

Bull Durham Tobacco ^[1]

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by Robert F. Durden, 2006

See also: [Tobacco](#) ^[2], [American Tobacco Company](#) ^[3], [Brown and Williamson Tobacco Company](#) ^[4], [R. J. Reynolds Tobacco Company](#) ^[5], [W. Duke Sons and Company](#) ^[6], [Tobacco Barrels: Hogsheads](#) ^[7], [Inventions in the Tobacco Industry](#) ^[8], [Tobacco Belts](#) ^[9]



An 1879 advertisement for Durham's W. T. Blackwell & Co. features the company's trademark bull, used to popularize its tobacco products. North Carolina Collection, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill Library.

Seeking a name for his manufactured smoking tobacco shortly after the [Civil War](#) ^[10], John R. Green of [Durham](#) ^[11] drew inspiration from a popular brand of mustard made in Durham, England, that featured the head of a Durham bull on its label. Green chose to use the image of a whole bull, and his trademark—soon the subject of extensive litigation to protect it—became one of the most recognizable product advertisements in the country. Green made William T. Blackwell ^[12] his partner in 1867, and when Green died two years later, Blackwell bought the entire business from the Green estate. Subsequently, with James R. Day and [Julian S. Carr](#) ^[13] as his partners, Blackwell led the William T. Blackwell Company to a dominant position in Durham's burgeoning tobacco industry. Bull Durham smoking tobacco was widely advertised and was one of the world's best-known American products of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The 1988 blockbuster film [Bull Durham](#) ^[14], starring [Kevin Costner](#) ^[15], [Susan Sarandon](#) ^[16], and [Tim Robbins](#) ^[17], brought national attention to both the famous tobacco moniker and the [Durham Bulls](#) ^[18], Durham's popular minor league baseball team.

References:

William K. Boyd, *The Story of Durham: City of the New South* (1927).

Nannie M. Tilley, *The Bright-Tobacco Industry, 1860-1929* (1948).

Additional Resources:

Julian S. Carr NC Historical Marker: <https://www.ncdcr.gov/about/history/division-historical-resources/nc-highway-historical-marker-program/Markers.aspx?MarkerId=G-101> ^[19]

Advertisement of Bull Durham, UNC

Libraries: http://mainstreet.lib.unc.edu/projects/tobacco_durham/index.php/images/view/132 ^[20]

Authors:

[Durden, Robert F.](#) ^[21]

From:

[Encyclopedia of North Carolina, University of North Carolina Press.](#) ^[22]

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