



August Belmont, Jr. (1853-1924), built the New York racetrack which now bears his name.

The third race of the Triple Crown, the Belmont Stakes - named after his father, August Belmont, Sr., who originally funded the event - is run every June at Belmont Park (located in the town of Elmont on Long Island, New York).



Belmont Park as it appeared on June 6, 2012. Image, copyright ZUMA Press, Bildnummer 10731156, online via WDR (a German-language website). Image provided here as fair use for educational purposes. The race track at Belmont is the longest of the three U.S. Triple-Crown tracks.

During his eventful life, Belmont, Jr. also accomplished many other impressive things:

- As a sprinter at Harvard University (from which he graduated in 1875), he introduced spiked track shoes to Americans.
- As founder of Interborough Rapid Transit Company, in 1902, he helped to birth New York City's first underground rapid transit line.

- As a 65-year-old, Belmont volunteered to serve in Europe after America entered World War I. He joined the U.S. Army Air Service and was commissioned as a Major.
- As an avid horse-racing fan, he “is credited with having saved thoroughbred racing when it was at its lowest ebb in the East, after the repeal of the racing law in New York State.” (The quote is from *TIME* Magazine’s obituary article about him.)
- As a breeder of horses, in Kentucky, he bred 129 American Stakes winners.

Man O’War was the greatest of all the horses bred at Belmont’s Kentucky farm. When the foal was born, Belmont’s second wife - Eleanor Robson, a British-born actress - named him “My Man o’War” in honor of her husband who was still serving overseas during World War I.

Given the uncertainty of the war’s end, Belmont sold the foal (who was born in 1917) to Glen Riddle Farms in Maryland.

Among the many notable people in Belmont’s life was Commodore Matthew C. Perry (his maternal grandfather). It was Perry who’d helped to open Japan to the West following his 1852-1854 expeditions there. (Perry’s ships, which were equipped with powerful Paixhans shell guns, helped to convince Japanese officials that opening their country might be a good idea.)

August Belmont, Jr., died at his New York City apartment - located at 550 Park Avenue - in 1924. His widow, Eleanor, lived for another 55 years. She died, just before her 100th birthday, in 1979.

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Media Stream



Belmont Park in New York

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