

# Studer Shorthorns

*by Bert Moore*

## A True Family Legacy



*Schmidt's Soul Train (above) and Studer's Alter Boy 56R (right) recently returned to Studer Shorthorns after seeing service in commercial herds. They will both be used naturally this year.*

**T**he two hour plus trip from the American Shorthorn Association (ASA) headquarters in Omaha, Neb., along US Highway 34 to Creston in southwest Iowa passes through hills, some rolling, some steep, as well as creeks and rivers flanked by timberland. These steep slopes and wooded areas are much more navigable by cows than by 4-wheel drive tractors. The thought comes to mind – this sure looks like good cow country. A reminder that a substantial number of feedlots and readily accessible packing plants are in the area makes the thought even more reasonable.

Among these rolling and sometimes steep hills and timber, stands the attractive log home, with a bulldog on the porch, of the Dale and Anita Studer Family. Dale is the third generation of this family which can clearly and easily be labeled as true breeders of Shorthorn cattle. Aply assisted by his wife, Anita who is also a surgical nurse, and their five children, Nathan, Kaisha, Ashley, Austin and Sarah, this family has contributed to a legacy now in its fourth generation of breeding Shorthorn cattle.

#### The Studer Foundation

The Studer Family's involvement with Shorthorns started in 1920 when the herd was established by Dale's grandfather, Ben G. Studer. The original farm site near Wesley in north central Iowa was homesteaded by Ben's father and grew to over 1,200 acres. He definitely raised a family of 'stockmen' as the Studers established successful programs with all species of livestock. In 1920, Ben paid the high price of \$10,000 for a boar which went on to be Champion at the National Swine Show. In 1940 an Angus herd was established which eventually grew to 325 head. An Ayrshire dairy herd was added in 1945 and along with the Yorkshire swine operation, 100 ewes were lambed out each year in the haymow of one of their numerous barns.

Grandpa Ben made numerous trips to Scotland to purchase livestock. All three cattle breeds, Shorthorns, Angus and Ayrshires have origins in and saw early breed improvement in Scotland. For many years the 100 head Shorthorn herd was headed by direct imports from Scotland. *The Shorthorn World* adver-

tisements for Ben G. Studer's Scotch Shorthorns dating back to the 1930s listed herd bulls as well as females, imported from Scotland. The bulls names carried the prefixes of many of the leading Scotch breeders – Calrossie Royal King, Calrossie Archer, Uppermill Caledonia, Naemoor Monitor, Prince William, Lawton Priam, Cromleybank Eldorado, Beaufort Bayardo and Pittodrie New Year's Gift.

Ben's four sons were all actively involved in this large scale farming and livestock operation. Ben, Jr. (Uncle Benny) took care of the hogs and trucking and delivery of livestock from their extensive sales. Uncles Mark and Paul handled the dairy operation and much of the farming. Nate, Dale's dad, worked with the cattle and specifically the Shorthorns, often with his sons working along side.

"Uncle Mark was a Green Beret airplane mechanic during World War II. Give him a pair of pliers and a piece of baling wire and he could fix anything," Dale says recalling he would get airplane tires to put on hay racks so they could haul larger loads. "Making hay was a continual summer time project and it was all done in small square bales. There were always several loads left on wagons in the evening so they could be unloaded in the morning."

Dale also recalls the stories of traveling with cattle to the World's Fair as well as places like California, Oregon and Chicago by train. One of their bulls, Prospector Traveler x, was taken up the service elevator to the top floor of the Pick Congress Hotel in Chicago

to where a sale was being held. Dale describes him as, "the most gentle animal ever, you could walk up and catch him in the pasture." One of the purchasers in that sale called "The Wonderful World of Shorthorns" was Phyllis Diller.

While many may not remember Prospector Traveler, his offspring has definitely impacted the Shorthorn breed. His daughter, Abbott's Lil 76th \*xar sold to Merl Welch and was the mother of GR Dreamboat \*xar. Prospector Traveler was sired by Sutherland Prospector x, the Reserve Grand Champion at the 1968 International and Grand Champion at the 1969 National Shorthorn Show and the 1969 International.

On January 4, 1953, a very special bull calf was born at Studer Farms. He was sired by their imported herd sire, Lawton Priam out of Valley View Rosewood 23rd x. She may have been one of the first Polled Shorthorn cows added to this almost exclusively horned cow herd. Ben G. Studer was the only person holding memberships in both the Iowa Polled and Horned Shorthorn associations.

