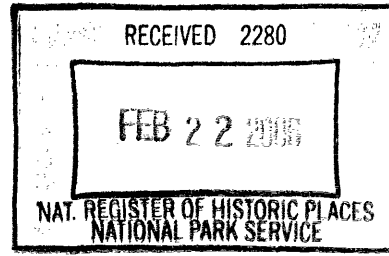


United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
REGISTRATION FORM



1. Name of Property

historic name Wildwood Farm

other names/site number Woodsacres Farm, Wildwood Farm Ky, LLC, OL-487

2. Location

street & number 3901 Axton Lane not for publication N/A  
city or town Skylight vicinity X state Kentucky code KY county Oldham code 185 zip code 40026

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this X nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property X meets        does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant        nationally        statewide X locally.

David L. Morgan  
Signature of certifying official David L. Morgan, SHPO Date 2-20-06

Kentucky Heritage Council/State Historic Preservation Office  
State or Federal Agency or Tribal government

In my opinion, the property        meets        does not meet the National Register criteria. (       See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of commenting official/Title \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_  
State or Federal agency and bureau \_\_\_\_\_

4. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register Edson H. Beall 3/30/06  
       See continuation sheet.
- determined eligible for the \_\_\_\_\_  
National Register
- See continuation sheet.
- determined not eligible for the \_\_\_\_\_  
National Register
- removed from the National Register \_\_\_\_\_

       other (explain): \_\_\_\_\_

for  
Signature of Keeper Date  
of Action





**10. Geographical Data**

Acreage of Property 40 acres

UTM References (Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

Zone	Easting	Northing	Zone	Easting	Northing	Owen Quad
1 16	627879	4256160	3 16	627349	4256541	
2 16	627637	4256399	4 16	627819	4256627	

     See continuation sheet.

Verbal Boundary Description A survey for Wildwood Farm Ky, LLC is included as the boundary description.  
Boundary Justification (See continuation sheet.)

**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title Cynthia Johnson  
organization N/A date December 1, 2005  
street & number 51 Mentelle Park #4 telephone (859) 268-3199  
city or town Lexington state KY zip code 40502

**12. Property Owner**

name Wildwood Farm Ky, LLC  
street & number 3901 Axton Lane. telephone (502) 645-4511  
city or town Skylight state KY zip code 40026

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

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Wildwood Farm  
Oldham County, KY

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## DESCRIPTION

### General Description

Wildwood Farm (OL-487) is located in northwestern Oldham County Kentucky. The farm is located at 3901 Axton Lane, which is the terminus of the road. Axton Lane connects to U.S. Highway 42. Nearby communities along U.S. Highway 42 include Westport, Skylight and Goshen. The farm is located 1-1/2 miles north of Skylight. The current property contains eleven features, ten of which are considered contributing elements. The features are divided into three groups: Domestic Complex, Agricultural Complex and Setting. The nominated property encompasses 40 acres.

The farm sits about 300 feet above the Ohio River with 1600 feet of river frontage. Views open across the river to the Indiana hamlets of Owen and Sunset Village on the Bull Creek flood plain. A rough, unsurfaced wagon road traverses the steep, wooded bluffs that lead to the rivers edge. Approximately one third of the nominated property's acreage is devoted to paddock and pasture land, which is located in the southeastern quadrant of the site. The remaining acreage is an open hardwood woodland. The western edge of the property is bounded by a wet-weather gully that drops 250 feet and includes three limestone waterfalls. This part of the property remains in a natural state, serving primarily as a wildlife habitat.

A pair of curved limestone walls signifies the entrance to the seat of Wildwood Farm. From the stone entrance, a meandering asphalt road curves up a gentle slope through a wooded area. To the right of the farm road, are the pasture, paddock, yearling barn and garden. The road continues to encircle the Colonial Revival main house at the top of the gentle rise. The road takes advantage of the open river view as it passes in front of the principal façade. Located along the back of the house are the smokehouse and the springhouse. The noncontributing terrace was added to the site some time after 1980, taking advantage of the stunning views of the Ohio River.

### History of the use of Wildwood Farm's acreage prior to 1929

Wood Axton assembled land holdings of approximately 1000 acres in Oldham County during the mid- and late 1920s. The principal property for Wildwood Farm consisted of several tracts encompassing nearly 800 acres. Axton purchased the parcels from Robert F. Shrader, Saul S. Reed, Cole Adams, and Andrew Ellison Jr. The land had been farmed for orchard-grass seed, general crops and livestock.<sup>1</sup> The river port, "Hall's Landing" was also operated on the banks of the Ohio River on a portion of the original property. It served as a principal shipping point for the farms in the vicinity of Skylight (originally Oldhamburg). Agricultural products including tobacco, grain, and livestock were shipped from Hall's Landing until 1918.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> William F. Axton, "Wildwood History," p. 9

<sup>2</sup> *Oldham County, Kentucky History and Families; The First Century, 1824-1929.* p. 148

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### History of the development of Wildwood Farm's acreage

"Wildwood" is located near Skylight, situated along the bluffs of the Ohio River. Located twenty miles upstream from Louisville, Wildwood is accessed by U.S. Highway 42 and Axton Lane. The house and outbuildings were designed by Louisville architect Otto Mock. This property contained most of Axton's land holdings in Oldham County and was the nucleus of the farm operations. The farm produced three types of products that are characteristic of Oldham County's Twentieth century agriculture: dairy products, orchard fruit, and thoroughbred horses.

The dairy operation was located on 600 acres of land west of Axton Lane. A surfaced farm road that forked off the end of Axton Lane was the main access to this property. A large portion of this property was used as a pasture for grazing cattle. The large dairy barn (demolished), silo and two cisterns were also located on this parcel. This property also contained the farm manager's house (demolished) and worker's dormitory (demolished). A rough unsurfaced road to Axton's house was created through a wooded area that divided the two adjoining parcels.<sup>3</sup>

The 60-acre apple, pear, and peach orchard was also located on the same property as the dairy farm. Located on the west side of the farm road, the peach tree orchard was 40 acres. The balance of the remaining 20 acres was planted with apple and pear trees. A shed was on the site that served as a packinghouse for the fruit. It was located next to the farm road for easy distribution. A mule barn was situated near the orchard.<sup>4</sup>

The thoroughbred operations were located on 177 acres that also included Axton's residence.<sup>5</sup> Five horse barns were originally associated with the property, each having a specialized function. Three horse barns were to the southeast of the main house. The seven-stall yearling barn was closest to the domestic complex. The thirteen-stall broodmare barn and the ten-stall mare-and-foal barn were also in the vicinity of the main house. To the northeast of mare-and-foal barn were the stallion barn and the run-in shed. The stallion barn was demolished around 1990. The original run-in shed was also demolished and replaced with a newer shed. The surrounding paddocks and pastures were fenced with three-board panel fencing. A 38,000-gallon water tower to the east of the main dwelling served as the farm's water system; it was demolished sometime during the 1990s.<sup>6</sup>

Axton had a training facility on a 167-acre parcel located a mile east of Skylight on U.S. 42 near the Liberty School. This facility included a three-quarter-mile track and a 24-stall horse barn for horses in training.<sup>7</sup> The 167-acre training facility was sold out of the family in the late 1970s.<sup>8</sup> The track and horse barn are still extant, though the barn has been greatly altered with additions.

