

WD

Cayuse Livestock Company

Melville, Montana
1909



First-generation William Henderson Donald.

William Henderson “Bill” Donald of Scottish ancestry was born on Staten Island, New York, in 1880. After graduating from Princeton University in 1902, he started as a runner for the family brokerage firm on Wall Street. It was his father’s fond dream that his eldest son would, one day, fill his shoes as head of the firm. However, young Bill found Wall Street confining and stifling. His heart took him west to Montana. After a short stay in Miles City, Bill traveled to White Sulphur Springs where he got a job with one Billy Loophole. His first letter from White Sulphur told his family of one major difference between the East and the West: he could trust his bunkhouse companions with money, watches, guns, and clothes, but a bottle of whiskey, even under lock and key, was never safe!

In 1909, Bill Donald purchased a ranch north of Melville on Sadie Creek. During the next couple of years, he learned several valuable lessons, such as one needed irrigation and hay so as not to be completely dependent upon the elements. With that in mind, he bought the first part of the present ranch and established the headquarters for the Donald Ranch on the banks of Sweet Grass Creek. Bill began a legacy that grew and was passed on through the generations. His great-great-grandchildren are now living on the ranch he started.

In 1913, Bill Donald married Alma Parker Schmidt; in 1924 they had one son, Bill Jr. They raised both registered and commercial Hereford cattle and Morgan horses. Beginning in 1927, the family incorporated a dude operation into the mix.

Bill Sr. started with several thousand deeded acres and leased more land as it became available. When the opportunities presented themselves, he purchased more ranches. The bad things about the thirties would fill a book; in fact, they filled many books as he kept illustrated daily diaries that detail disastrous cattle prices, a divorce, grasshoppers, drought, near foreclosure, and being stricken with Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis. The latter curtailed his operation considerably. He sold two ranches, dispersed the purebred herd, and closed the dude business. It did, however, bring about a short but delightful friendship with the immortal Yankee ballplayer, Lou Gehrig, who suffered with the same disease. Bill Donald Sr. died in 1945 at the age of 65.

In 1945, Bill Donald Jr. married Ann Carberry, and they had two children: Elli in 1947 and Bill III in 1952.

Second-generation Bill Jr. and his wife Ann bought a neighboring ranch at the head of Cayuse Creek from Daly Johnson in 1954 and started Cayuse Livestock Company with Ann’s brother-in-law, Redfield Vose, as a partner. In 1957, Redfield died in a plane crash, and Bill and Ann moved back to the original headquarters. They switched from Hereford to Black Angus cattle and diversified into Rambouillet sheep and farming. As the years passed, they bought adjoining land when it became available, putting together a well-balanced, contiguous ranch.

In 1974, Elli married Paul Hawks, and they had two daughters—Jenny and Gina. Jenny married John Martin, an engineer. They moved back to the ranch in 2004 and



Third-generation Bill Donald III.

stayed for a couple years before John returned to the engineering field. Gina married Jess Bainter in August 2009.

In 1974, third generation Bill Donald III married Betsy McBean, and they had two sons—Josh in 1977 and Wyatt in 1981.

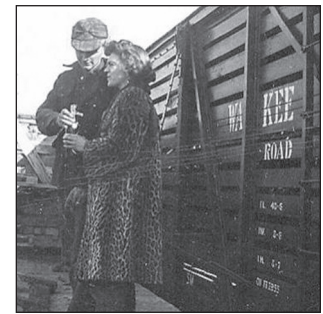
In 2000, Josh Donald married Mery Davis, and they had two daughters, Isabella and Emma. In 2004, Wyatt Donald married Stacy Lopresti, and they had two children: William and Ann Marie. Fourth-generation brothers Josh and Wyatt and their families are living and working on the ranch.

Paul and Elli refurbished some of the old dude cabins and operate a recreation enterprise called the WD Ranch. Cayuse Livestock Company currently consists of a cow-calf-yearling operation that utilizes the home ranch and leased ranches in Sweet Grass and Stillwater Counties, Montana, and Park County, Wyoming. The legacy continues.

One reason this ranch has persevered for generations is this simple fact: Bill Donald made ranching look challenging, rewarding, and fun to his son Bill Jr., who in turn made it look challenging, rewarding, and fun to Bill III, who is making it look that way to Josh and Wyatt. And so it goes. That is not to say that every day and every job is fun. They are not. What is fun is the overriding satisfaction gained from hard work; love of family, friends, and community; and the satisfaction of passing on something greater than your own self to an enthusiastic and dedicated next generation.



Fourth-generation Josh Donald.



Second-generation Bill Donald Jr. and his wife Ann indulge in a little celebration after shipping on the Milwaukee Road.

Second-generation Bill Donald Jr. and his wife Ann.



Cayuse Ranch branding. L to R: Mary Donald, Paul Hawks, Mark Thompson, Marvin Johnson, Neal Green, Wyatt Donald, & Bill Donald III with his trademark ponytail!



Second-generation Bill Donald Jr. and his new wife Ann in 1945.