

This historical account of the early days was forwarded to USACPF by Jerone Wilcenski.

The Agricultural Revolution

By the 18th Century the Agricultural Revolution had reached Scotland. Improved Haymaking was introduced along with foreign grasses, the sowing of rye grass, clover and later alfalfa. Turnips and cabbages were introduced, lands enclosed and marshes drained, lime was put down, roads built and woods planted. Drilling and sowing and crop rotation were introduced as well as development of the improved Scottish horse collar and plow. Enclosures began to displace the run rig system and free pasture. There was increasing specialization, with the Lothians became a major center of grain, Ayrshire, Aberdeen and Galloway of cattle breeding, the borders of sheep and Lanarkshire of horses. With the increase of quality grain and forage the Clydesdale breed began to grow much larger. The larger horses were much more efficient in the cultivation of land than oxen, which were previously used. By the mid-18th century Lanark had become a center of the horse trade in Scotland with hundreds of horses being sold at its horse markets. Skilled breeding continued to produce a type of horse to match the new agriculture demands as well as demands for the hauling of freight.

The Industrial Revolution

In the 19th century the rapid changes brought by the Industrial Revolution also rapidly changed the Clydesdale horse. In industrial Glasgow there developed a need for a large horse to haul coal, lumber and agricultural goods into the city and to haul steel, textiles and manufactured goods out of the city. Due to these demands the conformation modern Clydesdale began to emerge. To work in the city horses needed to be 17 hands and taller, have a thick powerful body, well sloped shoulders, large open feet and strong flat bone. The conformation of the legs of Clydesdales is far different than riding horses: long, wide and flat cannon bones, sloping pasterns, wide squared shaped hocks and short strong gaskins. This type of leg is critical for the hauling of freight on city streets. Clydesdales worked in the city starting at around five years of age and could last up to ten years. Demand for freight horses became a global demand with thousands of Clydesdale horses being exported to the United States, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa and Russia. These social and economic influences also created the need for a breed registry to be formed to promote and market the region's horses. In 1877 the Clydesdale Horse Society was formed and the society released its first studbook in 1878, recording the pedigrees of the Clydesdale horse. Now we think of breed registries as just recording lineage of horses, but the Society at the time was far more hands on. Part of their mission was to create uniformity that could be marketed and capitalized on by breeders and farmers. They sponsored a lot of shows and most importantly encouraged the district stallion hiring schemes. A district or a groups of breeders would evaluate stallions at the spring show then contract the horse to travel and breed mares in their area. This made the best horses more widely available and breeders were able to collectively focus and fix type a lot faster than the Shires in the south. So breeders in Scotland, despite minor differences of opinion, were on the same page as far as the type of horses they wanted to breed. Earlier in the south, after the death of Robert Bakewell, the Shires had little to no direction. Tons of regional types emerged that lacked uniformity. A lot of Lanark bred horses traveled south and bred horses. Scottish breeders began to pick and choose some of the better examples of Clydesdale type to bring north again for breeding. Horses in Lanark were fetching higher prices than those in the south so English breeders of Shire types sent horses north to be sold at market. The Scots saw too many horses they felt were the wrong type which created the impetus for a studbook to exclude these horses from entering their own breeding populations. Meanwhile Lawrence Drew and David Riddle had been using some English mares. They also happened to own the two most important foundation stallions. Prince of Wales and Darnley. You can learn more about these great sires and others here

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Lawrence Drew could be described as a difficult man at best, and was often described as a huckster by other breeders and American buyers. He and Riddell started the Select Clydesdale Society. You can read more about that here [https://books.google.com/books?](https://books.google.com/books?id=JubzVzon44C&pg=PA55&lpg=PA55&dq=drew+and+riddell+select+clydesdale+and+shire+society&source=bl&ots=SEF2HIXVkj&sig=ef-V1QHRKO_VtYacyff9yKQekc&hl=en&sa=X&ved=0CB4Q6AEwAGoVChMiyv2P2MW6xwIVzgaSCH18pA0y#v=onepage&q=drew%20and%20riddell%20select%20clydesdale%20and%20shire%20society&f=false)

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Thomas Dykes, then critical in forming the Clydesdale Horse Society studbook, hated Drew with a passion and the two exchanged heated published letters in the Glasgow papers. Drew did little to endear himself to American buyers or to fellow breeders. He often sold Shire types as Clydesdales, and the high priced crosses that failed to breed on. His famous Prince of Wales was not traveled as was common for other stallions, and bred more mares after being sold to Riddell on Drew's death. The rival Society collapsed shortly after Drew's death. American and Canadian buying demands had ensured that it barely got off the ground and also caused its final collapse. The rise of other breeders fully invested in the district hiring schemes put the final nail in the Select Clydesdale coffin. Some of these horses from the Select Society did enter the regular studbook quietly and through admixture at the time many Shire types and Clydesdales were pretty similar. This all changed by 1900 when they two breeds had a massive split and changed dramatically in type. The two breeds would then come together again after the Second World War with Clydesdale stallions quietly heading south with new Shire names, and some Shire mares coming north with new Clydesdale names.