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<sup>3</sup> David Carter, Interview 11/11/05

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> William F. Axton, "Wildwood History," p. 2, 10

<sup>6</sup> David Carter, Interview 11/11/05

<sup>7</sup> William F. Axton, "Wildwood History," p. 10

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

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The farm was divided between Wood Axton's two surviving brothers Bob and Edwin D. Axton upon his death in 1935. Bob Axton inherited the dairy and orchard part of the farm (the dairy barn burned in the 1970s). The dairy cattle were replaced with hogs in the 1940s.<sup>9</sup> Ed Axton inherited the thoroughbred portion of the farm, as well as the domestic complex. He named the property "Woodsacres."<sup>10</sup>

Woodsacres Farm then passed to Ed Axton's son, William Fitch Axton. He kept the farm intact until 1992, when he divided the 177-acre tract into three tracts. Tract one was 137 acres and still retains the original broodmare barn and mare and foal barn, as well as the later run-in shed. The remaining tracts two and three consisted of the remaining 40-acres and were not to be separated. These tracts contain Wildwood's original domestic complex, yearling barn, paddock, pasture and a designed garden.<sup>11</sup>

### **Wildwood Farm Today in Oldham County**

Wildwood Farm resides within the part of Oldham County with the highest concentration of horse farms. U.S. Highway 42 was designated a Kentucky "Scenic Highway" in part because of these cultural resources and the proximity of the Ohio River. Wildwood Farm is being interpreted within the Gentleman Farm property type found in Oldham County during the Twentieth century.

Most properties identified as Gentleman Farms in Jefferson and Oldham Counties range between 50 – 150 acres. The context established for the Gentleman Farm property type in Jefferson County recognizes that the original acreage might not be intact. The property type's Registration Requirements prescribe that a sufficient acreage of the farm complex remain so that it conveys the property type characteristics as outlined in the Description.<sup>12</sup>

The entire Wildwood Farm site proposed for listing exhibits a high level of integrity. The heart of Woodford Fitch Axton's Wildwood Farm remains intact. Historic features, which include the main dwelling, support buildings, roadways and a portion of the agricultural complex, are evident on the nominated property.

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<sup>9</sup> David Carter, Interview 10/26/05

<sup>10</sup> William F. Axton, "Wildwood History," p. 1

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

<sup>12</sup> Carey, Daniel. Louisville and Jefferson County, Kentucky, Multiple Property listing, Agriculture in Louisville and Jefferson County, the Gentleman Farm Property type, 1989

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**Property Inventory**

**Domestic Complex:**

1. Main dwelling
2. Terrace

**Agricultural Complex:**

3. Yearling barn
4. Smokehouse
5. Springhouse

**Setting:**

6. Stone entrance walls at end of Axton Lane
7. Farm road
8. Farm fences
9. Paddock
10. Pasture
11. Garden

**Domestic Complex**

1. Main Dwelling, 1929 — Contributing Building

Wood Axton purchased the actual property for the house and horse farm operation in 1927. He had commissioned Louisville architect Otto Mock to design the house in 1924. The house was completed on the site in 1929. Limestone for the house was quarried on site by local labor. Local stonemason Norris Guyton constructed the house. Cherry and Oak were logged from the site for the interior woodwork.<sup>13</sup>

Otto Mock was a self-taught architect. He was one of the last architects in Kentucky to be licensed without formal architecture school training. He favored revival styles for his designs. Among his commissions were designs for churches, residences and commercial buildings in Louisville, as well as Newport, Kentucky and Alexandria, Virginia. Some of his most notable works were Freedom Hall, part of the Gold Vault at Fort Knox, a Lutheran Church which is now Emmanuel Baptist Church, and Carlisle Baptist Church. Residences he designed included a half-timbered Jacobethan cottage at #16 Cherokee Gardens and the A.E. Mefferts House in Louisville.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> William F. Axton, "Wildwood History," p. 4

<sup>14</sup> Ibid. p. 2



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The Wood Axton house is a two-and-a-half story solid native limestone house. The principal façade is facing north, oriented toward the river viewshed. The house has a stone foundation and full basement, which includes a single car garage. The walls are one-foot thick ashlar square-cut solid limestone with irregular courses. The main block of the house is a three-bay double-pile rectangular plan house. An original one-story servant's wing is located on the southeast corner of the central mass. The side-gabled, terra-cotta tile roof covers both the central block of the house and the servant's wing. Three gabled roof dormers are on both the north and south facades of the central mass of the house. Two stone chimneystacks pierce the roofline of the main block. An exterior stone chimneystack is on the west façade of the servant's wing. A secondary entrance on the east façade is located in the servant's wing. It is accented with two engaged pilasters crowned with a fanlight transom. All of the windows throughout the entire house are six-over-six double-hung sash windows.

Raised tile porches with limestone foundations are located on the north and west facades. Originally, the north façade porch was covered with a standing-seam metal roof supported by four limestone columns. This feature was removed in the 1990s to create an open porch that faces the Ohio River. Bay windows and a double-door vestibule were added to the first floor of the north façade at this time. The porch on the west façade is the original open terrace. It is accessed from the interior by a set of wooden French doors.

The interior plan is irregular since there is no central hall. The principal entrance opens into the living room, which is a 44' by 18' space with 14' ceilings. The main staircase is located on the eastern side of the living room and continues to the attic. A large limestone fireplace is located along the interior wall of the living room. A small library and the dining room are located on the west side of the first floor. The dining room opens onto the west terrace. A long hall that serves as a pantry connects the dining room to the kitchen. The kitchen is located in the servant's quarters block. Originally, the servant's quarters had two rooms and a full bath. The interior partition was removed to open the space for public use in the 1990s. The second floor contains four bedrooms with two baths. There is also a large open parlor on the second floor that was originally intended to be a fifth bedroom. Axton chose to keep the space open. The attic story is a finished space and is completely open and with six dormered windows.

## 2. Terrace, c. 1980-1990 — Non-contributing Structure

This structure was added after the period of significance. It does not distract from the overall cultural landscape. It has a marble balustrade with stone steps that lead to the lower terrace. It affords generous views of the river below.

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Agricultural Complex

3. Yearling Barn c. 1929 — Contributing Building

The yearling barn is a one-and-a-half-story frame barn with clapboard siding. It has a front-gabled gambrel roof with a hay hood on the south façade. The barn is entered on either through the north or south facades. Covered open shedrows are located on the east and west facades. The barn was constructed by Guyton Norris and has seven stalls. Since it was designed for yearlings, solid oak partitions between stalls reach from the floor to nearly the ceiling. Dutch stall doors open to the shedrow. The hayloft is above in the attic story. The yearling barn is located to the southeast of the main dwelling.

4. Smokehouse, c. 1929 — Contributing Building

This is a one-story gable-front frame building with a stone foundation and clapboard siding. There is one door on the north façade. The smokehouse is located directly behind the main house to the southwest, separated by the drive. The building was used to smoke, salt, and cure hams, bacon and sausage for the family until the 1990s.

5. Springhouse, c. 1929 — Contributing Building

This is a one-story gable-front rusticated limestone building. The stone is rough-cut with no coursing pattern. The entrance is on the south façade and there is a stone jackarch with a keystone over the door. A small window is on the north façade. The springhouse is located directly behind the main house to the southeast separated by the drive. At some point the springhouse was converted into a powerhouse for utilities. It is now used for storage.

Setting

6. Stone entrance walls, c. 1929 — Contributing Structure

Two limestone walls flank either side of the entrance to Wildwood. Norris Guyton constructed the ashlar square-cut quarry-faced walls with irregular courses. Each wall has two stone piers on each end, one taller than the other. The wall gently curves between the piers. The walls and piers are capped with coping stones.

7. Farm road, c. 1929 — Contributing Structure

The gently winding road that extends from the end of Axton Lane to the main house is covered with asphalt. It passes the yearling barn and circles the main house.

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8. Farm fences, c. 1929 — Contributing Structure

The fences that surround the paddocks and pastures are one-by-sixteen three-board fences with three-quarter round pine posts. Posts and boards have been repaired or replaced due to age but follow the original layout of the 1929 farm design.

9. Paddock, c. 1929 — Contributing Site

Two paddocks flank the yearling barn on the north and south side.

