

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

1. Name of Property

Historic name: Normandy Farm

Other names/site number: FA-560

Name of related multiple property listing: N/A

2. Location

Street & number: 4701 Paris Pike

City or town: Lexington State: Kentucky County: Fayette

Not For Publication: NA Vicinity: x

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 at the following level(s) of significance:

 national statewide X local

Applicable National Register Criteria:

 A **B** **X** **C** **D**

Signature of certifying official/Title: **Craig Potts/SHPO** Date

Kentucky Heritage Council/State Historic Preservation Office

State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

In my opinion, the property ____ meets ____ does not meet the National Register criteria.

Signature of commenting official:

Date

Title :

**State or Federal agency/bureau
or Tribal Government**

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4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

- ☐ entered in the National Register
☐ determined eligible for the National Register
☐ determined not eligible for the National Register
☐ removed from the National Register
☐ other (explain:) _____

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

Private:

☒

Public – Local

☐

Public – State

☐

Public – Federal

☐

Category of Property

Building(s)

☒

District

☐

Site

☐

Structure

☐

Object

☐

Number of Resources within Property

Contributing

14

3

3

20

Noncontributing

1

1

2

buildings
sites
structures
objects
Total

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6. Function or Use Historic Functions

DOMESTIC/SINGLE DWELLING
DOMESTIC/SECONDARY STRUCTURE
AGRICULTURE/SUBSISTENCE: ANIMAL FACILITY
AGRICULTURE/SUBSISTENCE: AGRICULTURAL FIELD
AGRICULTURE/SUBSISTENCE: BARN
AGRICULTURE/SUBSISTENCE: AGRICULTURAL OUTBUILDING
TRANSPORTATION: BRIDGE
FUNERARY/CEMETERY
LANDSCAPE/OBJECT

Current Functions

DOMESTIC/SINGLE DWELLING
DOMESTIC/SECONDARY STRUCTURE
AGRICULTURE/SUBSISTENCE: ANIMAL FACILITY
AGRICULTURE/SUBSISTENCE: AGRICULTURAL FIELD
AGRICULTURE/SUBSISTENCE: BARN
AGRICULTURE/SUBSISTENCE: AGRICULTURAL OUTBUILDING
TRANSPORTATION: BRIDGE
FUNERARY/CEMETERY
LANDSCAPE/OBJECT

7. Description

Architectural Classification

EARLY REPUBLIC/FEDERAL
MID-19TH CENTURY/GOTHIC REVIVAL
LATE VICTORIAN/ITALIANATE

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Materials:

Principal exterior materials of the property: BRICK, WOOD/WEATHERBOARD, STONE,
METAL, CONCRETE

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Description

Summary Paragraph

Normandy Farm (FA-560) is a historic farm located some seven miles from Lexington, Kentucky, in northeast Fayette County. The farm fronts on the former Maysville to Lexington Turnpike, (or the Limestone Road), which is now known as Paris Pike (US 27/68). The property is being interpreted for its architectural and agricultural values as related to the concept “gentleman farm,” a significant type of property in Kentucky and elsewhere. Normandy Farm was part of Paris Pike Historic District that was nominated in 1977, listed,¹ and then delisted due to procedural issues regarding owner notification.² The nominated property consists of 255.983 acres, and includes 22 resources, 20 of which are contributing.

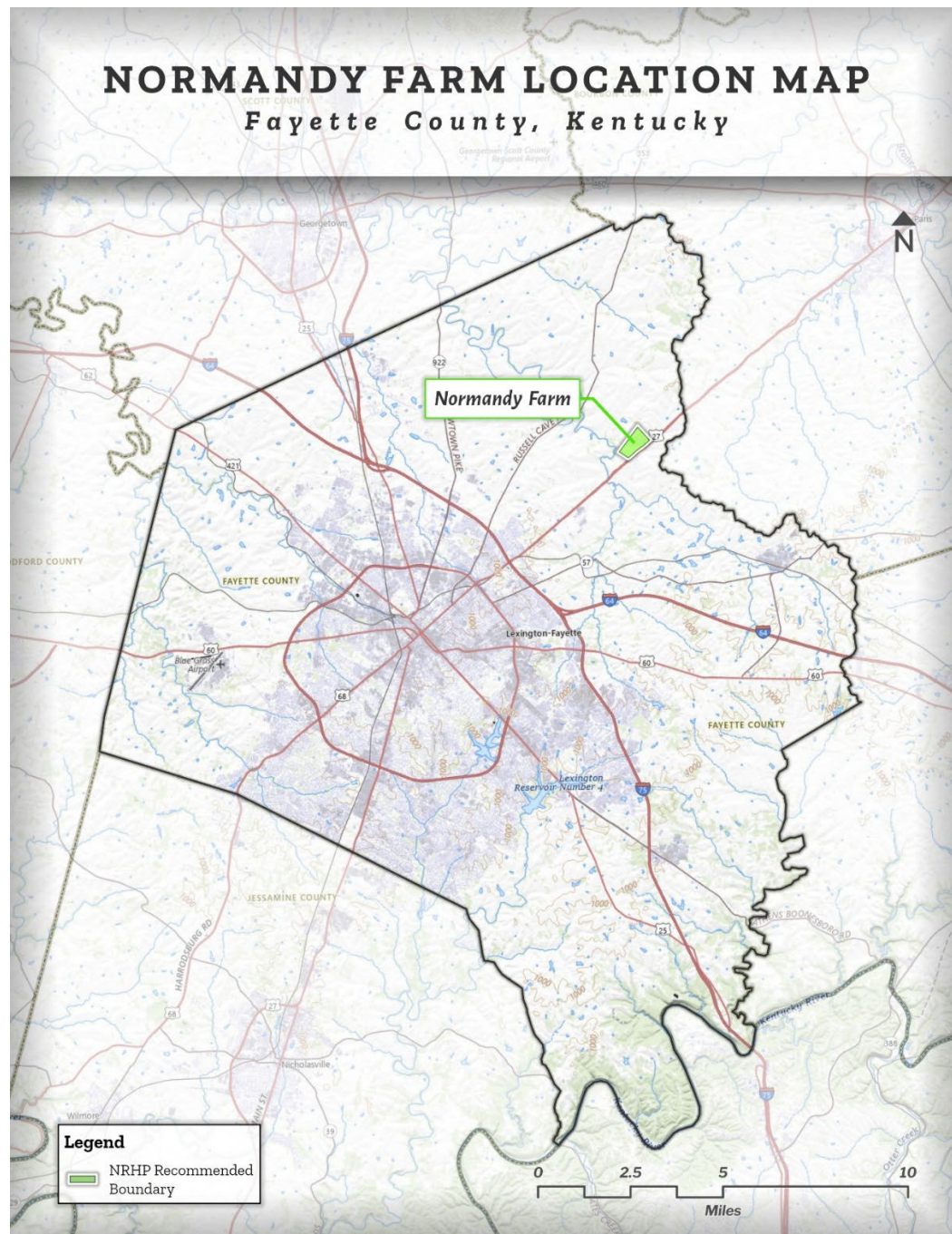


¹ Richard S. DeCamp. “Paris Pike Historic Destruct.” *Nomination to the National Register of Historic Places*. Copy on file at the Lexington –Fayette Urban County Government Division of Historic Preservation. Listed 1977, then delisted.

² At the time, the corridor was the subject of transportation project. Following the delisting, each individual property that qualified was determined eligible by the Keeper. Property owners engaged in lawsuits for over 40 years before a successful Section 106 process was completed early in the 21st century, with a widened roadway designed to be context sensitive.

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History of the property's ownership

For 50 years, this parcel was part of the famed Elmendorf Farm (NRIS SG100008737, listed 2023), a property that gained national attention under multi-millionaire owner James B. Haggin, a Kentucky native who made his wealth primarily in copper and gold mining in the West. Haggin assembled his version of Elmendorf (named by prior owner Daniel Swigert) between 1897 and

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1914. But before and after the creation of Elmendorf, this parcel has its own identity as a gentleman farm and valuable component of the agricultural landscape.

Abraham Bird, 1804-1825

Two Abraham Birds – father and son – arrived in Fayette County, Kentucky, around 1803, from Shenandoah County, Virginia. Abraham Bird, Sr., sometimes referred to as “Colonel Bird,” and his son were recorded on the North Elkhorn Creek in 1805. There were 160 acres of first-rate land ascribed to the father, and 283 acres of third-rate land in the name of the younger Bird. In 1806, the household (based on census records, it appears that the two men shared one household) owned five horses and were also recorded as owning five enslaved African Americans. The elder Bird was likely responsible for the construction of the house, which was no small investment in the first quarter of the 19th century.

Abraham Bird, Sr., died in March 1820, leaving his wife Rachel one-third part of the farm and plantation, and all of his household and kitchen furniture for the duration of her natural life. Additionally, Bird left to his wife an enslaved woman named Hannah and her two children, Hannaha and Nathan; a mare and two colts; three cows and their calves; six sheep; six hogs; and \$300 in cash. His son, Abraham Bird, Jr, received all of the land and plantation, including 1,954 acres of land on the north fork of the Kentucky River.

In 1825, Abraham Bird, Jr., sold the land and house in Fayette County to Robert P. Kenney and moved to Missouri.³

Robert P. Kenney, 1825-1870

Robert P. Kenney, also a native of Virginia, purchased 252 acres from Bird for \$5,046.00 in silver.⁴ Kenney epitomized the first wave of gentleman farmers in the antebellum period. Those farmers distinguished themselves from working farmers through the ownership of many acres of high-quality land, by management of the farm’s labor force rather than engaging in physical labor, through ownership of many workers, and through an effort to extend their influence beyond mere farm profits and into the social realm.⁵

Gentleman farmers were usually classically educated, and had the means and motivation to travel, further their learning, and often subscribed and wrote for agricultural journals. Constant improvement in their agricultural endeavors, such as field rotation, the enhancement of soil and livestock, as well as the upgrading and beautification of their physical landscape, would set them apart from the subsistence farmer in Kentucky. Instead of farming to live, as most Kentuckians did, gentleman farmers had other interests or occupations, such as politics or law. Gentleman

³ The junior Bird settled in Hannibal, Missouri, and was a farmer and state senator. According to a story in the January 26, 1908, edition of *The Baltimore Sun* (page 17), after “losing his fortune, he went to California in 1849 during the gold rush, died and was buried at sea in 1850.”

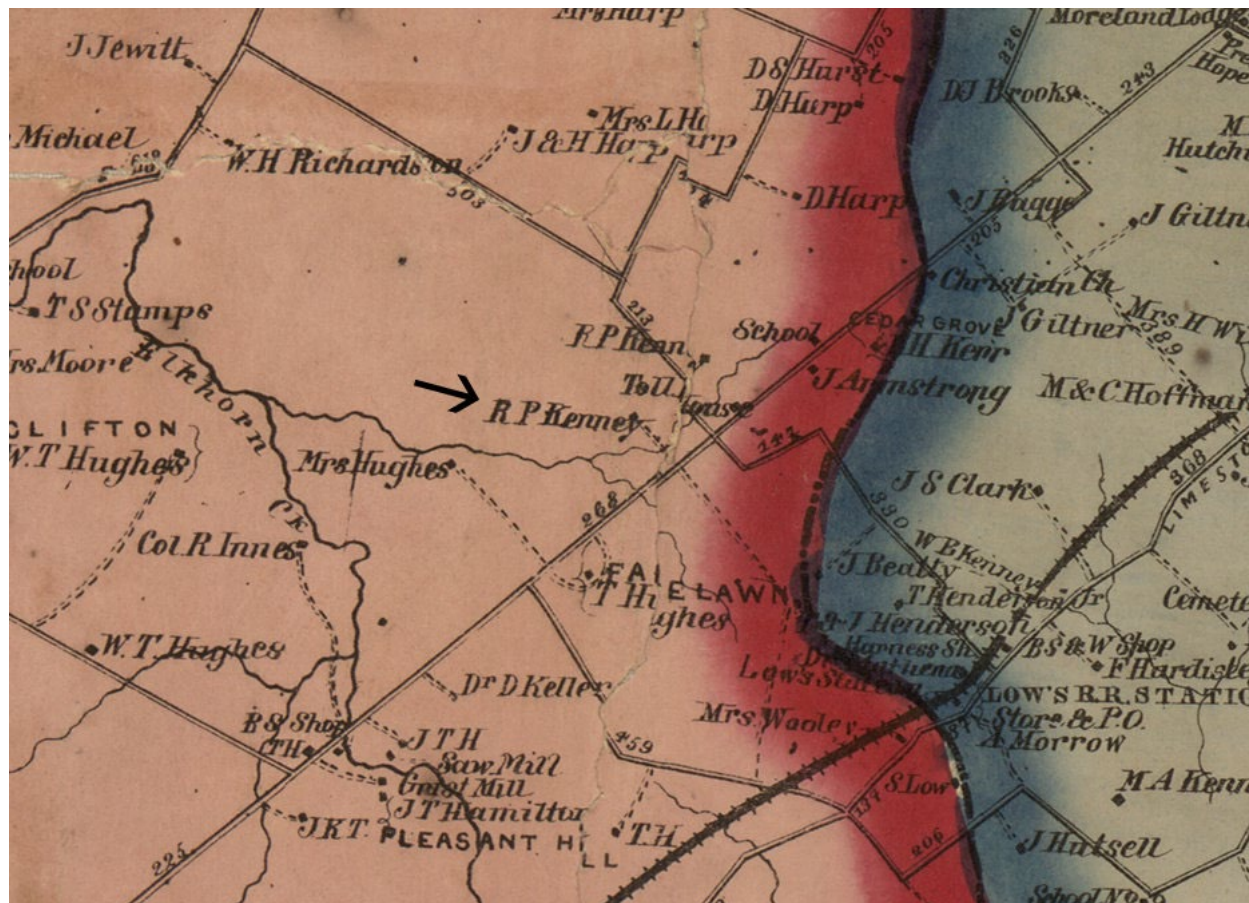
⁴ Fayette County, Kentucky, Deed Book 1, page 99.

