



**Margaret and David Miller, Sun Up Angus, Smithville, Mo.**  
*The family was presented the award, Outstanding Seedstock Producer of the Year, 1985, by the Missouri Beef Cattle Improvement Assn.*

*David is a native Missourian. Margaret says: "I'm still a Minnesotan."*

# SUN-UP HINKSON

## A long distance transaction

By Jim Cotton  
Editor

**C**urious how connections come about. For winding across this land are a century and more of tracks and trails which eventually cross. When, how and why folks encounter each other, do business, or even marry is the stuff of sagas. Time was when folks trusted their destiny to an oxcart plodding through the dust or followed a bony bunch of greasy—sacker cows, staking their dream on better pastures or at least a change.

Theirs was a rendezvous with risk. Nature and neighbors weren't always receptive. The hazards of earning a nickel were many. Disease and death lingered close, ready to invade the fragile life of pioneer homes. Still, settlers came together and built trading centers, communities, and eventually states and cities.

Missouri's Sun Up Angus Farm and the Hinkson Ranch in Arizona first made contact by telephone. Mrs. Mabel Hinkson is a Sun Up customer. At the 1987 Sun Up sale, she selected a portion of the 50 bulls she turns out annually—entirely sight unseen and through the convenience provided by AT&T.

"I sent her a catalog," says Sun Up's David Miller, "and she stayed on the phone while we told her where the bidding was going. She had certain lot numbers in mind and stayed in there until she got the bulls she wanted. She could step in or out at any point.

"We first got in touch through her neighbor, Dr. Ellsworth there in Arizona, who had bought bulls from us in years past."

Daughter Laurie won one of the first full scholarships awarded to a girl at Kansas State University. Traveling to Bulgaria, she won a silver medal at the World Games in basketball. Between her junior and senior year at K-State, she traveled among Angus breeders across the nation, working a week at one location and moving on. She is now licensed to practice law in California.

Showing an early kinship with animals, daughter Peggy poses with Sun Up Barrier Breaker 4 11, almost a member of the family because of his importance to their futures. She became the family's veterinarian and with her husband, the couple teach veterinary medicine in the University of Missouri system at St. Louis.

Son David-"Bub"- is in charge of the crops and machinery portion of the operation. Rader Miller is herd manager.



But, before this link-up via microwaves and pushbuttons took place, there preceded a long process of weaving toward each other, one that spans the generations.

The present farmsite of Sun Up near Smithville, Mo., was established by David Miller's grandfather in 1866. The elder Miller settled in Missouri after emigrating from Virginia scouting Montana, and backtracking to this rolling setting. In 1976, during the Bicentennial, Sun Up was designated a Centennial Farm of Platte County.

The Angus segment began 52 years ago when Dave purchased two registered cows plus eight commercials from Sam Tweedie of Norborne, Mo. Arriving home after dark, Dave discovered his registered herd had already provided a bonanza. A heifer calf was born enroute to Sun Up. Ten years later, it's recalled, this calf sold in an Angus consignment sale at St. Joseph for \$400, a sum exceeding the cost of all ten head purchased during the depths of those Depression times. (The mother cow cost \$40.)

Mabel Hinkson too remembers the hardships: "They (the Hinksons) came to this country when the government was buying these cattle at \$15 a head, shootin' them, and letting them lie."

The Hinkson legacy is spun from many threads and traverses a long line extending back to Scandanavia where one of the ancestors is thought to have been the Archbishop of Norway. The first known immigrant arrived in 1794, and some of his history suggests he worked on Washington's plantation. Early Hinksons operated a mill in Pennsylvania from where some family members emigrated to Iowa.

"They always seemed to work for someone who liked them and helped them along," says Mrs. Hinkson. Such as in Nebraska. Preston Hinkson -her father-in-law-and his brother Charley began a ranching operation in the Sandhills and survived the blizzard of 1888. The man Mabel Hinkson was to marry years later-Everett-was the first white child born in Cherry County.

The Hinksons later moved to the Platte River Valley near Grand Island. Everett's mother came from Denmark and her people gained a reputation as contractors for the Atchison, Topeka, & Santa Fe Railroad. According to Mrs. Hinkson's records, their firm built the first pre-stressed concrete bridge near Albuquerque, a feat which attracted much industry attention.

