

The North-South Races: American Thoroughbred Racing in Transition, 1823-1850

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In 1823 a southern gentleman rode to the rail and feverishly hailed a man seated in a box overlooking Long Island's new Union Course. "You must ride the next heat," appealed the horseman. "There are hundreds of thousands of Southern money depending on it."¹ Although he had not been incorrect, the excited rider, a substitute manager of the southern entry, had perhaps understated the immediate importance of the race. Actually at stake were a purse of \$20,000, more than ten times that amount in wagers, and an inestimable measure of state and sectional pride. Southerners and northerners alike realized that this was no ordinary horse race. Rather, it was the long anticipated, highly publicized match between the best horse in each section. Under these conditions and with the score tied at one heat apiece, the southern manager wanted jockey Arthur Taylor aboard Sir Henry in the final four miles against the northern entry, American Eclipse. Taylor finally consented, only to lose to Samuel Purdy on Eclipse.²

History has not proven the southerner's excitement unwarranted; the Henry-Eclipse match was a milestone. The race launched a new era in the annals of American thoroughbred racing, one which relied on American-bred and methodically trained horses who ran on groomed, fast tracks. Further, and perhaps more important, this contest and its ambience signalled a transformation in the institution of American sport. Crowds of tens of thousands, wagers of hitherto undreamed of sums, unprecedented media coverage, and political imagery, among other elements, became as much a part of this and succeeding intersectional races as were the riders and the horses. By design as well as by accident, thoroughbred racing, particularly those contests which contemporaries hailed as the "great match races," the elite intersectional contests, displayed the conditions which sparked national rather than merely parochial interest and appeal and which gradually but sufficiently eroded the romantic

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notions of American gentry. By the late 1840's common, pragmatic considerations dictated the nature and fate of the sport whose outcome after some fifty intersectional races was not what the race organizers of the 1820's had envisioned.

I

Prelude to the "Great" Races

Earlier and more completely than did other sports, thoroughbred racing heralded this new era because it claimed two necessary elements: a heritage of human interest and organization and a sense of utility. Very simply the Henry-Eclipse match had not developed overnight, nor was it without either presence or purpose. Nearly a century earlier, in the 1730's, Virginia gentlemen had imported English stallions and mares and had begun to abandon quartermile sprints in favor of the environmentally and culturally more desirable tests of strength and durability. Squires in Maryland, New York, and, to a lesser degree, in other colonies followed suit and set the stage for intercolony races of two, three, and four miles per heat between large, robust steeds. Perceived as tests of personal prowess and good sense, as a means of improving the breed of horses, and as events warranting stakes of colony pride and personal fortune, these races beckoned the likes of the Byrds and Randolphs of Virginia, the Taskers of Maryland, and the deLanceys of New York. Although never run on a truly regular basis, the races occurred until disrupted by the ravages of the Revolution.³

The seeds of recovery were sown in the post war decades, especially in the years immediately before and after 1800. Racing advocates gradually reconstituted older jockey clubs or formed new ones; from South Carolina to New Jersey in the east and west through Tennessee and Louisiana, turfmen paid yearly dues of up to \$25 to sponsor jockey club purses and arrange other, open events. Simultaneously and occasionally in concert with jockey club members, entrepreneurs constructed and refurbished mile long oval tracks, often with grandstands for the comfort and isolation of as many as 1000 wealthy patrons and jockey club devotees. Together the club members and the track builders and managers produced a sound foundation, both financially and emotionally, for thoroughbred racing's return to its position of eminence.⁴

At least as important as either of these efforts, however, were the successes American stable owners achieved in importing and breeding fine animals. Between 1784 and 1800 eastern stable owners, particularly, imported 134 stallions and mares, primarily from England. Although such shipments did continue sporadically through 1830, few horses reached American shores after 1806 when the Jay Treaty lapsed and when the American government's debates and battles with England assumed a more acrimonious tone. By that

time, however, the breeding efforts of stable owners had begun to bear fruit; home-bred stock, products of English and older American horses, appeared on a regular basis. This generation included the sires and dams of both Eclipse and Henry.⁵

Native stock was just what Americans wanted and needed. Within the new nation citizens were on the move, usually by horse and preferably on fast, sturdy ones. The horse, “that race of animals so serviceable to man,” was virtually the sine qua non of agricultural, transportation, and communication developments in the United States.⁶ Promoted by the press and favored by politicians, the horse quickly became both an object and a symbol of national pride and accomplishment. “We now have in the United States,” claimed editor John Stuart Skinner of the Baltimore-based *American Farmer*, “some first rate horses; some, that for the *continuance of swift running*, may be well compared with the best of which we have any records.”⁷ Not surprisingly there was no place more visible and competitive on which to prove the prowess of men and steeds than the race track. “The value of the *race horse* is daily becoming better known,” exclaimed one correspondent to Virginia readers in Skinner’s journal, primarily, he might have added, because Americans desired the speed and bottom of the thoroughbred.⁸ Stable owners, jockey club members, and track operators, as well as journalists, neither dismissed nor disputed those sentiments.

Yet even with the emergence, or re-emergence, of tracks, jockey clubs, native horses, and Americans’ preoccupation with utility, the Eclipse-Henry and succeeding North-South races, both major and minor ones, might not have occurred if two other elements had not existed as they did. The first of these, sectionalism, or the emphasis on regional differences, underlay the public connotation of the races; they were contests between representatives of the North and the South. Sectional differences, both state and regionals, had always existed in the United States. Even in the previous century colony pride had been at stake in match races. But after 1815 as sparks flared among congressmen debating internal economic improvements and tariffs which, if implemented, were perceived to benefit one area of the country more than another, regional competition among breeders and track men intensified. In fact horse racing was a microcosm of the national arena of economic competition. Financial success and prestige hinged on one’s ability to compete successfully against similar track dates and bloodlines. Once victorious among neighbors or operators in more distant counties, those from outside one’s geographical area provided the most intense competition. Consequently regional competition in all aspects of the equine industry broadened. Kentuckians and Tennesseans, for example, challenged each other to determine which state’s stables had the fastest horses; then they stood together to challenge breeders and track developers in New York or Alabama. Similar competition developed between

men in Alabama and Virginia, in South Carolina and Alabama, and elsewhere; but the turfmen in these states, too, could cooperate to prepare the fastest and strongest horse to represent the South against New Yorkers and New Jerseyites. Thus, although the North-South matches garnered unmatched media publicity and national attention, they were actually only one level of sectional contests. The regional and interstate races began and remained at the core of intersectional racing.⁹

The second factor requisite to the occurrence of the North-South races, indeed to most carefully planned thoroughbred contests, lay in the nature of the primary participants. During the colonial period stable owners, jockey club members, and promoters, usually all three in one, had been gentlemen. Early in the nineteenth century that situation changed little, if at all; gentlemen they had been and predominantly gentlemen the thoroughbred fanciers remained. As inheritors of racing's genteel tradition, they proposed matches and ran the races in a manner which stressed honest and just competition in order to stretch the capacities of both man and beast. They publicly issued and arranged matches between the best horses; they disavowed racing purely for profit, apparently caring more for the personally committed wager than any purse; and nothing deterred the principals from running the event once they had arranged it. More important perhaps, the major figures—William Johnson, the Stevens men, and their backers—embodied a Promethean humanism which stressed the public good and the progress of the breed. Ultimately their actions, both toward the horses they valued and the public they tried to serve, resulted in a paradox of major consequence.¹⁰

II Henry and Eclipse

The Henry-Eclipse race was actually the product of another race. In the fall of 1822 a well-known Virginia breeder, James J. Harrison, had challenged New Yorker Charles Van Ranst's to run American Eclipse against his Virginia champion, Sir Charles. Virginia curiosity about Van Ranst's horse, who had raced and developed his reputation only in New York, and the fact that the two stallions descended from the same English Derby winning (1780) grand-sire, Diomed, apparently stimulated Harrison to propose the match. The result of the event was not, however, what the Virginian had expected. On the eve of the race, planned for Washington, D. C.'s National Course, Sir Charles injured a tendon, and Harrison forfeited the match. However, in part to save face and, according to the *Richmond Enquirer*, "from a desire that the spectators might not be wholly disappointed," Harrison and Van Ranst agreed to a single heat, the running of which crippled Sir Charles.¹¹ He lost and, with his racing career ended, returned to Virginia to breed the next generation of fine thoroughbreds. The victor, American Eclipse, traveled back to New York

where he became the central figure in the renaissance of northern racing fortunes.¹²

Eclipse's first "national" victory was at once both cause and effect of the conditions which thereafter enabled New York racing stables to challenge those in other states. On the one hand, Eclipse's defeat of Sir Charles and the newspapers' laudatory comments in part prompted Van Ranst and his wealthy ally, John C. Stevens, to pursue other competition. For Eclipse and his owner and backers, the match against Sir Charles was a stepping stone to successive races. On the other hand, however, neither Eclipse's local reputation, which had intrigued Harrison in the first place, nor the race itself could have developed if conditions in New York had not been suitable. Twenty-five years earlier such a race probably would not have occurred; but now in 1822 Eclipse had become the hero of a generation which maintained attitudes and opportunities favorable to racing.

