



Col. Charles Goodnight

-- Dave Raynolds

From the age of 10, young Charles Goodnight was aware of buffalo in America's Southwest. Later, as a member of the Texas Frontier Rangers in the 1860's, he rode amongst the Southern Herd, which he described as follows:

"During the Civil War I passed through that vast herd of Southern Buffalo many times. I do well remember that vast herd of buffalo. It was probably twenty-five miles through and fifty miles long and as thick as they could graze. Of course, we generally went straight through until we got west of the herd so we could get grass for our horses, and then we turned to the northwest. A Command marching through the herd, especially lengthwise with it, would form a lane about as far as the eye could see (north and south) from a quarter to a half mile wide. The buffalo paid very little attention to the Command, only on the side the wind was to. We would ride in easy rifle range of them all day on the side the wind was from. When for some reason the herd became excited it was very dangerous to be caught in and mixed up with the stampede. The buffalo would close up and become one solid mass of moving animals. The noise resembled low rumbling thunder and the earth trembled under their pounding hooves. Our Command moved up on a slight eminence, and as far as the eye could reach, north, south, and west, a distance of not less than ten miles in either direction, the whole country was covered with what appeared to be a monstrous moving brown blanket, the length and breadth of which could not be determined. The number of animals it contained was beyond the human mind to estimate."

After the war Goodnight caught his first buffalo, picking up straggler calves in 1866. He finally established the J.A. Ranch in Palo

Duro Canyon in the Texas Panhandle in 1876, driving in 1600 longhorns to an area 70 miles long and from 1 to 12 miles wide. At first he shared space with some 10,000 buffalo, but these were quickly picked off by hide hunters.

In 1878, at the suggestion of his wife, he seriously set about gathering buffalo for a small herd. A decade later he informed William Hornaday of the Smithsonian Institution: "he had been breeding buffaloes in a small way for the past ten years," but without giving any particular attention to it. At present his herd consists of thirteen head, of which two are three-year-old bulls and four are calves. There are seven cows of all ages, one of which is a half-breed." Later Goodnight experimented with cattalo crosses.

In 1902 he provided three bulls to "Buffalo" Jones, who was restocking Yellowstone Park. Of these, one died the first winter in the snow. The last, "Old Tex," was harvested in 1925, and the bleached mounted head is in the Fishing Bridge museum. It is the largest buffalo head recorded under the Boone and Crockett measurement system, with an outside horn curve of 22 3/8", base circumference of 14 7/8", and a widest spread of 35 3/8". In 1909, Goodnight provided a cow to help start the National Buffalo Range in Moise, Montana.

Col. Goodnight outlived "Old Tex," dying in 1929. His herd survived, numbering about 250 in 1933. For heeding his wife and his early preservation efforts, Col. Charles Goodnight is nominated for the National Buffalo Hall of Fame.



Doc Ken's Korner

As some of you may have heard there is a problem with tuberculosis in some buffalo... Since many of the facts are not yet known I will just cover the disease as it pertains to the livestock industry in this article and we will go into more depth about the specific problem in a later article. If some of you have specific questions about tuberculosis please jot them down and send them to me so that I can address them in the next article.

Tuberculosis is caused by the organism *Mycobacterium*. It usually is considered a chronic debilitating disease however it can assume an acute rapidly progressive course.

There are three recognized tubercle bacilli; human, bovine and avian. The tubercle bacilli only multiply in infected animals so these animals are the reservoirs for the disease. Thus if we are ever going to become free of tuberculosis we have to eliminate it from the animal reservoirs.

The disease starts by forming a primary focus (usually in the lungs but can be in the intestinal lymph nodes) and the lymphatic drainage from that area causes a caseous lesion in the lymph node. Thus the lumps that are often seen in chronic cases of T.B. These lumps become tumor like masses.

These tuberculosis organisms can be spread from any of the body openings of the infected animal. Respiratory discharge can be spread on the feed bunk, watering trough, or on the grass. It can also be spread through the manure on the grass, etc. The animal contracting the disease may get it by breathing in the organisms or dried dust particles containing the organism. Therefore in crowded, poorly ventilated areas you may have a very high incidence of the disease if you bought only one infected animal. An English Vet. text book that I have states that they can isolate the organism from manure 6-8 weeks after it was dropped in a pasture. Again we see how tough the organism is. It is easy to see how one buffalo could expose many other buffalo as well as cattle and man.

As the disease progresses in the herd it will soon become unprofitable to raise the animals. Some will die and fertility will decrease greatly. Since treatment is nonpractical because of cost and recurrence problems, the reactor animals must be destroyed to protect man and the livestock industry.

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