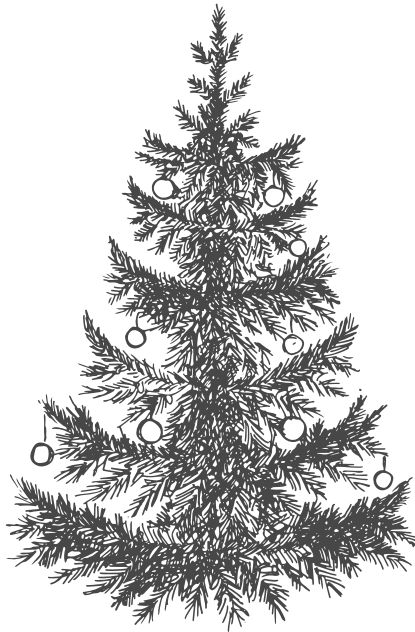


*On, On  
Buffaloes*



*Christmas 2021*



*Merry Christmas and Happy Holidays!*

Once again, the festive Christmas and extended holiday season is upon us and we find ourselves wrapping up another calendar year at West Texas A&M University. As we prepare to welcome 2022, Mary and I would like to extend heartfelt good wishes to you and yours, auld lang syne.

At WT, the Panhandle's University, our journey has included a particularly memorable and momentous year as we launched One West, a comprehensive fundraising campaign designed to fuel ***WT 125: From the Panhandle to the World***. One West focuses on: People, through scholarships and professorships; Programs, through University and College priorities; and Places, through strategic growth and University-wide enhancement. With the goal of raising \$125 million by 2025, this historic One West campaign will help strengthen WT's impact on the Panhandle region and beyond.

WT experienced many other momentous events this year: we brought back in-person graduation ceremonies at Buffalo Stadium; "Buff-Branded" one of the University's largest-ever freshmen classes; and welcomed Thunder XIV, WT's live buffalo mascot, to our Buff herd.

WT is one of the few universities to have a live mascot, and is one of two to have the buffalo represent the institution. Thanks to the gentle and vigilant care of the WT Herdsmen, Thunder XIV will continue to be a living symbol of the University. I am proud to continue this live mascot tradition which began in 1922 with a pair of yearling buffaloes from Col. Charles and Mary Ann "Molly" Goodnight, who are credited with saving America's buffalo herd from extinction.

We are grateful to the Goodnights for rescuing and raising orphaned bison calves, helping the herd at the Goodnight Buffalo Ranch grow to more than 200 head of bison. Over the decades, descendants of the Goodnight buffalo herd have been placed in Canada, Germany, Nevada, New Hampshire, Kansas, Oklahoma, Texas, Montana, New Mexico and New York.

This year's Christmas card tells the story of what the majestic and fiercely independent buffalo mean to WT and the Texas Panhandle. I am grateful for the Cultural Foundation of the Texas Panhandle, comprised of the comprised of West Texas A&M University, the Panhandle-Plains Historical Society/Museum and the Texas Panhandle Heritage Foundation (TEXAS Outdoor Musical), for providing much of the artwork in this year's card, featuring the Goodnight Bison Herd and WT's mascot. Mary and I are honored to share this piece of Texas Panhandle history with you this Christmas season.

To paraphrase Saint Francis of Assisi, Blessed are you, Lord God, maker of all living creatures. You called forth fish in the sea, birds in the air and animals on the land, even the buffalo of the Texas Panhandle. We ask you to continue to bless our beloved University in this season and the coming year.

On, On Buffaloes!

*Walter and Mary Goodnight*

# The History of the Goodnight Bison Herd

The Goodnight bison herd, one of the earliest herds of domesticated buffalo and one of the oldest now in existence, was established by Charles Goodnight in June 1878, which is the year the Southern herd of American bison was nearly exterminated.

According to an article in the Brenham Weekly Banner, “When Molly Goodnight realized the inevitable extinction of the buffalo, she urged Charles to endeavor to preserve them. He set aside at her request 600 acres from his great ranch of 60,000 acres for buffalo park. In a letter telling of his start as a buffalo raiser, Mr. Goodnight said: ‘In the spring of 1879 — May 15 to be exact — at my wife’s request, I started out to look for some young buffalo. At last, I found a few younger ones in Palo Duro Canyon, and roped them from horseback. The month following W.W. Dyer, my wife’s brother, caught two young females. From this start we have now a herd of 45 purebred buffaloes. ... The buffalo breeds slowly in captivity. It seems incomprehensible that they should have grown into such enormous herds as there were when I came to this country, and which, in fact, covered all the western plains.’”

