

Just My Thoughts and Observations

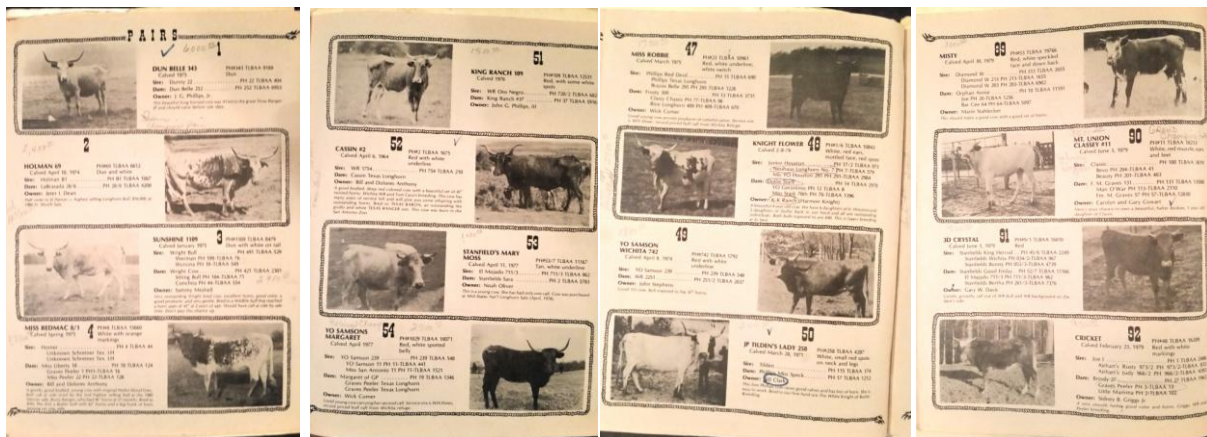
From over 35 years of Working with TEXAS LONGHORNS

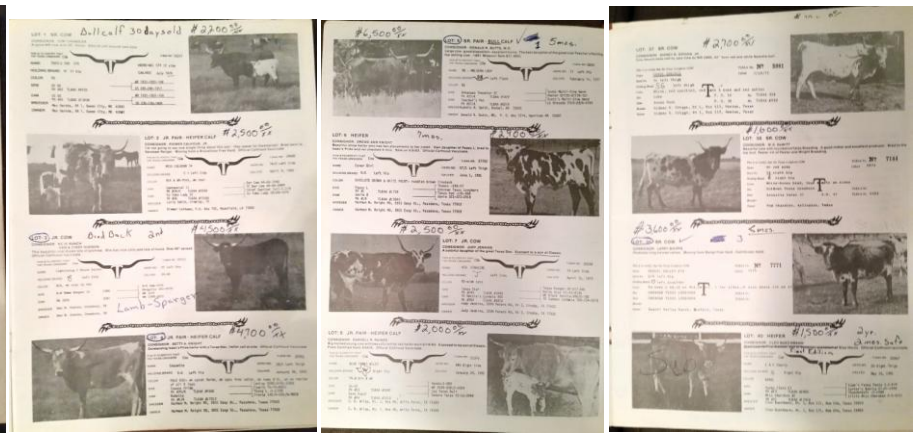
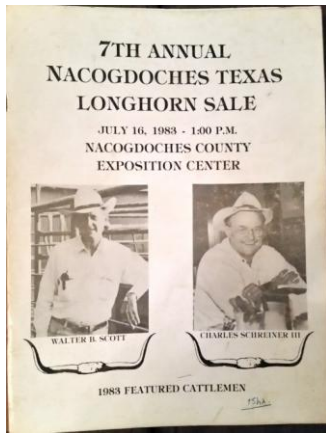
I find it hard to realize that June of 2015 marked my thirty fifth year of being involved with the Texas Longhorn Breed. It was at the young age of 12 years old that I developed my passion for this wonderful and majestic breed. That passion still burns deep within me today and I couldn't image myself without Longhorns in my life. God has blessed me with the ability to work with these great cattle as a way of make a living. God not only blessed me with being able to work with a breed of cattle that I love but in the process, He has blessed me with many wonderful friends. All I can say is it has been an awesome journey!

