

Continuing the Hereford Dream

The fourth generation of Anstey Hereford producers is carrying on the legacy begun by their grandfather.

by **Christy Couch Lee**



Charles Anstey (front row, right); his daughters, (back row, left to right) Deb Brown, Kathy Ankenbauer and Cindy Anstey; and his granddaughter, Hannah Ankenbauer (front row, left), are carrying on the Hereford tradition begun by George J. Anstey more than a century ago.

Nearly 125 years ago, George J. Anstey boarded a ship to carry him from his homeland of England to the promise of a new and better life in the U.S. His plan was simple: locate a piece of land to call his own — a place where he could begin raising purebred cattle, just as his ancestors had done. Little did he know, four generations later, Charles Anstey and his family would continue his dream of raising purebred Hereford cattle on his little piece of heaven in Massena, Iowa.

Chasing a dream

The Anstey Hereford legacy began 122 years ago with Charles Anstey's grandfather, George J. Anstey. George emigrated from Whitehall, Gloucestershire, England, to the

U.S. in 1876, at the age of 18. He began working for farmers in Wisconsin, but when jobs became scarce, George moved to Iowa, where he began working for a farmer for \$15 per month. George and his employer ventured to Minnesota for a cattle purchase — a state where grasshoppers had riddled the crops and farmers were dispersing their cattle herds at low prices.

Upon the suggestion of his employer, George invested \$150 of savings to purchase cattle of his own. He sold that herd for \$300 the following spring and returned to Minnesota to purchase more cattle. George continued this process until he had built a herd of 60 head of mixed breeds. In 1881 he married

Ada Louise Always, and they purchased 240 acres at \$12.50 per acre in Massena, Iowa, where the family continues to raise registered Herefords today.

George ventured back to England in 1886 to introduce his family to his new bride.

"When my grandfather returned to England, his dad was raising Shorthorns," Charles says. "He said they took so much feed and attention he decided that he would raise Herefords."

And, in 1887, when he returned to his farm in Iowa, that's just what he did.

George began Fairview Herefords with the purchase of one registered Hereford cow — Irene 31572 — at the Iowa State Fair from the McKnight herd of Pennsylvania, and one registered Hereford bull — Lord Hower 31443 — from the Iowa Hereford Cattle Co. of Indianola, Iowa.

According to "Iowa Veteran Both Breeder and Judge" an article in the



In 1911 George J. Anstey (far right) purchased bulls, Beau Gaston (above) and Beau Dover (right), whose service mushroomed the family business.



Oct. 1, 1922, issue of *The American Hereford Journal*, George spent \$250 on the purchase of Lord Hewan.

“At that time, this seemed a tremendous price to pay for a bull to use only on grade cows,” the article states. “Money was very scarce, and \$250 meant to this young breeder what many thousands may have meant to some breeders in later days. He states that his sleep was very much disturbed for two nights following the purchase.”

He continued to build his purebred Hereford herd with the purchase of two show heifers from Cosgrove Livestock Co. of Lasueur, Minn.; additional cows from the Iowa Hereford Cattle Co.; and a carload of cows from Colin Cameron of Lochiel, Ariz.

In 1911 George purchased two bulls from Gudgell and Simpson of Independence, Mo., — Beau Gaston, sired by Beau President, and Beau Dover, sired by Beau Dandy. Charles says this purchase mushroomed the family business.

“My grandfather was fortunate in securing these good breeding bulls,” Charles says. “The results of linebreeding — mating one with the get of the other — undoubtedly influenced him to continue with the blood of those sires to their sons and grandsons, daughters and granddaughters to the present.”

The Beau Gaston line continues in the Anstey herd today.

Although the Anstey herds have not shown often, many of their customers — from George’s day to present — have found success in the showing. George’s customers included Col. E.H. Taylor of Frankfort, Ky.; Sen. J.N. Camden of Versailles, Ky.; O.G. Lee of Kansas City, Mo.; H.E. Talbott of Dayton, Ohio; Jack Van Natta of Battle Ground, Ind.; Buck and Doe Run Valley Farms of Mortonville and Coatsville, Pa.; and the Hooper herd of Hope Hull, Ala.

