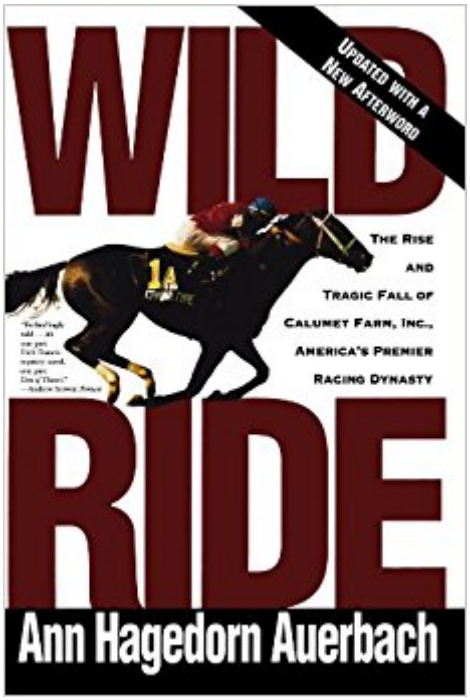
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# Wild Ride: The Rise And Tragic Fall Of Calumet Farm Inc., America's Premier Racing Dynasty




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## Synopsis

An award-winning writer chronicles the tragic story behind the downfall of horse racing’s crown jewel.Founded in 1924 by Chicago mogul William Monroe Wright, Calumet Farm was to the world of thoroughbred racing what the New York Yankees are to baseball -- a sports dynasty. The stable bred so many superstars that it became the standard by which all achievements were measured in the horse racing industry. But during the 1980s, a web of financial schemes left Calumet destitute. Wild Ride is Ann Hagedorn Auerbach’s investigation of the fast-track, multibillion-dollar thoroughbred industry and the fall of Calumet -- the inside story of a debacle that extended further than anyone could have imagined. Spanning four generations, this fast-paced saga brings to life a gallery of colorful characters from Calumet’s glittery past. Wild Ride shows the industry’s transformation from a clubby blue-blood society where a handshake closed a deal to a high-stakes business bulging with bankers and scandalous deal making. When the Bluegrass Bubble exploded, one of America’s largest family fortunes lay in ruins. "A fascinating tale with a cast of characters worthy of Dickens -- or Runyon." -- Carl Desens, Business Week

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## Customer Reviews

Journalist Auerbach untangles the spiderweb of financial machinations that enveloped, consumed, and ultimately destroyed one of the most famous horseracing stables in the world. Through three generations of the Wright family, Calumet led, lost, and regained its preeminence as a breeding farm and racing stable only to lose everything, including the family’s fortune, in the fourth

generation. Chronicling the history of Calumet and its fall into the depths of massive debt, this well-researched, fast-paced book sheds new light on the destruction of Calumet and exposes the excesses of the 1980s. Highly recommended.Susan Hamburger, Pennsylvania State Univ., University ParkCopyright 1994 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to an alternate Paperback edition.

An absorbing account of how Kentucky’s Calumet Farm, long thoroughbred racing’s paramount breeding stable, came a cropper in the 1990s. Drawing on interviews with many of the principals and a voluminous public record, Wall Street Journal correspondent Auerbach provides a generation-spanning chronicle that ranges from the legendary stable’s founding by a baking-powder magnate during the early years of the century through its sale at auction in 1992. Owned by the Wright family, Calumet bestrode the sport of kings like a colossus, breeding more Triple Crown winners than any of its rivals and setting the pace in a high-stakes enterprise. In mid- 1982, however, Lucille Parker Wright Markey died at 93, and control of the farm passed to a son-in-law, John Thomas (aka J.T.) Lundy, a good-ole-boy local whom the matriarch had treated with all the warmth accorded a poor relation. In piecing together how J.T. managed to bankrupt a prospering institution less than a decade after gaining the whip hand, Auerbach leaves little doubt that he was never up to the job intellectually or psychologically. The arriviste squire of Calumet used his status to wheel and deal on a fast global track during much of the 1980s. Backed by international bankers, Wall Street money men, mobsters (including a couple of John Gotti’s capos), and nouveau riche investors clamoring for a piece of the action, he took an early lead in his run for the roses, but changes in federal tax law, overbreeding throughout the industry, a crushing debt burden, and other handicaps brought him down. Lundy’s fall put paid to Calumet. An era ended with the dispersal of the farm’s bloodstock and the property’s acquisition by an outsider. A sorry tale, well told, that lends new meaning to the phrase "riding for a fall." (8 pages b&w photos, not seen) -- Copyright Ã Â©1994, Kirkus Associates, LP. All rights reserved. --This text refers to an alternate Paperback edition.

