

Sherwood Jackson

Sherwood's life as a sheepman started when his father bought him two Shropshire ewes from John Telford from Emington, Illinois. Sherwood was a freshman in high school. The Shrops did well for him but he went on to Hampshires which he showed at various county fairs in Illinois. The clean heads and legs of the Suffolk breed were what really impressed Sherwood. His first Suffolk was a ewe lamb he bought at a Roy Warrick sale in Oskaloosa, Iowa. The ewe lamb was from a breeder in western Canada. She was champion at the Illinois State Fair that year. Sherwood kept going back to the Oskaloosa sale to add to his Suffolk flock.

Sherwood graduated from the University of Illinois in 1944. There were 13 openings for teachers in Illinois that year and Sherwood chose the Mendota High School because of their outstanding agriculture program. But one year later he received an offer from Seneca High School, his home town, which he accepted. Sherwood taught at Seneca High School for 29 years. During those years there was one student teacher he still remembers fondly, Jim Heggemeier. During his years as teacher Sherwood started many students and other young people in the purebred sheep industry. After "San Francisco" Sherwood served several years as a member of National Suffolk Sheep Association Board of Directors; he was known for serving with great integrity and honesty. On July 7, 1951 Sherwood married Lorraine Johnson and they moved to their farm north of Seneca.

Sherwood's Suffolk flock grew to around 800 head. He used rotational grazing on 43 acres divided into eight sections. He says he never could have managed all this work along with his teaching duties if it weren't for Lorraine and their border collie, Panda.

Sherwood credits his success in the sheep business to several people: Jack Hampton and Benny Doan, both shepherds from the University of Illinois; Carl Stasell and Walter Baysinger, high school ag teachers from Streator and Ransom Illinois; Ralph Yohe from Mt. Zion, Illinois who worked as a sheep specialist for the *Prairie Farmer*; and Jimmie Davis, University of Wyoming shepherd. He and Lorraine traveled throughout central and western Canada and the western United States looking for good Suffolks to add to their flock.

Sherwood showed his Suffolks at county fairs throughout Illinois, the Illinois State Fair as well as other Midwestern state fairs and the International Stock Show when it was held in Chicago. He recalls Robert Jackson and Jim Van Cleave as two of the best sheep fitters he worked with.

Sherwood also had the honor to judge many sheep shows ranging from county fairs to the Cow Palace in San Francisco.

One high-light of Sherwood's tenure as a board member was the opportunity for him and Pearson Linn of the National Suffolk Association to travel to Washington D. C. to meet with the USDA and British sheep leaders to exchange ideas about the control and eradication of scrapie.

Sherwood and Lorraine, both 93 years old, now live in Ottawa, Illinois but still call the farm "home." They are still very interested in the sheep industry and agriculture.