

# Art Thompson

*devoted to* **Nebraska**

Art Thompson, prominent purebred livestock auctioneer, was posthumously inducted into the Nebraska Hall of Fame in Lincoln in 1992. A sculpture of Thompson by George Lundeen was unveiled and remarks made by Gov. Ben Nelson, Hall of Fame chairman Charles Thone, a former congressman, and Thompson's sons Elwood and Art. The sculpture is now on permanent display on the second floor of the state Capitol.

Col. Arthur Weimar Thompson was born on the Hill Farm near Bradshaw, Neb., in York County. His father, Elwood, and his mother, Sarah Weimar, had migrated from Alsace Lorraine with members of their respective families and had met in Ohio. As a pioneer in Nebraska, where he migrated in 1883, his father once owned a farm west of Lincoln near the area now occupied by Branched Oak Lake, before moving to the Hill Farm.

Thompson attended country school and possibly a few classes at York College. He worked his way through business college in Lincoln by washing dishes in a restaurant and by stoking a furnace in a residence across from the state Capitol.

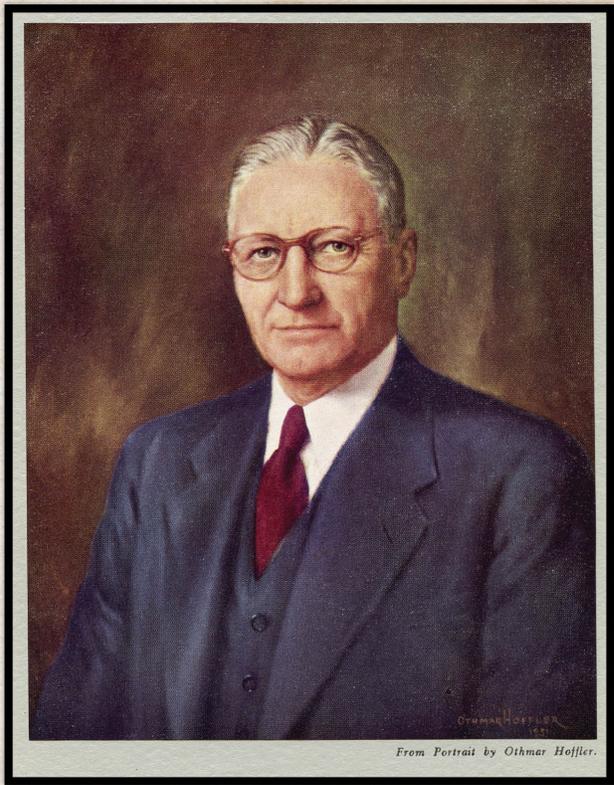
After learning the auctioneer trade, Thompson specialized in selling purebred livestock throughout the United States and Canada, ultimately becoming known as "dean of livestock auctioneers." Eventually he limited his services exclusively to Hereford cattle. His commitment to improving Hereford genetics was considered his greatest contribution.

In conducting more than 7,500 sales, he traveled hundreds of thousands of miles by car, train and airplane. At times he had to hire a team to pull a sled through deep snow to reach a scheduled sale. Once he even hired a handcar to take him 18 miles through snowbound country.

He constantly advocated improving the quality of livestock to the farmers, ranchers and purebred cattlemen at his sales, as well as to their children in 4-H sales, which he sold annually at the Nebraska State Fair and the Ak-Sar-Ben.

To honor him and his contribution to improving the cattle industry long before Nebraska achieved its national leadership as the "beef state," the Block and Bridle Club hung his portrait in the Animal Husbandry Building. He was similarly recognized by the famed Saddle and Siroloin Club in Chicago, the only auctioneer ever so honored.

*Adapted from an article originally published in the Record Stockman*



*From Portrait by Othmar Hoffler.*

