

## **My Proud Roots**

Kurtis Reid

### *Family History*

The Reid's are a family that has always been surrounded with the influence of agriculture. Since our family first set foot in Canada with the New World's promise of opportunity in their sight and a dream in their hearts, we have managed to survive through the good times and the bad. There have been seven generations of Reid's who have called this great country home and hopefully many more in the future. Being a Reid just doesn't mean coming from a line of farmers, honest hard working people and Hereford cattle breeders, it also mean you are a proud Canadian.

The Reid family journey to Canada started nearly 200 years ago, in Normandy County in England. Thomas Reid met a young lass from southern Scotland named Agnes Black. Agnes's father was actually a heralded piper and was ordered by the queen to play for her at every ceremony she held or attended. It was not long until they were happily married. Life in England was good, but the population was on the rise, land was scarce and there just wasn't enough room for a new couple who dreamed of raising a family and having a promising future. When the call for settlers came from Canada and the West, the Reid's answered. The promise of a better life and strong future attracted the couple's attention.

Thomas and Agnes Reid immigrated to Holstein, Ont. They bought a small farm, some cattle and started a new life of promise. Immigration to Canada meant a new start. Thomas had dreams like any other young married man, and a dream that came true was having a family with his wife Agnes. Thomas and Agnes were blessed with a family of six. They had four sons; William, John, Thomas Jr and David and two daughters; Elizabeth and Janet.

Then in 1883, William headed for the wide open prairies of the west, hoping to make his own mark. He settled in a small town called Carlyle, it is now in southern Saskatchewan (the North West Territories at that time), 1mile East and 1 mile south of what we call the home stead at Moosomin. He brought with him his purebred Hereford cattle which were the first of the breed in western Canada, his two hands and a team of

horses. The next brother to move out west was John and his wife Sarah. In 1883 they settled five miles south from his brother. John later became heavily involved in the community being appointed an organizer of the Woodlands School and then elected the first chair in 1891.

Then in William's and John's early years in Saskatchewan, news from Ontario came telling them that their father (Thomas Sr) was thrown from a horse and passed away shortly after. Thomas Sr was buried in an unmarked grave that has not yet been located. Once the estate and family issues were taken care of, David took over the farm in Ontario and Thomas Henry Reid Jr packed his belongings bound for the west following his older brothers. Thomas settled 6 miles south of Moosomin, Saskatchewan, and to this day we still refer to that as the home stead.

The Reid boys took full advantage of their new opportunities in the west. They quickly cleared land for fields that held promise of bumper wheat crops year after year. The work was not easy, and although they had more land than they would have had in Ontario, only two or three fields were originally cleared on the home stead at Moosomin. This was because clearing a field took a great deal of time. It is hard to say how long it took, but my grandfather estimates from when he helped clear some fields with some hired help from local boys, around three months. Then after clearing the field it took two days of hard work to pre work the field for seeding, and after the pre work the seeding itself took three days. and I hope that one would realize that tractors were not around at the Reid farm in the early 1890's, all the field work was done with a team of horses, a plow, a shovel, your hands and your feet. It is truly remarkable to think of the work that my ancestors put into the land only expecting the land to treat them the same.

After a summer of heat and dry conditions that brought upon prayers for rain, it would be time to harvest. This was always a big deal for the Reid's and to this day when we help with harvest at our friend's farm in Macrorie, Saskatchewan, it is still a time of hectic happenings. In the early days of the Reid homestead at Moosomin, it would take three days to harvest the front field, 105 acres, and four to five for the two back fields which were around 190 acres. My grandfather told me a story of how John had troubles one of his first years selling his wheat. He had been taking it to the local grain elevator in

Carlyle the past two years, but in Moosomin they were offering a much higher premium, so he decided in his fourth year of selling grain to take it to Moosomin. But Moosomin would not pay the hauling cost as it was too far, and this forced John to pay for it himself. At this time there were no railroads around the Moosomin area and because of this, all the grain was hauled in carts by a team of four to six horses. It cost my great-great uncle 40 cents on top of the regular hauling charge to have his grain hauled to Moosomin. The next year, John went back to the Carlyle elevator. Farmers back then had to do everything they could to get the best prices for their cereal crops, and it turned out that John did make some extra money. However as there are also no grain augers, all the grain was shoveled by hand so the physical labor turned out to be too high a price. Around the farm there is not down time because there are always things to do and time is precious.

