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# 1973

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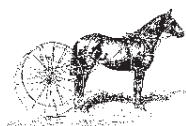
**DuQuoin State Fair • August 29, 1973 • Purse \$144,710**

## Flirth: Almost Overlooked

Few geldings have ever won the Hambletonian, the first being the immortal "Grey Ghost" Greyhound, who accomplished that feat in 1935. Another came in 1973 in the form of the Florican gelding Flirth. Owned and bred by the Arden Homestead Stable and trained by Ralph Baldwin, Flirth was a rank outsider to most observers on this Hambletonian Day, with most of the interest centered on John Simpson, Jr.'s Knightly Way or Gene Riegle's Arnie Almahurst. Then there were the talented Florican fillies, Florinda and Honeysuckle Rose. Nearly everybody overlooked Flirth.

Baldwin had brought Flirth and stablemate Fetisil to DuQuoin nearly a week ahead of schedule and put some blistering workouts over the DuQuoin track, operating in near obscurity except for some local observers.

Flirth was lying in ambush on Hambletonian Day. He took over the lead in the first heat shortly after the quarter and never looked back, trotting home in 1:58<sup>2</sup> over Florinda and South Bend. In the second, he lowered the all age world mark for geldings to 1:57<sup>1</sup> with the same don't-look-back style. Noble Jade rallied for second in the final heat and South Bend was again third, but there was no menacing the winner.



- Second of only four geldings to win the Hambletonian; the great Greyhound (1935) being the first.
- Flirth set four world records, including the fastest race mile (1:57.1) ever by a gelding. The previous mark (1:57 1/4) of almost forty years was held by Greyhound, which he set as a 4-year-old in 1936.
- Flirth was voted Trotter of the Year.
- Arden Homestead is the ownership credited with the most starters in the Hambletonian. Through 1998, they have raced 32 horses since their first entry of Cinema and First Choice in 1926.
- The 13th and last Axworthy line trotter to win; Axworthy was the dominant sire line in the first decade of the Hambletonian.

**FLIRTH**, b g, Florican—Mirthful, by Rodney  
Driver & Trainer: Ralph Baldwin  
Owner: Arden Homestead Stable, Goshen, NY  
Groom: Jim Underwood . . . 1 1

FLORINDA, Florican—Scottish Victory, by Victory Song  
Driver: Joe O'Brien  
Owner: R. D. Fossati, Scuderia Reda Stable . . . 2 5

NOBLE JADE, Noble Victory—Barb Hanover, by Hickory Smoke  
Driver: Del Insko  
Owner: Harry L. and Alice Stillman . . . 5 2

SOUTH BEND, Star's Pride—Mom, by Florican  
Driver: Howard Beissinger  
Owner: Joseph T. Mendelson . . . 3 3

FAIRMOUNT HANOVER, Star's Pride—Fairest Hanover, by Hoot Mon  
Driver: Del Miller  
Owner: K. D. Owen, Clarence F. Gaines, A. C. Mudge, Osage Stable . . . 6 4

TIME BY QUARTERS:			
1/4	1/2	3/4	MILE
:29 <sup>2</sup>	:59 <sup>3</sup>	1:28 <sup>4</sup>	1:58 <sup>2</sup>
:28 <sup>1</sup>	:58 <sup>3</sup>	1:27 <sup>2</sup>	1:57 <sup>1</sup>

