

A HISTORICAL REVIEW  
BY  
LONIS WENDT

*The Life & Times  
of  
Scotty Philip  
"ON THE DAKOTA PRAIRIE"*

1875-1911

### SETTLEMENTS ALONG THE BAD RIVER IN 1890'S

Bad River Tree

**THE SCOTTY PHILIP MEMORIAL TRAIL RIDE MAP**  
with original trail location  
**THE "BAD RIVER TRAIL"**  
Sponsored by  
VERENDRIE MUSEUM ASSOCIATION  
FORT PIERRE, SOUTH DAKOTA  
July 16-29, 2011

Scotty Philip

Sarah 'Sally' Philip

SCOTTY PHILIP  
THE BUFFALO KING

Midland Main Street, looking east, 1908.

Scotty Philip  
Photographed 1910



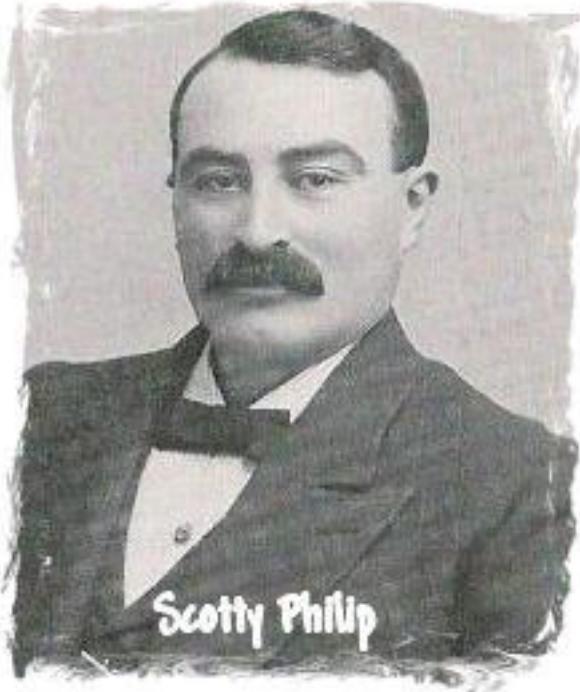
***“THE MAN WHO SAVED THE BUFFALO”***

## REMEMBERING SCOTTY PHILIP ON THE BAD RIVER TRAIL

### Introduction

#### Historic Bad River Trail Ride July 17-July 23, 2011

History, horses and riders gathered at Philip, SD on July 16, 2011 to retrace the original, historic Bad River trail. The riders descended down the Bad river to the river town of Ft. Pierre, and arrived on July 23, 2011. The six-day ride was



sponsored by the Ft. Pierre, SD Verendrye Museum Association and, highlighted a 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary commemoration of the death of Scotty Philip who, is often recognized as... *The Man Who Saved the Buffalo*. In conjunction with this event, the town of Philip, with Glynn Parsons and Chip Kemnitz as co-chairmen, hosted its first ever, “Scotty Philip Days” celebration, also commemorating the life and times of Scotty Philip, Horse races, quilt show, comedians, music, food, dancing and a special guest, “Cody the Buffalo” were offered as crowd-pleasing

activities, keeping folks entertained and busy. The Pony Express delivered the mail to the Philip Postmaster, speeches by historians and a family history by Sheila Philip, Scotty Philip’s grand-niece, preceded the unveiling and dedication

of a bust of Scotty Philip which was presented to his namesake community. The life-size bust was commissioned by the city and sculptured by Ray Kelly, formerly of Midland. The Midland community, guided by Beth Flom, also held a celebration in the Midland City park with good food, music, games, a special appearance by Scotty Philip(Mark Nelson) and a historical program. A large crowd attended the festivities.

Scotty Philip is generally recognized as one of the most extra-ordinary, innovative man who was prominent in the early development of the cattle industry in what became known as “west river” South Dakota. Scotty’s entire adult life was spent mostly in Haakon, Jackson, Jones, Stanley and Lyman Counties and, included a two-yr. stint in the 1899-1900 SD State Legislature and served as the Chairman of the first Stanley County Commission. Scotty Philip died at age 53, from a cerebral hemorrhage on July 23<sup>rd</sup>, 1911. Mr. Philip had spent over 30 years of his life raising cattle, buffalo and partnering in multiple business ventures within this vast, “best grass in the world” Bad River country open range, bounded on the north by the Cheyenne river, the White river on the south and the mighty Missouri river on the east. Many will remember the funeral service for Scotty Philip as a day when, hundreds of toughened, range-savvy, hard-drinking, cussing cowboys, Indians, bankers and businessmen from nearly every ranch, round-up wagon or town in western South Dakota congregated at the Philip ranch headquarters and, “with tears coursing down their faces, wept unashamedly.” Another oft-repeated story tells of the famous buffalo herd drifting over the bluffs to witness the last rites for one of South Dakota’s favorite sons!

The Bad river, which drains almost 3200 square miles of Haakon, Jones and Stanley counties, was first called the “Wapka Sicha”(meaning “bad”) by the Indian people, the “Little Missouri” by the Verendrye brothers in 1743, the “Teton” river by Lewis & Clark in 1804.

. Participants and visitors who followed the old trail were offered a magnificent, panoramic view of the real “Bad River” in its natural state, its colors, its wide, fertile flats, old Indian village locations and its flood-carved, steep river banks, evocative of what the Verendrye brothers would have seen so many years before. Another highlight was the following of a route across a portion of the Turner Buffalo ranch, where Scotty Philip’s “Saving the Buffalo” legacy lives, between grass-covered plains and blue sky. We

also visited original post office locations, old log homes, a giant tree, race track locations, river crossings and an aging walk-bridge, once used during high-water periods, allowing ranchers to tend herds or get the kids to school from either side of the raging river. Along the six day, 90-mile trail ride, we visited several small, mostly abandoned towns, which had been established when the railroad forged its way west in 1906. Among those town-sites were Powell, Nowlin and Midland, still a viable, busy, small town on the river, located equally between the Missouri and the Cheyenne rivers and the location where the towns founder, J.C. Russell, first opened his General store in 1890, a store often visited by Scotty Philip and his neighbors. Going on, we visited Capa and its single citizen, Phil O'Connor, Bovine, Van Meter, Wendte, Teton and our destination city of Ft. Pierre. The original Bad River Trail mostly followed an old Indian trail to and from the Missouri. By 1881, pioneers were using the trail as a route to civilization at Ft. Pierre and Pierre, to buy essential supplies and to access the steamboats and trains. Among those many travelers were Scotty Philip, Dan Powell, the Jarmin's, Madsen's, Ducheneaus, LaPlante's, Livermont's and others for more than 25 years.. A graded, mostly graveled road now serves the locals and visitors but, in bad weather, prepare to find a cowboy with a long, long loop!

The earliest permanent residents were squatting ranchers who survived by taking Indian wives Once the home to Indian villages, open-range cattle companies, homesteaders and real-life, bronc-bustin' cowboys, the river is now home to scores of honest, hard-working, progressive, ranch families. Throughout the years, Bad river residents have endured devastating floods, ice jams, drought, drownings of both man and beast, dangerous crossings, grasshoppers, the plow and an abundance of nature's gifts. Most ranchers are gallantly trying to keep the precious grass right-side-up!

After their arrival in Ft. Pierre, a community sponsored parade, the Pony Express mail delivery was completed, a feast, speeches from assorted dignitaries, and a dance welcomed the exhausted trail riders.

The "Bad River" has many a tale to tell and many yet to be written.

*Louis Wendt*



### Prologue;

Writing a memorable, historic recap of South Dakota legend and 1958 Cowboy Hall of Fame member, Scotty Philip, is a daunting challenge and an honor.

Our task will be flavored by the many books, verbal stories and a multitude of articles which have appeared in innumerable newspapers, magazines and county Historical Society collections. It is my desire to create a historic awareness for current and future generation of South Dakotans by relating the sacrifices and successes encountered by one of our earliest “West River” pioneers. James “Scotty” Philip found his calling among his many, “home’s on the range” along the White, Bad and Missouri rivers. Hopefully readers will enjoy this brief historical interlude which is directly connected to the area in which we live.

