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By:  Spiller H.R. No. 167

R E S O L U T I O N

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

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

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

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

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

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