “The Passing of Rancho del Paso,” *New York Times* (8 October 1905); “Haggin Stud to be Sold,” *Los Angeles Herald* (29 September 1905): 9.

Although Haggin operated his studs like his other industrial enterprises, utilizing maximum production and maximum efficiency, the large scales of his operation had worked against him, and resulted in giving considerable advantage to the buyer. Haggin's defiance of economic principles and logic in the Thoroughbred industry was not uncommon among wealthy breeders who made varied attempts to improve the running horse but as often as not ended up in the red. Like other breeders, Haggin delighted in watching his future champions grow, romp, and race. But he was singularly different from smaller breeders in that he operated with freedom from the normal anxieties of a market economy that troubled smaller breeders. Because he was, in no way, dependent upon his horses for his livelihood, he could sell them at an occasional loss. When questioned about a fair price for his horses, "Rather than take less than \$100 for my colts," he once declared, "I will knock them in the head or shoot them and feed them to the hogs."⁵

Haggin realized that the Kentucky horse farm defied logic of the business world. "A breeding farm is a poor investment financially," he concluded, "and at best demands close attention—more, in fact, than it is possible for a busy man like myself to give it."⁶ Still, the sales of Elmendorf stock resembled Haggin's other industries in that its economies expanded in scope and size. His system of sales was modeled on economics rather than sustainability, on distant markets rather than local sites, on cultural consumption rather than a cultural consummation of his yearlings. Selling his horses in such a manner ultimately promised to upend the delicate balance of a national market.

⁵ "Haggin Replies," *Lexington Leader* (26 July 1904): 7.

⁶ "The Passing of Rancho del Paso," *New York Times* (8 October 1905).

* * * *

During the first few weeks of June the paddocks at Sheepshead Bay were a dynamic place. Under the shade trees of these dirt tracks, champagne and beer flowed at what has been described as “the event of the horseman’s year.”⁷ Twice a year—one fixture in the spring and another in fall—James B. Haggin hosted sales at Sheepshead Bay to showcase his crops of yearlings. Colts and fillies in the second year of their life, young and untried, were shipped from California and Kentucky to the New York racetrack and offered at public auction. Crowds teemed with prospective buyers, curious speculators, and leviathan breeders. Some spent tens of thousands on a colt and filly, and the next morning made news of social significance in papers across the country. As the prices rose higher and the pedigrees more distinguished, so did the attire of the bidders, who often came to Haggin’s auctions in evening dress. They were looking for perfect symmetry and balance, strong shoulders, deep girth, and good hips, but more importantly, they were seeking a bargain, a yearling that would make their stables famous. And many of them believed they had found it at J.B. Haggin’s sales.

From the late 1880s, when he made his first inroads to New York, to the early 1910s, Haggin sold Thoroughbreds in a way no specialized breeder in America had ever done. He sent carloads of Kentucky-bred horses to Sheepshead Bay where they were entered alongside and joined with his California commodities in the New York sale ring. His sales generated the largest display of pedigree bloodlines in the world. As a leading turf writer reported, “It is quite probable that his annual crop of yearlings is equal in numbers to all the yearlings bred in Kentucky.” By 1904 it was asserted Haggin

⁷ “Men and Women of the Outdoor World,” *Outing* (May 1904).

“practically controls Fasig-Tipton & Co.,” the largest auction house in New York. Therefore, the Bluegrass breeder enjoyed a monopoly on the sale of yearlings in the East. “He can and does secure the best dates; his yearlings are always the first sold by the company,” noted the *Lexington Herald*.⁸ His sales were often conducted under the watchful eye and lyrical chants of William Easton, the manager of Fasig-Tipton, who, wearing his customary boutonniere, presented the horses in a way to catch the purse strings.⁹

The kind of horse Haggin sold and the scale on which he did it were integral components substantiating his influence on the national Thoroughbred markets. Changes in the kinds of races helped make this possible. Principal stakes were for two and three-year olds, and no nominations were received for yearlings, since races were closed when the horses were only one-year-old. As one turf reporter explained in 1891, “As they [the yearling] are unknown quantities at that time, so far as the actual ability is concerned, it is the custom of owners to name several in each race, in the hope that one may prove a jewel and capture the prize.”¹⁰

With the changes of prominent races, the yearling had come to represent something of a gamble for the buyer, which helped make Haggin’s sales ever so inviting. As a rule, buyers used bloodlines and family history as a guide, which made Haggin’s sales so promising. At Rancho del Paso and Elmendorf, he owned a large share of the choicest strains of English and American blood in America. With over thirty stallions,

⁸ *Lexington Herald* (23 July 1904).

⁹ Easton was manager of Tattersalls of New York and a person of prominence in the equine sale world. On Tattersall’s history, see V. Orchard, *Tattersalls* (London: Hutchinson, 1953); P. Willet, *The Story of Tattersalls* (London: Stanley Paul, 1987); Ken McCarr, *The Kentucky Harness Horse* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1978): 44.

¹⁰ Quoted in Carleton Burke, “Pastime of Millions,” *Thoroughbred of California* (March 1946): 58.

many of them imported at phenomenal expense, and an exorbitant selection of domestic pedigree broodmares, his equine progeny eclipsed others in not only bloodlines but in selection as well. Fancy yearlings were being shipped from California and Kentucky to New York in sums of unprecedented size. Between 1901 and 1903, for example, over six hundred yearlings grossed well over twenty-two million dollars today.¹¹

But shipping such numbers of prized commodities over long distances required a special kind of transportation system. When Haggin sent horses from central Kentucky to southern New York, he relied upon the overland system of railroads first established in central California. Like Rancho del Paso's caravan, the steam and iron caravan of expensive freight cars was a spectacular sight. Haggin had built private spurs and waiting stations on the Bluegrass stud. A switch engine took private rail cars from the farm to the intersection of the Lexington-Paris line, where a now-abandoned line appropriately called the "Thoroughbred," carried them from Lexington to Paris, through Cincinnati, over four major routes to New York in express time.¹² Some horses suffered from the ordinary difficulties of rail travel, such as bruising and sickness, and those unfit for sale were sent to a nearby New Jersey farm for recuperation.¹³ But few were exposed to bruising and sickness in large part because of Haggin's fancy accommodations.

¹¹ "Last Day of Haggin Sale," *New York Times* (20 June 1901): 8; "Echoes from the Eastern Racetracks," *San Francisco Call* (13 July 1901); "Sale of Rancho del Paso Yearlings," *San Francisco Call* (17 June 1902); "Haggin Colts Sell for Fancy Prices," *San Francisco Call* (19 June 1902); "Big Prices for California Yearlings," (17 June 1902): 5; "Big Yearling Sale Begun," *New York Times* (16 June 1903): 8; "Big Price for a Yearling," *New York Times* (17 June 1903): 7; "Big Prices for Yearlings," *New York Times* (18 June 1903): 5.

¹² *Bourbon News* (17 June 1904): 1. Sulzner, *Ghost Railroads*, 167-168; "Horse Sales," *Lexington Leader* (1907).

¹³ Reference has been made that the stud experienced several deaths because of the train trip. See Burke, "Pastime of Millions," *Thoroughbred of California* (June 1946): 44.

Here, as previously noted, the workers found an abundance of modern conveniences, including cooking facilities, a heating unit, sleeping bunks, and seating facilities. This rail car contained the essential paperwork for the sales, the pedigree files and sales catalogues, as well as amenities that would not have entered the imaginations of all but the wealthiest. The freight cars carrying his horses were specifically designed for comfort and safety but few showed the privileged wealth embodied than the palatial private car used for the executives of Elmendorf Farm. Al Berger, an acquaintance of Mackey who served as his guest chef, described the “remarkable car” as, “Dining room, kitchen, sleeping compartment, and most important, the commissary. The latter was under the car, the whole length of it. It was iced from outside. Contained all the good eats one could imagine—chops, steaks, mallards, quail, whiskey, champagne.”¹⁴

No facet was more profound than the sheer scales of Haggin’s yearling sales. For over a decade and a half, the owner of Elmendorf simply dwarfed the size and influence of other breeders across the nation. In 1898 he sold 69 one-year-olds at the June sale, nearly four times the average sale. In 1898 he increased his lot to 84.¹⁵ In 1901 the number doubled, as two hundred yearlings from Rancho del Paso and Elmendorf consumed six days of auctioneering. The following year Haggin submitted a fifth of all Thoroughbreds sold in New York, 194 yearlings.¹⁶ That figure doubled again in 1903. Over 350 youngsters were shipped from California and Kentucky to New York.¹⁷ So large was the number of yearlings in 1904, newspapers reported that fifty cars were

¹⁴ *Breeder and Sportsman* (20 November 1905); Burke, “Pastime of Millions,” *Thoroughbred of California* (March 1946): 16.

¹⁵ *Daily Racing Form* (3 June 1900).

¹⁶ “Haggin Colts,” *San Francisco Call* (19 June 1902).

¹⁷ “Big Yearling Sale Begun,” *New York Times* (16 June 1903).

required to move the yearlings from his two studs to New York.¹⁸ Haggin went on to set breathtaking records in 1905, offering 200 yearlings in the spring and 564 horses in the fall.¹⁹

That Haggin overwhelmed America's Thoroughbred trade was further illustrated by an annual sales record of Fasig-Tipton. In 1901 the largest auction house in New York reported revenues of \$1,018,285, an average of \$1,426 per animal in sixteen sales. Of the 714 horses sold, 475 were yearlings owned by at least fourteen prominent breeders, including, among others, H.P. Headley, Colonel Clay, Major B.G. Thomas, and Marcus Daly. The master of Elmendorf, however, claimed more horses than the all breeders combined. His share of yearlings was nearly half of the grand total—219 of the 475 horses—sold by the most influential animal broker during the spring season of 1901.²⁰

As his scales grew in size, communities across the country looked on with an air of interest. From Texas to Minnesota, and from California to Kentucky, editors featured Elmendorf and Rancho del Paso sales, reporting numbers and prices of his spring and fall sales in New York. Stories of the Haggin sales appeared from Marietta, Ohio, a city made known as the first “capitol” of the Northwest Territory, to Salt Lake City, Utah, home to the biggest lake west of the Mississippi, to Sumter, South Carolina, when Anthony L. Aste, otherwise known as “Tony the bootblack,” landed a Haggin horse at his New York auction.²¹ That these events appeared in papers, small and large, that filtered national

¹⁸ “Fifty Special Cars Carrying Yearlings,” *San Francisco Call* (4 June 1904): 2.

¹⁹ “Live Stock and Crop News,” *Bourbon News* (30 May 1905).

²⁰ *Daily Racing Form* (2 July 1901): 3.

²¹ See, for example, *The Watchman and Southern* (Sumter, S.C.) 1881-1930 (1 July 1903); *Desert Evening News* (Great Salt Lake City [Utah]) 1867-1920 (18 June 1903): 1; “High Prices for Horses”; *Marietta Daily Leader* (Marietta, Ohio) (16 June 1901): 8.

news to their communities' tastes and interests, demonstrated the sensationalism of Haggin's sales in the first years of the twentieth-century. It made for a story of the wealthy and fantastic, with prices far exceeding the reality that most subscribers comprehended.

It was not just the extraordinary volume involved; initially it was the high prices at which hundreds of Haggin's horses were sold. His yearlings initially sold hundred dollars more than the average yearling price. Prices seemed stable at first, as yearling prices held over the first few years. During the spring sale in June 1901, Fasig Tipton sold 475 yearlings for \$527,480, an average price of \$1110; Haggin's 219 yearlings brought \$260,520, an average price of \$1196.²² Haggin fared well financially the following year. In 1902 he sent another large disbursement of yearlings—194—where “big prices ruled”—\$216,700.²³ One untried yearling brought \$21,000.²⁴ And Haggin took the domestic Thoroughbred trade with an overwhelming force in 1903; his youngsters bred at Rancho del Paso and Elmendorf grossed over \$300,000.²⁵ But this remarkable expansion of scales and trade came at a tremendous cost.

Evidence that the economic bedrock of Haggin's tremendous sales was eroding was seen in the domestic market of Thoroughbred sales, which had always been notoriously unstable. The 1899 sale, for example, was abysmal. Indeed, many of Haggin's offerings received no bid at all. “The whole thing fell rather flat,” as one reporter commented, “It does not pay J.B. Haggin to bring his yearlings from Rancho del

²² In 1901 Haggin sold 201 head for a grand total of \$233,925. “Last Day of Haggin Sale,” *New York Times* (20 June 1901).

²³ *New York Times* (15 June 1902); “Big Prices for California Yearlings,” *New York Times* (17 June 1902); “Haggin Colts Sell for Fancy Prices,” *San Francisco Call* (19 June 1902): 4.

²⁴ “Big Prices for California Yearlings,” *New York Times* (17 June 1902).

²⁵ “Big Yearling Sale Begun,” *New York Times* (16 June 1903); “Big Price for Yearling,” *New York Times* (17 June 1903): 8; “The Haggin Sale,” *Daily Racing Form* (30 June 1903).

Paso to sell at auction here.”²⁶ The situation was not much better the following spring. Of the 84 yearlings brought to Madison Square Garden, combined sales brought only \$75,725, with an average of \$601 per head. A number of yearlings by Goldfinch, Star Ruby, Sir Modred, Golden Garter, and Ben Ali went for less than \$500.²⁷ Haggin sustained substantial losses with his Rancho and Elmendorf yearlings, forcing him to keep many of the prized youngsters for himself and return to the turf the following racing season. His supply of pedigree horses far surpassed demand, and Haggin was in part responsible for the collapse of domestic prices.

Although prices rebounded over the next three years, between 1900 and 1903, the sharp ascent was temporary, and sales returned to their previous low mark. A New York turf writer noted, “The prices were smaller than the average for the horses bred by Mr. Haggin, and nearly half [of those] catalogued either were passed out of the ring or were reported not present.”²⁸ Another reporter commented that a large crowd was in attendance at the spring sale of 1904 but prices “fell below expectation,” in part, because the stock was of “inferior quality.”²⁹

The real problem, however, was overproduction. Although his collections of Thoroughbreds were not only the largest, among the most valuable, producing his horses in high volume came at high costs for himself and the nation’s industry. And the domestic trade suffered as a result. Alarmed by the flood of horses, some charged that Haggin was responsible for the poor market. An editor in the *Illustrated Sporting News*

²⁶ “Young Racers at Auction,” *New York Times* (10 June 1899).

²⁷ “Notes of the Turf,” *Daily Racing Form* (13 June 1900).

²⁸ “Small Prices for Yearlings,” *New York Times* (23 June 1904): 7.

²⁹ “Haggin Thoroughbreds at Low Prices,” *New York Times* (17 June 1904): 10; “Bennington Buys High Price Colts,” *New York Times* (18 June 1904): 7; *The Evening World* (New York, N.Y.) (20 June 1904): 2.

declared in 1904, “The real trouble is J.B. Haggin. He owns the two greatest breeding establishments in the world—Green Hills-Elmendorf, near Lexington, and Rancho del Paso, in California, and, it is said, endeavors to dispose of his yearlings in a manner that is disgusting to all men who seek fair play in the sale ring.”³⁰

To his critics, Haggin had become a symbol of the ungentlemanly excesses of that period. He had devised a “racing trust,” they complained, intended to drive the price and induce bidders to pay more than was necessary. The editor was referring to the proven tactic of stooges who were planted in the crowd to make false bids. “Turfmen were slow finding out,” complained the editor, “that, instead of bidding among themselves, they were, in many instances, making genuine offers against alleged staged offers that came from Haggin’s reputed representatives in the ring.”³¹ These accomplices bought the yearlings for “fabulous prices at his sales, and then give a mortgage on all of the stakes and purses they expect to try for.”

Some in the Bluegrass defended Haggin. The Lexington *Herald* dismissed the article, calling it a “grave injustice.” Haggin’s policies, they explained, had not changed over the years. His representatives always purchased a commodity if bidding prices were lower than expected. Furthermore, had his yearlings gone to the general market and not to his own representatives, there would be no market for the offerings of others. Haggin, they argued, “relieved the market of just that many horses and left room for the sale of the Kentucky yearlings.”³²

Haggin himself did not take kindly to his critics. He understood their comments as an attack on his personal integrity. “I am sorry breeders do not approve of my mode of

³⁰ *Illustrated Sporting News* (23 July 1904).

³¹ *Illustrated Sporting News* (23 July 1904); *Lexington Herald* (11 July 1904).

³² *Ibid.*

selling my yearlings,” he responded. “I confess I have never consulted them or they me.” He then launched what proved to be a rare glimpse into the business side of producing Thoroughbreds. “Naturally the buyer and the seller are antagonistic,” he explained. “One wants a horse as cheap as he can get it and the other wants as much as he can get for it, and, therefore, they are pulling in opposite directions.” He acknowledged, “Of course, all the horses I bring to the sale ring are not Waterboys, Watercolors, or Africanders, but many are just as good, and if the buyer thinks he is going to get them for nothing, or for a song, he need not come to my sale.”³³

Of course, Haggin could not be blamed entirely for the downswing in the Thoroughbred economy. One of the major culprits was the nature of the industry. Thoroughbred breeding remained at once a sport, hobby, and profession carefully circumscribed by barriers of class, which was always undergirded by wealth. It simply took large amounts of capital to start and maintain a breeding and racing stable. Feed was increasingly high, not to mention the expense of maintaining a stable, along with providing the capital to employ an army of jockeys, trainers, and groomsmen. Furthermore, owners had to keep and train the yearling for nearly a year before a return on investments could possibly be realized. The Thoroughbred industry, then, remained a closed game, as described one turf reporter, in “which only a very rich man can engage, and that, gradually, the small breeder must go the way of the small owner and leave the breeding as well as the racing of horses to the millionaires.”³⁴

The Rancho/Elmendorf sales would initially break down some of these barriers surrounding the “Sport of Kings,” as it were, by redistributing horses within the elite

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ Ibid.

racing industry and encouraging a movement of affluent horse owners into the racing industry. Though the cost of Haggin's yearlings was by no means cheap with prices outside the reach of most Americans, superior yearling stock was not terribly expensive. With as little as a few hundred dollars, anyone could purchase a yearling with prestigious bloodlines, a colt by Watercress, or a filly by Salvator.³⁵ Some took advantage of Haggin's increasing scales and distressed prices to either begin or expand their stables, thereby joining with the elite of the Thoroughbred racing world. Others purchasing Haggin's colts and fillies were not breeders. They did not have farms, nor did they desire any. As one turf reporter described them, "They prefer to buy their horses at these sales, and be saved the annoyance of raising them."³⁶

But the best bargain came the following year at "The Most Notable Sale of Thoroughbred Horses in History." In November 1905, four special trains, 48 cars in all, pulled out of the Ben Ali Station in Sacramento, California, destined for Sheepshead Bay, New York.³⁷ In a moving demonstration of the size and importance, the steam armada tied up three different railroad lines and required a force of over a hundred men to accompany the train, which included a superior for the Illinois Central, General Agent W.W. Snedaker, who accompanied the trains to insure its delivery.³⁸ The world's largest shipment of Thoroughbreds unfolded fairly smoothly but it cost Haggin a chunk of money. All told, Haggin was reported to have paid an exorbitant \$150,000 for the railroad armada from California to New York.

³⁵ Burke, "Pastime of Millions," *Thoroughbred of California* (July 1946): 17.

³⁶ *Ibid.*

³⁷ *Breeder and Sportsman* (November 20, 1905); "Haggin Shipment," *Lexington Leader* (1905)

³⁸ *Ibid.*

Six days later, on December 5, 1905, at the corner of East Thirteenth Street at Van Tassell & Kearney's Emporium, Haggin auctioned 20 stallions, 464 mares, 13 yearlings, and 27 two- and three-year olds.³⁹ On its first day, auction attendance was large and the bidding was spirited.⁴⁰ Over 1200 persons mingled around on the sawdust square, including the most prominent horse people in the country. Some were well known breeders, like Harry Payne Whitney and Milton Young. A few, most notably A.J. Joyner and P.J. Dwyer, were successful trainers.⁴¹ Some were rich and savvy men who found themselves with a rare opportunity to expand their holdings.⁴² H. T. Oxnard, for example, president of the American Beet Sugar Company, purchased 33 mares on the first day of Haggin's dispersal sale for his Blue Ridge Stud in Virginia.⁴³

Haggin soon encountered a reminder that the industrial scales of pedigree animals did not pay off in a big way. By the second day the demand for Rancho del Paso horses was weak. Ninety-eight broodmares of proven winners averaged only \$614, and several stallions went for \$500.⁴⁴ Two days later, three hundred head of del Paso bloodstock had been sold for \$190,440, an average of \$628.⁴⁵ The final sale day brought its highest prices, only because Haggin, himself, paid the heftiest prices for his own stock. The two and three-year-old fillies, reserved as yearlings but never bred, sold better. Twenty-two fillies brought \$21,000. Also in poor demand were Haggin's yearlings. A chestnut filly by Star Ruby, for example, sold for the good price of \$5,500.⁴⁶ One hundred and one

³⁹ "Rancho Del Paso Sale," *New York Daily Tribune* (27 November 1905).

⁴⁰ "Rancho del Paso Sale," *New York Daily Tribune* (5 December 1905): 11.

⁴¹ "Haggin Buys Watercress," *New York Daily Tribune* (8 December 1905).

⁴² "Thoroughbred Racing," *New York Daily Tribune* (11 December 1905): 10.

⁴³ *Ibid.*

⁴⁴ Burke, "Pastime of Millions," *Thoroughbred of California* (June 1946): 9.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

⁴⁶ "Haggin Buys Watercress," *New York Daily Tribune* (8 December 1905).

head of horses were sold on December 4, 1905 for \$213,650, average of \$2,115. Eighteen stallions went for \$146,750, forty-nine broodmares for \$34,100, twenty-one two and three year old fillies for \$21,000, and thirteen yearlings for \$11,900.⁴⁷ By the fourth day Haggin had reached a breaking point. His pedigree horses were going for paltry sums, and he felt compelled to purchase many of his animals and transfer them to Kentucky. Some that commandeered steep prices included Star Ruby, which cost \$30,000, and Goldfinch, which cost an additional \$16,000. Indeed, of the eighteen stallions offered, Haggin bid on fourteen.⁴⁸ His purchases accounted for nearly a third of all money pledged at the public auction: \$130,000 of the \$405,000.⁴⁹ That the sale of Haggin's horses had fallen far below expectations was reinforced the following year. In 1906 he made the last shipment of California horses—218 yearlings from over 20 celebrated stallions—from Sacramento to New York where he achieved similar results.⁵⁰

Haggin had to know beyond a doubt that “the most notable sale of the Thoroughbred horses in history” had failed miserably. As compared to other estate auctions of notable horse breeders, like August Belmont or Marcus Daly, his dispersal sale of Rancho del Paso had achieved but modest results. In 1891, for example, Belmont's breeding and racing stables sold for \$651,350, while Daly's stables in 1901 went for \$405,525, as did W.C. Whitney's breeding stock in 1904, which netted over

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ “Haggin Secures Watercress for \$71,000 at Auction,” *Sacramento Daily Union* (8 December 1905): 11; “Royally Bred is this Thoroughbred Foal,” *Lexington Leader* (20 April 1907).

⁴⁹ “Thoroughbred Racing,” *New York Daily Tribune* (11 December 1905): 10. In addition to Watercress, Haggin purchased Star Ruby for \$30,000 and Goldfinch and St. Gatien, among others, each for \$16,000. “Haggin Secures Watercress for \$71,000 at Auction,” *Sacramento Daily Union* (8 December 1905): 11.

⁵⁰ “Last of Rancho del Paso Horses Reach New York,” *San Francisco Call* (14 June 1906): 1; Rancho del Paso Sale Catalogue (1906) at Bancroft Library, University of California Berkeley, California.

\$460,000 for only fifty-two head.⁵¹ Yet, the dismal sale of his California stud never extinguished Haggin's desire to remain the world's largest breeder.⁵²

Overnight the home of the greatest breeding establishment in the world had shifted from California to Kentucky. Three trains carrying over a hundred highly bred mares and stallions arrived at the Kentucky stud that fall. So large were shipments a force of fifty men meet at midnight to meet its passengers.⁵³ Observers estimated that over a thousand Thoroughbreds—33 stallions, 482 mares, and over 600 yearlings—were kept at Elmendorf.⁵⁴ Sale reports testify to the extraordinary growth of the Kentucky operation. In 1907, thirteen carloads of yearlings, comprising 260 head, were shipped from Lexington to Sheepshead Bay.⁵⁵

⁵¹ "Haggin Buys Watercress," *New York Daily Tribune* (8 December 1905).

⁵² Though horses still mattered to Haggin, economically and emotionally, he decided against retaining his property in Sacramento, California. He sold the 44,000 acres to the Sacramento Valley Colonization Company, and the Rancho del Paso that took form after this reflected an agricultural landscape well known in the state. A landscape of suburb-like colonies took shape along the American River that provided a great contrast to the industrial stud. Rather than a large farm producing an expensive and valuable commodity, Haggin's plant was converted into a series of small farms producing an inexpensive and perishable product, as the famous stud was subdivided by speculators and settlers who attempted to make money growing fruit and raising chickens. Sears and Roebuck of Chicago, who purchased 21,000 acres of the del Paso land, advertised its five to ten-acre plots in the *Marysville Appeal*, "Farms by Mail Order." "The Passing of Rancho del Paso," *New York Times* (8 October 1905); "Special Train Reaches New York," *Los Angeles Herald* (14 June 1906): 5; "Big Haggin Tract Finally Is Sold," *San Francisco Call* (13 May 1910):4; *Breeder and Sportsman*, (20 November 1905); Buckley-Gerber Abstract and Title Company, *Abstract of the Title of Rancho Del Paso: Subdivided by Sacramento Valley Colonization Co.*, (Sacramento, Calif: Buckley-Gerber, 1910); Joseph McGowan, A. *History of the Sacramento Valley* (New York: Lewis Historical Pub. Co, 1961): 183; Joyce Buckland, *Rio Linda and Elverta* (Charleston, SC: Arcadia, 2006).

⁵³ "Special Train Brings the Rancho del Paso Horses to Elmendorf Stud," *Lexington Leader* (9 June 1908).

⁵⁴ "Bluegrass Horses to be Sent Abroad," *Lexington Leader* (24 October 1910): 9. By 1908, just three years after the sale of Haggin's California stud, it was reported that nearly 700 horses stampeded through his Kentucky pastures. "Haggin Again Owns Toddington," *Daily Racing Form* (9 March 1907); "Record for Haggin Entry," *New York Times* (3 January 1908).

⁵⁵ "Horses Are Shipped from Elmendorf," *Lexington Leader* (14 June 1907): 1.

The sale of Haggin's Rancho del Paso also raised serious questions in central Kentucky about the viability of its most famous breeding farm. Some expressed particular concern about Haggin, worried that he might quit the Thoroughbred business altogether. The Thoroughbred had become less and less valuable, it was asserted, and it would be greatly to his interest to gradually decrease holdings and be content with a very small establishment.⁵⁶ Others were concerned about its impact on Thoroughbred breeding in Kentucky. The dispersal auction had initiated a "New Phase" of breeding in America. "That a large number of good brood mares have been sold and distributed among so many different owners and sent to so many different farms in different sections of the country," one editor opined, "the Blue Grass is to be put to a severe test to hold its position at the head of the lists of ideal breeding grounds."⁵⁷

But was Haggin's dispersal of Rancho del Paso a pragmatic decision considering the declining affairs of the Thoroughbred industry? Across America state legislatures had begun to impose what they believed was a "progressive" order on popular and prominent racetracks. They banned gambling at the tracks in an attempt to distance the general public from the more unsavory elements of such "vile amusements" as gambling. And Haggin was far from apolitical in his views. His decisions in light of the anti-gambling legislation had a profound economic and political effect that neither the reformers nor the breeder had foreseen.

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⁵⁶ "Without Grounds," *Lexington Leader* (15 October 1905): 1.

⁵⁷ "Sporting News: Haggin Dispersal Puts a New Phase of Breeding" *Lexington Leader* (11 December 1905).

Charles Evan Hughes was an energetic moralist with a certain vision of state authority. When Hughes took office as New York governor in 1907, he informed fellow elected members that he was neither an opponent of the racing sport nor the horse industry; he [simply] despised racetrack gambling, which, in his own words, was “a plainly presentable evil,” one that “does not improve the breed of horses, and does injury to the breed of men,” and “the continuance of which outrages the moral sentiment of the State and does violence to our respect of law and order.”⁵⁸ Two months later New York’s governor had the opportunity in politics to demonstrate his abhorrence of risk-loving operations. A Senate seat in the western portion of the state became vacant and Hughes appointed the position to a special candidate who shared his conviction. Consequently, the famous Agnew-Hart bill that restricted all forms of betting at America’s prestigious racetracks in New York became law.⁵⁹

Hughes’s position on racetrack gambling in New York reflected an important clash in America’s thoroughbred industry. Gambling on the state’s tracks had proven a sensitive and divisive issue throughout the nineteenth century, but the controversy surrounding racetrack betting reached a critical apex in the first decade of the twentieth-century.⁶⁰ A new era of horse gambling after 1880 had emerged, largely in part because of technological innovations. Telephones and telegraphs facilitated the rise of off-track betting which could then take place in poolrooms, or betting parlors.

⁵⁸ New York (State), and Charles Evans Hughes, *Public Papers of Charles E. Hughes, Governor, 1907[-1910]*. (Albany: J.B. Lyon Co., state printers, 1908): 55; “Governor Hughes Opens Anti-Gambling Fight,” *New York Times* (3 June 1908).

⁵⁹ “The Fight of the Governor on the Gamblers,” *New York Times* (8 March 1908). See, for example, “Pastors Want Hughes Bill,” *New York Times* (10 February 1908), and “Race-track gambling,” *New York Times* (9 February 1908).

⁶⁰ For more information about New York’s fight against horse track gambling, see Steven A. Riess, *City Games: The Evolution of American Urban Society and the Rise of Sports* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1989).

In 1907, the anti-gambling movement in New York represented a growing confidence in the ability of local and state governments to steady and control the vices of people by intervening in their daily lives. Like the larger movements of reform that historians have labeled progressivism, the anti-gambling crusade brought together a diverse array of people, black and white, immigrants and natives, male and female, urban and rural, rich and poor, Democrat and Republican, who called for reorganization and reform of America's turf industry.⁶¹ Over the next decade they beseeched their political representatives to bring "order" to their cities.⁶² They were increasingly appalled at the brutalizing effects of gambling, which they felt went hand in hand with the negative aspects of industrialization and immigration—the loose women, hard liquor, and corrupt politicians. Reformers paid less attention to the different types of betting, on-track, off-track, or otherwise, but, rather lead a massive campaign to ban all forms of gambling, which culminated with the passage of the Agnew-Hart Bill. When Governor Hughes and his supporters in New York's Congress passed the anti-gambling measure, most breeders

⁶¹ The ensuing national discussion was a part of a larger movement of people and processes that scholars have struggled to define and which appear to have formed the foundation as well as the complexity of Progressivism's origins, ideologies, and consequences. Scholars have struggled to define Progressivism and its participants to a distinct period, underlining its complexity in American history. Others recognized the political and economic value of fighting "corruption," often in cities with long histories of nativism fervor. For reconceptions about Progressivism, see Peter G. Filene, "An Obituary for the Progressive Movement," *American Quarterly*, 22 (Spring 1970): 20-34; Filene, "Narrating Progressivism: Unitarians v. Pluralists v. Students," *Journal of American History*, 79 (March 1993): 1546-62; Rebecca Edwards, *New Spirits: Americans in the Gilded Age, 1865-1905* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006). Yet, anti-gambling reform was not just an American phenomenon. The spirit to reform racetracks appeared throughout Europe, where it centered on redeeming the working-class patrons of the sport. See Mike Huggins, *Horsereading and the British, 1919-39*. (Manchester, UK: Manchester University Press, 2003), and Daniel T. Rodgers, *Atlantic Crossings: Social Politics in a Progressive Age* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1998).

⁶²A legal predecessor to the Agnew-Hart Bill seemed to confirm the reformers' fears. Although the Ives Act made poolroom betting a felony off-track horse gambling conversely flourished. As historian Steven Reiss points out, most raids of New York's poolrooms under the Ives Act served for publicity or to close down unprofitable establishments. Reiss, *City Games*, 185.

were angered by the reform impulse. They considered the Agnew-Hart bill a destructive force. W.K. Vanderbilt called the law a “death blow” for racing in America. T.P. Thorne, a French citizen and prominent racehorse owner, declared, “All the race tracks in American are doomed to death.”⁶³

For some of high profile breeders, however, the new law represented an surmountable obstacle. August Belmont, president of the American Jockey Club, was obviously concerned about the state of Thoroughbred breeding in New York but truly believed that if owners were prepared to accept some losses, racing would return to New York a “clean, healthful, and beneficial pastime.” James Keene weighed in, “I would think that the bills advocated by Governor Hughes and now before the legislature, should they pass would only tend to transfer the evils complained of from the race tracks to the pool rooms.”⁶⁴

A telling example of the breeders’ opposition to the bill and to the governor, alike, took place at the Ballston County Fair on August 23, 1908. Horse owners publicly made clear their grievances that afternoon at the local fair, refusing to allow their horses at the gate while Governor Hughes remained on the fairgrounds. For over an hour the governor sat at the station, awaiting the arrival of his train, all the while fair officials, embarrassed by the blatant display, threatened disqualification. Yet the horse owners stood their ground. When Hughes finally departed on the four o’clock train, racing at the Ballston County Fair proceeded and carried on through the dark.⁶⁵

Haggin was predictably disappointed and furious at what he considered a hostile act of government against its tax-paying citizens. In a rare burst of public candor, he

⁶³ “American Horsemen to Race in France,” *New York Times* (13 June 1908).

⁶⁴ “Racing is Safe, says Mr. Belmont,” *New York Times*.

⁶⁵ “Refused to Race Until Hughes Left,” *New York Times* (23 August 1908).

expressed his views of the “fanatical” governor, his legion of “cranks,” and the antigambling crusade in a print interview. Hughes’s efforts, according to Haggin, were considered “to be almost entirely personal, and threaten not only the New York state but the country at large with a loss that years of official repentance could not replace.”⁶⁶ Because Haggin believed that gambling was a real, legitimate, and acceptable reason for breeding horses, the enforced removal of betting opportunities meant that people would not attend horse races, and without a crowd the purses and stakes would cease. “The end of racing means the end of the thoroughbred horse,” he explained to a reporter.

Although the Agnew-Hart legislation impacted the finances of the largest Thoroughbred breeder in the world, Haggin also opposed the antigambling measures on deeper philosophical grounds stemming from his deep-seated antipathy to governmental control by way of reform measures. He showed little faith in the gambling reform efforts, in part, because he believed it to be not only severe and consequential, but misguided. The Agnew-Hart reinforced his lifelong belief that social changes should come from within, as it was “impossible to legislate our personal inclinations.”⁶⁷ If people were to be reformed, it would come inevitably as a consequence of their own doing, not of the political system.⁶⁸ “If Governor Hughes wishes to really fight crime,” Haggin further pressed, “there are hundreds of conditions calling for reform.” Such beliefs, articulated by Haggin, likewise persisted among numerous others who felt that the only role of any

⁶⁶ “Racing War Futile,” *Lexington Leader* (14 April 1908): 1.

⁶⁷ “Racing War Futile,” *New York American*, reprinted in *Lexington Herald* (14 April 1908).

