



Anxiety 4th

"The Father of American Herefords"

There is no doubt the American Hereford wouldn't be where it is today without the contributions several legendary sires have made since the first Hereford was introduced to the U.S. in 1817. This is why we've decided to start the "Hereford Legends" column and take a look back and recognize those sires whose impact has resonated throughout the Hereford industry and the entire beef cattle industry for generations.

It is only logical to start at the beginning, and although some might say that would be Henry Clay's first importation, I prefer to start with the sire whose blood still flows in the veins of nearly every Hereford in America, even today: a sire whose powerful hindquarters changed the beef industry forever, a sire who's often referred to as the "father of American Herefords," Anxiety 4th 9904.

And as long as we're starting at the beginning, I must first explain how Anxiety 4th became such an influential sire. Although for some it may be a well-known story, it never loses its appeal because of the amazing history it captures.

The men behind the bull

Charles Gudgell and Thomas Alexander "Governor" Simpson were relatively unknown in the cattle industry in 1881 when Simpson traveled to England in search of a bull that had the powerful, massive hindquarters the pair felt the Hereford industry needed to compete, or even survive. They had seen the bull Anxiety 2238 on the American show circuit and felt he had just the beefy hindquarters necessary to breed to the "cat-hammed" American Hereford population.

However, Anxiety died young, leaving only a few progeny sired before he came to America to carry on his distinct build. One of those few was Anxiety 4th, whom Gudgell & Simpson bought against the recommendations of the owner, who felt that Anxiety 4th was inferior to other bulls of the time.

The breeding program

But it was not just Anxiety 4th's genetic ability to pass on his powerful hindquarters to his offspring that would make him a legend in the industry. That was combined with Gudgell & Simpson's carefully planned

linebreeding program, which preserved and intensified his distinct characteristics.

Like the innovations of all revolutionary thinkers, Gudgell & Simpson's methods was met with criticism. But, as Jim Lents describes in his book, "The Basis of Linebreeding," the primary customers for the bulls Gudgell & Simpson were producing were Western rangemen who loved the combination of the Herefords' rustling ability and Anxiety 4th's "unusually strong hindquarters" and his tendency "to stamp these characteristics on his offspring."

Lents, who breeds Anxiety 4th Herefords in a closed herd since 1881, explains that it wasn't long before cattlemen demanded Anxiety 4th breeding from all herd bulls they purchased because of these traits. The intense demand for Anxiety 4th bloodlines caused others that were unable to compete to fizzle out, which is why more than 99% of all modern American Herefords are descendents of Anxiety 4th through the top line of their pedigrees.

The industry's transformation

Anxiety 4th truly revolutionized the beef cattle industry because of his strong hindquarters and his ability to pass that on, generation after generation. In an article written by Don Ornduff for the July 1978 *Hereford Journal*, Ornduff explains that before Anxiety 4th's dominance in the breed, a

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majority of the meat came from the front of the carcass. After Anxiety 4th's influence through Gudgell & Simpson's linebreeding program, the trend was reversed, meaning more of the meat from the average beef carcass then came from the hindquarter and loin areas, where the more expensive cuts are located, which increased the carcass' value.

Lents says of the revolutionary change, "In a real sense, the work that Anxiety 4th did is as much responsible for there being a (beef) industry and made possible a way for there to be a professional cattleman. It is a story totally without equal in history."

In 1939 a book was written on this historical bull, Gudgell & Simpson, and the bloodline descending

from him they developed called "History of Linebred Anxiety 4th Herefords," which gives much more detail of the story than this condensed version. But, author John M. Hazelton's powerful words are not to be forgotten in this account or in Ornduff's 1978 version.

Hazelton emphasizes the importance of this historical tale by writing, "From whatever angle it is approached, the story of Gudgell & Simpson and their work as breeders of Hereford cattle presents the outstanding chapter in the annals of American domestic livestock.

"It is the story of two men who, unlearned in the science of genetics and unskilled in the art of animal production, became the foremost improvers of beef cattle of

their generation, and left to their followers a priceless legacy in the form of desirable characteristics... firmly fixed.

"It is the story of a Hereford bull that, in the hands of these same two men, proved to be one of the greatest procreators of all breeds of domestic livestock of all countries and of all times, whose blood dominates the Hereford breed in America as the blood of no other sire dominates any other breed of livestock, and is found today in the veins of practically every living American Hereford."

And it still is today. **HW**