
Honoring and Preserving the Sports History of Chautauqua County



Chautauqua Sports Hall of Fame

15 West Third Street - Jamestown, NY 14701

May 2013

1909 Kentucky Derby Champ Wintergreen Ridden by Westfield's Vincent Powers

The biggest horse race of them all, the Kentucky Derby, will be run for the 139th time on Saturday, May 4, 2013.

This is an excellent time to remember that the annual Run for the Roses, which began in 1875, was once won by a jockey from Chautauqua County.

Vincent Powers was born in Westfield, NY in 1892 and spent the early years of his life in the village along the Lake Erie shoreline.

He left home to ride on half-mile racetracks in the South. He was only 15 years old in 1907 when he rode his first winner in a \$500 race for two-year-olds at Churchill Downs.

The following year at the age of 16 Powers handled 1,260 mounts and won 324 races. At a time when youngsters of today are thinking about driving their first car or going to the junior prom, Vincent Powers was the leading jockey in the entire nation.



So when the history of the Kentucky Derby is recalled it's not surprising many turf aficionados reflect upon the 17-year-old young man from Westfield who guided Wintergreen down the home stretch and to victory in the 35th classic in 1909.

Bred in Ohio by Jerome Bristow Respass, the multi-millionaire owner of a brewing company, and trained by Charles Mack, Wintergreen had won 5 races in 10 starts at age 2, and finished third in one stakes race.

At age 3, Wintergreen prepped for the Derby with only one allowance race at the antiquated Association Course in Lexington, Ky. He finished second in what turned out to be a key prep. The first three finishers in the Derby all came out of that overnight race.

Leaving from the sixth post position, Wintergreen was bumped at the start of the Derby race but recovered quickly. He took a good early lead and held sway throughout. He won in a canter by four lengths with a time of 2:08.20.



The winner's purse in 1909 was \$4,850. The 2013 winner is expected to bank \$1.5 million.

In all, Wintergreen raced six seasons, and while he was stakes-placed several times, the Kentucky Derby was his only stakes win. He remains to this day, the only Kentucky Derby winner bred in the Buckeye State.

Powers' ride on Wintergreen, regarded as one of the easiest victories of his career, attracted the attention of leading horsemen.

One of these was noted trainer Sam Hildreth. Powers rode for Hildreth on a mount named Fitz Herbert, winning several major stake races. Included are the Advance Stakes and the Lawrence Realization Stakes, both contested at Sheepshead Bay Race Track in Brooklyn.

He won back to back championships as the top jockey in the nation by repeating the feat in 1909.

Powers considered Fitz Herbert, the outstanding handicap horse of 1909 and 1910, to be the best horse he had ever ridden.

In 1911 Powers went to Europe to ride. He gained weight overseas and turned his attention to the horseracing sport of steeplechase. His transition proved fruitful as he enjoyed success riding steeplechase on the Continent.

Returning to the United States when World War I broke out, Powers became a contract steeplechase rider for Greentree Stables and its owner, Payne Hay Whitney and his wife, Helen.

Riding successes continued. In 1917 Powers was the leading steeplechase jockey in the country with 15 victories on 39 mounts. As such, he became the only jockey in history to lead the nation on the flats and through the fields.

When Jimmie Owens, head trainer at Greentree, died in 1922, Powers took over the training duties which he maintained for the rest of his career in horse racing.

Powers, the top steeplechase rider in 1917, was named the top steeplechase trainer just ten years later. He developed Jolly Roger, the first steeplechase horse to earn more than \$100,000.

He retired in 1946 and made his home in Queens Village, NY with his wife Hedwig. Powers died at age 75.

His life was full and included some of the finest horses in America that he rode and trained, both on the flat tracks and in steeplechase.

And all from a boy from Westfield.

Some of the information above was taken from an article written by Chuck Korbar, for the Dunkirk Evening Observer, in May 1982.

Inductee of the Month



Dr. Harold Blaisdell

Dr. Harold A. Blaisdell attended Jamestown High School football games on a regular basis from the 1940s into the 1960s and always rushed to treat injured players on either team. Dr. Blaisdell was also a pilot and often flew his own plane to JHS road games so he could serve his duties as team physician. In recognition for his services to the football team, he was elected to honorary membership in the JHS "J" Club.

