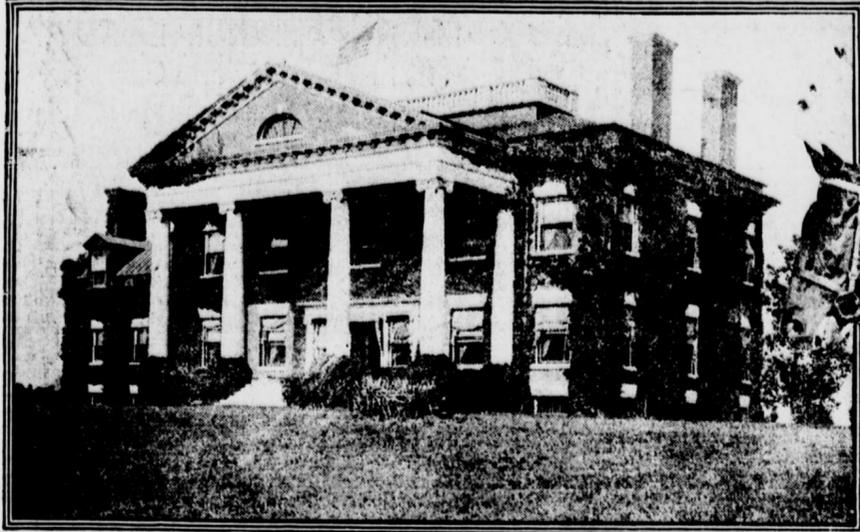


C. K. G. BILLINGS AND HIS INCOMPARABLE TROTTERS



The old Colonial residence at Curles Neck Farm.

Something About the Man Who Is Considered the Best All Round Amateur Horseman of Our Times and His Horses

NO man in the world loves a good horse with a greater love than C. K. G. Billings of New York, whose devotion to the trotter has made his name a household word wherever the American light harness horse is known.

The possessor of the fastest stallion in the Harvester, 2:01; the fleetest mare in Lou Dillon, 1:58 1/2; and the incomparable gelding Uhlan, 1:55, the greatest trotter that has ever lived and perhaps as perfect an all round horse as nature has yet produced, Mr. Billings has never started a horse for a money prize, but at great expense has shared his priceless equine treasures with the sport loving people of two continents on more than one occasion, giving exhibitions of speed in cities as far distant as Berlin, Moscow and Petrograd.

Mr. Billings differs from all other men who have owned champions at the trotting gait in the past, inasmuch as he has played a most important part in the development and education of many of his horses both to wagon and saddle. Robert Bonner drove the great Dexter, 2:17 1/4, whose dam, Clara, by American Star, was the sixth dam of The Harvester, and he took a world of pleasure behind the brown gelding, while in after years he owned and drove in succession Harry 2:12 1/4, Mand S. 2:08 1/4, and Sunol 2:08 1/4. All these were driven only, and sometimes at long intervals, and those who know the great publisher best in his declining years say that sometimes the farm near Tarrytown would not know him for months at a time. It was not that Mr. Bonner was not a keen horseman, for he was all that, but in his inability to ride he lost much of the charm which comes to those who are fond of horses. In the saddle there is that sense of intimate relationship, and man and horse are in closer companionship than ever comes to the occupant of any vehicle, even the racing sulky of the present day, which is almost as much a part of the horse as the harness he wears.

It is as both rider and driver that Mr. Billings, whom experts pronounce the "best all round amateur horseman of his time," is so widely known both in this country and abroad. When a younger man—and he is so young and agile to-day that "it is as a fiddle," a term applied by one of his good friends a few days ago, clothes him like a glove and was found to drive a harness wagon than any other branch of the sport, though he can tool a four-in-hand with anybody, as those who were wont to visit the races at Washington Park in the '80s when Gen. Phil Sheridan was president of the amateur club which governed racing in Chicago at that time can testify.

