

Babe Hurd

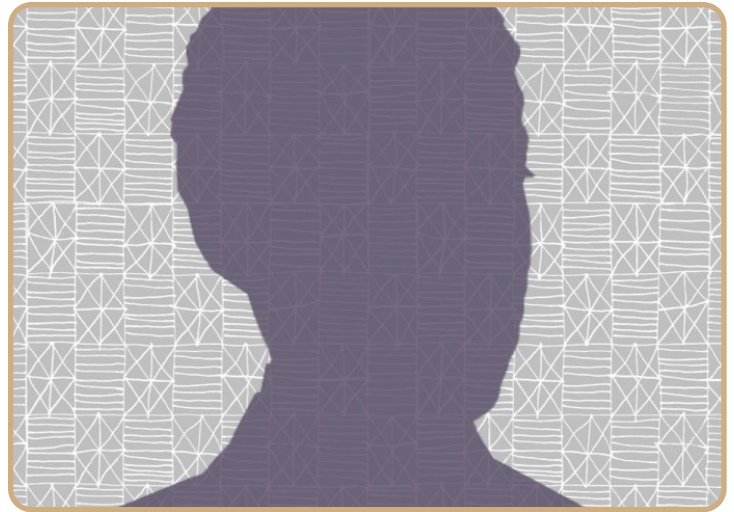
Author: Yvonne Giles,
Research Consultant

Places: Galveston, Texas; Augusta, Savannah, Georgia; Charleston, South Carolina; Lexington, Louisville, Paris, Kentucky; St. Louis, Missouri; Chicago, Illinois

Birth: June 1, 1866

Death: December 7, 1928

Professions: Jockey, Trainer, Owner



Childhood and Family

Babe Hurd and his brother Mitchell were born in Texas.¹ Researchers are continuing to search for the names of their parents and siblings.

Hurd and Anna Thomas married in 1898 in Georgia.² Alice Hurd Whitfield, a daughter, lived in Chicago, Illinois with her husband Samuel and three children.

Career Starts in Youth

By the age of thirteen, Hurd rode Thoroughbreds owned by Oden Bowie, Governor of Maryland. His first win came aboard the horse Cinderella. In 1882, Babe and Mitchell Hurd worked for Green B. Morris and James Patton stable of Kansas City, Missouri. Horses they rode in spring meets in Georgia, South Carolina, and Louisiana included:

-Duke of Kent

-Jim Ferrell

-Exeter

-Fisherman

-Apollo

Hurd, riding Apollo in the Cottrill Stakes, won by three lengths in the straightway. In May, the stable came to race at the Kentucky Association track before going to Churchill Downs.³

The 1882 Derby

Hurd mounted on Apollo was in sixth place in a field of fourteen. Fans bet that Runnymede, a stakes winner, owned by Philip and Michael Dwyer of New York would come in first. Apollo had not raced at the age of two, and Hurd, a month from his sixteenth birthday, had ridden the horse once. How could they win?

Hurd paced the horse to save his energy. At the last quarter mile, Apollo and Runnymede pulled out. Hurd urged Apollo to the front and won by half a length. It was a surprise upset.⁴

Training Career

Hurd retired from riding in 1885 to begin a career as a trainer. He worked at:

- Garfield Park Racetrack, Chicago, Illinois
- St. Louis Fair Grounds, St. Louis, Missouri
- Churchill Downs track, Louisville, Kentucky⁵

The horse owners who employed him were:

- M. H. Tichenor
- Frank Shaw
- M. B. Gruber

In 1905, Babe and Mitchell Hurd and Arthur Parker formed a partnership to race horses:

- Faquita
- Florence
- Cecil B.

The Hurd brothers owned these horses, backed with \$500 from Parker. They had a disagreement about what races they were going to enter, and Parker sued the brothers.⁶

End of Career and Legacy

By 1920 Hurd worked for William Thraves at Longridge Farm in Bourbon County, Kentucky. He remained at the farm for eight years before he became ill and died at the age of sixty-two. His daughter, Alice, came to Lexington and arranged to have her father's remains buried in Chicago.⁷

Hurd's record win in 1882 would stand for 136 years. It was not matched until 2018 when Justify, a horse that had not raced as a two-year old, won the Kentucky Derby.⁸

Sources

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Footnotes

¹1900 United States Federal Census."

²Marriage Record."

³Goodwin Brothers Firm, Goodwin's Official Annual Turf Guide.

⁴"When Apollo Won The Kentucky Derby."

⁵Louisville Trainers Showing Activity."

⁶Running Horses on Them Ground for Liquidating Partnership."

⁷Famous Jockey Dies in Ky."

⁸Justify - Triple Crown Winner 2018."