Compared to other states in which the Revolution had interrupted racing, New York only gradually allowed track events to reappear. Concurrent with the surge in post-war importation of horses and agricultural initiative, some citizens of New York desired to prevent thoroughbred racing from re-emerging. These opponents believed that gambling and other presumed vices traditionally appendaged to the races were detrimental to the moral health of the populous and that these evils outweighed the benefits. For nearly two decades their views reigned; voluntary associations sought to suppress gambling, and the New York Assembly and local governing bodies banned racing. At least by 1815, however, the climate of opinion had altered. New Yorkers looked positively toward the future rather than negatively at the past, and they redoubled their efforts at agricultural development, a key to New York's economy and "the first and best pursuit of man," according to Governor DeWitt Clinton.¹³ The citizenry and breeders alike thus began to accept and to redevelop racing as a positive rather than a negative endeavor. Thereafter in the name of agriculture, the government and thoroughbred owners joined forces to provide the citizens with the sound, native horses necessary to farming enterprise. Breeders assisted new voluntary associations such as the Society for the Promotion of the Useful Arts and demonstrated the qualities of their animals at agricultural fairs. The legislature and county and borough commissions abandoned strictures against racing, actions which paved the way for the opening of tracks such as the Union Course on Long Island (1821). Even jockey clubs, reorganized and reconstituted for agricultural service, implemented Governor John Jay's recommendation for requiring heavier weights in races than southerners used, since this was one way to secure the training of large, strong horses, of which Eclipse was perhaps the best. Between 1818 and 1821 at the hands of Van Ranst, a large landholder and member of voluntary agricultural societies, Eclipse exemplified the positive connections between agricultural

development and horses. Prior to his run against Sir Charles, he had occasionally raced, appeared at fairs, and stood at stud for eighty-seven mares.¹⁴

Like Eclipse, Henry, too, was the product of an agriculturally dependent society. Virginians, as well as other southern race men, stressed the agricultural foundation for racing, but unlike their northern brethren they did not suffer either an extended interruption in racing or the moral outcries. As Eclipse and Van Ranst did, Henry and his several owners met the ultimate test of a horse's usefulness—being put to stud and fathering desirable progeny.¹⁵ In a more esoteric vein some southern journalists attempted to bind racing and agricultural development to ideals which were perhaps believed but were less clearly enunciated in the North. One Virginia writer to the *American Farmer* argued that the “community” stood to benefit from the “preservation of; and a strict regard to pedigree—a care to the perfection of your stallions” by owners of race horses.¹⁶ The editor of the *Charlestown Courier* broadened that sentiment by comparing the races to the “gymnastics of the ancients.” By contributing “in a great degree to the improvement of our horses,” he declared, the races tended “to strengthen the nerve and muscle of a country.”¹⁷ For the majority of Southerners, however, these cavalier notions probably were less meaningful than were the fundamentally utilitarian agricultural arguments of New Yorkers.¹⁸

In part, then, because of the agricultural orientation of both northerners and southerners, the race between Eclipse and Henry developed as a significant one. Since agricultural development was a national endeavor, and more specifically, since a quality breed of horses was a borderless goal, the match was a contest with national import. Because frictions between England and the United States had earlier diminished shipments of horses, this race could verify Americans' independence from England by establishing a new speed record. But the nationalistic tenor of the match, particularly as it was emphasized in journals such as *Niles' Weekly Register* and the *American Farmer*, edited by Baltimoreans Hezekiah Niles and John Skinner, respectively, did not negate the personal and state pride of the principals who arranged the match. After Eclipse's defeat of the crippled Sir Charles, Van Ranst and Stevens had issued a general challenge to thoroughbred breeders to produce another horse to run against Eclipse in the spring, 1823. The Virginians, led by William Johnson and financed by others of stature, including the nationally renowned politician, John Randolph, accepted partly because they had left Washington “exceedingly mortified by being beaten in what they supposed themselves to excel.”¹⁹ Pride and service, both qualities viewed as commendable by contemporaries, thus justified the race.²⁰

Preparations for the May contest were intricate and often secretive. For nearly five months the Virginia contingent scoured the state for horses capable of

defeating Eclipse. Johnson, Virginia's "Napoleon of the Turf," eventually transported five candidates to New York and waited until the last moment before naming Henry. Simultaneously Van Ranst and his chosen manager, John C. Stevens, "employed the best professors in the art of feeding and rubbing" horses to prepare Eclipse. Stevens's brother even imported three French chronometers for timing the mounts as they ran. Away from the secret preparations at the stables, each side unobtrusively raised the necessary \$20,000 deposits from then unknown investors. The drive for excellence was both complex and expensive.²¹

From the perspective of men of the press, those articulators and interpreters of public opinion, the race in its several phases claimed the attention of Americans as few events had done. As the race approached, *Niles Weekly Register* reported that "the interest of the contest increased, like a snowball." Not since the House of Representatives had balloted for Vice-president between Jefferson and Burr, claimed editor Hezekiah Niles, had so many eyes turned to a single event.²² Other journals estimated the size of the crowd which swarmed around the track, but the *Richmond Enquirer* dispensed with impossible counts and just described the scene:

The hour of starting soon arrived, but such was the immense crowd upon the course in solid column, for near a quarter of [a] mile both right and left of the judges' box, that some minutes were taken up by the officers in clearing it.²³

Whether the throngs gathered simply to view the race, or to see the nation's fastest and unrivaled course, or to bet remains unknown.²⁴

What they viewed, to be sure, was a previously unparalleled spectacle. Henry, a four-year old, won the first heat; Eclipse, at nine, the next two. The match for four-mile heats had consumed nearly two hours, and it had been close; in fact, the outcome remained in doubt until the final mile. After the race one famous observer from Massachusetts, Josiah Quincy, realized that he had been so "unconscious of everything else" that "the sun had actually blistered my cheeks without my perceiving it."²⁵ What had mesmerized Quincy, and perhaps others, was a race in which both horses toppled the current English speed record and in which the northern stress on size and bone, as well as the skill of jockey Samuel Purdy, himself a thoroughbred owner and breeder, overcame southern "pluck" and their emphasis on blood and bottom.²⁶

The post-race postures assumed by both northerners and southerners were nearly as admirable as the race itself had been. According to the press gentility and good will characterized the aftermath. The *New York American* highlighted the "liberality and candor" of southern gentlemen who recognized Eclipse's superiority with Purdy aboard, while the *New York Commer-*

cial Advertiser also praised the “southrons” who bore their “defeat and losses with the greatest grace.”²⁷ Southern papers, in turn, acknowledged the “better” opinion of the northern sportsmen about the qualities which Eclipse had manifest, and they commended the New Yorkers for the splendid post-race gala they sponsored. Except for the *Virginia Times*, no major newspaper dared to suggest that Eclipse and the northerners had certain unfair advantages over Henry. For the most part, from the perspective of the journalists, the race had produced no losers, and gallantry had ruled the day.²⁸

The pressmen did, however, detect certain characteristics among the spectators which were potential causes of trouble. Given the pre-race predictions about the amount of money to be wagered, the ardent gambling opponent Hezekiah Niles believed that the actual, smaller amount of money was a positive sign. As he had suggested in describing the 1822 race, Niles perceived gambling as a cause of moral and economic decline among the common men of America, a situation which neither the nation nor racing could endure. Other editors echoed Niles’ perception of the potential menace of gambling and added concerns of their own, particularly about the demeanor of the crowd and the destructive potential of massed humanity. Then, too, the *Charleston Courier* abhorred the implicit sectional tone of the races and the “frenzy” obvious in New York, which, if not bridled, would unduly waste “enlightened minds.” To be sure, no reporter or editor believed that any misactions had occurred; nonetheless, and perhaps in an effort to shape public opinion, they did imply that race men and spectators must exercise caution to insure that future behaviors remained as orderly and generous as the present were.²⁹

The only man who actually argued that the crowd had not behaved in a cavalier fashion was William Johnson, Henry’s manager and strategist. Even though he had eaten too much the night before and thus had not been at the track, Johnson believed that the fans, particularly those from New York and other northern states, had undesirably affected Henry’s running. The spectators had, he argued, pressed tightly at the rails and had virtually obstructed his jockey’s vision of the course. From his perspective “could we have had an open course to run upon, and not upon the crowd . . . we should have beat the race.” Henry was the “best horse,” he maintained, and on another, preferably neutral track, Henry could distance Eclipse. With that in mind, Johnson immediately challenged Van Ranst and his syndicate to a second contest, this time on Washington, D.C.’s National Course and according to the rules and lighter weights of that jockey club.³⁰

For his part, Van Ranst refused the challenge. Responding publicly for Eclipse’s owner, John Stevens explained that:

he owes it to the association who have so constantly supported him, to the State at large, who

have felt and expressed so much interest in his success, and to himself as a man, not totally divested of feeling, never, on any consideration, to risk the life or reputation of the noble animal whose generous and almost incredible exertions have gained for the North so signal a victory, and for himself such well-earned and never-failing renown.³¹

The fear of endangering Eclipse's future, which lay in breeding New York's subsequent equine generation, and the gentleman's unwillingness "to become a professional patron of sporting" thus combined to thwart Johnson's plans for a rematch. Neither money nor promises of greater glory, both of which Johnson offered, weakened Van Ranst's resolve and his dedication to agricultural service. As it had during and after the race, the gentleman's code—service, intelligence, and self-discipline—governed the thoughts and actions of Van Ranst and his associates.³²

Several northern and southern newspapers praised Van Ranst's decision. "Let the country have the benefit of his stock," exclaimed the *Richmond Enquirer*.³³ In New York City the *National Advertiser*, too, argued that a non-renewal of the series was advantageous to the country, not so much because of Eclipse's breeding prowess, but rather because the contests "lay the foundation of sectional jealousy, and create a spirit of rivalry when there should be union."³⁴ The *Charleston Courier* concurred with the *Advertiser's* apprehensions, and both again cautioned about the future. Despite the glory and efficacy of this "great race," should the arrangers of races fail to heed their own ideals, these editors believed, future races might not bear the desired fruit.³⁵

Nevertheless, racing was too much a part of the gentry heritage to languish, or to be allowed to languish. Despite the fears and conservatism of the newspapers which furnished the primary coverage, breeders continued to support racing, both as a human service and as a matter of their own pride. Even with Eclipse retired, other horses remained to be proven, first at local and regional events and ultimately on the national scene. Until the late 1840's the North-South "great" matches continued at the pinnacle of American thoroughbred racing. The desire to find one horse in any given year who could withstand the strains of distance and the crowds nearly consumed stable owners in both the North and the South. In part because the Eclipse-Henry event was the first and model race and its outcome had been so close, the desire to prove beyond a shadow of a doubt which was the better horse, as Johnson believed this race had really not accomplished, remained an important motivation in the succeeding races.

