

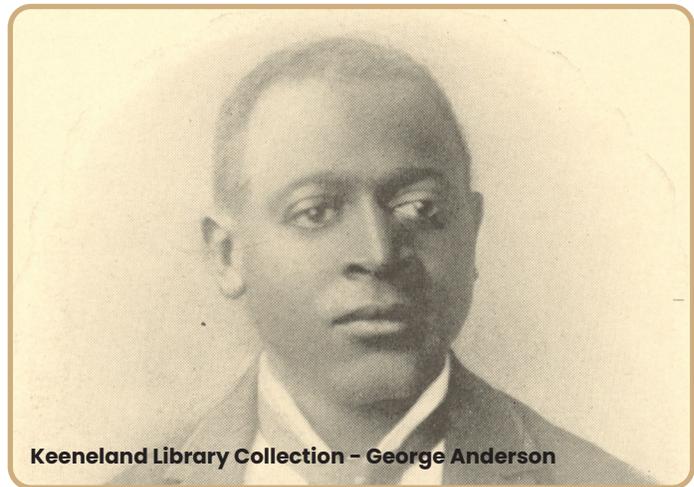
# George B. “Spider” Anderson

**Author:** Emily Libecap,  
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**Places:** Baltimore, Maryland; New York;  
New Jersey; Savannah, Georgia

**Birth:** 1871    **Death:** Unknown

**Professions:** Jockey, Exercise Rider



## Childhood and Family

George B. Anderson was born in Baltimore, Maryland in 1871. His parents were Charles and Ellen Anderson and he had four siblings.<sup>1</sup> Researchers are seeking more information about his childhood and early years in archived records and newspapers.

## Career Beginnings

Anderson, at twelve years old and weighing 80 pounds, rode in the 1883 spring meet at Baltimore and Brighton Beach. Within three years, T. B. Davis and Frank Hall hired him to ride horses they owned. They stabled in Maryland at the Ivy City Colony, three miles from Washington, D.C.

Anderson, a ‘lightweight’ jockey, rode two-year old horses of prominent owners. They gave him the nickname of “Spider” because he was so small.<sup>2</sup>

Anderson was known for his honesty, clever riding and determination. One news story said that “The Spider never knows when he is beaten and seldom gives up.”<sup>3</sup>

In 1889, while waiting for a race to begin, the horse Juggler bit Anderson’s leg and lifted him out of the saddle, shook him and then dropped him on the ground. Spider’s leg was treated and bandaged. He got back in the saddle and rode August Belmont’s Fides to win the race while 10,000 fans cheered him on.<sup>4</sup>

In December, he won every race at Augusta, Georgia on horses that Green B. Morris stables owned. Anderson rode:

- Brait
- Barrister
- Sam Harper, Jr<sup>5</sup>

His skills as a jockey were compared to those of Isaac Murphy and Pike Barnes.<sup>6</sup>

## Career Highlights

Anderson was the first African American jockey to win the Preakness Stakes race, which he did in 1889 riding the horse Buddhist, owned by Sam Brown. He also won the Alabama Stakes in 1891 aboard the filly Sallie McClelland and won the U.S. Hotel Stakes that same year.<sup>7</sup>

Throughout his career, Anderson rode for prominent horse owners including

- August Belmont
- D. D. Withers
- William L. Scott
- Byron McClelland
- William "Bill" Daly<sup>8</sup>

From 1889 to 1897, Anderson rode to win steeplechase races on these and other horses:

- Bess
- Counsellor Howe
- Sir Vassar<sup>9</sup>

## Legacy

At some point, Anderson retired as a jockey and became a co-owner of horses. Although newspapers reported accounts of Anderson's life up until 1905, researchers continue to look for the date of his death.

Additional Research Provided By

Yvonne Giles, Research Consultant

## Sources

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## Footnotes

<sup>1</sup>1880 United States Federal Census.”

<sup>2</sup>The Ivy City Colony: Life at the Race Track During the Winter.”

<sup>3</sup>In The Mud at Ivy City.”

<sup>4</sup>How Onandaga Defeated Sachem”

<sup>5</sup>The Horses of Morris Stable Scoop Every Race.”

<sup>6</sup>Famous Riders: 3 Colored Jockeys Who Have Done Wonderful Work, Daring, Honest, Skillful.”

<sup>7</sup>Goodwin Brothers Firm, Goodwin’s Official Annual Turf Guide.

<sup>8</sup>Weeks, *The American Turf*.

<sup>9</sup>At Ivy City Everything in Readiness for Fall Meeting.”