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*“Bill Koogle (1849-1915):
Mysterious Man of the West”*

By

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Chapter #1

Little is known about the early life of Charles Goodnight's friend and associate Bill Koogle before he came west. He was born William C. Koogle in Maryland in 1849. (Note #10) His family may have lived in the Frederick County area of Maryland at this time. He was stated to have come from a family of four sisters, each of which married well. He was enrolled at Gettysburg College in Pennsylvania shortly before running away from home at age 17 and going west. If this age is correct Bill Koogle may have arrived in Kansas as early as 1866 or perhaps it was a few years later. Anyway, he appears to have entered the buffalo hunting business in Kansas, probably as a lowly skinner before working his way up to shooting the bison. He seems to have eventually gained a reputation as a fine marksman and hunter during this time. Buffalo hunting along the Arkansas River in Kansas & Colorado was becoming big business around this time. He may have traded hides at Kansas outposts or even spent some time at Bent's Fort in Colorado. Bents Fort was a rendezvous place for hunters to sell their robes, restock their wagons and spin their yarns. Koogle is said to have spent some time in Colorado during this time. Nevertheless, his main exploits as a buffalo hunter and adventurer would come later, down in the Texas Panhandle.

Like many self-made men Koogle tried his hand at many occupations during his early years out west. Some of his multiple trades (or skills) included Bullwhacking, Fencing,

Cowboying, Freighting, Buffalo Hunting, Mining and even Gambling. A hobby he wasn't very good at. Although he never became famous for his own escapades & adventures Koogle did associate with some men that today are famous in the western field. During his lifetime he had such men as Charles Goodnight, Fred Patching and Will Lewis within his circle, just to mention a few.

Nevertheless, Bill was in Kansas in c.1877 when he came into contact with one important man of the West. This initial encounter was in the form of a message. Charles Goodnight had sent word to Dodge City for Koogle to come to the JA ranch in the Texas panhandle. It seems that the bison were no friend of Goodnights at this time and he hired Koogle to come to the Texas ranch and solve this problem. The JA although in its infancy would have a million acres under its control in the future and Adair and Goodnight needed to preserve as much of the grass and water as possible for their enormous cattle herds. The young Koogle who had obviously already earned something of a reputation as a Marksman & Buffalo hunter was soon on the trail with his crew, headed for Texas. Laura V. Hamner once wrote in her Texas school book: "Charles Goodnight had sent for Bill Koogle to come down from Dodge City to rid the ranch from the encroachment of the buffalo. With eighteen men, cooks and skinners and teamsters, Koogle killed out the herd that had cleaned the grass from off Lone Creek. Fifteen thousand was what he estimated to be his winter's kill." (Note #1)

It has been stated that by 1879 hunting the bison as a profession was over in the Texas Panhandle and elsewhere in Texas. What few bison that did still remain in the Panhandle were in few numbers, while more of the remaining bison had been driven south along the Caprock

into the Muchaque Peak area by then. Even the important hunter's outpost at Rath City in Stonewall County had closed in 1879. Soon the Rath Trail that stretched from there northward to Ft. Elliott in the NE panhandle to Dodge City would become just a cowboy, cattle and immigrant trail soon. Since it seems true that the Panhandle was free of the large bison herds by eighteen eighty, we can conclude that Koogle hunted the bison on the JA in the early years of the ranch. In fact by 1880 he had been hired by Goodnight to begin the fencing of the JA lands.

Goodnight had driven his first cattle herd into Palo Duro Canyon in the late fall of 1876, according to Judd Campbell but the JA ranch wasn't founded until Goodnight's trip to Denver in 1877. Winters in the panhandle occur from November through March so Koogle and his team may have done the 'big winter kill' of thousands of bison in late 1877 and early spring 1888. But it has been reported that Koogle had been in the Texas Panhandle as early as 1876. (Note #10) From this we can assume he had done some hunting here prior to his being hired by Goodnight. As reported by one of the cowboys when the Goodnight cattle from Colorado were driven into Palo Duro canyon, there were as many as 10,000 bison grazing the canyon! (Note # 24)

In 1879 an English writer S. Nugent Townshend and a photographer named J. G. Hyde came to the Texas panhandle and visited Goodnight and the JA ranch. A book was a result of their visit here. Also it may be more than a coincidence that Charles Goodnight began to view the Bison in a more conservative light in the years to come. Mrs. Goodnight had already felt empathy for the buffalo calves that the hunters left behind and had begun to rescue them. It's been suggested that the writer from England had encouraged Charles to try and save the remaining bison. Townshend was an editor for "The Field Magazine" established in 1853 in

London and seems to have been an animal conservationist. Dennis Kulvicki states, "Townshend may be directly responsible for this position change in Charles Goodnight." (Note #27) A former JA cowboy is part of an interesting story illustrating Goodnight's interest in preserving the buffalo in the 1880's. Here is an excerpt of that story.

