

Remarks by Mr. W. E. LeGrande

Upon the Presentation of the Askew's Carolina Lady Field Trial Hall of Fame Scroll
at the NRSFTC Fall Trial of 1972 by President William I. Cargo.

To say the least, this is a very happy moment for Helen and I, and we certainly want to thank everybody who had a part in getting Lady into this Hall of Fame, and thank you Mr. President and all the field trial people all over the United States for their help.

I never thought that it would be possible for an Irish setter to be inducted into the Field Trial Hall of Fame. However, if one of my dogs were to be selected, I'm happy that Askew's Carolina Lady was the one to be chosen.

To field trial people in general and Red Setter people in particular, I owe a debt of gratitude for their efforts in Lady's behalf. Also, the editors past and present of "The Flushing Whip" and gun dog editors of various national hunting magazines for their national publicity of the Irish setter breed. My special thanks go to Herm David from whose fertile brain the idea of Lady being in the Hall of Fame was first mentioned. // Also heartfelt thanks to our great friends and editors, all who are now deceased; Horace Lytle former gun dog editor of "Field & Stream" and "Sports Afield", who shocked us with his famous article in 1950 entitled "Irish Setters in the Field"; Henry P. Davis who wrote many articles in "Sports Afield" publicizing the Irish setter, but especially the article that appeared in the August 1951 issue entitled "High Tails on Irish Setters", also for his annual All-American team of sporting greats that appeared in "Sports Afield" each year with a silver All-American Team pin going to each owner of a dog named to the team. This covered all of the hunting breeds. Henry selected Lady to represent the Irish setter breed in the series called "Sporting Dog Greats". We have that page taken from "Sports Afield", if you want to pass it around for a minute.

This is Henry Davis' series of gun dog greats. Jim Lockhart, the famous Illinois painter and illustrator who did much work for "Sports Afield" came to

our farm and painted the picture. My wife bought it for me for a Christmas present and it hangs over our fireplace now. A beautiful picture.

To Henry L. Betten, called the sage of field trials through fifty or more glorious years, noted for his many books on bird dogs and his annual summer wars in "The American Field" with Herb Cahoon, for his many letters of encouragement and advice, and especially his classic article that appeared in "The American Field" entitled "The Old Fashioned Religion". This followed Horace Lytle's original challenge article by about six months.

And to McDowell Lyon the great authority on locomotion in animals and author of the classic work on movement in animals "A Dog in Action". Mac spent many weekends at Willow Winds farm going over my pups, checking for straight fronts and sublaxions in rear. He deserves all the credit I can give him for his tireless efforts in helping our breed. All of these men, now deceased, I wish all of these great writers who are now running, working and writing about dogs in bird dog heaven could somehow know that their tireless efforts have paid off and that Lady is now a member of The Field Trial Hall of Fame. Who knows, perhaps Horace Lytle is running Askew's Carolina Lady along with Smada Byrd in valhalla.

One other writer still living who helped publicize our breed, and Lady in particular, was Joe Stetson in Field & Stream. In one issue he documented our entire cross-breed program. Also he served as judge for our national trials on several occasions. There are many other writers who have helped in our comeback program for the Irish and all we can say is many thanks to you all.

There have been many versions printed about the founding of the National Red Setter Field Trial Club, depending upon who the writer talked to. It could have been Herm's version (Herm David), Rusty's version (Rusty Baynard) or Ned's version. Be that as it may, the important thing is what caused us to form a new club when the Irish Setter Club of America was already an old and prestigious club devoted to the Irish setter. The reason was without a shadow of a doubt

two articles that appeared in 1950. The first one by the immortal Horace Lytle appeared in the January 1950 issue of "Sports Afield" and the second shortly after in "The American Field" by the much loved and respected Henry L. Betten titled "The Old Fashioned Religion". Another one a year or so later by our great and good friend Henry P. Davis titled "High Tails on Irish Setters" This was in "Sports Afield" in August 1951.

Through all of these articles ran the main thread, the Irish setter had become decadent as a field dog and cross breeding was the only way to revive the once great hunting breed. The authors laid the entire blame at the doors of the bench shows and the club mostly dedicated to bench shows and breeders- the Irish Setter Club of America. The artificial bench standards helped bring about the low station of the dogs in the field. I have been really taken over the coals by bench breeders for my views about this, but I really considered myself a disciple of Horace Lytle and Henry Betten. In retrospect, I believe that their views have been vindicated on the field of battle during the last twenty years of field trialing. History will record that Irish setters have won more placements during the last twenty years, all breed trials that is, than during the entire prior field trial history. A lot of this was due to a few injections of Henry Betten's "Old Fashioned Religion" and Horace Lytle's call to cross breed.

