

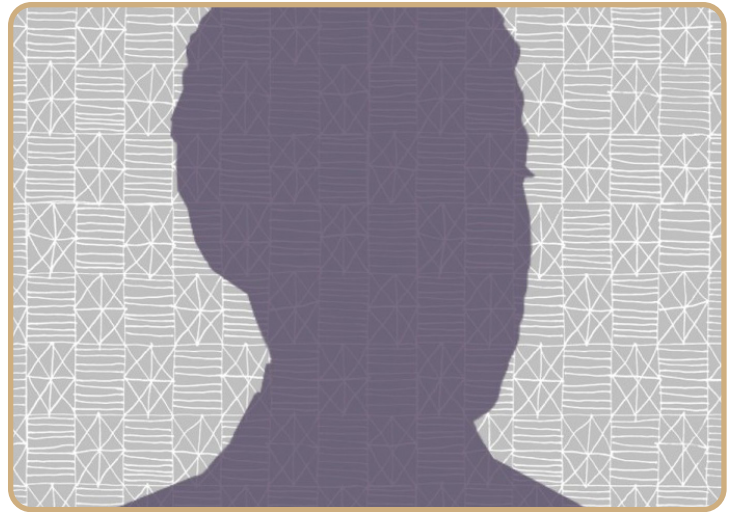
Edward Dudley Brown

Author: Michael Phelps,
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Places: Spring Station, Woodford County,
Kentucky; Lexington, Kentucky

Birth: circa 1848 **Death:** May 11, 1906

Professions: Jockey, Trainer, Stable
Worker, Horse Owner, Stable Owner



Childhood in Stables

Edward Dudley Brown was born enslaved in Fayette County, Kentucky. At the age of seven, he was sold in a Lexington Courthouse auction to R. A. Alexander who trained him as a horseman. Alexander owned the Woodburn Stud farm, located in Woodford County in the community known as Spring Station.¹

Jockey Career

Brown began as a stable hand before becoming a jockey for Alexander from 1864 to 1867. Ansel Williamson trained Brown.² Brown rode the undefeated Asteroid and other Woodburn Thoroughbreds in his wins.³ His most notable wins came in 1870 aboard Kingfisher, trained by fellow African American horseman Raleigh Colston, Sr. Together, they won the 1870 Belmont Stakes, Travers Stakes and Champion Stakes.⁴

Thoroughbred Training Career

Brown left to work with Woodburn Stud's former manager, Daniel Swigert.⁵ With Brown's maturity into manhood, he had become too heavy to be a jockey on the flat courses. He briefly switched to steeplechase before trying his hand at training Thoroughbreds.⁶ Brown found his greatest fortune as a trainer. In 1875, he won the Kentucky St. Leger with King Alfonso and then in 1877, the Kentucky Derby with Baden Baden.⁷ Throughout the 1880s, his training services were in high demand. He worked for horse owners including:

- Milton Young
- R. C. Pate
- Eugene Leigh
- Dr. J. D. Noet.⁸

His winning streak continued. In the year 1881 alone, he earned 53 documented wins with various Thoroughbreds.

Family and Home Life

Brown married Lucy Alexander Gaines who had also grown up at Spring Station and they became parents of one son, Lee Lovelle.⁹ They purchased a brick home that still stands at 140 Eastern Avenue in downtown Lexington.¹⁰ It is located near the original grounds of the Kentucky Association track where Brown stabled and trained Thoroughbreds. Brown later relocated to Louisville where he continued operating a stable of his own while he also trained for others.¹¹

Freedom, Ownership, and Leadership

Brown's achievements as a trainer allowed him the freedom to strike out on his own in 1896. After emancipation from enslavement, he became a wealthy horseman, known to carry a bankroll of \$75,000.¹² With this wealth he established his own stable and continued his success as an owner and as a trainer. He won the 1896 Kentucky Derby with Ben Brush and then the 1898 Kentucky Derby with Plaudit. Overall, his career includes at least eighteen identified Stakes, Cups and Derby wins at tracks from New York to Missouri. He was asked to preside over a trust which oversaw African American jockeys.¹³

Legacy

Toward the end of his life, Brown's health suffered. In 1906, he became bedridden with pneumonia but survived.¹⁴ He contracted pulmonary tuberculosis two months later and died. The Midway Pilgrim Baptist Church in Woodford County, Kentucky hosted his funeral.¹⁵ In 1984, Brown was inducted into the National Racing Hall of Fame for his notable achievements as a trainer.¹⁶ He has been called "one of the top trainers of the 19th century" and "the most noted colored trainer ever known to American turf."¹⁷

Sources

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Footnotes

¹Woodford County Clerk, "Marriage Record of Edward Dudley Brown and Lucy Alexander Gaines."

²1910 United States Federal Census."

³"Brown Dick' Is Dangerously Ill."

⁴Brown, Edward D. 'Brown Dick.'"

⁵Talbott, "Edward Dudley Brown."

⁶NMRHF, "Edward D. Brown."

⁷Brown, Edward D. 'Brown Dick.'"

⁸"Brown Dick' Is Dangerously Ill."

⁹Woodford County Clerk, "Marriage Record of Edward Dudley Brown and Lucy Alexander Gaines."

¹⁰Fayette County Deed Book 71."

¹¹(No Title)."

¹²NMRHF, 'Edward D. Brown.'"

¹³Noted Trainer Dead: Brown Dick, A Colored Man Who Was Supposed To Head The Jockey Trust."

¹⁴"Brown Dick' Is Dangerously Ill."

¹⁴Talbott, "Edward Dudley Brown."

¹⁶NMRHF, 'Edward D. Brown.'"

¹⁷Noted Trainer Dead: Brown Dick, A Colored Man Who Was Supposed To Head The Jockey Trust."