On Track to Change: How 20th Century America Shaped Thoroughbred Racing

Course Description: This course explores the profound impact of 20th-century American culture, politics, and economics on the evolution of thoroughbred racing. This course delves into the sport's transformation through key moments such as the Great Depression, advancements in technology, and the cultural shift of gender roles. Through a historical lens, the course offers a unique understanding of how societal shifts influenced both the sport's development and its role in American life. **Pictured: Man o' War beating Sir Barton (Credit: T. Martin)**

Course guiding questions:

- How has horse racing helped Americans?
- Why are museums and Halls of Fame important?
- How did horse racing evolve in response to cultural shifts?
- How did technological advancements influence horse racing?

Activity 1: Social Reform in the 1900s

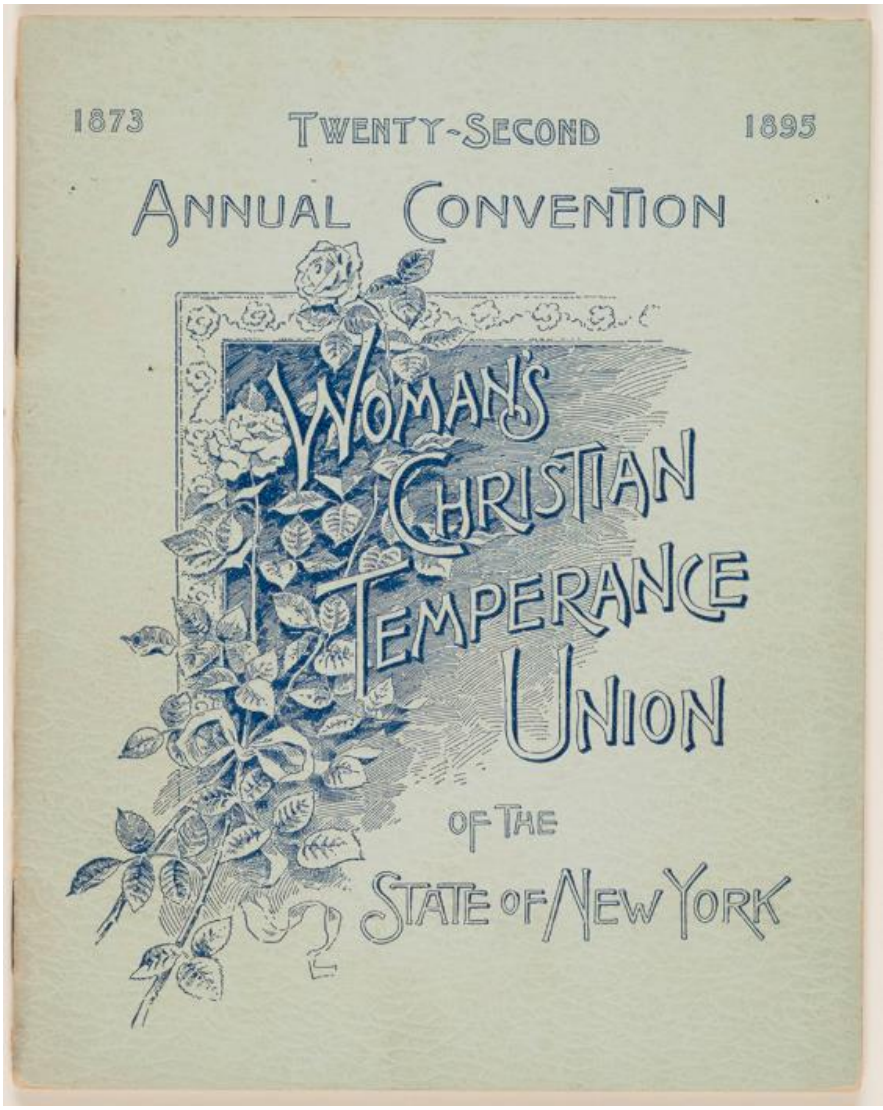
Before the 20th century, horse racing was a key part of American culture, dating back to the colonial era. The first American racetrack opened in 1665 on Long Island, New York, and racing quickly became popular among the colonial elite. By the 19th century, races like the Kentucky Derby (first held in 1875) had become iconic. The sport was not only a form of entertainment but also a significant social activity, attracting both the wealthy and the working class. Betting on these races became common, with wagers placed on horses to win, place, or show, leading to the development of a thriving gambling culture that was tightly interwoven with the sport itself. Horse racing helped fuel the American fascination with competition, breeding, and the emerging horse industry, contributing to the nation's growing interest in sports as both a spectacle and a form of leisure. As you go through this activity, notice how horse racing affects and is affected by American cultural and political movements.

Guiding Question: How did horse racing evolve in response to American cultural shifts?

1: At the start of the 20th century, bookmakers and pool wagering at the track were prominent. Individuals could place various types of bets on specific horses, including win, place, or show bets (first-, second-, and third-place finish, respectively). **Pictured: Women betting on horse racing via messenger boys (credit: New York State Archives)**

2: A second form of gambling that was popular at the start of the 20th century was off-track betting. Off-track betting expanded the accessibility of horse racing beyond those who could not attend racetracks in person. It involved gambling establishments like bookmakers, gambling houses, casinos, and saloons, where bettors could wager on horse races without needing to physically attend the event. In these settings, bookmakers would take bets on racing, often acting as intermediaries between the bettor and the racetrack. **Pictured: Horse racing auction pools (credit: New York State Archives)**

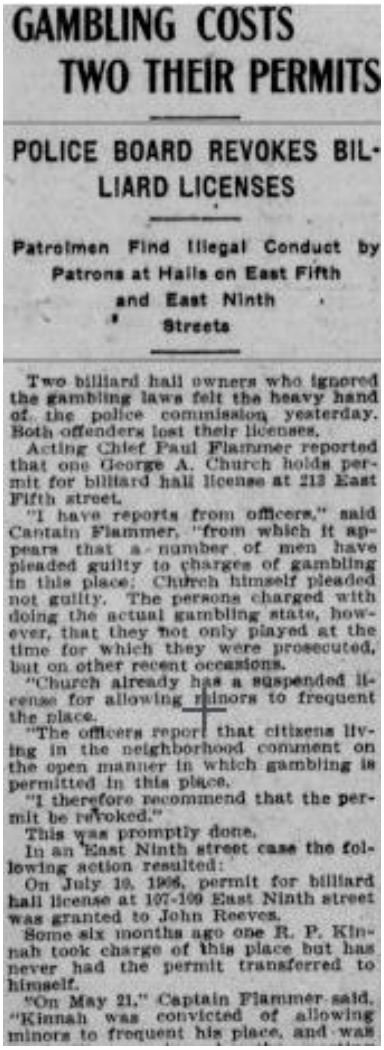
3: A series of religious reformer groups, like the Anti-Saloon League and Women's Christian Temperance Union, gained traction and influence in the early 1900s, advocating for a national ban on alcohol and gambling as part of their broader mission to promote moral and social reform. These organizations believed that both alcohol and gambling were detrimental to individuals, families, and society, contributing to poverty, crime, and the breakdown of moral values. **Pictured: Twenty-second Annual Convention of the Woman's Christian Temperance Union of the State of New York. Rochester, New York, 1895. General Collections, Library of Congress**



4: In 1908, horse racing faced widespread prohibition across the United States, primarily because of its association with gambling, which was increasingly seen as a moral threat. By 1908, the number of active racetracks had plummeted from more than 300 at the beginning of the century to just 25, reflecting the growing influence of both religious and political movements determined to curb gambling and promote social order. Despite the bans, horse racing did not disappear entirely. The cartoon shown to the right depicts a man looking at the closed gates of St. Asaph's Racetrack (a Virginia racetrack that permanently closed in 1905). The padlock on the gates says "THE LAW" and the quote along the bottom of the cartoon says, "Closed. Eh! Well, I Believe I'll Take The Money Home to My Family." **Pictured: A comic strip, "Chronicling America" from the *Washington Times* (January 13, 1905, p.1) (Credit: Library of Congress)**

5: When bookmaking was outlawed in Kentucky in 1908, the existence of the Kentucky Derby and Churchill Downs were threatened as they faced difficulties in generating enough purse money for their races. Three decades prior, Matt Winn, the president of Churchill Downs from 1902 to 1949, had experimented with pari-mutuel betting, which meant that bettors placed their own bets, and no bookmakers were required. Remembering this experiment, Winn found that an obscure statute exempted pari-mutuel betting from Kentucky's anti-gambling laws. Now tasked with finding machines to execute this type of wagering, his cross-country search began. Six machines were found, allowing the 1908 Kentucky Derby to continue as planned. **Pictured: Picture collage after Whirlaway's Kentucky Derby win in 1941. Matt Winn is the man to the far right in the middle image (Credit: Keeneland Library Cook Collection)**

6: By 1909, California, responding to growing concerns over the negative impacts of gambling, became one of the first states to implement a statewide ban on all forms of gambling, including horse racing. Shortly thereafter, New York, a state with a rich history of horse racing, followed suit with its own restrictions, marking a significant turning point in the nationwide movement to curb gambling. **Pictured: Los Angeles Herald, Volume 35, Number 238, 5-27-1908 (Credit: California Digital Newspaper Collection)**



GAMBLING COSTS TWO THEIR PERMITS

POLICE BOARD REVOKES BILLIARD LICENSES

Patrolmen Find Illegal Conduct by Patrons at Halls on East Fifth and East Ninth Streets

Two billiard hall owners who ignored the gambling laws felt the heavy hand of the police commission yesterday. Both offenders lost their licenses.

Acting Chief Paul Flammer reported that one George A. Church holds permit for billiard hall license at 213 East Fifth street.

"I have reports from officers," said Captain Flammer, "from which it appears that a number of men have pleaded guilty to charges of gambling in this place. Church himself pleaded not guilty. The persons charged with doing the actual gambling state, however, that they not only played at the time for which they were prosecuted, but on other recent occasions.

"Church already has a suspended license for allowing minors to frequent the place.

"The officers report that citizens living in the neighborhood comment on the open manner in which gambling is permitted in this place.

"I therefore recommend that the permit be revoked."

This was promptly done.

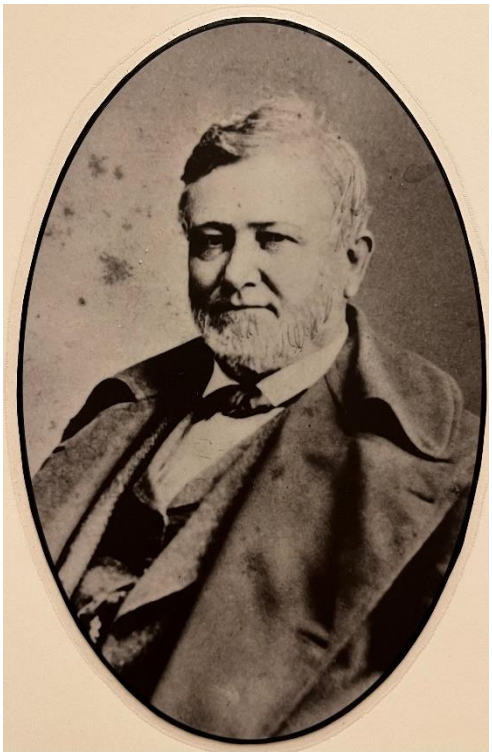
In an East Ninth street case the following action resulted:

On July 10, 1906, permit for billiard hall license at 107-109 East Ninth street was granted to John Reeves.

Some six months ago one R. P. Kinnah took charge of this place but has never had the permit transferred to himself.

