

THE FAMILY TRADITION

The Sidwell family celebrates 100 years in the Hereford business.

by Sara Gugelmeyer



The Harold and Marlene Sidwell family pictured the day of their centennial celebration. Pictured (back row, l to r) are: Cheryl, daughter of Harold and Marlene; and Valerie and Phil Langston, daughter of Warren and Jolene Sidwell. Front row, (l to r) are: Warren and wife, Jolene; Bryan; Harold; Marlene; and Laurie and Matthew Sidwell, son of Warren and Jolene.

Surviving 100 years in the cattle business is no easy feat. If you look back to what life was like in 1908, when G.A. Sidwell first started putting together a herd of Herefords, you'd be hard-pressed to find much the same as it is now.

One thing that could be found, though, is that the Sidwell family is still continuing the family tradition of producing quality Hereford cattle.

Their first names may be different, their location may be different but their Sidwell

name and devotion to cattle and tradition are the same.

The beginning

At only 23 years old, G.A. Sidwell started into the cattle business in 1908 in Queen City, Mo., with an imported cow from Herefordshire, England. She was called Brampton Agnes VI, a purebred Hereford, of course. He also chose a bull named Columbus Regent, and from those two started a strain of cattle that would earn recognition throughout the U.S. and Canada.

G.A. and business associate J.E. Biehl then purchased herd bull Disturber 4th, by Disturber, and began selling bulls and females at the Des Moines Disturber sale to customers around the country. G.A. continued to market his cattle there until 1920, when he began having his own production sale at his place in Queen City, with

the help of his sons. For 10 years they worked to improve the herd and provide customers with the best cattle they could.

G.A. visited Colorado and was impressed by the opportunities there for his cattle operation. Soon after, he purchased a ranch in Weld County. Then, in 1930 the Sidwells moved the entire operation there.

"Some of their bull business was in the West anyway," says Marlene Sidwell, wife of G.A.'s grandson Harold. "They were already selling many bulls to customers in Colorado and New Mexico."

G.A.'s son F.A. became a partner in the cattle business, and they renamed it G.A. Sidwell & Son. The pair continued with what they did best, producing good cattle, and were able to survive the depression and hold production sales in 1940, '45 and '47.

Sidwells host 100th anniversary celebration

In honor of the Sidwell family's 100 years in the Hereford business, Harold and Marlene Sidwell, along with their children and grandchildren, organized a celebration Sept. 6 at Sidwell Herefords' headquarters near Carr, Colo.



Craig Huffhines, AHA executive vice president, spoke at the Sidwells' 100th anniversary celebration. Huffhines and Harold are holding the painting of Colorado Baldwin by Bud Snidow.

"Because it was the 100th year, we wanted to honor the founder, G.A. Sidwell, as well as the heritage of the family," Marlene says. "We also wanted to honor Harold for his 50 years of raising registered horned Herefords."

About 200 customers and friends of the family attended the event.

Sidwell Herefords had junior herd bulls and cows with bull calves on display for visitors to view. Everyone also had the opportunity to tour the ranch and look at the other cattle. Marlene spent a lot of time researching the history of the family operation, so inside the sale barn were display boards of the four generations with pictures, ribbons — dating back to 1911 — and information for the guests to peruse. "It was almost like a mini-museum," Marlene explains.

She also distributed booklets with a condensed version of the family history for visitors to take home.

The family provided a sit-down dinner, complete with door prizes, after which was the program. Harold, Warren and Bryan Sidwell spoke, as well as American Hereford Association Executive Vice President Craig Huffhines and Western Region Field Representative Ben Brillhart.

"It was a real honor for us to have Craig and Ben there with us for the celebration," Harold says. "We try to raise quality, functional cattle, and for Craig to be there meant he thought enough of us and what we're doing to come."

Also during the evening's events, Warren and his family presented Harold with a Bud Snidow oil painting of Colorado Baldwin, his children and grandchildren gave him a bronze bull, and his wife, Marlene, gave him a belt buckle — all in honor of his 50 years of dedication in raising registered horned Herefords. **HW**



The Sidwells had cows with bull calves on display during their celebration.