10. Pasture, c. 1929 — Contributing Site

Two pastures are situated to the east of the yearling barn along the border of the nominated property. A horizontal three-board fence divides the pastures.

11. Garden, c. 1929 — Contributing Site

The garden is directly east of the main dwelling. It consists of rectangular beds. Freddy Roundser was the original groundskeeper and gardener. Some alteration has occurred with the addition of raised beds and two columns at the entrance. The original siting and relationship to the house remain intact.

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### Statement of Significance

Wildwood Farm (OL-487) meets National Register eligibility Criterion A and is significant in the Area of Agriculture. Its importance is evaluated within the context "Agriculture in Oldham County, Kentucky, 1900-1950". Within that context, it is a significant representative of the twentieth century Gentleman Farm property type in Oldham County. The period of significance is 1929 – 1935. Wood Axton, a wealthy tobacco manufacturer from Louisville, established Wildwood as his rural residence and farm. The significant date is 1929, when the construction of the house was completed and the farm began operation. The period of significance ends with the death of Wood Axton. Wildwood Farm was established at a time when the Gentleman Farm in Oldham County was shifting from the nineteenth-century model to a twentieth century iteration of the property type.

### Research Design

To evaluate the historic significance of the Wildwood Farm, and to understand its role as a twentieth century Gentleman Farm in Oldham County during the context period, several sources were consulted. In order to construct the historic context, primary and secondary sources were sought to gain an understanding of both Agriculture and Gentleman Farms in Oldham County. Jack Harrison had developed an historic context for Agriculture in Oldham County with the National Register Nomination for Clifton Farm in 1997. This context, however, had not fully addressed the role of horses in Oldham County's agriculture during the twentieth century. By using newspaper articles, agricultural survey information and county histories, the importance of horses in Oldham County could be shown. The U.S. Agricultural Census was also examined for an understanding of farming in Oldham County during the context period. Maps and atlases provided additional information about farming activities in the county.

Established contexts for Gentleman Farms in Jefferson and Oldham Counties were examined. Daniel Carey's "Louisville and Jefferson County, Kentucky, Multiple Property listing, Agriculture in Louisville and Jefferson County, the Gentleman Farm Property type," from 1989 provided the outline for the identity of a nineteenth century Gentleman Farm in Jefferson County. The National Register nomination documenting Waldeck Farm, authored by Donna Neary in 2000, extended the conception of the Jefferson County nineteenth-century Gentleman Farm to Oldham County. Ultimately, these contexts were not heavily used in developing this nomination. One reason was that neither context fully addressed the twentieth-century Gentleman Farm landscape. Since the context period for this nomination occurs only in the twentieth century, alternate sources were consulted. It was also felt that the definition of a Gentleman Farm must be clarified to create an understanding of the property type that integrates it within local agricultural patterns.

For a general understanding of the Gentleman Farm in Kentucky, "An Historical Context Statement and Typology of Gentleman Farms for National Register Nomination" authored by Karl Raitz and Carolyn Murray-Wooley for the Kentucky Heritage Council was consulted. To gain insight into Kentucky farm types for comparison with Gentleman Farms, Janie-Rice Brother's Master's Thesis

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“The Agricultural and Architectural Landscapes of Two Antebellum Montgomery County Farms” provided a thoughtful analysis. To expand this context into the twentieth century, trade journals published during the context period, such as *Country Gentleman*, *Progressive Farmer*, and *Country Life*, were examined. Since the identity of the Gentleman Farm in the twentieth century is still being developed, Geographer Karl Raitz was consulted for his opinions on the characteristics of the twentieth century Gentleman Farm property type. Various local sources were consulted to develop an overview of Wildwood Farm’s creation and evolution. The vertical files at the Oldham County History Center provided newspaper clippings and accounts concerning Wood Axton and his Wildwood Farm. Personal interviews and family histories also aided in understanding the creation of Wildwood as a Gentleman Farm.

### **Agriculture in Oldham County, Kentucky, 1900 - 1955**

Oldham County is located in the north-central part of Kentucky in the Outer-Bluegrass region. Oldham comprises 170 square miles, or 108,00 acres. The County is bounded on the north by the Ohio River and Trimble County, Henry County on the east, Shelby and Jefferson Counties on the south, and Jefferson and the Ohio River on the west. In 1823 Oldham County became the 74<sup>th</sup> county, made from parts of Jefferson, Shelby and Henry Counties. In 1836, a part of the county was taken to form Trimble County. Oldham County’s current boundaries were established by 1856. LaGrange became the county seat in 1838, which previously had been in Westport.<sup>15</sup>

### **Early Agriculture in Oldham County**

Earliest settlement in the area that became Oldham County occurred in the 1780s and 1790s, nearest the Ohio River. Few river settlements were founded, however; most settlers preferred interior locales for town-building. Oldham County from its earliest settlement was dependent on agriculture. Early crops grown were corn, wheat, hemp and hay; livestock included cattle, horses and hogs.<sup>16</sup>

The Ohio River played an early role in transporting goods to market. Numerous landings along Oldham County’s border served as shipping points.<sup>17</sup> The success of farming in the county was enhanced by the construction of roads for transporting produce and livestock to markets.<sup>18</sup> The completion of the Lexington and Ohio Railroad provided an additional distribution system for Oldham County’s agricultural products. By the 1850s, farmers had responded to needs for produce in nearby Louisville, and began raising poultry, making butter and cheese, and growing fruit and vegetables to ship into the city.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> Robert M. Rennick, “Oldham County” p. 671-674

<sup>16</sup> Jack Harrison, “Clifton” National Register Nomination, 1997

<sup>17</sup> *Oldham County, Kentucky History and Families; The First Century, 1824-1929*. p. 52

<sup>18</sup> Donna Neary, “Waldeck Farm” National Register Nomination, 2000

<sup>19</sup> Jack Harrison, “Clifton” National Register Nomination, 1997

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**Oldham County Farm Characteristics, 1900 – 1955**

Oldham County's economy was primarily agricultural until the mid-twentieth century and was based in several important crops and livestock. Corn, hay, tobacco and orchard grass were the major crops. Fertile soil also made ideal pasturelands for grazing livestock. Beef and dairy cattle, hogs and horses comprised the major livestock produced in the county.<sup>20</sup>

By 1930, the total number of farms in Oldham County had reached 783. The average acreage of an Oldham County farm at this time was 139 acres. Despite the Depression-era, the number of farms rose to 922 in 1935. The average acreage declined to 116 acres in 1935. Only 15 farms were over 500 acres were found during this time period. An even smaller number of farms were over 1000 acres; in 1935 there were four such farms.<sup>21</sup>

By 1940, the number of farms in Oldham County had fallen to 802. The average size of Oldham County farms had risen to 142.6 acres in 1940. A total of 21 farms had acreage between 500 and 1000 acres. Only three farms were listed at over 1000 acres in 1940.<sup>22</sup>

The number of farms in Oldham County rebounded in 1945 to 915. These farms averaged 132 acres by 1945. The number of larger farms, those with 500 to 1000 acres, rose to 24. Farms over 1000 acres increased to five in 1945.<sup>23</sup>

The post-World War II era in Oldham County starts to reflect the change in the dependence of agriculture. The number of farms plummeted to 769 in 1950. The average size of the farms, however, rose to 141.2 acres. The number of farms with 500 to 1000 acres also increased—to 28 in 1950. The number of farms with over 1000 acres dropped to three during this same time.<sup>24</sup>

**Important Agricultural Products in Oldham County, 1900-1950**

Oldham County was the first producer of commercially grown orchard grass for seed production in the United States. Oldham County's Lilburne Magruder introduced orchard grass crops in the 1890s. By the early twentieth century, Oldham County was the leading orchard grass-seed-producing county in the United States. During this time, approximately 80 percent of all orchard grass grown in the United States was grown within 40 miles of Goshen in Oldham County.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> Robert M. Rennick, "Oldham County" p. 672

<sup>21</sup> U.S. Census of Agriculture 1940

<sup>22</sup> Ibid.

