

# The OUTLAW GAZETTE

December 1992

Vol. V, No. 1

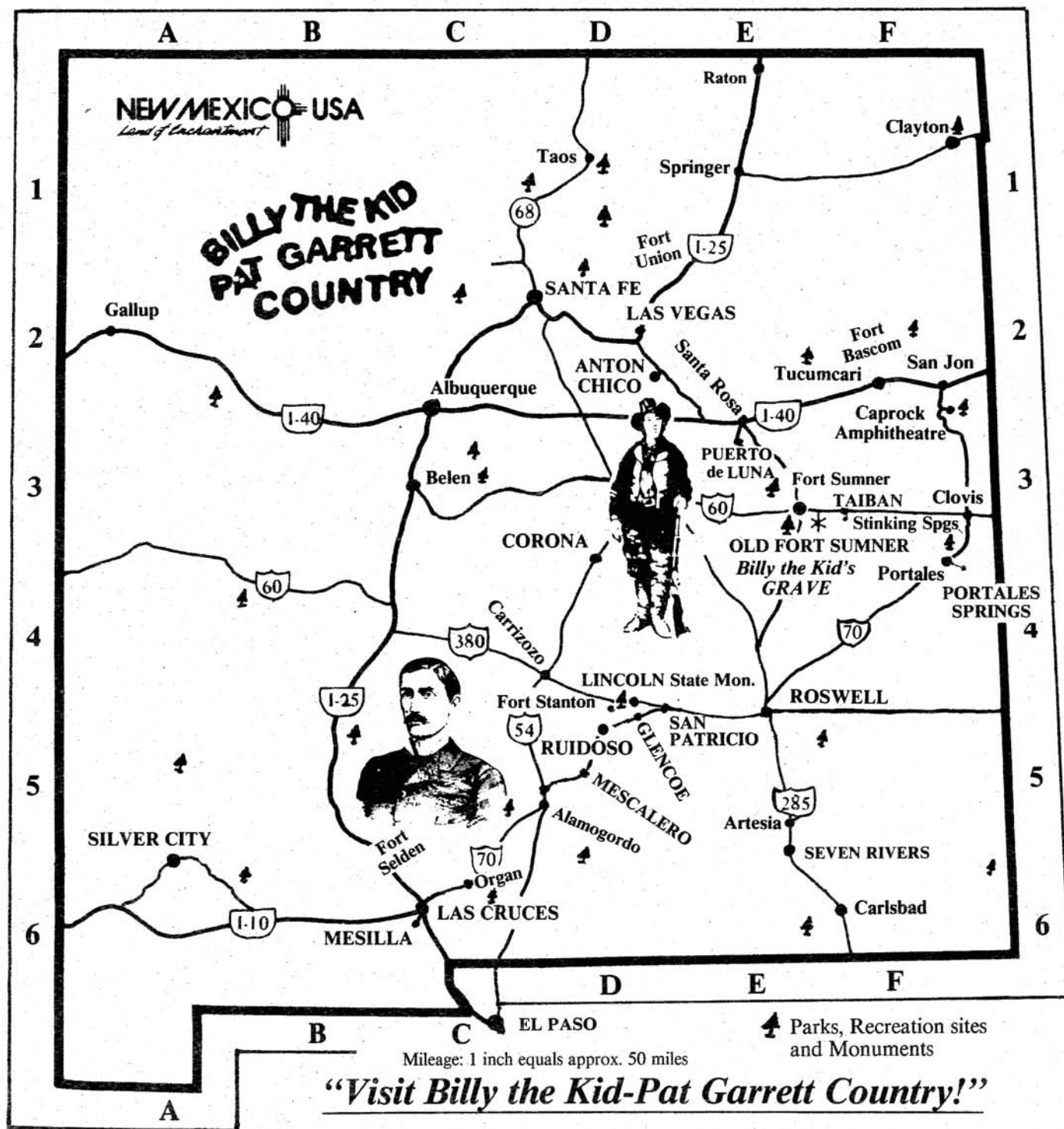
## BILLY THE KID



OUTLAW GANG  
NEW MEXICO

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TAIBAN NM 88134





# BILLY THE KID OUTLAW GANG, Inc.

## OUTLAW GAZETTE

VOL. V

NO. 1

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#### COVER:

Compliments Baxter Lane, Amarillo, Texas

### Billy the Kid T-Shirts

If you like the cover of our *Outlaw Gazette*, T-Shirts with that design will be available at BTKOG Headquarters, Box 1881, Taiban, N.M. 88134. \$12.95 post-paid in USA.

## Stallings steps carefully into history

**Chuck Stallings, Staff Writer**  
**The Ruidoso News**

Crossed the Mojave Desert a bunch of times, Death Valley twice and the Kansas plains (long ways) at night during my school years. But never have I crossed a more desolate area then the road from Roswell to Fort Sumner.

Couldn't figure it out. I had just insulted Fort Sumner residents every which way I could. Called their hero, Billy the Kid, a sawed off, snot nosed killer.

And then they invite me up to stay in this cozy little ranch house, in a totally isolated area near Stinking Springs, not more than 200 yards from where one outlaw was shot dead by Sheriff Pat Garrett's posse.

"Where should I pick up a key to get in?" I asked owner Janean Grissom.

"No need," she said. "It'll be unlocked."

An unlocked room in the middle of nowhere, surrounded by Fort Sumnerites. I decided that Dianne would like to go with me.

It was nearly midnight when we turned up the long stretch of dirt road that led to the bungalow.

"Come in, Charles, it's really nice," Dianne said. "Can't sit in the car forever."

Couldn't figure it out. It was neat as a pin, bed and breakfast chic.

A note in the kitchen said to help myself to anything.

I checked all the fruit juices, milk bottles, cereal packages, but none had been tampered with. How did she know I like Sara Lee pecan coffee cake?

From my darkened corner, I watched the full moon cast a pale light through the bedroom window, creating soft shadows to outline Dianne's body under the covers.

"Chuck," Dianne mumbled. "I think you can come to bed now. It's been an hour."

After the most restful night of my life, soothed by a cool prairie breeze, I awoke early to a few cows mooing in the nearby pasture.

Looking out the window at the countryside, I felt refreshed and young again, like a 12-year-old on my grandpa's farm in Indiana.

There was a sign on a stake next to Billy's gravesite that read, "Chuck Stallings future resting place." Chino Silva, son of Jesus Silva who was a Billy the Kid pall bearer, had me to lay down next to the sign to measure me, but when he started digging, Maryln stopped him.

"Not yet, Chino. Not yet," she said softly.

There's all kinds of stuff to see in the area. Fort remains, where a brutal fascist named Kit Carson brought a bunch of Navajos and Apaches together in an experiment that didn't work, but created the settling at Fort Sumner.

Then there's unmarked things like Red Lake. That was a marvel to me. It actually has red water. Depending on the sunlight, the color runs from light red to blood red throughout the day. I've never seen anything like it.

That night, I stood in the doorway where Billy the Kid stood just before Charlie Bowdre's body swallowed a hailstorm of lead from fire spittin' peacemakers and rolled down the frozen snow-filled banks to lay frozen himself.

Walking the trail back to my ranch house in the moonlight, three riderless horses, poundin' the dirt furiously, glided effortlessly by me to disappear in the dark.

It began to sink in. Let him soak in the history of the land. Let him walk the steps Billy walked. That was their mad plan for me. How dare they enrich my life?



