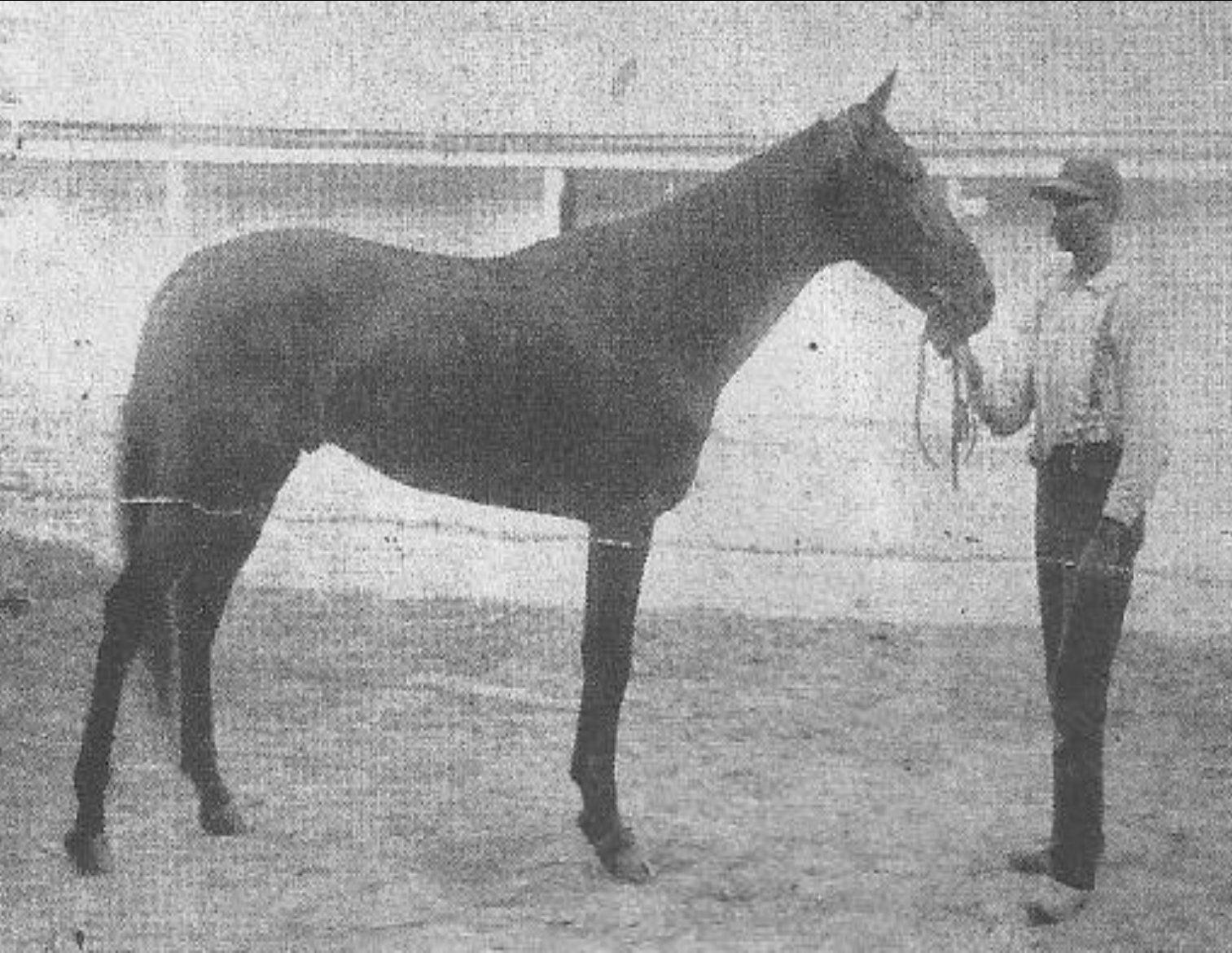


A Horse, His Owners And His Groom

Gambetta Wilkes, The Cecils, and Paul Helm



Michael J Denis
September 2018

James Granville Cecil

- Born Montgomery Co, VA 1803
- In business in Monticello, KY
- Married (1) Sarah Ann Buster, born 1820, Monticello, who died 1862 in Boyle Co
- Moved to Danville 1848
- Married (2) Margaret St Clair Pinkard of Lexington
- Began with 430 acres, expanded to 900

James Granville Cecil(2)

- 1840 Census, Monticello, 6 slaves
- 1850 Census, Boyle Co, property \$13,217 and 12 slaves
- 1860 Census, Boyle Co, real property \$23,520, personal \$60,000, 20 slaves
- 1870 Census, Boyle Co, property \$94,000, personal, \$73,700
- At death, estate valued at \$37,000, even after large advances to his children

James Granville Cecil(3)

- President of Farmer's National Bank
- Director of Central National Bank
- Richest man in Boyle Co at death, June 1881
- Children (8) included Granville Cecil, born 3 May 1850, and Charles Perry Cecil, born 3 Jul 1852
- Great grand-daughter was Lily Cecil Dulin Wallace

Granville Cecil

- “Melrose”,
bought 1878,
about 1-1/2 mi
north of Cambus Kenneth, owned by
brother Charles Perry Cecil
- Melrose had 322 acres devoted almost
exclusively to brood-mares and colts.



