



ANGUS ACROSS AMERICA

A History of the Breed

The primary force which led to the development of the Angus breed was the demand for better beef among the hearty meat-eaters of England and Scotland.

Exact Origin Unknown

The exact origin of the Angus breed is not available from written records, ancient monuments, nor fossil remains. And the question often asked is this—was the original wild ox a horned or hornless beast? Historians are not in agreement except to state there is considerable evidence that hornless cattle existed in ancient times, and likely arose first in the bovine world.

The Celtic people of southwest Europe brought hornless cattle with them when they migrated to Great Britain. Norsemen also introduced polled cattle into the British Isles. Hornless cattle have been known in Scandinavia since earliest times. One indication of this ancient relationship is the fact that blood types of Holstein-Freisians and Aberdeen-Angus are remarkably similar.

In the adjacent Scotland counties of Aberdeenshire and Angusshire, two local hornless strains of black cattle were developed. In the Buchan district of Aberdeenshire they were known as "hummels." In Angusshire they were known as "doddies."

These areas of Scotland surrounded the route of old-time cattle trails between northern grazing grounds and Border County finishing farms nearer English city markets. From the doddies of Angus and the hummels of Aberdeen developed the breed known as Aberdeen-Angus.

In 18th century Scotland there were men of skill and Angus cattle at hand. The tool of intensive breeding had been proved of outstanding value by Robert Bakewell. He used the extraordinary power of close breeding as a means of fixing type in his herds of cattle.

Scotland's pioneer breeders, Hugh Watson of Keillor, William McCombie and Sir George MacPherson Grant, were the perfectors of Angus type and contributed much to breed development and fame.

Hugh Watson owned the most famous cow in the Herd Book of the Aberdeen-Angus Society. She is Old Grannie, who died in a thunderstorm in 1859 at the age of 36 years. This Angus cow produced 29 calves, 11 of which were recorded. Two of his best known sires were Old Jock, the first recorded Aberdeen-Angus bull, and his sire, Grey-Breasted Jock.

A New Breed Launched in the USA

The genesis of a breed completely new to the United States began in the mind of a far-sighted native of Banffshire named George Grant. He was a man of extraordinary vision with a keen sense of values. As a silk merchant in London he pulled off one of the few authentic merchandising coups in history when he cornered the black crepe market.

Although he was a big plunger, too, he amassed enough money to travel widely

and as he crossed the Great Plains of the United States he was attracted to the prairie of western Kansas.

After long sessions of negotiation he purchased many thousands of acres from the Kansas and Pacific Railroad in 1871. Grant's dream was a colony of Britishers who would settle the area he named Victoria in honor of his Queen. In order to develop Victoria he built a school and a church, hired an architect to lay out the town and design a villa for him on his ranch, invited prominent bankers and lawyers from New York out for a visit, promoted the settlement and sale of land widely in the United States as well as in his native land, and shipped the first four Angus bulls to the United States.

On April 1, 1873 the steamship Alabama slipped down the Clyde River at Glasgow laden with the first settlers, supplies, and numerous sheep and horses as well as the quartet of bulls which would start an unending path of beef cattle progress in America.

After a long, arduous voyage the colonists reached New Orleans. In Dixieland the black, hornless bulls attracted many befuddled looks from dock hands before they were gathered aboard a barge for the winding steam-powered journey up to St. Louis. The power of steam also carried them on the last stage of their trek and they arrived in Victoria on May 17.

The new settlers faced rugged times in their new homes, too. Plagues of grasshoppers, drought, prairie fires, and illness finally forced many to move further east, or even back to England and Scotland. Today only a few descendants of the first settlers remain in Ellis County, Kan.

Freaks of the Future

But the rugged Angus bulls, used on Texas Longhorn cows, made a mark in the livestock industry which was felt over a wide area, including the banks of the Hudson River in New York City in 1880.