Marlene researched the family history and made display boards of the four generations.

Colorado Baldwin

In the mid-40s G.A. made a trip to an auction at Raton, N.M., and met Hereford breeder E.N. Jeffers. G.A. liked his cattle, and the pair traveled to Jeffers' place at nearby Springer.

"Back then we didn't have tools like EPDs (expected progeny differences), but my grandfather had a great eye for cattle," Harold says. G.A. picked out Prince D109, but Jeffers refused to sell him. Harold explains that G.A. continued to harass him for several years until 1947, when G.A. and his son purchased half-interest and insisted the bull's name be changed to Colorado Baldwin. Later Jeffers sold them the remaining half-interest.

Colorado Baldwin's progeny became very popular and boosted G.A. Sidwell & Son's business.

Harold explains that at one point a writer from the *Western*

Livestock Journal did a survey and discovered about 90% of commercial cattle in the Rocky Mountain region were of Colorado Baldwin descent.

In 1953 G.A. and F.A. made a deal with F.A.'s brother-in-law M.J. Diehl to start marketing their bulls together. That way they had enough stock and customers to start hosting an annual bull sale. They sold cattle to 28 states and Canada through the sale barn at ranch headquarters, constructed in 1958.

The next generations

The family tradition continued when G.A. retired in 1959 and F.A. invited his sons to join him in the Hereford operation. Walter, Harold and Richard formed a corporation with their father, and even the name was traditional: F.A. Sidwell & Sons. And the operation continued to grow.

The three sons and their father operated three ranches and many acres of wheat. They continued to hold annual bull sales and began marketing females as well.

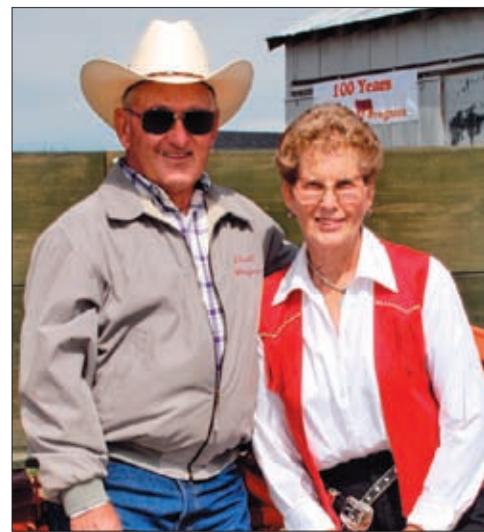
They used sons of Colorado Baldwin and Domino Plus 20th.

Harold says, "My dad was a very astute man with knowledge of the lineages of the Hereford breed."

In 1971 the corporation was broken into three separate entities in each son's name. And in 1981 the Colorado Hereford Association honored F.A. Sidwell as the Breeder of the Year.

Harold was very proud his dad had earned this honor. "My dad was my mentor, sharing his knowledge and wisdom of the Hereford breed with me."

Although brothers Walter and Richard are still in the cattle business, Harold stayed on at the headquarters and



Marlene and Harold at the Sidwell Herefords 100th anniversary celebration.

continued to produce registered horned Herefords.

Harold and Marlene began working in earnest to follow in the prior generations' footsteps. With 7,500 acres of grass and wheat, they managed 225

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SIDWELL TIMELINE



Disturber 4th
G.A. and Sarah



Colorado Baldwin



F.A. and Georgia



F.A. Sidwell named Breeder of the Year by the Colorado Hereford Association.



Cheryl at the 1988 Weld County Fair.



Harold and Marlene



Bryan



Warren and Jolene

1908 – G.A. Sidwell started his Hereford herd at Queen City, Mo.

1911 – G.A. Sidwell and partner J.E. Biehl purchased a bull, Disturber 4th, from Michael Jacobs.

1920 – G.A. brought his sons into the business and began having a production sale on his Missouri farm.

1930 – G.A. and family moved to Colorado.

1940 – The first production sale was hosted at the new location in Colorado, not long after G.A. invited son F.A. into partnership with him and changed the name to G.A. Sidwell & Son.

1945 – Hosted second Colorado production sale.

