

Cattle survive hardships

# Longhorn herds re-emerge

**United Press International**  
**CROSBYTON** — The look of the Texas Longhorn and its historic background has lured people into establishing ranches and registering 62,500 of the animals since 1964, industry officials say.

A descendant of Spanish cattle that Christopher Columbus brought to the New World, the longhorn managed for itself on the Plains, developing survival instincts unmatched by other breeds of cattle.

But the taming of the West meant the end of traditional cattle drives and the decline of the longhorn.

The breed faced extinction

when the federal government established a purebred longhorn herd on the Wichita National Forest and Game Preserve near Cache, Okla., in 1927.

Animals from this herd were used to develop another herd at the Fort Niobrara Wildlife Refuge near Valentine, Neb., in 1936.

Protected but left basically to themselves, the longhorns did well on the refuges, prompting the government periodically to sell some cattle to keep the refuges from becoming overcrowded.

A history buff, Dr. L.V. Baker of Elk City, Okla., attended one of the sales at the Wichita pre-

serve and purchased a few cattle to put on a lot near his home.

"We loved them so much that we kept buying more and finally bought a ranch to put them on," said Baker, now president of the Texas Longhorn Breeders Association of America.

A member of the association's board for nine years, he has more than 360 longhorns on two ranches near Vici, Okla.

Bobby Adams, a private longhorn consultant who owns about 30 longhorns on a ranch he manages near Crosbyton, said interest in longhorns reaches beyond those people traditionally associated with the cattle industry.

He said people building longhorn herds range from doctors and political consultants to plastic manufacturers and oilmen.

"They get caught up in the longhorn business and feel it's a good investment," Adams said. He said most start like Baker, buying a few at first because they like the longhorn's unique appearance.

"There is a certain amount of fascination," Adams said. "They all have different personalities. They all look different too," compared to a herd of Angus cattle, which are nearly indistinguishable from each other.

Nola Gee, who worked on Texas political campaigns and was part of former President

Nixon's administration for a year, selected longhorns to replace registered Herefords and Murray Greys on her ranch near Austin.

She bought six longhorns in September 1982 and now has 140.

"We've built a herd just about as fast as anybody could," Gee, 49, said during a recent telephone interview.

She and her 26-year-old daughter, Angela Acton, manage the herd, which is split between a ranch near Austin and another ranch near Huntsville. The family has some other cattle breeds on the Huntsville ranch.

They have established a 10-year plan for their longhorns, which includes breeding and marketing programs.

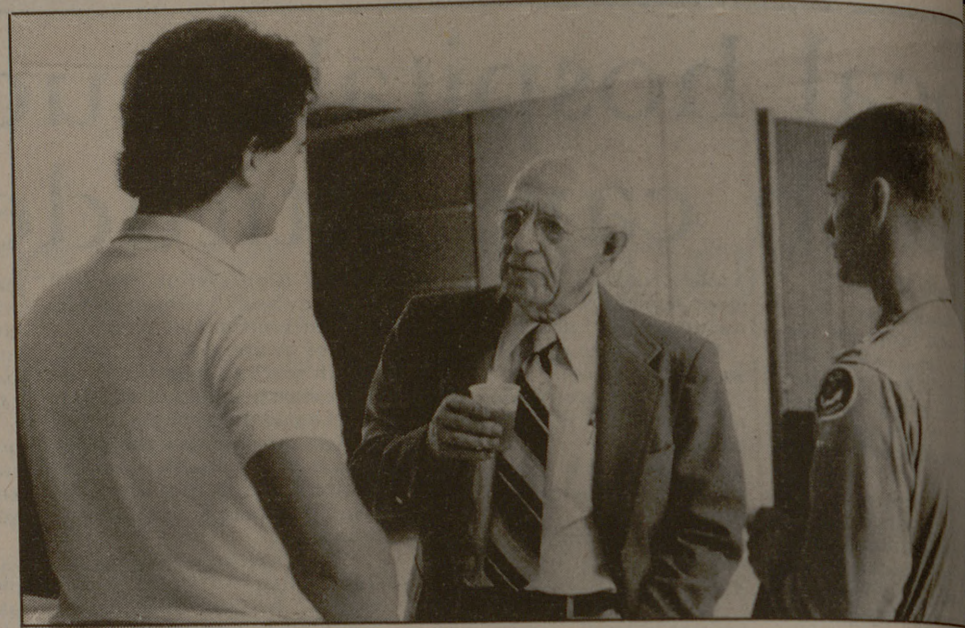
Gee said her daughter suggested longhorns because they were concerned their cattle were not making enough money for the Austin ranch.

