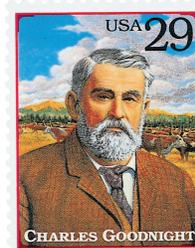


This Day in History... March 5, 1836

Birth of Charles Goodnight

Cattle rancher Charles Goodnight was born on March 5, 1836, in Macoupin County, Illinois. One of America's most famous cattle barons, Goodnight helped blaze a major cattle trail and is sometimes referred to as the "Father of the Texas Panhandle."

Goodnight spent the first 10 years of his childhood in Illinois before moving to Texas with his mother, stepfather, and siblings. He quickly learned the tricks of frontier survival and started working as a cowboy in 1856. Goodnight also served in the local militia and joined the Texas Rangers in 1857. When the Civil War broke out, he joined the Confederate Army. Goodnight spent most of the war on the frontier fighting against Native Americans.



From the 1994 Legends of the West Issue



This is considered one of the most beautiful US stamps ever issued.

After the war, Goodnight started herding the wild Texas Longhorn cattle, pushing them northward from West Texas toward the railroad lines. By 1866, Goodnight owned thousands of longhorn cattle, but like many other Texans, had no easy way to get his herds to lucrative eastern markets. Instead, he turned to other potential buyers – the military posts and mining towns of Wyoming, Colorado, and New Mexico.

In 1866, Goodnight partnered with Oliver Loving, an experienced driver, to move cattle from Texas to New Mexico. Although many cattle were lost along the way, the survivors sold readily. This established the Goodnight-Loving Trail as one of the main highways of the cattle drives and launched Goodnight as one of the first great cattle barons. During this time, Goodnight rebuilt an army surplus wagon to become the first chuck wagon.

After his banking ventures failed in 1876, Goodnight moved to the lush valley of the Palo Duro Canyon. There he partnered with John Adair to establish the JA Ranch, the first Texas panhandle ranch. Together they built an immense empire that eventually grew to almost one million acres and 100,000 head of cattle, as well as



Goodnight bred Angus cattle with buffalo to create the cattalo.



Goodnight is credited with creating the first chuck wagon.

a herd of bison. To improve his stock, Goodnight imported Durhams and Herefords, transforming the Texas longhorn into today's cattle. He also bred buffalo with Polled Angus cattle to create a new breed, the cattalo.

In 1880, Goodnight helped found the Panhandle Stockman's association. The group promoted better cattle-breeding methods and also worked to decrease attacks from rustlers and outlaws. Goodnight also blazed a second trail to the railheads in Dodge City, Kansas, which eventually extended to Montana. Plus, he established Goodnight College in Armstrong County and worked for a newspaper and bank.

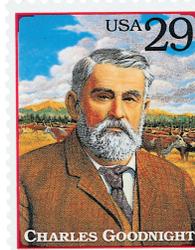
In his later years, Goodnight invested in silver mines in Mexico, but the government took them over and he lost his fortune. Goodnight died on December 12, 1929 at the age of 93. Today he is considered the Father of the Texas Panhandle for expanding ranching into the state and showing how to move the cattle to market. Several streets in Texas, Colorado, and New Mexico are named after him, as well as a small town – Goodnight, Texas.

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