"On May 21," Captain Flammer said, "Kinnah was convicted of allowing minors to frequent his place, and was

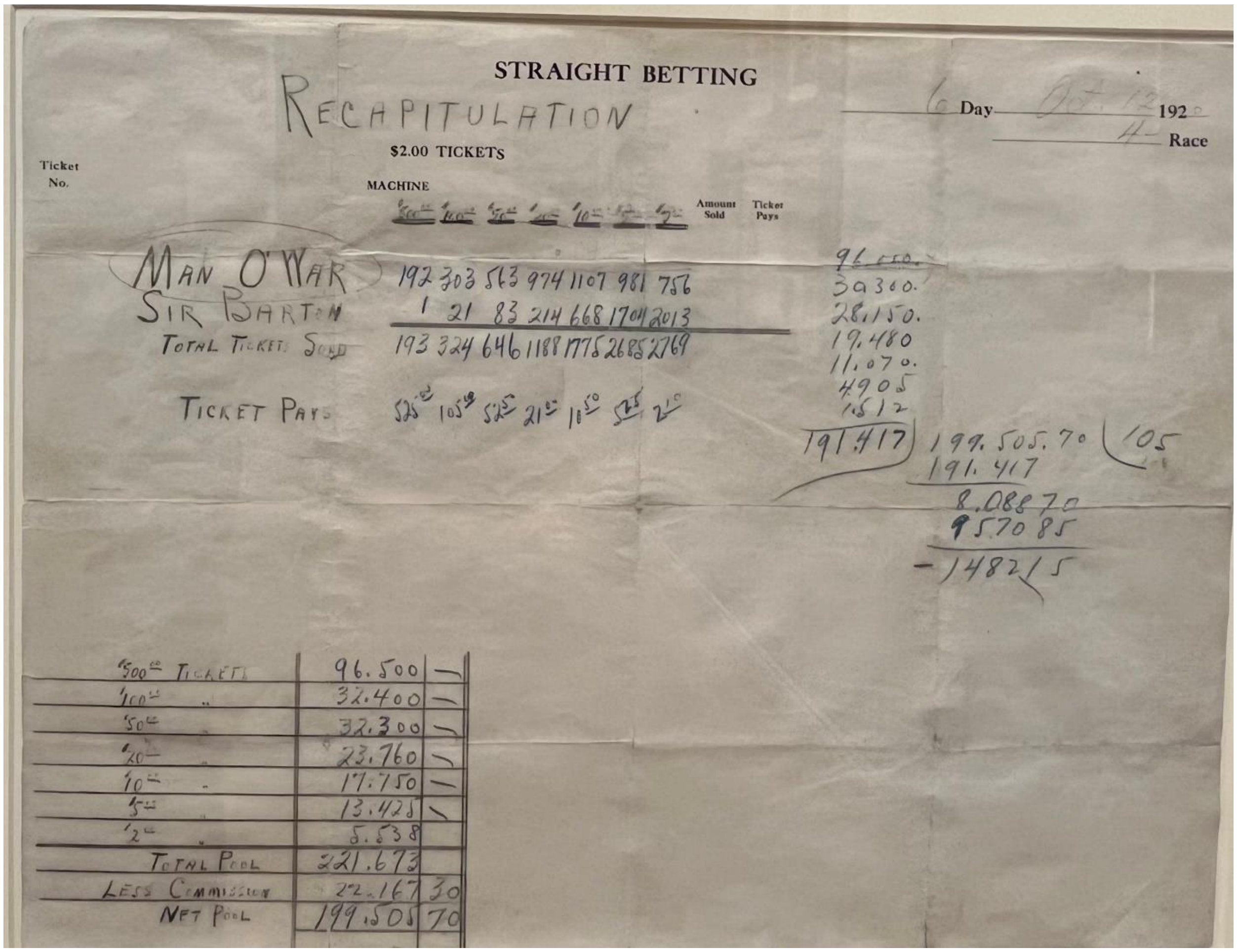
7: By 1910, following the nationwide wave of gambling bans, only Kentucky and Maryland remained as strongholds for legal horse racing, with their racetracks continuing to operate despite the widespread closures elsewhere. These two states, both with deep historical ties to the sport, maintained horse racing not only as a beloved tradition but also as a vital economic activity. **Pictured: H. Price McGrath, professional gambler and owner of the first winner of the Kentucky Derby (Credit: Keeneland Library Collection)**



8: During the Prohibition period of the 1900s, when alcohol was banned, Americans found ways to access it through illegal channels. This led to the rise of speakeasies, underground bars where alcohol could be secretly purchased. Similarly, the widespread bans on gambling did not eliminate the practice; instead, it forced gambling to shift further underground, giving rise to a network of illicit bookmakers and illegal gambling rings. This underground gambling, much like bootlegging during Prohibition, became an unregulated and corrupt trade, often involving organized crime, bribery, and general lawbreaking, as people continued to seek out opportunities to wager despite the legal restrictions. **Pictured: John Cavanagh, the leader of a band of 600 bookmakers in the early 1900s (Credit: Keeneland Library Collection)**

9: In 1911, The Jockey Club, the organization founded in 1894 that regulates thoroughbred breeding and racing, suspended all racing in New York for the season because of the controversy surrounding gambling and prohibition. The racing industry was far from self-sustaining, and without attendees at the track to place bets, it was not a lucrative business. This suspension impacted tens of thousands of jobs for workers at racetracks and at thoroughbred farms. **Pictured: A 1964 meeting of The Jockey Club in Saratoga Springs, New York (Credit: Museum Collection)**

10: In 1913, New York State made a groundbreaking move by legalizing parimutuel betting, a system that offered a more regulated and transparent way to handle wagers, the same system seen at Churchill Downs in 1908. Under this system, all bets are pooled together, a tax or "house-take" is deducted from the total, and the remaining pool is distributed among the winners based on the results of the event. This method of betting, which is ideal for events with a ranked outcome such as horse racing, helped ensure that the betting process was fair and more honest, reducing the influence of illegal bookmakers and enabling the state to benefit from regulated tax revenue. Many other states followed New York's lead which allowed horse racing to regain footing in the United States. **Pictured: The recorded bets placed on the 1920 match race between Man o' War and Sir Barton. (Credit: Museum Collection)**



STRAIGHT BETTING

RECAPITULATION

6 Day Oct. 12 1920

4 Race

$2.00 TICKETS

Ticket No.

MACHINE

	$500	$100	$50	$20	$10	$5	$2	Amount Sold	Ticket Pays
Man O'War	192	303	563	974	1107	981	756		
Sir Barton	1	21	83	214	668	1704	2013		
Total Tickets Sold	193	324	646	1188	1775	2685	2769		
Ticket Pays	525.00	105.00	52.50	21.00	10.50	5.25	2.10		

96.550.
30300.
28.150.
19.480
11.070.
4905
1512
191.417

199.505.70
191.417
8.088.70
9.570.85
-1482.15

105

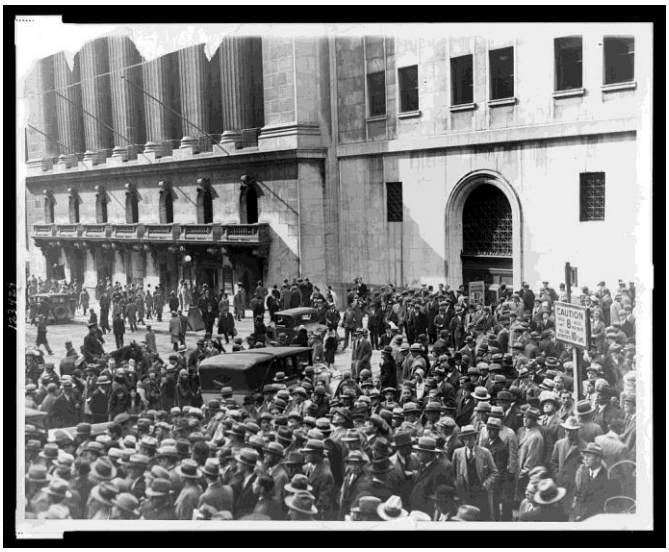
$500.00 Tickets	96.500	—
$100.00 "	32.400	—
$50.00 "	32.300	—
$20.00 "	23.760	—
$10.00 "	17.750	—
$5.00 "	13.425	—
$2.00 "	5.538	
Total Pool	221.673	
Less Commission	22.167	30
Net Pool	199.505	70

Activity 2: Providing Hope during the Great Depression

This activity will track the turbulent years of the Great Depression and the remarkable career of the legendary racehorse Seabiscuit, whose rise to fame captured the hopes and spirits of Americans during one of the most challenging periods in U.S. history. As you explore key moments in Seabiscuit's career, you'll learn how this underdog horse, who defied expectations and overcame significant challenges, became a symbol of perseverance and resilience. At the same time, you'll discover how the Great Depression affected American society, the economy, and everyday life, with a special focus on the impact it had on sports and the entertainment world. This activity will help you understand how Seabiscuit's story intersected with the larger national narrative, offering a beacon of hope to millions of struggling Americans and inspiring a sense of unity and determination during the darkest days of the 1930s.

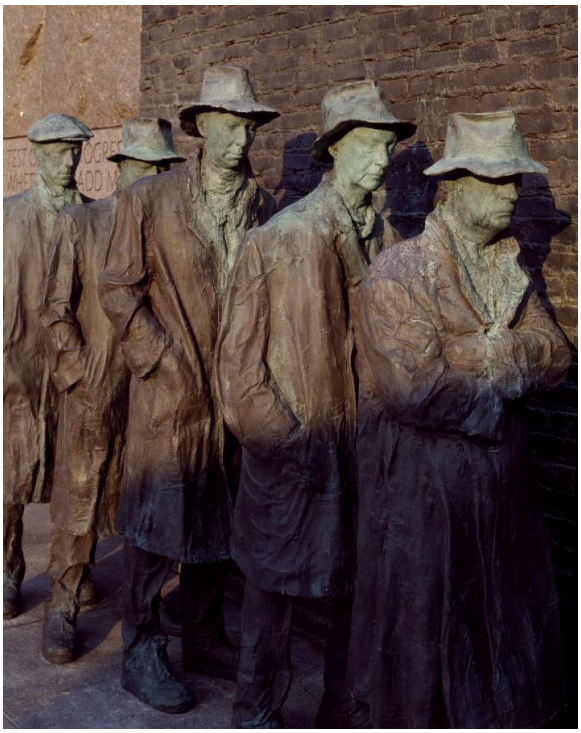
Guiding Question: How has horse racing helped Americans?

October 24, 1929: Although the Great Depression was certainly a culmination of many factors, including agricultural overproduction, banking instability, and income inequality, the official start of the Great Depression is accepted as the Great Stock Market Crash on "Black Thursday," October 24, 1929. On this day, panic selling led to 16 million shares being dumped on the market, causing stock prices to plummet and triggering widespread fear, as investors, banks, and ordinary Americans saw their wealth vanish almost overnight. This financial collapse set off a chain reaction that deepened the economic downturn, leading to widespread unemployment, poverty, and the failure of thousands of businesses. **Pictured: Crowd of people gather outside the New York Stock Exchange following the Crash of 1929 (Credit: Library of Congress)**



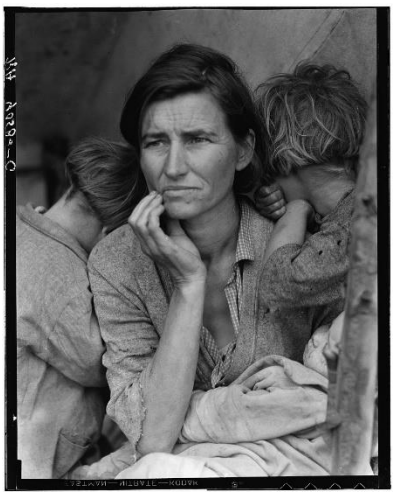
March 6, 1931: The Minnesota Food Riots of 1931 were a series of protests and violent outbursts in response to widespread hunger and economic hardship during the Great Depression. As unemployment soared and farmers struggled to sell their crops, many families in Minneapolis and surrounding areas faced severe food shortages. On March 6, thousands of people gathered outside food warehouses, demanding access to food at affordable prices. The protests turned violent when police clashed with the demonstrators, marking a turning point in the growing unrest across the country, as Americans increasingly voiced their frustrations with government inaction during the economic crisis. **Pictured: Man lying on the ground (Credit: National Archives, via PBS)**

May 23, 1933: On this day, in Lexington, Kentucky, a horse named Seabiscuit is born at Claiborne Farm, marking the beginning of a legendary career in horse racing. **Pictured: Seabiscuit, Red Pollard up (Credit: Museum Collection)**