"Rosewood 23rd developed pinkeye during the summer when she was nursing this calf, so she was kept in a corral close to the barn," Mike Studer reports remembering carrying water to this cow and calf – Priam Royal Leader.

Volumes could be written about the impact this bull had on the Shorthorn breed in the US and also in Australia and Scotland. After winning grand championships at the 1954 Iowa and



**One of the most famous bulls in Shorthorn history is Priam Royal Leader. Sired by the Studer's imported herd bull, Lawton Priam, he dominated the show circuit and eventually was sold to Australia where he also left his lasting mark. Two of Dale Studer's current herd sires trace to Priam Royal Leader.**



***In true Shorthorn fashion, the Studer Shorthorns operation is a complete family endeavor. Family members include Kaisha, Sarah, Austin, Chance Will, Ashley Will, Anita, Dale, Jenny, and Nate Studer.***

Missouri State Fairs, reserve at Illinois and standing second at the International in Chicago, he was sold to Mrs. Hazel McFarlane's Milly Milly Stud in Australia for \$7,500.

The Australian description of this bull in an article about him in the August 15, 1967 issue of *The Shorthorn World* essentially mirrors Mike Studer's description of him. "Priam Royal Leader (P) was a beautiful soft-coated, deep-fleshed roan. Those who have seen him would agree that he was rugged. The bone of his legs was short and thick and strong. His head was the head that breeders dream about, strong and masculine in every way, a magnificent outlook, expressing the essence of potential prepotency."

Prior to shipment to Australia, Priam Royal Leader was mated to a small number of cows in Harold Thieman's herd in Missouri. His progeny were subsequently sold not only the US, but Canada, Scotland and South Africa. More importantly he established a line of cattle most appropriately referred to as the 'Leaders'. His grandson, TPS Coronet Leader 21st x became the very first Sire of the Year when this distinctive award was established.

Confirming the fact that family legacies do live on, two of Dale Studer's current herd sires trace directly in their sire lines to Priam Royal Leader.

### **Continuing the Success**

Growing up with six brothers must have been quite a challenge for Dale's sister, Mary; but working along side his

***The Studer Family is proud of the cattle they raise and, with good reason, enjoy being around their cows. This calf is sired by another Priam Royal Leader descendant and current herd sire, Studer's Jazz Man 10U out of an Eionmor Marquis 86G daughter.***



father, uncles and grandfather, Dale and his brothers acquired the work ethic and husbandry skills associated with great stockmen. Outstanding stockmen not only have the right environment, but strongly inherited traits and instincts leading to the ability to breed outstanding livestock. In more modern day terminology, not only do they have outstanding EPDs, but high accuracies as well! Time and again the Studer Family has demonstrated this fact.

By the late 1960s, Mike and Dale took over most of the showing of cattle. Show strings of 10 to 15 head were taken to the stops on the show road – Sioux Falls; Cedar Rapids; the Iowa, Minnesota and Nebraska State Fairs; as well as the American Royal and the International.

"We could usually make enough in prize money to pay our expenses for that fair and the next one, so that the prize money at the next fair was profit," Dale remarks.

Tom Studer, known throughout the cattle industry as 'Stub', also travelled many miles displaying cattle. He worked for the famous Shorthorn breeder, Fernwood Farms in Illinois and later for a very familiar name in the Shorthorn business, Don Cagwin, who managed Royal Tartan Shorthorn Farm.

Like so many other members of the

Studer family, Tom had a knack for handling and displaying cattle with the utmost perfection.

In his book "*A Cattleman's Walk Down Memory Lane*", Bob Gordon spoke very highly of Tom's skill talking about when he walked a bull across a marble floor. He went on to say, "I had first met Tom when we went to our first Shorthorn show in Denver in 1968. Over the next few years we grew to be very good friends. Tom had a sharp eye for evaluating good cattle and also had a quick sound evaluation of people. We could be sure no matter where we displayed Ajax (Simmental bull), Tom had him looking his best. Whether it was displaying him at a cattle show or any other place you could rest assured that Tom had him in the best place possible and he would have made friends with a lot of people where he displayed the bull. Tom passed away as quite a young man (2000) after fighting a heroic battle with lung infection. He was of a mold seldom duplicated." His widow and family live in the Virginia, Illinois area.