<sup>23</sup> U.S. Census of Agriculture 1950

<sup>24</sup> Ibid.

<sup>25</sup> Orville J. Whitaker, *Soil Survey of Oldham County, Kentucky*, p. 2

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During the first part of the twentieth century, dairy products became the leading farm commodities produced in the county. Nearby Louisville was a ready market for milk, butter, eggs and other dairy products. The rearing of beef cattle and hogs remained important throughout the twentieth century, while dairy farming declined in the last quarter of the century.<sup>26</sup>

Horses and mules had been present in Oldham County agriculture since its establishment. They were primarily used for work on farms or for transportation. As mechanized farm machinery and automobiles became more prevalent in the twentieth century, the need for equine stock waned.<sup>27</sup> The agricultural interest in horses as livestock shifted when a burgeoning Thoroughbred industry in Oldham County emerged in the first half of the twentieth century.<sup>28</sup> The corridor along U.S. Highway 42 in the northwestern portion of the county was particularly suited to breeding and raising horses.<sup>29</sup> The Crider-Nicholson soil in this region of the county provided nutrient-rich pasture land, as suitable for raising horses as that found in the Inner Bluegrass area of Kentucky.<sup>30</sup>

The thoroughbred horse industry is concentrated in only seven counties in Kentucky: Fayette, Woodford, Bourbon, Scott, Clark, Jessamine and Oldham. Of these seven counties, Oldham is the only one located outside of the Inner Bluegrass region.<sup>31</sup> Oldham County also ranks in the top 3 percent nationwide for horse farms.<sup>32</sup> Farms in Oldham County breed not only Thoroughbred horses, but also Arabian, Saddlebred and Quarter horses.<sup>33</sup> The area near Skylight in Oldham County has the primary concentration of thoroughbred training and breeding farms.<sup>34</sup>

### **Gentleman Farm Property Type in Kentucky, 1865-1900**

Throughout the nineteenth century, the concept of the agrarian ethic was espoused by national figures including Thomas Jefferson, Nathaniel Hawthorne, Daniel Webster, Henry David Thoreau, Andrew Jackson Downing and Alexander Jackson Davis. The American “gentleman farm” was born out of this philosophy that being closely tied to the land was a virtuous pursuit.<sup>35</sup> Modeled after the “English gentleman” these farmers sought to create a refined image of themselves and their farms. This was especially important since elites sought to separate themselves from the image of luxury and excess that had become associated with moral degradation.<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> Jack Harrison, “Clifton” National Register Nomination, 1997

<sup>27</sup> Lowell H Harrison. and James C. Klotter. “Bourbon Barons, Tobacco Tycoons, and King Coal,” p. 297

<sup>28</sup> “Growth Causing a Decline in Farming in the County,” December 31, 1998

<sup>29</sup> Orville J. Whitaker, *Soil Survey of Oldham County, Kentucky*, p. 4

<sup>30</sup> Ibid.

<sup>31</sup> Kirsten Haukebo, “A New Leader on the Farm” p. 1

<sup>32</sup> Rebecca Yonker, “Patton Peruses Horse Park Proposal,” p. 1

<sup>33</sup> Thomas D. Clark, “Agriculture” p. 18-19

<sup>34</sup> “Skylight Remains in Heart of Horse Country,” p. 24

<sup>35</sup> Donna Neary, “Waldeck Farm” National Register Nomination, 2000

<sup>36</sup> Karl Raitz and Carolyn Murray-Wooley. “The Gentleman Farm and the Landscape of Kentucky’s Bluegrass Region,” p. 1

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A sizable class of nineteenth-century gentleman farmers rose to prominence just prior to the Civil War and continued until the start of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>37</sup> The characteristic gentleman farmer was a classically educated elite. These gentlemen were born into the position of wealth. The gentleman farmer of this period might have a profession outside of the farm, such as a lawyer. They were generally the manager of their farm operations, but most importantly, did not work in the actual day-to-day farm operations.<sup>38</sup>

Gentleman farms were large in acreage ranging in hundreds to thousands of acres. Land holdings were usually comprised of the most fertile soils. As a result, this productive farmland was typically held in the family through generations.<sup>39</sup> Gentleman farms of this period were often found to be within a reasonable commuting distance to the county seat or town.<sup>40</sup>

Gentleman farmers were concerned with improvement and experimentation on the farm. They could afford to try new methods since their economic survival was not as dependent on the profits of the farm as the economic viability of a middling farmer would have been. The gentleman farmer is noted to have been an innovator, using improved farming methods and machinery. The hope was that he could provide better methods for not just himself, but the greater farming community.<sup>41</sup>

Gentleman farmers were also concerned with improving the appearance of the farm. Conscious styling was applied to the dwelling, fencing, roads and landscape.<sup>42</sup> Substantial houses constructed with stone or brick followed the fashionable architectural styles of the time. Lanes that meandered through the property were established to connect the farm to major road systems. Park-like, manicured landscaping on land not used for farming was prevalent.<sup>43</sup> Siting of the main house was also important. Typically, the dwelling was found on rising ground to take advantage of views of the farm.<sup>44</sup>

Other property types coexisted with the gentleman farm in the rural landscape. The "middling farm" is identified as a type of farm that generated income beyond subsistence, and so, operated as a profitable enterprise. This type of farm could be found raising crops or livestock such as cattle, hogs, and poultry. Middling farms could have substantial homes and large acreage but did not emphasize aesthetics in the same way as a gentleman farm's designer would.<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> Daniel Carey, "Agriculture in Louisville and Jefferson County, the Gentleman Farm Property Type," Louisville and Jefferson County, Kentucky, Multiple Property listing, 1989

<sup>38</sup> Raitz and Murray-Wooley. "The Gentleman Farm and the Landscape of Kentucky's Bluegrass Region," p. 8

<sup>39</sup> Raitz and Murray-Wooley. "The Gentleman Farm and the Landscape of Kentucky's Bluegrass Region," p. 3

<sup>40</sup> Raitz and Murray-Wooley. "The Gentleman Farm and the Landscape of Kentucky's Bluegrass Region," p. 30

<sup>41</sup> Raitz and Murray-Wooley. "The Gentleman Farm and the Landscape of Kentucky's Bluegrass Region," p. 19

<sup>42</sup> Brother, "The Agricultural and Architectural Landscapes of Two Antebellum Montgomery County Farms" p. 7

<sup>43</sup> Raitz and Murray-Wooley. "The Gentleman Farm and the Landscape of Kentucky's Bluegrass Region," p. 31

<sup>44</sup> Raitz and Murray-Wooley. "The Gentleman Farm and the Landscape of Kentucky's Bluegrass Region," p. 20

<sup>45</sup> Brother, "The Agricultural and Architectural Landscapes of Two Antebellum Montgomery County Farms" p. 10



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The gentleman farm is also distinguished from the “country estate” property type, in that it was actively farmed. The country estate while a designed residence and landscape was essentially an urban house in a rural setting. The gentleman farm’s main purpose was to be an agricultural enterprise even though there was an emphasis on a designed residence.<sup>46</sup>

### Twentieth Century Gentleman Farms in Kentucky

Many features of a nineteenth century gentleman farm were emulated in the twentieth century manifestation of the property type. These features, however, were translated into a new cultural, social and economic environment. The period between the 1920s – 1940s marks a significant period of gentleman farm development in the twentieth century.<sup>47</sup>

During the twentieth century, an increasing amount of gentleman farm owners had acquired their wealth through successful businesses separate from the agricultural realm. These owners seemed to treat their farms as a type of business venture or hobby.<sup>48</sup> This gentleman farmer seemed less concerned with identifying with a rural ideal than his nineteenth-century counterpart did. Perhaps stemming from the desire of association with the nineteenth-century gentleman farm landed gentry, the later gentleman farmer consciously tried to project an image of success and prestige.<sup>49</sup>

Trade journals published during the early decades of the twentieth century suggested proper elements for the gentleman farm. Expensive purebred livestock advertisements filled the classified sections of *The Country Gentleman, Progressive Farmer and Country Life*. Jersey and Guernsey cattle, Thoroughbreds, Standardbreds and even purebred dogs were prominently featured in these trade journals. The importance of display and image in a gentleman farm was also emphasized. Many articles dealt with topics ranging from “entertaining city friends,” garden improvement suggestions, and “home essentials.” Farms featured in the journals boasted of impressive views, well-built residences, model horse and cattle barns, and substantial acreage.

