



Silent Majority scores down the stretch at The Red Mile for trainer-driver Billy Haughton in 1972. Although he could be a little wicked with his hind feet on occasion, Silent Majority could also pace some wicked fractions, but unfortunately was not staked to the Jug and other major events.

George Smallegre

stud ranks, but Henry T. Adios stood in the shadow of his barn mate Meadow Skipper at Stoner Creek Stud in Kentucky. Comparisons between the two stallions are unfair, as no stallion in his day could compete with Meadow Skipper. Henry T. Adios had a modestly successful stud career before being exported to Australia.

The best stakes star that Henry T. Adios sired was Silent Majority, a foal of 1969 and thus a contemporary of Strike Out, who was from the first crop by Bret Hanover. The two Canadian-owned colts made headlines in the summer of '72, but Silent Majority was lightly staked and missed many chances to shine.

Steve Brown of Dunroven Stud remembered Billy Haughton saying that Silent Majority was the only son of Henry T. Adios who would pin his ears in a race and go forward. The others who pinned their ears went backwards.

In the spring of 1973, Silent Majority incurred a suspensory problem and wouldn't stand training, so a deal was made for him to begin a breeding career at Walnut Hall Farm.

One of the mares sent to Silent Majority in that first season was a Duane Hanover daughter named Bergdorf, who came from a solid if unspectacular Midwest maternal heritage.

We'll start the examination of Abercrombie's maternal family with his third dam, Princess Chief, who was foaled on Feb. 20, 1945, as Allied troops were about to cross the Rhine River in the assault on Germany that would end the European theater of World War II.

Ebony in color like her sire, Chief Abbedale, Princess Chief was out of The Gay Princess, a trotting mare whose chief claim to fame was that she defeated Greyhound at Columbus, Ohio, in 1934 in the second starts of their respective lives.

Chief Abbedale was an underappreciated sire who would later join Billy Direct and Hal Dale as the first stallions to get a pair of Little Brown Jug winners. Chief Abbedale's Jug winners were Forbes Chief and Quick Chief. Neither excelled as a stallion, and this male line has disappeared.

Princess Chief commanded a \$2,050 bid from Herman Brickel when the Two Gaits Farm consignment sold at Lexington in 1946. (This Herman Brickel is the uncle of the noted race secretary of the same name who was featured last issue.)

Princess Chief gained her greatest fame racing for Perry Rohmor of Wil-

Abercrombie is a great-grandson of Adios, whose offspring helped him dominate the pacing stakes in the 1950s and '60s as few sires in the sport have ever done. Adios sired eight winners of the Little Brown Jug and swept other sires of merit into dark corners of oblivion with his greatness.

Of all the great sons of Adios, from Bret Hanover to Adios Butler, Adios Harry, Bullet Hanover, Dancer Hanover, Shadow Wave, and Lehigh Hanover, it is

a True Son of the Midwest

by Dean A. Hoffman

curious that his male line would flourish through his son Henry T. Adios.

True, Henry T. Adios was a brilliant racehorse, a Jug winner himself, a reliable free-for-all, and three-time divisional champion who retired as the richest pacing stallion in history, but Henry T. was a notorious "one-brush" horse who raced best from behind cover.

Adios overshadowed his rivals in the

Near right: Henry T. Adios, the grandsire of Abercrombie, was an outstanding colt star for Stanley Dancer, then matured into a tough free-for-all for driver Del Insko. He retired as the richest pacing stallion in history with earnings of \$706,698.

Far right: Knight Dream was a Jug winner in 1948, and he and his son Duane Hanover crop up with amazing frequency in the pedigrees of Abercrombie's finest performers. Knight Dream, a son of the outstanding trotter Nibble Hanover, is pictured at Hanover Shoe Farms, where he spent his entire stud career.



ington, Ohio. One man who remembers Princess Chief well is Jan McPherson, a schoolteacher and trainer from the Ohio community of Xenia.

"Mr. Brickel was notorious for switching trainers," recalled McPherson. "It was almost an annual tradition in an era when this was not done. In those days, some owner and trainer relationships went on for decades."

Rohmor had been the manager of the Fairmeade-Green Acres breeding farm in Wilmington and was well into his 50s when he turned to training and driving.

"Perry was a soft-spoken, true gentleman of the old school," said McPherson. "He was a very good trainer and fine horseman, but he was not a very good driver."

His strategy with Princess Chief was to send her to the front and play "catch me if you can."