⁶⁸ Others James Keene, in discussing the racetrack legislation, spoke not of gambling and racing, but about the role of the government in society. “You are trying to improve the breed of man,” Keene once told Senator Agnew, one of the key sponsors of the anti-racing legislation, “but you can never succeed. Only God Almighty can do that.” See “Jockey Club May Reform Betting,” *New York Times* (28 February 1908).

government was to stay out of the way and that people were personally culpable for their own plight.

Haggin was obviously not the sort of man to sit quietly, nor was he a man to back down or give up. Friday morning, two days before the passage of Hughes' anti-gambling legislation, he telephoned C.H. Berryman, his farm manager at Elmendorf, with regard to a special train of ten rail cars, carrying 157 yearlings and fifty employees, scheduled to depart from Lexington for Sheepshead Bay the following morning, [with]another seventeen carloads [scheduled for departure] later in the week.⁶⁹ Haggin instructed Berryman to cancel the order and postpone all future shipments.⁷⁰ He told the press, "I have never been in so undecided a position in all my life. I really do not know what to do with all these thoroughbreds."⁷¹

There is no question that the Agnew-Hart bill was a turning point for Elmendorf Stud. Less than a week after the passage of the New York legislation, Haggin told his farm manager to cancel the annual sale at Sheepshead Bay, which had been advertised for the last weekend in June.⁷² Haggin then determined to sell the bulk of his Thoroughbred stock in Kentucky as well. "I have \$1,000,000 worth of fine breeding stock now, and I will sell it as soon as I can."

"I have 150 yearlings on hand now," Haggin noted, "And they are worth and would bring \$1000 each under ordinary circumstances, but since the passage of this law I doubt whether they would bring \$250 each. There will be no profit in the business."⁷³

⁶⁹ "Provisions of the Bill," *New York Times* (12 June 1908): 2; "Special Train," *Lexington Leader* (9 June 1908); "Great Loss to Breeders," *New York Times* (12 June 1908).

⁷⁰ "Special Train," *Lexington Leader* (9 June 1908).

⁷¹ "J.B. Haggin's Sturdy Attitude," *Daily Racing Form* (25 July 1908).

⁷² "American Horsemen to Race in France," *New York Times* (13 June 1908).

⁷³ "James B. Haggin," *Lexington Leader* (14 June 1908): 1.

Where the animals were to be sold remained undetermined. “I have made up my mind that they are to be sold,” he told a turf writer, “but when and to whom and for what, that’s the rub. When they go, they will go at a sacrifice, but they can’t stay here until next year and I cannot afford to raise any more under present conditions.”⁷⁴

How quickly those thoughts were confirmed. Two months after the Agnew-Hart bill, Haggin attempted to sell a few dozen yearlings at Sheepshead Bay. His horses achieved extraordinarily low prices; 37 head sold for only \$3100, at an average price of \$83, vindicating his decision to avoid domestic markets.⁷⁵ This sale proved to be one of the last domestic sales of Haggin’s horse empire. Spurred by political controversies and economic conditions in America, the largest Thoroughbred breeder in the world decided to sell his commodities overseas, launching one of the greatest transatlantic movements of animals in the twentieth century. And he was not alone. Though this “reform” of racing practices through application of legal restrictions proved largely ineffective in exercising any measurable and lasting social control over gambling, American horse breeders took exception and embarked upon extreme reactionary measures by shipping more than 1,500 Thoroughbreds overseas between 1908 and 1913, including 24 past, present, or future United States champions.⁷⁶

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⁷⁴ “J.B. Haggin’s Sturdy Attitude,” *Daily Racing Form* (25 July 1908).

⁷⁵ “Haggin Summary,” *Daily Racing Form* (12 September 1908).

⁷⁶ *The Original Thoroughbred Times Racing Almanac* (Lexington, KY: Thoroughbred Times Books, 2003): 56.

Chapter Eight

“Forceful Wreckage”: The American Invasion of Elmendorf Stud Farm in Europe

At nine o'clock, when the pilot rang the bell on the *Valasques* and the lookout answered, “All’s well,”¹ Harry Talbutt had already begun his watchman duties at the bow of the ship. It was September 5, 1908 and Talbutt was one of sixteen men who had made the twenty-six day voyage from Kentucky to Argentina, carrying an important shipment of J.B. Haggin’s expensive horses to Buenos Aires. From his post, he could see the training track on the main deck where his charges were exercised daily, as weather permitted.² With a terrific wind and high sea, Talbutt determined to check on his equine passengers and proceeded down the stairs where the horses were residing in the specially built and fitted quarters, hung in canvas hammocks, one floor below the main deck. He discovered that one horse had taken sick through the night. The night watchman then notified the veterinarian who diagnosed the horse as “past recovery,” and consequently instructed the men to put an end to the animal’s suffering. With waves crashing into the deck, Talbutt heaved the horse overboard.³

Given the obvious dangers of a long Atlantic voyage, including sickness, storms, and shipwrecks, Haggin’s overseas shipments always faced potentially disastrous outcomes, particularly since the trip was so long and the animals so expensive. The horses boarded onto railroad cars in Lexington, Kentucky, and traveled eastward to New York along a network of railroads. They traveled hours away over the Louisville &

¹ “Harry Talbutt,” *Lexington Herald* (18 November 1908).

² “Elmendorf Horses,” *Lexington Herald* (14 August 1908): 1; “Horses for Argentina,” *Lexington Herald* (7 June 1908): 1; “Off for South America,” *Lexington Leader* (7 June 1908).

³ “Harry Talbutt,” *Lexington Leader* (18 November 1908).

Nashville, and then the Pennsylvania Railroad before arriving in the New York harbor, where the horses were then placed aboard a steamer. From this point, the trip to England continued for a minimum of twelve days, while the voyage to Argentina took up to thirty days.⁴

But a closer look at these particular sales exposes the fragility and vulnerability of the pedigree horse business from an international perspective. Between 1897 and 1907, the dizzying scales of yearlings that Haggin placed on the auction block quite simply paralyzed the national horse trade, as the owner of Elmendorf found it increasingly difficult to achieve high prices. After the passage of anti-gambling laws in New York, Haggin announced the decision to abandon Thoroughbred breeding and made immediate plans to ship his horses overseas. From England, France, Germany, Austria, Budapest to Argentina, large shipments of Elmendorf horses arrived in ports as a part of a vast wave of transatlantic trade. These overseas shipments would eventually jeopardize the stability and popularity of European bloodlines to which Haggin had bred his horses, as hundreds of mares, stallions, colts, and fillies, bred and reared in central Kentucky were sold for relatively mediocre prices in distant lands. Haggin's share of sales eventually triggered long-term political and economic crises that would eventually lead to the banning of American-bred horses in Europe for over four decades.

* * * *

Haggin understood the perils associated with sales of stock in foreign markets and provided for his horses accordingly. While human passengers often crossed the deep vast

⁴ "Turf Market Brightens," *New York Times* (12 April 1913).

seas in dismal accommodations of steerage, his horses traveled in the “best of style,” and were treated as “first class passengers.”⁵ In addition to the training track and specially designed quarters, his horses were given the finest care onboard. He sent employees with experience to carry on such tasks as feeding, supervising, nursing, and guarding them. Most were seasoned and specialized employees who were entrusted with the responsibility of maintaining healthy animals as they were transported across the Atlantic.⁶ John Mackey, Haggin’s trusted advisor for over three decades, accompanied several of the voyages that carried Haggin’s horses to Europe.⁷ Matthew Byrnes, the well-known horse trainer, oversaw several shipments to South America, making sure the horses and crew were under control.⁸ Of the other sixteen Elmendorf employees who made the maiden voyage of Haggin’s horses to Argentina, four were veterinarians, clearly reflecting the special value the owner placed on the health of his transatlantic shipments.⁹

A notable few employees abroad were young and unskilled, like Harry Talbutt, who went abroad because he wanted to see the world. Scanning the nocturnal waters of the deep Atlantic Ocean, Talbutt peered over the bow of the splendid new steamship *Valasques*. At five in the morning, he could see the rain beating the water into foam six miles away, and behind that view, he was able to watch the sun rising up as if out of the sea. “It was a sight,” he wrote in his journal. “I have already been justified in taking this

⁵ “Elmendorf Horses,” *Lexington Herald* (14 August 1908): 1.

⁶ Rio de Janario, Talbutt wrote, “was undoubtedly the most beautiful site I ever beheld.” “Harry Talbutt,” *Lexington Herald* (18 November 1908).

⁷ “Haggin Horses for German Sales,” *Lexington Leader* (17 August 1911): 2.

⁸ In exchange for a reported 5 percent of gross proceeds from the sale in Buenos Aires, Byrnes assumed responsibility for the horses and crew, “Elmendorf Horses,” *Lexington Herald* (20 July 1908): 1.

⁹ “Mare Leaps Overboard,” *New York Times* (21 August 1908); “Brood mare Lady Lucas,” *Lexington Leader* (21 August 1908): 1.

trip.” Having never previously worked with horses, Talbutt was made the night watchman of Haggin’s horses and worked from supper until the dawn of each new morning in menial activity that was well offset by the daily opportunity to experience the beauty of the sea as the ship crossed over the equator. “We sleep down where the horses are in canvas hammocks under the blue heaven with a stiff breeze playing around us, [and] the breeze rocks us to sleep.”¹⁰

Though such measures must have proved quite expensive, the ship’s alteration and the crews on the overseas stock shipments made a difference.¹¹ Many of Haggin’s shipments to Europe and South America entirely avoided serious illness and disease among his stock.¹² The shipment in 1910, for example, succeeded brilliantly for such a long voyage, leaving New York with 147 and arriving in Buenos Aires thirty days later with 146 horses.¹³

Of course, these equine shipments also had the benefit of Haggin’s considerable understanding of and experience with transatlantic animal trading. As early as 1898 and 1899, he had sent his California yearlings to England. These sales achieved attractive prices on the other side of the Atlantic: in 1898, forty-five fillies brought an average price of \$868, almost two hundred dollars more than the domestic numbers; the following

¹⁰ “Harry Talbutt,” *Lexington Herald* (18 November 1908).

¹¹ The cost of a single night watchman was \$250. *Daily Racing Form* (14 October 1910).

¹² There was only one report of environmental concerns on Haggin’s shipments. In 1912 a boatload of Elmendorf yearlings was grounded due to an outbreak of foot and mouth disease. Such global ventures found themselves influenced by events in distant places. One shipment of Elmendorf yearlings missed its sale date because of a seamen strike in London. “Haggin Yearlings Still in Kentucky,” *Daily Racing Form* (11 August 1912).

¹³ “Argentine Puts Duty on Thoroughbreds,” *Daily Racing Form* (2 October 1910). Of Haggin’s sixty-three thoroughbreds shipped to England, only one died on the voyage. See *New York Times* (14 September 1908).

year, 85 yearlings brought over \$51,000.¹⁴ Having made plans to double that number in 1900, Haggin unexpectedly encountered the firm but measured rejection of the British Jockey Club who refused to register his American-bred horses in the *GSB*.¹⁵ He quickly withdrew his horses from overseas markets, that is, until the political and financial economy in New York collapsed almost a decade later.

When he resumed shipping his horses to England and France, his horses were still familiar to the European buyer. Though American-bred, most could be traced within one or two crosses to prominent European strains of bloodstock, meaning they were by English stallions or English mares, and few were even imported—an advantage of critical importance for the seller.¹⁶ Consequently, the smaller consignments of Haggin horses fared better in European horse markets than in the domestic market. In October 1908, for example, thirty-eight of Haggin's Thoroughbreds were sold at the Newmarket auction in England for \$32,000, far more than their market price in America.¹⁷ His shipments to Germany, in particular, were quite successful. Among the several consignments of thirty and fifty horses shipped to Berlin for public auction at the Hoppengarten racecourse, thirty of his mares in 1911 sold for \$20,000.¹⁸ And when Haggin expanded to Uruguay, Budapest, and Austria in 1911 and 1912, he profited handsomely.¹⁹

¹⁴ "Why Haggin's Fillies Are Denied Registry," *San Francisco Call* (4 March 1899): 3; "Gossip Anent the Speedy Gallopers," *San Francisco Call* (10 October 1898): 5; "Montana Horses to Go Abroad," *New York Times* (31 August 1898): 5; Barbara Austin Highly, "Race Horses on the Rancho del Paso," *Golden Notes* (October 1969): 2; "Surgeon to Race Horses," *Sacramento Bee* (1 January 1942): 10-11.

¹⁵ "Palo Alto's Big Change," *New York Times* (10 February 1899): 9; "Notes of the Turf," *Daily Racing Form* (21 March 1900): 2. This would foreshadow Elmendorf's experiences a decade later when its owner liquidated his entire horse empire on the national and international marketplaces.

¹⁶ "Elmendorf Horses," *Lexington Herald* (23 May 1909): 1.

¹⁷ 10_6_1908.

¹⁸ "Elmendorf Horses Bring Good Prices," *Lexington Leader* (29 November 1911): 5; "Last of Haggin Horses to Be Sold," *New York Times* (25 August 1911): 12; "More Horses Go From

Still, Haggin's transatlantic trade should not be assumed to be consistently stable or profitable. These shipments represented at most a short-term windfall. As Haggin sent larger numbers overseas, prices for his product went down, not up. He thus discovered that the greatest challenge to overseas sales was not the shipwrecks, outbreaks, or privateers. The threat to his overseas Thoroughbred ventures came from the economic arena and his own industrial philosophy. In 1909, sales in several of his European consignments reflected the fall of prices for Kentucky-bred horses. In January 1909, thirty-four of his horses were "readily sold" at the Hoppegarten Track in Germany for \$17,746 dollars, an average of \$500 each.²⁰ In April thirty-six mares in France brought only 85,100 francs, at an average of \$470 dollars. Fifty-eight were originally offered, but twenty-two were withdrawn when the general reserve was not met.²¹

Similar to the conclusion of domestic sales in New York, most of these sales in distant lands underscored the weak conclusion in Haggin's commercial sales: Haggin's pedigree sales all too often benefited the buyer of pedigree horses rather than the seller. The colt named Columbus, for example, sold for only 45 guineas at the Newmarket

Elmendorf," *Lexington Leader* (9 November 1911): 5; "Bluegrass Horses to be Sent Abroad," *Cincinnati Enquirer* 1910; "Elmendorf Horses Bring Good Prices," *Lexington Leader* (29 November 1911): 5; "Notes of the Turf," *Daily Racing Form* (16 October 1910): "Mr. Haggin to Ship Saturday," *Lexington Leader* (11 August 1911): 9; "Haggin Horses to Germany," *Lexington Leader* (31 October 1910): 1.

¹⁹ Five mares and colts were shipped to Montevideo, Uruguay. "Last of Haggin Horses to Be Sold," *New York Times* (25 August 1911): 12. Elmendorf horses were destined for Austria but instead were shipped to Budapest where the Kentucky commodities brought good prices. "Elmendorf Horses Bring Good Prices," *Lexington Leader* (29 November 1911): 5; "Notes of the Turf," *Daily Racing Form* (4 May 1912); "Notes of the Turf," *Daily Racing Form* (25 June 1912); "Notes of the Turf," *Daily Racing Form* (12 September 1912); "Notes of the Turf," *Daily Racing Form* (14 August 1912).

²⁰ "Big Shipment of Racers," *New York Times* (5 December 1908): 7; "Germans Buy Horses," *New York Times* (10 January 1909): 3.

²¹ "Elmendorf Mares Sold in France," *Lexington Herald* (26 April 1909): 3.

auction house in 1908; yet Columbus performed so well two years later that he was in position to win the 2000 guineas purse.²²

A striking example of the depreciating market took place in June and July of 1909. At 5:30 in the morning on the twentieth of June, Haggin stood at the dock in New York City's harbor and watched fifty-two of his Kentucky-bred horses loaded onto the steamer *Minnehaha*. These yearlings represented the last of his 1909 crop.²³ One month later, on the twenty-seventh of July, Haggin stood at the same dock and watched over half of the shipment come down the cattle plank. Having not met the reserved price, the yearlings were re-loaded on the steamer and shipped back to America, leaving one editor to suggest that Haggin may take "a second thought before shipping his stock" to overseas markets.²⁴

It was evident the large shipments to distant markets spelled instability and possible ruin for all breeders, whether on this side or the other of the Atlantic. There was growing alarm over the depopulation of Thoroughbred studs. Many feared, with good reason, that the "anti-racing agitation" in New York posed great harm for Kentucky's more distinguished industry. As one editor noted, "It is appalling to think of the rapid depopulation of the great thoroughbred farms in Kentucky, and the wreck that has been made of the industry by untoward legislation in New York, attributable in great measure to former Governor Charles E. Hughes."²⁵

²² "Notes of the Turf," *Daily Racing Form* (12 October 1910); "Notes of the Turf," *Daily Racing Form* (14 October 1910).

²³ "Horses and Horsemen," *New York Times* (20 June 1909): S3.

²⁴ "Haggin Horses," *Lexington Herald* (27 July 1909): 1.

²⁵ Not all in central Kentucky blamed New York for its loss of horses. Whereas others attacked Governor Hughes for his pursuit of anti-gambling legislation, the Berea Citizen commended him, offering him a blessing and accolades. "May his career be long and continue to be effective for good service to his fellow countrymen."

The actions of the Commonwealth's largest breeder certainly gave the Bluegrass pause. In less than two years Haggin had shipped no fewer than 300 broodmares from Kentucky to foreign markets.²⁶ Consequently, many associated with the Bluegrass industry refused to stand by silently as Haggin depleted the country of one of its most valuable commodities. Domestic breeders described such selling crazes as "impatient and bearish."²⁷ Depicting Thoroughbreds as an American tradition, they denounced Haggin and other wealthy horsemen who were selling their commodities in Europe as anti-American. By sending his commodities to overseas markets, Haggin "showed very little regard for the interests of racing and breeding in this country." When breeders received low prices in distant markets, the writer concluded, "Their lack of patriotism has been correctly punished."²⁸

Haggin did not respond to the concerns voiced by the local turf community. He left his farm manager to defend his actions and his farm's future. Berryman had been denying reports that his employer was retiring from the Thoroughbred business for several years. As early as 1905, he went on record to say that, "The farm will continue in the horse business as heretofore."²⁹ But even as Berryman attempted to assuage and reassure the citizens of Fayette County, the "cream" of Elmendorf's Thoroughbreds had

²⁶ "28 Horses," *Lexington Leader* (15 November 1908): 24; "Racers for England," *New York Times* (16 November 1908): 7; "Big Shipment of Racers," *New York Times* (5 December 1908): 7; *New York Times* (21 August 1908); "Higher Prices for Haggin Yearlings," *New York Times* (1 October 1908); "Men in Shipwreck," *Lexington Leader* (15 November 1908): 8; "Harry Talbutt," *Lexington Leader* (18 November 1908).

²⁷ "Kentuckians in a Selling Craze," *Daily Racing Form* (29 August YEAR).

²⁸ *Daily Racing Form* (14 October 1910). A few, in contrast, believed Haggin's decisions benefited the industry as a whole. Exports corrected the domestic economy, they reasoned.

²⁹ "Without Grounds," *Lexington Leader* (15 October 1905): 1.

been sold—in many instances practically given away—by the hundreds “until now a mere handful remain[ed].”³⁰

By 1911, Haggin’s threat in the wake of the New York legislation —”The thoroughbred will disappear quickly”—had come dangerously close to fruition. Four years before, the year that Agnew-Hart cleared both houses of New York legislature, Elmendorf contained over a thousand Thoroughbreds—33 stallions, 482 mares, and over 300 yearlings.³¹ By 1910, only 175 horses were left. Many of the remaining broodmares were at an elderly age, too old to breed again, and four of the nine stallions were over twenty years of age.³²

Haggin wasn’t finished.

The following year he consented to sell more, sending horses to England, France, Germany, Austria, even Budapest. In the winter of 1911, only 76 mares and 16 foals remained at Elmendorf, less than 10 percent of its largest population four years before.³³ This rapid depopulation of the Elmendorf stud prompted a far greater problem on the European continent that would influence the transatlantic trade of Thoroughbred horses for over four decades. Though the overseas shipments would eventually jeopardize the stability and popularity of European bloodlines to which Haggin had bred his horses, the New York financier seems to have deliberately chosen to disregard the global impact of his business decisions. It was not surprising that subsequent to Haggin’s shipments of premier race horses across the world, elite organizations of differing nationalities and

³⁰ “Bluegrass Horses to be Sent Abroad,” *Lexington Leader* (24 October 1910): 9.

³¹ *Ibid.*

³² “Seventeen Stallions at Elmendorf,” *Daily Racing Form* (6 March 1910).

³³ “More Horses Go From Elmendorf,” *Lexington Leader* (9 November 1911): 5; “Last of Haggin Horses to Be Sold,” *New York Times* (25 August 1911): 12; “Elmendorf Horses Bring Good Prices,” *Lexington Leader* (29 November 1911): 5.

with differing agendas responded to the “American invasion” by issuing a blackout of American-bred horses from prestigious stud books and prominent races being held anywhere outside the United States.

* * * *

On September 18, 1908, Harry Talbutt penned one of the last entries in his journal. “Arrived safe in Buenos Ayres,” he noted. “All well. The horses are in good condition and have been put in quarantine for three days. Will go to the country for a month.” It was unclear what kind of impression the Argentinian countryside and culture made on Talbutt. Unlike the passage to Argentina, he wrote no lyrical tribute to his experiences in Buenos Ayres as his next entry, listed October 8, 1908, but simply stated, “Leave for New York tomorrow, arrive November 5th.”³⁴ This cryptic entry was no doubt the result of current events for Haggin’s crew as a week before the *Valsquez* steamed into the harbor at Buenos Ayres, and an international controversy had erupted.

Several days before Harry Talbutt and the crew of Haggin’s shipment dropped anchor along the rugged coastline of Argentina, the Buenos Ayres Jockey Club had published a resolution that attempted to exclude foreign-born horses from its prestigious races.³⁵ The Daily Racing Forum trumpeted, “This measure is directed principally against the American horses coming on the steamer *Velasquez*.”³⁶ Breeders on the other side of the Atlantic, however, were not too concerned. The *New York Times* reported that

³⁴ “Harry Talbutt,” *Lexington Herald* (18 November 1908).

³⁵ “Buenos Aires Bars American Horses,” *New York Times* (14 September 1908): 8.

³⁶ “Argentina Club Against Americans,” *Daily Racing Form* (4 September 1908).

J.B. Haggin's sale in Buenos Ayres brought "such good results that already other Americans have followed up the experiment."³⁷

Haggin's gamble to market his product in Buenos Ayres paid off handsomely, and he pushed ahead with plans for more shipments to Argentina.³⁸ His shipments reached their highest numbers over the next two years. A consignment of 125 arrived in the summer of 1910, followed by another [shipment] of 74 that winter.³⁹ It would seem that breeders in South America did not pass up the opportunity to acquire American-bred horses, but the ruling members of the Argentinian Thoroughbred industry had their own plans.

On October 9, 1910, the Buenos Aires Jockey Club effectively closed their markets to American-bred yearlings.⁴⁰ The *Lexington Leader* reported that although "(our) thoroughbred breeders have made many shipments there [to Argentina] for sale, they will now have to sell their horses elsewhere."⁴¹ Consequently, all Kentucky Thoroughbred breeders lost the Argentinian market except J.B. Haggin; paradoxically,

³⁷ Among those were Colonel Milton Young, the owner of McGranthonia Stud in Kentucky, who started sending his horses there, as did James Keene and J.J. McCafferty. "Kinstress Beats Speedy Invader," *New York Times* (23 November 1908): 7.

³⁸ This port was a destination Haggin had been reluctant at first to consider. He had to deal not only with the high transportation costs but also with a different breeding environment. The American-bred horse was at a physical disadvantage in Argentina. August marked the beginning of the breeding season in South America, as compared to January in America, which translated into a loss of four months at the racetrack and in the sales ring. Elmendorf's farm manager believed the prices to be as such that it would not pay for the American breeder to transport their horses to this market. "Mr. Haggin Will Not Endeavor to Put his Horses On South African Market," *Lexington Leader* (3 November 1903).

³⁹ "Haggin's Horses," *Lexington Leader* (2 July 1910): 2; Daily Racing Forum (14 October 1910); "Filly Ocean Bound Beats Dalmatian," *New York Times* (21 June 1910): 12.

⁴⁰ Ironically, the American delegate to the Pan-American Congress had returned the week before discussing the interest in development of shipping with the United States. "The people down there are more than willing to meet us more than half way." "Lewis Nixon Home," *New York Times* (12 November 1910): 4.

⁴¹ "Argentina Raps American Horses," *Lexington Leader* (9 November 1910): 5.

Haggin appeared to benefit from this ban of American-bred horses.⁴² The 1910 restriction stated explicitly that Haggin's horses were "freed from the above law," as "they have been inscribed and imported into Argentina several months ago."

The Jockey Club went even further by ardently promoting Haggin's Kentucky-bred horses. "Now that a fixed law has been set down regarding imported stock," the club urged, "buyers have a splendid and last opportunity of acquiring some of the best bloodstock ever imported into Argentina from North America. James B. Haggin's thoroughbreds are at present stationed at Merio Station, F.C.O, and can be inspected any day." Haggin paid a duty of 500 pesos for each Thoroughbred that entered the capital city. But 97 cents was a small price to pay for adequate prices.⁴³ That October, Haggin sold seventy-four head for a total of \$37,000, an average of \$500 a head.⁴⁴ Over the next two years Haggin continued to ship Kentucky-bred horses to various European countries, until he made a sudden and dramatic reversal in his selling strategy.

On June 14, 1913, the first time in five years, a handful of Haggin's yearlings entered the sales paddock at Sheepshead Bay.⁴⁵ Governor Hughes was no longer in office, having been appointed to the state Supreme Court. Moreover, betting at the New

⁴² The evidence is scanty but there is little doubt that Haggin had connections to the elite breeding culture in Buenos Aires. He owned land near the capitol city where his horses recovered from the long voyage before entering the sales paddocks. He was majority stockholder in the largest mining and agricultural enterprises in South America, Cerro de Pasco, which stretched over 135 miles in the adjacent country of Peru. He who had wealth, property, and facilities, would also have ties to the organization responsible for horse racing in Argentina, the prestigious Buenos Aires Jockey Club. "Argentine Puts Duty on Thoroughbreds," *Daily Racing Form* (2 October 1910); Roy Hora, *The Landowners of the Argentine Pampas: A Social and Political History, 1860-1945* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2001): 33, 67.

⁴³ The consignment consisted of forty six magnificent colts from Watercress, Goldfinch, Star Ruby, Greenan, Mimic, Royal Flush III, and Salvator. "Buenos Aires Bars American Horses," *New York Times* (14 September 1908): 8; "Argentine Puts Duty on Thoroughbreds," *Daily Racing Form* (2 October 1910).

⁴⁴ *Daily Racing Form* (14 October 1910).

⁴⁵ "Haggin Yearlings Sold," *New York Times* (24 June 1913).

York racetracks was no longer illegal, having been softened by a state court's decision.⁴⁶ That spring, the Belmont Park band had struck up "Auld Lang Syne" as "Thoroughbreds were led to post in New York for the first time since 1910."⁴⁷

Haggin's decision to participate in a domestic sale had not been reversed, necessarily, by the changes in state government or the revisions in state law. Participation in the 1913 domestic sale could, more probably, be attributed to growing obstacles overseas. Indignant, the British Jockey Club signed a resolution that made clear their unwillingness to absorb foreign importations and, in so doing, the British Jockey Club closed ranks around its sales ring. Like their South American counterparts, the elite members of the English turf used club laws as a vehicle of industry reform. The British passed the so-called Jersey Act, which made most American-bred horses ineligible for registration in the *General Stud Book (GSB)* unless it could be traced "without flaw" to animals already registered, replacing the previous requirement of eight crosses of genetic purity.

Haggin knew what was happening. He had caught a glimpse of anti-American pressure a few years earlier and saw it from European breeders. The notorious Jersey Act had been long in the making, exemplifying the British concerns with the "American invasion" of their elite industry.⁴⁸ Since the 1880s, the growing presence of foreign

⁴⁶ The 1912 gambling court case stated that the racetrack was not liable for illegal gambling if they were not aware that it took place on the track. It remained on the books until 1934. For the court decision, see Maryjean Wall, *How Kentucky Became Southern: A Tale of Outlaws, Horse Thieves, Gamblers, and Breeders* (Lexington, Ky: University Press of Kentucky, 2010): 227 - 233.

⁴⁷ "Racing Through the Century," *Thoroughbred Times* (14 February 2000).

⁴⁸ See, for example, *Daily Racing Form* (10 September 1908). See also Mike Huggins, *Horseracing and the British, 1919-39* (Manchester, UK: Manchester University Press, 2003), and Huggins, *Flat Racing and British Society, 1790-1914: A Social and Economic History*. (London: Frank Cass, 2000).

horses, trainers, and jockeys had been felt on the English turf as professional riders, including Willie Simms, Tod Sloan, Danny Maher, and Lester Reiff, took the British track with a fierce force, capturing numerous stakes and introducing a new style of jockeying overseas.⁴⁹ Between 1898 and 1900 John Huggins, employed by Lord Derby, trained the winners of over-trained the winners of over 162 races.⁵⁰ British breeders subsequently implemented other measures to limit the amount of foreign involvement, even restricting the number of training licenses available at Newmarket for American breeders.⁵¹ They amended the rules for registration in the *GSB* to horses whose ancestry entirely traced to those already registered in the British pedigree guide.⁵² Unfortunately, when Haggin's yearling, Rubio, won the 1908 Grand National steeplechase, it confirmed to many anxious British that their values and interest in the turf were being threatened once again by American breeders.

Ironically, the Jersey Act hurt Britain more so than America. Designed to stave off invasively foreign breeders, this ruling lasted for more than three decades, preventing the British from importing the best American stock after World War I wracked their horse industry. More than any other American breeder, Haggin was targeted by the

⁴⁹ Wray Vamplew and Joyce Kay, *Encyclopedia of British Horseracing* (London: Routledge, 2005).

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 17.

⁵¹ William H. P. Robertson, *The History of Thoroughbred Racing in America* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1964): 198–199.

⁵² When Haggin began exporting Thoroughbreds from California to England in 1899, his actions had stirred much resentment among the British breeders. "There has been a great deal of crack-brained trumpeting about American-bred yearlings," wrote one reporter. "A mighty fuss was raised about a large consignment of yearlings from the United States, sold at Newmarket last Autumn, when high prices were realized, but not one of the animals which changed hands has won a race so far, and they appear to be practically worthless for racing purposes." "Haggin's Sale at Newmarket," *New York Times* (16 July 1899): 6.

French and British regulations. Fearing “the reform wave is going to cross the pond,” the French were “slow and cautious” from the beginning about purchasing Haggin’s horses.⁵³

Equally significant was the response of Kentucky turf writers to the foreign embargo of Haggin’s horses. When the British banned Haggin’s horses from their public registry in 1899, Bluegrass turf writers came to his defense, censuring the Englishmen for conceiving such a “scheme” with “harassing exactness” to stop the importation of quality bloodstock from foreign countries.⁵⁴ His drastic measures in the wake of the antigambling legislation produced a dramatic reversal of public opinion in Kentucky. When the French banned American-bred horses from most prestigious races in 1908, gone was the spirited defense of Haggin’s actions. Some in central Kentucky scoffed. Haggin should stay in America, they argued, and now he “will be forced to fight out [his] own battles at home.”⁵⁵

The British ban and the Kentucky dialogue seemed to matter little to J.B. Haggin. He was wailing to set aside his ambition and his passion and abandon his position as the world’s largest thoroughbred breeder. He had already liquidated the bulk of his horse empire by 1913; indeed, only a handful of favorite sires and several dozen broodmares remained on Elmendorf.⁵⁶ Over the next two years, he avoided foreign markets altogether, and shipped a few carloads of yearlings to the New York, from which he profited handsomely; sixteen of his yearlings were sold for \$24,200, an average price of

⁵³ “France Disfavors American Turfmen,” *Lexington Leader* (18 November 1908): 4.

⁵⁴ “Palto’s Big Change,” *New York Times* (19 February 1899): 9; “Why Haggin’s Fillies Are Denied Registry,” *San Francisco Call* (4 March 1899): 3.

⁵⁵ “France Disfavors American Turfmen,” *Lexington Leader* (18 November 1908): 4.

⁵⁶ In 1914 Haggin had 70 Thoroughbred mares at Elmendorf.

\$1512.⁵⁷ In 1913, Haggin also made a few new investments in breeding lines, purchasing the stallion Ballot for \$50,000. The son of the Imp. Voter, out of Imp. Cerlto had proven himself as a successful racer, winning over \$100,000 in his breeder's colors.⁵⁸ After the sale, national papers declared, "Haggin a Turfman Again."⁵⁹ This statement was far from the case; Haggin contemplated new use for his horse land and one alternative immediately compelled his interest. And this one required much more capital than before.

* * * *

Millions of dollars, why would J.B. Haggin sell off his prized blood stock for mediocre prices in distant markets? Three major points serve to explain Haggin's decision to leave the horse industry. First, his passion for and his pride in his pedigreed product were indisputable: Haggin sought only the finest and fanciest of horse to race and he worked, always, to breed even finer progeny from his equine acquisitions; he created magnificent stables and landscapes as a suitable backdrop and appropriate housing for the care and protection of this valuable product. But Haggin was first and foremost a decision maker. Although his horses were a lifelong passion, he still did not prize his animals above his need for control. He was a man accustomed to uncompromised power with regard to his personal and business activities. Politics and government intervention changed everything

⁵⁷ That's slightly higher than the \$1330 average price achieved by Hancock and Keene at the same sale. Twenty-three Thoroughbred yearlings were shipped to New York for sale. "Haggin's Yearlings Shipped," *Lexington Leader* (15 June 1914).

⁵⁸ It is possible that the deaths of his prized stallions, Waterboy and Star Ruby, also motivated Haggin. Though Haggin had liquidated the bulk of his equine breeding operation and he only kept a handful of stallions, Elmendorf was in need of fashionable strains. In addition to Ballot, Haggin added to the stallion barn the successful sire, Sain, for \$5000. "J.B. Haggin Buys Ballot for \$50,000," *Lexington Leader*.

⁵⁹ "Haggin a Turfman Again," *New York Times* (13 November 1913).

about J. B. Haggin's endeavors. To make clear his commitments, he liquidated his horse stables to foreign markets, all except for a handful of his very favorites, at a loss.

Secondly, anti-gambling movements in distant cities exacerbated the inherent weakness of his industrial operation, essentially removing the ultimate objective of profit and power from the high scale breeding of bloodstock racehorses. The move to sell his beloved champions overseas, would ensure that the owner of the greatest stud farm in the world, rather than the politicians, exercised control in the ultimate disposition of his horses. In 1908, Haggin asserted, "When they are gone it is entirely probable I will never raise another Thoroughbred."⁶⁰ This decision to "call the shots" inaugurated a crisis with global consequences.

Finally, Haggin had conceived other plans for Elmendorf. At the same time ships of his prized horses were sailing for distant ports in Europe and South America, steamships were crossing the Atlantic in the opposite direction, carrying pedigree animals of another kind, destined for his Kentucky farm. Between 1907 and 1913, Haggin proceeded with plans to produce a greater variety of pedigree animals like chickens, pigs, cows, and dogs. Although he acquired much smaller numbers of many breeds, including Tamworths, Jerseys, Shorthorns, among others, production of these herds utilized many elements of his Thoroughbred operation.