Gentleman farmers did have a vested interest in creating a successful enterprise as a means of gaining prestige. Twentieth-century gentleman farmers were interested in developing the farm as a model farm to allow for crop experimentation, in introducing new farming methods, and in breeding fine bloodstock. The capital available to gentleman farmers allowed them to employ new agricultural technologies and machinery. When this worked, the farm’s productivity increased, and the gamble bolstered the farm’s reputation. Once proven, gentleman farmers’ methods were often adopted by the local agricultural community.<sup>50</sup>

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<sup>46</sup> Daniel Carey, “Agriculture in Louisville and Jefferson County, the Gentleman Farm Property Type,” Louisville and Jefferson County, Kentucky, Multiple Property listing, 1989

<sup>47</sup> Dr. Karl Raitz, “Gentleman Farmers”

<sup>48</sup> R. Gerald Alvey, “The Bluegrass Gentleman Farm and Other Rural Folk Patterns,” p. 95

<sup>49</sup> R. Gerald Alvey, “The Bluegrass Gentleman Farm and Other Rural Folk Patterns,” p. 95

<sup>50</sup> R. Gerald Alvey, “The Bluegrass Gentleman Farm and Other Rural Folk Patterns,” p. 95

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The gentleman farmer of this period resided on the property, even though he might be involved in a business or profession away from the farm. Typically, the main dwelling was a large, revival style structure. Other dwellings for farm managers and laborers could be located on the property but were modest in scale. Formal entry gates were also associated with gentleman farms of the period.<sup>51</sup> Sometimes plaques or signs were also located at the entry to announce the presence of the farm.<sup>52</sup>

Most gentleman farms of this period placed a great importance on raising purebred livestock.<sup>53</sup> Many gentleman farmers had specialized barns for their bloodstock. These buildings were purpose designed for the animal's function. Barns were often large and over-scaled with decorative elements such as Dutch doors, Palladian window treatments, or roof dormers. Fencing was also distinctive, with the post-and-plank form almost universally chosen by the gentleman farmer of this period.<sup>54</sup>

Much like their nineteenth-century predecessors, gentleman farmers could afford to create an idealized farmscape that made aesthetic qualities paramount. Since their livelihood was not dependent on success of the farm, they could conspicuously develop the land.<sup>55</sup> Gentleman farms during this period tended to be large operations with hundreds or even thousands of acres. Generous use of the land was made for the domestic dwelling and yard. They employed the landscape to display their ability to utilize the land for non-agricultural uses. Meandering drives, large fence setbacks and ornamental gardens are elements on a twentieth century gentleman farm that underscore the liberal use of the land.<sup>56</sup>

### **Twentieth-Century Gentleman Farms in Oldham County**

From the early-19<sup>th</sup> century, Oldham County's economy became increasingly interconnected with Jefferson County's. Oldham County farmers sent their agricultural products to Louisville and Jefferson County buyers. During the 1850s, the Lexington and Ohio Railroad traversed the county, connecting it by rail to Lexington and Louisville. A later line to Cincinnati was added in the late 1850s. An interurban rail line was added in the early 1900s. The interurban departed every half hour for trips to Louisville.<sup>57</sup> The benefit of reliable fast transportation to urban centers, such as Louisville, allowed owners to partake in rural living while remaining connected to town.<sup>58</sup>

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<sup>51</sup> Dr. Karl Raitz, "Gentleman Farmers"

<sup>52</sup> R. Gerald Alvey, "The Bluegrass Gentleman Farm and Other Rural Folk Patterns," p. 97

<sup>53</sup> R. Gerald Alvey, "The Bluegrass Gentleman Farm and Other Rural Folk Patterns," p. 96

<sup>54</sup> Dr. Karl Raitz, "Gentleman Farmers"

<sup>55</sup> Dr. Karl Raitz, "Gentleman Farmers"

<sup>56</sup> R. Gerald Alvey, "The Bluegrass Gentleman Farm and Other Rural Folk Patterns," p. 97

<sup>57</sup> *Oldham County, Kentucky History and Families; The First Century, 1824-1929*, p. 59

<sup>58</sup> Donna Neary, "Waldeck Farm" National Register Nomination, 2000

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With the development of Oldham County's roads, railroads, and interurban trains, access was convenient for commuting to Louisville. This made Oldham County's rural setting attractive to Louisville's upper class to establish Gentleman Farms. Sixteen stock farms were established in Oldham County by 1879.<sup>59</sup> National Register-listed Waldeck Farm (OL-227), Walnut Hill Farm (OL-278), A.F. Bottorf's Welcome Home (OL-289), Grandview (OL-295), Tyler Peacock House (OL-247), Sugar Grove Stock Farm (OL-201), Midway Stock Farm (OL-243) and Nock House (OL-340) have all been identified as Gentleman Farms in Oldham County from the nineteenth century.<sup>60</sup>

More Louisville industrialists migrated to Oldham County in the first half of the twentieth century to establish gentleman farms. William Belknap of Belknap Hardware Co. purchased Land O' Goshen Farm (OL-286) in 1920s<sup>61</sup>. Charles Bottorff, president of Belknap Hardware Co., acquired Annewood Farms near Goshen in 1940.<sup>62</sup> Lowry Watkins Sr. purchased Frog Jump Farm (OL-262) in Skylight in 1933 to raise thoroughbreds.<sup>63</sup> Woodford Fitch Axton, owner of Axton-Fisher Tobacco Company in Louisville, purchased land for his gentleman farm, Wildwood, in 1927.<sup>64</sup>

These twentieth-century gentleman farms were developed on properties that were already established farms. The new owners began remaking the landscape for their bloodstock operations. Often acreage was added to provide more pastureland. For instance, Charles Bottorff purchased an additional 200 acres for Annewood Farm, making it 400 acres. In the case of Hermitage Farm, the existing property was already 850 acres, which was quite suitable for Thoroughbreds.<sup>65</sup>

Some new owners kept the historic dwellings intact, such as at Hermitage, Annewood and Frog Jump Farm, where the main dwelling predated the pre-Civil War. Other capitalists purchased the emblem of prestige, yet did not feel constrained against reshaping historic sites according to their desires. For instance, William Belknap added a two-story stone addition in 1925 to the original 1811 house.<sup>66</sup>

### **Wildwood's Gentleman, Woodford Fitch Axton**

Woodford Fitch Axton amassed a considerable wealth from his successful Louisville tobacco business, Axton-Fisher Tobacco Company. As a self-made businessman, Axton came from humble beginnings. He originally worked in the wholesale grocery business, traveling to rural towns in western Kentucky. He was interested in developing reasonably priced tobacco goods, after recognizing the demand for these types of products. Upon being repaid by a customer with a piece of tobacco machinery, he established a tobacco manufacturing enterprise in Owensboro, Kentucky.<sup>67</sup>

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<sup>59</sup> Beers and Lanagan. *Atlas of Jefferson and Oldham Counties, Kentucky*.

