

1886 Gray Satan won the \$62,800 Spokane Futurity, richest race in track history as one of a record 190 wins for jockey champion Jose Corrales.

Aug. 30, 1986 An anniversary crowd of 10,466, largest in more than 40 years, marked Playfair's 50th season.

April 6, 1984 The city's longest incorporating 104 days, opened.

1983 Black Mackee's daughter, Miss Mackee, won the first of her unprecedented 11 Playfair stakes races.

1981 Auto dealer Jack Pring's Appleyway Leasing Corp. bought the track and operated it for eight years.

1978 Playfair's first 2-year-old Horse of the Meeting, Black Mackee, went on to become the area's dominant sire.

1973 Jerry Taketa, once Playfair's top apprentice, took his third title in a row.

1970 Playfair became the first western track to offer regular night thoroughbred racing.

1969 Turbulator, which began the season as a maiden, finished it as Horse of the Meeting after winning a record seven straight races.

Sept. 16, 1967 Trainer Bill Cummings saddled five horses and, astonishingly, all five won.

Oct. 17, 1965 Hall of Famer Johnny Longden recorded career victory No. 6,020 aboard Mr. Mose.

1964 Smogy Dew followed her Longacres Derby win with a Spokane Derby victory that helped her become one of the state's best and most-loved race mares.

1963 New general manager George C. Manos began upgrading the physical plant and touched off two decades of unprecedented success.

Oct. 5, 1958 Collaborator, fresh from an easy victory in the Spokane Derby, trounced older rivals in the Playfair Mile under a daunting 137 pounds.

Sept. 7, 1947 Lighted Way won the first of his eight Playfair stakes races, including three renewals of the Harvest Handicap.

Oct. 3, 1946 Eddie Plesa, on the way to the riding title, won with six of his seven mounts.

1937 Johnny Adams won the riding title on his way to the National Horse Racing Hall of Fame.

Aug. 30, 1935 Playfair Race Course came into being with 16 consecutive days of racing at the refurbished fairgrounds.

1933 After a two-decade ban, the state legislature legalized pari-mutuel betting.

Sept. 4, 1930 Cyclonic, owned by Ruth Parton, the region's first top horsewoman, cantered to his third straight Spokane Derby win.

1916 Albert Johnson, a native of rural Milan, Wash., began a Hall of Fame riding career that included two Kentucky Derby victories.

1910 After Thomas Calhoun, named for the Chicago Tribune sports editor, won the 1910 Spokane Derby, he posed with Genevieve Paterson and his owner.

1909 The state banished formal wagering on horse races, although racing continued at county fairs.

1907 The Spokane Interstate Fair made its debut on 63 acres near Altamont and Main with a half-mile track and a wooden grandstand.

Oct. 11, 1887 The Washington and Idaho Fair opened on grounds now occupied by Corbin Park, launching Spokane's first race meet that attracted reputable regional competition.

2009 Larry Stone's SCAFCO, which manufactures steel studs and grain-storage structures, bought 45 acres for \$2.1 million and began to develop the barren site into Playfair Commerce Park.

2005 The City of Spokane paid Appleyway Leasing \$6.3 million for the property with plans to build a new sewage treatment plant.

March 2004 Following an auction of Playfair's equipment and artifacts, the ancient grandstand and adjoining barns were demolished.

May 27, 2003 After failing to reach contract terms with horsemen's groups, Nelson vacated his lease and surrendered his operating license.

2001 Nevada-based casino developer and race-track operator Eric Nelson leased Playfair for both live racing and off-track betting.

2000 After a three-year hiatus, Lilac City Racing Association, a horsemen's group, operated a cold, snowy fall season that ended on Dec. 17, which turned out to be the city's final day of horse racing.