Haggin remained devoted to the transatlantic breeding economy, primarily importing various kinds of European blood stock: his sheep dogs came from Scotland, while his Suffolk and Shropshire sheep from Australia, England, and Canada; his jacks and jennies were shipped from Brazil, while his Shire draft horses, White Orphington chickens, as well as Berkshire and Tamworth pigs hailed from England. Some of his milk

⁶⁰ "J.B. Haggin's Sturdy Attitude," *Daily Racing Form* (25 July 1908).

cows were imported from Ireland and Scotland, but the vast majority came from an archipelago called the Channel Islands where Haggin had paid a premium for the doe-eyed cow called the Jersey.⁶¹

To take the place of his Thoroughbreds James Ben Ali Haggin would accept nothing but the most imposing and expensive bloodlines of the time. Among the famous strains of Jerseys, for example, including Golden Fern, Golden Lad, Raleigh, Sultana, Blue Belle, and Majesty, to name but a few, he also acquired the sons and daughters of the most celebrated in the Jersey cattle world, the Violas.⁶² His herd of Berkshire pigs featured the daughters of such celebrated sires as Star Masterpiece, Longfellow Premier C., and Big Crusader, the largest boar of the breed.⁶³ And when Haggin instructed his “lieutenants” to purchase prized animals “regardless of price,” they complied.⁶⁴

The “Lady of the Cave,” a single White Orphington chicken, for example, was valued at over \$2000.⁶⁵ The head of his Shorthorn herd, one of the few pure white in existence, cost a reported \$20,000 in 1912.⁶⁶ And like his horses, his milk cows commanded ranking prices paid for the breeds, setting record prices for both males and

⁶¹ “Sheep Dog,” *Breeders Gazette* (4 February 1909): 9; “Mr. Harding’s Sheep,” *Breeders Gazette* (23 July 1909): 144; *Breeders Gazette* (8 February 1917): 290; “Shetland Ponies,” *Lexington Leader* (19 July 1907): 11; “Shetlands,” *Lexington Herald* (28 July 1907); “Will Breed Ponies,” *Bourbon News* (23 July 1909): 8; “Stock, Crop and Farm Notes,” *Bourbon News* (23 September 1909): 7; *The Richmond Climax* (13 October 1909): 1; “Mr. Berryman to Buy Sheep from Elmendorf,” *Lexington Herald* (5 March 1908).

⁶² Known for beautiful fore udders and large quantity of milk, the Violas were considered more refined than other imported bloodlines, such as the Tennessee, which were, generally speaking, excellent working dairy cows with large milkers.

⁶³ Elmendorf Advertisement, *Breeders Gazette* (30 July 1914): 174.

⁶⁴ M.A. Scovell to Tom Dempsey, Scovell Letterbook, v. 82: 173, in Kentucky Agricultural Experiment Station Collection, at University of Kentucky Special Collections, University of Kentucky, Lexington, Kentucky.

⁶⁵ “Haggin’s Russell Cave Poultry,” *Lexington Leader* (17 December 1911): 1. *Bourbon News* (5 January 1909): 2.

⁶⁶ Phillip Speed, “Mr. James B. Haggin’s Kentucky Estate,” *Town and Country* (10 February 1912): 30-33..

females in 1911, when \$15,000 was paid for Nobles of Oaklands and \$7000 for his dam, Lady Viola.⁶⁷

Like his thousand-horse operation, these new arrivals were treated as productive and scientific enterprises. All of the animals were registered with purebred breeders' associations, such as, among others, the American Jersey Cattle Club, Kerry and Dexter Cattle Club, the American Guernsey Club, and American Shorthorn Association.⁶⁸ These professional groups, as scholar Harriet Ritvo explains, simultaneously inspired pedigree enthusiasts like Haggin to not only improve the breeding product, but provide the authority and recognition for a ratification of what breeders had accomplished. Certifying animals with these respective associations insured some measure of market return by authenticating bloodlines in pedigree herd books. But what made Elmendorf synonymous with the choicest and highest producing pureblood in the world was another institution that had for a half-century protected the interests of the fashionable and aristocratic.⁶⁹

Keeping with his love of pedigree animals, Haggin's managers turned Elmendorf into the country's best producer of show stock, with international champions at the head of its herds. The farm eagerly embraced the fair circuits, even designing a separate department and manager within its dairy to care for and prepare the show herds, finding those fairs that fit well with the longstanding traditions of constitution and beauty of form

⁶⁷ K.A. Harrison, "The Pride of the Bluegrass," *The Country Gentlemen* (24 February 1912): 3; Phillip Speed, "Mr. James B. Haggin's Kentucky Estate," *Town and Country* (10 February 1912): 30-33; "Private Fortune's Aid to Agriculture," *Breeders Gazette* (17 January 1912): 129-133.

⁶⁸ By the turn of the twentieth-century, these elite organizations functioned as promoters and regulators of the breeds. Each developed an extensive system of registration within their breeds through herd books to maintain what they believed represented the highest standards for the purity of their breeds. These herd books helped distinguish high stock from most working cows.

⁶⁹ Harriet Ritvo, "Pride and Pedigree: The Evolution of the Victorian Dog Fancy," *Victorian Studies*, v. 29, no. 2 (Winter, 1986): 227 – 253.

in pedigree breeding.⁷⁰ Haggin's herd of Shorthorns first achieved high fame.⁷¹ Described as "The Most Select Herd of Pure Scotch Short-Horns in this country," his two sires in service included Whitehall Marshall, twice crowned grand champion at the famed International Show, a feat unequalled by any other bull of the breed, and King Cumberland, the sire of the 1908 International Junior Champion.⁷² In 1910, the chickens of Elmendorf took over fifty prizes at national and state competitions, capturing the coveted first place at the Crystal Palace, London, England.⁷³ By the following year Haggin's show herds traveled to fairs all across the country, from Virginia to Wisconsin, Iowa to Indiana, as well as Chicago to Toronto, where judges often motioned his animals to the top of the class.⁷⁴ So great was the success of his exhibition herds of pigs,

⁷⁰ *Jersey Bulletin* (22 November 1911): 1928; *Jersey Bulletin* (12 July 1911): 1197

⁷¹ For Berkshire pigs, see "Final Sale of Elmendorf," *Breeders Gazette* (6 January 1916). For Elmendorf advertisements, *Breeders Gazette* (30 July 1914): 166; *Breeders Gazette* (6 August 1914): 207; *Breeders Gazette* (23 July 1914): 131. His Shorthorns featured the famous Grasmere herd as well as the champion bulls with show records unequalled of any breed, making the Kentucky farm "a Mecca" for any Shorthorn breeder who wanted an animal "that means progress." L. H. Bailey, *Cyclopedia of American Agriculture: A Popular Survey of Agricultural Conditions, Practices and Ideals in the United States and Canada* (New York: Macmillan Co, 1907): 372.

⁷² See, for example, *Breeders Gazette* (14 July 1909): 43; *Breeders Gazette* (6 November 1912): 1016; *Breeders Gazette* (4 December 1912): 1284; *Breeders Gazette* (1 November 1911): 897. The Elmendorf Shorthorn herd was on its way to acquiring a show record unsurpassed before it experienced a devastating loss of its show herd in a railroad wreck following the Virginia State Fair in 1911. See, "Elmendorf's Shorthorn Herd Killed in Wreck," *Lexington Herald* (18 October 1911): 1.

⁷³ "Haggin's Russell Cave Poultry," *Lexington Herald* (17 December 1911): 1.

⁷⁴ "Ponies From Wales," *Lexington Herald* (19 September 1909); "Elmendorf," *Lexington Herald* (17 September 1909): 1; "Entries for Twelfth International Live Stock Exposition," *Breeders Gazette* (15 November 1911): 993; "Fair," *Breeders Gazette* (21 August 1912): 318; *Breeders Gazette* (11 September 1912): 472; "Kentucky State Fair," *Breeders Gazette* (18 September 1912): 531; "Iowa State Fair," *Breeders Gazette* (23 October 1912): 869; *Breeders Gazette* (6 November 1912): 978; "Bluegrass Fair," *Breeders Gazette* (13 August 1914): 241; "Kentucky State Fair," *Breeders Gazette* (24 September 1914): 492; "National Dairy Show: The Jerseys," *Breeders Gazette* (1 October 1914): 784-786.

chickens, sheep, and cattle in show circuits across the country that the farm acquired champion honors for the next seven years in nearly every state, for shows made.⁷⁵

The most successful show herd however was Haggin's Jerseys. Often described as "the most sensational exhibit of progeny ever made in this country," more than 250 first prizes and championships stood to the credit of Nobles of Oaklands and his get.⁷⁶ At the 1911 national competition one reporter observed that "When ribbons were hung, and Noble of Oaklands was brought in the arena, along with his twelve-year-old dam, Lady Viola, it left an indelible impression on the minds of those privileged to witness it."⁷⁷ So exceptional was Elmendorf's show herd of milk cows that the American Jersey Cattle Club asked if the Viola family would be exhibited in a booth as representatives of the breed at the 1911 National Dairy Show.⁷⁸

⁷⁵ "Bluegrass Fair," *Breeders Gazette* (21 August 1907): 331; "Elmendorf Cattle Win State Fair Prizes," *Lexington Herald* (22 September 1907): 1; "Elmendorf Farm," *Lexington Herald* (18 September 1908): 1; "Elmendorf Won at Chicago Show," *Lexington Herald* (8 December 1908): 1; "The Ninth International," *Breeders Gazette* (9 December 1908): 1127; "Fine Chickens," *Lexington Leader* (2 January 1909): 1; "Elmendorf Cows Win in Many Prizes," *Lexington Herald* (20 September 1909): 7; "Iowa State Fair," *Breeders Gazette* (8 September 1909): 400; "American Royal," *Breeders Gazette* (27 October 1909): 834; "Haggin and Johnson Win Prizes at Missouri Poultry Show," *Lexington Leader* (7 December 1909); "Haggin Fowls Win at Baltimore," *Lexington Leader* (11 January 1910): 1; "Shorthorns," *Lexington Leader* (4 August 1910): 9; "Elmendorf Shorthorns," *Bourbon News* (30 August 1910): 1; "Thousands Visit Birds at Appalachian Exhibition," *Lexington Leader* (9 October 1910): 17; *Breeders Gazette* (13 September 1911): 438; *Breeders Gazette* (20 September 1911): 495; "Tennessee State Fair," *Breeders Gazette* (27 September 1911): 562; "Close of Fair Fall Season," *Breeders Gazette* (25 October 1911): 817; "Thirteenth International," *Breeders Gazette* (11 December 1912): 1251, 1259.

⁷⁶ Elmendorf Advertisement, *Breeders Gazette* (14 May 1916): 1060; for quote, see *Breeders Gazette* (8 November 1911): 938; *Jersey Bulletin* (8 November 1911): 1871.

⁷⁷ *Breeders Gazette* (8 November 1911): 938.

⁷⁸ M.A. Scovell to O.A. Auten, Scovell Letterbooks, v. 84 (29 September 1911): 405, in Kentucky Agricultural Experiment Station Collection, at University of Kentucky Special Collections, University of Kentucky, Lexington, Kentucky (hereafter cited KAES Collection); M.A. Scovell to W.R. Spann, Scovell Letterbooks, v. 84, (7 October 1911): 477, in KAES Collection; M.A. Scovell to I.C. Stump, Scovell Letterbooks, v. 83 (6 July 1911): 80, in KAES Collection; M.A. Scovell to C.H. Berryman, Scovell Letterbooks, v. 83 (8 July 1911): 107-108, in KAES Collection.

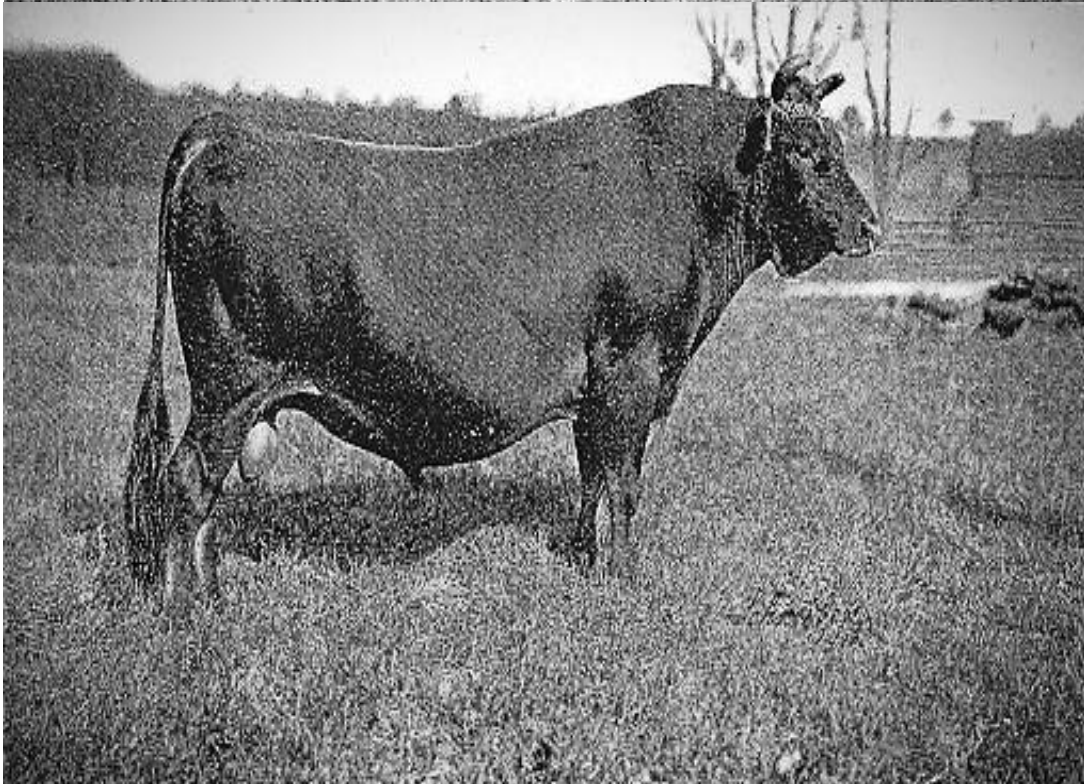
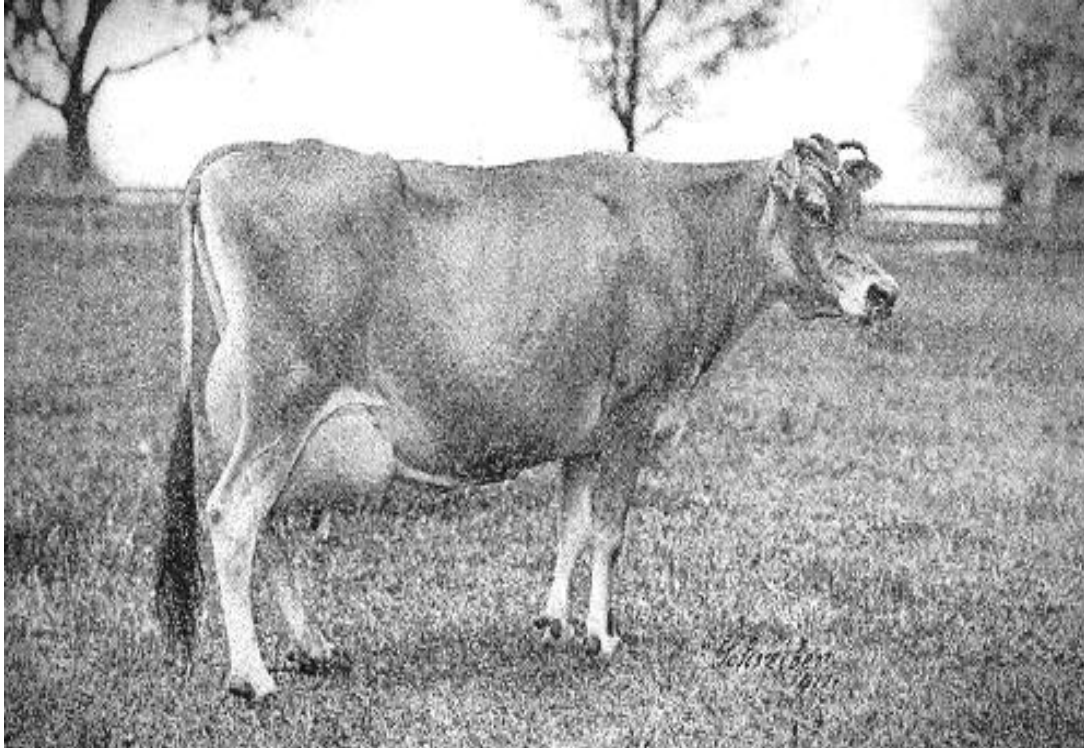


Figure 8.1: Lady Viola, *A Complete Dispersal Sale of the Elmendorf Jersey Cattle: The Property of Estate of J.B. Haggin* (Lexington, KY: James M. Byrnes, 1916); Figure 8.2: Nobles of Oakland, *A Complete Dispersal Sale of the Elmendorf Jersey Cattle: The Property of Estate of J.B. Haggin* (Lexington, KY: James M. Byrnes, 1916).

Haggin developed an avid interest in the national and state fair circuits, finding there an important source of pride and profit for his industrial style of high stock breeding. True, these animals earned profound admiration and great fanfare, celebrating the more aristocratic aspects of blooded stock breeding, but his new pedigree investments nonetheless chiefly reflected values of wealth and industry. Such fancy show animals ended up in the hands of the millionaire breeders like Haggin, in part, because his experts recognized the monetary potential of a ringside reputation. In agricultural journals and pedigree papers across the country, the farm used fair experiences to push goods to markets. At first Elmendorf placed just one advertisement for all its pedigree animals, including its Jerseys, Berkshire pigs, and Shorthorns, in a small but prominent upper corner of one page among columns full of pedigree breeding operations.⁷⁹ That year the farm began to hold annual specialized sales of its cattle and pigs. It was not uncommon for a thousand visitors and hundreds of buyers to attend one of the most publicized sales of pedigree animals.⁸⁰

But the most important development in the wake of his decision to quit the Thoroughbred business was another kind of diversification of equal significance to the

⁷⁹ But with the performance of prized animals, the farm's advertising changed rapidly. The amount of advertising in respectable agricultural newspapers and journals, such as *Breeders Gazette*, the *Jersey Bulletin*, and *Systems on the Farm*, began to increase and the content was less local and more national and specific in design. As national competitions confirmed the overall quality of Haggin's animals, the farm's advertising grew flashier and more sophisticated. By 1910, it ran full- and half-page advertisements for its pedigree fancying, listing the litany of accomplishments in the show ring, to advertise and document proven success of bloodlines. See, for example, "Elmendorf Farm Jerseys," *Breeders Gazette* (5 July 1911): 34; "Elmendorf Farm," *Breeders Gazette* (24 April 1912): 1020; "Elmendorf Jerseys," *Breeders Gazette* (25 December 1912): 1465; "Elmendorf Farm Jerseys," *Breeders Gazette* (18 June 1913): 1420; "Elmendorf Jerseys," *Breeders Gazette* (7 May 1913): 1136; "Elmendorf Farm Herd of Jerseys," *Breeders Gazette* (9 July 1914): 64; "A National Event," *Breeders Gazette* (4 May 1916): 990; *Jersey Bulletin* (12 July 1911): 1117.

⁸⁰ *Breeders Gazette* (17 May 1911): 1235; *Lexington Leader* (20 May 1912): 1; *Lexington Leader* (23 May 1910): 5; *Richmond Climax* (1 June 1910): 5; "Elmendorf Shorthorns," *Lexington Leader* (25 May 1910): 1.

growth of modern farming in central Kentucky. Indeed, if Haggin's horse sales exposed the fragility of pedigree business, his decisions in the wake of quitting the business revealed the possibilities of bloodstock breeding in Kentucky. At the same time ships of prized horses were sailing for distant ports in Europe and South America, steamships were crossing the Atlantic, carrying pedigree animals of another kind, and destined for his Kentucky farm. Over the next seven years, Haggin would devote even more money and attention to the transformation of his Bluegrass farm into the world's largest and finest dairy. In some ways the creation of an immaculate dairy was more ambitious in scope and size than his Thoroughbred operation. Though he brought his experiences with horse breeding directly to bear on the creation of his new enterprise, this dairy, more so than his horses, made Elmendorf the ultimate prototype of the ideal modern farm: efficient, pedigreed, mechanized, and scientific. Ironically, the very forces that drove Haggin from the horse industry—government intervention of sensitive public issues—he came to depend upon with his new milking enterprise.

Chapter Nine

Haggin's "The Modern Dairy of the Southland," 1907-1917

In January 1907, as political controversies in horse racing swept the nation, a reporter for the *Daily Racing Form* observed a strange development on the country's premiere horse farm. At J.B. Haggin's Elmendorf, large numbers of milk cows imported from various countries had begun to arrive, leading the newspaper correspondent to question if Haggin, the great lover of Thoroughbreds, "planned to milk his mares."¹ As more and more of his pedigree horses were being shipped to foreign markets and equal numbers of fancy cows were arriving by rail and by road to Kentucky, Haggin was asked about his interest in the breeding of dairy cattle. Humanitarian work, he replied, had given a new impetus to a dairy at Elmendorf Farm. "Down where I live in Kentucky—when I'm there—there are a lot of babies, fine babies—or very nice mothers, and those babies need milk—good milk—that will make them grow fat and healthy. Now, I [am] buying a few cows for my place—the best I can get—and after a while I'll be able to supply those mothers with all the milk they want, and milk for the family table, too."²

Following the pattern of his other enterprises, Haggin aggressively applied business principles and scientific methods to create the most sophisticated dairy plant of its time. So expansive was milk production at Elmendorf that one thousand cows were milked with "military precision" twice a day; so expensive was milk operations, that one Jersey bull cost \$15,000 and construction costs of a milking barn exceeded \$250,000 in 1910; so clean was the plant, experts called it "the most perfectly sanitary institution of

¹ "Notes of the Turf," *Daily Racing Form* (10 January 1907): 2.

² *Lexington Leader* (19 March 1909): 2.

its kind in America.”³ Machines were also introduced, as well as systems of transportation and distribution, to achieve even greater results. Haggin ultimately constructed a commercial operation with every modern invention for assurance of certified milk. In various ways, Elmendorf was the precursor of the modern dairy of the mid-twentieth century.

To understand how Haggin’s dairy venture was completely organized upon the basis of modern farming, we should investigate how he combined his passion for pedigree breeding with his vision of industrial production, all within the scope of progressive societal reform. Haggin, who was formerly castigated for exploiting workers in the gold rush of Deadwood, in the sweltering silver mines of Peru, and the hot cotton fields of California, became a progressive reformer engaged in saving the health of babies. The inadequate, deficient conditions of commercial milk production and the direct and disheartening impact on children’s health in the Bluegrass moved Haggin “to see that every sick child and invalid in the city is supplied with milk.”⁴ The Elmendorf policy for distribution of their dairy product, it was written, ensured that “Rich and poor are treated alike.”⁵ Immersed in the production of milk, which was as pure as it was delicious, as sweet as it was wholesome, Haggin saw himself a part of a much larger reform dynamic whose objective was the long-term amendment and advancement of commercial milk production in America.

³ “Elmendorf Dairy: Modern Dairy of the Southland,” Promotional Pamphlet, in University of Kentucky Special Collections, University of Kentucky, Lexington, Kentucky; *Interstate Druggist*, v. 48 (1914): 310.

⁴ Phillip Speed, “Mr. James B. Haggin’s Kentucky Estate,” *Town and Country* (10 February 1912): 30-33. Although local newspapers give Haggin unquestioning praise for his philanthropic milk venture, often printing articles that detail his charitable giving, the papers offer little evidence concerning the milk commission’s successes

⁵ *Ibid.*

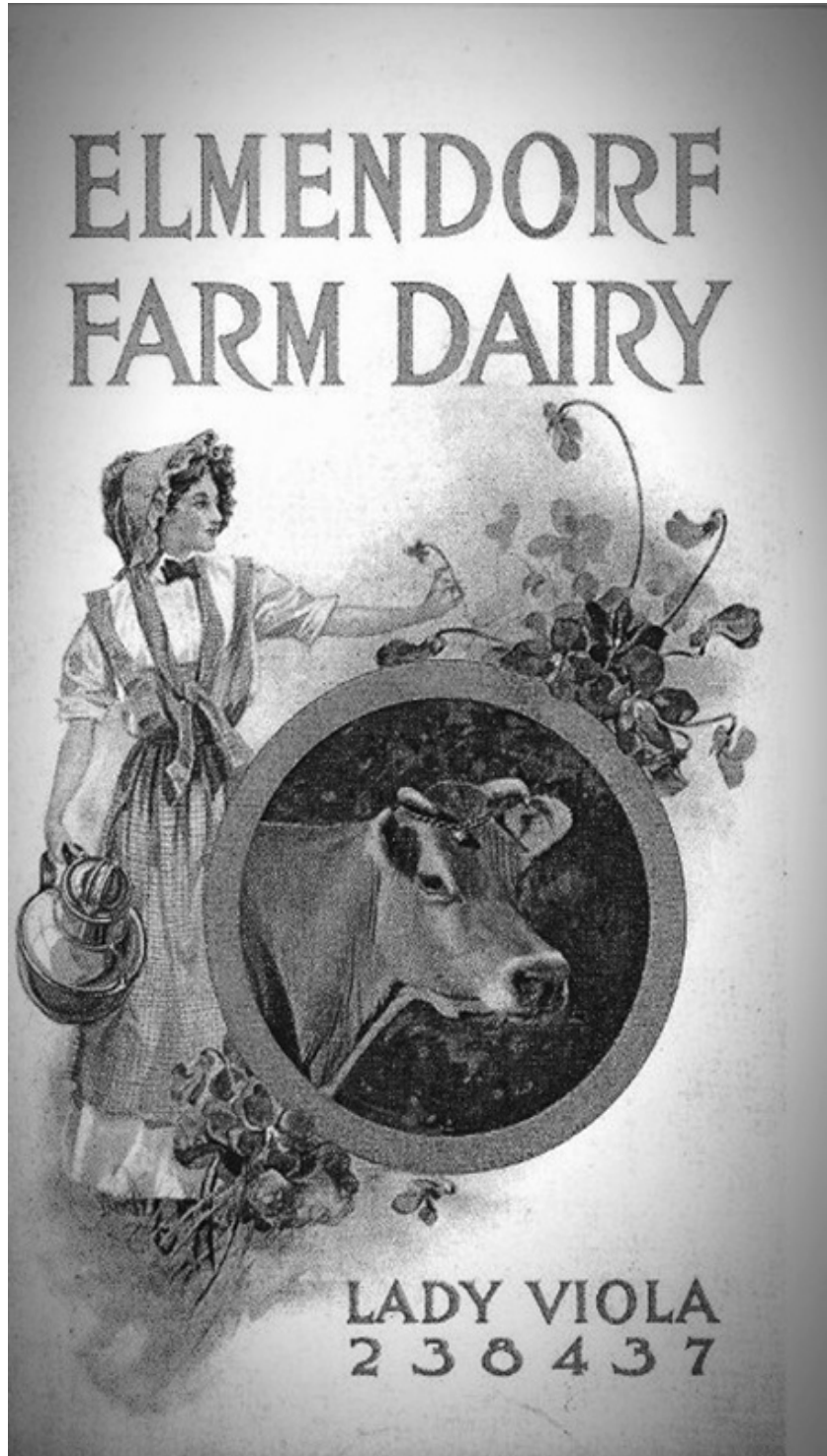


Figure 9.1: Front Cover of *Elmendorf Farm Dairy: The Modern Dairy of the Southland* (Lexington, Ky: Elmendorf Farm Publishers, 1912).

* * * *

In October of 1899 a sickness swept through the college corridors and classrooms of Kentucky University. Many students developed what appeared to be a slight cold but quickly discovered that they had contracted the serious illness of typhoid fever. Within a few days over forty students became gravely ill, including Louis Ford, a theology student, who fell sick and was taken to the hospital. For over a week his condition was critical. Ford lay in a bed, harried by fever, headache, malaise, and diarrhea. Over the following week the young missionary lingered near death with a gastrointestinal infection until the end came on the evening of October 23.⁶

With illness spreading throughout the student body and some students losing their lives in the battle, President John McGarvey looked for an answer within the walls of the college. McGarvey ordered a complete search of students' living quarters and meals. Officials had first believed the deadly illness came from contaminated water or decrepit dormitories.⁷ The true culprit however was found to be contaminated milk, a "potion of poison," as one reporter observed, which transmitted a nasty germ to the students.⁸

Infected milk bore the threat of catastrophe. Medical officials and social reformers in America believed the nation's milk economy was in steady decline. Milk from current public sources was dangerous, dirty, spoiled, and adulterated because sources of infections were infinite in the closed, dark, crowded stalls of dirty and unkept barns of

⁶ *Lexington Herald* (23 October 1899): 8.

⁷ *New York Times* (14 November 1899): 7.

⁸ The phrase used in early twentieth-century pamphlets. M. J. Rosenau, *The Milk Question* (Boston and New York: Houghton Mifflin Co, 1912). See also, Nancy Tomes, *The Gospel of Germs: Men, Women, and the Microbe in American Life* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1998): 112.

dairy farmers. With manure caked to flanks of cows, dripping from stall boards, accumulating around the barn, most dairy farmers, reformers argued, showed a great reluctance to invest in permanent sanitary structures and sterile practices. Most farmers chose to see milking only as a byproduct of their beef operations and performed the task as means allowed. In many of these stables, the main food for bovine stock was distillery slop, or “swill.” As a mix of brewers’ grains, this inexpensive feed was literally teeming with thousands of types of bacteria, instantly able to contaminate milk by contact.

Of course, there were numerous reasons for diseased milk. Cities received their commodity from great distances sometimes in excess of four hundred miles. Contractors collected this highly perishable product from various dairies and deposited their goods into large vats, where clean and dirty milk intermingled, and dirt and germs collected in steel drums, sometimes with days separating milk production from public consumption.⁹ It is not surprising that professionals described milk as “a living fluid,” full of microbial dangers exacerbated by time and temperature. In the most severe cases of decomposition, milk gave way to various colors of blue, green and red, with pockets of fine mold covering its surface, and its viscosity increased so dramatically, as historian Kendra Howard describes, “it could be pulled into strings.”¹⁰

⁹ The 1912 publication often cited in recent histories reports that Boston received its milk supply outside of a fifty-mile circle, and “some milk starts two hundred and forty-three miles from the city. New York City received practically no milk within fifty miles and some of its supply comes from points as far away as four hundred miles.” Rosenau, *The Milk Question*, 260.

¹⁰ See for example, Kentucky, *Bulletin of the State Board of Health of Kentucky* (Louisville: State Board of Health of Kentucky, 1906/07): 148; Richard A. Meckel, “*Save the Babies*”: *American Public Health Reform and the Prevention of Infant Mortality, 1850-1929* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1990): 40-41, see also Chapter Two and Three; Dr. V.C. Vonjham, “Diseased Milk,” *Christian Advocate* (20 October 1887): 686; Kendra D. Smith-Howard, “Perfecting Nature’s Food: A Cultural and Environmental History of Milk in the United States, 1900-1970,” (Ph.D., diss., University of Wisconsin-Madison, 2007): 18.

As significant was its impact of the most vulnerable of consumers. Infected milk primarily took the lives of the young, especially those under the age of five. As more and more women, particularly from middle and working-class backgrounds, shifted from breast-to bottle –feeding late in the nineteenth century, children were at considerable risk for contracting a plethora of illnesses contracted from foul milk, including diphtheria, typhoid fever, cholera, septic sore throat, tuberculosis, and bacterial diarrhea.¹¹

Crying “Save the Babies,” proponents of milk reform quickly became a national movement due to the economic and social terror wrought by the increasing prevalence of contaminated milk. Coalitions of men, women, professionals, volunteers, industrialists, and farmers answered with great energy.¹² In their desire to encourage change in the homes, some leaders established societies for milk’s most vulnerable consumer, the children. With energetic campaigns, they focused their efforts on poor and middle-class women, reaching out to them to consider breastfeeding. “Take not away from us that food which God in His wisdom provides,” one 1914 broadside implored.¹³

There were many who believed dairying should be thoroughly reorganized upon the basis of modern scientific expertise. Some sought to reduce percentages of milk contamination by changing the process of milk production itself. Recognizing the

¹¹ Jacqueline Wolf demonstrates how economic pressures, class conflict, altered sexual mores, and changing concepts of time, nature, efficiency, self-control, health, and medicine all contributed to the shift from breast to bottle by the late 1890s. Historiography of infant feeding and milk. Jacqueline H. Wolf, *Don’t Kill Your Baby: Public Health and the Decline of Breastfeeding in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 2001).

¹² Many of their efforts harkened back to earlier movements to reform America’s milk. Since the 1810s, public health reformers waged heated campaigns against swill-feeding farmers in the larger metropolitan areas of New York and Chicago. Temperance reformers’ spirited slop battles, however, proved as least successful as smashed whiskey bottles. What set apart the progressives’ efforts in the early twentieth-century, however, was urbanization, federalism, and scientific advancements. See Meckel, “*Save the Babies*”, 68; E. Melanie DuPuis, *Nature’s Perfect Food: How Milk Became America’s Drink* (New York: New York University Press, 2002): 21..

¹³ Department of Health City of Chicago Educational Poster, (18 April 1914) Infant Feeding, p. 1.

feasibility of focusing on sanitation practices surrounding the cow itself, these public figures poured money and resources into depots for distribution of pasteurized milk to the less fortunate, while some promoted the practice of artificial formulas as a favored alternative.¹⁴ Public health officials and agricultural professionals, in particular, pushed for stricter oversight of dairy farmers. Ordinances were passed which required that dairies improve sanitary conditions of barns, daily cleanliness of dairy stock, and sterilization practices inherent in milk production. Licenses to sell milk to markets became mandatory. Reformers and officials created scorecard systems in dairy evaluation as an effective weapon in the fight against filthy dairies. Professionals drew attention to the importance of scientific guidelines for milk production encompassing microscopy and chemistry whereby dairying observed simple principles of bacteriology. Two scientific processes, in particular, deserve a close consideration, as both encouraged special ordering of the dairy industry and both influenced the development of Haggin's plant.

Pasteurization became the most popular method in America for safeguarding milk against contamination and/or spoilage, although it carried decided disadvantages. First introduced in 1873 to New York by Abraham Jacobi and publicized by Nathan Straus in 1893, the process involved gently heating milk to a temperature at which most dangerous bacteria were killed.¹⁵ Despite its coming success, pasteurization was far from

¹⁴ MJ Wasserman, "Henry L. Coit and the Certified Milk Movement in the Development of Modern Pediatrics". *Bulletin of the History of Medicine*. 46, no. 4 (1972) Jul-Aug; 46(4): 359-90; Jacqueline Wolf, "'Let Us Have More Mother-Fed Babies': Early Twentieth-Century Breastfeeding Campaigns in Chicago and Minneapolis," *Journal of Human Lactation* 15, (1999) no. 2: 101-105.

¹⁵ Jennifer Koslow, "Putting It To A Vote: The Provision of Pure Milk in Progressive Era Los Angeles," *The Journal of the Gilded Age and Progressive Era* 3, no. 02 (2004): 111-144; Judith Walzer Leavitt, *The Healthiest City: Milwaukee and the Politics of Health Reform* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1982): 181; Julie Miller, "To Stop the Slaughter of Babies:

standardized in J.B. Haggin's day. The equipment was costly for a small working dairy, and some remained skeptical of its benefits, arguing that pasteurized milk was difficult to produce in either the farm or the home without ruining milk's flavor and consistency.¹⁶

More important still, pasteurization was not the preferred method of medical and agricultural professionals in Kentucky. The state food inspector in Kentucky, Robert McDowell Allen, acknowledged that pasteurization does a "good service" when milk came from a filthy source; "but trying to purify the milk after it has become contaminated is the wrong principle," he argued. Allen believed that the farmer should be more made responsible for producing clean milk. "The production of milk is a work of scrupulous and systematized cleanliness from dairy barn to consumer," wrote the chief inspector in 1906, "involving proper barns, efficient and contented labor, the proper handling and distributing of the milk, and in addition to this, the health of the cows and their care, feed and water." Farmers, he believed, had to choose exactness over expedience. "Milk should be produced from healthy, clean cows, in clean stables, and then cooled, bottled and sealed as soon as it is drawn from the cow. Then, and only then, is it a pure food."¹⁷

Certification of clean dairy practices also signified dramatic developments in science, technology, and germ theory, but it offered a different process and concept than pasteurization of progressive farming.¹⁸ First developed by a New York physician, Henry

Nathan Straus and the Drive for Pasteurized Milk, 1883-1920," *New York History* 74 (April 1993): 158-184.

