



Seabiscuit and Secretariat: The History of America's Most Famous Horses

Charles River Editors

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- *Includes accounts of the horses' lives and races
- *Includes online resources and a bibliography for further reading
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Americans have always loved animals, and those living prior to World War II were still close enough to their pioneer roots to feel a special affection for horses. After all, it was these noble animals that had carried soldiers and pulled plows and milk wagons alike. A horse was more than just a pet; it was a partner in the fight for survival. Just as many Americans had known special, unforgettable individuals, so they had known special horses.

Seabiscuit was one of these, and even the animal's name spoke to the heart of those struggling. A sea biscuit was a piece of bread baked for so long in such a low oven that it was completely dry and would never mold. It was so tough that it had to be soaked in water, sometimes even rainwater, before it could be eaten. But it was nutritious and would allow a sailor to do his duty for one more hour, helping keep him alive until he reached a safe harbor.

Seabiscuit was in many ways like his cracker namesake, for he was cultivated in many small races until he was ready for the big league. He was also at his best when soaked in the affection and attention given to him by his owners, trainer, and jockeys. Most of all, his wins and even his losses came to nourish a desperate nation and inspire its citizens to keep going until they reached a safer harbor of financial stability. He was also a friend, an inspiring leader who would rank in popularity and respect along with men like Roosevelt and Churchill. It is possible, perhaps even likely, that had he been born in another place and time, his name might never have been known outside of the racing world, but as one Horatio Alger story appealing to a nation full of them, his name became a household word and helped secure him a legacy as perhaps the most famous horse in history.

Unlike other previous heroes like Seabiscuit, Secretariat's fame is based not on the way in which he overcame long odds against him but in the way that he and his trainers made the very most of the advantages he had from birth. Won by his owner in a lucky draw, he was cherished even before he was born and spent the first year of his life happily trotting around the green fields of a Virginia farm. As he grew up, he enjoyed the best food, care and training money could buy, and in return he learned to run, first fast and then faster, as it slowly dawned on his growing audience that they were in the presence of greatness.

His career was short lived but full of glory, as he won nearly every race he ever ran. Of course, the peak of his career came in 1973, when he capped off a Triple Crown by shattering the track record at the Belmont Stakes on the way to winning by 31 lengths, a margin of victory that was never replicated. As he marveled at the performance, CBS announcer Chic Anderson couldn't help but gush, "Secretariat is widening now! He is moving like a tremendous machine!"

Everyone the least bit familiar with horseracing has seen clips of Secretariat, and by the time Secretariat

retired, he had won 16 of the 21 races he ran and only placed outside of the Top 3 once. Along the way, he ran at many race courses like Laurel, courses that most people don't remember, places where once full parking lots are now overgrown with weeds and where once glorious tracks are now being covered over with new construction. But while these courses may be nearly forgotten, Secretariat never will be.

Seabiscuit and Secretariat: The History of America's Most Famous Horses looks at the life and career of two of the world's most famous horses. Along with pictures of important people, places, and events, you will learn about Seabiscuit and Secretariat like never before.

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