⁵ The 1860 census recorded 23 enslaved workers on Kenney’s farm; previous decades enumerated between 17 and 25 enslaved workers.

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mulation required a certain



R.P. Kenney as noted on the *Topographical Map of the Counties of Bourbon, Fayette, Clark, Jessamine, and Woodford, Kentucky From Actual Surveys* by E. A. and G. W. Hewitt,. (New York: Smith, Gallup & Company, 1861).

Although little is known about Kenney's education or social standing within the Fayette/Bourbon County agricultural elite, tax and census records provide tangible proof of his wealth and the extent of his farming operation. In 1840, Kenney was taxed on 452 acres on the North Elkhorn worth \$20,340.00; a decade later, he owned 800 acres worth \$48,000.00. In addition to his land holdings, Kenney's wealth was enhanced by the 21 enslaved persons he held in bondage; the sum of \$7,800.00 was attached to these enslaved African Americans. That year, Kenney owned 25 horses, valued at \$1,000.00; 57 mules, valued at \$2,550.00; 37 cattle, valued at \$980.00; one carriage, valued at \$200.00; the total value of his holdings was \$47,870.00.

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For comparison purposes, Brutus Clay of Bourbon County, Kentucky, one of the most well-known of 19th century gentleman farmers, is recorded as owning 35 horses, 40 mules, and 70 head of cattle in 1841; Clay's enslaved labor force was double that of Robert P. Kenney.⁶

Kenney was also an investor, another characteristic of gentleman farmers in the Bluegrass. Upon writing his will in 1859, Kenney dictated that the 2,300 acres of land he owned in Missouri were to pass to his grandson, Robert Kenney Bryan.⁷ Kenney Lane, to the north of Normandy Farm (and part of the boundary of Elmendorf Farm) takes its name from the Kenney family. William B. Kenney moved to a parcel off Iron Works Pike following his father's death and his brother's occupation of the family homeplace.⁸

Robert P. Kenney's inventory after his death in November 1869 included his land holdings, one black mare, and shares of the Northern Bank of Kentucky, the Maysville and Lexington Turnpike, and the Lexington to Frankfort Railroad.

Matthew A. Kenney, 1870-1878

When Robert P. Kenney died in 1869, he left land on both sides of Hughes Lane on the turnpike. The land was divided between his two sons, Matthew A. and William B. Kenney. The farm remained in the family, although Matthew A. Kenney, the oldest surviving son, did not immediately take up residence in the Bird/Kenney house in Fayette County.⁹ Matthew Kenney oversaw his own successful gentleman farm in Bourbon County, and like his father, invested heavily in land in Missouri.

In 1860, Matthew Kenney's real estate of 440 improved acres was valued at \$30,800 and his personal estate was worth \$14,300. Kenney seems to have run a purebred cattle operation as well and also had large numbers of swine and sheep. Like his father and other gentleman farmers, he had an enslaved work force, with 13 enslaved workers under his name in 1860.

Kenney is recorded in the 1870 census in Bourbon County but was in residence in Fayette County by 1875. That year, he is recorded on Fayette County tax lists as owning 437 acres of land worth \$20,600.00. He had 10 horses and mules, worth \$400.00.

In January 1878, Kenney advertised "453 acres of good land" for sale in Fayette County on the Paris to Lexington Turnpike. The farm had almost two miles of stone fence and a "good Brick

⁶ Dr. Berle Clay, *Landscape Change in the Bluegrass, 1830-1870*. Unpublished manuscript, 87.

⁷ It is not known what happened to that land by the time RP Kenney died in November 1869, nor how the estate was settled since he also made provisions to leave several enslaved persons to his grandson.

⁸ Richard Penistan founded the Kentucky Stock Farm, which he sold in 1876. The 735-acre farm included a new 35-box stable touted as "the best in America," a "perfect" full mile track, and a "first class...newly furnished" main house, and new Trainer's House. Ad published in the Wednesday, May 24, 1876 edition of *The Kentucky Gazette*, page 3. William Kenney purchased Kentucky Stock Farm and kept the name for his horse breeding operation. William is noted as "William M. Kenney," but in his father's will (Fayette County Will Book 14, page 26) he is referred to as "William B. Kenney."

⁹ This Matthew A. Kenney also had a first cousin named Matthew A. Kenney (1836-1911) in Bourbon County, Kentucky.

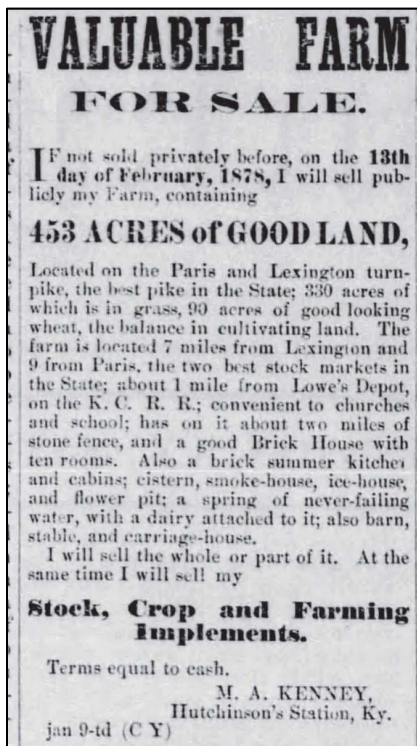
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House with ten rooms.”¹⁰ After he sold the farm in February 1878, Matthew Kenney moved back to Bourbon County, where he quickly sold his land in that county. He then moved to Missouri with his family. Kenney died in Missouri in 1886 of pleurisy.



From the January 12, 1878 edition of The Kentucky Gazette

James H. Kerr, 1878-1901

In February 1878, James H. Kerr, listed his 133-acre farm for sale. The property, which has a “handsome, modern built cottage of 8 rooms,” new outbuildings, and three tenant houses rented for \$5 month, was on the market as Kerr had “bought a larger farm.”¹¹ This 133-acre farm was located on the north side of the Hopewell and Bethlehem Pike in Bourbon County.

Kerr moved across the county line, two miles closer to Lexington, and increased his land holdings substantially. The historic house on the former Kenney farm apparently appealed to Kerr, and he reworked it into an updated version of a gentleman farmer’s country house, with Gothic and Italianate influences. His renovation of the house marked another era in the farm’s development.

Based on a review of the 1880 Agricultural Census, Kerr’s diversified farm had an emphasis on cattle, sheep, and swine. In the 1880 agricultural census, Kerr only had six horses, but was recorded as having 50 swine, 100 sheep, 54 “other” cattle (not dairy cattle) and also had a large orchard. He

¹⁰ “Valuable Farm for Sale.” The Kentucky Gazette, Saturday, January 12, 1878, page 2.

¹¹ Auction Notice, *The Citizen-Advertiser*, Wednesday, February 20, 1878, page 3.

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was frequently noted in the society pages of local newspapers, often as “a wealthy farmer of Muir Station.”¹²

Kerr was 69 years old in 1900, and his daughter and grandson lived in downtown Lexington. In the spring of 1901, Kerr sold 541 acres to J.B. Haggin. The farm, “one of the prettiest in the Blue Grass” was described as “quite an acquisition to Mr. Haggin’s present 4,000 acres.”¹³

James B. Haggin 1897-1914

As is oft cited in contemporary accounts, Haggin decided to model his Kentucky estate on the work for the Vanderbilts at Biltmore in North Carolina. “In erecting a white palace in the Blue Grass Region of Kentucky, and in preparing a site for it, Mr. J.B. Haggin did for the State what Mr. George Vanderbilt did for North Carolina – took the natural features of a landscape rich in possibilities and, sparing no expense or labor, developed it to the highest point of which art and invention is capable.”¹⁴

No detail was too small to be overlooked, and Haggin evidenced no compunction about spending his money. A great deal of his fortune was spent creating the landscape he thought was appropriate at Elmendorf. There were many farms to which he could look for inspiration (guided by his architect and landscape designers and gardeners) and gentleman farmers of the mid-19th century to serve as role models for shaping and controlling the landscape.

Although the Bird-Kenney-Kerr parcel was absorbed into Haggin’s Elmendorf, it was not reshaped by Haggin’s grandiose vision for the landscape that he undertook on other parcels. Normandy Farm’s built landscape apparently satisfied Haggin’s visions of an ideal gentleman farm, to the extent that he did not raze the main house or carriage house. The property maintained much of its antebellum identity. Twentieth century additions to Normandy Farm were added after Haggin’s death.

Joseph E. Widener and family, 1920-1951

Joseph Early Widener was “the most influential molder of turf affairs in his day,” and with his initial purchase of 213 acres of Haggin’s Elmendorf in 1920, extended his reach into the Bluegrass horse country. Widener would later acquire more of the original Elmendorf holdings (some 1,200 acres), as well as the elusive Hughes tract, which Haggin had failed to purchase. The Hughes tract includes the location of Normandy Farm’s resource #19.

Born in 1871 in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, Widener was the son of Peter Arrell Browne Widener, who amassed a fortune after humble beginnings as a butcher. After Joseph’s older brother, George Dunton Widener and nephew, Harry Elkins Widener, died on the Titanic, Joseph became heir to his father’s fortune.

¹² “Social Circles,” *Lexington Herald-Leader*, Thursday, February 22, 1894, page 5.

¹³ “Deal About Closed,” *Lexington Leader*, Thursday, March 14, 1901, page 5.

¹⁴ Knight and Greene, *Country Estates of the Blue Grass*, 1904, p. 107.

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Widener's immense wealth, his tenure in the Thoroughbred industry, ownership of other farms, and the already-improved landscape of Elmendorf meant that he could indulge in horses and art, while enhancing his Kentucky farm. A 1924 publication about Elmendorf proclaimed that "Famous Kentucky Stud Maintaining its Prestige under Ownership of Joseph E. Widener" and that "Mr. Widener has a regal group of matrons of the most fashionable blood at Elmendorf, in charge of that capable expert, George Terry."¹⁵

Widener, perhaps because of his privileged background (in contrast to Haggin, who actually worked to obtain his wealth), exercised a lighter hand on the landscape than Haggin. He had Haggin's opulent mansion, Green Hills, demolished, and focused on building improvements geared solely for the horses. In a sense, Widener had nothing to prove – he wasn't styling himself as a gentleman farmer, for he held that role long before he bought any farmland in Kentucky.

After Joseph E. Widener's death in 1943, the immense acreage of Elmendorf Farm passed to his son, Peter A. B. Widener, II. He died only five years after his father, in 1948. Joseph's grandson, Peter A. B. Widener III, attended the University of Kentucky, but left school upon his father's death. He divided Elmendorf into four sections, retained one parcel for a few years and sold the other three, including the subject tract.

E. Barry Ryan, 1951-1987

E. Barry Ryan, a horse trainer and breeder from New York, established the parcel as its own distinct farm once again in 1951 and christened it Normandy Farm in honor of the Normandy Barn (Feature #12). Ryan grew up in Montreal where his father owned and operated a stable.

Ryan, like Joseph E. Widener, was the product of a wealthy family. His grandfather, Thomas Fortune Ryan, was a co-founder (along with James Duke) of the British American Tobacco Company. In contrast with many gentleman farm owners, Ryan was not just a horse farm owner, but an actual horse trainer, who continued to train horses (other than his own) after buying Normandy Farm.

In 1970, Ryan sold 168.67 acres of the farm he purchased from the Widener family to Robin F. Scully of Clovelly Farm. Seventeen years later, he sold Normandy Farm for \$2.36 million.

The Landscape of Normandy Farm

Despite many owners over the POS, and periods of incorporation into larger land holdings, the landscape of Normandy Farm has persisted as an easily recognizable entity. It is characterized by historians as a Bluegrass gentleman farm, and in the vernacular, a Kentucky horse farm on Paris Pike. When viewing the farm from Paris Pike, the pastoral appearance of the farm is virtually the same as it was from the first half of the 20th century.

The land use and activities of the property remain the same as they have since the beginning of the POS. The historic patterns of organization – pastures, domestic sphere, tenant houses, cluster of

¹⁵ C.J. Fitzgerald. "Thoroughbreds at Elmendorf." *The Field Illustrated*, July 1924, Volume 34, 11-13.

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barns and training paddocks – are little changed from the 1930s. The all-important boundary markers of any farm with livestock are present here, with board fences and rock walls.

Rolling hills, divided into fields and paddocks by board fences painted black, and lined by stone walls at the road edge, host groups of horses, who seek shade under trees encircled by more plank fence. Buildings are placed in discrete groups across the landscape, almost as accent marks on the rich soil.

The domestic hub of the farm, one of the earliest building zones on the farm, is accessed through a stone gateway and tree-lined driveway culminating in an oval in front of the house. This group of buildings (NR 1-4) is anchored by the early 19th century main house. To the west of the domestic complex is the 19th Kenney family cemetery (NR #22), ringed by a dry-laid rock wall and surrounded by trees. Outbuildings are arranged to the side and rear of the main house. The tree-lined drive continues past the house to the horse cemetery (NR #5) and comes to a T intersection with the first barn complex (NR #s6-10) and tenant house (NR #11). The circulation network through the farm then goes east and west. To the west the farm is bounded by Hughes Lane, and another tenant house (NR #14). The famous Normandy Barn (NR #12) and a tobacco barn/stable (NR #13) lie to the east. The interior road continues west and then south to a non-historic barn (NR #20) and lunge ring (NR #21). The 19th century tenant house (NR #19) is accessed via Paris Pike.