He came by his love for the horse naturally, his father having been a famous horseman in his day. Born in Saratoga he went to Chicago at an early age and remained there till about ten years ago, when he identified himself with many of the leading industries of the Western metropolis. He was a prominent figure at all the amateur meetings and was early recognized as an exceedingly skillful driver. Shortly after coming East he began using trotters for saddle horses and now hardly a day passes that he does not ride one or more trotters, whether at his town place, Tryon Hall, at 196th street and Fort Washington avenue, at his newer estate, Farnsworth, near Oyster Bay, or when visiting in the beautiful Curles Neck Farm on the James River in Virginia, purchased last year, where all his horse breeding operations are carried on under the supervision of Ed A. Tipton, for many years with the late Marcus Daly of Montana.

Under a cover of the trotter endeavor to give the list of saddle horses in the Billings stable, all of which are pronounced by him as making acceptable mounts. First and foremost, of course, comes Uhlan, 1:55, sired by The Harvester, 2:01; Lou Dillon, 1:58 1/2; Frank Crank, 2:00 1/4; Dr. Mack, 2:00 1/4; Frank Hall, a metropolitan son of Walnut Hall, 2:03 1/4; and Ben Wright, a fast trotter of unknown breeding, but whose sterling qualities have won him a high place in the affection of his master. Other record horses ridden by Mr. Billings in the past but not owned by him are Charles Mitchell, 2:04 1/4, presented to Charles Tanner of Cleveland, trainer of the Billings trotters for many years, who managed the foreign exhibition campaigns in 1909 and 1912, and who held the reins over

Uhlan and other Billings champions when they made their best records: Bertha Mae, 2:08; Charley Mac, 2:07; a levathan, seventeen hands high, but "galled like a pony" to quote his former owner, and Wilmering, 2:12 1/4, a magnificent stallion, by Boreal, which was presented to the United States and is now in one of the Government studs in Colorado string carriage horses.

Mr. Billings was very fond of Wilmering and says he was as nearly perfect as any stallion could well be under the saddle, but it is of Uhlan that he waxes enthusiastic. In talking with a representative of THE SUN about this horse a few days ago he said:

"You know I have driven Uhlan a mile to wagon in two minutes and a half mile in 56 1/2 seconds, the wagon and myself weighing 300 pounds. Now consider the marvellous feat of riding him an eighth of a mile in 13 seconds, which I did at Curles Neck Farm last fall, with Ed Tipton and others holding the watches. On that occasion the horse carried 192 1/2 pounds, which is almost fifty pounds overweight, according to the regulations, which call for 145 pounds. I weighed with the saddle and bridle, which were of the ordinary English variety. To shuck you that the performance was no fluke I had already ridden him an eighth in 13 1/4 seconds over the grass or turf course at Saratoga last summer, when William Garth, the well known turfman of Virginia, was one of the timers, and once at Lexington in the presence of a great many spectators he trotted the same distance in 13 1/2 seconds. Taking into consideration the fact that I took only about 100 feet to get under way and the great weight carried I have always been curious to see how far a thoroughbred would beat Uhlan similarly risked."

Shades of Great Eastern, 2:15 1/4, Dexter with a record of 2:18 that way, and all the other performers under saddle forty years ago! Such dazzling speed is enough to make one howl for a thoroughbred would beat Uhlan similarly risked."

