



Movin' Forward

by Bryce Schumann, American Angus Association CEO

Small beginnings

Every great achievement begins simply as an idea. It just takes one person, any person, with the fortitude to turn a belief into reality. Visionary people know success and courage are complementary. W.A. McHenry had both in spades.

Courage

If you don't know the story of W.A. McHenry, you should. His influence is likely in the pasture just outside your back window. McHenry was an Iowa breeder and a turn-of-the-century businessman. Like the three generations preceding him, he was also a man of service.

McHenry served in the 8th Illinois Cavalry during the Civil War and fought in seven of its 10 bloodiest battles. At the Battle of Gettysburg his horse was shot from under him — twice.

When President Lincoln was assassinated, he was among the soldiers who tracked down John Wilkes Booth. He guarded Lincoln's body as it lay in state, later writing to his wife, Mary:

"It does not seem to me that we can get another man who will so fully trust in God who will ask the prayers of our Nation ... Oh, it is hard to bear. Could he only have lived to see our country free. ... Let us more fully put our

trust in God. Pray that we may be made a better Nation."

He rode to Illinois on the funeral train, and he wept. When he finally returned home in 1865, he had just \$300.

Contributions

Despite his meager beginnings in the countryside of Denison, Iowa, McHenry accumulated nearly 18,000 acres in the state during his lifetime, along with an additional 20,000 acres in Canada. He became an influential businessman, prominent in various organizations and banking institutions.

However, his greatest contribution — at least the one for which he's most remembered — is an Angus bull named Earl Marshall.

McHenry was an astute cattle breeder, according to Steven Burress, a Logan, Iowa, breeder, historian and the author of an upcoming book about McHenry.

Burress explains that McHenry was a student of the old masters, the William

Watsons of the line-breeding world. He traveled to Scotland in 1897 and personally brought back the treasured Angus cattle he purchased there. Piece by piece, he built an extensive Angus herd. By 1912 he bred what would become one of the most influential bulls in history, Earl Marshall.

Eventually, he sold his herd to Escher & Ryan, which propagated the bloodlines so effectively that of the 3.1 million Angus registered in the last 10 years, all but 946 head trace back to Earl Marshall.

Our opportunity


Of course, much more is available in Burress' book, as well as the *I Am Angus* segment available on YouTube featuring the historic bull and his owner.

Additionally, breeders from around the country will honor both W.A. McHenry and his bull Sept. 4 during what would have been Earl Marshall's 100th birthday. Presentations, a sale and other activities are planned, and I encourage anyone with interest in the breed to attend. Further details will be posted to www.angus.org as they become available. (See page 171 for more on the Sept. 4 event.)

Until then, think about the story of W.A. McHenry. It's a story that teaches us a lot about the power of courage and the power to shape an industry.

This was a humble man with humble beginnings.

He was a pioneer who loved his family, community and country.

He was a man — one of us — who lived his life to the fullest, and, thankfully, bred a bull named Earl Marshall. 

AMERICAN ANGUS ASSOCIATION

3201 Frederick Ave., Saint Joseph, MO 64506-2997; phone: 816-383-5100; fax: 816-233-9703; Office hours: (M-F) 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. (Central)
email: angus@angus.org • home page: www.angus.org • [facebook.com/americanangusassociation](https://www.facebook.com/americanangusassociation) • [@AngusAssoc](https://twitter.com/AngusAssoc)

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