Granville Cecil(2)

- By 1888, was owner of the “Salt River Farm”, over 900 acres.
- Messy divorce, estate was tied up until mid 1960s.
- Son J G Cecil advertised sale of last breeding stock at Melrose, Quilland, foaled 1910 by Gambetta Wilkes.

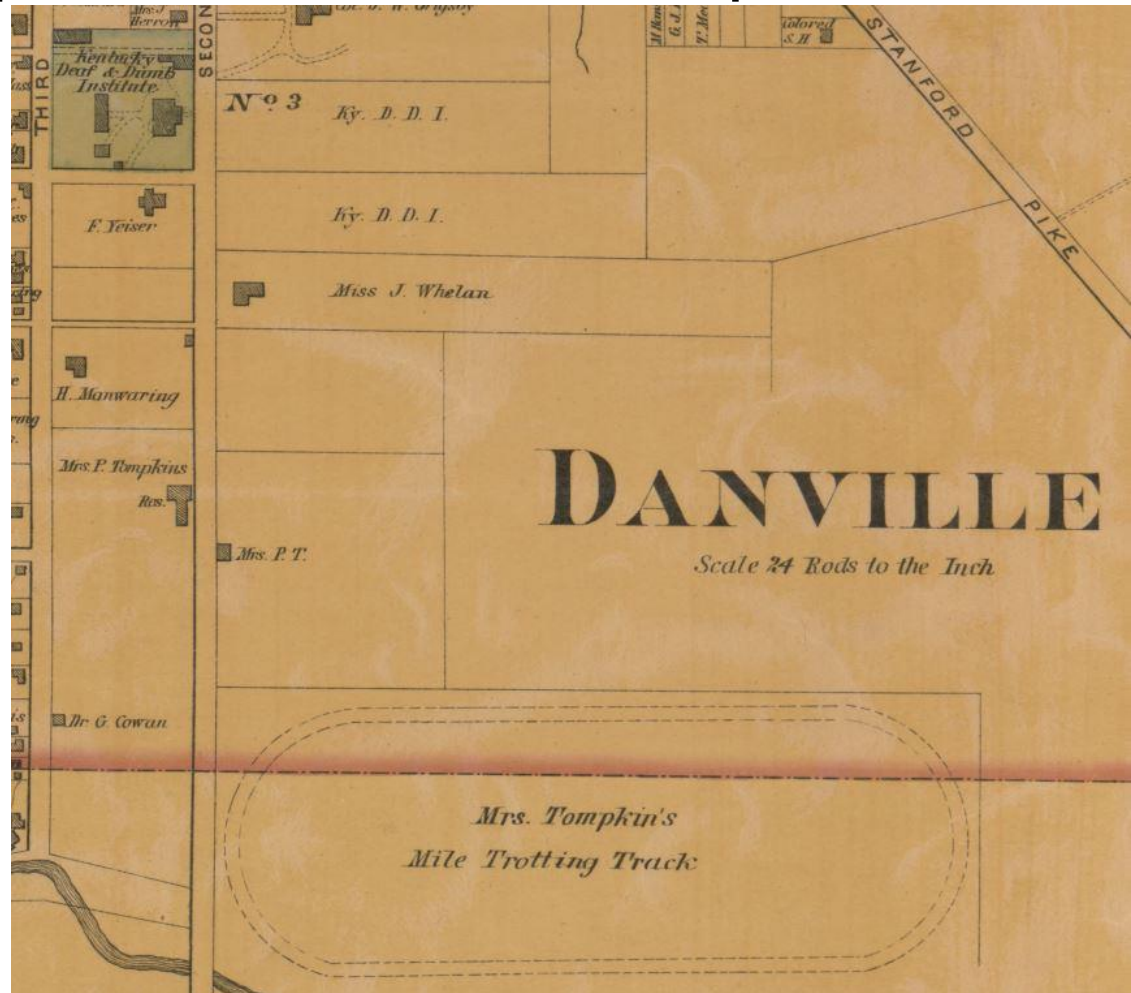
Charles Perry Cecil

- Cambus Kenneth built by William Kennedy about 1790, owned by Dr Ephraim McDowell 1816-1830, later by James Granville Cecil, 1862.
- Present house was built by Charles P Cecil about 1885.
- Vice President of Farmer's National Bank
- With brother, Granville, organized and ran Cecilian Park
- Lily Cecil Dulin Wallace his grand-daughter.



