

By: King of Hemphill

H.C.R. No. 51

CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

1 WHEREAS, The names of certain individuals stand out boldly in
2 the history of the Lone Star State, and for more than a century, the
3 life of famed rancher Charles Goodnight has inspired generations of
4 Texans; and

5 WHEREAS, Born on March 5, 1836, to Charles and Charlotte
6 Goodnight in Macoupin County, Illinois, young Charles Goodnight
7 joined his family in 1845 on the 800-mile journey to Milam County,
8 Texas, where the boy arrived riding bareback on a white-faced mare
9 named Blaze; from an early age, he learned the virtue of hard work,
10 laboring as a farmhand, racing as a jockey, and hauling freight with
11 teams of oxen; and

12 WHEREAS, Mr. Goodnight entered into a partnership with his
13 stepbrother, John Wesley Sheek, in 1856 to raise 400 head of cattle
14 in the Brazos Valley; in the late 1850s, he met Oliver Loving, and
15 together the two young men drove a herd to the gold rush camps in
16 Colorado before the Civil War; during the 1860s, he worked as a
17 scout for the Texas Rangers, taking part in the Comanche wars and
18 fighting outlaws along the Colorado and Brazos Rivers; and

19 WHEREAS, After his service with the Rangers, Mr. Goodnight
20 returned to the cattle business, and in 1866, he, Mr. Loving, and 18
21 cowhands drove a herd from Fort Belknap, Texas, to Fort Sumner, New
22 Mexico, and the route they forged became known as the
23 Goodnight-Loving Trail, one of the most heavily trafficked cattle
24 trails in the Southwest; Charles Goodnight is also credited with

1 inventing the chuck wagon during that legendary drive; and

2 WHEREAS, In 1870, he married Mary Ann "Molly" Dyer, a
3 schoolteacher, and the couple settled in Colorado for several years
4 before returning to Texas; in 1876, he entered into a partnership
5 with John G. Adair to set up the JA Ranch along Palo Duro Canyon,
6 with Mr. Goodnight serving as resident manager and part owner of
7 the operation; over the next 11 years, he increased the ranch's herd
8 and expanded its range and helped establish law and order in the
9 Panhandle; he pioneered the use of many new techniques and
10 inventions, including artificial watering facilities, barbed wire
11 fences, and the development of Hereford bulls through
12 crossbreeding; he also created one of the first western
13 sidesaddles, for use by his wife; and

14 WHEREAS, From 1887 to 1926, Charles and Molly Goodnight lived
15 in a spacious, two-story ranch house on the Goodnight Ranch near the
16 Salt Fork of the Red River; when his wife became distressed at the
17 decline of the southern herd of native bison, Mr. Goodnight took up
18 their cause, breeding them on his ranch and shipping buffalo to
19 Yellowstone National Park and to zoos on the East Coast and in
20 Europe; he also raised other animals and performed agricultural
21 experiments with the encouragement of botanist Luther Burbank; and

22 WHEREAS, Molly Goodnight died in 1926, and Charles Goodnight
23 followed her three years later at the age of 93, and they are buried
24 together in the Goodnight Cemetery, not far from the ranch they
25 called home for nearly 40 years; the descendants of the Goodnights'
26 buffalo live on as the Official State Bison Herd of Texas at Caprock
27 Canyons State Park, and the legacy of Charles Goodnight, pioneer,

1 cattleman, and naturalist, will endure as long as the Lone Star
2 shines bright over Texas; now, therefore, be it

3 RESOLVED, That the 83rd Legislature of the State of Texas
4 hereby designate March 5 as Charles Goodnight Day; and, be it
5 further

6 RESOLVED, That in accordance with the provisions of Section
7 391.004(d), Government Code, this designation remains in effect
8 until the 10th anniversary of the date this resolution is passed.