



NORTHEAST/ MID-ATLANTIC

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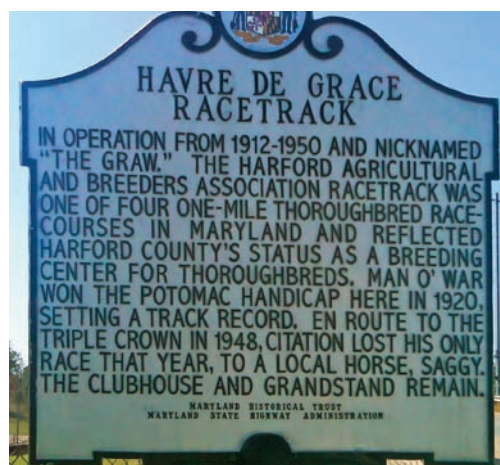
The Original Havre de Grace

Superstars raced at Maryland oval

BY TERRY CONWAY

When old-timers in the waterfront village of Havre de Grace get to reminiscing about the “good old days,” they start swapping tales about the local racetrack of the same name that first opened in 1912.

Perched on the bluffs above the Susquehanna River and on the headwaters of the Chesapeake Bay, the Maryland track attracted legendary horses, fabulously rich owners, and top-tier trainers and jockeys. Affectionately dubbed “The Graw” by locals, it was one of racing’s gems. Racing history was minted here.



VICTORIA KEITH



HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF HARFORD COUNTY

A postcard depicts the racing action at the old Havre de Grace; above, a historical marker

FRIESAN FIRE

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If a picture is worth a thousand words, what's a ton of video worth? Check out FRIESAN FIRE on YouTube.com. He's awesome.



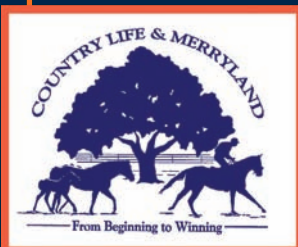
ELLEN PONS

When we first studied FRIESAN FIRE as a stallion prospect, we clicked on YouTube.com and typed his name. Up popped the life story of the favorite for the 2009 Kentucky Derby (Gr. I). Four pages of links. All his races. His winning 2-year-old debut at Delaware Park. His sweep of the Louisiana preps for the Derby. Trainer Larry Jones galloping him in workouts. All we needed to know about a son of A.P. Indy who won almost \$700,000, all on dirt, and out of a champion Australian family.

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Box seating in the clubhouse at Havre de Grace

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**2011 New York Second-Crop Sires
By Earnings**

Sire	Named Foals	Rnrs	Wnrs	Stks Wnrs	Earnings
Bluegrass Cat.....	200	137	63	4	\$3,436,834
Greeley's Galaxy.....	59	35	16	0	\$482,135
Andromeda's Hero.....	51	19	7	0	\$193,978
Uncle Camie.....	16	7	4	0	\$90,048
Quigley.....	8	4	0	0	\$21,920

**2011 New York Sires
By Stakes Winners**

Sire	Stks Wnrs	Stks Wins
Freud.....	8	15
Posse.....	5	10
Alphabet Soup.....	5	6
Bluegrass Cat.....	4	7
Congaree.....	3	6
Roaring Fever.....	3	4
Golden Missile.....	2	2

**2011 New York Sires
By 2-Year-Old Winners**

Sires	2yos	2yo Rnrs	2yo Wnrs
Bluegrass Cat.....	84	49	18
Posse.....	74	39	11
Touch Gold.....	40	22	10
Disco Rico.....	31	14	6
Silent Name (JPN).....	54	24	6
Sunriver.....	54	16	5
Congaree.....	42	16	5
Utopia (JPN).....	68	34	5
Patriot Act.....	34	7	3
Alphabet Soup.....	43	11	3
Eltish.....	25	5	3
Catienus.....	43	18	3
One Nice Cat.....	18	6	2
Friendly Island.....	26	7	2
Wild Desert.....	32	13	2
Stonesider.....	34	15	2
Freud.....	24	14	2