III

In the Shadow of Henry and Eclipse

Despite Eclipse's retirement and Van Ranst's withdrawal from the national racing scene, Johnson's challenge did not go unheeded. John C. Stevens and

his New York and New Jersey counterparts accepted Johnson's invitation to run the best horse north of the Potomac River against one of equal merit from the South. Although no exact rematch occurred, these same men were instrumental in arranging matches and jockey club events through 1845, occasionally on tracks in both Baltimore and Washington but most frequently on Long Island's Union Course. During the first five years after 1823, for example, fourteen intersectional races, albeit minor ones, took place on the Union Course alone, nine of which southern horses won. Only one, however, fired the imaginations of the public nearly as much as had the "great race" between Henry and Eclipse. In 1825 a southern mare, Flirtilla, defeated a northern filly, Ariel, in three three-mile heats for \$30,000.³⁶

The Flirtilla-Ariel contest contained all the elements which distinguished the "great races" from other North-South competitions. First, it featured two model bloodlines; Eclipse had sired Ariel, and Flirtilla was Henry's half-sister by Sir Archy, as had been Sir Charles. Second, newspapers up and down the east coast advertised and described the race with an avidity not apparent since 1823. Further, turfmen from both sections probably buoyed public expectations by arguing that neither horse had previously been "fairly tested" and that their opponents "exaggerated . . . the capacity" of the opposing section's representative. Finally, as had been the case in the Eclipse-Henry match, this one emerged as a test of two different breeding emphases: Ariel's size compared to Flirtilla's bottom.³⁷

The atmosphere on Long Island and public expectations were also conducive to the aura of "greatness" which enveloped the race. It was Indian summer on the island; the trees displayed vivid colors, and the weather was beautiful. New Yorkers were emotionally high, in part because the Erie Canal was about to tie the Hudson River to Lake Erie, and, of course, because they believed that their elegant, gazelle-like filly who had been named for the spirit in Shakespeare's *The Tempest* was ready to run. Southerners, too, eagerly anticipated the race, for they expected to vindicate "the ancient reputation of their horses" which had clouded after some recent defeats, and they generously wagered on Flirtilla. By post time the course was "never more thronged" and "betting went on merrily."³⁸

The day belonged to the southerners, much to the dismay of the hosts. Although Ariel had won the first heat by a head, she dropped behind in the next one and, with her flanks bloody, nearly stopped in the third heat. Crossing the finish line nearly sixty yards ahead, Flirtilla won, a margin of victory sufficient, claimed the *Richmond Whig*, to eliminate all doubts about the wisdom of the southern emphasis on breeding for bottom and to ensure that Virginia "has probably more than recovered her former losses."³⁹ In contrast, and in defeat, northerners found little in Ariel's performance to praise. They attri-

buted the loss to poor management by the filly's owner, Henry Lynch, and to her inexperienced jockey who, committed strategic errors. Compared to the sage race plan pursued by Johnson and Flirtilla's jockey, Lynch's tactics appeared as miscues out of Pandora's box.⁴⁰

After Flirtilla's victory four years passed before conditions hitherto requisite for the "great" races reappeared. In 1829 southerners and the now reorganized northerners constituted another major intersectional race. Billed as "Eclipse and Henry, Again," this one matched another Eclipse filly, Black Maria, against a Sir Archy colt, Brilliant. The romantic image of the horse-god Eclipse and the fact that owners Stevens and Johnson had arranged the contest before either animal had been foaled undoubtedly heightened the interest of the press and perhaps fueled the betting fever of the public. What they awaited was the telling match; with the score tied at one race apiece, this third contest would determine once and for all which bloodline was superior.⁴¹

To the delight of northern fans, Black Maria and the Stevens's stable won. Following the race editor Niles concluded that Black Maria's victory had established "the superiority of the blood of Eclipse . . . to the great pride of New York sportsmen."⁴² Memories of losses sustained by the North vanished in the wake of Black Maria's victory. The bloodline of Eclipse had again earned national acclaim, and significantly for the North, John C. Stevens had returned to take charge of their interests. From this point onward, whether or not Stevens actually owned the horse in any given great race, he assumed responsibility for the preparations and the strategy. Until 1842 major intersectional races did not suffer from unsound management, as the North's contingent had in 1825.

In addition to suggesting the importance of Stevens, the Black Maria-Brilliant affair was significant in the history of the major intersectional for two reasons. It confirmed both the sectional character of the races, as opposed to the initially national flavor, and the gentry ideal maintained by thoroughbred breeders and race proponents. First, the sectional character of the races attached both to bloodlines of the horses and to their supporters. Although the two sires, Eclipse and Sir Archy, shared a common root in Diomed and were never entirely without offspring in the opening region, each had been born, reared, and was more productive in his respective region. Thus foaled either as a New York or a Virginia steed, Eclipse and Sir Archy (through Charles and Henry) became a sectional representative with distinctive qualities. Eclipse provided northern breeders with the large bone structure and overall size they deemed essential to agricultural development. In contrast Sir Archy offered southerners the swiftness, agility, and durability necessary among men who, perhaps even moreso than did their cousins above the Potomac,

relied upon the horse for travel, communication, and supervising slaves. Thus, whether accurately or not, northerners and southerners perceived differences between themselves, and these two bloodlines personified those differences.⁴³

Significant, also, to the composition and continuity of the races was the aura of gentility radiated by the two primary human participants, William R. Johnson and John C. Stevens. Both were gentlemen who pursued racing for its excitement, as a personal challenge, and out of a sense of service to their states and regions rather than solely, or primarily, for individual monetary gain. They were men who lived according to the gentry code as it prevailed in Jacksonian America, at least as perceived by the American author, James Fenimore Cooper, and the English traveler, Harriet Martineau. For the gentlemen with whom Cooper empathized, money was not an end in itself but a means to an end—for manners, for the entertainment of friends, and to establish standards of conduct for others to emulate. Apparently Johnson and Stevens rarely, if ever, recovered sums equal to those spent, and their investments served the public, as Martineau believed they should. She argued that American gentry, in contrast to European aristocracy or nouveau riche Americans who “paraded as aristocrats,” manifested a democratic and rational spirit and understood useful careers which, given contemporary utilitarian perceptions of breeding, training, and racing horses, Stevens and Johnson clearly manifest. In sum, Johnson and Stevens and many of their backers were race men whose love of horses, personal self-discipline, and Promethean humanism supported and worked for the ideals of the common man—progress and power for the citizenry.⁴⁴

The fact that Johnson and Stevens shared gentry attitudes did not, however, negate distinguishable personal preferences and backgrounds which themselves reflected state and ultimately sectional differences. Johnson, the transplanted Virginian, represented the plantation tradition of his adopted state in a manner similar to that of his good friend, John Randolph of Roanoke. Through marriage Johnson became the owner of Oakland, a manor in Chesterfield County on the Appomattox River, where he established his stable and launched his career in Virginia politics. As a planter, breeder, state representative and senator, and businessman, Johnson combined the occupations which were the cornerstones of Virginia gentry.⁴⁵

The origins of Johnson’s opponent, John C. Stevens, lay in the technical-industrial sphere of the North. Born in Hoboken, New Jersey, Stevens achieved recognition both for his genius in the development of steam navigation and railroad enterprise and through his marriage into the old, politically influential Livingston clan of New York. His estate, Castle Point on the Hudson River, provided the perfect setting for his stables, and his success in

breeding and training thoroughbreds paved the way to membership in the New York Jockey Club and eventually to its presidency. Unlike Johnson, however, Stevens did not engage solely in the sport or racing. He helped to found the New York Yacht Club and designed and commodored the sloop *America* in the first cup race bearing that name in 1851. Apparently Stevens expanded his avocations in a mirror image of northern technical development.⁴⁶

Other advocates of thoroughbred racing also reflected gentry qualities and sectional preferences. The Virginian John Randolph, an ardent states' rights disciple, rarely wagered on races, except for those which matched a southern born and trained horse against a northern one. Another Virginian, William Wynn, displayed abilities and interests similar to those of Johnson and, in fact, was second only to the "Napoleon" as a trainer and breeder. The attitudes and beliefs of these and other race proponents in the South were paralleled by notable northerners, including Cadwallader Colden, from the distinguished and politically influential Knickerbocker family; Robert Livingston Stevens, John Stevens's brother; and Philip Hone, Empire State businessman and one-time New York City mayor. For them racing was important and exciting, and they took pride in and boasted about northern victories.⁴⁷

Paradoxically, the decade which confirmed the gentry underpinnings of the North-South races and their sectional tone also marked the beginning of the end of this era of thoroughbred racing history. After 1829 the men and their horses became increasingly susceptible to sectional interests. Images and metaphors bound the horses, the contests, and the turfmen to their political brethren. The politicizing of this sporting arena, coupled with the effects of several other factors, caused these gentlemen to become either unwilling or unable, or both, to make their hereditary attributes as significant at the track as they had once been. Thus the subsequent decade, which in 1830 began spritely enough, nourished the seeds of destruction for intersectional racing.

