

## Chapter 19

# Goat and Sheep Ranching

It is almost impossible to discuss sheep and goats without the mentioning both since the two breeds arrived in Texas at the same time. Although there are certainly differences between the two animals there are also closely identifiable similarities such as size and weight as well as in usefulness to man such as wool and edibility. These animals are remarkably easy to handle and maintain when considering the fact a knowledgeable herder with trained dogs can manage a large number at one time on an open range.

Modern day sheep ranching in Texas is thought to have originated as early 1691 with the establishment of the first Spanish mission in east Texas, San Francisco de los Tejas near the present day town of Crockett in Houston County.<sup>1</sup> The initial herd size is estimated to have been approximately 1,700 animals between the two breeds.<sup>2</sup> The trend of the Spanish expanding their building of missions across east and south-central Texas continued at a steady pace. With the founding of San Antonio in 1718, they constructed five missions along the San Antonio River from 1716 to 1731 that today are a National Historical Park.<sup>3</sup> In 1747 the Spanish Army constructed Presidio La Bahía at the present-day city of Goliad located on the San Antonio River some 91 miles southeast of San Antonio and 26 miles southwest of Victoria. La Bahía was both a garrison and mission that served as the agricultural center for that area like all the other Spanish missions.<sup>4</sup>

Noted art dealer, Ken Duperry stated he is aware of at least a dozen Spanish mission paintings that Darge painted during his travels throughout south-central Texas. Some with figures and some without. The Texas Mission Guide lists a total of twenty-eight missions built throughout the state by the Spanish between 1632 and 1793. The missions extended as far north as Dallas.<sup>5</sup>

By the late 18<sup>th</sup> century cattle, goats and sheep had become an agricultural industry in south central Texas and the Rio Grande valley. The producers of all agricultural products are constantly searching for new markets to sell their commodities even if it takes major changes to make a successful transition. Within the confines of goats and sheep, it took the thoughtful introduction of new breeds and refinement to expand these markets. In the case of sheep, it was the introduction of the Merino and Rambouillet breeds that were needed for the higher-quality wool the weaving mills in New England needed after devising new manufacturing techniques. The change in goats was similar in circumstances. Goats introduced by the Spanish were short-haired and were generally raised for human consumption

of their milk and meat. The big change was the introduction of the Angora species from Turkey, noted for their long silk like hair.

Many parts of Texas experienced disruption from the three very different cultures of Native American, Spanish and Anglo all trying to protect and maintain their own territories. Major battles would be fought between the Spanish and the encroaching Anglos who wanted to claim for themselves what the Spanish felt they already owned. And battle they did, sometimes to the very bitter end as at the Alamo Mission from February 23 to March 6, 1836. Texas finally gained its independence from Mexico with the defeat of the Mexican Army on April 21, 1836 at the battle of San Jacinto by the Texas Army commanded by one of Texas's most famous heroes, Sam Houston. With the defeat of the Mexican Army, Texas became a Republic. Nine years later on February 26, 1845 the Republic of Texas was approved by the U.S. Congress for annexation and on December 29, 1845 became the 28<sup>th</sup> state inducted into the United States of America.<sup>6</sup>