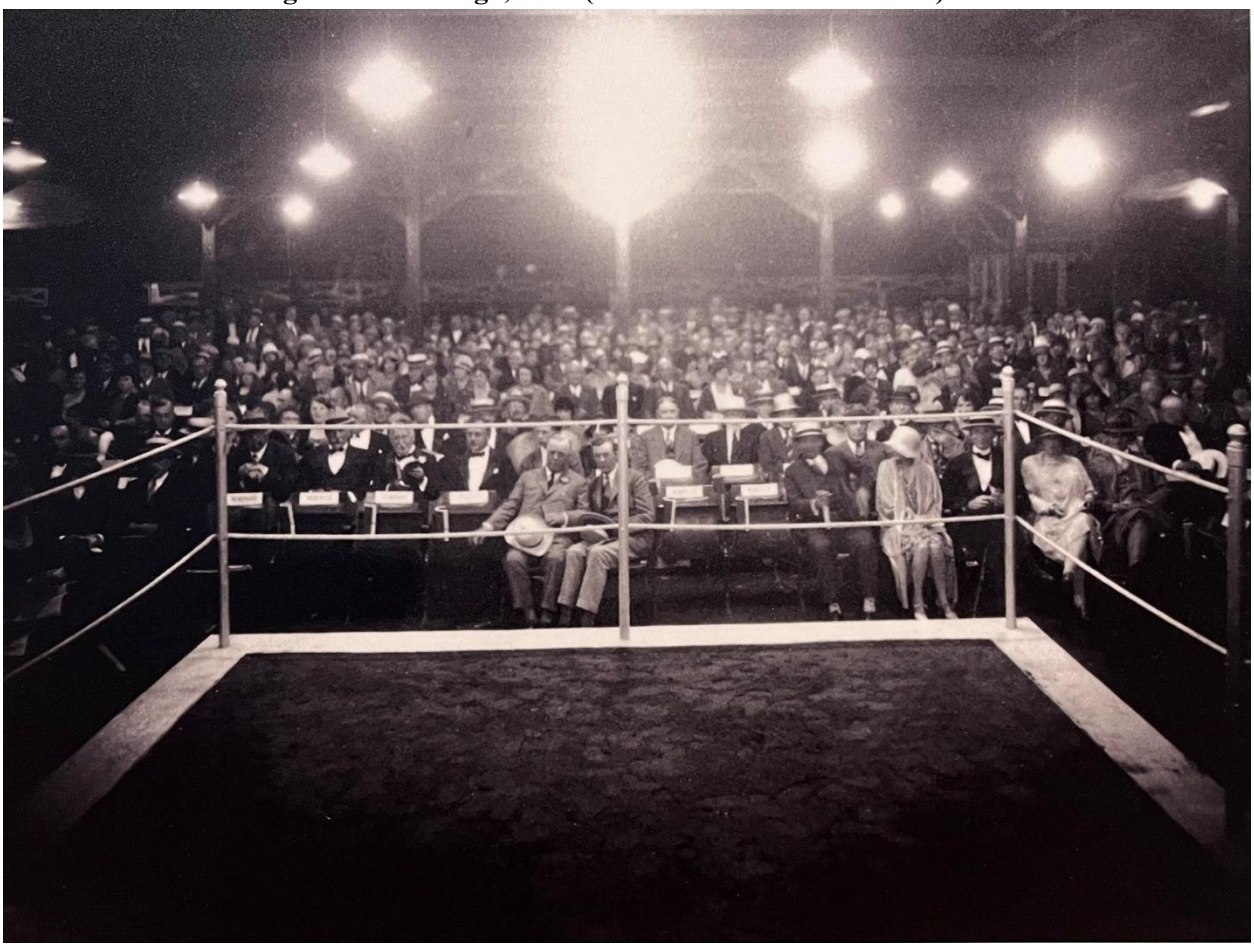
1933: By 1933, more than 12 million Americans were unemployed, a staggering figure that reflected the widespread devastation of the Great Depression. For those fortunate enough to have jobs, the average annual income was just $547, which, when adjusted for inflation, would be the equivalent of earning only $13,300 today. This represented a 42 percent decrease in wages since 1929, highlighting the severe economic contraction that resulted in widespread poverty, social instability, and a dramatic shift in the American way of life during the 1930s. **Pictured: Sculpture depicting a Great Depression breadline at the Franklin Delano Roosevelt Memorial, Washington, D.C. (Credit: Library of Congress)**

1935: During his 2-year-old season, Seabiscuit was trained by the renowned Hall of Fame trainer James "Sunny Jim" Fitzsimmons, who recognized the horse's potential but also noted that he was often sluggish and lacked motivation. Despite Fitzsimmons' expert training, Seabiscuit struggled to perform on the racetrack, losing his first 17 races and frequently finishing near the back of the pack, leading many to question his ability. However, in the fall of 1935, Seabiscuit's fortunes began to change as he started winning more significant races at Narragansett Park in Rhode Island, including the prestigious Claiming Stakes. **Pictured: "Seabiscuit," from a 1940 print by Franklin Brooke Voss. Gift of Charlotte Dorrance Wright.**



1935: In 1935, the Works Progress Administration (WPA) was established as part of President Franklin D. Roosevelt's New Deal to combat the devastating effects of the Great Depression. The WPA aimed to provide jobs for millions of unemployed Americans by funding public works projects such as the construction of roads, schools, and bridges, as well as arts and cultural programs. In that same year, the unemployment rate was still alarmingly high, with nearly 20 percent of the workforce out of work, but down 22 percent from 1933. The WPA played a crucial role in decreasing the unemployment rate, offering millions of jobs and providing much-needed relief to struggling families across the nation. **Pictured: Destitute pea pickers in California. Mother of seven children. Age 32. Nipomo, California, 1936 (Credit: Library of Congress)**

August 1936: After seeing Seabiscuit's performance at Suffolk Downs in Massachusetts earlier that year, trainer Tom Smith was impressed by the horse's potential and convinced Charles S. Howard, a wealthy businessman and horse owner from California, to purchase the colt at Saratoga for $8,000 in a private sale. **Pictured: Yearling sale at Saratoga, 1920 (Credit: Museum Collection)**



March 7, 1937: Seabiscuit ran in the San Juan Capistrano Handicap at Santa Anita Park in California, a prestigious stakes race that attracted a massive crowd of 45,000 spectators eager to see the horse's next performance. In a stunning display of speed and determination, Seabiscuit won the race by an impressive seven lengths, setting a new track record and solidifying his status as one of the top racehorses of his time. This victory further fueled his popularity with the public.
Pictured: Jockey Red Pollard's leather leg brace, 1938 (Gift: Ms. Norah Christianson)

1937: A horse named War Admiral won the prestigious Triple Crown, solidifying his place in racing history by claiming victories in the Kentucky Derby, Preakness Stakes, and Belmont Stakes. Seasbiscuit, however, despite never winning the coveted Triple Crown, had an exceptional year in 1937, finishing as the leading money winner in the United States. With $152,780 in earnings that year, Seabiscuit surpassed War Admiral by $8,000, demonstrating his remarkable consistency and success on the racetrack and earning him the admiration of fans and cementing his legacy as one of the sport's greats. 1937 was the beginning of the legendary rivalry between the two horses.
Pictured: War Admiral with Charles Kurtsinger after the 1937 Preakness Stakes (Keeneland Library Morgan Collection)

1938: The United States experienced a significant but fragile period of economic growth as the country began to recover from the worst of the Great Depression. The economy grew by 4.8 percent, driven by increased industrial production, government spending, and the expansion of the New Deal programs. While the recovery was still uneven and unemployment remained high, this growth marked a turning point, signaling that the nation was slowly starting to regain its economic stability as it moved toward the looming demands of World War II. **Pictured: Ethel Magafan's 1938 post office mural, titled, "Thresher," and funded by the U.S. Treasury Department's Section of Fine Arts as a "New Deal" project during the Great Depression in Auburn, the seat of Nemaha County in the southeast corner of Nebraska (Credit: Library of Congress)**

November 1, 1938: On this day, Seabiscuit and War Admiral faced off in a historic match race, the 1938 Pimlico Special, in a highly anticipated showdown that had captured the imagination of millions of Americans. The race, which became a national spectacle, drew an astonishing 40 million listeners to their radios, eager to witness the thrilling showdown between the two champions. In a stunning display of speed and determination, Seabiscuit defeated the Triple Crown winner War Admiral, cementing his place as a legend in the world of horse racing and captivating a nation still reeling from the hardships of the Great Depression. This iconic race was not only a sporting triumph but also a symbol of hope and perseverance, as Seabiscuit's victory was seen as a victory for the underdog. **Pictured: Silks worn by George Woolf in the 1938 Pimlico Special, 1938 (Gift: Lt. Col. Michael Howard)**

1939: The Great Depression is widely accepted as having ended in the United States in 1939, when the nation's economy began to show signs of improvement because of the economic boost provided by World War II and increased government spending. However, the recovery was slow and uneven, with many states and individuals not fully recovering until the mid-1940s as unemployment remained high and economic conditions varied across different regions. **Pictured: Women Getting their hair done at the Chez Marie Beauty Shop, 1939 (Credit: Library of Congress)**

March 1940: Seabiscuit and his jockey, Red Pollard, competed in the Santa Anita Handicap. The same race that had previously posed a challenge for the horse in previous years, having already lost it twice. In a remarkable turn of events, Seabiscuit and Pollard triumphed in the race, setting a new track record and securing their place in history. The victory was witnessed by the 75,000 spectators gathered at the event, breaking the attendance record at Santa Anita Park. **Pictured: Seabiscuit, Red Pollard up, in the winner's circle with trainer Tom Smith, 1937 Yonkers Handicap at Empire City (Credit: Keeneland Library Morgan Collection)**

April 10, 1940: Seabiscuit's retirement from racing was officially announced on April 10, 1940. He was taken to Ridgewood Ranch in California to stand at stud until his death in 1947. Seabiscuit was inducted into the National Museum of Racing's Hall of Fame in 1958. **Pictured: Seabiscuit (Credit: Keeneland Library Morgan Collection)**

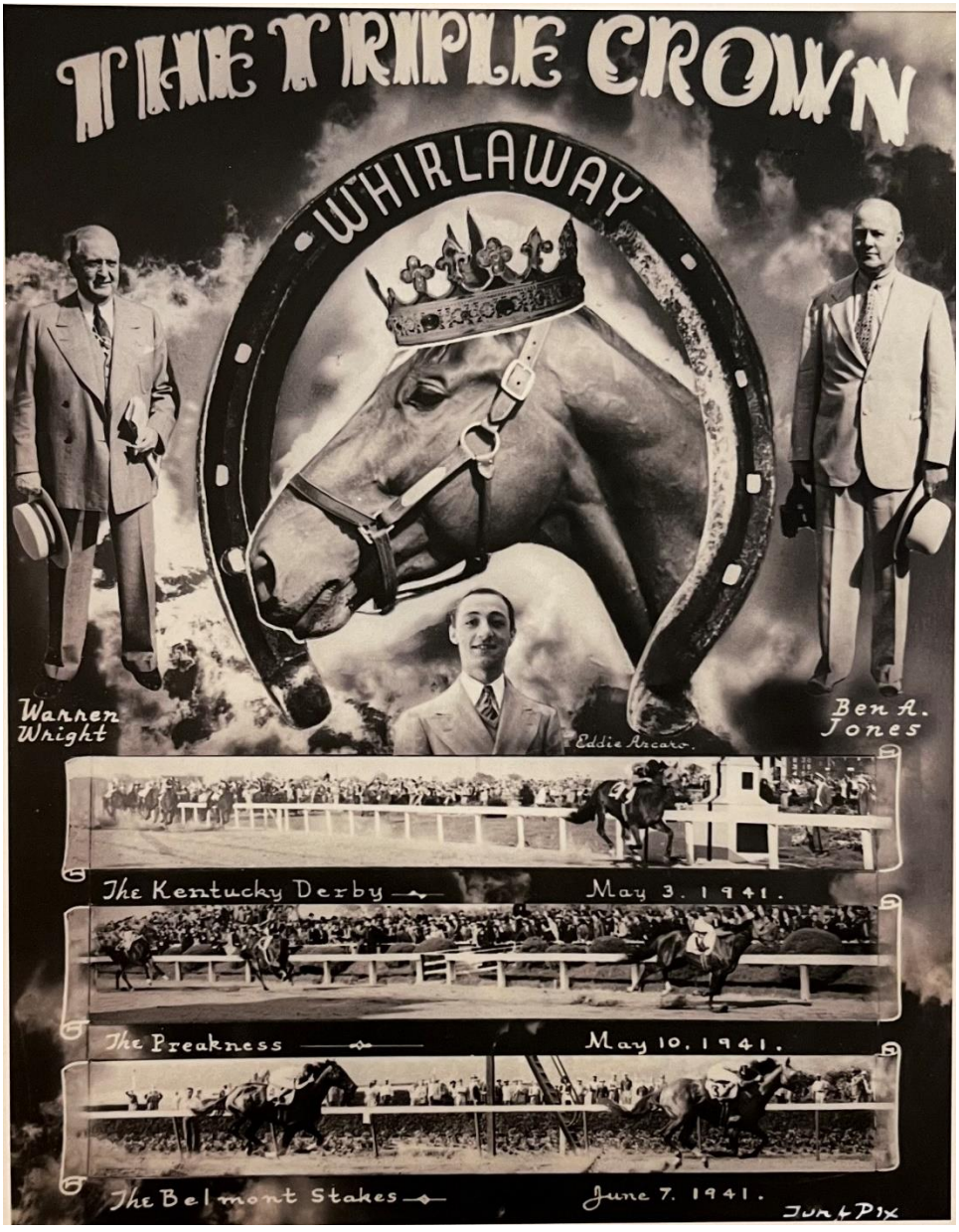
Activity 3: Supporting the War Effort on the Home Front

In the 1930s, Nazi Germany, led by Adolf Hitler, began expanding its territory, starting with the annexation of Austria and the invasion of Czechoslovakia while Japan was pursuing imperial expansion. Tensions in the Pacific escalated, and the United States imposed economic sanctions on Japan, further straining relations. On December 7, 1941, Japan launched a surprise attack on the U.S., leading to the United States' official entry into World War II.

