

REYNOLDS OF Tocal BUILT ONE OF OUR GREATEST BEEF STUDS

BY JAMES JERVIS

Charles Reynolds, founder of the famous Tocal Beef Stud, is No. 10 in our series "*Recalling the Pioneers*".

Few names are better known among cattle breeders throughout the length and breadth of this great Commonwealth than the Reynolds family, the members of which have now been associated with the industry for over a century.

The pioneer was Charles Reynolds, who came from a farming family in Devon and had been brought up amongst cattle of the Devon and Hereford breeds.

For some years before coming to Australia he had managed an extensive horse and cattle-breeding establishment for his father.

Charles Reynolds arrived in NSW in 1840 and purchased a station on the Liverpool Plains, but this venture was not a success as he lost 80% of his cattle within six months.

Undeterred by this bad luck, Reynolds returned to Maitland and demoted a property called Louth Park, where he determined to begin cattle breeding on a large scale.

FIRST PURCHASES

His first setup was to purchase a few pure-bred Devons and Herefords from George Hobler, who was the pioneer of the Hunter. Then he imported two Devon bulls, *Molland* and *Red Rover*, which became the founders of what was for many years the only pure-bred herd of Devons in the colony.

After a couple of years at Louth Park, he moved to Tocal which, at that time, had an ill-omened name because all its earlier holders had been ruined whilst on it.

Now the tide of fortune changed. Charles Reynolds removed his Devons and Herefords to it and it became famous as one of the greatest stud-farms in all Australia.

Amongst the Herefords were some of the best cows procurable and a bull named *Captain*, by *Trojan* (imported) out of a cow imported by *Hobler*.

SET PROGRAMME

In his herd of Devons were the bulls *Molland* and *Red Rover*, and Reynolds set resolutely to work to keep the two breeds entirely separate.

He then made more purchases from *Hobler* and in the course of years bred from the *Captain*, after which he used *Thurlow* (a son of *Captain*).

In 1860, Reynolds purchased a property called Duninald, on the opposite side of the Paterson River from Tocal on which the Devon herd was kept whilst the Herefords remained at Tocal.

The Devon bulls *Molland* and *Red Rover* were used for many years, after which an imported sire named *Gardone* was introduced into the herd, and still later an imported bull, *Emigrant* and a heifer, *Ellen*, were purchased.

Until 1857 Reynolds' stock was seldom beaten at Hunter Valley shows, but after that and for a long period, Tocal was subject to frequent and disastrous floods which prevented all attempts at exhibiting with any prospect of success.

But a better day dawned in the later 1860's, and about 1871 the success of two Hereford bull calves, *Napoleon 3rd* and *Royal Charter*, rewarded this veteran after many years of dreary failure.

Young bulls from Reynolds' herd enjoyed for years a great reputation throughout NSW and in Queensland, where the stock had a large share in laying the foundations of the herds built up in the 1860's in the newly occupied territory in the north of that colony.

These herds were regarded as second to none in Australia.

LEICESTER SHEEP

Reynolds was interested, too, in breeding Leicester sheep of which he imported many excellent specimens.

Rams exhibited by him at shows were greatly admired.

It was as a breeder of thoroughbred horses that Reynolds achieved fame also.

Through this activity Tocal became a household word throughout Australia.

Reynolds' first step on taking possession of Tocal was to gather round him a few really good mares, picked from the studs of the most noted breeders of the time, and he looked about for sires on whose bloodlines he could depend to found a stud.

GOOD STALLIONS

Among the earliest of these were *Aaron*, *Ackbar*, *Emigrant* and *Gratis*, and from those were bred horses that gave the breeder and his stock a most prominent position.

In 1854 Reynolds purchased *Cossack*, the most renowned racehorse of the time, and from this period the Tocal stud dates its splendid position on the turf.

The price paid for *Cossack* was about 400 guineas; a considerable sum in those days for an old colonial horse, the prejudice in favour of imported sires not having been broken down by the success of *Cossack* or his sire, *Sir Hercules*, and other colonial-bred stock.

At the same time were quartered at Tocal were *Vanguard* and the imported horse, *Freetrader* (winner of the Liverpool Grand National Steeplechase).

DESPISED HORSE

In 1864, on the recommendation of John Tait, *Reynolds* bought *New Warrior* for 700 guineas, a horse then almost despised, and by him were sired the highly successful racing stock *Tarragon*, *Tim Whiffler*, *Kaiser*, *Juanita*, *Detective*, *Teddington*, *Pyrrhus*, *The Pearl*, *The Spy*, *The Prophet* and others. With the exception of the first three all these horses were bred at Tocal.