Over my 35 years of working with Longhorns I have accumulated a pretty large collection of Longhorn magazines and sale catalogs. On rainy and dreary days I sometimes enjoy going through my collection and reflecting on the history that I have had the honor of witnessing in the breed. I thought it would be nice to give the new breeders and those interested in the breeds history a chance to see where this breed has come from I have attached pictures of the pages from sale catalogs from 25 to 30 years ago. The interest in the cattle was high and the numbers of registered Texas Longhorn cattle were very low back in the 1980's. As you look over these catalog pages, you will notice that there are a few names that you will be familiar with and others that you will not know or may have only heard mentioned by another long time breeder. A lot of Texas Longhorn breeders, Longhorn enthusiast, collectors and hobbyist that have come before us. Some had a major impact on the breed while others just simply enjoyed the breed and had little too no long term impact on the breed. Some of the cattle in these catalogs can be found in the pedigrees of today's cattle.

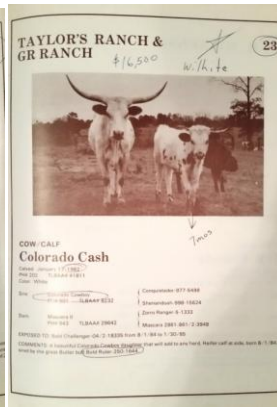
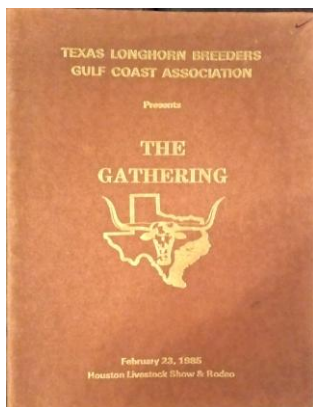
From Sale Catalogs in 1980's

First pages are from the 1980 Nacogdoches Longhorn Sale, which was one of the Registered Texas Longhorn Sales I attended. It would later become the First Texas Longhorn Sale where I consigned cattle and would be their youngest consignor.



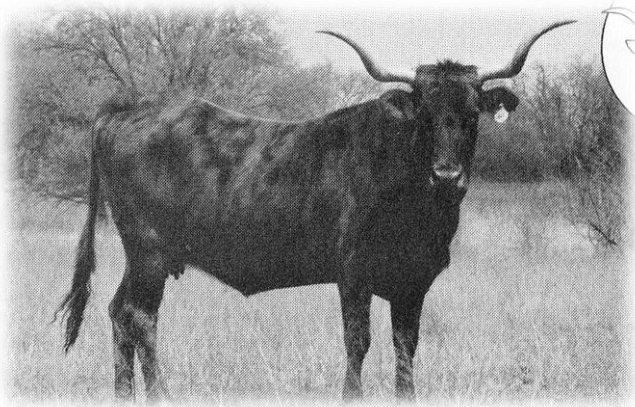


The cow to the left can be found in the pedigrees of a number of today's bigger horn cattle. Not long after she sold in this sale she would produce a daughter, Bet I Can. That daughter would produce a cow name Know I Can. If you study the herds of Bob Loomis and J.L. Collier you will find this cows genetics.