"Mitch Bell once used Old Blue (a steer) to lead two buffalo, one a yearling and the other a two-year-old, from the Turkey Track Ranch to the JA. He found out then how the big steer would work. Len Brandon was in charge on that trip. Sam Cotter went along to drive the wagon, and Brandon and Mr. Bell rode horses. Most of the Buffalo had disappeared from the Plains when Mr. Bell went to work for the JA, and Colonel Goodnight was then gathering his herd which later became famous as one of the last two large ones in America. He heard of two buffalo up on the Turkey Tracks and sent Mr. Bell, Brandon and Cotter to get them." (Note #25)

Bison hunters had already been in the Texas panhandle hunting before Koogle arrived in 1876. A famous battle between panhandle Indians and buffalo hunters had occurred at the Adobe Walls trading post in 1874. Today some of the early hunters are famous. They include the Indian fighter Billy Dixon hero of Adobe Walls, the Cator brothers of Zulu Stockade, Frank Collison the writer and John Wright Mooar. Mooar had hunted along the southern part of the Caprock and was in the Texas panhandle just after an Adobe Walls battle. Most of these Texas buffalo hunters are surely more famous today than Bill Koogle has ever been. It is probably due to the fact that biographies and articles have been written about these brave men and sometimes by them. If it were not for the fact that Will Lewis the famous panhandle rancher had been Koogle's nephew, perhaps after Laura V. Hamner's lone paragraph above it should have been

stated: *This will be Bill Koogle's only mention in West Texas history except for a footnote or two.*

It is a fact however that Koogle's death in Clarendon was reported in the Grand Valley Times newspaper, out in Grand Valley county, Utah: *"William C. Koogle died in Clarendon, TX on June 1, 1915. He was well known throughout this section of Utah, having been engaged in prospecting in the La Sal Mountains for the past fifteen years. He died at his sister's home in Clarendon."* (Note#28)

Regardless of how unknown Bill Koogle is in western history, he is still remembered around Clarendon and Claude as the buffalo hunter that killed off the big herds in Palo Duro Canyon. But he has long been forgotten as the founder of the *Half Circle K Ranch*.

Chapter #2

Bill Koogle's next job on the JA appears to have been the building of countless miles of fence for Goodnight. By 1880 barbed wire had proven its worth on the Frying Pan Ranch of the Panhandle and the big ranchers were hauling in great spools of Glidden's magic wire to fence their ranches. At about this same time, Goodnight and Adair decided it was time to fence the mighty JA at Palo Duro Canyon. One source claims that the young Bill Koogle (and a partner) was contracted to do this enormous job. Perhaps however he was just hired to be in charge of Goodnight's fencing crew. Nevertheless Koogle is credited as the man that did fence the Palo Duro ranch. He seems to have also done some fencing on the southern division of the JA ranch, the Quitaque Lazy-F at about this same time. John Wright Mooar the noted bison-hunter and frontiersman freighted the wire from Colorado City and fencing had begun on the Quitaque spread sometime in 1881. (Note #5)

Perhaps it was during this time that Bill Koogle almost lost his life during an accident on the JA ranch. He appears to have been driving a wagon with a team of mules down the road not far from ranch headquarters. Perhaps the wagon's braking system was faulty or Bill dozed, nevertheless while coming down a steep grade the mules had a runaway and Bill Koogle might have been killed if not for 'jumping off the wagon' as it bounced wildly down the road and into the canyon. Today this bluff is still called 'Koogle's Jump Off' and the story is probably familiar to every cowboy that has ever worked on the JA. (Note #15)

In 1883 Bill appears to have met a young woman in Kansas City named Caroline B. Shannon and after a brief courtship Carrie and Bill were married there. She was a daughter of a town merchant and former mayor of the city, Patrick Shannon. He had a dry goods store on the levee which outfitted many peopled headed west. His daughter was from an upper crust family but little else is known about her except that she was a Catholic and probably didn't fit well with the protestant community of Clarendon. This panhandle town had been originally established by a Methodist minister, Rev. Carhart. However, we know that by 1889 she had bore at least four children for Bill. The firstborn was a daughter named Mary, who appears to have been born in early 1885 in Kansas City at the Corrigan home. The second child was a baby who died in infancy and was buried on Jan. 7, 1886 on a hill near Old Clarendon. (Note #5) Anna Virginia would be born in late 1887 and son Harry Joseph would arrive in April of 1889. (Note #13)

