

WABASH VALLEY

P R O F I L E S

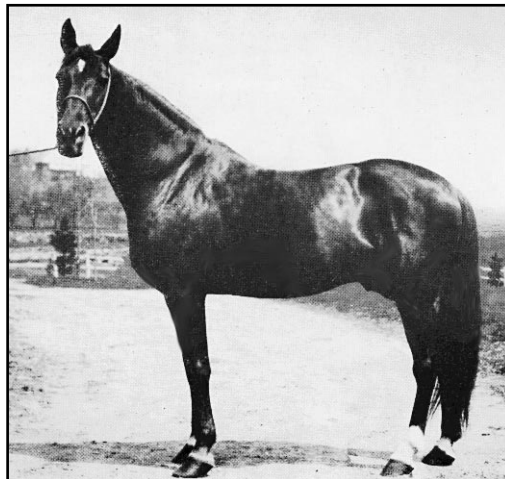
A series of tributes to hometown people and events that have shaped our history.

Axworthy

Axworthy, a handsome ashen chestnut colt with a triangular star on his forehead, is the most distinguished Terre Haute native in horse racing annals.

When a syndicate headed by William P. Ijams of Warren Park Farm (now the site of Honey Creek Mall) acquired Axtell, a world record-setting stallion, for \$105,000 from C.W. Williams of Independence, Iowa, on Oct. 11, 1889, Terre Haute and its Four-Cornered Track emerged as a national horse racing center. The price was the highest paid for a horse of any age, breed, sex or gait. Undefeated in 1888 and 1889, Axtell broke down as a four-year-old, never to race again. Yet Ijams demanded a \$1,000 fee for his horse's stud services, double the amount earned by any stallion in the world. Axtell died in Terre Haute on Aug. 19, 1906.

Axtell's renown might have been fleeting had it not been for his offspring's successes. Axtell's mile record (2:12) was bettered in 1891 by Allerton (2:09.25). But Axworthy, one of Axtell's seven foals produced by dam Marguerite (owned by A.B. Darling of New Jersey), became one of the most celebrated horses in history. Born in Terre Haute on Feb. 13, 1892, Axworthy was one of the initial "immortals" inducted into the Hall of Fame of the Trotter at Goshen, N.Y., in 1953, preceding his sire's induction by a year. Cultivated at Warren Park by acclaimed driver-trainer Budd Doble, Axworthy was the "talk of Terre Haute" in 1894 after pushing Oakland Baron to a world record for two-year-old stallions (2:16.5) at the Four-Cornered Track. Like his father, however, the gangly trotter developed front ankle trouble. Soon after reaching 2:15.5 the next summer, Axworthy was retired to stud at Warren Park. Nearing his fifth birthday, he was sold at auction Dec. 2, 1896, to John Shults of Brooklyn for \$500.



Instead of making his lame acquisition a road horse, Shults coddled him. The purchase ranks as the best bargain in horse racing history. Unable to compete due to injury, Axworthy nevertheless exhibited uncommon straightaway speed, majestic presence and a grand gait. Ultimately he sired 59 stallions; 26 bettered 2:10 in the mile; two surpassed 2:05. He also produced dams of 449 foals: 114 trotted 2:10 or better and 31 — including the noted mare Hamburg Belle — eclipsed 2:05. Axworthy's issue includes Guy Axworthy — said to be the finest stallion of the 20th century — and Dillon Axworthy, sire of Dean Hanover, progenitor of the celebrated Hanover lineage. Lee Axworthy, son of Guy Axworthy, held the world stallion record until 1941. Guy Abbey, another Guy Axworthy product, sired Greyhound, world champion trotter from 1934 to 1940. These descendants of Axtell and Axworthy now share their ancestors' immortality in the Hall of Fame of the Trotter.

In 1906, Shults sold Axworthy to William Simpson at auction for \$21,000. Simpson placed the horse under the management of R.L. Nash to serve as a public stallion in Lexington, Ky. He died there Nov. 5, 1917, at age 25.

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