Cecilian Park (1)

- About 1883, Cecils purchased Mrs Thompkin's Mile Trotting Track
- Located on Clark's Run, just south of KSD, where Bate-Wood Homes is
- Largest of 3 tracks in Danville



Cecilian Park(2)

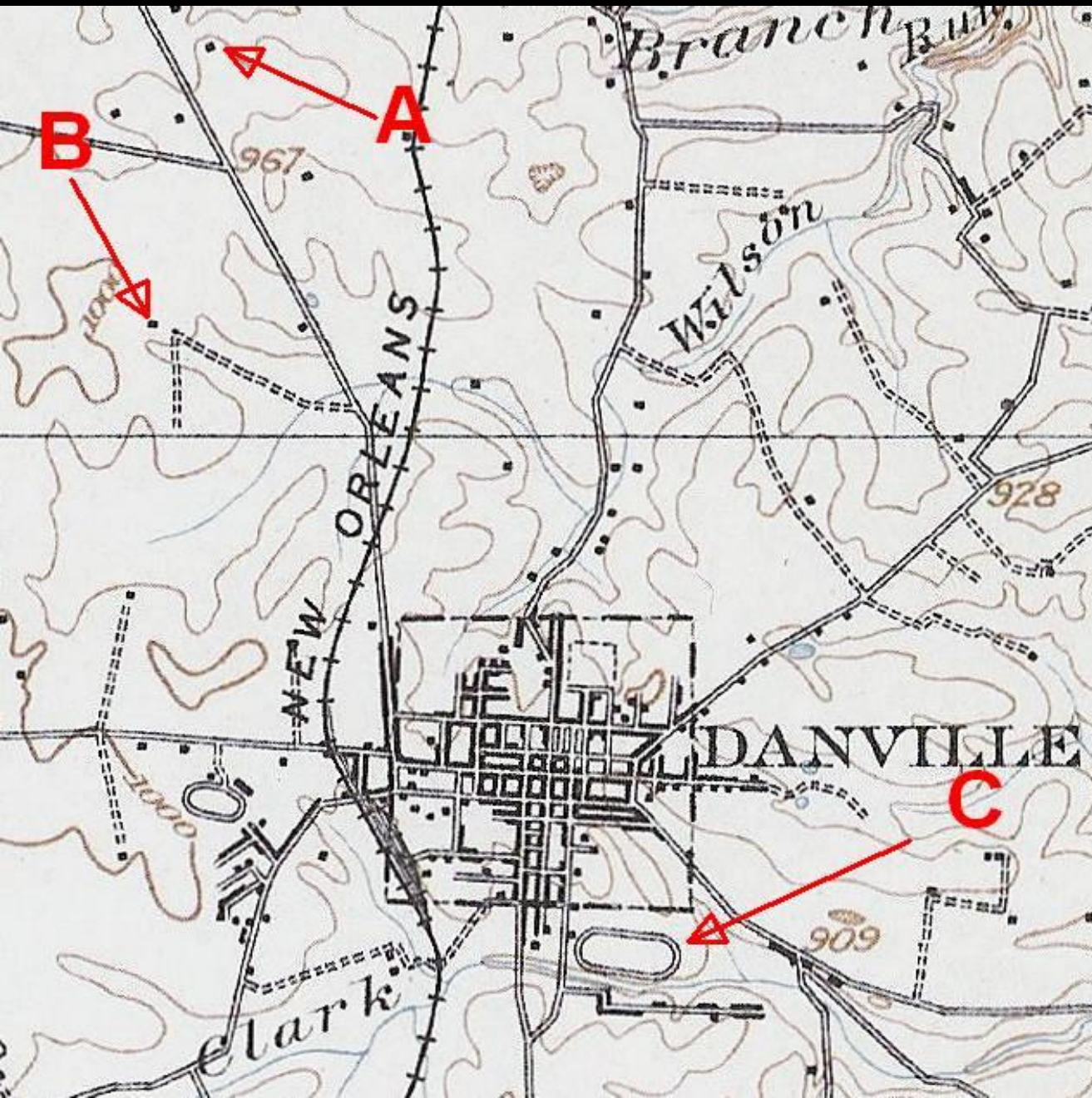
- About 1883, Cecil Brothers began raising trotting horses.
- Cecilian Park prospered with quality horse blood lines.
- One of the best mile tracks in Kentucky
- Exercised from 80 to 100 horses daily.
- Before death of Granville Cecil, 1916, stock was sold off
- By 1920, Cecilian Park up for public auction

Cecilian Park(3)

Stock was located in four different places:

1. Melrose, 322 acres, owned by Granville Cecil
2. Salt River Farm, at one time 900 acres, also owned by Granville
3. Cambus Kenneth, 705 acres, owned by Charles Perry Cecil
4. Cecilian Park, 135 acres, between KSD and Clark's Run on South Second St

Cecilian Park(4)