"Even though she was free-legged, Princess Chief could leave a ton," recalled McPherson. "This worked until she reached the free-for-all ranks at the Ohio fairs. Then some of the better drivers used this to their advantage. They would carry Princess Chief a ways, let her go, and let her give them a trip. They would usually

get past her in the stretch. The Chief Abbedales were not known for their staying power."

Princess Chief retired with a mark of 2:07 and earnings of \$9,506. That doesn't elicit any admiration today, but McPherson said, "A 2:05 mile would win 95 percent of our races at the Ohio fairs then, and I would suspect that in her faster races, Princess Chief finished second or third."

When she was retired, Princess Chief was bred to various stallions, including The Widower in 1958. She delivered a filly named Princess Best in the spring of 1959.

The Widower stood in Ohio at the time and was best known as the sire of the incomparably tough mare Belle Acton, but Princess Best was no Belle Acton. She earned less than \$1,000 and, like her mother, earned a 2:07 mark as a 4-year-old.

Enter Dr. Arthur C. Evans, a Cincinnati urologist, who purchased Princess Best for breeding purposes. Dr. Evans was introduced to the sport in a most unusual way.

"I had a patient who was dying of cancer," Evans explained. "I went to his office and noticed that he had a copy of *The Horseman & Fair World* on his desk. He told me he was interested in harness racing and gave me a copy of the magazine."

Evans tossed it onto his car seat, where it remained for a long time. When he saw his patient again, the man asked if he had

enjoyed the magazine. Evans didn't want to admit he hadn't read it, so he commented on how interesting it was.

The man was delighted that the young doctor took an interest in his favorite sport and bought a subscription in his name.

"You know, if a magazine comes to you 52 times a year, you begin to read it and take an interest," admitted Evans. That interest led him down Route 25 from Cincinnati to Kentucky to attend the Lexington Trots Grand Circuit meeting one fall.

A few days later, while he was preparing for surgery at a Cincinnati hospital, another doctor asked him, "Didn't I see you down at the trotting track in Lexington the other day?"

Evans acknowledged that he'd been horsing around in the Bluegrass, and the two doctors began to talk horses. The other doctor was a friend of Willis and Kate Nichols, who owned Walnut Hall Farm and resided in the Cincinnati area.

Evans soon became more involved in harness racing, and in 1958 he was called in as a consultant when the half-million dollar stallion Demon Hanover required surgery for kidney stones.

Because of Evans' close association with Walnut Hall Farm, he bred Princess Best to the farm's stallions. She first went to Sampson Direct. Evans said that it was Katherine Nichols who persuaded him to switch Princess Best to the court of Duane Hanover in 1966. Of course, Evans wasn't the only breeder jumping on the Duane Hanover bandwagon in the mid-1960s.

A son of Knight Dream, Duane Hanover matured into a formidable free-for-all for Billy Haughton in the late 1950s, but he went to Walnut Hall with little fanfare. That changed rapidly, however, when his initial crops contained several

ABERCROMBIE

Silent Majority	Henry T. Adios	Adios	Hal Dale
		Greer Hanover	Adios Volo
	Hobby Horse Tar	Tar Heel	Nibble Hanover
		Wilfellen	Veda Hanover
Bergdorf	Duane Hanover	Knight Dream	Billy Direct
		Dorsh Hanover	Leta Long
	Princess Best	The Widower	Wilmington
		Princess Chief	Willola
			Nibble Hanover
			Lydia Knight
			Dillon Axworthy
			Great Medium
			Abbedale
			Widow Grattan
			Chief Abbedale
			The Gay Princess

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Magnesium Aspartate	8,272 mg.
Zinc Aspartate	1,200 mg.
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Probiotic Saccharide	3,300 mg.
Probiotic Bifidobacterium	3,300 mg.
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Glutamine	2,000 mg.
Serine	2,970 mg.
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Phenylalanine	1,935 mg.
Threonine	1,825 mg.
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Abercrombie

exceptional pacers, most notably the talented True Duane, the colt who pulled Chris Boring to national prominence as a driver.

Duane Hanover's subsequent crops included high-class colts like King Omaha, CB Duane, and Romeo Lobell. Suddenly Duane Hanover found himself hailed as the outcross savior to the Adios, Good Time, and Tar Heel blood that dominated the sport in the '60s.

The robust bay stallion never truly filled those shoes, however, and his first foal from Princess Best went through the auction ring under the name Bergdorf for \$4,000. Duane Hanover, like his sire, was not noted as a sterling sire of filly speed.

Unraced at two, Bergdorf spent most of 1970 slugging it out in overnights at The Meadows for John Windgard. At the end of the year, she had a 4-1-3 tally in 16 starts and \$3,583 in earnings. Her best winning time was 2:06.