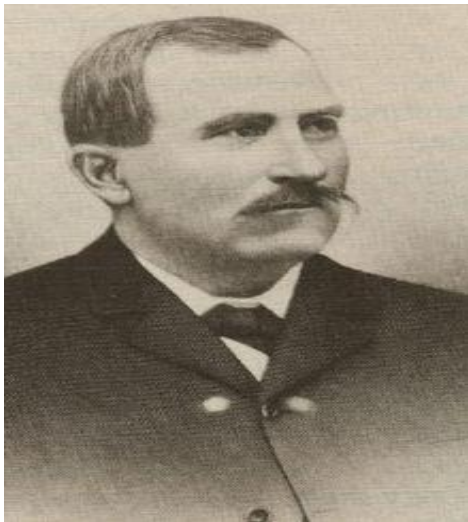
The advent of the American pioneers in addition to statehood brought many new families to Texas seeking fame and fortune. Many found what they were looking for, but as with anything else it was always an uphill struggle and many endured hardships. Sheep production in Texas began to change dramatically in the timeframe of the 1830s thru the 1840s with the introduction of the new breeds. Between 1840 and 1850 herds of Merino and Rambouillet sheep arrived with the Germans and Scots who settled throughout the Texas Hill Country. The area of the Edwards Plateau is at the crossroads of West Texas, Central and South Texas north and west of San Antonio. San Angelo, Austin, San Antonio and Del Rio roughly approximate the outline of the Texas Hill Country. Settlers from throughout the Midwest and the Ohio Valley relocated to Texas with their herds of purebred sheep. Texas was the place to be to raise sheep.<sup>7</sup>

The first Angora goats came to the United States in 1849. They made their way to Texas sometime between 1857-1858 with the help of William W. Haupt of Hays County, Texas who originally acquired eight of the prized purebreds from another rancher in Georgia. Haupt immediately began crossbreeding the Angoras with shorthaired Spanish goats that were prevalent throughout Texas. As with most successful ventures, when it was recognized as successful it didn't take long for other ranchers in Texas to try to duplicate Haupt's success. Crossbreeding of the two goat species began slowly and eventually gained momentum throughout the whole country.<sup>8</sup>

The impact of the American Civil War, 1861-1865 affected Texas industry and agriculture as well as other states whether they were members of the Union or Confederacy. There seemed to be no winners. Some of the manpower, estimated at approximately 90,000 Texans that had been involved mostly in agriculture, became part of the Confederate Army.<sup>9</sup> The 1860 census listed the Texas population at 604,215 residents which included the slave population of 182,566. The population in all probability continued their regular vocations in agriculture.<sup>10</sup>

The end of the Civil War brought peace and reconstruction, but normality was slow in returning. Agriculture was one of the first. George W. Kendall, (1809-1867) was a journalist, who with a partner, established *The New Orleans Picayune* newspaper in 1837. He was also a soldier and war correspondent.<sup>11</sup> Kendall and three friends set up a partnership in 1852 and ventured into the sheep ranching business in the Texas Hill Country north of New Braunfels. Because of his early efforts to introduce Spanish Merino rams and Chaurro ewes, he is credited as the father of the modern sheep ranching industry in Texas. Kendall's knowledge of journalism and experienced advertising were used to market the attributes of sheep ranching in the Edwards Plateau and Trans-Pecos area that would eventually set off a period of accelerated growth and economic development. New ranchers came to Texas from everywhere, including California. The new growth of the 1870s reached its zenith in the 1880s.<sup>12</sup>

The popularity of mohair with consumers escalated the demand for the soft fiber. The earlier introduction of Angora goats followed the almost identical development of growth in the same area of the Edwards Plateau and Trans-Pecos area as with sheep. Goats, being a different breed of animal, were more capable of enduring a more semiarid climate and brushy environment than sheep. So much so that goats were often used to clear land so that more grass would grow under trees.



Charles A. Schreiner Sr., Undated Photograph

No writings of early day cattle, goat and sheep ranching in Texas could possibly be complete without the inclusion of Charles Armand Schreiner Sr. (February 22, 1838 – February 9, 1927). If there have ever been men who have approached greatness in Texas history because of their business acumen and accomplishments, Charles A. Schreiner Sr.'s name rightfully belongs on that list. He is widely respected and noted for his accomplishments in ranching, general investing, merchandising, banking, innovative financing, politics and philanthropy. He made his mark in Texas history by excelling in all.

