Race of Reins

Created by Bettymarie McClanahan

for

The Chronicle of African Americans in the Horse Industry

www.AfricanAmericanHorseStories.org



Image: Jockey Oliver Lewis riding Aristides to victory in inaugural Kentucky Derby, May 17, 1875. (Source: Wikipedia)

### **Summary**

This multi-curricular, co-curricular and extracurricular educational module provides an in-depth unit of study or a range of stand-alone lessons that revere the African American jockeys who shouldered, championed, reigned and ruled the Kentucky Derby. It also provides extensions that encourage African American youth to rightfully reacquire and rule the reins once more.

### **Grade Levels**

High School, grades 9-12

### **Subjects**

English: Reading and Writing (Communication)

Art: Drama, Performance and Visual Arts

Technology: Webpage and Video Presentations

History: Chronicle of the African American Jockey before, during and after Kentucky Derby dominance

Health: Historical nutritional practices

### **Time Requirements**

Two-day activities to one semester unit of studies

### **Chronicle Resources**

Person profiles, related stories and related research for the following:

Oliver Lewis

William “Billy” Walker

Garrett Davis Lewis

Babe Hurd

Isaac Murphy

Erskine “Babe”Henderson

Isaac Lewis

Alonzo “Lonnie” Clayton

James “Soup” Perkins

Willie Simms

Jimmy Winkfield

### **Chronicle Themes**

Before Emancipation, Separate Is Not Equal, Legacy Lives On

### **Goals**

Students will research history, create visual and web based documentaries, vet validity and accuracy of non-primary sources and/or create works of art and song.

### **Guiding Questions**

What is the European connection between the African Slave Trade and the horse industry?

Who were the African American men who shouldered the beginnings of The Kentucky Derby?

How did they become prominent in the horse industry, and why is this not common knowledge?

What effect did the Jim Crow Laws have on African Americans and the horse industry as it pertains to the Kentucky Derby?

How can these men be honored for their contributions on a state and national level?

How can we encourage young African Americans to, once again, rule the reins?

### **Vocabulary**

**Reins**  - a long, narrow strap attached at one end to a horse's bit, typically used in pairs to guide or check a horse while riding or driving

**Reign** - dominating power or influence

**Aristocracy**- a governing body or upper class usually made up of a hereditary nobility

**Reacquire** - to regain as one's own

**Chronicle** - a historical account of events arranged in order of time usually without analysis or interpretation

**Steeplechase** - a horse race over a closed course with obstacles

**Paradox** - an argument that apparently derives self-contradictory conclusions by valid deduction from acceptable premises

**Vetting** - to subject to usually expert appraisal or correction

**Claim** - to assert in the face of possible contradiction

**Counterclaim** - an opposing claim

**Rebuttal** - a claim that refutes by evidence or argument

**Jim Crow** - ethnic discrimination especially against Blacks by legal enforcement or traditional sanctions

### **Career Connections**

Historian, Academic Scholar, Web Page Creator, Production Specialist, Artist and/or Songwriter.

Equine Professions: Jockey, Trainer, Breeder, Farrier, Goom, Instructor and/or Equestrian.

### **Background Information**

African American Winning Jockeys of The Kentucky Derby

Sports’ two most exciting minutes

Memorialized by

The Kentucky Derby's eleven monumental African American men

Oliver Lewis: Aristides (1875)

William “Billy” Walker: Baden-Baden (1877)

Garrett Davis Lewis: Fonso (1880)

Babe Hurd: Apollo (1882)

Isaac Murphy: Buchanan (1884)

Erskine “Babe”Henderson: Joe Cotton (1885)

Isaac Lewis: Montrose (1887)

Isaac Murphy: Riley (1890)

Isaac Murphy: Kingman (1891)

Alonzo “Lonnie” Clayton: Azra (1892)

James “Soup” Perkins: Halma (1895)

Willie Simms: Ben Brush (1896)

Willie Simms: Plaudit (1898)

Jimmy Winkfield: His Eminence (1901)

Jimmy Winkfield: Alan-a-Dale (1902)

### **Module Overview**

#### **Month 1: Informational Studies, Assignments 1 - 7**

* Africans and horse training for the “Sport of Kings” in Europe and other countries (2 Days)
* History of Virginia Slavery and the use of enslaved people in the horse industry in Virginia (3 Days)
* Enslaved peoples’ entry into trainer / jockey status (2 Days)
* Specific study using the Chronicle of African Americans in the Horse Industry website (5 Days)
* Narrative studies of individual men in the horse industry (3 Days)
* Creation of web page for individual African American Kentucky Derby jockey (5 Days)

#### **Month 2: Creative And Argumentative Studies, Assignments 8 - 11**

* Creative studies group will be established. Creative Timelines will be ongoing and may last throughout the summer months.
* Students will do portrait work of individual jockeys and trainers in the horse racing industry.
* Students will create a “Trail of Trials / Tribulations” modeled after the picture depicting slaves leaving the Virginias to uncertain futures in the South.
* Students will create and collaborate with other students in other schools in neighboring and / or distant counties to devise a way to express the history, devotion and expertise of African American pioneers in the horse racing industry.
* Murals collaborations and memorial models will be the culminating activity for this component of the unit.
* Students will write persuasive / argumentative letters / papers / editorials about the Jim Crow Law elimination of African American Horsemen.
* YouTube Videos and documentaries will be created and shared to invite others to contribute to the cause by creating scholarships for young African American men who, once again, want to claim their right and heritage in the “Sport of Kings” utilizing the Legacy Equine Academy as an entry point.

#### **Month 3: Public Awareness: Assignments 12 Through 13**

* Artwork will be created and distributed to raise awareness of:
  + the lack of African American young men and the jockey profession with respect to the past history / decline of participation, and
  + the potential of young men in the horse industry field of studies and professions.