Not long after their marriage the newlyweds traveled to Frederick, Maryland to visit relatives. Among the kinfolk that welcomed them were Bill's sister Hallie Koogle Lewis and her husband Charles, parents of the legendary Will Lewis. (Note #3) Other relatives there included George C. Rhoderick and his wife Mary Koogle and Bill's parents the Adam Koogle family. It seems that Koogle's brother-in-law Charles Lewis and Charles's in-law (Ralph Jefferson of Washington, DC) became intrigued with Bill's adventurous stories of ranching in the Panhandle of Texas. Koogle no doubt had told them that land was cheap in Texas, grass was plentiful and that huge profits were being made by raising cattle. The railroad would soon make this area of Texas accessible and cattle shipping would be easier and he may have told them this also. At any rate, Jefferson and Lewis were impressed with his tales and being successful businessmen

they purportedly raised \$50,000 each to form a triangle partnership with Koogle. It is stated that Koogle himself had a large sum of money from his fencing ventures to invest. (Note #11)

According to plan, Bill was to return to Texas and use the capital to buy land, cattle, horses and equipment, and to build a ranch headquarters. (Note #3) Koogle and his bride did return to the Clarendon area after the Christmas visit. Then sometime in early 1884 possibly Koogle invested a good portion of the money raised in a ranch NW of Clarendon below the Caprock. It was a moderately sized ranch of 31,000 acres and was originally called the Bar-O. It was owned by three partners J.W. Sacra and brothers E.C. & J.W. Sugg at the time of the purchase. (Note #11) The ranch must have been located on the Salt Fork (of Red River) being more/less in the NW corner of Donley County. Some of the ranchland seems to have extended into Armstrong County however as ranch records are currently in the archives there also.(Note #8). Nevertheless, the ranch was stated to have been 18 miles NW of the townsite of old Clarendon.

The main part of the spread included 20 sections that were in a single tract of land, 12 miles wide. (Note #4) This part of the ranch was called the Franklin School Block and may have originally been owned by the Franklyn Land Company who did own the nearby Diamond F at the time. The ranch also was bounded on the north by an unfenced meadow. Koogle's plan was to free-graze this meadow and a vast area of public domain that joined the ranch on the west. The little ranch lay on the Westside of Carhart's ¼ Quarter Circle Heart ranch and the Diamond F ranch was on the north. The JA was the nearest ranch on the south. To the west was open range for miles & miles and this looked mighty promising for 'freegrazing', Koogle must

have thought. Anyway, Koogle & his partner's ranch were surrounded by ranches that counted their acreage in the hundreds of thousands. Their Circle K ranch was relatively small according to these and other 19th century ranches of West Texas, not to mention the XIT and the Long S.

Koogle went one step further and filed on 4-sections that joined the upper end of the ranch near the caprock in this open area. Here he built a fancy rock & wooden house near a little lake and conveniently it became 'headquarters' of the ranch even though it set on Koogle's private claim. Koogle next decided to name the jointly-owned spread after himself and he became the head of the newly founded Koogle Ranch. He wasted no time in designing & registering an appropriate brand for his new ranch, a half circle with a K inside. The brand of course was registered to Koogle, Ralph Jefferson and Charles Lewis. Not long after this, Koogle was in Clarendon buying supplies and hiring cowboys to work the Bar-O cattle he had purchased with his newly established ranch, the Half-Circle K! To say that Bill Koogle wasn't doing everything to his advantage in Texas while his partners were far away in Maryland would be an understatement!

Chapter #3

It appears that by 1885 Koogle had sold most of the original cattle and he discontinued the use of the Bar-O brand. In the summer of the same year he made arrangements to buy a big herd of cattle in faraway Tyler, Texas that were to be trailed to the ranch. He hired some irresponsible drovers unfortunately and many of the yearlings were lost. Also, a young Negro boy (Birl Brown) was picked up on the trail near Tyler and brought to West Texas without his parent's consent. This young lad was first put to use in the ranch house until Later he was adopted by Boney and became the cook's helper. At first there was controversy about the decision to keep the boy at the ranch as if he were an orphan. Koogle's reasoning was that he was much better off at the ranch than on the trail with the rough men that had brought him to West Texas. So no decision to return him to Tyler was ever made. Birl Brown grew up and became a fine cowboy of West Texas and if he ever returned home it was sometime after he grew to manhood.

