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# THE BLOOD-HORSE

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TRAINING AT CAMDEN: SITE OF THE COLONIAL CUP

**THE GREATHOUSE FAMILY OF KENTUCKY**  

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**GOODBYE HALO, HELLO HOLLYWOOD STARLET**

The Greathouse family's Glencrest Farm is more than a business

# A FAMILY TRADITION

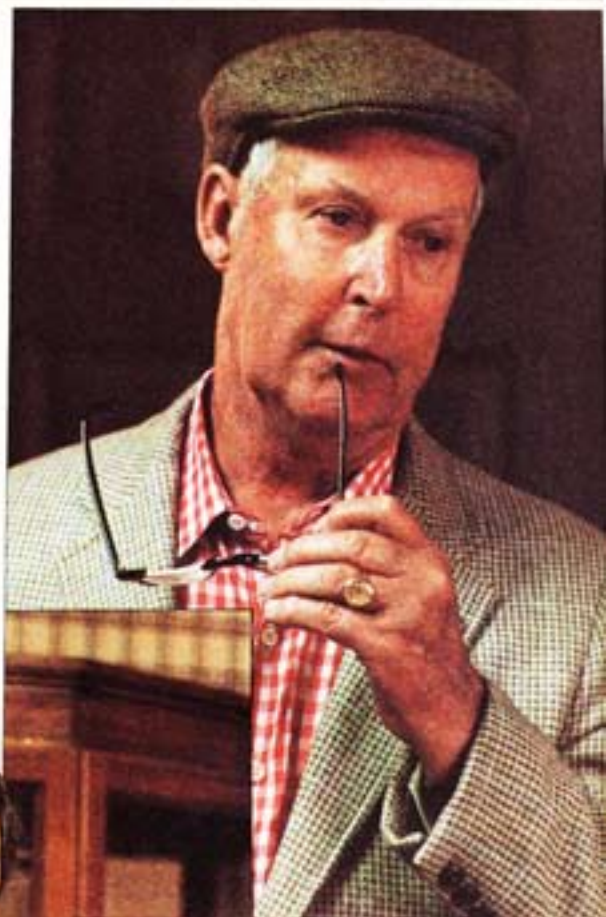
BY DEIRDRE B. BILES

The story of Central Kentucky's Greathouse family has an old-fashioned theme. The six children of John W. Greathouse Sr. and his wife, Mary Allen, worked on the family's Glencrest Farm during their formative years, and their ties to the prominent Thoroughbred nursery remain strong in an era when many families have ceased to function as a unit.

"Glencrest was a very small operation when we were growing up," said Nancy Greathouse Walker, 42, the family's eldest daughter. "After school, we would come home, change our clothes, and help with the afternoon feeding. We 'night-watched' during the foaling season, stripped bluegrass, and housed tobacco."

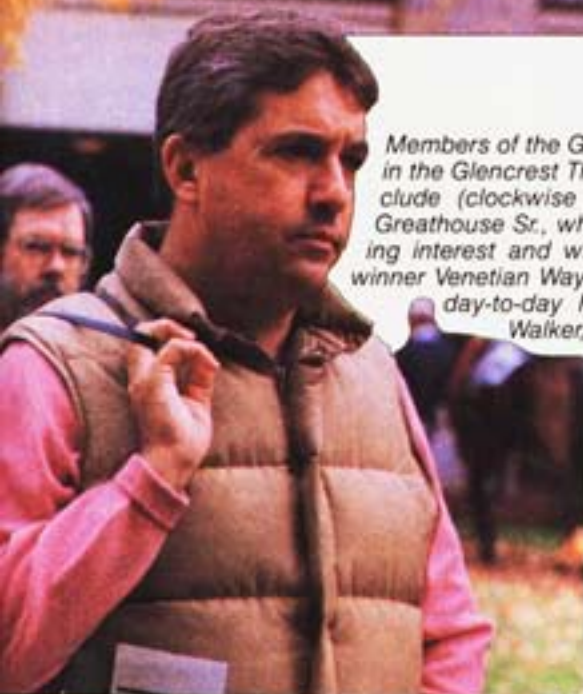
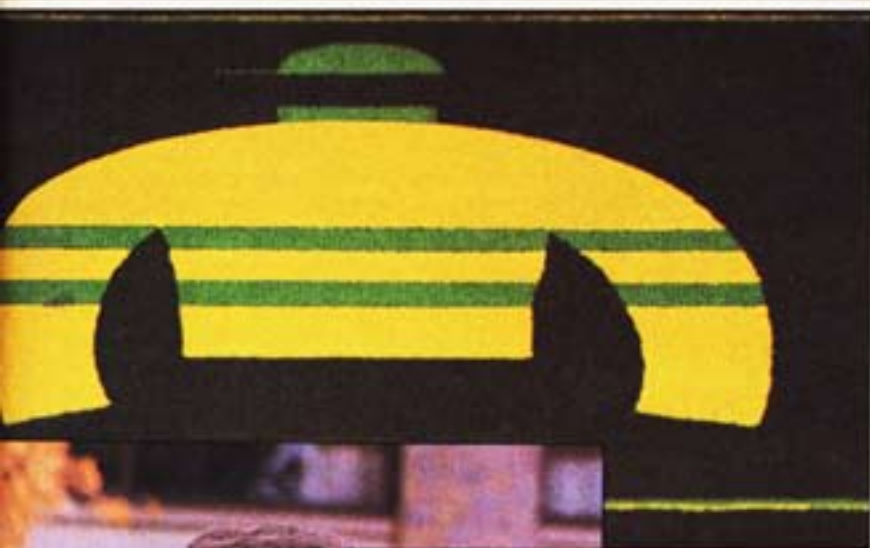
"I think because we all pitched in and worked as a family, the farm is more than just a business to us. We love the horses and the land, and we want to see Glencrest preserved, developed, and maintained. It's something beyond an everyday job."