BTKOG Patch 1993

### Sallie Chisum: Bile

*I thought he should only  
come out at night  
the first time I saw him.  
Garrett was in his 20's,  
newly appointed sheriff,  
but he was bilious.  
Maybe it was the whiskey.  
Later, I realized  
he had the face  
of Edgar Allan Poe:  
haunted eyes  
that were dark, sunken  
He was always  
sucking on a mint,  
but his breath  
was still putrid.  
My uncle told me  
Garrett had killed  
thousands of buffalo.  
I knew there was something  
wrong with him  
the first time we met,  
but I never guessed  
he'd be the one  
to kill Billy.*

— Arthur Winfield Knight  
BTKOG member



## Have you even wondered why Billy the Kid is famous?

Bryan Woolley  
Staff writer  
The Dallas Morning News  
(Sunday, November 15, 1992)

With the possible exceptions of Jesse James and George Armstrong Custer, more ink and paper have been used up on Billy the Kid than any other character in the history of the American West. Considering that Billy Bonney, as the Kid sometimes was called — or William Antrim or Henry McCarty, as he also was called — died without accomplishing much of anything when he was only 21 years old, this is an astounding fact.

But as Frederick Nolan points out in the opening pages of his exhaustive new history of the frontier feud that gave the Kid his fame, it isn't the historical Billy the Kid who has proved immortal, but a mythological one. "Indeed," he writes, "those who savor the ironies of history may find a certain sweet justice in the fact that today, of all the powerful, rich and famous men of his era, it is the Kid who is remembered best — and at that, for things he never did."

We all have read books or seen movies or TV shows about the Kid who never existed — the young Robin Hood of the Southwest on the one hand, and on the other, the juvenile psychopath who was said to have killed 21 men "not counting Mexicans and Indians" before he was gunned down himself by a sheriff who was or wasn't supposed to be his friend. But while the myths were building, even the scant facts of the Kid's life have proved slippery and elusive.

In *The Lincoln County War*, Mr. Nolan attempts, with exquisite success, to strip away the myth and give us the Kid as the people of Lincoln County, N.M., knew him more than 100 years ago — a job that Robert M. Utley did equally well in his 1989 biography, *Billy the Kid*. But the task that Mr. Nolan sets for himself is more stitched together, from literally hundreds of sources, the most detailed, exhaustive history of the Lincoln County War ever written, and has told the story to the largest extent possible in the words of the participants.

In the hands of a lesser writer, such a book could have wound up as a disastrous cut-and-paste job. But despite Mr. Nolan's insistence that every last bone of evidence be picked of its very last smidgen of flesh, he has managed to weave his huge mountain of facts and opinions into a vivid narrative.

The Lincoln County War, regarded by the cold eye of history, was simply a struggle between two storekeeping partnerships — the Murphy-Dolan faction on one side and the Kid's Tunstall-McSween

faction on the other — to drive each other out of the county, leaving the victor to enjoy a mercantile monopoly in that remote, mountainous area of New Mexico. But as the feud escalated from a business competition to a murderous war involving dozens of greedy businessmen, corrupt and incompetent public officials, hired gunslingers, innocent victims caught in the crossfire and even the U.S. Army, it caught the attention and imagination of the entire nation.

Out of the bloodshed, the myth of Billy the Kid grew. And interest in the mythological Kid has kept interest in the war alive for more than a century, simply because it was the context in which the Kid's brief career was played out.

I believe it's safe to say that the definitive history of that conflict now has been written. And in addition to his narrative, Mr. Nolan also has given us a veritable encyclopedia of the feud, including 83 photographs, three maps, a detailed chronology of events and brief biographies of every participant.

Put this work and Mr. Utley's biography on your bookshelf, and you're likely never to feel the need to crack another book about Billy the Kid or the Lincoln County War.

**Note:** If you'll recall, Frederick W. Nolan wrote the definitive book on John Tunstall (*The Life & Death of John Henry Tunstall*) and now his new book *The Lincoln County War: A Documentary History*, can be purchased from BTKOG members Theresa and Jim Earle (The Early West Creative Publishing Co., P. O. Box 9292, College Station, Texas 77842) for \$49.95, plus \$2.00 for shipping.

Maryln and Joe Bowlin during their trip to Europe couple of years ago, stopped in England and visited Frederick Nolan and he told them about his forthcoming book.

Bryan Woolley, who wrote this article, has his latest book out too, *The Edge of the West*.

### Excerpt from I'll Get Them All He Said With A Grin!

*And there in Old Fort Sumner*

*Billy met his fate,*

*The bright moon was shining,*  
*the hour was late.*

*Shot down by Pat Garrett,*  
*who once was his friend,*

*The young outlaw's life*  
*had now come to an end.*

*But what is the truth about*  
*young Billy the Kid?*

*A cold-blooded killer or*  
*a folk hero for what he did?*

*Follow the trail of money*  
*and it can be seen,*

*The real villain in truth*  
*was the Santa Fe Ring!*

Don McAlamy

## Billy's Ballad

*I awake to the shadow of the  
hangmans noose dangling in the wind,  
I hear voices of ghosts who are long  
gone friends,  
I watch the tumble weeds blow across the  
desert sands so wild so free,  
But I'm on the run and free is  
something I'll never be,  
I've seen a lot of places and I've met  
a lot of faces,  
Some tried to beat me in this life,  
But the six-gun taught me to fight.*

*I've dared to live in ways few will do,  
I ride with the wind in my face and  
a bullet staring between my eyes,  
Yes I took a few lives and I broke  
my share of hearts,  
But if you don't understand the rules  
of the game,  
Than it's a game you shouldn't start.*

*I've laughed at death and sneered  
at chance,  
Looked fear in the eye and asked him  
for a dance,  
They try to stop me any way they can,  
But here in the desert I'll make my stand,  
They'll not run me out - not here, no way,  
Cause this is my home - I'm here to stay,  
They say I'm a wanted man - HA! HA!  
Come on Pat Garrett catch me if you can.*

*Chase me from here to hell who knows  
ya might get me,  
HA! HA! you never can tell you might  
kill me,  
Oh yes you might,  
But you'll still hear my laughter ringing  
loud as a gun shot through the night.*

*Cause I'll live forever,  
And this out-law will still ride,  
Through the hearts and minds of all,  
As I kiss the world good-bye.*

Dedicated to the memory of Billy the Kid

— Rick Jackson  
Linn, West Virginia



## NOTICE

Our past newsletters have alerted members of our renewal policy taking effect this year. Those with renewals due July 1991 through December 1991, will have a white insert in this Gazette, notifying them renewals are due. Those from January 1992 through June 1992, will receive their renewal notice inserted in the April 1993 newsletter. Please cooperate with us and be on the lookout for your notice, as we need your support to continue our work in keeping *America's Most Enduring Legend* alive.





## Puerto de Luna — The 1991 Re-enactment and Dedication by the Outlaw Gang . . .

Bill C. Cummings

Puerto de Luna, Oct. 1991—Several hundred people turned out here today at a village made forever famous for its links to Billy the Kid. They were here to participate in the unveiling of a state historical marker for the Alexander Grzelachowski store, where Billy the Kid tasted his last Christmas meal. Television crews from the NBC affiliate in Albuquerque and the PBS station recorded the featured events. A reporter and photographer for the *Santa Rosa News* also were present. State Senator Pete Campos, in high good spirits, mixed affably with the crowd. Young boys passed out red ribbons that declared, "Real Life is Drug Free!" The boys were runners for Anna Lucero who was here to launch Governor and Alice King's Red Ribbon Campaign War on Drugs. Bob Boze Bell, who wrote and illustrated an article on the Kid for the August issue of *Arizona Highways*, was here from Phoenix, busy taking both video and still photos.

The gracious hosts, who did not seem at all put upon by the crush of people and the excitement, were Victor and Otilia Flores, who own the property that once was Grzelachowski's.

The marker became the tenth state historical marker to be sponsored by The Billy the Kid Outlaw Gang, Inc.

At the center of the day's festivities was the building that Alexander Grzelachowski erected roughly at about the same time Lawrence G. Murphy put up his store in Lincoln. Constructed from stone, the walls of the building are a good three to four feet thick. There is a porch with pillars like that of the Tunstall store. One of the pillars has a hole in it that is claimed to be a bullet hole put there by Billy the Kid. Three doorways lead inside from the porch, and over each there is an ornamental gable.