Thomas married my great grandmother Margaret Grant in 1893. From what my grandfather has told me, Margaret was a worthy match for Thomas as she met his stubborn farming roots with a look of her own that usually ended up going in her favor. After getting the farm started and having a solid base for their future, Thomas and Margaret started their family in 1900. Their first born was Elmo. Regrettably Elmo passed away as an infant due to complications. A few years later my great grand father Thomas John Carlyle Reid was born in 1902. He was always known as Carlyle, and finally to my great-great grandmother's relief their third child was born, a beautiful girl named Leonne in 1904.

Life's rhythm returned after Thomas's children were born. Farming took the forefront and Margaret took care of the children until Thomas came in after all the chores and work was finished. Margaret did not just stay in the house because after the children could walk she resumed her chores; feeding the swine and chickens, gathering the eggs from the sitting hens and running an organized household.

In those days the Hereford female cattle were primarily crossed with Shorthorn bulls brought back from Ontario. Shorthorns were popular in Eastern Canada at the time and the trend spread across the West as families settled the wild prairies. However at the Reid farm only about half the cattle were cross bred and the other half were kept purebred.

Carlyle and Leonne attended school in Coverdale District School to begin with. They rode to and from school on horse back every day and because there were no real fence lines in those days, they could cut straight across country for the 10 or so mile trip. Upon graduating from Cloverdale, Carlyle and Leonne attended Moosomin High School. From what my Grandpa Reid can recall, he doesn't think that Carlyle finished grade twelve because he was needed at the farm, which was fairly common back then. Great Aunt Leonne finished grade twelve and then attended teachers college for further education.

Carlyle took over the farming operation in 1924 while he was courting a lovely young woman by the name of Florence Katherine Zimmerman, whom he took as his bride the following year in 1925. Great Grandma was a student at the teachers college in Moosomin when Carlyle met her.

When John announced that he and his wife Sarah would be dispersing their cattle and moving to British Columbia, it came as a surprise. They had no children and wished to live the rest of their lives out together in a relaxed atmosphere.

John held a major cattle auction sale just before he left to disperse this purebred herd of Herefords that he had been building for over 30 years. Carlyle attended this sale as he wished to continue his father's herd of pure bred cattle and cease to cross breed to Shorthorn. John then approached Carlyle before the sale and asked him which of the females his favorite was. After walking through the cattle and evaluating each of them Carlyle pointed to a female in the middle of the row. John then walked up between this cow and another, pulled out his knife and cut her neck tie. He told Carlyle that this was his cow now. Since there were no fences, the cow was able to roam free and during the sale wandered off into the bush. After the sale Carlyle tried to locate her for days but never could, then two years later a group of wild mustangs were spotted in the valley with a purebred Hereford cow tagging along behind. There was no mistake that this was the cow that John had given Carlyle. It turns out that she followed the mustangs because cattle don't paw like a horse and so she survived in the winter by following the horses and eating in the areas that they cleared the snow from when they were pawing. After John moved to B.C our family lost contact with him. No one knows where he went, or what he did with his life after he moved away.

Now that Carlyle and Florence had their farm going productively Thomas decided to retire and built a house in town. In 1921 the red brick house was finished and it still stands today across from the Baptist Church on Main Street.

On January 5, 1927 Carlyle and Florence were blessed with their first child (my grandfather) Grant Carlyle Reid. Then on April 29, 1929 my Aunt Leonne was born. The Reid family then kept going strong even as the Dirty Thirties hit.

Cattle prices plummeted, the grain market virtually died and times seemed to just get harder and harder every day. The Reid family did not suffer my grandfather tells me. "There was always food on the table and work to be done, which is what helped us get through."<sup>i</sup> My grandfather remembers that a strict law that helped our family to stay ahead was the Pure Bred Cattle Act. This act stated that all bulls that were to be used for breeder were to be purebred only and if a cross bred bull was used the vet would be sent to the farm to castrate the bull.