The Glencrest Farm of today consists of more than 1,100 acres of Scott County land and is operated by a partnership of John W. Greathouse Sr., 69, and his four sons. Energetic men, they



never seem to lack for a pressing matter to attend to—a deal to be made, a race to attend, a stallion season to be sold.

The partnership does not require the direct involvement of its members, but each Greathouse son voluntarily donates a portion of his talents to the Glencrest operation. John Jr., 44, is in charge of day-to-day horse operations;



Members of the Greathouse family involved in the Glencrest Thoroughbred operation include (clockwise from top left) John W. Greathouse Sr., who began the family's racing interest and who bred Kentucky Derby winner Venetian Way; John Jr., who oversees day-to-day horse operations; Nancy Walker, who manages the farm office; Allen, who acts as comptroller, and David, who handles yearling preparation and sales.



Allen, 39, performs the duties of comptroller; David, 37, oversees the preparation and selling of yearlings; and Edward, 35, handles farm maintenance and takes charge of such ventures as raising cattle, tobacco, and hay.

The two Greathouse daughters also contribute to Glencrest. Nancy manages the farm office, where her constant companion is a West Highland Terrier named Lord McDuff of Glencrest (Duffy). Margaret, 27, works for a Lexington advertising agency and participates in farm affairs through her ownership interests in some horses.

"The advantages of working as a family are that you can anticipate likes and dislikes, and you can trust one another," said Allen, who worked for Kentucky's Highway Department before returning to Glencrest. "The disadvantage is that if you have a real difference of opinion, there's no easy way to resolve it quickly. If someone really wants to do something, though, everybody generally goes along."

In addition to the farm, Greathouse business interests include a Lexington tobacco warehouse, automobile financing, and insurance. All of the family ventures are overseen by the Greathouse patriarch, John Sr., a reserved, bespectacled man who shows a preference in his conservative attire for tweed jackets and khaki trousers. He is a benevolent presence, encouraging his children in family efforts as well as those they choose to pursue outside of Glencrest.

"I think we've been influenced by Dad's hard work and love for Glencrest and his determination for it to be the best it can be, for what it is," Nancy said. "He's always wanted to keep the farm of moderate size, not so large that you can't check on each mare, each workman, and each aspect every day. I think he has imparted to us that special feeling for the home farm that everyone grew up on."

**G**lencrest is operated primarily as a commercial breeding operation, with the chief venture being the selling of its yearlings at public auction. The family enjoyment of racing, however, is satisfied through a stable that normally has some 20 to 30 runners. The racing stock usually consists of Glencrest yearlings that do not meet their reserves, private acquisitions, and an occasional filly retained for eventual inclusion in the farm's broodmare band.

In 1987, Glencrest has been prominent on both the public auction and racing fronts. The farm was the seventh-leading consignor to the Keeneland fall yearling sale in terms of gross receipts, selling 30 yearlings for \$1,145,900, an average of \$38,197.

On the race track in 1987, Glencrest has been represented by three graded stakes winners. Anka Germania, raced in partnership with Fernwood Stable, is a leading contender for champion grass filly honors, having won the the Orchid (gr. IIT) and New York (gr. IIT) Handicaps and the New Jersey Turf Classic (gr. IIIT). Bolshoi Boy, campaigned in partnership with Arthur Belford, has captured three

(Continued on next page)

## GREATHOUSE FAMILY

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The main residence at Glencrest Farm is more than a century old.

graded stakes this year, including the Cornhusker (gr. II) and Razorback (gr. II) Handicaps. Glencrest's Spring Beauty won the Barbara Fritchie Handicap (gr. III).

