

Odell Livingston

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Places: East Bernstadt, Laurel County,
Kentucky; Lexington, Fayette County,
Kentucky; Louisville, Jefferson County,
Kentucky

Birth: November 24, 1909

Death: March 7, 1977

Professions: Stable Worker, Exercise Rider,
Trainer



Birth and Family

Odell Livingston was born in 1909 to Edward and Martha Livingston who were living in East Bernstadt, Kentucky.¹ By the time Livingston was ten, the family had moved to Louisville, Kentucky. Their home was in South Highland Park. It was a neighborhood that was near Churchill Downs racetrack in Louisville, Kentucky.

Livingston married Alma. They had a son, Edward.² His second marriage was to Susie B. Heaston.

Career

Livingston said later in life that he had been associated with horses since he was ten years old. He decided to become a trainer in 1938.³ He took the jobs that would help him learn what he needed to know.

In 1940 Livingston worked as a stableman at Keeneland in Lexington, Kentucky. His employer was S. H. Stone.⁴ Livingston's work with horses was interrupted by military service from 1942 to 1945. Following discharge, he returned to Louisville.

Trainer

Livingston picked up where he had left off before service. He had gained enough experience and knowledge to pass the exam to get his trainer's license.

Photos document his training Sanab for J.R. Hoffman. The horse won at River Downs in 1947 and Churchill Downs in 1948. In 1964, Jerrywood won at Churchill Downs. Livingston trained the Thoroughbred owned by Susie Livingston, his wife.⁵

Death and Legacy

Odell Livingston died in 1977 and was buried in Evergreen Cemetery, Louisville, Jefferson County, Kentucky.⁶

Livingston was a trainer for over thirty years. He was one of several African Americans who stayed connected to the racing industry despite racial discrimination during the Jim Crow era. Archive records document Livingston's accomplishments as an African American horseman.⁷

Sources

Dunnigan, Alice Allison. *The Fascinating Story of Black Kentuckians: Their Heritage and Traditions*. 489. The Associated Publishers, Washington, D.C. January 1, 1982.

Thirteenth Census of the United States, 1910. Washington, D.C.: National Archives and Records Administration. 1910.

Fifteenth Census of the United States, 1930. Washington, D.C.: National Archives and Records Administration.¹⁹³⁰

U.S. World War II Draft Cards for Kentucky, 10/16/1940–03/31/1947. Records of the Selective Service System, 1926–1975; Box:390. Record Group 147. National Archives and Records Administration, St. Louis, Missouri. Odell Livingston

"Death Certificate: Odell Livingston" March 7, 1977. Jefferson County, Kentucky. #5889.

"Odell Livingston (1909–1977) Grave Memorial". Accessed February 1, 2021

<https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/204466755/odell-livingston>

Mitchell-Smith, Wanda. 2019. Donated Items.

Footnotes

¹Thirteenth Census of the United States, 1910. Washington, D.C.: National Archives and Records Administration. 1910

²Fifteenth Census of the United States, 1930. Washington, D.C.: National Archives and Records Administration. 1930

³Dunnigan, Alice Allison. *The Fascinating Story of Black Kentuckians: Their Heritage and Traditions*.

⁴World War II Draft Cards for Kentucky, 10/16/1940–03/31/1947. Records of The Selective Service System, 1926–1975; Box:390. Record Group 147. National Archives and Records Administration, St. Louis, Missouri

⁵Mitchell-Smith, Wanda. 2019. Donated item.

⁶Odell Livingston (1909–1977) Grave Memorial

⁷Mitchell-Smith, Wanda.