<sup>60</sup> Donna Neary, "Waldeck Farm" National Register Nomination, 2000

<sup>61</sup> *Oldham County, Kentucky History and Families; The First Century, 1824-1929*. p. 141

<sup>62</sup> *Kentucky's Historic Farms: 200 Years of Agriculture*. P. 298

<sup>63</sup> *Oldham County, Kentucky History and Families; The First Century, 1824-1929*. p. 50

<sup>64</sup> Oldham County Deed Book 49, p. 137.

<sup>65</sup> *Kentucky's Historic Farms: 200 Years of Agriculture*. P. 298 -299

<sup>66</sup> Kentucky Heritage Council Survey forms.

<sup>67</sup> Mary Goetz, "Wood Axton," p. 25-26

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Axton and his brother Edwin Axton partnered with George H. Fisher in 1902 and moved the business to Louisville. By 1905 the business was incorporated to become the Axton-Fisher Tobacco Company. In 1923, the Axton-Fisher Company entered the cigarette manufacturing business as an independent. The company offered low-cost cigarette brands including: "Clown," "Spud" (the first menthol cigarette, introduced in 1929), and "Twenty Grand" (introduced in 1932). The business strategy of offering low-cost cigarettes helped to make Axton-Fisher a highly successful company. Even during the Great Depression, sales continued to rise.<sup>68</sup>

Throughout Axton's career, he espoused progressive ideals. He supported the unionization of Axton-Fisher Tobacco Company. Axton paid union-scale wages, provided free meals during each shift, and provided fifteen-minute breaks for every shift. Axton carried his progressive philosophies beyond his business into community activism. He ran unsuccessfully for mayor of Louisville in 1913 on the "Bull Moose" Progressive ticket. He supported antitrust legislation, public ownership of utilities, and campaigned for lower executive salaries. Axton lived by his principles, limiting his own salary to \$10,000 a year as president of Axton-Fisher Tobacco Company.<sup>69</sup>

### **Evaluation of Historic Significance of Wildwood Farm**

Wood Axton purchased property in Oldham County during the mid- and late 1920s, acquiring approximately 1000 acres. The parcels were spread over several tracts of land, not all contiguous. The bulk of his landholdings, however, were located near Skylight. He established Wildwood Farm on approximately 800 acres of land that overlooked the Ohio River. Wildwood was the nucleus of Axton's farm operations, which included his residence.

Wood Axton constructed a new Colonial Revival residence on the property near the bluffs overlooking the Ohio River. The domestic complex was situated on approximately 25 acres of the property.<sup>70</sup> This portion of the property was not intended for cultivation or pastureland. Any buildings that were from the previous occupation were demolished. A smokehouse and a springhouse behind the main dwelling served the house. Hams, bacon, and sausage were salted, cured, and smoked for the Axton family.<sup>71</sup> Groundskeeper Freddy Roundser maintained an ornamental garden near the main house.<sup>72</sup>

Wood Axton had a love for fine stock and was able to transfer his passion to his Wildwood Farm.<sup>73</sup> Axton envisioned the farm to be a type of "model farm." As a gentleman farmer, Axton believed that his model farm would contribute to the wealth of the county. "I am trying to improve my land so future generations will find it in better condition. This is the best legacy one generation can leave the next."<sup>74</sup>

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<sup>68</sup> Mary Goetz, "Wood Axton," p. 26

<sup>69</sup> William F. Axton, "Axton-Fisher Tobacco Company," p. 56

<sup>70</sup> Deedbook 411 p. 513

<sup>71</sup> William F. Axton "Wildwood History" p. 9

<sup>72</sup> David Carter, Interview 11/11/05

<sup>73</sup> "Wood Axton Dies at Home," p. 1

<sup>74</sup> Mary Goetz, "Wood Axton," p. 26

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Wildwood was a successful farm that produced three distinct agricultural products: a state-of-the-art dairy operation with Guernsey cows; a 60-acre apple, pear, and peach orchard that had 5,500 trees; and a thoroughbred breeding and training farm. Wildwood became widely known for its thoroughbred horses as well as for its Guernsey cattle herd.<sup>75</sup>

The dairy operation was located on 600 acres west of Axton Lane. Axton brought experienced dairymen from Illinois and Wisconsin to run the operation, and hired local labor to work the dairy farm. The dairy barn was outfitted with electric milking machines—a new technology at the time. On Sundays, local citizens would come to the dairy to watch the milking operations.<sup>76</sup> Axton supplied the dairy with Golden Guernsey cows to produce Grade A milk when most Oldham dairies used Holstein or Jersey cows. The herd of prized dairy cattle included “Betsy’s Hopeful,” a \$42,500 world champion milk-producing cow.<sup>77</sup> The milk was trucked to Louisville for distribution at local grocery stores. Axton had specially designed milk bottles for his dairy product. He also placed a life-sized sign of Betsy’s Hopeful at the intersection of U.S. 42 and Axton Lane to advertise his dairy.<sup>78</sup>

The 60-acre apple, pear, and peach orchard was also located on the dairy farm property. Peach trees were the most numerous, taking up 40 acres of the orchard. A shed was on the site that served as a packinghouse for the fruit. Axton hired local kids to grade and pack the fruit for market.<sup>79</sup>

Wildwood was an early farm to breed thoroughbreds in Oldham County. The farm eventually became one of the largest racing stables in the Midwest.<sup>80</sup> The state-of-the-art thoroughbred nursery was located on the 177-acre tract that also included Axton’s residence.<sup>81</sup> By 1931, Wildwood had between 60 and 75 thoroughbreds stabled at Wildwood. The stock included: 28 brood mares, between 20 and 25 colts, several yearlings and two-year-olds and 3 stallions including In Memoriam and Ormont.<sup>82</sup>

Wood Axton’s thoroughbred racers were famous for being long shots at the racetrack.<sup>83</sup> Wildwood bred and trained several high profile stakes-winners including: Frank Ormont, Two Sons, Paradisical, Hank McTavish, and Nicodemus. Axton’s horses ran at all of the larger U.S. tracks and in Mexico and Cuba.<sup>84</sup> Once the colts were old enough, they were taken for training to be racehorses. Axton had a training facility on a 167-acre parcel located a mile east of Skylight on U.S. 42. This facility included a 3/4-mile track and a 24-stall horse barn for horses in training.<sup>85</sup>

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<sup>75</sup> “Wood Axton Dies at Home,” p. 1

<sup>76</sup> David Carter, Interview 10/26/05

<sup>77</sup> William F. Axton, “Wildwood History,” p. 9

<sup>78</sup> David Carter, Interview 10/26/05

<sup>79</sup> David Carter, Interview 10/26/05

<sup>80</sup> Mary Goetz, “Wood Axton,” p. 32

<sup>81</sup> William F. Axton, “Wildwood History,” p. 2, 10

<sup>82</sup> “Wood Axton Owns Valuable Horses,” p. 3

<sup>83</sup> “Wood Axton Dies at Home,” p. 1

<sup>84</sup> Mary Goetz, “Wood Axton,” p. 32

<sup>85</sup> William F. Axton, “Wildwood History,” p. 10

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Wood Axton died in 1935 at his Wildwood Farm.<sup>86</sup> At that time, the farm was divided between his two surviving brothers Bob and Edwin D. Axton. Bob Axton inherited the dairy farm and orchard parcel. The dairy cattle were replaced with hogs in the 1940s.<sup>87</sup> Ed Axton inherited the thoroughbred portion of the farm, as well as the domestic complex. He named the property "Woodsacres."<sup>88</sup> He continued the thoroughbred operations until his death in 1961.<sup>89</sup> Woodsacres Farm then passed to Ed Axton's son, William Fitch Axton. He kept the farm intact until 1992 when he divided the 177-acre parcel into three tracts.<sup>90</sup>

Wood Axton created a highly successful dairy, orchard and thoroughbred operation in Oldham County at a farm that was a state-of-the-art facility. Additionally, he made an important contribution to Oldham County's thoroughbred industry by developing his farm in the early stages of the industry in the county.

