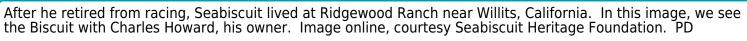


- 0. THE REST OF THE STORY Story Preface
- 1. SAN FRANCISCO EARTHQUAKE
- 2. CHARLES HOWARD
- 3. TOM SMITH
- 4. RED POLLARD
- 5. SEABISCUIT
- 6. THE PIMLICO SPECIAL OF 1938
- 7. GEORGE WOOLF
- 8. SANTA ANITA HANDICAP

### 9. THE REST OF THE STORY

10. MORE on HORSE RACING



• Horse racing can be a dangerous sport. For jockeys who worked during the era of Red Pollard and George Woolf, the low-paying profession was even more frightening than it is now. Between 1935 and 1939, nineteen jockeys were killed racing.

• Trying to lose weight was only one of the issues, albeit a significant one. Laura Hillenbrand (in her book, <u>Seabiscuit: An American Legend</u>) describes the torment jockeys put themselves through to make the weight cut. Of the most extreme example - which may have been used by Red Pollard - Hillenbrand writes:

For jockeys who were truly desperate [to lose weight], there was one last resort. Contact the right people, and you could get hold of a special capsule, a simple pill guaranteed to take off all the weight you wanted. In it was the egg of a tapeworm. Within a short while the parasite would attach to a man's intestines and slowly suck the nutrients out of him. The pounds would peel away like magic.

When the host jockey became too malnourished, he could check into a hospital to have the worm removed, then return to the track and swallow a new pill. Red Pollard may have resorted to this solution. (Seabiscuit, page 83.)

• <u>Ridgewood Ranch</u> was Seabiscuit's home after his racing years. The famous horse who, some say, was one of the greatest athletes of all time, died young (when he was only 14 years old), quashing Charles Howard's plans to breed his prize thoroughbred. (He had sired just 108 foals, or about one year's production for many modern stallions.)

• The great champion is buried under an unmarked oak tree at Ridgewood Ranch, near Willits, California. He had suffered a heart attack. Every summer, the Willits Chamber of Commerce offers "Seabiscuit tours."

• Charles Howard died three years later (in 1950), also of heart problems. He was 72. His wife, Marcela, lived a long life and married again.

• Johnny ("Red") <u>Pollard</u> battled alcoholism, life-threatening injuries and a non-jockey's physique to do what he loved doing: racing horses. Everywhere he traveled, he took with him his favorite books, including those by Shakespeare and <u>Ralph Waldo Emerson</u>.



# THE REST OF THE STORY

• A jockey who had first failed as a prizefighter (his nickname was "Cougar"), Red <u>married Agnes Conlon</u>. One of <u>their</u> children, daughter Norah, has written a book of poetry about her father entitled *Leaning In*.

• Red finally stopped racing horses when he was 46. His body, wracked by years of injuries and alcohol, couldn't take the track any longer. He never really won after Seabiscuit. Continuing to rely on Agnes, he lived out the rest of his life physically paying for his years of racing.

• After Agnes got cancer, in 1980, Red went to a nursing home. He died there, with Agnes by his side, in 1981. Two weeks later, she was gone as well.

• Tom Smith was finally <u>inducted</u> into the Hall of Fame more than forty years after his breathtaking work with Seabiscuit. He had been banned from racing for a year because one of his grooms, while preparing a horse for a November 1, 1945 New York race, had given the horse a decongestant in violation of horse racing rules.

• After he was reinstated, Smith trained Jet Pilot (a horse owned by Elizabeth Arden Graham) and won the Kentucky Derby in 1947. Ten years later, after suffering a stroke, one of the best "horse whisperers" in the world died.

• <u>Bill Nichols</u> was a teenager, working at Seabiscuit's post-racing home, Ridgewood Ranch. He is still alive and was a primary source for Laura Hillenbrand's book, *Seabiscuit: An American Legend*.

• Leonard D. Smith, (now a veterinarian, then a teenaged ranch hand) worked at Ridgewood in 1940, right after Seabiscuit (pictured here with <u>Tom Smith</u>) retired from the race track. He recalls that the ranch was very similiar to the Bonanza TV show with cattle, horses, mining and timber.

• There were a lot of <u>draft horses</u> on the ranch, mostly used for "sledding" out the cut timbers. (Those horses were housed in a large <u>barn</u> together with hay and other supplies.)

• Dr. Smith - 82, at the time of this writing - <u>still rides</u> nearly every day and keeps shoes on two horses. He has many Seabiscuit stories. One of his best involves the duping of a few unsuspecting Ridgewood visitors.

