COLLECTION SUMMARY

Creator:
Blythewood Farms (Cleveland, Tenn.)

Inclusive Dates:
1932-2016

Scope & Content:
This collection is composed of 27 scrapbooks chronicling the history of Blythewood Farms in Cleveland, Tennessee. Spanning the years from 1932 to 2016, the scrapbooks contain photographs, newspaper clippings, award certificates, registration certificates, event programs and articles about Blythewood, its owners and the American Saddlebred horses bred, trained and shown there.

Volume 1 (1932) contains newspaper clippings. Among them are articles about Bess Mayfield as a young horsewoman in New York City.

Volume 2 (1942-1948) contains newspaper clippings, photographs, judge’s ribbon, pin, and ringmaster ribbon. Among the articles is the engagement announcement of Bess Mayfield to David Neil. Photographs include one of Bess Mayfield at a three-gaited competition.

Volume 3 (1949-1952) “Blythewood No. 2” contains newspaper clippings, articles about Sue City Sue, Grand Champion at Atlanta, and Blythe Spirit, Road Horse Champion, and Blythewood Farms horse sales.

Volume 5 (1953-1958) “King Coe Book No. 1” is devoted to the National Champion horse King Coe and the many horses he sired as an award winning stallion.

Volume 6 (1954-1958) “Blythewood No. 3” contains newspaper clippings and magazine articles about Blythewood Farms and its many horses. It also contains photographs of various competition winners.

Volume 7 (1956-1963) “Thoroughbred Registration Papers” contains thoroughbred registration papers, including breeding and pedigree data for Blythewood Farms horses. It also contains a copy of The Breeder’s Guide to Descriptions.


Volume 9 (1958-1968) “Blythewood Book No. 4” contains data concerning the horses of Blythewood Farms, and David Neil, Chairman of the AHSA Roadster Committee.

Volume 10 (1959) “King Coe Book No. 2” is devoted to King Coe, voted the number one breeding sire, the many horses he sired, and his death.

Volume 11 (1959-2013) [Horses of Blythewood Farms] contains certificates of registration for Blythewood Farms horses and recognition of CF First Night Out as Reserve Sire of the Year.

Volume 12 (1962-1965) [Horses of Blythewood Farms] contains clippings about the horses of Blythewood Farms, including an article citing one sold to an individual in South Africa. It also contains a photograph of David Neil and other officials at the California State Fair.

Volume 13 (1965-1968) [Horses of Blythewood Farms] contains clippings about the horses of Blythewood Farms and the pedigree of Grand Command. It also contains a Memorial Certificate, “The United States of America Honors the Memory of David Neil,” signed by Lyndon Johnson, President of the United States.

Wins Five-Gaited Competition,” and “Light and Bright Takes Top Honors in Five-Gaited Mare Event.”


Volume 18 (1982-1983) [Horses of Blythewood Farms] contains photographs of Blythewood Farms horses, including Hayfield’s Bold Knight and Bell Ringer.


Volume 20 (1987-2009) [Horses of Blythewood Farms] contains clippings concerning the horses of Blythewood Farms, and one of Bess Neil receiving the Audrey Gutridge Award.


Volume 22 (2005-2015) “Horses Bred at Blythewood” contains pedigrees and award certificates for Blythewood Farms horses, including horses sired by CF First Night Out. It also contains a photocopy of a check signed by actor, William Shatner.


Volume 24 (2010) “Cleveland and Family” contains a variety of items including photographs of Blythewood Farms horses, pedigrees, trophies and tack, and Neil family photographs. There are four photographs of special interest: David Neil as a child sitting on the pony he rode to school every day and his brother Winston; Dallas Hardee Neil, sitting, and Annie Gill, standing; a group photograph of Elinor, Robie Gill, Winston Neil, Annie Gill Neil, Dallas Hardee Neil, Mary Elizabeth (Mayfield) Neil, Martha Neil, Robert Neil, Anne (Mayfield) Neil,

Volume 25 (Undated) “Happy Valley Farms” contains clippings about David Neil and his tenure at Happy Valley Farms where he obtained the ranking of Master Trainer. It also contains a much earlier clipping of Bess Mayfield showing her horse, Minawanda, at Madison Square Garden, in New York.

Volume 26 (Undated) “Blythe Spirit” is a compilation of Blythe Spirit’s pedigree, an alphabetical listing of ancestors, paternal and maternal charts, base information for multiple horses, and paternal and maternal information for multiple horses.

Volume 27 (Undated) “Harrods Burg” is a compilation of Harrods Burg’s pedigree, an alphabetical listing of ancestors, paternal and maternal charts, base information for multiple horses, and paternal and maternal information for multiple horses.

Volume 28 (Undated) [CF First Night Out Part 2] contains biographical information about CF First Night Out and clippings and photographs of the horses he sired.