"Everyone in the Texas longhorn business was making money on their cattle," she said.

"My husband is a federal judge. He says, 'I'll do the judging and you do the ranching,'" Gee said of 5th U.S. Court of Appeals Judge Tom Gee.

She said she decided to get out of the politics when they married. She turned to ranching. Neither she or Acton knew much about longhorns when they began, Gee added.

"We've not regretted making the decision," Gee said, adding she hopes eventually to build one of the largest breeding herds in Texas. She said most established longhorn herds have about 500 head.



Dave Scott, Battalion

Dr. C. L. Sonnichsen, president of the Western History Association speaks with students following lecture Monday night.

## Frontier feuds once centered in B-CS area

by Christie Johnson

**Battalion Reporter**  
 A noted Texas historian says Bryan and College Station lie in a region where Texas frontier feuds most often occurred.

Dr. C. L. Sonnichsen, guest speaker Monday night for a lecture series presented by the Texas A&M Department of History, spoke on his experiences as a grass roots historian researching Texas feuds of frontier days.

A grass roots historian usually does research in small country towns and searches for what he calls "forbidden fruit," Sonnichsen said. A grass roots historian is curious about topics people don't like to discuss and deals with folklore and folkways of different cultures, he said.

Sonnichsen said he became interested in Texas frontier feuds when he was in college

during the 1930s. Since then, he says he has managed to disprove several stereotypes associated with frontier feuds.

For example, Sonnichsen said many people believe frontier feuds were the result of trivial disputes between neighbors. But he said he has learned through research that Texans usually engaged in feuds as a means of seeking revenge.

Neighbors banded together in an attempt to put an end to horse thieves, he said. These people called themselves "regulators," and often would abuse their power and impose restrictions on innocent people, Sonnichsen said. This led people to form another group called the "moderators," who tried to stop the "regulators' corrupt tactics. Incidents such as these started feuds, he said.

Sonnichsen said he has found

evidence of more than 100 that have taken place since the early 1800s.

He often has difficulty with his articles published late to his research on frontier feuds, Sonnichsen said. Family members of those involved in feuds sometimes are hesitant to discuss the matter for fear of bad publicity.

Grass roots historians must wait until the evidence it is safe to discuss.

Sonnichsen graduated from the University of Minnesota in 1954 and received his Ph.D. from Harvard University in 1958. He is a researcher of Southern folklore and history. He is president of the Texas History Association and a past editor of The Journal of Texas History.

## Final A&M debate subject U.S. Marines in Lebanon

by Holly Powell

**Battalion Reporter**  
 An audience participation debate, sponsored by the Texas

A&M debate team, will be held tonight to discuss the U.S. military peace-keeping force's withdrawal from Lebanon.

This will be the seventh and

last audience participation forum held this semester, says Bruce Daniel, the assistant adviser to the debate team.

The debate team usually

sponsors one audience participation forum per month in abbreviated months of December and January.

"The forums are what we think are pertinent current issues either on campus or on campus."

The forum will consist of moderator calling on sides of the audience. This has prepared opposing speakers to give their arguments.

Anyone can give speeches for or against Daniel says. Tryouts are held a week in advance of the forum.

The initial speeches are seven minutes and just the outer boundaries of the arguments, he says.

Daniel says the main speeches are not to get the audience to participate in these issues.

After an hour of debate, a voice vote will determine the results.

The debate will be held MSC at 7 tonight.

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