

## **C.J. “Buffalo” Jones**

Charles Jesse Jones was born on January 31, 1844 in Bloomington, Illinois.

He came to Kansas when he was twenty-two. In the early 1870s, he made a good living for his wife, two sons and two daughters by hunting buffalo and capturing wild horses.

C.J. Jones is one of four founding fathers of Garden City, Kansas, and in 1883, became it's first mayor, and was Finney County's first legislative representative.

He was concerned over the demise of the great buffalo herds and dedicated himself to preserving the few remaining buffalo. C.J. became known as “Buffalo Jones” in the late 1880s when he tried to rebuild the breed by domestication. He found and captured 57 buffalo calves from the Oklahoma and Texas panhandles. At his ranch southeast of Garden City, he attempted to improve the endurance of range cattle by crossing them with buffalo.

In 1893, C.J. made the run for land into the Oklahoma Cherokee Strip and in 1897-98, journeyed to the Arctic Circle.

C.J. Jones was appointed by his friend Theodore Roosevelt as the first game warden of Yellowstone National Park in 1901. In 1906, he developed a ranch and game preserve on the north rim of the Grand Canyon, where he continued to crossbreed cattle and buffalo to produce cattalo. There he met Zane Grey, who wrote about their adventures in his book “Roping Lions in the Grand Canyon”. Zane Grey immortalized C.J. Jones in his book, “The Last of the Plainsmen.”

“Buffalo” Jones went on safari to Africa in 1909 and 1914 where he lassoed, captured and photographed wild animals. While there, he contracted malaria and never fully recovered. C.J. Jones died October 1, 1919 and he, his wife and two sons are buried in the Valley View Cemetery in Garden City, Kansas.

Charles Jesse Jones was elected to the Cowboy Hall of Fame in 1959.