

⁵ Carvel Collins, *The American Sporting Gallery: Portraits Of American Horses From 1839-Spirit of the Times-1844* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1949), n.p.; John Eisenberg, “Off to the Races,” *Smithsonian* 35 (5) August 2004: 98-105, 101; Irving, *Jockey*, 163; letter, 17 February 1822, Robert M. Cahusee to William Porcher, South Carolina Historical Society.

⁶ Irving, *Jockey*, 181; Irving, “Sporting.”; Irving, *Jockey*, 11-12.

In the “Sporting Epistle,” author J. B. Irving mentions that “...the winner of the Great Peyton Stakes of \$34,000 at Nashville...” would be at the next major South Carolina race – an example of the size of the purses available.

⁷ Letitia D. Allen, “Wade Hampton II’s Patronage of Edward Troye” in *Art In The Lives Of South Carolinians: Nineteenth-Century Chapters*, ed. David Moltke-Hansen (Charleston, SC: Charleston Art Association, 1979): LA-1-LA-27, LA-2; Kent Hollingsworth, “The Equine Art of E Troye” in *The Blood Horse. A Weekly Magazine Devoted to the Turf* 23 December 1967: 3948-3955, 3948 and 3949; Allen, “Patronage,” LA-1 and LA-2; Hollingsworth, “Equine,” 3948 and 3949; Harry Worcester Smith, “The Best Of These Was Troye,” *The Spur* January 1939: 41, 47-48, 41.

⁸ Hollingsworth, “Equine,” 3950; Rodger Stroup, “Up-Country Patrons: Wade Hampton II and His Family” in *Art In The Lives Of South Carolinians: Nineteenth-Century Chapters*, ed. David Moltke-Hansen (Charleston, SC: Carolina Art Association, 1979): Rsb1-Rsb13, Rsb-3; “Wade Hampton II and Artists,” Virginia Gurley Meynard Papers, South Caroliniana Library, Manuscripts Division; Stroup, “Up-Country,” Rsb-3; Meynard, “Portraits,” 1; Irving, “Sporting.”

⁹ Alexander Mackay-Smith, “Comments on Letitia Adams ‘Wade Hampton II’s Patronage of Edward Troye,’” Virginia Gurley Meynard Papers, South Caroliniana Library, Manuscripts Division; Mackay-Smith, *Race Horse*, 69, 70 and 416; Meynard, “Portraits,” 3; Meynard, *Venturers*, 158; Irving, “Epistle.”; Meynard, “Portraits,” 1; Meynard, *Venturers*, 158.

Edward Troye’s paintings of Argyle, Pocahontas, Sovereign and Trifle, commissioned by Wade Hampton II, are owned by the Yale University Art Gallery.

¹⁰ Hollingsworth, “Equine,” 3949 and 3950; Smith, “Best,” 41 and 47; Harry Worcester Smith, “Edward Troye (1808-1874) The Painter of American Blood Horses,” *The Field, The Country Gentleman’s Newspaper* 21 January 1926: 96-98, 96-97.

In the last section in Mackay-Smith’s *Race Horse*, he has an index of the known Troye paintings and for whom they were painted. The list is rife with the names of planters. Many of his paintings were not signed, so the total number is not known.

¹¹ Mackay-Smith, *Race Horse*, 416-421; Smith, “Best,” 41 and 47; Smith, “Troye,” 96; *The Scientific American* February 1861; Allen, “Letters,” 20; Easterby, “Three.”; Irving, “Epistle.”; Ralph Jerome Cannaday, “Gen. Wade Hampton—War And Reconstruction’s Hero” *The News and Courier*, 36 March 1961; Allen, “Patronage,” LA-7 and LA-8; Mackay-Smith, “Commentary”; Meynard, “Portraits,” 2-6.

¹² Smith, “Troye,” 41; Meynard, “Portraits,” 2-6; Mackay-Smith, *Race Horse*, 71; Meynard, “Portraits,” 4 and 6; Stroup, “Up-Country,” Rsb-4; *Spirit of the Times*, 23 March 1839, 309.

¹³ Stud Book, “Journals,” James Henry Hammond Papers.

