

Don Henderson



President Colton Hamilton with
Hall of Fame Inductee Don Henderson

The Henderson family, John, his wife Alice (Graden) and their young son, Tom, immigrated to North America in about 1872. Tom was only six years old at the time, as he was born in 1866 at Oxnam Roxburgh, Scotland, great sheep country south of Edinburgh. The Henderson's settled in the Bridgewater/Fontenell area of south western Iowa but by the early 1900s, the need to expand and limited

possibilities in their area pushed them to make the huge decision to move to Western Canada. In 1903, they brought with them to Lacombe, Northwest Territories, settler's effects, four Angus cows and an Angus bull. John Henderson is recorded as registering Sampson of Lacombe 7295T, born July 23, 1903, in the first Canadian Aberdeen Angus Herd book. B.A. Green, Fontanelle, Iowa, bred this bull.

Tom Henderson and his son, Sam Henderson started their herd in 1909, registering two animals in 1910. Their herd was known as Heatherbrook. Over the years, many top cattle were acquired from major herds in the U.S. with many of these being the Earl Marshall bred cattle.

Sam and Ida Talbot were married in November, 1914. Ida was a daughter of Lacombe pioneer Henry James Talbot, a Shorthorn breeder who helped start the Calgary and Lacombe Bull Sales and consigned to Calgary for 40 years. His brother, Peter Talbot, was the first Senator for the Lacombe area in the federal government.

Sam and Ida had three children: Jean born in 1917, Don in 1924 and Alberta Mae born in 1927.

Don worked at Heatherbrook along with his father Sam and was an excellent cowman and horseman. He was the person who kept things going on a day to day basis at Heatherbrook while his father was away promoting Angus cattle. Sam served 25 years as a director of the Canadian Angus Association, from 1921 to 1946 and served two terms as President. He was also a director of the Alberta Angus Association from 1919 to 1946 and President in 1934 and 1935.

Don Henderson married Mary Miller on July 22, 1948. Mary was originally from Blackfalds but taught at Central School in 1946 and 1947 and boarded at the Henderson's. Don and Mary were both born in the same house in Lacombe. A nurse, Mrs Pearson, took mothers to be into her home and helped them through childbirth. Before this time, most babies were born at home.

Don and Mary Henderson were the third generation to operate Heatherbrook Farms, Canada's oldest continually operated Angus herd established in 1910. In the early years Heatherbrook campaigned at the major western shows as well as Toronto Royal Winter Fair and Chicago International. At the 1924 Royal Winter Fair, Heatherbrook exhibited the first prize Get of Sire, sired by Earl Marshall.

Heatherbrook is considered the originating source in Canada for such famous cow families at Black Jestress, Evening Tinge and Janessa, the Hartley Elba's, Eba and Missies, the Tolan Blackcaps, the Heatherbrook Barbara's, Princess and Queens.

Don Henderson's expertise lies as a cowman and horseman with a lifetime's experience and in recent years his time has been spent with mules. Mary Henderson was also actively involved in the day to day operation of Heatherbrook, as well as being a 4-H leader for the 4-H Horse Club for over 30 years. Mary was also the representative on the Canadian 4-H board representing the Canadian Angus Association. Both Mary and Don have been active members of the Tees and Lacombe Agricultural Societies supported many Angus events and have been active supporters of many local organizations and functions.

Don and Mary's lifetime in the cattle business has been shared with their family Doug, Susan, Bruce, Dixie, Kathy and Jim were actively involved with both the Angus and horse projects at Heatherbrook. Mary and Don have retired but Don still helps manage the cowherd in the summer with the help of grandsons, Kyle and Byron.

Don and Mary have many fond memories of their friends in the Angus business.

Don and Mary's grandsons Kyle and Byron Henderson, now own Heatherbrook Farms Ltd. and are the sixth generation of Henderson's to raise Angus cattle. Andrew and Peyton Church, sons of Christa Henderson are the seventh generation to raise Angus on part of the original Henderson farm at Lacombe.

Jim Henderson, raises Angus and Simmental and goes under the name Heatherbrook South and is very involved in the promotion and breeding of seedstock.

Doug and Linda Henderson raise Angus and have been in the Angus Sale Management business for over forty years, at Lacombe. Susan and Albert Orm raise purebred Shorthorns. Bruce & Lynne had a commercial Angus herd for a number of years. Kathy's two sons are involved with the Meadow Lake Stockyards. Dixie and Kathy were both very active in the horse 4-H.

Don and Mary Henderson continued the legacy of the Heatherbrook Angus herd and their family and many grandchildren and now great grandchildren continue to raise Angus cattle and work in the cattle industry.

Don and Mary are very family orientated and their strong beliefs in family and the care of livestock have been passed down to their children and grandchildren.

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