1947 – Hosted third Colorado production sale. Also, the operation purchases half interest in a bull from E.N. Jeffers & Son, Springer, N.M., and changes his name to Colorado Baldwin.

1953 – G.A. Sidwell & Son began hosting annual production sales.

1958 – G.A. Sidwell celebrated 50 years in the business with a Golden Anniversary Sale, which drew a crowd of 500 people.

1959 – G.A. retired. F.A. invited his three sons, Walter, Harold and Richard, to join the business, and the name was changed to F.A. Sidwell & Sons.

1961 – G.A. Sidwell was inducted as a charter member of the National Cowboy Hall of Fame.

1966 – F.A. Sidwell & Sons hosted the Colorado Junior Hereford Association Field Day.

1971 – F.A. Sidwell & Sons was dissolved, and three separate corporations were established for each son and his family. F.A. retained an interest in each.

1973 – Harold Sidwell sold bulls to the Hungarian government to be transported to Hungary.

1981 – The Colorado Hereford Association honored F.A. as Breeder of the Year. Harold ceased hosting an annual sale, something that he had continued after his father's retirement. Also, Harold's eldest son and his son's wife, Jolene, started their own farming enterprise.

1985 – Harold, his wife, Marlene, and son, Bryan, establish a partnership in the Hereford business, calling the new company Sidwell Herefords.

1988 – Harold's daughter Cheryl exhibited the grand champion steer at the Weld County Fair – the first time in 22 years a Hereford had received that honor.

1989 – Warren and Jolene Sidwell moved to Oklahoma.

1992 – Sidwell Herefords had the grand champion at the Fort Worth National Show.

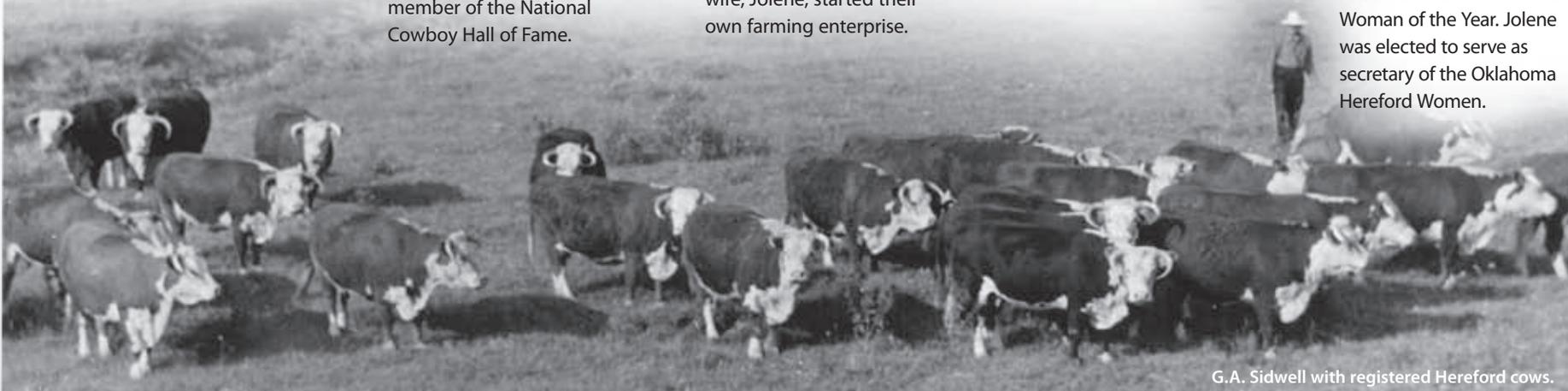
1994 – Warren and Jolene bought a piece of land near Chelsea, Okla., and re-entered the purebred Hereford business as W & J Cattle Co.

1996 – The 42nd World Hereford Conference was in Ft. Collins, Colo. Sidwell Herefords took cattle to the event to display for Hereford breeders from around the world.

2000 – The top-selling bull in the Herefords in Native America Sale was raised by W & J Cattle Co. Also, Warren was elected to the Oklahoma Hereford Association's Board of Directors. Sidwell Herefords owned the Reserve Grand Champion Pen of Four at the National Western Stock Show.