During WWII, Americans on the home front made significant contributions to the war effort through rationing, war production, and military enlistment. Factories shifted to produce war materials such as weapons, tanks, and airplanes, while citizens conserved resources like food, rubber, and gasoline through government-mandated rationing programs. As you go through this activity, notice how the American horse racing industry also shifted to support the war effort during World War II.

Guiding Question: How has horse racing helped Americans?

Event 1: In 1941, a horse named Whirlaway competed in his 3-year-old race season, making an indelible mark on the world of horse racing. Born in 1938 at Calumet Farm in Lexington, Kentucky, Whirlaway quickly became a standout, showcasing exceptional speed and stamina. During his 3-year-old season, he raced in the prestigious Kentucky Derby, Preakness Stakes, and Belmont Stakes, the three jewels of the American Triple Crown. By June, Whirlaway had triumphed in all three races, securing an impressive eight-length victory in the Kentucky Derby, setting a new record for the race. With the Triple Crown secured and having solidified his place in history as one of the greatest horses in American racing, Whirlaway ended 1941 on a career high with plans to head to the West Coast for the 1942 spring racing season. **Pictured: Triple Crown collage featuring photographs from Whirlaway's Triple Crown victories (Credit: Turf Pix)**

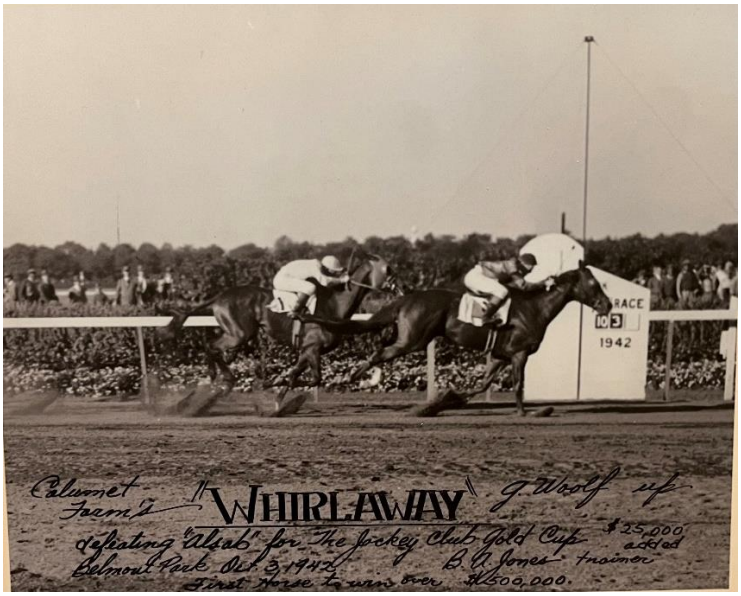


Event 2: On December 7, 1941, the Pearl Harbor naval base in Hawaii was attacked in a surprise military strike by Japanese forces, marking a pivotal moment in World War II. The devastating assault resulted in the loss of over 2,000 American lives, the destruction of 20 naval ships, including the battleship USS Arizona, and the crippling of more than 300 airplanes stationed at the base. The following day, in response to this unprovoked attack, President Franklin D. Roosevelt addressed Congress, calling for the declaration of war against Japan. This was swiftly approved, bringing the United States into World War II and dramatically shifting the global conflict. **Pictured: Wreckage of USS Arizona, Pearl Harbor, Hawaii (Credit: Library of Congress)**

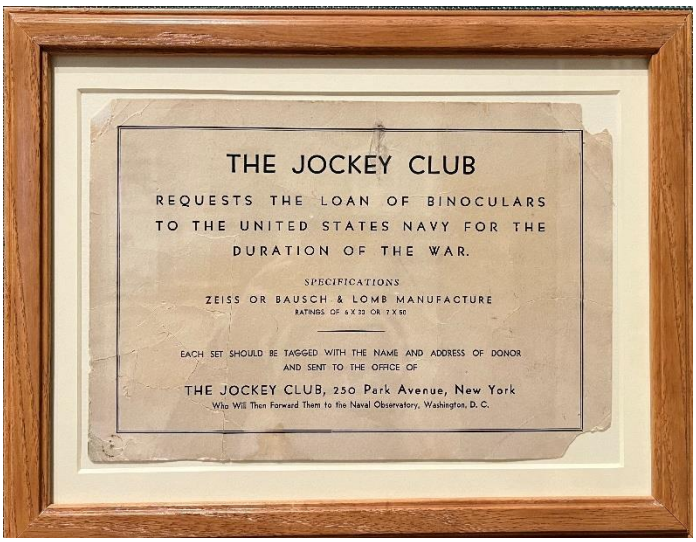
Event 3: In 1942, America officially entered World War II and 3.9 million Americans served in the U.S. military that year. With that many Americans, mostly men, serving in the military, women in America entered the workforce. By the end of World War II, nearly six million women had entered the workforce. Women filled the positions previously occupied by men in addition to new jobs which were created to increase production supporting the troops and home front. **Pictured: We Can Do It! Rosie the Riveter. (Credit: Library of Congress)**

Event 4: On February 23, 1942, a Japanese submarine attack off the coast of Santa Barbara, California, heightened fears of a potential Japanese invasion of the West Coast, prompting increased security measures across the region. In response to growing anti-Japanese sentiment, horse racing was suspended on the West Coast, and Santa Anita Park, once a popular venue for thoroughbred racing, was repurposed as an internment camp. The park became one of the largest detention centers, housing more than 18,000 Japanese immigrants and Japanese-American citizens throughout 1942. These individuals were forced to live in horse stables and makeshift military barracks constructed to accommodate them, enduring harsh conditions as part of the broader effort to forcibly relocate and imprison Japanese-Americans during the war. **Pictured: Miche by Lee Townsend, 1952. Miche, the gray horse, is pictured here at Santa Anita Park. (Credit: Gift: Muriel Vanderbilt Adams)**

Event 5: To support the U.S. war effort during World War II, the Thoroughbred Racing Association (TRA) announced in 1942 that instead of purchasing tickets to attend the races, patrons would be required to buy war bonds. These bonds were sold to the public to finance military operations without raising taxes, allowing ordinary citizens to contribute to the war effort while also receiving a return on their investment. The funds raised from these bonds were used not only for military needs but also to support the USO (United Service Organizations) shows, which provided entertainment to soldiers stationed abroad, boosting morale during the war. The TRA set a goal of raising $2 million through the sale of war bonds, contributing significantly to the overall war financing efforts. **Pictured: War bond race at Churchill Downs, October 28-30, 1942 (Credit: Caulfield and Shook, courtesy Ken Grayson)**



Event 6: Having won the Triple Crown the previous year, Whirlaway was the most celebrated and sought-after horse to see race in 1942. During the span of eight months, he raced an impressive 22 times at 12 different tracks, captivating fans with his speed and charisma. His races not only attracted large crowds but also played a key role in raising funds for the war effort, as Whirlaway's races sold more war bonds than any other horse's events. Through the sale of war bonds, Whirlaway's races helped fund USO shows and provided entertainment for troops fighting abroad who became familiar with his name through radio broadcasts. Throughout 1942, half a million spectators attended his races, raising an astonishing $5 million for the War Relief Fund, which played a critical role in supporting both the military and the morale of the nation during the war. Whirlaway was inducted into the National Museum of Racing's Hall of Fame in 1959. **Pictured: Whirlaway, George Woolf up, winning the 1942 Jockey Club Gold Cup (Credit: Museum Collection)**



Event 7: In 1945, the U.S. government decided to temporarily suspend horse racing across the country to better focus resources on the War effort. On January 2, James F. Byrnes, the War Mobilization Director, requested the suspension so that vital resources, such as transportation and manpower, could be redirected toward military needs. Just days later, on January 6, the Thoroughbred Club of America convened in Lexington, Kentucky, and agreed that halting racing would be the most effective contribution they could make to support the war. In a publication by *The BloodHorse* on the same day, it was noted that, "Track operators, breeders, horsemen could be proud of the spirit they had shown. They accepted the decision without bitterness, and without questioning the wisdom of it. In general they resolved to stand by the Government order and make it yield as much benefit as possible to the war effort." **Pictured: The Jockey Club ad calling for donations of binoculars for the United States Navy (Credit: Patricia Johnson Guy)**

Event 8: On September 2, 1945, the Japanese government officially surrendered, marking the end of World War II. The formal signing of the surrender took place aboard the USS Missouri in Tokyo Bay, where Japanese representatives signed the documents in the presence of Allied forces, officially bringing an end to the deadliest conflict in human history. The surrender followed the devastating atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki in August 1945, as well as the Soviet Union's declaration of war against Japan. **Pictured: Racing's Victory Meeting Program from Belmont Park (Long Island, New York) on November 6-15, 1944 (Credit: Museum Collection)**

Event 9: With the conclusion of the war, the racing industry began to rebuild quickly. People flocked back to racetracks, eager for entertainment after years of war-related austerity. The economic boom of the 1950s brought new wealth into the sport, and racing began to reestablish itself as a significant part of American culture. During this period, some of the most iconic horses in history emerged, such as *Citation*, who won the Triple Crown in 1948, and *Native Dancer*, a legendary horse of the early 1950s. Both horses were inducted into the National Museum of Racing's Hall of Fame in 1959 and 1963, respectively. The post-WWII era not only restored thoroughbred racing's place in American life but also set the stage for the sport's continued growth into a major part of the American sports landscape.
Pictured: Armed before racing in the Naragansett Special, September 14, 1946 (Credit: B.A. and H.A. "Jimmy" Jones Collection)

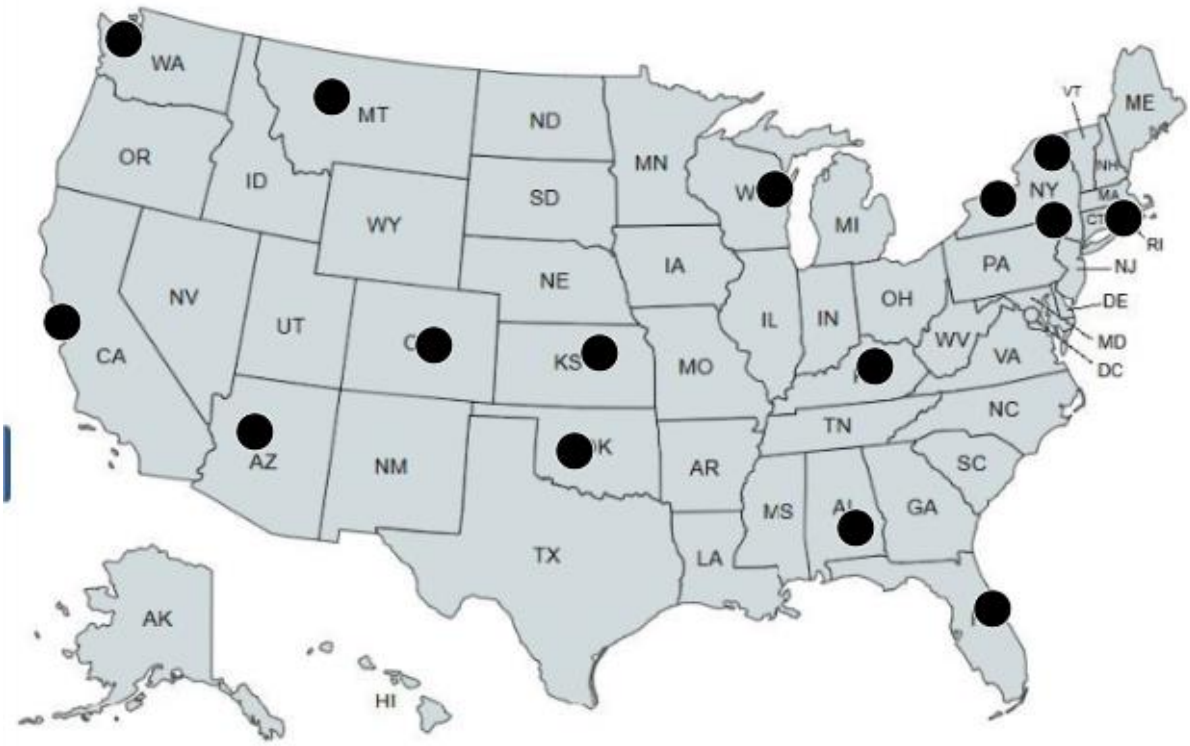
Activity 4: Preservation and Celebration of History

As the country emerged from the shadow of the war, there was a growing recognition of the importance of preserving and honoring its rich cultural heritage, especially the legacies of notable individuals who had made significant contributions to American society. This shift was driven by the desire to not only celebrate the country's past but also provide future generations with a deeper understanding of its history. Throughout the 1950s, a series of memorials, museums, and historical institutions were established across the country as part of a broader national movement to preserve the nation's collective history. The federal government, as well as local communities, took active steps in creating structures that celebrated achievements in science, arts, politics, and military history.

