

By: Campbell

H.C.R. No. 10

CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

1 WHEREAS, On October 7, 1876, Josiah Wright Mooar, one of the
2 most successful of the buffalo hunters and later a renowned Scurry
3 County pioneer, felled a white buffalo near the present-day site of
4 Snyder, Texas; and

5 WHEREAS, At the end of the Civil War, some 13 million buffalo
6 roamed the Great Plains; the animals provided nearly all the wants
7 of the Plains Indians and, through their great numbers, posed a
8 tremendous obstacle to the establishment of ranching and farming in
9 that region; with the completion of the first transcontinental
10 railroad in 1869, however, it became possible to transport buffalo
11 hides to eastern markets, and the profits to be made on the plains
12 quickly drew legions of hunters and skinners; and

13 WHEREAS, Born in Vermont in 1851, J. Wright Mooar traveled
14 west as a young man and worked as a buffalo hunter in western
15 Kansas, providing meat for railroad crews and hides for the English
16 market; in 1871, he shipped a load of 57 buffalo hides to his
17 brother, John, then a jewelry clerk in New York City; the sale of
18 those hides to a tanning company resulted in an order for 2,000 more
19 and is credited with launching the American buffalo-hide industry;
20 and

21 WHEREAS, In 1873, the Mooars became part of the vanguard of
22 hunters moving into the Texas Panhandle; the brothers withdrew to
23 Kansas in 1874, during a series of Indian-army conflicts known as
24 the Red River War, but they returned to Texas in 1876; in October of

1 that year, J. Wright Mooar established the first buffalo hunting
2 camp in Scurry County, on a site along Deep Creek about 10 miles
3 northwest of present-day Snyder; and

4 WHEREAS, Returning to camp late in the afternoon on October
5 7, Mr. Mooar happened upon a white buffalo and dropped the animal
6 with a single shot; altogether, he later wrote, white hunters were
7 recorded to have killed only seven such animals; Theodore Roosevelt
8 reportedly offered Mr. Mooar \$5,000 in an unsuccessful bid to
9 purchase the hide, which was subsequently exhibited at the St.
10 Louis World's Fair in 1904 and on numerous other occasions; and

11 WHEREAS, A curiosity to many Americans, the white buffalo was
12 held in deepest reverence by various tribes of the Plains Indians,
13 who took it to signify the abundance of the earth; in their
14 religious traditions, a holy woman had once appeared to the people,
15 bearing a sacred pipe, and then transformed herself into a white
16 buffalo; one day, they believed, the woman would return and unite
17 the nations of the four colors--the black, red, yellow, and white;
18 and

19 WHEREAS, J. Wright Mooar continued hunting until 1877, by
20 which time he is believed to have killed more than 20,000 of the
21 shaggy beasts; with the great southern buffalo herd nearly
22 extinguished, he acquired property, including the site where he had
23 shot the white buffalo, and became one of the earliest cattle
24 ranchers in Scurry County; and

25 WHEREAS, Mr. Mooar often regaled visitors with stories of his
26 exploits, and his recollections about buffalo hunting, published in
27 *Holland's Magazine* in 1933, have served as a valuable resource for

1 plains historians; when this gentleman, regarded as Scurry County's
2 first citizen, died in 1940, 3,000 people from throughout West
3 Texas are said to have attended his funeral; and

4 WHEREAS, J. Wright Mooar and the days of the buffalo hunters
5 are widely remembered in Snyder, the county seat of Scurry County;
6 the town itself is named for William Henry (Pete) Snyder, who
7 accompanied Mr. Mooar and his hunting party in 1876 and hauled their
8 hides; from 1878 until 1881, Mr. Snyder operated a trading post on
9 Deep Creek, and the community that developed around the post later
10 officially took his name; and

11 WHEREAS, Today a statue of a white buffalo graces the
12 courthouse square in Snyder, and each October, in tribute to Mr.
13 Mooar and the county's pioneer heritage, the community stages the
14 White Buffalo Festival; the local chamber of commerce, moreover,
15 has promoted the area as the Land of the White Buffalo; and

16 WHEREAS, J. Wright Mooar's shooting of the white buffalo
17 stands as a potent symbol of a massive transformation that reshaped
18 the West in little more than a decade; by the mid-1880s, with the
19 exception of a few herds that were maintained on government
20 property or private ranches, the buffalo had been completely
21 cleared from the Great Plains; with its passing, the Native
22 Americans there had no hope of supporting themselves off of the
23 reservation, and the plains were opened to a sea change in people,
24 culture, and economy; and

25 WHEREAS, A leading figure among the professional buffalo
26 hunters, Mr. Mooar contributed to those changes throughout the
27 plains and played a significant role in shaping the history of

1 Scurry County; it is indeed fitting that Snyder's roots in this
2 extraordinary period and its association with this legendary Texan
3 be appropriately recognized; now, therefore, be it

4 RESOLVED, That the 78th Legislature of the State of Texas,
5 4th Called Session, hereby designate Snyder as the Land of the White
6 Buffalo.