2005 – Warren was elected as president of the Oklahoma Hereford Association and served until 2006.

2007 – Marlene was named the American Hereford Women Woman of the Year. Jolene was elected to serve as secretary of the Oklahoma Hereford Women.



G.A. Sidwell with registered Hereford cows.

registered cows. Using a descendent of the original Colorado Baldwin herd bull, Harold used HT Bald Plus 9239 as well as Britisher 33, a bull purchased from Wyoming Hereford Ranch. The cross produced offspring Harold and Marlene called "Cadets."

In 1977 they also purchased M&M Advance B216 for the "Line One" influence to breed to their Cadet cow herd.

Harold and Marlene's son Bryan took an interest in the family operation, and in 1985 a partnership was formed between Harold, Marlene and Bryan in the same spirit as the previous generations.

In 1989 Harold and Marlene's eldest son, Warren, and his wife, Jolene, moved to Oklahoma for her job with State Farm.

The Sidwells continued hosting successful production sales until 1981. At that time they began selling yearling bulls and heifer calves only by private treaty.

Today, Harold, Marlene and Bryan's operation, Sidwell Herefords, consists of 100 registered cows and 200 commercial cows. The main operation is near Carr, Colo., with additional land near Yoder, Wyo., and hayland at Torrington, Wyo.

Marlene is active in the operation and in American Hereford Women

(AHW). She was named the AHW Woman of the Year in 2007.

Sidwell Herefords raises successful cattle in the showring, with champions at Denver and Ft. Worth and at the state and local levels.

Most recently they purchased CL1 Domino 7163T from Cooper Herefords. Bryan says, "He will continue our goal of producing thick, big-topped, heavy muscled and functional cattle."

He adds, "Presently, our plan is to continue to raise the type of cattle that our customers want and sell more bulls, and that tells you that you're raising the right cattle. Being in the Hereford breed is an honor in itself."

Although Bryan is poised to take over the Colorado and Wyoming operations after Harold retires, Warren has a future in the Hereford business as well.

Sidwells in Oklahoma

After Warren and his wife moved to Oklahoma, they were able to acquire some land near Chelsea and start their own cattle operation. Warren says it was difficult starting over, but it was a challenge they took on readily because they fell in love with the area right away. He says, "It was a challenge, but we love the country and love the people."

Warren and his wife, Jolene, earn off-farm income with jobs at State Farm Insurance. But, his Hereford herd of about 50 registered cows brings him a great sense of honor. He sells most of his calves as feeders but carefully handpicks three to five top bulls to sell each year by private treaty or at consignment sales.

Some of their calves are sold through the auction at Joplin, Mo., which Warren says he finds ironic because that is near where his great-grandfather G.A. first started in the Hereford business at Queen City, Mo. "It's almost like we've come full-circle," Warren says.

Warren has two children, Matthew and Valerie. Both are married and reside nearby in the Tulsa, Okla., area. In the long-term, Warren says he would love if his children were able to carry on the tradition by taking over his Hereford herd. In the short-term, Warren says he would like to be able to retire from State Farm and look after his cows full-time.

"Our whole family is honored to be Hereford breeders and have the opportunity to get to this point and be a part of such a great breed," Warren says.

Warren and Bryan's sister, Cheryl, is a medical assistant and CNA, and helps out on the ranch in Colorado.

Harold has seen decade after

decade of changes in the cattle business and says he is excited about the future for the breed. "We went through a big era in size, and now we're back in the more moderate size, I think," Harold explains. "That's more like back in the earlier years when we were having more success selling bulls. We are getting back into more of that time, when things are more moderate and everything is more efficient."

Harold also says he would love to expand and sell more bulls and possibly even return to the pre-1980s era of Sidwell Herefords with annual production sales. He says, "It looks like maybe we will be able to get back to that with people wanting to raise more black baldies."

When asked why the Sidwell family has stuck to the Hereford business for 100 years, Harold chuckles, saying, "We've been maybe crazy at times, but we've always loved being in the horned Hereford business. My grandfather started it, and we felt, even when things were really tough, that we had a future." **HW**