However, Askew's Carolina Lady, the first Irish setter elected to the Field Trial Hall of Fame was a 100% Irish setter with absolutely no outside crosses or genes in her body. In my opinion she was the finest 100% Irish that I have ever seen. I have never seen pointer or other bird dogs that had greater intensity on point than Lady. Her pups pointed early and broke early and she was an outstanding mother and raiser of pups. She winded her birds head high and went to her birds boldly. The late John S. Gates said this is the greatest attribute of a bird dog, he goes to his birds boldly, no pussy footing, stab them. Lady did, her only fault was that she did not have enough range for all breed stakes. This is where a shot of "The Old Fashioned Religion" really helped.

Lady's genes are in every Irish setter I have bred in the last twenty-two years. But most, thanks to Henry and Horace, also contain an injection from without, so that we could incorporate the superior range, smoother gait, higher tail. Lady's tail was up to 45° , but today a lot of judges want them straight up and a few minor points such as added speed, etc.

As Henry Betten stated in his article, both Llewellyn and Laverack, the greatest English setter breeders in history, used Irish blood in the formation of their strain of setters. So it was only fitting that they should pay off the debt owed through all these years. Even the pointer breeders of old borrowed from the English setters and hence also from the Irish setters. When the Llewellyns were in their glory period they were whipping the pointers so badly that special stakes were run for the bigger, slower pointer so they could win a few trials, much as the restricted breed trials are run today. So the pointer boys, realizing that short hair was dominant over long hair, which meant that crossbred pups would all be short hair and look for all the world like pointers, crossed their big, slow, hammer head pointers with the then untouchable in trials, the Llewellyn, and the pups were slimmed down and became faster with higher tails than the old slow pointers of the day.

According to the late great veterinary professor at Mississippi State University, Dr. Sales, both Alfred's John and Hard Cash, who were some of the finest pointers of the breed, were actually sired not as their papers registered, but by the top Llewellyns of the day. This accounts for a long haired pup showing up in pure bred pointer matings now and again. A lot of the top pointer families such as Ariel Sam, Arkansas Ranger, etc. carry a recessive gene for long hair. All it takes is for both the sire and dam to carry these recessive genes for long hair. It takes two to tango, both sire and dam must carry these recessive genes for long hair, and if so, they will according to Mendel's law produce 25% long hair pups in a mating.

Where do we go from here we might ask? What are our goals? It has been fairly well established in the last ten years that the red setter can on occasions

hold his own in all breed trials in so called minor league circuits, but no major circuit all breed wins in championship stakes, either amateur or open, have been won. Rufus McTybe O'Cloisters won a runner-up in an amateur pheasant championship. Other than that there have been several near misses. In my opinion, this should be our next goal to breed for. We have had some near misses in all breed champion stakes as just said. My own Lady's Final Fling won the Middle Atlantic Shooting Dog Classic, a one hour stake over a great field of top pointers and setters. In those days a stake had to be run three years as a classic and the fourth year it could be called a championship. Nothing changed between the classic and the championship except another year, and Lady's Final Fling did win the last year it would be called a classic.

I'm going to take a little of your time if you will bear with me. I have a couple more papers here. Mr. O'Leary was wrongfully kept from winning the National Amateur Pheasant Championship at Delaware, Ohio by one prejudiced judge. That's one thing in twenty-five years of field trialing, I have never argued with the judges, never even asked them why they chose one dog over another. But this was so flagrant, that in twenty-five years it was the first time I ever felt I was robbed. Mr. O'Leary had nine pheasant finds all perfect, and one back. At the end of the first day the one judge rode over and told me that Mr. O'Leary was high dog. The next day it snowed to beat the band and nobody had any bird work. The whole day was just miserable, so they called a dog called Builder's _____ who you probably heard of before, who ran the highway all the way around and the reason he didn't have any bird work was because they were all down in the heavy cover, such as we saw today. So they called him back and they planted some birds out there and he had three finds on planted quail. He was declared the champion, no runner-up. I forgot to say that Mr. O'Leary had one back perfect and was lost on point for five minutes and the judge found him and he had a pheasant right under his nose. That judge was asked about this, not by me but he was asked, and he said he thought O'Leary had it, but the other judge said he saw O'Leary's bracemate bump a bird and it

flew over O'Leary's head and he went with it for a few feet. I didn't see it and I had my eyes on him the whole time. So we have to classify this as a near miss.

