

HISTORY
OF
VENANGO COUNTY,
PENNSYLVANIA.

ITS PAST AND PRESENT,

INCLUDING

ITS ABORIGINAL HISTORY; THE FRENCH AND BRITISH OCCUPATION OF THE
COUNTRY; ITS EARLY SETTLEMENT AND SUBSEQUENT GROWTH; A
DESCRIPTION OF ITS HISTORIC AND INTERESTING LOCALITIES; ITS
RICH OIL DEPOSITS AND THEIR DEVELOPMENT; SKETCHES OF
ITS CITIES, BOROUGHs, TOWNSHIPS, AND VILLAGES; NEIGH-
BORHOOD AND FAMILY HISTORY; PORTRAITS AND
BIOGRAPHIES OF PIONEERS AND REPRESENT-
ATIVE CITIZENS; STATISTICS, ETC., ETC.

ILLUSTRATED.

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1890.

Prospect Hill Stock Farm, * of which Messrs. Charles Miller and J. C. Sibley of Franklin, Pennsylvania, are the proprietors, is to-day undoubtedly the best equipped and one of the largest and most widely and favorably known of any breeding establishment in the world. There are, in reality, adjacent to Franklin, three separate farms owned by the firm. The first, generally known as the Fair Ground farm, adjoining the Third ward of the city, lies on the east side of the Meadville pike and extends from the foot to the top of the hill. It comprises about one hundred and ninety acres, and contains the principal buildings. This is the farm referred to in this article, unless otherwise stated. The Galena farm, lying principally on the west side of the Pittsburgh pike, between Franklin and Uniontown, contains about three hundred and twenty-five acres, and is at present used mostly for pasturage. The Prospect Hill farm, located in Sandy Creek township, six miles southeast of Franklin, consists of nearly two hundred acres, and is now used chiefly for growing crops. It has barn capacity for about ninety animals. On this farm is the first silo built west of the Allegheny mountains. Its capacity is two hundred and forty tons. The firm began their career as breeders after they had achieved such success in other lines that they had sufficient means to enable them to obtain for foundation stock the most desirable animals regardless of cost. The first purchase which called general attention to the rising firm was that of the Jersey bull Pedro 3187, whose dam at that time (1881), had the highest yearly butter record of any cow in the world. Breeders were present at the auction from

* By E. H. Sibley.

all parts of the country and competition was lively, but the firm finally secured the prize for two thousand five hundred dollars, which was considered an unreasonable sum to pay by those who did not fully appreciate the importance of having the best qualities possible in a sire. However, as is generally true, the best proved in this case to be the cheapest, and in addition to an immense amount of free advertising, and to getting back considerably more than first cost in the increased price at which they sold his calves, the firm at length disposed of this bull for the highest price up to that time realized for any animal of this breed, namely: ten thousand dollars in cash, and other considerations valued at three thousand dollars. Shortly afterward the firm purchased from A. B. Darling, proprietor of the Fifth Avenue hotel, New York city, Michael Angelo 10116, a better bred son of Eurotas, paying for him, when a calf only six weeks old, twelve thousand, five hundred dollars cash, which price still remains the highest *bona fide* cash price ever paid for an individual of the Jersey breed.

At one time in Jersey history great attention was paid to mere beauty; the ideal being a gazelle-like creature, which was more ornamental in the lawn than profitable in the dairy. The firm realized from the first that the true standard of value of the breed, and hence the standard that must ultimately prevail, was excellence for milk and butter, and hence selected all animals on this practical basis. As the general public had not yet come around to their standard they were able to buy for one hundred and thirty dollars one of the best dairy bulls that ever lived, Stoke Pogis 5th, 5987, for which afterward fifteen thousand dollars was offered and refused. Several bull calves by this bull were sold by the firm at from one thousand to one thousand five hundred dollars each.

While on a visit to Canada Mr. Sibley saw a cow, then dry, which other breeders had also looked at, but had paid no particular attention to, which he concluded was one of the best he had ever seen. He advised the fellow breeder, who had an option on her for two thousand dollars, to take her by all means, and he himself went immediately and bought for the firm her bull calf, Ida's Rioter of St. L., 13656, for one thousand five hundred dollars. Within a year from that time the full brother of this bull was sold for five thousand dollars, and his dam Ida of St. Lambert was purchased jointly by V. E. Fuller of Hamilton, Ontario, Canada, and Miller & Sibley for six thousand dollars cash. Mr. Fuller eventually disposed of his interest in this cow to Messrs. Miller & Sibley. She made, before a committee appointed by the American Jersey Cattle Club, a seven days' test of thirty pounds twenty-one and a half ounces of butter, which was nearly three pounds higher than any previous yield. She gave sixty-seven pounds of milk per day, four hundred and fifty-five and one-half pounds in seven days, and eighteen hundred and eighty-eight pounds in thirty-one days, these amounts constituting and still remaining the best milk records for those periods of any cow in the Jersey breed.

A cow that had been bought for four hundred and thirty dollars, and that was retained in spite of the advice to sell her by a chief expounder of the escutcheon theory, who declared that she would be an unprofitable cow in the dairy, gave, when two or three years older, in twelve consecutive months sixteen thousand one hundred and fifty-three and three-fourth pounds of milk, which, from tests in several different months, was conservatively estimated to have yielded fully nine hundred and fifty pounds of butter. This animal, Matilda 4th, 12816, her owners claim to be the best cow of any breed for a yearly production of milk and butter combined. It might be interesting to speak in detail of La Petite Mere 2nd 12810, Fawn of St. Lambert 27942, and many others well known throughout Jerseydom, but the limits of this sketch forbid. The firm have literally sold their Jerseys from the Atlantic to the Pacific ocean, and from Canada to the gulf of Mexico. Two bulls were sent to the Pacific slope this summer (1889), one going to Oregon and the other to California.