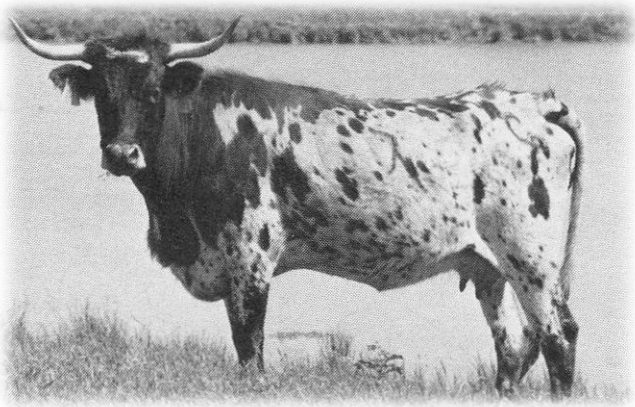


You will also notice a change in the quality of the cattle. Some will be quick to say "we have sure improved the breed in 30 plus years". But have we really improved the breed? I think the answer is both yes and no. I think we have made progress in the Longhorn breed in regards to beneficial traits of conformation, size and milk production. In my opinion these improvements are due in part to genetic selection and better herd management practices with better nutrition. We have also seen an "improvement", if you want to call it that, in the less important traits of horn length and hair coat color. These are for the most part, non-functional traits and have little to no benefit to the animal. All these improvements seem to have had little effect on the over physical characteristics (phenotype) of the breed. The phenotype (*the visible and physical characteristics of an organism resulting from the interaction between its genetic makeup and the environment*) has remained basically unchanged. The traits of horn length and hair color and there "improvements" have more to do with improving the animals eye appeal to prospective buyers or collectors. Any or all of these trait "improvements" can become harmful to the breed when taken to the extreme or becomes the sole focus of the breeder or breed.

Let's take a look at two cow families as examples of the progression of the Longhorn breed. These are examples of increases in horn length, conformation and color within a cow family line. As you look at these old photos you will notice that the horn length is longer but please take special note of the phenotype.



This is Senorita Yates 32, who was born in 1969. This photo is from a 1985 sale catalog where she was a winner of a "gold medallion" for having a tip-to-tip measurement of over 36". She sold for \$1,500.00. Would you believe me if I told you that her genetics are still having an impact on today's Longhorn cattle? Well they are and I bet you are wondering through which animals. Keep reading.



This is CP Yates Cactus Flower, who is a 1981 daughter of Senorita Yates 32. This photo is from the same 1985 sale catalog that her dam's photo is from. She sold as the next lot after her dam. Would you believe me if I told you that her genetics were also still having an impact on today's Longhorn cattle? Well they are and again I bet that you are wondering through which animals. **Hint:** *at the time she sold she was bred to Mr. Measles*

The genetics of these two females are being carried on in today's Longhorn cattle in the form of multiple daughters and granddaughters that are available and still producing through the marvels of modern technology. These genetic are being passed on today all because CP Yates Cactus Flower produce a heifer by Mr. Measles. Mr. Measles was a son of Texas Ranger JP and one of the greatest cows of all time Measles. The resulting heifer would slowly mature into a beautiful tricolored cow with triple twist horns measuring in the upper 70's. **Who is this daughter?**

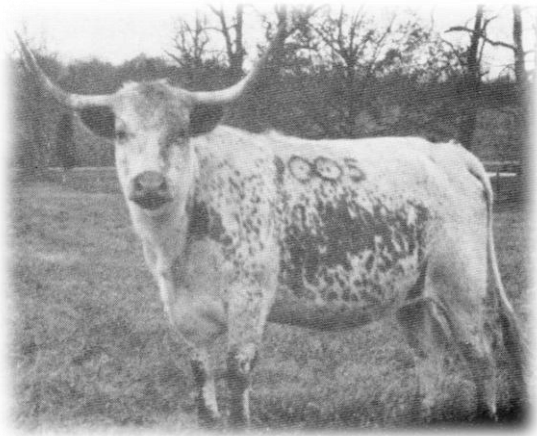
Answer: CP Measles Flower



This is CP Measles Flower, she is the deceased daughter of CP Yates Cactus Flower and a granddaughter of Senorita Yates 32. The genetics of all of these females are being carried on to a new generation through the clones of CP Measles Flower like FC Measles Flower and several others.