After the beautiful ranch house had been built and the spread was well stocked with cattle Bill and Carrie's future must have appeared especially bright. He had come from being a lowly bullwhacker to a legendary bison hunter and now he was a full-fledged rancher, all in one decade! This was certainly something to be proud of. However his marriage was another story. Carrie proved too fragile for the frontier life and before long she was spending a lot of time back home in Kansas City with her sister, Mrs. Thomas Corrigan. Her sister's husband was a successful engineer and businessman of the city and soon Koogle had enlisted him to buy some cattle (5,000 head) and place them on the new ranch in a partnership also. Supposedly Corrigan

had agreed to pay the ranch a 'grazing fee' for the animals kept on the ranch. It is more probable that when Lewis & Jefferson found out about this side-partnership Koogle had cooked up, Bill hurriedly assured them that they'd be making money, too! Available sources state that Corrigan was charged a grazing fee per each head and he still had cattle on the ranch when it was disbanded in the late eighties. (Note #6)

In the first year of the Koogle ranch it appears that Bill may have indulged in his hobby of gambling and spent some of the investment money rather carelessly. Before long he began to buy cattle on credit without first consulting his partners. It was decided back in Maryland (the following year) that someone needed to move to Texas and assist Koogle or at least oversee the ranch operation. Ralph Jefferson and his wife Emma (who were living in Washington, DC) boarded a train for Texas and arrived in Old Clarendon probably in 1884 after an arduous trip from Dodge City or Wichita Falls, Texas. Not long thereafter he opened a grocery store in Old Clarendon and sold groceries and general merchandise. When the last partner Charles J. Lewis arrived in Texas the following year, it was just in time for Koogle to confront him about signing loan papers, too. Bill needed money to pay off ranch debts and soon the Circle K was operating on borrowed money. Perhaps not long after this Mr. J. H. Brush, a banker of Osage, Iowa took over the financing of the Circle K which meant that he held a mortgage on the ranchland & cattle. (Note #7)

After his arrival in Old Clarendon Ralph Jefferson operated the small grocery store until he also took on the job as postmaster of the one-horse town. Being a dandy who knew nothing about ranching he and his family had moved to Texas to more/less see what Koogle had

invested their life savings in. They surely weren't disappointed in the beautiful ranch that lay beneath the Caprock as it was in a picturesque area. Upon the Jefferson's arrival in town his talents as an actor and impressionist were discovered and this added to the social life around the frontier town. (Note #16) However, even though Ralph Jefferson was something of a sophisticated eastern type, like Koogle he also was inclined to drink. His habit of indulging would become much worse when he opened his store in new Clarendon in 1887 for liquor would be available there in Saloons. When he was on the wagon he was an astute businessman but as time went by Jefferson was less and less reliable. With Charles Lewis's help he was however able to hold on to his postal job until he returned to his eastern home in c.1889. Perhaps Koogle who is purported to have gambled and imbibed frequently may have been a bad influence on his partner or perhaps it was vice-versa. Which ever is now irrelevant but Ralph and Emma did stay in the Panhandle until the late eighties until the demise of the ranch. When they left Texas, Charles Lewis then applied for the postmaster job in Clarendon and was selected in 1890.

Not long after the third partner and his family had settled in Old Clarendon an arctic blizzard hit the central United States and the Texas Panhandle. This gigantic storm arrived in the panhandle area and hit the Circle K ranch on January 7th, 1886 while Bill and Carries baby was being buried. (Note #9) The Circle Heart ranch lost at least 500 cattle in one pasture near Old Clarendon and the storm dealt a crippling blow to the three partners of the Koogle ranch also. Luckily, the cattle nearer the Caprock had ravines and arroyos to seek shelter in. Therefore the Half Circle K had less frozen cattle to deal with once the storm subsided. Nevertheless, the

losses were substantial and the three partners found themselves deeper and deeper in debt at the ranch.

When the Fort Worth & Denver railroad reached Donley County in 1886 it missed Old Clarendon by 6 miles, to the south. Soon a new townsite was chosen and people started moving there and taking their houses and barns with them. By then Charles Lewis and Ralph Jefferson, who shared a building in the old town, decided their businesses must also be moved to the railroad. Soon it was decided that Ralph Jefferson would build a large, brick building there that could serve as Grocery Store, a Mercantile Store and a Post office. According to plan Charles Lewis was to occupy one side of the store with his dry-goods & mercantile while Ralph would maintain the rest. When Ralph was in one of the nearby saloons imbibing Charles could cover for him, just as he had done at the old location.

