

## “RANCHERS AND CATTLE DRIVES”

Cattle have been in Texas since the Spanish brought the famous longhorn, whose horns spread a distance of four to eight feet from tip to tip into the country during the mid 18<sup>th</sup> century. These longhorns still endure, but throughout history many were bred with other types of cattle from Mexico and Britain that had shorter horns and varied in color and size.

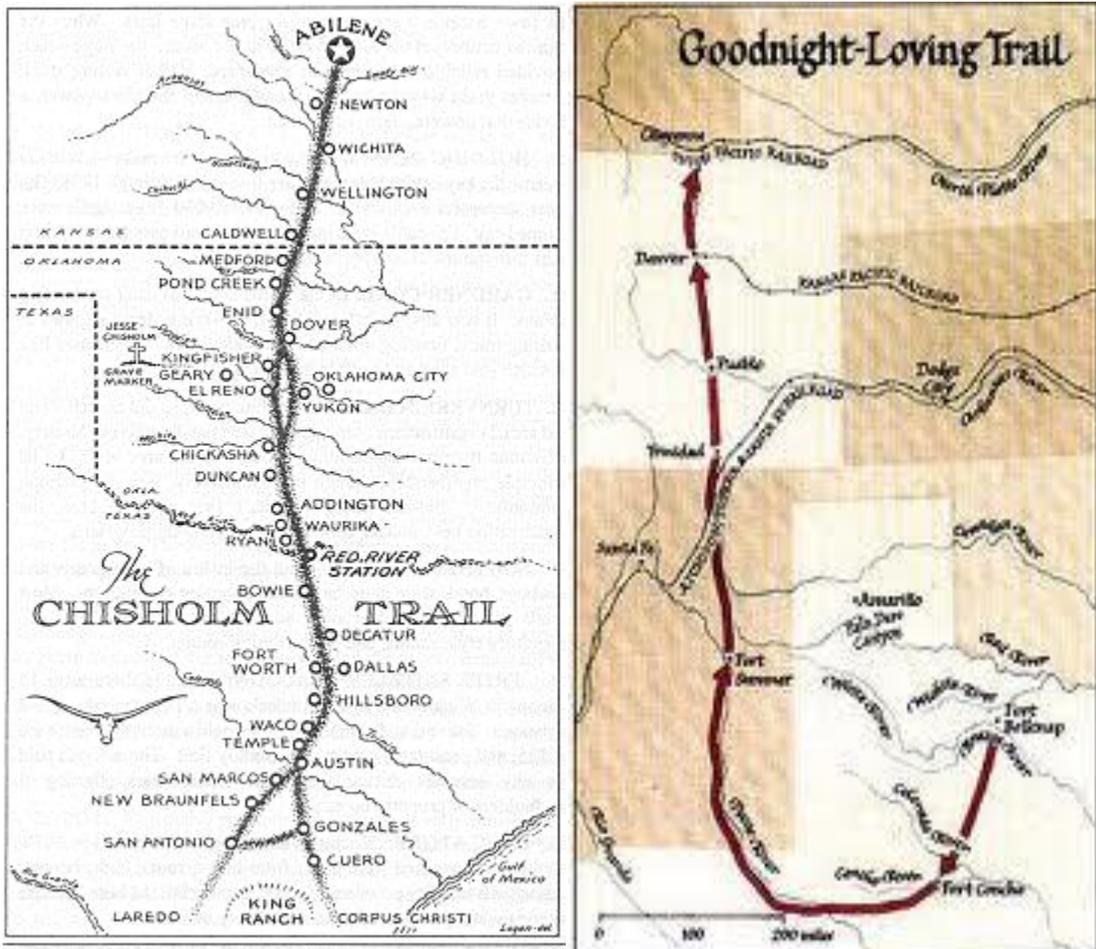


Cattle were a huge source of meat and provided hides that were made into much needed leather goods. The meat and goods created by these animals were sought after by many people all over the Americas. Cattle drives eventually became a widespread endeavor across the country to the California gold rush areas where cattle prices were higher. Thousands of cattle were moved by cowboys on horseback and a typical drive from Texas to California would take up to six months.

After the Civil War, ranches began to spring up everywhere. With many different ranches, cattle had to be branded or ear marked to let cowboys and ranch hands distinguish the herds if they got mixed or lost. After barbed wire was introduced, this problem subsided, and a new one was presented as the land was divided thus preventing easy crossing. The cattle drives had to deviate from their fastest routes to avoid the new property fences.

One of the most prominent cattle drive trails through Texas was the Chisholm Trail that stretched between the North Canadian and Arkansas rivers. This trail led cattle from Texas north to Abilene, Kansas. When the railroad began to establish travel, the old Chisholm Trail was no longer needed and began to fade away around 1884.

Another prominent man named Charles Goodnight, who was the first cattle rancher in Texas, began an important cattle trail through West Texas up to the rocky Mountain mining regions. He used the Butterfield stagecoach route to the southwest to avoid Indians. This route was much longer, but it was safer. His partner Oliver Loving used this trail many times before he was mortally wounded by an Indian attack in 1869.



“In 1876, Goodnight consolidated his operations back in Texas, this time at a ranch near Palo Duro Canyon in the Texas Panhandle. The next year, he formed a partnership

with an Irish investor, John G. Adair, and their ranch soon covered more than a million acres, with a herd of one hundred thousand head. A pioneer in cattle breeding, Goodnight crossed the tough but scrawny Texas longhorns with the more traditional Herefords to produce a longhorn breed that was both independent and commercially lucrative.” (www.pbs.org) The vast ranch is often correlated with the JA Ranch which was divided by Goodnight and Adair’s widow in 1887.

Cattle drives are a rarity these days, but there are ranches that still use the old fashioned cowboy techniques of riding and roping. The American Quarter Horse Association gives an award each year called “The Best Remuda Award” to the working ranch that has the best group of American Quarter Horses still used to work livestock today.



A Ranch Remuda is defined as “the herd of horses from which those to be used for the day are chosen.”