IV The Winds of Change

In 1830 and for the next few years achievement and glory among turfmen knew few bounds. Between 1830 and 1832 southern victories in match races, sweepstakes, and jockey club purses mounted (24-7). In 1833 and 1834, however, northerners narrowed the gap (20-22), primarily because of the "superior stock" of Eclipse, which even southern papers praised. During these years, although the two sides won in spurts, the races garnered previously unmatched regular public attendance and media commendations. Improvements in tracks and more numerous training stables in part accounted for the generally positive state in which racing found itself. In Virginia the *Richmond Enquirer* reported ten to thirteen separate stables in training for the races at the

Tree Hill Course alone where, the paper concluded, “we have never known the spirit of racing so alive as it is at present.”⁴⁸ The *Charleston Courier* offered a similar appraisal of that city’s Washington Course, and the *American Turf Register and Sporting Magazine* lauded Baltimore’s Central Course. In fact, of the major tracks, only the Union Course received criticism rather than compliments, and the complaints there centered upon Cadwallader Colden’s mismanagement. Although he was a life-long patron of the turf, Colden apparently lacked the ability to insure a public focus on improving the breed. With gambling rife and the crowd influential in dictating the tenor of the races, Colden lost control of the Union Course. Early in 1833 new managers assumed the duties and worked to return the course to its previously reputable status. Within a few months they apparently accomplished their task. Criticism of the Union Course ceased, and it once again became a show place for racing. With the Union Course back in the fold, major tracks in the East, as well as in the West, thus in part accounted for the current “unparalleled” show of race horses.⁴⁹

The specter of racing seemed especially bright in the South. Two factors which suggested the health of the turf on a national basis, improvements of the tracks and more numerous stables in training, clearly influenced the renewed vigor with which southerners raced one another. Contests between Virginians and Carolinians, or Carolinians and Alabamans, or Marylanders and Virginians occasioned a degree of public interest and wagers not previously perceived in the South, at least not since pre-Revolution days. In 1832, for example, 10,000 spectators watched Johnson’s Bonnets-of-Blue defeat a South Carolina mare, Clara Fisher, in Charleston. The *Spirit of the Times*, published in New York and an advocate of turf events, estimated that bets laid on another match between South Carolina’s Argyle and Alabama’s John Bascomb totalled one-half million dollars.⁵⁰

Southern interest in these interstate contests coincided with two sets of events. First, Cadwallader Colden’s mismanagement of the Union Course apparently allowed the atmosphere and conditions there to become less conducive to racing than were conditions on tracks in the South. William Johnson, for example, raced at Norfolk, Richmond, and Baltimore in the spring of 1832 but not at the Union Course. Other turfmen, most notably the Virginian James Craig, Maryland’s James Seldon, and Wade Hampton from South Carolina raced regularly in the South during the early 1830’s and only infrequently in the North. They did return to race at the Union Course after its reorganization, but they did not abandon their home tracks.⁵¹

Second, tensions among southern politicians seemingly augmented interest in southern interstate racing competition in nearly dichotomous ways. On the one hand, as politicians debated nullification, emancipation of slavery, eco-

conomic expansion, and the election of 1832, among other issues, some southern proponents of the turf perceived the track as a distraction from the strife of party feuds, . . . a field that all can meet, in good fellowship with open hearts and hands—an oasis in the desert—a truce in a time of war.’’⁵² On the other hand, the anger and agony accruing from states’ rights arguments apparently surfaced at the races. Given the sums of money at stake—thousands and occasionally tens of thousands of dollars—both in purses and wagers, the race course became more like a battleground than a peace table. By 1836 the betting on a “Great Southern Match Race,” a polarized affair between Georgia and Alabama on one side and South Carolina on the other, appeared to New York viewer and editor William Porter to display “a greater sectional character . . . than that which characterizes a match between the South and the North.’’⁵³ Whether southern thoroughbred owners concurred with Porter’s summation is unclear, but facts do not surface to suggest that they did anything to reduce state political identities.

In retrospect the 1836 match which Porter described, as well perhaps as the nature and tenor of other southern races, seemed to suggest that the thoroughbred sport had actually entered a new era in the first half decade of the 1830’s. The “glory years” had produced growth and expansion of stables and tracks, but they had also highlighted political fervency and a disconcerting managerial inability by a gentleman like Colden. Other actions and statements—the running of sick horses (distemper), the naming of horses after political events or issues such as “Nullifier” and “Flying Dutchman,” and unsubstantiated claims that stables in one section could “overmatch” those in another—suggested that these same “glory” years provoked other conditions which could and might alter racing significantly.⁵⁴

In 1836 the national scene provided evidence to confirm that a change was occurring in the character of thoroughbred racing. In another “great race” neither improvement of the breed nor its sub-theme, confirming the superiority of one or the other of the two premier equine lineages, figured prominently in the match between the North’s Post Boy and the South’s John Bascombe. In part perhaps because Eclipse had stood at stud in the South since 1832 and Archy mares had borne foals in the North, the earlier question of superiority was moot. Post Boy himself bore the blood of both sires; Henry was his sire, and his dam was a half-sister to Eclipse. Thus insofar as the Eclipse-Archy confrontation had ended in the melding of their attributes in northern and southern horses, the traditional dichotomy of characteristics, size and bone versus pure speed and bottom, had also ceased to matter.⁵⁵

What did matter, instead, was the preparation and riding of the two steeds. Although reporters had traditionally noted differences in training styles and riding tactics, now they described the race almost entirely from the perspec-

tive of the men in charge, the trainers and riders. The *American Turf Register and Sporting Magazine*, which produced one of the two standard accounts, explained that from the gate during the first heat the southern jockey, Willis, “knew his game,” “collared” Post Boy, and on the final straight “shook” Bascombe. In each mile, the editor continued, “the trick that was to do the business was evident.” Willis held back the horse before the turns and forced Post Boy to swerve, a maneuver which always left Bascombe ahead on the final leg. In the end Willis’s tactics enabled Bascombe to maintain a more continuous pace and thus prolong his endurance, which, more than speed, both jockeys knew was the key to winning. The race had been close, to be sure, but the outcome was never really in doubt. Even northern fans had reduced the odds which they offered after the first heat. For them the contest became one to be decided by the jockeys’ skills and pre-race preparations rather than the two evenly matched horses. On both counts southerners held the advantages, and northerners were not willing to risk large sums of money on the questionable ability of their man.⁵⁶

The Post Boy-Bascombe match was different from earlier North-South spectacles primarily because of this consuming interest in the human factor. Perhaps given the presumed equal abilities of the horse, contemporaries assumed that superior preparation and riding would reign; thus, the men whose skills would decide the contest naturally generated more excitement than did the horses. However, that the emphasis on men occurred for additional reasons is suggested by the “subsequent bantering” between men at festivities following the race. At the jockey club dinner the “friends of Post Boy,” who were “highly excited by the issue of the race, aided, no doubt, by a little pure juice of the grape,” baited the “friends of Bascombe” into accepting a rematch. Bascombe’s owner, Alabama’s Colonel John Crowell, did not, however, concur with his backers’ decision and convinced them to withdraw their acceptance of the northern challenge. Still, the losers of the race continued to pursue a rematch, and after “some unpleasant feelings, and the indulgence of some bitter remark,” they struck a bargain with Crowell: Post Boy against Bascombe again for any amount not less than \$10,000.⁵⁷ Northerners believed they might yet have their revenge.

Arranging the contest became an even more complex process as time passed. In part because of the expense of transporting Bascombe to the Union Course for a second event, Crowell demanded that the contest occur instead on any track south of Pennsylvania. The northern supporters of Post Boy, however, argued that establishing the superiority of one horse over the other required an exact rematch so that the surface of the track and the crowd size would not affect the horses and riders differently. Crowell again refused, and the bickering continued. Between August and November journalists and correspondents to the newspapers entered the fray, variously supporting the arguments of

their favorites and deprecating those of their opponents. Finally, to the dismay of the northerners, Colonel Crowell decided to retire Bascombe to stud. After all, he reasoned, Van Ranst had withdrawn Eclipse from further competition after his victory, and besides, he needed to spend more time on his plantation.⁵⁸

If sentiments had remained the same as they had been in 1823, turf supporters might have approved, or at least accepted, Crowell's decision. The nation's farmers still required sound horseflesh which Bascombe's tenure in stud might produce. Nonetheless, in 1836 such sentiments did not prevail; neither nationalism nor agricultural improvement motivated turfmen as completely as they had in the past, and Crowell's decision did not please, or appease, the backers of Post Boy. Even the previously non-controversial *American Turf Register* criticized the Alabama planter and the region he represented. Whatever the South had won in the first race, declared the new editor, it had almost certainly "perilled" by refusing a rematch. Under the "influence of sectional feelings," Skinner's partisan successor believed, southerners had made the wrong decision.⁵⁹

How the times had changed! Turfman who no longer dwelled upon either the Eclipse-Henry confrontation or national agricultural developments had become "partisans." Neither Johnson nor Stevens, the two managers, intervened to save the proposed rematch, bowing instead to the wishes of the horses' owners, Crowell and Robert Tillotson. Perhaps the partisanship resulting from sectional antagonism had prevented the assumption of strong roles by these two men, or perhaps they perceived little of value to be gained from a rematch. Unlike their actions, or lack of action, their reasoning remains uncertain. What is clear, however, is that the sense of service, the purpose of earlier great races, was absent. Post Boy and Bascombe raced not as the foci of agriculturally dependent interests, either national or state, but as the symbols of respective, maturing northern and southern identities. Whether they had been swayed by or had themselves felt the emotions of sectionalism, the turfmen had seen a change in the races.

V

The Beginning of the End

Changes in the racing scene did not cease with the Post Boy-Bascombe contest. During the next five years thoroughbred racing faced other critical situations to which the sport had to adjust. Particularly in the older, eastern domains did thoroughbred owners and others with vested interests find themselves in precarious positions. Numerous causes existed, chief among which was the national economic decline. The panic of 1837 and the subsequent recession stimulated fear, depressed stud fees, and even some bankruptcies among horse owners. In part because prices for stock and stud fees

had risen since the early 1830's, some stable owners found themselves saddled with expensive maintenance costs and diminished income from breeding. Unable to pay inflated stud fees for stallions in whom the deleterious effects of years of inbreeding had begun to show, farmers did not generate the scale of business for large stable owners as they had in the past. At the same time racing also suffered; for some advocates of the turf, racing had become an "expensive amusement." From Huntsville, Alabama, the *Southern Advocate* concluded that even the most successful turfmen "do little more than defray expenses from their winnings."⁶⁰ Thus the effect or expenses at home and at the track without sufficient income was quite simple: diminished pocket-books.⁶¹

In addition to economic instability, eastern race tracks suffered from the competition for fans, publicity, and stables which had matured in the West. Although turfmen and track entrepreneurs had established stables and courses in the West even before the turn of the century, their efforts in Louisiana, Tennessee, and Kentucky did not attract national attention until the late 1820's and early 1830's. Especially during the early, profitable years of the 1830's, Virginia, Alabama, and Carolina thoroughbred owners patronized northern and western tracks as well as their own. After the panic of 1837, however, realizing that the Metarie Track in New Orleans, for example, was several hundred miles closer to home than was Long Island's course, some southern sportsmen transported their horses west instead of north along the Atlantic coast. By the mid 1830's, also, westerners produced nationally known stallions, particularly Wagner and Grey Eagle, both inbred Archies, which they claimed could rival any horse in the older racing sections of the country. Thus, on two counts, western competition appealed to easterners, especially men in the South, and although the West did not escape the panic and recession, it apparently either suffered less or recovered more quickly than did either the North or the South.⁶²