It was where Sam Riddle insisted Man o' War won his greatest race and where Big Red's resplendent son—Triple Crown winner War Admiral—earned his first victory. Exterminator thundered home in the Philadelphia Handicap, setting an American record. Sir Barton, Equipoise, and Seabiscuit rolled to impressive victories at Havre de Grace. And on a rainy April afternoon in 1948, the famed Citation suffered the only blemish of his Triple Crown season there.

Sixty years after the final race was run at the track, Havre de Grace is back in the headlines, thanks to local Thoroughbred owner Rick Porter, who named a promising filly after the famed oval.

"I would drive by the town on I-95 and

thought it would be a catchy name," said Porter, who is currently awaiting word whether his Havre de Grace will win Horse of the Year honors for 2011. "I'm

**2011 New York Sires
By Winners**

Sire	Rnrs	Wnrs
Posse.....	208	112
Touch Gold.....	191	107
Freud.....	131	72
Catienus.....	133	66
Bluegrass Cat.....	137	63
Golden Missile.....	123	61
Alphabet Soup.....	141	58
Congaree.....	99	54
Roaring Fever.....	71	40
Disco Rico.....	62	34
Say Florida Sandy.....	66	31
Gold Token.....	47	29
Eltish.....	40	21
A. P. Jet.....	29	18
Greeley's Galaxy.....	35	16
Regal Classic.....	31	14
Mayakovsky.....	35	13
Raffie's Majesty.....	34	13
One Nice Cat.....	36	12
Here's Zealous.....	34	12
Well Noted.....	18	11
Stanislavsky.....	15	11
Congressionalhonor.....	40	9
Jade Hunter.....	30	9
Performing Magic.....	23	9
Andromeda's Hero.....	19	7
American Chance.....	17	7
Griffinite.....	16	7
Talk Is Money.....	12	7
Silent Name (JPN).....	24	6
Phone Trick.....	17	6
Smokin Mel.....	8	6
Utopia (JPN).....	34	5
Sunriver.....	16	5
Comeonmom.....	9	4
Crown Delite.....	8	4
Uncle Camie.....	7	4
Take Me Out.....	14	3
Ommadon.....	9	3
Peruvian.....	9	3
Patriot Act.....	7	3
Millions.....	6	3
Slice of Reality.....	5	3
David.....	4	3
Distinctive Pro.....	4	3

Bred to be a racehorse. Bred to be a sire.

Bluegrass Cat

Storm Cat - She's A Winner, by A.P. Indy | Fee: \$17,500

#1
in NY



Leading Second-Crop Sires

	SWs	Earnings
Bernardini '12 Fee: \$150,000	8	\$5,498,493
Bluegrass Cat '12 Fee: \$17,500	4	\$3,436,834
War Front '12 Fee: \$60,000	9	\$3,373,155

*Bloodhorse.com, 12/31/11

A Leading New York Sire

Bluegrass Cat finished 2011 with enough earnings to not only be **New York's Leading Second-Crop Sire**, but also rank **#3 on the New York General Sires list** from just two crops to race.

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fortunate Havre de Grace turned out to be such a talented horse. It's a tip of the cap to a beautiful port in France and a neat little racetrack. I read a lot of stories about its history, and the track was known for what I love—short meets and really good horses.”

The racetrack drew crowds from all over the mid-Atlantic region. Passengers arrived by train from Philadelphia and New York as well as from Washington, D.C., and Baltimore; passenger car loads of fans would descend from the platform and stream to the racetrack eager to wager on the day's racing card.

“With those train lines it was in shooting distance of all those cities,” said Joe Kelly, 93, former Turf writer for the *Baltimore Sun* who covered the track from 1946-1950. “Fans could wander down to the stable area at the water's edge and see these Thoroughbred legends grazing under the elm trees. You could sit in the stands and look down the C&D Canal as the ships headed down to the Bay. It was a beautiful spot.”

