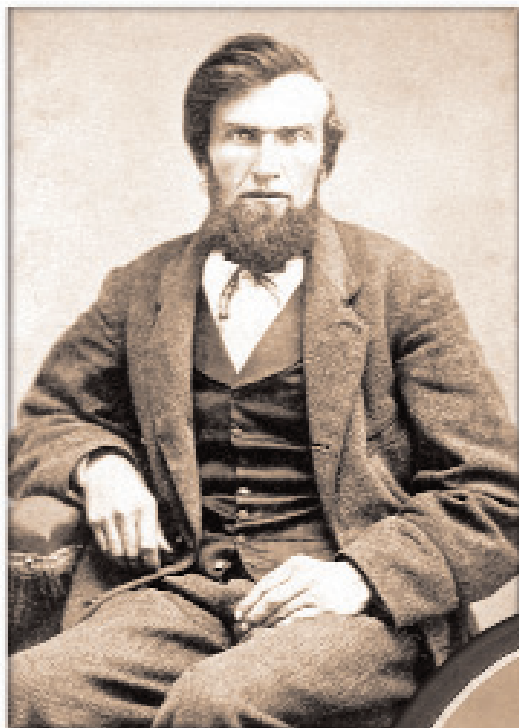


# Angus Origins

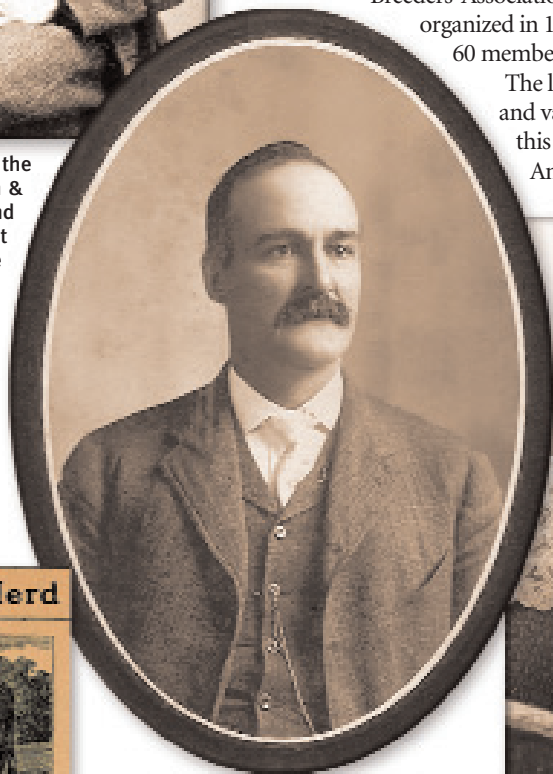
Two immigrants paved the way for Angus in the United States.

by Keith Evans



► **Above:** James Anderson was the senior partner in the Anderson & Findlay Angus operation. He and George Findlay started the first herd of registered Angus cattle in the United States.

► **Right:** Tom Anderson, the son of James Anderson, managed the Anderson & Findlay herd after it was relocated from Lake Forest, Ill., to Allen County, Kan., near Iola.

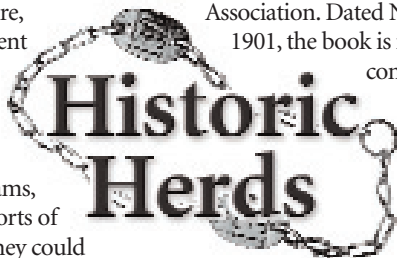


► **Right:** Maude Anderson Crandall, granddaughter of James Anderson, received 10 head of the Anderson & Findlay herd as a wedding gift.

was reiterated recently when Betty Smykal of Wheaton, Ill., an in-law of James, donated a 103-year-old promotional catalog of the Anderson & Findlay herd to the American Angus Association. Dated November 1901, the book is in pristine condition and lists 197 cows, both imported and farm-bred, and four imported bulls. The heritage of these cows and bulls was illustrated with five-generation pedigrees that trace back to the founding animals of the Aberdeen-Angus breed in Scotland. A supplement sheet, inserted into the catalog after it was printed, lists 88 farm-bred bulls for sale in November 1901. Photographs of the farm and the cattle are reproduced in fine detail.

