



2018 INDUCTEES

MICHEL PABLO

1844-1914

CHARLES A. ALLARD

1852-1896

There was a time when 30 million bison inhabited North America. By 1830, mass destruction of the animals began. In 1870 alone, 2 million bison were slaughtered.

No surprise then that two 19th century men born to Indian mothers worked together to save the buffalo from extinction—and by extension, perhaps, their native culture.

By 1873, a scant number of buffalo remained. That year, a Pend d'Oreille Indian, Sam Walking Coyote, returned to the Flathead Valley with a handful of orphaned buffalo calves in tow. He sold them to reservation ranchers Charles A. Allard and Michel Pablo.

Allard was a chatterbox, an effusive salesman. Pablo, a pensive agriculturalist and businessman. They made a perfect team.

They turned their buffalo out in the fence-free Flathead and Mission valleys.

While their intent was entrepreneurial, their aspiration aimed to help replenish a wild buffalo population.

One can't help but imagine that the buffalo's cultural significance to Indian people also played a role. For instance, one Christmas Allard and Pablo presented a gift of buffalo meat to the reservations' chiefs. Reports suggest such a feast hadn't been experienced by tribes there in over a generation.

When Allard died in 1896, following complications from a fall from his horse, the herd numbered 300.

Allard's half-share was dispersed to several U.S. locations, with one-third purchased by Kal-

ispell's Charles E. Conrad.

By 1906, Pablo's 700 buffalo confronted the Flathead Valley's federal homestead boom. With newcomers populating the once open range, Pablo worried about the herd's safety and offered it to the U.S. government.

Officials refused, so Pablo turned to Canada. Between 1908 and 1910, he shipped nearly 500 head to settle in Alberta's Buffalo Park.

The U.S. government's reluctance to aid Pablo's herd riled the American public. William Hornaday's American Bison Society responded by working with President Theodore Roosevelt to provide land for what became the National Bison Range.

Today, some 30,000 wild bison inhabit North America, a historical repopulation anticipated by the Allard-Pablo partnership. Visitors to the National Bison Range in Moiese, Yellowstone National Park, South Dakota State Park, and Canada's Buffalo Park are treated to the sight of bison thanks in large part to Charles Allard and Michel Pablo.

Their efforts provide modern-day Native American tribes the opportunity to maintain cultural traditions and allow for scientific study and state bison management, including regulated hunting.

About 140 years after Sam Walking Coyote sold those buffalo calves to Allard and Pablo, President Barack Obama signed the National Bison Legacy Act of 2016, elevating bison as the official mammal of the United States. ■