By this time Koogle was still on the ranch but his wife appears to have been spending a lot of time in Kansas City with her family. In fact she was so enamored with the city that she and Bill had decided to extend their lavish life-style and maintain a second home in Kansas City. (Note #8) It was a common practice among the big, panhandle ranchers to maintain a residence in Clarendon or Mobeetie along with a ranch house or headquarters on the ranch. The possibility that Bill Koogle's two residences may have been 500 miles apart just illustrates once more his inclination to be extravagant!

About the time of the big blizzard or soon thereafter, the young Will Lewis had begun working part-time on the partner's ranch. He was anxious to learn Cowboying skills that would be important to him in the future. He hated to be cooped up in his dad's store and the ranch was

ideal for a sixteen year old. He simply became intoxicated with the smell of mesquite, sage and the clean West Texas air. Red Williams the wagon boss didn't show much notice to the fact that Will was one of the owner's sons. He gave Will little slack and wouldn't let him participate in the jobs he wished to, initially. Red more/less followed Goodnight in that he made Will prove that he had the grit to work hard, before he could try the real cowboy part. Art Sherrod and Fred Patchin were however much more patient with the boy and assisted him anytime he found himself in need. During this time his uncle Bill was no help or hindrance to him as he was spending little time at the ranch and it was difficult to know just where he was. Will loved to swing a rope, to ride and to even polish his saddle. However there was something about the saddle one of the Mexican vaqueros rode that intrigued him. The Mexican's saddle had a leather enclosure on each stirrup, called a Tapadero. Will thought that this was the most ingenious thing he had ever seen, tapaderos made one less likely to get hung-up on a runaway horse he figured. In fact, one didn't need to wear cowboy boots at all to ride safely with tapaderos, he surmised. Someday he would own a saddle that had tapaderos, he decided!

Chapter #4

Sometime after Will began working on the ranch as a greenhorn it was discovered that part of the ranch's water supply was somewhat in jeopardy. This had occurred because near the headwaters of Allen Creek on the Caprock some 'school sections' were still owned by the state. Such land was available for settlement! The partners knew that whoever got legal title to this land would virtually be in control of the water supply for the land downstream. Charles Lewis's son Will was nearing manhood about this time and he supposedly decided that he and a cousin (Bernard Rhoderick) should try and claim this key piece of land. The young Lewis had grown up helping his father in his store but he was intrigued with horses, cattle & ranching even before his stint on the Koogle Ranch. Simply put, he wanted to be a cowboy and perhaps even a cattleman someday. Even though he was still a teenager Will was frugal and had already bought some cattle. Bernie his cousin was 3 years older and eligible to legally make a 'land claim'. Young Will Lewis may have said something like this, "Bernie, I'm not old enough to file but I've picked out some land over on Allen Creek. If you'll homestead there we'll become partners on a ranch! I'll furnish the money, and even furnish some cattle!"

This was probably the best if not the first business offer that the older Bernie Rhoderick had ever had! Soon Will Lewis and Bernard Rhoderick had established the Flying-W brand and were running cattle on 4-sections just below the Caprock on Allen Creek. They appear to have built a dugout there, in which they could spend time as this was a condition of the Texas 4-section land act. Nevertheless, this land appears to have joined the Koogle ranch on the west

end and was probably in eastern Armstrong County, where a portion of the Half Circle K ranch lay.

After Will and Bernie had the new land secured and before Will's cattle were moved there, they would have had to at least build a corral so the animals could be penned at night. If they had intended to run cattle there, without fencing the 4 sq. miles this would be the normal way of doing it. However, if the property had just been homesteaded to become an unofficial part of the Circle K a corral would not have been necessary at all, especially if Koogle had already fenced this acreage in! Much of the ranchland at the time did not fall into solid blocks, as one would expect. The state of Texas had labeled every other section (in many counties) as 'school sections' and much panhandle ranchland had these alternating sections. Such sections were reserved and held by the state for homesteading. On the Circle K the land that fell outside of the Franklin school block also would have had alternating sections. Therefore, when Koogle fenced the ranch he also fenced in many school sections. His west fence ran all the way to the Diamond F but there was a large meadow on McClelland Creek that neither ranch owned. It was 'public domain'! (Note #12) As a consequence there is a good chance that the young boys land was already enclosed within the Koogle ranch, when it was homesteaded! If this indeed were the case, the two boys probably just turned their cattle loose so they could graze the Circle K's land along with their own.

