

May 2, 2021

Harness racing is one of America's most historic sports, dating back to about 1825 when farmers brought their best horses to the agricultural fairs to see who had the fastest racer. By the mid-1800's, harness racing tracks began to appear and, by the late nineteenth century, harness racing had become America's most popular sport. Today it is a multi-billion dollar international sport.

The Delaware County Fair has been home to the Jug since 1946, and the race is held at the Delaware County Fairgrounds on the third Thursday after Labor Day. Crowds of 40,000-plus come for a day of sunshine, friendship, food, and the excitement of watching some of the top Standardbred horses strut their stuff. The Little Brown Jug has the distinction of being one of the few races that require horses to finish first in two heats to be declared the winner.

Joseph A. Neville, a Delaware native, joined the Delaware County Agricultural Society in the mid-thirties and began a push to move the county fair from Powell, where it had been held since before the first world war. In 1938, Neville and several businessmen convinced the fair board that the move would be an economic boon. In 1939, Neville and his friend Henry C. "Hank" Thomson embarked on the construction of a half-mile racetrack at the new location for the fair.

[Many world records were made on the wide, steeply-banked Delaware track, quickly spotlighting it as the country's fastest half-mile track. In 1940, the popular track was awarded Grand Circuit dates and Delaware, Ohio was on the racing map. During war years, there were no rich stakes offered for three-year-old pacers, so Neville and Thomson put their heads together and decided to plan a Grand Circuit meet that would outshine any event ever held at Delaware. They wanted a new event with

a purse comparable to that of the famous Hambletonian, and began making plans for the first event to be held in 1946.

But what would they call this race? A contest was posted with a prize of \$100 for the winning name; entries would be judged by representatives of the United States Trotting Association and several racing magazine publishers. The contest generated 4,000 name suggestions, but the choice was unanimous. "Little Brown Jug" had been a champion pacer in the post-Civil War years, and the song of the same name was well-known.] *Might skip due to time.*

The inaugural Little Brown Jug was viewed by an estimated 27,000 racing fans. The weather was perfect and a field of top pacers put on a spectacular show through four punishing heats. "Ensign Hanover" became the first Little Brown Jug champion, and history moved forward.

Jim Caple a senior writer for ESPM. 2007

Published an article: "101 things all sports fans must experience before they die" It is a worldwide list of sporting events. I am sad to say that watching my beloved Columbus Blue Jackets are not on that list. But I can tell you one event that is... The Little Brown Jug #83. Caple writes "You owe it to yourself to see this this harness racing classic.

Attending a Monday night football game is ranked #88!

Attending the races during Jug week is unlike any other harness event. Sure there are richer races around the country but the problem is you don't get the up-close interaction with the animals and participants that you do in Delaware. We have been able to maintain something that many sporting events have not been able to do... keep its taditon.

Ill never what about to tell you as long as I live... Right after the races Jug week many horses head down to Lexington KY for the grand circuit races at the Red Mile in Lexington. People would say Oh you need to come down... it's a really good time... I relented. Well... I was in shocked... being exposed to 10 or thousands of people during jug week I was greeted by maybe 3 or 4 thousand people at the Red Mile. Where are all the people? The Red Mile is a Mile track... literally you have to watch the horses on a TV monitor when they are on the back stretch. Delaware has a half mile track.... Which I think is idea for the fan.

I would be mistaken if I did not take this opportunity to thank Andy Brenner and the States Legislature and Governor for the support they have provided horse racing. Horse racing provides thousands of jobs and millions in tax revenue to the State of Ohio. Horseracing is a good thing.

I am asking you to please support the passage of the Little Brown Jug license plate. Hope to see you at The Jug (without a mask)!

Thank you,

H. Chip Thomson III

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