The cattle barn on the Fair Ground farm is a three-story, sixteen-sided polygon, lighted by electricity, heated in winter by steam, and having capacity for one hundred and fifteen animals. The thermometer is not allowed to go over 45° and not under 40° Fahrenheit, the aim being to maintain a temperature a little above freezing point. The basement is devoted mainly to milking cows. The gutters behind the stalls are covered with iron grating extending to a sewer, which leads one hundred rods from the stable. The number of pounds of milk that each cow gives is immediately set down on the record sheet. By this means and by tests at intervals of each cow's milk for richness, the value of every cow in the dairy for milk and butter can be closely determined. On the floor above are box stalls for service bulls and cows soon to calve, and in one room with the engine is a De Laval cream separator, for separating the cream from the milk as soon as milked. This was the first one of these machines to be set up in Pennsylvania and the second one in America. The top floor is used mainly for storage for feed. A railway suspended from the roof and power supplied by a team of horses outside the barn makes it an easy matter to raise from the inside or outside of the barn, and place wherever desired, straw, hay, fodder and other kinds of feed. The power cutter on this floor cuts one ton of corn fodder into one-third inch length in twenty-five minutes.

At the present time the entire Jersey herd numbers about one hundred head. The firm also own (purchased for the firm principally by Mr. Miller) a Holstein bull; four head of Black Polled Angus cattle; about seventy-five head of Shetland, Welsh, and Burmese ponies; two hundred head of pure and grade Angora goats, and twenty head of coach horses, the last mentioned headed by Incroyable, a prize-winning stallion by one of the French government stallions. W. K. Vanderbilt imported Incroyable, and

is said to have paid more money for him than was paid for any other horse of this breed that ever left France. For several years the firm owned, and had in the stud, Prince Buccleugh, an imported, registered Clydesdale stallion of famous prize-winning ancestry.

In 1886 J. C. Sibley purchased, as an individual venture, from ex-Governor Stanford of California, for ten thousand dollars, the four-year-old trotting stallion St. Bel 5336, record 2:24½. This horse has been repeatedly timed quarter miles in thirty-two seconds. Electioneer, his sire, has more of his get in the 2:20 list than any other stallion that ever lived, and promises soon to lead all others in the number of his 2:30 trotters. Beautiful Bells, the dam of St. Bel, already first among the famous brood mares in the average speed of her foals, also promises within a few years to surpass all others in the number of her foals to trot in 2:30 or better.

The mares purchased were carefully selected regardless of cost, for their blood lines and individual excellence. They were chiefly daughters of such noted sires as Dictator, Almont, Nutwood, Volunteer, Harold, Electioneer, Happy Medium, Princeps, Nephew, Belmont, and Mambrino King, and the aim was, as far as possible, that the dams of these mares should be equally as well bred as their sires.

A horse barn was constructed nine hundred feet in circumference, the largest of the kind in the United States, elliptical in form, containing a tan bark track under cover one-seventh of a mile in length, on which horses can be exercised in the winter and at other times when the weather will not permit of their being taken outside. A half-mile track, said to be one of the best in the United States, was also built at a heavy expense.

In the summer of 1888 Major Charles Miller, who, through his prominent connection with the Baptist denomination, had previously refrained from joining the trotting horse enterprise, purchased a one-half interest, wisely concluding that this business, honestly and honorably conducted as it was, was as legitimate and creditable as any of the many others in which he and Mr. Sibley had invested money together.

Additions and improvements to the farm have been constantly going on, among which may be mentioned a fire-proof brick stable for stallions, a stable containing twenty box stalls for horses in training, a two and one-half story barn for colts, residences for superintendent and trainer, blacksmith shop, etc., etc.

The total amount of money invested by the proprietors up to November 1, 1889, was three hundred and fifty-one thousand, three hundred and three dollars, twenty-six cents; number of men employed, sixty-eight, and total yearly expense of fifty thousand dollars, of which twenty thousand dollars was for labor.

No effort has been made to sell the St. Bel colts, the plan being to develop them and sell them for what they can show. One colt, however, was

sold as a suckling out of a dam that had no record, and none of her get yet in the thirty list, for twenty-five hundred dollars. An offer of fifty thousand dollars for St. Bel has been refused. His younger brother, Bell Boy, sold at auction for fifty-one thousand dollars. St. Bel's service fee is five hundred dollars, and his book for 1890 was filled in five days' time. Only two or three other stallions in the United States command so high a fee. Miller & Sibley also own St. Bel's full sister, Palo Alto Belle, and full brother, Electric Bell. For the filly they paid eight thousand dollars as a two-year old. For the colt they paid twelve thousand five hundred dollars cash when less than one year old. This is the highest price yet paid for a colt of this age. Two other highly-bred and valuable stallions owned by this firm are Clay Wilkes 1840, by George Wilkes, dam by American Clay, second dam by Cassius M. Clay, Jr., and Sulwood by Sultan, dam by Nutwood. The stallions Elector and May King, both by Electioneer, were sold during the past year for seven thousand five hundred dollars each. The whole number of trotting animals now owned by the firm is about one hundred.

J. C. Sibley still continues the active management of the trotting horse department and the general oversight of the entire business, but turned it over, in 1885, to his younger brother, E. H. Sibley, who is given the title of manager, the purchase of supplies and handling of funds, the settlement of accounts and the sales department of Jerseys, ponies, etc. The other officials at the present time are: George B. Jobson, veterinarian and superintendent of herds and flocks; R. F. Patterson, superintendent of horse department; R. C. Stinson, trainer, and O. L. Rew, superintendent of farms.