



Student Name:
Class Period:
Date:

Meet the Originals

Texas Originals is a radio series about people who made an impact on Texas. You can hear it online and on radio stations around the state. Read or listen to the episode on Charles Goodnight. Then, answer questions about it.

Charles Goodnight 1836–1929

Charles Goodnight liked to point out he was born in 1836, the year the Republic of Texas was founded, and moved here in 1845, the year Texas joined the United States. A legendary rancher and trailblazer, Goodnight became known as the "father of the Texas Panhandle."

Goodnight was nine years old when his family arrived in Texas from Illinois. He served as a frontier scout and Texas Ranger in his youth, then entered the cattle business at the age of twenty.

In the 1860s, Goodnight and partner Oliver Loving established the Goodnight-Loving cattle trail, which curled northwest from Texas into New Mexico and Colorado. Their friendship and adventures formed the basis of Larry McMurtry's epic novel *Lonesome Dove*.

The following decade, Goodnight and partner John Adair built the JA Ranch—the first ranch in the Panhandle. There, Goodnight bred new strains of cattle and was one of the first Texas ranchers to use barbed wire. The JA Ranch eventually grew to over one million acres, including part of Palo Duro Canyon, and had a hundred thousand head of cattle.

As one historian wrote, Goodnight lived "intensely and amply," even into his nineties. He conducted agricultural experiments, founded a secondary school for the children of ranchers, and even tried his hand at film production.

Goodnight died in Arizona in 1929, but is buried in the Texas town that bears his name.

Check for Understanding: Answer the questions below based on evidence from the episode on Charles Goodnight. Refer to the text included above if needed.

1. Who was Charles Goodnight's cattle driving partner?
2. What were two innovations Goodnight used on the JA Ranch?

Going Further: Write or discuss your answer to the question below, supporting your answer with evidence from the episode or additional information you have learned in class.

3. **Creating Connections.** How long did the era of cattle drives last in Texas? Is this surprising? Explain.