

Thirty-four Wye bulls that sold in 1954 at Moultrie, Ga., grossed \$8,980, averaged \$265. Four years later, when Lingle tried the Moultrie market again, the average hit \$425. That was the last Wye public auction for 20 years.

Not only were prices less than ideal in those days. "The association didn't approve of what I was doing . . . My advertising wasn't welcome in breed publications," Lingle recalled. "I was advocating the wrong kind of cattle."

Perseverance Pays Off

But even in the face of adversity, Lingle didn't waver. He continued to pursue his goal of producing big, productive cattle. Granted, he had some advantages the average cowman may not have had. Wye's owner didn't have to depend on cattle for his daily bread. He could afford to wait the 30 or more years it took for Wye cattle to become an economically rewarding product.

That came to pass in the 1960s.

Early on, those buying Wye cattle were almost without exception commercial breeders; Lingle's creatures held no interest for those in the purebred business. However, as the purebred industry's attention turned to big, growthy cattle, that changed. Not only did Lingle have what the market wanted, he'd laid the groundwork for his product's promotion.

By the late 1950s Wye cattle were far enough removed from the U.S. Angus population that they were outcrosses. Lingle knew—if for no other reason than that they would lend hybrid vigor—Wye cattle had to do well. So he tried to place his bulls in strategic spots around the country where they would be highly visible. He also consigned bulls to several test stations.

That helped set the stage. And so did the 1958 purchase of Foremost of Wye by American Breeders Service. By the early 1960s Foremost calves were dotting the countryside and, along with other Wye progeny, were demanding attention.

The Going Gets Easier

By then the scramble for large cattle was well underway and in 1968 two-thirds interest in Lodge of Wye sold to Black Watch Farms for \$250,000. Black Watch also bought Churchill, then sold an interest in him to Dr. James Hicks, Briarhill Angus Farms, Union Springs, Ala. Those transactions followed by Dr. Hicks' purchase of Columbus of Wye drew plenty of attention. And about that same time Jim Turner, Green Valley Angus Ranch, Hobson, Mont., introduced Bonanza of Wye to that area.

Finally, after 30 plus years, overnight success. Size, fertility and productivity had come into their own. So had Lingle's ideas.

And in 1969 Lingle wrote, "After 32 years of closed door breeding, selecting, researching, getting down to exploiting the full potential of the Genetic Gold we have had in the Aberdeen-Angus breed for so long, we now have at Wye Plantation a clear, concentrated blood stream, not an infallible one, but perhaps one close to perfection."

James Lingle

The Man Behind Wye Angus

by Ann Gooding

On Dec. 4 James Lingle died of a heart attack at his home on Wye Plantation. An article on Mr. Lingle had been scheduled for this issue for some time; it was to be based on an interview conducted last spring in which Lingle's long-time friend and fellow Angus breeder Kenneth Clark had taken part.

Regrettably, the article was not completed in time for Mr. Lingle to see it. Nevertheless, because it is a story of a man who had the courage to follow his convictions and who, in so doing, developed a world-famous herd of cattle, it is being printed here, a tribute.

In the late 1930s James Lingle decided to develop a herd of big, productive Angus at Wye Plantation. He was laughed at, cussed at, accused of trying to ruin the breed. When reflecting more than 40 years later, though, he was philosophical. He always knew, he said, that he was doing the right thing.

Not that Lingle was satisfied. He continued to breed cattle, to work toward improvement. And in so doing he did not sell females (on the advice of Clark) and he never sold his best—at least, he said, not that he was aware of.

Rewards Come Rolling In

Lingle retired from Wye in 1971 but continued to live there and to take an active interest in the cattle until his death. He saw the herd turned over to the University of Maryland's Wye Foundation; he saw the subsequent public auction of the 115-head bull battery gross just less than a million dollars (\$8,110 average) all of which was earmarked for beef cattle research; he saw two successful annual production sales.

He saw the calf, Lundell of Wye, grow to an adjusted 365-day weight of 1,346 lb., a height of 52.2 inches at a year.

He was continually called on to speak where cattlemen gathered, to write where cattlemen read. He had a way with words.

He published a book, THE BREED OF NOBLE BLOODS, which chronicles his Wye story. He saw Wye cattle accepted across the country and, in fact, around the world.

He completed two assignments for the International Executive Service Corps, serving as consultant for livestock improvements in Tunisia in 1973 and in Mexico in 1975.



During his lifetime James Boal Lingle was called everything from a fool to a genius. He was accused of ruining the Angus breed; he was praised for saving it. He once sold 34 bulls for an average of \$265; he later saw an interest in one of his bulls bring \$250,000.

