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After he retired from racing, Seabiscuit lived at Ridgewood Ranch near Willits, California. In this image, we see the Biscuit with Charles Howard, his owner. Image online, courtesy Seabiscuit Heritage Foundation. PD

- 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, *Seabiscuit: An American Legend*) 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.)

- Ridgewood Ranch 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") Pollard 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 Ralph Waldo Emerson.

- A jockey who had first failed as a prizefighter (his nickname was "Cougar"), Red married Agnes Conlon. One of their 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 inducted 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.
- Bill Nichols 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 Tom Smith) retired from the race track. He recalls that the ranch was very similar to the Bonanza TV show with cattle, horses, mining and timber.
- There were a lot of draft horses on the ranch, mostly used for "sledding" out the cut timbers. (Those horses were housed in a large barn together with hay and other supplies.)
- Dr. Smith - 82, at the time of this writing - still rides 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 actually Seabiscuit tied to the corrals.
- Shirley Temple had the role 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 Gary Stevens and Chris McCarron 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 injured 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.

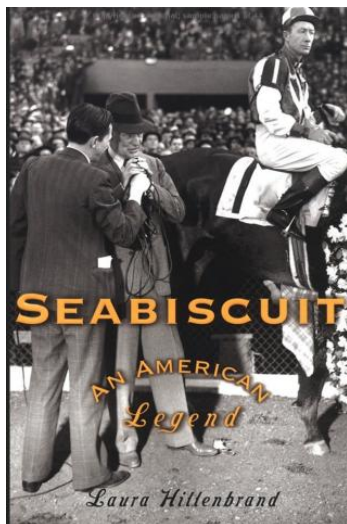
See Alignments to State and Common Core standards for this story online at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicAlignment/THE-REST-OF-THE-STORY-Seabiscuit>

See Learning Tasks for this story online at:

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Media Stream



Seabiscuit: An American Legend - by Laura Hillenbrand

Image of the book cover, online courtesy Amazon.

View this asset at:

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



Bill Nichols

Image of an older Bill Nichols, online courtesy Horse Art.

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



Tom Smith and Seabiscuit

Image online, courtesy Thoroughbred Champions Image Gallery.

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Draft Horses at Ridgewood Ranch

Image online, courtesy Thoroughbred Champions Image Gallery.

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Horse Barn at Ridgewood

Image online, courtesy Thoroughbred Champions Image Gallery.

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Dr. Leonard D. Smith - Ridgewood Ranch

Image provided by Wayne Smith, son of Dr. Leonard D. Smith.

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Seabiscuit at Ridgewood Ranch

Image online, courtesy Thoroughbred Champions Image Gallery.

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Chris McCarron

Image online, courtesy Blood Horse.

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Seabiscuit - Ridgewood Stud Barn

Image online, courtesy [Seabiscuit Heritage Foundation](#).

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Shirley Temple

Image online, courtesy Reel Classics.

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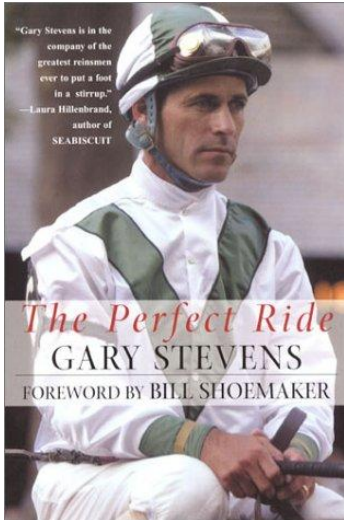


Shirley Temple - The Story of Seabiscuit

Image online, courtesy Wire to Wire.

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The Perfect Ride - by Gary Stevens

Image online, courtesy amazon.com website.

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