She spent the following year at Vernon Downs, where she earned a 2:03.3 mark late in the year. When she stopped racing at the end of 1971, she had pocketed \$6,085. It was time for her to become a broodmare.

Her first two foals were by Rivaltime, a now-forgotten Good Time warrior who tried vainly to match strides with Bret Hanover in the mid-1960s.

In October 1973, Bergdorf and her suckling daughter by Rivaltime walked into the auction ring at the Old Glory Sale Co. at Yonkers Raceway. The mare was back in foal to Rivaltime.

"We were looking around for mares for Silent Majority," recalled Steve Brown. "Everyone scared us to death with all the talk about how small Henry T. Adios was. I saw Bergdorf in the Old Glory catalog in foal to Rivaltime. I called Bill Haughton, who has trained some fillies for us, and asked if he'd buy her [for Walnut Hall], but it was Phil Tully who signed for Bergdorf because Billy didn't make it to the sale."

Brown described Bergdorf as a big, stout mare. The sale price was \$10,500, and Bergdorf came to Kentucky for her first date with Silent Majority in the spring of 1974.

That first mating produced Abercrombie, but Bergdorf later gained a special niche in the sport as the first mare to produce two sub-1:55 horses when her Most Happy Fella son Bruce Gimble paced in 1:54.4. **HB**

John Cashman and Abercrombie arrived at Castleton at virtually the same time, and it was Cashman who had to cope with the horse's marginal fertility.

"Abercrombie failed his first fertility test," said Cashman. "As I recall, Col. Floyd Sagar of Claiborne Farms was one veterinarian who tested him, and we had a meeting with Col. Sagar, Dr. William McGee, and Dr. Steve Conboy from Castleton, plus the insurance underwriter."

Castleton owner Frederick Van Lennep listened to the veterinarians and decided that Castleton would retain its share in Abercrombie, but other investors would have the right to bow out.

"The veterinarians felt that his semen would improve with time," said Cashman. "The key to Abercrombie has always been management. He's capable of handling 135 mares or so each year. We made a mistake one year and bred a lot of mares to him, about 175, and he couldn't do that. You just can't stretch him beyond about 140."

A serious problem occurred in 1986 when he served 143 mares and had only 49 registered foals the following year.

Neither Cashman nor Conboy have any valid explanation for Abercrombie's poor showing that season, other than that it might relate to a new semen extender being used.

The great stallion has had to fight aching feet most of his breeding career.

"He's always had bad, bad feet," said Cashman. "Dr. Conboy has worked on him for many years. Abercrombie isn't truly foundered, but his feet aren't good, and some days he's lame as a dog. Other days he can run up and down in his paddock. He's constantly fighting abscesses in his feet. He wears special shoes with pads."

Cashman said that Abercrombie has endowed his offspring with extraordinary soundness that gets better with age.

"When he is bred to speed mares from the Meadow Skipper and Albatross lines, you get a fast, durable horse," said Cashman. "They have great attitudes. They don't burn themselves [out] early as 2-year-olds. They usually don't start to surface until August or September. Then they just go on and race forever."

The cross of Abercrombie on Bret Hanover mares, a doubling of Adios blood that seemed natural since both



Dean A. Hoffman

Castleton Farm president John A. Cashman Jr. holds Abercrombie. The two came to Castleton at about the same time and Cashman says that Abercrombie might just be the greatest stallion ever to stand at the famed and historic Kentucky farm.

horses stood at Castleton, has not been as successful as the blending of Abercrombie and Meadow Skipper blood.

Castleton Farm yearling supervisor Richard Stone echoes Cashman's sentiments, adding, "The Abercrombies take good care of themselves and they are good doers at feeding time. They are good to work around."

Cashman noted that you can breed Abercrombie to the coarsest mares and still get a "typey" individual.

Abercrombies 'Never Say Die'

"I've seen him crossed on some big, homely mares by B.G.'s Bunny, and you get nice horses," he said. "He hardly ever gets unattractive foals."

Steve Waller rode many miles behind Abercrombie and remembers his efficient gait. "A lot of the best Abercrombies are gaited like he was," said Waller.

Carter Duer fell in love with Abercrombie many years ago and hasn't changed his tune at all, noting that Abercrombie's greatest legacy might be as a grandsire.

by Dean A. Hoffman



Above left: Trainer Gene Riegler sends Artsplace through a warm-up mile. Abercrombie's greatest son is off to a dazzling start as a stallion, passing on the speed and soundness he inherited from his own sire.