When George Grant exhibited two of the bulls at the Kansas City Livestock Exposition in the fall of 1873 he became the first exhibitor of Angus breeding cattle in the United States. His venture was the beginning of a long trail of Angus promotion on the tanbark. Cattlemen at the show had never seen such beasts and considered them freaks. In a way, they were "freaks of the future."

Shorthorns and Herefords preceded Angus into the United States by many decades. The first reds, whites and roans arrived in 1783. The first Herefords were imported by Henry Clay in 1817.

Rea's Angus Crossbreds

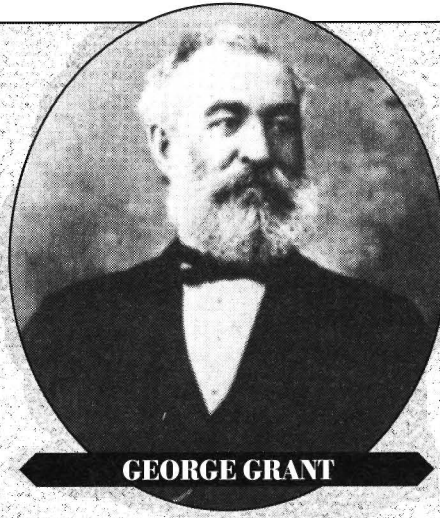
The seedstock imported by George Grant bloomed brightly in just a few years. In 1880 Joseph Rea, Carrollton, Mo., purchased a number of the Angus-Longhorn calves and wrote to a newspaper as follows:

"So far as I have experimented with them, I can say . . . they fatten easily, and make good selling cattle when ready for market. Having no horns they do not endanger other stock with them . . . and when shipping them, there are no horns to get hung in the slats . . . I would advise western men who have 'Texas' cows to mate them to polled Angus bulls . . . and by so doing get rid of the long horns . . ."

Thomas R. Clark of New York City, an associate of George Grant in the Victoria area, had an interest in the four Angus bulls and he became the first American to use the prepotency of the breed. In 1880 the black, hornless crossbreds made their mark in America's premier center of beef demand. Joseph Rea sent 36 head bred at the Clark ranch to Chicago where they were sold to F. Joseph, a meat purveyor of New York. These were the first steers with Angus blood marketed at Chicago's big market.

First Registered Angus in USA

Thomas Clark purchased his ranch from Grant in 1874 and he was the first breeder in Kansas to register a calf bred in the United States, one of the offspring of an 1881 importation.



GEORGE GRANT

In the summer of that year Kansas State University purchased the first purebred Angus born in North America, Eyebright 4th, a heifer calved Oct. 15, 1880 at Ontario Agricultural College, Guelph. She was produced from Angus imported in 1876 by George Brown, a professor at the college. They were the first Angus on this continent for which production can be found.

Two native Scotsmen, James Anderson and George Findlay, residents of Lake Forest, Ill., imported the first registered Angus in the United States when one bull and five females arrived at their farm in the summer of 1878. These cattle were widely exhibited at many state fairs. The impetus for the importation was the establishment of the American Fat Stock Show. This forerunner of the International Livestock Exposition was first held in December of 1878. The animals proved to be an exciting advertisement for the breed at this show, and led to other importations by Anderson and Findlay.

Findlay's employer, John V. Farwell, a Chicago dry goods merchant, imported 80 head in 1881, divided among Anderson and Findlay, himself, and T.W. Harvey, another leading pioneer of American Angus. Farwell later became a partner of the famous XIT Ranch which some claim stood for "Ten in Texas," the number of counties in the spread. Farwell founded a registered herd at Montezuma, Iowa, and many bulls produced there were shipped to the XIT. The 3 million acres in the ranch were a part of the payment to Farwell and his associates for constructing the Capitol in Austin.