Lingle was involved in the livestock industry in one way or another for most of his 85 years. And when, in his early 40's, he started raising Angus, because he had his own (and often unfashionable) ideas on the subject, Lingle was branded a renegade. But because he didn't yield to popular opinion, he developed one of the several strains that dominate the Angus breed today. He developed the Wye cattle.

Lingle, born in 1896 at Centre Hall, Pa., was a 2-year agricultural student at Pennsylvania State University. Although his family had raised a variety of species of livestock his area of expertise became the dairy cow. And that led to his employment at several dairies among them J.C. Penney's Emmadine Farms, renowned for its top-producing Guernseys. It was while he

produced horses and sheep and all manner of livestock until, as Clark puts it, "Lingle graduated more or less by accident into the Angus business."

And when he did graduate to Angus Lingle was less than enchanted with the era's short, fat, blocky cattle. Truth be told, they didn't suit him at all. But he had an idea—or maybe more accurately, an ideal. He visualized a herd of functional, large, efficient cattle; the females would excel in breeding, birthing and milking.

The Process Begins

He drew from his dairy experience. "I felt honestly and truly," he reflected more than 40 years later, "that dairymen knew more about cattle than beef fellows because the beef men didn't have the close association with their cattle. In those days we milked by hand. Dairymen almost lived with their cows. And I never quit believing in what I thought was a good animal—large, efficient, productive—I knew that other thing was wrong."

In 1938 Lingle took the first step toward his ideal, buying 10 half-sisters at \$145 a

ford Farms, just seven miles from Wye. Because he weighed 2,000 lb. and was considered much too big, Lingle picked him up for \$150, then used him for several generations. In fact, it was with that first bull that he started inbreeding, a practice that was to continue at Wye.

The second bull, Juryman of Wickwire, was the first of the imported-blood bulls used at Wye. He and the third bull, Puck of Wickwire, both came from George Bailey's Wickwire Farm.

By then Lingle was sold on imported blood. The bulls were doing what he wanted done; besides, he liked their heritage. "The Scotchmen," he explained, "were older agriculturally than we were. They had been in the business long enough to make all the mistakes and see them and they were good enough husbandmen to correct them, not increase them."

Clark Enters the Picture

About the time Lingle was founding the Wye herd, Clark, a veteran cattleman, was in Baltimore as a buyer for EssKay Co., a major East Coast meat packing firm. Since he made it his business to become acquainted with the agricultural community on Maryland's Eastern Shore, it followed that his and Lingle's paths would cross. They did and a long professional association and friendship ensued. (Clark, who bought his first Angus in 1947, now runs a 200-cow herd at Craigie-Ingleside near Alderson, W.Va. He, like Lingle did, has his own, not always popular ideas about the raising of beef cattle.)

It was with the imports that Clark entered the Wye picture. He either arranged the purchase of bulls or accompanied Lingle on buying trips to the United Kingdom.

Present Wye System Evolves

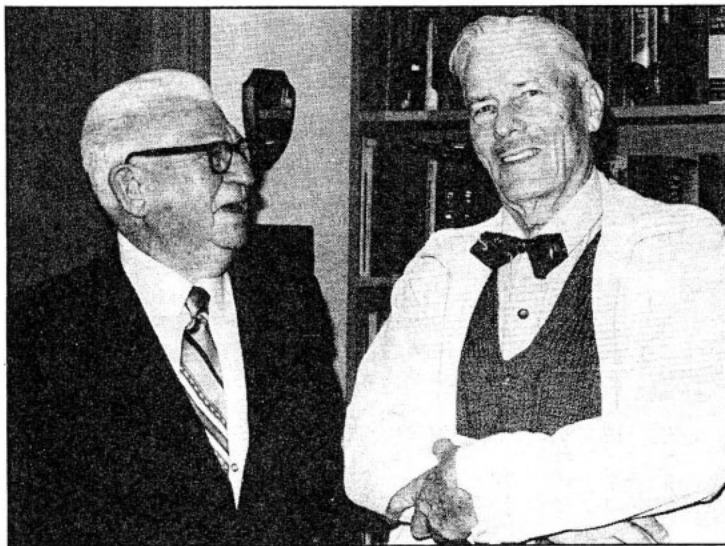
The first home-bred bull to be used at Wye arrived in 1954 when Capearl 82, daughter of Blackcapper 24th of Page, produced her 16th (and next to the last) calf. He was Foremost of Wye, by Puck of Wickwire.

That same year (and this was Clark's idea) Lingle put Wye bulls on test. Lingle was especially interested in the technical aspects of testing as was owner Houghton who encouraged the use of measurements and the subsequent involvement of Dr. W.W. Green and the University of Maryland.