The year following the blizzard was especially rough and by 1887 the ranch owners were notified that their mortgage holder Mr. J.H. Brush would be in Clarendon in late July. He was requesting a meeting with the owners of the Half Circle K ranch. His main reason for coming to

Texas from Iowa was because he was one of the creditors of the large, Quarter Circle Heart ranch which was going bankrupt. The land holdings of the 300 sq. mile ranch and 30,000 head of cattle were dispersed overnight and Mr. Brush next turned his attention to Koogle, Lewis and Jefferson's thumb-nail operation. The meeting was to be held at Judge White's business in Clarendon but Bill Koogle was nowhere to be found and Ralph Jefferson who was 'silent partner' also stayed away. Since this left the 51 year old Charles Lewis to face the banker alone, he brought his young son Will along instead. Will had been working on the ranch for about a year and he knew more about the operation than either his father or Jefferson. But he was dismayed to learn that Koogle had convinced his partners to sign another Brush loan for \$15,000 in 1886. (Note #14) This money supposedly had been used to replace the cattle frozen in the blizzard. After the early blizzard snow in early January had melted it appears that little more moisture fell during the rest of 1886 as a drought followed the storm. The cattle herds were depleted by 25%, nevertheless the banker listened sympathetically and chose not to foreclose on the outstanding loans. Charles & Will were quite relieved as they left the meeting with Mr. Brush.

Over the next two years before the Brush loan came due a lot of changes occurred in Donley County as the railroad arrived here in 1887. Jefferson and Lewis were distracted from the ranching enterprise while moving their businesses to the new Clarendon townsite. Koogle appears to have become more responsible with his handling of the ranch by then. In fact when the spring of 1889 arrived the owners were optimistic that the cattle could be shipped to Chicago and the price there would be enough to satisfy the outstanding Brush loans. So, the

lions-share of the Circle K herd was driven to the loading pens in Carson County and soon Bill Koogle and the animals were on board the Panhandle-Kansas railway and headed for Chicago. At a stop in Canadian he instructed the lone cowhand with him to check the cattle and prod any that were lying down or trying to do so. When shipping cattle by rail at every stop, shippers had to repeat this process so that cattle would not be trampled.

Chapter #5

It is a little unclear as to what went on when the 39 year old Koogle first arrived in the big city. The only thing that has been reported is that he reached Chicago on schedule and sold the cattle for a good price. This would have been great news for the other partners down in Clarendon. But what happened next is best told by Charles Lewis' daughter-in-law, Willie Newberry Lewis: "He (Koogle) decided to take one drink to celebrate.....one drink was followed by another, which was the beginning of a protracted drinking and gambling bout."(Note #17) Mrs. Lewis goes on to say that some days later an employee of the stockyards stumbled upon Koogle in one of the Chicago saloons. By then he was broke, sick and didn't have enough money to get out of town on. Nor obviously did Bill Koogle want to return to Texas and face the other partners after what he had done. His stupid move would mean that the ranch loans could not be paid after all and that the Half Circle K was now lost! "What could Bill Koogle do, where could he turn, where could he seek refuge," he surely wondered? It appears that he turned to his former employer and friend, Col. Charles Goodnight for help. It is reported that the man who found him in his hour of desperation did send a wire to Goodnight on his behalf. Goodnight seems to have wired him some money, with instructions. Then he went into Clarendon to see Charles Lewis and tell Koogle's partner and sister what had transpired in Chicago. When Goodnight arrived at Lewis' store without much ado he said, "I telegraphed John Clay (in Chicago) to put your Bill on the train for Mexico! I have a silver mine in the Chihuahua mountains and there is not a saloon or gambling hall within a hundred miles. He'll be safe there and perhaps be able to pull himself together."(Note #17)

It is accepted among relatives and family descendents of Bill Koogle, that Bill did in fact gamble away the ranch money which ultimately led to the ranch's demise. It is published by reputable writers that Bill Koogle did have a gambling problem. (Note #11) However whether Koogle was sent to Mexico by Goodnight as reported is questionable. Although the Chicago fiasco is believed to have occurred in the spring of 1889, it is doubtful that Goodnight had yet invested in the mining venture in Mexico. To try and sort this out let's consider some related prior events.

