

# Grayson County — "The Herefordshire" of VIRGINIA

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Grayson is located in the southwestern part of Virginia, and is one of the three Blue Ridge plateau counties, having for its southern boundary the Virginia-Carolina line. It was formed in 1778, and bears the name of one of the first two senators from Virginia. Grayson is often called the "Roof of Virginia," having two of the highest peaks in the state, Mt. Rogers and Whitetop, with elevations respectively of 5,720 and 5,678 feet above sea level. The scenic beauty of the county is unsurpassed. A succession of mountains, broad valleys and sparkling streams unfold before the eye in panoramic splendor.

Grayson is one of the best grassland

counties in the state, and supports a thriving livestock industry which furnishes 75 per cent of total farm income. (The value of livestock in 1935 was \$1,730,470.) Eighty per cent of the land in the county is cleared, over two-thirds of which is kept in permanent pasture or meadows. The fertile soils are of granitic origin, and are particularly well adapted to pasture grasses. This together with the high elevation and abundant rainfall favors the growth of bluegrass, timothy, red top, orchard grass and clovers, thus making it comparatively easy to control erosion and produce profitable crops for home consumption and livestock feeding.

#### County of Home Owners

Grayson is essentially a county of home-owners, who operate their own farms and do most of their own farm work. They pursue a live-at-home policy,

producing most of their food and feed needs, and their cash income is largely derived from the sale of cattle and other livestock. There are more than 2,500 farms in the county, 87.4 per cent of which are operated by the owners. On these farms are 24,000 cattle, 31,000 head of sheep and lambs, 7,500 hogs, 4,500 horses and 100,000 head of poultry. Cattle accounts for considerably more than half of the livestock wealth.

Practically all the cattle in the county are of beef breeds and 75 per cent are either high grades or purebreds. Herefords predominate, while 80 per cent of the beef cattle are of Hereford breeding, and the rest Shorthorns and Angus.

Grayson has established a reputation of producing more high grade stocker, feeder and breeding cattle than any other county in the east. In order to meet increasing competition from the west, special attention is being given to the improvement of the breeding herds. Perhaps the most marked improvement has come through the use of better sires. Grayson has long been a leader in the state's better sires contest, at the close of 1935 over 100 registered bulls, rams and boars were placed in the county. As results of the continued better sires program, Grayson has become not only the outstanding Virginia county in the production of good quality feeder cattle, but has also become well known along the Atlantic seaboard.

#### Draws Cattle Buyers

In addition to feeder cattle many buyers now look to Grayson for good cows and bulls with which to establish or improve their herds. During the past year, buyers from Georgia, North and South Carolina came to Grayson for breeding cattle. Also, a load of feeder calves were sold in Pennsylvania and Maryland for baby beef club work, in addition to a large number going into other Virginia counties.

Grayson livestock farmers will continue to march forward this year, in their efforts to further improve their cattle and other livestock, through better breeding, feeding and management. They also realize that success of their livestock industry is dependent on maintaining a fertile soil, and production of good quality feed crops, and improving



Grayson is one of Virginia's best grassland counties, most of it in rolling pastured meadows.

their pastures by top dressing with phosphates and lime.

The Grayson lamb improvement program has also made excellent progress during the past four years, through holding a county purebred ram sale each year, better feeding and care of the ewe flock, including regular treatments for controlling internal and external parasites, and the co-operative marketing and grading of lambs and wool.

#### Grayson Herefords

Last year over 40,000 pounds of pooled wool was sold for an average of 3 cents above best local prices, and some 5,000 lambs were graded and shipped co-operatively, netting the producers an average of over 1-2 cent more per pound than offered by local dealers.

Both the rural and urban citizens of Grayson are proud of the high quality of livestock produced in the county, and the excellent reputation Grayson holds as the outstanding Virginia county in the production of good livestock.

The Herefords have so caught the fancy of the Grayson cattlemen, that there are now more registered Herefords in Grayson than any other county in the state. Of the 60 breeders of purebred cattle in the county more than 40 of them are Hereford breeders, and two of the largest Hereford herds in Virginia are in Grayson County.

The first herd of registered Herefords was established in the county over 30 years ago. The local pioneer Hereford breeders were Messrs. C. Phipps and A. A. Bryant, of Bridle Creek. At present there are outstanding herds of Prince Domino Mischief, Anxiety and Woodford breeding which are considered by the livestock specialists to be the best in the South.

In addition to the 60 herds of registered cattle there are 20 purebred flocks of Hampshire, Dorset and Shropshire sheep, and seven herds of purebred hogs in the county.



Herefords, such as these, have caught the fancy of the cattlemen on the roof of Virginia.



These fine ewes and lambs helped provide Grayson livestock men with premium prices through co-operative sales.



High grade feeder steers thrive on Grayson's sky-washed pastures in the beautiful Blue Grass plateau region.



Here's one of the pure bred flocks of Hampshires—a partial result of Grayson's four-year lamb improvement program.