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In 1919, Sir Barton won [the Kentucky Derby](#), [the Preakness](#) and [the Belmont Stakes](#). He bears the honor of the first "Triple-Crown" winner, even though that title was not-yet available when he was racing. This image depicts Sir Barton and Johnny Luftus, his jockey, at the 1919 Preakness. Image online, courtesy Wikimedia Commons.

- The first Belmont Stakes (named for [August Belmont](#), the first president of the American jockey club) was run in 1867 at [Jerome Park](#). It was later moved to [Belmont Park](#) (which was built by his son, [August Belmont, Jr.](#)).
- In 1873, the first Preakness Stakes was run at Pimlico Course in Baltimore, Maryland.
- The first Kentucky Derby was run at the [Louisville Jockey Club](#) Course in 1875. The course is now known as [Churchill Downs](#).
- The first "Triple Crown" winner was Sir Barton. He accomplished that feat in 1919, the year following the end of World War I (and before the Derby, the Preakness and the Belmont were collectively called America's "Triple Crown").
- To date, there have been eleven Triple Crown winners: [Sir Barton](#) (1919); [Gallant Fox](#) (1930); [Omaha](#) (1935); [War Admiral](#) (1937); [Whirlaway](#) (1941); [Count Fleet](#) (1943); [Assault](#) (1946); [Citation](#) (1948); [Secretariat](#) (1973); [Seattle Slew](#) (1977) and [Affirmed](#) (1978)
- Citation - who won the [Triple Crown in 1948](#) - was the first horse to win \$1 million (on the 14th of July, 1951).
- [John Henry](#) was the biggest money-winning horse of all time when he retired (in 1985) while [Curlin](#) (a Kentucky-born thoroughbred) has replaced [Cigar](#) (grandson of Seattle Slew) as North America's current largest income-earner.
- [Seattle Slew](#) was the first undefeated horse to win the Triple Crown. He accomplished that feat in 1977. The next year, he beat [Affirmed](#), the last Triple Crown winner, in the Marlboro Cup.
- The greatest money-winning filly, Lady's Secret, was the daughter of Triple Crown champion [Secretariat](#) (also known as "[Big Red](#)," the horse owned by Penny Chenery who not only [won the Derby](#), the Preakness and [the](#)

Belmont - in 1973 - but also had the largest equine heart ever reported by any veterinarian).

- One of the saddest horse stories - ever - involves Shergar, the champion thoroughbred who was born in Ireland. In 1981, he won the Epsom Derby by ten lengths - still a record. Two years later, he was kidnapped ... and never seen again. At the 25th anniversary of his disappearance, an investigative journalist learned the brutal truth about Shergar's fate. The story is not for the faint-of-heart.
- Bulle Rock was the first Thoroughbred in America's Thirteen Colonies. He was shipped from Britain in 1730.

EDITOR'S NOTE:

We are exceedingly grateful to Leonard D. Smith, DVM (of Hendrix, Oklahoma) and his son, Wayne Smith, for providing us with facts for this story and for previously unpublished photographs of Seabiscuit and Ridgewood Ranch. Thanks, especially, to Gregory Kuehn (of Albuquerque, New Mexico), one of the most knowledgeable Seabiscuit authorities available, for his expert help with this story.

See [Alignments to State and Common Core standards for this story online at:](#)

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicAlignment/MORE-on-HORSE-RACING-Seabiscuit>

See [Learning Tasks for this story online at:](#)

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicActivities/MORE-on-HORSE-RACING-Seabiscuit>

Media Stream



August Belmont

Image online, courtesy Wikimedia Commons.

PD

View this asset at: <http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/August-Belmont>



August Belmont, Jr. - Builder of Belmont Park

Image of August Belmont, Jr., online courtesy Library of Congress.

PD

View this asset at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/August-Belmont-Jr.-Builder-of-Belmont-Park>



Starting Gate at Belmont Park

Image online, courtesy [New York City.gov](http://www.nyc.gov)

PD

View this asset at: <http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Starting-Gate-at-Belmont-Park>



Louisville Jockey Club - Churchill Downs

Image of vintage postcard online, courtesy Old Louisville.

PD

View this asset at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Louisville-Jockey-Club-Churchill-Downs>



Affirmed - Triple-Crown Winner

Image online, courtesy Thoroughbred Champions Image Gallery.

PD

View this asset at: <http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Affirmed-Triple-Crown-Winner>



Secretariat - 1973 Triple Crown Winner

Image online, courtesy Thoroughbred Champions Image Gallery.

PD

View this asset at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Secretariat-1973-Triple-Crown-Winner>



Citation - Triple Crown, 1948

Video clip from "Jewels of the Triple Crown," narrated by Jim McKay (born James Kenneth McManus). Copyright, CBS/Fox Video Sports, all rights reserved. Clip provided here as fair use for educational purposes.

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Secretariat - Winning the 1973 Derby and Preakness

Clip from SportCentury's "Classic Triple Crown Performances," online courtesy ESPN. The entire documentary, plus two additional videos about Secretariat, are available from Secretariat.com.

Quoted passages from *Secretariat: The Making of a Champion*, by William Nack, online courtesy Google Books.

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Secretariat - Wins the Belmont by 31 Lengths

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Secretariat - Big Red's Last Race

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Shergar - A Real-Life Pegasus

Clip of the 1981 Derby at Epsom Downs, online via YouTube.

View this asset at: <http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Shergar-A-Real-Life-Pegasus0>