¹⁶ Meckel, "Save the Babies," 89. Wasserman, "Henry L. Coit and The Certified Milk Movement in the Development of Pediatrics," 375.

¹⁷ R. M. Allen, *Milk Supply of Kentucky: Louisville* (Lexington: Kentucky Agricultural Experiment Station of the State College of Kentucky, 1908): 75.

¹⁸ Impelled by the discoveries of Louis Pasteur between 1877 and 1879 and Robert Koch in 1882, a reconfigured science of microbes known as germ theory challenged traditional ideas that heredity, climate, miasmas, filth, and other behavioral sins actually caused diseases. Although the discovery of disease-causing germs met stout resistance among some great experts across the

L. Coit, certified milk, in his words, was “raw milk taken [from] tuberculin tested cows, immediately chilled and bottled, not changed by any process and produced only under the supervision of medical milk commissions.”¹⁹ These medical milk authorities offered the “absolute assurance” that the farmer worked in the most sterile and hygienic conditions. The commission gave the most stringent instructions to the working dairy, including building materials, types of tuberculin tests, color of milking suits, and kinds of milking implements.²⁰ What best demonstrated the extraordinary degree of care afforded by certification was the bacteriological examinations.

Certified milk must contain no more than 10,000 bacteria per cubic centimeter, and daily examinations in a laboratory by a bacteriologist verified that its milk measured up to this established requirement.²¹ It was this kind of quality, safety, and purity that the chief inspector of milk in Kentucky imagined, one that he called “model stations for the education of the dairymen.” Unfortunately production of certified milk by proposed standards was almost wholly impractical for the small dairies who unavoidably suffered from the inescapable tradeoff between quality and quantity. It was very difficult and more expensive to limit bacteria counts to 10,000 per cubic centimeter, let alone, 50,000 per spoonful.²² Dairies in Fayette County often scored three, four, and ten times the limit of

world, germ theory became an acceptable scientific fact by the late nineteenth-century. David S. Barnes, *The Great Stink of Paris and the Nineteenth-Century Struggle against Filth and Germs* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2006): 2-3; Naomi Rogers, *Dirt and Disease Polio Before FDR* (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 1992): Tomes, *Gospel of Germs*, 28

¹⁹ Waserman, “Henry L. Coit and The Certified Milk Movement in the Development of Pediatrics,” 361, 370.

²⁰ Allen, *Milk Supply*; M.A. Scovell to C.H. Berryman, Scovell Letterbooks, v. 83 (7 July 1911): 91, in KAES Collection.

²¹ *Ibid*; “What is Certified Milk,” *Jersey Bulletin* (5 July 1911): 1092.

²² Allen, *Milk Supply*, 100, 108

100,000 per cc.²³ And when milk was inspected in metropolitan areas such as New York and Chicago, “ordinary milk” ranged between 500,000 and 1,500,000 bacteria per spoonful.²⁴

Such rigorous analysis of product provided a higher standard of hygiene, but the standards required tremendous investments for the farmer, both physically and financially.

As one health official pointed out in 1913, “The farmer is not a philanthropist, but a business man.”²⁵ If a working dairy could not afford additional hours of labor, neither could it afford additional costs for marketing their product. Certified milk cost 60 to 100 percent more than ordinary milk, and was beyond the reach for most consumers. “While some celebrated certified milk as fostering ‘a revolution in the methods of producing milk and the method of its supply to large cities,’” as scholar, Melanie Dupois, observes, “its high price and expensive machinery prevented most but the very wealthy from producing and purchasing this superior product.”²⁶

This reality held true in Kentucky dairies. All forms of regulation, including production of certified milk, were designed to change the poor state of dairying, so as to eliminate so-called “filthy dairymen,” and the diseases that came about from filthy

²³ See for example, *Lexington Leader* (5 October 1912): 2; *Lexington Leader* (16 September 1914):4.

²⁴ DuPuis, *Nature's Perfect Food*; Howard, “Perfecting Nature’s Food”.

²⁵ This occurred on all levels. Although the first milk commission was organized in 1893, for several decades standardization of objective and methods eluded “certified milk” commissions. Numerous commissions passed different codes and standards for certified milk across the nation. Not until 1912 did American Association of American Milk Commissions carefully set forth the origin and meaning of “certified milk.” See *Jersey Bulletin* (5 November 1913): 1525; “Walker-Gordon Milk is not Certified in All Cities,” *Jersey Bulletin* (23 August 1911): 1371. In Fayette County, its medical commission was characterized by a city versus county division. No member outside of the county was eligible for membership. See Wasserman, “Henry L. Coit and The Certified Milk Movement in the Development of Pediatrics,” 385; Meckel, “*Save the Babies,*” 83; Rosenau, *The Milk Question*, 246; Kentucky Medical Journal, p. 17m 1913.

²⁶ Dupois, *Nature's Perfect Food*, 77.

milk.²⁷ But the remediation of impure milk caused financial hardships for most working dairies. Understanding the degree to which such proposals, then, while intended to benefit the life and health of consumers, proved too much for these small-scale farmers shows how modern the state's fragile milk economy was pushed into the domain of wealthier dairymen, like J.B. Haggin.

* * * *

In the early summer of 1906, Robert M. Allen, the chief food inspector of Kentucky visited Joseph Scherer's dairy farm. After reviewing Scherer's facility, Allen gave the rural dairy a scathing report: "Milk room is exposed on side next to grocery; dirty plank floors, tub of filthy water...cans, rust on seams and rim; the walls of milk room are dirty and the ceiling is low and dusty."²⁸ Scherer, like most working farmers in Kentucky, attempted to follow "pure milk" guidelines set forth by the state inspector, agricultural agents, and county medical commissions. The small Louisville farmer had cleaned stalls, utensils, and hands with diligence. He had tested his cows for tuberculosis. He had even paid high wages for specialized and trained experts to verify its process. But the difficulties he encountered in the effort to produce clean milk seemed insurmountable. The only alternative, as Scherer saw it, was to quit milking. He reasoned: "We are renting the place we live on. We have tried to keep it as clean as

²⁷ Allen, *Milk Supply*.

²⁸ Allen, *Milk Supply*, 128.

possible, and our cows have been in healthy condition; but we will have to give up the business for we cannot build up the place as the law calls for.”²⁹

Scherer’s story, like many in Kentucky, demonstrated how the rural dairy farmer in the Bluegrass became acutely aware that his livelihood was gradually being removed from his control. Little illustrates this trend better than the other two hundred and fifty farmers of Allen’s investigation. As Kentucky’s chief inspector of farm commodities, Allen performed a remarkably extensive survey in 1906 of the nine counties between Lexington and Louisville which, for better or worse, revealed the farmers’ difficulties in bringing clean milk to market. Their voices provide a rich context, then, to understand how Haggin’s dairy was the exception to the rule, and why agricultural professionals considered Elmendorf dairy operations exceptional.

Most of the farmers Allen inspected could not afford the expensive organization materials and methods required to guarantee production of sanitized milk. Notations like “*a dingy, old, barn, 2-story, frame, old and dilapidated*” [italics in original] accounted for two to three times as many descriptions as “a modern barn” did. Many dairies were, in fact, dual-purpose structures supporting both horses and cows, which defied the restriction imposed by the state board of health. Most dairymen could not afford the single-purpose milking barns and specialized equipment that Extension Service personnel suggested. As one small farmer near Louisville explained, “I am running my dairy according to my means and abilities...Now, if you would kindly send about \$5000 to fix up my barn so that it would come up to requirements of a certified dairy.”³⁰

²⁹ Ibid, 174-175.

³⁰ Ibid, 175.

Not the least of Allen's dilemmas was fighting the routine use of swill. To help dairy farms clean up, Kentucky, like most states in America, prohibited the sale of milk from swill-fed animals in 1900.³¹ Yet some farmers took the risk of fines and continued to feed animals the mixture of brewery grains. "A word about feed," one farmer from Louisville wrote, "If you could see my children, you would think slop milk did not have microbes in it. I have been in the dairy business for twenty years, and I have distillery slop and brewer's grains which beat all of your dry feeds, for all of the microbes are boiled out it."³² To the dairymen who had long used swill to produce cattle, their past experiences bore more use than bacteriological exams and research reports.³³

Further shaping public sentiment was scientific testing. Many farmers were not willing to commit themselves to the required tuberculin tests for, early in the twentieth century, there was just cause for skepticism as the scientific community itself was divided on the question of whether *tubercle bacillus* could even pass from diseased animals to humans through milk.³⁴ As a result, many farmers, fearful that the herds might be infected opposed the test. Some believed that a positive result for one animal meant condemnation of entire herd.³⁵ C. Huettig, a dairy farmer from O'Bannon, Kentucky,

³¹ KRS 217. Paragraph 7 of Section 3 of Pure Food Law, Kentucky. *Baldwin's Kentucky Revised Statutes Annotated* (St. Paul, Minn.: Thomson/West, 2006).

³² Allen, *Milk Supply*, 175.

³³ In 1800s, distillery slop originated from "swill" milk stables attached to distilleries and breweries. The stable stalls often owned by different persons. Still used as a feed additive. Evidence - which were often raised for beef with milk as a by-product. Albert E. Menke and R. T. Gunn, *Distillery Slop* (Lexington: Kentucky Agricultural Experiment Station of the State College of Kentucky, 1886).

³⁴ In fact, Robert Koch, the scientist who discovered tubercle bacillus, made public statements that the virus did not pass in 1901 and 1908. Smith-Howard, "Perfecting Nature's Food: A Cultural and Environmental History of Milk in the United States, 1900-1970," 58.

³⁵ State- and city sanctions of tuberculin testing were met with fierce resistance, particularly in Fayette County, Kentucky. See, for example, "Pure Milk Controversy," *Lexington Leader* (30 November 1911): 3; "Tubercular Cattle to Die," *Lexington Leader* (1 March 1912): 1; "Want Tuberculin Law Repealed," *Lexington Leader* (4 January 1912): 1.

argued, “I bought the best stock I could find in good faith, and I would consider it a great hardship and great injustice to see some of them condemned at my loss through a test which by many is yet considered of doubtful reliability.”³⁶

Transporting a highly perishable commodity also raised critical challenges. Most used the railroad to send goods to market but they struggled with high freight rates, slow returns, and poor schedules. “Shipping is irregular,” wrote the Haggan brothers of Shelbyville, Kentucky. “Trains are often a little behind time and if late, will pull out and leave our milk on the truck, and if we dairymen didn’t help to load the milk every morning, I doubt if it wouldn’t be left every day,” reported a dairy farm from Elizabethtown. Standing in the hot sun of the summer caused milk to sour, a problem that a farmer in nearby Glendale endured. “I have been in the milk business for two years and a half. My only trouble is in keeping my milk sweet when trains are late in summer time.”

With many milk producers depending on the railroads to haul goods to markets, they were vulnerable to the treatment of goods to market. Mrs. Helen Wolcott of Shelby County found that “an unnecessary loss” to her business was the abuse of shipping cans, “being thrown from the cars,” or L.V. Van Meter who also had much “trouble with breaking and battering of cans in pitching off of train,” not to mention the delivery of milk to wrong stations.³⁷ And railroads rarely offered refrigerated and ventilated cars. If they did, dairymen like Harry Walker believed “our milk would reach the Louisville dealers in good condition like we aim to start it, which is not done now in the summer when the train is hours late.”

³⁶ Allen, *Milk Supply*, 170.

³⁷ Allen, *Milk Supply*, 169, 176.

Under the constraints of milk regulation, farmers saw little money made from clean milk. Those interviewed in 1906 often wrote about small profits and large losses gained from a product that required special care. For O.T. Carpenter of Fisherville, Kentucky, the price of milk, at thirteen cents [a gallon], did little more than pay for his bran feed at twenty-four dollars per ton. Dairy farmers often competed unfairly and illegally against swill-fed milk. It was the “greatest problem” confronting R. W. Briggs of Shelbyville, Kentucky, who could not “compete with the Louisville dairies who buy cows to fatten and just milk them to pay expenses, and feed on slop which costs so little.”

If poor prices at market were not bad enough, some farmers felt robbed by city merchants. James Weakly, also of Shelbyville, found himself at “the mercy of the dealer. He does pretty much as he pleases.” In no position to bargain, many felt that they had to take what merchants offered. G.E. Barry of Tunnelhill also found it very difficult to find a market “that will deal square with me.” It was not uncommon for milk to be partially skimmed or watered by city merchants. Indeed, the chief dairy inspector reported in 1906 that the dairy farmers received on average ten cents a gallon for their milk, although consumers in nearby cities paid twenty-five to thirty cents per gallon.³⁸

Much more than barns or markets, however, Kentucky farmers complained most about the perniciousness of labor. Their written statements made themselves clear: “Help scarce and hard to get,” stated Yager and Freeman of Grange, Kentucky; “Help is scarce, poor and very unreliable. Most all my feeding and milking is done by myself,” wrote O.T. Carpenter, of Fisherville, Kentucky; G.W. Beckley, a farmer in Eastwood, expressed his concern over labor supply, “My boys do the milking, and it doesn’t pay to hire and feed cows.” And not even the scientific education of a college graduate helped.

³⁸ Ibid, 83.

Helen G. Wolcott of Scott's Station gave her own interpretation of trained and untrained farm labor. "We have found in two years' experience the utter impossibility of producing clean milk from Kentucky labor, either white or black. We have a man now from Wisconsin [who is] a graduate of the short term dairy course of their State school." Wolcott concluded, "This extra expense for suitable labor should be compensated for in price of product."³⁹

Most of the dairy farmers in the state shared the same vulnerabilities early in the twentieth century. They found state regulations too expensive, the railroads inefficient, help unreliable, and prices too low. Not surprisingly, many were unimpressed with any kind of state inspected milk, especially certified milk, which required utmost strictness in regard to sanitary conditions and expensive machinery. "On account of all these new-fangled ways people are not paid enough for milk," wrote Omer Jones of Eastwood, Kentucky. "Help is hard to get and expensive too, and the veterinary examinations, [add]another expense, to say nothing of feed, milk tickets, etc. Another thing, a man in the country in winter, with much six inches deep, can't possibly keep a stable as clean as a dancing hall."⁴⁰ The progressive reform did little to guarantee what had long been elusive – a stable and high price for their milk. With no satisfaction in the market, one farmer proposed to organize. Frank Krisch of Jericho, Kentucky, suggested, "The best way is for all dairymen to go on a strike and feed milk to the hogs."⁴¹

Consider the differences between these smaller working dairies in Kentucky and Elmendorf. True to his philosophy, Haggin wanted "the very best, the very freshest, the very purest, and the very safest raw milk that it is possible to produce," and this meant

³⁹ Ibid, 165, 167, 168, 176..

⁴⁰ Ibid, 168.

⁴¹ Ibid, 164, 165, 172.

reshaping his horse stud farm into a commercial certified milk plant. With his industrial might, he recreated another bastion of modern and scientific farming. He used the power of industrial logic to overcome the difficulties of state regulations, and indeed changed the very nature of producing, transporting, and distributing pure milk.

* * * *

J.B. Haggin's social affairs were always extravagant occasions in the Bluegrass but the banquet celebrating the opening of his dairy in 1910 was legendary. Three hundred workers, all dressed in white suits, were on hand to serve the finest liquor and food. White pitchers of beer and mint juleps were poured freely, while the fixings of Kentucky burgoo simmered on the fire. Over 800 pounds of beef, mutton, chicken, and veal were barbequed over an outdoor pit and then seasoned in deep iron kettles with red wine and an assortment of cooked vegetables. By noon Haggin's new milking barn was filled with the large membership of the Kentucky Medical Association and the guests simply relished all that Elmendorf's Dairy offered in the way of luxurious cleanliness.

In the presence of medical officials—those Haggin wished to impress most—he succeeded in showing why Elmendorf was truly revolutionary. “It was a triumph of modern sanitary science,” wrote one medical man, “that a full dinner for seven hundred persons could be served in a dairy barn within three hours after milking.” One physician hailed, “These splendid stables are cleaner than most dining rooms and there is hardly a hotel in the state where as few flies will be found.”⁴² A correspondent for a leading agricultural publication commented, “It is impossible to portray the cleanliness and

⁴² Kentucky State Medical Association, *Kentucky Medical Journal*, v. 8 (15 October 1910): 1905.

sweetness of this cow barn.”⁴³ As one physician wrote, “Those who saw and took part will never forget how wonderful it was.”⁴⁴ Another reporter, writing for a New York magazine, held that Haggin’s milking stalls were “as white as marble and as clean and fresh as a lady’s boudoir.”⁴⁵

When a visitor drove past Haggin’s new dairy plant, they saw only the distinctive façade of Elmendorf’s gilded landscape. Constructed of rustic limestone, formal brick, and red Spanish tile, the dairy plant was featured in a series of postcards in 1913 that promised to capture and depict the estate’s peculiarly expensive style. When S.C. Ellis wrote to his Uncle Jack, he selected a postcard of the largest dairy in the world. “We was out to see it the other Sunday afternoon.” In describing the farm, Ellis noted, “They milk between three & four hundred cows (and) the farm has thirteen thousand acres in one body.” Then he wrote a telling message to his uncle: “It sure is a pretty place.”⁴⁶

But Haggin’s dairy stood as a monument to something more than a pretty place; the cows milked and the stables built embodied the industrial logic that had defined his empire. In keeping with his production of Thoroughbreds, Haggin continued a high-volume, high-quality strategy of production. By 1913, peacefully grazing on the hillsides of the massive estate, where hundreds of renowned blue-blooded horses once found a home, were 60 black Kerrys, 100 Dexters, 25 milking Shorthorns, 75 Guernseys, and almost a thousand Jerseys, making Elmendorf Stud farm the “Jersey Isle of America.”⁴⁷

⁴³ “Private Fortune’s Aid to Agriculture,” *Breeders Gazette* (17 January 1912): 1573.

⁴⁴ Kentucky State Medical Association, *Kentucky Medical Journal*, v. 8 (15 October 1910): 1905.

⁴⁵ Phillip Speed, “Mr. James B. Haggin’s Kentucky Estate,” *Town and Country* (10 February 1912): 30-33.

⁴⁶ S.C. Ellis to Uncle Jack, (1911), in author’s possession.

⁴⁷ “Frank A. Crabb,” *Jersey Bulletin* (22 November 1911): 1928; *Jersey Bulletin* (5 February 1913): 205.



Figure 9.2: "Mammoth Dairy Barn," Lexington History Museum, Lexington, Kentucky.



Figure 9.3: "Haggans [Haggin's] Elmendorf Dairy Barn," Lexington History Museum, Lexington, Kentucky.

Such scales of economy meant more land. Generally speaking, a cow required two acres of pasturage in the summer, and Haggin owned only 1600 acres within a mile of his dairy plant. His managers followed the same process as before, purchasing small parcels of land from different owners, and within five years Haggin had acquired an additional 3245 acres at Elmendorf.⁴⁸ As extraordinary as its acreage seemed—well over 12,000 acres stretching into three different counties—it was apparent that Haggin needed more than ever before. Twice a day workers were forced to herd cattle over macadamized roads between pastures, feeding sheds and barns, sometimes in excess of two miles.⁴⁹

Although acreage limited production at Elmendorf, the massive dairy barn played a critical role in its continued expansion. Built in the design of a Maltese cross, the barn split into four ells, which ran a distance of two hundred yards in length and forty yards in width. These wings provided enough space to milk four hundred cows at a time. To simultaneously reduce labor, raise production, and promote cleanliness, the farm used

⁴⁸ Hannah Boswell to J.B. Haggin, 43 acres, Deed Book 161 (17 August 1910): 275; W.B. Vane to J.B. Haggin, 94 acres, Deed Book 161 (August 1910): 235; Jas Thompson to J.B. Haggin, 200.25 acres, Deed Book 159 (11 February 1910): 552; Crenshaw & Logan to J.B. Haggin, 137.4 acres, Deed Book 159 (28 February 1910): 526; George Graves to J.B. Haggin, 93.7 acres, Deed Book 163 (1 July 1910): 625; Sarah O'Connell to J.B. Haggin, 79 acres, Deed Book 162 (1 March 1911): 606; G.M. Harp to J.B. Haggin, 54 acres, Deed Book 165 (18 December 1911): 99; P.B. Sains to J.B. Haggin, 30.5 acres, Deed Book 162 (11 March 1911): 527; L.P. Lewis to J.B. Haggin, 73.8 acres, Deed Book 168 (15 October 1912): 307; Thomas W. Moore to J.B. Haggin, 140.9 acres, Deed Book 168 (1 November 1912): 424; Thorton Moore to J.B. Haggin, 440 acres, Deed Book 168 (16 December 1912): 429; Ines G. Thomson to J.B. Haggin, 12.1 acres, Deed Book 167 (10 August 1912): 343; John McClintock to J.B. Haggin, 164 acres, Deed Book 166 (10 June 1912): 256; John Fister to J.B. Haggin, 310 acres, Deed Book 165 (12 March 1912): 551; Thornton Moore to J.B. Haggin, 244.7 acres (15 March 1912): C.H. Berryman to Margaret Haggin, 38 acres (27 December 1913); C.J. Haggan, 18 acres, Deed Book 173 (13 February 1914): 236; John Rocke to J.B. Haggin, 103.5 acres, Deed Book 173 (2 March 1914): 356; Emma Lee Smith to Haggin Estate, .5 acres, Deed Book 180 (7 December 1915): 6.

⁴⁹ M.A. Scovell to J.B. Haggin, Scovell Letterbooks, v. 83, (27 July 1911): 286, in KAES Collection. A better scenario, as one agricultural expert pointed out, would be smaller barns distributed closer to fields where corn was grown, cows fed, and manure distributed. W.D. Nichols, "Construction and Equipment of Dairy Barn," *Kentucky Agricultural Experiment Station Bulletin No. 179* (State University Press, Lexington, KY: 1914): 47-48.

technological prowess and industrial might in the barn; a low, drowsy hum could be heard reverberating down the long concrete and steel corridors of the barn, signifying the presence of artificial lighting.⁵⁰

To cool steel pens and concrete floors in the summer, water was pumped from a station at the rear of the barn, through underground pipes and aboveground troughs, and further provided a constant source of drinking water for the animals.⁵¹ To dispose of refuse and help with odors, the barn was outfitted with a plumbing system whose scale and that even by today's standards was quite impressive in its scale and foresight. In the rear of the pens, where cows were fastened, a stream of water flowed through a concrete trough that continually carried droppings to metal openings, each provided with a heavy metal cover. Through these openings, the manure emptied into an underground tunnel, which was circular in form and passed below each wing of the barn. When manure passed through the openings, metal carts below the ground collected it, and workers then did the heavy dirty work of transporting the refuse to various pits far away from milking stalls.⁵² Such rigorous sanitary cleaning led Dr. Frank Heisman, the state dairy inspector, to declare, "Mr. Haggin's sanitary dairy is shown everyday...Filthy pens are becoming a thing of the past."⁵³

⁵⁰ "Elmendorf Dairy: Modern Dairy of the Southland," Promotional Pamphlet, in University of Kentucky Special Collections, University of Kentucky, Lexington, Kentucky.

⁵¹ "Private Fortune's Aid to Agriculture," *Breeders Gazette* (17 January 1912): 129-133; Phillip Speed, "Mr. James B. Haggin's Kentucky Estate," *Town and Country* (10 February 1912): 30-33; K.A. Harrison, "The Pride of the Bluegrass," *The Country Gentlemen* (24 February 1912): 3-5.

⁵² "Private Fortune's Aid to Agriculture," *Breeders Gazette* (17 January 1912): 129-133. Animal waste reflects much longer and much larger debates concerning its intrinsic values and nuisances. Or, as historian Steven Stoll cleverly elucidates, "When it falls out hot, call it dung; when it goes to rot in mounds of straw, call it manure." Steven Stoll, *Larding the Lean Earth: Soil and Society in Nineteenth-Century America* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2002).

⁵³ Speed, "Mr. James B. Haggin's Kentucky Estate," *Town and Country* (10 February 1912): 30-33.

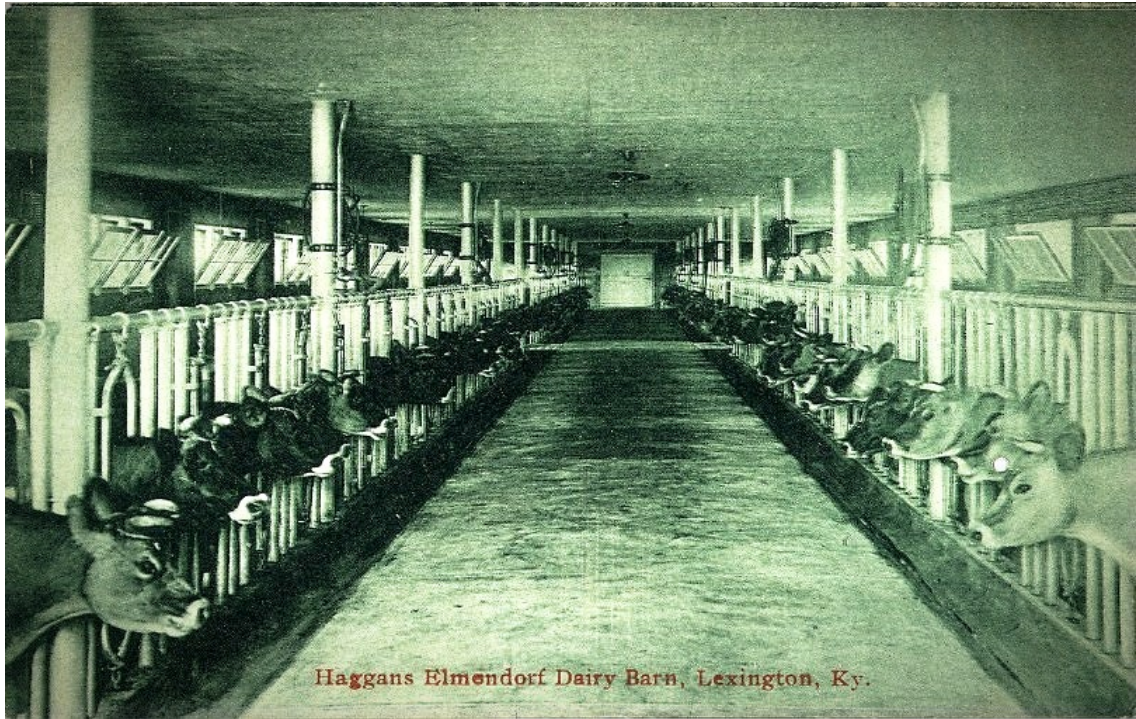


Figure 9.4: “Haggans [Haggin’s] Elmendorf Dairy Barn,” Lexington History Museum, Lexington, Kentucky. Above ground, other laborers were required to clean the iron pens, cement walls, and concrete floors after each milking, twice a day.

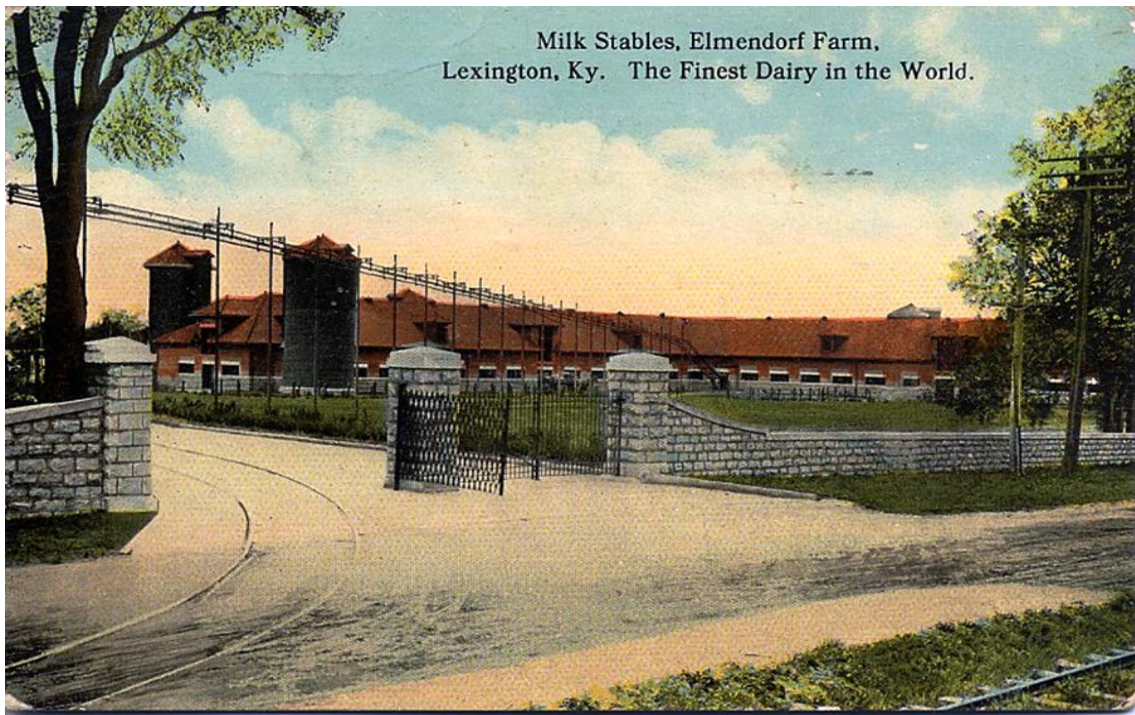


Figure 9.5: “Milk Stables, Elmendorf Farm,” Lexington History Museum, Lexington, Kentucky.

In the center of the dairy barn, the drive to streamline production caused a different kind of expansion, one that depended more and more on technical prowess and less on the human habits of milking. Here mechanization sought to impose order on the process of milking, to thereby guard against bacteria, as well as expand dramatically the amount of milk produced. After the worker milked the cow, they walked the full bucket to the collecting room and attached the ten gallon can to a motor-driven trolley. Running seventy-five feet per minute, it carried one hundred twenty metal cans per hour to the second floor of the four-story building, where milk was then strained and distributed to the machinery room on the first floor—one unceasing, moving process of production.

Over 5000 gallons of milk passed through the cooler, separator, filler, bottler, and capper machines in a single day.⁵⁴ The product was as cold and clean as the machines that filled them, and as important, it now carried a commercial seal. A wire wrapped tightly around the neck of the bottle, and a metal cap fastened pneumatically offered brand recognition. “Look for Elmendorf Metal Caps,” the farm ads stated. “They are self-sealers and cannot be used the second time.” Other ads warned, “If Cream and Milk purporting to be from Elmendorf Dairy is delivered in bottles which do not bear the Elmendorf caps, be sure it is not the Elmendorf product.”⁵⁵

The mechanized system became the way of marketing Haggin’s milk, but what also set Elmendorf apart was its strategy of vertical integration, of seeking to control all the stages of manufacturing and distributing its milk. Haggin enlisted this common strategy of industrial farming for two reasons: first, that the manner in which milk was distributed reduced the liability of contagion, and second, that selling agents and

⁵⁴ “Elmendorf Dairy: Modern Dairy of the Southland,” Promotional Pamphlet, in University of Kentucky Special Collections, University of Kentucky, Lexington, Kentucky.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

commission merchants raised the cost of production. Rather than deal with the uncertainties of contemporary rails and markets, Haggin chose rather to create his own means of transportation and distribution. With public rails unpredictable, his managers advised, it was clearly in the interest of Elmendorf to guarantee safe delivery.

By owning the modern means of transportation and distribution, the dairy overcame the problems of selling a perishable commodity as difficult as pure milk.⁵⁶ The railroad platforms, cars, and spurs that once transported prized horses in 1905, shipped certified milk to markets five years later. The product traveled in refrigerator cars over interurban line the six miles from farm to Elmendorf Dairy depots. The farm established these sites, as close as Lexington and as far away as Cincinnati, to distribute and sell milk.⁵⁷ These depots also played a pivotal part in expanding product lines. Elmendorf managers commissioned salesrooms at the Lexington depot on the corner of North Limestone and Short Street, where customers purchased and ordered products, including all flavors of Elmendorf Ice Cream.⁵⁸

⁵⁶ Scholar Alfred Chandler has described the overall effect as “throughput,” meaning that movement of the finished product, from its raw material, changing in its various form as it goes, all takes place in one large integrated factory. Alfred Chandler, *The Visible Hand: The Managerial Revolution in American Business* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1977).

⁵⁷ “New Elmendorf Milk Depot Site,” *Lexington Leader* (15 April 1911): 1; “Elmendorf Dairy Branches Out,” *Lexington Leader* (13 June 1911): 1. “Fine New Trucks for Elmendorf Dairy,” *Lexington Leader* (16 February 1913): 5; “Elmendorf Buys Refrigerator Car,” *Lexington Leader* (22 June 1911): 6. Only one other dairy in Fayette County used “horseless carriages” to carry their perishable commodity. “Auto Delivery,” *Lexington Leader* (17 July 1911): 10. Historian Ronald Kline demonstrates that the multi-functional use of the early automobile on the farm extended far beyond transportation. Farmers transformed motorized engines into washing machines, corn shellers, sheep shearers, and cream separators. Ronald R Kline, *Consumers in the Country: Technology and Social Change in Rural America* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000): 67-72. *Lexington Leader* (7 February 1907): 8; *Lexington Leader* (8 February 1908); “The Udderly Fascinating History of Biltmore Dairy Farms,” in Biltmore Estate Archives, Asheville, North Carolina.

⁵⁸ “Ice Cream Plant,” *Lexington Leader* (18 July 1911): 7; “Elmendorf Dairy,” *Lexington Leader* (13 December 1913): 6; “Elmendorf Cake,” *Lexington Leader* (20 April 1913): 5.



Figure 9.6: "Dairy Building," Album No. 3, Ben Ali Haggin Materials, University of Kentucky. The farm hired a trained ice cream maker with twenty-five years of experience in Europe to make "Tutti-frutti," "Vanilla Soufflé Glace," "Pistachio," and "Plombiere Glace." The success of Elmendorf Ice Cream could not have been more obvious. In 1913 the farm enlarged its candy facilities and built a model ice-cream plant, which operated at a capacity of eighty gallons per hour.