1905 Topo Map
showing:

- A-Melrose
- B-Cambus Kenneth
- C-Cecilian Park
- Salt River Farm off map to the left

CECILIAN PARK FARMS

AT

PUBLIC AUCTION

.....
WE WILL SELL AT PUBLIC AUCTION ON

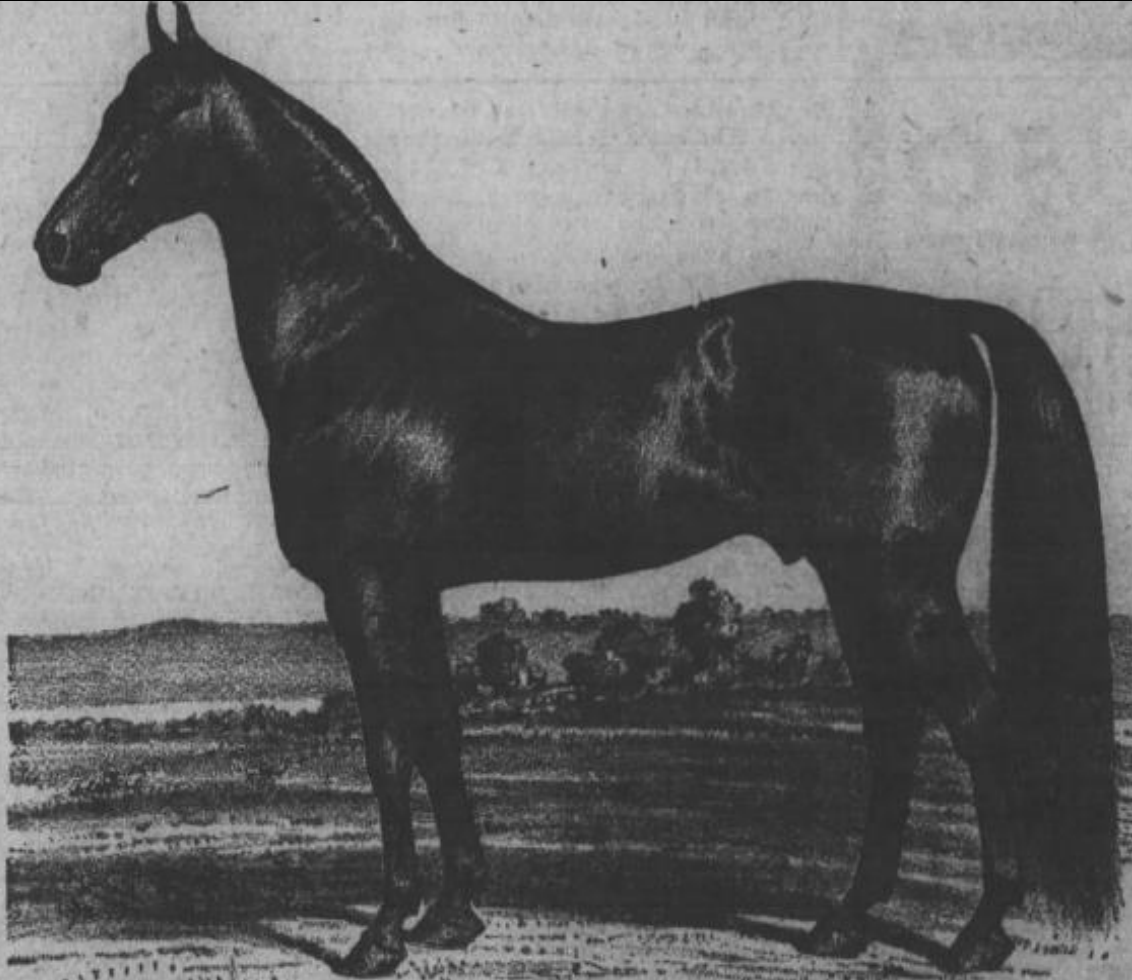
Saturday, July 24th,

at 10 o'clock a. m., on the premises, the Cecilian Park Farms,
located on South Second Street, in Danville, Ky.

Cecilian Park(6)

- Sold in nine tracts, \$50,000
- Advertised as having electricity along road, and city water nearby
- C A West Realty of Perryville planned to sell their part for “colored residents.”
- Interestingly, this was where Bate-Wood Homes, 1950s, was located.

Gambetta Wilkes



GAMBETTA WILKES 2:19 1-4, The King of Trotting Horse Stallions. He is the Only Two Century Sire.

Gambetta Wilkes (2)

- Foaled 28 June 1881, bred by Capt. R. B. Terrill, of Richmond
- Son of George Wilkes 2:22 and Jewell
- Brought to Danville as a 3-year-old
- Head of what became one of the most celebrated breeding establishments in the world

Gambetta Wilkes(3)

- In 1886, 15 $\frac{3}{4}$ hands high, standing at Central Kentucky Trotting Park for \$50 the season.
- 1889, Cecils refused an offer of \$25,000 for him.
- By 1896, at 14 years old, had sired 65 horses with speeds from 2:08 to 2:25
- Of that, 27 ran faster than 2:15

GAMBETTA WILKES® H, STANDARDBRED, 1881

Color: blk

Height: T2:19¼m

ATR #4659, ASB #912146S

b/b R.B. Terrell, KY, record 2:26 KY 1885, Sire of 49 trotters & 52 pacers under 3 minutes.