Physical Extent: 28 volumes

Accession/Record Group Number: Mf. 2066

Language: English

Permanent Location: Mf. 2066 (available only on microfilm).

Repository: Tennessee State Library and Archives, 403 Seventh Avenue North, Nashville, Tennessee, 37243-0312

Administrative/Biographical History

Blythewood Farms was founded in 1942 by David Neil and Mary Elizabeth “Bess” (Mayfield) Neil. It was named in honor of Mrs. Neil’s father, Pearson Blythe Mayfield, who purchased the property in the 1920s. Blythewood is one of the oldest and largest American Saddlebred nurseries and training farms in the
country. Today (2016) there are approximately 175 horses on the farm, with about 20 foals born each year.

Blythewood Farms has produced more than 300 American Saddlebred World and Reserve World Champions. Among the stallions that have stood at Blythewood are Blythe Spirit, CF First Night Out, ranked the number one performance sire of World Champions, 2005-2010, and Sire of the Year in 2009), and National Champion King Coe.

Mary Elizabeth “Bess” (Mayfield) Neil was born in Cleveland, Tennessee to Pearson Blythe Mayfield, a Cleveland attorney and founding board chairman of the Cleveland Public Library, and Mary Summerfield Key. She was educated at Girls’ Preparatory School in Chattanooga, Bob Jones College in Cleveland, Tenn., and attended Mrs. Semple’s Finishing School in New York City. Her father shared his love of horses with her as a girl, and they often rode together. She first competed in the early 1940s with the Bradley Riding Association, riding behind the Bradley County High School.

According to Mrs. Neil, “The American Saddlebred is the peacock of the horseshow world. I think they are stunning in structure, appearance and ability. They are primarily bred for show, but also used in jumping, dressage, endurance and trail and pleasure riding. I adore working with animals, especially show horses. I like the wonder of them.”

Among the honors and awards earned by Mrs. Neil are:
Lifetime Dedication Award from the Tennessee Sports Hall of Fame
Breeder of the Year United States Equestrian Foundation, Breeder of the Year American Saddlebred Horse Association, Lifetime Achievement Award United States Equestrian Foundation, Lifetime Achievement Award American Saddlebred Horse Association, Audrey Pugh Guthridge Award, American Saddlebred Breeders Hall of Fame, United Professional Horseman’s Hall of Fame.

In 1942 she married David Neil and in the same year they founded Blythewood Farms together. David Hardee Neil (1913-1965) was born in Kentucky. Prior to his marriage he sold horses in Nashville and at Happy Valley Farms in Rossville, Georgia. He and Bess Neil were the parents of two daughters, Anne Neil and Margot (Neil) Everhart. Anne Neil works at Blythewood Farms and is a professional trainer, showman and salesman.

The staff of Blythewood Farms also includes Richard Witt, breeding manager, who came to Blythewood as a teenager looking for a summer job. Except for attending college, Mr. Witt has never left the farm’s employ. He was inducted into the American Saddlebred Horse Association Hall of Fame in 2003. Assisting with training and breeding are Ramon Gomez and Pedro Martinez, both of whom have worked at Blythewood Farms for over 40 years.
Organization/Arrangement of Materials

Volumes arranged chronologically.

Conditions of Access and Use

No restrictions.

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Index Terms

Personal/Family Names:

Everhart, Margot Neil
Gomez, Ramon, active 1975-2016
Martinez, Pedro
Mayfield, Pearson Blythe
Mayfield, Mary Summerfield Key
Neil, Anne
Neil, David L.
Neil, Mary Elizabeth Mayfield
Neil, Winston L.
Witt, Richard
Neal family

Corporate Names/Organizations/Government Bodies:

Blythewood Farms (Cleveland, Tenn.) -- History -- Sources

Subjects:

American saddledbred horse
Horse farms -- Tennessee -- Cleveland
Horses -- Breeding -- Tennessee

Geographic Names:

Cleveland (Tenn.) -- Social life and customs -- 20th century -- Sources

Document Types:

Scrapbooks
Acquisition and Appraisal

Provenance and Acquisition:
Collection loaned to the Tennessee State Library & Archives by Mary Elizabeth “Bess” Neil, owner of Blythewood Farms, Cleveland, Tennessee. The collection was microfilmed and returned.

Processing and Administrative Information

Preferred Citation:
Blythewood Farms (Cleveland, Tenn.) American Saddlebred Horse Scrapbooks, 1932-2016

Processing Information:
The scrapbooks were processed by Barbara Fagen, Cleveland, Tennessee, in March 2016. Minimum conservation was undertaken. Loose photographs were secured with an archival adhesive, loose covers were secured with cotton tying tape, and loose papers were placed in folders, labeled with the appropriate scrapbook number, and placed at the back of each scrapbook.

Existence and Location of Originals:
Held privately.
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