

## **How does the Kentucky Derby represent more than just large hats?**

**Objective:** The following lesson will analyze the origins of the black jockey, his rise to fame, and explore how white supremacy, greed, and a struggle to maintain power brought an end to America's first sport.

1. Introduction: Center the students thinking by asking students to create a vision board of five pictures or words describing the Kentucky Derby. Students should consider what makes the Kentucky Derby special to them, the city, and others. Consider asking students the following questions:

1. What does the Kentucky Derby mean to you?
2. Does your family do anything special for the Kentucky Derby?
3. What is your favorite memory from the Kentucky Derby?
4. What images come to mind when you think of the Kentucky Derby?

2. Have students share out the images from their vision board. While students are sharing teacher should record students' ideas for future reference. Also, teacher should slot student ideas into themes for future reference.

3. Teacher will play the following clip to bring students attention to the black jockey.

[The forgotten Black jockeys of the Kentucky Derby](#)

Students should consider the following:

1. How did the black jockey get his start?
2. Why was he forgotten?
3. How did white supremacy effect the life of the black jockey?

4. After video and discussion have students write a paragraph about what they learned and what questions they still have.

5. Continuing with the history of the black jockey students will be introduced to different sources about the history of the black jockey and how it connects to the Kentucky Derby. The following activity can be completed in groups or individually based on teacher preference.

6. Display the following images: Students should record what they observe about the photo, reflect over how it is connected to the black jockey and the Kentucky Derby, and finally any questions they still have. Teachers may use the following link to access the [Library of Congress Primary Source Analysis Tool](#) or create their own organizer for students notes.

Source 1:



Teachers note: Explain the meaning of the word equestrian as well as the location of the Mali Empire. Students should understand prior to being enslaved Africans were experienced with horses and brought those skills to America. It is important for students to understand slavery did not birth the jockey. The skills were passed down from their ancestors prior to being enslaved. *The Age of Iron in West Africa* from the Metropolitan Museum of Art states that “In the period from 1400 to 1600, iron technology appears to have been one of a series of fundamental social assets that facilitated the growth of significant centralized kingdoms in the western Sudan and along the Guinea coast of West Africa. The fabrication of iron tools and weapons allowed for the kind of extensive systematized agriculture, efficient hunting, and successful warfare necessary to sustain large urban centers” ([www.metmuseum.org](http://www.metmuseum.org)).

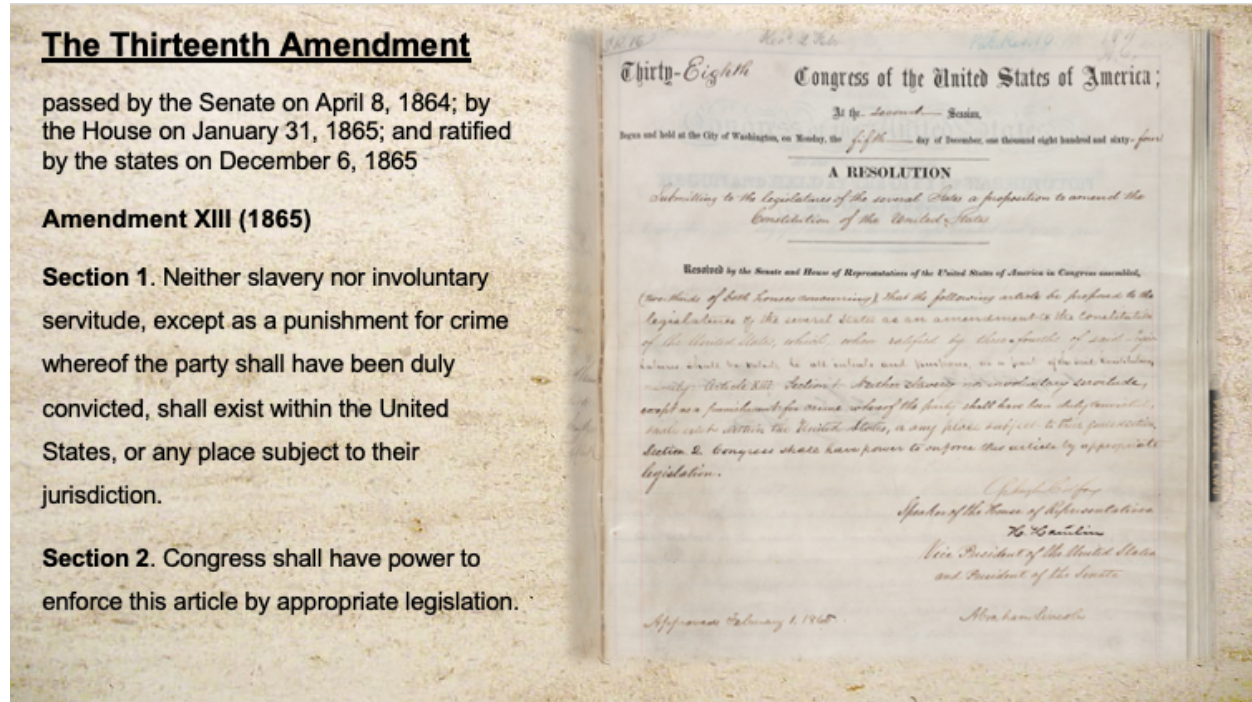
Source 2:



Teachers note: Using the same Primary Source Analysis tool, students should record what they observe about the picture and caption. From *The Tools and Trade Techniques of the Blacksmith*, “The tools of the blacksmith varied from time to time and from place to place. They were generally divided into three groups. The first is the hearth with its bellows, water trough, shovels, tongs, rake, poker, and a water container for damping down the fire and cooling objects. The second group consists of the anvil, sledges, tongs, swages, cutters, chisels, and hammers. The

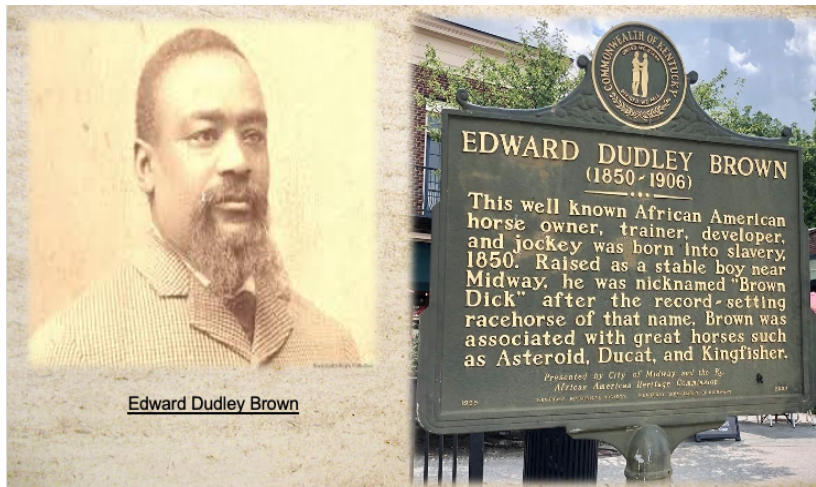
third group was made up of the shoeing box, which contains knives, rasps, and files for preparing the horse’s hooves for shoes, an iron stand for supporting the horse’s foot while working on it, and a special hammer and nails to fasten the shoe to the hoof” ([Kaufman](#)).

Source 3:



Teachers note: Use the primary source analysis tool for students to record thoughts. Teacher should draw student's attention the meaning of the 13<sup>th</sup> amendment as well as connect the source with the prior two sources. Students should understand how each source connects to the founding of the black jockey.

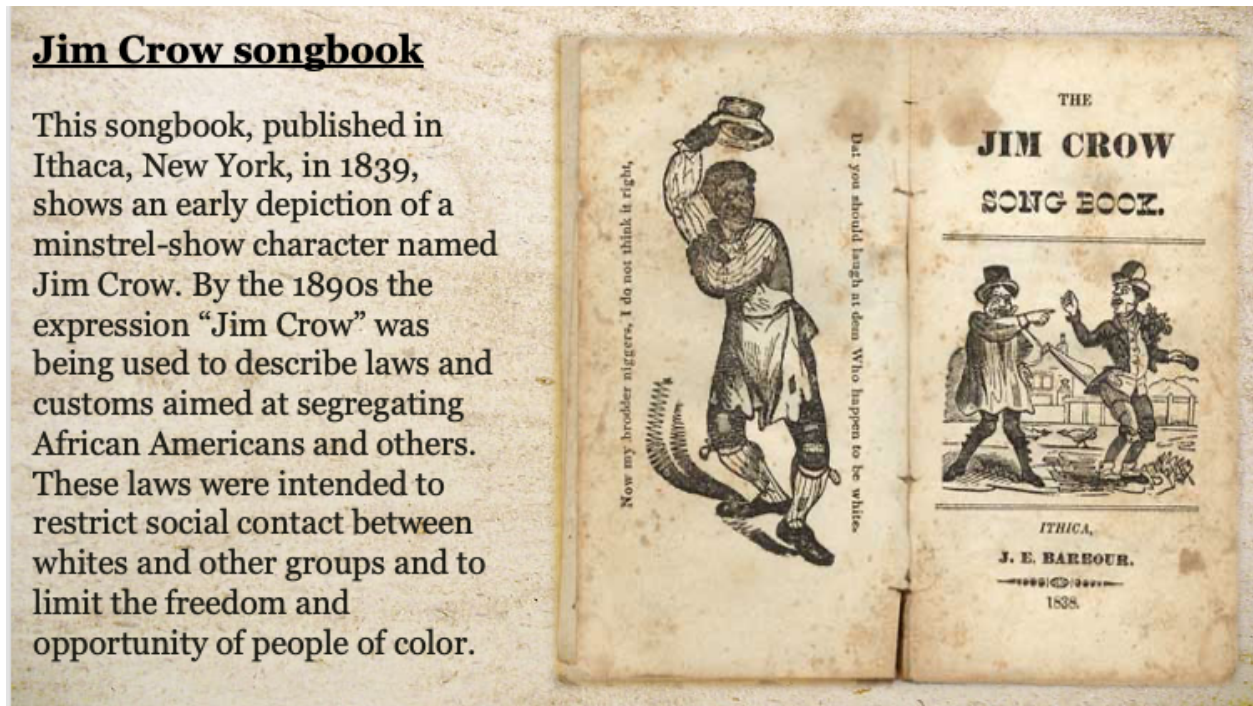
Source 4:



Teachers note: Students should read the text to understand who Edward Dudley Brown was and how he connects to the previous sources. Also, students should understand the double consciousness of Brown. Was he a great jockey, slave, or both? Students should understand how whites saw Brown, Brown saw himself, and how other enslaved people saw Brown.

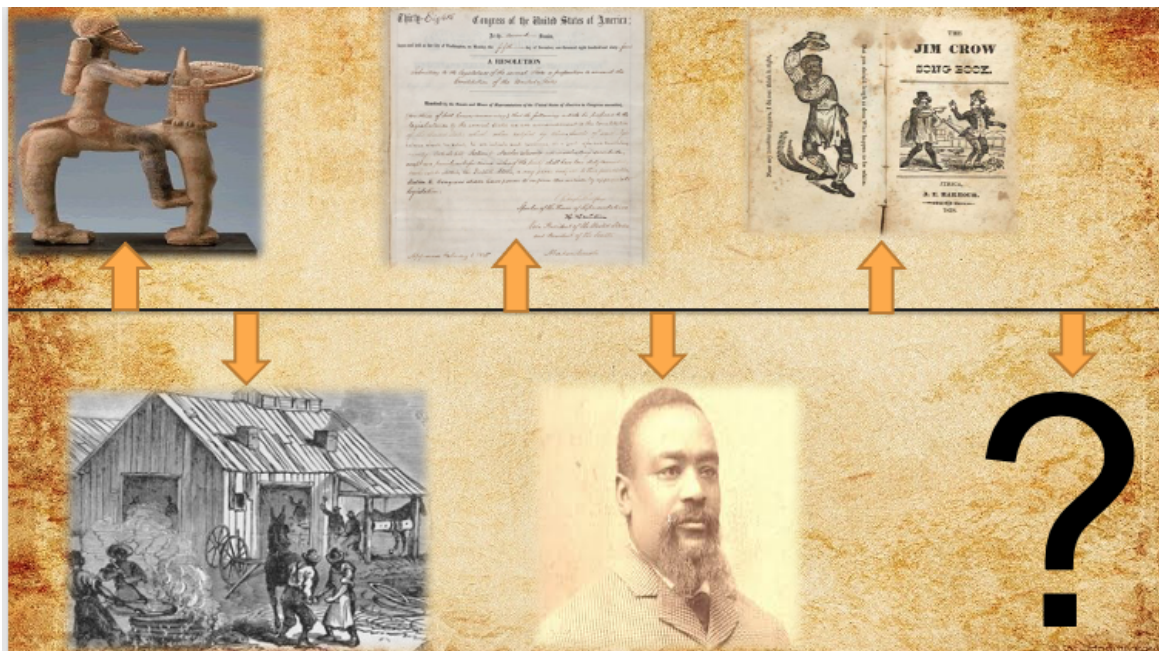


Source 5:



Teachers note: The final source explains why the black jockey was forced out of the Derby due to [Jim Crow Laws](#). Students should understand how white supremacy, greed, and power pushed the black jockey out. Explain to students’ how black codes and *Plessy v. Ferguson* connect to the ending of a great era of black jockeys.

Timeline:



Teachers note: After all sources have been introduced display the following timeline for students. Ask how each source connects to each other when thinking about the black jockey and the Kentucky Derby.

Have students then create another vision board answering the compelling question: How does the Kentucky Derby represent more than large hats? Each source should connect to each other and pay homage to the life of the black jockeys.



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