

## The History of Hamilton Farm

Resplendent on almost 600 acres in prestigious Somerset County, the current Hamilton Farm Golf Club encompasses much of the former country estate of the late New York financier James Cox Brady, a descendent of Irish immigrants whose father, Anthony Nicholas Brady, made a fortune in utilities before the turn of the last century.

Brady, a native of Albany, New York, went to Manhattan at the end of the Gilded Age when the Vanderbilts, Astors, Goulds and Morgans still gathered in the glittering ballroom of Caroline Astor's Thirty-fourth Street townhouse that later became the Waldorf Astoria Hotel.

His second-generation wealth prevented him from joining the uppermost echelon of New York society but allowed him to travel extensively. As accomplished on the back of a horse as he was in the board room, Brady dreamed of one day creating a great working estate in America like those he had seen in England and Ireland.

With this in mind, he frequented the Bedminster, New Jersey estate of his close friend, the pharmaceutical magnate Charles Pfizer, joined the Essex Foxhounds and learned as much as possible about the thousands of acres of pristine fields and forests across the Hudson River in northern New Jersey.

In 1911, Brady and his first wife, the former Elizabeth Hamilton, purchased a 180-acre parcel immediately adjacent to the Pfizer estate for \$18,000. They called the property "Hamilton Farm" for Elizabeth Brady's family, and soon erected a small hunting lodge at the entrance to the property.

It took Brady less than a decade to acquire 5,000 acres of forests and working farmland in Somerset, Morris and Hunterdon counties and create one of New Jersey's largest working farms. By the time he finished, Hamilton Farm encompassed the headwaters of the north branch of the Raritan River, and on a clear day Brady could look out the windows of his 64-room Georgian mansion over 4,000 rolling acres of corn, wheat, oats, rye and hay and see the Hudson River.

In its heyday, Hamilton Farm regularly employed more than 100 local men and women and supported a weekly payroll of \$4,000 to \$8,000, exclusive of mansion staff and day laborers brought in for construction.

The farm was managed by Fred Huyler, a Peapack carpenter Brady encountered when he first began buying up property. The two hit it off immediately and for half a century Huyler managed everything from the building of houses, barns, stables and kennels to the acquisition, breeding and exhibiting of livestock, poultry and dogs. It was Huyler who personally herded Brady's prized Herefords, Jersey cattle, Dorset sheep, Duroc-Jersey swine, chickens and German shepherds to the little Peapack train station when the animals were sent to exhibitions, and it was Huyler who personally escorted them to and from their destinations in specially outfitted train cars.

The care of the farm's fabled horses was handled entirely by the English groom and carriage driver Ted Williams, whom Brady brought to this country. Driving horses—in particular Clydesdales, Percherons, and hackney and Shetland ponies—occupied a special place in the financier's heart as attested by the three weathervanes his wife commissioned for the farm's 54-stall brick stable. Two depict prize-winning carriage horse combinations driven by Williams; the third is of the farm's world-famous hackney stallion, Hamilton

Model. To this day, many of Brady's fabled carriages can still be seen at the Shelburne Museum Carriage Collection in Shelburne, Vermont.

When it was built, the beautiful stable at Hamilton Farm was considered the largest, most lavish barn in the country. Its ornate interior included carriage rooms, corridors and harness rooms with tile walls, terrazzo floors and brass fittings. Each of the 54 stalls measured 12 foot square and had cork brick floors. The trophy room boasted a walnut case, stained glass ceiling light and an oak floor. Elaborate mechanical devices regularly cut, ground and cooked the horses' food, and 25 permanent stablemen were on hand to care for the animals. In addition, the stable had 40 rooms for the animals' caretakers. There were 10 sleeping rooms for staff, an apartment for the farm manager, eight bathrooms and a staff recreation room.

Hamilton Farm flourished in the early 1920's. The only setback was a 1921 fire that destroyed the original two-and-a-half story clapboard residence. Brady happily replaced it with a Georgian mansion, complete with sixty-four rooms, eleven fireplaces and a chapel with stained glass windows. He filled the place with antiques and works of art and personally oversaw the planting of the adjacent formal gardens. In spring and summer the family was surrounded by a sea of flowers. In fall and winter they enjoyed flowers, nectarines, pineapples, melons and vegetables from the farm's greenhouses.

When Brady died of pneumonia in 1927, his heirs promptly shut down the farming operation and sold off all the animals. They retained the farm, but the beautiful show place that had provided employment to a generation of local men and women was suddenly gone, leaving a large hole in the local economy.

Fifteen years later, Helen Cutting, Brady's third wife who by then had remarried, was living at the farm and financed the conversion of the stables and carriage house into an emergency hospital and rest center for U.S. Merchant Marine seamen. It was the first such hospital ever constructed in wartime America. It was overseen by physicians of the Medical Defense Council and staffed by area nurses and local volunteers. More than 45,000 Merchant Marine seamen were treated at Hamilton Farm during World War II.

It was in the 1960s that James Cox Brady Jr.—a close friend of Whitney Stone, who then was chairman of the United States Equestrian Team—invited the U.S.E.T to come to Gladstone. Mrs. Harden L. Crawford 3rd, a granddaughter of the original James Cox Brady, was living at the farm then and decided she wanted to learn to drive horses competitively. She prevailed upon Ted Williams, who was then in his late seventies, to come out of retirement and return to Gladstone.

Under his tutelage, Crawford became an accomplished driver and successfully competed in pleasure driving competitions in the U.S. and Canada. In 1972, she retired the trophy in the Devon Horse Show's Carriage Driving Marathon, and with her Welsh-thoroughbred crosses she captured the pleasure division of the four-in-hand competition at the Royal Canadian Winter Fair in Toronto.

Much of the estate was sold during the years following Brady's death, although family members continued to live in the house, and today, many still reside in the area.

The Beneficial Corporation contracted to purchase the property from the Brady family in 1978. The closing was marred by yet another fire which destroyed the mansion. Beneficial Corporation continued with the purchase, and contracted with designer Percy Leach to restore the mansion to its' grandeur. The property was used as a retreat and conference center.

In 1998, Lucent Technologies purchased the property with the concept of developing an ultra exclusive golf club with eighteen corporate members. Dr. Michael Hurdzan and Dana Fry, nationally known golf course architects, were hired to construct the finest golf facility in the country. Two courses were built, an eighteen hole championship course, and a challenging par three, which became the only USGA rated par three in the country. In addition, the design included eighteen cottages on the Par three Hickory course, one for each of the members. Over \$50 million was invested in bringing the dream of luxury golf entertaining to fruition.

In 2001, as the economy waned, so did Lucent's interest in the property. In June of that year, Townsend Capital, LLC, took over and promptly converted the club into a private, invitation only club for a limited number of members.

The vision of the club remained the same, however. Townsend Capital set forth to create the finest golf experience one could enjoy. The mansion continues to host exquisite dining and entertaining, and the golf courses are raved as the finest to be played.

In keeping with the finest courses in the world, Hamilton Farm hosted its first professional golf events in 2005 and 2006-the HSBC Women's World Match Play Championship. Exceptional personal service, five-star amenities and gourmet cuisine set Hamilton Farm among the finest private golf clubs in the world.