

# THE HEART OF THE TURF

RACING'S BLACK PIONEERS

PRESENTED BY KEENELAND LIBRARY

*The Heart of the Turf: Racing's Black Pioneers* traveling exhibit highlights the lives and careers of 80 African American horsemen and -women from the mid-1800s to the present. One-of-a-kind photographs from Keeneland Library collections capture moments across their varied careers, while biographical vignettes honor their lasting legacies.

Lexington's East End, home to the Kentucky Association track from the late 1820s through 1933, also was home to many Black horsemen and their families. By the late 1800s, four future Racing Hall of Famers lived in Lexington's East End: jockeys **Isaac Burns Murphy** and **Jimmy Winkfield**, trainer **Ansel Williamson**, and trainer/owner **Edward Dudley Brown**. Hundreds of others bought their homes, built their businesses, and raised their families in surrounding neighborhoods.

That many of the city's leading horsemen were African American and living near the Kentucky Association track shaped the East End's heritage as a historic industry hub for pioneering Black horsemen. The economy of the Bluegrass and viability of the Thoroughbred industry as a whole are rooted in their skill, hard work, knowledge, and tenacity.

From race track superstars to behind-the-scenes caretakers, *The Heart of the Turf: Racing's Black Pioneers* showcases select stories of the countless African Americans who forged their way in Kentucky and beyond from the era of slavery to the present, making the racing industry what it is today.

*Jimmy Lee in 1908*  
Keeneland Library  
Hemment Collection



## Traveling Exhibit Curatorial Team:

*Curator:*  
Roda Ferraro

*Historical Consultant:*  
Yvonne Giles

*Exhibit Panel Designer:*  
Jessica Downey

## Exhibit Sponsor:

Keeneland Association

## Youth & Adult Educational Programs:

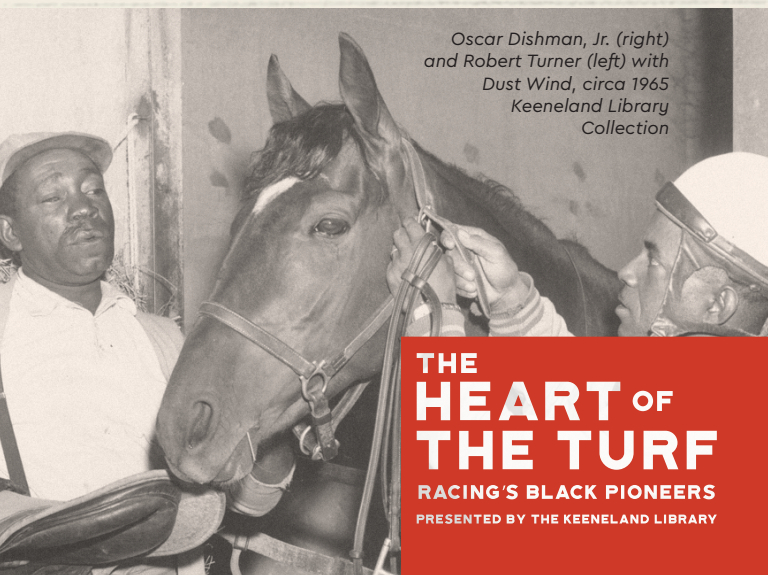
Want to learn more about the contributions of African Americans in the horse industry or dig deeper into the East End's heritage as a historic hub for racing's Black pioneers? To book an in-classroom educational program for students or an onsite educational program for community and corporate groups, contact the Keeneland Library at 859-288-4223.

## Traveling Exhibit:

To host *The Heart of the Turf: Racing's Black Pioneers* traveling exhibit in your schools, community centers, or gallery space, contact Roda Ferraro at [rferraro@keeneland.com](mailto:rferraro@keeneland.com).

## Support:

Visit [www.keeneland.com/keeneland-library](http://www.keeneland.com/keeneland-library) or call 859-288-4223 to learn how you can support the Keeneland Library's education and outreach initiatives through a gift to the Keeneland Library Foundation.



*Oscar Dishman, Jr. (right)  
and Robert Turner (left) with  
Dust Wind, circa 1965  
Keeneland Library  
Collection*

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