



I Remember . . .

Harry Mordecai, Jr. in cap, riding Pomonkey and George Brown, Jr. on Tom Clark take a fence during the running of the Maryland Hunt Cup in 1900. The winner was Mr. Brown who writes the reminiscences below.

. . . The First Maryland Hunt Cup

By George Brown, Jr.

THE first Maryland Hunt Cup took place on May 26, 1894, and most of the 100 or so people who came as spectators saw it from horseback or from traps and carriages, following along in the wake of the field as best they could.

That was the only sure way of seeing the participating horses, because there was then no overall view of the course as there is now in the Worthington Valley, and because it did not start and finish at the same point as it does now.

The first race began in Sam Shoemaker's meadow west of Park Heights avenue and ended 4 miles away at Brooklandwood. The jumps were post and rail and board fences, as they still are. But the course was over rugged farm country.

Yet it wasn't too rugged for those who followed it on horseback, and those few spectators who watched it from their four-in-hands atop Rogers Hill weren't particularly aware that it was anything out of the ordinary. For the Valley folk were a hard-riding bunch in those days; most of them were raised in the saddle, and most of them loved nothing better than to thunder over the fields and soar over the fences after the fox.

THAT first race was won by Johnny Miller, owned and ridden by John McHenry, with Tim Burr, owned and ridden by Redmond Stewart, in second place. The men were prominent huntsmen of that era. Some other prominent hunting men started the race for the cup; they were Jake Ulman, Ross W. Whistler, Frank Baldwin, Henry Farber and Gerald T. Hopkins, and

they were members of the Elkridge.

They were debating which club had the best mounts—the Elkridge or the Green Spring. Why not, it was suggested, have a timber race to settle the question? So the men gathered at Mr. Whistler's home, subscribed \$100 for a cup, and organized the race.

They determined that the race was to be strictly amateur, and that the course would be over natural hunting country, would have no artificial fences and would be flagged. Those rules are the cornerstone of the race. Only one rule has been changed, the one which specified that the contestants be members of either of the two clubs.

The first race was so successful that, in keeping with the plans of the founders, another was held the next year, at Hampton.

THE third started at Fernwood, another Valley estate, and ended at Brooklandwood. I remember it well because I was in it; I rode my black mare Nancy Lee, and although I fell three times, I finished. Tom Whistler, riding Kingsbury, won it—after the horse had bolted to a barn alongside the course, thrown Tom, and trotted to a stall to munch oats. Tom remounted and passed us.

By 1897—the course was 5 miles long that year, beginning at Brooklandville and winding back to my father's—the race, although still local in character, was beginning to attract crowds. Spectators still followed the field on their hunters, but more and more folk came in dayton wagons and the

like, bringing picnic lunches and making a day of it.

I missed the 1898 race, having contracted typhoid as a Spanish-American War soldier serving in Alabama. But I rode in 1900—and won, riding one of the great horses in the history of the event.

THAT was Tom Clark. I bought him from Redmond Stewart for \$250, because Redmond's father wouldn't let his son ride any more on account of the injuries he had sustained in the hunts and in the dozen or so point-to-points, steeplechases and timber races that have since disappeared. Indeed, Redmond was using Tom Clark to pull him in his Jaeger wagon to work.

I first rode Tom Clark in the old Overland Hunt Cup. A little later we won a \$200 cup in a flat race at Pimlico. So I was ready for the Maryland Cup, which began on the G. W. Ewing property, crossed the Brady place and ended up on Thomas Deford's land. It was a tough race, over hard and dangerous country, and it was as close as any before or since.

The pace was set by R. H. Thomson on Harry Birkhead's DeGarnette. But I overtook him, with Plunket Stewart on The Squire and Harry Mordecai on Pomonkey close behind me. In fact, we three fought it out all the way, neck and neck a good deal of the time; the photograph on this page shows Harry, with the cap, and me jumping from the Brady into the Deford property.

Well, I beat Plunket out at the last jump, and won by half a length. But I was out for

the next three years, having been badly injured in a fall at Timonium. I was second in 1907 and third in '08 on Irish Girl, was back in the field in 1912 and fell on Talisman in 1914. But in 1916 I had my day again, winning on Bourgeois; the race was held that year at G. Bernard Fenwick's Marberne Manor.

That was my last race—or so I thought. In the next few years I was content to be a spectator in the growing throngs that came in big, open cars and a variety of equipments ranging from coaches to buckboards, came to Marberne Manor, Hampton, Five Farms and finally, in 1922, to the present Worthington Valley course, which begins and ends on the estate then owned by C. L. A. Heiser and now by Mrs. J. W. Y. Martin.

BUT at a dinner party in 1924, we began to talk about the approaching race, and Proctor Brady and I said we'd like to ride in it. I determined that I would, especially when a guest made a bet to that effect, and, as it turned out, I competed on Proctor's horse Tom Fool, finishing fourth.

This year's will be the fifty-ninth running of what many have called Maryland's greatest sporting event.

And no race of the kind has seen better riders than Redmond Stewart, Jervis Spencer, Sidney Waters, Antelo Devereaux, Bob Taylor, Charles Harrison, Noel Laing, Billy Waters, Plunket Stewart, D. H. Mordecai and Stuart Janney, such horses as Garry Owen, Princeton, Billy Barton, Captain Kettle, Blockade, Winston, Pine Pep.

That's why I'll be there next Saturday.