By 1840 at least one major racing association reacted radically to the recession and the effects of western competition. As the traditional leader of the North's racing industry, the New York Jockey Club assumed the responsibility to resurrect northern prestige and to launch a plan to cope with the economic crisis. In September, 1840, members compacted the races on the Union Course into one day (from six) and reduced the cost of tickets for the stands. Unexpectedly, the experiment failed, in part the club assumed, because of the diminished quality of competition. After the race the club took a second step and encouraged northern breeders to reduce their shipments of good stock to the South and to either repurchase or recall some horses already in that region. By the following spring the presence of more numerous stables than had competed in recent years suggested to the New Yorkers that northern breeders had heeded their call. Even this show did not, however, insure economic sol-

veny, and in the next year the jockey club decided to make non-members pay more to view the races. Until 1844 all “strangers” paid ten dollars per ticket to the stands.⁶³

In their proper perspective, these experiments by the New York Jockey Club were actually one of several efforts made by thoroughbred advocates to revive the “languishing spirit” of turfmen, especially in the North. Earlier, in 1838, American sportsmen had challenged Englishmen to an international race, apparently in order to incite interest among the public and breeders as much as to contest for world supremacy. At the same time the Beacon Course in Hoboken, New Jersey, obtained new management and surface alterations in order to attract stable owners. These efforts apparently salvaged the Beacon Course, at least temporarily, but other tracks where owners and investors lacked the capital for improvements ceased to function. At smaller courses in New York and even at the Tree Hill Course in Richmond, Virginia, proprietors simply could not withstand the debilitating effects of the recession and western competition.⁶⁴

Eastern turfmen could not, however, depend only upon themselves to reverse racing’s sagging fortunes. No matter how much money stable owners expended on training, or how many horses appeared, or how scientifically tracks were levelled and prepared, sportsmen could not reclaim the “glory years” without public support. Past experience and popular attendance in the West, as well as common sense, dictated a connection between public viewing and financial stability that few could ignore. Perhaps because of their older appeals to agricultural interests, genteel thoroughbred proponents had shaped racing as a sport “for” the people, although certainly not “of” the people. They might not approve of “mob” actions at the track, but having argued that the sport benefitted all, the gentleman had in fact established the contests with a democratic appeal. Now, in the early 1840’s, racing’s squirearchy needed the public.

This need was particularly acute in New York. Since New York was the barometer of northern racing’s status and the traditional home of the “great” North-South matches, the reversal of that state’s racing economy was critical to the entire industry. If only a small portion of New York City’s population alone, 10,000 of a total 312,000 for example, paid fifty cents to stand along the Union Course, the track entrepreneurs and the Jockey Club could anticipate \$5000 in revenue, discounting subscriptions and stand admissions, a sum sufficient to provide the purse for a climactic stake race. If 2000 non-jockey club members paid ten dollars to sit in the spacious stands for the week’s races, the Club realized another \$20,000. Undoubtedly, then, the population in New York City held one key to economic stability, and few could miss the parallel between the beginning of racing’s economic woes and the last time attendance reached 15,000—in the year 1837.⁶⁵

By late 1841 several factors once again produced conditions conducive to public interest in racing. First, the national economic picture had begun to brighten. Second, breeders and sympathetic journalists preached the rhetoric of earlier days. As New York editor William Porter explained, stable owners still owed a "responsibility to the public" for sound horseflesh. Finally, and propitiously, two premier horses, the southern stallion Boston and the northern mare Fashion, were available to demonstrate the qualities which the public still needed. By the next spring, then, the nation focused on another "great race," a contest which at once signalled the easing of the eastern racing world's decline, a re-invigorated partnership between the public and turfmen, and another stage in sectional disputes among race enthusiasts.⁶⁶

Initial race preparations proceeded nearly according to custom. After building an impressive string of victories, Boston's half-owner, James Long of Washington, D.C., issued an open challenge to any two fresh horses to run one at a time for \$20,000 apiece on any course in the country. No one accepted immediately, but within a month William Gibbons agreed to run his mare against the southern champion on the Union Course for \$20,000 in May, 1842. Long then placed Boston's training in the hands of the old "Napoleon," William R. Johnson, while Gibbons placed Fashion's fate in the care of Samuel Laird, a friend and protegee of John Stevens. Except for the problem of financing Fashion, this race prelude manifested little residue of the racing world's problem-plagued recent past.⁶⁷

The public's "fierce excitement" and the race itself also seemed to suggest that the revival of racing was complete. Estimates of 60,000-70,000 spectators, provided by the press as they always had been, mirrored those in the Henry-Eclipse duel in 1823. The fact that both managers kept trial times secret and the rumor that Fashion had suffered an injury probably added to the intrigue of the contest, itself a characteristic of some previous matches. Then, too, what the fans viewed on the track was a typically exciting meeting. In two thrilling heats, the latter being particularly unpredictable, Fashion won. In the process she established a new speed record, nine seconds (composite) faster than Eclipse had run in 1823. As William Porter declared in his *Spirit of the Times* "extra" after the race, this match had been "the best race ever run in America." In victory the northerners were jubilant.⁶⁸

The race itself did not, however, reflect all of the circumstances impinging on the event. Prior to the race the Long Island Railroad Company had overbooked thousands of passengers; consequently, the trains sputtered and sputtered and finally failed to move. The infuriated "mob" overturned several cars and then proceeded to the course on foot. Thereafter, arriving late and finding their views impaired, they proceeded to tear down fences and break through a door to the stands. Among more genteel spectators, a feeling of

displeasure, if not of anger, also existed. They did not like the “taxing” policy, charging guests as much as club members, which the New York Jockey Club had invoked. Even with the presence of members of Congress, the atmosphere enveloping the race was not what race promoters either expected or desired. The public had returned, but conditions and emotions prevented them from displaying the spirit of old. In sum, rather than demonstrating its empathy with the horse men, the public had nearly made the event their own.⁶⁹

Animosity, rather than equanimity, reigned after the race as well. As reported by the press, sectional sentiments were avidly vented. Northerners who had wanted to regain the Eclipse saddle, the symbol of racing supremacy last won by Bascombe, stridently condemned one gentleman who had reported Fashion’s possible injury. Those who had wanted to keep this item secret, regardless of whether it was honest or not, denounced him “as a traitor to Northern interests, . . . a faithless, bribed partizan of the backers of Boston. “70 The act that they now had a “Northern champion” and had settled their “account” with the South apparently did little to dispel their anger at one of their own.⁷¹

From southern quarters, too, came emotional outbursts. “We did not announce the defeat of the Whigs with a profounder sorrow,” grieved the *Daily Richmond Whig*. In defense of Boston the paper continued: “The times are sadly out of joint—and no longer is the race to the swift, or the battle to the strong.”⁷² Even the facts that Fashion had been borne by a southern dam and that some southern bettors had won money provided little solace for the dejected southerners. They had lost the championship and found little glory in the participation itself.⁷³

Despite the fervency of the backers of both horses and the spectators, or perhaps because of it, the Fashion-Boston match did seem to help stem the decline of racing in the East. In the succeeding two years northern and southern stable owners transported their horses to at least a few of the courses on which they had raced prior to the recession. The financial stability of breeders remained a problem, to be sure, especially in a match race proposed for 1843. Some of Fashion’s northern supporters even offered \$2000 to finance a southern search for a worthy opponent. That race did not materialize, although other minor contests between northerners and southerners continued. Apparently these helped to buoy interest, both of the public and the breeders, in the sectional rivalry until one more “great” contest was arranged.⁷⁴

VI The End of an Era

Billed as a match “for the conqueror,” the final “great” race fed on and fueled sectional allegiances. With the score of the series tied at two victories apiece, this race for \$20,000 between the North’s champion, Fashion, and the

southern challenger, Peytona, was virtually immune to any other influences. In the South popular support for Peytona ignored the once important state boundaries, and as she travelled from Mobile northward, Peytona met the cheers of thousands who thronged the streets. From his view in Charleston, the editor of the *Courier* reported that “the feeling of the South against the North was aggravated to almost fury.”⁷⁵ In the North, too, partisans zealously supported Fashion. In Albany Whig and Democratic members of the New York legislature forgot their differences long enough to request a three-day postponement of the race so that they could attend. In the host city itself, the stock market closed so that all could join in the gambling on the race.⁷⁶

The pre-race excitement remained in evidence on the day of the race. The largest estimated crowd in antebellum thoroughbred history, between 70,000 and 100,000 fans, flocked to the track. Some of those spectators probably came simply to observe the two fleet mares and to see the “vast improvements in horses,” while others undoubtedly journeyed to the course to gamble. Perhaps because of the perceived significance of the race and with economic conditions more suitable, wagers involved sums of money unheard of since 1823. Although they remain estimates, crowd size and bets suggest that the Fashion-Peytona match was a truly popular spectacle.⁷⁷

In the end the match, which, according to *Niles National Register*, had enlisted “all the ambitions of the sections,” resulted in a southern victory.⁷⁸ In two straight heats run just six seconds slower than in 1842, Peytona won. Quickly forgetting previous disappointments, joyful southerners basked in the glory of their triumph. The *Richmond Enquirer* compared the southern aura of elation to the feelings the citizens of that region hoped to express after the November Presidential election in which they expected James IS. Polk to emerge the victor.⁷⁹ New York editor William Porter marvelled at the “ ‘change’ which has come o’er the spirit of the dream.”⁸⁰ More caustically, New York entrepreneur and politician, Philip Hone, perceived that “Southern mustaches curled up with exultation and the bachelors of the Union Club talked less wisely and loftily than is their wont.”⁸¹ Having gambled and lost and apparently remaining unconvinced that Peytona was the better horse, northerners were disconcerted, to be sure, but not vanquished. Still proud and loyal to northern horseflesh, they talked not about defeat but about a rematch.⁸²

