



MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

May 2017

Published periodically by Intermed XP

KENTUCKY DERBY.....did you know?

The horse world is teeming with stats on the May 6, 2017 winner, ***Always Dreaming***, but there's lots more background info and fascinating trivia to discover on this race which began as 1.5 miles (2.4km), but changed to its current 1.25 mi (2km) in 1896.

Of course, it's the oldest continuously running sports event in the USA dating from 1875 and the field is limited (since 1975) to twenty three year olds.

Although often called "the most exciting two minutes in sports", only TWO horses have officially finished in under two minutes! In 1973, ***Secretariat***'s time was 1.595 (with **Sham** just 2.5 lengths behind him, but only first place was recorded).



in 2001, **Monarchos** finished at 1:59:97.

Remember Lewis and Clark who explored the Louisiana Territory for US President Thomas Jefferson back in the early 1800's? Clark's grandson, Colonel Meriwether Lewis Clark, travelled to Europe in 1872 and met with prominent figures in horse racing and returned to establish a jockey club in Louisville, Kentucky. His goal was to draw attention to the fine racing stock of that city.

He acquired land from Clark's uncles, John and Henry Churchill. Hence, the name **Churchill Downs** which saw fifteen horses running the original 1.5 mile distance of **the first Kentucky Derby** to the delight of 10, 000 spectators. "**Aristides**" won first place in the "derby" which was an 18th century term for a race of 3 year olds.

The Kentucky setting and lore made it special from the start. The **twin spires of Churchill Downs** grandstand are a recognized emblem of the Derby. Its reputation owes something to the exceptional landscape, the climate and natural resources of eastern and central Kentucky. And then there's the **ambiance of "fête"** with ladies in large, stylish (and often outlandish) hats, mint julep drinks (brandy), and a tradition of playing Stephen Foster's " My Old **Kentucky Home**" as horses enter the track.

Modern fans are often unaware that when the race began in the 1870's, black jockeys dominated organized racing and won 15 of the first 28 Kentucky Derbies. That includes the very first where **Oliver Lewis** rode **Aristides**. Thirteen of the fifteen competing jockeys were African-Americans and Aristides was trained by a former slave, **Ansel Williamson**.

Isaac Burns Murphy of Kentucky (b. 1861) was one of America's greatest ever jockeys and the first 3 time Derby winner. The last African American to win was **James Winkfield** in 1901 and 1902. From 1921-2000, no African American would ride as racial discrimination prevailed in American horse racing.

(With thanks to [www. Britannica. com](http://www.Britannica.com))

The Editor