### **Integrity Considerations for Gentleman Farms in Oldham County**

To be considered eligible for the National Register of Historic Places, a Gentleman Farm should possess integrity of location, setting, design, feeling and association. If these standards of integrity are met the property will successfully convey the significance of a gentleman farm.

A gentleman farm will be said to have a high level of integrity in **location** if the farm complex retains its historic placement on the land. The major buildings associated with the property should remain in their original locations. Though it cannot be expected that the entire original acreage of the farm be intact due to modern land use patterns, a gentleman farm will be said to have a high level of integrity in **setting** if the farm maintains a rural character associated with the original farmscape. The gentleman farm must maintain a sense of a cultivated landscape. A gentleman farm must retain a minimum amount of landscape to convey the existence of a previously successful farming operation. These elements include a well-maintained domestic building, barn, pasture, fencing, entry driveway and thoughtfully placed trees and shrubs.

A gentleman farm will be said to have a high level of integrity of **design** if it retains a significant collection of buildings and structures related to the original farmscape. It is not practical to think that all related resources will remain, due to modern encroachments and land divisions. Representations of domestic and agricultural complexes must be present. Changes or additions to the domestic complex do not compromise eligibility if they are done in concert with the main block's scale, massing and high quality architectural style.

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<sup>86</sup> "Wood Axton Dies at Home," p. 1

<sup>87</sup> David Carter, Interview 10/26/05

<sup>88</sup> William F. Axton, "Wildwood History," p. 1

<sup>89</sup> Oldham County Deed Book 411, p. 511

<sup>90</sup> Oldham County Deed Book 411, p. 511

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A gentleman farm will be said to have a high level of integrity of **feeling** and **association** if the remaining land conveys a sense that a successful farming operation is intact. An intangible element that runs true throughout the gentleman farm is that the farms transcend generations. If there has been little alteration to the landscape and building relationships on a gentleman farm, then that farm will have a high integrity of feeling. On the perimeter, there should be enough of remaining farmland to convey the sense of the original farm use. While the gentleman farm does not need to be an actively operating farm, sufficient physical evidence of that former function must be present for the property to be said to convey a high level of integrity of association.

### **Integrity Evaluation of Wildwood Farm**

The high level of integrity exhibited at Wildwood Farm helps to make tangible the significance of the Gentleman Farm Property Type in Oldham County. The historic Wildwood Farm possesses the characteristics that define a gentleman farm in Jefferson and Oldham County. The historic significance of Wildwood Farm in Oldham County is conveyed through its high level of integrity in location, design, setting, feeling and association. These factors enable us to recognize the farm today as an outstanding Gentleman Farm in the local agricultural context.

Wildwood conveys a high level of integrity of **location** and **setting**. The farm is located at the end of Axton Lane and is accessed by U.S. 42, a major arterial road to Louisville. The buildings have not been moved from their original locations and retain their original spatial relationships to each other. The setting is intact despite the reduction of original acreage. The rolling landscape and fertile Crider-Nicholson soils that the farm is situated on have been retained throughout the years. The domestic and agricultural buildings, as well as landscape features (fences, paddock, pasture, garden, entrance gates) associated with the original Wildwood farm, are evident. Dramatic views of the Ohio River remain intact. The setting conveys a strong sense of a successful farm with well-maintained landscape.

Wildwood Farm retains a high level of **design** integrity. The main house, outbuildings and yearling barn have experienced little alteration since construction and are in excellent condition. The house has had some minor interior and exterior alterations, but the original plan is intact. The original massing, scale and architectural design of the main house has not been diminished with these changes. The addition of the terrace overlooking the Ohio River enhances the importance of the river views, especially since prominent siting is a significant feature found in gentleman farms. The garden near the house has had some alteration to the beds; however, its original relationship to the house has been maintained. The landscape features, including the entrance gates, the farm road, paddock, pasture and fencing, underscore the designed elements of a gentleman farm.

Wildwood Farm conveys a high level of integrity of **feeling** and **association**. The rural setting, river viewsheds, domestic and agricultural resources remain intact to convey the feeling and association of an Oldham County Gentleman Farm. Wildwood is well maintained and is in excellent condition. With very little alteration to the original farmscape, the property today conveys a strong sense of how the original farm appeared when Wood Axton built his gentleman farm in Oldham County.

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Interviews conducted by Cynthia Johnson on 10/26/05 and 11/11/05:

Carter, David. Mr. Carter's father was a horse trainer at Wildwood Farm. Mr. Carter worked at Wildwood's orchard as a teenager and spent time of the farm property. As an adult Mr. Carter worked as a horse trainer at Hermitage Farm.

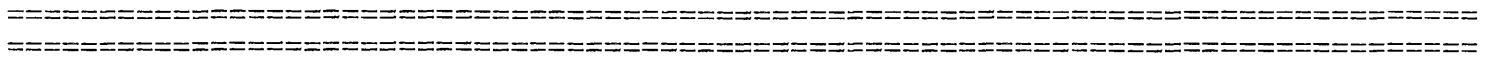


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**Verbal Boundary Description**

BEING Tract 2 and Tract 3 of the Minor Subdivision Plat prepared by H.E. Rudy Consulting Engineers dated August 19, 1992, approved by the Oldham County Planning and Zoning Commission on August 20, 1992, plat of which is attached to and made a part of the Deed of record in Deed Book 411, Page 511, in the Office of the Clerk of Oldham County, Kentucky. Please see attached map number Map #2.

**Verbal Boundary Justification**

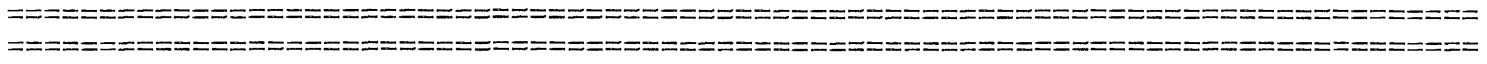
The nominated property includes parcels historically associated with the Wildwood Farm and is occupied by the principal structures that define the farm. The proposed acreage does not include the entire acreage originally associated with the farm due to the division of the property over time. This acreage, however, contains the main dwelling, agricultural outbuildings, and elements of a gentleman farm landscape to successfully convey property's historic use. The nominated property maintains the integrity of setting, location, feeling and association and is appropriate for the nomination.

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**Additional Documentation**

Maps:

Map 1 USGS topographic map showing location of property.

Map 2 Survey map showing property boundaries.

Figure 1 Historic photo of house taken before front porch was removed

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**Photo Key**

All photographs represent the building, streetscape features and surrounding geographical context of Russell Theatre. The property is located at 3901 Axton Lane in the vicinity of Skylight, Kentucky. All photographs were taken by Cynthia Johnson on November 11, 2005 and the negatives remain in her possession.

- 1 Looking south at the north elevation showing the primary façade of the main house. This façade faces the Ohio River.
- 2 Looking south at the north façade of the main dwelling. View is from the lower terrace that was added outside the period of significance
- 3 Looking east at the north and west elevation of the main house.
- 4 Looking west at the east elevation of the main house. The servant's wing is in the foreground.
- 5 Looking north at the south elevation of the main house. The west elevation terrace is also visible.
- 6 Looking south at the north and west elevations of the smokehouse. The smokehouse is behind the main house.
- 7 Looking north at the south and west elevation of the springhouse behind the main house and to the east of the smokehouse.
- 8 Looking north at the south elevation of the yearling barn located southeast of the main house. The south paddock is in the foreground.
- 9 Looking south at the north side of the yearling barn. The north paddock is also shown.
- 10 Looking north at the pasture located on the east side of the property. The yearling barn is behind the trees on the upper left side of the picture.
- 11 Looking northeast at the garden located on the east side of the main house.
- 12 Looking northwest at the stone entrance gates at the end of Axton Lane.
- 13 Looking northwest at the farm road that winds through a wooded area to the house. Fencing for the pasture is on the right side of the photograph.
- 14 Looking east at the main house, smokehouse, springhouse and farm road. The Ohio River bluffs are on the right side of the photograph.