(CLOSE)

GAMBETTA WILKES blk T2:19¼m 1881 STANDARD BRED	GEORGE WILKES* br 1856 STANDARD BRED	HAMBLETONIAN* b 15.0 1849 STANDARD BRED	ABDALLAH b 15.3 1823 STANDARD BRED	MAMBRINO b 1806	MESSENGER*	gr 15.3 1780
				AMAZZONIA ch 1810	SOURCROUT MARE	
					DOVE	
					FAGDOWN	
			CHARLES KENT MARE 1834 STANDARD BRED	BELLFOUNDER* b 15H 1816	OLD BELLFOUNDER	b 1797
				ONE EYE b 1815	VELOCITY	
		DOLLY SPANKER br 1847 STANDARD BRED	HENRY CLAY* blk 15.1hh T 2:35 1837 STANDARD BRED	ANDREW JACKSON blk 15.2 1827	YOUNG BASHAW	gr 15.1 1822
				LADY SURREY b 14.2 1824	CHARCOAL SAL	blk (Pacer) 1817 c
					REVENGE	dkb/br 1815
					PERKINS MARE	b 1795
	TELEGRAPH ~1840 STANDARD BRED		BAKERS HIGHLANDER 1835	PAULS HIGHLANDER	b 15.3 1829	
			PHILIPS MARE b	HUMPHREY MARE		
				BLACK HAWK*	blk 15.0 1833	
	JEWELL dkb/br 1869 MORGAN	GILLS VERMONT b 1852 MORGAN	DOWNINGS VERMONT dkb/br 15.1 ~1845 MORGAN	BLACK HAWK* blk 15.0 1833	SHERMAN MORGAN*	ch 1808
				Edit	QUEEN OF THE NECK	blk 16h 1825
			MARE BY BARCLAYS COLUMBUS ~1842 MORGAN	COLUMBUS ch (minimal sabino) 15.1 hands 1835c	DANSEREAU	blk 1826c
					VERCHERES MARE	ch 1825c
		SALTER MARE 1850c STANDARD BRED	CANNON WHIP 1820c THOROUGH BRED	MARE BY BERTRAND ~1832	BERTRAND	b 1821
					MARE BY MATCHLESS	~1822
			JACOB EMBRY MARE ~1835 THOROUGH BRED	BLACKBURNS WHIP ? 1805	WHIP	1794
					SPECKLEBACK	b 1790

* - Photo Available

* - Photo Available

Gambetta Wilkes(5)

- 23 August 1910, Gambetta Wilkes died.
- “Gambetta Wilkes is dead. The greatest sire of harness speed that ever lived, the horse that, in the opinion and parlance of horsemen the world over, put Danville on the map, died at the stables of his owners, G. and C. P. Cecil, this morning.” (*Advocate*, 23 Aug 1910, p1)

Gambetta Wilkes(6)

- He and descendants were good looking but nervous and high-tempered
- Direct descendant of Justin Morgan.
- Buried in front of his stall at Cecilian Park
- Stable was razed in April 1956

Gambetta Wilkes(7)

