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WHITE BUFFALO, "BIG MEDICINE,"  
BORN AT NATIONAL BISON RANGE

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An albino buffalo was born this spring on the National Bison Range, maintained by the Bureau of Biological Survey, United States Department of Agriculture, near Moiese, Mont. The white calf is one of about 75 young born so far this year in the herd of more than 400 animals.

Even when millions of buffalo lived on the great plains, a white buffalo was so rare that few were observed. "One or two in a lifetime was the utmost that any hunter secured," says Ernest Thompson Seton, and Dr. W. T. Hornaday tells that he "met many old buffalo hunters, who had killed thousands and seen scores of thousands of buffalo, yet never had seen a white one." According to E. Douglas Branch there was "only one white animal in the five million and more bison of the southern herd." Dr. Hornaday believed that "not over 10 or 11 white buffalo, or white buffalo skins, were ever seen by white men." A single albino was raised about 30 years ago in a herd at Pierre, S. Dak., says Dr. Robert S. Norton, Protector of the National Bison Range.

The Indians looked upon an albino buffalo with awe, considered it "big medicine," and for a good skin paid the price of 10 or 15 horses. Then piety, says Branch, demanded that 3 or 4 years after the purchase the skin should be offered to the wind and rain. The white man also was willing to pay a high price for an albino skin. Branch tells that the single albino of the southern

herd fell to the gun of a plainsman, who sold it for \$1,000. So highly were the white buffalo prized that, said Hornaday, "not a single one, so far as I can learn, ever had the good fortune to attain adult size."

"The National Bison Range," says Paul G. Redington, chief of the Bureau of Biological Survey, "is maintained to assist in perpetuating the American buffalo, which at the time of the establishment of the range was threatened with extermination. We are therefore much interested in having in the herd an example of a variation so rare as the white buffalo. When only one was known in a herd of more than five million, it is particularly interesting that we should have this 'big medicine' in a herd of about 500 animals."

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