Figure 1



Map #2

THAT A TITLE EXAMINATION WOULD REVEAL

**FLOOD HAZARD STATEMENT**

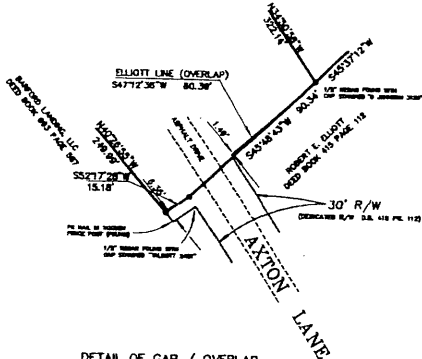
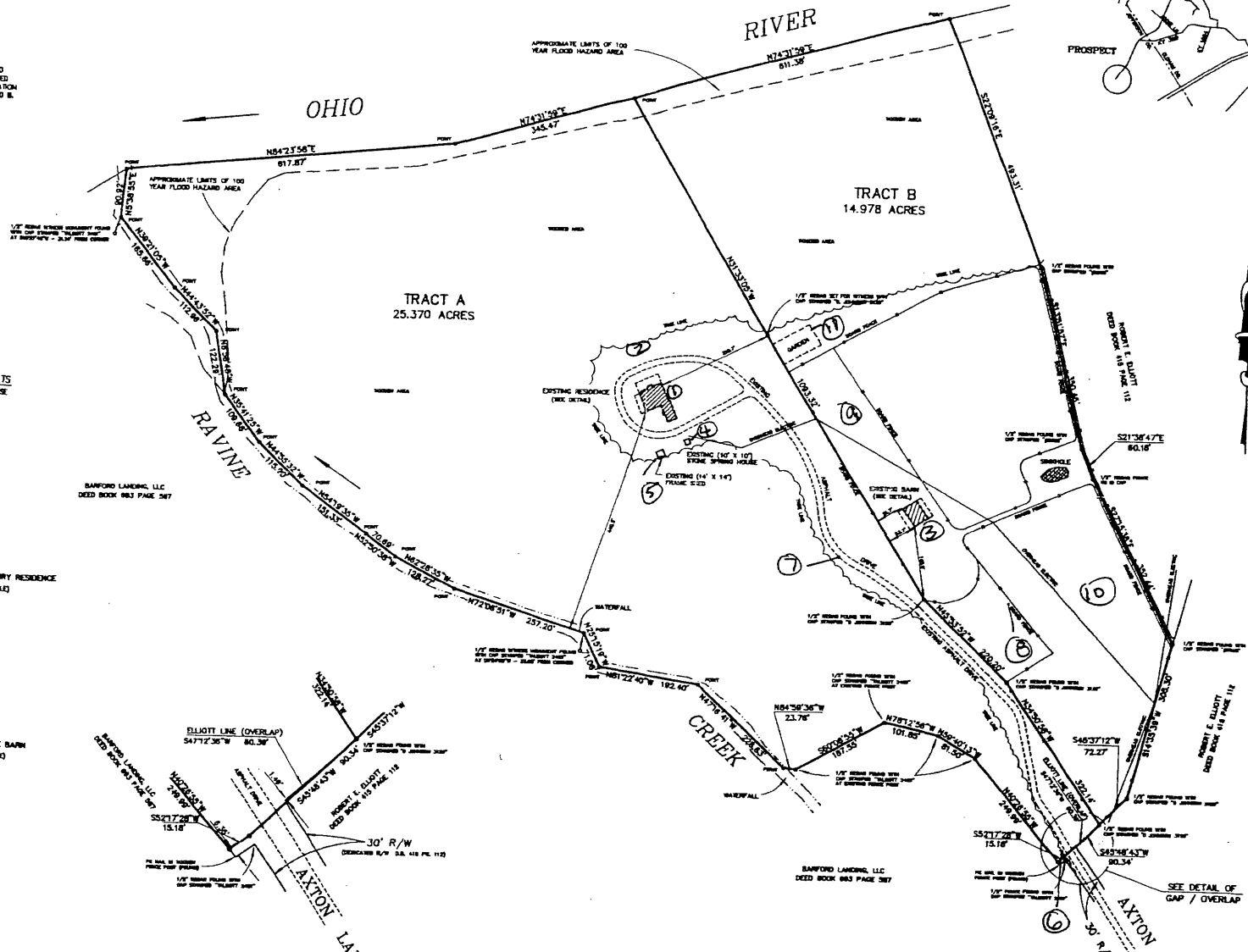
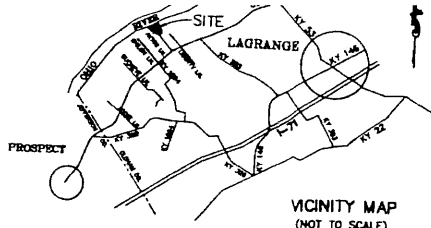
A PORTION OF THIS PROPERTY IMMEDIATELY ADJACENT TO THE OHIO RIVER IS LOCATED IN THE 100 YEAR FLOOD HAZARD AREA. THE REMAINING PROPERTY IS NOT LOCATED IN THE 100 YEAR FLOOD HAZARD AREA. THIS DETERMINATION IS BASED ON A REVIEW OF FLOOD MAP NO. 210185 D080 B, MAP DATED AUGUST 18, 1987.

**SURVEY CLASSIFICATION**

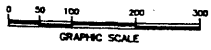
THIS SURVEY AND PLAT MEETS OR EXCEEDS THE TECHNICAL STANDARDS FOR A CLASS "B" SURVEY FOR RURAL LAND IN ACCORDANCE WITH 201 KAR 16.150.

**STATEMENT ON PRECISION & MEASUREMENTS**

THIS SURVEY WAS PERFORMED BY THE RANDOM TRANSVERSE METHOD. THE UNADJUSTED LINEAR ERROR OF CLOSURE RATIO OF THE TRANSVERSE EXCEEDS 1 PART IN 12,230. TRANSVERSE CLOSURE HAS BEEN ADJUSTED USING THE LEAST SQUARES METHOD. ALL BEARINGS AND DISTANCES SHOWN HEREON ARE MEASURED VALUES.



- LEGEND**
- BOUNDARY LINE (THIS SURVEY)
  - BOUNDARY LINE (BY DEED)
  - EASEMENT LINE (TYPE NOTED)
  - ROADWAY CENTERLINE
  - FENCE (TYPE NOTED)
  - CONSOLIDATION LINE



**LAND SURVEYORS CERTIFICATE**

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS SURVEY AND PLAT WERE MADE UNDER MY SUPERVISION AND THAT THE ANGULAR AND LINEAR MEASUREMENTS AS WITNESSED BY MONUMENTS SHOWN HEREON ARE TRUE AND CORRECT TO THE BEST OF MY KNOWLEDGE AND BELIEF. THIS SURVEY MEETS OR EXCEEDS THE MINIMUM STANDARDS OF GOVERNING AUTHORITIES.



DEED REFERENCE: DEED BOOK 819 PAGE 43  
 DATE OF SURVEY: JUNE 15, 2005  
 TAX PARCEL 12-00-00-01

DRAWN TALBOT
CHECKED WRIGHT
FILE NAME C:\WORK\2005\20050615
Advanced Civil Engineering Land Surveying
WILDLIFE FARM KY, LLC (OWNER AND CLIENT) 3801 AXTON LANE
DATE: JUNE 16, 2005
PROJECT NO. 06105
SCALE: 1" = 100'