

**GOODNIGHT-LOVING TRAIL.** The Goodnight-Loving Trail ran from Young County, Texas, southwest to Horsehead Crossing<sup>qv</sup> on the Pecos River, up the Pecos to Fort Sumner, New Mexico, and on north to Colorado. In the spring and early summer of 1866 Charles Goodnight and Oliver Loving<sup>qv</sup> drove their first herd of longhorn cattle<sup>qv</sup> over the Butterfield Overland Mail<sup>qv</sup> route from near Fort Belknap via the Middle Concho River and Castle Gap,<sup>qv</sup> to Horsehead (on some old maps marked Dead Horse) Crossing. Leaving the former mail route there, they worked up the Pecos, crossing it from time to time as the terrain and watering places required. They drove a second herd, bought from John S. Chisum,<sup>qv</sup> from his Concho River range to Fort Sumner later that same summer.

The northern extension of the Goodnight-Loving Trail was first blazed by Loving in the fall of 1866. Initially, it ran north from Fort Sumner up the Pecos to Las Vegas, then followed the Santa Fe Trail<sup>qv</sup> to Raton Pass and around the base of the Rockies via Trinidad and Pueblo to Denver, Colorado. Since that was a roundabout way, Goodnight in the fall of 1867 altered the route fifty or sixty miles to the east, crossing the Gallinas valley and the well-watered plains of northeastern New Mexico near Capulin Mountain before swinging back northwestward to Raton Pass. At Raton Pass "Uncle Dick" Wootton had established a toll station near the summit and charged Goodnight ten cents a head for passage. Goodnight complied, but not without protest. At the head of Apishapa Canyon, forty miles northeast of Trinidad, he set up a ranch and cattle-relay station.

In the spring of 1868 Goodnight entered into a contract with John Wesley Iliff in which he agreed to deliver his cattle to Iliff at the Union Pacific Railroad town of Cheyenne, Wyoming. From the Arkansas valley near Pueblo, Goodnight and his men struck out due north, passing east of Denver, to the South Platte River. They crossed that stream at the site of present Greeley and followed a tributary, Crow Creek, to Cheyenne, where the delivery was made. Afterward, Goodnight and his men went back to New Mexico to buy more cattle from Chisum at Bosque Grande. Returning north, Goodnight further "straightened out" the trail by leaving the Pecos north of Fort Sumner and traveling north to Alamogordo Creek and across the plains via Cuervo Creek and its tributaries to a spot on the Canadian River twenty miles west of Fort Bascom. From there he proceeded to the Cimarron Seco west of Capulin Mountain. In order to avoid Dick Wootton's toll road, Goodnight opened a new, easier passageway through Tinchera Pass into Colorado.

The Goodnight-Loving Trail was thus routed, and although Goodnight himself made only one more delivery at Cheyenne, many cattle concerns from Texas, New Mexico, and Colorado used all or portions of the trail extensively until the advent of railroads in the Southwest in the early 1880s. The trail was sometimes known simply as the Goodnight Trail.