Both Angus and Hereford cows were run on the XIT and by 1890 the huge Panhandle spread was cross-fenced enough so the herd was divided equally by breed characteristics. Angus bulls were used on crossbred cows showing the most Angus blood; Hereford bulls with females

indicating a preponderance of their kind. The 1890 branding figures showed 3,064 calves from the Angus pasture; 2,688 from the Hereford pasture.

The XIT Ranch won an International grand championship at the first Chicago Exposition in 1900 in the feeder calf division with their Angus.

It was generally agreed Angus were hardy and well adapted to the harsh rangelands of the West. They were excellent rustlers, but the large pastures sometimes meant it took more bulls to get a big calf crop, even though the high level of fertility in Angus meant larger calf crops when the management level was efficient.

The Anderson and Findlay herd was moved in the mid-1890s to Iola, Kan. For many years it was one of America's leading sources of seedstock. Descendants of James Anderson operate a herd of 75 cows which trace to the original Anderson and Findlay cattle near LeRoy, Kan.

Bringing Herds Up-To-Date

Two men who had the most influence on the two major U.S. breeds were Charles Gudgell and T.A. Simpson of Independence, Mo. In 1875 they formed a partnership which was to have a profound influence on the course of America's beef industry. In 1881 they imported their first Angus and these were sold to W.M.D. Lee of Leavenworth, Kan., an early day breeder of note.

With those Angus came Anxiety 4th, the great Hereford sire generally regarded as the patriarch of modern-day whitefaces. The Gudgell and Simpson importation of 1882 also included Blackcap and Knight of St. Patrick. These three animals left an unprecedented imprint on America's beef cattle business.

Knight of St. Patrick was produced in the herd of Robert Campbell McCombie Auld, a nephew of McCombie and later the first breeder in Michigan. Blackcap, the most famous daughter of Blackbird of Corskie 3, when mated to Knight of St. Patrick, produced Black Knight, the famous sire in the Turlington herd of T.W. Harvey, and two of our nation's most important foundation cows, Blackcap 2 and Blackcap 4. Knight of St. Patrick was the fountainhead sire of the Earl Marshall line of breeding.

Gudgell and Simpson were major exhibitors of top notch steers. They made history with their Sandy, sired by Knight

of St. Patrick, which became the first U.S. bred Angus to be a grand champion steer. He won at Kansas City in 1886.

The Gudge and Simpson operation was headquartered at Pleasant Hill, Mo., and moved to Independence in 1883, the year Mr. Gudge became the first secretary of the American Angus Association.

A leading Kansas Citian, A.B. Matthews, imported more than 30 Angus in 1881 and many more after that. He held the first Kansas City auction of Angus in 1882 and was one of the founders of the American Angus Association.

The Geary Brothers of London, Ontario, made history on Sept. 20, 1882 by holding the first public auction of Aberdeen-Angus in North America. These pioneer promoters of the breed held their sale in the Chicago Stockyards where the breed was eventually to gain much fame and fortune. Twenty-one head averaged \$656 with a top of \$1,550 paid by Estill and Elliott, for Blue Ribbon, a daughter of Blackbird of Corskie 2nd.

Is He Good Enough?

Geary Brothers set the stage for the dramatic fat stock shows of 1883 when they placed an order for the purchase of a "steer good enough to present true Aberdeen-Angus type to American-cattle breeders." The result was their importation of Black Prince, bred by Robert Maitland, member of an ancient Aberdeenshire family. Black Prince, a 2,500-pound bullock, was shown at Smithfield just before Christmas in 1882. He left Scotland in July, and after the necessary 90-day quarantine in Canada, was shipped to Kansas City from Montreal by express. On arrival he weighed 2,360 pounds.

Black Prince, a steer of heavy muscling and smoothness, presented the judges with a big problem. They had never seen a finished Aberdeen-Angus this good on the rail, so how could they try to look under his sleek hide? At the climax of the tense atmosphere of the judging ring they picked a 2,150-pound Shorthorn named Starlight as the champion.