"So Everett's inheritance came from both sides," she says of a man big both in stature and vision.



Angus art and mementos are part of the sitting room decor and appreciated whenever there's time to sit.

The monarch pines flanking the house were started from seedlings nursed all the way from Montana and planted beside a log cabin, first dwelling on the Miller homestead.



But then, it took some scope to comprehend this part of Arizona and harness yet preserve its potential. The Hinksons found this expanse of high desert and shortgrass steppe country in essentially a Civil War primitive state. Through wells and roads, fences and pipelines they molded it into a reliable, productive *bona fide* ranch of 188 sections. The ranch plan calls for 20 cows to the bull, and typically 50 bulls are needed to cover the range. Mrs. Everett Hinkson continues the operation and is the planning force for the long-term progress of the ranch.

Performance selected bulls are sought, and Sun Up is a recent source. "We're getting those first Sun Up calves this spring," she says. "We have to turn our bulls over so often, of course. We've never bought fitted bulls out of the

shows much. If we did in years past, we would have taken them down over a period of three months (

Which may be a line borrowed from the Family album. Their herd has never been put in the show report section. But performance-ah, it's a matter of forte. They've been originators, on the front end, of bulls in some fashion, somewhere, for 39 years. Not many seedstock herds of any stripe can make that claim.

An unexpected and fortunate turn of events started the Miller-Sun Up program. In the late 1940s, David began investigating better ways to select and mate beef cattle. He journeyed to Minnesota where some important foundation work in testing and selecting swine was being undertaken. Handling the data processing and secretarial



Mrs. Everett Hinkson, Ojo Bonito, St. Johns, Arizona. "In my early life I thought . . . I was going to be a career gal. But then I went to a shrine ball, and there I met Everett." The photo was taken in 1959.

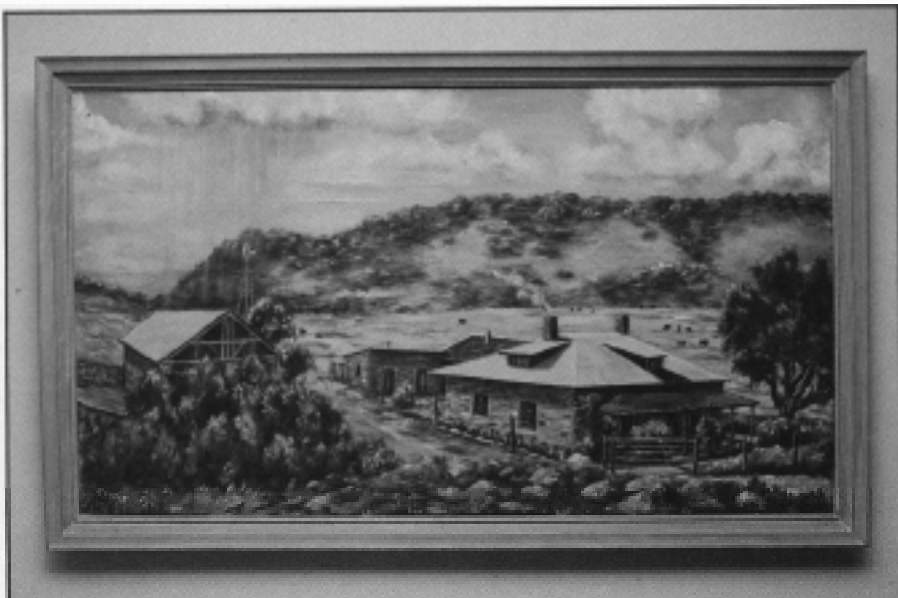
## "My Beloved Ojo Bonito"

A ranch near St. Johns, Arizona

There must have been some kind of confrontation. Most likely a public land hearing.

At any rate, Mrs. Everett (Mabel) Hinkson felt provoked enough to tell the State of Arizona: "Mr. Udall, come hell or high water, I'm going to run a ranch out here and you might as well get used to it." That wasn't very long ago. And, from all appearances, Mabel Hinkson is doing just that—running a ranch and stocking it with Angus cattle by the hundreds and hundreds.

The Hinksons were used to big country and the distant horizons obviously shaped their outlook. There was nothing so intimidating that it couldn't be conquered or wore down including a state land department.