**GOODNIGHT, CHARLES** (1836-1929). Charles Goodnight, rancher, the fourth of five children of Charles and Charlotte (Collier) Goodnight, was born on March 5, 1836, on the family farm in Macoupin County, Illinois. His father died of pneumonia in 1841 when Charles was five, and shortly thereafter his mother married Hiram Daugherty, a neighboring farmer. In all, Charles had only six months of formal schooling. Late in 1845 he accompanied his family on the 800-mile trek south to a site in Milam County, Texas, near Nashville-on-the-Brazos, riding bareback on a white-faced mare named Blaze. He later took pride in the fact that he was born at the same time as the Republic of Texas<sup>qv</sup> and that he "joined" Texas the year it joined the Union. Growing up in the Brazos bottoms, the boy learned to hunt and track from an old Indian named Caddo Jake. At age eleven Charles began hiring out to neighboring farms, and at fifteen he rode as a jockey for a racing outfit at Port Sullivan. Not satisfied with that occupation, he returned to his widowed mother and younger siblings, continued at various farm and plantation jobs, including supervision of black slave crews, and for two years freighted with ox teams. In 1853 his mother married Rev. Adam Sheek, a Methodist preacher; that led to the formation of the partnership three years later between Charles and his step-brother, John Wesley Sheek. Although they considered going to California, they were dissuaded by Sheek's brother-in-law, Claiborne Varner, who induced them to run about 400 head of cattle on shares along the Brazos valley for a ten-year period. In 1857 the young partners trailed their herd up the Brazos to the Keechi valley in Palo Pinto County. At Black Springs they built a log cabin buttressed with stone chimneys, to which they brought their parents in 1858. Goodnight continued freighting cotton and provisions to Houston and back for a time until Wes Sheek married, then assumed the bulk of responsibility of looking after the growing herd of scrawny, wild Texas cattle. With his acquired hunting and trailing skills, he quickly mastered the modes of survival in the wilderness. During this time he became acquainted with Oliver Loving,<sup>qv</sup> who was also running cattle in the Western Cross Timbers. When the gold rush to Colorado began, Goodnight helped Loving send a herd through the Indian Territory and Kansas to the Rocky Mountain mining camps.

As Indian troubles in Northwest Texas increased, concurrent with heated conflict over the reservations on the upper Brazos and Clear Fork, Goodnight and his neighbors joined forces with Capt. Jack (J. J.) Cureton's<sup>qv</sup> rangers, with whom he served as a scout and guide. It was Goodnight who found the trail leading to Peta Nocona's<sup>qv</sup> Comanche encampment on the Pease River in December 1860 and brought word of it back to Cureton and Capt. Lawrence Sullivan (Sul) Ross.<sup>qv</sup> He guided the rangers to the Indian camp and took part in the attack on December 18 in which Cynthia Ann Parker<sup>qv</sup> was recaptured. With the outbreak of the Civil War,<sup>qv</sup> Cureton's rangers, including Goodnight, were attached to the Frontier Regiment.<sup>qv</sup> Goodnight spent most of the war chasing marauding Indians and border toughs while ranging from the Canadian to the Colorado and Brazos headwaters with the likes of James E. McCord, James B. (Buck) Barry,<sup>qv</sup> and A. T. Obenchain. The intimate knowledge he gained of the vast rolling prairies and Llano Estacado<sup>qv</sup> later proved useful.

At the expiration of his term of service in 1864, Goodnight returned to Palo Pinto County, where he and other cowmen spent the next year trying to recoup their cattle business from the chaos that characterized the frontier during that era. He sought out a new range along Elm Creek, in Throckmorton County, where Indians ran off nearly 2,000 head of his cattle in September 1865. Since cattle markets in Texas were poor at that time, Goodnight looked for a higher price at the Indian agencies and army posts in New Mexico, where beef was in demand. In the spring of 1866 he and Loving organized a drive from Fort Belknap southwest to the Pecos River at Horsehead Crossing<sup>qv</sup> and up that stream to Fort Sumner, where they sold their steers to feed the Indians beef at eight cents a pound. Eighteen cowhands, including Bose Ikard, Robert Clay Allison,<sup>qv</sup> and "One-Armed" Bill Wilson, participated in the venture, for which Goodnight assembled and utilized the first chuckwagon. The route they laid off became known as the Goodnight-Loving Trail,<sup>qv</sup> later one of the Southwest's most heavily used cattle trails. At the end of their third trip to Fort Sumner in 1867, Loving died from wounds he received in a fight with Indians, but Goodnight continued to divide the trail earnings with his old partner's family in Weatherford and later had his body taken back there for burial. Throughout the late 1860s Goodnight contracted for delivery of herds on the Pecos, usually at Bosque Grande, below Fort Sumner. He also received herds from John S. Chisum<sup>qv</sup> and other Texas cowmen, drove thousands of cattle into Colorado and Wyoming, and sold them to such ranchers as John Wesley Iliff and the Thatcher brothers for the purpose of stocking northern ranges. Goodnight's herds were not immune from attacks by bandits and Indians, especially during the height of the illicit trade with Comancheros.<sup>qv</sup> In the winter of 1869 he established his Rock Canon Ranch on the Arkansas River five miles west of Pueblo, Colorado, and registered a PAT brand for his cattle. It was around that time that people started calling him "Colonel."