Since that first test, every Wye-raised bull has been weighed, measured and individually gain-tested. Lingle, in fact, was the first to use individual testing. It was, he said, the only way to determine feed conversion. His experience as a dairy cow tester during school vacations had taught him one simple fact: There was a great difference in animals and in their ability to produce. And there was a way to isolate those differences, Lingle felt. Keep records. Measure individuals.

So thanks to his foundation of large females, inbreeding, imported bulls, records and tests and the application of practical genetics, Lingle's ideal was edging closer to reality. Problem was, nobody cared.

The friendship between James Lingle (left) and Kenneth Clark (right) spanned half a century. Lingle developed the Wye herd; Clark still runs 200 of his Craigie cows near Alderson, W.Va. Between them they imported the bulls used to develop both herds. And although he's never performance tested his own cattle, Clark is the one who talked Lingle into testing bulls at Wye.



was at Emmadine that daughters Janet and Ruth were born to him and his wife Ruth. (Lingle's wife died in 1971.)

Lingle faced the '30s with a young family and a knowledge of dairy cattle; the latter supported the former—more or less.

Lingle Meets Houghton

In the meantime, Arthur A. Houghton Jr., president of Stueben Glass Co., bought a farm on Maryland's Eastern Shore near Queenstown. It was called Wye Plantation and had been the home of William Paca, a signer of the Declaration of Independence and twice governor of Maryland.

A former county agent and acquaintance of Lingle's happened to be involved in the real estate transaction and it was he who introduced Lingle and Houghton. That meeting began an association that was to last the rest of Lingle's life.

Although Lingle's background was dairy, Houghton was not interested in that business, so Wye Plantation's 1,000-plus acres

round from Max Sherman at nearby Bennetts Point Farm. Lingle didn't know the first thing about Angus pedigrees and he really didn't care. Those 10 females were a little rough but they were feminine, big, had good udders and were by a bull (Blackcapper 24th of Page) from Hartley Stock Farms, Page, N.D. And Lingle, who knew Hartleys had bred good Guernseys, reasoned they probably also bred good Angus.

The first 10 heifers were soon joined by eight more from the Kershaw Ranch in Oklahoma. They were Blackcap Revolution-bred but again breeding didn't matter. Size did. They were long and leggy. And unpopular. Lingle and Houghton paid \$168 each for them.

Attention Turns to Bulls

Lingle would never buy another female. That side of the herd was closed, but for the next 20 years he did buy bulls. The first (and only bull with domestic bloodlines) was Blakeford Buxton, a product of Blake-

Wye Angus "isms"