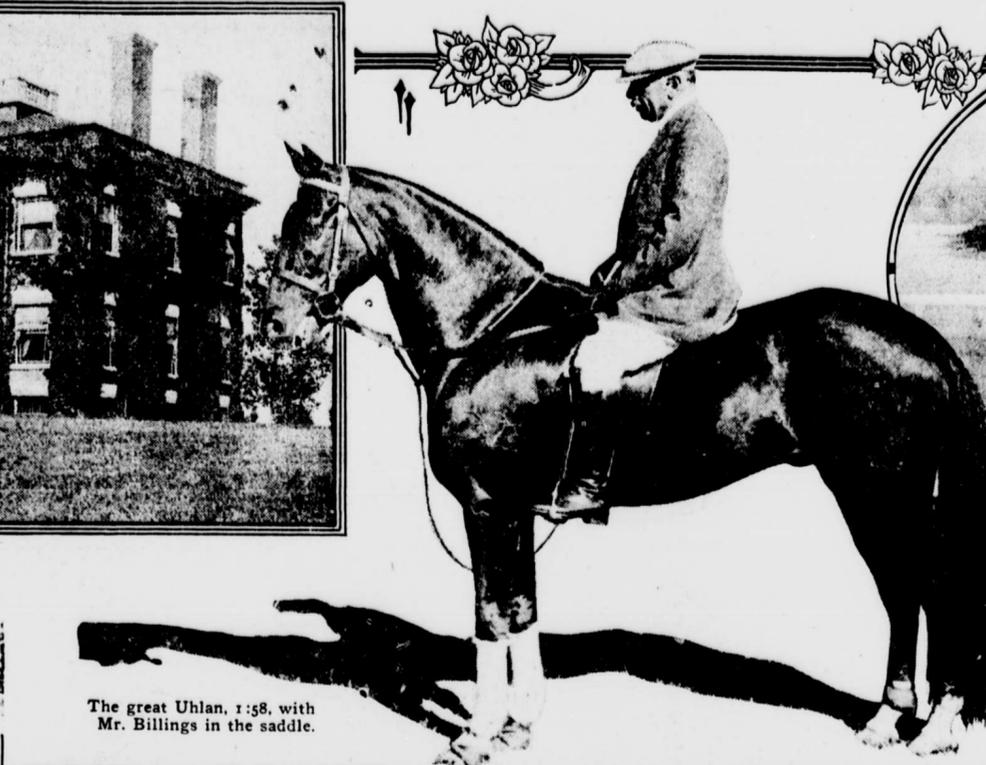
Asked how it felt to travel at this unparalleled rate of speed on the back of a trotter Mr. Billings replied: "First I was afraid that he might tip over, but his action is so pure that there was no sense of jarring or concussion. Uhlan simply floats when at the top of his speed."

"How was he equipped when you rode him in 13 seconds for the fur- long?" Mr. Billings was asked. "I had on a pair of riding boots with an ordinary snaffle," was the reply. "No martingales and only a pair of snug fitting quarter boots for protection. The saddle was of the usual English hunting type."

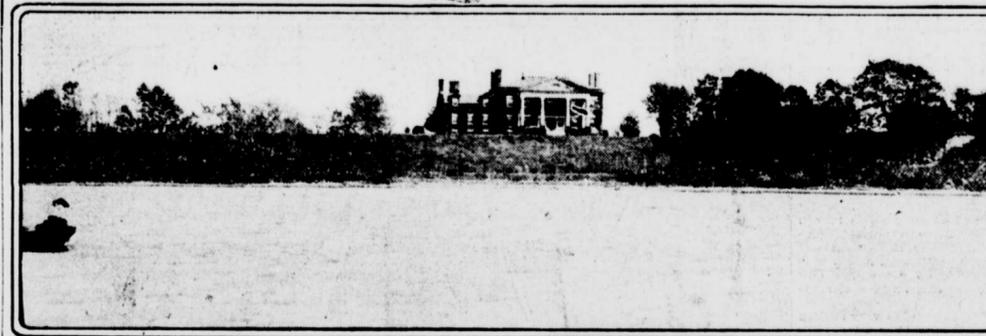
Uhlan trotting horse enthusiasts who were wont to meet at three heats in 2:10 or better on a quarter in 30 seconds, figure the rate of speed attained by Uhlan under saddle. The mile in 1:44 would appear to be correct, or just 16 seconds faster than Dr. George W. Bailey of Maine was willing to wager his worldly possessions on Uhlan's speed. "No martingales and only a pair of snug fitting quarter boots for protection. The saddle was of the usual English hunting type."