Individual Feature Descriptions

NR #1 Contributing Building

Main House



The two-story brick, central passage dwelling was built, according to previous documentation, in the first decade of the 19th century for Abraham Bird. It later became the home of the Kenney family, the Kerr family, and during the Widener years at Elmendorf, it served as the manager's home.¹⁶ It faces southeast, toward a branch of the Elkhorn and the eventual Lexington to Paris Turnpike. For ease in the description of the buildings, the façade of the house will be referred to as the south elevation.

¹⁶ Following the demolition of Haggin's house known as "Green Hills," Joseph E. Widener occupied the original Manager's house (designed by Harry Lewis Copeland and built between 1900-1901) at Elmendorf.

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Prior to 1878, the dwelling was a five-bay wide, one to 1.5-story, single pile house with a two-room ell. Some earlier sources state that the house was two stories originally, but physical evidence does not support this claim. The floor-to-ceiling heights now on the upper story – a little less than eight feet in height – are not the typical dimensions of an antebellum two-story houses in Kentucky but are considerably shortened. A low half story with two small rooms to either side of the staircase is likely what was originally present. When the cross gables were added during Kerr's remodel of the house, the ceiling height was marginally raised.

Recent work on the house revealed that the joists are hewn, the lath is riven, and the nails that were used were hand wrought – all details to point to an early 19th century construction date.

In the last quarter of the 19th century, the dwelling was updated in an interpretation of the Gothic Revival and Italianate styles. As part of that renovation, the openings on the façade were reduced from five to three and the windows openings were reworked and lengthened, and three front gables added to the façade.

Although the masonry has been painted (white), there are faint lines in the brick courses on the façade indicative of repairs or added bricks. The brick on both the main body of the house and the ell is laid in Flemish bond.

The house now reads as a three-bay wide façade with a window/door/window fenestration pattern. It rests upon a stone foundation. The segmentally arched windows are a combination of 2//2 double-hung wooden sash windows on the first story of the façade, and 1/1 double-hung wooden sash windows on the second story. The windows all have stone sills.

The central entry door was also modified in the late 19th century renovation. The opening is segmentally arched, and the single light transom follows suit, as do the narrow four-light sidelights flanking the door. Recessed panels are located underneath each sidelight. The entry door is a four-panel wooden door, with recessed panels; elongated, rectangular panels are located in the top 2/3 of the door, while square panels are in the bottom third.

Interior gable end brick chimneys are located on either end of the house. The side gable roof is clad in asphalt shingles. Paired brackets are located at either end and between each of the cross gables on the façade.

There are segmentally arched windows on either side of the chimneystack on first story of the south gable end of the house. The upper story windows have flat jackarches. The three windows on the east gable end have flat jackarches. Also on the east gable end, on the west side of the chimneystack, is a narrow door opening with a two-light transom. This door was added after 1951 by E. Barry Ryan.

The front porch, which spans $\frac{3}{4}$ of the façade, is of early 20th century construction. Six tapered wood posts rest on brick piers, with a single limestone slab running between each to act as balustrade.

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The ell has a central chimney and an interior gable end chimney on the north gable end. It is unclear what the original fenestration was on the sides of the ell; the east elevation had some mid-20th century fenestration changes, and a one-story, shed roof brick and frame addition is located on the west elevation of the ell. It is likely, whoever, given the two rooms of the ell, that each unit had two openings on the side elevations. The first story of the east elevation of the ell has a large picture window flanked by narrow doors on either side, one 6/6, double-hung sash windows, and one large (fixed) picture window. The large picture window and doors were added after 1951 by E. Barry Ryan. The second story has six, 6/6, double-hung sash windows.

The one-story section on the west elevation is four bays wide, with a window/door/window, window fenestration pattern. While this one-story section looks like a porch that was later enclosed, the courses of the brick section match up with those of the ell, suggesting this was an early section of the house. The window in the brick section also has a jackarch and stone sill. The window is a wood, 6/6 double-hung sash window. The doorway has single light transom. The other two windows are modern, 6/6 double-hung sash replacement windows, which replaced single light fixed windows that were failing. The synthetic (vinyl) siding that previously clad this section has been replaced with Hardi-board.

NR #2 Office (Contributing Building)

To the rear of the dwelling (north) is the office. There are two sections of the office. The first section is a metal Quonset-hut type, two bays wide and one room deep. This section rests on a concrete block foundation, and has two bays on the façade, a window and door. The window openings consist of six-light wooden casement windows. The three panel entry door has a full light metal storm door and is sheltered underneath a flat roof portico with two wood posts. The east elevation has shed roof type of dormer projection with four sets of six-light rectangular wooden casement windows. The walls and roof are all corrugated metal. The building dates from the 1950-1960 time period and was added to the farm during the tenure of E. Barry Ryan.



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Between 150,000 to 170,000 Quonset huts were manufactured by the military during World War II, and after the war, surplus Quonsets were sold the public.¹⁷ Numerous examples of Quonset huts were adapted for civilian use across Lexington: as housing at the United States Veterans Hospital on Leestown Road, on the University of Kentucky campus as housing for student veterans and faculty families, and at area schools as classrooms. The first local dealer of Quonset huts appears to have been the firm of Trapp, Wyatt and McDowell, Inc., which opened for business in February 1948.¹⁸ In 1951, Caruthers A. Coleman advertised as the “Authorized Quonset Dealer for the Lexington area,” and embarked on an aggressive marketing campaign aimed at farmers.¹⁹ There were plenty of avenues for a Quonset hut to make its way to a Thoroughbred farm.

The Quonset hut is attached via a one-bay wide hyphen to a later, non-historic addition. This section was built between 1997 and 2002. The façade faces west and has a window/door/window fenestration pattern, with paired and single 1/1 double-hung sash windows. The addition rests on a concrete block foundation and is clad in vinyl siding. It has a side gable asphalt shingle roof.

NR #3 Carriage House (Contributing Building)



The 1.5-story frame carriage house, built in the late 19th century, has been adaptively reused as multiple living units for farm workers. This building was likely built during the ownership period of James H. Kerr. The building rests on a mortared stone foundation and is located on the west side of the entry drive, opposite the main house. It is clad in wood clapboards.

The façade has a window/door/window/door/window fenestration pattern. Although the doors and windows have been replaced, the original opening of the carriage bays is visible, as the wooden lintels along which the doors slide are still in place, and the rest of the openings has been filled in with vertical siding, clearly demarcating the depth and space of the former bay. The original

¹⁷ Survey LA 2015. Los Angeles Citywide Historic Context Statement, Sub-theme: The Quonset Hut, 1941-1965. Electronic document, <https://planning.lacity.org/odocument/ecc893e4-f5dd-4d7d-8034-1132c7d4aed8/The%20Quonset%20Hut%20C%201920-1965.pdf>, accessed June 2026.

¹⁸ “Quonset Huts Firm Opens in Lexington.” *Lexington Leader*, Saturday, February 28, 1948, page 10.

¹⁹ Full page ad, *Lexington Leader*, Wednesday, September 19, 1951, page 15.

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sliding doors, based on a 1952 photograph, were wooden sliding doors with rectangular fixed 8-light panes at the top.

The windows on the first story are now 1/1 double-hung vinyl sash replacement windows with non-operable louvered shutters and appear to have been shortened. The original windows were 6/6 double-hung sash. The hipped roof hay hood originally contained hinged, double wooden doors with 6-lights at the top of each door. The hay hood now has double metal doors with a square fixed light at the top center.

A three-part Palladian-inspired window is located on the south gable end of the carriage house. There are two, one bay wide, hipped roof dormers on the west elevation; one on the original core of the carriage house, and one on the addition.

A one-story, one-bay wide recessed wing is located on the north elevation of the carriage house. This was added to the carriage house between 1975 and 2000. It rests on a poured concrete foundation and is clad in wood clapboards. A recessed opening on the upper story of the north gable end is accessed by an exterior wood staircase. The ground floor of the north elevation has a window/door/window fenestration pattern with 1/1 double-hung vinyl sash windows with simulated muntins, and full-light French doors.

NR #5 Garage (Contributing Building)



The one-story frame, front gable garage is adjacent to the carriage house. It was built between 1925 and 1949. The garage rests on a concrete block foundation and is one bay wide, with a sliding metal garage door on the façade. The side gable roof is clad in asphalt shingles.

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NR #5 Horse Cemetery and Fair Play Bronze Statue (Contributing Site)



The horse cemetery is located some 220 yards north of the main house, on the west side of the entry drive. Joseph Early Widener established the horse cemetery and in 1951, Peter A.B. Widener III, his grandson, moved the graves, markers, and the bronze statue of Fair Play to this site. There are 24 Thoroughbred graves, the most famous being the parents of the famous Man O'War.

Joseph Early Widener commissioned Laura Gardin Fraser of New York to cast a life-size statue of Fair Play, a stallion Widener purchased from the dispersal of Nursery Stud.²⁰ Fair Play was the sire of Man O'War. At the foot of the bronze statue are the graves of Fair Play (1905-1929) and Man O'War's dam, Mahubah (1910-1931).

Other horses interred include:

Chance Shot (1924-1952)
Sickle (1924-1943)
Haste (1923-1944)
La Roseraie (1928-1946)
Offensive (1941-1960)
Peace (1927-1945)
Qu'elle est Belle II (1909-1932)
Rose Pompon (1910-1933)
Stagecraft (1929-1939)
Zephyretta (1922-1948)
Blue Glass (1917-1941)
Nature (1906-1931)
Nipisiquit (1924-1947)
Ormonda (1916-1944)
Quelle Chance (1917-1936)
Stephanie (1925 - ?)
Osmand (1924-1951)

²⁰ Nursery Stud was the farm of August Belmont II, the breeder of Man O'War. The farm was located on Georgetown Road, about four miles from Lexington, on the east side of the road, between the current-day Citation Boulevard and Spurr Road. The dispersal sale was held in 1925.

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During E. Barry Ryan's time at the helm of Normandy Farm, five additional horses were buried in the cemetery:

Alablue (1945-1962)

Bonnie Beryl (1943-1963)

Firm Policy (1959-1985)

Pipette (1944-1960)

Quick Pitch (1960-1953)

NR #6 U-Shaped Yearling Barn (Contributing Building)



The frame U-shaped barn is located at the intersection of the entry drive and the farm road that runs east to west. The barn was built between 1926 and 1927, during the tenure of Joseph E. Widener. It was designed by Horace Trumbauer.

It is likely that this barn was the U-shaped weanling barn discussed in a March 1926 article in the *Lexington Herald*. Two stables and a training track were contracted out to the Lexington firm of McCormick Lumber Company. One of the barns, a training barn, is now located to the north of Normandy Farm, on a parcel known as Clovelly Farm. The U-shaped barn was planned to have 30 stalls (the actual barn has 28) with "rooms for the men caring for the horses and a feed loft over the stalls."²¹ The two barns and track were estimated to cost \$200,000 to construct.

The barn is clad in wood clapboards and rests on a poured concrete foundation. The side gable roof has an overhang on the courtyard side, to shelter the stall openings. The building is arranged around a courtyard and has 28 stalls. Each stall has a sliding wooden door and a hinged, slatted wood screen door on the courtyard side, and six-light hopper windows on both the exterior (pasture side) wall and the courtyard wall. A full loft with rounded, arched windows on the gable ends

²¹ "Widener's Estate Will Be Improved." *The Lexington Herald*, Monday, March 15, 1926, front page.

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spans the entirety of the barn. A sliding wooden door in the central part of the U allows access through the barn to the rear and the west and east stables (NR #7 and 8).

There are six front gable dormers/hay hoods, two to each of the three sections of the U. In the northwest corner of the barn is a feed room, with an interior brick flue and machinery for making/grinding horse feed. One of the pieces of equipment was manufactured by the Gibson Oat Crusher Company of Chicago, patented in 1909. In the interior (southwest) corner of the feed room is a boxed-in winder stair that provides access to the loft. The opposite corner of this section of the barn was used as an office.

NR #7 and NR #8 West and East Stables (Contributing Buildings)



To the west of the U-Shaped Barn (NR #6) are two, identical four-stall stables, built between 1927 and 1937. The frame buildings rest on a poured concrete foundation and are clad in wooden clapboards. The façade has a door/window/door/window/door/window/door/window fenestration pattern and is eight bays wide. The hipped roof of each stable is clad in standing seam metal.

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NR #9 Concrete block shed (Contributing Building)

This one-story concrete block shed is located on the north side of the west stable (NR #7). It was built between 1925 and 1949. It is one-bay wide, with hinged double doors. It has a shed roof clad in metal.

NR #10 Contributing Building Equipment Shed



#9 Concrete Block Shed



#10 Equipment Shed

This three-bay wide shed is located to the north of the West and East stables (NR # 7 and 8). The box frame building is clad in vinyl siding and corrugated metal siding. It has a hipped, asphalt shingle clad roof.

NR #11 Tenant House (Contributing Building)



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This one-story frame house is located east of the U-Shaped Barn (NR #6) and on the north side of the farm road. It was built between 1920 and 1937 and may have been constructed as a two-family unit. The dwelling rests on a poured concrete foundation and is clad in wood clapboards. The six-bay wide house has a window/door/window/window/window/door fenestration pattern on the façade. The three central windows are contained within a projecting section of the façade. The windows are 1/1 double hung sash windows. A small, recessed porch, formed by the overhang of the roof, is located over the western entry door. It is supported by one wooden bracket and a metal post. The multi-hipped roof is clad in asphalt shingles and pierced by two interior brick chimneys.