Carlyle felt the effects of the stock market crash heavily at the start. He had just completed the main barn in 1929 that would house the cattle during calving, store hay and straw and the minimal equipment that he owned. During the previous 8 years Carlyle had saved enough grain up to pay for the barn all at once, but he thought it would be a good idea to hold the grain and sell it the following spring as prices usually went up around that time of year, but three months before he was about to sell the grain the market crashed. My grandfather remembers his father telling him, "If I woulda sold that grain then, we would be in the black today."

In the end it took 20 years to pay for the barn that just three months before could have done all at once. Carlyle was not one to hang his head so he kept on pushing through and in 1940 he had fully paid off the barn.

During the thirties the land was so dry and the crops were so poor, farmers were unable to pay money for a bull. My great grandfather then went back to the barter system when he sold a bull. My grandpa remembers when men would come to look at a bull and tell his father that they didn't have enough money to pay. Carlyle would tell them to go back to their farms, pick out their two best steers, bring them back with them and they could take a bull home. But when people from the north came to buy a bull a different agreement was reached. The north was not as hard hit by the drought as

central and southern Saskatchewan so the deal Carlyle made with them was if they brought a full truckload of wheat then they could take home their pick of the bull pen. My grandfather told me as we sat talking in his apartment that, "the barter system was all we had. It was barter, deal and trade or you wouldn't survive."

Some money was also made by pedaling meat, and shipping steers but shipping was tricky because there was a chance that you would not see any money and sometimes you would even have to pay the difference from your own pocket. Carlyle was a firm believer in culling the weak end of the herd so my grandfather remembers a few times when a bill instead of a cheque would come in the mail from when an old cow was shipped. My grandfather has many stories of the dirty thirties he remembers.

With money scarce and the crops thin the butcher was a necessity to survival. He was hired by the local beef ring and would travel to every farm in the area every day of the week. He would butcher an animal in the afternoon and early the next mornings cut it and place the fresh meat into bags that each family supplied. This meat was the family's meat for the week and portions were dependant on the size of each family. My grandfather stopped right then to tell me this story. He pointed at me and said, "You know, there was no market were we could by canned goods. We had to do that all ourselves. We would buy peaches, peel them, and then can them."

Our farm lies along the Pipestone Valley and now next to the Moosomin Lake shore. The lake was man made when the Moosomin Dam was built in 1955; we sold our land across the valley before they finished the project.

The valley held abundance of wild saskatoons, raspberries, cranberries and within the garden rhubarb, peas and carrots were picked. Picking berries was a day long exercise and was like everything else back then, physically demanding. Once the picking, washing and peeling was complete all of the vegetables or fruit were put in separate jar and placed in the boiler with the rubber rings. Then the job everyone hated, filling and keeping the stove full of wood. You had to keep the fire going until the water came to a boil, then you had to keep it at a boil for a while to cook, preserve and disinfect the food. And finally you pulled the hot cans out, pushed the seal into the lid and tightened the lid on as tight as you could get it.

This would last our family for the year until the next picking and canning season came. When that happened it was my grandfather's job to go into the cellar, check for mice and then alert my great grandmother that it was safe to come down (she was terrified of mice). Then they would check the remaining cans. If any had gone bad due to a broken seal or bad contents it would be opened and poured into the pigs slop because waste back then was not an option. Everything had a use and if it didn't it wasn't worth having. There is a funny story about giving the pigs the fermented fruit that my grandfather tells and you will find it in the stories section of Appendix A, it is called "The Pig". After checking all the remaining cans, the empties would be brought upstairs and the process started over again.

Grant stayed on the farm and married my grandmother Phyllis Kilpatrick in 1949. Grant stayed heavily involved with the Hereford cattle business. He is one of the founding members and long time secretary of the Eastern Saskatchewan Mainline Show and Sale, a founding director and president of the Moosomin Hereford Show and Sale. A major honor was then bestowed upon Grant and Phyllis in 1980. They were awarded with the Family Heritage Award for being the third generation on the family farm. My grandfather and grandmother had 5 children together. They had four girls, Margaret (Margo), Carol, Barbra and Cheryl and a son (my father) David Grant Reid.

In 1967 before David was born they moved the old house off the farm which was built in 1905 and moved a new house onto the foundation. All five children received their schooling in Moosomin. All of the kids graduated high school and moved onto successful careers.