Two pictures of this marvellous trotter are herewith presented. The one in motion was made when the champion was in the height of training and he is attacking some such flight as is only a plain bird's nest. The other photograph was made when the champion had taken on some additional flesh, and surely it fills the eyes and must gladden the heart of every lover of a good horse. Those who are familiar with the horse say it is probably the best picture of the champion and his owner in existence. Those who have maintained that the trotter does not possess sufficient length of rein to make him a desirable saddle horse can find no fault with Uhlan in this respect, while his shoulder is unusually square and his chest is as broad as a plow. Intelligence of the highest order is betokened by the beautiful head with its well placed, tapering ears. It would be difficult to conceive of a better balanced horse than Uhlan, as he stands 15 1/4 hands and weighs 1,130 pounds in his present condition, a record for his weight for generations to marvel at. He tipped the beam at 1,075 pounds and every ounce of it was so much whalebone and ivory encased in a black satin skin.

Foaled the property of Arthur Parker of Massachusetts in 1905, the horse passed to Charles Saunders of Boston, from whom Mr. Billings secured him for a reported price of \$35,000. He was sired by Bingen, 2:06 1/4, and his dam was Blondella of Sir Walter, Jr., a grandson of Aberdeen, the famous rat-tailed son of



The great Uhlan, 1:58, with Mr. Billings in the saddle.



View of the residence from the James River.

Rysdyk's Hambletonian, whose dam was the famous American Star mare Widow Machree, with just enough of the fire and devil in her veins to make her a great matron. Uhlan was a splendid racehorse before passing into the possession of Mr. Billings, but attained championship fame only after "Doc" Tanner had become his mentor. He is priceless in the eyes of his owner and his record of 1:58 for the mile, his double team record of 2:03 1/4, with Louis Purser and his record of 1:54 1/4 with running mate Slats, all made over the track of the Kentucky Horse Breeders Association in Lexington, will long adorn the pages of history. That he comes first in the appreciation of his owner is only natural, but he had to prove his superiority all round qualities before he succeeded in supplanting Lou Dillon, 1:58 1/2.

The Harvester, 2:01, the head of the stud at Curles Neck Farm, is a very highly regarded by Mr. Billings, and good judges who have looked over his record of colts by him say that he should be one of the sires of the age. A superb individual standing fully sixteen hands high and weighing 1,200 pounds, he fills the eye the moment his keeper opens the door of the capacious box and reveals the magnificent brown stallion standing knee deep in rye straw, his long fore-top braided in a silken strand revealing a star of beautiful proportions. Like many Electioners, notably Sunol, 2:08 1/4, he is a trifle higher headed than at the withers. When THE SUN representative visited the farm a short time ago The Harvester was munching his noonday meal, but he left it godunaturally and paced for several minutes while the party inspected his unusual personality. It would be hard to find a more distinctly masculine individual representative of the Electioner-Wilkes cross which is so popular just now, and a later glance at his colts in the paddocks, where they ran by their mothers' sides, revealed the fact that he stamps his progeny with his own very remarkable individuality. Charles, who looks after the horse and understands him perfectly, had a laugh at one member of the party who side-stepped for the door as the horse with his ears flat on his neck turned from his feed and marched toward the visitors.

"He only wants me to kill that fly on his neck," remarked the caretaker as he put the afore-said fly out of commission. Up went The Harvester's ears once more and the business of converting oats into fat and muscle was resumed. The horse is ridden every day by Charles when Mr. Billings is not at the farm. When the master is at the place The Harvester cannot furnish him with sufficient exercise, so Bion, a lordly orloff in an adjoining box, is pressed into service, followed by Nancy Royce, 2:03 1/4, the greatest by Alerton with "Knapp" McCarthy raced for so many years.