NR #12 Normandy Barn (Contributing Building)



The Normandy Barn, built in 1927 and designed by Horace Trumbauer, is one of the outstanding 20th century horse barns in the Bluegrass. The L-shaped barn, commissioned by Joseph Early Widener to resemble barns in the Normandy countryside, has 12 stalls, and a 22-foot wide central brick and clay tile clock tower with a conical roof.²² The roof is a gable/jerkinhead combination, clad in tile, with ceramic figures clambering over the slopes. The playful depictions cats, mice, storks, and owls, among other creatures, are said to be good luck and protection for the horses and the farm.

While the tower is original to construction, the clock was not added until 1936. Widener imported the clock and its works from Europe, and it originally chimed “just before and after the hour,” supposed to give farm workers time to come in for lunch as well as sound the time of day.²³ Nancy Polk, who owned the farm from 1997 until her death in 2018, restored the clock as well as some of the roof figurines.

²³ Florence Winkler. “Practical, Expansive, Unusual Barns Dot Blue Grass Farms.” *The Lexington Herald*, Sunday, January 14, 1968, page 96.

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Widener's 1920s training barn, now located on Clovelly Farm, shares some traits with both the Normandy Barn and the U-shaped barn. In a 1926 article in the *Lexington Leader*, Widener noted that he chose the English court yard plan for the training barn, "with a slight overhang in front of the boxes in order to get as much sunshine as possible."²⁴ The south and west elevations of the two wings of the Normandy Barn have deep overhangs; the soffit of the overhang is clad in beadboard. The side wings containing the stalls are 96 feet long. The barn is clad in horizontal wood clapboards while the interior of the stalls are sheathed in oak paneling. Each stall has a door that opens onto the courtyard of the barn, and a door that opens onto the pasture. The interior stalls have one courtyard window and one window facing the pastures, while the corner stalls have three windows.

The one-bay wide tower has a double door entry on the ground level, with wood, half-glass, half-panel storm doors sheltering solid metal doors, all painted the signature green and white colors of Normandy Farm. The floor is poured concrete. The front gable porch over the doorway extends out toward the courtyard. Wood posts with Y-bases support the porch, which was extended a few feet during the filming of the 2003 movie *Seabiscuit*.²⁵ The pasture side of the tower has three, 20-light steel casement windows on the ground floor, and two identical casement windows on the upper level. Metal, fire-proof doors on the interior of the tower's second story provide access into the lofts over the wings. A brick chimney pierces the tower's roof on the south side.

The ground floor of the tower served as an office for a watchman and as storage for supplies. The firebox for the original wood burning fireplace on that level has been closed off, and a gas heater inserted into the stack in its place. The upper level of the tower is given over to the clock work, which arrived at the farm in "18 heavy boxes...[of] weights, cogs, pulleys, and discs."²⁶

The courtyard in front of the Normandy barn was originally fenced off but is now open.

NR #13 Tobacco barn (Contributing Building)



²⁴ C.J. Fitzgerald. "Elmendorf." *The Thoroughbred Record*, Saturday, November 20, 1926. (This article also appeared in *The Thoroughbred Record*.)

²⁵ The Normandy Barn served as War Admiral's stable in the movie.

²⁶ "Normandy Clock, Brought From France by Joseph Widener, Now Adorns Tower of French Type Barn at Elmendorf Farm." *The Lexington Herald*, Sunday, May 10, 1936, page 27.

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This six-bent tobacco barn was built between 1952 and 1956. It has nine stalls and a stripping room on the west elevation. The barn is clad in board and batten boxing and has a standing seam metal roof. Sliding, half-glass (12-light) and half panel doors are located on the gable ends. The stalls have single light replacement hopper windows. The stripping room has an exterior brick flue on the west gable end.

NR #14 Tenant House #2 (Contributing Building)

This tenant house, which faces east toward Hughes Lane, was built between 1900 and 1924. The one-story frame dwelling rests on a stone foundation and is clad in horizontal wood clapboards. The original house was just three bays wide, with a window/door/window fenestration pattern on the façade. Between 1952 and 1956, in the ownership period of E. Barry Ryan, one-story, one-bay wide side gable wings were added to either side (north and south elevations). These wings are built on concrete block foundations. A one-story, one-bay wide shed roof addition extends from the rear of the central block of the house. The windows are all 1/1 double-hung sash vinyl replacement windows, apart from the single-light windows on either side of the shouldered, exterior brick chimney on the north gable end. The central entry door is a half-light, half-panel wood door with a metal storm door, and is flanked by eight-light sidelights. A front gable portico on wood posts extends out over the entry door. An interior brick chimney is located on the downslope of the central portion of the house. The side gable roof is clad in asphalt shingles. A modern wooden deck and accessibility ramp are located on the rear of the house.



#14 Tenant House 2



#15 Water Gate

NR #15 Water Gate (Contributing Structure)

There are two metal water gates on either side of the entry drive. The gate itself is a metal arch, with square metal rods hanging down from hooks and chains, with another horizontal member at the bottom near the water.

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NR #16 Bridge (Contributing Structure)

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The bridge over Elkhorn Creek dates to the Joseph E. Widener period, likely 1925-1935. It is a single span, poured concrete bridge with angled, recessed panel wing walls on the north and south sides, and an arched, recessed panel central section that spans the creek. Mortared stone abutments are visible on the east side of the bridge.



#16 Bridge



#17 Stone Walls

NR #17 Stone Walls (Contributing Structure)

The dry laid stone walls that border Paris Pike have been a feature of the farm since the 19th century and are mentioned in M.A. Kenney's sale ad of 1878.

NR #18 Pastures (Contributing Site)



The landscape is an integral part of a gentleman farm. Fields or pastures, fenced by open rail board fence on the interior of the farm, and stone fences and wood plank fences on the perimeter or roadside of the farm, are not only scenic, but a necessity with livestock and especially with very expensive Thoroughbred horses.

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NR #19 Tenant House (Contributing Building)



Built in the second half of the 19th century, this one-story frame, central passage house is noted on the 1877 and 1891 property owner's maps as the residence of James B. McCreary and in 1904 as belonging to John T. Hughes.²⁷ The Hughes farm was one parcel James B. Haggin was unable to purchase for his Elmendorf holdings; it was later bought by Joseph E. Widener and became part of the tract sold to E. Barry Ryan in 1951. In the 1940s, this dwelling was noted as Elmendorf Farm's "Mechanic's Cottage."²⁸ In the first decade of the 21st century (between 2000 and 2002), this dwelling was moved back from the roadway as mitigation for a FHWA-funded Paris Pike project. The dwelling was documented prior to the move, which was part of the Section 106 mitigation for the project.

While this house later became a tenant house for the Hughes farm, it was likely originally the main dwelling for the farm owner and became an ancillary dwelling after the construction of a new, larger house.

The vernacular Gothic Revival dwelling is clad in vinyl siding. The foundation was originally dry laid stone on the front part of the house and the rear ell; the enclosed back porch rested on brick piers. The house now rests on a continuous poured concrete foundation. The central cross gable on the façade contains a diamond shaped light. The five-bay wide house has a window/window/door/window/window fenestration pattern. The windows are 1/1 double-hung vinyl replacement sash windows with faux muntins. A shed roof porch on turned and chamfered wood posts extends across the three central bays on the façade. The porch floor is poured concrete. An enclosed, two-bay wide, shed roof porch extends off of the east side of the ell. The side gable roof of the house is pierced by two interior brick chimneys on the gable end.

²⁷ The house was built after the Civil War and prior to 1877.

²⁸ HABS documentation, Kurt Fiegel, 2001.

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NR #20 Horse Barn (Non-contributing Building)

This frame 22-stall horse barn was built between 2004 and 2006 and is non-historic.



#20 Horse Barn



#21 Lunge Ring

NR #21 Lunge Ring (Non-contributing Structure)

This circular lunge ring is non-historic. It has a wood plank enclosure.

NR #22 Kenney Family Cemetery (Contributing Site)



The Kenney Family Cemetery is located in a paddock to the east of the domestic complex (NR #s 1-4). The cemetery is surrounded by a dry laid stone fence approximately four feet high. There is a metal gate at the south end of the fence. The cemetery is currently overgrown and only one tombstone is visible, but previous documentation recorded three burials. The legible stone is for two of the children of Robert P. Kenney, and his second wife, Sarah Cartmell Trumbull Kenney: Elijah C. Kenney, born November 17, 1824, died 1832; and Maryann C. Kenney, born June 17, 1832, died 1832. According to the Kentucky Historic Resources Inventory form completed in

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1980, another son, Robert P. Kenney, is also buried in the cemetery. He was born in 1819 and died of typhoid on September 6, 1851.

Given the size of the walled enclosure, it is likely that there are many more unmarked graves both within and outside of the stone walls. It was not uncommon for enslaved African Americans to be buried near the family plot yet located outside of its walls. Since this was a farm with a sizeable antebellum African American presence, there are certainly unmarked graves of African American peoples on Normandy Farm.

Changes to Normandy Farm since the End of the Period of Significance

The changes observed at Normandy Farm since 1972 are minimal. The most recognizable aspect of fields, pastures, and runs of stone and board fence, remain unchanged. The experience of driving past Normandy Farm on historic Paris Pike might have changed due to the expansion of the road, but not from any change in the landscape.

The expansiveness of the main house, since Kerr's 1880s updates, allowed for the historic and recent functions of the house to be housed without the need for any additions, which are often observed on other rural Kentucky houses. The carriage house, added during Kerr's tenure, had received a one-bay addition that does not detract from the original core of the building.

The supporting resources of the farm added in the early 20th century are still extant with a high level of intactness. One new barn (NR #20) and a lunge ring (NR #21) have been added to the farm, but the barn is sympathetic new construction that blends in well with the existing historic landscape.

Evaluation of Resources

Contributing resources at Normandy Farm are those which date from the 1840-1976 POS and that retain a sufficient degree of materials and design as defined below. Non-contributing resources are those constructed after the end of the POS or those resources with such severe amounts of change that they no longer help us experience the historic landscape. The resources are evaluated according to National Register Bulletin No. 15, *How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation*.

The following criteria were utilized in the evaluation of properties' **contributing** status:

- Contributing properties must have been constructed between 1840-1976, the farm's Period of Significance;
- Contributing properties must demonstrate a strong association with the historic evolution of Normandy Farm, most notably through location and setting;
- A level of change is expected on any historic farm, but contributing properties must retain substantial character-defining features, such as massing, form, fenestration arrangement, and stylistic detail to add to the character of the district.

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All historic properties in the district have undergone alteration since their construction. As a whole, Normandy Farm retains a high level of integrity of its setting, location, design, materials, workmanship, and association to qualify for the National Register.

The following criteria were used to give a **non-contributing** status to individual properties:

- Properties that post-date the 1976 end of the POS.

Resource Inventory

The Resource Inventory which follows describes the properties found at Normandy Farm. The inventory table that follows contains several abbreviations:

- The National Register Numbers (NR #) are the resource numbers referred to in Sections 7 and 8 and are keyed to the map accompanying the nomination.
- The Date is the approximate date of construction, using the codes utilized by the Kentucky Heritage Council. If an exact date of construction is known, it is included listed.
- The height of the building is in the "HT" column.
- The status of the building is either "C" for contributing or "NC" for non-contributing.

NR #	Name	Date	Type	Material	HT	Status
1	Main House	1804, 1878	Building	Brick	2	C
2	Office	1951-1955	Building	Metal and frame	1	C
3	Carriage House	1875-1899	Building	Frame	1.5	C
4	Garage	1925-1949	Building	Frame	1	C
5	Horse cemetery	1900-1924	Site	Stone	N/A	C
6	U-Shaped Barn	1926-1927	Building	Frame	1.5	C
7	West Stable	1926-1927	Building	Frame	1	C
8	East Stable	1926-1927	Building	Frame	1	C
9	Concrete block shed	1950-1974	Building	Concrete block	1	C
10	Equipment Shed	1925-1949	Building	Frame	1	C
11	Tenant House	1925-1949	Building	Frame	1	C
12	Normandy Barn	1927	Building	Stucco	1.5	C
13	Tobacco Barn/Stable	1952-1956	Building	Frame	1	C
14	Tenant House	1900-1924	Building	Frame	1	C
15	Water Gate	1925-1949	Structure	Poured concrete	N/A	C
16	Bridge	1926-1937	Structure	Stone	N/A	C
17	Stone Walls	1900-1924	Structure	Stone	N/A	C
18	Field and pastures	N/A	Site	N/A	N/A	C
19	Tenant House	1850-1874	Building	Frame	1	C
20	Horse Barn	2004-2006	Building	Frame	1	NC

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NR #	Name	Date	Type	Material	HT	Status
21	Lunge Ring		Structure	Frame	N/A	NC
22	Kenney Family Cemetery	1834-1870	Site	Stone	N/A	C

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8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

- ☐ A. Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- ☐ B. Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- ☒ C. Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- ☐ D. Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

- ☐ A. Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes
- ☐ B. Removed from its original location
- ☐ C. A birthplace or grave
- ☐ D. A cemetery
- ☐ E. A reconstructed building, object, or structure
- ☐ F. A commemorative property
- ☐ G. Less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years

Areas of Significance

Agriculture

Architecture

Period of Significance

1865-1976

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Significant Dates

1878, 1927, 1951

Significant Person

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Trumbauer, Horace (architect)
McCormick Lumber Company (builder)

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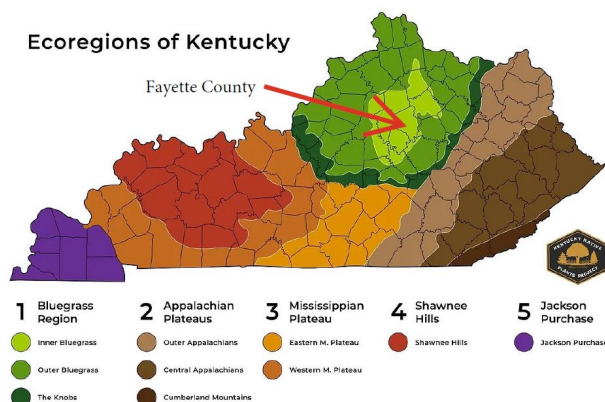
Statement of Significance

Summary Paragraph

Normandy Farm (FA-560) meets the first term of National Register Criterion C for its significance as a type of construction, a Gentleman Farm. A Gentleman Farm in Kentucky can have historic significance and will have a distinct architectural expression. Normandy Farm exhibits the classic features that define the type, and it has significant associations with agriculture in Fayette County in the early 20th century. It is very highly identified with the Thoroughbred horse and purebred livestock industry in Kentucky during the tenure of James B. Haggin, Joseph and Peter Widener, and E. Barry Ryan. Its significance will be evaluated within the historic context, “Gentleman Farmers in Fayette County, Kentucky, 1840-1975.” The NRHP Areas of Significance under which the property qualifies are Agriculture and Architecture.