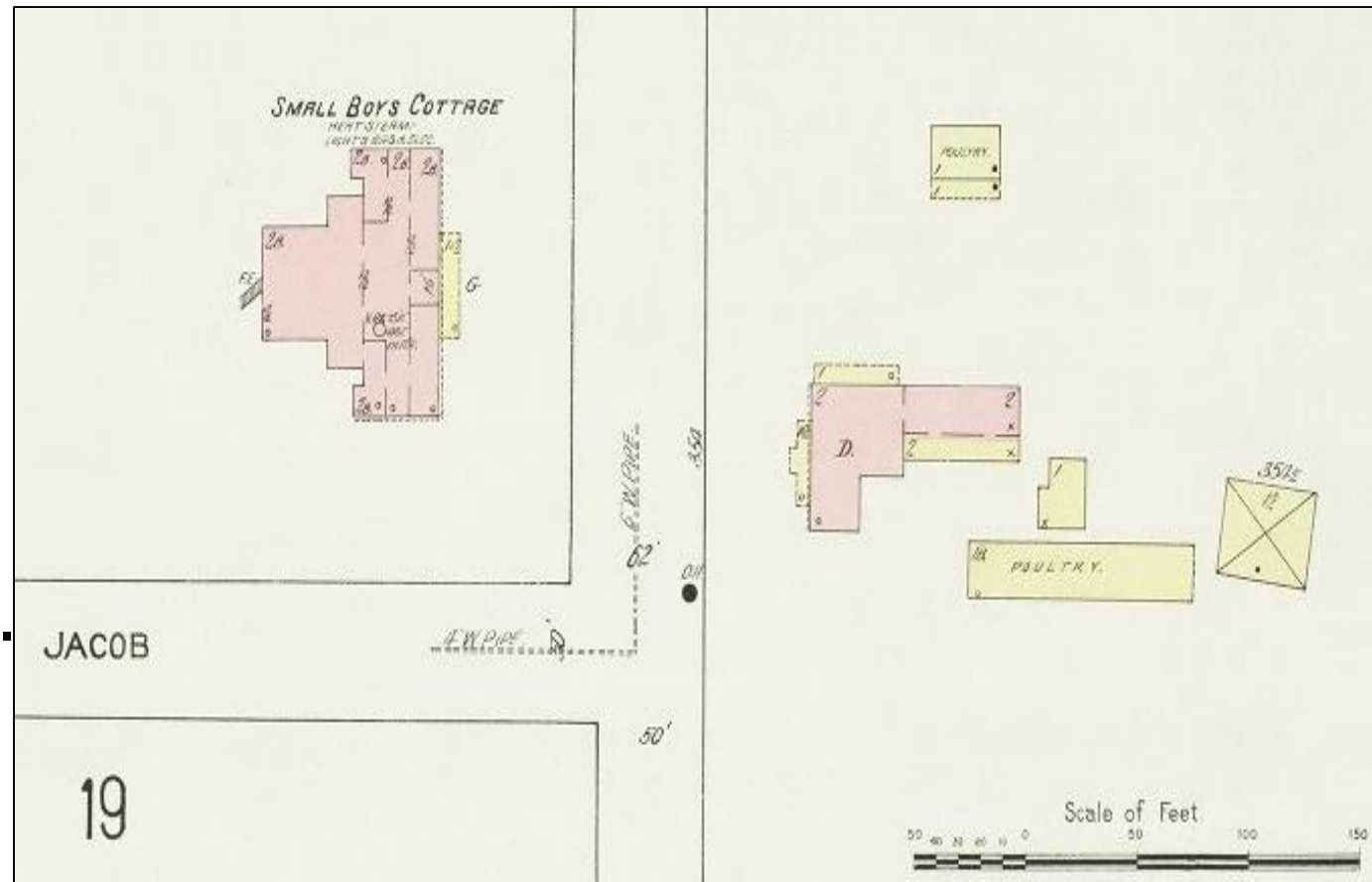
- Mrs. Robert Smith Dulin (Jean Cecil) of Cambus Kenneth, daughter of Charles Perry Cecil, and mother of Lily Cecil Dulin Wallace noted:

"I hated that horse, Gambetta Wilkes. Every time I wanted a pretty new dress or a special pair of shoes, I was told Gambetta Wilkes needs a new set of harness or Gambetta Wilkes is making a trip to some race track and needs extra blankets or something and Gambetta Wilkes always won." (A-M, 27