The Goodnight bison herd was located on the Palo Duro Ranch on Red River in Armstrong County, near Goodnight, Texas. Initially, the herd consisted of a few calves. By the close of 1888 the number had increased to 13, including two three-year-old bulls, seven cows, and four calves. One of these cows was a “cattalo,” a hybrid created by a buffalo and a domesticated cow.



Harold D. Bugbee (1900-1963)

*Buffalo, 1936*

Lithographic pencil drawing

Courtesy of the Panhandle-Plains Historical Museum, Canyon

A vital part of the Cultural Foundation of the Texas Panhandle.

By 1894, the herd included 25 to 30 full-blooded buffalo and about as many hybrids. About 10 years later, in 1903, the herd had increased to 45 buffalo and 75 hybrids. The number of full-blooded buffalo numbered 70 in 1908, increasing to 104 by 1910. On January 1, 1914, the herd had grown to 164, of which 35 were bulls, 107 were cows, and 22 were calves.

The Goodnight bison herd is interesting, not only because it was one of the largest private herds in the country, but also because it is one of the few which originated from stock obtained from the great Southern herd of wild buffalo that had roamed over the plains of the Texas Panhandle and beyond. A few of these Goodnight bison were placed in herds managed by the federal government, including two Goodnight bison bulls that were added to the Yellowstone herd in 1902, and a Goodnight bison cow that was integrated into the Montana herd in 1909.

According to a June 14, 1886 article in the New Orleans Times-Democrat, “the timely formation of the Goodnight bison herd and the formation of four other private herds, along with government protection of a wild herd at Yellowstone National Park, saved the species from extinction. Those few herds provided the founding stock that produced nearly all plains bison in existence today. ... Goodnight donated to several early bison conservation efforts, such as those at Yellowstone, the National Bison Range and Canada’s national parks. He sold animals to numerous other parks, private individuals and zoos, including ‘Buffalo Bill’ Cody and the New York Zoological Park, which was instrumental in establishing the first U.S. bison preserves. Most U.S. herds have been mixed and moved, but the Goodnight bison herd has stayed on its original range.”

Thanks to the Goodnights’ vision, the Official Texas State Bison Herd now resides at Caprock Canyon State Park. The Goodnights story lives on in the musical TEXAS that just celebrated its 55th year at Palo Duro Canyon State Park. TEXAS and the Panhandle-Plains Historical Museum are vital parts of the Cultural Foundation of the Texas Panhandle.

## The History of WT’s Mascot

The mighty buffalo has stood the test of time and tradition at West Texas A&M University, gallantly capturing the spotlight at athletic events, parades and public appearances too numerous to count. However, had it not been for T-Anchor cowboy L. “Parson” Gough, WT’s mascot might be a badger, a chaparral, a coyote, a rattlesnake or a prairie dog. All of these common campus pests, at least in 1921, were nominated as the school’s mascot by the student body, and it was a heated debate until Gough took the floor. He got up and described an adventure he had in 1892, when he and another cowboy had roped two buffalo calves on the very site where Old Main was built. The student body stood in unison to cheer for Gough’s nominee, and the buffalo has served as a majestic symbol of the University ever since.

The first University buffaloes were purchased in 1922 from the historic Goodnight herd maintained on the Goodnight’s T-Anchor Ranch. The young buffaloes were aptly named Charlie and Mary Ann (Molly’s given name). Charlie performed the functions of the mascot for 13 years and now stands proudly in the Panhandle-Plains Historical Museum. After Charlie, the University went without a live mascot for many decades. In 1977, Thunder (aka Lollipop) was obtained, beginning the line of Thunders that continues today. Thunder II (Buford), Thunder III (Max), Thunder IV (B.J., the

offspring of Buford and Lollipop) and Thunder V (Ladee) took their turns over the years, finally giving way to Thunder VI (Sadee) in 1996.