Carlyle passed away in 1967 and was shortly followed by his wife Florence.

As Grant's children grew older they participated more and more in everyday farm life. There is a gap of about 13 years between my oldest aunt (Margo) and my father (David). And keeping with tradition all of the kids were introduced into cattle showing through 4H. Grant led the 4H club for about 12 years. He remembers when David was in grade 1 in his first year of 4H that the Reid family had 12 calves at the 4H achievement day show. All he could do was shake his head and laugh thinking about the memories that kept coming back to him about the times when he lead the Moosomin and Area 4H club. My Grandfather also started something inside the 4H club that had

never been done before, a Pee Wee class. This was done because he wanted to increase the club numbers and give every kid the opportunity to show. He remembers seeing these little ones trying to drag a stubborn calf around the ring, and he tells me, “and I am not kidding, those little buggers were stubborn, they were so stubborn that they would even lie down on the poor kids. So when they did that I would get over there quick, roll the calf over and put its feet under it. The calf didn’t even know it had even lain down. Then someone in the crowd said, ‘that doesn’t look like the first time he has done that’, and then your grandmother said, ‘and I bet you it won’t be the last time either.’” ii

In 1977 my grandmother took over the local grocery store for a venture of her own. She purchased the local Solo store and changed it to Reid’s Lucky Dollar Food Store. My father remembers working in the store sometimes and how this was his mother’s project, separate from the farm. The store was later sold in 1985 and still to today it is called the Lucky Dollar.

My father married in 1984 to Kathy Predinchuck. And coincidentally Kathy grew up in Moosomin, went to school with my father, is born a day after my father and was born in the room next to the one my dad was. David and Kathy had three children, Kyle (1985), the charming Kurtis Michael Phillip Reid (1889) and Kaitlyn (1991). Before I was born my grandmother passed away from cancer in 1985. Grandpa had moved into town in 1982 into the red brick house on Main Street that everyone knows. He had down sized the herd in 1989 and went into semi retirement and now enjoys his evening card games at the hall. My father became a bank manager at RBC in Southey when I was born.

David has lived in numerous towns across Saskatchewan following his work and he has always been rising on the corporate ladder. Farming eventually became too strenuous for my grandfather. We did not sell our, but put our cattle on shares with a friend in Weyburn, Saskatchewan. We still have about 20 cows there and every year we always seem to have a few of the best calves on the farm come fall. My grandfather remarried to Margaret Mason in 1986 and they lived happily together in Moosomin until 2006 when Margaret passed away. My grandfather then decided to move to Saskatoon were he could be closer to our family. He now lives in Luther Tower and I frequently visit him.



### *Hereford Cattle*

As I have mentioned before my family has raised Hereford cattle practically all our lives. I (Kurtis) am a 5<sup>th</sup> generation Hereford breeder in of our family. The Reid family holds the title of the longest running purebred breeding family in Canada, that span stretches over 118 years. The Cliffs Farm can be found on many pedigrees in the Hereford industry. The Reid's purchased their first purebred Hereford female in 1889 from J.W Stone of Holstein, Ont. My grandfather gave me the First volume of the Hereford Herd book and when you look inside it you will see our names in ownership.

My grandfather was awarded his breeder's 100 year pin in 1989. The Reid's held a huge barn dance and celebration to commemorate this event and honor. We are one of only a handful of Hereford breeders who have been recognized with this award of achievement.

The Reid's originally started raising horned Hereford cattle. For those who are unfamiliar with the cattle industry and the Hereford breed there are two separate genes, horned and polled. Back in the days of my great grandfathers the polled gene was considered a mutant and only very, very few breeders raised and bought them, everything else had to be horned. But as the polled gene was bred up they started to become more and more favorable. They were easier doing (took less maintenance), heavier muscled and overall more attractive to look at, so in the 1950's my grandpa Reid and great grandpa Reid changed to polled cattle. That same year they purchased a quarter of pasture land that enabled them to expand their operations.

Our family has ever only held one of its own production sales were the cattle are all ours. We held our production sale in 1954. This was an exciting day for us. My grandfather remembers painting the barn the year before, hauling old equipment out of the bush and to the trash, cutting the grass were he never bothered to before and worrying what the outcome will be. The outcome in the end was excellent. Our cattle sold well and we were pleased, but Grandpa Grant decided not to continue the sale

because of time and energy input. He had Mainline, Moosomin and private treaty sales, and for him that was enough.