On July 26, 1870, Goodnight married Molly Dyer, his longtime sweetheart, who had taught school at Weatherford (see GOODNIGHT, MARY ANN DYER). After the wedding at the home of relatives in Hickman, Kentucky, the newlyweds returned to the Rock Canon, which was their home for the next six years. Goodnight continued driving cattle and in 1871 worked with John Chisum to clear a profit of \$17,000. In addition he farmed with irrigation,<sup>qv</sup> planted an apple orchard, and invested heavily in farmlands and city lots in Pueblo. Among other services he helped found the Stock Growers' Bank of Pueblo and was part owner of the opera house, a meat-packing facility at Las Animas, and other businesses in the area. Along with neighboring cattlemen such as Henry W. (Hank) Cresswell<sup>qv</sup> and the Thatchers, he formed Colorado's first stock raisers' association in November 1871 and in 1875 laid out the Goodnight Trail from Alamogordo Creek in New Mexico to Granada, Colorado. However, overstocked ranges, coupled with the panic of 1873, resulted in the loss of his holdings. To alleviate the financial crisis Goodnight sought a virgin grassland.

After sending his wife to relatives in California until he could settle his affairs, in the fall of 1875 he gathered the remnant of his longhorn cattle,<sup>qv</sup> some 1,600 head, and moved them to a campsite on the upper Canadian River at Rincón de las Piedras, New Mexico, for the winter. With a Mexican cowhand named Panchito (Little Frank), he investigated the vast Panhandle<sup>qv</sup> of Texas, recently cleared of hostile Indians, and decided on Palo Duro Canyon<sup>qv</sup> as the ideal spot for a ranch. After returning to Pueblo to borrow money, he remained with his men at the New Mexico campsite through the calving season before moving down the Canadian to its junction with Alamocitos Creek, near the future site of Tascosa, where they spent most of the summer. Before leaving, Goodnight made a pact with Casimero Romero<sup>qv</sup> in which the *pastores*<sup>qv</sup> of New Mexico agreed to limit their

operations to the Canadian and its tributaries, while Goodnight would have exclusive use of the headwaters and canyons of the Red River. After securing the services of Nicolás Martínez, a one-time Comanchero who knew all of the old Indian trails, the Goodnight outfit moved east to Tecovas Springs before turning southeast across the tableland to Palo Duro Canyon. On October 23, 1876, they reached the edge of the canyon in Randall County and set up camp. Among the members of this first cattle outfit in the Panhandle were James T. Hughes, son of the English author Thomas Hughes; J. C. Johnston, later a director of the Matador Ranch;<sup>qv</sup> Leigh Richmond Dyer,<sup>qv</sup> Goodnight's brother-in-law; an Irishman named Dave McCormick; and Panchito. They remained on the rim with the cattle while Goodnight and Martínez located a route into the canyon and a site for the ranch headquarters. Since buffalo<sup>qv</sup> were still fairly plentiful below the canyon walls, the cowboys were kept busy driving them back for about fifteen miles to make room for the cattle. They spent two days portaging supplies by muleback and herding the cattle down the steep, rugged trail. Within the bounds of the present Palo Duro Canyon State Scenic Park,<sup>qv</sup> Goodnight constructed his first temporary living quarters, a dugout<sup>qv</sup> topped with cottonwood and cedar logs, with abandoned Comanche lodge poles as rafters. Subsequently, farther to the southeast in Armstrong County, where the canyon floor widened out for ten miles or more, the colonel built a comfortable three-room ranchhouse from native timber without using any nails. He also built corrals and a picket smokehouse at the site, which he affectionately dubbed the Home Ranch.

