

# PHAR LAP

T H E M A K I N G O F A L E G E N D



Photo courtesy of Museum Victoria

## WHO WAS PHAR LAP?

Phar Lap is Australia's most famous racehorse. He was a champion who won not only the best horse races in Australia, but also the richest race in North America before his untimely death in 1932. But to millions of people worldwide Phar Lap was more than a racehorse. This gentle giant also won the hearts of everyone who saw him or heard mention of his name during the Great Depression when there was little else to provide hope and joy in people's lives.

**'Phar Lap, the one and only, a freak, a horse of the century.'** (Banjo Paterson)

## Further information on the mighty Phar Lap:

[www.museum.vic.gov.au/pharlap](http://www.museum.vic.gov.au/pharlap)

[www.nma.gov.au/advancedSearchResultsItemDetail.jsp?irn=64620](http://www.nma.gov.au/advancedSearchResultsItemDetail.jsp?irn=64620)

[www.tepapa.govt.nz/TePapa/English/Galleries/CollectionHighlights/OtherLandVertebrates/PharLap.htm](http://www.tepapa.govt.nz/TePapa/English/Galleries/CollectionHighlights/OtherLandVertebrates/PharLap.htm)



Photo courtesy of Museum Victoria

## PHAR LAP'S FINAL JOURNEY - THE STORY

This new documentary will examine the events surrounding Phar Lap's journey to America in late 1931 until his 'triumphant' return to Australia as a legend a year later.

After competing in three Melbourne Cups and having won most of Australia's greatest horseraces, Phar Lap left Sydney in late 1931 and travelled by ship to America. On the way he rested for a few weeks near Wellington in his native New Zealand. In March 1932, Phar Lap won the Agua Caliente Handicap in Mexico, the richest race in North America.

Two weeks later he was dead. His body parts were divided and sent to various institutions – the skeleton to New Zealand's Dominion Museum, the heart to the Australian Institute of Anatomy in Canberra, and the chestnut hide, after being mounted by America's leading taxidermists, was returned to the Melbourne Museum, where it stands today – one of Australia's most treasured icons.

**Hoofnote:** This documentary will not re-examine the many theories surrounding Phar Lap's unfortunate death.

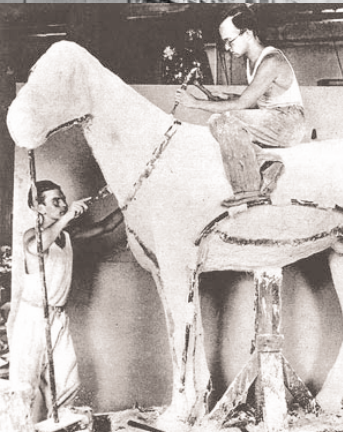


Photo courtesy of Museum Victoria

## THE SEARCH IS ON...

The search is on to discover more about Phar Lap and his final journey. 75 years on, the number of living eyewitnesses to Phar Lap is dwindling. Most of those directly associated with the 'Red Terror' during this final journey – Tommy Woodcock (strapper & trainer in America), David Davis (American part-owner), Harry Telford (part-owner & trainer in Australia), William Nielsen (Veterinarian), Billy Elliot (winning jockey at Agua Caliente), E J Martin (track rider), and Jimmy Smith (Canadian farrier) – have passed on, and with them their first hand accounts of the horse and the journey.

However some of these key figures may have left **note-books, diaries, journals, photos** and **souvenirs** relating to Phar Lap, or written **letters** to family, friends, business partners, institutions or newspapers about Phar Lap and about this final journey. Such items may still be in existence and are being sought by the Phar Lap Doco crew as their contents may provide further insight. The Doco crew is also keen to find any **photographs** taken by fans of the horse, and perhaps even **film-footage** of Phar Lap taken by some budding home movie enthusiast.



Photos courtesy of Museum Victoria

## HOW YOU CAN HELP...

Somewhere out there, perhaps stored under a bed, or in a box in an attic, or in a family junk room in homes around Australia, in New Zealand, across America, or elsewhere in the world there may be forgotten items relating to Phar Lap.

Was someone in your family lucky enough to have seen Phar Lap race, or up close at his stables in Melbourne or Wellington, or near San Francisco or at Agua Caliente? Did they take a photo of him, or have their picture taken with him? Did they write a letter or postcard about him? Were they present to see Phar Lap win at Agua Caliente in Mexico in 1932? Perhaps they photographed or filmed him?

Or after his death, did they write home about seeing his mounted effigy on display in New York or elsewhere in America, or in Sydney or Melbourne on route to his resting place at the Melbourne Museum?

If you have or know of any materials or further details relating to Phar Lap's final journey to America via New Zealand, or his time in America and his race win in Mexico, the Phar Lap Doco crew would love to hear from you.

Your input will assist in making the Phar Lap story complete and will ensure that the legend of Phar Lap lives on. (Full credit will be given to the owners of all items used in the film).

## THE PHAR LAP DOCO CREW

THE PRINCIPAL behind the Phar Lap Doco is the Australian filmmaker, Philip Tyndall. Philip has 20 years experience in independent filmmaking, mainly in documentary film and video production. His best known film is the international prize-winning feature-length documentary "Words And Silk", which explored the worlds of writing and horseracing; Winner of "Best Documentary" and "Best Artist-Profile Documentary" Awards at the Houston and San Francisco Film Festivals.

## CONTACT

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