

Anthony Hamilton

Author: Emily Libecap,
Graduate Student Intern

Places: Columbia, South Carolina;
Brighton Beach, New York; New York, New
York; Lexington, Kentucky; Vienna, Austria;
Budapest, Hungary; Warsaw, Poland;
Russia; Menton, France

Birth: 1866 **Death:** 1904

Professions: Jockey



Childhood

Anthony Hamilton was born in Columbia, South Carolina to Anthony, Sr. and Sarah Hamilton.¹

Career Beginnings

Hamilton began his career in the horse industry with William Lakeland, a trainer from England. Hamilton went to Lakeland's stables based in Brighton Beach, New York. He worked as an exerciser.² At age 15, Hamilton won his first race aboard Sligo in the 1881 Phoenix Handicap. Hamilton signed his first professional contract in 1886 with J.B. Haggin, and rode for him for two years.

Record-Setting Wins

Throughout the following fifteen years of his career, he won many prestigious races. Among these were the three major New York handicaps (the Brooklyn twice, Suburban, and Metropolitan.)³ Hamilton also won:

- The 1887 American Derby
- The 1888 Choice Stakes
- The 1890 Toboggan Handicap
- The 1889 and 1890 Monmouth Oaks.

⁴ His career high winning percentage of 33.8% in 1890 stands among the all-time highest in the history of the sport.

Career Abroad

Hamilton, like many African American jockeys of his time, went abroad to pursue further success. He emigrated to Vienna, Austria, in February 1901, then went to Warsaw, Poland in March that same year.⁵

Hamilton's victories in Europe included:

- The Metropolitan Stakes in Vienna, Austria
- The Karolyi Memorial in Budapest, Hungary
- The Ruler Stakes in Warsaw, Poland.

The Ruler Stakes are the prestigious first race of the Polish Triple Crown. He also went to Russia and rode there in 1904.⁶

Personal Life

Hamilton married three times. He and his first wife, Annie Messley, married in 1891.⁷ The wedding received wide coverage in the Lexington newspapers. Lucy and Isaac Murphy as well as Lucy and Edward Dudley Brown hosted receptions for the couple. ⁸

They had a daughter, Antonia, who was born December 5, 1891, but passed away the following year. Soon after, the couple divorced.⁹ Hamilton remarried to Kittie Brown, of Indianapolis, Indiana. They divorced in 1897.¹⁰

Hamilton married Eva Lucretia Davis, of Brooklyn New York, sometime before he left for Europe in 1901. Hamilton had no other children.¹¹

Legacy

His career ended due to an injury sustained when a horse threw him. Hamilton then moved to Menton, France and died there in 1904 from tuberculosis. His obituary described him as wearing furs and diamonds as well-earned signifiers of his success.¹² His body was returned to the United States and buried in Mt. Olivet Cemetery in New York.¹³

Sources

"Anthony Hamilton." n.d. National Museum of Racing and Hall of Fame. Accessed October 31, 2019. <https://www.racingmuseum.org/hall-of-fame/anthony-hamilton>.

"Anthony 'Tony' Hamilton (1868-1904)." n.d. Find a Grave. Accessed October 8, 2020. <https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/199507564/anthony-hamilton>.

"Birth of Antonia Hamilton." 1866. New York. File #45475. New York Index to Births.

"Jockey Hamilton, Planet Elected to HOF." 2012. BloodHorse.Com. May 31, 2012. <https://www.bloodhorse.com/horse-racing/articles/129119/jockey-hamilton-planet-elected-to-hof>.

Kentucky Leader. 1891. "A Colored Party," February 1, 1891.

Kentucky Live Stock Record. 1891. "Winning Jockeys in 1890," March 28, 1891, Vol 33, #13, p198 edition.

Lexington Leader. 1891a. "Jockey Hamilton to Marry A Wealthy Colored Girl," January 12, 1891.

———. 1891b. "Isaac Lewis Instead of Isaac Murphy," January 14, 1891.

———. 1891c. "Jockey Hamilton," January 26, 1891.

Lexington Transcript. 1891. "Grand Reception Given by Isaac Murphy and Wife, to Anthony Hamilton and Bride," January 25, 1891.

"Marriage to Kittie Brown." 1866. New York Extracted Marriage Index. Certificate #19025.

Renau, Lynn S. 1995. Jockeys, Belles and Bluegrass Kings. Louisville, Ky.; Herr House Press.

"Report of Deaths of American Citizens Abroad." 1835. Ancestry.com.

Sanger, Charles. 1985. "Black Riders in the North." American Turf Monthly, August 1985.

The New York Sportsman. 1891. "Kentucky Thoroughbred Gossip," February 7, 1891.

"'Tony' Hamilton Is Buried To-Day". 1904. New York Evening World.

"U.S. Passport Applications 1795–1925." 1901.

Footnotes

¹U.S. Passport Applications 1795–1925."

²Weeks, The American Turf, 395.

³Anthony Hamilton."

⁴Sanger, "Black Riders In The North."

⁵U.S. Passport Applications 1795–1925."

⁶Anthony Hamilton."

⁷Jockey Hamilton to Marry A Wealthy Colored Girl."

⁸Grand Reception." "A Colored Party."

⁹Birth of Antonia Hamilton."

¹⁰"Marriage to Kittie Brown."

¹¹Anthony 'Tony' Hamilton (1868–1904)."

¹²Renau, Jockeys, Belles and Bluegrass Kings, 114.

¹³Report of Deaths of American Citizens Abroad."