



Thirty Tons a Day

Bill Veeck

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In between his romances with baseball, in early 1969 Bill Veeck took up the challenge of managing Boston's semi-moribund Suffolk Downs racetrack. "Being of sound mind and in reasonable possession of my faculties," Veeck wrote, "I marshaled my forces, at the tender age of fifty-four, and marched upon the city of Boston, Massachusetts, like a latter-day Ben Franklin, to seek my fame and fortune as the operator of a racetrack. Two years later, fortune having taken one look at my weathered features and shaken its hoary locks, I retreated, smiling gamely."

When he took over the track, Veeck had yet to learn that the normal daily output of some sixteen hundred horses (including straw) would amount to so much, or be so hard to dispose of. But that was the least of his problems. In the tough-minded and Tabasco-tongued prose that is his trademark, Veeck recalls the battles he won and lost, the fun he had, and what he discovered about horse racing at "Sufferin' Downs." It's a zesty, complicated story but a relentlessly fascinating one about the inside workings of one of the most popular sports in America.

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