



*James ("Scotty") Philip*

## *Dakota Images*

In 1874, fifteen-year-old James Philip left his native Scottish highlands for Victoria, Kansas, a Scottish-English colony. Tired of farming by age sixteen, he left Kansas to wander through Colorado and Wyoming. From Cheyenne, where his foreign accent earned him the name "Scotty," he joined the throngs of gold seekers illegally entering the Black Hills and was twice escorted out by the army. The fall of 1877 found him in northwestern Nebraska, where he worked in ranching and freighting and served as a guide, scout, and dispatch rider for the military at Fort Robinson. In 1879, he married Sarah ("Sally") Larribee, the daughter of a French trader and a Cheyenne Indian woman. The couple began ranching along the Bad River in 1881, settling at the mouth of Grindstone Butte Creek, not far from the present town of Philip, South Dakota.

By 1889, Scotty Philip had more than one thousand head of cattle, and in the early 1890s, he began a second ranch on land adjoining the Missouri River above Fort Pierre. As a partner in the Minnesota and Dakota Cattle Company, known by its brand as the "73 outfit," he shipped in thousands of cattle from Texas and Mexico. By 1903, when livestock raising on the open range was nearing its end, there were perhaps forty thousand Philip cattle on South Dakota range lands. In the course of becoming a prominent cattleman, Philip had also branched out into real estate, banking, and politics, serving as a Stanley County commissioner, state senator, and officer in the Missouri River Stockmen's Association.

Philip is best remembered for helping to save the bison from extinction. In 1901, he bought a herd of fifty-seven buffalo, the descendants of several calves captured during one of the last big hunts on the Grand River twenty years before. Pastured above Fort Pierre, the herd eventually grew to nine hundred, became a popular tourist attraction, and formed the basis for several herds around the country, including the bison herd now living in South Dakota's Custer State Park.

Philip had ten children, five of whom were deceased at the time of his own sudden death on 23 July 1911 at the age of fifty-three. Eulogized as "a man of large stature, large plans and large heart," James ("Scotty") Philip, along with G. E. ("Ed") Lemmon, became one of the first South Dakotans named to the National Cowboy Hall of Fame in 1958.

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