Bion is one of the very remarkable exhibits of Curles Neck. He is a Russian trotter, almost snow white now, but a dappled gray when Mr. Billings first saw him in Moscow in 1909. He had trotted a two lap ice-track in 2:14 1/4, and Mr. Billings did not rest till he secured him in 1912, when he paid his second visit to Russia. It would be hard to find a handsomer big horse than Bion, and his owner says he is not only a clever saddle horse but a very good trotter as well. He shows in his clear cut throat, tapering muzzle and jewellike eye the Arabian ancestry from which his sprang. Bion is one of the best argu-

ments possible in favor of the endeavor to establish type in our American horse families.

Returning to The Harvester, 2:01, it is worthy of note that this horse, though campaigned for many years, never lost but one race, and that when ailing, Lady Jones beating him at Lexington, Ky., on October 13, 1909. The Harvester won the first heat in 2:09 1/4 and the second in 2:07 1/4. He finished last in the third heat, which was trotted in 2:09 1/4, and the horse's temperature being taken, it was shown that he was sick and he was therefore withdrawn. It was one of the only two occasions when he did not win his races in straight heats, the other time being when Bob Douglas, 2:04 1/4, beat him the first heat of the Charter Oak Stakes at Hartford on September 6, 1909. By Walnut Hall, 2:08 1/4, a great-grandson of Electioner, and out of Nolelet, by Moko, a grandson of George Wilkes, he was a sensational colt as a two-year-old, though virtually unbroken. He had been led by the side of a pony a quarter in 34 seconds, and when the auctioneer for the executive staff of Uhlan of Milwaukee outbid all competitors and took him for \$9,000, a very high figure for an untried young trotter. He was turned over to the great Tennessee Ed Geers for education and starting in at Syracuse the next day by Charles when Mr. Billings was a short time ago. The Harvester was munching his noonday meal, but he left it godunaturally and paced for several minutes while the party inspected his unusual personality. It would be hard to find a more distinctly masculine individual representative of the Electioner-Wilkes cross which is so popular just now, and a later glance at his colts in the paddocks, where they ran by their mothers' sides, revealed the fact that he stamps his progeny with his own very remarkable individuality. Charles, who looks after the horse and understands him perfectly, had a laugh at one member of the party who side-stepped for the door as the horse with his ears flat on his neck turned from his feed and marched toward the visitors.

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navigable clear to the farm. Almost in front of the mansion, which is a feature of the place, a spacious dock capable of accommodating the Vanadise, Mr. Billings's superb steam yacht, is constructed. There have been extensive additions to the property in the way of barns and other outbuildings, houses for the capable manager, J. E. Colenso, and for Trainer "Thad" Logan, sick for a long time but rapidly regaining his old time strength, and brood mare expert Larry Murphy, as well as buildings for the executive staff and the small army of helpers and farm employees and a magnificent mile track and a brood mare barn with a covered dirt track on which the young things can take their exercise and learn to step in preparation for the auction ring, for it is Mr. Billings's intention to sell all the youngsters unbroken the fall they are weaned. Most of these changes have come since the new owner took charge, and there are other and abundant evidences of aggressiveness on every hand.

The mansion, which is of the Colonial type, occupies an eminence from which the yellow bosom of the James is visible for many miles, the farm being 1,500 feet wide and from 25 to 60 feet in depth in the vicinity of the farm. The property derives its name from the peculiar formation of the estate, the river curving in a "neck" or "U" shape, the mansion being built at the extreme point overlooking the river. In the distance, high above the hills, the smokestacks of the Du Pont powder works at City Point where 7,000 men labor night and day to fill orders for explosives, vomit black smoke, and the thought came to the writer that tranquil Sunday in June that war was indeed all that Sherman termed it and then some.