John Adair died in St. Louis in 1885 and for 2 years his estate had remained unsettled. By late December 1887 Col. Goodnight was not yet the legal owner of the Quitaque Lazy F although an agreement had been reached between him, Cornelia Adair and Lysander Moore. The deeds of the ranch were yet to be sign over to the new owners Goodnight & Moore until in 1888. Furthermore, there purportedly was a five figure lien against the land and Goodnight didn't appear to have the money to pay this, which is probably the reason that L.R. Moore had become involved in the Quitaque Ranch deal. Goodnight was anxious to rid himself of a partner (Ms. Adair) and surely would have not wanted another partner in the new ranch if he could have afforded otherwise, When the final deal was struck Goodnight walked away with 1/2 interest in the Quitaque ranch's 159,000 acres and 10,000 head of cattle. Soon, Goodnight and Moore started a high-grade cattle company on the Quitaque Lazy F. They appear to have operated the ranch together for 2 or 3 years during 1888-1890. In perhaps late 1890 Moore bought Goodnight's interest in the Lazy F ranch. It was during this interval of time that Goodnight is said to have become involved with the mining venture in Mexico. Monte Ritchie (heir to the JA

ranch) states that after Goodnight went broke in Mexico with the mining venture; he began a new ranch at Goodnight, Texas on land that the JA had given him. (Note #15) If the sequence of events I have laid out is correct, this would have been in the 1891-92 period. Other sources claim that Goodnight homesteaded some land on the Ft. Worth-Denver Railroad, SE of Claude and this purportedly was the beginning the Goodnight Ranch in the Panhandle. Either way it doesn't seem likely that he was operating a mine in Mexico at the same time that Koogle sold the cattle in Chicago and squandered the proceeds.

So, after Bill Koogle had gambled off the ranch's money in Chicago, where did he flee to avoid his financial troubles in Texas? Family tradition says that he stayed away from Clarendon for many years before returning as an old man, more/less destitute. Between the spring of 1889 and 1900 the path that Koogle took to escape his problems is dim. However we do know that in 1900 he was working as an ore miner in Grand County, Utah. He is listed as W.C. Koogle, age 50 in the U.S. census records there. (Note #18) He also appears in the 1910 census of Grand county still working as a miner.

From these remote references we can conjecture that the story of Koogle taking refuge at Goodnight's mine in Mexico may have just been an extension of the truth. It is a fact that after leaving Texas he did eventually become associated with mining as he became a miner in Utah. But it is possible that he may have first traveled to Colorado and sought help from his brother there after gambling off the ranch. It is reported that at one time he did work for this relative at his Colorado tannery. (Note #22)

There is another mystery about the elusive Bill Koogle that is worth considering. It is no secret that he and his wife Carrie Shannon had begun to have marital problems even while they lived on the ranch. She frequently traveled home to Kansas City and sojourned there. It is a fact that some of their children were even born in Kansas, during these extended visits. When Koogle traveled to parts unknown and disappeared for a decade there is scant reason to think that his family joined him, where ever he went. It is more likely that his wife and three children returned to Kansas City to live permanently, after the ranch was lost. He may have visited them occasionally but he and his wife seem to have been separated for long periods of time for the rest of his life.

As early as 1899 his wife appears in the city directory of Kansas City. Then in 1900 his wife appears in the census of Kansas City as Carrie B. Koogle and is living in her mother's household (Mary Eleanor Shannon) in the 11th ward. (Note #19) She also appears in the 12th ward of the same census as the mother of 3 children and is listed as D. Carrie Koogle. Then in the 1910 census she is listed as a widow, which indicates she might have thought husband Bill had died even though he was still alive in Utah! He certainly 'was' alive when the census takers of Utah had recorded him in 1910 and also later!

Nevertheless, after Bill Koogle grew older and quit the mines in Utah, family traditions states that he returned to Clarendon and was accepted back into the family. The old buffalo hunter, miner and rancher spent his final days in Texas with his sisters and their families, the Charles J. Lewis and Bernard Rhoderick families. He is buried in Citizen Cemetery of Clarendon, Texas. and died on June 1, 1915 in Clarendon. This being three years after his

nephew Bernard Rhoderick was killed in a buggy accident there in 1912. (Note #8) The exact date of his death unlike many facets of William C. Koogle's life, was finally determined by the Utah obituary quoted near the end of chapter one above. (Refer also to Note #28)

As for the ranch Koogle helped found and manage during his younger days, the 'Half Circle K' appears to have fallen into the hands of Col. Charles Goodnight when the other partners could not pay off the loans in June 1889. Before taking over the Circle K land, Goodnight had sealed the ranch's fate by leasing the large meadow which had been free-grazed. (Note # 23) The ranchland then became the northern pasture of the new Goodnight ranch that the Colonel had established at Goodnight, Texas. Although history is unclear on Goodnight's last big ranching venture, this ranch may have had it's beginnings in the settlement of the JA ranch in 1888. (Note # 21)

NOTES:

#1...."No-Gun Man of Texas" by Laura V. Hamner / page 158 / published Amarillo, TX 1935

#2....Koogle did live in Colorado for a short time before coming to Texas. Since John Adair had an office in Denver, it is possible that Adair himself had hired Koogle and sent him to meet Goodnight in Dodge City.