Charles A. Schreiner, born in Riquewihir, Alsace, France, at age fourteen, emigrated to San Antonio with his family after arriving by boat in Indianola, Texas in 1852. His father Dr. Gustav Schreiner died shortly after they arrived in San Antonio.<sup>13</sup> At the young age of sixteen, Charles joined the Texas Rangers and served with distinction from 1854 to 1857. It is thought the reason for joining the service of the Rangers was to help support his mother. A long-term career in law enforcement was not to be the desire of a young man whose real preference in life would prove to be business. Following the death of his mother Charlotte on February 23, 1857, Schreiner resigned from the Texas Rangers in order to start two new businesses that would become several of his lifelong professions.<sup>14</sup>

As was common with young men of that era, cattle ranching became one of his occupations

that was be the beginning of a long and successful business career that eventually encompassed many other associated businesses. His first venture was the start of a small cattle ranching operation in the vicinity of Turtle Creek south of Kerrville. With the financial help of brother-in-law Caspar Real in 1858, they purchased a small general store in Camp Verde located some 13 miles south of Kerrville. Schreiner and Real contracted with the War Department to supply beef and other provisions to the military.<sup>15</sup>

Camp Verde was a former military base experimenting with camels as a beast of burden, hopefully to be used throughout the southwest in lieu of horses and mules. The experimentation began in 1856 with the arrival of the first group of twenty-four Arabian camels from Egypt via a naval supply ship. The second group of forty more camels arrived in the spring of 1857. The overall experiment was considered a success. The camels passed every test of their ability – carrying heavier loads and traveling longer distances than the customary horses and mules. During the winter of 1861, the Fort was captured by the Confederacy. When the Fort was recaptured by Union troops in 1865, there were more than one hundred camels. The Fort was deactivated in 1869 due to lack of funding and the thirteen-year adventurous experiment that turned out to be a historic success ended without fanfare.<sup>16</sup>

In order to keep the general store and ranch supplied, Schreiner always made regular trips to San Antonio some sixty plus miles southeast of Camp Verde. It was on one of these trips he happened to meet Mary Magdalena (Lena) Enderle, a native of Germany, (born June 15, 1843 – died September 8, 1905). They married November 13, 1861 in Bexar County, San Antonio, Texas and became life-long partners. Their marriage produced eight children born between 1862 and 1881.<sup>17</sup>

The start of the Civil War quickly brought many changes to Texas and altered the lives of many even after the war ended. It seemed to have changed just about everyone because of the unexpected daily uncertainty. Schreiner enlisted in the Texas Confederate Army in 1861 as a private and served for over three years. At war's end he returned to his ranch on Turtle Creek and rejoined his family. Returning home after service in the war became a process of rebuilding. Reconstruction in Texas was difficult and Schreiner and Lena would endure unexpected financial difficulty and hardships for the next several years as they rebuilt their lives and their ranch.<sup>18</sup>

Never ones to stay down for long, the Schreiners moved to Kerrville in 1869 and with the financial aid and support of August Faltin of Comfort, a short distance southeast of Kerrville, went into the general merchandising business. It was a business that Schreiner knew well from his experience at Camp Verde. The new business of the Faltin and Schreiner Mercantile Company prospered as the town of Kerrville developed and grew. Although the railroad would not reach Kerrville from San Antonio until October 6, 1887, Kerrville was a town destined for growth. Within ten years, Schreiner bought Faltin's interest in the store and his business empire continued to grow.<sup>19</sup>

Besides his business interests, Schreiner was also very busy with Kerr County politics. He

simultaneously served as both Kerr County Clerk and District Clerk. He also served as Kerr County Treasurer for thirty years from 1868 to 1898. He was almost a one-man courthouse. Serving in these three county offices gave him a valuable knowledge that would later help him in his banking business that was located inside the Faltin and Schreiner Mercantile Company.<sup>20</sup>

In the late 1800s almost every business in Kerrville was within walking distance. The presence of Native Americans continued to be a hazard and annoyance that required a volunteer militia to be organized in 1875. Schreiner was elected captain. It would be a military standing he would proudly retain the rest of his life. He became Captain Charles A. Schreiner.<sup>21</sup>