Thanks to all who contributed to this collection of true west history.

# *THE LIFE AND TIMES OF SCOTTY PHILIP*

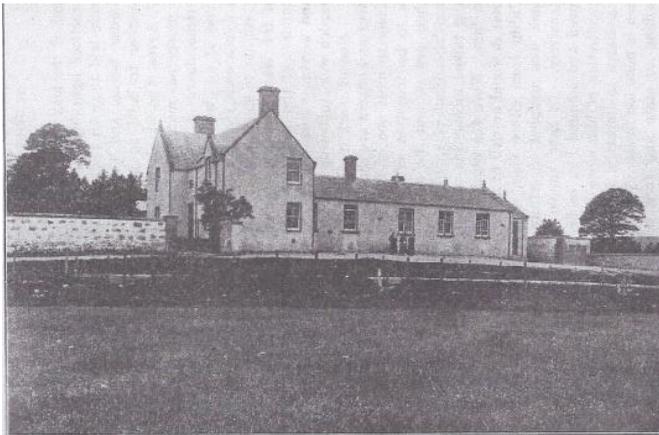
## *Chapter one;*

### *"The Wind In My Face"*

*by Ionis wendt*

Our story begins!

James "Scotty" Philip, like most immigrants to America back in 1874, was ready to follow his dream of finding a fortune in the New World. James and two of his brothers had arrived at a colony home of his oldest brother George, near Victoria, Kansas, with practically no money, and no prospects of having any.... without a lot of hard work, or, some unforeseen good fortune. Jamie or James Philip, as he had been



The Birthplace of James Philip

christened back home in Scotland, was only seventeen when his dream was fostered when, at the age of 15, he had read letters from his brother George, describing the beautiful and bountiful plains of this great new world. With determination, he joined his two brothers on an

ocean voyage to America. While making his way to Kansas he noticed that along with rolling plains and gentle rises, frequent fences were seen, but, this was supposedly open range and thousands of cattle were running at large. He was informed that the fences were placed to "keep the cattle out of the fertile fields, rather than keeping them in" a pasture. After just a few months of helping his brothers get started, helping with the harvest and doing menial jobs for neighbors, the urge

for more experiences, excitement and the desire to “make it on his own,” dominated his thoughts. Occasionally, comparisons of how his homeland in the Scottish Highlands, with its constant fog, mountainous terrain, and rocky soil differed from the fertile, flat, treeless plains of western Kansas invaded his mind. He began thinking of faraway places where he might find his fortune. News about the gold to be found in the Black Hills was circulating every day. He wondered if he should tell his family back in Scotland of his plans. James had been the “seventh born” to a family of five brothers and four sisters, and whose parents had taught the siblings to care for each other and, to stay in touch. This family lesson allowed Scotty to send and receive many letters to family members and associates throughout his lifetime. One of his letters from home wrought a recollection of grammar school and his having ran in a special “blindfold” race with other kids as part of a school activity. James, being bigger than the other kids, probably could have won every race, but on this “field” day the teacher had asked him and the other students in the interest of fairness, to run the race blindfolded....The race was ran. James did not stumble or falter and won the event. After the race the teacher had asked quite sternly; “how did you stay on the path?.....did you.....peek?” Scotty replied; “No Ma’am.... I just kept the Wind In My Face!”

**Scotty Philip kept the “WIND IN HIS FACE” the rest of his life.**



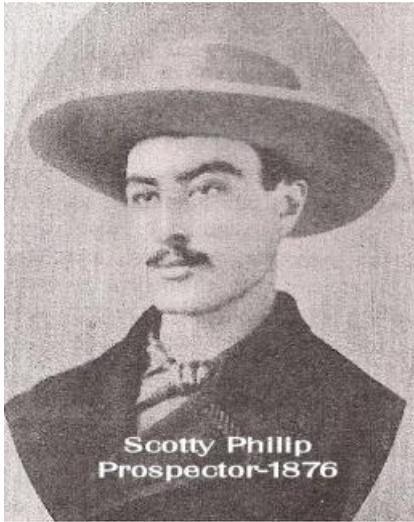
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# *The Life and Times of Scotty Philip*

## Chapter two:

### *Where's The Gold?*

James "Scotty" Philip, in making preparations to leave, was probably quite anxious and apprehensive as he packed everything he owned into his bedroll and saddlebags, said "so long" to his brothers and, with the wind in his face, rode west. James finally arrived in Dodge City, Kansas, but after just a few days, found the town distasteful. Wild Bill Hickok, the most notorious of



gunfighters, was the "law and order" Sheriff at the time. It may have been, that while at Dodge City, James may have felt his first inclination of the impending demise of the buffalo as he observed the thousands of buffalo hides loaded on train cars, and, from hearing of organized buffalo hunts being planned. He also reckoned that the Continental Railroad workers had a daily need for food and that their army of hunters, by regularly giving chase, had actually split the great hordes of buffalo into "north" and "south" herds. His lifelong concern for the buffalo was probably born in the heart of what became "cattle drive" country. His concern for the plight of the Indian would

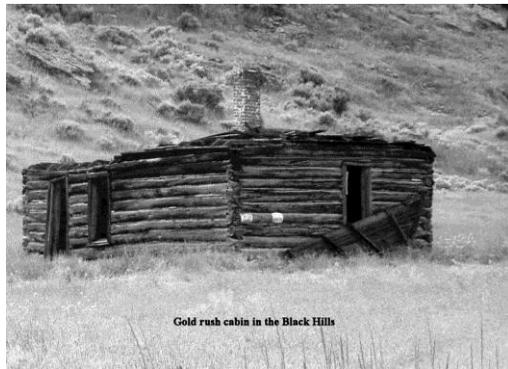
come just a couple years later.

Keeping the wind in his face, James decided to move on northwest toward the wild, frontier town of Cheyenne where, it seemed, every healthy male in Cheyenne was preparing to go to the Black Hills as soon as the snow melted. Wanting no part of the gold rush, James took a job with an area rancher near Chugwater, Wyoming Territory. However, by July of 1875, James, though he liked ranching and taking care of livestock, had changed his mind, he would draw his pay, outfit himself, then join a group of prospectors for a trip to the Black Hills. He penned this letter to his brother dated *Aug.27, 1875, Cheyenne Wyoming; My Dear Brother: On the*

*eve of starting out, I did not receive the box you sent. I am taking with me 250 lbs of flour, 25 bacon, 6 of powder, 20 of sugar, salt, etc, 7 of coffee and tea, \$35 for a pony, \$5 for ammunition, a whipsaw, strychnine and an overcoat. I don't know whether I am right or not. However, if this is my last letter, good bye all. With kind love to all, I remain; Your loving brother, Jamie.*

Following their arrival at a “tent city,” which was in the southern Hills, everyone in the party quickly spread out in search of a profitable claim. Scotty, as he was addressed by nearly everyone in the party, was impressed by the grass, the timber and the abundant water. After just a few days of prospecting, and helping lay out the town of Custer, they were arrested by soldiers and abruptly escorted back to Ft. Robinson. After a few days the men were released without a trial and ordered to return to Cheyenne. Predictably, by early spring of 1876, the gold fever urge had returned. Scotty made up his mind to chance a return to the hills. This trip would be different. He decided to partner up with a young man named Boston Smith, and together, the two young men would blaze a dangerous, new route, by circling

North-east through Sioux country, presuming to avoid military patrols and roving bands of Indians wanting a white man’s scalp. It would have taken considerable courage to attempt this 240-mile ride through unknown territory. Together, they planned to “strike it rich” in the Black Hills of Dakota. The trip went well except for one particular spine-tingling incident on their journey which occurred when, Scotty and Boston awoke one morning to find their picket ropes had been cut and their horses gone. They were now afoot a hundred miles from anywhere and were wondering how or why they still had their scalps! After hiding their saddles and other items, the two began tracking the natives on foot. Three days later they caught up with a band of



Gold rush cabin in the Black Hills

warriors and saw their still-haltered horses grazing nearby. Avoiding discovery, they formed a plan to get their horses back after darkness had set in. Moving stealthily in the dark, they reclaimed their horses, then, hearing gunshots, took off in different directions, hoping that at least one of them would make it out alive.....!

