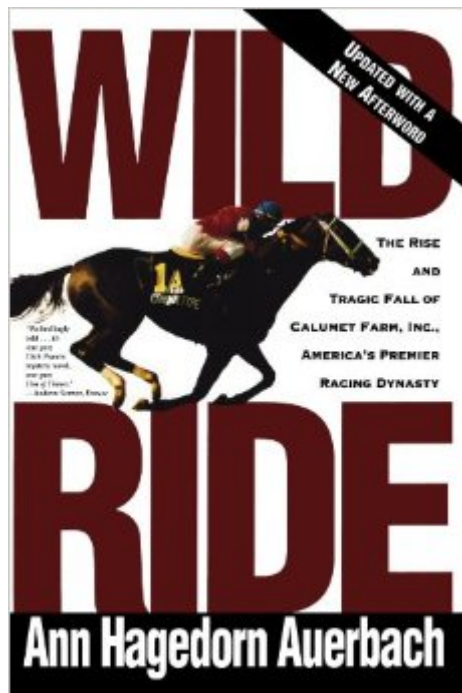


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Wild Ride: The Rise And Tragic Fall Of Calumet Farm Inc., America's Premier Racing Dynasty



Synopsis

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

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

This book is amazing. Sure it's a fun tale, brilliantly told, of one of the most famous horse farms in history. But it's so much more. It's also a fantastic insight into excess and fraud and how businessmen commit it. Read it for the blood and guts and glory of horse racing. The story of Calumet is wonderful. But hang onto your hats. Auerbach's indepth investigative journalism shows

the anatomy of a swindle. How J.T. Lundy, owner of Calumet, and his cohorts turned the most beautiful animals in the world into cash machines. How they debased the tradition of one of the noblest sports. Auerbach is undaunted by the complicated financial shinnegans that these people concocted to bilk banks out of millions. In fact, I believe that her reporting is the reason that Lundy wound up getting indicted and convicted. And she tells it in such a compelling way that even someone who can't add 2 plus 2 can see how the rich sometimes get richer at our expense. Read it and weep. But know that in the end, justice was done.

Ann Auerbach's investigational story is a compelling journey into a rarely discussed aspect of horse racing. Auerbach details the history of Calumet Farm, once America's most famous Kentucky horsefarm. The author's love of horses is evident in her detailed account of events. It took much courage for Ann Auerbach to uncover and discover the truth about Calumet's fall. It will also take some backbone for Alydar fans and horselovers to read the facts presented. I read this book for two reasons. I wanted to understand how a farm like Calumet could go from the best to the worst. I also needed to know what happened to Alydar after his racing fans were no longer watching him. *Wild Ride* answered both of my questions in a methodical and journalistic style.

There may be a horse on the cover, but this is not a horse racing book. If you want a book that covers the entire history of Calumet - you'll have to keep waiting. This book is primarily about J.T. Lundy and the investments he made that ultimately led to the Alydar tragedy. Citation - one of the greatest racehorses of all time and easily the greatest horse ever bred at Calumet (no offense to Whirlaway) - gets a whopping paragraph mention. Many portions of this book get bogged down with discussions of trust funds, banks, liens, etc. If you want to know how not to run a business, this is for you. If you want to know how not to run a horse farm, this is for you. If you are just plain curious in how Calumet went so downhill so fast, this is for you. If you want to read about horse racing - this book is not for you. Auerbach seems to grasp the basics of horse racing...but she apparently never actually visited the farm...several times referring to Keeneland (which is directly next door to Calumet) as several miles away...Since she's a Wall Street Journal writer, obviously the business side of everything is extremely sound.

Once again, truth is stranger and more powerful than fiction. In one book, *Wild Ride* provides a family saga, an industry history, an as yet unsolved murder mystery, a portrait of the greed of the 1980s, and an insight into a world only lived in by a few, coveted by many and misunderstood by

most. This saga artfully weaves the history of the Calumet Farm, considered to be among the true dynasties of the fabled Bluegrass area, with the history of thoroughbred horse breeding and racing. Even if the horse racing industry did not interest the reader (but almost everyone at least watches the Kentucky Derby!), the speed in which the power of greed and corruption, along with an amoral attitude can cause an old-line successful business to collapse in a matter of a few years is astounding and compelling reading. Ann Hagedorn Auerbach skillfully takes the reader on a ride through the Bluegrass country, after clearly doing a tremendous amount of digging into the past and present to offer the reader a comprehensive tale that is very, very hard to put down. A great read on multiple levels.

Reads like a novel. An interesting peek inside one of the nation's most famous farms. Our copy has made the rounds of our barn many times, each border has read it at least twice. At times "Wild Ride" is sad, almost gut-wrenching, sometimes it can be rather amusing, and other times it reads like a Dick Francis murder mystery. This book belongs on every horseperson's desk. A valuable insight into early Thoroughbred history.

WILD RIDE, by Ann Hagedorn Auerbach, (New York: Henry Holt, 1994) reads like the murder mystery that it very likely is. Subtitled "The Rise and Tragic Fall of Calumet Farm, Inc., America's Premier Racing Dynasty," the book is the work of a journalist who specializes in reporting about white collar crime. But Auerbach is more than that: she is an admirer of horses also. The tragic hero of WILD RIDE is Alydar, one of the foremost stallions in American racing history, who was euthanized in November, 1990 after breaking a hind leg in his stall. While offering no definitive proof that Alydar was intentionally and fatally injured to collect \$36.5-million in insurance proceeds, Auerbach examines the incident in extreme detail and weaves the death of the stallion into her exhaustive account of the management of Calumet during the tenure of chief executive officer J.T. Lundy. Although the book is currently out of print, the recent reopening of the Alydar investigation may change that. In any case, WILD RIDE would make a marvelous primer for anyone who hopes to follow the course of the current federal probe into the stallion's death.

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