Never one to be satisfied with the status quo, Schreiner was always looking for new business ventures and ways to improve current operations. Although unclear as to what year this transpired, the Charles Schreiner Company was formed to put all his business interests under one roof. His activities were general merchandising, banking, ranching and marketing of wool and mohair. Along with the marketing, the enterprise also provided such services as warehousing, transportation facilities, and a unique and exclusive commission sales system for wool and mohair that played a primary role in the expansion of both goat and sheep raising in the 1880s and 90s. It was the first enterprise in America to value mohair and Kerrville, Texas would soon become the "Mohair Center of the World."<sup>22</sup>

It is almost hard to envision, but in a thirty-year span of time from moving to Kerrville in 1869, Schreiner assembled a business empire of remarkable fortune and magnitude. By 1900 the Charles Schreiner Company owned 600,000 acres or 938.5 sections of ranch land extending eighty miles northwest to Menard from Kerrville. Considering a section of land is 640 acres and is one square mile, even in those days, that was a Texas size ranch assembled by an astute hard-working Texas business man. His vision of the future was immense.

Schreiner's ranching empire greatly expanded in the 1880s with the purchase of the now famous YO Ranch. This 27,000-acre ranch became the headquarters for the Schreiner Cattle Company. In addition to the YO, he also purchased the Live Oak Ranch and other properties which became the headquarters for his mammoth cattle, goat and sheep operation.<sup>23</sup>

Schreiner had always conducted his banking and finance operation inside the mercantile store. In 1893, with both businesses thriving, he separated the bank from the store and established an unincorporated bank that still operated on the second floor of the store. The bank was eventually moved to a separate building in 1914. As an unincorporated bank, the Charles Schreiner Bank relied on the personal financial strength and standing of the Schreiner family. In 1917, Charles Schreiner divided his many businesses among his children. The bank went to Louis A. Schreiner, which was fair since Louis had worked at the bank since it separated from the store. The bank continued to operate this way until 1959 when it became a chartered bank under the guidelines and regulation of the State of Texas. Louis Schreiner worked at the bank until two days before his death at age 99 in 1970. Some twenty years later, Schreiner Bank, after 97 years of operation, unfortunately failed on April 9, 1990.<sup>24</sup>

When loaning money to cattlemen, Schreiner and his bank always insisted that a portion of

the funds be used to diversify and add goats and sheep to their livestock herds. The reason this same policy continued under the leadership of Louis Schreiner was the belief, like that of his father, goats and sheep helped pay the bills no matter what the economic conditions were at any given time. It was a well thought out practice that helped the bank and quite a number of family ranches during the drought and the struggling, lean and unpredictable years of the Great Depression.<sup>25</sup>

Captain Charles A. Schreiner died February 9, 1927, but not before providing 140.25 acres of land and an initial endowment of \$250,000 in 1917 to establish the Schreiner Institute that opened in 1923. The school was recognized as Schreiner University in 2001 and currently has an enrollment of fourteen hundred students. Schreiner family members have generously added millions over time and have created a permanent endowment.<sup>26</sup> The University is not only an exceptional accomplishment on the part of Schreiner, but to have other family members gifting additional funds that secured the future endowment is noteworthy. It is an extraordinary way to honor their father and his memory.

Not with-standing his exceptional lifetime achievements, Captain Schreiner understandably and rightfully so has been designated *father of the hill country*. He withstood the defeat of the Confederacy and all the hardships and poverty that ensued at war's end to become a giant of a Texan with his own remarkable story.

During the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century the number of sheep in Texas grew significantly to a peak population of 10,829,000 units recorded in 1943. That year growers sheared 80,713,000 pounds of wool.<sup>27</sup> The population of the State of Texas that year was 7,012,000.

