



‘The Legacy of Black Horsemen’ tells the story of the jockeys and trainers in the 1800s who helped establish the Thoroughbred industry

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The Legacy of Black Horsemen, an hour-long historical documentary from KET, highlights the often-untold story of Black jockeys, trainers, grooms and exercisers in the 1800s whose contributions helped lay the foundation for the Thoroughbred industry.

Working with horses in era of slavery, the Civil War, segregation and Jim Crow laws, these Black horsemen were subjected to discrimination and cruelty throughout much of their lives. During slavery, many won the faith of their white owners and were trusted with major financial and horse training decisions. In the wake of the Civil War, many Black horsemen opted to stay in the industry, which led to a near dominance on the turf, with African American jockeys winning more than half the Kentucky Derby races leading to the turn of the 20th century.

But that dominance would come to an end with the *Plessy v. Ferguson* decision and the rise of Jim Crow laws. Black jockeys faced violence on the track from white jockeys, and African Americans were pushed out of the saddle. Eighty years would pass before a Black jockey would again ride in the Kentucky Derby.

Utilizing contemporary interviews, reenactments and historical photographs and paintings, *The Legacy of Black Horsemen* brings these important stories to light, showing how African Americans played an indispensable role in establishing Thoroughbred racing as America’s first national pastime.

The program is funded in part by the KET Endowment for Kentucky Productions.

The Legacy of Black Horsemen

KET Monday, Nov. 20 • 9/8 pm

KET2 Thursday, Nov. 23 • 9/8 pm



Watch on-demand at KET.org and on the PBS app

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