Inside, there are the old high ceilings and heavily worn floorboards. Originally, each room had a fireplace; the mantelpieces were long ago sold. The southern doorway leads into what is known to have been the saloon. Whereas the rest of the rooms are square in shape, the saloon is a long oblong.

The building is complete except for Grzelachowski's warehouse. Beneath the warehouse, there was a basement. It has since been filled in with earth to keep the Flores' cattle from falling into it. Mrs. Flores says the basement walls were filled with carved initials. Apparently, a small jail once was located behind the building. It, too, is no longer standing.

Before the speeches, there came an attention-grabbing re-enactment of the Christmas Day when Pat Garrett arrived at Grzelachowski's with a wagon load of prisoners who had surrendered to him at Stinking Springs, namely Tom Pickett, David Rudabaugh, Billy Wilson, and Billy the Kid. Only the wild turkey with all the trimmings that Grzelachowski served up that day was missing.

This correspondent along with Gary Allen and Billy Cox had come from Carrizozo to be in the re-enactment. Our instructions were to show up looking seedy. We had left off shaving since Wednesday, and, the night before the ceremonies, we slept in our clothes out behind Grzelachowski's store. Gary was picked to be Rudabaugh. I was dubbed Pickett. Cox, about whom more follows, was the Kid. Just before the event, Rudy Sanchez, who runs a video store in Santa Rosa, materialized as Billy Wilson.

By the bridge that spans the Pecos, we were placed in handcuffs, waist chains, and foot shackles supplied by the real-life sheriff of Lincoln County, James McSwane,

who had the role of Pat Garrett. Cox and Allen were chained together just as their historical counterparts had been. Waggoners Jimmie Johnson and Victor Flores started the horses moving, and the wheels of the wagon soon were rolling along the remnant of the original trail that led up to Grzelachowski's.

The wagon was closely guarded by a mounted and armed posse. Besides McSwane, the posse consisted of Bob Logue from Taos, Severa Adame from Stinking Springs, Paul Moore from Ft. Sumner, Gino Lujan from Santa Rosa, and Joe Bowlin, the organizer of the day's events.

As the wagon came into view of the onlookers, Johnny Eastwood, who always takes the part of Segura, emerged from the crowd and ran along side, shouting, "Are they treating you alright, Billy?" When the wagon had gone a little further, Rudy Sanchez alias Billy Wilson rolled out of the wagon, handcuffs, foot shackles, and all, in a scene-stealing mock escape attempt. As the wagon arrived in front of Grzelachowski's, a voice shouted, "Hey, Billy, are you really a Robin Hood?" Someone else immediately let out, "I'm for lynching him right here and now!"

At the store McSwane alias Garrett turned us over the real-life sheriff of Guadalupe County, Joe Robert Chavez. An enthusiastic participant, Chavez had driven to Albuquerque that morning to pick up period costume before heading here.

As simple as the re-enactment was staged, the crowd got into it. The whole half an hour or so had the feeling of a familiar liturgical celebration. Immediately afterward, people came forward to have their picture taken with Billy and his outlaws.

Maryln Bowlin, founder of BTKOG, fairly beamed. In her view, the people who had come to Puerto de Luna had witnessed both a re-enactment of history and history in the making. She pointed out that any such presentation in the future would probably not have two impersonators so perfect of Garrett and the Kid as James McSwane and Billy Cox.

McSwane, as mentioned, is the elected sheriff of Lincoln County. As such, he is the successor of Jack Gylam and "Ham" Mills, Saturnino Baca and William Brady, John Copeland and George Peppin, George Kimball and Pat Garrett, John Poe and George Curry. He has twice won the annual BTKOG look alike contest.

Billy Cox has become something of a New Mexico Phenomenon as a latter-day Billy the Kid. While he is proud of his two wins at the annual BTKOG look alike contests, Cox lives Billy the Kid everyday not just at contest time. Certain parallels between the Kid and himself intrigue Billy. They both lost their mothers while boys, they have a shared Irish ancestry, and then there is the William H. in both their names. Cox has roamed New Mexico to



be where Billy was and to recreate in his own life some of the Kid's experiences. People respond warmly to both Billy Cox and to the other Billy they see when Cox shows his face. Everybody gets into the Billy fantasy real easy and spontaneously around Cox.

Billy has learned how "to play it right." He explained this concept in an interview with Bonny Celine of Albuquerque (who feels that Cox is living everyone's dream). "I'll walk into a saloon, and everybody will say, 'There he is, that's him, that Billy!' I do it right. It's psychological. Not like I walk in there, BAM, BAM, BAM, and some guy says, 'Who do you think you are?' 'I'm Billy the Kid.' No, I just walk in there and people *know*, hey, it's Billy."

That's what people kept saying today. And Maryln is right that it will be a long time, if ever again, before an elected sheriff of Lincoln County who looks like Pat Garrett and an itinerant young man who lives and looks like Billy the Kid will meet up to re-enact the past.

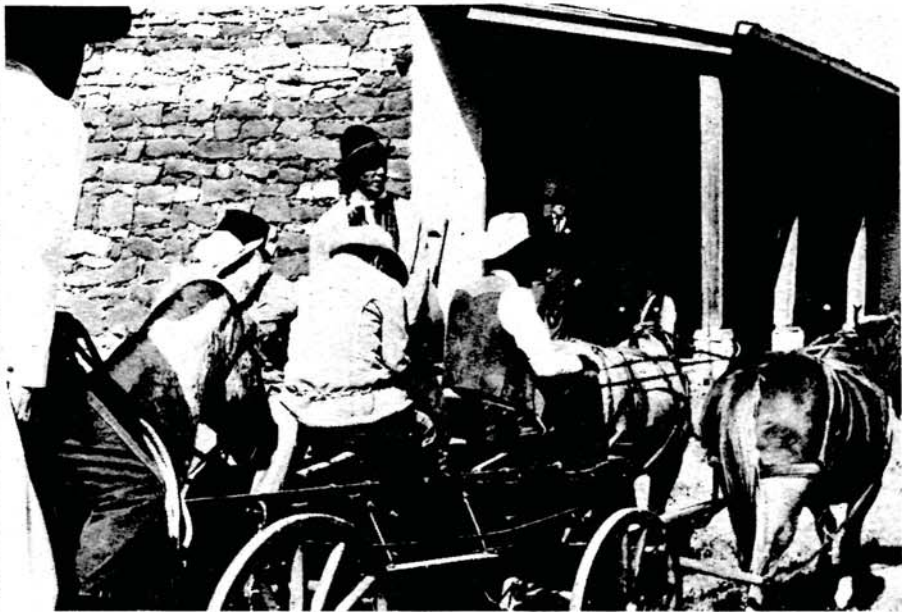
The crowd dispersed from around the Grzelachowski store to regroup at the platform set up for the speakers. The roster of those who addressed the crowd included designated oldtimer Frank Padilla; Senator Campos; Guadalupe County Extension Agent Gino Lujan; Travel Writer for the New Mexico State Tourism Department, Mike Pitel; and historian Francis C. Kajencki.

Kajencki has written everything in print there is about Grzelachowski. Anyone really into Billy and the individuals who peopled his life feels such a gratitude to Kajencki that it is difficult to restrain the urge to kneel down and kiss his hand. The author has worked quietly behind the scenes for ten years to get recognition for the Grzelachowski store and to inspire efforts to preserve it. Today was like a dream come true, and Kajencki practically floated on air. For anyone interested, he had copies available of his new book, *Poles in the 19th Century Southwest*.

Speeches done, memberships in the Outlaw Gang were presented to Sheriffs McSwane and Chavez. Members of the Outlaw Gang who were present were invited to come forward for picture taking. Among those present was current Outlaw Gang president Janean Grissom.

The celebrators broke up to stroll toward the community hall across from Our Lady of Refuge for lunch. A quartet of fiddlers broke into a serenade.

For Billy and his outlaws, the day ended when they bedded down for the night in the Grzelachowski store, guests of the Flores'. All were hopeful the place was haunted so that they would get the chance to talk to Padre Polaco, or maybe even Billy himself. Either the store isn't haunted, or a tired bunch of cowboys slept through everything the ghosts had to offer.