The record high population of Angora goats reached 4,612,000 units recorded in 1965. That year growers sheared 31,584,000 pounds of mohair. The herd sizes and corresponding mohair production steadily declined afterwards in response to the final loss of price supports that eventually ended during the President Clinton administration.<sup>28</sup>

Every artist is credited with a special work that is referred to as their *signature painting* although there may be several pieces that are worthy of that category. In the case of Fred Darge, *Old Pedro the Goat Herder* is one of several. After many years in a private collection, it became Auction Lot #36404 that sold at a Heritage Auction on May 15, 2007.<sup>29</sup> The purchaser was noted Dallas businessman and art collector Sam Wiley. This one painting not only set a record price for a Darge painting, but awakened collectors to early Texas art and the western genre that Fred Darge was a wrongfully neglected and often under-rated artist. This one painting brought the realization that Darge certainly deserved more attention. *Old Pedro* was no longer just another *goat* herder; overnight he became the talk of the town with both dealers and collectors and deservedly so.





**Old Pedro the Goat Herder**, 36" x 30", Oil on Linen, Circa 1950,  
Courtesy of Heritage Auctions 2007

Completed in the Big Bend circa 1950's, *Old Pedro the Goat Herder* highlights the remarkable artistic gifts of Darge. He was a very driven and inspired artist that so effectively delivered the best of his capabilities in this simple, but eye-catching full-length portrait. Everything Darge strived to paint is expertly rendered in this piece. Along with the superior use of light and shadows, both animals and human are natural and perfectly depicted in location and landscape.

The one plausibly artistic license in *Old Pedro the Goat Herder* could be the very fancy high crown wide brimmed expensive felt hat made by the John B. Stetson Company. Extraordinarily good paintings need exceptionally good hats. Cowboy movies were the hits of the early movie industry and it didn't take long for these hats to become part of the western genre. It became a must have item for the many actors in the cowboy movies. It is obvious that Darge became influenced by Hollywood that made famous the huge ten-gallon hats that was the trademark of the first cowboy movie star Tom Mix.

These exceptional hats worn prominently by Mix (January 6, 1880 – October 12, 1940), in his acting career during the 1920s-1930s when he was starring in numerous western films had a great influence on western wear and many wore the Mix ten-gallon hat. Judging from his art, Darge was obviously also taken in by this style of hat because he painted many of his cowboys as well as shepherders wearing these hats made famous by Mix. He also painted these hats in several self-portraits. There is nothing wrong with adding a little Hollywood to his colorful art work, it is all in a day's work.<sup>30</sup>

Perusing the life of Fred Darge, it is very clear that the Big Bend held a special place in his heart. No doubt he considered it to be his second home. There was just something about this special place on earth that consistently magnified his extraordinary talents. It can be said that the inspiration of this region released Darge's innate gifts of capturing on canvas the bountiful beauty of mother nature and the people who endured and often thrived.

Darge made great use of mountains in the background, the sky above, foliage from front to back and was diligent in including sunlit shadows. These natural treasures were always there for the taking and Darge made generous use of these extraordinary gifts for his paintings. His ability to capture the outdoors is exceptional and will always be remembered.



Every artist is constantly challenged and tasked with the chore of finding what they think will be a great scene to transfer from vision to canvas that will live on into eternity, plus sell. When Darge first saw Pedro tending his goats, he knew immediately he had his next painting and several others, plus images for wood carvings. There was just something about Pedro that captured Darge's attention.

