

Guy Crippen

1891 - 1952

Inducted 2010

Guy Crippen was born in the small town of Darlington, Wisconsin in 1891. From that time on, harness racing acquired a man who proved to be one of its most colorful figures. The Wisconsin based trainer traveled across the country racing his stable, but he always came back to his home state, training his horses on the ovals of Elkhorn and Milwaukee. In 1938 the trainer from Sudsville (Milwaukee to the uninitiated) was in attendance at a national gathering of friends of harness racing to formulate the creation of the USTA. When not busy with his stock, the likeable Badger reinsman kept himself occupied with ideas of making harness racing a bigger and better sport.

Guy was long recognized as one of the best in his profession and his campaign of 1950 was judged as one of his most successful. That year the Kroening stable was made up of young horses, only Highland Ellen being older than four, and they were raced from the very opening of the season to the close, literally from coast to coast. As an example of careful conditioning and special skill in keeping horses on edge, Crippen performed the unique feat with the two stable aces, Highland Ellen and Lord Steward. Both horses won at Santa Anita in April their first starts and won their last starts in October in Toledo, all in track record times.

On the west coast he annexed a reputation among race going fans as one of the most colorful and spirited drivers in the game. Railbirds cheered him in unison for his expert handling of horses. Newspaper men acclaimed him in their columns as one of the most colorful sports personalities to invade the sun-splashed shores of the Pacific. In back of it all and in his home bailiwick he was just a wonderful guy, with an undying yen for good, clean-cut racing and a homey chance to sit and just plain talk with a few of his good natured moans thrown in.

In 1951 Guy won the Hambletonian with Mainliner, followers of harness racing will always remember that win as a high point of the Badger reinsmans career when Mainliner carried Guy to a stirring victory in the race every driver hopes to win. The 1951 Hambletonian proved to be Guy Crippen's last. The sixty-year-old reinsman who had managed his powerful stable so well was stricken with throat cancer during the summer of 1952 and had to retire from his profession, dying in early September.

Nominated by Wayne Moldenhauer