Ojo Bonito is Spanish for "pretty spring". The headquarters ranch at an elevation of 6,200 feet is an area of warm days and cool nights. The ranchhouse and complex serves as field office and quarters for archaeological investigations of the area conducted by Arizona State University. Students and leaders explore the remnants of a dense Anasazi occupation from A.D. 700 until 1400. Ojo Bonito is the location of a major spring that served both the ranch and during the 14th century, a large pueblo determined to be approximately 250 rooms in size.

Typical of modern accommodations on remote ranches, the ranch is equipped with gas refrigerators and generator power. The painting is by Byers of Hobbs, N. M.

"I fell in love with the setting even before I set foot in the house," said the young bride of 1938.

chores for this study was a young lady who later became Mrs. David Miller. Shortly after they were married in 1950, Margaret took over the rudimentary records, and the pair started upgrading both their cattle and records toward a performance concept.

David and Margaret explain they chose "Sun Up" as a farm name because that's when each day started for them. In retrospect, however, the name took on broader significance when the dawn rose upon a new era in cattle improvement and selection. They were there to witness, to participate.

Seeds sown then on the hard and stony ground of performance testing took root slowly, but the beef industry was curious and receptive. Performance Registry

International appeared, lending the fledgling effort a much needed boost in methodology and prestige. With industry acceptance, the performance movement gained momentum and importance. Test stations and breed associations developed new approaches. Beef Cattle Improvement Associations grew up. PRI was the guiding light.

For Sun Up, it was an exciting time, especially 1963, a quarter century ago, when their "personal best" was realized and the spotlight finally fell on what they had been striving toward—a world record-holder in Sun Up Barrier Breaker 411. Here's a bull that achieved the unheard-of weight of 1,200 pounds at a year of age plus a gain of more than four pounds per day on official test off

**E**verett Hinkson, as a boy, must have absorbed some of the dimensions of the Sandhills (see Sun Up—Hinkson: A long distance transaction) for he fell right in cadence with his family and particularly his Uncle Charley who strode off in giant steps toward whatever grand project needed willing hearts and hands.

The Hinksons proved their mettle feeding sheep by the thousands near Grand Island, Neb. "They'd get out before daylight and feed sheep in that country when it was 20-30 below zero," Mabel Hinkson relates, adding the family also farmed, raising part of the corn they needed for the winter. Corn and farming were truly a gamble in that country then.

"Charley Hinkson was a plunger," she continues. "He bought lambs in Magdalena, N. M., and San Angelo, Texas, as far back as the 1880s. He was one of the greatest financiers that West Texas ever had," she says of the years in that country. "We still do business with that bank today.

"Everett and his uncle opened up some land in Texas around Muleshoe in pre-Depression days." Prior to that, a land purchase was also made near Crosbyton, Texas. Everett farmed with the family long before he reached the six-foot plus stature he was to attain.

"He was Uncle Charley's pride and joy and in fact, he was Uncle Charley's powerhouse. Uncle Charley was up in years when Everett came along, but they made a team."

The impressions from the Sandhills ran deep. Everett always wanted to ranch and returned to Nebraska for several winters, not to raise cattle, but to study business at Lincoln. Mabel thinks it was during these trips and the exposure to the ideas of others and developments he'd read that prompted his interest in Angus. "He'd made up his mind Angus cattle were the way to go."

In time he built up a little purebred

herd, and Mabel recalls he cashed in an insurance policy to purchase the foundation cows. "He bought his first Angus bull from Charley Post, Post, Texas."

The Arizona venture began when Everett and Uncle Charley Hinkson were touring the country looking for a ranch. Nevada was one possibility. "Uncle Charley was never looking for anything small in his life. That's why I liked Everett so much because he thought the same—it rubbed off on him."

But Mabel McDougal Hinkson endured quite a history in getting to Arizona as well.

"My grandfather and grandmother were children during the Civil War and raised on the banks of the Cumberland River in Tennessee separating the North from the South. One was born in 1853, the other in 1859. My grandfather had an education that was the envy of us all. He went to school until he was 24 years old. His mother was out of a string of lawyers, the Gilberts from way back.

"Granddad was raised by a Negro mammy, and I heard him say many times: I would've died for Mammy anytime, and there's no question she would have died for me."