#3...."Tapadero" by Willie Newberry Lewis / University of Texas Press / Austin-1972 / page-14 /

#4...."Tapadero" by Willie Newberry Lewis / University of Texas Press / Austin-1972 / page-15 /

#5...."The Cattleman" mag./ March 1959 / page 58 , page 18 /

#6...."Tapadero" by Willie Newberry Lewis / University of Texas Press / Austin-1972 / page-18, page 161 /

#7...."Tapadero" by Willie Newberry Lewis / University of Texas Press / Austin-1972 / page-19 /

- #8**....According to an interview with Mrs. J.C. Rhoderick, Jr. on Aug. 20, 2008 (in Silverton, Texas)
- #9**...."Tapadero" by Willie Newberry Lewis / University of Texas Press / Austin-1972 / page-67
- #10**..."History of North Mexican States & Texas" by Hubert H. Bancroft / A.L. Bancroft & Co, San Francisco--1889 / page 559
- #11**..."The New Handbook of Texas"/ published by Texas State Historical Society, Austin--1996 / volume 3, page 411
- #12**..."Tapadero" by Willie Newberry Lewis / University of Texas Press / Austin-1972 / page-15
- #13**...Dates taken from a 2008 letter to author, from John Dawson of Kansas City, grandson of Harry Joseph Koogle
- #14**..."Tapadero" by Willie Newberry Lewis / University of Texas Press / Austin-1972 / page-129
- #15**..."The JA Ranch: Monte Ritchie" / a VRC film / Produced by Carson County Square-house Museum, PO Box 276, Panhandle, Texas...c.1990 /
- #16**..."Amarillo Globe News" / Anniversary Edition --1938 / article by S.M Stocking / section D, pg. 30 /
- #17**..."Tapadero" by Willie Newberry Lewis / University of Texas Press / Austin-1972 / page-151 /
- #18**...U.S. Census of 1900 / Basin City precinct, Grand County, Utah
- #19**...U.S. Census of 1900 / Kansas City Kansas / 11th Ward / refer to: Mrs. Patrick Shannon and/or Mary Eleanor Shannon /
- #20**...According to an interview with B.F. Rhoderick on Aug. 3, 2008 (in Quitaque, Texas)
- #21**...'Amarillo Globe News' / January 18, 1976 issue / section F, page 21
- #22**..."Tapadero" by Willie Newberry Lewis / University of Texas Press / Austin-1972 / page-16 /
- #23**..."Tapadero" by Willie Newberry Lewis / University of Texas Press / Austin-1972 / page-152-153 /

#24... "A Comrade of the Trail" by Inez C. Enderud, 'History of Armstrong County', Vol 2, Pg. 6 / 1939

#25... 'Old Blue: Judas Steer' by Vance Johnson, Amarillo Daily News, January 7, 1938 issue

#26... "Tapadero" by Willie Newberry Lewis / University of Texas Press / Austin-1972

#27... A letter from Dennis Kulvicki (President. of The Star Day Foundation) to the author, dated Oct. 16, 2015

#28... Grand Valley Times, newspaper, Grand Valley County, Utah/ June 6, 1915 issue

Mail comments to the author at: col.rbt@gmail.com

Author: Robert W. Brown is a writer and researcher. He was born in Motley County, Texas at the end of WWII. His early education was at the Quitaque and Matador schools in Texas. After graduating in sixty-four he entered West Texas State at Canyon and took general studies for 2 plus years. After leaving college he became self-employed for many years and took up library research as a hobby. Aside from a couple of prior newspaper articles his first noteworthy publication was 'Browns Index of Southwest Painters' published in 1996 and is used internationally. Newspaper articles credits include: The Valley Tribune, Paducah Post, Briscoe County News, Pampa News and the Amarillo Globe Sunday. Brown has also compiled an 'Index of West Texas Bands & Musicians' and was awarded the '2012 Pioneer Award' from the West Texas Music Hall of Fame in Ft. Worth. He is Listed in an edition of: 'Who's Who in the South and Southwest' published by Marquis Who's Who.

FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT:

Dennis M. Kulvicki
Editor-In-Chief
THE TEXAS BISON STUDENT STUDY GROUP JOURNAL
The STAR DAY Foundation
P. O. Box 640010
El Paso, Texas 79904-0010
(915) 751-2244
dennismkulvicki@thestardayfoundation.org
<http://www.thestardayfoundation.org>