Unexpectedly perhaps, to contemporaries at least, the Fashion-Peytona contest was the last “great” North-South thoroughbred race. Even though New York backers of Fashion had pushed for a second event and Peytona’s owner, Thomas Kirkland, personally challenged William Gibbons later in the summer, an exact rematch never materialized. During the next four years northern and southern horses continued to compete for jockey club purses and in stake races, but none resulted in a more significant contest.⁸³

The late 1840's and early 1850's produced several signs that thoroughbred racing existed as a shell of its former self. In 1849 only thirty-eight meetings occurred on twenty-five tracks, compared to 153 meetings on 106 courses ten years earlier. At the Union Course the New York Jockey Club disbanded as less expensive trotting and mule races replaced and blooded contests. John C. Stevens, once the industrious manager of northern entries, had abandoned the sport in favor of yacht competition, and even memories of Eclipse faded in the pages of the *Spirit of the Times* as the magazine concentrated on other sports. Confused and concerned about the debilitated state of racing in New York, two southern correspondents to the *Spirit of the Times* offered a multitude of suggestions to revive the sport. They went unheeded.⁸⁴

In Virginia the sport fared only slightly better. A few courses continued to provide racing, but at at least one, Petersburg's New Market Track, the meets belied a romantic attempt to retrieve the past rather than an effort to insure progress. In his assessment of Virginia racing William Porter concluded that thoroughbred races "fail to excite the smallest degree of interest now." Gentlemen, for whom racing had been "one of the chief amusements," generally ignored breeding and training.⁸⁵ More like New York than not during these years, Virginia, too, had lost one of its most dedicated horse men. William Johnson, the "Napoleon of the Turf," died in 1849. His death, much as did Stevens's shift to yachting, seemed to confirm that the era in which thoroughbred races, especially the "great" races, had existed as the foremost American sport had really ended.⁸⁶

Why had this era of thoroughbred racing, especially the North-South contest, ended so quickly and, it seems, so unexpectedly? On the surface at least, sectionalism seemingly had become the greatest enemy of the races. In 1846, one year after the final great race, the sectional controversy had entered a new phase. Abolitionists and pro-slavery advocates vigorously debated the future of slavery in the territories of New Mexico and California. Northern and southern Democrats disagreed about the Oregon boundary line and the Wilmot Proviso.⁸⁷ By 1850, even in the face of the great Compromise, antagonistic factions seemed ready to sever all threads of unity, concluded the ardent nationalist, Philip Hone. "The flame is no longer smothered," he conceded. "The fanatics of the North and the disunionists of the South have made a gulf so deep that no friendly foot can pass it; enmity so fierce that reason cannot allay it; unconquerable, sectional jealousy. . . ."⁸⁸ He might well have added that one once friendly rivalry possible unable to bear the intense political friction was that of the turf. The sectional feelings which had once baited the races now nearly precluded their continuation.

To be sure, also, unfavorable economic factors had eroded the financial base upon which the races had developed. The thoroughbred industry had been an

expensive one. Breeding, transportation, training, and the all-important wagers had required large outlays of money, and except for sales of horses, stud fees, and purses, owners and trainers realized few financial benefits. No subsidies, grants, donations, or sponsorships existed to defray expenses for one's time and welfare at the races and on the road. Then, particularly after 1837, when the panic and recession caused farmers and planters to contract, or in some cases to withdraw, their dealings with owners of blooded stallions and mares, the latter suffered the loss of income from sales and stud fees. By 1842, as the uncertain financing of Fashion suggested, even finding investors willing to share in the \$20,000 pre-race deposit required of each side was no simple task. As one journalist had concluded during the panic years, racing had become an "expensive amusement" indeed.⁸⁹

Neither sectionalism nor economic fragility was sufficiently encompassing, however, to occasion the end of the contests. From the beginning of the era of great races, marked by the Henry and Eclipse match, as well as the renaissance of other interstate and regional events, the contests had at least dramatized sectional feelings, and perhaps they had even exacerbated them, especially by 1836. Further, economic gain had never truly been a consuming goal of racing among the primary participants; men like Stevens, Van Ranst, Johnson, and Wynn did not perceive themselves as professionals dependent upon income from the sport but rather as servants of the citizens. They earned their livelihoods at other, albeit sometimes related, occupations. Thus, as the agony and intensity of these two factors became more intense through the years, each might, at the worst, have had the effect of scaling down the races or reducing their numbers, but neither by itself nor both in tandem probably threatened the efficacy of the races. Rather than serving as causes, sectionalism and economic instability were actually catalysts for the demise of the races and symbols of a deep-seated evolution which caused the sport itself to change.

Stated simply, the original value system which had spawned the races in the East no longer existed. Early in the nineteenth century the society which supported the races had done so largely because of certain desirable attributes which it believed the contests supported—utility, unity, and individualism. In a sense, Americans had assumed the gentry code as the foundation for a national ethic, and the gentlemen sportsmen assented to and nourished the ideal. Throughout the first three decades of the century, Americans perceived the thoroughbred as a symbol of their dreams as well as an essential creature in their existence. He was a noble animal, much as they, now free from England and enlightened, hoped to be. He was a function of their agrarian way of life, a key to progress, and an individual who won, or lost on the basis of his talents. Further, men could master the horse, make him serve them, and perfect him. And to prove his worth, his master tested him under perfect conditions:

one against one and in public. Once put to public use, as at stud, he as an individual could make a difference.

During the 1830's, of course, the ideals of the public and the reality of the sport changed. The causes were legion; they stemmed from conditions, from men, and from the horses. Prosperity, heightened regional identity, and even manufacturing prompted, or perhaps were initiated by, acquisitiveness, less fervent nationalism, and mass action and thinking. Seemingly as Alexis de Tocqueville, the noted French surveyor of American society, surmised about this period, democratic individualism had had the effect of creating a uniformity of acting, thinking, and feeling. The result was a new reality, the mass, and Tocqueville might have added, a mass which had inbred horses, multiplied races, and rationalized an intensifying political meaning in the races. By 1836 the Post Boy-Bascombe meeting was quite unlike the Eclipse-Henry match. "Partizans," not nationalists, dictated the tenor of the race; the bloodlines of the two steeds were strikingly uniform; and northern backers reduced their odds after the first heat had been lost, apparently to minimize their almost certain losses. No glory existed for Crowell in the retirement of Bascombe to stud, for the higher purpose now was not agricultural progress but symbolic sectional superiority. Thus, for the most part, this race actually marked the end of the races, at least as they had been originally conceived.⁹⁰

In large measure the gentlemen who had directed thoroughbred racing for so long bore the responsibility for its antebellum demise on two counts. First, they had conceived a purpose for the races which was not inherent in the nature of the events. In public they never raced simply for the sake of racing but for the reason of agricultural development. Theirs was not the endeavor of idealists but of idealistic pragmatists. Consequently, even if they held the power to do so, they could not have kept the races free from some ulterior purpose nor immune to societal influences. In concert with an agriculturally-dependent society they had shaped the races.

Second, their sport needed and required a following which was not entirely conducive to the realization of their dreams or the continuation of the sport as they conceived it. The genteel owners and trainers had nurtured a sport whose purpose was to serve the public, specifically the agrarian segment. However, in part at least because it was a sport "for" the public and not "of" the public and because it occurred in an urban arena, racing became a spectator sport dependent upon urban, mass support. And once the costs of thoroughbreds rose above the means of many farmers and planters, the original agricultural justification no longer seemed tenable.

In the end, of course, people in North and upper South were most responsible for the end of this era of racing. The gentleman organizers and participants

had not entirely resisted the sensations of acquisitiveness, or perhaps more accurately, the desires to remain financially solvent. Nor had they become enraged and acted to prevent the politicizing of the contests. Concurrently, the spectators and backers also did not deter the transformation of the sport; by feeling and acting out the emotions and events of their times, they, too, affected the transformation of the sport. Whether antebellum Americans realized it or not, thoroughbred racing, once the “sport of kings,” was no sacred cow; rather it was an instrument of the people.