Leaving Leigh Dyer in charge of the outfit, Goodnight went with Martínez to Las Animas to purchase more needed supplies and provisions. In February 1877 he returned via Camp Supply and Fort Elliott to check up on his men. On Commission Creek, near Fort Elliott, he met with the outlaw gang of "Dutch" Henry Born<sup>qv</sup> and struck up a bargain, sealed with a drink, in which their leader promised to keep his activities north of the Salt Fork of the Red River. After finding things satisfactory at the Home Ranch, Goodnight returned to Colorado to secure more capital and arrange to bring his wife out to the new homestead. In Denver he met with John G. Adair<sup>qv</sup> at the latter's brokerage firm, from which the colonel had borrowed \$30,000 in March 1876. Adair agreed to help expand the ranch into a large-scale operation, and in May 1877 the Goodnights and Adairs, along with four cowboys, arrived at the Home Ranch with 100 Durham bulls and four wagons loaded with provisions. On June 18 they drew up the five-year contract that launched the JA Ranch,<sup>qv</sup> with Goodnight retaining one-third interest and an annual salary of \$2,500 as resident manager. During his eleven years with the JA, Goodnight devoted his time and energy to expanding the range, building up the herd, and establishing law and order in the Panhandle. In the summer of 1878 he took the first JA trail herd, led by his famous lead steer Old Blue, north to Dodge City, Kansas, then the nearest railhead. The Palo Duro-Dodge City Trail, which he blazed, was well-used in subsequent years by many Panhandle ranchers. Late that fall, when destitute Indians from the reservations came to hunt the now-scarce buffalo, Goodnight made his famous treaty with Quannah Parker<sup>qv</sup> in which he promised two beeves every other day for Parker's followers provided they did not disturb the JA herd. In 1879 Goodnight moved the JA headquarters to its present location. Although he strictly enforced his rules against gambling, drinking, and fighting, he usually was able to hire the cowboys he needed. In 1880 Goodnight helped organize and served as first president of the Panhandle Stock Association<sup>qv</sup> in Mobeetie. Two years later he bought the Quitaque (Lazy F) Ranch<sup>qv</sup> and reportedly became the first Panhandle rancher to build fences of barbed wire.<sup>qv</sup> Though John Adair's arrogant mannerisms sometimes tried the Colonel's patience, he maintained a warm relationship with

Mrs. Adair, and in 1882 the partnership was renewed and Goodnight's annual salary was increased to \$7,500. By the time of Adair's death in 1885, the JA had reached its maximum of 1,325,000 acres, on which grazed more than 100,000 head of Goodnight's carefully bred cattle. In addition, Goodnight was a pioneer in the use of artificial watering facilities and the ownership of permanent ranges in fee. As an early believer in improvement through breeding, he developed one of the nation's finest herds through the introduction of Hereford<sup>qv</sup> bulls. He often spent weeks at a time at the stockyards of Kansas City, buying and selling cattle to upgrade his herds. With his wife's encouragement, he also started a domestic buffalo herd, sired by a bull he named Old Sikes, from which he developed the "cattalo" by crossing bison with polled Angus cattle. He also invented the first practical sidesaddle, with an additional horn to rest the left knee, for his wife.

