

Interviewee: David Miller

Interviewer: \_\_\_\_ Johnston of United States Trotting Association (USTA)

Date: September 19, 2018

Location: Log Cabin at Delaware County Fairgrounds

Transcription by Caiden Hooks, completed August 25, 2019

USTA: You got many drives today?

Miller: Five, I believe.

USTA: Ok.

Miller: Yeah, it was good.

USTA: Ok. Ready?

Miller: I'd come for the honorary (Ron) Pierce.

USTA: Oh, ok. Yeah.

Miller: Yeah.

USTA: All right. Ready to go?

Miller: Yup! [In background, USTA: Unclear (perhaps "There you go.")]

USTA: All right. How old were you when you experienced the Little Brown Jug and do you recall what your first experience or first impressions were?

Miller: Yeah, I was twelve years old, turning thirteen, and I'd never seen nothin' like it. It was pretty exciting, pretty thrilling, and the whole place was just kinda mind-blowing for me.

USTA: Now was there any other career path that you considered other than being a driver or trainer, or was this something you wanted to do?

Miller: Yeah, no, you know what? Ever since I can remember I wanted to drive and just been involved with the horses my whole life. And when I got old enough to get my license, I started.

USTA: Ok. How old were you when you first rode at the Jug and do you have any specific memories of that day?

Miller: Yeah. I drove here when I was probably like fourteen in a matinee. I can't remember the horse, and I don't think he did that well, but I was like, "I finally get on the track here," you know? But yeah, I was pretty pumped.

USTA: In 2003, you won the Jug and Triple Crown with No Pan Intended. Talk to us a little bit about that race and what winning that Triple Crown meant to you.

Miller: Oh. Well, it was an awesome feeling, you know. It all started about two weeks out. He win [won] the Cane at Freehold, and he beat the horses that was like the favorites at the time. And I told the owner, it were Bob Glazier, I said, "We're gonna win the Jug." And to come here and to do it, you know, it was a high that I had never felt. It lasted a couple-three weeks.

USTA: [Laughs] Who would you say are some of the most important people who kind of help make this race what it is today, if anybody?

Miller: Well, I wouldn't say it's just *one* person. I mean, the state of Ohio, and, you know, the Jug, they've kinda been proud of it. And ya know what? They work very hard and put up a lot o' money to get the best horses here. And you know, people here in Ohio really do appreciate racing. They love seeing the good horses and the top drivers and the top horses, and in a way it just kinda escalated into what it is today.

USTA: That kinda leads into the next question. What do you think makes the Little Brown Jug so special versus other events?

Miller: Well, you know, it's a leg of the Triple Crown. And I'm sure when it started out, it was probably the money they went for [Unintelligible] made it kinda special. And, you know, it was two-heat racing and it was just good racing. And like I said, it brought all the top horses here and top trainers and top drivers, and it's been a good, good time.

USTA: Now what is probably being talked about is one of the greatest races of all-time was [Unclear, "All Been Erse"?] All Bets Off, Wiggle It Jiggle It, and Lost For Words. Talk to us about that race and how you kinda felt before and after and where does that race kinda stack in do ya think, your hardest race?

Miller: Well, I definitely think it was one of the better Jugs. You know, Life Sign's race was similar to that type of race. That day there, my horse, he won his elimination very handy, and he was nowhere near as good as Wiggle-It Jiggle-It was. But we were here on the half, and Wiggle-It Jiggle-It didn't get off the gate very well and was havin' trouble, so I made the front pretty easy. And the only thing different I would'a' done, if he would'a' came earlier, I would'a' had to turn 'im loose. But he never got to me until we was goin' to the half, and at that point ... My horse, he was a good horse and he'd put out a big effort that day, you know. Wiggle-It beat 'im right at the wire, and I thought I had it won it at the head of the stretch. But you know, it was pretty thrilling for everybody involved, and I'm sure the fans got their money's worth that day.

USTA: Now the following year you won the Little Brown Jug with Betting Line at 1:49. Was that kind of like a resurgence sorta [so to] speak? You know, was it nice to get back in it and get back in Winner Circle?

Miller: Yes! Yes. You know, I'm always glad to come here with a favorite, *I'm* always glad to *come* here, you know, and to have a favorite, it's something I look forward to all year. And to come here knowin' that I got a shot at winnin' it again, it just makes it much more exciting, you know. Yeah, winnin' with him was a great feeling. He had dominated all year long and it was just kind of another feather in his cap. and I was a big fan of 'im. He was a good horse. I mean, he went on all size tracks, all different ways. He was just a very tough horse.

USTA: What traditions connected to the race are ones maybe you think should never be changed? What should be kept the same, if any ["anything"?]?

Miller: Well, I definitely think the heat racing separates it from anything else. And I'm a fan for it. I mean, it's Jug Day! It's not final of the Jug, you know. [Chuckles] It's Jug *Day*, you know. It has its own character, animosity, whatever you wanna call it. You know, it's got its feeling. And you know what? I don't think they should change anything.

USTA: How do you know the Jug can be sustained and advanced going forward?

Miller: Well, it's the same old answer. They know money. You know what? Bigger purses. You know what? There's a few things that I would do here. A slanted starting gate. There's a few things that I think that would maybe spark some change. But the biggest thing is the money. *It is* a leg of the Triple Crown, and we got a horse this year goin' for it, so it's still got its tradition and, you know, the thrill of it.

USTA: Last question. You have four Little Brown Jug victories, so if you score the victory this year, it'd be your *fifth* victory. What would it mean to be one of the all-time leading Jug winners?

Miller: That would be great, and that's what I'm goin' for. I'm gonna keep goin' as long as I can. I'm fifty-three now and hopefully people keep givin' me horses that have shots to drive, do whatever.

USTA: K.