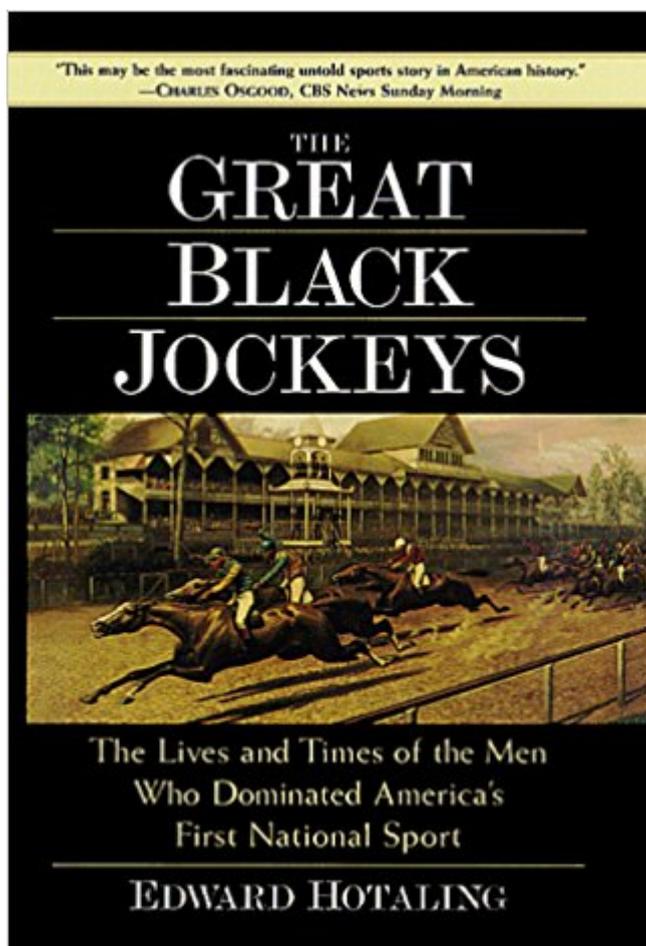


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# The Great Black Jockeys



## Synopsis

More than a century before Jackie Robinson broke the color barrier in major league baseball, black athletes were dominating America's first national sport. The sport was horse racing, and the greatest jockeys of all were slaves and the sons of slaves. Cheered by thousands of Americans in the North and South, they rode to victory in all of the major stakes, including the very first Kentucky Derby. Although their glory days ranged from the early 1700s to the turn of the 20th century, the memory of these great black jockeys was erased from history. Who were these athletes and why have their names vanished without a trace? "This may be the most fascinating untold sports story in American history. We are lucky that it is so well told now by Mr. Hotaling in his wonderfully written book." — Charles Osgood, anchor, CBS News Sunday Morning

The Great Black Jockeys is the first book about the lives and times of the forgotten men whose extraordinary skills were a wonder to behold, men with names like "Honest Ike" Murphy, Abe Hawkins, Willie Simms, Austin Curtis, Jimmy Winkfield, and dozens more. This is also a story of a young country where whole towns turned out in cleared fields to cheer and place wagers on magnificent horses and the men who rode them, and where the greatest athletes in the land were the property of others. For fleeting moments on the racecourse black riders in colorful silks tasted the glory and freedom that slavery had denied them. In *The Great Black Jockeys*, the exploits and courage of America's earliest and best athletes are finally remembered.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Mr. Hotaling's latest horse-racing book is a must read for anyone who considers himself a true aficionado of the sport. It tells a story which far too many people, even serious horse players, know little about. Horse racing is unique among sports in America because it has virtually no black presence. There are few black owners, trainers, and breeders, and very few of the most visible players in racing, the jockeys. This was not always the case. In fact, black jockeys once dominated America's oldest sport. The first winner of the Kentucky Derby was black, as was the Derby's first repeat winner and its first three-time winner. The jockey with the highest winning percentage in history was black. Hotaling gives the history of these pioneers, and in doing so gives a history of the sport. He also deals with the glaring question: why have black jockeys largely disappeared from the sport? It is well-written and insightful, a book invaluable to those who value the history of horse racing.

I read this book because it combined Black History and horse racing. Two of my favorite subjects. The book is well organized, full of information. The author seamlessly intertwines American History, African American History, and the history of horse racing in America. So the book keeps your interest. He also balances historical facts, with the colorful characters/stories surrounding horseracing, while elevating Black jockies to their noble place in the "sport of kings". This book is worth the price. A great read!!

Any person who is a serious study of sports history will find this a most compelling dialogue on the "true" evolution of the American professional athlete. It is simply the most "untold" and most compelling story in the American experience. Today's athletes - of whatever color - should read this book to get a true appreciation for the foundations of the "professional" athlete in America and the depth of character exhibited by these great athletes under the most dire conditions.

This book explores a neglected aspect of the African-American experience in the United States. I had always assumed the African-American heroes of sport were a twentieth century phenomenon. It was an eye opener to learn that there successful African-American jockeys and trainers as early as colonial time. I would recommend this well written book to anyone with an interest in American history

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