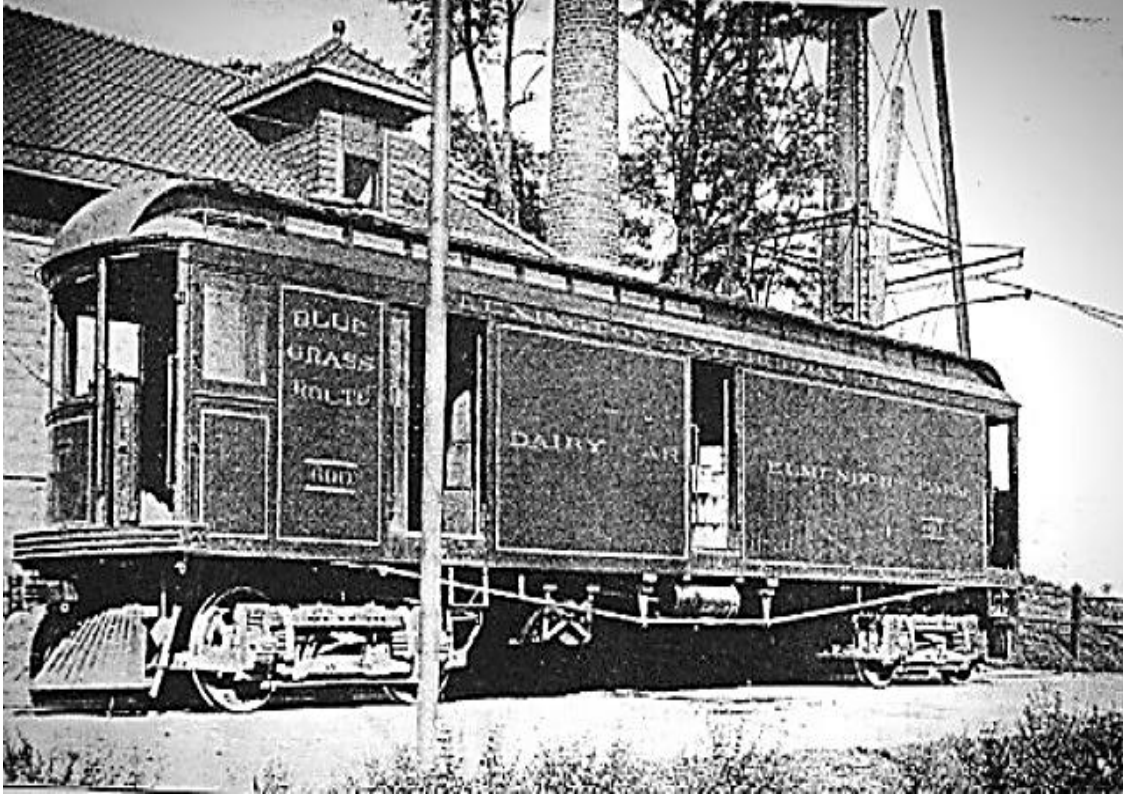


Figure 9.7: Dairy Car, Album No. 3, Ben Ali Haggin Materials, University of Kentucky. The depot initially employed rubber-wheeled wagons and rubber-shoed horses, quieted to comfort sleeping customers, to distribute its product in the early hours before dawn. Delivery improved when the farm purchased refrigerator trucks, which contained curtains and porcelain-lined iceboxes, to “keep milk in darkness and coolness until it is delivered to the customer.”

ELMENDORF MILK *and* CREAM

DELIVERED DIRECT
FROM DAIRY *to* CUSTOMER

NO MIDDLEMAN

NO Milk, Cream or Buttermilk delivered except in sealed Bottles.

☐ Look for the Elmendorf Metal Caps. They are self-sealers and cannot be used the second time.

☐ If cap can be removed from bottle by hand, you may know the bottle has been opened or tampered with since filling.

☐ If Cream and Milk purporting to be from Elmendorf Dairy is delivered in bottles which do not bear the Elmendorf caps, be sure it is not the Elmendorf product.

ACCEPT NO SUBSTITUTE

Report All Frauds

Drink Clean Milk

ELMENDORF REFRIGERATOR CAR used for transportation of Dairy Products over Interurban Line to Elmendorf Dairy Depot, Lexington, Ky.

All Orders Promptly Filled

Fayette Phone 575 East Tennessee Phone 580
Lexington-Paris Interurban Car to Elmendorf Farm

Figure 9.8: Elmendorf Advertisement, Elmendorf Farm Dairy: The Modern Dairy of the Southland (Lexington, Ky: Elmendorf Farm Publishers, 1912). Advertisements in newspapers further reinforced the health benefits of vertical integration, advising consumers, "NO MIDDLEMAN."

The role of philanthropy also helped to legitimize the factory-style operation. In the summer of 1911, Haggin established a milk commission in Lexington, with the assistance of his granddaughter-in-law, Emma Jackson Haggin. The wife of Colonel Louis Lee Haggin received notable publicity for her work in supply depots, a cause she served passionately for four decades. Under the direction of Dr. Woolfolk Barrow, the commission performed sanitary scientific work, “to see that every sick child and invalid in the city is supplied with milk from Elmendorf.”⁵⁹ The baby was provided with an icebox, in which sterilized milk was delivered each morning.⁶⁰

Haggin, unusually sympathetic to the progressive reform of pure milk, was first and foremost a businessman. He controlled the means and methods connecting the farm and consumer, thereby eliminating the middleman, but his operation was not immune to commodity trends. When price of feed shot up, the dairy raised prices a second time in less than six months. In the winter of 1910, Dairy Manager Herbert Lowell posted a notice in several newspapers, “Owing to the high prices of feed I am compelled to charge forty cents per gallon for milk until further notice.”⁶¹

Some expected the best possible prices from Haggin, but when his promises dried up, they were disappointed and outraged. Editorials in local venues, like *Bourbon News*, made worse publicity for Elmendorf, by insinuating a venerable racket on milky goods. “That he [Haggin] wanted to give the poor babies pure milk, etc.,” was simply “rubbish.” And the proof was the “almost prohibitive prices on milk.” In 1910 a quart of Elmendorf

⁵⁹ “Private Fortune’s Aid to Agriculture,” *Breeders Gazette* (17 January 1912): 129 -133; Phillip Speed, “Mr. James B. Haggin’s Kentucky Estate,” *Town and Country* (10 February 1912): 30-33; K.A. Harrison, “The Pride of the Bluegrass,” *The Country Gentlemen* (24 February 1912): 3-5.

⁶⁰ “Need More Money if More Babies Are To Be Taken,” *Lexington Leader* (30 June 1914): 7.

⁶¹ *Bourbon News* (4 January 1910): 5; *Bourbon News* (1 February 1910): 7; *Bourbon News* (11 February 1910): 7; *Bourbon News* (18 January 1910): 5.

milk sold for nearly eight times that of ordinary milk. Thus, what was publicly endorsed for the young and poor in Kentucky was made affordable to mostly the well-off in the Bluegrass. “What chance has a poor man to live and feed his children,” lambasted one citizen, “when milk is forty cents per gallon or ten cents per quart.” They furiously contended, “Old man Haggin is out for the money like all of the other so-called philanthropists,” and “the poor be damned.”⁶²

Within a few years Elmendorf Dairy had moved away from its activities to promote progressive reform by providing milk to babies “rich and poor alike,” and replaced it with an industry focused on scales, efficiency, and low cost, able to withstand price volatility. That reality, combined with mechanized and hygienic production, made Elmendorf Dairy a thoroughly modern affair. And Kentucky’s agricultural and medical experts were thrilled. “Elmendorf exists for the pleasure and pride of its owner, as a monument to the perfection attained by master-molders of animal form, and as beneficence to agriculture,” wrote the editor of *Breeders Gazette*.⁶³ In light of his “triumph of sanitary science,” Dr. A.T. McCormack, editor of the *Kentucky Medical Journal*, declared, “All honor to Elmendorf and its great dairy!”⁶⁴

Other public health officials believed Haggin’s methods and means posed a necessary good for the state’s milk economy. Dr. Frank Eiseman, chief inspector of dairies in Kentucky, stated, “The good done by Mr. Haggin’s sanitary dairy is shown every day in Fayette and Bourbon Counties and this good is spreading to every part of the state.” Milk farms will be “forced to meet [his] sanitary methods or go out of business.”

⁶² *Bourbon News* (7 January 1910).

⁶³ “Private Fortune’s Aid to Agriculture,” *Breeders Gazette* (17 January 1912): 129 -133.

⁶⁴ Kentucky State Medical Association, *Kentucky Medical Journal*, v. 8, no. 18 (15 October 1910): 1905.

With his work in reformation of a failing industry, Eiseman concluded, “Mr. Haggin has built a monument to himself which will go down in history and make him one of the philanthropists of the generation.”⁶⁵

But Haggin had one major advantage over all dairies in Kentucky. His became far and away one of the most celebrated in early twentieth-century America, in large part, because of the advisors and workers he employed. This expertise came in the form of the newly founded agricultural college—Kentucky College and Kentucky Agricultural Experiment Station—the same professionally-trained experts who researched, inspected, and regulated the state’s milk economy. As the directors of the land-grant college sought to modernize other farmers, they sustained Haggin’s world-famous dairy. But this was an industrial bargain with serious limits. The land-grant university acted in the interests of the prosperous and influential milk operators, giving not enough attention to hard-working rural farmer in Kentucky, those who milked cows by necessity, interest, and obligation.

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⁶⁵ Phillip Speed, “Mr. James B. Haggin’s Kentucky Estate,” *Town and Country* (10 February 1912): 30-33.

Chapter Ten

“A Grant Unparalleled in Agriculture”: Kentucky A&M College at Elmendorf, 1910-1917

On a cool morning in February of 1910, a strike halted production at Elmendorf Dairy. The dispute involved wages. Twenty of the twenty-three workers employed at the dairy were no longer satisfied with receiving room and board plus a monthly salary of twenty-five dollars. Some employees had worked at Elmendorf for over a year, while a few had been employed but a month, but the fact that fourteen of the strikers came from the same community of Stillwater in Wolfe County, several of them kin, gave them solidarity and, from solidarity, greater force.¹ Before dawn, the workers assembled and made known to dairy supervisor, Dwight Parks, and farm manager, C.H. Berryman, that current work conditions were no longer acceptable. Employees asked only for a \$1.00 increase per eight-hour day in exchange for providing care for cows worth hundreds of thousands. But James Ben Ali Haggin never acquiesced to collective demands, and his management followed the same line.² When Elmendorf management refused to readjust employee wages, the workers dropped their steel pails and walked out of the dairy barn, leaving bovine udders tight with milk. Most went to the train station and caught the first rails home to Wolfe County.³

The strike was a turning point for labor relations at Elmendorf. Five months following this walkout, Haggin struck a bargain with Dr. Melville A. Scovell, dean of the

¹ *Hazel Green Herald* (30 December 1909): 1; *Hazel Green Herald* (20 December 1909): 1; *Hazel Green Herald* (27 January 1910): 1; *Hazel Green Herald* (3 February 1910): 1; *Hazel Green Herald* (17 February 1910): 1.

² “Milkers Go On Strike at Elmendorf,” *Lexington Leader* (22 February 1910): 1; *Hazel Green Herald* (24 February 1910): 3.

³ *Hazel Green Herald* (24 February 1910): 3; *Hazel Green Herald* (3 March 1910): 2.

Kentucky Agricultural & Mechanical College and director of Kentucky Agricultural Experiment Station, to allow access to Haggin's cows, machines, and facilities in exchange for student assistance in producing its pristine milk. This was not the first time Haggin had hired college students at his farm. In 1905, he paid twenty students from Kentucky University to haul hay and cut tobacco over summer break;⁴ but this mutually beneficial exchange with the college five years later was a different matter altogether. What began as an informal relationship between the university and the farm, where student work was originally intended to be seasonal and irregular, quickly became an indispensable business arrangement.

Over the next four years, Haggin gave Kentucky's land-grant college unprecedented benefits to its directors and students. Elmendorf's owner provided unlimited access to Elmendorf stock and facilities in exchange for the use of student's formal training and supervised labor. Elmendorf essentially became a practicum laboratory of the land-grant university, and rural milk workers were replaced with professionally-trained agriculturists. Administrators, faculty, and students increasingly managed the general scale of dairy operations, pursuing efficiency, cleanliness, and profit at Elmendorf while removing all pastoral sentimentality from dairying. College representatives conducted Elmendorf's bacterial examinations and organized its production. They became increasingly involved with the feeding of cattle, the sterilizing of barn, the milking of cows, the bottling of milk, and even the clerking of farm records at Elmendorf. With the full hands-on administrative operation of Elmendorf, the land-

⁴ "Kentucky Boys Working Bravely at Elmendorf," *Lexington Herald* (20 July 1905). The superintendent of Fayette County Schools also proposed a working relationship between the school district and Elmendorf Farm in 1907. See "Student Labor," *Lexington Leader* (17 January 1907): 1.

grant college subordinated the interests of Kentucky's milk farmers to that of one dairy, and designated the powerful J.B. Haggin as owner of "the modern dairy of the southland."

In fairness, directors of the agricultural and mechanical college believed with sincerity that working with Haggin's dairy would encourage innovation and foster improvement among the entire state's milk industry. When Dean Scovell accepted Haggin's offer, Scovell made immediate plans to amalgamate the College and Haggin's farm. He made known that the college and station now had the power "to make such experiments as we desire on Elmendorf's pure breeds of cattle and horses, and to make all the necessary dairy experiments in Haggin's magnificent new dairy and creamery...I have no doubt but that an arrangement can be made whereby Elmendorf farm can become an adjunct of the Experiment Station and the Agricultural College, and if this can be done, we will have the best facilities for such work anywhere in the United States."⁵

⁵ J. Allan Smith, *The College of Agriculture of the University of Kentucky: Early and Middle Years, 1865-1951* (Lexington, Ky: Kentucky Agricultural Experiment Station, 1981): 86; Linda Raney Kiesel, "Kentucky's Land-Grant Legacy: An analysis of the administration of John Bryan Bowman and James Kennedy Patterson, 1865 – 1890," (Ph.D. diss., University of Kentucky, 2003); Ezra Gillis, *The University of Kentucky: Its History and Development : a Series of Charts Depicting the More Important Data, 1862-1955* (Lexington: The University, 1956); James F. Hopkins, *The University of Kentucky: Origins and Early Years* (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1951).



Figure 10.1: “Scovell, Melville, first Head of the Kentucky Agriculture Experiment Station 1885-1912, Dean of the College of Agriculture 1910-1912,” Portrait Print Collection (University of Kentucky), circa 1867-: 2001, University of Kentucky.

Scovell described a feeling shared by others in the media; the cooperative vision jointly held between KAES and Elmendorf garnered widespread enthusiastic press from many prominent agricultural publications. The *Breeders Gazette* reported that Elmendorf, “with its unequalled equipment of buildings and the various breeds of livestock,” in the “disposition of Kentucky Agricultural College and experiment station,” made for a “grant unparalleled in agriculture.”⁶ The *Lexington Leader* called joint venture “one of the biggest deals that has ever been put through by the Agricultural College at State University.” The two “will hereafter work closely together for mutual benefit and for the great benefit, convenience, and improvement of the work of the students of the college and the agricultural interests of the State at large.”⁷ The *New York Times* reported that the land grant college “will have every opportunity for using the latest improvements in machinery and unlimited land on which to experiment.”⁸

Furthermore, the intended relationship between KAES and Elmendorf was not without precedent early in the twentieth century. In the years before World War I, the land-grant institution established by public funding, although complex and constantly changing, more often served the well-to-do rather than the poorer farmers of the rural areas. Most college personnel may have been familiar with the farm but they placed their abiding faith in the progress of scientific farming, to a fault. The college, many believed, shouldered the responsibility of performing experiments for the individual farmer who, in their eyes, lacked the time, opportunity, money, and knowledge to do so. They conducted research on soil fertility, published techniques for managing labor, produced bulletins on insect control, studied methods of selective breeding, and offered courses on agricultural

⁶ “Private Fortune’s Aid to Agriculture,” *Breeders Gazette* (17 January 1912): 129 -133.

⁷ “Mr. Haggin Aids Farm Students,” *Lexington Leader* (9 July 1910): 1.

⁸ “Big Farm for Students,” *New York Times* (10 July 1910): 1.

education, most of which appealed to the more prominent, articulate, and wealthier of landowners. Yet, as scholar Charles Rosenberg writes, “experiment station scientists and administrators never considered the possibility that insofar as their work proved successful it might help enrich the rich, [while simultaneously] impoverishing and ultimately forcing many worthy, if less entrepreneurial, farmers from the land.”⁹

From the administrative perspective, therefore, work at Elmendorf was not only appropriate but necessary, considering the financial constraints experienced by publicly funded institutions as a majority of land-grants, in the years before World War I, faced a real dilemma in the realm of limited funding. As a means of generating research and strengthening positions with state legislators, college directors, in particular, developed close ties with persons who contributed both money and influence to the land-grant institutes. This was clearly seen in California, for example, with the development of the insecticides and fruit growers, or in Wisconsin, with the rise of dairy industry, or in Alabama, with International Harvester and Seaman Knapp’s campaign for diversification.¹⁰

These alliances between educational centers and privately owned business certainly altered the land-grant’s expectations of scientific farming and its possibilities. It

⁹ Charles E. Rosenberg, “Rationalization and Reality in the Shaping of American Agricultural Research, 1875-1914” *Social Studies of Science* 7, no. 4 (1977): 402.

¹⁰ Historians see an “industrial bargain” forged between the land-grant system and larger farmers. For more information about this development that occurred in the wake of the boll weevil, depressions, and world wars, see Roy V. Scott, *The Reluctant Farmer: The Rise of Agricultural Extension to 1914* (Urbana, 1970); Alfred Charles True, *A History of Agricultural Education in the United States, 1785-1925* (Washington, D.C., 1929); David B. Danbom, *The Resisted Revolution: Urban America and the Industrialization of Agriculture, 1900-1930* (Ames, Iowa, 1979); Jack Temple Kirby, *Darkness at the Dawning: Race and Reform in the Progressive South* (Philadelphia, 1972); Pete Daniels, *Lost Revolutions: The South in the 1950s* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press for Smithsonian National Museum of American History, Washington, D.C., 2000); Steven Stoll, “Insects and Institutions: University Science and the Fruit Business in California,” *Agricultural History* 69, no. 2 (1995): 216-239.

led to a number of problems, modern historians agree, for smaller farmers desperately working from crop to crop, who were far from the beneficiary of most land-grant efforts. Some of this resistance may have been rooted in anti-intellectualism, but for most rural farmers, many of whom found some value in the extension work, a scientist's input into methods and materials in farming operations meant very little if they could barely sustain families. Consequently, it is not unusual that rural farmers seemed to regard the land-grant institutes with suspicion and ambivalence and making the professional agriculturist's job difficult and demanding.

It is arguable that no other similar land-grant exposed the problems and opportunities in preserving scientific methods and business knowledge in farming more than Kentucky's land-grant college. First as director of the extension station and second as dean of the A&M college, Dr. Melville A. Scovell brought order, direction, and purpose to the program, but his remarkable success in the agricultural domain caused considerable tension within the university, and the controversial activity of the college/Elmendorf relationship appeared all the more significant because of its impact on Haggin's farm. As early as 1907, Haggin had approached Scovell about accepting some of kind of a position at Elmendorf, but for three years the station director did not accept the offer. Internal problems within the university precluded him from working to create some sort of permanent relationship with one of the nation's largest entrepreneurs able to benefit the station.

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A slight, well-dressed man of medium height with glasses and beard, Scovell cut a figure of a learned scholar, not a toiled farmer. He graduated from the University of Illinois, worked under Harvey A. Wiley as the USDA's chief chemist, and then accepted an appointment as the first director of the Kentucky Agricultural Experiment Station in 1885.¹¹ Here Scovell's work was cut out for him: upon his arrival, the experiment station had no apparatus, books, chemicals, stock, assistants, faculty, nor land.¹² Its facilities consisted of a poorly-equipped laboratory in the dingy, damp basement of the main science building. Although the station's dismal state could not have been more alarming, Scovell proved to a capable administrator. He recruited talented assistants and, with them, devised a plan to make the station the regulatory body of agricultural commodities in Kentucky whereby Scovell and his staff analyzed samples, certified quality products, and fined farmers who violated the state's pure food legislation.¹³

The work accomplished by Scovell and his staff became a tremendous source of revenue and conflict for the station. In the years between 1897 and 1901, Scovell

¹¹ His graduate work at Illinois nearly ended his promising career as a professional agriculturist. For more about the sugar cane patent, see University of Illinois (Urbana-Champaign campus). Report of the Board of Trustees of the University of Illinois. Urbana: The University, (1881): 219-220; John Alfred Heitmann, *The Modernization of the Louisiana Sugar Industry, 1830-1910* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1987): 125, 136-137 For information on Harvey Wiley, who made national headlines with controversial experiments involving the so-called, "poison squad," which tested the harmful effects of food preservatives on human guinea pigs, see Steven L. Piott, *American Reformers, 1870-1920: Progressives in Word and Deed* (Lanham, Md: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2006): 167, 170-171; Clayton A. Coppin and Jack C. High, *The Politics of Purity Harvey Washington Wiley and the Origins of Federal Food Policy* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1999): 51-51, 71, 126.

¹² The experiment station was established at the Kentucky Agricultural & Mechanical College, two years before the passage of the Hatch Act, which created experiment stations in conjunction to land-grant institutions. Dissertation Linda Raney Kiesel, "Kentucky's Land-Grant Legacy: An Analysis of the Administrations of John Bryan Bowman and James Kennedy Patterson," (Ph.D., diss., University of Kentucky, 2003): 33.

¹³ Smith, *The College of Agriculture of the University of Kentucky*, 43. Kastle Letterbooks, v. 94, Box 265, (429-31), in KAES collection; "In Memoriam: Dr. Melville Amasa Scovell," *Necrology* (1913): 114-116.

dramatically increased the station's budget from \$5,632 to \$46,192.¹⁴ Seven years later the station had a staff of sixty and a budget of over \$67,000.¹⁵ The meager facilities of the struggling station expanded to a 253-acre farm, complete with a main building, insectary, piggery, greenhouse, and dairy.¹⁶ In less than fifteen years Kentucky Agricultural Experiment Station went from a nearly insolvent department to one of the top three institutes in America.¹⁷ From the outset, however, Scovell was at odds with the College's president over the purpose of regulatory funds. Dr. James K. Patterson had brought the station into existence for the purpose of agricultural education, and he believed regulatory funds should pay, among other expenses, the salaries of agricultural professors.¹⁸ Scovell disagreed. Although he believed that station could not be divorced from the college, the funds from state food work, argued Scovell, should be not used for any purpose but research.

¹⁴ It received \$15.00 per certificate of fertilizer, and \$1.00 per 100 labels. Farmers without certificates or labels were fined \$100 per violation. Fees were handsomely supplanted with federal appropriations such as the Hatch Act and the True Act. Smith, *The College of Agriculture of the University of Kentucky*, 45.

¹⁵ Larry Pryor, "Faculty Stars of the Past," *Courier Journal*, (n.d.): 103, in Scovell Faculty File, in KAES Collection.

¹⁶ "Sketch of the Experiment Station, Sept. 8, 1901, Lexington Herald; Pryor, "Faculty Stars of the Past," 103.

¹⁷ "In Memoriam: Dr. Melville Amasa Scovell," *Necrology* (1913): 117; "Private Fortune's Aid to Agriculture," *Breeders Gazette* (17 January 1912): 129 -133.

¹⁸ Hopkins, *The University of Kentucky: Origins and Early Years*, 73, 77; Smith, *The College of Agriculture of the University of Kentucky*, 43.



Figure 10.2: “Melville A. Scovell,” University of Kentucky general photographic prints, circa 1900 – 2005, University of Kentucky.

The core of the controversy lay in the ambiguous role of the experiment station.¹⁹ Both resident Patterson and Director Scovell shared a desire to promote “scientific” farming but they differed on the function of the station.²⁰ From the president’s perspective, the experiment station was a part of, not apart from, the university, and the regulatory funds should be poured into university’s coffers.²¹ From the director’s perspective, the experiment station was at once separate from and connected to the university. The station scientists only carried teaching assignments because the station was directly responsible to the public. Its true purpose sought to provide for the present needs of farming through research and development.

Most crippling to resolution of the station’s advancement however, was that personalities put Scovell and Patterson at considerable odds. Patterson’s successor recalled that the university president “hated” the young station director “worse than the

¹⁹ Kiesel, “Kentucky’s Land-Grant Legacy,” 175 -195. Historians have attributed agricultural education’s “languishing years” to President Patterson’s “autocratic” reign of four decades. One called its earlier period as “perhaps the worst failure of the A&M College.” One scholar characterizes this period as a product of the president’s “resentment” of a flourishing experiment station. See Hopkins, *The University of Kentucky: Origins and Early Years*; and Smith, *The College of Agriculture of the University of Kentucky*.

²⁰ Patterson emphasized a more classical approach to academic curriculum than did Scovell. The president valued the soft science courses of Latin, et cetera, while the director emphasized hard science classes of bacteriology and zoology. For more about this dilemma at land grant universities, see Alan I. Marcus, *Agricultural Science and the Quest for Legitimacy: Farmers, Agricultural Colleges, and Experiment Stations, 1870-1890* (Ames: Iowa State University Press, 1985).

²¹ His frustration with Scovell was most clearly articulated in Patterson’s retirement speech: The Agricultural College has gotten little or nothing from the Station in the instruction of its matriculates or in the inspiration which comes from contact with living agricultural specialists...I give solemn warning now and here in this my last official utterance as President that you cannot afford to neglect this matter and allow things to drift and crystallize apart as they have been doing. The Experiment Station is by law not a self-contained unit, but an integral and essential department of the Agricultural College, and should bear a large part in its up-building and development.” Patterson, Final Address, Patterson Papers, Box 18, Folder 238, 1910.

devil hates holy water.”²² So deep was his animosity toward Scovell that Patterson refused to retire in fear the Board of Trustees would appoint Scovell his successor. In 1910, officials promised Patterson that Henry Barker would be named as the college’s next president. With his doubts suppressed, Patterson stepped down after four decades as president of Kentucky State College.²³

Ironically, this decision only helped to strengthen Scovell’s authority within the land-grant university, making the relationship between the university and one of the largest farms in the world fully operational. Ultimately, the retirement of James Patterson, in 1910 significantly altered the structure of the agricultural college. Following Patterson’s departure, the Board of Trustees, with little discussion, yielded to the station director’s plans to reorganize the agricultural college. Scovell wanted to pattern the organization structure of Kentucky State College after that of Wisconsin and Cornell where the agricultural college represented an interrelated network of research, education, and extension: The experiment station covered research and postgraduate work; the department of teaching included undergraduate instruction; and the department of extension work employed agents to perform scientific experiments, offer invigorating lectures, and promote laborsaving activities in farms, homes, and schools.²⁴ Indeed, this concept was quintessentially what the federal government enacted four years later.²⁵

²² Oral History Interview with Thomas J. Bryant, conducted by Charles G. Talbert (23 June 1972) in Charles T. Wethington University of Kentucky Oral History Project, at Louie B. Nunn Oral History Center, University of Kentucky, Lexington, Kentucky; Barker’s testimony to the committee “Testimony Heard by Special Investigative Committee,” Board Minutes.

²³ Smith, *The College of Agriculture of the University of Kentucky*, 87.

²⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁵ The Smith Lever Act of 1914 would nationalize the three-legged approach of research, extension, and instruction at all land-grant institutes. It had been fueled by the destructive appetite of the boll weevil in 1893 and the novel efforts of Seaman Knapp in 1902. See Scott, *The Reluctant Farmer*, and True, *A History of Agricultural Education in the United States*.

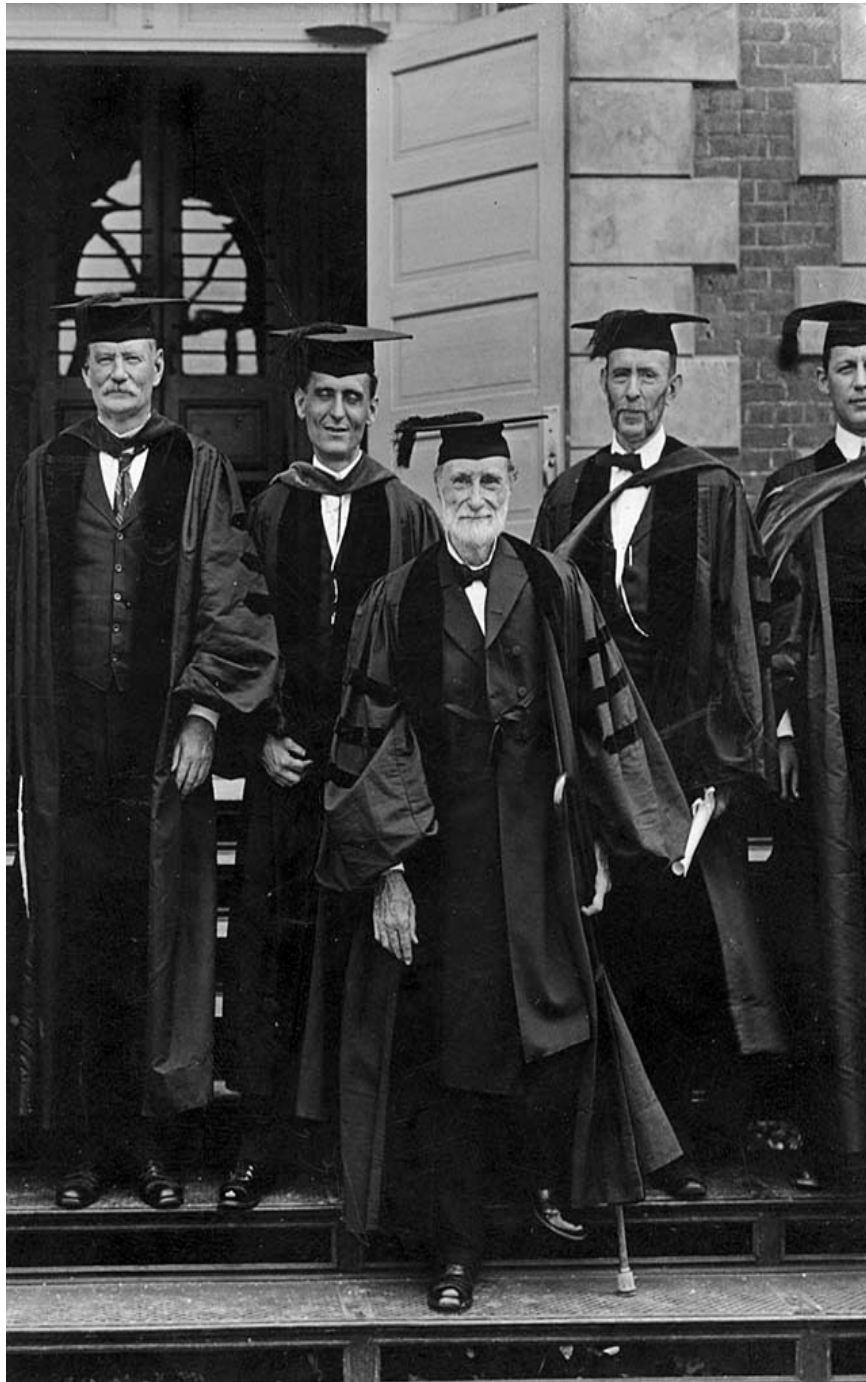


Figure 10.3: “Graduations, President Henry Barker, on left and President Emeritus James Patterson, center, Photographer , Leon Frankel.” (1917) Louis Edward Nollau F Series Photographic Print Collection, circa 1885 – 1966, University of Kentucky.

By early summer of 1910, Scovell found himself at the helm of the newly organized College and Station, and one of his first objectives involved Elmendorf. On 22 of June, Scovell wrote to Elmendorf's Superintendent Berryman, "I am enclosing herewith a notice showing that the Experiment Station and the Agricultural College have been consolidated and the management placed in my hands." He insisted, "I am now ready to take advantage of the great offer so kindly made by Mr. Haggin," in which "our boys will have an opportunity to see "big things," including "care for his great herds" and "carry on milking experiments from time to time."²⁶ Scovell concluded, "If these plans in the main can be carried out, I feel that we will have a great institution here and Elmendorf will be the cause of making it great."²⁷

When Scovell made this deal with Haggin, he effectively became Elmendorf's advisor and buying agent. Under his direction the estate experienced dramatic growth and vitality. Though no farmer, the station director was a renowned breeder and judge of the Jersey. Years before, the chemistry professor had assiduously studied the different breeds, and many in the breeding industry considered him an expert on pedigree dairying. Considered "One of the best known and best-liked judge of dairy cattle in America," Scovell had been assigned large responsibilities as chairman of the Grand Comparative Test at the 1893 Columbian Exposition and the 1897 Louisiana Exhibition.²⁸ He handled over 400,000 entries to test the milking capabilities of pedigree dairy cattle. The owner of

²⁶ M.A. Scovell to C.H. Berryman, Scovell Letterbooks, Box 263 (22 June 1910): 324, in KAES Collection; M.A. Scovell to W.R. Goodwin, Scovell Letterbooks, Box 263 (13 July 1910): 442, in KAES Collection.

²⁷ M.A. Scovell to C.H. Berryman, Scovell Letterbooks, Box 263 (22 June 1910): 471.

²⁸ "Death of M.A. Scovell," *Breeders Gazette* (12 August 1912): 317. His correspondence is filled with engagements at numerous United States fairs. For an example of the notoriety as a Jersey judge, see *Jersey Bulletin*, (13 September 1910): 1494, when he served as the Jersey judge at the Canadian National Exhibition.

Elmendorf, however, admittedly knew very little about Jersey cattle.²⁹ As such, Haggin gave Scovell complete authority over his dairy. He yielded to those decisions of the station director and that bore tremendous consequences for Elmendorf Dairy.³⁰

Scovell excelled in his post as “Haggin’s Lieutenant.” He sold the farm’s earlier imports, which he admitted to be a “very inferior” and a “miserable lot of cattle,” and immediately began to acquire the kind of pedigree bloodlines that one of the world’s wealthiest land barons could financially afford.³¹ The director travelled America and crisscrossed the Atlantic, attending sales and fairs, to hand-select Haggin’s fancy cows. He even spent an entire month in the Channel Islands, away from the university, to acquire the most famous breeding family in the history of Jersey cattle for Elmendorf.³² He also proved to be a good manager of the breeding stock. He established delivery dates as close as Lexington and as far as Brazil.³³ He created lists upon lists that instructed the

²⁹ T.S. Cooper to M.A. Scovell, General CH-CZ, 1910-1911, Box 125 (12 August 1910), in KAES Collection.

³⁰ “I believe he is going to allow me to put the very herd in the country on that place,” Scovell once confided to a colleague. Scovell to T.S. Cooper, Scovell Letterbooks, v. 78 (5 August 1910): 116, in KAES Collection; Scovell to Tom Dempsey, Scovell Letterbooks, v. 82 (17 May 1911): 173, in KAES Collection.

³¹ M.A. Scovell to T.S. Cooper, Scovell Letterbooks, v. 78 (12 August 1910), in KAES Collection; T.S. Cooper to M.A. Scovell, General CH-CZ, 1910-1911, Box 125 (21 July 1910), in KAES Collection.

³² See for example, Scovell to Perres, Scovell Letterbooks, v. 82, (10 June 1911): 355, in KAES Collection; M.A. Scovell to W.R. Goodwin, Scovell Letterbooks, v. 81, b. 263 (10 April 1911): 392, in KAES Collection. See Scovell’s purchase of Lee’s cattle for Berryman; M.A. Scovell to C.H. Berryman, Scovell Letterbooks, v. 80 (20 Dec. 1910): 47, in KAES Collection; M.A. Scovell to Lee, Scovell Letterbooks, v. 80 (20 Dec. 1910): 59, in KAES Collection; M.A. Scovell to Dempsey, Scovell Letterbooks (July 20, 1910): 35, in KAES Collection; M.A. Scovell to Dempsey, Scovell Letterbooks, v. 80 (23 Dec. 1910): 88, in KAES Collection; M.A. Scovell to Dr. TA Geddes, , Scovell Letterbooks, v. 89 (July 20, 1911): 201, in KAES Collection; M.A. Scovell to Quisenberry, Scovell Letterbooks, v. 80, (DATE): 157, in KAES Collection.

