

# The Private Life of Sunny Jim

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MIAMI, Feb. 23.—Sunny Jim Fitzsimmons, whose racing day at 82 runs from 6 a.m. to 6 p.m., looks after "the kids" before and after his toil at the racetrack. "The kids?" Yes, his sons, John, 63, and James, 61.

Fitz cooks breakfast each morning for the family at their Allapath home, near Hialeah. Also an evening meal. The morning menu is a hearty glass of orange juice, boiled eggs and toast or hot cakes.

"I mix my pancake batter the night before," he explains seriously. "Saves a lot of puttering around in the kitchen in the morning. The boys bought me a new batter mixer recently and poured my batter in it late that night. I couldn't find it in the old pot the next morning, so I mixed more. When we got straightened out finally, we had a heap of pancakes that morning."

After breakfast, Fitz and the boys head for Hialeah. John is his assistant. Jimmy serves as stable agent, keeping the books and records up to date. The first track chore for Sunny Jim is to personally inspect the nearly three dozen horses in Barn A.

Workout time is over by 10 a.m. and Mr. Fitz heads home for lunch and a nap. Shortly after noon, he dresses again and heads back to Hialeah to saddle the horses he has entered in the day's races.

If the little veteran from Sheepshead Bay in Brooklyn is lucky, he will be home about sunset. His schedule then calls for him to cook dinner—but it's up to the boys to do the dishes.

Time hasn't bypassed Sunny Jim. One of

his after-dinner chores is to prepare his workout schedule for his Hialeah horses the next morning. He also must study reports from the farm and the New York track where he has four dozen more horses in winter quarters.

To facilitate this work, he dictates into a tape recording machine.

The next modern gadget that gets his attention is his television set. He has it rigged with a remote control so he can turn it on and off from the comfort of his bed.

"I lose more darn sleep because of that thing than I should," he says. "Course, before they had it, I went to the neighborhood picture (movie) nearly every night. Now there's television. Arthur Godfrey and I Have a Secret are my favorite programs.

A former jockey himself, who rode with moderate success before the turn of the century, Fitz was asked if he had ever considered retiring from the sport.

"Quit, hell," he retorted. "As long as I feel all right in the head and my bosses are satisfied with the job I'm doing, I'll keep right at it."

Apparently the bosses are happy. Sunny Jim became trainer for the Wheatley Stable horses in 1924. He also trains for Ogden Phipps, vice president of The Jockey Club.

Mr. Fitz has been successful as a family man, too. He has six children, 17 grandchildren and 15 great-grandchildren. Regarding the last figure, he says: "I think that's the right count. Seems there are more every spring when I go home to New York from Hialeah."