Notes

1. Josiah Quincy, *Figures of the Past* (Boston, 1910), p. 96.
2. *Niles Weekly Register*, XXIV (31 May 1823), pp. 193-194; William H. Robertson, *The History of Thoroughbred Racing in America* (Englewood Cliffs, 1964), p. 55; Jennie Holliman, *American Sports 1785-1835* (Durham, 1931), pp. 119-121.
3. *Maryland Gazette*, 11 February 1768, 29 September 1774; John Hervey, *Racing in America 1665-1865*, 2 vols. (New York, 1944), I, pp. 244-248; Nancy L. Struna, “The Cultural Significance of Sport in the Colonial Chesapeake and Massachusetts” (Unpublished Ph. D. dissertation, University of Maryland, 1979), pp. 99-103; Robertson, *Thoroughbred Racing*, pp. 32-33.
4. Hervey, *Racing in America*, II, pp. 4-25, I, pp. 247-248; Robertson, *Thoroughbred Racing*, p. 33; Henry W. Herbert, *Frank Forester’s Horse and Horsemanship of the United States and British Provinces of North America*, 2 vols. (New York, 1857), II, p. 509; Dale Somers, *The Rise of Sport in New Orleans 1850-1900* (Baton Rouge, 1972), pp. 24-25; John R. Betts, *America’s Sporting Heritage: 1850-1950* (Reading, 1972), pp. 10-12. To be sure, the redevelopment process occurred more rapidly in the South than in the North.
5. Hervey, *Racing in America*, I, pp. 243-244; *American Turf Register and Sporting Magazine*, I (February 1830), pp. 36, 270-273. Two American actions in particular, the Non-Intercourse Act (1806) and Jefferson’s embargo (1807-1809), effectively interrupted British-American commerce.
6. *Virginia Times*, I (2 June 1823), p. 2.
7. *The American Farmer*, V (13 June 1823), p. 96.
8. *Ibid.*, IV (10 January 1823), p. 335.
9. David M. Potter, *The Impending Crisis, 1848-1861* (New York, 1976), pp. 27-29; Charles S. Sydnor, *The Development of Southern Sectionalism, 1819-1848* (Baton Rouge, 1968), pp. 300-337; Robertson, *Thoroughbred Racing*, pp. 32-33. See, also, Arthur Ekirch, Jr., *The Idea of Progress in America, 1815-1860* (New York, 1944); Carter Goodrich, “The Revulsion Against Internal Improvements,” *Journal of Economic History*, X (November 1950), pp. 145-169; Louis Hartz, *Economic Policy and Democratic Thought: Pennsylvania, 1776-1860* (Cambridge, 1948); Harold F. Williamson, ed., *The Growth of the American Economy* (New York, 1951).
10. For enlightening discussions of gentlemen of this period, see David Grimsted, ed., *Notions of the Americans, 1820-1860* (New York, 1970), pp. 17-20; Irving H. Bartlett, *The American Mind in the Mid-Nineteenth Century* (New York, 1967), pp. 74-77; Rollin G. Osterweis, *Romanticism and Nationalism in the Old South* (New Haven, 1949); Stow Persons, *The Decline of American Gentility* (New York, 1973), pp. 29-50.
11. *Richmond Enquirer*, XIX (26 November 1822), p. 3.
12. *Niles Weekly Register*, XXIII, (30 November 1822), pp. 193-194; Hervey, *Racing in America*, I, p. 261, II, p. 26; Roger Longrigg, *The History of Horse Racing* (New York, 1972), p. 212.
13. Quoted in Nathan Miller, *The Enterprise of a Free People: Aspects of Economic Development in New York State during the Canal Period, 1792-1838* (Ithaca, 1962), pp. 14-15.
14. Douglas C. North, *The Economic Growth of the United States* (Englewood Cliffs, 1961), pp. 156-157; Miller, *Enterprise of a Free People*, pp. 15-16; Betts, *America’s Sporting Heritage*, pp. 10-11; *American Turf Register and Sporting Magazine*, I (February 1830), p. 270; Longrigg, *Horse Racing*, p. 211; *Richmond Enquirer*, XX (3 June 1823), p. 2; Hervey, *Racing in America*, I, p. 257, II, p. 100.
15. *American Turf Register and Sporting Magazine*, V (July 1834), p. 581, VI (May 1835), pp. 443-444; *Virginia Times*, I (2 June 1823), p. 2.

16. *American Farmer*, IV (10 June 1823), p. 335.
17. *Charleston Courier*, XXXI (12 June 1823), p. 2.
18. William Taylor, *Cavalier and Yankee. The Old South and American National Character* (New York, 1961), p. 340.
19. *Niles Weekly Register*, XXIV (31 May 1823), p. 193.
20. For examples of nationalistic sentiments, see *Niles Weekly Register*, XXIV (7 June 1823), p. 211; *American Turf Register and Sporting Magazine*, V (July 1834), pp. 578-579; of state and regional pride, see *Charleston Courier*, XXIX (6 June 1823), p. 2.
21. *Niles Weekly Register*, XXIV (31 May 1823), pp. 193-194; Robertson, *Thoroughbred Racing*, p. 52; Hervey, *Racing in America*, I, pp. 266, 261-262.
22. *Niles Weekly Register*, XXIV (31 May 1823), pp. 193-194.
23. *Richmond Enquirer*, XX (3 June 1823), p. 2.
24. Editor Niles had estimated that pre-race wagers totalled one-half the cost of the Erie Canal, but since he was a foe of gamblers and this estimate drew upon little concrete evidence, it is difficult to assess Niles' accuracy. Regardless, one cannot dismiss the public interest in betting, especially in the relatively prosperous 1820's.
25. Quoted in Hervey, *Racing in America*, II, pp. 73-74.
26. *Richmond Enquirer*, XX (3 June 1823), p. 2; *Charleston Courier*, XXIX (6 June 1823), p. 2; *Virginia Times*, I (2 June 1823), p. 2; *Niles weekly Register*, XXIV (7 June 1823), p. 211; *American Turf Register and Sporting Magazine*, I (May 1830), p. 431; Hervey, *Racing in America*, I, pp. 273-274.
27. Quoted in *Virginia Times*, I (11 June 1823), p. 2, (2 June 1823), p. 2.
28. *Richmond Enquirer*, XX (3 June 1823), p. 2; *Charleston Courier*, XXXI (9 June 1823), p. 2; *Virginia Times*, I (31 May 1823), p. 2, (2 June 1823), p. 2.
29. *Niles Weekly Register*, XXIV (7 June 1823), p. 211, XXIII (23 November 1822), p. 177; *Virginia Times*, I (3 June 1823), p. 2; *Charleston Courier*, XXXI (9 June 1823), p. 2, (12 June 1823), p. 2, XXIX (6 June 1823), p. 2. These include supportive comments from the *New York Post*, the *New York Commercial Advertiser*, and the *New York Advocate*.
30. Letter, William R. Johnson to S. Crawford, editor, *Virginia Times*, I (28 May 1823), p. 4; Letter, William R. Johnson to John C. Stevens, *Richmond Enquirer*, XX (10 June 1823), p. 3.
31. Letter, John C. Stevens to William R. Johnson, *Richmond Enquirer*, XX (10 June 1823), p. 3.
32. *Ibid.*
33. *Richmond Enquirer*, XX (3 June 1823), p. 2.
34. Quoted in *Virginia Times*, I (28 May 1823), p. 4.
35. *Charleston Courier*, XXXI (12 June 1823), p. 2.
36. *American Turf Register and Sporting Magazine*, II (July 1831), pp. 556-559, V (September 1834), pp. 19-24, V (May 1835), pp. 433-441; Hervey, *Racing in America*, II, p. 14.
37. *Richmond Whig*, II (8 November 1825), p. 3; *American Turf Register and Sporting Magazine*, II (July 1831), pp. 556-559; *Charleston Courier*, XXIII (10 November 1825), p. 2; Hervey, *Racing in America*, I, pp. 274, 276, II, pp. 30-31.
38. *Richmond Whig*, II (8 November 1825), p. 3; *American Turf Register and Sporting Magazine*, II (July 1831), pp. 556-559; *Southern Advocate*, I (28 October 1825), p. 2; Robertson, *Thoroughbred Racing*, p.58.
39. *Richmond Whig*, II (8 November 1825), p. 3.
40. *American Turf Register and Sporting Magazine*, II (July 1831), p. 558.
41. *Niles Weekly Register*, XXXVII (17 October 1829), p. 117; *American Turf Register and Sporting Magazine*, I (September 1829), p. 49, (November 1829), pp. 158-159, III (September 1831), p. 44.
42. *Niles Weekly Register*, XXXVII (17 October 1829), p. 117.
43. *American Turf Register and Sporting Magazine*, I (January 1830), pp. 219-223, (February 1830), pp. 36, 270-273; Hervey, *Racing in America*, I, pp. 196, 259, 273. Eclipse eventually went to stud in Virginia (1832) and then to Kentucky, Alabama, and Tennessee until he died at the age of thirty-three in 1847. Although he spent all but three years in Virginia (and those in the Halifax district of North Carolina), Sir Archy's sons and daughters did appear in the North, although as a matter of importation. In the cases of both horse's progeny appearing in the other region, they did so primarily because breeders had begun to try to stem the undesirable results of inbreeding rather than trying to introduce new qualities.