***\* As a footnote to this incident;*** *25 years later, while driving a large herd of steers across the Missouri to be loaded on train cars at Everts, Scotty's horse began floundering in the muddy, swift-running river. After sliding off the horse and hanging on to the stirrup to lighten the load, Scotty realized they weren't going to make it.....suddenly a small dinghy approached, earlier that morning, Scotty had asked its operator to watch for cowboys in trouble, never, ever thinking it would be him....., then, after the rescue and seeing the horse make it to shore, the two men began talking, incredibly, the ferryman was none other than Boston Smith. During this reunion each discovered for the first time that the other had survived. The gunshots they'd heard were Boston scattering the Indian's ponies.*

When Scotty, and their party arrived at Deadwood Gulch in the northern Hills, thousands of gold-seekers, overflowing with anticipation or disappointment, were milling about in every direction. Scotty and another partner quickly sold their horses, bought mining tools and equipment and immediately set out in search of finding the right claim.

Scotty Philip wrote this letter to his brother in Kansas: *July 19, 1876; My Dear Brother; Arrived here on the 16<sup>th</sup>, looked around, took a claim, and went to work today. I and another fellow are working together. We commenced a hole today, 10' by 10' by 6 feet..... I intend to write a little each day, until I get a chance to send it. July 21<sup>st</sup>; Still very unsatisfactory. We have dug one hole, 11 feet deep and it came on wet so we gave it up without a cent's worth! It will be a pity if this is a failure for gold for this is a nice looking place. We have begun to dig a drain nine feet deep and going to dig until we find something..... or quit.*

*July 24<sup>th</sup>; I have no money, not even 50 cents.....still working, the young fellow is going back disheartened, but I mean to stay, I have 100 lbs of flour left and mean to work until that is done. Goodbye, I remain your affectionate brother. Signed, James Philip.*

It was just a matter of days before Scotty Philip decided that the real gold was on the top of the ground.

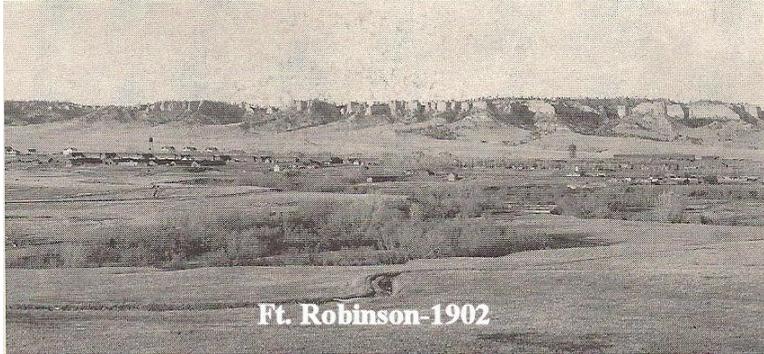
**He would raise cattle on the luscious, green grass of the Dakota prairie.**

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## THE LIFE AND TIMES OF SCOTTY PHILIP

### Chapter Three : "**Home On the Bad River**"

Early the spring of 1877, James "Scotty" Philip had made up his mind to leave the Black Hills. He had spent the winter months sporadically trekking out to scratch and dig for the glittering gold dust, eager for a miracle, but with no tangible luck. Scotty was able to survive the winter by taking odd jobs around the "tent" city of Deadwood, mostly chopping firewood for those lucky ones who had struck it rich and, who would pay good wages rather than swing an axe. In February of 1877, Scotty, just 18 yrs. of age, learned that the Sioux Treaty of 1877 had been signed and it was now legal to live in the Black Hills. Even this long-awaited news failed to change his mind. Scotty's dream of finding wealth in the Hills had faded and as soon as the weather warmed a bit and he could afford the fare, his intent was to return south, maybe returning to his brother's home near Victoria, Kansas. Finally, with the wind in his face, Scotty left for Camp Robinson, stayed around a day or two, then, headed on south to Wyoming Territory. At Ft. Laramie, Scotty took a temporary job as teamster, a job for which he had little experience, but he had a way with animals and learned quickly. After a couple months he drew his pay and headed back north, to the area around Camp Robinson where grass and water were in abundance, a great place to start a ranch. As usual, his cash flow was short, he needed money with which to get a start and buy cows. About this time, just after the Custer massacre, the plains Indians were informed that they would be spared if they turned themselves in to different Army outposts. The peaceful Chief, Red Cloud and his band surrendered and began gathering in villages around Camp Robinson, meanwhile the Army, to prevent uprisings and skirmish's, continued increasing troop and horse numbers. The Post Quartermaster, realizing there would be great need for winter feed, began offering \$15.00 for each ton of hay delivered to the Post. Scotty seized the opportunity, using all his savings to purchase "used" haying equipment from the local Indian agent, and quickly locating some excellent, unclaimed hay

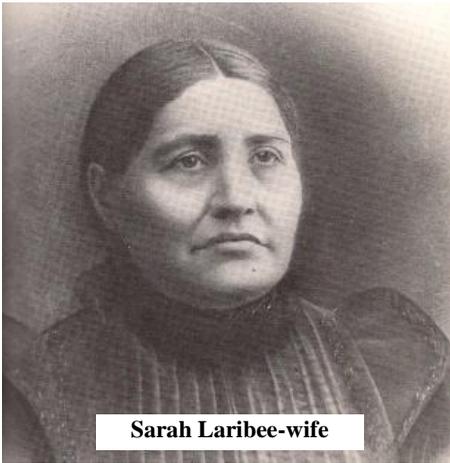


meadows reasonably safe and close by. The location was along the White river, approximately eight miles north of Camp Robinson, west of

Crow Butte and close to the Sidney-Deadwood trail. This site became his first ranch headquarters. Needing help for his haying operation, he found an out-of-work man named George Clark, with whom a partnership was formed, and together, they began the task of mowing, raking and stacking the nutritious hay. On the second day, one of his horses broke a leg which resulted in Scotty, going in to debt for the first time, to buy a team of mules. Later, Indian retaliation caused several of the stacks to be burned, forcing them to move the hay to their nearby headquarters or into the Camp as quickly as possible. The partners delivered 40 ton of hay to the Army and kept what was left. The \$600.00 seemed like a fortune to Scotty and Clark. Scotty repaid his debt and bought another team and more cows. While working at Camp Robinson, Scotty, and his future brother-in-law, J.E. Utterbeck, the Post blacksmith, were usually present at daily briefings, keeping them abreast of military and Indian movements all around the Great Sioux territory. Scotty wrote this author-edited letter to his brother George in Kansas: *Nov. 4, 1877: My dear Brother: I learned that the Indians have left Red Cloud Agency. They have gone down to the Missouri. My partner has gone with a load of*

*freight. We get .06 a lb. He will be gone a month. I don't think the Indian war is over yet. The Sioux were very dissatisfied at moving. I can talk a deal of the Sioux language. The Black Hills is getting better and I think it will be a good country yet. Enclosed you will find a sample of the Black Hills gold. Your loving brother, James Philip* \*\*

**In October of 1877 the Red Cloud Agency was moved to the Missouri River, near the mouth of Yellow Medicine Creek(today's Medicine Creek in Jones and Lyman Counties). This location was never accepted by Red Cloud's nation. Less**