Almost won the United States Chicken Championship with two covey finds on chickens with Little Jack. The dog that won had one covey find. The judges honestly didn't see Jack's second find as they rode to the front the chickens lifted, but a reporter for "The American Field" saw the birds go and reported it in the "Field". He felt Jack should have won it.

There is no reason why a good Irish with some of "The Old Fashioned Religion" in his veins could not win an amateur all breed championship today. Yes, even the U. S. Shooting Dog Championship. The dog should be started from horseback and worked in this manner for most of his life after being broke. This probably means that he should go to the prairies in Canada as that is the easiest place to fix proper ways in the handling of wild birds. Double Jack, Lady's Final Fling and Mr. O'Leary were on the prairies for several years, and I attribute the fact that they had superior range and were able to find wild birds to the prairie experience. Working dogs on planted game allows the dog to get very close to the bird. We call them dumb birds. Then when you run on wild birds you have far too many stop-to-flushes because the dog gets too close to the bird.

Now I would like to read Horace Lytle's article, because some of the newer members may never have had the chance to read it. This is the article that appeared in the January 1950 "Sports Afield". It was titled "Irish Setter in the Field" and said in the subtitle "A Strain of Red Dogs Distinct from the Bench Variety can be Developed for Hunting by Select Cross Breeding"-

"This is a subject on which I may exercise a paternal prerogative and speak frankly about Irish setters as field dogs. I was an Irish setter man myself some years ago. I always had other breeds, but my first field trial was with an Irish setter and this associated me with the breed. There were probably many who didn't know that I had other dogs, so from one Irish setter man to another I shall speak rather crisply. In the field trials at Sauk

Center, Minnesota about 1884, an Irish setter was the winner. She was a bitch owned by F. Stauter of Dayton, Ohio. Dr. _____ once wrote of an Irish setter that outran and outranged/Sport's Peerless Pride on the prairie and Pride still ranks as one of the great chicken dogs of all time. Then be it remembered that it was Joe Jr. that defeated the great Gladstone in a match race of three days. Joe Jr. was the son of Elcho an imported Irish setter. Coming to more recent days, 25 to 30 years ago (1920-1925), we had my own bitch Smada Byrd, McKerry's Pat, Modnach Mike, between them these three cooled the pointers and English setters a good many times.

But the good ones are becoming fewer and fewer. I shipped Smada Byrd to Oklahoma to be bred to McKerry's Pat, but she didn't catch and there wasn't another living Irish worthy of her. At least none with the record to prove it. The breed's popularity as show dogs is what proved their undoing. Only recently I was invited to judge an exclusive Irish setter field trial. I accepted, both for old times sake and to bring myself up to date on the breed.. With two possible exceptions the performances were of the sorriest sort. The breed, in so far as hunting excellence seems to have slipped farther and farther since my involvement with it. I felt that the conflict of the shows is still what is doing most of the damage. ~~One man in the gallery owned several but had no entries in the trial~~

After the trial the secretary came to me with a question, 'Mr. Lytle is it worth while trying to go on as we are? One reason we asked you to judge was because we wanted to ask you this question first hand.' Are you sure you want me to tell you what I really think? I asked him. I would rather not, for if I do I will speak honestly. He asked for it and was so manifestly sincere that I gave it to him straight from the shoulder.

This is the gist of what I told him. The Irish setter was once red and white, all of the white has been bred out of them and with it much of the breed's desire for the hunt. There is no use at all to try to keep going on now on the basis of show and field. The sacrifice has been too great. The

breed has gone too far over the hill, it is now too close to the bottom of the hump. There are not enough good ones to provide any basis for breeding. As field dogs the breed is doomed unless a few bold determined men get together and divorce themselves from show dogs and develop field specialists.

I told him what I would do about it if I was a few years younger. I believe that there is only one thing that could be done. The best possible Irish bitches should be obtained from Ollie Niemeyer of Ohio or F. J. Lepaday from Nebraska. I believe these two have the best possible red dogs in America that have been used constantly for hunting. Breed these bitches to the best sons of such an English setter as Mississippi Zev, National Champion of 1946. Register the offspring as cross bred setters in the Field Dog Stud Book, thereafter breed back offspring to pure bred Irish setters, but the dogs and bitches should in the meantime see as much hunting as can be given them. Then when the English setter mating does not appear in a four generation pedigree, the offspring resulting thereof can and should be registered as pure bred Irish setters in the Field Dog Stud Book. Not so with the AKC. Yet that potent Zev influence will be in there and should linger on beneficially for a long time. Even then, the dogs resulting from such mating should be kept to hunting and far, far away from the effete influence of the shows.