James, the patriarch of the family, left

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## The Allendale Herd



ANDERSON & FINDLAY  
IOLA, RURAL ROUTE No. 2  
ALLEN COUNTY, KANSAS



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Scotland for the United States in 1851 and settled in the “West,” which at that time included Illinois. He bought property near Lake Forest and set up a farming and livestock operation. Lake Forest was near Chicago, and the area soon became ripe for development. However, increasing land values would lead to the transfer of the herd to Kansas in the mid-1880s.

George — who was James’ nephew and another Scotsman with a farm and livestock background — immigrated to America in 1871 and settled in Lake Forest. An ambitious and enterprising young man, George married one of James’ daughters, creating the first Anderson-Findlay partnership. He later formed the Anderson &

Findlay Angus partnership with his father-in-law.

The announcement of a new cattle show in Chicago helped push James to import the first Angus herd. Alvin H. Sanders, in his 1928 book, *A History of Aberdeen-Angus Cattle*, explained that the Illinois Department of Agriculture decided to hold an annual show of Christmas fat stock in Chicago, starting December 1878.

James determined that the Chicago show would be an ideal opportunity to show off Angus cattle to Midwest cattle breeders and Chicago meat packers. George agreed and joined in a business partnership to import and breed Angus cattle. George’s brother William was a livestock salesman in Aberdeenshire, Scotland. James and George contracted with William to select the initial five cows and one bull to be shipped to Lake Forest in summer 1878. The animals carried the blood of

foundation Angus bulls like Black Prince of Tillyfour and Grey Breasted Jock, both listed in the first herd book of Aberdeen-Angus cattle published by the Aberdeen-Angus Cattle Society of Scotland.

The black, hornless Angus cattle were not unknown in the United States. George Grant, a native Scotsman and London businessman, had imported four bulls into the United States in 1873 to cross with native cows on his ranch near Victoria, Kan. Stockmen in Missouri and other Midwestern states fed out some of the crossbred calves with outstanding results. Meat packers were equally impressed with the carcasses of the Angus crosses. No doubt, both James Anderson and George Findlay knew of this Angus experiment and reasoned that there was profit to be made by importing and breeding Angus cattle.

The Angus were exhibited at the 1878 Chicago show and later at other major shows, including the Saint Louis (Mo.) Exposition, which was the greatest cattle show of the late 19th century before the International Livestock Exposition was started at the Chicago Stockyards in 1900. The black cattle created a sensation at these shows; but, of course, they won no prizes because there were no other Angus with which to compete. This situation, however, was soon remedied.

### Building the herd book

Two more people imported Angus in 1879 and 1880, and then the floodgates were opened. More than a dozen importations were made in 1881, and in 1882 they were too numerous to track. Charles Gudgel, the first secretary of the American Aberdeen-Angus Breeders’ Association, wrote in the first *Aberdeen-Angus Herd Book* published in 1886, “Importations were so numerous (in 1882) that it will be very difficult to recall them all.”

That same year, James wrote, “We are unable to see any reason for breeding any other than polled Aberdeen-Angus, since for early maturity, weight and quality of beef, and hardiness of constitution, they cannot be surpassed, to say nothing of the advantages of being hornless.” Anderson & Findlay brought in more Angus in 1881 and continued to import for several years.

Both James and George were active in organizing the American Aberdeen-Angus Breeders’ Association. George participated in an organizational meeting hosted in Kansas City, Mo., in 1882. He remained active in the management of the Association in its early years, serving on the Association Board of



► **Above:** Doris Crandall Trostle (left), Lansing, Mich., was the last person to maintain a registered Angus herd that traced back to the original Anderson & Findlay stock. She is shown with her sister Louise.

► **Right:** Doris Crandall Trostle is shown with one of her greatnieces at the ranch near Le Roy, Kan.



► George Findlay, who with his uncle James Anderson helped import a bull and four females from Scotland, started the first registered Angus herd in the United States.

Directors and as president in 1904. When the first *Aberdeen-Angus Herd Book* was published, Anderson & Findlay recorded more cattle than any other member, more than 100 head.