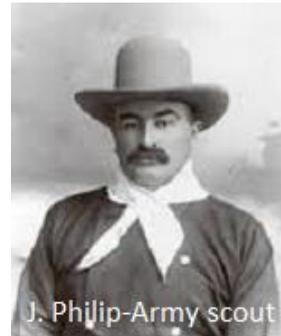


**Sarah Laribee-wife**

**than a year later they were returned to what is now the Pine Ridge**

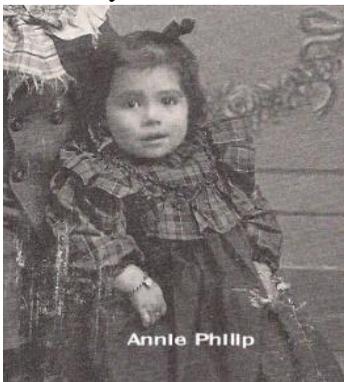
**Reservation.** Joe Laribee, a Frenchman with a Cheyenne wife, was Scotty's nearest neighbor along the river. The Laribee's large family included four beautiful daughters, all of whom married famous South Dakotans. The eldest, Helen, married the great Indian Chief, Crazy Horse, second daughter Julie, married prominent White river rancher/banker Mike Dunn, third daughter Zoe married J.E. Utterbeck,

who later owned the vast Anvil ranch south of Belvidere. Fourth daughter Sarah, had caught Scotty's eye and he began spending considerable time at the Laribee home. They would marry a year later. January of 1878 was unusually cold and snowy, temporarily bringing the freighting business to a standstill, giving Scotty another opportunity. On a visit to the now re-named Ft. Robinson, Scotty was asked to be a Scout and Courier for the Army. It was an "only when needed" job, with good pay and, he could continue operating his small ranch. Scotty quickly gained a reputation for being fearless and dependable when couriering messages through dangerous, hostile Indian country to distant Army outposts and Indian villages. This job allowed him to form



**J. Philip-Army scout**

friendships with several Military Officers and noteworthy chiefs of the day and, to acquire a profound disdain for the Governments treatment of the Indian. Oftentimes, when joking with other young men, Scotty had said, “to make something of yourself in this country, you need a wife, a home, a family, something to work for!” Heeding his own advice, Scotty and Sarah, or Sally, as everyone called her, were married at Ft. Robinson by the Episcopal Missionary, John Robinson in the early spring of 1879. After a dance and celebration the couple moved out to Scotty’s small cabin. For a wedding gift, Sally’s father, J.C. Larabee, gave the couple several head of cows to help get them started in the cattle business. After living a year near Crow Butte, a baby on the way, and being crowded by new settlers, the Philip family moved into Dakota Territory a few miles north of the Nebraska border. They settled into a log cabin on White Clay Creek, near the border of what is now the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation. Scotty continued the lucrative freighting business to support his family and to buy more cows. As the birth of their first baby neared, Scotty stayed closer to home, and was there when the first of ten children, daughter Mary was born in early 1880. As quickly as Sally and the baby were healthy, Scotty resumed his freighting business. While returning from a late trip to Ft. Pierre, he detoured down along the Bad River where, in every direction, the grass was tall and lush, trees for shelter were plentiful, and water flowed from numerous springs in the river bed, literally, a paradise on the plains. He finally chose an area near a big bend in the river between Grindstone and Medicine creeks. After returning home, he told Sally what he had found. Sally, being half Cheyenne, was entitled to an allotment on the Great Sioux Reservation.



Annie Phillip

Scotty surmised that, as a white man with a half-Indian wife, he could survive there by, “staying away from trouble!” Both agreed that they should make use of the allotment and move immediately to the Bad River site. This land had not yet been surveyed, therefore no claim was ever filed. With Sally driving the freight wagon and Scotty herding the cows and horses, they left White Clay Creek and headed north along the old Ft. Laramie-Ft. Pierre wagon road. As they followed the White River to the northeast, little Mary took sick,

seemingly, worsening by the hour. There was not a doctor within a hundred miles, no medicine nor any “old wives tales” that worked. Mary died the next day.(No photo of Mary exists.) She was less than six months of age. Scotty and Sally buried their firstborn, “in a beautiful place” near the old trail along the White river. After arriving at the ranch site, Scotty and Sally, with sadness and remorse, built another log cabin home on high ground. They would spend nearly 20 years here, raising a family and growing their cattle operation along the Bad River, 80 miles west of Ft. Pierre and nine miles east of today’s Philip, SD.

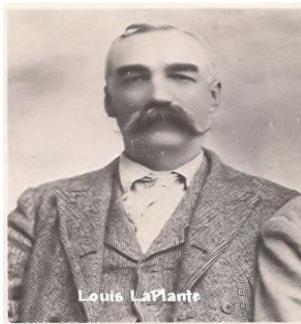
**James”Scotty” Philip was on his way to prominence as a cattleman.**



# THE LIFE AND TIMES OF SCOTTY PHILIP

## Chapter Four: *The Open Range*

James “Scotty” Philip and wife Sally endured a few months of living in a small, primitive dugout while their log house was being built. (*The dugout was located in a proximity, north of the old ranch site, and possibly beneath what is now Hwy 14, nine miles E of Philip, SD.*) Soon after the house was completed, a second daughter, Emma, was born. Scotty and Sally vowed to take better care of this baby. The small herd of cattle they had driven to the Bad River was in excellent shape, cattle prices were high and the grass was growing. Scotty sensed a growing animosity from scores of restless, white ranchers, who, without Indian wives, were unable to settle on the reservation or able to make use of the abundant grass. Things were soon to change on the reservation. Late in 1881, all white men living on the reservation were warned by the Indian Bureau, that they must show proof of having married their Indian partner or be evicted from the reservation. Scotty and Sarah knew they had been legally married in 1879, but had never received a legal marriage license. Being cognizant of the advantages of the allotment which allowed free, open range for as many cattle as he could accumulate, Scotty hurriedly rode the 100 miles in cold, wintery weather to the Pine Ridge Agency to request that Missionary Robinson and original two witnesses sign a form proving his marriage. All signed the Certificate of Marriage which, incorrectly, listed the marriage date as Jan. 1, 1882, rather than the actual wedding date in 1879. Nevertheless, Scotty was now legally married! Later, in March of 1882, Scotty read another



perturbing Public Notice in an old newspaper, notifying all interested ranchers from several western counties to join a petition movement to, “have 45,000 square miles of grazing land within the Great Sioux Reservation opened for settlement.” The article claimed that the “opened” land would; “*sustain a million head of cattle, increase wealth, bring employment and induce the railroads to build to the Black Hills.*” Scotty and his neighbors knew that, “if they persisted long enough, the white man usually got what he wanted, it would be just a matter of when!” Fortunately, the Dawes

Act, which was applied to every Indian Treaty after 1868, specified that three-fourths of the Indian males living on the reservation needed to sign each treaty to make it the law. Scotty felt confident that the only thing that percentage of the Indian population ever agreed on was; to go to war or to hunt. Scotty's growing herd of cattle, branded with a **L - 7** or **S - 7**, ranged both north and south of the Bad river. His first set of steers for market were driven to Ft. Pierre, ferried across the Missouri river on the "Jim Leighton," loaded on the train at Pierre and finally, sold in Chicago for \$9.35/cwt. Scotty had never felt so rich! Without any ado, he bought several head of heifers to, take advantage of the open range for as long as it lasted. Scotty and Sally became good friends with nearby neighbors, among them; Dan Powell, a rancher living upriver a mile who, at an earlier time, helped Scotty in the hayfields near Camp Robinson and



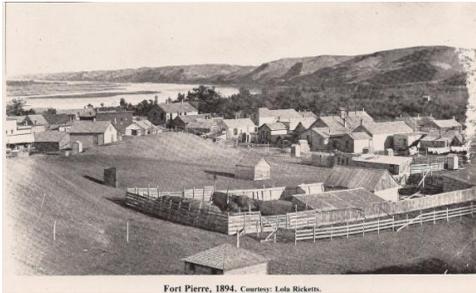
Rhabeig Collection

Clara Philip, Scotty's daughter.

