

## **BUILT ON THE SHOULDERS OF VETERINARY GIANTS** **“A Stout Heart at the Finish”**

**BY: DR. STEVE JOSEPH, KCVMA HISTORIAN**

A May 7, 1938 newspaper account says Kentucky and Maryland thoroughbred owners “...looked down their rosy noses at the big rugged...” horse from Kansas. In fact, Lawrin made a fuss at the Derby gate that didn’t improve their smirks and delayed the race by several minutes.

But, the following day the description changed. “*There was no finer looking horse.... Big and powerful, he moved with poise that moved the hearts of the crowd as he won them with his brilliant ride over the mile and a quarter distance....*”

Lawrin (1935 – 1955) is the only Kansas horse to win the prestigious Kentucky Derby. The owner of the horse was Herbert Woolf of the legendary Woolf Brothers Clothiers. Woolf also owned Woolford Farms where Lawrin was raised. The farm spread from what is now Mission Road to Roe Avenue and from 79th to 83rd Streets.

The copper brown stallion was jockeyed by 22-year-old Hall of Famer Eddie Arcaro (1916 – 1997). Arcaro went on to win six “Run for the Roses” races, including those on Whirlaway and Citation, tying him for the most Derby victories. Ben Jones was Lawrin’s trainer. Jones’ record of six Derby wins has not been surpassed.

Arcaro planned to ride the frontrunner until the horse was scratched hours before the race. Woolf convinced the jockey to ride Lawrin. Later, Arcaro would say the Kansas horse was better than War Admiral, who won the Derby the year before. According to Arcaro, Lawrin won because he had “...a stout heart at the finish...”

Only a New York City crystal ball gazer and a Kansas City sportswriter picked the 8 – 1 underdog to win. The party that followed included such local celebrities as Barney Allis.

Lawrin is buried alongside his father Insko (1928 – 1939) in the attractive neighborhood north of Cornith Square. Insko was the injured son of Galahad III who sired the 1930 Triple Crown winner Gallant Fox. Galahad III sired a record total of three Derby winners.

Dr. Thomas Fowler (1913 graduate of KCVC) was the local veterinarian at Woolford Farms. Fowler is recognized as a premier equine veterinarian and advised Woolf to “...take care of your clothing business and I will tend to Lawrin.” Dr. Fowler was the father-in-law of the now retired Dr. Gunter Alberti, a KCVMA Life Member.

A 1949 article described Woolford Farms as “...bits of old Kentucky with its blue grass, shade trees, clear streams and white wooden fences...”

Today, one wonders if cheering stablemen and pounding hooves were heard as ghosts from the past during this year’s “Two Minutes to Glory.”