### **Moving west**

Transfer of the Anderson & Findlay herd from Illinois to Kansas was significant to the expansion of the breed. It brought Angus breeding stock closer to ranchers and cattle producers in the West.

James owned a large tract of land in Allen County, Kan., near Iola, that he had purchased in 1878. Later acquisitions brought the ranch to some 2,000 acres. As land prices escalated in Lake Forest, it was decided to develop the Illinois property and transfer the Angus herd to Kansas. Because of its location in Allen County, the herd was named the Allendale Herd of Aberdeen-Angus. Thomas J. (Tom) Anderson, James' son, had operated the Kansas property for several years. When the majority of the cattle were relocated between 1894 and 1897, Tom took over management of the herd. Neither James nor George ever moved to Kansas, although James was a frequent visitor to see his family, as well as check on the operation.

For more than a decade after moving to Kansas, the Anderson & Findlay Allendale Herd promoted the Angus breed throughout much of the United States, but particularly in the Southwest. A trophy won by the Allendale Herd at the 1904 Oklahoma City Fat Stock Show, in what was then the Oklahoma Territory, is on display at the American Angus Association headquarters in Saint Joseph, Mo. It is one of many prizes won by the herd during the late 1800s and early 1900s.

Angus cattle were very valuable property in the 1870s and 1880s, as more and more people wanted to get into the Angus business. The boom in Angus cattle prices had cooled by the 1890s; however, demand was still strong. Anderson & Findlay supplied bulls to the famed XIT Ranch in Texas and to other western ranchers. In addition to breeding cattle, there was extensive farming and cattle feeding at the Kansas ranch. Tom fed out many of the Angus crossbred steers he produced on the ranch and marketed them at the Chicago Stockyards.

### **Change in ownership**

James and George dissolved their partnership in 1908 with a herd dispersion. James retained 50 head at Allendale and in 1912, what was left of the Allendale Herd became the sole property of his son Tom.

Tom remained in the Angus business until 1922, when he sold the Allendale property and moved back to the Chicago area.

That would have been the end of the line for the Anderson & Findlay herd bloodlines had it not been for Maude Anderson, one of Tom's daughters.

In 1920 Maude married L.E. Crandall, and her father presented her with 10 head of the Anderson & Findlay cattle as a wedding present. The newly married couple moved to property owned by the Crandall family near

Le Roy, Kan., only a few miles from Iola. For years they ran a fairly large cattle herd, including about 50 registered Angus carrying Anderson & Findlay bloodlines.

In 1965, L.E., who was also Betty Smykal's uncle, died. The historic herd might have disappeared then had it not been for two factors — Maude's love of Angus cattle and the Anderson & Findlay heritage, and her daughter, Doris, who shared her mother's enthusiasm. Doris Crandall was married to

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Dee Trostle, and in 1966 they purchased one-half interest in L.E. and Maude's herd, and moved to the Crandall ranch to take over management of the operation.

Doris was the last of the Anderson descendants with an interest in maintaining the historic registered Angus herd. In 1973, the American Angus Association celebrated the 100th anniversary of George Grant importing four Angus bulls. Part of the celebration included the recognition of

"Pioneer Angus Herds," herds that had been in continuous operation for 50 years or more. That year, Doris wrote a letter to the Association nominating her herd for the honor. In 1973, Maude was 77 and still interested in Angus cattle. Doris and her mother donated several Anderson & Findlay artifacts that are still on display at Association headquarters.

Doris died in 1992, and with her went the Anderson & Findlay herd. Her husband, Dee, is still alive at 77, and their oldest son, Kerry, operates the family farm near Le Roy. Neither Kerry nor his father has an interest in running a registered herd. The papers on

the Anderson & Findlay cattle were not maintained after Doris' death, and the remaining purebred cows were merged with the commercial herd.

But the Anderson & Findlay heritage lives on. Many present-day registered Angus breeders, given the time and inclination, could trace the ancestry of their cattle back to the Anderson & Findlay herd. The breed still owes much of its success to the farsightedness of James Anderson and George Findlay and the herd they started — the first in the United States.