Above right: Life Sign rolls past the tunnel at The Red Mile in 1993, just a few weeks after his miracle victory in the Little Brown Jug. The son of Abercrombie sent his first foals to the racing wars this past summer and the results indicate that he will be a stallion of lasting impact.

Right: Some horsemen have said that Albert Albert resembles his sire more than any other single son of Abercrombie. Both horses were deceptively gaited in that they got over the ground with little apparent effort and they could be roughed up and still ask for more. Albert Albert is the sire of the \$2.3 million winner Pacific Rocket.



"You see Abercrombies of all ages racing, and racing very well," said Duer. "I think his fillies are underrated."

A list of the leading money winners by Abercrombie appears with this article, and the accomplishments of these superlative pacers are so well known as to make elaboration unnecessary. Who in the sport hasn't marveled at the tenacity of Artsplace, Life Sign, Armbr Emerson, Anniecrombie, Armbr Dallas, Kentucky Spur, and others?

I have always been struck by the affinity of Abercrombie for mares with a touch of Knight Dream blood in their pedigree. Abercrombie himself gets his Knight Dream cross through Duane Hanover, sire of Bergdorf.

Knight Dream won the Jug in 1948 and spent his stud career at Hanover Shoe Farms. His best son was Torpid, a Jug winner himself, but this male line has weakened in recent decades. Consider, however, the influence of Knight Dream in the pedigrees of some of Abercrombie's best performers:

- The third dam of Artsplace is by Duane Hanover;
- The third dams of Life Sign, Albert Albert, Leah Almahurst, As Promised, and Bond Street are by Knight Dream;
- Armbr Emerson, Armbr Dallas,

Topnotcher, Cimarron, and Armbr Cadet are out of mares by Most Happy Fella, whose second dam is by Knight Dream;

- Survivor Gold is out of a mare by a son of Most Happy Fella;
- Anniecrombie's second dam is by True Duane, a son of Duane Hanover; and
- Sportsmaster's second dam is by Best Of All, who is out of a Knight Dream mare.

There are numerous others stars sired by Abercrombie. Actually, the stars aren't

necessarily the ones that have made Abercrombie great. The hundreds and hundreds of pacers who are not household names but who quietly go about their business of winning races and making money are what have made Abercrombie such an exceptional sire.

And, as John Cashman said, they race forever.

The legacy of Abercrombie, like his sons and daughters, will last a long, long time. **HB**

ABERCROMBIE OFFSPRING (through August 13, 1997)

Foal Name	Year foaled	Sex	Life Record	Life Money	Dam Name
Artsplace	1988	H	p,4,1:49.2	\$ 3,085,083	Miss Elvira
Life Sign	1990	H	p,3,1:50.3	\$ 1,912,454	Three Diamonds
Armbr Emerson	1983	H	p,4,T1:51.4	\$ 1,472,590	Armbr Uppity
Anniecrombie	1983	M	p,5,1:52.3	\$ 1,414,477	Sparklespray
Armbr Dallas	1982	G	p,3,1:52.3	\$ 1,401,201	Armbr Trixie
Kentucky Spur	1986	H	p,3,1:52	\$ 1,341,340	Peach Melba
Topnotcher	1986	H	p,4,1:52.2f	\$ 1,340,850	She's The Most
Albert Albert	1985	H	p,3,1:52.1	\$ 1,237,070	Lismore
Misfit	1989	H	p,7,1:49.4	\$ 1,125,392	She's A Ten
Leah Almahurst	1985	M	p,3,1:52.3	\$ 1,053,201	Liberated Angel
Dontgettinmyway	1992	H	p,5,1:52.2	\$ 947,593	Seven O'Clock
Survivor Gold	1989	H	p,4,1:51	\$ 897,929	T M I
Cimarron	1985	G	p,9,1:51.4	\$ 876,404	Most Happy Liz
Sportsmaster	1989	H	p,2,1:52.1	\$ 755,803	Diana Lynn Lobell
Dare You To	1985	H	p,6,1:50.4	\$ 755,729	Chickasaw Brave
Golden Greek	1984	H	p,3,1:52.1	\$ 720,657	Classical Jazz
Arizona Jack	1993	H	p,3,1:50.2	\$ 693,823	Concertina
Armbr Cadet	1981	H	p,4,1:53.2	\$ 693,392	Armbr Trixie
As Promised	1989	H	p,4,1:50.2	\$ 669,639	Promised Princess
Laag	1984	H	p,3,1:51.2	\$ 642,995	Tinsel