

OKLAHOMA
TERRITORY

TERRITORIAL TALES

Bits of
History
Before
Statehood

INDIAN
TERRITORY

SEP 7 1982

Last Buffalo Herd Killed Off Quickly

The last buffalo in Oklahoma County was killed in March 1876. The animals rarely were seen east of the Chisholm Trail after that.

And the last wild buffalo in Oklahoma, a lonely old bull, was killed at Cold Springs — now Cimarron — in October 1890 in Beaver County, according to J.B. Thoburn's "History of Oklahoma." The book was published in 1916.

During the autumn and winter of 1876 to 1877, the Cheyenne and Arapaho Indians secured 7,000 robes, for which they received an average of \$5 each in trade, according to the 1877 report of the commissioner for indian affairs. They also tanned 15,000 robes for traders for \$2 each. The traders got them from white hunters.

Indians of the Wichita Agency secured about 5,000 of the American bison robes during the same season. A herd of about 4,000 was seen on the North Canadian between Camp Supply and the site of Woodward in July 1877. Although it was not the season to kill for robes, the herd was surrounded by Indian and white hunters.

The Cheyenne, Arapaho, Commanche, Kiowa and Plains Apaches hunted buffalo in the western part of the territory again during the following season, with meager results. The Cheyenne and Arapaho had only 219 robes to trade as the result of the hunt.

The next season (1878 to 1879), the buffalo hunt was nearly a failure, with the Indians returning with few robes and little meat. That was the last general buffalo hunt on the Southern Great Plains.