

Upstate New York



Bernard F. Webster

Upstate New York



Webster is a home-grown Western New York racing legend. He lived in Hilton, NY and got his first driving win at the age of 16 at the Hemlock Fair; both a mere 25 miles from Batavia Downs. But that incipient stage of his development would later see a 47-year career unfold on the biggest stages of the sport, as Webster would go on to win the Hambletonian, the Little Brown Jug and the Kentucky Futurity.

Webster, aka 'The Master of the Half-Mile' and 'Benny The Whip,' would win his first pari-mutuel race at Buffalo Raceway in 1958. He competed on the Western New York circuit until 1965 when he decided to relocate at Yonkers and Roosevelt Raceway. Webster joined what many believe was the greatest driver colony ever, competing against legends like Billy Haughton, Carmine Abbatiello, Buddy Gilmour, Del Insko and John Chapman.

In 1975, Webster won the Little Brown Jug with a little known three-year-old gelding named Seatrain (1:55 \$825,006). Just a week before the big stakes event, he set a World Record for a three-year-old pacing gelding on a half-mile track at Batavia Downs and that prompted his trainer to enter him in the Jug.

In 1976, Webster purchased Oil Burner (1:54.2 \$535,541) from Stanley Dancer and went on to win several major races, including the Oliver Wendell Holmes and Monticello-OTB Classic. After he retired, Oil Burner was later syndicated for \$2.7 million. Webster retained 40 per cent of one of his first and most successful foals, No Nukes (1:52.1 \$572,430) No Nukes went on to even greater success in the breeding shed and was one of only six \$100 million sires in the sport.

Webster went on to win the 1981 Messenger Stakes with Seahawk Hanover (1:55.2 \$675,122), the 1984 Hambletonian with Historic Freight (1:57 \$668,392) and the 1985 Kentucky Futurity with one of his favourite horses, Flak Bait (1:55.2 \$880,576).

In a career which spanned six decades, Benny The Whip Webster won 4,378 races and his horses earned purses of \$43,197,645.