

# *History of Maine Chance Farm*



**M**AINE CHANCE FARM on Newtown Pike has been associated with horses for more than half a century. Before its purchase by the University of Kentucky in October, 1967, the farm was owned by cosmetics magnate and horse racing devotee Elizabeth Arden (Graham). Arden owned a summer home in Maine that eventually became the Maine Chance beauty and health spa for women. In the 1950s, she acquired more than 700 acres on the north side of Fayette County.

The property, originally part of Coldstream Stud and later Crown Crest farm, became Arden's Maine Chance horse farm in Kentucky. She reputedly pampered her Thoroughbreds as much as her human customers, piping music into barns and instructing grooms to treat the animals' legs with Arden skin cream products. By 1945 her horses were among the racing industry's top money winners, and one of them, Jet Pilot, won the 1947 Kentucky Derby.

Following Arden's death in 1966, Maine Chance Farm was offered for sale by executors of her estate. Bounded on three sides by UK's Spindletop and Coldstream research farms, the property offered UK expansion opportunities, and the University indicated interest. At the July, 1967, Board of Trustees meeting, President John Oswald recommended that UK purchase Maine Chance to expand existing programs, develop new programs, provide additional land for agricultural research and protect existing investments and programs. In August, 1967, UK officials approved an offer of \$2 million, and on October 11, 1967, the University obtained the deed.

In recent decades, UK's Maine Chance Farm has operated as a horse farm for teaching and research. Along with Spindletop Farm, Maine Chance now accommodates several programs associated with horse management, nutrition and health. The farm maintains more than 200 horses and a number of barns, pastures and paddocks of varying size. Maine Chance and the adjoining farms of Spindletop and Coldstream remain a valued resource for UK research and education as well as treasured green space for Fayette County and the Bluegrass region.

# *History of Spindletop Farm*



**S**PINDLETOP FARM, bordered by Newtown and Ironworks pikes, was established with the purchase of 800 acres in the mid-1930s by Mildred “Pansy” Yount, the widow of oil millionaire Miles Frank Yount. The name derives from the Spindletop oil field in Texas, where the Younts made their fortune in the 1920s. After becoming financially secure, the couple established a stable of American Saddlebred horses, which soon gained national recognition.

When Miles Yount died of a heart attack in 1933, Pansy chose Kentucky as the place she would start anew. At a cost of \$1 million, construction of the Spindletop Hall mansion began in 1935. When completed, it featured 40 rooms and more than 45,000 square feet of floor space, and Pansy deemed the house to be a showplace of Kentucky. Eventually she expanded the farm to 1,066 acres. On the property were seven miles of metal fences, 17 houses for servants and farm hands and 18 barns. The property also housed a greenhouse, swimming pool, bath house, tennis court, two aviaries and three kennels. Pansy lived for a time at the mansion with her adopted daughter and second husband, Cape Grant. She left Spindletop in 1955.

In 1959, the University of Kentucky purchased Spindletop Farm for \$850,000. At the deed signing, Governor A. B. Chandler said citizens of the Commonwealth and supporters of the University should show their appreciation to Pansy for her generous offer to sell the property to UK at a price that “amounted to a substantial gift.”

In 1962, the year Pansy Yount Grant died, Spindletop Hall became the residence of the University of Kentucky Faculty, Staff, and Alumni Club. The farm is where the College of Agriculture conducts a wide variety of soil, seed, plant and agricultural engineering research. The farm and the adjoining farms of Maine Chance and Coldstream in northern Fayette County are known as North Farm, and they remain a vital asset to research efforts of UK’s College of Agriculture.