

By: Spiller

H.R. No. 167

R E S O L U T I O N

1 WHEREAS, Fort Belknap holds a special place in the history of
2 the Lone Star State as it marked the starting point for the
3 celebrated Goodnight-Loving Trail; and

4 WHEREAS, Founded by General William G. Belknap, Fort Belknap
5 was established on June 24, 1851, near the Brazos River in Young
6 County; it initially served as the northern anchor of a series of
7 U.S. Army forts built to protect settlers on the Texas frontier;
8 although the fort officially closed in September 1867, it became a
9 hub of connecting roads, including the Butterfield Overland Mail
10 route, a mail and passenger stage service that stretched from
11 St. Louis to San Francisco; and

12 WHEREAS, In 1866, former Texas Ranger Charles Goodnight and
13 cattle runner Oliver Loving devised a plan to drive a herd of cattle
14 from Fort Belknap along the Butterfield Overland Mail route, hoping
15 to sell them to markets in New Mexico, where beef was in higher
16 demand; the first Goodnight-Loving cattle drive left the fort on
17 June 6, 1866, with 2,000 head of Texas longhorns, 18 cowhands, and
18 the world's first chuck wagon, which was custom-built by
19 Mr. Goodnight for the drive; traveling in hostile country, the
20 group worked its way along the Pecos River and sold the cattle at
21 Fort Sumner, New Mexico; the Goodnight-Loving Trail would
22 eventually pass through Colorado and end in Cheyenne, Wyoming, and
23 over the years, it grew to become one of the Southwest's most
24 heavily used cattle trails; and

1 WHEREAS, In 1936, the Works Progress Administration
2 allocated funds for the restoration of Fort Belknap, and the state
3 refurbished the buildings that still stood and rebuilt those that
4 had been destroyed; the fort was designated as a National Historic
5 Landmark in 1960; and

6 WHEREAS, Fort Belknap serves as a poignant link to the iconic
7 era of the great Western cattle drives, and it is indeed deserving
8 of special recognition; now, therefore, be it

9 RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives of the 88th Texas
10 Legislature hereby honor Fort Belknap for its historic role as the
11 starting point of the Goodnight-Loving Trail and pay tribute to all
12 those who have contributed to the fort's restoration and
13 preservation.