Analyzing this map of America and looking at the institutions established during this time reveals the broad effort to preserve these legacies, especially in sports.

Guiding Questions: Why are museums and Halls of Fame important?

Map: Public Domain



The Northeast

Saratoga Springs, New York: In 1950, a group of prominent racing enthusiasts, spearheaded by Cornelius Vanderbilt Whitney, founded the National Museum of Racing in Saratoga Springs, New York, a city deeply steeped in horse racing history. Saratoga is home to one of the oldest operating racetracks in the United States, Saratoga Race Course, which has hosted races since 1864. The museum was established to honor the rich tradition and cultural significance of horse racing in America, as well as to preserve and showcase the history, artistry, and achievements within the sport. The museum officially opened its doors in 1951 at a temporary location in Canfield Casino, a historic venue that had hosted horse racing-related events since the late 19th century.

In 1955, the National Museum of Racing and Hall of Fame moved to its permanent location on Union Avenue, near the Saratoga Race Course, where it stands today as a central hub for racing history. The permanent facility allowed the museum to expand its exhibits, which include an extensive collection of racing memorabilia, historical artifacts, and tributes to some of the most iconic figures in the sport, such as Seabiscuit, Whirlaway, and Man o' War. The Museum also incorporated a Hall of Fame to honor the legends of American horse racing. The first class of inductees was welcomed that same year, and it included horses that had raced prior to 1900, as well as jockeys and trainers from that time. This initial group of honorees laid the foundation for what would become a revered tradition in the sport. For the next 57 years, the Hall of Fame recognized excellence in three categories: horses, jockeys, and trainers. However, in 2013, the Hall of Fame expanded to include a fourth category called the "Pillars of the Turf." This new category was created to honor individuals who made significant contributions to the sport of horse racing in areas beyond the racetrack, such as owners, breeders, and industry leaders who played a crucial role in shaping the history and future of the sport. **Pictured: Ribbon cutting ceremony (Credit: Robert Lucaroni)**

Oneonta, New York: 1950: The National Soccer Hall of Fame was founded in 1950 by the Philadelphia "Old-timers" Association, with the goal of honoring the history and contributions of American soccer players, coaches, and other influential figures in the sport. Initially, the Hall of Fame was located in Oneonta, New York, where it operated for several decades, before moving to its current home in Frisco, Texas, in 2005. The Hall of Fame serves as a key institution in preserving the history of soccer in the United States, featuring exhibits, memorabilia, and a Hall of Fame that celebrates the achievements of those who have significantly shaped the sport. The move to Frisco allowed the Hall of Fame to expand its reach and modernize its offerings, aligning with the growing popularity of soccer in the country. **Pictured: The previous location of the Hall of Fame in Oneonta, New York (Credit: User, Cmcnicoll via Wikipedia)**

Cooperstown, New York: Although the National Baseball Hall of Fame was established earlier, in 1936, it underwent a significant change in 1954 when the eligibility rules for induction were revised. Prior to this change, players were required to have been retired for at least one year before they could be considered for induction into the Hall of Fame. However, in 1954, the Hall of Fame's board of directors voted to extend the required period of retirement to five years. This adjustment was made to ensure that players had been away from the game long enough to allow for a more thorough evaluation of their careers, as well as to allow time for a more objective reflection on their impact on the sport. **Pictured: Ralph Kiner looking at an exhibit case in 1949 (Credit: National Baseball Hall of Fame)**

Newport, Rhode Island: In 1954, facing the threat of closure, the Newport Casino in Rhode Island was purchased by Jimmy Van Allen, who sought to revitalize the property and attract more tourists. To accomplish this, he established the National Tennis Hall of Fame and Museum within the casino. This initiative aimed to honor the history and achievements of tennis in the United States, and its creation helped increase the casino's appeal as a tourist destination. Later that same year, the Hall of Fame was officially sanctioned by the United States Tennis Association (USTA), marking the beginning of its role as the sport's primary institution for recognizing excellence. In the 1970s, with the induction of an English tennis player, the institution expanded its scope to honor international figures, leading to its renaming as the International Tennis Hall of Fame and Museum. **Pictured: International Tennis Hall of Fame and Museum (Credit: International Tennis Hall of Fame and Museum)**

The South

Lexington, Kentucky: Ashland, the historic estate of Henry Clay, located in Lexington, Kentucky, became a public site in the 1950s after being preserved by the Henry Clay Memorial Foundation. The estate, once home to the prominent U.S. statesman, was opened to the public as a museum in 1950, allowing visitors to explore the house, gardens, and the rich history of Clay's political and personal life. Every year since 1936, the Ashland Stakes, a thoroughbred race named for the estate, is run at Keeneland Race Course. preservation and opening of Ashland helped solidify Henry Clay's legacy as one of Kentucky's most influential figures. **Pictured: Ashland, the Henry Clay Estate. Photo by Robert Brammer.**

Tuscumbia, Alabama: Ivy Green, the birthplace of Helen Keller in Tuscumbia, Alabama, became a museum in 1954 to honor her legacy. Although the home was established in the 19th century, it was during the 1950s that the property was preserved and officially opened to the public, showcasing Keller's early life and the remarkable story of her overcoming blindness and deafness. The museum offers visitors a chance to see the house and surrounding grounds, including the well-known water pump, where Keller first connected words to objects, marking a pivotal moment in her education. **Picture Credit: Library of Congress**

Daytona Beach, Florida: The Museum of Arts and Sciences (MOAS) in Daytona Beach, Florida, was founded in 1955 as a community-driven initiative to provide access to art, science, and history for the public. Originally located in a small building, the museum grew over the years, expanding its collections to include fine art, natural history, and cultural artifacts. In 1993, it moved to a larger facility, where it continued to offer a wide range of educational exhibits, including those related to Florida's natural environment and the region's rich history. The museum has since become a key cultural institution in Central Florida, offering diverse programs for visitors of all ages. **Picture Credit: Museum of Arts and Sciences**

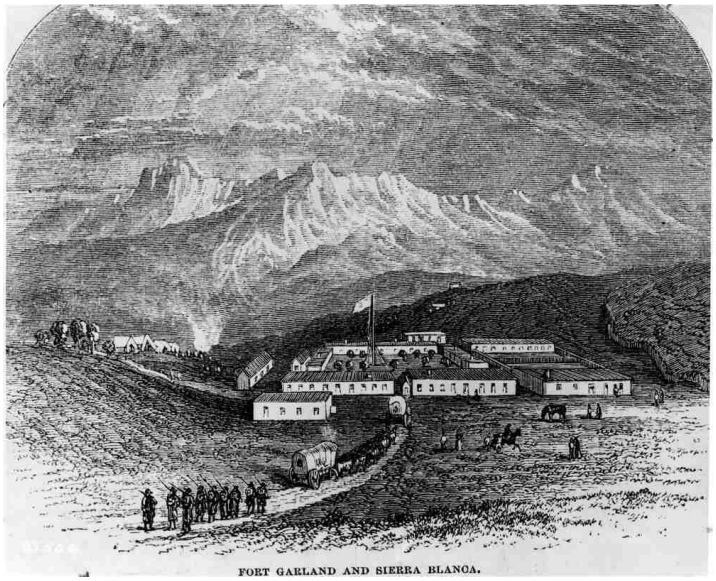
Anadarko, Oklahoma: The National Hall of Fame for Famous American Indians was established in 1952 by the Oklahoma state government and local Native American tribes with the mission of celebrating the achievements of Native American leaders and role models. It highlights figures from diverse tribes and regions, ensuring that both historical and contemporary contributions are recognized. The Hall of Fame is located in Anadarko, known as the "Indian Capital of the World," and is part of the annual American Indian Exposition. Through exhibits, events, and educational programs, it aims to foster greater appreciation for Native American history and culture, while also promoting pride and unity within Native communities. **Picture Credit: National Hall of Fame for Famous American Indians**

The Midwest:

Green Bay, Wisconsin: The National Railroad Museum, located in Green Bay, Wisconsin, was founded in 1956 with the mission of preserving and sharing the history of railroads in the United States. It began as a small collection of artifacts and locomotives, but over time it grew into one of the largest railroad museums in the country, showcasing a wide array of historic trains, equipment, and exhibits related to the railroad industry. The museum serves as an educational resource, offering visitors a chance to explore the evolution of rail transportation and its impact on the nation's development. **Picture Credit: National Railroad Museum**

Abilene, Kansas: President Dwight D. Eisenhower's library, dedicated in 1959 in Abilene, Kansas, was one of the first major examples of these institutions designed to celebrate the lives and contributions of American presidents. These libraries were not just monuments to the leaders themselves but also symbols of the democratic ideals of the country. Similarly, the establishment of historic preservation societies and state-run commissions to mark the significance of key historical figures—from civil rights leaders to innovative scientists—became more common. **Pictured: The Dwight D. Eisenhower Presidential Library, part of a complex in Abilene, Kansas, that includes the Eisenhower family's longtime home (Credit: Library of Congress)**

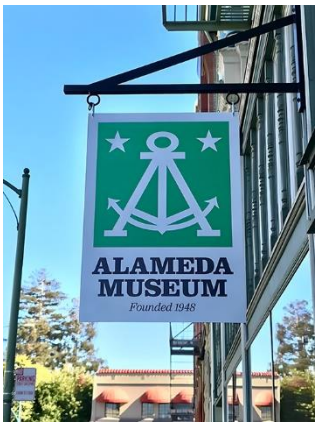
The West:



Fort Garland, Colorado: Fort Garland, located in southern Colorado, was originally established in 1858 as a military outpost during the Indian Wars to protect settlers and supply routes. However, by the 1950s, the fort had long ceased its military functions. In that decade, Fort Garland's historic site was preserved and became a museum, showcasing the area's history, including its role in frontier defense and its connection to figures like Kit Carson, who was stationed there in the 1860s. The fort's transformation into a museum helped to preserve its legacy for future generations. **Pictured: Public Domain**

Bozeman, Montana: The Museum of the Rockies, located in Bozeman, Montana, was founded in 1957 to showcase the region's rich geological and cultural history. Initially focused on paleontology, the museum became renowned for its extensive collection of dinosaur fossils, particularly those from the nearby Hell Creek Formation. Over the years, the museum expanded its exhibits to include Native American artifacts, western history, and Montana's natural environment, becoming a major educational and research institution. Today, it is known for its comprehensive collections and commitment to preserving and sharing the region's diverse history and heritage. **Picture Credit: Museum of the Rockies**

Tucson, Arizona: The Arizona-Sonora Desert Museum was founded in 1952 in Tucson, Arizona, with the goal of educating the public about the unique desert ecosystem of the Sonoran Desert. Originally conceived as a botanical garden and wildlife museum, it quickly grew into a renowned institution that combines natural history, wildlife conservation, and art in its exhibits. The museum's outdoor exhibits feature native plants and animals in their natural habitats, while its indoor galleries explore the region's geology, cultural history, and biodiversity. Today, it serves as a vital resource for both education and conservation efforts in the Southwest. **Picture Credit: Arizona-Sonora Desert Museum**



Alameda, California: The Alameda Museum in Alameda, California, was founded in 1951 to preserve and showcase the city's rich history. Initially housed in a former public library building, the museum highlights the area's past through exhibits on local history, maritime heritage, and the cultural development of Alameda, offering visitors a glimpse into the community's growth from its early days to the mid-20th century. The Alameda Museum was founded by local residents who recognized the importance of preserving the city's historical landmarks and stories. As the city of Alameda grew and evolved, the museum became a vital resource for learning about its maritime heritage, the impact of the railroad, and the growth of its neighborhoods. Over the years, the museum has expanded its collection, with notable exhibits on the city's military history, including its role during World War II, and its early days as part of the California Gold Rush. The museum remains a hub for those interested in the unique history of Alameda and its transformation into the vibrant community it is today. **Picture Credit: Alameda Museum**

Seattle, Washinton: The Museum of History & Industry (MOHAI) in Seattle, Washington, was founded in 1952 to preserve and showcase the rich history of Seattle and the Pacific Northwest. Initially established as the Seattle Historical Society, the museum began with a collection of local artifacts, photographs, and documents. Over the years, it expanded its exhibits to cover a wide range of topics, including the region's industrial development, cultural heritage, and technological innovations. MOHAI moved to its current location on the shores of Lake Union in 2012, where it continues to serve as an educational hub for understanding the dynamic history of the region. **Picture Credit: Museum of History & Industry**

Activity 5 - Breaking Down Barriers in the Sport of Kings

After you read the background information, look at the newspaper articles and annotate them to show the ways the press evolved in their representation of female athletes in those 30 years.