• Seabiscuit was exercised by the ranch hands when they checked the cattle or needed an extra horse for some easy work. One day some city folks came to the ranch and wanted to take pictures of the legendary champion. The wranglers had Biscuit tied to the corrals with the other horses. He was dirty, sweaty and did not look like a famous racehorse. The cowboy in charge said he'd be glad to get Seabiscuit, so he went into the stalls and led out a fairly clean bay racing gelding. The visitors took pictures of the wrong horse and went on their way. The guy in charge just didn't think anyone would believe that it was <u>actually</u> Seabiscuit tied to the corrals.

• <u>Shirley Temple</u> had the <u>role</u> of Margaret O'Hara in 1949's *The Story of Seabiscuit* (a highly fictionalized film which does include clips of Seabiscuit's actual races). In that movie, the horse playing the title role (Sea Sovereign) was the real Seabiscuit's son.

• Real-life Hall of Fame jockeys <u>Gary Stevens</u> and <u>Chris McCarron</u> portray George Woolf and Charley Kurtsinger, who rode Seabiscuit and War Admiral, respectively, in the 1938 Pimlico Special match race. McCarron also served as the current movie's racing consultant.

• On August 17, 2003, Gary Stevens was <u>injured</u> as he crossed the Arlington Million finish line, in first place. Storming Home, his mount, had suddenly veered left and Stevens could not hold on. Despite jeers from the crowd, Stevens was stripped of his first-place finish.

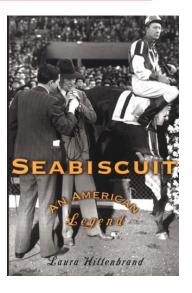
• Laura Hillenbrand, the author of *Seabiscuit: An American Legend*, has the debilitating disease Chronic Fatigue Syndrome. Because of those health problems, she is largely confined to her home.

See Alignments to State and Common Core standards for this story online at: <a href="http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicAlignment/THE-REST-OF-THE-STORY-Seabiscuit">http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicAlignment/THE-REST-OF-THE-STORY-Seabiscuit</a>

See Learning Tasks for this story online at: http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicActivities/THE-REST-OF-THE-STORY-Seabiscuit

View this asset at:

# Media Stream



<u>Bill Nichols</u> Image of an older Bill Nichols, online courtesy Horse Art. PD

http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Seabiscuit-An-American-Legend-by-Laura-Hillenbrand

View this asset at: http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Bill-Nichols

Seabiscuit: An American Legend - by Laura Hillenbrand

Image of the book cover, online courtesy Amazon.







Tom Smith and Seabiscuit Image online, courtesy Thoroughbred Champions Image Gallery.

PD View this asset at: <u>http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Tom-Smith-and-Seabiscuit</u>

Draft Horses at Ridgewood Ranch Image online, courtesy Thoroughbred Champions Image Gallery.

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View this asset at: http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Draft-Horses-at-Ridgewood-Ranch

Horse Barn at Ridgewood Image online, courtesy Thoroughbred Champions Image Gallery.

PD

#### View this asset at: http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Horse-Barn-at-Ridgewood











Dr. Leonard D. Smith - Ridgewood Ranch Image provided by Wayne Smith, son of Dr. Leonard D. Smith. PD View this asset at: http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Dr.-Leonard-D.-Smith-Ridgewood-Ranch

## Seabiscuit at Ridgewood Ranch

Image online, courtesy Thoroughbred Champions Image Gallery.

PD View this asset at: <u>http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Seabiscuit-at-Ridgewood-Ranch</u>

<u>Chris McCarron</u> Image online, courtesy Blood Horse. View this asset at: <u>http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Chris-McCarron</u>

<u>Seabiscuit - Ridgewood Stud Barn</u> Image online, courtesy <u>Seabiscuit Heritage Foundation</u>. PD

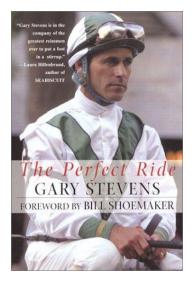
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<u>Shirley Temple</u> Image online, courtesy Reel Classics. PD View this asset at: <u>http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Shirley-Temple</u>



## Shirley Temple - The Story of Seabiscuit Image online, courtesy Wire to Wire.

Image online, courtesy Wire to Wire. View this asset at: http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Shirley-Temple-The-Story-of-Seabiscuit



## <u>The Perfect Ride - by Gary Stevens</u> Image online, courtesy <u>amazon.com</u> website. View this asset at: <u>http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/The-Perfect-Ride-by-Gary-Stevens</u>