In the 1920s and early 1930s those train passengers would also partake in a turn at the roulette wheel and dice table or pay a visit to a nearby raucous speak-easy dur-

ing the Prohibition Era. Havre de Grace developed a reputation as “Little Chicago.” Restaurants, hotels, and cathouses all prospered. Alphonse Capone and his cronies would roll into town in big, bulbous black Chryslers, register at the Chesapeake Hotel, and hurry over to the Graw looking to cash in with insider tips.

Harford County Executive David Craig gathered oral histories from people who visited the track for a college research project. He wrote about the track in the *Harford Historical Bulletin* in 1994.

“A lot of people I grew up with, their fathers were bookies, and the town had its share of murders and prostitution,” Craig related. “At the track you could sit in the top of the grandstand before the era of the radio and telephone and signal a house in town and tell them what the results of the race were and change (wagers) before anyone in the world knew.”

Birth of the Graw

Passage of anti-wagering laws in New York in 1908 led to sharp drops in attendance and handle, and tracks in that state eventually closed. Down in Harford County, pari-mutuel betting on horse racing was approved as reported in the *Havre de Grace Record* on June 15, 1912. Two weeks later construction began on Havre de Grace racetrack, which supporters said would strengthen Maryland's racing and breeding industry. New York racing titan August Belmont provided much of the financial backing, while Edward Burke was tabbed to run the Graw. A burly six-foot-two-inches tall with a heavy square jaw and bushy white mustache, Burke was known to be the best price-maker in New York.

The Graw opened Aug. 24, 1912. Post time was 2:45, and an estimated 5,000 people turned out, paying \$1 admission in an era when grocers sold sirloin steak for 16 cents a pound. The first winner on the card was Insurance Man. The Havre de Grace Handicap attracted 32 entries over a distance of 1 $\frac{1}{8}$ miles with a purse of \$1,500. Adams Ex stormed down the stretch to win.

The next week concerns about gambling and drunkenness by both sexes threw the track into a tailspin, and an injunction threatened to put an end to racing. However, the controversy soon faded and the racing season opened again in September 1913. The track operated continuously from 1912 to 1950, except during World War II (1942-1945). It hosted two meets each year. The spring meet served as one of the key destinations for colts bound for the Kentucky Derby, while the fall meet attracted some of the best handicap horses in the country for races such as the prestigious Havre de Grace Handicap.

Allen Murray caught the racing bug as a teenager. Today he and his wife, Audrey,



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Exterminator was one of the many great horses to race at Havre de Grace

own the Murmur and Berkley Thoroughbred farms in Darlington, Md.

“Used to walk hots for a \$1 an hour, added up to \$25 during the meet, and that was important money back then,” Murray, 78, recalled. “All the major stables and their best horses came to race. I remember crowds 15 to 20 deep on the rail. It seemed if you were in the horse business you were rich. Our family had a four-bedroom house in town, and we’d all move into one room and rent out the other three. During race season it was a big, festive atmosphere.”

Immortals of the Turf

The village was first known as Hammer’s Town until French General Lafayette spied it during the Revolutionary War and exclaimed, “C’est Le Havre de Grace.” He said the town, incorporated in 1785, reminded him of the French seaport Le Havre. The name Havre de Grace means “Harbor of Grace.”

In September 1920 another legendary figure turned up in town—Man o’ War. The incomparable champion of the American Turf was competing in the \$10,000 Pontiac Handicap. Just a short trip from

his owner’s Glen Riddle Farm near Berlin, Md., the Graw was a homecoming for the colt. The loamy track was the site of Man o’ War’s first extensive training before he set out on his 2-year-old campaign in 1919.

