

1926

New York State Fairgrounds, Syracuse, NY August 30, 1926 • Purse \$68,451.32

Guy Mc Kinney: The Last Shall be First

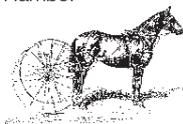
Horse owners are renowned for their optimism and in the case of Guy McKinney, it was owner Harry B. Rea's optimism that carved him a unique niche in the annals of harness racing, that of the very first horse to win the Hambletonian.

A \$925 yearling, Guy McKinney developed a critical illness shortly after his purchase. He recovered and trained for a two-year-old career with only three starts in which he never figured.

Harry B. Rea ignored the colt's past futility on the racetrack and made the January 1, 1926 nominating payment. The colt responded to this show of faith with flair — he put together an unbeaten string of wins to carry him to the Hambo.

On Hambletonian Day, Guy McKinney continued that skein with a straight heat victory. From there, he won several other stakes, including the Kentucky Futurity, amassing \$68,742 in single season earnings, a mark that stood until 1949.

Guy McKinney changed hands at auction in the fall of 1926, with the fledgling Hanover Shoe Farm the winning bidder at \$12,000. He was turned over to trainer Tom Berry for the specific purpose of breaking the 1:59½ record. On Thanksgiving Day in 1930, Guy McKinney set a new standard of 1:58¾ in Phoenix, Arizona, which stood until 1938.



- By offering to add \$8,000 to the purse, Syracuse, New York won the bidding to host the inaugural Hambletonian over Kalamazoo, Michigan and Atlanta, Georgia. Kalamazoo bid \$5,000; Atlanta offered \$3,000.
- Winless in five starts as a 2-year-old (40-1 in the winter book), Guy McKinney came into the race undefeated at three and was the post time favorite at 3-2 in the pools.
- The trophy for the first three years was the Onondaga Hotel Cup. Legendary New York Mayor Jimmy Walker presented the cup for the inaugural race, and noting Ray's green jacket said, "Well, you've got the right colors anyway."

- The purse for Hambletonian No. 1 was \$73,451.32, equivalent to \$668,114 in 1999 dollars. That was a record purse until 1950. The New York State Fair added \$8,000. In comparison, The Meadowslands added \$569,987 to the 1998 Hambletonian.
- The total individual payments for the first Hambletonian were \$960 including a starting fee of \$500; the total fees for the 1999 Hambletonian Open are \$16,925 of which \$15,000 is the starting fee.

GUY MCKINNEY, b c, by Guy Axworthy-Queenly McKinney, by McKinney
Driver: Nat Ray
Owner: Henry B. Rea
Sale History: \$925 yearling purchase, Kentucky Sale Co.,
Lexington, KY . . . 1 1

CHARM, by Belwin - Axcharm, by Axworthy
Driver: Ben White
Owner: Henry Schlesinger . . . 3 4

GUY DEAN, by Guy Axworthy - Jenny Dean, by Prince Ingomar
Driver: Walter Cox
Owner: Montour Farm . . . 2 2

FULL WORTHY, by Axworthy - Worthy Spirit, by Axworthy
Driver: Tommy Murphy
Owner: H. W. Hanon . . . 5 5

ELLIE TRABUE, by Peter Volo - Myra Hunter, by The Harvester
Driver: Charles Valentine
Owner: Estate of Gates Strawn . . . 4 3

STATION BELLE, by Belwin - Sienna, by Peter the Great
Driver: Tommy Berry
Owner: E. J. Merkle . . . 10 6

Also competed: San Juan 6-11; Cinema, 9-7; First Choice, 7-9; Petrena Harvester, 8-8; Bronx, 12-10; General Walker, 11-13; Hollywood Susan, 13-12; Josephine Volo, 14-dr.

TIME BY QUARTERS:			
1/4	1/2	3/4	MILE
:31¾	1:04	1:36	2:05½
:31¾	1:04	1:35¾	2:04¾

No Mutuel Betting. In \$250 auction pools, Guy McKinney sold favorite at \$100. The Ben White entry of Charm, Bronx, Station Belle and San Juan sold second choice.