OUR STORY

Journal of the New Jersey Council for History Education

WEB EXTRA

Fall 2006

Pride of Ownership: 19th Century South Carolina Planters and Their Horses Heidi Weber

Heidi Amelia-Anne Weber is Instructor of History at Essex County College. Prior to joining the faculty there, she taught at Seton Hall University.

Much of the identity of the Southern planter was found in various manifestations of his house, property and other possessions. Through the medium of his plantation house, the planter attempted to present to the outside world an image of his status as a leader and an owner of vast holdings. However, the planter could also express his character, his honor, his prestige, and his wealth through many other assets. This could be done through the appearance of facilities on the plantation as well as through the acquisition and display of various forms of personal property, i.e., art and blood horses, two interests that were frequently intertwined.

Among the pleasures that life afforded them, a horse of fine breeding was a favorite of the planter class and an exquisitely bred equine held a place of distinction on the plantation. Horses were brought to the American South from all over the world, with planters giving great credence to the highest quality stock, particularly those that were English. These prize animals held a prominent place in the realm of the world of the planter.¹

Stables housing these esteemed treasures were carefully constructed and maintained. In certain instances—on the grounds of South Carolina Governor John Laurence Manning’s plantation Milford, for example—the structures for the horses as well as their equipment matched the architectural style of the house itself. The pairing of the Greek Revival format of house and stable seemed to symbolize the symmetry of the entire operation. This provided the essence of continuity and fluidity, thus representing the successful operation of the lands, as well as promoting the overall vestiges of power of the planter.²

Many planters maintained “strong stables” with impressive lineages. Since blood horses were an important component of the planter’s life, as well as another measure of his character, stables were carefully positioned on the property. At Wade Hampton II’s Millwood plantation, located outside of Columbia, South Carolina, the horses of fine breeding were kept within close proximity to the great house, to be readily

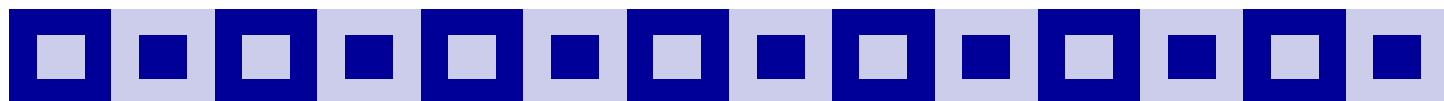
accessible and visible to the planter himself, yet hidden from the public eye, emphasizing their exclusivity. This was also done for the benefit of guests, who were granted their choice of steed by Wade Hampton II during the course of their stay. Having visited Millwood and enjoyed the hospitality of his host, John B. Irving gained insight into Hampton’s life which led him to assert that “no man can be fonder of fine horses than Col. Hampton.” This planter was known for many things in his life, but perhaps chief among them was his active participation in the realm of the import, breeding, racing, and stud services of his pedigreed horses.³

The exquisite stock at Millwood, which came from strongly established bloodlines such as Monarch, Pocahontas and Argyle, were afforded with the finest of quarters. Their master, Wade Hampton II, held these horses in the highest esteem. Based upon their usage and purpose, all of the equine stock was divided and placed in their appropriate stables. Those of breeding and those used for racing were placed in the “eastern stable” which was positioned next to the housing for those who labored as well as raced these horses.⁴

Racing was a popular pastime for the planter class, especially in South Carolina. Following the first official contest in 1665, the sport quickly gained attention all over and quickly found popularity in the South. Turf races gave the planter elite, along with others of societal ranking, an opportunity to display their wealth in yet another fashion. Though participation in this pastime had dwindled greatly in the post-Revolutionary era, in South Carolina, as well as in other regions, those with large land holdings and military rank sought to infuse new life into the sport. With their financial support and continued backing, turf gaming again became the popular gentlemen’s recreation.⁵

Turf races all over the South sported high stakes, some of which were even provided by the planter entrants themselves. Through prize money and glory were readily sought after, ownership of the great horse was the true aspiration. In his historical account of *The South Carolina Jockey Club*, J. B.

Turf races gave the planter elite...an opportunity to display their wealth in yet another fashion.