who had lately married Mary "Fanny" Charging Eagle, the Jarmin family, five miles down-river, George Waldron, another couple miles downstream and, the Louie LaPlante family, located 10 miles farther downstream. Scotty often stayed overnight at the LaPlante ranch on his trips up and down the Bad River to Ft. Pierre. Similar to his cowherd, Scotty's own family was expanding. A third daughter, Olive was born Dec. 3, 1883, a fourth daughter, Hazel in early 1885 and, a fifth daughter, Clara, was born in November of 1888, but, still no son had seen daylight. There were reports of huge herds of Texas cattle being driven to the grasslands north and west of the Black Hills, and that the

big operators were unleashing a constant clamor for the government to open the reservation, however, like a rattlesnake, Mother Nature was about to strike! The winter of 1886-87 came early, deep snow and minus-30 degree weather created an unprecedented disaster for area ranchers, as many, especially those without shelter or without a timbered bottom close by, suffered enormous losses. Most of the livestock were not acclimated to the fierce, freezing winds and skimpy food supply. From this weakened condition, thousands of cattle, horses and sheep perished. The losses, often referred to as the "Big Die-up", caused many ranchers to lose nearly everything they owned. Scotty lost most of his weaker

stock, but, thanks to the thick timber around his ranch, fared better than most. It was estimated that more than 300 folks perished in these storms. Following the nasty 1887 disaster, ranchers, for the first time, began putting up winter feed and erecting shelters where necessary. The winter of 1888 was more intense, bringing another series of blizzards, sub-zero temperatures, severe livestock losses and death to hundreds of settlers, including dozens of school children. Newspaper accounts of the day referred to the winter of 1888 as “The Children’s Blizzard,” and was the most deadly winter ever recorded in South



Fort Pierre, 1894. Courtesy: Lolo Ricketts.

Dakota history. Thousands of southern cattle were lost as they could not withstand the severe cold of the northern plains. Two consecutive years of weather-related losses forced several large operators to go out of business. Besides the weather, many other news-making events of that day were shaping the future of Scotty Philip’s

life on the frontier: The capitol fight between Yankton and Bismarck with its accusations of fraud, the decision of whether or not to admit a “North and a “South” Dakota or a single state, “Dakota,” to statehood...and, the first train to Rapid City from the south, was welcomed by a raucous crowd on July 2, 1886. Scotty determined that, after just a single, chaotic decade, the “Iron Horse” would essentially end the era of freighting by team and wagon, surely, to never return. For Scotty and his neighbors more bad news was spread; In February, 1889, the US Congress passed the historic Treaty opening the Great Sioux Reservation to white settlement. Scotty surmised that once opened, tracks would be laid, bringing hordes of homesteaders, fences, town-builders, and perhaps law and order to the now lawless, un-surveyed prairies. Their ranch on Sally’s allotment along the Bad River would probably be left unchanged but, the grass would have to be shared with the sodbusters. Trying to protect his growing assets, Scotty, saddled up and rode to Ft. Pierre, determined to search out available land upon which to file for a homestead. He would soon move part of his operation closer to the Missouri river.

**The open range, like the buffalo, was soon to disappear.**

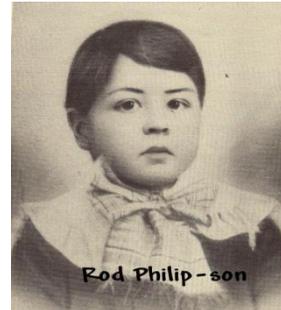


# THE LIFE AND TIMES OF SCOTTY PHILIP

## Chapter Five;

### "Saving The Buffalo"

James "Scotty" Philip's main purpose in life was to become successful and wealthy but, he also had a passion for horseracing. Scotty often raced his own horses at the Powell, LaPlante and Giddings Flat racetracks. He liked fast horses, once taking a 100-mile ride to Deer's Trading Post, near the location of his first ranch along White Clay Creek in Nebraska, to witness a "race of the century." This memorable race featured horses belonging to J.E. Utterbeck, Scotty's brother-in-law, and one of his best friends from scouting days, Jim Dahlman. (*Dahlman later served 21 years as the "Cowboy Mayor of Omaha."*) Both were said to possess extraordinarily fast racehorses, always seeking a race against formidable competition! Remaining neutral, Scotty estimated that over a thousand passionate supporters, both Indian and white, came from miles around to bet their dollars, horses, saddle, bridle, blankets, guns, trinkets and anything else of value on this well-advertised horserace. The winners partied hard....the losers, well....they went home, perhaps "crying in their beer!"



In late 1889, there was joy in the Philip household. A sixth child was born, finally, after five daughters, a son saw daylight and, was immediately named George, the most popular name in the Philip family. But the happiness was short-lived, six months later, baby George died unexpectedly. Scotty buried him close to the ranch house along the Bad River and proclaimed it "the saddest day of his life."

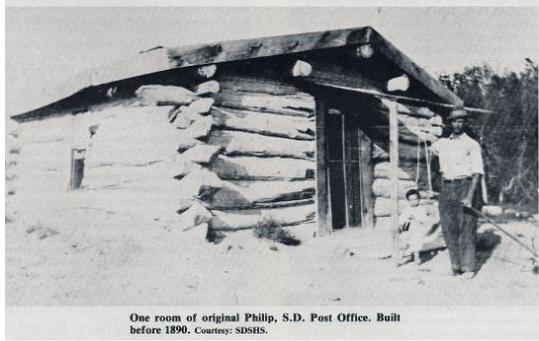
Although saddened by the loss of his son, Scotty continued his quest for yet unclaimed land close to the Missouri river. On one of his many explorations for the perfect ranch site, he decided to file on land three miles north of Ft. Pierre that was bordered on its eastern edge by the

Missouri river and included the now abandoned, old military and fur-trading post, known in modern times as the Fort Pierre Chateau. Scotty and good friend, Buck Williams, discussed the possibilities of how the newly elected South Dakota State Legislature would configure county boundaries on the recently opened land. Quickly, the men surveyed and plotted out a new town named, Stanley. The enterprising men built homes in Stanley and urged businessmen and settlers to do the same. They began advertising that, whereas, Ft Pierre had suffered immense losses from multiple floods, Stanley was out of the flood plain. To prove they were serious, they built a large, luxurious hotel for travelers, homesteaders and business men. Justifiably, several citizens of Ft. Pierre were not ready to be uprooted by a couple dreamers and mounted an anti-Stanley movement! An election was called, and a heated campaign ensued. In the midst of the County seat fight, it was discovered that Scotty Philip was not a U.S. citizen and therefore, could not vote in this election for which he had so much at stake! Hastily, Scotty was ferried across the river to Pierre and filed the proper citizenship papers. Finally, Election Day arrived and in a close vote, Ft. Pierre won the County seat. Scotty and Buck decided to abandon their dream of having a town named Stanley. A question of what to do with the large hotel building was settled by the two men playing a game of



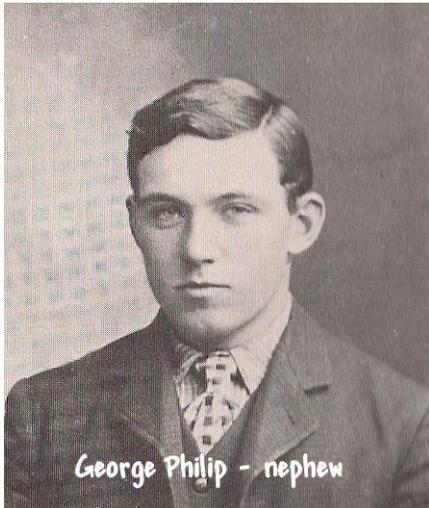
cards, with the winner to be the sole owner of the hotel. Scotty won, and later, sold half of the hotel building, which was removed and used to build a home in Ft. Pierre. The remaining half was moved to Ft. Pierre and still stands. (*North of the Robins Water Softener store along Hwy 83.*)

Scotty Philip's first civic duty occurred in 1890, when, he petitioned the US Government to establish a Post Office in their area around Medicine Creek. Given that the closest mail service was 18 miles northwest at Grindstone, the Postal Service concurred. The post office was



One room of original Philip, S.D. Post Office. Built before 1890. Courtesy: SDSHS.

given the name, Philip, and opened on May 27, 1891, with Dan Powell serving as first postmaster. In 1898 it was moved to a location six miles upriver, and, in 1907 was moved to the new town of Philip, SD. A second civic duty began in the summer of 1892, when Scotty, who had had only four years of school, determined that his and neighboring children should have an education. As quickly as possible, Scotty built the area's first schoolhouse near his ranch house and hired a teacher, to whom he paid the entire \$35.00 per month salary plus free room and board at the Philip home. The first teacher, Nannie Whitney of Ft.