³³ M.A. Scovell to C.H. Berryman, Scovell Letterbooks v. 82 (21 June 1911): 263, in KAES Collection; M.A. Scovell to Tom Dempsey, Scovell Letterbooks, v. 80 (30 December 1910): 136, in KAES Collection; M.A. Scovell to Lee, Scovell Letterbooks v. 80 (23 December 1910): 89, in KAES Collection; M.A. Scovell to Lee, Scovell Letterbooks, v. 80 (23 December 1910): 90, in KAES Collection; M.A. Scovell to C.H. Berryman, Scovell Letterbooks, v. 80 (24 December

Elmendorf management on the types, kinds, and names of cows to breed.³⁴ He also defended the virtues of Haggin's cows to prospective buyers across the world.³⁵ "I do not think you could get a better butter bull than the one advertised," he told one breeder in Iowa. "They are asking five hundred dollars for this bull. I think it is cheap at that."³⁶ At Elmendorf, moreover, and instructed by his understanding of hygienic and scientific milking, Scovell brought order to Haggin's dairy barn. "In the first place," he wrote the

1910): 97, in KAES Collection; M.A. Scovell to C.H. Berryman, Scovell Letterbooks, v. 80 (26 December 1910): 101, in KAES Collection; M.A. Scovell to Spann, Scovell Letterbooks, v. 80 (30 March 1909), in KAES Collection; M.A. Scovell to Cooper, Scovell Letterbooks, v. 77 (9 May 1910), in KAES Collection; M.A. Scovell to Hunnicutt, Brazil, Scovell Letterbooks, v. 69 (30 November 1908), in KAES Collection; M.A. Scovell to Ben P. Bole (Cleveland, Ohio) Scovell Letterbooks v. 79 (7 November 1910): 222, in KAES Collection; M.A. Scovell to B.H. Hunnicutt (Brazil) Scovell Letterbooks v. 79 (7 November 1910): 224, in KAES Collection; M.A. Scovell to Cooper, Scovell Letterbooks v. 79 (4 November 1910): 194, in KAES Collection; M.A. Scovell to C.H. Berryman, Scovell Letterbooks, v. 79 (15 November 1910): 295, in KAES Collection; M.A. Scovell to Dempsey, v. 79 (23 November 1910): 348, in KAES Collection; M.A. Scovell to Cooper, Scovell Letterbooks, v. 79 (18 October 1910): 84, in KAES Collection.

³⁴ M.A. Scovell to C.H. Berryman, Scovell Letterbooks, v. 78 (25 July 1910): 17, in KAES Collection; M.A. Scovell to C.H. Berryman, Scovell Letterbooks, v. 81 (27 March 1911), in KAES Collection; M.A. Scovell to C.H. Berryman, Scovell Letterbooks, v. 82 (22 June 1911): 458, in KAES Collection; M.A. Scovell to C.H. Berryman, Scovell Letterbooks, v. (v. 81, b. 263): 289-192, in KAES Collection; M.A. Scovell to C.H. Berryman, Scovell Letterbooks, v. 80 (14 February 1911): 466-469, in KAES Collection; M.A. Scovell to C.H. Berryman, Scovell Letterbooks, v. 78 (5 August 1910), in KAES Collection; M.A. Scovell to C.H. Berryman, Scovell Letterbooks, v. 78 (25 July 1910): 17, in KAES Collection; M.A. Scovell to C.H. Berryman, Scovell Letterbooks, v. 80 (21 December 1910): 60, in KAES Collection; M.A. Scovell to C.H. Berryman, Scovell Letterbooks, v. 81 (27 February 1911): 305, in KAES Collection.

³⁵ M.A. Scovell to T. J. Rawlings, v. 83 (11 July 1911): 136, in KAES Collection; M.A. Scovell to Honorable Wm. Hart Dexter, Scovell Letterbooks, v. 90 (9 November 1911): 137-138, in KAES Collection; M.A. Scovell to E.C. Lilly, Scovell Letterbooks, v. 91 (23 May 1912): 232-233, in KAES Collection; M.A. Scovell to C.H. Berryman, Scovell Letterbooks, v. 80 (20 December 1910): 47-49, in KAES Collection; M.A. Scovell to Lee, Scovell Letterbooks, v. 80 (21 December 1910): 59, in KAES Collection; M.A. Scovell to Lee, Scovell Letterbooks, v. 80 (23 December 1910): 88, in KAES Collection; M.A. Scovell to C.H. Berryman, Scovell Letterbooks, v. 81 (21 June 1911): 444, in KAES Collection.

³⁶ M.A. Scovell to E. W. Brickert, Scovell Letterbooks, v. 92 (6 May 1912): 143, in KAES Collection; M.A. Scovell to Ben P. Bole (Cleveland, Ohio), Scovell Letterbooks, v. 79 (7 November 1910): 222, in KAES Collection; M.A. Scovell to B.H. Hunnicutt (Brazil) Scovell Letterbooks, v. 79 (7 November 1910): 224, in KAES Collection; M.A. Scovell to Cooper, Scovell Letterbooks, v. 79 (4 November 1910): 194, in KAES Collection; M.A. Scovell to Berryman, Scovell Letterbooks, v. 79 (15 November 1910): 295, in KAES Collection; M.A. Scovell to Dempsey, Scovell Letterbooks, v. 79 (23 November 1910): 348, in KAES Collection; M.A. Scovell to Cooper, Scovell Letterbooks, v. 79 (18 October 1910): 84, in KAES Collection.

owner, “I believe you will have the finest barn in the United States.” Scovell promised, “You also will have a complete dairy establishment, where milk can be handled hygienically, and where dairy products can be made.”³⁷

To make those predictions happen, the station director developed a comprehensive plan to simultaneously promote efficiency and cleanliness.³⁸ Increasingly he argued the case for restrictive growth of Elmendorf. When the farm superintendent wanted to add another 5000 gallons of milk to daily production, Scovell discouraged. The procurement of an additional 400 cows, Scovell believed, jeopardized the certified operation. “I believe that complications would arise, as (a) there would not be grass land enough; (b) the milking period would have to be extended too many hours each morning and night; (c) there would too many cows together, even if handled with military precision.”³⁹ As the director saw it, industrial scales should move cautiously, which wisdom Haggin had never practiced. Yet Scovell was able to ensure conservatism of dairy practice, and would consequently foster at Elmendorf the kind of scientific management that he, the Station Director, prescribed for all milk farmers in Kentucky.

As the land-grant university became deeply invested in the production of milk at Elmendorf dairy, the Station arranged for a number of tests that openly promoted Elmendorf. These tests were firmly grounded in the scientific management of agriculture. The Station performed, for example, bacterial examinations, which would allow Elmendorf to produce at maximum, and to more efficiently and more cleanly produce

³⁷ M.A. Scovell to J.B. Haggin, Scovell Letterbooks, v. 79 (12 December 1910): 492, in KAES Collection.

³⁸ M.A. Scovell to C.H. Berryman, Scovell Letterbooks, v. 80 (21 December 1910): 60, in KAES Collection.

³⁹ M.A. Scovell to J.B. Haggin, Scovell Letterbooks (27 July 1911): 286-287, in KAES Collection.

milk than did any dairies elsewhere. For over four years, Monday through Saturday, without fail, the Station sent a morning statement to Superintendent Berryman that reported levels of bacteria, temperature, and butterfat sampled from an Elmendorf delivery wagon. Most read like April 17, 1913's report, "The sample of Elmendorf milk received April 17th showed 1,100 bacteria per cc. 8 percent butterfat. Bottle clean, cold, cap tight."⁴⁰ These examinations provided absolute assurance that Elmendorf's milk was clean, pure, and rich. Director Scovell additionally authorized the Register of Merit tests to verify the quality of Haggin's cows. Pioneered by American Jersey Cattle Club in 1903, these year-long records confirmed an animal's ability to produce large amounts of milk and butter, proponents argued, and would be backed by a guarantee from state experiment stations.⁴¹

⁴⁰ Over 1000 samples were compiled from bacteriological reports found in M.A. Scovell and Joseph Kastle Letterbooks, Volumes 92-101, in Kentucky Agricultural Experiment Station Records, at University of Kentucky Special Collections, University of Kentucky, Lexington, Kentucky. For exact reports, see Joseph Kastle to C.H. Berryman, (15 April 1913): 95; M.A. Scovell to C.H. Berryman (26 October 1912): 106. The Babcock Test, introduced in 1890 by Charles Babcock at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, served "as a criterion for culling nonproductive animals from dairy herds and thus leading to a general upgrading of dairy stock." For more information on the Babcock Test, see Charles Rosenberg, "Science, Technology, and Economic Growth: The Case of the Agricultural Experiment Station Scientist, 1975-1914," *Agricultural History* 45, no. 1 (1971): 1-20; Eric Lampard, *The Rise of the Dairy Industry in Wisconsin; A Study in Agricultural Change, 1820-1920* (Madison: State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 1963): 197-203; Howard, "Perfecting Nature's Food," 44

⁴¹ This test, proponents argued, represented the fairest evaluation of an animal's constitutional vigor. In 1912, for example, the Station submitted sixty Elmendorf cows for Register certification, the most entered by one entity. This series recorded over 24,776 pounds of butter. "Register of Merit Work at Elmendorf Farm" *The Jersey Bulletin*, (17 January 1912): 1061; "Fourteen Days' Test at Elmendorf," *The Jersey Bulletin* (17 January 1912): 129; "'Dab of Butter' and Beauty Combined," *The Jersey Bulletin* (1 May 1912): 690; "Test of Majesty's Lady Houpla," *The Jersey Bulletin* (15 May 1912): 789. Of course not everyone agreed. Some breeders complained too much stress was laid on Merit certification, while others believed competitive testing shortened the cow's years of usefulness and weakened their progeny. See W.R. Spann's discussion in "Seeing is Believing," *Jersey Bulletin* (3 January 1912): 18.

Scovell even managed to find time to use this information and design advertisements for Elmendorf milk.⁴² “At the pail and churn,” Haggin’s Register herds “have been tried and proven good.”⁴³ Breeders were more likely to trust an award-winning herd, these ads implied, especially if tests had the endorsement of the university experts at the experiment station. Ultimately, Haggin may have purchased the cows, built a laboratory, and covered the costs of machinery and apparatuses, but the land-grant university provided the scientific expertise to make his certified dairy work.⁴⁴

Because Elmendorf had what the university could not always provide—an opportunity for ever greater facilities devoted to agricultural research—the station sponsored, in addition to scientific testing, a research program at Haggin’s estate. The research focused on questions that they believed helped Kentucky’s dairy farmers. The station performed a number of feeding and milking experiments on Elmendorf, and then published its findings in the form of bulletins and in the venue of agricultural journals. The topics included improved designs of dairy buildings, the proper use of silage, new

⁴² MA to W.R. Goodwin, of *Breeders Gazette*, Scovell Letterbooks, v. 82 (24 June 1911): 490.

⁴³ Seventeen cow listed under Class AA; Fourteen listed under Class A; Four listed under Class B, and another fifty completed yearly tests. See *The Jersey Bulletin* (1 October 1913): 1512; *The Jersey Bulletin* (25 June 1913): 978; *Breeders Gazette* (1 May 1912): 1040; M.A. Scovell to J.B. Haggin, Scovell Letterbooks, v. 91 (16 March 1912): 401-407, in KAES Collection; “Elmendorf Farm Jerseys,” *The Jersey Bulletin* (3 January 1912): 22. For similar tests with other breeds, see American Kerry and Dexter Cattle Club, *Bulletin of the American Kerry and Dexter Cattle Club No.1, 1911 - No.3, 1912, No.6, 1917 and a Few Items of Correspondence Regarding Dexter Cattle, 1917* (1917): 6, 8; *The Breeders Gazette* (18 September 1912): 521.

⁴⁴ Much of the work was supervised by Dr. Daniel Joseph Healy, the university professor of bacteriology, and J.P. LaMaster, a graduate student of dairying and who later became Elmendorf’s assistant manager. Dr. Healy came to Kentucky following his graduation from McGill University in Canada, and served as public health officers for the city of Lexington and pathologist for Eastern Kentucky Hospital for the Insane before accepting the position of professor of bacteriology at Kentucky Experiment Station. See Joseph Kastle to C.H. Berryman, Kastle Letterbooks (13 April 1913): 120, in KAES Collection. For Haggin’s costs of the laboratory, see Joseph Kastle to Elmer & Amend, Kastle Letterbooks (8 November 1913): 291, in KAES Collection; Joseph Kastle to G.E. Stechert & Co., Kastle Letterbooks (25 March 1914): 112, in KAES Collection.

approaches to cattle feedings, the importance of selective breeding, and the improved practices of machine milking.⁴⁵ Although their foci were different and varied, they all promoted the gospel of scientific farming; that is, dairy farmers should not abandon milking but rather improve farm management, selectively apply use of machinery, adopt new methods of productivity, and build more barns of greater efficiency.

Haggin's estate may have provided a logistic solution to the Station's scientific research, but the needs of the farm clearly influenced the direction of the land grant institution's research. In March of 1911, for example, Elmendorf's milking herd developed white scours and the farm lost fifty calves in a three-week period. Director Scovell immediately arranged for a series of extensive experiments to determine causes and remedies of white scours. "I do not think that there are better arrangements for calves anywhere in this country than are at Elmendorf," Scovell wrote, "and I doubt whether any are more carefully cared for." He reassured Haggin, "I believe that with the experiments we now have under way, conditions will improve and that we will soon be able to know more about how to rear calves."⁴⁶ Breeders across the state lost a number of valuable calves by white scours every year, and therefore the results would prove inestimable to the state's cattle industry. It is significant, however, that it was, finally, upon Haggin's loss that the Station was prompted to determine a sure remedy to a much dreaded infection plaguing the entire dairy industry.

⁴⁵ Hooper to Scovell, File H, Box 130 (18 June 1912), in KAES Collection. J. D. Turner and H. D. Spears, *Concentrated Commercial Feeding Stuffs* (Lexington: Kentucky Agricultural Experiment Station of the State University, 1909); For experiment station bulletins, see, for example, W. D. Nicholls and John B. Hutson, *Profitable Dairy-Farm Organization in Kentucky* (Lexington: Kentucky Agricultural Experiment Station, University of Kentucky, 1918); J. J. Hooper and J. W. Nutter, *Experiments with the Sharples Mechanical Milker* (Lexington, Ky: State University Press, 1914).

⁴⁶ M.A. Scovell to J.B. Haggin, Scovell Letterbooks (17 March 1911): 212-216, in KAES Collection.

For over two years, Scovell attended to matters at Elmendorf, responsible for pedigree dairying, until his death in August of 1912.⁴⁷ He was personally convinced that the university would benefit by aligning itself with one of the country's largest industrial farms. "There is no place that I know of in the country," as he saw it, "where these experiments could be carried on so comprehensively as at Elmendorf."⁴⁸ Though Scovell offered knowledge and services freely to Haggin, the farm only provided reimbursement to the university for the station director's transportation, lodging, and food when he attended sales.⁴⁹ For Scovell, however, Elmendorf was a promising opportunity, helping the state of agriculture in Kentucky by increasing research, attracting students, and stimulating interest in matters of utmost importance. He believed the needs of Bluegrass milk farmers would be expertly addressed, but Scovell was wrong. It became increasingly clear that the agricultural college performed a significant amount of research and energy which supported the demands of a particularly large-scale dairy, rather than the everyday farmer.

Over the next three years, administration at the agricultural college continued to preserve the massive commercial and scientific industry that had been created under Scovell's direction. Scovell's successor, Joseph Kastle, endorsed many of his predecessor's conditions for the College and the dairy farm. Kastle resumed the bacteriological exams and herd certification program first developed by Scovell, and he

⁴⁷ Scovell had struggled with a number of medical ailments the last few years. It was written that an attack of rheumatism developed into endocarditis, which caused acute inflammation of the heart. However, Scovell had terrible operation the previous year with pancreatitis, and an old abscess could have caused the inflammation around his heart. Pryor, "Faculty Stars of the Past," *Courier-Journal* (n.d.) in Scovell Faculty File, in KAES Collection;

⁴⁸ M.A. Scovell to C.H. Berryman, Scovell Letterbooks (22 June 1910): 469, in KAES Collection.

⁴⁹ M.A. Scovell to Elmendorf Dairy, Scovell Letterbooks (13 July 1911): 142; M.A. Scovell to Elmendorf Farm, Scovell Letterbooks (29 August 1911): 67, in KAES Collection.

also arranged for a number of visits to Elmendorf from college applicants even from visiting South African delegations. Kastle often wrote about student opportunities at the largest stock farm in the world in his reports.⁵⁰ Kastle even helped Elmendorf obtain certified milk status in Ohio. The director served Haggin's purpose by sending letters and reports to the secretary of medical milk commission in Cincinnati, making his milk now available to thousands of consumers in Ohio and surrounding areas.⁵¹

Like his predecessor, Kastle was an ardent proponent of working with Elmendorf Dairy, but unlike Scovell, he possessed little of Scovell's ideology. Kastle made it clear early on, "I have no interest in the Elmendorf Dairy except in so far as it offers a problem in scientific and economy dairying, and no wish to interfere in any way with your [Haggin's]own ideas concerning its management."⁵² Kastle was like any college administrator; he hoped the wealthy owner would become a wealthy benefactor, donating a hundred thousand dollars for a new building at Kentucky State.⁵³ But Kastle also expected both the station and the agricultural college to maintain some standards of impartiality where, clearly, Scovell had not. When Elmendorf's Berryman requested that the Station publish a monthly report of bacterial counts, for example, Kastle objected, stating he would not, and could not, authorize bacteriologists to create marketing

⁵⁰ See, for example, Joseph Kastle to Cramer, Kastle Letterbooks, v. 99 (27 March 1914): 136, in KAES Collection; Joseph Kastle to Skinner, Kastle Letterbooks, v. 99 (14 April 1914): 282, in KAES Collection; Joseph Kastle to Ballard, Kastle Letterbooks (March 1913): 388, in KAES Collection; Joseph Kastle to Louis Rausch, Kastle Letterbooks (23 February 1914): 395, in KAES Collection; Kastle's Report, Kastle Letterbooks, v. 94, b. 265, in KAES Collection.

⁵¹ Joseph Kastle to Dr. Otto P. Geier, Sec. of Medical Milk Commission (19 April 1913): 78, in KAES Collection; Joseph Kastle to C.H. Berryman, Kastle Letterbooks (10 April 1913): 80, in KAES Collection.

⁵² Joseph Kastle to C.H. Berryman, Kastle Letterbooks, v. 95 (18 April 1913): 119, in KAES Collection. C.H. Berryman replaced Scovell with Henry J. Berry as manager of the dairy cattle department. See "Henry J. Berry to Elmendorf," *Breeders Gazette* (4 June 1913): 1324.

⁵³ Joseph Kastle to Hon. W. Cauden, Versailles, Kastle Letterbooks (18 December 1913): 490, in KAES Collection.

advertisements, “inasmuch as I consider it inexpedient for the Station to even seem to lend itself to the exploitation of any product or any commercial enterprise, no matter how good or meritorious these may be.”⁵⁴

University administration, for the most part, believed that they maintained scientific neutrality by reviewing the farm’s dairy products, at the same time they confirmed what was believed the very best milk of its kind, but some were less than thrilled by their role at Elmendorf. As director of dairy studies, Dr. J.J. Hooper was in charge of all work in dairying at the university. He was made responsible for organizing short-courses and experiments at Elmendorf, and he enjoyed the practicality of conducting research on a commercial farm. “At Elmendorf, the animals are available for experimental work, to a certain limited extent,” Hooper once wrote to the Station Director, “but because of the endless red tape, experimental work is held back from day to day and then from week to week.”⁵⁵ He was especially concerned with potential of bringing harm to himself. Being in control of Haggin’s herd, he wrote, brought unnecessary responsibility for an overworked professor.⁵⁶

Others were less inclined to complain and found it expedient to accommodate Elmendorf. Dr. J.W. Nutter supervised dairy work at Elmendorf and the farm paid two-thirds of his salary at the College.⁵⁷ Such arrangements eventually evolved into a struggle which entailed matters of fundamental principles between the land-grant college and small rural farmers in the Bluegrass; a salary funded by a large-scale wealthier owner was

⁵⁴ Joseph Kastle to C.H. Berryman, Kastle Letterbooks, v. 95 (18 April 1913): 119, in KAES Collection.

⁵⁵ J.J. Hooper to Scovell, File H, Box 130 (27 June 1912), in KAES Collection. Underline in original.

⁵⁶ J.J. Hooper to Scovell, File H, Box 130 (14 June 1912), in KAES Collection.

⁵⁷ Joseph Kastle to Roach, Kastle Letterbooks (21 August 1916): 41, in KAES Collection.

not only questionable, but it raised questions about how the College and the Station benefited the neediest of the state.

Most indicative of the Kentucky State College's unusually dominant presence at Elmendorf was the work of college students. Between 1910 and 1914 young men and women at Kentucky College of Agriculture took up jobs as milkers, clerks, assistants, and supervisors at Haggin's dairy. Of course, not all dairy employees were students. Some had worked for Haggin when he owned a horse stud farm.⁵⁸ There was even one dairyman by the name of Amiel DeCaen, imported from the Channel Islands, together with the cattle.⁵⁹ And not all student employees were males. Work at Elmendorf was available to a handful of female students. These women were young, single, and working-class, and more often enrolled in home economics, the female-only division of the land-grant university. They found jobs not in the dairy barn, but in sex-segregated occupations as laundresses and office workers.⁶⁰ Eloise Gunn, a student in home economics at Kentucky College, for example, was in charge of the farm's dairy records.⁶¹

⁵⁸ "George S. Bell," *Lexington Leader* (29 January 1911): 2.

⁵⁹ Unfortunately, DeCaen was unable to send for his fiancée, having met his untimely death as a result of his injuries from a bull attack. *Frankfort News Journal* (22 November 1911).

⁶⁰ There is a large amount of historical literature, especially from a global perspective, on women's work in dairying and the impact of modernization. Most interesting is the parallels in this argument early in the twentieth-century and the rationale for employing women in the dairy late in the eighteenth- and mid-nineteenth-centuries. See Sally McMurry, "Women's Work in Agriculture: Divergent Trends in England and America, 1800 to 1930," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 34, no. 2 (1992): 248-270.

⁶¹ Joseph Kastle to Professor Frank A. Gause, Kastle Letterbooks (12 August 1913): 354, in KAES Collection.



Figure 10.4: Learning the fine points in judging dairy cattle. Louis Edward Nollau F Series Photographic Print Collection, circa 1885 – 1966, University of Kentucky.

In the final analysis, however, the most sought-after workers in Haggin's dairy were the white males who had finished high school and were enrolled at the university. To be sure, these students represented a new generation of professional agriculturists in Kentucky. Because certified milk required scientific skill, diligent attention, and scrupulous cleanliness, they were believed to be the most logical choice. They were trained to be scientific farmers and research scientists, and most were enthralled by the idea that the world's finest dairy offered employment to many. Their labors vividly represented an important aspect of production that initially posed a threat to the world's finest dairy farm, but now promised prosperity in Haggin's industrial order.

* * * *

Once hired, Elmendorf milkers found themselves placed in the throes of industrial production. As on any dairy, work began before dawn. At four o'clock in the morning, and again a half-day past, thirty men, all dressed alike in clean white suits, white caps, and wooden shoes, knelt beneath the cow's underbelly, milking its teats.⁶² Twice a day they turned two sets of four hundred cows in roughly two and a half hours.⁶³ As the milkers made their way down the long lines of Jerseys, carrying a little stool around to the different cows, they engaged in old-fashioned method of hand pulling, coaxing the milk from the udder.⁶⁴

⁶² "Elmendorf Dairy: Modern Dairy of the Southland," Promotional Pamphlet, in University of Kentucky Special Collections, University of Kentucky, Lexington, Kentucky; Interstate Druggist, v. 48 (1914).

⁶³ Joseph Kastle to C.H. Berryman, Kastle Letterbooks (18 April 1913): 119, in KAES Collection.

⁶⁴ *Lexington Leader* (28 September 1910). Bulletins configured the amount of steps saved in a modern barn. They estimated that if milk from fifty cows was carried fifty feet further than necessary, a farmer walked an extra distance of one and a half miles per day, or almost 548 miles per year. See W.D. Nichols, *Construction and Equipment of Dairy Barn*, Kentucky Agricultural Experiment Station, Bulletin, no. 179 (Lexington, KY: State University Press, 1914): 42.

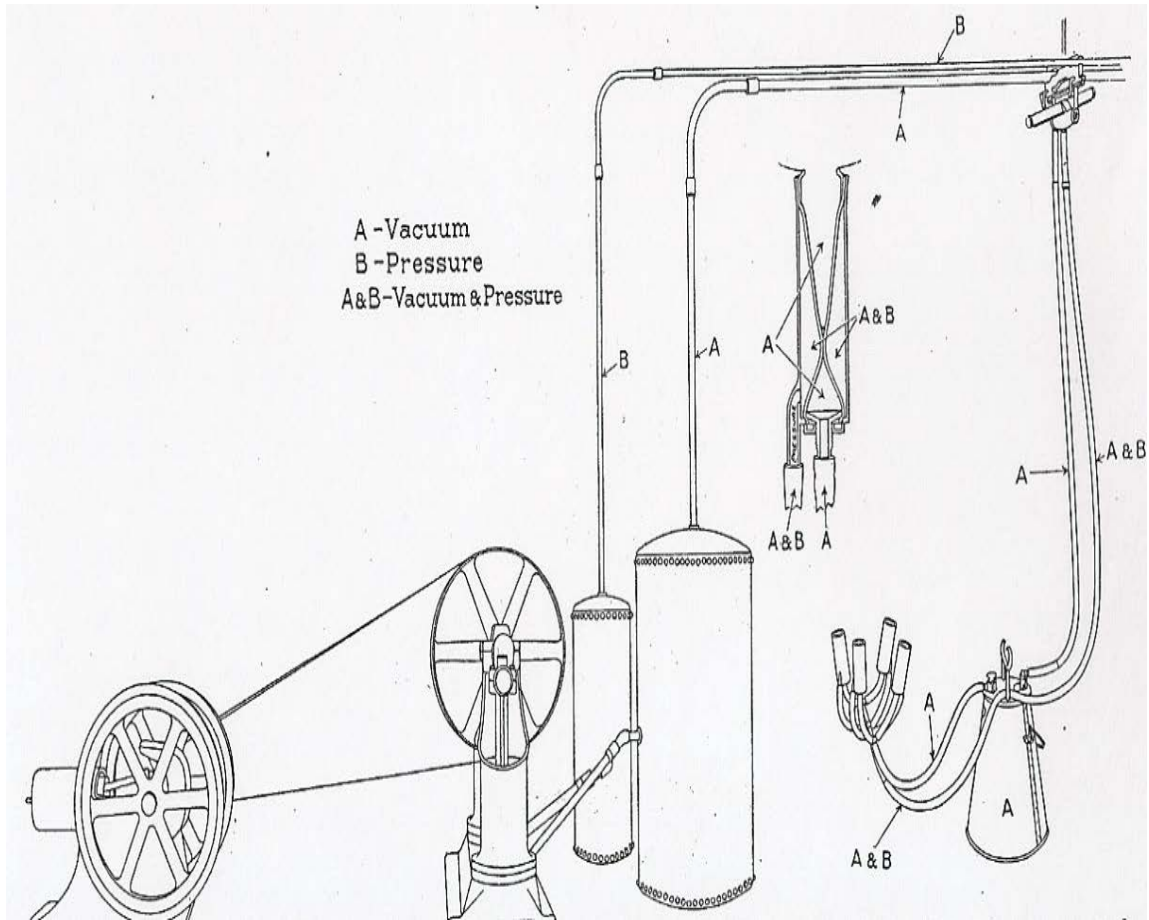


Figure 10.5: Sharples Mechanical Milker, J. J. Hooper and J. W. Nutter, Experiments with the Sharples Mechanical Milker (Lexington, Ky: State University Press, 1914).

To the casual observer, it would seem that the dairy symbolized enduring excellence of old-fashioned methods. But their work was wholly “Taylorized,” in that the milking process was divided into separate and repetitive functions to save steps, increase efficiency, and speed production.⁶⁵ Standing at attention, nearby, was a young boy who laboriously carried full buckets to the center of the barn. Here the “helper” attached the full can to a motorized trolley line, recorded the cow’s milk on large index cards, and returned a fresh pail to the milker. Those additional measures were designed to save 30 minutes per 50 cows, or a distance of 1.5 miles per day and 548 miles per year. With the milk of over eight hundred cows collected twice a day, this translated into a savings of labor of 16 hours per day and over 26,000 miles per year.

And if not through process, in appearance, the students’ work revealed the power of great wealth and scientific milking. Elmendorf, ever vigilant about germs in certified milk, issued special requirements for milkers. Agricultural professionals believed bacteria passed to cows through hairy beards, dirty hands, filthy clothes, and the dairy took extra steps to diligently prepare milkers each day. After showering in specially designed bathhouses, the students donned white shirts, white caps, and wooden shoes, all freshly pressed and cleaned by the laundress near the barn.⁶⁶ In addition to clothes, the dairy gave scrupulous attention to faces and hands. Before each milking workers were required

⁶⁵ Promoted by Frederick Taylor, Henry R. Towne, and Alexander H. Church, systematic or scientific management sought “to get the maximum use from men and machines.” Alfred Chandler, *The Essential Chandler*, 349; Daniel T. Rodgers, *The Work Ethic in Industrial America, 1850-1920* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1978).

⁶⁶ “Elmendorf Dairy: Modern Dairy of the Southland,” Promotional Pamphlet, in University of Kentucky Special Collections, University of Kentucky, Lexington, Kentucky; “O’Neil Returns,” *Lexington Leader* (28 May 1911): 7; “Barber Shop Now to Be Added,” *Lexington Leader* (26 May 1911): 1; “Latta in Charge,” *Lexington Leader* (11 June 1911): 13; “Paraphernalia,” *Lexington Leader* (4 June 1911): 14; “Milkers Must Shave Clean,” *Bourbon News* (2 June 1911): 7.

to report to the farm's barbershop. Here the resident barber, J.B. Latta, shaved faces, manicured hands, and inspected clothes, looking for any spots or dirt, anything that would corrupt the milk.⁶⁷ It remains unknown if workers chafed at such routines, but the hygienic efforts certainly underline the extent of Haggin's great wealth. The barbershop and lavatories alone were reported to have cost well over \$100,000, no less in a dairy barn.⁶⁸

In the mode of the land-grant university, students were taught skills that made them productive workers, and in exchange, they received some of the farm's better paid and higher-status jobs. The rank-and-file milkers were paid the same scale as the striking milkers from Wolfe County—twenty-five dollars a month plus room and board—although some with special training were paid more. When Ralph Morgan, a graduate student in bacteriology, took over the farm's laboratory, he received seventy-five dollars a month.⁶⁹ In contrast to university jobs, which offered limited employment at twelve cents an hour and no jobs during the summers, Haggin put them to work year-round, offering decent pay, housing, and transportation, especially for male students.⁷⁰ In addition to a monthly salary, they received free transportation to and from the university, as well as better housing than most.⁷¹ By 1910 twenty-seven men boarded at Elmendorf

⁶⁷ Elmendorf Pamphlet; "Latta in Charge," *Lexington Leader* (11 June 1911): 13; "Barber Shop now to be Added," *Lexington Leader* (26 May 1911): 1; "O'Neill Returns," *Lexington Leader* (28 May 1911): 7; "Milkers Must Shave Clean," *Bourbon News* (2 June 1911): 7; "Paraphernalia," *Lexington Leader* (4 June 1911): 14.

⁶⁸ "Paraphernalia," *Lexington Leader* (4 June 1911): 14.

⁶⁹ Joseph Kastle to C.H. Berryman, Kastle Letterbooks (25 March 1914): 215, in KAES Collection; Joseph Kastle to C.H. Berryman, Kastle Letterbooks (n.d.): 244, in KAES Collection; Joseph Kastle to Bacon, Kastle Letterbooks (8 December 1913): 38, in KAES Collection.

⁷⁰ Joseph Kastle to J.W. Campbell, Kastle Letterbooks (4 August 1915): 348, in KAES Collection.

⁷¹ Joseph Kastle to C.H. Berryman, Kastle Letterbooks (16 August 1913): 391, in KAES Collection.

and worked in the dairy.⁷² Dairy workers with families were furnished with cottages in what became known as “Jersey Village,” while single men slept in the dairy boarding house on the Alexander farm, just north of Elkhorn Creek.⁷³ That Haggin paid the tuition of student milkers perhaps best illustrates how these workers received far greater benefits than others employed at Elmendorf.

Of course, Haggin persevered in the partnership with Kentucky College for reasons other than the receipt of inexpensive and expert labor. He counted on the administration for provision of enforceable authority to discipline workers, making them more diligent in their milking, more reliable in their attendance, and more importantly, less likely to strike. Indeed, the farm expected students to keep rigid work schedules at Elmendorf. The dairymen attended to milking at 4:00 a.m. They ate breakfast, cleaned up their rooms, took a wrapped lunch, boarded a special trolley car, and took classes at the university until 3:00. They returned to the dairy, redressed in work clothes, milked for two hours, were back in the boarding house by 6:30, ate dinner, and observed study hours until retiring for bed.⁷⁴ However, many did not maintain this rigorous routine.

If Elmendorf offered the students the greatest opportunities for training in the science of industrial milk production, the farm also became a source of tension and frustration. Milkmen often fell into a rut, by reason of the fact that they were compelled to

⁷² United States, and National Archives (U.S.), *Thirteenth Census of the United States*, Eighth Magisterial District (1910): 261.

⁷³ “Elmendorf Dairy: Modern Dairy of the Southland,” Promotional Pamphlet, in University of Kentucky Special Collections, University of Kentucky, Lexington, Kentucky; “Elmendorf Cottages to be Built Here,” *Lexington Leader* (4 February 1908): 1.

⁷⁴ Joseph Kastle to C.H. Berryman, Kastle Letterbooks (18 April 1913): 119; “Elmendorf Dairy: Modern Dairy of the Southland,” Promotional Pamphlet, in University of Kentucky Special Collections, University of Kentucky, Lexington, Kentucky; Elmendorf Scrapbook, in Elmendorf Farm Photographic Collection (1900), in University of Kentucky Special Collections, University of Kentucky, Lexington, Kentucky.

do the same actions day after day, twice a day. Occasionally, some students developed a reputation as difficult and irresponsible milkers among other workers at Elmendorf. “All the fellows at Elmendorf only had two hours to work in the morning, and two hours in the afternoon,” and P.F. Butler, a rural worker originally from Pennsylvania, complained to Dean Scovell, “and the rest of the day they loafed.”⁷⁵ This contrasted greatly from other departments at Elmendorf, where some complained that the demands of industrial production proved too much. In 1911, for example, J.H. Robey had charge of the poultry at Elmendorf for only one season and “got disgusted and resigned.”⁷⁶

Scovell himself admitted to having “considerable trouble at Elmendorf with the help.” One of his colleagues suggested, “I think it would be a splendid move to go to work and bring a colony from Switzerland or from Denmark and get rid of all other help.” Immigrants, he argued, were easier “to train and control,” as “there is always one of our kind that will make a disturbance and be the cause of a strike and other disturbances.”⁷⁷ This seemed hardly to matter to Elmendorf. They kept foreign-speaking laborers in the hay and bluegrass fields, and out of the dairy. The farm continued to employ college students at the dairy, hoping to reward workers through promotions. To maximize work in 1913, for example, the farm offered wage incentives to its student milkers. To workers collecting the milk containing the lowest bacterial count, Elmendorf offered a reward of ten dollars for the first prize, and a second prize of five dollars.⁷⁸

⁷⁵ T.S. Cooper to M.A. Scovell, General CH-CZ, 1910-1911, Box 125 (14 August 1911), in KAES Collection.