Historic Context: Gentleman Farmers in Fayette County, Kentucky, 1840-1975

Fayette County was created by the Virginia legislature in 1780, one of three counties partitioned within the area that would become Kentucky 12 years later. The county was named for General Lafayette, and the county seat of Lexington was formed in 1782. The county is located in the Inner Bluegrass physiographic region, which has extremely fertile soils, and is “undoubtedly the best agricultural land in the state.”²⁹ The Inner Bluegrass today is a 7-county area, with Fayette County at its center, shown in light green below:



Many of the earliest settlers of European and African backgrounds to populate Kentucky migrated into the state in the 1780s, with land grants given as payment for service in the Revolutionary War. Lacking established urban areas, the primary occupation would necessarily be that of farming, initially for subsistence. Many land grant holders came without intention of staying—content to sell their land to speculators. Those who stayed engaged in farming on whatever scale they could support. Such a tidal wave of people came seeking their fortunes that by 1792, Kentucky joined the union as the 15th state.

²⁹ Karl Raitz, “The Bluegrass” in *Kentucky: A Regional Geography*, ed. P.P. Karam (Dubuque: Kendall/Hunt Publishing Company, 1973), 53.

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The Inner Bluegrass area of Kentucky provided the best opportunities for anyone with sufficient land and agricultural know-how to erect something akin to Virginia's plantation system, but settlement-era agriculture in Kentucky (1780-1820) was still grounded in survival.

The beginnings of farming in Central Kentucky

Settlement-era Lexington, which by the 1820s was already enjoying the moniker of the "Athens of the West," had been described in 1815 as promising to be the "great inland city of the Western World."³⁰ Purchasing a farm in Fayette County in 1825 was a much larger investment than buying land in say, Montgomery County, Kentucky, in the state's Outer Bluegrass region. And purchasing land that had already been somewhat improved cost even more.

Holders of large military warrants, or plantation owners from Virginia, could afford to wait until the land had been made hospitable for their arrival. This meant a great deal of time and labor expended not in agriculture but in constructing a farm. Settlement-era farms in Kentucky had to be built, a process of clearing land, removing rocks, and establishing fences and lines. Various figures have been offered as to how much land a man could clear – from three acres a month, minus the stumps, to a more likely estimate of 15 acres a year.³¹ Robert P. Kenney no doubt benefitted from the Bird family's work on clearing the land – or rather, the work of the Bird's enslaved labor force. His coffers could then be directed toward buying more land and investing in livestock.

Fortescue Cuming's account of traveling through Kentucky in 1810 provides an insightful look into the beginnings of Fayette County's strong agricultural traditions and economic growth. The "labyrinth of cross paths" he followed due to the lack of a reliable road network allowed him views of a favorable and impressive cultivated countryside. This early 19th century "central Kentucky culture and economy...enabled by land so rich that farmers soon produced commodities – tobacco, hemp, grains, and livestock – in excess of local market demand." High yields of crops and plenty of cattle, swine, and mules, "elevated Lexington to the status of a central place for industry, wholesaling, and retailing."³²

Although Lexington's growth and prosperity befitted early 19th century farmers like the Birds and the Kenneys, the energy needed to transport many types of surplus products was prohibitive. Farming in Fayette County initially followed the model practiced in Virginia, a diversified program of crops, livestock and a major cash crop, chiefly, tobacco. This approach to farming in central part of Kentucky was frustrated by the lack of improved roads and navigable waterways. These barriers made the exportation of tobacco nearly impossible, since the only market was at New Orleans. Should hogsheads of tobacco from Kentucky actually make the arduous journey, the return was very low, only two to three cents per pound.³³ Still, dark fired tobacco did emerge as a valuable antebellum cash crop in the western part of the state, where planters had access to the

³⁰ J. Winston Coleman, Jr, *Stage Coach Days in the Bluegrass* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1995), 30.

³¹ Paul W. Gates, "Problems of Agricultural History 1790-1840" *Agricultural History* 1 (January 1972), 47.

³² Karl Raitz and Nancy O'Malley. *Kentucky's Frontier Highway: Historical Landscapes Along the Maysville Road*. (Lexington, Kentucky: The University Press of Kentucky, 201), 62-63.

³³ Richard Troutman, *The Social and Economic Structure of Kentucky Agriculture, 1850-1860*, (Lexington, Kentucky: Dissertation, University of Kentucky, 1958), 81.

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Ohio River, and burley tobacco in the Inner Bluegrass overtook the dark fired tobacco after the first crop was harvested on the farm of George Barkley in 1863.³⁴

Farmers in the Inner Bluegrass, however, quickly realized that it was more advantageous to use the rich land for grazing livestock than plowing it under for a soil-draining crop like tobacco. Livestock made better use of the area's high quality soil than tobacco did, and while hemp was profitable, livestock required a smaller labor force.

Though the Thoroughbred horse is touted as the symbol of Kentucky today, in the nineteenth century, cattle held that honor. The cattle industry developed rapidly in the Bluegrass. The first cattle in the colonies, descendants of animals from Great Britain and Ireland, were improved little as they multiplied. In the 18th century, a better-quality strain of cattle accompanied the southward bound settlers from Pennsylvania into Maryland, northern Virginia and the Valley of Virginia. The grasslands of the Shenandoah Valley treated cattle well, and a short-horned milking breed was introduced during the Revolution. A valley man is first credited with bringing purebred cattle of both beef and milking types to the Bluegrass. Mathew Patton moved to Clark County with his small herd of Gough and Miller grade cattle, whose descendants would improve herds across the Bluegrass.³⁵

In 1817, Lewis Sanders, a Fayette County farmer who in 1816 had held the first livestock show in the state, imported some English cattle. Together with imported cattle purchased by Henry Clay, they would intermingle with the Gough Miller stock and produce the Kentucky shorthorn, a breed that during the 19th century was celebrated and held in high esteem and favor, not to mention being the favorite subject of many a portrait painter.³⁶

Mules were also a vital part of Kentucky's antebellum agricultural economy. Horses' lowly, sometime gangly cousin, the mule, bolstered the state's economy, trade and image. George Washington began improving the breed in the late 18th century and Henry Clay introduced the first imported Catalonian (Spanish) jack into Kentucky in 1832.³⁷ The desire to improve the bloodlines gained momentum in Kentucky, and in the first part of the nineteenth century, "improved lineages of jackasses, propagated solely for the siring of mules, began to emerge."³⁸

Though a mainstay of Central Kentucky agriculture, most mules raised in Kentucky did not stay in Kentucky but were exported to other states. In 1838, some 4,396 horses and 3,177 mules valued at \$227,450 passed through the Cumberland Gap. But it was the cotton and sugar markets of the

³⁴ Terri Boggs, Mac Cooley, John DeAtley, and Kathy Siler. George Barkley Farm. National Register nomination form. Available from Kentucky Heritage Council, Frankfort, or National Register of Historic Places, Washington D.C. NRIS: 03000259. George W. Barkley Farm. Nomination to the National Register of Historic Places.

³⁵ Lewis Cecil Gray, *History of Agriculture in the Southern United States to 1860*. (New York: Peter Smith, 1941), 230; Clark, *Agrarian Kentucky*, 28.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 28-31.

³⁷ Thomas Clark, "Livestock Trade Between Kentucky and the South, 1840-1860," Register of the Kentucky State Historical Society XXVII (September 1929), 569.

³⁸ G. K. Renner, "The Mule in Missouri Agriculture, 1821-1950" *Missouri Historical Review* 4 (July 1980): 435.

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deep south that made the rearing of mules “one of the most profitable occupations engaged in by the American farmer.”³⁹

Gentleman farmers can be identified by several characteristics. Such men were usually classically educated, and had the means and motivation to travel, further their learning, and often subscribed and wrote for agricultural journals. Constant improvement in their agricultural endeavors, such as field rotation, the enhancement of soil and livestock, but also the upgrading and beautification of their physical landscape, would set them apart from the subsistence farmer in Kentucky. Instead of farming to live, as most Kentuckians did, gentleman farmers had other interests or occupations, such as politics or law. Gentleman farmers modeled themselves after English and Virginia gentry; this emulation required the money to create such a social image. Finally, Raitz’s criteria stipulate that gentleman farmers are, above all, gentlemen, and not hands-on farmers. They did not perform manual labor and often owned the largest number of workers within their communities.⁴⁰

Gentleman farmers were able to locate their farms in fertile, desirable land, and they developed their farming operations with an eye to every detail. This included manicured parkland, sturdy, well-built fences, and a main dwelling that was architecturally fashionable and impressive. The entire picture was vital to the gentleman farmer, and to that end, he focused on all buildings, including barns, workers’ quarters, tenant houses, and other outbuildings to support his diversified farming operation, feed a large work force, and produce a setting that enhanced his status. Overall, the gentleman farm was a thoughtful interpretation of both need and fashion, unlike the make-do dwellings and occasionally haphazard farmstead arrangements of the average Kentucky farmer.

Antebellum Gentleman farmers raised a great many mules. Regional newspapers in the 1840s and 1850s were peppered with account of jacks at stud at many well-known farms. Between 1830 and 1860, Brutus Clay of Bourbon County “marketed a mix of hogs, cattle, horses and mules.”⁴¹ Hogs would constitute a vital role in agriculture that transcended gentleman, middling and yeoman farming types. Swine could be found on almost every farm in the Bluegrass regardless of farm size, because hogs were hardy animals that required less care than other livestock and could transport themselves to available markets, eking out sustenance in the most unlikely of spots. For these reasons, pork was an important staple in the antebellum diet. Unlike beef, pork would keep once it was salted and cured. Salt-pork, cured ham and bacon were mainstays of the mid-nineteenth century diet, and an important facet for many a farm’s bottom line.

The 1830s were a time of change for Kentucky agriculture and the country as a whole. The years between 1830 and 1860 should be remembered as a time of great advances in agriculture, architecture and society in the Bluegrass. Depressions, panics and disease, as well as the specter of slavery marked those 30 years; these realities of life did not vanish behind the cultivated fields, manicured landscapes, and fine houses.

³⁹ Clark, “Livestock Trade Between Kentucky and the South, 1840-1860,” 570.

⁴⁰ Janie-Rice Brother. *The Agricultural and Architectural Landscapes of Two Antebellum Montgomery County Farms.* (Unpublished Master’s Thesis, University of Kentucky, 2003),

⁴¹ Clay, *Agrarian Kentucky*, 28.

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Fayette County farmers did not operate in a vacuum. The 1820s were a seemingly prosperous period in American economic history. The initial settlement period was over, and the War of 1812 “triggered a commercial and agricultural expansion.”⁴² Four years of growth followed, and bank after bank was chartered in the United States. There were 88 banks in operation in 1811: by 1818, there were 392 chartered banks in America. Very few men could be characterized as professional bankers. Most were “well connected men, more versed in politics than finance” who sought bank charters not to invest in banks, but to borrow from them.⁴³

The years after the war, a time of rapid expansion and well-being, not to mention financial optimism, would guide the business operations of many Bluegrass farmers who came of age during that time. The War of 1812 brought growth and prosperity, leading to over-dependence on credit due to the rapid purchase of land and human workers, leading to a depression that left many harboring a distrust of banks, the government, and credit. The Panic of 1819 was brought on primarily by a slump in European demand for American grain and debt, and instigated falling prices, a sharp slide in land values, and many debtors defaulting on their loans.

While livestock was a very important segment of antebellum agriculture, crops were a necessity – especially Indian corn. Wheat, corn, and oats were commonly grown on Fayette County farms.