The place is kept in perfect order as though the owner was expected at any moment. It is said that the ability to reach the farm by water from New York in about twenty-two hours had much to do with Mr. Billings's determination to purchase the estate. The photographs shown on this page convey some idea of the beauty of the place, the peculiar formation of the river, the view of the fields and the trimmings of white. Since passing into Mr. Billings's possession a brick walk leading to the terrace from

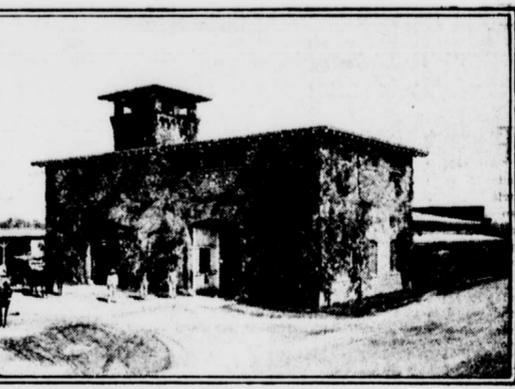
the river's edge has been laid and it has added to the beauty of the place. There is an abundant supply of pure water from artesian wells and the entire land under cultivation has been drained, this item alone costing the former owner, it is said, \$250,000. While the land which is under cultivation is most desirable, producing oats, wheat, clover, timothy and alfalfa, the unproductive portions have their charm as well, the marsh being one of the best ducking grounds in the country. The shooting is over live decoys and those who are fortunate enough to be invited during the season may be in their blind or punt half an hour after breakfast any morning. Wilson snipe, the gamest birds that fly, are found in the marsh lands also, and in the season for geese some splendid bags of these birds are made, the young wheat fields in the spring bringing the birds in legions. Quail whistle everywhere and in the woods deer range and the wild turkey in season will answer the pleading lure of the female's call or he may be still hunted with success by those who have patience and the craft of the woodsman. Woodcock, squirrel and rabbits are also found; in short, it is a sportsman's paradise.

It is all historical ground. Curles Neck Farm having been the home of one of the Randolphs, who settled there in 1635. Nathaniel Bacon, the leader of "Bacon's Rebellion," the first protestant against English government in the colonies, is also said to have lived there at one time. It is in the region of many battlefields, notably Malvern Hill, and there is a Colonial graveyard in which many Randolphs were laid to rest almost 300 years ago. There are eighteen miles of splendid roads and every fence and outbuilding is as bright and clear as paint can make it. Dark green with a red trimming harmonizes charmingly with the vivid green of the alfalfa and the gold of the ripening wheat. A patented fence of light wattles capable of being moved quickly at any time encompasses most of the fields and through its use the paddock where the mares and their young feed can be changed from time to time as necessity demands.

It was a beautiful sight that Sunday afternoon when Larry Murphy gave his ingratiating call of "Coo-coo-up! Coo-coo-up!" to the band of a score of



Uhlan trotting at the rate of 1:44 for the mile.



Type of the stables at Curles Neck.



Park and main driveway at Curles Neck.

sunning himself in the grass stretched at full length, his mother standing over him when the party came to the gate leading to the paddock, which the mare and colt had entirely to themselves. As the latch clicked Memories became stone, her beautiful head poised and her ears thrust forward, listening intently. One word from Larry reassured her, the fine ears played to and fro in recognition of her friend. The colt was almost under her feet and a member of the party expressed a fear that she would step on him.

"No fear," remarked Larry as he walked forward. "She knows her's there?"

The youngster showed reluctance to rise, but finally got on his feet, stretched himself and trotted off by the side of his dam to the further end of the enclosure.

On July 1 there were forty-three mares at the farm. Space precludes an account of them all, but in order that experts may see what other experts who are not hampered by price consider as specimens worthy to mix with the champion trotters of the world the breeding of a few individuals is given below:

Arlie Dillon (2), 2:21 1/4, town sister to Harry Dillon, W. 10 and dam herself of Dillon Axworthy (2) 2:11 1/4; (3) 2:10 1/4; b. m. (1904) by Sidney Dillon—Arlie by Gay Wilkes, 2:15 1/4; 2 dam, by By, sister to Lockheart, 2:08 1/4 by Nutwood.

Arlie (dam of Orbingen, 2:15, her first foal), sister to Albia, 2:08 1/4, b. m. by Bingen, 2:06 1/4—Narion by Arion, 2:18 1/4; dam Nancy Hanks, 2:04, by Henry Medford.