**A Friendly Encounter**, 20" x 24", Oil on Canvas, Circa 1950's, Collection of Mr. and Mrs. Robert E. McKee III

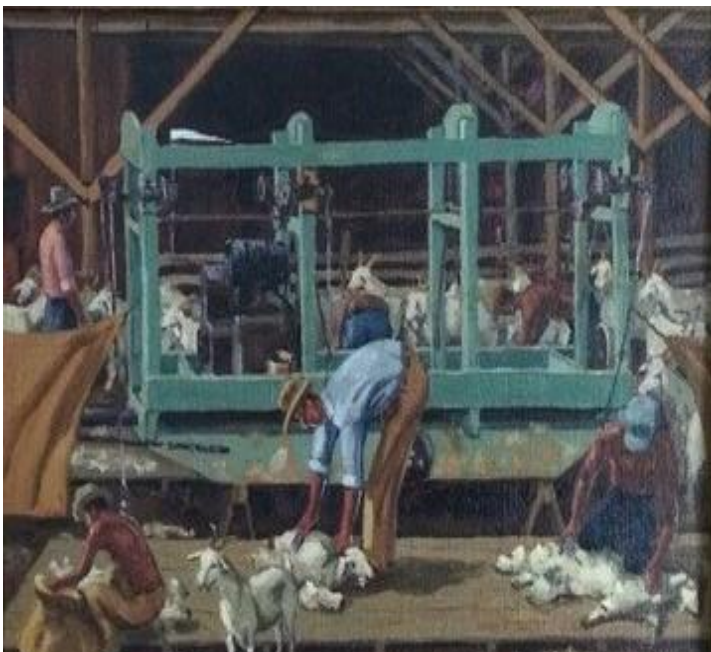
It seems odd that Darge did not sell both of these paintings during his lifetime. The reasons these beautiful paintings were still in Darge's possession at his demise will never be known. It is likely that collectors of his art will always wonder. More than likely the answer to this question could be the prices Darge was asking.





**Sheep Round Up**, 12" x 16", Oil on Canvas Board, Courtesy of David Dike Fine Arts, Circa Late 1940's, Trans-Pecos Area.

During research and the viewing of a large number of Darge's paintings, it became apparent that many more paintings of goats had surfaced while there were very few with sheep. Knowing about the large number of Darge paintings that had been seen over the decades by Ken Duperry, an inquiry was made to him. He said, "When I bought the collection of paintings from Mrs. Cruce, there were less than a handful of paintings of sheep and they were all small." <sup>31</sup> With that question answered as it was, it appears that Darge could have been more partial to goats and their individual personalities and colors. Perhaps the fact that sheep appear to all look the same, but goats are a diversity of colors and therefore more interesting to paint.



**Shearing Season**, 8" x 10", Oil on Canvas Board, Circa 1930's, Collection of Konrad Shields

Research revealed this small painting, similar to the Nau Collection's *Shearing Season*. Darge often painted these small studies for large paintings that would be done during the winter months in his Dallas studio. This piece appears to be the study for the larger Nau painting. The detail in this painting is exceptional, making it an historical work. It would have required much more work than could have been completed on location. It is understandable that Darge would have wanted to fully execute this piece when he had more time to attend to each figure and minute detail.



Shearing Season, 24" x 30", Oil on Canvas, Collection of John L. Nau, III Collection of Texas Art

The cash crop of goat and sheep ranchers is wool in the sack. In the Big Bend area, it was the practice of the Wilson ranch to shear twice a year in April and August. This historically important painting thought to have been done at the Wilson ranch shearing shed, demonstrates shearers (trasquiladores) hard at work shearing goats. The best shearers could fleece 200 sheep or 250 goats per day. It was hard back-breaking work, bent over all day working and moving as fast as they could to make a good day's wages since they were paid by the unit. They were often better paid than most Hispanics because there was an essential amount of skill involved and required special machinery. <sup>32</sup>

The turquoise framed assembly holds a gasoline engine that powers a rotating shaft on the top of the frame that moves the rotating long arms that in turn move the blades on the hand-held shears. This particular unit was hauled on either the back of a truck or in all likelihood was carried on a trailer. The unit depicted in this painting is an older type shearing machine circa 1920's. By the 1930's trasquiladores were mounting gasoline power plants on the back of trucks that ran an electric motor and electric shears. <sup>33</sup>

In as much as Darge excelled in painting sheep and goat scenes, it appears that cows and horses were more saleable and therefore more financially beneficial. Survival of most artists is usually uncertain; income is not guaranteed. During Darge's painting career, the art market survived, in varying conditions, wars, the Depression and ensuing economic collapse and the Dust Bowl. Additionally, artists survived the changes of styles and genres that were old and

**new, in fashion and out. Regardless, Darge never varied from his original intent – to paint what he observed as people lived their daily lives.**