During his morning works “Big Red” had the whole backstretch buzzing. He struck his regal, high-headed stance. His coat, rubbed and brushed, gleamed like polished copper. Grooms, exercise boys, owners, and trainers hugged the rail when he stepped onto the track.

Prominent owners, breeders, and promoters filed into the clubhouse on the afternoon of Sept. 18 for the Potomac Handicap. The racing secretary announced Man o’ War would race under a career-high 138 pounds—the stoutest load a 3-year old ever carried in this country. The heavy, cuppy track was another deterrent to the long-striding colt after a lengthy season.

The racing chart states “Man o’ War was a bit fractious at the post but broke well and assumed command under a strong pull
(continued on page 134)

2011 Pennsylvania Sires By Stakes Winners		
Sire	Stks Wnrs	Stks Wins
E Dubai	9	11
Jump Start	7	13
Petionville	6	8
Silver Train	6	7
Smarty Jones	5	6
Eurosilver	4	6
Medallist	3	4
Unbridled Energy	3	3
Love of Money	2	4
Wheaton	2	4
Albert the Great	2	3
Offlee Wild	2	3
Partner’s Hero	2	3
Invisible Ink	2	2

2011 Pennsylvania Sires By 2-Year-Old Winners			
Sires	2yos	2yo Rnrs	2yo Wnrs
E Dubai	88	39	16
Silver Train	65	35	14
Offlee Wild	55	30	10
Smarty Jones	58	19	10
Petionville	42	17	7
Jump Start	54	16	7
Medallist	32	13	6
Unbridled Energy	42	15	6
Ecclesiastic	34	13	5
Invisible Ink	14	8	5
Gimmeawink	23	17	4
Pure Precision	12	7	4
Love of Money	25	10	3
Real Quiet	36	9	3

2011 Pennsylvania Sires By Winners		
Sire	Rnrs	Wnrs
E Dubai	209	115
Smarty Jones	154	100
Jump Start	138	90
Petionville	148	81
Silver Train	131	77
Eurosilver	133	76
Wiseman’s Ferry	112	69
Offlee Wild	109	60
Cat Thief	85	50
Medallist	66	44
Unbridled Energy	70	42
Albert the Great	79	40
Gimmeawink	77	39
Real Quiet	77	32
Snow Ridge	67	32
Trust N Luck	57	31
Delaware Township	62	30
Partner’s Hero	58	26
Lite the Fuse	59	24
Formal Dinner	58	24
Invisible Ink	32	22
Pure Precision	36	19
Wheaton	24	16
Siphon (BRZ)	41	15
Will’s Way	25	15
Flying Chevron	16	12
Sir Shackleton	31	11
Love of Money	29	11
Rimrod	17	10
Cetewayo	21	7
Fastness (IRE)	19	7
Harry the Hat	16	6
Storm Center	12	6
Duckhorn	27	5
Activist	19	5
Ecclesiastic	13	5
Coastal Storm	11	5
Power by Far	18	4
Awad	12	4
Cozar	12	4
Aisle	9	4
Lyracist	7	4
Knockadoon	11	3
Tekken (IRE)	10	3
Textbook	9	3
Quarry	7	3
Pretty Wild	6	3
Beautiful Indy	4	3
Deputy Cat	4	3
Lord At Law	4	3

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VICTORIA KEITH

The Maryland National Guard operates out of what is left of the Havre de Grace grandstand

2011 Maryland Sires By Stakes Winners		
Sire	Stks Wnrs	Stks Wins
Lion Hearted	7	7
Not For Love	6	12
Great Notion	3	5
Gators N Bears	2	2
Rock Slide	2	2
Two Punch	2	2
Dance With Ravens	1	3
Deputy Storm	1	2
Eastern Echo	1	1
Louis Quatorze	1	1
Mojave Moon	1	1
Polish Numbers	1	1