Then in 1959 the Reid's exported a bull to England, this had not been done very often as Herefords originated in Herefordshire England and most of the importing was done from their, so it was a great satisfaction to know that we could send our animals back to their place of origin. In the 1970's my grandfather entertained international guests from across the globe that were looking to purchase females in Canada, we exported heifers to Japan, Russia, Spain, and Czechoslovakia.

In 1975 Grant was touring the USA looking at cattle and visiting different farms and decided to purchase a group of females in Missouri. These females became the basis of our herd and they can still be found in our cattle's extended pedigrees.

Showing and selling cattle is a basis to the Reid family. It was a key factor in income and the bonds of friendship. My great grandfather Carlyle took cattle to Brandon and the local Moosomin Fair but never to the Regina Bull Sale. He preferred to use Regina as his holiday and only go to enjoy the atmosphere and other extracurricular activities. The first cattle to ever be shown by a Reid in Regina at Agribition was in 1972 when my grandpa Grant took 4 heifers. My grandfather continued to exhibit animals at Agribition for 20 years afterwards. He has only ever missed attending 3 Agribition shows since its founding in 1970. Our family has always done well at Agribition standing 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup> and virtually every were else in the class. We have had Jr division champions, Sr. division champions but the overall grand champion banners have eluded us so far, but it is now my dream to win one of these banners for the family.

My grandfather took it upon himself to get all of his children involved in showing cattle by leading the 4H club and taking them to as many shows as he could. David was one of the first members of the Canadian Junior Hereford Association and attended its first National Junior Show, Bonanza held in Red Deer, AB, 1980.

Then in 1998 David kept the cattle showing tradition of our family going when he introduced Kyle and me to showing. We attended the local fair circuit and being only a 30 minute drive from the Manitoba border we did what is called the Milk Run, which are the local Manitoba fairs. I did not know it then, but because of that first year of

showing the country seed was planted in my soul. I have a passion for showing and marketing my cattle across Canada and anywhere else that I will travel.

In August of 1998 my brother and I experienced our first CJHA Bonanza in Lloydminster, SK. At Bonanza parent involvement is against the rules because this show is meant to have Jr members learn the ropes by doing it themselves. Since we had never been to a major show, a Sr member named Chad Wilson allowed us to go in his string and he taught us the ropes.

In following years my brother has taken a different route working and my sister has joined me in showing. We are members of the local 4H club, active members of both the Canadian Junior Hereford Association and Canadian Charolais Youth Association. Since 1998 I have only missed two Bonanzas. I have traveled to show from BC to Ontario and this summer I will be traveling to NS to Bonanza because last August (2006) I was elected the CJHA National Council President. This is such a huge honor for me as I hold the junior association and Hereford breed dear to my heart.

I traveled to Denmark in January of 2005 and look forward to traveling there again next summer because the World Hereford Conference will be held there. We have also recently started showing cattle again at Agribition with great success. We have had three class winners in three years (one female is a two time class winner). My father takes great pride in the three of his children. He encourages us to show and always to do our best. Since I have become involved in the cattle industry I have won countless awards such as Grand Aggregate (high proficiency) three times at Bonanza at two times at CCYA, many open grooming and showmanship competitions at many different shows, and few open show class winners. One of my favorite achievements was winning the Supreme Bred and Owned animal at Bonanza 2005 in Lindsay, Ont. My life has altered as well because of another section that seems to come naturally to me, cattle and livestock judging. I have traveled to a couple of competitions in the states, and have won many prizes and top placing at competitions in Canada. I have just recently received a scholarship to attend Nebraska College of Technological Agriculture in the fall and look forward to having agriculture involved in the rest of my life.

My family history has and always will be important to myself. Since I have started to research it and become more and more involved with the agriculture industry

I can not help but feel a closer tie to the land and my roots. I have dreamed that one day I will return to the Home Stead, fix up the old house and start a life of my own, but the future holds many possibilities and only time will tell.

---

<sup>i</sup> Grant Reid

<sup>ii</sup> Grant Reid