Guiding Question: How did horse racing evolve in response to American cultural shifts?

Background information:

In the early 1900s, women in America were often confined to the societal expectations and gender roles of the time. Women were expected to be the epitome of domesticity, emphasizing their roles as wives and mothers, responsible for maintaining the home and family. As women began to gain more visibility in public life—particularly with the rise of the suffragist movement, the early feminist movement, and women entering the workforce—those who defied traditional roles or sought political change were sometimes labeled as "radicals" or "unfeminine," while others, particularly in the entertainment and sports worlds, were often depicted through a more sensationalist or objectified lens.

The 1960s marked a pivotal decade in the history of the feminist movement, igniting the second wave of feminism and challenging long-standing gender norms. In 1963, Betty Friedan's groundbreaking book, *The Feminine Mystique*, sparked national conversations by exploring the dissatisfaction of housewives across America who felt confined to their roles as domestic caretakers. Friedan's work exposed the limitations of traditional gender expectations and encouraged women to seek fulfillment outside the home. The same year, the Equal Pay Act of 1963 was passed, making it illegal for employers to pay women less than men for the same work, though disparities persisted. In a landmark achievement for women in science, Maria Goeppert-Mayer became the first woman to win a Nobel Prize in physics in 1963, breaking barriers in a male-dominated field.

The Civil Rights Act of 1964, particularly Title VII, further advanced gender equality by prohibiting employment discrimination based on sex, opening doors for women in the workforce. In 1968, the feminist movement took to the streets with protests at the Miss America Pageant in Atlantic City, where women symbolically rejected the objectification of women in mainstream media and culture, calling attention to issues like beauty standards and sexism. Together, these events represented a growing wave of activism that sought to address systemic inequality and push for broader social change for women. That same year, Kathy Kusner became the first woman to be issued a professional Jockey license. In this activity, you will be presented with a number of articles from *The Courier Journal,* of Louisville, Kentucky, ranging in date from 1968 through 2000. Use the pen and highlighter tools to mark some of the ways the press evolved in their representation of female athletes in those 30 years.

In 1967, a woman named Kathy Kusner applied for a professional jockey license and was denied. She and her lawyer filed a lawsuit to appeal the decision. She won the lawsuit and was granted a jockey license by the Maryland Racing Commission. The article on the left, from September of 1968, is about the result of that court case. The article below, from October of 1968, reports on Kathy's own thoughts about earning her license.

THE COURIER-JOURNAL, LOUISVILLE, KY.
FRIDAY MORNING, SEPTEMBER 27, 1968

Woman Jockey Awarded Big Court Victory

Los Angeles Times-Washington Post Service

WASHINGTON—Kathy Kusner, who wants to be the nation's first woman jockey at a major race track, won a big—and possibly decisive—victory yesterday in her joust with the Maryland state racing commission.

Judge Ernest A. Loveless overturned a commission decision to deny a license to Miss Kusner, a 27-year-old Olympic rider from Arlington, Va.

"This court," Loveless intoned, "finds as a matter of law that based upon the evidence presented, no reasonable mind could reasonably have reached the factual conclusion the commission reached . . ."

To Compete in Olympics

The commission may well disagree with Loveless and decide to appeal, but its attorney, Jon F. Oster, could not be reached for comment.

Judge Loveless observed:

"Throughout the record there has been an omnipresent feeling that the horse racing circle would be in jeopardy if females were allowed to participate as jockeys.

"Although at the outset of the record it was stipulated that sex (defined as being female) was not an issue, we nonetheless feel that it was the only issue."

Miss Kusner is in New York preparing to leave for the Olympics in Mexico City, where she is one of two women on the U.S. equestrain team. Her lawyer, Audrey Melbourne said, "Kathy is delighted."

THE COURIER-JOURNAL, LOUISVILLE, KY. THURSDAY MORNING, OCTOBER 31, 1968

First Girl Jockey To Turn Down Fees

WASHINGTON (AP)—Kathy Kusner, the nation's first girl jockey, is a shy, almost frail lass who feels more at home with horses than people.

The Olympic rider, first of her sex to crash the hard-bitten world of horse racing as a jockey, insists she isn't a crusader.

"I don't care about proving anything at all," she said yesterday. "I just want to ride horses."

Moreover, Miss Kusner plans to ride free—without the usual jockey's share of a winning purse—to retain her amateur standing. She said the International Olympic Committee has given her a go-ahead.

KATHY KUSNER
First ride likely at Laurel

The Maryland Racing Commission bowed to a court order and issued a license to the 27-year-old jumping show rider as the first woman ever permitted to race horses on a major flat track where betting is legal.

The slender, brown-eyed jockey said she hopes to begin racing, possibly at Laurel in Maryland by the end of November when she completes the Eastern horse show circuit.

She said she already had been contacted by owners about possible racing assignments.

Miss Kusner, from Monkton, Md., was a member of the U.S. riding team that finished fourth in the Olympics at Mexico City Sunday. She is currently riding in the Washington International Horse Show.

Won't it be an abrupt step from the tweedy world of jumping shows to the often seedy world of day-to-day thoroughbred racing?

"Both involve horses," she said.

She set a simple standard for herself: "To be able to give the owner and the trainer and the $2 bettor their money's worth."

The Olympian shrugged off any thought of riding some day in the Kentucky Derby.

"That sure would never come close to happening," she said. "That is for those at the very top. I just want to ride where other people ride."

Miss Kusner agreed that one of her biggest problems might not be on the track but in the jockey room.

Won't tracks have to provide separate dressing rooms?

"I would imagine they would," she said, smilingly.

The girl jockey, who has short brown hair trimmed in a boyish bob and has thin, almost spindly legs, is 5 feet 4 and weighs 103 pounds.

The Maryland Commission turned down her bid for a license after a workout at Pimlico this year, but a court ruled the panel had refused her because of sex discrimination and ordered a reversal.

The equestrienne, who has been riding since she was 10 years old, said horses are "something that have always been a part of my life."

Asked at a news conference what she likes about horses, Kathy said:

"They don't have to give interviews."

After Kathy Kusner was awarded her license, other women followed her lead and applied for their professional jockey licenses as well. That does not mean they were immediately welcome and accepted in their new roles as explored in the article below from November 1968. The first woman to actively race professionally was Diane Crump who did so in 1969. The article to the right, written in February of 1969, talks about her first race and some people's reactions.

The Courier-Journal

******* LOUISVILLE, FRIDAY MORNING, NOVEMBER 22, 1968

Victim of a Boycott

Penny, Unhorsed Again, Planning Legal Action

By DAVE KINDRED
Courier-Journal & Times Staff Writer

Penny Ann Early, as angry as only a woman scorned can be, lashed out yesterday at jockeys who for the third time in five days stopped her from riding at Churchill Downs.

A jockey boycott caused cancellation of the ninth race, in which the 25-year-old Chicagoan would have become the first woman to ride in a thoroughbred flat-race at a major track.

The boycott, first in the track's 94-year history, infuriated many in the crowd of 5,000. They shouted "chicken" and "yellow belly" at the male jockeys as they rode onto the track for the eighth race.

Another story and more pictures on Page B 6; profile of Penny Ann, Page B 8; editorial, Page A 12.

Churchill Downs stewards Leo O'Donnell, John G. Goode and Lewis Finley said they and racing secretary Allan (Doc) Lavin had tried all afternoon to line up jockeys for Miss Early's race. They even moved the race from the fourth spot on the program to the last, hoping the extra time would help them get at least one more rider.

Finally, about an hour before the race, the stewards gave up when the last uncommitted jockey said he couldn't ride because he had no tack.

At that point Penny Ann was dressed in her boots and red and blue silks, waiting to go. She had dressed in a first aid room across the corridor from the regular jockey quarters.

"We've been talking to owners, jockeys and trainers," Finley said. "We wanted to hold this race together and get this thing done—once and for all." But, he added with resignation, "We can't make a jockey ride."

After the announcement by track officials that the race would not be run "because no other jockeys are available," Miss Early sounded off at a press conference. In rapid-fire order she said:

"I plan to take legal action against the Jockeys Guild. I hold no animosity

See PENNY
Back page, col. 1, this section

Penny Gets a Wreath From Some 'Mealy-Mouths'

A large wreath of white carnations was delivered last night to Penny Ann Early at her Louisville motel.

With it was a card signed:

"From the mealy-mouthed jockeys at Churchill Downs."

This was an apparent reference to Miss Early's statement last week that she wasn't worried about not being strong enough to ride because, she asked, "How can some mealy-mouthed, 98-pound boy be any stronger than I am?"

Her insulted reaction last night to the wreath:

"It just shows their class. I wasn't surprised."

THE COURIER-JOURNAL LOUISVILLE KY
WEDNESDAY MORNING, FEBRUARY 12, 1969

Miss Crump's Mount Fifth In Final Test

HIALEAH, Fla. (AP)—Diane Crump earned her "spurs" at Hialeah Park yesterday.

Presiding steward Keene Daingerfield said after watching the 20-year-old Connecticut girl ride for the second time, finishing fifth in a 12-horse field aboard Bridle 'N Bit in the fourth race, that Miss Crump will receive a jockey's license as soon as she asks for it.

Diane said that will be today.

"It went very well, much easier than last time," she said after the race. "I had the experience of being in tight quarters and survived it. The other jockeys couldn't have been nicer."

Miss Crump last Friday became the first girl to ride against men in a parimutuel race on a major American track, also on Bridle 'N Bit. The 3-year-old colt owned by Mrs. Mary C. Calumet finished 10th in that event.

Yesterday's race, like that one, was at 1 1/8 miles and Bridle 'N Bit was still "over his head" at odds at 24-1.

Mount Closes Ground

Diane broke the colt alertly, stayed on the rail throughout and whipped left-handed through the stretch run. Bridle 'N Bit was fourth going into the first turn, dropped back to seventh on the backstretch and closed a little ground through the drive. He was 14 lengths behind the winner, Polar Traffic.

Miss Crump, who first applied for a license at Churchill Downs last November but later withdrew her application, apparently has broken down the resistence of male riders to women jockeys. When she was named to ride a horse at Hialeah a week ago Monday, a boycott was threatened until the horse failed to draw into the race from the also-eligible list.

When she was named on Bridle 'N Bit last Friday, six jockeys canceled their mounts. Yesterday, none canceled out.

Angel Cordero Jr., the nation's leading rider last year, finished fourth in the race aboard Mi Piace.

"They had to tell her to weigh in after the race, but she did all right," he said.

'Looked Good,' Says Turcotte

Ron Turcotte, who refused to ride against Diane last Friday, was not in her race yesterday, but he watched her ride.

"She looked good out there, but you could see she was getting tired at the end," he said. "She'll have to ride a lot more to get fit. But, heck, I get tired myself sometimes."

Said Miss Crump:

"I'll get my license tomorrow, if the stewards will give me one, and I have another horse to ride Saturday and three or four next week. I realize I have a lot to learn, like any new rider."