Glencrest's 1987 stakes winners also include Hilo Bob, bred in partnership with Q. W. Walker Jr. Hilo Bob is from the first crop of the stallion Wavering Monarch, a major winner bred and raced by Glencrest.

Not every Greathouse family member necessarily is a partner in each horse sold or raced in the Glencrest name. However, the Greathouses have come to recognize that associating all animals with Glencrest results in greater recognition for the farm.

"One reason we started doing this was because, in 1982, we had Wavering Monarch, The Wheel Turns, and some other good runners," said David Greathouse, who also operates a bloodstock agency. "If we had run everything under the name of Glencrest Farm, we would have been on the leading own-

ers' list—not at the top, but in the top 20 or so. We're in this business together to participate in a commercial breeding program, enhance the farm's reputation, and make money. We should try to share as much as we can."

Over the years, John Greathouse Sr. and his children, along with various outside partners, have bred some 30 stakes winners. Among them are 1960 Kentucky Derby winner Venetian Way; 1966 champion 3-year-old filly Lady Pitt; Bold Liz, ranked second among fillies on the Experimental Free Handicap for 2-year-olds of 1972; and Flying Snowdrop, a major winner in South Africa. Campaigned in the names of the Greathouses and their outside partners have been more than 15 added-money winners, including Matching, In Full View, Flying Katuna, Christmas Bonus, and homebred Tricky Fingers.

**J**ohn W. Greathouse Sr.'s late father, W. W. Greathouse, made what proba-

bly were the first automobile loans offered in Lexington during the early part of this century. He also owned more than 2,000 acres of land. His son worked as a messenger in Keeneland's mutuel department and tried the tobacco business, and he was convinced that raising Thoroughbreds would go "hand in hand" with the family's farming ventures.

"My father didn't knock it (the Thoroughbred business), but he didn't endorse it either," John Sr. said. "It was something he'd never been into, and I guess he wasn't looking for anything else to be involved in."

The earliest Greathouse Thoroughbred venture John Sr. can recall involved a yearling he prepped and sold for a friend at Keeneland in the 1940s. The deal whetted his appetite to own and raise his own horses. In the 1950s, he purchased some 220 acres near Midway, Ky., from his father for Glencrest, so called because the name was found on some papers associated with the land.

Although he was later joined in the Thoroughbred business by his father and a brother, veterinarian L. F. Greathouse, John Sr. remained the family's dominant force in the breeding industry. The 1960s proved fruitful, as he achieved prominence as the breeder of classic winner Venetian Way (Royal Coinage—Firefly, by Papa Redbird) and champion Lady Pitt (Sword Dancer—Rock Drill, by Whirlaway). In 1962, he sold a yearling full brother to Venetian Way (Cambio) at Keeneland for \$71,000, the highest price paid that year in North America for a colt offered at public auction.

John Sr. also became involved in industry matters not directly related to his own operation. He served as president of the Thoroughbred Breeders of Kentucky during the 1970s and was instrumental in the establishment of the Kentucky Thoroughbred Development Fund, which provides race purse supplements to the owners of Kentucky-bred runners. He also served a term as president of the Thoroughbred Club of America.

"My father is knowledgeable not only about the animals, but also about the industry," said John Greathouse Jr. "Dad has dealt well with people over the years, and he's always had a good eye for a horse. I know a lot of people who can either deal with people and work with horses, but most can't do both."

The elder Greathouse and his wife

live on Glencrest in a large brick Greek Revival residence, fronted by huge white columns. Recently, John Sr. spoke nostalgically of his early days in the Thoroughbred business, calling the game "more fun then." The industry participants were more close-knit, and the financial pressures were not so great, he recalls. He derives satisfaction today from "the fact that we've grown in a very pleasant way, using our own money, and my children have been here to help."

The modern Glencrest is divided into two divisions—one for breeding stock and the other for yearlings—located approximately three miles apart. There are 15 barns, numbered 1 through 16—"We skip 13. Keeneland does it, so can we," John Sr. said. The predominant barn structures are converted tobacco barns and high-raftered buildings suitable for both horses and tobacco. One of the farm's more interesting barns is a converted brick structure, built more than 100 years ago. It was used by a previous owner to house draft horses and store whiskey barrels.

Glencrest is home to some 60 Greathouse broodmares, 20 year-around broodmare boarders, and those animals' offspring. Scheduled to stand at the farm in 1988 are six stallions, including Wavering Monarch (by Majestic Light) and Clever Trick (by Icecapade), which had been represented by 16 stakes winners through early December.