Anstey genetics received the top carload bred 2-year-old heifer honors at the 1928 Fort Worth Stock Show.

George marketed his Hereford genetics through 15 production sales and advertisements in the *Hereford Journal*. However, Charles says, word-of-mouth advertising led to his greatest success.

“We sold so many commercial bulls and heifers,” Charles says. “We used to go to the sale barn, and the Herefords sired by our bulls brought a premium. My grandfather supplied more bulls than any breeder in the country.”

In addition to being respected as a livestock producer, George was also sought for his opinion in the ring. George judged Herefords across the country, including the Chicago International, the National Western Stock Show in Denver, the Fort Worth Stock Show in Ft. Worth, Texas, the American Royal in Kansas City, Mo., and state fairs in Iowa, Nebraska, Texas, Illinois and South Dakota.

According to “G.J. Anstey Real Hereford Pioneer,” published in the July 23, 1942, issue of *Journal Stockman*, George maintained a passion for Herefords, even as he neared retirement.

“To hear Mr. Anstey recount his experiences and repeat pedigrees is to realize his enthusiasm and exuberance that in no way reflect his advanced age,” the article states. “This pioneer breeder was among the first purebred men of any breed to start in the Midwest and probably did more than any individual to promote Herefords in the West and Middle West.

“In spite of his many years, Mr. Anstey can still pick out a good bull, and any Hereford breeder will tell you the Anstey stamp of approval is enough to certify the animal as a top-flight individual,” the article continues.

Through the generations

George died in 1945, leaving his wife and seven of his 11 children behind. At the time of George’s passing, his son Charles L. purchased the top 35



Charles L. Anstey

cows of the herd to add to his existing Charles L. Anstey Herefords operation. In time, Charles L. built his herd to 200 cows, and with his wife, Marcella, began raising nine children on the Anstey ranch. Charles L. marketed bulls to ranchers in Wyoming.

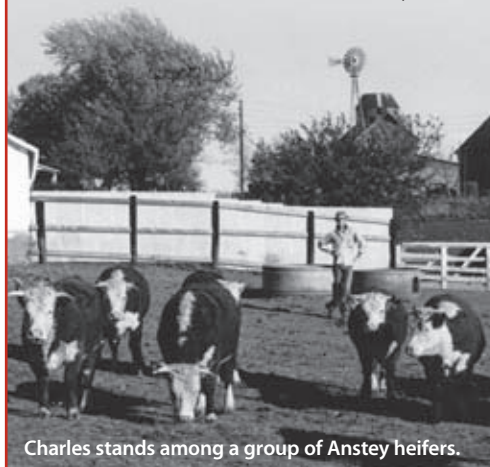
He also held many bull sales in South Dakota and helped ranchers develop their own herds of registered Herefords, including the Splickers of North Dakota.

“Anstey Herefords have gone into every state in the United

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Anstey Timeline:

- 1858 – George born
- 1876 – George emigrates from England to the U.S.
- 1881 – George purchases 240 acres at \$12.50 per acre in Massena, Iowa
- 1887 – George purchases his first purebred Herefords, Irene 31572 and Lord Hewan 31443
- 1899 – Charles L. born
- 1911 – George purchases Beau Gaston and Beau Dover from Gudgell-Simpson
- 1929 – Charles born
- 1945 – George J. Anstey Dispersal Sale held
- 1957 – Charles L. purchases Duke Lamplighter
- 1961 – Anstey Diamond Anniversary and Charles L. Anstey Dispersal Sale held
- 1966 – Anstey 80th Anniversary Hereford Sale held
- 1992 – Kathy Ankenbauer starts her Hereford herd
- 2003 – Charles coordinates first Hereford-influenced feeder calf sale in Anita, Iowa



Charles stands among a group of Anstey heifers.