Sadee's retirement in 2004 paved the way for the University to return to its original Goodnight Bison ancestry with Thunder VII. Christened Charlie Jr. and known as "C.J.," the bull calf was obtained in December 2004 from the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, which maintains the Goodnight herd



WT President Walter V. Wendler met Thunder XIV when several of the Herdsmen were walking the young buffalo on campus. Early imprinting will help the young Thunder feel more comfortable around humans and campus activities.

at Caprock Canyon State Park in Quitaque. Soon after Thunder VIII (Jack) and Thunder IX (Liz), half-siblings who were donated by and named after Jack and Liz Longbotham of Abilene, performed mascot duties until 2008. Thunder X made his official mascot debut on Nov. 8, 2008, at Kimbrough Stadium and was retired in 2011 when the reins were passed to Thunder

XI (Lillie). Thunder XI served the university well until 2015 when she was retired and Thunder XII took over official mascot duties for the next three years. Thunder XIII (nicknamed Little Bit) was the mascot from 2018-19, but he was returned to live out his life with the Goodnight herd.

In 2021, WT acquired a bottle-fed calf – nicknamed "Mater," after a character in Pixar's Route 66-themed film "Cars" — to take on the duties as Thunder XIV. The eight-month-old male calf is the responsibility of the WT Herdsmen, under the direction of Ph.D. student Logan Burlison in the Paul Engler College of Agriculture and Natural Sciences. Thunder XIV was introduced to the campus at a variety of events to make sure the calf is ready for larger crowds at football games. Due to safety and logistical reasons, the mascot will no longer run onto the field, as was tradition at WT's former football stadium.

The buffalo has been a steadfast pillar of strength, honor and majesty, and the words that appeared in a 1921 issue of the University's student newspaper, *The Prairie*, still hold true today:

"Now, since the Buffalo is to be our mascot, what qualities are we to think of when we see him gracing all our insignia? First of all, he is strong and sturdy. And his virtues are as prominent as his physical qualities. He always fights a clean fight, and he was never known to sneak away from his foe on the field of battle or to betray his friend. His broad shoulders tell you that he can endure physically, and his sincere eyes bespeak the soul which supports his physical power."

On, On Buffaloes!

# Mary Ann's Legacy

By Linda Kirkpatrick

*I rode to the edge of the caprock  
And gazed in the canyon below  
I thought of a time and a lady  
And of her life of so long ago.*

*I watched the remains of her legacy  
Thundering within the canyon wall,  
While the red-tailed hawk soared peacefully  
Beckoning with its lonely call.*

*The preservation of the buffalo  
Was the center of her dream,  
And because of this honored lady  
The hunter was not supreme.*

*She had returned in desperation  
To a Texas she'd once known.  
Vowing to never leave the canyon  
And to forever call this land home*

*She saw to the needs of her husband  
And to the cowhands on the old JA  
She was wife, mother, sister, doctor  
And preacher when they'd lost their way.  
Life in the canyon was lonely  
Her chickens her closest friends*

*Her undying love for the buffalo  
Stayed with her until her life's end  
Mary Ann Goodnight grieved and watched  
As progress raised its vicious head  
And as way was cleared for progress  
They shot the buffalo dead.*

*During the day she heard the rifles ringing  
And at night the orphan calves bawl,  
As these sounds echoed the canyon  
With their haunting lonely call*

*Her heart pained for the buffalo babies  
And her feelings she did convey  
So, Charlie went out and roped two for her  
The ancestors of these today.*

*The rest of the herd was swallowed up  
As if it had never been  
As the canyon walls loomed in silence  
And Mary Ann's buffalo lived within.*

*Millions once roamed the canyons  
But now there are only a few  
But thanks to Mary Ann "Molly" Goodnight  
Hers are here for me and you.*



Harold D. Bugbee (1900-1963)

*Miss Molly was Home, 1948*

Ink drawing on paper

Courtesy of the Panhandle-Plains Historical Museum, Canyon  
A vital part of the Cultural Foundation of the Texas Panhandle.

Kirkpatrick, Linda. 2002.

"Mary Ann's Legacy,"

*Somewhere in the West: Texas Women Who Left a Legacy*

Cowboy Miner Productions

The faculty, staff and students of West Texas A&M University  
wish you a blessed Christmas, happy holidays and a prosperous New Year.

On, On Buffaloes!



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WEST TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY.

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Please visit [wtamu.edu/OneWest](http://wtamu.edu/OneWest) or contact one of our staff to learn more about  
how you can be a part of this historic One West campaign.