2011 Maryland Sires By 2-Year-Old Winners			
Sires	2yos	2yo Rnrs	2yo Wnrs
Dance With Ravens	57	24	10
Scipion	28	16	9
Outflanker	45	14	7
Gators N Bears	26	11	5
Lion Hearted	33	13	5
Great Notion	15	8	4
Deputy Storm	9	3	3
Not For Love	38	11	3
Two Punch	36	14	2
Go for Gin	18	11	2
Rock Slide	32	8	2

2011 Maryland Sires By Winners		
Sire	Rnrs	Wnrs
Not For Love	168	97
Lion Hearted	155	85
Dance With Ravens	121	69
Louis Quatorze	126	67
Rock Slide	84	41
Oratory	70	40
Two Punch	79	36
Great Notion	49	35
Outflanker	65	31
Gators N Bears	54	24
Go for Gin	57	23
No Armistice	35	15
Deputy Storm	22	15
Seeking Daylight	32	14
Mojave Moon	32	12
Scipion	16	9
St Averil	27	8
Cherokee's Boy	17	8
Crowd Pleaser	13	5
Purple Passion	12	5
Waquoit	15	4
Afleet Prince	7	4
Allen's Prospect	6	4
Polish Numbers	6	4
Fleet Foot	7	3
Citidancer	5	3
Regal American	5	3

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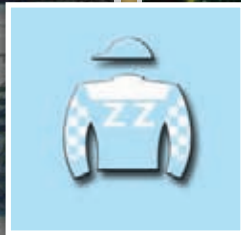
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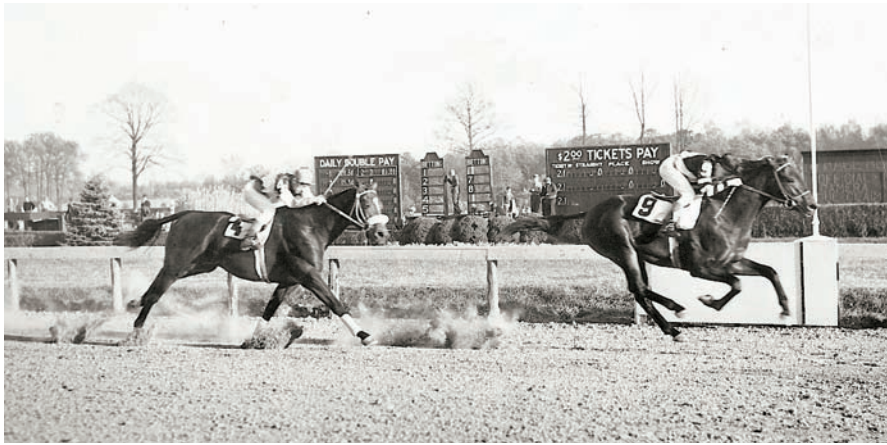
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Triple Crown winner War Admiral won two races at Havre de Grace

(continued from page 130)

round the first turn, then (jockey) Kummer rated him along easily and he drew away without effort when Wildair (carrying 30 pounds less) challenged about the middle of the stretch and was easing up at the finish.”

Man o’ War won by 1½ lengths. His final time was 1:44½, beating the previous record time of 1:45 flat. He earned \$6,800 for the effort, his 19th win from 20 starts.

Other famous horses of their respective eras graced the Havre de Grace oval.

A Depression-era horse, Equipoise was known as the “Chocolate Soldier.” Courage, class, and good looks—Equipoise had it all. Under sunny skies and on a fast track, Equipoise competed on opening day at the Graw on April 16, 1930. The Lima *Sunday News* reported: “Equipoise, brilliant C.V. Whitney 4-year-old, today showed 20,000 fans here that his return to form at Bowie was not merely temporary as he ran off with the \$10,000-added Harford Handicap in easy fashion.”