In 1886 Goodnight, with two big-city partners, began investing in the Inter-State Land Company, for which he sold shares in land along the Texas-New Mexico border purchased from the Beales-Royuela grant, an old Spanish land grant. At the same time he became involved in the Grass Lease Fight,<sup>qv</sup> from which he emerged as a leader for the big cattlemen's interests. For his efforts in that controversy, Goodnight was severely censured by the press and accused of robbing money from the schoolchildren of Texas. What was more, he felt pressured to reduce his holdings to cope better with the rapid changes that were being imposed on the cattle industry from the recent drought, falling beef prices, and the advent of railroads and farmers to the Panhandle. For these reasons, along with a stomach ailment that almost proved fatal, Goodnight decided to sell out his interest in the JA after the second contract expired in 1887 and limit his ranching activities. In the division of the properties, he retained interest in the Quitaque Ranch, half of which he sold to L. R. Moore of Kansas City. Even so, Mrs. Adair retained his services as manager of the JA until 1888, when John C. Farrington succeeded him. Soon after his exit from the JA ownership, Goodnight bought 160 sections in Armstrong County near the Fort Worth and Denver City line, including the Sacra-Sugg Ranch on the Salt Fork and some school land. Near the town that bears his name he built his spacious, two-story ranchhouse, into which he and his wife moved on December 27, 1887. This small ranch, to which he relocated his buffalo herd of 250 head, was formally organized as the Goodnight-Thayer Cattle Company, with J. W. (Johnnie) Martin as foreman and later as a junior partner. After selling his remaining interest in the Quitaque to Moore in 1890, Goodnight, in association with William McCamey and Avery L. Matlock,<sup>qv</sup> invested heavily in a Mexican gold and silver mining venture deep in the mountains of southern Chihuahua; that enterprise proved a failure. Furthermore, his investments in the Inter-State Land Company reduced his fortune considerably after federal courts declared the Beales-Royuela grant invalid. In 1893 he was among the cowmen compensated in part for losses they suffered to the Comanchero trade during the 1860s. As civic leaders and promoters of the higher education he was denied, the colonel and his wife opened Goodnight College at Goodnight in 1898. After selling out his interest in the Goodnight-Thayer Company in 1900, Goodnight limited his ranching activities to sixty sections surrounding his house and near the railroad. There he continued his experiments with buffalo and also kept elk, antelope,<sup>qv</sup> and various other animals in zoo-like enclosures, as well as different species of fowl. The Goodnight Ranch became a major Panhandle tourist attraction and featured buffalo meat on its menus. Buffalo from the Goodnight herd were shipped to zoos in New York and other eastern cities, Yellowstone National Park, and even to Europe, and Goodnight's wildlife-preservation efforts gained the attention of such naturalists as William T. Hornaday, Edmund Seymour, and Ernest Thompson Seton. As a friend of

Quanah Parker and other Plains Indian leaders in Oklahoma, Goodnight staged occasional buffalo hunts for former braves. He also exchanged visits with the Pueblo tribes in New Mexico, endorsed their causes in Congress, and gave one tribe a foundation buffalo herd. In addition, he grew Armstrong County's first wheat crop and conducted other agricultural experiments with the encouragement of the pioneer botanist Luther Burbank; indeed, the colonel was often called the "Burbank of the Range."

Though the Goodnights had no children of their own, they often boarded college students, whom they hired to do secretarial work and other chores. They employed a woman as a housekeeper in 1905 and subsequently reared her son, Cleo Hubbard, as their own. After his wife's death in April 1926, Goodnight fell seriously ill but was soon nursed back to health by Corinne Goodnight, a young nurse and telegraph operator from Butte, Montana, with whom he had been corresponding because of their mutual surnames. On March 5, 1927, the Colonel celebrated his ninety-first birthday by marrying the twenty-six-year-old Corinne at the home of Mayor Henry W. Taylor, Goodnight's nephew, in Clarendon. Shortly afterward they sold the ranch, with the stipulation that he could live there for the rest of his life, and bought a summer house in Clarendon. Goodnight spent his last winters in Phoenix, Arizona, because of his delicate condition. As a living frontier legend, he was often interviewed by Western authors and journalists, as well as such scholar-historians as Lester F. Sheffy,<sup>qv</sup> Harley T. Burton, and J. Evetts Haley. Not until July 1929 did he officially join a church, even though he had helped found churches at Goodnight years before. On the morning of December 12, 1929, Goodnight died at his winter home in Phoenix at the age of ninety-three. He was buried next to his first wife in the Goodnight community cemetery.

Laura V. Hamner published a biographical novel of Goodnight, *The No-Gun Man of Texas*, in 1935, but J. Evetts Haley's monumental publication, *Charles Goodnight: Cowman and Plainsman*, which first appeared in 1936, remains the standard scholarly work on the man. Goodnight's papers are housed in the Research Center of the Panhandle-Plains Historical Museum<sup>qv</sup> in Canyon, where several Goodnight artifacts donated by Cleo Hubbard and his family are on display. Streets in several Panhandle towns bear his name, as do the Charles Goodnight Memorial Trail and the highway to Palo Duro Canyon State Scenic Park, which includes a restored dugout thought to have been his first 1876 quarters. The Goodnight ranchhouse, owned since 1933 by the Mattie Hedgecock estate of Amarillo, still stands near U.S. Highway 287. In 1958 Goodnight was one of the original five voted into the National Cowboy Hall of Fame in Oklahoma City.