"Our father died when I was two and a half years old," she speaks of her immediate family. "And our mother was a seamstress and an arrested tubercular. So our life was not all that rosy. My brother and mother both had the 1918 flu. And of course, out where we lived (rural Texas) we had no doctors, no help of any kind. Mother

was never the same after that."

Mabel had become acquainted with Everett Hinkson at a shrine ball in Texas, but building the ranch in Arizona intervened. And for nearly four years, the two were separated. Then, one day in Arizona, Everett jumped off his horse and smashed an ankle against a malapai rock. He sent Mabel a postcard and she wrote back: "I'll be on the midnight train." Of course, the whole town and all the railroad men knew I was on that train and where I was going. Everett met



"This was the first fall I was on the ranch." Angus have been a prominent factor in the ranch's management, and the Hinkson herd is thought to be one of the largest commercial Angus herds in the desert Southwest.

me in Gallup on crutches and pain pills with the license in his pocket. There was a nice Svenford's men's store there in Gallup and so he went in and got fitted out.

"The Harvey House in Gallup in those days was really something. This doctor and his wife arranged a little luncheon there after we got married." So began a partnership that lasted some 45 years. Everett was the devoted husband, Mabel the adoring wife and helpmate. "He was not one to be demonstrative nor did he talk a lot. He had a tiny bit of timidity which I thought was the nicest thing about him.



Sired by Sun Up Pine Drive 558, a record-holder at the Columbia station with a 5.1, 140-day ADG, a record never equaled by another Angus bull in any Missouri Bull Test Station.



There's always one in a group that just won't conform.

"He was overprotective-his sisters would say, 'Everett, you just overdo it.' But I want to tell you, if he ever said to me I'll see you there or meet you here, he was there. He was as true as a die. Everett was a cowboy, a pretty rider, he wore pretty boots and clothes and was someone nice to be seen with. Not one thing about him would I have changed.

"My brother was a teacher and accustomed to circulating in high places. He used to say, 'If I could just wear a suit of clothes like Everett Hinkson.'

"I told him you'd have to have something to hang them on!"

Mrs. Hinkson recalled the Pine Springs ranch was part of the Hinkson spread when one of the family members sold it in 1976. It was a regrettable decision. "If we had those 98 sections to go with what we have now, there wouldn't be anything in this state that would top it. When the Pine Springs was sold, it put us on kind of an outside circle, and it's a little harder to run a ranch that way. It was one of the choicest pieces of the original ranch. It was a little lower elevation and it just went together with our ranch so well."

Ranching's her theme in life.

"People can't believe I'm doing what I'm doing in this cattle business.

"You know, I've put in pipelines since Everett's been gone (1983). I've put in storage tanks and drinkers. We have a spring over in the Benedito Canyon that runs 12 to 14 gallons a minute year around, and that water is of a different quality than anything you can drill for. So we just recently put a pipeline four miles down that canyon plus added a couple drinkers.

"Everett had drilled a well just down the canyon from this site about a couple of miles. That was back in 1951 and then it was cased and capped. I'm going to put some pipe in that, put a tower over it, and a windmill plus a storage tank. I guess I'm just nuts for doing all this.

"I will brag a little about this. I have somebody working on this outfit that tops any foreman in this whole territory. Bill Mann. He's worked with us since the 1950s."

The two make a team. Ranching in this country is never easy but the rewards are evident. "We only feed supplement (in the winter). We don't feed hay. If we have the rains when we need them, this grass out here will put it on faster than the feedlots and the irrigated farms we operated in Texas-you can't imagine.

"You know, high altitude has something going for it. You can see it when these cattle put that bloom on.

But there are neighbors to consider. The ranch borders both the Navajo and Zuni Indian Reservations. There are the public lands departments, the easements, permits, and regulations from a host of agencies that must be maintained, granted, or asked for. On the practical level, there are fences to build or repair, roads to navigate in bad weather, pipelines to bleed or drain, tanks needing bentonite, salt and mineral to disperse, gates to close or lock, camps to maintain or safeguard from vandals. Most of all, there's the grass to harvest and preserve. It's the rancher's crop.