Equipoise returned to the Graw in the final start of his racing career in the Havre de Grace Handicap where he finished second, conceding 28 pounds to Osculator. Plagued by chronic sore feet, 5-year old Equipoise retired from the Turf and was honored with his second Horse of the Year title in 1933. He became the second-most-popular runner in America, trailing only Man o’ War.

War Admiral learned to be a racehorse at Riddle’s training center near Berlin. Standing just 15.3 hands, War Admiral was a full hand smaller than his superstar sire. When George Conway thought the colt was ready to race, the trainer shipped him over to Havre de Grace for his debut April 25, 1936.

“The Admiral” showed quickness and a determined spirit in his victory on Philadelphia Handicap Day. Walter Haight, the horse racing writer for the *Washington Post*, reported: “A first-time starter, War Admiral, battled Sonny Joe, another first-time starter, to a nose decision in the opening dash for juveniles. The winner, a son of

Man o’ War, ran Romney Royal into defeat and then had enough left to outlast Sonny Joe, a Vanderbilt youngster. Ground Oak was third in the field of ten. War Admiral, ridden by jockey Moose Peters, paid \$17.”

Carrying Riddle’s colors in the spring of 1937, 3-year-old War Admiral scored an easy victory in a six-furlong allowance at the track and then wired the field in the Chesapeake Stakes at the Graw, winning by an easy six lengths, prepping for his historic Triple Crown sweep.

Seabiscuit showed up in 1938. Owner Charles Howard parlayed Seabiscuit’s overwhelming victory in the Havre de Grace Handicap into the spectacular match race versus War Admiral at Pimlico on Nov. 1, 1938.

Citation won his racing debut at the Graw in April 1947. He was the last super-

**2011 West Virginia Sires
By 2-Year-Old Winners**

Sires	2yos	2yo Rnrs	2yo Wnrs
Windsor Castle.....	42	12	5
Fiber Sonde.....	13	6	4
Peak Dancer.....	21	7	3
Footnotes.....	4	3	2
Meadow Monster.....	18	4	2

**2011 West Virginia Sires
By Stakes Winners**

Sire	Stks Wnrs	Stks Wnrs
Bop.....	2	3
Windsor Castle.....	2	3
During.....	2	2
Black Tie Affair (IRE).....	1	1
Crowning Season (GB).....	1	1
Luftikus.....	1	1
Makin.....	1	1
Peak Dancer.....	1	1
Prized.....	1	1
Prospect Bay.....	1	1
R. S. V. P. Please.....	1	1
Reparations.....	1	1
Way West (FR).....	1	1

**2011 West Virginia Sires
By Winners**

Sire	Rnrs	Wnrs
Black Tie Affair (IRE).....	94	47
Luftikus.....	71	34
Windsor Castle.....	57	33
During.....	63	30
Bop.....	49	28
Prized.....	46	26
Meadow Monster.....	37	18
Yarrow Brae.....	34	17
Kokand.....	24	10
Way West (FR).....	19	10
Civilisation.....	40	9
Reparations.....	25	9
Prints of Peace.....	22	9
Housebuster.....	16	8
Family Calling.....	26	7
Race On Green.....	21	7
Ghostly Minister.....	18	7
Peak Dancer.....	16	7
Cowboy Carson.....	16	6
Devon Deputy.....	14	6
Castine.....	13	6
Inner Harbour.....	13	6
Garnered.....	11	6
Limit Out.....	8	6
Creative Act.....	13	5
Run Softly.....	13	5
Weshaam.....	12	5
My Boy Adam.....	10	5
Prospect Bay.....	21	4
Mesopotamia.....	17	4
Makin.....	14	4
Valiant Nature.....	11	4
Classy E. T.....	9	4
Deputy Rummy.....	9	4
Stored.....	8	4
Fiber Sonde.....	6	4
Our Valley View.....	6	4
Medford.....	12	3
Green Fee.....	10	3
Ball’s Bluff.....	9	3
Deputy Rokeby.....	7	3
Endeavouring.....	7	3
Dancinwiththedevil.....	6	3
One More Power.....	6	3



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COURTESY VICTORIA KETH

An aerial view of the Graw alongside the headwaters of Chesapeake Bay

star to compete at the track as he swept the Triple Crown a year later and won 19 of 20 races. But he suffered his only defeat of his Triple Crown season at the Graw.

