

Sir Archie ^[1]

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Sir Archie

by Ansley Wegner

Research Branch, NC Office of Archives and History, 2006.
www.ncmarkers.com ^[2]

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1805-1833



An 1827 broadside produced by John Amis, Sir Archie's owner, advertising the horse at stud. From the Cameron Family Papers, no. 133, Southern Historical Collection, Wilson Library, UNC-Chapel Hill.

^[4]The greatest thoroughbred in North Carolina history was the celebrated Sir Archie, foundation sire of champions Timoleon, Boston, Lexington, and Man O'War. In the era preceding the time when Kentucky became the nation's center of [horse racing](#) ^[5] and equine culture, North Carolina established a considerable reputation. For several generations Virginia and North Carolina horses dominated tracks throughout the country.

Foaled in Cumberland County, Virginia, Sir Archie (1805-1833) at an early age came to the attention of the nation's first great trainer, [William Ransom Johnson](#) ^[6] (1782-1849), a native of Warrenton, North Carolina. Johnson bought the horse for \$1,500 and described him as "the best horse I have ever seen." After Sir Archie won races in Richmond and Petersburg, Johnson was hard pressed to find competition. In 1809 [William R. Davie](#) ^[7] of Halifax, Revolutionary War general and founder of the [University of North Carolina](#) ^[8], purchased Sir Archie for \$5,000 and soon thereafter put him out to stud. Sir Archie's offspring became the next generation of champion thoroughbreds. From 1817 to 1833 he was quartered at "Mowfield" plantation and is buried on its grounds. In the annals of turf history he has no peer.

In 1974 a State Highway Historical Marker was erected on US 158 one mile south of the "Mowfield" and west of Jackson in Northampton County. It is one of only two state markers dedicated to a four-legged mammal, the other being about a breed, the Plott Hound ^[9].

References:

Elizabeth Amis, Cameron Blanchard, and Manly Wade Wellman, *The Life and Times of Sir Archie: The Story of America's Greatest Thoroughbred, 1805-1833* (1958)

Roger Longrigg, *The History of Horse Racing* (1972)

Thoroughbred Heritage Portraits website: <http://www.tbheritage.com/Portraits/SirArchey.html> ^[10]

Additional Resources:

Mason, Scott. "A big horse that left a even bigger impact." *Tar Heel Traveller*. WRAL. <https://www.wral.com/a-big-horse-that-left-a-even-bigger-impact/13589433/> ^[11] (accessed April 24, 2014).

Fulghum, Neil. "Sir Archie: An Equine Superstar." *North Carolina Miscellany* (blog). North Carolina Collection, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. May 27, 2008. <https://blogs.lib.unc.edu/ncm/2008/05/27/sir-archie-an-equine-superstar-2/> ^[12] (accessed April 24, 2014).

"Sir Archie." N.C. Highway Historical Marker E-83, N.C. Office of Archives & History. <http://www.ncmarkers.com/Markers.aspx?MarkerId=E-83> ^[13] (accessed April 24, 2014).

Decock, Luke. "Sir Archie of Northampton County, NC." Visit Northampton NC <http://visithamptonnc.com/things-to-do/heritage-tourism/300-sir-arch...> ^[14] (accessed April 24, 2014).

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- [10] <http://www.tbheritage.com/Portraits/SirArchy.html>
- [11] <https://www.wral.com/a-big-horse-that-left-a-even-bigger-impact/13589433/>
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