Irving assessed the planters' affinity for their noble beasts, recognizing the importance of a great horse: "The gentlemen of the Turf... never ran their horses for the pecuniary value of the prize to be won, but solely for the honor that a horse of their own breeding and training should distinguish himself."⁶

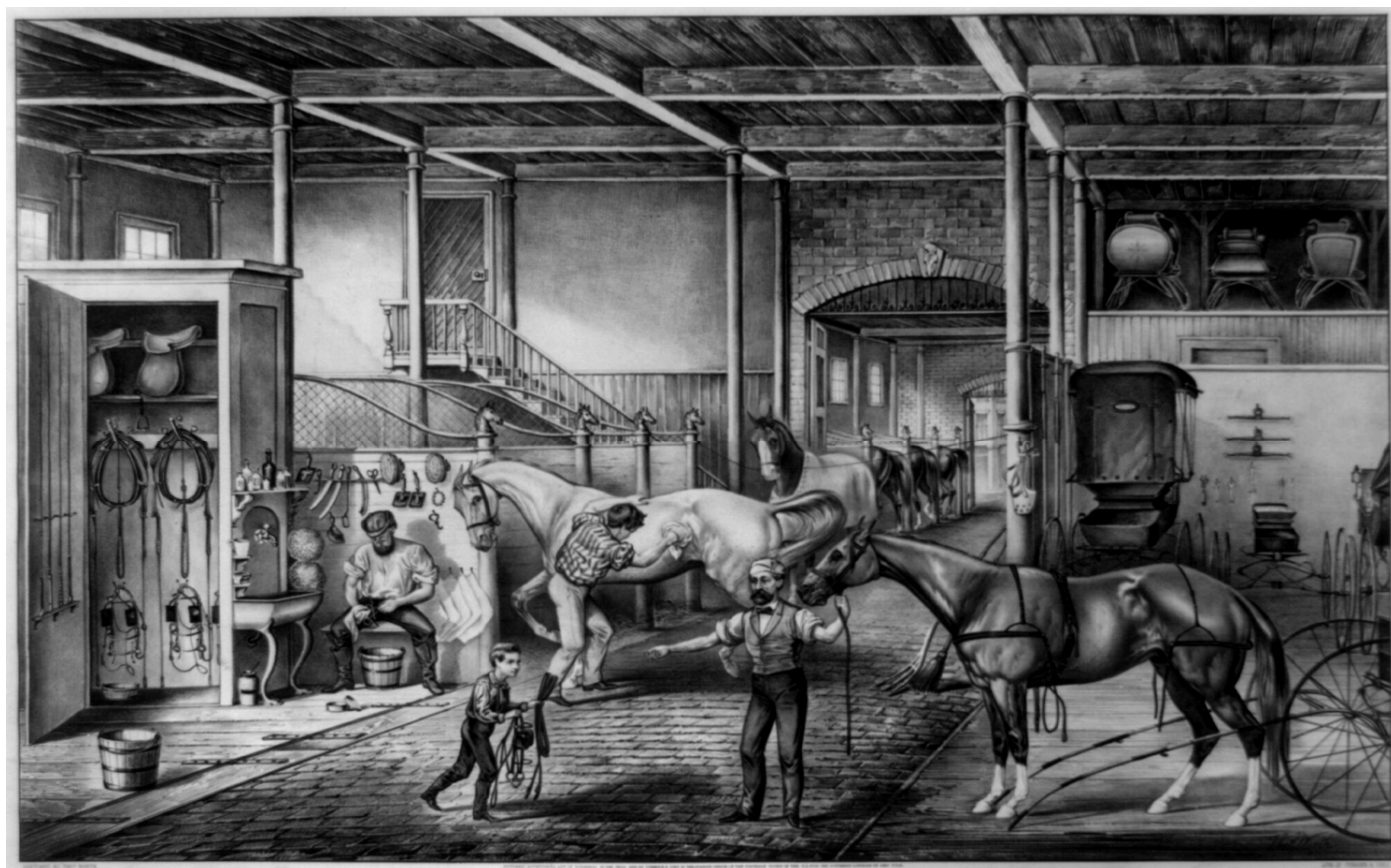
As treasured as the possession of a magnificent horse was, the display of a formal painting of the animal within the homestead was of equal value. In the antebellum era, there were many artists who specialized in landscape and portrait paintings but relatively few great animal painters were available. Edward Troye was one of the foremost artists of this genre, an art form that had gained much popularity during this time period. Troye's budding reputation brought him to the South, a location where many sought to have their prize steeds painted at their homesteads. The display of other possessions, such as the house and the grounds, took a background, though still significant place in these oil paintings. The emphasis on the horse showed visitors to the planter's home his pride of ownership of a majestic beast; it also served as a chronicle of the steed's bloodline. Edward Troye's works, though at times done with artistic liberty and enhancement, served as solid representations to suit those multiple needs.⁷