John Greathouse Sr. has stressed a continuing quest for quality in the Glencrest breeding program. He also has emphasized, however, moderation in capital expenditures, a philosophy that benefited the farm during the sharp fall that followed the Thoroughbred marketplace's highs earlier in this decade.

In the production of yearlings, stallion costs are kept down by breeding many mares to farm stallions. Glencrest owns shares in approximately 20 stallions, including Danzig, Polish Navy, and Dixieland Band. Expenditures in that area are controlled by buying into studs when they are first syndicated or early in their careers. Stallion seasons purchased by the farm generally cost in the \$10,000 to \$50,000 range.

Pedigree, conformation, and race record all are emphasized by the Greathouses in their selection of stallions. Another element they look for is speed.

"The stallion has to have speed

somewhere in his pedigree or his race record," David Greathouse said. "Speed can be defined in a couple of different ways. Some horses, the good sprinters, break and go right to the lead. Other horses can lay a little close and give you a big late run. Plodders are something that we've never bred to."

Said John Greathouse Jr.: "If we can't sell the foals of a stallion that has speed and can pass it along, we can race them and make a living with them."

The philosophy of broodmare acquisition, as described by John Greathouse Sr., is to obtain "all the pedigree we can get and as much racing class as we can afford." Most mares the family buys cost in the neighborhood of \$50,000 to \$200,000.

For a number of years, the Greathouses have purchased well-bred fillies with lesser race records from the Ogden Phipps family, whose powerful program has produced numerous champions. Glencrest's Wavering Monarch, which captured the 1982 Haskell Invitational Handicap (gr. I) and the 1983 San Fernando Stakes (gr. I), was produced from a former Phipps animal, the Buckpasser mare Uncommitted. He is also the son of a Phipps stallion, Majestic Light.

The Greathouses also like to purchase mares still racing or mares just off the race track. They believe those animals to be better values than some in-foal broodmares, whose prices can be overly inflated by the foals they are carrying.

David Greathouse considers Europe to be a good source of reasonably priced racing fillies and broodmares. His recent acquisitions there have included Irish-bred Anka Germania, which is scheduled to start in the Dec. 13 Hollywood Turf Cup Handicap (gr. IT).

"One thing we've done for years is 'underbreed' our mares. That's based on the fact that some mares being bred to \$75,000 stallions today might not even be half-sisters to a stakes winner," David said. "Because a lot of our mares are bred to \$20,000 stallions, their offspring bring \$100,000 instead of the \$200,000 you would get breeding to a more expensive stud. However, if the foal isn't a good one, we're out just \$20,000, not \$75,000. We think it pays off in the long run."

Glencrest yearlings are sold primarily at Keeneland in the summer and fall. A treadmill, lunging, and hand walking are used in sale preparation to develop

the young animals' muscles and give the yearlings an athletic appearance—a strong shoulder, a widening chest, and enough meat on its frame to please the buyers. The Glencrest yearlings' bloodlines generally are most appealing to the American buyers, but the animals often have attracted the attention of foreign interests as well.

Top-priced yearling ever sold by Glencrest was Dolly's Alydar (Alydar—Mindy's Hurricane), a colt which brought \$875,000 at the 1982 Fasig-Tipton Saratoga sale. Glencrest also sold a \$525,000 Nureyev—Careless Kitten colt (Masnun) at Keeneland in July of 1986. In 1985, Glencrest's Danzig—Guile Princess colt brought \$500,000 at the Fasig-Tipton Kentucky summer yearling sale. Named Polish Count, the colt this year placed in a group III stakes in West Germany.

Glencrest yearlings that do not attain their reserve prices become members of the Greathouses' racing stable. The family sends its runners to a number of trainers, among them Rusty Arnold, Tommy Skiffington, Howie Teshler, and Steve Morguelan. One Greathouse racing strategy is to send stock to New York in the winter, when purses remain relatively high, but some of the more powerful stables have shipped to Florida.

"They're generally not our better-bred horses or best-looking horses, but we want to see them go to the races, and we want them to win," said John Greathouse Jr., of the family's racing animals. "If they're good enough, we try to spot them in a place where they can get some black type."

"We still own the mare, so we're thinking of helping that mare first. Second, we're thinking of selling the race horse. They're all for sale when they're on the race track, and they'll be for sale next week, next month, and next year, until we get them sold."

The racing aspect of the Glencrest operation is especially satisfying to John Jr., who once aspired to be a trainer. He has not regretted his decision to set aside that goal for family-related pursuits.

"There are so many things that we couldn't afford to do individually that we can do collectively," he said. "We want to be around horses and raise good horses, so it doesn't matter which one of us bred a particular horse or sold a particular horse. We're willing to shed a little bit of our ego to get along with other people and make everything work." ■