States, as well as into Canada,” Charles says.

Charles L. held two range bull sales in South Dakota and continued to market his genetics through word-of-mouth advertising.

In 1956 Charles L. hosted a carload of bulls to the National Western Stock Show and became ill. He entered the hospital in Omaha, Neb., and was never able to return home. Upon his father’s passing, Charles and his wife, Ruby, purchased 20 cows and a bull from his father’s herd and began Charles Anstey Herefords, in addition to caring for his father’s herd.



Charles and Ruby Anstey

Other changes were quick to come

“The demand for bulls in the western states dried up,” Charles says. “Our bull trade changed. Instead of selling bulls in groups of 20 to 40, we started selling them in groups of one to five.”

In 1957 Charles purchased Duke Lamplighter — a straight Anxiety Fourth bull — from R.D. Mousel Jr. of Cambridge, Neb.

“We cross Duke Lamplighter on our Beau Gastons,” Charles says. “This cross was very successful when I started, and I knew we would stay with Anxiety Fourth Herefords. Today, there are only two Anxiety Fourth breeders left — myself and Jim Lents of Indianoma, Okla.”

Charles says more commercial operations started in Iowa, and he began selling as many bulls to local commercial producers as his family had done previously to ranchers in the West. He continued building his Hereford herd to an all-time high of 500 in the 1970s.

In December 1966 Charles held an 80th anniversary sale at the ranch.

“Fifteen of the 25 2-year-old bulls went to repeat customers,” Charles says.

Charles and Ruby have three daughters — Cindy Anstey, Kathy Ankenbauer and Deb Brown. Of the many achievements that bring pride for Charles, perhaps one of the greatest was the 1977 Cass County Fair, Atlantic, Iowa. In this first year for combined breeds, two of his three daughters — Kathy and Deb — won their classes of 30 and 35 with Hereford steers.

For the past seven years, Charles has coordinated a Hereford-influenced feeder calf sale, the third Saturday of January each year in Anita, Iowa. Last year was the largest sale with 500 head sold.

“In 2006 we sold 657-lb. steers for \$1.26 per lb. — the highest price of any breed,” Charles says.

Today, Charles and his daughter Kathy manage 150 head of registered Herefords. The American Hereford Association (AHA) membership begun by George has now been passed down to Kathy, and all cattle are registered under this membership and the name Triple A after the three Anstey daughters.

Charles hopes the Anstey Hereford legacy will continue into



The Anstey family registers their cattle under the name Triple A, after Charles’ three daughters (l to r): Cindy Anstey, Kathy Ankenbauer and Deb Brown.

future generations. Kathy and her husband, Dan Ankenbauer, have two children — Hannah and Charles. And, Deb and her husband, Bret Brown, have six sons — Jared, Heath, Nick, Beau, Ty and Tanner. Although Charles’ grandchildren are active in athletics, Hannah also enjoys showing Hereford cattle at local shows and is interested in becoming more involved in showing and breed promotion on a larger scale.

“In the last 53 years that I have been involved with Anstey Herefords, my main focus has been to preserve bloodlines and promote the Hereford breed,” Charles says. “And, I find pride in seeing what our cattle have done for our customers.”

In addition, Charles says, he is honored to have been named an AHA Century Breeder.

“We’re very honored to be within the elite group of breeders from this great organization,” Charles says. “As I look over the century that my family has been in the Hereford business and the success we’ve had, I owe a lot to my grandfather and father and the hundreds of breeders of both purebred and commercial Herefords that have made it possible to attain this milestone.”

It’s likely that if George J. Anstey could have seen into the future as he boarded the ship for the States, he would be filled with pride about his family, pride for the legacy of quality Hereford genetics that have spanned more than a century in the Anstey family. **HW**



The Anstey family was honored to have a photo of its herd on the cover of the March 15, 1969, *American Hereford Journal*.