Donna Hillman would like to be 'just one of the guys'

Girl jockeys find toughest problem is getting horses to ride

Associated Press

ROBYN SMITH
Offered choice of horses?

Colorado State 57, Nebraska 51

Special to The Courier-Journal & Times

LEXINGTON, Ky. — Guards Gary

By SALLY QUINN
© L.A. Times-Washington Post Service

LAUREL, Md. — The shot was heard and they were off. The fans were screaming, especially as they rounded the bend and headed toward the finish. Several horses, neck and neck, began to crowd each other and one rider was knocked off. As the others shot across the finish an ambulance siren was heard. And the winner was Jolly Fox, ridden by Donna Hillman.

Minutes later, after receiving her trophy in the winner's circle, Donna Hillman eyed owner Robert J. Brown and trainer John F. Burckhalter and said, "Maybe you'll let me race for you next time, huh?"

Both nodded, but it was evident they were not at all sure she would ride for them again. Unless, of course, they had another "Buttons and Bows," "Powder Puff," or "My Fair Lady Handicap," as this race was called.

"I don't like riding with all girls," says Donna. "When all girl jockeys get together, it's a big thing. I'd much rather just be one of the regular guys."

Sometimes people around the track do call the women jockeys "guys." Sometimes they call them "girl jockeys," "lady jockeys," "women jockeys," or "jockettes." And sometimes they call them a lot of other names, too. "I don't care what they call me," says Donna, "as long as I can ride."

"Sometimes you have to change in the ladies lounge inside the track," said Donna. "And once, in Middleburg," said Jennifer Rowland, "I had to change in a horse stall because there was only a men's dressing room."

'Have to be superior'

One of the worst problems for women jockeys, it seems, is getting horses to ride. Many trainers and owners won't break tradition and let women ride for them no matter how good they are.

"You have to be better than the best men," says Miss Rowland, 21, Maryland's leading woman jockey. "You have to be superior at all times to even get a mount."

"If you win," says Arline Ditmore, the one who was later thrown, "it's either because they let you or dumb luck. If you lose, it's because you're a woman. They never want to give you credit for what you've done. And no matter how much talent you have, if you don't have the opportunity to ride you can't show it."

A male reporter in the room piped up that it was obvious women weren't as strong as men jockeys, and therefore couldn't be as effective.

"Wanna bet?" asked Donna.

"We're stronger mentally," said Sherry Siegfredt while Donna, 23, was challenging the hapless young man to arm-wrestle. "I've arm-wrestled plenty of men," she announced. "And they can't put my arm down."

Mumbling about not wanting to hurt her, he accepted her offer, gasped "she really is strong," strained and gave up.

"I never lose," she said, and smiled. She is 5-foot, 4-1/2 and 104 pounds.

One of the things that bugs a lot of the women is the racetrack gossip. If a girl gets mounts, people will assume she's sleeping around.

"I've never met so many nasty people as I have in this business," says Miss Rowland. "But I've never really run into this problem that I know of."

Problem with other women

"Hey, you're lucky," said Donna. "I've never heard so much slanderous gossip as I have about girls around the track. And you have trouble with trainers, too, who will say they would give you horses except that their wives won't allow them to have girls in the stable.

"In fact," said Jennifer, "women trainers and wives have really tried to hold me back—worse than the men."

"That's right," said Donna. "It's like they want to be the only ones."

There are, at the moment, only about 42 women riders in big-league horse racing in this country and even fewer women trainers.

Many of the women prefer to race in their home areas rather than take on the competition of the bigger tracks like Belmont, Aqueduct and Hialeah. "I just said 'bye-bye New York' after a while," said Donna. "I'd rather be a big fish in a little pond."

"Well, if Alfred Vanderbilt offered me any horse I wanted, like he did Robyn Smith (a woman jockey who was on the cover of Sports Illustrated several months ago and whose name has been linked romantically with Vanderbilt, chairman of the New York Racing Association), I'd go to New York in a minute," said Arline Ditmore.

To look good or not to look good in the saddle is a question women jockeys have to deal with all the time. Sherry Siegfredt was the only one in the My Fair Lady Handicap with a lot of makeup on. The others, except for Donna, who wore a bit, had none. Jennifer doesn't wear any mascara and Sherry likes to look the same whether she's on a horse or on a date. Donna tries to de-emphasize her feminity when she's riding: "I just wore a little today because I didn't want to look like a real scrounge in the papers."

Only Arline is married (to a trainer) and the others say they rarely have time to go out with men. "There aren't that many at the track I want to get involved with," said Donna, "and it's almost impossible to meet people outside because of the work schedule and the traveling."

There is even an armed guard at the track hired to protect the girls from overly admiring or overly abusive men. As Donna was being followed back to change after the race, she told the guard she didn't need his protection. "My orders are to stay with you and protect you from any men who might come around," explained the persistant guard.

"Are you kidding?" she asked, looking at the guard incredulously. "I'm stronger than any guy I know."

The article above, written in 1973, explores how female jockeys were treated during their careers in their own words. The article to the right, written in 2000, covers a panel held at the Kentucky Derby Museum that allowed the women who were in the industry in the 60s and 70s to reflect on that time and how somethings have changed and some have not.

THE COURIER-JOURNAL • FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 17, 2000

Women in racing at least can see the finish line now

By JENNIE REES
The Courier-Journal

Though equality might still be over the horizon, women have come an incredibly long way in horse racing, a panel of female participants agreed last night in a forum at the Kentucky Derby Museum.

"It's a male-dominated sport, but when you think about it, 30 years ago it was illegal (for women) to ride a race," said Diane Crump, the first woman to ride in a pari-mutuel race (1969 at Hialeah) and in the Kentucky Derby (1970). "I galloped 20 horses a day to ride maybe two horses a week. Obviously, it's not like that now. It's not equal, but how can it be equal? It (advancement) came only in the past 30 years."

Crump noted that when she started out, she often was the only female exercise rider at a track.

"Anymore, women make up well over 50 percent of all the work force on the backside," she said. "So it has to run over into the training and riding. We're going to see a woman win the Derby as a trainer and a rider in, let's say, 10 years. But hopefully less."

Seven women — two former jockeys, two current trainers and three owners — shared their experiences with a mostly female crowd of about 150 in the two-hour seminar, which was part of the museum's "Women in Racing" exhibit.

With a lot of humor and emotion and no rancor, they told stories of being in racing at a time when few women were active participants. The common theme was their passion for horses.

Sandy Schleiffers, the fourth woman jockey to be licensed (in 1969) and the first to become a member of the Jockeys' Guild, recalled speaking to apprentice rider Kris Prather when the exhibit opened earlier this fall.

"I thought, 'There's no way this kid can be a jockey. She's too soft-spoken, too quiet. You've got to be really tough,' " Schleiffers said of Prather, who recently left Churchill Downs to ride in New York. "Then it dawned on me: It's different now. We had to be as tough — and actually tougher — than the male riders. Otherwise we weren't going to make it."

Crump: "It's a male-dominated sport, but . . . 30 years ago it was illegal (for women) to ride a race."

Gothard: "You just try and try. Now I don't feel that much prejudice among other trainers."

Schleiffers recalled the time at Lincoln Downs when another jockey nearly dropped her twice in a race. She chewed him out as they pulled up, and when they crossed paths on the ground, her male antagonist called her a dirty name.

"And I decked him — right in front of a full crowd," she said to applause. "At that point I did need my Jocks' Guild membership. The stewards made us shake hands and made me swear I wouldn't punch any more jockeys.

"A year later I'm riding in Boston, and the same jock is my valet, cleaning my tack, washing my clothes. I tell you, it was OK except every time he saddled one of my racehorses, man, I checked that tack — just to make sure the saddle would stay on there."

Concluded Schleiffers, who later earned a doctorate and now teaches at Colorado State University: "I still think there is going to be pressure and prejudice, but nowhere near the discrimination there was back then. Today a woman can do anything she wants to do, race track or anything else. What it takes is determination, discipline and dedication."

Trainer Akiko Gothard, who earned her first Grade I victory with K One King in this year's Oaklawn Park Handicap, agreed that dedication goes a long way.

"Just look at me," she said. "I wasn't exposed to horses until I was almost 40 years old (as a translator for Japanese horsemen buying Kentucky stock). You just try and try. Now I don't feel that much prejudice among other trainers. They were more friendly, though, when I didn't have a good horse. It used to be, 'Hi, baby, you need help, I'll help you.'

"The only thing I can think of is the owners who spend a lot of money, if they have a choice, they'd rather ask male trainers, even if we have the same record."

Dell Hancock of Claiborne Farm said that as more women work to get ahead in the industry, their presence will be increasingly felt.

"People say, 'You never see a good chestnut horse with a flaxen mane and tale,' " said Hancock, a former president of the Kentucky Thoroughbred Association. "There aren't too many chestnut horses with flaxen manes and tails. The more women do things at the top level, if they so desire and have the dedication and want to work hard, I think the door is open."

Owner Penny Chenery, who managed Secretariat's career and was arguably the most prominent woman in sports during his 1973 Triple Crown season, alluded to advancements women have made in agenda-setting circles but called it "still a world of suits."

For a woman's advice to be acted upon, she said, "You have to have the good horse, you have to have the opportunity and then you have to walk through it without an agenda, without trying to accomplish any other purpose except what it is you've got to do."

Also on the panel were trainer Donna Ward, credited with developing Beautiful Pleasure into a champion, and Louisville horse owner Roanne Victor.

Activity 6: Milestones in Sports Broadcasting: From Radio to Television

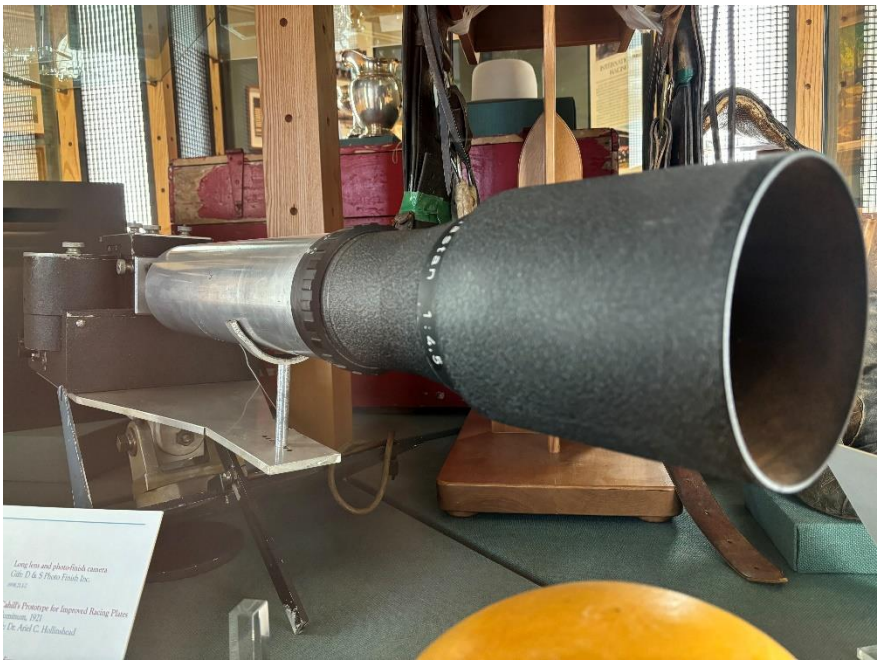
Description: The early 20th century, known as the Second Industrial Revolution, was a period of rapid technological advancements that greatly impacted various industries, including horse racing. Innovations in technology allowed the sport to evolve in new ways, making it more accessible, exciting, and efficient. Key technological developments allowed horse racing events, like the Kentucky Derby, to reach a broader audience, attracting new fans and making the sport more mainstream. These developments also brought horse racing to a global audience, providing real-time access to races, expert analysis, and betting opportunities, further transforming the sport into a multimillion-dollar global industry. Use this timeline to track how horse racing adapted to changes in technology over the 20th century.

Guiding Question: How did technological advancements influence horse racing?