When dual purpose Shorthorns were allowed to reenter the ASA herd book, Dale and his brother, Rich, added considerable dual purpose influence. In 1980, Dale purchased Pinesedge Babe Ruth, the National Champion Dual Purpose Shorthorn Bull. While Rich

passed away in the late 80s, his family still lives in the Wesley area.

### Expanding Horizons

Ben G. Studer, patriarch of the Studer family passed away in 1980 and the herd was dispersed. That same year Dale began helping Bill Marsden manage an Angus herd in Texas. Riverside Angus Farm, owned by Diamon Shamrock, was a herd of 300 Angus and Brangus cows and 1,000 commercial cows. Together they embarked on an intensive embryo transfer program with cows to flush every month and a show string to take to many of the major shows.

Then in the early 90s, Dale moved to Pennsylvania to managed Yeo Farms. This operation included 100 Angus cows, some Suffolk sheep as well as farming.

During his time in Texas and Pennsylvania, Dale still always kept a few of his favorite Shorthorn cows near Wesley where his brothers lived, but found it increasingly harder to focus on his Shorthorns.

"I enjoy all breeds," Dale comments. "My brothers, Wayne and Craig, have Angus and Simmentals, but I was always especially fond of the gentle nature of Shorthorns."

In late 1991, Dale and his family were feeling that Shorthorn pull more than ever. With a strong desire to be closer to family and to continue their Shorthorn pursuits, Dale and Anita moved their young family back to Iowa. In their current home area of southwest Iowa, they appreciated the acres of pasture and timber where they could run cows.

Upon their return to Iowa and as their children reached 4-H age, it was only natural to take a few head of Shorthorns to the Union County Fair. The 'old timers' quickly recognized the quality brought out by these young



**Studer's Big John 30T provides proof of the Studer's family legacy and impact on the Shorthorn breed. He is one of the Studer's current herd sires which trace back to the Studer's famous bull, Priam Royal Leader.**

people, even remarking they hadn't seen a Shorthorn champion at that fair since the 1950s.

Then at the 1994 Louisville show, the bull MTS Special Effect \*x won the championship. The breeder was Ben G. Studer II, Mike Studer's son and Ben G. Studer's great-grandson. His dam, DSF Exclusive Sally 89th \*x, was bred by the Dale Studer Family.

After success using Eionmor Mr. Gus 80C, sire of Studer's Pretender 96th, Dale began a quest to expand the herd. He travelled to Innisfail, Alberta to the herd of Robert and Ken Morison. The Studers acquired 30 cows which form a great deal of the foundation of the current herd.

When Roger Applegate, Oakland, Iowa, passed away, Dale purchased a few more cows and his last heifer crop. The Applegate purchase included the Party Gal cow family from which a cow and her calf were named Champion

Pair at the National Junior Shorthorn Show. This same cow has proven to be a herd bull producer. Two of her sons are Studer's Controller, 2007 National Western Stock Show Champion, and Studer's Jazz Man 10U, one of their current herd sires.

When asked which sires have had the most impact on the herd Dale names off five – Armstrong Big League OA063, Eionmor Mr Gus 80C, Studer's Winterpuff 92nd, Studer's Pretender 96th, and Studer's Prince James. Eionmor Marquis 86G, out of the same cow as Eionmor Mr. Gus 80C, has numerous daughters in the herd and two of his sons, Schmidt's Soul Train and Studer's Alter Boy, recently back from a commercial herd, will see natural service this year. Other sires have included SULL Red Raider 6807, Studer's Jazz Man 10U and Studer's Big John 30T. The last two, as previously mentioned, trace in their sire lines to Priam Royal



**Studer's Jazz Man 10U (left) is another Studer herd sire which traces back to Priam Royal Leader. He is sired by one of today's most popular sires, Jake's Proud Jazz 266L, out of DSF Party Gal 34M. His dam was sired by Studer's Prince James 99, pictured below.**



Leader. The most recent addition to their herd bull battery is the Canadian bred, Alta Cedar Diablo x.

The Studers feel very fortunate to usually receive abundant moisture and generally have lots of grass in this area of southwest Iowa. This is still far enough south that much of the permanent pasture on the hills and valleys of the area have high plant populations of fescue. When this grass is lush and green it makes wonderful pasture, but because of the endophyte present when the fescue plants get more mature, cattle can become heat stressed. The stress is caused by an alkaloid in the endophyte which causes the external blood vessels of an animal to constrict and not adequately dissipate heat. This requires cattle that will fully shed out in the spring, but need good hair coats to adequately endure the sometimes brutal winters (like this last one) in this part of the country.