On retirement of the famous racer, *The Barb*, from the turf in 1869 Reynolds bought him from John Tait for 2000 guineas, the highest price up to that time ever paid for an Australian-bred horse for stud purposes.

Tocal horses were heard of as winners on all the major Australian courses, and yearlings from the stud were sought after at high prices for many years.

NEW CEREALS

Reynolds was interested not only in stock breeding but also in developing agriculture in the Hunter Valley.

He experimented in the growth of new cereals. He also promoted the establishment of Pastoral and Agricultural Societies and helped them to succeed.

His choice among cattle was for the Devon breed, which he claimed fattened earlier and quicker, were more profitable to the butcher and which were better able to get their own living on scanty feed or poor country than other stock.

Charles Reynolds was killed whilst on his way home to Tocal in September 1871, by being thrown from his horse. He was then 65 years of age and left a widow, four sons and a daughter.

SON SUCCEDED

After Charles Reynolds' death his son, Frank, who was born at Tocal, managed the stud and the property for his mother. When she died and the stud was being dispersed he purchased a considerable number of the stock and carried on at Tocal.

Then he acquired Glendarra, on the Paterson River, and Guygallen at Lostock and moved some of the stud there. He was also interested in racing stock and owned the famous blood stallions *Sir Tristram* and *Medallion*.

In 1879 Frank Reynolds introduced 15 cows and heifers, descendants of *Minerva*, a cow in A.A. Dangar's Baroona Stud.

In 1881 a bull, *Dale Tredegar*, a first-prize winner at the English Royal Show, was purchased and he left his mark on the stud through his sons, *Bondsman* and *King of the Vales*.

STUD HERD

At Tocal, Frank Reynolds bred a stud herd of his own from the cow *Purity*, the winner of many prizes including two silver cups at the Sydney Show in 1876.

Her daughter, *Purity 1st*, was never beaten in a show ring. In 1878 she won a silver cup at the Singleton Show for the best cow of any breed on the ground, and in the following year was awarded the Hunter River A. and H. Association's Cup for the best female Hereford, an honor gained also in 1880.

Later Percy Reynolds, Frank's brother, transferred the pure-bred herd referred to above to Hobartville, near Richmond.

EARLY GRANTS

This historic property has had a long association with families interested in sheep and cattle.

The holding consists of two early grants, one of 100 acres to James Blackman on March 31 1802, and another of 400 acres to Edward Luttrell on August 8 1804.

James Blackman was later Constable at Bathurst, and his son made history by being the discoverer of the rich country around Mudgee.

Blackman senior died at Mudgee and his ornate tomb may be seen in the old cemetery on the outskirts of that town. Descendants of this pioneer were long connected with the grazing industry in western NSW.

Edward Luttrell was a surgeon who arrived here in 1804, and the Governor was instructed to make him a grant of not less than 400 acres.

Some years later members of his family were granted 1000 acres in the Mulgoa Valley near the land given to the Cox family.

Luttrell bred sheep, and we find him mentioned in 1810 as a woolgrower.

COLONIAL STYLE

William Cox purchased Blackman's and Luttrell's grants and built a two-storied residence there in the old colonial style for his son, William. This graceful house still stands and is owned and occupied by the Reynolds family.

Sloper Cox, a son of William junior, owned it in the 1860's and later it passed to Andrew Towns, who used it to breed racing stock. There, *Grand Flaneur*, *Trenton*, *Maribyrnong*, *Sardonyx*, *Eprigram* and other champions were bred and in the leafy oak avenue which led to the house, annual yearling sales were held.

In 1900 Percy Reynolds purchased Hobartville, and when the Tocal dispersal sale was held in March 1901, he bought a number of the best cows with which he formed a stud which had about 60 to 70 cows.

FINE PEDIGREE

They traced their pedigrees back to:

- 1) the Cressy Company's (Tasmania) importations from England in 1825;
- 2) from some of George Hobler's stock imported in 1836 and which produced the *Purity* and *Queen Victoria* families;
- 3) *Minerva*, imported by A.A. Danger of Baroona, in 1869;
- 4) *Wanton*, imported by Charles Reynolds in 1857. The *Fancy Pairs* are descendants of this dam and produced the 1930 Sydney champion bull, *Starlight*.
- 5) *Last Day*, bred by George Loder of Abbey Green and bought by Frank Reynolds in 1876 as a yearling for 150 pounds.

The Hobartville herd is regarded as the most successful herd of Hereford cattle in Australia.