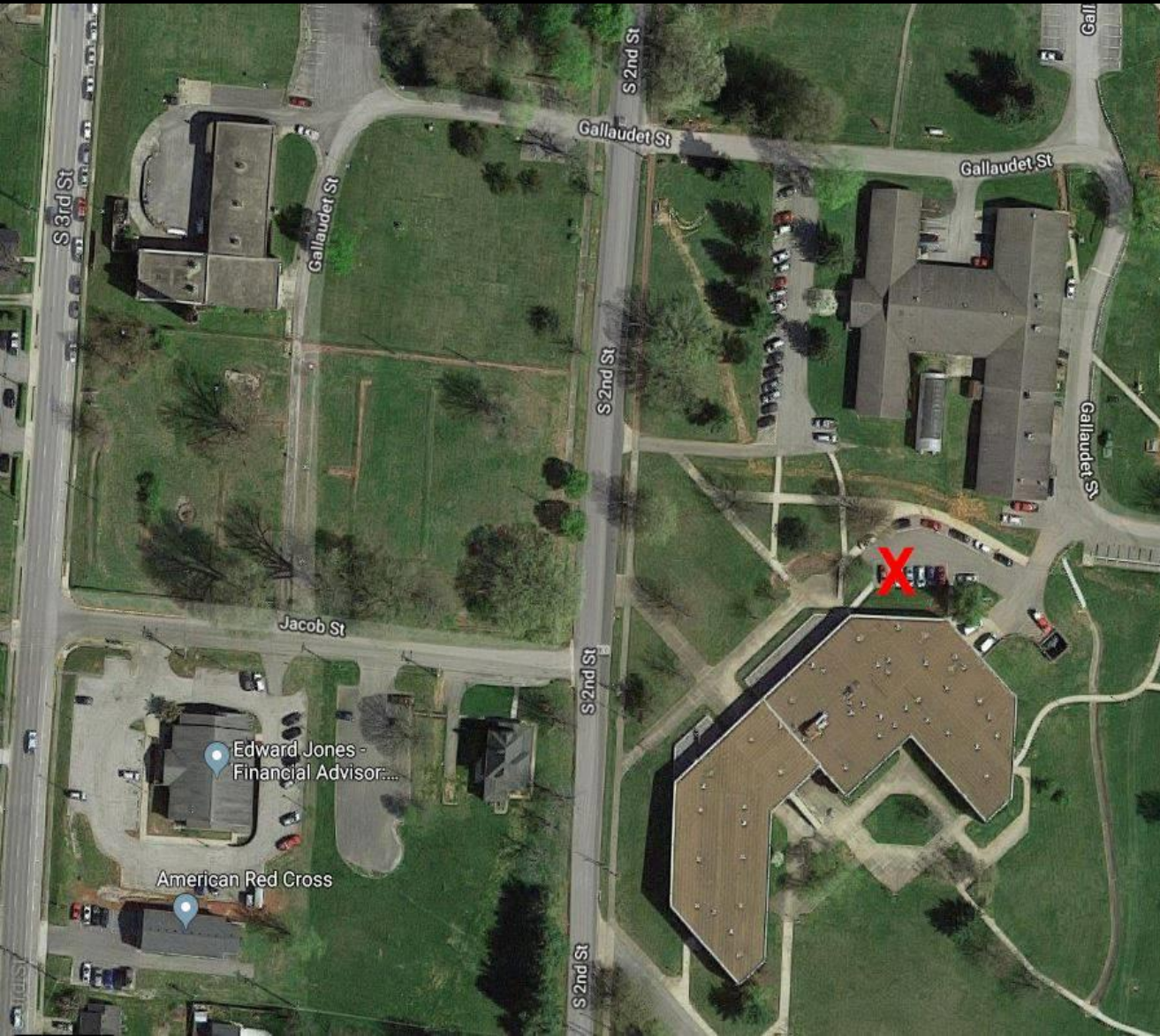
Jun 1965, p66)

Gambetta Wilkes(8)

- The square on the right was probably Gambetta Wilke's stable, where he was buried.
- The brick house was purchased by the Cecils about 1883.
(Sanborn Fire Maps, 1914)



Gambetta Wilkes(g)



“X” marks the approximate location of Gambetta Wilkes’s stable, on the present KSD campus.

Paul Helm

CECILIAN PARK. JANUARY 1ST. 1908

OLD COMPANIONS —
faithful attendant PAUL HELM
daily, almost hourly companion.



G. & C. P. CECIL, Danville, Ky.

GAMBETTA WILKES 2.19 1-4 at 27 years of age. Sire of 200 Standard performers — The Champion Sire, living or dead.

Paul Helm
and
Gambetta
Wilkes,
1908

Paul Helm(2)

- Born Lincoln Co 1857 (1870C) or Apr 1850 (1900C)
- Son of Isaac Crow, b 1819, and Charlotte Craig, b 1818
- Living Boyle Co 1900C
- Married twice, 1st wife unknown

Paul Helm(3)

- Married 2nd 1885 Nannie Doneghy, dau of Adam and Bettie (Wilson) Doneghy
- Children Georgia, Julia and Booker
- 1900C also lists him as "hosttler"
- 1910C says, laborer, horse groomer
- 1920C, living Randolph Hill, working on railroad

Paul Helm(4)