"We run 20 cows per bull, and 50 bulls are turned out each year. We don't intend to run full-stocked. We do about what the state land department

calls carrying capacity. If you're a little understocked, you're never in too much trouble."

Her plans include leasing some sections from a neighboring ranch on the north side which would allow spreading water to a number of deficient areas. "They'd have to give me a lease of several years to justify the cost of drilling a well." Arriving at some cooperative arrangement may not be as easy as it was in the old days. "I could get most any kind of favor out of the neighbors, especially if there were no women around and they liked apple pie."

Should Mrs. Hinkson apply her determination to the project, it's quite probable it will be accomplished. It would be in the spirit of what's gone on before at Ojo Bonito. "The changes that are out there are Everett's. He made the roads and put up the windmills. I want to tell you it was the most fascinating life. It was primitive country and things had not changed much when we started out here. If I could have Everett and the ranch in the next world, what more could I ask?

"Years ago, an artist went with us to the ranch. It was the first day of the rainy season with moisture in the air to telescope the scenes right in front of you. The rocks and cliffs were lavish with gold, pink, purple, and reds. These are rare days, but each day is different.

"The artist said: 'Many an artist has done justice to the Grand Canyon, but who has seen this?'

"And I am the only woman who has lived out beyond that next cedar ridge, in the huge rock house in Jaraloso Canyon.\*" ■



Bull 741 posted the highest ADG, setting a new all-time station high. He hit 4.97 and is a son of Sun Up Megaforce as is his mate, number 719. Average of the group was 4.18 ADG.



This package of bulls is freshly returned from the North Missouri test station at Spickard.



the owners premises. David estimates that today, more than 95 percent of the Sun Up herd traces back to "411" in their three to five generation pedigrees.

Then records started cracking. Several Sun Up bulls and herdsires began chalking up impressive test scores and mature weights. One of note who remains prominent in herd pedigrees is Sun Up Extreme 117. This bull became the all-time high-gaining bull ever tested in the State of Missouri with an ADG of 4.96 pounds.

Says David: "Every bull in his five generation pedigree topped its test station in gain. None gained less than 4.29 pounds." Extreme himself posted a 4.96 ADG.

"We sent him to market when we got too many daughters in the herd," David continues. "But he had accomplished everything we'd asked of him. He himself was a kind of accident, really, as it was a sire-daughter mating, but it proved one of the best his sire ever bred." That sire was Sun Up Emulous 489, full brother of the dam of the famous Sun Up Megaforce still in use today on Sun Up pastures.

David states by 1975, Sun Up goals were to produce bulls achieving 1,300 pounds as yearlings and to gain over five pounds ADG on test. In 1976, a home-raised bull, Sun Up Barrier Breaker 18E, gained the 5.25 ADG desired, and a herdmate, Sun Up Excel, hit 1,390 pounds at 12 months of age.

Testing by this time was being conducted regularly in Missouri stations or at Oklahoma BEEF Inc., Stillwater.

At OBI in 1984, number 057 was stirring excitement. Was it possible this bull could become the breed's first official 1,500 pound yearling? According to David and OBI personnel, Sun Up Megaforce posted a 365-day adjusted weight of 1,551, a 112-day figure of 5.91, a 140 ADG of 5.34, and a 125-day post weaning gain of 6.28. He stood 53.5 inches at the hip and started out with a 665-pound 205-day adjusted weight. Weight per day of age was 4.14.

He's sired by Sun Up Emulous 140, also a top Missouri gainer and a son of Schearbrook Shoshone. Megaforce traces four times to Barrier Breaker 411, three times to "4.91" and twice to "4.89". (The Millers nickname their bulls after the ADGs posted while on test.)

