



History 101

Man O' War

Although my father was into horse racing (actually, he was into horse race betting), and he took me out to various tracks when I was a kid, I never developed any interest in it. Still, I doubt if there are many adults today who have not at least heard of Man O' War.

Man o' War, (March 29, 1917 Nursery Stud farm, Lexington, Kentucky – November 1, 1947, Faraway Farm) is considered one of the greatest Thoroughbred racehorses of all time. By the prominent sire Fair Play, his dam Mahubah was by the U.K. Triple Crown Champion, Rock Sand. Man o' War was owned and bred by August Belmont, Jr. (1851–1924), whose father's accomplishments were recognized through the naming of the Belmont Stakes. Belmont Jr. joined the United States Army at age 65 to serve in France during World War I. While he was overseas, his wife named a new foal "Man o' War" in honor of her husband. However, the Belmonts decided to liquidate their racing stable. At the Saratoga yearling sale in 1918, Man o' War was sold at a final bid of \$5,000 to Samuel D. Riddle who brought him to his Glen Riddle Farm near Berlin, Maryland.

Trained by Louis Feustel and ridden by Johnny Loftus, Man o' War made an impressive racing debut at Belmont Park on June 6, 1919, winning by six lengths. Three weeks later he won the Keene Memorial Stakes.

In the early 1900s, there were no starting gates. Horses circled around and then lined up behind a piece of webbing known as the barrier and were sent away when it was raised. In Man o' War's only loss, the Sanford Memorial Stakes, he still was circling with his back to the starting line when the barrier was raised (though some accounts give other reasons). After Man o' War turned around, he already was far behind the starters. The jockey, put Man o' War in bad positions, getting boxed in by other horses. Despite this, he came close to winning, losing by only a half-length. Over his two-year career, Man o' War won 20 of 21 races, setting three world records, two American records and three track records.

Man o' War died on 1 November 1947 at age 30 of an apparent heart attack only a very short time after his longtime groom, Will Harbut, died. In the early 1970s, his remains were moved to a new burial site at the Kentucky Horse Park, where his grave is marked with a statue by American sculptor, Herbert Haseltine.

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Man_o'_War]