Enactment in Puerto de Luna, New Mexico, October 19, 1991, when captured Billy the Kid (standing in wagon) and three cronies, all in chains, arrive at the Alexander Grzelachowski Territorial House for Billy's last Christmas dinner, 1880. Sheriff Pat Garrett on the veranda. (Staged by "Billy the Kid Outlaw Gang" Historical Society.)



## Billy the Kid Gang re-enacts arrest at territorial open house (1992)

Artesia Daily Press, Artesia, New Mexico, Sept. 20, 1992

(Note: This article was published a week prior to the event.)

Come to the Grzelachowski open house and listen to how the Wild West was really won!

The Alexander Grzelachowski Territorial House was built around 1870. Grzelachowski's home and store were a hub of activity for San Miguel County (now Guadalupe County) and surrounding area and often visited by some of the most famous characters of western history.

On Christmas Eve 1880, William H. Bonney, alias "Billy the Kid," in the cus-

tody of Sheriff Pat Garrett, was served his last Christmas dinner, while being transported for trial.

On Saturday, Sept. 26, the Billy the Kid Outlaw Gang will perform a re-enactment of the arrest.

In a cooperative effort with the New Mexico Historical Division, Santa Rosa Consolidated Schools and the Historical Preservation Society, oral histories will be taken during the storytelling times at the event.

Many events are planned for old and young alike. See family photographs, old



guns and relics and demonstrations of quilting, wood carving and real cowboys. Take a hay ride in a horse pulled wagon, and bring your children for the fishing contest to be held at the pond under the orchard trees behind the old house. Hear the old-time fiddlers, baladas and cordillos.

A \$100 cash prize will be awarded to the best western costume so put on your cowboy hats, sombreros, bonnets and boots.

The evening will close with a star-lit dance near the river.

The Billy the Kid Outlaw Gang, headed by Joe Bowlin of Taiban, N.M., will stage Sheriff Pat Garrett's capture of Billy the Kid and three cronies and their arrival in bitterly cold weather at the home of Territorial merchant, Alexander Grzelachowski, on Dec. 25, 1880.

Billy the Kid look-alike Billy Cox plays the role of the famous outlaw.

Alexander Grzelachowski (Gre-ze-la-hof-ski), who came to New Mexico Territory with Bishop Jean Lamy in 1851, became the leading citizen of Puerto de Luna, where he ran a thriving merchandizing business. He traded extensively with the Territory's foremost merchant, Charles Ilfeld of Las Vegas, dealt with cattle baron John Chisum and engaged top lawyers like Thomas Catron, who became one of the first two U.S. Senators from New Mexico in 1912. Grzelachowski knew Billy the Kid and Sheriff Pat Garrett well. They often stopped in Puerto de Luna to visit the Pole.

The Alexander Grzelachowski Territorial House, owned by Victor and Otilia Flores, is being restored and preserved as an example of the village commercial structure of the period of 1870-1900 in east central New Mexico.

The Grzelachowski house is located in Puerto de Luna, 10 miles south of Santa Rosa on Highway 91.

(A note from Mike Pitel of the New Mexico Department of Tourism: "Andrea Marquez and the Santa Rosa Chamber of Commerce, and the residents of the Village of Puerto de Luna are extremely pleased with the recent Billy the Kid reenactments at the Grzelachowski Open House in late September. There were more than 500 people who came to the day-long festivities, double the number who came during the historical marker dedication a year ago. Please thank the outlaw gang for playing an integral part in that annual event.

Also thank the outlaw gang again for helping to make the recent dedication of the Texico Welcome Center successful as well. There were more people who attended the Texico dedication than the Santa Fe dedication the following week; better news coverage at Texico, too.)

"If you see a car with BTKOG tags, wave, honk or tip your hat!"

## Texico Welcome Center's Billy the Kid Exhibit

*An added note on the Texico Welcome Center:* Located west of Texico, New Mexico on Highway 60-70-84 (approximately 8 miles east of Clovis) this welcome center is the eastern gateway to *Billy the Kid Country*. As a result of a meeting there with Mike Cerletti, head of the state's tourism department, the Outlaw Gang will have one of the big glass enclosed cases to publicize the Gang's activities and accomplishments and the Caprock Amphitheatre's outdoor drama *The Real Billy the Kid*, 49 miles north of Clovis, N.M.



## BTKOG Membership Is Widespread!

Billy the Kid Outlaw Gang members can now be found in 49 states! Poor Delaware, where is your western spirit?

We even have one member from Puerto Rico.

And 12 foreign countries with members include Austria, Canada, Australia, Belgium, England, France, Germany, Italy, Holland, Japan, Spain and Sweden.

## We Get Letters!

Mr. Joe Bowlin  
and the Outlaw Gang:

Alice joins me in sending you our sincere thanks for your participation in the opening of the Tourist Center in Texico. The Billy the Kid group were superb. They definitely captured the southwest spirit.

Keep up the good work and we look forward to seeing you again real soon,  
Sincerely,

**Bruce King**  
Governor  
New Mexico

Dear Maryln and Joe:

We want to thank you for the great visit we had in New Mexico. We appreciated your hospitality. We are sorry we didn't get to meet more BTKOG members, but it was GREAT meeting both of you and we sure appreciated Bob Barron's Tunstall Canyon tour.

**The Brewers,**  
Lisa, Lori, Bud, Dan & Aaron  
(Dick Brewer's descendants)

Dear Joe & Maryln:

Thank you so much for the opportunity of participating in and learning from the recent BTKOG/PG gala. We were made to feel so welcome that I know that we'll make the effort to return. As you may remember, Nate and I built an 11-day trip around being in Ruidoso. We traveled 4,400 miles in that time, camped on the ground, no tent, for 5 nights, saw wondrous sights that we had only read about or seen on TV, and then made friends of quality and endurance.

If it's appropriate, please express to the membership our gratitude. This trip changed us for the better and forever.

Thanks!

**Don & Nate Whittington**

BTKOG, Inc.  
Historical Society

Would you please send us another supply of your most excellent brochures? Our supply is completed depleted.

My personal opinion? They are without a doubt the finest brochures we put on our racks. Thank you!

**Gloria Poague**  
Alamogordo Visitor  
Information Center

## Garrett Carrot Cake

2 Cups sugar  
1 1/2 cups cooking oil  
2 cups flour  
1 cup chopped nuts  
4 cups grated carrots  
4 unbeaten eggs  
2 teaspoons soda  
2 teaspoons baking powder  
2 teaspoons salt  
2 teaspoons cinnamon