**LOVING, OLIVER** (1812-1867). Oliver Loving, cattle driver, son of Joseph and Susannah Mary (Bourland) Loving, was born in Hopkins County, Kentucky, on December 4, 1812. On January 12, 1833, he married Susan Doggett Morgan, and for the next ten years he farmed in Muhlenberg County, Kentucky. The Lovings became the parents of nine children, four of whom were born in Texas. In 1843 Loving and his brother and brother-in-law moved their families to Texas. In the Peters colony,<sup>qv</sup> Loving received 639.3 acres of land in three patents and counties-Collin, Dallas, and Parker. The family stopped for a year in Lamar County and had settled in Collin County before 1850. Loving farmed and, to feed his growing family, hauled freight. By 1855 the Lovings had moved to the future Palo Pinto county, where they ran a country store near Keechi Creek and ranched. The first assessment roll of Palo Pinto County, taken in 1857, listed Loving with 1,000 acres of land. To market his large herd, Loving drove them out of Texas. In 1857 he entrusted his nineteen-year-old son, William, to drive his and his neighbors' cattle to Illinois up the Shawnee Trail.<sup>qv</sup> The drive made a profit of thirty-six dollars a head and encouraged Loving to repeat the trek successfully the next year with John Durkee.

On August 29, 1860, Loving and John Dawson started a herd of 1,500 toward Denver to feed the gold miners. They crossed the Red River, met the Arkansas, and followed it to Pueblo, Colorado, where the cattle wintered. In the spring Loving sold his cattle for gold and tried to leave for Texas. Since the Civil War<sup>qv</sup> had broken out, the Union authorities prevented him from returning to the South until Kit (Christopher) Carson<sup>qv</sup> and Lucien Maxwell interceded for him. During the war Loving was commissioned to drive cattle to Confederate forces along the Mississippi. When the war ended, the Confederate government reportedly owed him between \$100,000 and \$250,000. To make matters worse, the usual cattle markets were inadequate for the available supply. In 1866, having heard about the probable need for cattle at Fort Sumner, New Mexico, where some 8,000 Indians had been settled on a reservation, Loving gathered a herd, combined it with that of Charles Goodnight,<sup>qv</sup> and began a long drive to the fort. Their route later became known as the Goodnight-Loving Trail,<sup>qv</sup> although it had been used by other cattlemen. The trail followed the path of the Butterfield Overland Mail<sup>qv</sup> to the future site of Fort Concho and turned north at the Pecos, leading to Fort Sumner and on to Denver. The two cattlemen sold beef to the army for \$12,000 in gold. Loving drove the stock cattle on to Colorado and sold them near Denver, while Goodnight returned to Weatherford, Texas, with the gold and for a second herd. The two men were reunited in southern New Mexico, where they established a ranch at Bosque Grande, about forty miles south of Fort Sumner. They spent the winter of 1866-67 there and supplied cattle from the ranch to Fort Sumner and Santa Fe.

In the spring of 1867 Loving and Goodnight returned to Texas, ready to start a new drive. The third drive was slowed by heavy rains and Indian threats. Loving went ahead of the herd for

contract bidding. He took only Bill Wilson, a trusted scout, with him. Although he told Goodnight that he would travel at night through Indian country, Loving became impatient and pushed ahead during the day. His careless action brought an Indian attack in which he was seriously wounded. The weakened Loving sent Wilson back to the herd, eluded the Indians, and with the aid of Mexican traders reached Fort Sumner, only to die there of gangrene on September 25, 1867. Before Loving died Goodnight assured him that his wish to be buried in Texas would be carried out. After a temporary burial at Fort Sumner, while Goodnight drove the herd on to Colorado, Goodnight had Loving's body exhumed and carried home. Stories differ as to who accompanied the body back to Weatherford, but he was reburied there in Greenwood Cemetery on March 4, 1868, with Masonic honors. Loving has been inducted into the National Cowboy Hall of Fame in Oklahoma City. Loving County, Texas, and Loving, New Mexico, are named in his honor.