There was still hope in the hearts of his backers, however, and Black Prince was exhibited the next month in Chicago. These were the days of mighty bullocks, too. The average weights of Chicago's entries had been 2,087 pounds in 1878; 2,172 in 1880; and 2,147 in '82. The



BLACK PRINCE OF TURLINGTON 2ND

grades and crosses class in the latter year hit 2,634 pounds.

The Chicago championship stage included the Kansas City champion Starlight; a Hereford-Shorthorn cross (forerunner of a lighter, more modern type steer named Roan Boy); and Black Prince. But unlike Kansas City, the Chicago affair included butchers on the judging panel. The championship was a huge victory for Aberdeen-Angus. The next year he was shown again, only to be defeated by a 2,400-pound white Shorthorn, even on the rail. But in defeat he caused a storm of protest as Black Prince produced a far superior product. The carcasses were not ribbed until after the final decisions were announced. In effect, his defeat gained the Angus breed more notoriety than he could have gained from a victory.

Geary Brothers moved their registered herd to Brookfield, Mo., in 1887 and operated on the farm of Major C.N. Blossom, a Kansas City hotel man who was an early breeder of Angus before his death in 1885. George Geary was president of the American Angus Association in 1888-89.

Another significant herd of the 1880s was Turlington, owned by Turlington W. Harvey, a Chicago lumberman who bought his first Angus after a start with Shorthorns. Harvey's share of the Farwell importation included many high quality Angus, but it was 1886, when he hired William Watson, a highly capable feeder, fitter and master showman, that Harvey's herd at Turlington, Neb., became nationally known. "Willie" was a son of Hugh Watson and his career as a stockman spanned the globe. As a tribute to his many contributions to the breed the American Angus Association erected a marker at his grave in Winchester, Ill.

An Angus Pioneer's Pioneer

B.R. Pierce and Son hold a special place in the hearts of Angus admirers for several special reasons. Stanley R. Pierce, the son, exhibited his 1,430-pound Advance as the first grand champion steer at

the International Livestock Exposition. A grandson of the mighty Black Woodlawn, Glenfoil Thickset 2nd, and a son, Oakville Quiet Lad, wrote whole books of Angus history for Otto Battles and W.A. McHenry. The Woodlawn herd, founded in 1883, has been a source of foundation stock for hundreds of registered herds.

The Woodlawn herd is still in operation today near Preston, Ill., under the guidance of Lewis B. Pierce. Pierce served as president of the American Angus Association in 1960. His father, Stanley, was president in 1912.

The Heatherton herd of Goodwin and Judy was started at Beloit, Kan., in 1883 with purchases by John S. Goodwin from A.B. Matthews. He imported a famous Scottish show bull, Justice, a son of the famous cow Jilt and later formed a partnership with M.A. Judy, a member of an old-time Indiana livestock family.

The herd became known for its many excellent cows of the Blackbird and Blackcap tribes. Some of these wrote history for famous breeders S.E. Lantz, Congerville, Ill., and J. Garrett Tolan, Pleasant Plains, Ill.

The partnership was dissolved in 1899 and continued under the leadership of Judy, who later made many importations from Scotland which left their imprint on many herds. His most famous import was Prince Ito, bred at Ballinalloch, one of 60 he brought to America in 1901. This sire of the International grand champion Prince Ito 2nd was sold for the then record price of \$9,100 to B.R. Pierce.

Angus Herd Book

The first American Angus Herd Book was published in 1886 with 5,200 entries. Of this number 2,398 were produced in United States herds and 2,802 were bred in Scotland or Canada. Of 540 owners represented only 178 were Americans.

More than 12 million head have been recorded since the Association was founded in 1883. Today membership numbers 22,000 breeders and growing.

Editor's note: For a complete history of the Angus breed, members can order the booklet, "A History of the Angus Breed." It's available for \$2 from the Public Relations Dept., American Angus Association, 3201 Frederick Blvd., St. Joseph, MO 64506.

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