

# Alonzo Clayton

**Author:** Emily Libecap,  
Graduate Student Intern

**Places:** Jackson County, Mississippi;  
Kansas City, Kansas; Little Rock, Arkansas;  
Chicago, Illinois; New Jersey; New York;  
Kentucky; Los Angeles, California

**Birth:** 1876    **Death:** March 17, 1917

**Professions:** Jockey, Exercise Rider



## Childhood

Alonzo “Lonnie” Clayton was born in Mossy Point, Jackson County, Mississippi. His parents were Robert and Evaline.<sup>1</sup> By 1880, the Clayton family was living in Kansas City, Kansas.<sup>2</sup>

## Early Beginnings

At only twelve years old, he ran away to join his brother in Chicago, who rode as a jockey for Elias J. “Lucky” Baldwin. Clayton’s first job at Baldwin’s stable was as an exercise boy. He made his jockey debut at fourteen years old in Clifton, New Jersey, in 1890. The following year, he won the Jerome Stakes and the Champagne Stakes at Morris Park in Westchester County, New York.<sup>3</sup>

## Career Highs

In 1892, at fifteen years old, Clayton won the Kentucky Derby aboard Azra. He rode for Pastime Stables and Bashford Manor Stables of Louisville. From then on, his career and fame grew.<sup>4</sup> Clayton rode primarily in the New York circuit. In the 1890s, he also raced throughout the country.

- In 1892, he rode Azra to victory in the Clark Handicap at Churchill Downs and the Travers Stakes at Saratoga.
- He rode in the Kentucky Derby three more times, placing second in 1893 and 1897, and third in 1895.
- He won the Kentucky Oaks in 1894 and 1895.
- In 1895 alone, he posted 144 wins.

Clayton enjoyed a successful career during this decade with these notable wins and many more.<sup>5</sup>

## Legacy

Clayton was arrested for alleged race-fixing at his last big appearance in 1901. Despite being cleared of all charges, he never won another major race and was unable to make a career comeback. He died in 1917 of tuberculosis in Los Angeles.<sup>6</sup>

The house he built for his family in North Little Rock, Arkansas still stands today, and is on the National Register of Historic Places. Clayton was honored in 2010 with the construction of a historical marker in Louisville, Kentucky, at the old location of Bashford Manor Stables.<sup>7</sup>

## Sources

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## Footnotes

<sup>1</sup>1870 United States Federal Census."

<sup>2</sup>1880 United States Federal Census."

<sup>3</sup>Encyclopedia of Arkansas."

<sup>4</sup>Hotaling, The Great Black Jockeys, 290.

<sup>5</sup>Goodwin Brothers Firm, Goodwin's Official Annual Turf Guide.

<sup>6</sup>Encyclopedia of Arkansas."

<sup>7</sup>Kentucky Historical Marker Database."