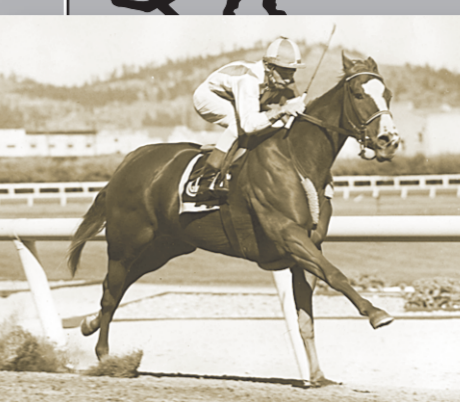
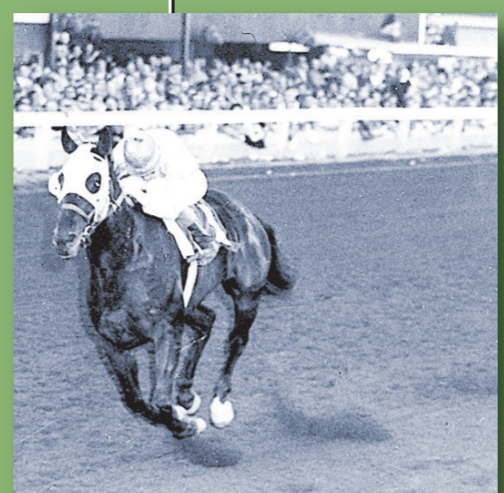
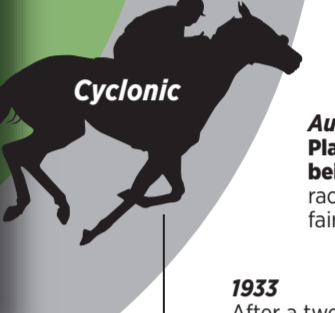
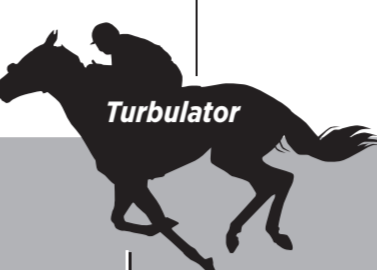
1995 There was satellite wagering on every race for the first time.

1989 Eastern Washington Racing, Inc., led by pizza products supplier Joe Rizzuto, a longtime horse owner and part-time trainer, leased Playfair for a 98-day season.

December 1988 Weeks after general manager Mark Arnold resigned and claimed the Washington Horse Racing Commission was unresponsive to the demands of a changing industry, Jack Pring announced he would not continue to run the track.

Aug. 28, 1987 Jockey superstar Bill Shoemaker rallied Glamour Betty to win the feature race at the track's 51st birthday party.

Sept. 19, 1983 Scott Bergsrud, who won three consecutive riding titles, rode six winners in one day for the second time in 10 weeks.