George Philip - nephew

Pierre, left with homesickness after two weeks, but another teacher, Jessie Stewart Hayes of Ft. Pierre was quickly found. *[Can we imagine the luck of finding two educators out on the open ranges of Dakota back then?]*

The Philip family was enduring more joy and sorrow. In late 1890, an ecstatic Scotty and Sally had a second son, Stanley, followed in 1893 by sister, Tina, who lived just eight months, in 1895 a third son, Roderick, was born and, in 1902 their last child, Annie, was born but, died tragically from a fall in 1907.

Tragedy returned in 1908 when their oldest living daughter, Emma, age 27, died of a heart attack at the Pierre hospital. Scotty Philip outlived

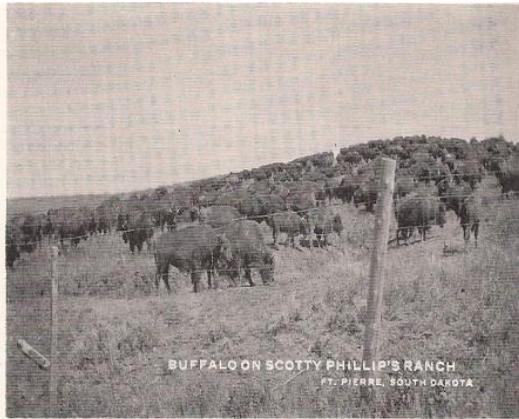
five of his children. A blessing was that, in 1899, a nephew, George, age 17, who had been orphaned since the age of seven, was coming from Scotland to live with them in South Dakota. The Philip's loved him as their own son.



By the mid-1890's, Scotty had increased his herd to over a thousand head. His reputation as a cattleman grew and likewise, did his opportunities. He was offered partnerships in several cattle operations including the *Minnesota-Dakota Cattle(73 ranch), Native Cattle Co, Philip &*

*Stuebe, Binder & Philip and Tom Jones and Philip during the 1890'S and 1900's.* At his peak, Scotty, with as many as 65 cowboys in his employ, owned an estimated 40,000 head of cattle and hundreds of horses. Paychecks for this many riders would require a considerable cash flow. Scotty was quick to recognize that the "open range" grass, as he had known it, would inevitably be divided into small, fenced quarter and half-sections. To continue to operate on such a large scale, he would have to contract with the Indian Bureau for the last "open range" grassland available. Being a squaw-man (as he called himself) he again had priority, and immediately signed a lease for nearly eight townships (169,000 acres) on the Lower Brule Indian Reservation for three and one half cents per acre. He built a third ranch headquarters along Cedar Creek in Lyman County, using it regularly until his death in 1911.(Near the Charley Landeau ranch.)

Since coming to America, Scotty had always marveled at the buffalo's majestic profile and unparalleled ability to survive the harsh winters of the northern plains. During his many rides across the vast prairies inspecting his three ranches, Scotty was often mindful that rarely, if ever, did he see any buffalo. He began formulating plans to save and

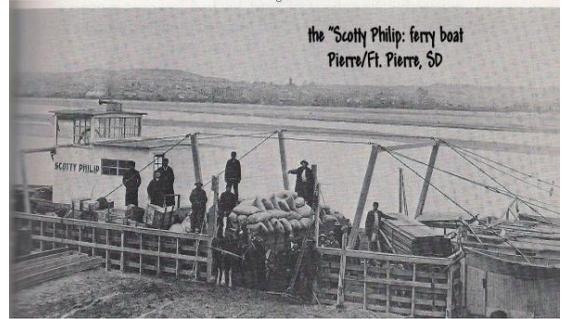


Doug Philip Collection

preserve the endangered "symbol of the west." Shortly after learning of the death of Pete Dupree, who had, while participating in the last great Buffalo hunts 20 years previous, saved five buffalo calves, perhaps saving the buffalo from extinction in South Dakota. Scotty contacted Dupree's son-in-law, Doug Carlin, who had been named executor of Pete Dupree's

estate, and made an offer to buy all the surviving buffalo on the Dupree ranch. A deal was made to purchase the buffalo for \$10,000.00, with a catch! Scotty must also take the crossbred "cattalo" which were deemed to be....."not worth a damn!" After the deal was sealed with a handshake, Scotty and his crew began building a buffalo pasture fence around 15,000 acres north of Ft. Pierre, bounded by the Missouri River on the east and much of the north(see map). The fence would have two sections of woven wire topped by three rows of barbed wire, all attached to large, sturdy posts spaced five to six feet apart. The fence was completed in the fall of 1901. (Up to this time, buffalo had never been "fenced in!") In September of 1901, Scotty and five of the best riders around, needed several days to drive the herd of buffalo over the 100 mile trail to the buffalo pasture. A third ranch home near the buffalo pasture was completed in 1902. In 1906, Scotty Philip appealed to the US Congress to help save the buffalo. For an annual lease of \$50.00, Scotty was assigned 3500 acres of unclaimed Government land "to be used as a Buffalo Park along the banks of the Missouri." It became perhaps, South Dakota's first tourist attraction. "Excursion boats" brought tourists to see the buffalo and also as a possible enticement to "promote" Pierre as the best choice for the State Capitol of South Dakota.

*With advice from Wm. T. Harnaday, Scotty Philip, and other visionary ranchers from Canada, North Dakota, Montana, Oklahoma and Texas rescued small numbers of buffalo and together, are credited with preserving the unique species for our future generations.*



***[Scotty Philip's legacy of saving the buffalo is visible today on several area ranches such as: the Turner Ranch, Prairie Moon Ranch, Byrd Ranch, Lower Brule Buffalo Ranch among others.]***



**Turner Buffalo ranch descendant of S. Philip herd**

# *The Life and Times of Scotty Philip*

## Chapter Six

### THE EPILOGUE

This brief epilogue will conclude our series on the Life and Times of Scotty Philip. We hope the articles have been interesting, informative and entertaining. We sincerely appreciate the discussions and compliments that you've shared.