James Lingle's Words of Wisdom

- Gleaned from the cow paths of the past where great animals trod and from the scribes who invented the cow pens and gleaned from dedicated husbandmen the fodder to feed those pens.
- Good cattle are still man's most valuable friends.
- There are great values to be had from accumulated excellence through concentration of genetic assets.
- Goodness has a pattern.
- Function follows form.
- Size in the dam and quality in the sire are always a good combination.
- The most important thing we have to consider is production; next comes type. When you combine these factors, you have a work-and-wear animal with constitution, beauty, quality and finish.
- You may get all of the above traits in one animal, yet that animal may lack the ability to reproduce them.
- Like does not beget like, else why the variations in full brothers and full sisters?
- Improvement in cattle breeding comes through genetic variations that produce individuals far superior to their contemporaries or their progenitors of the same breed.
- The successes or the tragedies of the beef cattle industry can be spelled with four letters, M-I-L-K. No one has ever seen a poor calf regardless of breed or color if the mother cow gave an abundance of milk.
- For a cow that gives an abundance of milk select one whose length of head equals one-fourth the distance from poll to pins, equals the distance from hooks to pins, or the distance from hock to ground.
- The size of a beef cow becomes of secondary importance when she becomes a superior producer. Qualifications for that title include; 1) the production of 4-5½ tons of weanlings whose weights are officially determined at 225 days of age; or 2) the production of 10 consecutive calves which at 225 days of age reach 60% of their dam's weight.
- Crossbreeds cannot improve themselves. Only by the infusion of homogeneous strains (purebred) can crossbreeds be improved.
- Proven purebreds provide the only real "shortcut" to genetic improvement. That path is far more economical than investing a fortune throughout the 96 years required to achieve 98% purity by selecting through 16 generations of crossbreeds.
- Fear of inbreeding cattle came about by way of religious predilection—and perhaps a salesman with bulls to sell. That individual said "in and in will get you out" and scared cattlemen into adding new blood to avert retrogression.
- In and in will get you out if you have poor cattle, but not many failures come from breeding the best to the best by test.
- The odds against ever reproducing an identical full brother or full sister in cattle breeding are a fantastic 205,891,132,694,649 to one.
- The Bible relates the small beginning of Homosapiens at the beginning of time but I guess the wives of Cain and Abel were never recorded.
- Moses is reputed to be the best example of line breeding. In his extended pedigree an ancestor named Terah appears 10 times in the seventh, eighth and ninth generations.
- Cleopatra had the most inbred pedigree in recorded history. She was no dropout in any company.
- The long-extended inbreeding of the Incas of Peru enabled them to maintain their leadership for generations.
- Although their sexy, prolific queens have a unique way of attracting their lovers, honey bees must by now be heavily inbred.
- Selecting a herd sire is the hardest thing a cattle breeder has to do. Always try to get one that has an excellent mother and look-alike grandmothers.
- The first principle of breeding is to discern and grasp a good line of proven stock, to stick with it, and to resist all temptations to switch to another.
- Should you ever think your cattle genes are getting tired, put the semen from your top bulls in the freezer for a dozen years. You will be gratified with welcome results when you re-introduce those genes into your herd.
- Hugh Watson was the great improver of the Angus breed at its very inception. After he died his records showed that he had added no outside blood to his herd in more than 50 years.
- Progress is a demanding tyrant. Thus it is that with sadness we behold what used to be the great mother cow reduced to the status of an animated incubator; and our once proud bull that was given to roaming, bellowing and charging, now stands in the corner of his paddock his head bowed low, his dewlap touching the ground, his once proud attitude vanished while he serves only as a masturbating machine.
- Regardless of all that is past and all that is yet to come, nature's way, together with God's and reason's voice, is never at odds with nature's duties.
- Cow paths always mean adventure. Their winding courses are dictated by sensitive hoofs in search of soft, pebble-free earth found along the way to pleasant, restful places.
- The width of cow paths gives a clue to the size of the cattle that made them.
- Cow paths are also used by barefoot boys when they go fishing.
- In cattle breeding the genes wage an internal, invisible, intangible battle while waiting for some understanding husbandman to bring order out of the chaos before some intruding guerrilla imposes a hopeless state of anarchy.
- Injecting outside blood into a proven, attested, selected genetic pattern is a crime of the same enormity as a burglar's breaking into one's home and leaving furniture, fixtures and precious keepsakes in a state of utter disarray.
- A bull is not a bull until someone uses him.
- A bull is not a sire until he has proven himself through his sons and daughters. Once you find a good one never, never let him go.

All of this was because he had the courage to move against a trend with which he could not agree.

Reminiscences Bring Out Opinions

Last spring, in Lingle's home overlooking Wye River, he reminisced, expressed opinions.

On size: "When you start in on a breeding proposition always try to get the largest specimens within the breed you can because as you go along and refine them the time will come when, due to your refinements, you will sacrifice size. We tried not to sacrifice size."

On genetics: "My wife used to get on me when I started comparing cattle with humans. But I used to be in the dairy business and we had a big turnover in labor. And whenever we had a guy that was extraordinary physically, I truly looked forward to the day his folks would come visit. Size in the dam and quality in the sire were confounded sure propositions."

On his start with Angus: "When I got in it, it was a social thing and the cattle were based on baby beef. The time came when baby beef wouldn't pay the bill and that's when it was time to change and a lot of people had their money in it and people would get real provoked with me for what we were doing. We got credit for ruining the breed but I knew that wasn't right because I had been in cattle all my life and my dad was a livestock man and my grandfather. I knew I was right to get the bigger working kind of cow."

On breed purity: "There are so many built-in qualities—grazing, carcass, prolificacy, mothering—in this Angus breed that you just can't afford to step out into some of this other stuff. We know there's less waste in the carcasses and there's been just an awful lot of good things built in for such a long time that I think it is very well worthwhile to try to keep this thing pure. A lot of people are letting their hair down now, I am sorry to say, because of their rush to get their scale up."

"Wyeisms" Cap it Off

There were many other subjects addressed, among them Lingle's Wye Angus "isms." Partially printed here, the Wyeisms not only outline his philosophy on animal breeding, they reveal a man with both a sense of humor and common sense.

As the afternoon and the conversation was winding down, Clark pretty well summed things up. He said of his friend Jamie, (He was always "Jamie" to Clark) "I knew he had a vision, a goal. Definitely. And he never deviated from it. We used to argue like the devil but he never varied an inch from his aim. He wanted bigger cattle, better cattle, more productive cattle, more efficient cattle. Someone once told him that he had a fine herd of cows but he had the wrong type, which was a compliment, really, to his accomplishments."

Later Lingle was asked, "Did you, in your reckoning, ever reach your ideal?" His reply: "No."

But surely he came close.