Trainer Jimmy Jones wanted a tune-up for the Chesapeake Stakes (1 $\frac{1}{16}$ miles) on April 17, a major prep race for the Kentucky Derby. Jones entered Citation in the Chesapeake Trial, a six-furlong race five days prior. With Eddie Arcaro in the irons, Citation went off at 1-2.

“Citation got carried really wide by a tiring horse ridden by Carson Kirk and finished second by a length to Saggy,” recalled Kelly. “He ran a hell of a race, and I remember Eddie Arcaro wanted to clobber Kirk. Citation beat Saggy decisively next time out and went on to sweep the Triple Crown. Best racehorse I ever saw.

“Calumet would come up from Florida, and it was an impressive sight to see Cita-

tion in the morning,” Kelly remembered. “Trainer Jimmy Jones would be on a pony bringing six or seven horses out to the track. Ben Jones would be around too. It was a show unto itself.”

When Edward Burke died in 1943, a new board of directors had been approved and General Milton A. Reckford, commandant of the Maryland National Guard, became the new chairman and took control of the Graw. Reckford had sold off the Guard’s previous site at Fort Ritchie to the federal government and needed a new facility. The National Guard bought the racing plant for \$1.4 million. In 1949 Pimlico, Laurel, and Bowie began eyeing Havre de Grace’s dates.

“I always felt it was the most popular and had the best location, but with Havre de Grace out of the picture, the other three could split its 25 dates,” Kelly said. “Garden State was opening in New Jersey, and it drew heavily from Philadelphia whereas Havre de Grace was a 90-minute train ride. I think the Maryland politicians used that as a good talking point.”

“Everyone thought it would be Laurel that closed, but it was Havre de Grace,” added historian David Craig. “It was typically second behind Pimlico in profits for its owners and the state. Didn’t matter. The deal was done within a matter of a couple of weeks.”

“Racing is all about politics, and especially in those days,” Kelly noted. “That’s the way the cards fell.” The fabled track’s last day of racing was April 26, 1950. The track’s stockholders sold out to the Union Trust Co. representing Pimlico and Laurel for \$1.8 million on Jan. 1, 1951. Today the old clubhouse is still intact and serves as the administrative office of the National Guard. 📍



VICTORIA KETH

Entrance to Havre de Grace

2011 New Jersey Sires By Winners		
Sire	Rnrs	Wnrs
Defrere	88	42
Alex's Pal	31	19
Don Six	24	16
Crafty Friend	41	11
Mr. Sinatra	21	10
Close Up	20	10
Unbridled Jet	27	9
Mo Mon	26	8
Private Interview	20	8
Mr. Nugget	16	7
Hit the Trail	11	6
Iron Deputy	12	5
Deputy Warlock	10	5
Funny Frolic	8	4
Capture the Gold	7	4
Believe in Saints	10	3
Gerosa	8	3
Evening Kris	5	3
Tree	9	2
Harrington Sound	5	2
Fort Wayne	4	2

2011 New Jersey Sires By 2-Year-Old Winners			
Sires	2yos	2yo Rnrs	2yo Wnrs
Defrere	28	7	3
Alex's Pal	5	2	2
Hit the Trail	3	2	2
Don Six	12	2	1
Capture the Gold	2	1	1
Mr. Sinatra	7	3	1
The Third Dan	1	1	1

2011 Virginia Sires By Winners		
Sire	Rnrs	Wnrs
Captain Red	9	6
Hansel	16	5
Magic Prospect	8	5
Red Tail Hawk	5	4
Hay Halo	11	3

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