This is well written in a way--and boring beyond belief in another. I can’t fault the writer for writing what she knows about (business) but it’s a little ironic that what a horse racing fan craves most--in short, a wild ride--is almost completely absent here. I sooooo wanted to like this and gave it over three hundred pages before finally just giving up. I thought the mystery of Alydar’s death combined with the greediness of Mr. Lundy would come together like Easy Goer and Sunday Silence

pounding through the homestretch together. If it did, I'm sorry but I couldn't read about one more breeding contract being contested or one more default on a loan in order to get there. I was hoping to hear hooves pounding and smell sawdust and tack rooms. I heard only the crunching of numbers and the smell of spread sheets.

Ummm I was in the Race Horse Business for too many years to count...knew some of these people or their kids personally. They contributed to giving the business a bad name. I have already read this book cover to cover....very well researched, written and a darn great read. Some of the greatest racehorse athletes were affected by these people...What a shame and what a waste to beautiful horse flesh.I knew the woman who foaled Affirmed. There is an old saying that says..." There is something about the outside of a horse that makes the inside of a man feel good." So very true. They pretty much threw that saying under the rug. If you know anything about horses or care about horses...this is the book to read!

I read this book after taking a horse farm tour in Lexington, Ky. The tour guide recommended it if we thought we may be interested in the history of Calumet Farm. I got a picture of all things horses, all things dysfunctional families and all things thievery. This was a truly fasscinating story, although it was hard to believe that so much good and bad could happen in one family. Horse racing and all that goes along with it must be in a person's blood because it seems they are willing to sell their souls to the devil for it. All the financial details and horrendous deals for the almighty dollar is unbelievable. Sad to say it is true though. This was a good read although it had so many financial information to decipher. It left me staggering. Had no idea horse racing industry was like this.

Now the mystery of why Calumet disappeared from the racing world ( at least for me) for such a long time is becoming clearer. It was sad to see them go but heartbreaking to find out how Alydar really died. To think that anyone would use the death of such a great horse for personal gain sickens me and the way in which Alydar broke his hind leg had to have raised suspicion I am mortified that no one was held responsible. BUT.....I have not yet finished the book so we shall see. I am overjoyed to see their colors back on the track although...they are different and not the red and black of years gone by. I wish the new owners nothing but the very best.

An exceptionally well detailed account of the financial irresponsibility of the Lundy family. How in the world can a family inherit a debt free farm with assets in the multi millions and the over a short time

span end up $167,000,000 in the hole? The book centered almost entirely on the financial dealings and personalities of the owners and their pals, and very little on their racing history. There is certainly a lot of research in it, but I got tired of reading how these silly people continually frittered away the life work of the grandfather and father founders of the farm. It really is a tragedy.

Fascinating read. Finished it in two days. Gave it to my library because they did not have a copy and they were thrilled. GREAT BOOK!!

Amazing story of wealth and fame to a heart breaking total lose of a Racing Empire. Well written page flipper.

Great history of not only the Farm and how it began. The middle really got boring when it was just a listing of all the deals that were done. It also suffered by being written too soon after the events. It helped me to find out later that Lundy and others did go to prison. It just makes me sick how certain people get to waste and steal more money than most of us will ever see in a lifetime.

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