

How a Winter Made Converts to the "White-Faced Durhams"

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MY first experience with Herefords was in 1885, when the cattlemen of West Texas began shipping in a few bulls along with some Shorthorn bulls. I was working for a cattle company, and that spring they shipped in 75 Shorthorn, 25 Hereford and two Aberdeen-Angus bulls. At that time we boys working on the range did not know there was any such breed at Herefords, and when we were sent to Colorado, Tex., the nearest railroad town, for these bulls we called them all Durhams, for Shorthorns were known then as Durham cattle. We called the Angus black Durhams and the Herefords white-faced Durhams.

The ranch being 75 miles from Colorado, it took several days to drive the bulls there, and by the time we got to the ranch we had some of them named. I remember that we called one of the Hereford bulls John L. Sullivan. He was a very heavy, low-down two-year-old, and it was fun for us boys to see him fight the larger bulls. We hadn't been long on the road until he was boss of the herd, for he had whipped them all.

The year 1885 was a good one for West Texas. It rained a-plenty and cattle did well. The country was all open except that some had horse pasture and small beef pastures. We turned the bulls loose on the range, and, it being a rough country, they located around at different watering places. We watched them, and when winter came the boss told me to gather all of them up and put them in the horse pasture.

After working the range pretty closely I got 23 of the Herefords, more than 60 of the Shorthorns and the two Angus. It wasn't hard to find the Shorthorns and the Angus, for they had stayed in pretty close to ranch headquarters. In the latter part of 1885 and the first part of 1886 the company fenced the range. The year 1886 was a very dry one, and we gathered cattle all year and put them in the pasture. In the spring the bulls were turned out. We castrated and dehorned all the Spanish bulls we could get in the roundups and gave the Shorthorns, Herefords and Angus the whole range.

In the winter of 1886 and the first four months of 1887 more cattle per-

ished than in any of the hard winters we have ever had in West Texas. They died by thousands and broke more men than have ever gone broke in the cattle business since. The company told me to try to count the cattle they had lost. We rode all winter counting and skinning the dead animals, but they died faster than we could count and skin them. While we were riding we were gathering all the bulls and putting them in the horse pasture. Then was when I became a lover of Herefords, for the 25 Hereford bulls were all there to turn out

horn cows and a Hereford bull. I bought my first registered Hereford bull in 1896, when I secured Peerless Wilton 14th 50736 from Thomas Clark Beecher, Ill. I shipped him to Amarillo, Tex., and led him, to the horn of my saddle, a distance of 130 miles. It took me nine days to lead him to the ranch. A short time after that I bought five registered cows and then named my herd the Peerless Herefords. I afterward bought more cows and the other men in that section bought Herefords, until to-day, with the exception of the dairy herds, 95 per cent of the cattle of West Texas are white-faced. Many of them form the purest-bred great herds in the world.

The romance of the range, as written by some of the writers, has changed. The longhorn steers and brindle cows are gone. The deep, worn trails they made toward the West and the water-holes are now followed by some of the greatest Hereford bulls and cows the breeders of Whitefaces have ever bred.



Some of George M. Boles' Herefords, Lubbock, Tex.

in the spring. The two Angus were there also, but the Shorthorns were almost all dead.

It is not with pleasure that I think of that time in the cattle business, for it was a dark age. Men who had good herds of cattle, some of the best men I ever knew, have never recovered from this 1886 loss. From this time the cattlemen bought more Herefords than any other breed and in a few years bought only Herefords for this western country. Up to 1894 there had been but few registered Hereford bulls bought for the West Texas range country, but there were lots of very highgrade bulls.

I worked for wages up to 1891 and then began working for myself. I started a herd with 56 highgrade Short-

In riding over the country I sometimes see bones of the buffalo that have been bleaching for many years. At another place the head of a Spanish bull with the horns still on—the victor, perhaps, in many hard-fought battles. Like the buffalo, his bones and the memory we have of him are all that is left. The ground where they lie is now grazed by herds of registered Hereford cattle.

There are many things I could tell about my experiences with Herefords, but the story would be too long. I will say, however, that my experience with Hereford breeders has been that I have found them the salt of the earth—and they should be, for the breeders of the greatest breed of beef cattle should be great men.



Scene on George M. Boles' Peerless Hereford Ranch, Lubbock, Tex.