## OLD WEST LEGENDS

### The Goodnight-Loving Trail

Spanning more than 2,000 miles from [Texas](#) to [Wyoming](#), the trail was first blazed by [Charles Goodnight](#) and [Oliver Loving](#) in 1866. The trail runs from Young County, [Texas](#), southwest to Horsehead Crossing on the Pecos River, then northwards to [Fort Sumner](#), [New Mexico](#), through [Colorado](#) and ends in Cheyenne, [Wyoming](#).

The trail was first used when [Goodnight](#), a former [Texas Ranger](#) and [Indian](#) Scout met pioneer cowboy, [Oliver Loving](#) sometime after the [Civil War](#). At this time, the cattle markets were inadequate for the available cattle and the two wanted to capitalize on the need for cattle at [Fort Sumner](#), [New Mexico](#), where some 8,000 [Indians](#) had been settled on a reservation.

The drive would be a dangerous one, traveling across hostile [Indian](#) country, but the pair, with their combined skills,



The Goodnight-Loving Trail, was one of many [cattle trails](#) in the American West. This image available for photographic prints and downloads [HERE!](#)



were dedicated and in June, 1866, they set out with some 2,000 head of cattle and 18 riders to blaze what would become known as the Goodnight-Loving Trail.

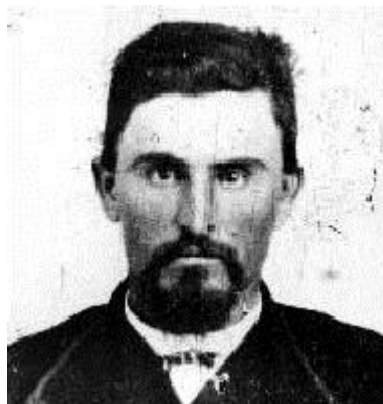


They left the [Texas](#) Frontier on June 6, 1866, with 2,000 head of mixed cattle and 18 armed men to blaze a trail that went down into history as the Goodnight-Loving Trail. Upon reaching [Fort Sumner](#), they sold beef to the army for \$12,000 in gold. Loving continued to drive the rest of the herd to Denver, while [Goodnight](#) returned to [Texas](#) for a second herd. The profitable

venture led to more drives, including a partnership with John Chisum.

However, in the summer of 1867, when [Oliver Loving](#) went ahead of the herd to negotiate contracts, taking only one trusted scout with him, he was attacked by [Comanches](#) and seriously wounded. Though he was able to reach [Fort Sumner](#), [New Mexico](#), he later died of his wounds on September 25, 1867. [Goodnight](#) continued the drive to [Colorado](#), but later returned for Loving's body and returned it to [Texas](#), where he was buried in the Greenwood Cemetery in Weatherford.

In the spring of 1868 [Goodnight](#) entered into a contract with John Wesley Iliff in which he agreed to deliver his cattle to to the Union Pacific Railroad town of Cheyenne, [Wyoming](#). [Goodnight](#) traveled the trail a couple of times, straightening out the route along the way.



[Goodnight](#) then settled down on his [Texas](#) Ranch, but cattle drivers throughout [Texas](#), [New Mexico](#), and [Colorado](#) continued to utilize the trail that he and loving had blazed.

The Goodnight Loving Trail originated in Young county, western [Texas](#), U.S. The trail ran southwest to connect with the [Pecos River](#) and thence up the river valley to Fort Sumner, [New Mexico](#), and north to the railhead at [Denver](#), Colorado. The trail was established in 1866

by cattlemen [Charles Goodnight](#) and Oliver Loving, who followed a route of the Butterfield Overland Mail, joining their herds to that of John S. Chisum in New [Mexico](#). The route was later extended to [Cheyenne](#), Wyoming. The arrival of the railroads to western Texas in the early 1880s made the long cattle drives unnecessary, and the trail was to all purposes abandoned. Its role in Texas history and legend is celebrated in [Larry McMurtry](#)'s 1985 novel *Lonesome Dove*.