After being commissioned to paint one of the greatest fillies on the turf, Trifle, Edward Troye began to gain a notable reputation. On his first lengthy visit to the South, Troye made the acquaintance of Col. Wade Hampton II, who engaged him

to paint some of his prize steeds. This was to be the first of many stays at Millwood, for Hampton repeatedly called upon Troye to capture the likenesses of his prominent bloodline horses. The planter was a great patron of the arts and frequently commissioned works from painters and sculptors. Troye was but one of many who visited Millwood to perform his art, but what he produced found a very special and prominent places of display within the big house.⁸

The initial paintings that Troye composed at Millwood were of two of the colonel's finest bred horses. Argyle and Pocahontas, both of great racing bloodlines and themselves being animals that had proven successful on the turf, were painted majestically in the forefront of a painting which also featured the house that had been built as a wedding present for Wade II and his bride. Upon the completion of these works, Hampton sought the perfect locale in which to display them so that all visitors could be engulfed in the beauty and elegance of his prize animals. Appropriately positioned, these two Troye paintings held a place of honor and graced the walls of the vestibule.⁹

Many other members of the South Carolina Jockey Club, as well as planters all over the South, employed Troye to paint their horses, as well as other animals. It was really the horse that was the desired subject. The homestead, the occasional jockey astride or along side his mount, the stable attendant or valet were always overshadowed by the presence of the equine



"Trotting Cracks" at Home. Currier and Ives, 1868. Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division, LC-USZ62-95000.

in the painting.¹⁰

Between 1836, when Troye painted Argyle and Pocahontas, and 1840, when he returned to Millwood, Troye traveled throughout the South to plantations and turf racing yards to perform his art. In that time period, dramatic renovations had taken place at Millwood that transformed the house into a masterpiece of the Greek Revival design. Few houses could rival its magnificence and beauty. Though the plantation was truly "a social center for notables of the day," Hampton opted for Troye to not include it in the background of the next series of paintings. In fact, when the painting of the renowned horse Argyle was done for the colonel, he had Troye include his father's home The Woodlands. Troye went on to paint Monarch, Bay Maria and Foal, and Maria West and Foal during that visit as well as others in subsequent visits, including American Eclipse, a forefather of the racing legend Man O'War.¹¹

Edward Troye, though he gained the reputation as the greatest horse painter of his day, was not the only artist brought to Hampton's attention. Henri de Lattre also placed his brush to the canvas and captured the images of another mare and her offspring from the Millwood breeding farm. Other artists painted the great Hampton blood horses as well. In fact, the legendary Monarch commanded many different artists, the two aforementioned as well as men like James De Veaux, whose career had been aided in various means by the colonel and his brother-in-law John L. Manning. The master of the track Monarch received much attention in his off time as well as racing. When it came time for Wade Hampton II's equine to again be the subject of a piece of art for his owner's homestead, the news reported "Monarch is 'sitting' for his portrait at Columbia." The paintings of these horses were of great importance to Wade Hampton II because the horses' speed, beauty and laurels added a different dimension of definition to their owner's character as well as to the house, where their images hung in proud display upon the oft-viewed walls.¹²

There were many planters who owned thoroughbreds that did not participate in the well-regarded races or commission paintings to commemorate their ownership of such valuable entities. James Henry Hammond went to great pains to take possession, or in some instances partial ownership, of some fine blood horses. In 1835, for example, he purchased "3/5ths of Argyle." Horses were a treasured possession, one that added depth to the planter's status.¹³