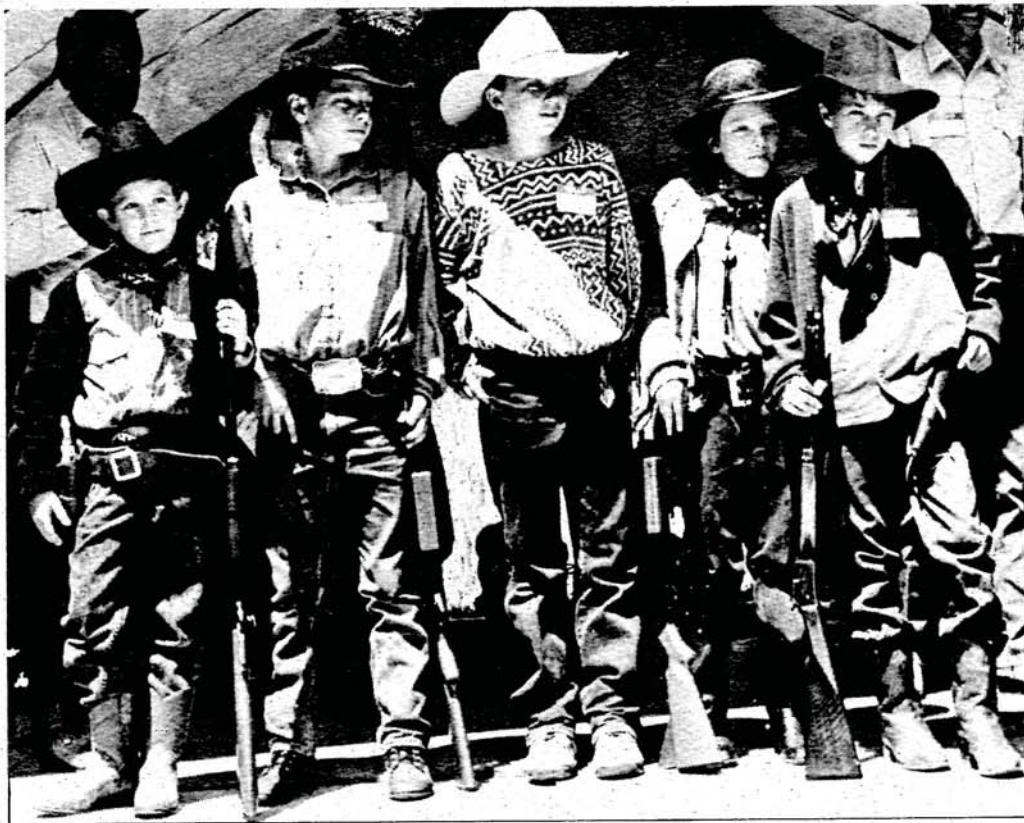
Grease and flour 3 9-inch cake pans. Chop nuts and set aside. Grate carrots, using the smaller of the two columns on the grater or do in Cuisinart. Set aside. Pre-heat oven to 300 degrees. Sift together baking powder, soda, cinnamon and flour. Set aside. In large bowl cream oil and sugar until light in color. Add eggs. Cream well. Add flour mixture to above. Mix well. Fold in nuts and carrots. Pour into pans. Bake 60 minutes. Cool well before icing.

## Icing

1 lb. powdered sugar, sifted  
8 oz. cream cheese  
1/4 cup margarine  
3 tsp vanilla  
3/4 cups chopped nuts  
Cream well and ice cake.

Heather Robertson  
San Francisco, California

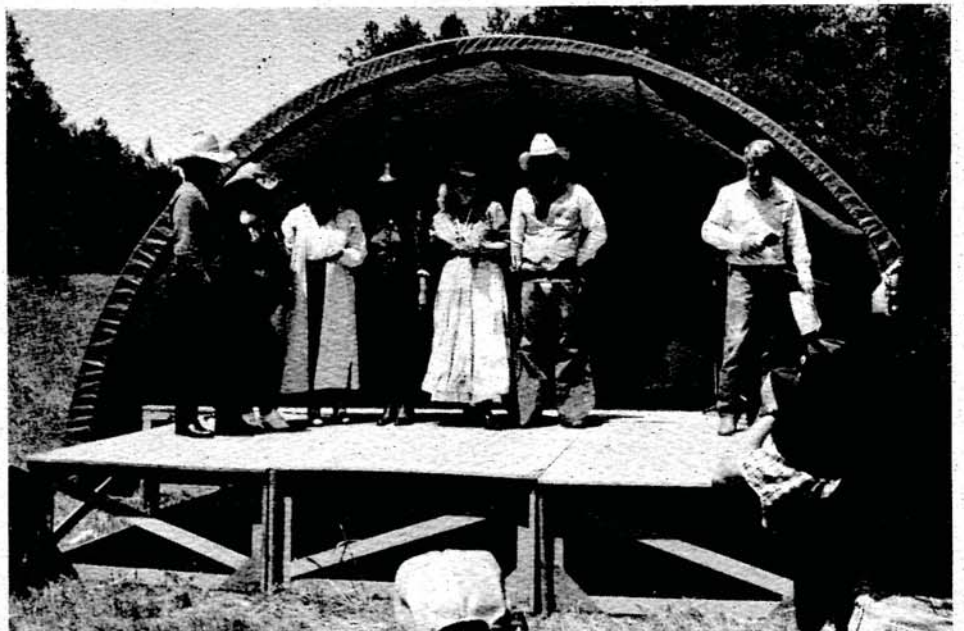
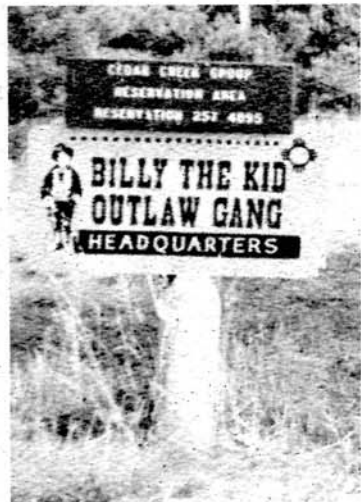
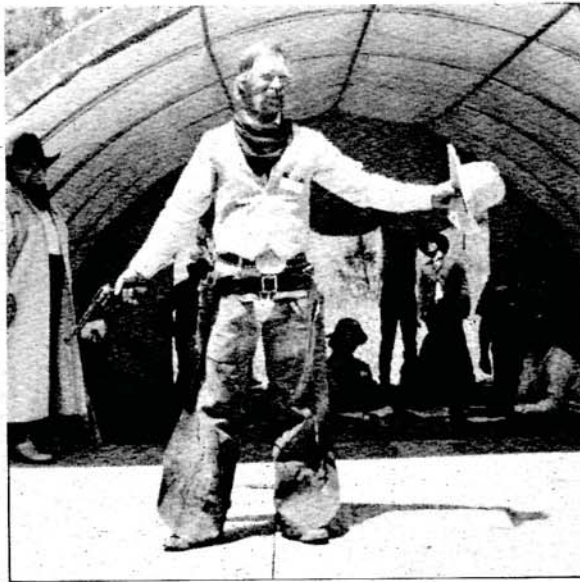




Photos of various activities of the BTKOG - at the annual Billy the Kid/Pat Garrett Days with look-alikes, cookouts - at Ruidoso; at Puerto de Luna dedication and reenactments — all great historical fun!









## The Kid At Old Fort Sumner\*

Jerry Weddle

Members of the Outlaw Gang will be interested in reading a newly discovered manuscript written by a pioneer of old Fort Sumner. Everyone knows that Billy Bonney was killed in the Maxwell house on July 14, 1881. The house was occupied that night by the widow Luz Beaubien Maxwell, her son Pete, her daughters Paula and Odela, and her servants Deluvina and Antonia Molina. I have been hoping that one or more of them had the foresight to write down their account of this disputed incident. My research failed to unearth any personal record of their experiences, but with the help of Paula Maxwell's grandson, I found a manuscript written by Louisa Beaubien. Louisa was the daughter of Dona Luz's brother, Pablo Beaubien, who married a sister of Manuel Abreau. They came to old Fort Sumner soon after the kid was killed and lived there most of Louisa's life. She came to know many of the people involved, and grew up listening to first-hand talk about Garrett and the Kid from her cousins and others in the village.

Sometime between 1938 and 1940, Louisa Beaubien Barrett reminisced about the early days of old Fort Sumner and of the oldtimers she knew. Her daughter, Marian Barrett, recorded her anecdotes and insights for posterity. Occasionally, Louisa's memory faltered over a name or date. Garrett did marry the granddaughter of Miguel Trujillo, but her last name was Gutierrez, not Trujillo. His second wife was Apolinaria Gutierrez, not Celsa Gutierrez. They had the same surname, but it is not known if they were related. These are minor confusions attributable to a long memory which do not detract from the value of Louisa's reminiscence. After all, Kid and Celsa were intimate friends, and it was through Kid that Garrett met the Gutierrez family. Some priceless details like Kid working briefly as a sheep-herder, giving clothes to Pat Garrett, and scaring the house-keeper have been corroborated by Louisa's contemporaries, among them Skelton Glenn, Odela Maxwell Abreau and Deluvina.

