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GRAND CANYON BUFFALO HERD

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THE GRAND CANYON BUFFALO HERD

(Taken from Report on the American Bison Society)
1924-1925-1926

The Grand Canyon herd of buffalo in Coconino County, Arizona, is the only unrestricted herd now on the Public Domain, and it also comprises the only buffalo in the State of Arizona. This herd originated from buffalo owned and driven there in 1905 by the late Col. C. J. Jones, "Buffalo Jones." Their range is located north of the Grand Canyon in what is called House Rock Valley, between Lee's Ferry and the Grand Canyon of the Colorado River. This so called valley is a plateau like strip about forty miles in width at the southern end and runs to a point at the northern end at Lee's Ferry, and lies parallel with the Colorado River; between the upper rim of the Grand Canyon and the bottom gorge through which the river flows. This place is so enclosed by natural barriers that no fencing has ever been necessary to keep the herd on this range since they were first located there; twenty years ago. This House Rock Valley is about seventy-five miles from the nearest town or settlement and the sheep and cattle ranches and other habitations are very few and far between for many miles around.

The various strains of blood represented in the assemble of the original Grand Canyon herd of buffalo made it the most mixed herd as to blood; in the United States. In 1893 Jones sold his entire herd of pure-bloods and catalo to Michel Pablo and Charles Allard of Montana for $18,000. The pure bloods were turned loose on the Flathead Indian Reservation with the buffalo then owned by Pablo and Allard. The catalo were kept by themselves on Horse Island in Flathead Lake. In 1905 Jones bought back all the catalo and some pure-blood buffalo---fifty-two head in all---from Michel Pablo, and twelve bulls from the Corbin Estate. He also at the same time bought the entire herd of thirty-three pure-blood buffalo from F. J.Molera at Monterey, California, this gave him a mixed herd of ninety-four buffalo and catalo. Jones killed a number of the bulls and located the balance, about sixty head, north of the Grand Canyon in House Rock Valley. Some few years later Jones moved part of the herd over into New Mexico and these were known as the Jones' herd while those left on the Grand Canyon range----about seventeen in number---came into the possession of the present owner, James T. Owens. The Molera or Monterey herd was of pure blood and originated in the early eighties when Mr Molera bought from a small showman in San Francisco a fine bull for $500, and place it on his Monterey ranch, a few yea later he purchased a full-blood cow from Buffalo Jones at Garden City, Kansas, for which he paid Jones $700 for the cow and [300 freight from Kansas to Monterey, California. These two animals bred a number of calves. In 1894 at the time of the Mid Winter Fair in San Francisco, an exhibitor brought seven buffalo from the East. Mr. Molera bought these seven buffalo and placed them with the others on the Monterey ranch, and some ten years later sold the entire herd to Buffalo Jones. The twelve bulls purchased from

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the Corbin herd were descendants from the Bedson herd and wild calves caught by Jones in the Panhandle of Texas, and from buffalo purchased in Kansas. The herd bought from Pablo were mostly catalo but a number were pure-bloods from the Pablo herd, therefore it appears that the blood in the Grand Canyon herd is made up from numerous strains as follows: The Bedson herd, Pablo herd, Corbin herd, Molera herd and buffalo from Texas, Colorado, Kansas and Oklahoma, and also a good sprinkling of catalo.

When Jones was about to leave the Grand Canyon, is associate, James T. ~~XXXXXXX~~ Owens selected seventeen of what he judged to be pure-blood buffalo, these he took in lieu of a settlement, as Jones at that time was financially embarrassed. Jones drove his herd of buffalo and catalo out of the country, and in 1915 disposed of the last of them and never again owned any buffalo.

The seventeen buffalo that were left formed the nucleus of the present herd and have increased until now they number about one hundred head. One of the animals in this herd is what is known as a pinto or spotted buffalo, he is about ten years old and a monster in size, and is said to be over six feet from the ground tto the top of his shoulders, but his general appearance indicates a mixture of domestic blood.

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REPORT OF ARIZONA STATE GAME DEPARTMENT 1926-1927

Buffalo Herd

During the month of December 1927 a deal was consumated between Jas. T. Owen, ~~***~~Uncle Jim--and the State Game Department whereby Arizona became owner of ninety-eight head of buffalo. These animals range in the famous Houserock Valley and will be a great attraction to tourists coming into southern Arizona by way of the new bridge below Lee's Ferry on the Colorado River. In 1927 seventeen of the older animals were taken out of the herd by hunters. The hide and head of one largebull went to the State University for a live size specimen for the University Museum, one,--an old cow--was retained by the Game Department for a robe and the other fifteen skins and heads were taken by the hunters. All meat except one hundred pounds from each animal which the hunter received, was sold by the Game Department and the money used for game protection.

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