Fine thoroughbreds on the turf represented the planter and his ability to dominate in another realm. The luxury of owning these animals, providing elaborate structures for their stables as well as the ability to have their likenesses painted and displayed on the walls added an additional dimension to the master's power. While these great horses, their beautiful stables and the art works that represented their images found places of honor in the world of the Southern planter, art in general held a position of prominence as well. The planter found representations of his power in many manifestations, inclusive of the prize horse and the portrait of these noble beasts. It was through these tangible entities that he was able to display his authority in the antebellum world. He could also display his great pride in ownership of these magnificent horses. ❧

¹ "The South Carolina Turf," *The News and Courier*, 27 September 1844.; Account Book, The Estate of James Henry Hammond Deceased, Harry Hammond Papers, South Caroliniana Library, Manuscripts Division; John B. Irving, "Sporting Epistle From South Carolina," *The News and Courier*, 27 September 1844; Alexander Mackay-Smith, *The Race Horse of America, 1832-1872; Portraits By Edward Troye* (Saratoga Springs, NY: The National Museum of Racing, 1981), 68 and 70; Stud Book 1833-1840, "Journals, Reciepes [sic], Expenses &c of Blood Horses Belonging Wholly or in part to James H. Hammond, Silver Bluff, Barnwell, S.C. 1833," James Henry Hammond Papers, South Caroliniana Library, Manuscripts Division; Stud Book 1833-1839, "Pedigrees, Purchases, Sales & Raves of Blood Horses Belonging Wholly or in Part to James Henry Hammond, Silver Bluff, Barnwell, S.C. 1833," James Henry Hammond Papers, South Caroliniana Library, Manuscripts Division. Richard Lamb Allen, "Letters from the South," *The American Agriculturalist*, November 1846, 20; J. B. Irving, *The South Carolina Jockey Club* (Charleston, SC: Russell & Jones, 1857), 178; Benjamin F. Perry, *The Writings Of Benjamin Perry, Volume II: Reminiscences of Public Men*, eds. Stephen Meats and Edwin T. Arnold (Spartanburg, SC: The Reprint Company, 1980), 336; *The Raleigh Register* 28 July 1806, obituary of Launcelot Thorpe (microfilm).

In Irving's 'Sporting' article, he refers to Wade Hampton II's property as Woodlands. Wade I owned Woodlands, which Wade II absorbed into his Millwood plantation. The correct name of the property was Millwood.

² Richard Hampton Jenrette, *Adventures With Old Houses* (Charleston, SC: Wyrick & Company, 2000), 208. Mr. Jenrette purchased and restored many historic houses, including Millford (Millford).

³ Irving, "Sporting.," Irving, *Jockey*, 177; Irving, "Sporting.," Mackay-Smith, *Race Horse*, 68-69; Virginia G. Meynard, *The Venturers: The Hampton, Harrison, And Earle Families Of Virginia, South Carolina, And Texas* (Easley, SC: Southern Historical Press, 1981), 172; Manly Wellman, *Giant in Gray: A Biography of Wade Hampton of South Carolina* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1949), 38; Irving, *Jockey*, 177; Account, "Wade II," Hampton Family Papers, South Caroliniana Library, Manuscripts Division; Ann Fripp Hampton, *A Divided Heart: Letters Of Sally Baxter Hampton 1853-1862* (Spartanburg, SC: The Reprint Company Publishers, 1980), 31; Harry R. E. Hampton, "The Second Wade," Virginia Gurley Meynard Papers, South Caroliniana Library, Manuscripts Division; Millwood, Richland County Research File, National Register of Historic Places Inventory Nomination Form, South Carolina Department of Archives & History.

⁴ *American Turf Register and Sporting Magazine*, May 1840, 244; Irving, *Jockey*, 178-180; Irving, "Sporting.," Mackay-Smith, *Race Horse*, 75, 416 and 421; Virginia Meynard, "Portraits Of Horses By Edward Troye and Henri DeLattre Owned By Col. Wade Hampton II," Virginia Gurley Meynard Papers, South Caroliniana Library, Manuscripts Division, 1 and 4; The Triad Architectural Association, "Millwood: Its Architecture And Ambiance" (Draft Copy) (Columbia, SC: n.p., 1982), South Caroliniana Library.