Louisa's reminiscence has the feel of authenticity. Although only four of the forty pages is concerned with Garrett and Kid, it offers for the first time a view of character and events from the perspective of the Maxwell family. I have corrected mis-spellings and separated the run on sentence into punctuated paragraphs while maintaining the wording of her story.

Billy the Kid has become very famous in the past 25 years, but in this section of the country the people had paractically forgotten about him. There are still a few folks living who knew Billy personally and they speak of him as being not such a bad sort. According to those who knew

him best, he was not really a criminal bandit, but a victim of circumstances. By chance the Kid became involved in the Lincoln County War, which was a war between two cattle outfits. He was an exceptionally good shot and many a man fell at the point of his gun. However, he did not kill as many men as he had been credited with. Those who knew him well discredit stories of any wanton killing or stealing by him.

The story I heard of him at my mother's knee by the flickering fireplace one long winter evening follows. A young boy, 18 or 19 years of age, arrived at Fort Sumner one spring. After inquiring for work he was directed to Pete Maxwell, a large sheep and cattle grower who employed many men. The name he gave was Bill H. Bonney. On account of his youth he soon became Billy the Kid. He was blond, slight of build, and looked younger than his years, Billy had a pleasing personality and spoke English and Spanish, as he had practically been raised in New Mexico. He was first hired as a sheep herder. Later he worked with the cattle and horses.

After working for Pete Maxwell for a while the Kid left and went to work for John Chisum. He claimed that Chisum was the only man he ever stole cattle from. Chisum had "done him dirt," promising he would stand back of Billy if he helped fight against the other parties that figured

**Covering her mouth  
with his hand he explained,  
*"I am not dead.  
I am very much alive  
and am here in hiding!"***

in the Lincoln County War. The men he killed, he killed in that war. The kid also claimed that Chisum owed him wages, and warned Chisum that he would pay himself plenty from Chisum's herds.

It was while working as a sheep herder that Billy met Pat Garrett. Pat approached him and asked if he thought he might get work. Billy in turn directed him to Pete Maxwell. Garrett was in rags, so the Kid loaned him a pair of trousers and fitted him rather quick since Garrett was a much larger man. Clad in these clothes Garrett appeared at Pete Maxwell's to ask for work. He went to sheep herding alongside Billy and they became fast friends. Through the Kid, Pat Garrett met the grand-daughter of Miguel Trujillo, Juanita Trujillo, whom Pat later married. During the wedding reception Juanita was taken ill and only lived a few days. Then Garrett married Celsa Gutierrez, daughter of Salvador and Luciana (Chana) Gutierrez, also of Fort Sumner.

Billy often came to Fort Sumner where he had many friends. Those who wonder what attraction the Kid had for the

Maxwell family will note that he was just a very young likable boy. The feminine part of the family consisted of Mrs. Lucien Maxwell, mother of several grown children and grand children. Except for the two youngest, Paula and Odela, her daughters were married with families of their own and lived away. They came home on occasional visits. They all treated Billy kindly, but he had no special attraction for them. When he came to the house, it was to see Pete. The Kid was not by any means "Harbored" after he became a criminal. On the contrary Pete advised him to either leave the county or give himself up to the law.

Billy broke away from the Lincoln jail after killing the jailor and guard and came straight to Pete's. The Maxwell family was away. Finding the house open, he made his way to one of the rooms on the second floor. There he had been hiding for a couple of days when Tonia Molina, the housekeeper, walked into the room. She saw the Kid sitting on a chair by the window and she started screaming. Tonia thought it was his ghost, as he was supposed to have been hanged several days before. Billy jumped up and caught her by the arm and told her to stop yelling because he didn't want anyone to know that he was there. Covering her mouth with his hand he explained, "I am not dead. I am very much alive and am here in hiding. You fool, shut your mouth and get me something to eat. I'm starving." This she did. Since the Maxwell family was expected to return soon, he remained in hiding for several days and then left for the hills. By that time everyone knew he had escaped.

It was said that Billy came and went around Fort Sumner at his leisure. He told Pete that he came back to do one little job and then he would get out of the country. The job was to kill Pat Garrett who had been deputized to get him. He claimed Pat had been as big a cattle rustler as he had been and was just out to get him for the reward. He wanted to give Garrett a chance to shoot or make a move to shoot first. Many of the oldtimers said that Garrett saw the Kid several times, once in the home of Jesus Silva. Mrs. Silva had placed a pallet on the floor for Cirilo and Jesus, Jr. They were playing when the Kid came in. He got down on the floor and played horses with the two small boys. Mrs. Silva looked up at the window and saw Garrett standing there looking in. He turned and walked away.

One night Garrett came in to Pete Maxwell's room to ask Pete if he knew where Billy could be found. Pete told him, "You know as much about the Kid's whereabouts as I do." Pete was in bed and Garrett was sitting on the edge of the bed talking to him. There was no light in the room, but the moon was shining brightly through the big open window. Billy walked into Pete's room asking "Quien es Pete?" Pete didn't answer because he



knew they would start shooting at each other. Garrett dropped to the floor by the side of the bed and fired the first shot, which went through the Kid's heart killing him instantly. His second shot went through the washstand against the opposite wall. In the same instant Pete jumped out of bed, through the window and into his mother's bedroom. Garrett followed him there. The two men who were with Garrett had stayed out on the porch while he went into Pete's room. Having heard the shooting they did not dare come into the room but took positions of advantage outside. Garrett and Maxwell then came out and told them what had happened.

Garrett wanted some member of the family to go see if Billy was dead. Pete replied, "You must think we are crazy to run the risk of being shot by the Kid in case he isn't dead." Deluvina, the Navajo Indian servant of the family, lighted a candle and went to the door and called "Billy, Billy." When he didn't answer, she walked into the room and kneeling by the body felt his heart. She called out, "He is dead." The posse came in to examine the body. After holding a coronor's jury the body was laid out on a home-made table which was brought in from the back porch. A coffin was made by the men of the town led by Domingo Swabacker, and Billy the Kid was buried in the Fort Sumner cemetery.

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## The Rest of the Story . . .

Carolyn C. Allen

As I happen to be an admirer and champion of William H. Bonney, alias Billy the Kid; it disturbs me when uninformed individuals pass judgments on him without knowing the full facts. For example, this summer in Ruidoso a tourist asked me, "How can you say that Billy the Kid was not a ruthless killer when he blew a man's head off with a shotgun?"

My answer is that one has to know the entire story and not judge by Twentieth Century standards, especially since the Nineteenth Century frontier expected a man to solve his own problems, and believed in the eye for an eye philosophy.

Seventeen-year-old Billy Bonney first entered Lincoln County in the Fall of 1877 at Seven Rivers, New Mexico. According to legend he arrived at the adobe home and store of Heiskell and Barbara (Ma'am) Jones, parent of nine strapping sons and one slim daughter. He appeared footsore, limping, and hungry after his horse and gear were stolen by Apaches. He had walked for three days and nights across the rugged Guadalupe Mountains in his boots, without socks! Today some historians discount this version, but I believe it happened. (There is not space in the newsletter for my dissertation on why. I will save that for another time.)

As a result of his being taken in by the Jones family, he formed a close attachment to the elder Jones and a life-long friendship with their oldest son John. (Sadly, neither one of the young men was to have a long life.) The friendship survived fighting on opposite sides during the Lincoln County War as the Seven Rivers group fought for the Dolan faction — not because they like Dolan, but because they resented and disliked John Chisum. And some of them had probably sold rustled cows to Murphy and Dolan.

Seven Rivers (which now lies beneath the waters of the Brantley Dam on the Pecos River — the town of Carlsbad is nearby, and the Guadalupe Mountains can still be seen in their rugged grandeur) at that time was a small settlement on the Pecos and a rough place. Bodies were always being recovered from the river after being "pecosed." Either they had been shot, knifed, hit on the head, or drowned, and then dumped into the water. Seven Rivers was close to Texas, and the Texas Rangers had made it hot for outlaws and rustlers. Therefore, desperate men were crossing into New Mexico Territory because there was "no law West of the Pecos" except at the county seat in Lincoln which was almost 160 miles away.