In 1963 he received a citation from the Chautauqua County YMCA for his Christian service to youth in the community. He was honored because he not only served as the football team's physician for over 30 years, but he was also a personal friend of the players and encouraged them in various ways such as making career choices.

While not busy with his surgical practice and team physician duties, Dr. Blaisdell was active in golf, hunting and fishing.

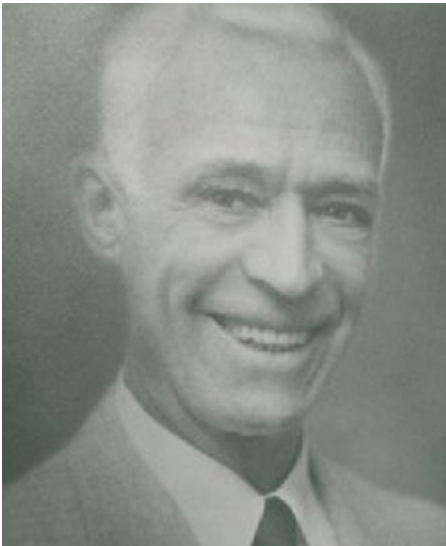
The Jamestown High School sports programs lost a staunch supporter when Dr. Blaisdell was killed in a traffic accident in 1964.

He was inducted into the Chautauqua Sports Hall of Fame in 1985.

The following was written about Dr. Blaisdell in 1927:

Representative of one of new England's oldest Colonist families, the descendants of whom still till the soil of the farm at Cherry Creek, near Jamestown, New York, which was settled by Stephen Blaisdell in 1827, Harold Alfred Blaisdell, practicing physician of Jamestown, is among the rising practitioners of his progression in this part of the State. He is a young man of exceptional natural attainments, of cultured manner and ingratiating personality, and has entered upon his professional career equipped with a thorough training in its intricacies and impressed with the responsibilities of his task. Dr. Blaisdell has shown that he appreciates the urgency of a company of high class physicians and surgeons in any community, and has been a constant student of his profession during his practice and has kept up with the progress of his fellows and the leaders in prevention, invention and cure. There are great rewards for the scientist whose work is beneficial to mankind and it is not unlikely that Dr. Blaisdell, in his progress through life, will win a just share for the excellence of his work in the field of his choice.

He was born in Cherry Creek, Chautauqua County, New York, April 28, 1897, a son of Alfred and Bertha (Waite) Blaisdell, and was educated in the public schools, afterward attending the University of Buffalo, from which he was graduated in 1923 with the degree of Doctor of Medicine. He then took one year as an intern of Roosevelt Hospital, New York City, and at Yale University Hospital, New Haven Connecticut, coming to Jamestown in January, 1924, and establishing himself in practice specializing in surgery.



Dr. Harold A. Blaisdell scrupulously upholds the high standard handed down to him through these genealogical lines, his goal set at the top, which he gives every indication of reaching. He is a member of the staffs of both hospitals in Jamestown and belongs to the American Medical Association, and to the New York State and Jamestown Medical Societies. He is also a member of the Buffalo Academy of Medicine and a Junior Fellow of the American College of Surgeons. His military career began with enlistment in the American Expeditionary Forces, July 3, 1917, when he was assigned to the 106th Field Artillery, 27th Division, and with which contingent he served overseas from June, 1918 to April, 1919, participating in major engagement at St. Mihiel, the Meuse-Argonne and elsewhere. He was seriously injured by powder burns and was confined to the hospital for six months, finally being honorably mustered out of service

at Camp Union, New York, May 14, 1919. He now holds the commission of a first lieutenant in the Officers' Reserve Corps. He is a member of the American Legion, Post No. 149; Rotary Club; Lodge No. 384, Free and Accepted Masons; Western Sun Chapter, Royal Arch Masons; is president of the University of Buffalo Club of Jamestown; director of the Young Men's Christian Association; member of the Moon Brook Country Club, and member of the Executive Council of Local Boy Scouts. His residence is on Houston Avenue, Jamestown, New York. He attends the First Baptist Church.