Will anybody do it, I wonder? If they don't the breed is a goner as a hunting dog."

We took his advice, the other article I'm just going to read a few excerpts. I'll pass these around and then I have photographed the next issue of "Sports Afield" in which they almost hung Horace Lytle. The bench show people from all over the country wrote in and said they were going to cancel their subscriptions and advertisements and to hell with "Sports Afield". Horace lost his job.

After Horace got so much heat about this article, Benry L. Betten wrote in "The American Field" to back up his suggestions. This is the famous article "The Old Fashioned Religion" and even today when anybody does any cross breeding

it is commonly referred to as giving them a shot of "The Old Fashioned Religion". This is by Henry L. Betten, the California sage. If I'm boring you, I won't make it too long, but I thought you would be interested in these two articles. (a great burst of applause from the Red Setter folks) "The Old Fashioned Religion" by Henry L. Betten, "The American Field" 1950, page 175.

"What devilish blight has fallen upon the Irish? Where are the competent fowlers of that horde of hibernians who once overran and ruled the prize ring of old? You find no outstanding champion of that race today. Apparently it has gone soft. For the Irish setters, once a grand breed of gun dog, has long been decadent. You must go back sixty or seventy years to review an era when the breed was in it's prime and it's best examples could compete successfully in the field and in any company.

And yet according to tradition, the Irish breed provided the foundation stock for all other breeds and strains with the possible exception of the Russian setter which is now extinct. Unlike the Laveracks and a score of other English setter strains perhaps equally as good which have passed into oblivion, the furry red Irish are still with us. But compared with the breed's once high stake in the field, the current status is apparent the lowest in Irish setter history.

Since 1900, frequent spasmodic attempts have been made to re-establish the Irish setter on a level with the English setters and pointers. In this period a limited number of excellent individuals were bred and developed which lent some encouragement to such hopes. However the average owner of a red dog relied more on words than on consistency and deeds to see his favorite breed through. There^{is} regeneration mostly quickly faded and again and again the breed was surrendered to the show ring. This to the often complete neglect of their working qualities.

The charge that solid color is the basis of prejudice against the Irish is true only to a small part. I honestly believe that the vast majority of field trial judges would be proud to place such a dog with utmost fairness in any

company in four corners with his merits. However, it is still true that Irish setters in general are often deficient in traits of bird sense, animation, biddability, and do not ordinarily measure up to the high standards of their predecessors or to the standards of the current pointers and English setters. You may compete against these breeds and you can be assured that he will not be discriminated against due to his race or color."

I'm going to skip around in the article since it is so long, and I do have a few more passages to read to you.

....."While the foregoing may seem irrelevant in relation to the Irish setter, it should be realized that undue employment of Laverack's alleged breeding system in show connection, while sometimes advantageous in the physical sphere can be highly destructive in intelligence. In some measure something like this seems to have happened with show setters and it is a serious question (this is his famous passage) it is a serious question if by unraveling shoddy wool and reknitting worn out material you can regenerate exhausted lines short of a miracle.

The history of all sporting and working breeds which must possess high intelligence or mentality to succeed clearly reveals that they were initially developed from a conglomeration of blood and once seriously vitiated must be revived from a spark from without or wither on the vine. An analysis of the long continued deterioration of the Irish setter plainly indicates that if the breed ever is to be rescued from a slave status brought on by the show ring and the cause of the indifference of a lackadaisical facet, assistance must come from without it's ranks. This necessity was recognized by Horace Lytle, an outstanding gun dog authority, whose experience touched all branches. In the January issue of "Sports Afield", the Dayton sage openly advised the infusion of English setter blood in the sluggish blood stream of the grand old breed as the quickest and the most practical means of regeneration. Naturally this revolutionary suggestion has aroused wild comment and much interest, together with a bitter condemnation from straight laced witch

burners and commendation from broader and discerning minds.

If the Irish setter is to be rescued and restored to it's once proud station as an outstanding gun dog, then why should it's kinsman and descendents of the English breed not be allowed to come to it's rescue. Afterall in the face of undeniable genealogical history of our sporting breeds, why should not a shot of "The Old Fashioned Religion" be applied in this instance? Or is bigotry and snobbery to continue to rule and inevitably push this tired breed completely off the map in a sporting sense. And in the final analysis what is caucasian royalty, other than a conglomeration of patrician breeds which intermine for purely political reasons, yet the self same snob who wrings his hands in holy horror at the thought of mingling the blood of closely related canine breeds has the greatest admiration for such royal unions.