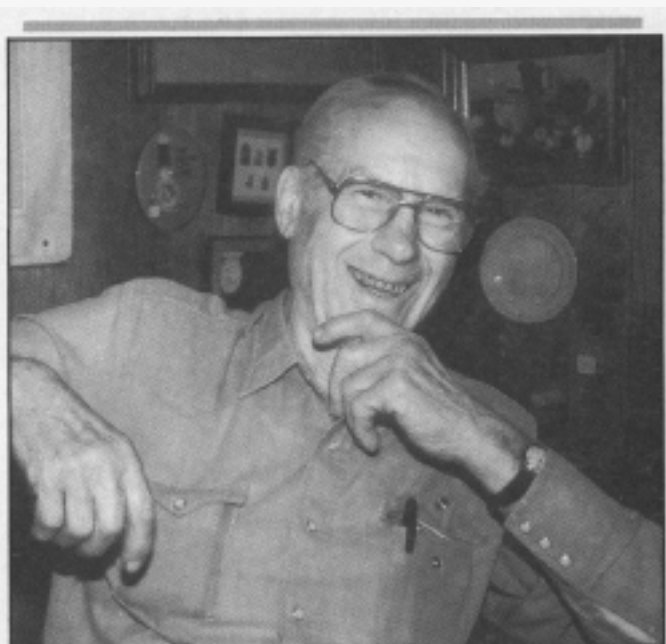
Another bull in pasture use today is Sun Up Pine Drive 558 by Pine Drive Big Sky and out of Sun Up Pudge 29A a cow family that's produced several high gainers and good daughters. "Pudge" is a daughter of Sayre Patriot. "558" racked up a 140-day ADG of 5.1 pounds to become the highest-gaining yearling Angus in the 30-year history of the Columbia, Mo., station.

David's ranking of the four key traits responsible for the Sun Up program is: 1) rate of gain, 2) conformation, 3) cow productivity, and 4) feed efficiency. Traditionally, number one is considered first because of its heritability and "also because of its effect on the cost of performance," he states.

"The Sun Up cowherd is the only one in the world to produce top-gaining individual and progeny of sire group for 15 consecutive years at any official bull testing station in the world," he asserts. The years 1963-1977 were golden years for Sun Up as it dominated the Missouri bull testing scene with an enviable string of first, second, and third high-gaining entries. But just how valid are fast gains?

"Fast gains are low cost gains," he points out. "I think we should keep in mind too that a superior bull's daughters are worth more for mother cows. Gainability is the one I rank first as it has the highest heritability (most estimates agree at 60 percent). Many times it determines what a fellow gets out of his cattle."

Great gains were Sun Up's claim a quarter century ago, and they continue to offer cattle that possess this quality which customers appreciate. That chapter of the story is well-



*I would kind of like to put an E.T. program in, but I can't seem to get Rader interested in it. But then. I don't have to do all the work to set it up and make it go!"*

documented and the farm's enjoyed the foresight of principles applied way back in the early Fifties to achieve it. For the future, selection will also examine carcass merit and how to measure it, select towards it, and merchandise any predictability it offers.

There, too, David is no stranger. His file contains comparisons of a major test arranged through the early days of the Meat Animal Research Center at Clay Center, Neb., when 16 progeny groups sired by 16 Angus bulls and out of over 200 two-year-old Hereford heifers were compared. Two hundred and thirteen carcasses were scored. The significant differences between the average of all carcasses and the Sun Up-sired group were the marbling score and fat thickness correlations.

The average for all calves was a 5.8 marbling score and fat thickness of .62. The Sun Up group sired by "491"-Sun Up Emulous Pride 82-revealed a marbling score of 8 and a fat thickness of .48, nearly 25 percent less rind yet with a "modest" marbling designation.

"Even though the carcasses were 50 pounds heavier and with 25 percent less backfat, the marbling score was still superior by more than two grades. Yet, do you know there are people today-serious cattlemen-that argue you have to have fat cattle to get them to grade?"

There's much work to be done, he concludes.

Part of the drudgery for this future investigation may be taken over by computerization. In recent years, son Rader Miller has placed all the Sun Up records on hard disk. Accurate measurements at birth, weaning, and yearling have always been of particular concern to the Millers. Now, the ranking and selection of that field data can be matched against heritability estimates to really produce an array. Computer printouts are now offered to customers who come shopping.

Most of the trade is from commercial buyers, like Mrs. Mabel Hinkson (see sidebar), who are looking for genetic value from a herd managed under a pasture regime, silage weaned, and roughed without shelter. However, there have been a number of foreign visitors including a delegation from the Soviet Union, two groups from Chad, and a highly placed official from the Japanese ministry in charge of beef and meat industries stopped by this spring.

In fact the program, though initiated long ago when performance was just a gleam on the horizon, continues to attract attention near and far. Consider the firm in Florida-5,000 cows, bought 19 bulls-what was that area code again?