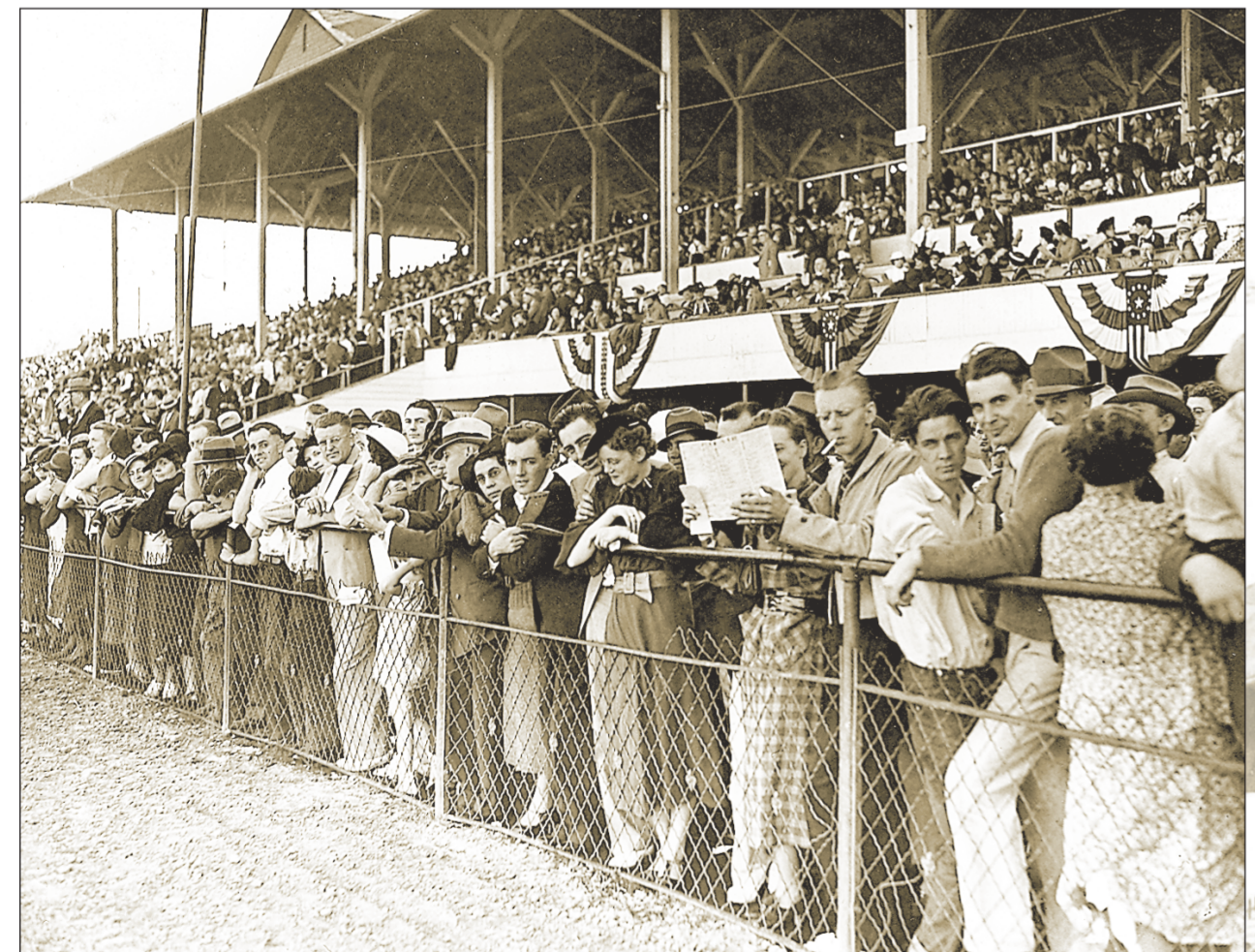
A look back at Playfair

More than century of horse racing in Spokane

Research by Jim Price Graphic by Molly Quinn



There they go in 1937: Starting-gate pioneer Clay Puett designed and built this open-stall gate for his use as the starter during Playfair's first few seasons.



ABOVE: Here is a Playfair crowd in 1937. Many thousands of fans crowded into the stands on major stakes-race days before the Turf Club enclosed the south end.
 RIGHT: Shown here in 1915 with its distinctive original cupolas, the Spokane track's grandstand, designed by Kirtland Cutter, the city's best-known architect, gained a new roof after a surviving a major fire and became America's fourth-oldest horse-racing facility.

Because horse racing entertained as many as 15 million Inland Northwest spectators at one facility for more than a century, it once would have been unimaginable to think that its rich history could come to an end. The oak grandstand, built for the Spokane Interstate Fair, became the home of Playfair Race Course. Thoroughbred, harness and quarter horses raced in front of it. So did automobiles, motorcycles and boats. Famous jockeys rode there. Fans cheered their regionally prominent equine favorites. Trainers, grooms, hay and harness dealers made their living there. But in 2004, a wrecking ball had the last word.



SOURCES: The Spokesman-Review file photos; Washington Horse Breeders Association