Hemp was an important product for the colonies of America, but after the Revolution, as new lands were opened up, hemp cultivation increased. The fertility of the Bluegrass soil, though not the climate, was well suited for the crop. But hemp was by no means a universal favorite for antebellum farmers. There were main areas of production – in 1859, Fayette, Woodford, Garrard and Montgomery Counties led the state in hemp production. But the number of farmers that grew large quantities of hemp remained low, as it was a labor-intensive crop, and substantial yields required large acreage. Census records note that counties with large proportions of slaves to whites were also the counties with large yields of hemp.⁴⁴

Robert P. Kenney, the second-known owner of Normandy Farm, had a large hemp operation prior to 1850. In 1847, the Lexington Weekly Press reported that one of Kenney’s barns, containing 20 tons of hemp, a buggy, and three horses, burned. This event marked a change in Kenney’s farming operation, from hemp cultivation to a focus on pedigreed livestock, including horses.

Hemp was an incredibly labor-intensive crop, and almost solely the province of large landholders. Following the 1847 fire, Kenney did not report growing any hemp in the 1850 and 1860 agricultural census. While the number of enslaved people he owned did not decrease, their labor was not engaged in the production of hemp. This move might well have enabled Kenney’s farm to hold its value and continue operating at a high level, both economically and socially, after Emancipation and the Civil War.

⁴² Daniel Feller, *The Jacksonian Promise: America 1815-1840* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1995), 39.

⁴³ Ibid., 41.

⁴⁴ Ibid., 92, 109.

United States Census Returns, 1850 and 1860.

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By 1850, Kenney had expanded his agricultural holdings to 800 acres of improved land valued at \$48,000. He was still heavily invested in mules (80 enumerated in the 1850 census) and had 24 horses. Kenney's livestock was valued at \$18,360.00 in the 1850 census. In addition horses and mules, he had 30 blooded cattle, 84 sheep, and 150 swine. By 1860, Kenney was "retired" and living with his youngest son, William M. Kenney. His real estate was valued at \$46,000, while his personal state was recorded at \$18,880.00.

A comparison of Kentucky and the other slave-holding states in the Union in 1859 reveals the agricultural prowess of the state: it ranked first in the production of horses, mules, rye and barley; second in the labor-intensive crop of hemp, corn wheat, and tobacco, and sheep; third in swine; and fourth in the raising of cattle.⁴⁵

By 1860, Kentucky had become home to a substantial number of larger farms--24,095 farms of 100-499 acres. Census enumerators found 1,078 farms of 500-999 acres, and 166 farms over 1,000 acres. Farms of more than 1,000 acres made up only one-fifth of one percent of Kentucky farms. The 1860 census reports Fayette County's average farm as 98 acres. This average belied the true wealth that had been accumulating on Fayette's landscape. These larger Fayette County farms had become establishments run by an emergent class, the Gentleman Farmers, who sat at the top of the agricultural hierarchy of Kentucky's rich Bluegrass region. The Inner Bluegrass region is a 6-county area, with Fayette County lying at its center.

Gentleman Farms

An understanding for antebellum gentleman farmers in the Bluegrass is established in Dr. Karl Raitz's context study "The Gentleman Farm and the Landscape of Kentucky's Bluegrass Region."⁴⁶ Raitz's gentleman farms context focuses on descriptions in period literature to arrive at a standard for a gentleman farmer. These abstracts from period literature provide a context for these farmers and their farming operations. Overall, the gentleman farm was associated with the agrarian ideal supported by Thomas Jefferson, and later such tastemakers as Andrew Jackson Downing and Alexander Jackson Davis. A Gentleman Farm was not just a type of property. Being a Gentleman Farmer was to aspire to a way of life in the 19th century, and to follow a particular set of virtues.

Some consideration should also be given to the demographics of central Kentucky and especially Fayette County. Established patterns of migration and diffusion show that a majority of settlers came from the Piedmont and Valley regions of the Carolinas and Virginia, where they were familiar with the traditions of the Tidewater – traditions that were based on the English manor.⁴⁷

Gentleman farms were more prevalent in the Inner Bluegrass counties due to the agricultural economies of those communities in comparison to Outer Bluegrass counties. The Inner Bluegrass

⁴⁵ Lowell H. Harrison and James C. Klotter. *A New History of Kentucky*. (Lexington, Kentucky: The University Press of Kentucky, 1997), 138.

⁴⁶ Karl Raitz, "The Gentleman Farm and the Landscape of Kentucky's Bluegrass Region." On file at the Kentucky Heritage Council.

⁴⁷ Ibid, 50.

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has the best ratio of desirable land in the region, and gentleman farmers, having usually inherited their land or received it during the settlement period, were centered around the Inner Bluegrass. The central counties were settled sooner and were much more populous early on than the Outer Bluegrass counties, and their county boundaries changed very little after initial settlement. Their economic structure, therefore, had ample time to mature.

In the Inner Bluegrass Counties that surround Fayette County, several outstanding farms gave shape to the concept of the gentleman farmer, and the gentleman farm. Robert A. Alexander (1819-1867) of Woodburn Farm sought to create a parklike environment at his Woodford County farm. Other wealthy Kentucky landowners, like Brutus J. Clay (1808-1878) of Bourbon County and Robert Wilmot Scott (1808-1884) of Franklin County fashioned their farms after English manors, and this careful arrangement of land and buildings filtered down to the movers and shakers of the early 20th century Thoroughbred industry.

The estates of gentleman farmers were rarely seen from the road but instead hidden in a carefully orchestrated blend of parkland and woodland. This practice wasn't limited, of course, to wealthy Kentucky agriculturists. In the mid-nineteenth century, the advice of agricultural writers and journalists argued against the placement of a house near or oriented to the road.

Solon Robinson, a respected agriculturist of the nineteenth century, visited Kentucky in 1841, and his observations of the landscape bear witness to Allen's advice. He noted that travelers never saw "the best houses" i.e., gentleman farms, as they were located "back from the road and the way of approach as generally through one of the woodland pastures."

This could be for several reasons, the most overriding due to necessity, not fashion. Most gentleman farmers obtained their land through land grants of military warrants. Brutus Clay, for example, received his land from his father, Green Clay, as it was part of a military warrant. The land had to be improved, and the log cabin built originally was located in the center of the farm, near a reliable water source, and far from any known trace. The haphazard nature of land acquisition during the settlement era also influenced placement of dwellings on the large tracts of land that would later become antebellum gentleman farms.

Gentleman farmers, by and large, had no need for the road as far as it being a conscious part of the symbolism of the grandness of their estates.⁴⁸ They did, however, have a need for the manicured parkland that obscured their dwellings from view and spoke volumes to the passerby about the owner's wealth and status. Their isolation in and of itself was impressive.

But in the case of farms along the Maysville to Lexington Turnpike, the road was vital in supporting the growth and wealth of the farms lining its path. The development of a modern road system paralleled agricultural growth. Two years into Robert P. Kenney's ownership of Normandy Farm, the Maysville and Lexington Turnpike was incorporated (for the second time). When the road was finished in 1835, Kenney was well-positioned to take advantage of the most heavily

⁴⁸ Roads, especially when improved, were of course essential for the travel of both two and four legged creatures.

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travelled section of the 67-mile turnpike – the portion between Lexington and Paris, upon which his farm fronted.⁴⁹

After the Civil War, gentleman farms in the Inner Bluegrass faced a changed labor force and a growing interest (and preference) for a more focused, less diversified type of farming operation. Enslaved workers were replaced, in many cases, by freed African Americans. While Shorthorn Cattle, sheep, and bluegrass seed cultivation found favor on many farms in the Bluegrass in the late nineteenth century, in Fayette County a growing number of farms began to shift to what we now know as “horse farms.” This movement further heightened the difference between the Fayette County Gentleman Farm type and other farm types elsewhere in the Inner and Outer Bluegrass Region.

Popularity of Horse Racing in Fayette County

Though certainly appreciated by importing blooded stock, cattle would not attain the same iconic status in the antebellum Bluegrass as did the horse. First indispensable as transportation, and then as a tool to break the land for farming, horses blended in almost unnoticed in the landscape. Mules were a huge export for Kentucky in the antebellum period, and much better as work animals, but mules did not command the same cultural status as the horse. Almost everyone owned a horse, even if they were not landowners. In the early days of the Commonwealth, 92% of taxpayers owned a horse. But most of these horses were not racehorses (even if their riders often raced them).

Racing and breeding for speed occupied men with the money to pursue such goals. The Kentucky Jockey Club was organized in 1797 in Lexington and the famous racehorse Lexington foaled at Dr. Elisha Warfield’s farm in 1850.⁵⁰ Racing was a spectator sport, and many Kentucky county seats established racetracks in the first half of the 19th century, which thankfully kept fast horses and reckless riders from racing on city and town streets.

The breeding of “horses for the turf” and the rapt attention to pedigrees was the purview of a select group of Kentucky farmers, but even most of those landowners and farmers bred racehorses as part of a larger varied farm operation. The concentration on purebred horse lines and breeding commercially in Kentucky prior to the Civil War may have been epitomized by Robert Alexander, a gentleman farmer.

For a few decades before and after the Civil War, Robert Aitcheson Alexander of Woodburn Farm in Woodford County, adjacent to Fayette’s east, was the most famous horse breeder in America. On his 2,700-acre farm, inherited from his father, Alexander raised purebred sheep and Shorthorn cattle. He also created a nursery for running and harness horses.

His attention to pedigrees would become the norm as horse racing shifted to a Northeast focus in the last two decades of the 19th century. According to some followers of the Turf, Alexander

⁴⁹ Raitz and O’Malley, 66, 87.

⁵⁰ Harrison and Klotter. *A New History of Kentucky*, 136-137.

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founded the Thoroughbred industry in Kentucky – it would be more accurate to say he refined and modernized an existing industry.⁵¹

The aesthetic of Woodburn was also important to other farms in the Bluegrass. The design principles and pastoral landscape, in particular, would influence future generations of horse farms. Alexander's youth in England and Europe shaped his ideas of how a "proper" farm should look. These farms emphasized the style, scale, and siting of the main house, fencing, roads, the landscape, and the placement and type of outbuildings.

The idea of the English manor resulted in Alexander ripping out old split rail fences, and replacing them with plank fences made from oak, and stone fences along the perimeter of his farm. An 1857 account of Alexander's fence building along the Old Frankfort Pike described these important landscape elements as "constructed in the best possible manner."⁵² Alexander also remade the landscape around Woodburn, in addition to updating the existing house. In 1904, it was noted that "the English plan is recognized in the landscape gardening, in the blossoming hedge and avenues of great trees which beautify the approaches to Woodburn."⁵³

The Postbellum Horse Industry

The North/South divide of the Civil War gave way to an "East versus West" struggle as soon as the late 1860s. Although Kentucky's "western" status had vanished decades before the Civil War, the rivalry between wealthy New York and New Jersey interests and Kentucky horsemen persisted. The very terms "East and West" for decades after the war related to a power struggle between New Yorkers and Kentuckians over control of Thoroughbred racing."⁵⁴

Beginning in the 1870s, small groups of wealthy northern businessman began horse farms in Kentucky. Much like the executives who bought resource rights and established coal and timber operations in Eastern Kentucky, these men sought to take advantage of the rich soil to produce healthy, fast racehorses – without really ever becoming part of the local community.

In 1894, a group of 50 wealthy and upper-class men hailing from New York, New Jersey, Delaware, and Philadelphia, met in order to control and regulate the sport of horse racing by forming the Jockey Club. These men, like their counterparts 30 years earlier who took Thoroughbred racing from "regional popularity in the South to prominence as a national and commercialized sport,"⁵⁵ would change the sport of racing and breeding in America. The Jockey

⁵¹ Amber Fogle Sergeant, "The Pastime of Millions": James B. Haggin's Elmendorf Farm and the Commercialization of Pedigree Animal Breeding, 1897-1920. (Unpublished dissertation, University of Kentucky, 2012), 129-130.

⁵² Carolyn Murray-Wooley and Karl Raitz. *Rock Fences of the Bluegrass*. (Lexington, Kentucky: The University Press of Kentucky, 1992), 80.

⁵³ Thomas A. Knight and Nancy Lewis Greene. *Country Estates of the Blue Grass*. (Lexington, Kentucky: Henry Clay Press, 1973 reprint of the 1904 original), 23.

⁵⁴ Mary Jean Wall. *How Kentucky Became Southern*. (Lexington, Kentucky: The University Press of Kentucky, 2010), 21.

⁵⁵ Wall, *How Kentucky Became Southern*, 27.

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Club placed control of horse racing in the hands of elite racing interests in the East.⁵⁶ Those very Easterners, like August Belmont II, would purchase or rent Kentucky farms for their Thoroughbred nurseries, and improve their stables.

Joseph E. Widener, later owner of Elmendorf Farm, and one of those Eastern elite, was elected to the Jockey Club in 1909 and served as steward and vice-chairman. E. Barry Ryan, the trainer/owner of Normandy Farm, was also a member of the Jockey Club.

Although the “Eastern invasion” had already begun – Belmont’s Nursery Stud Farm in Kentucky was founded in the last quarter of the 19th century, the native Kentucky horsemen railed against the formation of the Jockey Club. In the December 1, 1894 edition of the *Southern Planter*, Elmendorf Farm’s owner Cornelius Enright attacked the Anti-Pool Law in New York, judging it to have a “more disastrous bearing on the great horse breeding center of Kentucky than on any section of the United States.”⁵⁷ Consequently, Enright distanced himself from the Eastern racing aristocracy, railing against the racing fraternity and some of the Big Associations. “What should have been a place and means of recreation and pleasure got to be a monopoly and simply a money-making scheme,” Enright said.⁵⁸

The Changing Face of the Gentleman Farmer in the 20th Century

While the main design principles of the gentleman farm as laid out by Raitz persisted well into the 20th century, the farmer himself, especially in Fayette County, began to change. According to Raitz's context, gentleman farmers did not make themselves such, but rather were born into that role, and accepted it, with all the trappings and devices necessary to maintain the socially acceptable image.