Though James "Scotty" Philip's sudden death, at age of 53, on July 23, 1911, shocked and stunned his family, friends and business associates, he had, undeniably, achieved the wealth and success that was the anticipated promise of nearly every immigrant who came to America in our pioneering years. Scotty Philip is best known as a "cattle baron" and



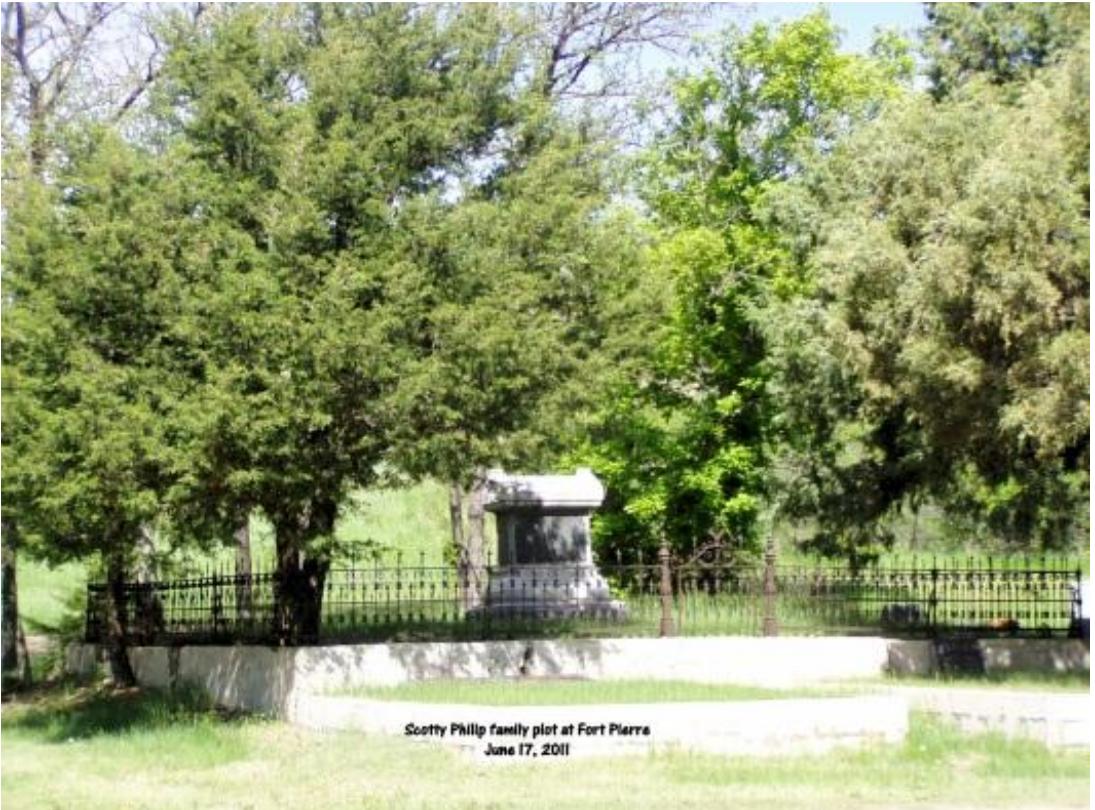
"the man who saved the buffalo" but, was also an enterprising entrepreneur with an abundance of "savvy" to make the right decision and was unquestionably, "ahead of his time." Before being struck down in the prime of his life, he had leased nearly the entire Lower Brule Indian Reservation. The year of 1910 had been one of drought and

the spring of 1911 was not any better, so Scotty had ordered an irrigation pump and was preparing to pump water from the Missouri to irrigate the Giddings Flats at the western edge of the buffalo pasture. (The irrigation pump for this project had arrived at the ranch shortly before Scotty's demise.)

Scotty Philip's reputation was one of diligence, dependability, courage, honesty and always ready to help someone in need. He was respected and valued by the military as a scout/courier, as an advisor and friend to four Governors, by Banking Companies as a Director in several banks, by cattlemen as a neighbor and as co-founder and CEO of the first Missouri River Stockman's Association(which later became the Western South Dakota Stockgrowers Assoc.), by Indian chiefs as a friend of Crazy Horse and Red Cloud, by the South Dakota State Legislature as a Senator in

1899-1900 and, by citizens of the newly organized Stanley County, serving as their first Chairman of the Stanley County Commission. Several of his foreman and riders became successful ranchers in their own right. Scotty was also a 32nd Degree Mason of the Sioux Falls lodge. The famous, 1743 Verendrye plate, was found in the backyard of Scotty's large home in Ft. Pierre two years after his death. His friends read like a "Who's Who" of famous West River South Dakotans; Among them were Alex Johnson, Col. Robert Stewart, Cap Mossman, Mayor James Dahlman, Ed Lemmon, Tom Jones, Eb Jones, Cy Hiatt, George Waldron, Jack Borden, Harry Hudson, Dan Powell, Fred Dupree, Pete Dupree, Doug Carlin, Joe Binder and brother-in-laws Mike Dunn and J. Utterbeck. In Bert Hall's "*Roundup Years*" documentation, Scotty is mentioned more than 40 times and not once is there a disparaging word about him. Scotty had a loving wife, Sally, who was, as nephew George Philip described; "as faithful and self-sacrificing a helpmate as ever dedicated her life to a husband." George also expressed his personal attachment to Scotty, writing; "I considered him the grandest man I ever knew, and I loved and respected him as I never did and never will another."





Though dying quite young, Scotty outlived five of his ten children. Sally passed away in 1938. The Philip family burial plot, within which all of his family, except Mary, the oldest, (her grave along the White River could not be found) would be laid to rest, was designed and built by Scotty with help from friends. It lies below the bluffs facing east on a grass-covered slope overlooking the mighty Missouri river between Ft. Pierre and the famous buffalo pasture. As James Robinson wrote in his book; "*West of Ft. Pierre,*" this location was a true paradise, surrounded by his huge pasture and worthy of a Cattle King." The plot was completed on July 22, 1911, just a day before Scotty succumbed to a cerebral hemorrhage. The plot and the adjacent 40 acres were donated to the Masonic Lodge of Pierre/Ft. Pierre by Sally Philip, to be used as a community cemetery.

The service for Scotty Philip was said to have had the largest attendance for any funeral ever held in western South Dakota. Alex Johnson, then Supt. of the Northwestern Railway Company, arranged to have a special train transport people from Pierre and Ft. Pierre to the ranch and back. It was said that people of every description and every lot in life, mingled together, sharing their tears, and apparently, on cue, the famous Scotty Philip buffalo herd roamed over the bluffs to mourn their loss. Louie La Plante, George Mathieson, Fred Rowe, Tex Hemphill, Dr. J.C. Lavery and W. H. Frost served as pallbearers at the Philip funeral.

Scotty Philip died with the wind in his face, moving forward until the very end. The famous buffalo pasture and large herds of cattle, horses and buffalo remained in the Philip family until 1925, when a final dispersion was held. [An interesting incident was related to us by Ray Norman, of Milwaukee, OR, age 94. Ray grew up along Willow Cr, west of Ft. Pierre and near the Scotty Philip buffalo pasture. As a youngster, he often rode his pony over to the Philip ranch to visit and play. On one of those occasions, probably in 1924-25, Scotty's daughter Clara, asked him; "...why are you riding bareback?" Ray replied, "I don't own a saddle!" Clara said, "I think we have one of Scotty's saddles left, and, I want you to have it!" Ray, who later became a sought-after bronc-buster/horse-trainer, kept the prized saddle at the Norman home. Unfortunately, the artifact was lost when the Norman home burned to the ground in 1938.]

*THERE IS A REAL PLACE FOR A COMPREHENSIVE STORY OF AN AREA  
CONSIDERABLY LARGER THAN SOME 16 OF OUR SOVEREIGN STATES  
AND LOCATED IN THE SWEEP OF THE BUFFALO FROM CANADA  
TO TEXAS AND THE SWEEP OF WHITE ADVANCEMENT FROM THE  
MISSISSIPPI TO THE PACIFIC. THIS IS THE COUNTRY OF  
CRAZY HORSE, RED CLOUD, SPOTTED TAIL AND SITTING BULL;  
THE COUNTRY OF ED LEMMON, CAP MOSSMAN, SCOTTY PHILIP  
AND FRED T. EVANS, TO NAME A SCANT FEW REDS AND WHITES  
WHO CONTRIBUTED TO ITS SWIFT PASSING GLORY UNTIL THE  
BARBED WIRE FENCE PUT A STOP TO MOST OF THE FOOLISHNESS  
THAT IS THE COMMITMENT OF PIONEERING.*

**REFERENCES**

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*Roundup Years by Bert Hall*

