

Murphey, Archibald DeBow (from Tar Heel Junior Historian) ^[1]



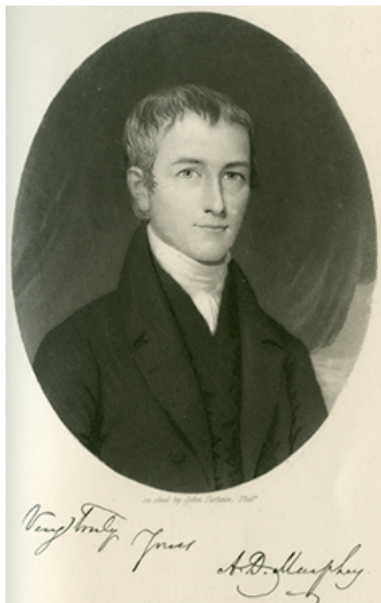
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Archibald DeBow Murphey

by John Lauritz Larson, Tar Heel Junior Historian Association, NC Museum of History, Fall 1996; Revised by SLNC Government and Heritage Library, May 2023

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See also: [Archibald DeBow Murphy](#) ^[2], (from the *Dictionary of North Carolina Biography*)



Charles L. Van Noppen, 1906. Vol. 4, following p. 340.

^[3]Elected to the North Carolina Senate in 1812, Archibald DeBow Murphey fought for public education and statewide internal improvements. He believed that the success of a republic depended on the quality of its citizens and that any tax money spent on improving the intellectual or material parts of their lives would be repaid by improving their standard of living and quality of life.

Murphey's 1817 *Report on Education* ^[4] proposed a system of primary schools and academies to prepare students for the existing state university in Chapel Hill. A state Board of Public Instruction, elected by members of the General Assembly, would be charged with managing a school fund; organizing the schools, curriculum, and instruction; and providing for the advancement of poor children (at public expense) through the highest levels of education their talents warranted. Although the state did create a "Literary Fund" in 1826, nothing came of Murphey's plan until the first general public school law of 1839.

Murphey's 1819 *Memoir of Internal Improvements* ^[5] received wider attention. In it Murphey expressed his belief that government was obligated not just to preserve liberty but also to advance the welfare and progress of a whole community.

At the time this article was written, John Lauritz Larson was teaching history at Purdue University in West Lafayette, Indiana.

Additional information from NCpedia editors at the State Library of North Carolina: :

This person enslaved and owned other people. Many Black and African people, their descendants, and some others were enslaved in the United States until the Thirteenth Amendment abolished slavery in 1865. It was common for wealthy landowners, entrepreneurs, politicians, institutions, and others to enslave people and use enslaved labor during this period. To read more about the enslavement and transportation of African people to North Carolina, visit <https://aahc.nc.gov/programs/africa-carolina-0> ^[6]. To read more about slavery and its history in North Carolina, visit <https://www.ncpedia.org/slavery> ^[7]. - Government and Heritage Library, 2023

Additional resources:

Archibald D. Murphey papers, 1768-1893. Southern Historical Collection, UNC Libraries.
http://www.lib.unc.edu/mss/inv/m/Murphey,Archibald_D.html ^[8].

Learn NC resources ^[9]

Murphey, Archibald D. *Memoir on the internal improvements contemplated by the legislature of North-Carolina* Raleigh [N.C.]: J. Gales. 1819. <https://archive.org/details/memoironinternal00murp> ^[10] (accessed December 6, 2012).

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Archibald De Bow Murphey. Engraving by John Sartain. In Samuel Ashe, *Biographical History of North Carolina*. Greensboro: Charles L. Van Noppen, 1906. Vol. 4, following p. 340. Online at North Carolina Collection, UNC Libraries at <http://www.lib.unc.edu/ncc/ref/unc/cq/murphey.html> ^[3]. (accessed April 2011).

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