Beginning in the late 19th century, the gentleman farmer increasingly began to be a landowner whose wealth was derived from businesses far removed from agriculture. For a growing number of industry titans, the purchase of an existing gentleman farm became one way to acquire status and confirm one’s social standing. For some of these owners, the farms were less a way of life than a consumer item. Among these new types of owners of gentleman farms was James Ben Ali Haggin, whose reshaping of an already established Thoroughbred farm would not only change the landscape, set benchmarks and standards for other 20th century farms, but also alter the practices of an entire industry, as Haggin took the idea of the gentleman farm and organized it around a successful model in the industrial world: a vertically integrated business.

James Ben Ali Haggin

The man who would wield such influence in Thoroughbred horse breeding and racing from one coast to another was born on December 9, 1822, in Kentucky’s first town, Harrodsburg. His

⁵⁶ These Eastern interests were not above owning large horse farms in Kentucky, including James R. Keene of Castleton Farm, and Augustus Belmont of Nursery Farm. Belmont’s decision to move his breeding operation from New York to Kentucky greatly boosted the horse industry in the Bluegrass.

⁵⁷ “The Opinions of Many Prominent Horse Breeders in Kentucky.” *The Southern Planter*, Number 12, 1894, 602. This “anti-pool” law was in fact a constitutional amendment to the New York State Constitution that prohibited any lotteries, poolselling, bookmaking, or any other kind of gambling in the state.

⁵⁸ “The Opinions of Many Prominent Horse Breeders in Kentucky.” *The Southern Planter*, Number 12, 1894, 602.

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father's family had arrived in Kentucky in 1775, while his Maryland-born mother had spent her formative years in New York and Philadelphia before moving to Kentucky in the early 19th century.

Haggin's mother, Adeline Ben Ali, was the daughter of a physician, Ibrahim Ben Ali, a native of Turkey who traversed England and Europe before emigrating to America. During Haggin's rise to fame and great wealth, the press made much of his maternal grandfather's Turkish origins as his "striking features" gave him a "distinct and indisputable ethnicity."⁵⁹

James B. Haggin was the oldest of eight children and attended Centre College in Danville, Kentucky, though he is not believed to have graduated. Following family tradition, Haggin entered into the practice of law, becoming a clerk in his family's firm. This phase didn't last long, as Haggin moved southwards, landing in Natchez in 1845, and marrying Eliza Jane Sanders, a native of Shelby County, Kentucky, the following year.

From Natchez, Haggin went to New Orleans, and then he turned westward. Following the same path as the men seeking gold, Haggin ended up in Sacramento, California, where in the fall of 1850, he was in a law practice with A.C. Munson and Milton S. Latham. Later that decade, he and fellow Kentuckian (and his future brother-in-law) Lloyd Tevis went into practice together. Tevis and Haggin in 1862 purchased 44,371 acres in California that became Rancho del Paso. By the 1880s the ranch had become the "world's largest Thoroughbred nursery."⁶⁰

During the 1880s, Haggin began to spend more and more time in New York, and after his wife died in 1894, he made it his permanent home. He spent time in Kentucky, too, and in addition to acquiring Elmendorf in 1897, married his second wife. Margaret Pearl Voorhies of Versailles, Kentucky, was 28 years old and the niece of Haggin's first wife.

Haggin Buys Elmendorf

And so it was, three years after the founding of the American Jockey Club in New York, when it seemed that a decisive blow had been set to the "Western" forces, that Haggin made his move to Kentucky. "Here Mr. Swigert made the fortune in racehorses which he afterwards lost in business ventures, and here a successor, a man of many millions, a Kentuckian returning to his native heath, proposes to establish the handsomest estate, the most perfect breeding farm which money and brains and long experience can obtain."⁶¹

The key words in the above observation from 1901 are the establishment of the "handsomest estate." Haggin would use the aura and image of the established idea of a gentleman farm in Fayette County as the veneer for the largest-scale business anyone in the Thoroughbred industry had ever seen. Haggin did everything in his business life in a big way. He transferred that approach to farming, and the scale at which he operated shook the horse industry. Haggin had already begun pursuing a scientific and large-scale approach to the breeding of pedigreed animals at Rancho del

⁵⁹ Sergeant, 37.

⁶⁰ Ambrose, 15.

⁶¹ S.A. Smith, "Elmendorf and Its Owner," *The Morning Herald*, April 21, 1901, 4.

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Paso. But it was the cloak of the Old South that Haggin wanted to appropriate for his version of the "New South."

Haggin's initial plans for the built environment at Elmendorf were partially complete by 1902. In 1905, Haggin sold Rancho del Paso and moved his breeding and racing from California to Kentucky. Hundreds of horses arrived in the Bluegrass in 1905. In 1908, Elmendorf was home to almost 700 horses, including 34 stallions at stud. It was the most extensive Thoroughbred operation in the world.⁶²

But even as his enormous Thoroughbred nursery began to swell and grow, Haggin was already contemplating leaving the Thoroughbred business. Other pedigreed animals would benefit from the rich soil of Elmendorf, and between 1907 and 1913, scores of cattle, sheep, pigs, and chicken crossed the Atlantic to Kentucky.

The Widener Years, 1920-1948

Joseph Early Widener was a world apart from Haggin, and his improvements to Elmendorf were not an excuse to spend money, but improvements designed for the main tenants: the horses. Widener demolished Haggin's palatial Green Hills mansion – he saw it as an unnecessary expense to maintain – and redid the Manager's House for his own residence while in Kentucky.

He brought in architect Horace Trumbauer to design barns. Born in 1869, Horace Trumbauer established an office in Philadelphia in 1892. He designed 17 buildings on the campus of Duke University in North Carolina, estates in Philadelphia, and many "cottages" in Newport, Rhode Island. Trumbauer designed at least two barns on the tract that still goes by the Elmendorf name, and two barns on Normandy Farm.

After Joseph Early Widener's death, and the United States entry into World War II, the running of Elmendorf Farm changed. In 1945, Elmendorf's operations were described as having "de-emphasized Thoroughbred producing and racing as a sole interest and has gone in for plain dirt-farming to a remarkable degree. Many of the fancy trimmings formerly associated with the famous estate have been removed."⁶³ The year before, the farm raised its first crop of tobacco, and the manager at the time, Glen W. Tomlinson, stated that the farm would continue to grow tobacco, "increasing the crop in line with federal allotment and public demand."⁶⁴

When Peter A.B. Widener III expectedly became the owner of Elmendorf as a college student, he further scaled back the farm horse business. He eventually divided the farm into four tracts, selling all but the main parcel still known as Elmendorf today (NRIS #). The horse cemetery established by his father was moved at this time to its current site on Normandy Farm.⁶⁵

⁶² Sergeant, 146.

⁶³ "Elmendorf, Famed Horseteria, Gets Practical Face-Lifting." *Lexington Herald*, January 14, 1945m, page 55.

⁶⁴ Ibid.

Glen W. Tomlinson started as manager at Elmendorf in 1943, but by 1952 had left the horse business and was the owner and manager of a motel in Orlando, Florida (*Lexington Herald*, January 20, 1952, page 14)

⁶⁵ "Widener Relocates Cemetery." *Lexington Herald-Leader*, Sunday, January 13, 1952, page 70.

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The Significance of Normandy Farm as a Property Type within the Historic Context of Gentlemen Farms in Kentucky, 1840-1976

The preserved physical landscape of Normandy Farm conveys important trends in the development of a horse farm aesthetic in Kentucky, especially the principles espoused by Joseph Early Widener. Although Normandy Farm was part of Haggin's Elmendorf from 1901 until 1950, it existed as an individual unit before and after that time, and one might even argue that it maintained a separate identity even during the Elmendorf years. The antebellum core of Normandy Farm remained intact throughout Haggin and Widener's tenure, and the early 20th century additions - barns, tenant houses, landscape elements - remain almost untouched to the current day. E. Barry Ryan, the last owner during the POS and renowned during his time in the Thoroughbred industry - named the farm, promoted it, kept it afloat, and preserved it almost perfectly.

Normandy Farm illustrates a gentleman farm that exhibits evolutionary change in the Bluegrass. That contrasts with some Gentlemen Farms, such as Haggin's, which were created from scratch once the Gentleman Farmer purchased them and exercised his vision upon the landscape. Haggin was able to fold the Bird-Kenny-Kerr farm seamlessly into his agricultural empire, as it was already structured as an antebellum Gentleman Farm. It already had the historic main house and dependencies, and it appears that Haggin largely left the parcel alone. In purchasing James Kerr's farm, Haggin utilized the land, but confined his building to other parcels. Joseph Early Widener took the reins in the 1920s, and shaped the antebellum Gentleman Farm into a 20th century Gentleman Farm focused on Thoroughbred horses.

Widener, already invested in the horse industry, had established a breeding farm known as Haras du Mesnil in France in the early 20th century. He "brought from France numerous ideas" that became part of Elmendorf, namely the Normandy Barn, and stables built around courtyards.

Normandy Farm is an important historic resource that physically expresses the historic narrative of horse racing and breeding industry in Kentucky, and the property has a special place in local and regional history. The Thoroughbred industry is still very active in Kentucky, and a vital component of the state's economy. Normandy Farm achieves the ideal of the historic horse farm, and the manicured landscape forms what many visualize when they think of "horse country." The historic road, Paris Pike, forms one part of the physical expression of a historic farm in Central Kentucky. Stone walls, flanked by black board fences, stretch across acres of verdant, gently undulating Bluegrass fields. Large, architect-designed barns dot the pastures and paddocks where horses graze and sitting serenely over it all is the gracious antebellum manor house.

This property type - the Gentleman Farm in Fayette County from 1840-1976 - is significant for what it conveys about the cultivation of an identity embraced not only by those in the (horse farm) business, but by the public, business leaders, tourism officials, and government officials. The farms along Paris Pike have captured the public's imagination since the early 19th century. An 1835 article in the *Western Monthly Magazine* extolled the landscape of the Maysville and Lexington Turnpike (now known as Paris Pike). For many miles from Lexington, the road "passes, on a nearly direct line, over a most picturesque country, and through a series of farms, such as are not excelled

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in any part of the United States either for their natural advantages or their neat and skillful cultivation.”⁶⁶

In 1906, Elmendorf, of which Normandy Farm was then a part, held the prime role in horse farm attractions in Fayette County. “Elmendorf Farm, with its...Green Hills mansion...its great barns built on an extensive scale for breeding purposes, its great stallions; its famous mares and its broad fertile blue grass meadows, make it the principal point of interest in Fayette County to all sightseers and visitors.”⁶⁷

In 1958, with Normandy Farm once again a separate entity, Paris Pike was described as “the Wall Street” of the Blue Grass. The beautiful landscape, the powerful horses, and the vast amounts of money invested in each supported the allusion to the financial seat of power in the United States. E. Barry Ryan, the first owner of the newly christened Normandy Farm, established the farm in the second part of the 20th century as a major Thoroughbred nursery. Ryan made a name for himself and Normandy Farm as one of the few horse farm owners who also trained and bred horses.

A 1927 newspaper article, titled “Horses Bring Tourists to Lexington,” noted that the “farm on which the Thoroughbred is produced has come to be a model of efficiency and a thing of beauty.” This model of efficiency was the finely molded and crafted gentleman farm. What most people (tourists and residents) expect to see now in central Kentucky, which bills itself as the “Horse Capital of the World,” is the scenic and pastoral dream executed by Haggin, the beautiful façade of a scientific enterprise – one that not only brings in tourist dollars, but an industry that contributes \$6.5 billion annually to Kentucky’s economy, along with providing 60,494 jobs.⁶⁸

The Evaluation of the Integrity between the Significance of Normandy Farm and its Physical Appearance Today

To be considered eligible for the National Register of Historic Places, the Gentleman Farm property type in Kentucky should possess integrity of location, setting, materials, design, feeling and association. A property that maintains these integrity factors will successfully convey its identity and significance as a gentleman farm.

A high level of integrity of **location** and **setting** is demonstrable on a Gentleman Farm if the farm complex retains its historic placement on the land. Major buildings including dwellings (both primary and secondary) and agricultural outbuildings (barns and stables) associated with the property should remain in their original locations. The Gentleman Farm should maintain a rural character such as the farm possessed during its period of significance. A sense of the cultivated, designed landscape should also still be intact. Finally, the outward signs and patterns of a farming operation should still be present and recognizable on the landscape. Characteristics of this integrity consideration include elements such as well-preserved and maintained domestic buildings, barns

⁶⁶ Thomas D. Clark, *Travels in the Old South, Volume 1*. (Lexington, Kentucky: University Press of Kentucky, 1973) 266-269.

⁶⁷ “In Behalf of Charity,” *Lexington Leader*, January 9, 1906, page 6.

⁶⁸ Jeff McDanal, “Horse Country: Central Kentucky is Horse Capital of the World,” *The Lane Report*, October 27, 2021. <https://www.lanereport.com/148359/2021/10/horse-country-central-kentucky-is-horse-capital-of-the-world/>

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and stables, pastures, fencing, entry driveways and interior farm roads or road network and intentionally planted trees and shrubs.

