

C-NOTES: TEXAS CATTLE DRIVES

EQ: How did the cattle drives impact Texas History?

BEGINNINGS	Spanish explorers brought the first cattle to Texas in the 1600s. Cattle herds were neglected during the Civil War and roamed wild on the South Texas Plains during the 1860s and 1870s.
CHISHOLM TRAIL	<u>Jesse Chisholm created the first cattle trail in 1865.</u> His first trail began near San Antonio, but by the mid-1870s the trail began at the Rio Grande near Brownsville. It stopped in Abilene, Kansas. Why Kansas? Because the railroads there could deliver the beef to other places in the northern/eastern U.S.
GOODNIGHT-LOVING TRAIL	<u>Charles Goodnight and Oliver Loving created their trail in 1866.</u> The two men wanted to take their cattle from Texas to Denver—the problem was the Comanches in the Panhandle were very dangerous. To solve this dilemma, they developed a route that was longer than just going straight to Denver, but it was safer.
ENDINGS	Texas Cattle Drives ended in the late 1880s for several reasons. 1. The invention of barbed wire. Farmers and ranchers used barbed wire to make fences on their property, blocking the cattle trails and limiting access to water. 2. Railroads. More railroads were built in Texas. Railheads and meatpacking plants were closer to the ranches, thus making cattle drives to the north obsolete. 3. End of the open range. Too many cattle grazed on crowded ranges due to increased fencing with not enough grass to feed all the cattle. 4. “Great Die-Up.” The terrible winter of 1886–87 killed over 500,000 cattle in Texas.