It was into this environment that Billy Bonney came. He spent a week or so with the Jones, helping Ma'am with the dishes and working in the store. In their spare time he and John rode and practiced their shooting skills. He probably met the Beckwiths, Marion Turner, Buck Powell, Bob and Wallace Olinger, Buck Morton, and even Jesse Evans.

As an example of the frontier — the time, the place, the people — John Jones had received his six-shooter, a gift from his father, at the age of fourteen. It was his initiation rite into manhood.

At the end of Billy's stay, John lent him a horse which carried him north to Chisum's South Spring Ranch and eventually to Lincoln and his destiny. However, many times afterward the Kid would ride back to Seven Rivers to stay with the Jones. Ma'am became a second mother to the youth — and required his presence at Bible service on Sunday mornings at their store.

It was in this close friendship that one of the killings we know Billy committed had its roots. Among the Seven Rivers residents was Bob Olinger, known as Pecos Bob, who had the reputation of a braggart and a bully. Probably Billy knew him in the fall of 1877, but their paths had not yet converged. Later Bob rode with the Seven Rivers men in the War. Again, there was not necessarily personal enmity between them. That all changed, though, in 1880 when Billy returned to visit the grieving Jones family at Seven Rivers. John Jones was dead, shot in the back by Bob Olinger. This was confirmed by Ma'am herself who had prepared John's body for burial

and had seen the bullet entry wounds.

As Billy was already in trouble with the law because of the Brady indictment, he told Pa Jones for him and his boys to stay out of trouble. He, the Kid, would take care of Olinger.

Therefore, in April of 1881, when Billy the Kid blasted Bob Olinger with Olinger's own shotgun, he was not merely responding to Olinger's taunts and jeers and threats; he (Bonney) was avenging the death of a friend and repaying a debt to a family that he respected and loved.

## Book Nook

Carolyn C. Allen

For those of you who would like to know more about Billy the Kid or the Lincoln County War, I should like to recommend the following three books. If you enjoyed "The Rest of the Story," the more complete version may be read in *Ma'am Jones of the Pecos* by Eve Ball, published by the University of Arizona Press, Tucson, 1969. It is available in reprint in paperback form.

If you want to read the original version of the legend (and not necessarily the truth), I recommend *The Authentic Life of Billy the Kid*, by Pat F. Garrett, University of Oklahoma Press, Norman, 1988 (originally published April 1882.)

Of course, this is the book upon which so many of the myths have been based. It was also largely ghosted by Ash Upson except for Garrett's version of Billy's death.

However, as much as the two libeled the Kid, it is charming to read the 19th Century hyperbole. Any serious Billy the Kid/Pat Garrett devotee should have the book in his or her library. Just remember that it is largely fiction and Garrett's justification to the world for his July 14, 1881, action of shooting the Kid.

Was the Kid armed as Garrett maintains? History still debates that point. I believe Garrett when he says, "Scared, Cap? Well, I should say so. I started out on that expedition with the expectation of getting scared."

Personally this reviewer does not believe Billy was armed that night. But that does not take away from Garrett's determination to get him — rightly or wrongly.

To counterbalance Garrett's book, I refer you to *Billy the Kid, a Handbook* by Jon Tuska, University of Nebraska Press, Lincoln, 1983. In Tuska's narrative of the historic "Life and Death of Billy the Kid," he says that Billy was shot while unarmed, except for a butcher knife.

This book also discusses "Billy and the Historians," "Billy the Kid in Fiction," "Billy the Kid in Film," and "The Legend of Billy the Kid." To me, it is a well balanced commentary by a social historian with no ax to grind, and I recommend it to interested "Outlaws."





## Thomas G. Yerby and Nasaria

Donald R. Lavash

Thomas G. Yerby, an acquaintance of Billy the Kid, settled for a time northeast of Fort Sumner, New Mexico. He acquired a homestead, built a house, shed, barn and fenced the land for ranching. Typical of eastern migrants after the Civil War this Virginian retreated west to stake his claim on the "new frontier."

He came into this life during the Mexican War, which extended the United States to California and the Rio Grande. It was a time when gold fever struck the heartland of the United States and raged unchecked.

Yerby grew up in the small farming community of Stony Hill, Richmond County, Virginia. Prior to 1853, few if any birth records existed for that southern state. Therefore, his exact date of birth is unknown. However, the 1860 census for Richmond County taken on August 13, 1860, does list the family members, ages, occupations, etc. T. G. (Tom) Yerby the middle child has been registered by the enumerator as being 13 years old and in school suggesting he may have been born in 1847.

The father, A. O. Yerby, age 43, gave his occupation as a farmer with real estate valued at \$25,000, and personal property worth \$39,915. These pre-Civil War figures indicated that the Yerbys possessed immense personal wealth for the time period, partly acquired by good fortune and by family cooperation and hard work. Not unlike other southern plantation owners, if necessary, the Yerbys intended

to protect their valuables with their lives.

When the Civil War broke out most of the eligible men were called into service for the Confederacy. Undoubtedly Mr. Yerby and later young Tom were conscripted and fought for the south. After Richmond fell to Union forces, most of the plantations were eventually dismantled.

By 1870, a destitute Mrs. Yerby and her daughter, Emma, had moved in with Dr. William W. Douglas and his family. The census for that year indicated Mr. Yerby had not return from military service. Likewise, neither Tom's nor his oldest sister Virginia's name appeared on the record. For the Yerbys who had been left behind, only memories of a former life remained.

Over the next few years, Tom moved often working his way westward and arrived in New Mexico Territory sometime around 1872. Soon after his arrival Yerby went to work for Becker & Co. a wholesale firm in Belen, New Mexico. Later, he moved to Las Vegas and became a bookkeeper for Charles Ilfeld & Co. While in the employ of the Ilfelds the company sent him to Springer to liquidate one of their retail stores that had become insolvent.

Tom became quite proficient in the merchantile business and his earnings proportionately increased. Within a few months he accumulated sufficient funds to homestead some land located near Los Esteros (bottom lands along the Rio Pecos included in the Bosque Redondo) in southeastern San Miguel County. He also acquired additional land near the head of Arroyo Canaditas. Later he filed on the property identified as the N $\frac{1}{2}$ , NE $\frac{1}{4}$ , Section 1, Township 2 North, 28 East.

Eventually Tom secured other holdings and purchased a lot on the northwest edge of Las Vegas, New Mexico between streets formerly called Spring and Flores. Yerby engaged some local carpenters to build another home with adjoining buildings.

While waiting the completion of his house in Las Vegas, Tom met a 16 year old hispanic girl named Nasaria Leyba (Leiba). The family members were originally from the small town of La Cienega situated southwest of Santa Fe. The Leybas also had recently moved to the isolated community.

Within the weeks that followed, Tom and Nasaria became very good friends. Since he needed a housekeeper for the ranch near Fort Sumner, Tom offered the job to Nasaria. She accepted and a few days later they began the lonesome trip overland to the ranch.

Over the next several months, the obvious friendly association grew into more than just a working relationship. On more than one occasion, Nasaria had been seen traveling with Tom while making his usual rounds between Las Vegas and the ranch near Bosque Redondo. To those that knew them, marriage seemed eminent.

According to the family tradition a marriage between Tom and Nasaria took place. Without announcing their intentions, one day while traveling to the ranch, the two made the usual stop at Anton Chico where they were married by the parish priest. However, in the 1880 census of Fort Sumner, Nasaria is listed as a "boarder" in the Tom Yerby household. She is further identified as the mother of a 3 year old son named Juan, and a daughter, Florentina, age 1 who they affectionately called Flora. Both children though carried the Yerby name.

Following the July 1878 shootout in Lincoln in which Alexander McSween was one of those killed, some of his hired guns, including Billy the Kid, escaped northward along the Pecos River to hide out in the Fort Sumner area. In September, the married loyalists, Charlie Bowdre and Josiah (Doc) Scurlock, joined their companions.