*South Dakota Historical Collections Vol. 22*

*The Man Who Saved the Buffalo by R.C. Lee*

*West of Ft. Pierre by J. Robinson;*

**PHOTO'S**

*Doug Philip,*

*J. Graybill*

*Lois Wendt*

*Lonis Wendt*

*Rheborg Family*

*SD State Historical Society,*

*Zieman Family,*

*Scotty's ranch home north of Fort Pierre.*

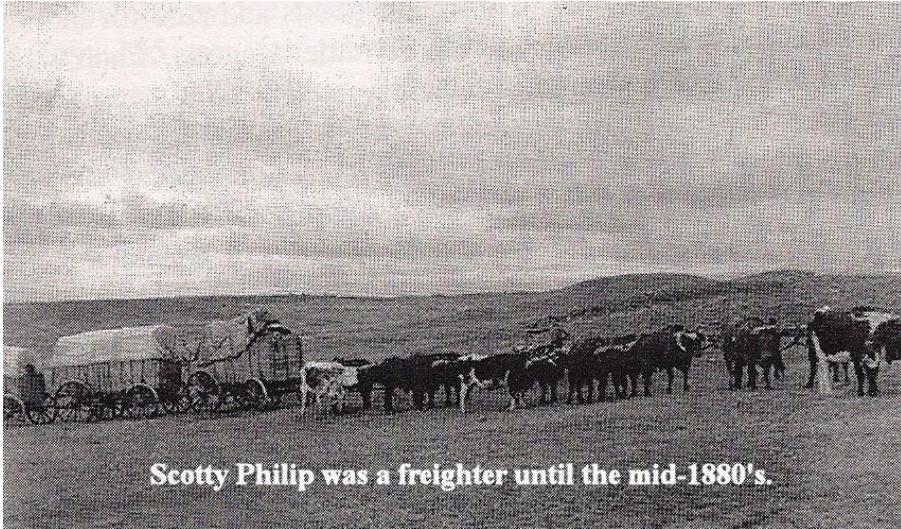


Scotty Philip built this home mostly surrounded by the huge buffalo Pasture, just a few yards from the family burial plot.

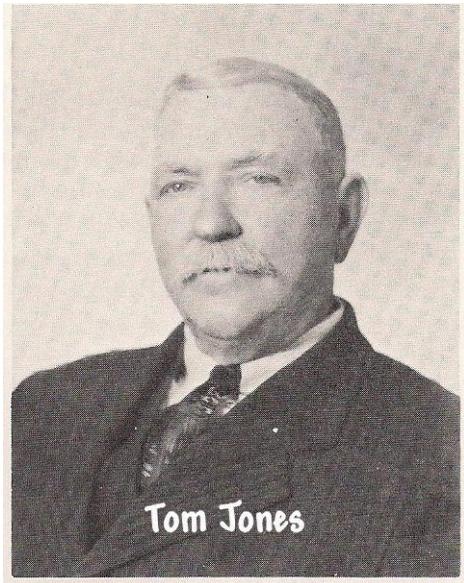


*Ziemann Collection*

*Scotty's home in Fort Pierre. Left to right: Miss Mortenson (a neighbor), daughters Hazel, Clara, Olive, Emma, Scotty's wife Sarah, and his youngest daughter Annie*



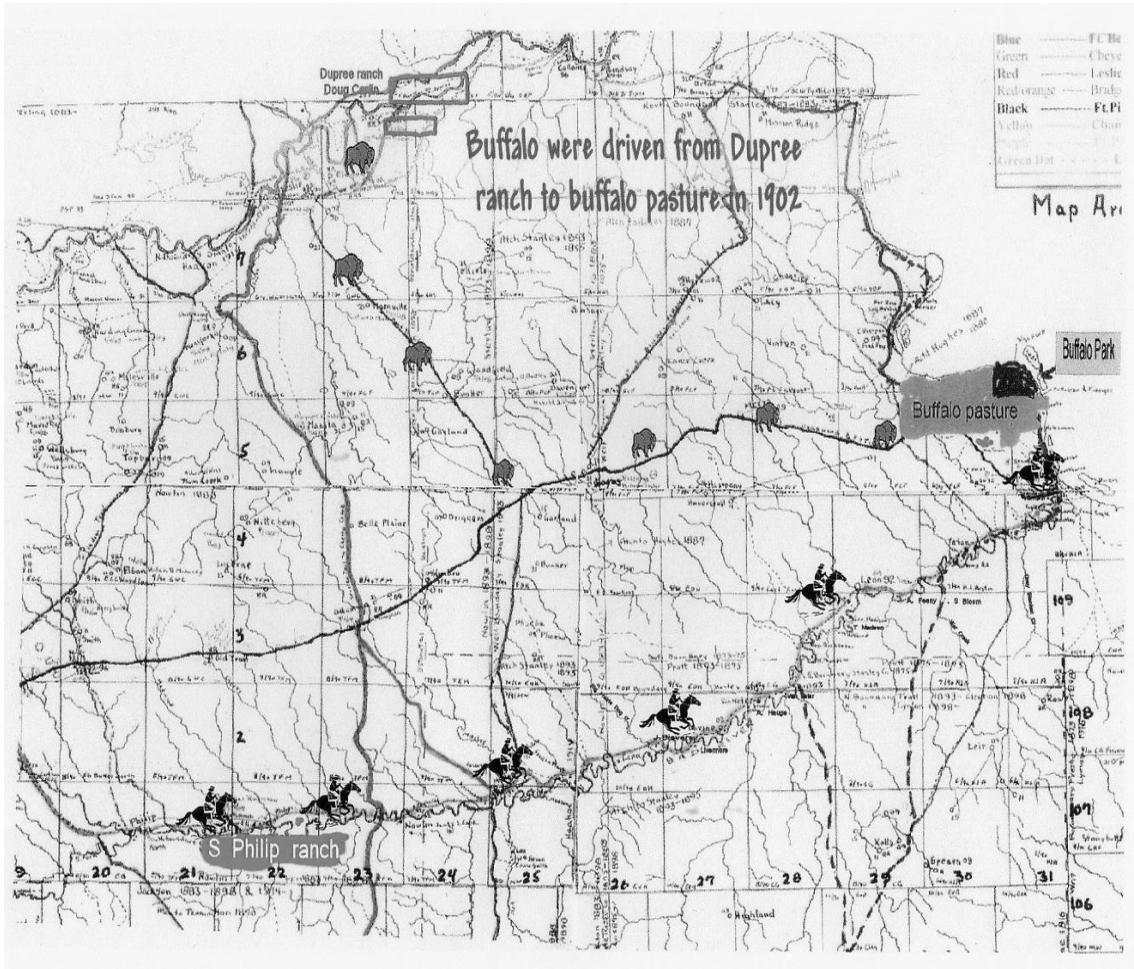
Scotty Philip was a freighter until the mid-1880's.



Tom Jones, an all-around, outstanding cattleman, was a good friend and was also a partner in Scotty Philip's Lower Brule Reservation cattle operation.

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1890 map showing Indian, Military, freighting and the Bad River trails and, the possible path used to “Save the Buffalo” and, the location of the “buffalo pasture.”

THE  
LIFE AND TIMES  
OF  
SCOTTY PHILIP

“THE MAN WHO SAVED THE BUFFALO”

***SCOTTY PHILIP LIVED DURING A TIME WHEN SOUTH DAKOTA'S MOST FORMATIVE HISTORICAL EVENTS OCCURRED. AMONG THEM WERE: THE OPENING OF THE BLACK HILLS, THE ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE OF THE GOLD RUSH, THE NEAR EXTINCTION OF THE BUFFALO, THE RISE AND FALL OF THE FREIGHTING AND STAGECOACH BUSINESS, THE COMING OF THE RAILROAD, THE OPENING OF THE GREAT SIOUX RESERVATION, THE END OF THE OPEN RANGE, THE MOVING OF THE DAKOTA TERRITORIAL CAPITOL FROM YANKTON TO BISMARCK, THE ESTABLISHMENT OF INDIAN RESERVATIONS, STATEHOOD FOR SOUTH DAKOTA, THE FIRST STATE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY AND, THE INVENTION OF THE AUTOMOBILE.***

*The author, Lonis Wendt*