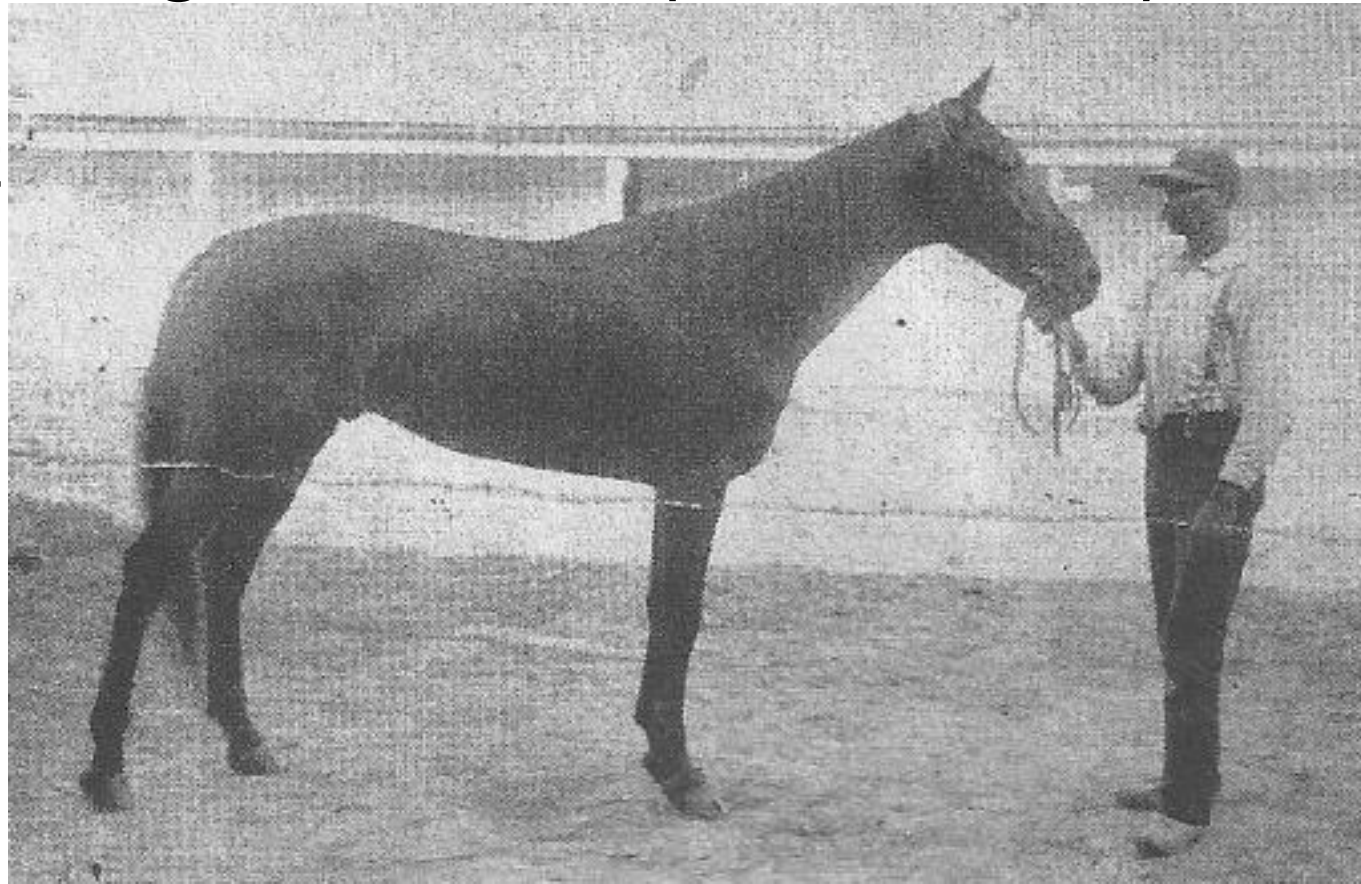
- Also living here 1920 -- wife, Nannie, 55, nurse; son Booker T, 21, plasterer; Booker's wife, Maggie, 21.
- Nannie died 21 Jun 1928 at home on Shakertown Pike
- Paul died at home on Duncan's Hill, widower, 3 Jan 1929, buried Hilldale

Paul Helm(5)

- Georgia married John Henry Gray.
 - ❖ Children: Nannie, John Paul, Garnet, Margaret (m Eugene McGill), Jack, George, Henrietta, Henry Cowan and Bertha Mae (m Charles Napier).
- Julia married Coleman Singleton.
 - ❖ Children: Thelma (m William Rowe), Helena, Coleman, Arthur, William, James, Clara (m Charles Robinson), Charles Etta (m Dowell McCowan), John Davis, James J, Robert, Donald and Doris Jean (m Eugene Owsley).

Paul Helm(6)

- Extensive obituary, unusual for 1929
- “His heart was light and his disposition sunny.”
- Known throughout the “Grand Circuit”
- Constant companion of the horse



Paul Helm(7)

“He was one of the greatest mimics of his race. He could sequester himself from those around him and imitate the voice of the late Granville Cecil ... and his mimicry was so good, that his fellow employees would look around for the ‘Big Boss.’ ...” (*Daily Messenger*, 7 Jan 1929, p3)

Paul Helm(8)

- On razing of Gambetta's barn, many reminisced about the horse and Paul Helm... (A-M, 10 Apr 1956)
- "Paul was a large negro, more than six feet tall and weighing about 225 pounds. "
- Once when Paul was sick he asked to be taken on a stretcher to see the race.
- As the horses entered the stretch, Gambetta was trailing until Helm raised up on his stretcher and in his stentorian voice loud enough to be heard over the murmur of the crowd, yelled, "Come on, Gambetta."

Paul Helm(9)

- When the colt heard Helm's voice, he pricked up his ears, settled into a faster gait, and won the race.
- As Gambetta's chief mourner, Helm trained the horse for 25 years, and "is desolate for he loved this horse and was his companion in his youth, in his prime and in his equine dotage."

The End? Not quite!

- The story of Gambetta Wilkes brings together people and events that otherwise might never have come in contact with one another.
- It is a story that needs to be told, and honored with a roadside historical marker.
- That is the NEXT chapter in the story.