Inasmuch as some authorities and other partisans prefer to remain blind to the fact of gun dog genealogy and to coat such with a veneer of fictitious origin and long continued purity, they doubtless will continue to deny that any good has ever come from the union of Irish and English blood. Yet aside from Laverack's very obvious employment of this combination, there is Llewellyn's and today's Buckle admission. This combination entered also into the Isley line of English setters of which Horace Lytle is now the most active exponent and which within it's limited scope has produced enough of field trial winners of high merits. The orange and white Gildersleeves and Theodore Moffat's orange and white strain, exceptional gun dogs as a whole, were said to have originated from this same combination. But these meritorious lines passed out of existence long ago because of the stigma placed on native setters.

Of the so called native setters, Campbell setters were most conspicuous and successful in competition with imported English setters. This famous strain of Tennessee setters was originated by M. C. & George Campbell of Spring Hill, Tennessee. It was founded on the mating of Mason's Jeff of English-Irish ancestry and a white and lemon bitch Pam of English ancestry. Because of the exceptional field ability of this pair and their progeny without

exception, the Campbell line developed a great reputation in the south and west. Setters of this breed were freely entered by the Campbells in early trials with great success. This culminated with the famous match race between Gladstone, pride of the Llewelin camp, and the Campbell setter Joe Jr., which was by the great Irish setter Elcho and Buck Jr., a cross bred English-Irish bitch. As a result of this and other wins, added popularity accrued to the Campbell strain. And had not the fancy mounted the band wagon of imported strains of setters and fallen for the glamour of patrician breeding, doubtless these so called natives would have enjoyed a great hold on the strength of sheer merit. Notwithstanding, although held in the background by their home spun origin, and comparatively few that were bred and started in trials, they more than held their own in the best company. Others which never entered competition were superlative performers in the gunning field. And doubtless if their pedigrees were traced, there are many setters today whose merits rest in part on a remote dash of the old Campbell stuff".

Well I think that is enough of that, you get the general gist of it. What really caused us to found the NRSFTC was those two articles. Frankly I wish that all of you could have been around about 1950 and seen our first trials. I wish also that you could have run some of the red dogs in that era. With their pump handle tail handed down by the bench dogs, and then to see this trial today. It is a great comparison. We used to have twenty to thirty people to a trial, look what you have in this room and the entries you had today. When I came in and saw all of those trailers with those high tailed Irish painted on their sides, I couldn't help but remember back in Petersburg, Delaware when we used to run, they would come in station wagons and regular cars, have the dog in the seat with them. Nobody had trailers, horses were gotten down the road from a farmer, hardly ever had enough.

There is one other thing that I want to say. I know there is a controversy, as much as I am for cross breeding and everyone knows I am and have been for the last twenty-two years and am still doing it. I have been asked to say something

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about running cross bred in the National Red Setter trial. In my own humble opinion I oppose it. My dog Hard Tack is used as a precedent, everybody says a precedent has been set, Hard Tack ran and won in a National Red Setter trial. But they don't stop to tell you that Rusty Baynard got on the phone the night before the trial and he said bring everything you've got, we only have about ten entries, we can't hold a trial. I said Rusty you don't want me to bring Hard Tack, you know he is a cross bred. He said "bring anything, I don't care what he is. If you have any pointers bring'em down, we want to have a trial!" So I loaded up the station wagon with nine or ten dogs and headed for Delaware. Hard Tack was entered and Hard Tack won. He was a cross bred.

I oppose running registered or unregistered cross bred in the National Red Setter trials for this reason; we have always considered that the ~~National~~ Red Setter trials should be for people, some starting out, some who had good red setters but didn't want to compete in all breed trials. This was a good place that they could run dogs. When you bring in cross breeds, you will keep people who are just starting out running Irish setters from competing. This you don't want to do, because everybody has to crawl before they walk. You have to get your feet wet in Red Setter trials before you go ^{into} ~~into~~ all breed trials. This is where you start and if the people are going to run cross bred in this trial that haven't paid the penalty, crossed and bred back to a registered Irish setter for four generations, I think you may be keeping others who have never won from having any place to start out.

This is only my opinion, I was asked to give it by the president, and this is it in spite of the fact that I once ran Hard Tack in a National Red Setter trial. I wouldn't do it again. There is no need to do it, you have so many entries you can't hardly get them run in three days now, so why run cross bred. I cross breed all the time but I would never think of running a cross bred in a National Red Setter trial. In fact, I would feel kind of funny if I won, beating registered Red Setters. I would think anyone who is cross breeding would want to run the cross bred in an all breed trial and whip pointers.