“Our ‘cool room’ is a fan and the breeze that blows through the barn,” Dale comments.

Selection priorities in the Studer herd are based on visual appraisal, as well as years of records. They always keep structural correctness, disposition, performance and udder quality along with EPDs in mind. Calving ease has become a big selection tool and all their heifers are AI'd to calving ease bulls. Their own herd bulls are primarily used on the mature cows.

It is very apparent when visiting pastures that Dale and Nathan really enjoy being around cows. They are proud of the cattle they raise. Quick to talk about a good one or a great producer, they are equally as prompt to remark about a particularly good looking cow, “Yeah, but she hasn't done much...and she's calving late.” A memory for detail and the critical eye of a good stockman is just as important as one that sees the positive traits. Their cattle have to look good and they do like to raise the kind that they enjoy looking at.

This is not a problem. Most of the Studer cattle have moderate frames, are problem free and low maintenance. This is the type that fits with most commercial producers. Dale believes that developing a market for bulls defines the success of a registered seedstock herd and he estimates that 75 percent of their sales go to commercial producers.

The Studer Family likes the show ring and as already discussed, has had more than considerable success in that area. The show road, expo sales and their own production sale gives them excellent exposure to purebred breeders. Their website gets hits from across the nation, as well as internationally, while their commercial sales are tagged from

radio ads, state and local publications and most importantly, word of mouth. There is a demand for Shorthorn bulls in southwest Iowa as evidenced by Dale receiving three calls in the previous four days inquiring about bulls for sale and the previous week sold a bull to his mailman.

### **The Importance of Family**

The Studer program continues to be a true family operation with each family member playing an important role. While their Creston operation currently runs about 100 cows, Mike, still living at Wesley, also has few Shorthorn cows.

Nathan, Dale and Anita's oldest son, lives about 18 miles north of the home place. He and his wife, Jenny, have about 20 Shorthorns, 25 Simmentals and the same number of recipients. Nathan, an Iowa State graduate is a beef consultant with Cargill Animal Nutrition, is looking to expand the number of Shorthorns. Young in years but very mature in his attitude and thinking, Nathan looks very critically at the need to control production costs and bring efficiency into the beef business, as well as all of agriculture. He has also served three terms as president of the Iowa Shorthorn Association. Jenny, a Black Hawk College and Colorado State graduate, works as a marketing consultant with Cargill. She comes from a fourth generation livestock background and brings a great deal of 'livestock savvy' to the operation.

Other members of the Dale and Anita Studer Family have been great contributors as well. Kaisha is employed in the medical field in Des Moines and always offered great support. Ashley, also an Iowa State graduate and sales consultant with Hubbard Feeds, and her husband, Chance Will, live at Wiota, Iowa. They have 10 Shorthorn cows and a large herd of commercial/club calf cows. Austin, another Iowa State graduate, just began a position in Grand Island, Neb., in the agronomy area. Sarah, the only family member still eligible for junior activities, is a college sophomore pursuing a degree in the medical field.

Even though some of the Studer children aren't close enough to help with the daily chores, they are always quick to call asking about 'my cow' and change their schedules to help with shows and sales.

On October 9, 2010, they are planning their Family Legacies Production Sale at Nathan and Jenny's place. Featured will be the four generations of Studers who have contributed and the Shorthorn cattle which come from that legacy. Their success can be attributed to careful progress and the maintenance

of a solid genetic base, something that is viable and kept them in it for the long term. The Studers take great pride in the fact that their breeding program is working for the producers, both purebred and commercial, and that they have influenced the Shorthorn industry in a positive way. As 2010 Iowa Seedstock Producers of the Year (among all breeds), it is obvious the Studer program is widely recognized and highly respected.

With years and years of family history and stories, one sticks out for Dale.

"Grandpa Ben never showed or sold cattle on Sunday," Dale explains. "He

gave all the help the day off and all the business was held until the following day. I have so much reverence for my Grandpa Ben and dad. It was such a gift to work beside them both. And I say beside them because neither treated me as anyone less than he. Their gentle strength, wisdom and integrity helped me be who I am. Seems funny to me that when I remember who they both were and what they stood for, I know that the Shorthorn breed is the right one for me. There isn't any place I would rather be than around family and Shorthorns."

Truly a family legacy.