Normandy Farm conveys a high level of integrity of **location** and **setting**. The farm is located off Paris Pike, a scenic byway that has been enlarged, but remains a pivotal corridor lined by farms. The placement of the turnpike was not dictated by the quality of the soil surrounding the roadbed but the “best and nearest route” from Maysville to Lexington⁶⁹. Nonetheless, the setting of the road and the farms along it comprise a “remarkable landscape, a place that is radically different from any other rural countryside in America.”⁷⁰ While the Inner Bluegrass has been home to prime Gentleman Farms since before the Civil War, within the Inner Bluegrass, the Paris Pike section of the Maysville Road is the epitome of the designed landscape of these farms, and the location and setting of Normandy Farm has a symbiotic relationship with the roadway and the larger collection of farms along the historic route.

The **setting** of Normandy Farm remains almost unchanged from the period of significance. Not only does the collection of buildings on the farm retain their original historic materials and relationship to one another, the canvas of the farm itself maintains its relationship with the historic farms up and down the former turnpike. As a collection, the resources communicate the feeling and association of a historic farm, and the types of buildings convey the specialized needs of a Thoroughbred operation created in the 20th century. The farm’s feeling and association has persisted despite multiple owners with different backgrounds, interests and experience.

A Gentleman Farm has a high level of integrity of **materials** and **design** if it retains a significant collection of buildings and structures related to the farming operation from the period of significance. It is not expected that all related historic resources will be extant, due to changes in land use and farming operations as well as land divisions. Historic Gentleman Farm operations sought to employ new farming techniques, and to experiment with new approaches to farming—goals which did not allow the farm’s landscape to remain static. Both domestic and agricultural complexes should be represented and understood as such. Material changes or additions to the domestic complex do not compromise eligibility if they are sympathetic with the main block’s scale, massing and possess a like quality of architectural design.

Normandy retains a good level of **design** and **material** integrity. Like any working farm, there have been cycles of loss and rebuilding. The buildings at Normandy Farm span a wide range of time periods and owners. The antebellum house, reworked in the late 19th century, gives voice to two pivotal time periods—antebellum Kentucky and the post-Civil War Kentucky. The farm also operated in a changing agricultural landscape. The technology of the early 20th century was altered and tinkered with during the 1920s and 1930s and further augmented and expanded during the mid-20th century. Materials, too, bear witness to maintenance concerns and the availability of new materials. The barns are still clad in their wood clapboard or beadboard, as are the ancillary domestic buildings.

⁶⁹ Raitz and O’Malley, 66.

⁷⁰ Ibid, 144.

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The houses, outbuildings and barns have undergone minimal alteration since construction and are in good to excellent condition. The workmanship of buildings should reveal the influences, tools, and skills of the day. The workmanship of the contributing resources at Normandy Farm is exceptional. Except for a few cases, cladding of exterior walls and windows are all original. Additions to the main buildings were carried out during the Period of Significance. The one non-contributing building does not intrude upon the spatial relationship of the contributing buildings and the landscape.

If a Gentleman Farm retains integrity of location, setting, materials, and design, it will be said to have a high level of integrity of **feeling and association**. That sense of feeling will be strong if the property's remaining land conveys a sense of a successful farming operation. Gentleman Farms tend to function independently of a change of ownership and the passing of 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. The farm should retain enough farmland to convey the sense of the original farm use and operation. While the gentleman farm does not need to be an active farm operation, evidence of that former function must be present for the property to convey a high level of integrity of **association**.

Normandy Farm, as an operating horse farm, is still clearly associated with its origins and history of development. The intact materials, design, and setting of the farm allow someone moving through that landscape, either as a pedestrian or in a vehicle, to observe the passage of time as expressed by the built environment.

The rural setting, rural viewsheds, domestic, and agricultural resources at Normandy Farm remain intact to convey the feeling and association of a Gentleman Farm Property type. Normandy Farm is a well-maintained property and is in excellent condition. Because it retains the qualities discussed above, the farm retains the requisite integrity factors, **feeling and association**, to meet National Register Criterion C, and thus is eligible for listing. _

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The Lexington Herald

The Lexington Herald-Leader

Lexington Leader

The Lexington Observer & Recorder

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Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- ☐ preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
☐ previously listed in the National Register
☒ previously determined eligible by the National Register
☐ designated a National Historic Landmark
☐ recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
☐ recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____
☐ recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # _____

Primary location of additional data:

- ☒ State Historic Preservation Office
☐ Other State agency
☐ Federal agency
☐ Local government
☐ University
☐ Other
 Name of repository: _____

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): FA-560

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 255.983

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Use either the UTM system or latitude/longitude coordinates

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates

Datum if other than WGS84: _____



- | | |
|--------------------------|-------------------------|
| 1. Latitude: 38.12903549 | Longitude: -84.39152403 |
| 2. Latitude: 38.11844568 | Longitude: -84.40171221 |
| 3. Latitude: 38.11552863 | Longitude: -84.3963228 |
| 4. Latitude: 38.12289092 | Longitude: -84.38460718 |

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Or

UTM References

Datum (indicated on USGS map):

☐ NAD 1927 or ☐ NAD 1983

1. Zone:	Easting:	Northing:
2. Zone:	Easting:	Northing:
3. Zone:	Easting:	Northing:
4. Zone:	Easting :	Northing:

Verbal Boundary Description

The nominated parcel encompasses 255.983 acres and is located on the west side of Paris Pike (US 27/68) in Lexington, Kentucky. The nominated property is situated between Paris Pike and Hughes Lane. The boundary contains all of Parcel 25575500 in Fayette County, Kentucky, with a physical address of 4701 Paris Pike, Lexington, Kentucky.

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The boundary includes the buildings, structures, and sites that are historically part of Normandy Farm during the Period of Significance and maintain their integrity. The boundary on two sides of the farm is defined by public roadways and historic fence lines. The boundaries were selected as this is the section of farmland that predated Elmendorf and also was the parcel divided off by P.A. B. Widener III and sold to E. Barry Ryan in 1951. All of the extant buildings from the POS are contained within the 255.983 acres of the nominated property.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title: Janie-Rice Brother

organization: Palmer Engineering

street & number: _____

city or town: _____ state: _____ zip code: _____

e-mail: _____

telephone: _____

date: _____

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Photographs--Photo Log

Name of Property: Normandy Farm
City or Vicinity: Lexington
County: Fayette
State: Kentucky
Photographer: Janie-Rice Brother
Date Photographed: May/June 2026

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera:

1 of 32.

1. (KY_Fayette County_NormandyFarm_001) Façade of the main house (NR #1), facing northwest.
2. (KY_Fayette County_NormandyFarm_002) Façade and east elevation of main house (NR #1), facing west.
3. (KY_Fayette County_NormandyFarm_003) West elevation of main house (NR #1), facing northeast.
4. (KY_Fayette County_NormandyFarm_004) West elevation of the office (NR #2), facing east.
5. (KY_Fayette County_NormandyFarm_005) Carriage House and garage (NR #3 and #4), facing west.
6. (KY_Fayette County_NormandyFarm_006) Horse Cemetery (NR #5), facing southwest.
7. (KY_Fayette County_NormandyFarm_007) U-Shaped Yearling Barn (NR #6), facing northwest.
8. (KY_Fayette County_NormandyFarm_008) Rear and side elevations of U-Shaped Yearling Barn (NR #6), facing east.
9. (KY_Fayette County_NormandyFarm_009) West and east stables (NR # 7 and 8), facing northwest.
10. (KY_Fayette County_NormandyFarm_010) Concrete block shed and West stable (NR #9 and 8), facing south.
11. (KY_Fayette County_NormandyFarm_011) Equipment shed and West and East stables (NR #10, 7, and 8), facing north.
12. (KY_Fayette County_NormandyFarm_012) Tenant house façade (NR #11), facing northwest.
13. (KY_Fayette County_NormandyFarm_013) Tenant house rear elevation (NR #11), facing southeast.
14. (KY_Fayette County_NormandyFarm_014) Normandy Barn (NR #12), courtyard side, facing north.
15. (KY_Fayette County_NormandyFarm_015) Normandy Barn (NR #12), pasture side, facing south.

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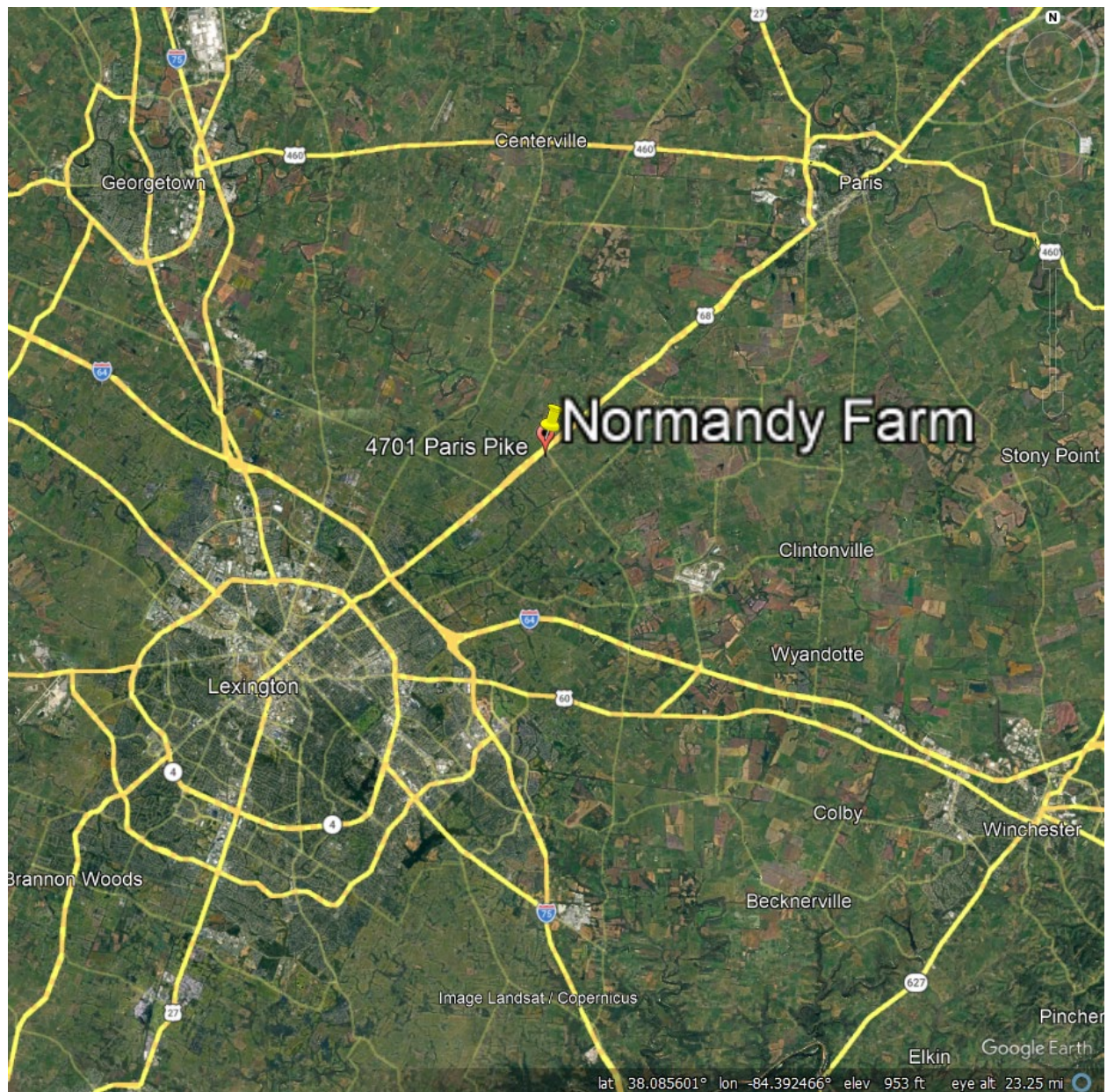
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16. (KY_Fayette County_NormandyFarm_016) Normandy Barn (NR #12), courtyard side, facing northeast.
17. (KY_Fayette County_NormandyFarm_017) Normandy Barn (NR #12), detail of tower, facing north.
18. (KY_Fayette County_NormandyFarm_018) Tobacco Barn (NR #13), facing south.
19. (KY_Fayette County_NormandyFarm_019) Tobacco Barn (NR #13), facing north.
20. (KY_Fayette County_NormandyFarm_020) Tenant house facade (NR #14), facing southwest.
21. (KY_Fayette County_NormandyFarm_021) Tenant house rear elevation (NR #14), facing southeast.
22. (KY_Fayette County_NormandyFarm_022) Water gate (NR #15), facing southwest.
23. (KY_Fayette County_NormandyFarm_023) Bridge (NR #16) over Elkhorn Creek tributary, with main house in background, facing northwest.
24. (KY_Fayette County_NormandyFarm_024) Stone walls along Paris Pike (NR #17), facing northeast.
25. (KY_Fayette County_NormandyFarm_025) Stone entryway to farm (NR #17), facing southeast.
26. (KY_Fayette County_NormandyFarm_026) Pasture (NR #26) near Normandy Barn (NR #12), facing south.
27. (KY_Fayette County_NormandyFarm_027) Tenant house façade (NR #19), facing northwest.
28. (KY_Fayette County_NormandyFarm_028) Tenant house ell and rear elevation (NR #19), facing south.
29. (KY_Fayette County_NormandyFarm_029) Non-historic horse stable (NR #20), facing southwest.
30. (KY_Fayette County_NormandyFarm_030) Non-historic lunge ring (NR #21), facing southeast.
31. (KY_Fayette County_NormandyFarm_031) Kenney Family Cemetery (NR #22), facing south.
32. (KY_Fayette County_NormandyFarm_032) Tombstone within the Kenney Family Cemetery (NR #22), facing northeast.

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Normandy Farm, Fayette County, Kentucky. Wide Area map