⁷⁶ J.H. Robey went on to establish his poultry farm of single white leghorns in Fairfield, Illinois. See J.H. Robert to Louis Lee Haggin II (2 February 1911), a copy in author’s possession.

⁷⁷ T.S. Cooper to M.A. Scovell, General CH-CZ, 1910-1911, Box 125 (11 January 1911), in KAES Collection.

⁷⁸ Joseph Kastle to C.H. Berryman, Kastle Letterbooks (13 April 1913): 120, in KAES Collection.

But some problems went beyond the environs business productivity and crossed over the boundary between public and private matters. For some time, the student inspector of milk bottles, N.M. Gregor, engaged in a relationship with the female manager of an Elmendorf boarding house until the unknown woman charged the young man of “certain immoral practices.” Gregor was set to be fired until Dean Kastle stepped in. He readily defended Gregor, reminding the farm superintendent that the student had completed his work “very thoroughly” and to the “high standard” of Haggin’s estate.⁷⁹ Perhaps because the student boarded on Elmendorf, six miles from town, away from school vigilance, Kastle felt compelled to defend the affair and the reputation of his station. The dean certainly had his own reservations about Elmendorf. As students shared more fully the responsibilities of a commercial dairy, they inevitably moved further away from studies, and Dean Kastle concluded, “I feel that the Station is getting very little return.”⁸⁰ Kastle may have expressed his frustrations about student workers at Elmendorf but an especially critical time came in the fall of 1914.

The relationship between Elmendorf and Kentucky College appeared at the end in September of 1914 when J.B. Haggin passed away at his summer home in Newport, Rhode Island. As much as the land mogul was determinedly concerned with his Bluegrass estate, Haggin said nothing about Elmendorf in his will.⁸¹ The land-grant university could not help but be aware of the local headlines, “What is to be done with Elmendorf?”⁸² The letter books of the university dean and station director never explicitly state when their relationship with Elmendorf ended; however, a reader

⁷⁹ Joseph Kastle to C.H. Berryman, Kastle Letterbooks (16 August 1913): 391, in KAES Collection.

⁸⁰ Joseph Kastle to J.J. Hooper, Kastle Letterbooks (8 June 1914): 53, in KAES Collection.

⁸¹ Will.

⁸² “Speculation as to the Future of Elmendorf Farm,” *Lexington Herald Leader* (13 July 1915): 1.

invariably draws the conclusion that by early 1915 the university no longer provided the farm's daily bacterial counts and the director no longer mentioned the farm's assets in his reports.

Regardless of Haggin's death and the attendant state of flux, the fact remains that the land-grant university continued to influence Elmendorf until the family sold the business in 1917. Over three years following the Haggin's passing, the farm took steps to continue the business of large-scale commercial dairying. With a graduate of the university as its manager, Ralph Morgan, the dairy adopted a different strategy to achieve efficient and hygienic production. It sold off a significant number of prized Jerseys in 1916 down to roughly four hundred cows needing milking twice a day.

In 1915, unable to secure skilled workers from the university, the farm had invested in Sharple's mechanical milkers which drew simultaneously from three cows.⁸³ Similar to home consumer goods on the farm, like washing machines or refrigerators, these devices sought to save labor, increase production, and promote cleanliness.⁸⁴ Of

⁸³ Years before the farm expressed a genuine interest in machine milking, but the university research showed that Sharples could not offer large profits without risks of cleanliness. Workers were required to spend an additional 75 minutes at day's end to clean parts. Thus machines secreted milk no faster than a seasoned human hand. J. J. Hooper and J. W. Nutter, *Experiments with the Sharples Mechanical Milker* (Lexington, Ky: State University Press, 1914).

⁸⁴ Mechanically what took place in the dairy barn paralleled in many ways developments in the farmhouse. In the case of rural housework, historian Ronald Kline describes the perception of rural household technology as "a progressive social force." Kline, *Consumers in the Country: Technology and Social Change in Rural America* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000): 93. For more about the rural household, see Katherine Jellison, *Entitled to Power: Farm Women and Technology, 1913-1963* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1993); and for a counter argument of "more work for mother," see Ruth Cowan, *More Work for Mother: The Ironies of Household Technology from the Open Hearth to the Microwave* (New York: Basic Books, 1983).

course, milk machines were still considered luxuries early in the 1900s. Indeed, a single unit's price of \$568 exceeded the cost of most milk barns.⁸⁵

Under Morgan's management, Elmendorf Dairy purchased three mechanical pumps, twenty-four milking units, and various implements.⁸⁶ The Sharples proved to be a welcome addition for a scientific dairy. They garnished a remarkably low bacterial count; two hundred samples, all mechanically drawn, averaged 3389 bacteria per spoonful.⁸⁷ More importantly, the farm saved an annual \$1,200 per cow. Two men operating four Sharples could feed, milk, and strip the teats of 50 cows in 1 hour and 15 minutes versus traditional method of four hours, leaving the former student to conclude, "The extra cost of labor in hand milking is alone sufficient."⁸⁸ Ultimately, it was this larger vision of science, efficiency, and mechanization that the ag-department graduates brought to Elmendorf. Without them, the largest dairy in the world could never have grown as successfully.

The history of the Kentucky Agricultural & Mechanical College at Elmendorf Farm records all the complex ideals of industrialized farming, with its limitless possibilities and challenges. The directors of the college provided Haggin with expertise and experience, and gave the farm the techniques and technology to make milk hygienically and efficiently. It is important to remember that these efforts were not

⁸⁵ W.D. Nichols, "Construction and Equipment of Dairy Barn," Kentucky Agricultural Experiment Station Bulletin No. 179 (State University Press, Lexington, KY: 1914): 2.

⁸⁶ "A Milking Machine Makes A Saving of \$1200 a Year," *System on the Farm* (March, 1917): 23.

⁸⁷ This numerical value was encouraging, as it fell far below the rigid qualifications of the Fayette County milk commission. J. J. Hooper and J. W. Nutter, *Experiments with the Sharples Mechanical Milker*, Kentucky Agricultural Experiment Station, Bulletin No. 186 (Lexington, Ky: State University Press, 1914): 490-492.

⁸⁸ *Ibid*; "A Milking Machine Makes A Saving of \$1200 a Year," *System on the Farm* (March, 1917): 23

without merit. The directors were sincere in their beliefs that the college's relationship with Elmendorf Farm would improve the conditions of Kentucky's milk industry and thereby offer benefit to all Kentucky dairy farmers. The utilization of Haggin's limitless money and facilities, would allow the college to perform scientific research far beyond the college's financial capabilities.

The exchange resulted in what appears to be a moral contradiction. A great deal of the agricultural college's efforts had provably facilitated a single, privileged dairy. To compound the issue, neither were the combined efforts of Elmendorf and the land-grant college consistently practical or economical because no matter what these agricultural specialists believed, very few Kentucky dairymen were ever financially able to emulate the expansive business strategies of J.B. Haggin in their dairy farming.

Seen as this living laboratory of modern dairying and scientific research, the publicly funded partnership between the land-grant college and the private dairy farm of J.B. Haggin taught very little. The prices paid for Elmendorf cattle, the general scale of operations, the system of bacterial examinations, and the social background of its workers, all proved remarkable in size and modernity but ultimately offered little more than conversation to the dairy association of Kentucky dairy farmers. As one journalist noted, "There is a danger in the possibility of Elmendorf being held as an example, rather than a prodigy."⁸⁹

A mere five years after Haggin's passing, the university adopted a different view of the ever famous Elmendorf Dairy. Realizing the unrealistic expense and expectations of its certified milk production, W.D. Nichols, a professor at the university and extension service, published an article in local newspapers stating on record, "Several years ago the

⁸⁹ "Country Life Goes West," *Country Life* v. 26 (August, 1914): 94.

huge dairy herd of J.B. Haggin, at Lexington, was housed and handled to produce perfect milk. However, the marvelous barn and the intricate and costly milk house did not always produce certified milk that would stand the test.” He pointed out the glaring anomaly of Elmendorf Dairy. “The Haggin barn, with its tiled walls and concrete floors, did not have the propitiator’s thought behind it.” Nichols pressed the point further: clean milk, the extension agent noted, was not a “matter of fine babies.” Rather, it was a matter of “very plain structures, plenty of white wash, and constant dusting,” which any farmer could afford to do.⁹⁰ Interestingly enough, what never came up in the critique was the role of the university in the making of Elmendorf Dairy.

⁹⁰ “Clean Milk Not a Matter of Fine Babies,” *Bourbon News* (27 June 1919): 7.

Chapter Eleven: Conclusion

“The Wrong Kind of Old” ~ The Legacy of James B. Haggin’s Elmendorf Farm

On September 12, 1914, J.B. Haggin died a few months short of his ninety-third birthday. Although he had lived most of his life in relatively good condition, his health had begun to deteriorate in the fall of 1913, when he was constantly treated for debilitating bouts of pneumonia. The illnesses, however, were only consequence of a more serious problem; the real culprit was congestive heart failure. The national papers often reported of Haggin’s weakening health. The “great Turfman,” the *New York Herald* printed, would often lapse into states of unconsciousness.¹ Still, at the age of ninety-one, “The Haggin” seemed to others never too sick to work. Following the routine he conducted his entire life, he continued the daily trips to his New York office, writing letters and handling correspondence about business.² Others thought his health had improved markedly. Indeed, when his grandson made a polite inquiry about his health in 1913, his secretary E.M. West replied, “The only thing the matter with him seems to be his legs which pain him a little.”³ But this outlook proved far from true. The following summer, Haggin’s central office sent internal reports to his superintendents in Kentucky and California that the fragility of his strength was apparent, and his deteriorating health had become chronic.⁴

¹ “Mr. Haggin, Turfman, is Ill,” *New York Herald* (2 October 1913); “James B. Haggin Continues Ill,” *New York Herald* (13 September 1913). Personal correspondence confirms newspaper reports, as J.B. Haggin wrote to his grandson that he was not well enough to attend to business matters. J.B. Haggin to Louis Lee Haggin II (29 March 1913).

² Louis Lee Haggin to J.B. Haggin.

³ E.M. West to Louis Lee Haggin (22 November 1913).

⁴ H. Jastro to Louis Lee Haggin (8 June 1914); “James B. Haggin Growing Stronger,” *Lexington Leader* (8 September 1914).

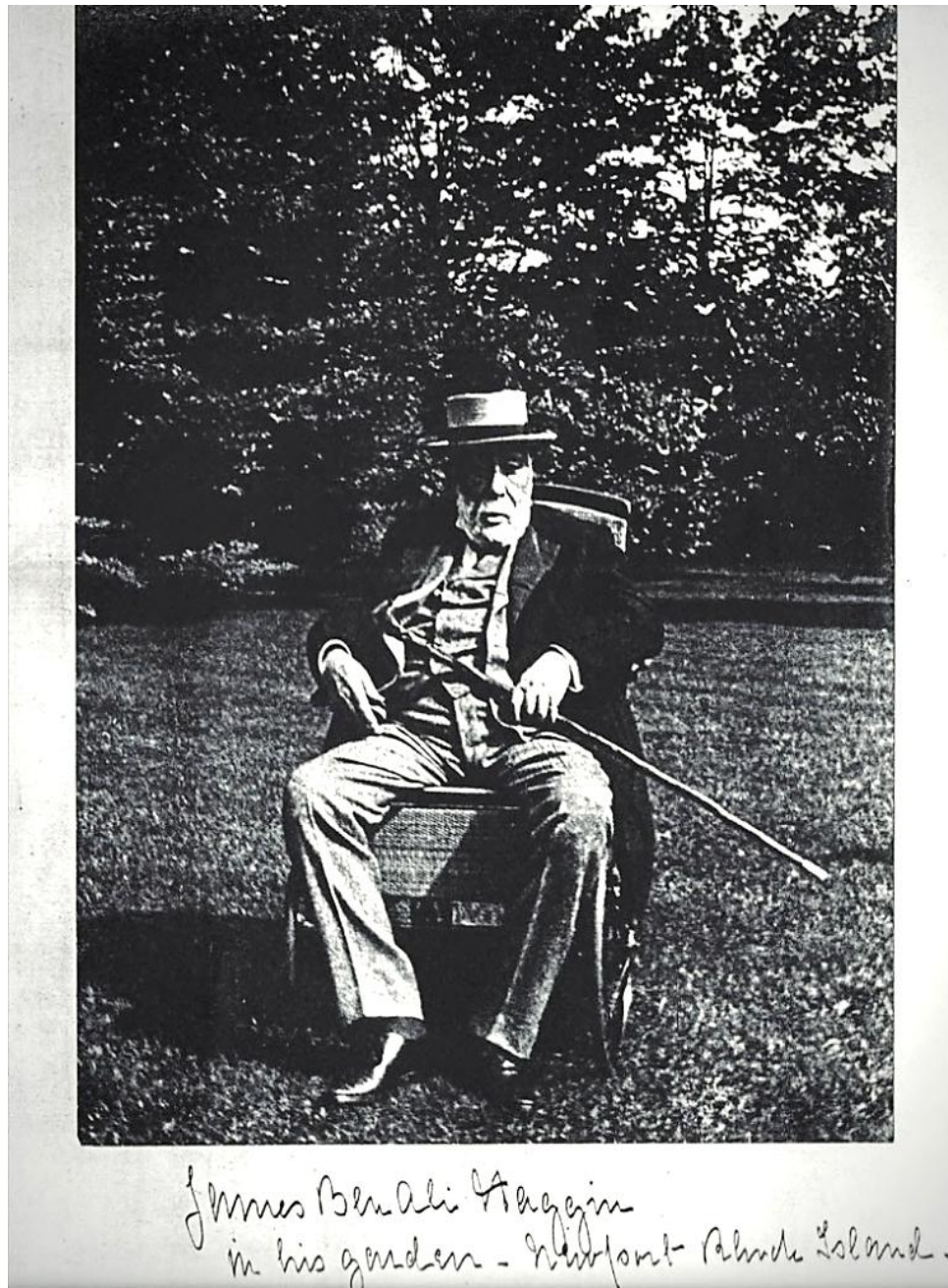


Figure 11.1: When newspapers printed pictures of Haggin in his later years, they were reproductions of formal portraits. They often showed him sitting in a chair, dressed in somber black business suits, depicted with his trademark full white beard. Although heavier in weight, Haggin always appeared in good health for a man in his eighties. But this family photograph showed with revealing detail the signs of J.B. Haggin's final days. Copy of photograph, Album No. 3, Ben Ali Haggin Materials, University of Kentucky.

Across the country from Grand Rapids to El Paso, and from Norfolk to San Francisco, his death generated front-page headlines—“James B. Haggin, Pioneer, is Dead,” “Last Forty-Niner Death”, “Turf Croesus is Dead”, and “‘Owner Haggin’: Man of Silence and Accomplishments”—a clear testament to his notoriety, although in life he often shunned this kind of publicity. The funeral took place three days later. It was a private affair in the Bronx, as Haggin wanted it, but much to the surprise of many Kentuckians.

That “one of her most notable, and doubtless her wealthiest citizen” would be laid to rest beneath his native soil, most considered a foregone conclusion.⁵ His construction of a family monument in Mercer County in 1912 led many Kentuckians to believe that when he departed in peace Haggin would lay beneath the granite stone at Spring Hill cemetery, next to his parents, with room for his Kentucky bride someday. Even the *New York Times* reported the “retired Turfman” would be buried in the Bluegrass.⁶ But New York had always been the preferred destination in Haggin’s mind. The same time he had commissioned the family monument at Spring Hill, he also constructed a massive mausoleum in Classic Revival style, complete with two Corinthian columns and a slight pediment, in the venerable Woodlawn Cemetery in the Bronx. His final place would be among other millionaires, like Collis P. Huntington, Jay Gould, and F.W. Woolworth, where aristocratic grandeur permitted those of established wealth to rest in death as they had enjoyed in life.

⁵ “James Ben Ali Haggin,” *Lexington Leader* (13 September 1914): 4.

⁶ “James B. Haggin Dies in Newport,” *New York Times* (13 September 1914): 1.



Figure 11.2: J.B. Haggin's Mausoleum, Woodlawn Cemetery, Photograph by the author. (2011)

As one of the world's richest men, J.B. Haggin never intended to live a life of rustic simplicity in Kentucky. He required opulence to feel at home in the country. But what do we make of his much grander plans for the estate? From a financial perspective, was it not irrational for Haggin to invest millions in the aesthetics of a breeding farm, when it did little to generate income, promote productivity, or yield profit? Haggin's death left many questions about his life unanswered. This was of course by design. Haggin's passion for money and collectibles was rivaled only by his passion for privacy. He made it far too difficult for any person to know everything about his personal life. As seen throughout his business career, he did everything in his power to keep his affairs private, and this call for secrecy has proven the greatest of all obstacles to a historical study of Elmendorf. Although many read his silence as proof of his modesty—"He wanted none of it, would have none of it," one editor surmised—Haggin's deep aversion to publicity had less to do with an expression of humility or self-effacement, but was shaped in large part by his industrial experiences.⁷ He wanted to make his fortunes in the long shadows of boardrooms and private talks of offices, staying far away from what he considered the prying eyes of the press. He imposed the strictest of limitations as a means of effectively silencing the very details that gave insight into his thoughts and individuality. Still, if we are to surmise the legacy of Elmendorf, we must offer some explanation as to why such a brilliantly successful financier would make decisions that in turn led to the magnificent failure of this great estate.

* * * *

⁷ "Owner Haggin: Man of Silence and Accomplishments," *The Sun* (20 September 1914).

J.B. Haggin had always been at heart a builder and a collector. The wealthy financier derived considerable pleasure from owning the finest and the fanciest. He tended to buy his horses readymade. Pedigree breeding appealed to Haggin's view of himself as an aristocrat and gentleman. Beyond his personal desires, however, there was a larger reason for the major overhaul of Elmendorf, one that plainly showed that the Kentucky stud farm made for a very different sort of business endeavor, wholly unlike his operation in California. Symbolizing beauty and order, Elmendorf's extravagant design followed naturally from the idealized landscape of the Bluegrass that had seized the national imagination. This type of breeding farm had roots in the elite tradition in central Kentucky, dating back to the Tidewater days of the mid and late-eighteenth century, but its distinguishing feature of an English countryside, lavish and dramatic in design and style, was a relatively recent development at mid-century. Elmendorf, then, was a projection of what was considered the ideal Bluegrass farm at the turn of the century. Haggin's estate emulated an elegant gentility that was in keeping with a faded antebellum past of the South, all the while celebrating an unrestrained style of American life that was inviting to wealth.

Elmendorf may have been designed so as to make the business methods and processes almost invisible, but it was Haggin's industrial logic that caused its demise. As a breeder of pedigree animals, he could never subsume his inclination as a large-scale financier. He made fortunes, by integrating vertically and expanding dramatically, at the point when others had to fold. To describe him as compulsive would not be an exaggeration. When he began a project, he sought to dominate it with seemingly endless

amounts of money. And he did it with unprecedented scales. But such scales in a specialized industry nearly collapsed under a modern logic of unfettered expansion.

Given the nature of pedigree breeding and certified milk-making, he was more likely to build a sustainable operation and turn profits by building smaller facilities, owning smaller numbers, and expanding over a longer period of time. But Haggin increased the economies of scale in both number and quality, by any means or cost, even at risk of future productivity, in an industry where costs and risks ran ever high. His animals, although undeniably valuable, lost money in national and international markets. And he knew it. He acknowledged in 1905 that Rancho del Paso and Elmendorf made only marginal profits in the best years, recognizing that little, if any, money was made from pedigree horse operations. In an age when agriculture was thought by many to be business in itself, a system of production ad infinitum, the finest thoroughbred stud farm in the world was neither self-sustaining nor self-sufficient.

How could a shrewd and prescient businessman engage in an endeavor in such a manner? It was simply not in his nature to ignore numbers, especially when it came to matters of money. For a man like Haggin, his pedigrees appealed to his view of himself as a wealthy aristocrat. The breeding of pedigrees therefore were driven as much by his interests as his ideals. With the greatest assemblage of imported and domestic Thoroughbred bloodlines at the turn of the century, there was no question that he enjoyed a privileged status within the breeding world. For the wealth and riches they symbolized, like the landscape itself, his fancy beasts gave the prestige and respect he craved.

Yet, what is most striking about Elmendorf was a matter not simply of owning the very best but of creating the finest. In this period of time, there is an intrinsic value of

pedigree animal breeding that is within the control of all owners to orchestrate or to gamble. From Haggin's view, the key to producing such exceptional quality was to balance individuality, as defined by appearance and performance, with pedigrees. Elmendorf was the home of tough and talented bloodlines. These animals may show good form in training at the racetracks, but strength in breeding was found in their ancestry. Through the studying and analyzing of charts and families, then, pedigree breeding offered a chance to not only judge and assess the value of an animal's worth, but to change physical attributes and genetic constitution. There remains the challenge in the pedigree breeding business that proves its greatest legacy. It ultimately represents a belief in a person's ability to overcome any obstacle.

All of which helps explain Haggin's seemingly inexplicable move in the wake of New York's anti-gambling legislation. The Hart-Agnew Act, which attempted to ban racetrack gambling in the nexus of Thoroughbred racing, was a death knell for the industry. He did not approve of what he considered the encroaching power of state government, and in protest he had announced his decision to quit the horse business. He certainly was not alone in his dismay; faced with the aggressive politics of progressivism, others in his position had resigned themselves to the same conclusion. But while most held out the hope that the popular protests would subside, Haggin held true to his threat and exited the industry in grand fashion. And it seems safe to conclude that anger was one of many emotions that influenced his decision, and amid these frustrations in defying the progressive impulse, Haggin had gambled on the collapse of the Thoroughbred economy and lost.

In retrospect, his decision had even greater consequences than anyone realized at the time. When Haggin refused to sell the majority of his horses in domestic markets, choosing instead to ship his horses across the Atlantic to various different countries, the Thoroughbred industry in America was forever changed. Vast numbers of his horses sold for dismal prices, pushing markets to plummet in England, France, and Argentina. Intense controversy over these decisions proved imminent and inevitable, as Haggin found himself in direct conflict with the breeding industry at home and abroad. Although the seeds of this movement were planted long before Haggin's decision in 1907, he nevertheless upset the delicate balance of international and national markets with his monopolistic attitude towards breeding horses. International breeding circles sought to push American breeders, trainers, and jockeys from their tracks, using legislation to deem their horses as "half-breds" and effectively banning them from overseas tracks for several decades.

Although Haggin's personal thoughts about these developments may never be known, the most persuasive and coherent explanation for his decision regarding his Kentucky estate, was mentality. When others would have quit the business of pedigree breeding for good, this avaricious man became more risky in his ventures at Elmendorf, diversifying the farm's activities by acquiring more kinds and types of fancy animals and by expanding into other crop enterprises. Some of these ventures were successful; Elmendorf's pigs, for example, paid more profit than any other animals, and its tobacco production exercised considerable control over the state's industry. He put his wealth and name behind the Berryman Realty Company, controlling 250 shares of the corporation's stock. Its commercial business included an ice plant, an automobile garage, and an opera

house named Ben Ali Theatre.⁸ The latter, designed by the famous Manhattan architect W.H. McElfatrick and the Tiffany Studios of New York City, in the words of scholar Gregory Waller, was “designed to reaffirm the social hierarchy – purged, of course, of anyone who could not afford a second balcony ticket.”⁹ But the most famous of his activities—a modern dairy—best fit into a larger pattern of Haggin’s decisions and beliefs regularly employed on the Bluegrass land.

The same time Haggin sold horses in distant lands, he continued his passion for perfection on a grander scale, and in a different direction, financing and constructing the world’s finest milk operation. From his view there was a substantial need for clean milk in the Bluegrass. Elmendorf Dairy, by contrast to the stud farm, reflected a social and scientific activism that was influenced by the progressive era. Such declarations against the menace of contaminated milk were part of a larger movement among doctors, scientists, politicians, activists, and agricultural colleges to reform what they believed to be antiquated and harmful methods of dairy farming. It may seem surprising, given Haggin’s anger against anti-gambling efforts in New York, that he endorsed government intervention with pure milk. Government was dangerous, he believed, intruded into the lives of Americans. Such views were typical of his position and his class, especially considering his privileged position as a mighty industrial financier.

Yet, to point out the contrast in the horse breeding and milk making ventures is not to emphasize the contradictions in his beliefs. Quite the opposite, it was typical of Haggin to be interested in pure milk reform, in large part, because the progressive

⁸ *Lexington Leader* (26 May 1912): 1.

⁹ Gregory A. Waller, *Main Street Amusements: Movies and Commercial Entertainment in a Southern City, 1896-1930* (Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1995): 102.

movement reaffirmed his belief in the benefits of modernization. Not only did his sentiments about milk reform seem to be sincere and wholehearted, Haggin had remained a longtime promoter of scientific methods and commercial practices of agricultural expansion. Consequently, his managers at Elmendorf applied the same logic of pedigree breeding, growth, and integration that had been devoted to large-scale productions of Thoroughbred horses. He committed unprecedented money to import from Europe the finest milking cows. At his Kentucky estate, he also constructed a modern infrastructure of milk-making, integrated vertically, to produce, certify, ship, and advertise his milk. In time the renowned breeding stud farm was quickly transformed into a modern milk enterprise that attracted international attention. People came from far places as South Africa to take a look at Haggin's new modern and scientific venture in milk. What visitors could not see, however, were some of the deepest issues in modern agriculture at the turn of the century.

The chief problem that the dairy faced was ultimately the same trap of sustainability that plagued Haggin's horses. Though Elmendorf utilized new technologies, relied on professional experts, and put forth organizational techniques of mass production, the factory-style milk farm was endangered by the very industrial logic and social consciousness that created it. By fashioning such an expensive dairy to the fanciest specifications and manufacturing capabilities, Elmendorf Dairy probably paid its way but never turned pure milk into large profits. The costs and prices of Haggin's milk simply ran too high.

A second issue which bears further scrutiny was the work of the land-grant institute at Elmendorf. For all his experience in pedigrees and agriculture, Haggin knew

very little about dairy breeding and milk making.¹⁰ He only accomplished the feat of the world's finest dairy with the help of the most educated in Kentucky at the turn of the century. Haggin recruited help from the state agricultural college who quickly became a critical component for fashioning its breeding and milking systems. The state college, by offering advice, time, and labor, gave scientific expertise and instant credibility to Haggin's dairy, and in exchange they should have gained access to the finest facilities and pedigree cows for research and instruction. Elmendorf Dairy, thus, as reported by the local and national agricultural publications, existed as a project of state generosity as much as of industry. They were putting their knowledge and advice at the disposal of Haggin's farm, in the hopes of advancing the interests of the college and the state industry. But what appeared as a wonderful opportunity for higher agricultural study did not work as intended. Many professors and students found it difficult to perform research and work away from the college. Their disappointment was understandable and not surprising. Haggin was willing to offer opportunities, in the financing and promotion of good causes, and he looked with favor on the land grant institute, especially the work and the devotion of its first director, M.A. Scovell. Having recognized their ability and expertise, he seems to have allowed the college a larger part than most in determining the policies and procedures of the milk plant. But having yearned for fame and finest, Haggin never hesitated to promote his own farm and use the skills of the land-grant college to his own advantage.

Beyond that, there was something larger than publicity to explain why Haggin never considered this arrangement with the college. It was a question of control. In his

¹⁰ Haggin admitted this fact to T.S. Cooper. T.S. Cooper to M.A. Scovell, File Gen. Ch-Cz, Box 124, (21 July 1910), in KAES Collection.

world, total control meant power. “I don’t want to recognize anybody as owning anything apart from myself,” the aging grandfather confided to his grandson. “The place and all the stock on it belongs to me.”¹¹ A widely successful financier, Haggin knew he could never control completely the markets that his Bluegrass operation depended upon. But this letter conveys a man intent on order and control of his possessions. And Elmendorf was personal.

Only in death would Haggin let go of Elmendorf Farm. And, then, he placed care of the farm in the hands of those he trusted most, his son, Louis T. Haggin, his wife, Pearl Haggin, and two friends and advisors, Allan McCulloch and H. E. Moller. He left them but a few instructions for its direction. The executors promised, in accordance with his wishes, a uniform salary to farm employees of \$100 to serve as their pension.¹² In this final testament Haggin ordered that these individuals be given full power of his estate. Elmendorf Farm, ultimately, became a part of Haggin’s long list of holdings, spread across the continent, now under the control of his executors, all of whom lived in New York and none of whom had ever been intimately connected to the Kentucky farm.

How do we account for the fact, then, that J.B. Haggin spent millions upon millions to fashion an extravagant venture in central Kentucky only to leave it with little direction? The mere fact that Haggin made meticulous arrangements for certain possessions proved that he gave time and thought to how his massive wealth should outlive him. Haggin left specific instructions in his will about Margaret Haggin’s jewelry—that included one piece with a ruby and 278 diamonds, and another with diamonds weighing over 300 carats—making certain to provide security for her private

¹¹ J.B. Haggin to Louis Lee Haggin (18 January 1913).

¹² “Young Donovan Target for Gibbons,” *New York Times* (10 November 1914): 9.

income.¹³ Historians have not commented because much of the will seems consistent with the ideals and practices of this generation of wealthy people. As for most of his money and possessions, including his real estate property, personal paintings, and stock holdings in New York, California, Peru, and Kentucky, he left it to his descendants, to be distributed by his wife, son, and two of his most trusted friends and advisors. At play, perhaps, was the fear of inherited wealth. Typical of the wealthiest in America, particularly with vast fortunes, like Carnegie, Rockefeller, and Mellon, was the warnings against idle heirs. Others feared if they died, heirs might squabble and fight over the substantial fortunes. But those closest to him presumed that the decision had to do with his true feelings of animal breeding. Allan McCullough, one of the executors, concluded in an article, “Contrary to prevalent opinion, Mr. Haggin made only a pastime of horses. They were his amusement, not a business.”¹⁴

The will proved to be nevertheless a most bewildering aspect of Haggin’s relationship with the farm, and one of tremendous consequences. A year after J.B. Haggin’s passing, the executors began to auction off the fortune he had accumulated. First to go was the more tangible forms of wealth. Between 1915 and 1917, the farm hosted a series of dispersal sales, sending the entire herd of prized shorthorns, horses,

¹³ Oral History Interview with Evelyn Duggan, conducted by Patricia Sanders, 28 February 1987, Haggin Research Files, Haggin Museum, California. “Haggin Jewelry Brings \$1.6 million at Auction,” *Public Auction Sales and Appraisals of Art, Literary Jewelry and Other Personal Property*, Vol. XVII, No. 7 (April 1966) “It is my will that no part or portion of these jewels shall be considered as any part or portion of my estate. They are gifts made to my wife from time to time and to which she has the exclusive right and title.” Will on file in Fayette County.

¹⁴ “James B. Haggin Will Filed in the County Court Here,” *Lexington Leader* (20 November 1914): 1; “Haggin Executors Leave for East,” *Lexington Leader* (22 November 1914); “Elmendorf Stud to be Auctioned,” *New York Times* (17 October 1915): 17;

chickens, pigs, and milk cows from Haggin's stables to the auction block.¹⁵ Buyers across the country attended these sales, which not only affirmed the popularity of Haggin's animals, but distributed his animal bloodlines across the region and across the country. The Dexters, for example, were sent as far away as Minnesota, Vermont, Missouri, and Texas.¹⁶ The Shorthorns, consisting of prime show bulls, King Cumberland and Fayette Marshall, were shipped to Kingsley Macomber's Paicienes Ranchos in San Benito, California.¹⁷ Of course, not all of Haggin's animals left the Bluegrass. In a worn, used catalogue from the 1916 Elmendorf Jersey sale, a witness to the "national event" had written the names of the buyer and the prices of the animals purchased. Overwhelmingly, those calves, bulls, and cows sold at nominal prices were more often acquired by breeders from Kentucky.¹⁸

¹⁵ *A Complete Dispersal Sale of the Elmendorf Jersey Cattle: The Property of Estate of J.B. Haggin.* (Lexington, KY: James M. Byrnes, 1916); *A Complete Dispersal Sale of the Elmendorf Berkshire Pigs: The Property of Estate of J.B. Haggin* (Lexington, KY: James M. Byrnes, 1916); "First of a Series of Dispersal Sales," *Breeders Gazette* (29 January 1916): 118.; "Elmendorf Berkshires," *Breeders Gazette* (18 January 1917): 100.

¹⁶ American Kerry and Dexter Cattle Club, *Bulletin of the American Kerry and Dexter Cattle Club No.1, 1911 - No.3, 1912, No.6, 1917 and No. 8, 1919 and a Few Items of Correspondence Regarding Dexter Cattle, (1917) (1919).*

¹⁷ "Elmendorf Shorthorns Go to California," *Breeders Gazette* (1915); Alvin Howard Sanders, *Red, White, and Roan: Stories Relating to the Origin of the Shorthorn Breed of Cattle in Great Britain, Its Early Introduction into America, and Its Growth in Popularity Throughout the United States in Recent Years* (Chicago: American Shorthorn Breeders' Association, 1936).

¹⁸ *A Complete Dispersal Sale of the Elmendorf Jersey Cattle: The Property of Estate of J.B. Haggin.* (Lexington, KY: James M. Byrnes, 1916) at University of Kentucky Special Collections, Lexington, Kentucky. See, for example, C.P. Curren's purchase of "My Aunt Jemima," for \$70 and Noble's Pretty Violette for \$65; J.D. McKibben of Augusta, Kentucky's purchase of Goddington Foxglove for \$70 and Rondin's Lily for \$75 and Jean Murry for \$85; J.W. Gresham's purchase of Noble's Dulce Belle for \$65; S. Wiedemann of Paris, Kentucky, and Bosnia's Oxford Beauty for \$140; G.R. Burberry of Centerville and Jolly Countess for \$60 and King's Golden Charlotte for \$70; J.M. Richardson's purchase of a heifer for \$65; E.P. Easton's purchase of Tapon's Sarah for \$50; G.W. Sowder of Mt. Sterling and Sunny of Elmendorf for \$120; R.H. Stevenson of Lexington and Cardina for \$105; R.S. Tuppinn of Augusta and Golden Janet for \$65 and Fox's Rosalass for \$70 and Queen of the Honney for \$75 and Eula Gordon for \$65; Mrs. C. Holstill of Anchorage, Kentucky and Kleinwood's Jewel of Fairview for \$75; W.H. Whalon of Paris, Kentucky: Shy Fox's Jewel for \$80 and San Toy's East Lynne for \$25; Ori

Though the sales were often billed as “one of the greatest offerings the public has yet had an opportunity to secure,” for “specimens that in the past have been without price,” like the history of Elmendorf animal sales, they were invariably in the buyer’s favor.¹⁹ They proved to confirm once again an overwhelming pattern in the business of breeding at Elmendorf. Throughout the farm’s history, animal sales had proven anything but smooth and steady; it had been shaped by a market of uncertain supply and demand, with great peaks of inflated prices and low valleys of depressed sales, in which prized animals were sold in an environment of unpredictable extremes. But as the scales of pedigree animals continued to dwindle at Elmendorf, so prices continued to fall thereafter. In some of its final sales of its prized animals, the estate achieved its lowest prices ever. The national sale of Haggin’s milk herds was advertised as “The Biggest Event in Jersey History,” with the “greatest sale of high-class Jersey cattle ever held in America,” but the entire herd of 500, the majority of the sires and dames imported from the Channel Islands, brought a nominal average of \$170.²⁰ This was less than a fortieth of what Haggin had paid for ten animals at a Cooper’s sale nine years earlier.²¹

In the end, the bulk of Haggin’s worth in Kentucky was landed assets. And the sale of his 12,000 acres in the heart of Thoroughbred country unleashed a flurry of

Lebus of Cynthiana, Kentucky and Madame’s Bread for \$70; Newton Bishops of Cynthiana, Kentucky and Cancal Princess for \$75.