44. James F. Cooper, *Notions of the Americans*, 2 vols. (London, 1828), II, pp. 416-421; Harriet Martineau, *Society in America*, 3 vols. in 2 (London, second edition, 1837), III, pp. 92-96; Persons, *Decline of American Gentility*, pp. 6-7, 34-36.
45. "William Ranson Johnson," in *Dictionary of American Biography*, ed. Dumas Malone (New York, 1932-33), V, pp. 130-131; Hervey, *Racing in America*, Johnson's leadership apparently derived not only from personal skill but from pivotal position Virginians had and continued to maintain as leaders of southern culture. See Rollin G. Osterweis, *Romanticism and Nationalism in the Old South* (Gloucester, 1964), pp. 85-86; Thomas Cooper DeLeon, *Belles, Beaux and Brains of the '60s* (New York, 1909), p. 23.
46. Hervey, *Racing in America*, I, pp. 269-271; Philip Hone, *The Diary of Philip Hone, 1828-1851*, ed. Allan Nevins, 2 vols. (New York, reprint edition, 1969), I, p. xxvi.
47. Hervey, *Racing in America*, II, pp. 74-75; Robertson, *Thoroughbred Racing*, p. 55; *Virginia Times*, I (2 June 1823), p. 2; *Daily Richmond Whig*, XXVII (13 May 1842), p. 2; *American Turf Register and Sporting Magazine*, II (July 1831), pp. 556-559; Hone, *Diary*, I, 42.
48. Quoted in *Spirit of the Times*, I (12 May 1832), p. 4. Another Richmond paper, the *Daily Richmond Whig*, had earlier offered a similar assessment, III (17 April 1830), p. 2.
49. *Charleston Courier*, XXX (22 February 1832), p. 2, (21 February 1832), p. 2; *American Turf Register and Sporting Magazine*, V (October 1833), p. 97; Hervey, *Racing in America*, II, p. 103; *Charleston Courier*, XXVIII (29 October 1830), p. 2; *Daily Richmond Whig*, V (25 October 1830), p. 3, III (22 April 1830), p. 3; *Spirit of the Times*, I (20 October 1832), p. 2, II (8 June 1833), p. 1. For examples of southern praise of Eclipse see *Charleston Courier*, XXVIII (5 June 1830), p. 2; *Daily Richmond Whig*, III (14 May 1830), p. 3. For lists of winning and losing horses see *American Turf Register and Sporting Magazine*, VI (May 1835), pp. 433-441.
50. *Spirit of the Times*, I (3 March 1832), p. 2; *Charleston Courier*, XXX (21 February 1832), p. 2, (22 February 1832), p. 2; *Spirit of the Times*, V (23 April 1836), p. 2; Hervey, *Racing in America*, II, p. 118.
51. *Richmond Constitutional Whig*, IX (1 June 1832), p. 4; *Charleston Courier*, XXX (21 February 1832), p. 2; *Spirit of the Times*, I (13 October 1832), p. 2, II (18 May 1833), p. 2; *American Turf Register and Sporting Magazine*, III (October 1831), p. 90.
52. *Richmond Enquirer*, quoted in *Spirit of the Times*, I (12 May 1832), p. 4. The *Enquirer* continued: "The mind is sick with eternal jarring and wrangling about men and measures, and after all it is much ado about nothing." The editor hoped, given this appraisal, that Washington politicians would attend the races "for a week's relaxation."
53. *Spirit of the Times*, V (23 April 1836), p. 2. This particular race offered a purse of \$36,000, apparently the largest to that date in American thoroughbred history. *American Turf Register and Sporting Magazine*, VII (February 1836), p. 272.
- For a varied discussion of the southern states' political and cultural disputes, see Clement Eaton, *A History of the Old South* (New York, third edition, 1975), p. 337; Taylor, *Cavalier and Yankee*, p. 315; Sydner, *Southern Sectionalism*, p. 315. See, also, Richard McCormick, *The Second American Party System: Party Formation in the Jacksonian Era* (Chapel Hill, 1966); William H. Freehling, *Prelude to Civil War: The Nullification Crisis in South Carolina* (New York, 1966); Carl N. Degler, *The Other South: Southern Dissenters in the Nineteenth Century* (New York, 1974).
54. *Charleston Courier*, XXVIII (29 October 1830), p. 2; *Spirit of the Times*, I (28 July 1832), p. 3, (16 June 1832), p. 2; *American Turf Register and Sporting Magazine*, V (October 1833), p. 97. By 1834 Skinner capsulized the results of intersectional racing in a column entitled "Turf Warfare between the North and the South," VI (September 1834), pp. 17-24.
- The Spirit of the Times* suggested the intensifying influence of state and sectional politics on thoroughbred racing, and how political the events had become, in a satire describing a mythical "National Race" on the Union Course in 1836, a Presidential election year. The entries, descriptions of qualities and the race analysis appeared as political metaphors. Entries included: Martin Van Buren's "Kinderhook"; Richard Johnson's "Tecumseh"; Francis Granger's "Anti-Mason"; William Henry Harrison's "Tippecanoe"; Daniel Webster's "Federalist"; and John Calhoun's "Nullifier", among others. Exemplifying a description of pedigree and quality was: "The Kentucky champion, 'American System,' is one of the best two or three mile horses in the country, but has never been able to go four miles." "Nullifier is a splendid animal . . . by Jefferson, the sire of Independence, out of Nullification's dam." VI (10 December 1836), p. 340.
55. Hervey, *Racing in America*, II, p. 117. Discussions about the horses' attributes, such as those which comprised much of the race reports earlier, were conspicuously absent in journals and papers.
56. *American Turf Register and Sporting Magazine*, VII (July 1836), pp. 511-515. The *New York Courier* (1 June 1836) provided the other standard account, and both articles were printed in various papers, including the *Richmond Enquirer*, XXXIII (7 June 1836), p. 3; *Charleston Courier*, XXXIV (9 June 1836), p. 2. The *Spirit of the Times* revealed a more "social" description.
- A closer examination of some southern newspapers revealed fewer and less complete announcements of this race in May. Given past race interest, the editors probably remained interested in this race, but other events

required more attention. In particular the Mexican-Texan war diverted the editors from the pre-race coverage. Through March and April, the *Southern Advocate*, *Augusta Chronicle*, and the *Richmond Enquirer* provided almost daily news about battles. Even after Sam Houston's defeat of Santa Anna on April 21, these papers continued to provide their readers with extensive reports about affairs in Texas.

57. *American Turf Register and Sporting Magazine*, VII (July 1836), p. 515. In a less descriptive manner the *Baltimore Republican and Commercial Advertiser* also reported that northerners were unwilling to accept defeat, XXII (9 June 1836), p. 2. Not until October did a suggestion that Port Boy may have suffered an "indisposition" even become a matter of public record; *American Turf Register and Sporting Magazine*, VIII (October 1836), p. 69.

58. *American Turf Register and Sporting Magazine*, VII (August 1836), pp. 544-547, 562-563, VIII (October 1836), pp. 68-73; *Spirit of the Times*, VI (5 November 1836), p. 302, (26 November 1836), p. 326; *August Daily Constitutional*, cited in *Spirit of the Times*, VI (26 November 1836), p. 326.

59. *American Turf Register and Sporting Magazine*, VIII (October 1836), pp. 69-70. The editor, Gideon B. Smith, wrote another article later whose purpose was in part to convince southern backers of Bascombe that he had not been "unfriendly" to Bascombe. He did not apologize for his appraisal of the part sectional feelings may have played in the southern decision not to run their horse again; VIII (May 1837), pp. 57-58. Another paper, the *Baltimore Republican and Commercial Advertiser*, even more clearly assessed the impact that sectional feelings had had on the backers: all had become "partisans;" VIII (3 June 1836), p. 2.

60. *Southern Advocate*, quoted in *Spirit of the Times*, VIII (8 June 1838), p. 134.

61. Eaton, *Old South*, p. 309; North, *Economic Growth*, pp. 190, 194; Hervey, *Racing in America*, II, pp. 153-154; *American Turf Register and Sporting Magazine*, XII (March 1841), p. 162, XIII (May 1842), p. 289.

62. *American Turf Register and Sporting Magazine*, XII (March 1841), p. 162; Somers, *Sport in New Orleans*, pp. 25-26; Hervey, *Racing in America*, II, p. 121.

63. *Spirit of the Times*, X (19 September 1840), p. 325, (10 October 1840), p. 378, XI (8 May 1841), p. 114; *American Turf Register and Sporting Magazine*, XII (March 1842), p. 168, (January/February 1842), p. 102, XV (May 1844), p. 305.

64. Hervey, *Racing in America*, I, p. 246, II, pp. 103, 13; Betts, *America's Sporting Heritage*, p. 13.

65. *Spirit of the Times*, VII (3 June 1837), p. 124.

66. *Ibid.*, XI (16 October 1841), p. 373.

67. *Ibid.*, XI (16 October 1841), p. 373; *American Turf Register and Sporting Magazine*, XII (December 1841), pp. 682-687. Stevens accompanied his friend Philip Hone, but he was no longer actively racing.

68. *Spirit of the Times*, XII (10 May 1842), p. 105, (14 May 1842), p. 126, (21 May 1842), p. 138. Earlier in the year Porter had believed that the Boston-Fashion match had given "new impetus" to New York racing, so he at least was not surprised by the crowd estimates. Also, *American Turf Register and Sporting Magazine*, XIII (July 1842), pp. 367-373.

69. *Spirit of the Times*, XII (14 May 1842), p. 126; Hone, *Diary*, II, pp. 600-601; *Spirit of the Times*, XII (21 May 1842), pp. 138-139.

70. *Ibid.*, p. 133.

71. *American Turf Register and Sporting Magazine*, XIII (July 1842), pp. 367, 373.

72. *Daily Richmond Whig*, XXVII (13 May 1842), p. 2, (14 May 1842), p. 2.

73. *Ibid.* Perhaps because of the other issues and a still completely unrecovered economy, other southern papers apparently did not send reporters, choosing instead to reprint the *Spirit's* "extra". See, for example, *Charleston Courier*, XL (16 May 1842), p. 2, (31 May 1842), p. 2; *New Orleans Weekly Picayune*, XIV (23 May 1842), p. 2.

74. *American Turf Register and Sporting Magazine*, XIV (February 1843), pp. 100-101.

75. *Charleston Courier*, XLIII (19 May 1845), p. 2.

76. *Spirit of the Times*, XV (10 May 1845), p. 122, (17 May 1845), p. 134; Robertson, *Thoroughbred Racing*, p. 64.

77. *Spirit of the Times*, XV (17 May 1845), p. 134. *Niles National Register* estimated that gambling reached just short of one million dollars, LXVIII (17 May 1845), p. 176. The *New York Sun* "extra" concluded that betting had not been as fierce as many viewers had earlier anticipated and in fact had reached only one-half million dollars; cited in *Richmond Enquirer*, XLII (16 May 1845), p. 2; *Charleston Courier*, XLIII (19 May 1845), p. 2.

78. *Niles National Register*, LXVIII (17 May 1845), p. 176.

79. *Richmond Enquirer*, XLII (16 May 1845), p. 2.

80. *Spirit of the Times*, XV (24 May 1845), p. 146.
81. Hone, *Dairy*, II, p. 731. The Union Club on Broadway had opened in 1837. Modelled after the London Club, it served as a locus of debate, eating, and gentlemen's entertainment. Its members were the social elite who paid \$100 for the honor of belonging, and membership was restricted to 400. See, Douglas T. Miller, *Jacksonian Aristocracy. Class and Democracy in New York 1830-1860* (New York, 1967), p. 67; Edward Pessen, *Riches, Class and Power Before the Civil War* (Lexington, 1973), pp. 228-229.
82. *Charleston Courier*, XLIII (19 May 1845), p. 2.
83. *Niles National Register*, LXVIII (30 August 1845), p. 416.
84. Betts, *America's Sporting Heritage*, p. 13; *Spirit of the Times*, XXI (22 February 1851), p. 6, (27 September 1851), p. 359.
85. *Spirit of the Times*, XXI (1 November 1851), p. 439.
86. *Richmond Whig and Public Advertiser*, XXXI (12 May 1854), p. 2.
87. Potter, *The Impending Crisis*, pp. 21-16, 51-60, 99-138.
88. Hone, *Diary*, II, p. 884.
89. *Southern Advocate*, quoted in *Spirit of the Times*, VIII (9 June 1838), p. 134.
90. Alexis deTocqueville, *Democracy in America*, 2 vols. (New York, 1899), II, pp. 172-173, 182, 239, 274.