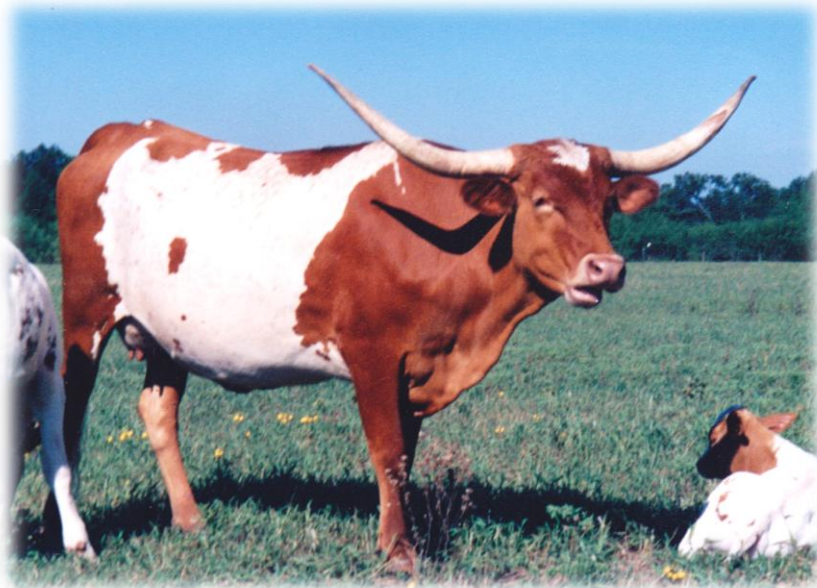
As you look at this family line you can easily see the improvement in body size, conformation and horn length over the three generations. But note the phenotype is the same from generation to generation, virtually unchanged. In other words they still look like a Longhorn just more horn, color and body size. Their body structure, head shape, ear size, eye set and horn set are all similar and met the breed standards established by the Texas Longhorn Breeders Association of America. The breed "improvements" in this example had no negative effects on this family line when it comes to phenotype. Let's look at another family line with similar results.



This photo is from a 1983 Sale catalog of Wix Ruth . She is a 1978 daughter of the Wright bred bull, Champ 858 and her dam was Rita, a Bell Tower Multi Sired cow. Back in the beginning of TLBAA it was not uncommon for cattle to be register as being Multi Sired. Some ranches would run several bulls with their cow herds and back then there was no DNA testing to prove who the actual sire was, so calves would be register as Multi Sired. At the time of the sale Wix Ruth, was bred to a \$62,000 bull named Impressive. The resulting heifer would go on to produce daughters that can be found in some of today's top cattle.



This photo is of Impressive Ruth, the 1983 daughter of Impressive and the above cow Wix Ruth. She had horns measuring in the mid 40's but boy could she produce when bred to a son of Superior and Doherty 698 by the name of Phenomenon. This mating produced several outstanding daughters all of which measured in the 70" range at maturity.



This is a photo of Phenomenal Abigail at the age of 3yrs with a horn measurement of 54+ ". She is a daughter Impressive Ruth and a granddaughter of Wix Ruth. Many breeders consider Phenomenal Abigail to be one of the best daughters Phenomenon ever produced. She always commanded a top price when she was offered at auction. Many of her offspring have sold for big money as well.

Once again when you analyze the progression of this cow family the increase in certain traits is pretty easy to spot. There is definitely an increase in horn length and lateral growth. There is also an increase in body size. But even with these changes there is no change in the phenotype with the "improvements" that occurred within this family line. These are only two examples of many that show improvements in horn, color and size with no change in the phenotype.

Now the question that I am searching for the answer to is "why is it that with these and other family lines we can see an increase in horn length, lateral horn growth, body size and better conformation over a three generation time period with no change to the phenotype but when we look at animals where the breeder is breeding to increase the horn base we not only see the increase in the base but a distinct change in the phenotype?" The animals that are being bred for large horn bases, in my opinion, have a very different look or phenotype. Their head shapes, horn sets, eye set, ear shape and set, are all a little different. You can even see slight changes in the body structure of these animals. Why is this? I am just looking to have a better understanding of why we are seeing this change in phenotype in our cattle and why this change is acceptable. Some of these phenotype changes are things that I was taught to breed away from by the old timers that bred and studied this breed long before I came along. I want to insure that I am being a good steward of this great breed. I feel and believe that we, as breeders, have a duty and responsibility to up hold the breed guidelines that were established when the Texas Longhorn Breeders Association of America was founded. I do not want to let down all the men and women who work so hard to keep the Texas Longhorn from becoming extinct by letting non-longhorn traits to become an expectable part of our breed. I believe that every breeder has the right to breed and raise whatever type of Texas Longhorn they like so long as the phenotype (*the visible and physical characteristics of an organism resulting from the interaction between its genetic makeup and the environment*) remains basically unchanged. In other words they still look like a Texas Longhorn.

These opinions are all based on my observations from 35 years in the Longhorn business. It has only been in the last few years that I have been seeing this change in phenotype. Improving and bettering the breed is a good thing so long as the overall phenotype of the animal is staying the same and true to the breed standards.