¹⁹ “Elmendorf Berkshires,” *Breeders Gazette* (3 February 1916): 281; “Elmendorf Jersey Sale,” *Breeders Gazette* (11 May 1916): 1039; “Dispersion Sale of the Long Established Enterprise Herd of Short-horns,” *Breeders Gazette* (February 1916): 318.

²⁰ *A Complete Dispersal Sale of the Elmendorf Jersey Cattle: The Property of Estate of J.B. Haggin*. (Lexington, KY: James M. Byrnes, 1916); “A National Event: The Complete Dispersal Sale of Elmendorf Jersey : Elmendorf Ad,” *Breeders Gazette* (January-June 1916): 1090; “A Three-Days’ Sale,” *Breeders Gazette*, 1040; “A National Event,” *Breeders Gazette* (4 May 1916): 990; “High Prices of Jersey,” *New York Times* (26 June 1916): 18. Only the dispersal of Haggin’s remaining horses fared well; ninety-seven horses brought over \$800 each. “Splendid Prices Realized at Haggin and Clay Dispersal,” *Lexington Herald* (29 October 1915).

²¹ M.A. Scovell to Perres, Scovell Letterbooks, v. 82 (10 June 1911): 355.

activity. Wealthy established breeders hastened to purchase acreage adjacent to their own property. John Madden purchased over 2000 acres on the east side of Paris Pike and US 27, facing the Green Hills estate. Newspapers reported that this acquisition in 1917 represented an unprecedented transaction in the county's history. Madden was said to have paid half million dollars for the prime real estate, or about 8.5 million dollars at today's value.²² Others courted disaster with their proposals for Elmendorf. Local entrepreneurs envisioned Haggin's former estate as a mammoth amusement park of 1000 acres, complete with "thriller attractions, scenic railways, shoot-the-chutes, roller coasters, swings, movie shows, and an open air vaudeville house."²³ But the plan fell through.

Much more successful was the intense pressure to subdivide Haggin's property, by the executors and by individuals, into small plots to sell for development. By the fall of 1916, the descendants and managers of Haggin's estate acquired assistance from those who specialized in real estate and made plans to cut 6000 acres into small tracts of 100 acres.²⁴ They anticipated tremendous interest and substantial returns in what was repeatedly described as "thoroughly Hagginized" property; that is, land that afforded every modern convenience, including electricity, city water, transportation in the heart of Bluegrass country.²⁵

²² "2000 Acres of Elmendorf Sold," *Lexington Leader* (5 May 1917): 1.

²³ "Syndicate Will Buy Elmendorf," *Lexington Leader* (4/1/1916, p.1., c.3.

²⁴ "Haggin Estate to Be Cut into Small Tracts," *Lexington Leader* (26 October 1916): 1; "Definite Plans," *Lexington Leader* (22 November 1916): 1; , "For Sale Elmendorf Farm Lands, Especially Suitable for Stock Raising," *The Thoroughbred Horse Association Builder*, Vol. I, No. 3 (March 1917).

²⁵ Advertisement, *Bourbon News* (9 November 1917): 2; "To Subdivide 803-Acre Tract," *Lexington Leader* (2 October 1917): 1.

Private individuals also saw opportunity to be made on Elmendorf acreage.²⁶ Judging by these sales, many of these people realized significant returns in these schemes. Hal Price Headley, a well-known breeder would later become father-in-law to Haggin's great-grandson, Louis Lee Haggin II, sold portions of the famous estate at a substantial profit.²⁷ Robert Meter, of Paris, followed Headley's example and sold parts of Elmendorf for \$415 an acre; three times what Haggin paid ten years earlier.²⁸ The response to these sales was overwhelming. Local newspapers reported that crowds of 600 and 700 persons attended the sales, as they contended with another, long and loudly, to acquire a piece of old Elmendorf.²⁹

This spirit of bidding and carving of Haggin's investments also included his acquisitions in downtown Lexington. Though his health was failing by the winter of 1912, the New York resident had continued to expand his holdings in central Kentucky, purchasing huge slices of downtown real estate. By the time of his passing two years later, Haggin owned entire blocks in the heart of Lexington.³⁰ The block bounded by Walnut and Limestone, Main and Short streets, including two lots on Limestone at the

²⁶ "Public Auction," *Lexington Leader* (27 September 1919): 2; "Four Small Farms Cut From Rich Haggin Land," *Lexington Leader* (30 September 1919): 2; "Saunders Farm Brings \$407.50 An Acre Average," *Lexington Leader* (14 December 1919): 12; "Five Hundred Acres," Advertisement, *Lexington Leader* (25 September 1919): 3; "Haggin Land," Advertisement, "Definite Plans," *Lexington Leader* (22 November 1916): 1.

²⁷ "To Subdivide 803-Acre Tract," *Lexington Leader* (2 October 1917): 1; "H. Price Headley Buys 956 Bluegrass Acres," *Lexington Leader* (3 November 1917): 8. Picture of advertisement, *Lexington Leader* (26 September 1919).

²⁸ "Part of Elmendorf is Sold for \$415 an Acre," *Lexington Leader* (30 September 1919); "Four Small Farms Cut From Rich Haggin Land," *Lexington Leader* (30 September 1919): 2; "6 Blue Grass Farms," *The Thoroughbred Horse Association Bulletin*, Vol. I, No. 10 (October 1917).

²⁹ "Fayette Farm Averages \$366," *Lexington Leader* (13 October 1919): 2.

³⁰ *Lexington Leader* (29 December 1911): 1; *Lexington Leader* (30 October 1911): 1; "Big Realty Company Formed By Haggin and Berryman," *Lexington Leader* (25 May 1914): 1; "Haggin Interests Buy \$250,000 Stock in Phoenix Hotel Company," *Lexington Leader* (24 March 1914): 1. Some of these purchases were personal. See, for example, Haggin's purchase of the Ben Ali Theatre. Gregory A. Waller, *Main Street Amusements: Movies and Commercial Entertainment in a Southern City, 1896-1930* (Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1995).

Bryan Station intersection, of which the lots were valued at a half million, realized significant returns for the estate, selling at over \$730,000 in 1920.³¹

But the physical centerpiece of Elmendorf, both the mansion and the lands surrounding it, was sold to a wealthy Philadelphian named Joseph P. Widener. One of his employees described him as, “A very fine gentleman, rather stern and austere at times.”³² He certainly knew how to play the part. The son of a financier who made fortunes in streetcars and public utilities, Widener was well known for his dealings in paintings, decorative art, and furniture but he also became widely regarded as a collector and breeder of racehorses at the turn of the century, owning stables in America and Europe. His influence has been widely established in New York with Belmont Park and in Florida with Hialeah Racetrack, but of historical importance was his interest in Kentucky following Haggin’s death. “He was very interested in the whole landscape situation here,” recalled one of the stud’s veterinarians, Dr. Charles Hagyard. Widener loved art in painting and in nature. “Beautification of the countryside was what it was.”³³

When Widener purchased the original tract known as Elmendorf for \$160,000, over the next ten years the Philadelphia breeder began in great earnest to not only produce great bloodlines, purchasing and leasing fashionably and faultlessly bred stallions, but also to redesign the façade of old Elmendorf.³⁴ After acquiring over 3000 acres in central Kentucky, Widener hired well known Philadelphian architect Horace

³¹ This is almost 9 million dollars at today’s value. “Haggin Sale Sets New Record Here,” *Lexington Leader* (13 January 1920): 1; “Property Worth \$500,000 to Be Sold Here Monday,” *Lexington Leader* (3 January 1920): 10.

³² Interview with Dr. Charles Hagyard, conducted by Mary Jane Gallaher (21 December 1978), in Horse Industry in Kentucky Oral History Project, at Louie B. Nunn Oral History Center, University of Kentucky, Lexington, Kentucky.

³³ *Ibid.*

³⁴ “Elmendorf Tract Sold for \$160,000,” *Lexington Leader* (23 January 1920): 1; “Home Tract,” *Lexington Leader* (25 September 1919): 6.

Trumbauer, famous for Duke University, to design the horse barns on the Kentucky estate. Among his more influential was the L-shaped Normandy Barn in 1927. Still standing today, the famous barn was modeled after a structure on the famous and impeccable stud farm, Haras du Mesnil, in Normandy, France. With a slate rook decorated with models of animals and birds, the barn was composed of sections, each with six stalls, and a rising clock tower, with workings and fittings, it has been said, removed from the original French barn before Germany invaded in World War I. Indeed, it was this style that soon changed the way in which twentieth-century breeders designed their Bluegrass barns. As compared to Haggin's neoclassical style that in its design symbolized the largest and finest, and was consequently "copied by few other farms," as historical geographer Karl Raitz writes, Widener commissioned structures that in its final style was much less ornate and that subsequently "resonated with other farm owners." Rather than Haggin's façade of brick and stone, Widener ordered that the barns be painted dark green and white, which was more in keeping with an English estate.³⁵ In a matter of years, therefore, "Haggin's preference for massive Victorian proportions gave way to a refined delicacy of building form."³⁶

The contrast of Haggin and Widener was perhaps best illustrated in the fate of Green Hills. Among the various structures he now owned at the intersection of the Maysville Road and Iron Works Pike, including the superintendent's residence, stallion barns, and broodmare buildings was Haggin's magnificent mansion. But Widener chose

³⁵ As a reporter from the Lexington Herald once noted, "Nature has been aided but never marred, and the broad expanse of Bluegrass pastures, the woodlands and the rolling hills, have the exquisite beauty that can be found nowhere in this country, except in Kentucky, and that is very like the best to be seen in England." "Elmendorf Famed," *Lexington Herald Leader* (1 January 1930): 28.

³⁶ Karl Raitz and Nancy O'Malley, *Kentucky's Frontier Highway: Landscape Along the Maysville Road*, (forthcoming publication by University of Kentucky Press, 2012): 69.

not to live at Green Hills when he visited his estate a few times a year, preferring instead another house on the farm. He attempted to donate the building on his Bluegrass estate, but its size imposed too many costs. Perhaps Widener may have had numerous ideas for refurbishing the grand mansion for another purpose, but on February 22, 1929, he decided on a course of action, to raze the mansion and keep the four columns, effectively creating for Haggin's farm the symbol we recognize today.

* * * *

For the first ten years at Mt. Brilliant, Louis Haggin was deep in debt. His financial troubles only grew, however, when his grandfather passed away in September of 1914. "I am making a great reduction in prices at the present time," he explained to a pedigree breeder, "on account of a great change in my affairs occasioned by the death of my Grandfather."³⁷ The scheme of liquidating pigs and bird 50 percent value failed, and Louis Haggin was forced to ask his uncle, as an executor of the estate, for a loan to pay off the demands against him. "It is extremely embarrassing to me to ask for money," he wrote to his uncle, "but I know you understand why I prefer being in debt to the estate, if you would call it being in debt, than being in debt to so many people."³⁸ One can read Louis Haggin's request as a man who felt the heavy weight of the family name. How a Haggin could afford only partial payments, his lenders asked. By 1917 the grandson fared much better. Receiving a portion of his inheritance, he paid off the demands against him and purchased Mt. Brilliant, including 1183 acres that surrounded the mansion, from his

³⁷ W.F. Luce to Louis Lee Haggin (23 November 1914); T.E. Rodifer to Louis Lee Haggin (26 October 1914).

³⁸ Allen McCulloh to Louis Lee Haggin (12 December 1914).

grandfather's estate. He then enlisted as a private in World War I, went to England, and rose to the rank of lieutenant.³⁹ When he returned home, Louis Haggin became increasingly devoted to the sport of dog breeding. Among the setters he owned, Becky Broom Hill was a three times national champion and widely famous among the setter annals.

With his grandfather's passing, Louis Haggin had seemingly escaped the familiar burdens of debt. But two important differences now marked his Bluegrass estate. First, without J.B. Haggin, Mt. Brilliant ceased to be factory plant with fine animals as its main source of capital. It came to represent, like much of Kentucky, a diversified collection of tenants who raised tobacco as its cash crop. Second, although he would eventually sell off tracts over the next ten years, that two-story colonial mansion with its wide veranda and four massive Doric columns as well as the two hundred acres surrounding it, would be the only piece of his grandfather's immense 12,000-acre operation to remain in the family for the next eighty-five years.⁴⁰

Three generations of Haggins would be born and raised in what Elizabeth Simpson once described as "Tara":

"Of all the estates in the Bluegrass there is none that holds the place close to the heart of Lexington. Perhaps because it is typically Kentucky with the vine-covered stone walls where wild grapes festoon the branches of age-old trees and its mansion of southern colonial style that forms the exquisite setting for its exquisite mistress, or perhaps it is because the Haggin family is more of the warp and woof of the community than most of the owners of the great

³⁹ "Col. Louis L. Haggin, Sportsman, Is Dead," *New York Times* (21 December 1935): 17.

⁴⁰ "Mt. Brilliant Tract Bought," *Lexington Herald Leader* (29 January 1922): 1.

estates...extending hospitality in the gracious, boundless manner that has ever been distinctive of Kentucky.”⁴¹

The women of the Haggin family, in particular, devoted themselves to philanthropic organizations. Louis Lee Haggin’s wife, Emma Jackson Haggin, received notable publicity for her work in the supply depots, a cause she served for four decades. Emma Haggin worked with famous Kentucky reformer Madeline Breckinridge who, among others, served as a social baroness of public health and education reform in central Kentucky, including the West End School. Haggin organized social lawn fetes at Mt. Brilliant that utilized objects of social status and wealth to achieve their means. Booths filled with candy, lemonade, punch, as well as Elmendorf Ice Cream, pony rides dancing for children, Greek dances gracefully performed on the greens—the upper echelons of Lexington’s inner circle paid a small price for admittance into a pleasurable garden of entertainment. J.B. Haggin’s wife, Pearl Haggin, although she remained a New Yorker, became a great benefactor of various health organizations and educational entities in Kentucky, among others, including the University of Kentucky (Haggin Hall & Margaret Voorhies Haggin Trust), Transylvania University (Margaret V. Haggin Auditorium), Centre College (Margaret V. Haggin Professor of Science), Ashland Seminary (Margaret Hall School & Margaret Hall Foundation), James B. Haggin Memorial Hospital (Harrodsburg), and Margaret Voorhies Haggin Quarters for Nurses (Hyden, Kentucky).⁴²

⁴¹ Harriett McDonald Holladay, “Memories of Mt. Brilliant School,” Accessed; Mt. Brilliant Website.

⁴² J.B. Haggin’s wealth helped provide the bedrock for one of the more benevolent foundations in math and science, the Richard Lounsberry Foundation. See Richard Lounsberry Foundation Report, 2004-2009, available from the Richard Lounsberry Foundation, 1020 19th Street, NW, Suite LL60, Washington, D.C., for a full list of its grants in math and science.

Of these Haggins in Kentucky, however, one would dramatically shape the course of horseracing in the state.⁴³ Louis Lee Haggin's youngest son was only a year old when J.B. Haggin passed away. Indeed, Louie Lee Haggin II's only memories of dear "Opa" had been passed down. "What I heard Mother and Daddy say," the great-grandson once recalled, "he (J.B. Haggin) was a wonderful, kind, sweet person. He had to be really a wonderful businessman to do everything he did."⁴⁴ His recollections were certainly romanticized but the legacy of his great-grandfather nevertheless shaped his career in what was seen as a family business. As a horseman, Louis Lee Haggin II operated a small stud farm a short distance from Keeneland gates in Woodford County.⁴⁵ Although he kept a small stable at Sycamore Hill Farm, Haggin II bred a total of fourteen stakes winner, ten of which used his great-grandfather's colors of orange and blue silks. Louis Lee Haggin II was an influential member of The Jockey Club, being the first Kentuckian to be named a steward in 1963, as well as numerous Thoroughbred organizations, including, among others, the Thoroughbred Racing Association, Thoroughbred Breeders of Kentucky, the Grayson Foundation, and the National Museum of Racing at Saratoga.

⁴³ William Haggin Perry was a longtime partner of Claiborne Farm. For more information about this farm, see Raymond G. Woolfe, *Secretariat* (Lanham, Md: Derrydale Press, 2001); Frank J. Mitchell, *Great Breeders and Their Methods: The Hancocks* (Neenah, Wis: Russell Meerdink Co, 2005); A. B. Hancock, Edward Lasker, and Cynthia Lasker, *Successful Breeding Methods at the Claiborne and Ellerslie Studs* ([S.l.]: Horse and Mule Association of America, 1943).

⁴⁴ Interview with Louis Lee Haggin III, conducted by Mary Jane Gallaher (7 February 1980) in Horse Industry in Kentucky Oral History Project, at Louie B. Nunn Oral History Center, University of Kentucky, Lexington, Kentucky.

⁴⁵ "Feature Haggin's Colors on Keeneland Buttons," *Daily Racing Form* (11 March 1976).

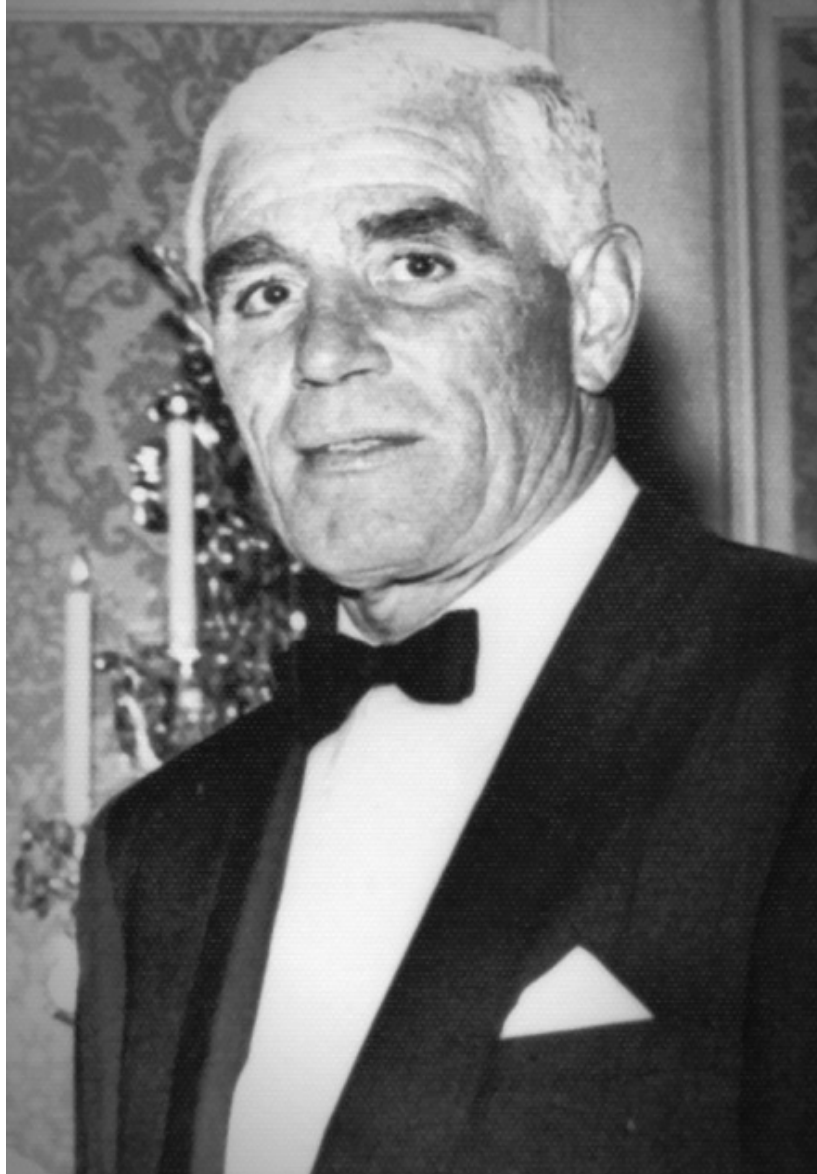


Figure 11.3: “Louis L. Haggin II, member of UK Development Council” Portrait Print Collection, University of Kentucky Special Collections.

Perhaps his greatest influence in the industry, however, came through his marriage to Alma Headley, daughter of Hal Price Headley, owner of Beaumont Farm on Harrodsburg Pike and founder of Keeneland Racetracks. “Mr. Headley was like a father to me after my father died in 1935,” Haggin once professed. And though Keeneland, Haggin repeated, was Headley’s idea, the great-grandson of J.B. Haggin and his wife played a central role with its growth and popularity. “Keeneland was his life so far as racing was concerned,” Joe Kramer, Haggin’s trainer, once stated. “He had to race at Keeneland in the spring and fall because that’s where he stood under the trees and told all those stories.” Of course, most people in the grandstands and the outfield know very little of Louis and Alma Headley Haggin and their influence at Keeneland Racetrack.⁴⁶ But when the bugle played and the gates dropped, and the crowds rose to their feet, those who yelled and cried for their horses were also cheering on the ambiance and tradition that the younger Haggin helped create. Indeed, it was Louis Lee Haggin II, as president of Keeneland Association, a position in which he served for over sixteen years, who insisted the grounds be kept immaculate and that the horses be saddled in the walking ring under the trees behind the grandstand, in full view of spectators.⁴⁷

⁴⁶ Louie Lee Haggin III’s wife was called Keeneland’s “unofficial mistress.” “A Lady’s Touch: Alma Haggin Helped Design the Keeneland Look,” *Keeneland* (Winter 2004): 37 – 40; Charles R. Koch, “Two Feet Firmly Planted,” *Keeneland* (Fall/Winter 1980): 7.

⁴⁷ Koch, “Two Feet Firmly Planted,” *Keeneland* (Fall/Winter 1980): 6-14; “Feature Haggin’s Colors on Keeneland Buttons,” *Daily Racing Form* (11 March 1976); “A Lady’s Touch: Alma Haggin Helped Design the Keeneland Look,” *Keeneland* (Winter 2004): 37 – 40; “L.L. Haggin II Dies; Was Noted Horseman,” *Lexington Herald* (13 April 1964); Hugh J. McGuire, “Haggin had Contributed Much to Keeneland and All Racing,” *Daily Racing Form* (26 October 1972); “Haggin Leaves Legacy of ‘racing as it was meant to be,’” *Lexington Leader* (21 April 1980): B6; “The Forty-First Annual Testimonial Dinner of the Thoroughbred Club of America in Honor of Louis Lee Haggin II at Keeneland Race Course,” (26 October 1972), at Keeneland Library, Kentucky.

As for Mt. Brilliant itself, the estate became mired in a tragic tale of troubles in the Haggin family. The mansion had been home to Bettie Haggin Molloy, the eldest daughter of Louis Lee Haggin, as long as she lived. From her mother, Emma Jackson Haggin, she inherited the estate, and according to her original will, filed in 1969, she owned the property for life and upon death, Mt. Brilliant would be divided among her three children, James “Mike” Molloy, Patrick Molloy, and Genevieve Molloy Wilson.⁴⁸ But Mt. Brilliant was put up for sale in January of 1985.⁴⁹ Influencing this decision was the monetary troubles of Mike Molloy’s cattle farm on the former Haggin estate. Although Molloy’s enterprise seemed prosperous and successful—indeed, Mt. Brilliant was considered for several years one of the leading producers of the pedigree breed—the costs of modern methods had risen too high to recover any profit. When forced to sell the estate and the equipment, Molloy admitted, “The artificial insemination, the frozen semen, and the cloning don’t produce the revenue. He posited, “If we had been able to race cows, the sale would not be necessary.”⁵⁰ The transaction fell through in a matter of weeks, but the drama that unfolded in its immediate aftermath proved to be of more intense and more personal than any experienced at the farm’s history.

The high hemlock hedge and swimming pool at Mt. Brilliant may have been concealed by lilacs, dogwood, and magnolias, but it could not hide the dark drama within the family that ultimately resulted in the razing of the two-hundred-year old mansion. Bettie Molloy’s children became increasingly angry at their brother’s ability to manage their mother’s estate. In a lawsuit filled with bitter charges of conspiracy, collusion, and

⁴⁸ “Ex-Lexington Attorney Suing Brother Over Farm Inheritance,” *Lexington Herald Leader* (29 March 1985): B1.

⁴⁹ “Mount Brilliant Farm is Sold,” *Lexington Herald Leader* (19 January 1985): A5.

⁵⁰ “Molloy Family Selling Mount Brilliant Farm,” *Lexington Herald Leader* (8 January 1985): B2.

theft against brother and mother, Patrick Molloy and Genevieve Molloy Wilson successfully removed their elder brother as administrator of Mt. Brilliant.⁵¹ The case became extremely bitter and painfully public in the courts, but it also ended almost a century of the Haggin family at the former Elmendorf. After the courts of Kentucky upheld the decision that Mt. Brilliant should be divided equally among the heirs, the farm went through a handful of owners, until it eventually ended up in the hands of a Texan businessman Greg Goodman.⁵² Over the next several years the wealthy horse breeder took possession of the farm, replacing stone fences, adding outdoor facilities, burying utility lines, and restoring its formal gardens to their formal glory.

The grand mansion at Mt. Brilliant, however, was another story altogether. Goodman had no need for the white-columned structure, having contracted well-known architect John Blackburn and interior designer James Gehrmann to rehabilitate the famous carriage house into his private residence. Goodman made plans to raze the pillared mansion, and many in the local community were appalled. His neighbor, James Millard, wrote an editorial, “My reaction is just absolute, entire disappointment...the thought that someone can move into our community and in so little time destroy a historic property that is an icon for northern Fayette County is beyond the pale.”⁵³ But Goodman rationalized his decision as a pragmatic one, “We’ve spent a lot of money fixing the farm up...and the house is not a pretty sight.” The cost of restoration alone required millions. “I’m sorry,” he responded to the critics, “I don’t have \$2 million to

⁵¹ “Ex-Lexington Attorney Suing Brother Over Farm Inheritance,” *Lexington Herald Leader* (29 March 1985): B1; “Businessman Files Petition for Chapter 11 Protection,” *Lexington Herald Leader* (9 July 1987): A10.

⁵² Goodman’s family owned Goodman Manufacturing, one of the nation’s largest producers of whole-house air-conditioning units. .

⁵³ “Mount Brilliant House Part of History, Culture, Trampling the Constitution,” *Lexington Herald Leader* Commentary, A15.

spend on a house so people can drive by and look at it.”⁵⁴ On Thursday, November 21, 2002, Goodman commissioned the razing of the twelve-room, two-story mansion, portions of which had stood at Russell Cave Road since 1792. “The only historic thing about it is it’s old, but it’s not good old.”⁵⁵

While the loss of Mt. Brilliant mansion might not seem an “important object” in the larger landscape of the Bluegrass, its demolition certainly pointed to a more pressing issue of sustainability and heritage in central Kentucky. Historic preservationists attempted to assay Greg Goodman’s decision, emphasizing the mansion’s present, rather than historic, value. Dennis Domer, a distinguished professor of Historic Preservation at the University of Kentucky, noted, “The mansion is most significant because of its place in the landscape, its longstanding image in the cultural heritage of the inner Blue Grass. This fabulous landscape doesn’t exist in any other place, and it is worth billions.”⁵⁶ And it is also endangered.

With the costs of horse breeding and the loss of tobacco farming, the rise of residential consumption in central Kentucky has transformed the heart of Thoroughbred country, one that has proven completely detached from the idyllic farms that they have come to depend upon. Suburban sprawl, critics argue, has poses to destroy the iconic landscape of the Bluegrass. These opponents are not sentimental defenders for a way of life that never existed. They are not consumed by a romanticized vision of a modern horse farm. Representing some of the most powerful families and people in the state, they opposed certain kinds of commercialized growth in central Kentucky, which threaten the

⁵⁴ Quoted in Marc R. Matrana, *Lost Plantations of the South* (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2009): 46.

⁵⁵ “Buildings: Past and Present,” *Lexington Herald Leader* (1 January 2003): A-9.

⁵⁶ “Bluegrass Landscape – Preservation Forces Must Decide How and Why to Save Mount Brilliant,” *Lexington Herald Leader* (27 August 2002): A9.

sustainability of iconic farms. Calling it a “Race Against Time,” the World Monument Fund protested by placing Kentucky’s Bluegrass Region on its Watch List, as more and more acres “fall prey to subdivisions and strip malls.”⁵⁷

It remains true that beautiful landscapes of rich Kentucky countryside are being lost to urban development at an unsustainably high pace. But the roots of this development are much deeper and more complex than we previously understood. Indeed, there is one place where one can go and find a physical legacy of J.B. Haggin’s massive and majestic Elmendorf. Ironically enough, it is the same place critics of urban development often cite as evidence of the constant, ever-rising expansion of commercialism, unhindered growth, and poor regional planning.

When Haggin left the turf in 1907, John Madden of Hamburg Stud claimed the title as the most extensive Thoroughbred owner in America. The “Wizard of the Turf” used Haggin’s exit as an opportunity to acquire large numbers of pedigree horses, and by 1913 Madden had no fewer than 300 thoroughbreds on his Kentucky estate.⁵⁸ When Haggin died in 1914, Madden purchased over 2000 acres of the famed Elmendorf, incorporating it into his Hamburg on the north eastern outskirts of Lexington. Over the course of the twentieth-century, Madden and his legacy for breeding champions was passed down through the family. Hamburg produced no fewer than seven Kentucky Derby champions, the last being Alysheba in 1987.

Yet, Madden’s farm came to represent not only the past, but the uncertain future of breeding farms in the heart of Thoroughbred country. Nothing testifies to conspicuous

⁵⁷ Ronnie Dreistadt, *Lost Bluegrass: History of a Vanishing Landscape* (Charleston, SC: History Press, 2011); Andrew Slayman, “A Race Against Time for Kentucky’s Bluegrass County,” (Spring 2007).

⁵⁸ “Haggin’s Yearlings,” *Lexington Leader* (14 April 1913).

advancement of modern life than does Hamburg in 2011. Today, a massive shopping center stands where million-dollar horses once grazed. With the main artery of federal commerce a short distance in the background, a small walking path honoring the achievements of the farm's brilliant horses now serves as a barrier between Wal-Mart and the highway leading into the shopping complex. Patrick Madden, the great-grandson of the "Wizard," rationalized the urban development of Hamburg: "When the city grew up against it, it became silly from an economic standpoint to raise horses on it."⁵⁹ His logic for the urban conversion of one of the most celebrated breeding farms in turf history was industrial and pragmatic. "It became impractical to farm it as a horse farm with the Interstate, three sewers, two water lines, and electric station running through the place."

Many of these modern conveniences that the younger Madden refers to in 2006 were constructed over a century ago first by James Ben Ali Haggin. They may have been internal to Elmendorf, not external insofar as Madden explains, but they underscore the consequential of Haggin's legacies in Kentucky. His farm, however vulnerable and unsuccessful, demonstrates the way which these habits and developments that present the most concern in the twenty-first century were fostered, in part, by the horse owners themselves. As a powerful financier in the late nineteenth-century, Elmendorf was at once a statement of Haggin's industrial philosophies and personal beliefs. He readily transformed the Kentucky farm first as a nationally preeminent horse stud, famous for its bloodlines and scales, and second as a premier dairy operation, exceptional for its sanitation, science, and size. Both, following a familiar pattern in his empire, were fully-integrated enterprises, systematically producing pedigreed animals and certified milk, but

⁵⁹ Andrew Slayman, "A Race Against Time for Kentucky's Bluegrass County," *WMF Watch Site* (Spring 2007): 19.

also taking the necessary steps to sell and market its own products. To acquire a dominant share of local and regional markets, he had spent vast sums of money on his Bluegrass holdings, making possible the large-scale production of the fanciest Thoroughbreds and the finest milk in the world.

This best explains why the world’s greatest breeding and milking farm, in many ways, failed. The history of Elmendorf Farm showed the unforgettable imprint of Haggin’s complex personality, as well as his modern philosophies of business, but it also demonstrated conclusively the fallacy of an acquisitive nature and aggressive impulses in industrial pedigree breeding. In the end, J.B. Haggin ultimately helped sow the seeds of the conflict over a century ago between sustainability and heritage in the “horse capital of the world.”



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BCL, Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley
BPL, Bakersfield Public Library, Bakersfield, California
BEA, Biltmore Estate Archives, Asheville, North Carolina
BH, The Blood Horse
CSLC, California State Library State, Sacramento, California
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Kentucky Agricultural Experiment Station Collection, UKSC
Kern County Land Company Correspondence, BPL
Louis Edward Nollau F Series Photographic Print Collection, circa 1885 – 1966, UKSC
Mt. Brilliant Papers, AFS
Mercer County Deed Books, MCC
Mercer County Will Books, MCC
Patricia Sanders Files, HM
Phoebe Hearst Papers, BCL
Portrait Print Collection, UKSC
Postcard Collection, circa 1890-1990, UKSC
Olmstead Associates Records, 1863 – 1971, LOC
Robert McKee Collection, HM
Roy D. Graves Pictorial Collection, 1850 (Haggin's Rancho del Paso), BCL
Scott Family Collection, UKSC
Watkins Albums, BPL
William Harland Boyd Research Files, BPL

Oral History Interviews, Collection, Location

Interview with Louis Lee Haggin II, Horse Industry in Kentucky Oral History Project, LBN
Interview with Dr. Charles Hagyard, Horse Industry in Kentucky Oral History Project, LBN
Interview with Evelyn Duggan, Sanders Research Files, HM
Interview with Frank Jackson, Blacks in Lexington Oral History Project, LBN
Interview with Thomas Brady, AFS
Interview with Harry B. Scott Jr., Horse Industry in Kentucky Oral History Project, LBN
Interviews with Thomas P. Embry, Horse Industry in Kentucky Oral History Project, LBN
Interview with Ted Bates, Horse Industry in Kentucky Oral History Project, LBN
Interviews with Henry White, Horse Industry in Kentucky Oral History Project, LBN
Interviews with Thomas J. Bryant, Charles T. Wethington Oral History Project, LBN
Interview with Phyllis Rogers, KL

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Lexington, Kentucky *Bluegrass Blade*
Paris, Kentucky *Bourbon News*
Breeder and Sportsman

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Chicago, Illinois *Breeders Gazette*
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Christian Advocate
Cincinnati Enquirer
Cleveland Gazette
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The Country Gentlemen
Country Life in America
Daily Leader
Daily Racing Form
Desert Evening News
The Evening World
Frankfort News Journal
Freeman
Golden Notes
Hazel Green Herald
Illustrated American
Illustrated Sporting News
Independent
Interstate Druggist
England *The Leeds Mercury*
Lexington Daily Press
The Lexington Herald
The Lexington Herald-Leader
Lexington Leader
The Lexington Observer & Recorder
The Lexington Transcript
The Live Stock Record
Los Angeles Herald
Louisville Courier Journal
Jersey Bulletin
Keeneland
Kentucky Farmer and Breeder
Kentucky Leader
Kentucky Medical Journal
Kern County Courier
Kern County Gazette
Ohio Marietta Daily Leader
Marysville Appeal
Lexington, Kentucky Morning Herald
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New York American
New York Daily Tribune
New York Sportsman

New York Sun
The New York Times
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Sacramento Record-Union
Sacramento Bee
Sacramento Daily Union Record
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San Francisco Chronicle
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