Baby Axworthy (2), 2:25 1/4; public trial (2), 2:09 1/4; a half in 1:52, b. m. (1910) by Axworthy (3), 2:15 1/4—Ham Bird, 2:26 1/4, sister to Hawthorn, 2:06 1/4; b. m. (1904) by Ham Lady Ham by Hambird, 2:31 1/4.

Baroness Jay, 2:29 1/4; br. m. (1907) by Jay McGregor, 2:07 1/4; dam Baroness Electra (3), 2:26 1/4; by Baron Wilkes, 2:18 1/4; 2 dam, by Fanny Swape, 2:19 1/4, by Florida.

Baroness Virginia (3), 2:08 1/4, winner of Kentucky Futurity; roan m. (1906) by Baron Review, 2:21 1/4—Virginia Reynolds by Jay Bird, 2 dam Harrie Wilkes, by Eagle Bird.

Bernice R., 2:07 1/4; b. m. (1904) by Dexter Prince—Dione, 2:07 1/4; by Eros; 2 dam Grade S., 2:22, by Speculation; 2 dam, by Tomboy, 2:16; 2 dam, by Ham Bird, by Abdullah Membrino.

Caracas (dam of 6 including Nahma, 2:07 1/4); bl. m. (1898) by Bingen, 2:06 1/4—Hour, 2:17, by Onward, 2:25 1/4; 2 dam, Jessie Turner by Mambrino (Patton).

Gertrude Dillon, 2:10 1/4; b. m. (1905) by Sidney Dillon—Biscay by Director, 2:17; 2 dam, by Harriet.

Miss Edna, by Harriet, W. 10; 2 dam, by John A. McKerron, 2:04 1/4; Lou Dillon, 1:58 1/2; by Sidney Dillon.

Lou Dillon, 1:58 1/2; ch. m. (1898), by Sidney Dillon; Lou Milton, by Milton Medford.

Louise Wilson, 2:10 1/4, sister to Tallie Marlow, 2:09 1/4; Minna Ward, 2:10, 8:9, b. m. (1907), by Prudal, 2:16; 2 dam, by Tomboy, 2:16; 2 dam, by Lou Dillon, by Abdullah Membrino.

Louise Bingen (3), 2:08 1/4; b. f. (1911), by Bingen, 2:06 1/4; Louie Marlow, 2:09 1/4; by Prudal, 2:16; 2 dam, Miss Edna, by Harriet, W. 10.

Margaret Preston, 2:10 1/4, half sister to Country Jay, 2:05 1/4; Ormonda, 2:08 1/4; Kentucky Todd, 2:08 1/4; Judge Parker, 2:09 1/4; blk. m. (1907), by The Director General—Parrella by Parrella; 2 dam, Minnie Merrill, by Young Jun.

Memories, own sister to Todd, br. m. (1909), by Bingen, 2:06 1/4; Fanny, 2:13, dam of Sadie Mae, 2:06 1/4; Magon, 2:09 1/4; w. m. (1907), by Arion (1), 2:07 1/4; 2 dam, Directress, 2:19, by Director, 2:17.

Nelly Worth, 2:25 1/4; m. m. (1902), by Axworthy (3), 2:15 1/4; Nell, dam of Tom Axworthy, 2:07, w.

Solida (3), 2:24 1/4, public trial at Lexington in 1913, for Doc Miller, 2:08 1/4; half 1:52 1/2; blk. m. (1908), by Tess, 2:14 1/4; Caracas (dam of Nahma, 2:07 1/4, 8:9 m. by Bingen, 2:06 1/4; 2 dam, Hour, 2:17, by Onward, 2:25 1/4; 2 dam, by Fanny Swape, 2:19 1/4, by Florida.

St. Louis, 2:14 1/4; Lady Brusals, 2:19 1/4; 2 dam, Mignon, by Robert McGregor, 2:17 1/4.