1921: The first sporting event to be broadcast on the radio took place in 1921, marking a monumental moment in the history of both sports and broadcasting. The event was a boxing match between Johnny Ray and Johnny Dundee, two prominent fighters of the time, which took place at Madison Square Garden in New York City. The radio broadcast was a groundbreaking moment, as it allowed listeners from across the country to follow the action of the fight in real-time, making the sport of boxing more accessible to a wider audience. **Pictured: Radio in barbershop (Credit: Library of Congress)**

1923: A historic match race between the horses Zev and Papyrus became the first horse race ever broadcast on the radio, marking a significant milestone in the intersection of horse racing and mass media. The race, held at Belmont Park in New York, was highly anticipated, as it pitted the American horse Zev, winner of the Kentucky Derby, against the British contender Papyrus. The only difference from previous match races, was now fans across America could listen to the race in real time. **Pictured: Finish of the Zev-Papyrus Match Race, Belmont Park (Museum Collection)**

1925: The first Kentucky Derby, the most prestigious American horse race, is broadcast on the radio. **Pictured: Churchill Downs (Credit: B.A. and H.A. "Jimmy" Jones Collection)**

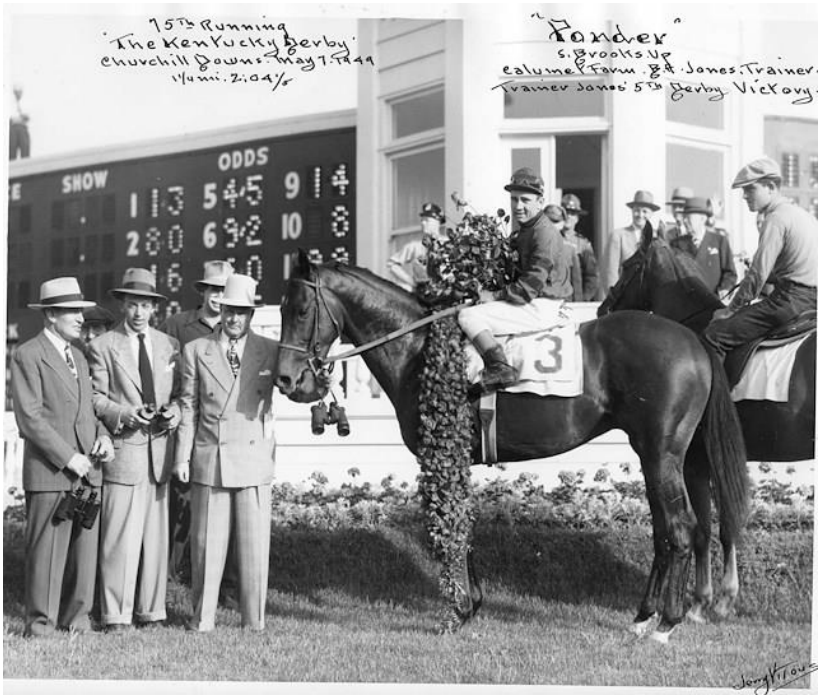


1937: The Del Mar Fairgrounds made history by becoming the first racetrack to use Lorenzo Del Riccio's photo finish camera to capture a photo finish. This technological innovation was designed to accurately determine the winner of a race in situations where the horses finished so closely that the naked eye could not discern the victor. The camera was a sophisticated device that took a series of high-speed photographs of the finish line, allowing officials to analyze the images and identify the precise moment each horse meets the finish line. The use of this camera at Del Mar was a game-changer for horse racing, providing an objective and reliable way to settle close finishes and eliminating the potential for disputes over race outcomes. This technology revolutionized the sport, and its success at Del Mar led to its widespread adoption at racetracks around the world, ensuring fairness and accuracy in determining winners for years to come. **Pictured: Long lens and photo-finish camera (Credit: Gift: D & S Photo Finish, Inc)**

1938: Marshall Cassidy revolutionized horse racing by beginning to film races at Hollywood Park in California. Cassidy, a notable racing executive, recognized the potential of capturing live races on film for the purpose of providing a more detailed and lasting record of the events. His efforts helped bring greater visibility to the sport by allowing race enthusiasts to review the action after the race had concluded, particularly in instances where the results were too close to call. This innovation not only provided racegoers and betters with an accurate historical record but also laid the foundation for the future of race replays and analysis. **Pictured: Strip of Telefilm, 1945 (Credit: Carroll Photo Service)**

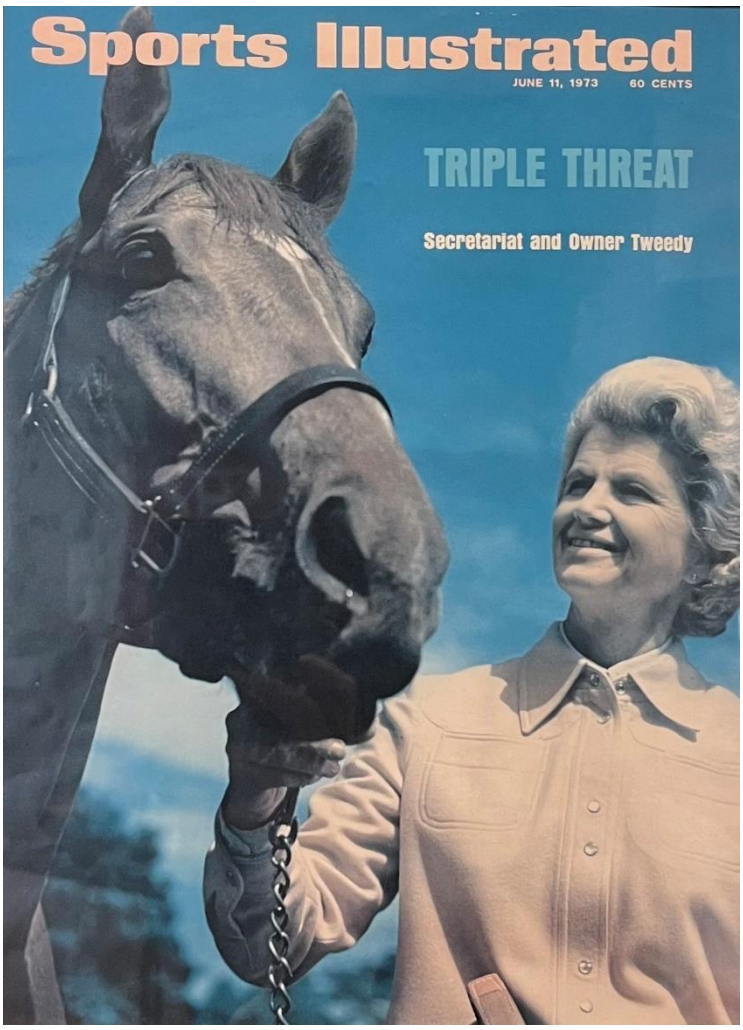
1939: The first-ever American sporting event was televised: a college baseball game between Princeton University and Columbia University. This historic broadcast marked a significant turning point in the way Americans consumed sports, as it introduced the power of television as a medium for sharing live events with a broader audience. The game was aired by NBC, and although the technology was still in its early stages, it sparked a new era in sports broadcasting. Viewers who were unable to attend the game in person could now experience the excitement of live sports from the comfort of their homes, opening the door for future televised sports events across the country. **Pictured: First televised sporting event (Credit: NBC Sports)**

1952: The Kentucky Derby is televised for the first time. This groundbreaking event was broadcast by NBC, and it introduced the charm and pageantry of the Derby to a wider audience, beyond the lucky few who could attend in person. Televising the Kentucky Derby helped solidify its status as the most prestigious horse race in the United States, drawing even more attention to the sport of horse racing. **Pictured: Ponder in the Kentucky Derby winner's circle 1949 (Credit: B.A. and H.A. "Jimmy" Jones Collection)**



1958: Videotape is used to replay a horse race for the first time, a Kentucky Derby won by Tim Tam. The ability to replay an entire race using videotape provided a much more accurate and accessible means of reviewing race outcomes, especially in close finishes where the winner might be difficult to determine by the naked eye. This technological advancement not only improved the integrity of the sport by allowing for more precise adjudication of results but also enhanced the viewing experience for fans at home, offering them the chance to rewatch key moments and analyze the race in greater detail.

Pictured: Tim Tam, Ismael Valenzuela up, in the winner's circle following their Kentucky Derby win May 6, 1958 (Credit: Skeets Meadors)



1970s: Syndicates, partnerships with shared ownership of horses, became popular in the 1960s and 70s. Prior to this, owning a racehorse was a privilege largely reserved for wealthy individuals or aristocrats, as the cost of purchasing and maintaining a horse for racing was prohibitively expensive. Syndicates allowed multiple investors to pool their resources to purchase a horse, making it possible for more people to become involved in the sport. This democratization of ownership not only broadened the fan base of horse racing but also brought fresh energy and innovation to the industry. With syndicates, smaller owners could share the financial burden, enjoy the thrill of racing, and have a stake in the success of their horses, making the sport more accessible and inclusive. The most notable horse to be involved in a syndicate was Hall of Fame horse Secretariat in 1973.**Pictured: "Triple Threat: Secretariat and Owner Tweedy," *Sports Illustrated*, June 11, 1973 (Credit: Museum Collection)**

1998: The “Go Baby Go” campaign was introduced by NTRA (National Thoroughbred Racing Association) to energize and engage viewers with the excitement of horse racing. Featuring high-energy advertisements and focusing on the thrill of the races, the campaign helped to humanize the sport by highlighting the personalities of jockeys, horses, and trainers, while also showcasing the dynamic nature of racing. These efforts combined to boost the visibility and popularity of the sport, increasing its accessibility to a broader audience and elevating horse racing as an entertainment and betting medium. **Pictured: “Go Baby Go” campaign logo from a 1998 NTRA commercial.**

July 14, 1999: The Television Games Network, or TVG, was launched and became the first channel exclusively devoted to horse racing, providing 24/7 coverage of races from tracks throughout the country and around the world. By creating a centralized platform for racing enthusiasts, TVG revolutionized how the sport was broadcasted, allowing fans to easily access live races, interviews, and expert analysis. The channel not only served as a hub for existing fans but also played a key role in attracting a new, younger audience by introducing innovative advertising strategies. **Pictured: TVG logo used from 1999-2022 (Credit: TVG)**

Activity 7: Racing Through Change: A Review

Description: The 20th century marked a period of profound transformation for America's oldest sport, horse racing, as it evolved in response to significant cultural, political, and technological shifts across the country. Let's review some of the information you learned during this course!

1. This female jockey was the first woman to be allowed on the United States equestrian team for the Olympics. She was born in 1943 and was a pioneering figure in the world of horse racing. In 1968 she applied for a jockey license through the Maryland Racing Commission and was denied. After filing a legal challenge, this woman won the right to be licensed as a jockey, making history as the first woman in the United States to hold such a license. What is the name of this woman?

A. Robyn Smith
B. Diane Crump
C. Penny Ann Early
D. Kathy Kusner

2. Thoroughbred horse racing continued for much of 1942 to support America's military efforts in the Second World War by selling these. Instead of tickets, the public could use these in order to see their favorite horse race, like Whirlaway. The Thoroughbred Racing Association was hoping to raise $2 million to support war efforts and fund USO shows to improve morale abroad. They ended up raising $5 million dollars.

A. Tickets
B. Donations
C. War Bonds
D. Programs

3. At the beginning of the 20th century, anti-gambling sentiment was very popular in America. State-wide, followed by nation-wide gambling bans led to 91 percent of America's racetracks closing. In 1910, what were the only two states with active tracks?

a. Maryland and New Jersey
b. Louisiana and Florida
c. Kentucky and Maryland
d. New York and Arizona

4. Seabiscuit is one of the most famous racehorses. It wasn't until later in his career that he found the success that would lead to a movie on his life decades later. His career started with a losing streak of 17 straight races, but once he found his stride, he was able to beat Triple Crown winner War Admiral in a record-setting match race at Santa Anita Park. In 2003, DreamWorks made the movie *Seabiscuit* starring Tobey Maguire as his primary jockey, Red Pollard. Seabiscuit's underdog story appealed to many Americans during their struggles with daily life during what turbulent time in America.

A. World War II
B. Prohibition
C. The Great Depression
D. The Second Wave of Feminism

5. The 20th century saw many technological advancements in horse racing. Lorenzo Del Riccio's innovative camera introduced this as a more accurate way to determine the winner in a race that was too close to call.

A. Video recording
B. Instant replays
C. Dead heats
D. Photo Finish

6. The 1950s were a popular time to create institutions that would preserve history and honor sports icons. Many Halls of Fame opened during this decade that still exist today. Which Hall of Fame opened in 1955?

A. National Baseball Hall of Fame
B. International Tennis Hall of Fame and Museum
C. National Museum of Racing and Hall of Fame
D. National Soccer Hall of Fame