Bowdre went to work for Tom Yerby as ranch foreman and O'Folliard hired on as a cowboy. Charlie's wife, Manuela, and Nasaria were about the same age and became good friends. Doc Scurlock and his wife, like many of the other former Regulators, left the country, but Billy the Kid and Wilson hung around the gambling halls and continued to steal horses and to rustle cattle.

Determined to work out a solution for his legal difficulties the Kid quickly became involved with influential people. Some of the prominent citizens included Pete Maxwell, Thomas W. Wilcox, and Thomas G. Yerby. Since Billy's comrades worked at the Yerby Ranch, he often visited them and consequently got to know Tom and Nasaria.



The Yerby and the Bowdres began a close relationship and were seen together at community functions attended by William Bonney. On different occasions, Tom escorted Nasaria to the local musical festivities where she usually danced with the Kid. But Yerby also had commitments and continued his working relationship with Ilfeld & Co., commuting from Fort Sumner to Las Vegas.

Meanwhile Nasaria remained at home with the Bowdres. On weekends, the three of them were in town shopping and enjoying the scheduled events where Billy was usually on hand to provide additional entertainment. After the birth of their daughter, Florentina, Tom spent more time at the ranch with his family.

Because of his association with Bowdre and O'Folliard, it was easy for Bonney to take advantage of Yerby's friendship and good nature. Secretly the ranch had become a favorite hangout for the gang that included some newcomers named Tom Pickett and Dave Rudabaugh. It also served as a temporary corral to conceal stolen horses and cattle. Yerby may very well have suspected wrongdoing but no attempt had ever been made to halt operations. Later, with the help of an informant, the sheriff removed two stolen mules and a horse from the ranch. Yerby had not been implicated in the theft. Ten miles west of there was the Wilcox-Brazil place sometimes used for the same purpose.

Pat Garrett had been elected sheriff of Lincoln County and authorized by the governor to find Bonney, his confederates and bring them all to justice. Garrett led a posse to Fort Sumner. He had been notified that Bowdre moved his family from the Yerby Ranch to Fort Sumner. In a letter to Captain Joseph C. Lea of Roswell, Bowdre wrote: "I thought this (move) a duty to Mr. Yerby, \_\_\_\_\_ and there will be no chance of a fight coming off there." He said he intended to leave the country and lead an honest life.

On December 19, 1880, Garrett and his men surprised the Kid and his companions when they rode into Fort Sumner and in the confrontation O'Folliard was killed and the others headed east.

Before the criminals reached Yerby's ranch, the posse caught up with the thieves and cornered them in a rock house at Stinking Springs. Hours later, Bowdre lay dead and the remaining four surrendered to Garrett.

Understandably the recent events caused some commotion in the Fort Sumner area. Under the circumstances Yerby decided to lease the ranch and moved his family to their Las Vegas home. For the next several years Tom continued his employment with the Ilfeld wholesale firm. While living in Las Vegas Tom and Nasaria maintained a close relationship with the Bach, Jaffa, Lipchener, and Shoup families.

In the fall of 1887, Yerby and his partner, E. J. Wilcox, made plans to leave

New Mexico to homestead in either Montana or Wyoming. Nasaria's family persuaded her not to go and she remained in Las Vegas with the children.

Before Tom left for the north country in March of 1888, he had title to the Las Vegas home transferred to "Nasaria Leyba for all services rendered." The family never saw Tom again. They suspected that Yerby probably died before he reached his destination. Nasaria Leyba, Florentina (Yerby) Flores, her husband Eugenio Flores, and Juan Yerby are buried in Mount Calvary Cemetery, Las Vegas, New Mexico.

*Footnote: In a cover letter accompanying this brief biography of Thomas G. Yerby, author Donald R. Lavash mentioned that the photo of Yerby is the only one ever published. Also that this photo and other photos will be used in his forthcoming book on Lincoln County.*

*Further Lavash located three of Yerby's grandchildren who provided him with several photos, including pictures of Tom, Nasaria, her brothers, his son, Juan, and daughter, Florentina. "What I do not understand", Lavash says, "is the interview by Charles Foor, who, supposedly, had been on the scene in 1880 and gave the impression that he knew the Yerbys, Wilcox, Maxwells, Bonney, etc. He said or rather told Fulton and others that Billy was the father of Florentina. I have her picture. She does not look anything like Billy the Kid. Many of the oldtimers told tall tales about the Kid and his romances with Gutierrez and Paulita Maxwell. If they fibbed about Florentina no telling what they said about other events in and around Fort Sumner. Again, Burns is the one who states that Paulita (Maxwell) Jaramillo and Billy were lovers. But left it out of the book because he feared reprisal if he published such a thing. What a historian? I believe caution should be used when studying "oldtimers" statements. I see no advantage in using material that cannot be proven and not just to enhance a story. Paco Anaya's and Francisco Trujillo's statements and interviews are good examples. Some of it may be correct. I believe what I have found on the Yerbys should quiet the thoughts about Florentina. She was not the daughter of Billy the Kid.*

## 1993 BTK/PG Days

The location of the Billy the Kid/Pat Garrett Days will again be at Cedar Creek Campground, Ruidoso, N.M. Dates: **July 16-17, 1993**. There will be free overnight camping for members for these dates.

## Billy in New York Times

Members might want to pick up a copy of the *New York Times Sophisticated Traveler* that ran Oct. 18, 1992. A beautiful article by N. Scott Momaday.

## The Kid Still Rides

Eugene Cunningham

*The following was published in This Is New Mexico by George Fitzpatrick in 1948.*

Billy the Kid is still alive—I heard it from a grizzled man on a plaza bench in El Paso, not a week ago.

"He wasn't killed at Sumner," the old-timer informed me earnestly. "No such thing! Pat Garrett just wanted a chance to let him loose, so they killed some *como se llama* and called him Billy Bonney and really the Kid's alive down in Old Mexico—"

Crossing the street to the office, leaving the old boy, there rose in my mind a picture of Lincoln, drowsing in the golden sunlight, with the encircling mountains changeless, ageless, and almost I turned about to say to the old-timer:

"You're right! The Kid is still alive, very much alive. He is not in Old Mexico, but in New Mexico! He still rides hell bent from Old Mesilla to Ysleta; from Tularosa up the heights and into the pines of Mesquero; from Lincoln to Arroyo Taiban—to Tascosa, Vegas, Sumner... And he will continue to ride—so long as human beings remain what they are; so long as all of us thrill to tales of those who unwittingly followed the Nietzschean admonition, lived dangerously—and lived daringly..."

I hold no brief for William Bonney. On the contrary, I have doubtless said as many harsh things about the little "sure thing killer" as any other writer. But there is no gainsaying the glamor that has attached to his name—and his day.

That last is perhaps more important than is generally believed. The haze of romance that clings about the Kid's memory is as much a part of land and time as of the record of the grinning cowboy from the Rio Feliz. New Mexico plains and mountains are a magic land—as certain parts of the Hudson River Valley, of California, of Texas, are enchanted regions.

Since that day when he was buried in an unmarked grave in Sumner he has popped up here and there. He has been seen in New Mexico and Old Mexico. He has been reported in Arizona, in Texas. Oldtimers will swear they have seen him. They will take an oath he is still alive.

Billy Bonney is dead, there can be no doubt about that. But the Kid still lives—the Kid still rides!

Go where you will over the trails he rode, and you will find him. He walks ahead of you on Lincoln street... he sits on the balcony of the old courthouse... he swaggers it in Fort Sumner. Where the old Perea house stood at Stinking Springs you may hear him yelling in the cold dawn to luckless Charley Bowdre, dying in the open. For he—and those whom he rode and danced and drank and fought—were so much creatures of the land that even now they seem as much a part of it as mesquite and ocotillo and rugged boulder.



## "The Real Billy the Kid"

An interview with Don McAlavy

*The Real Billy the Kid* is alive and well! He appears summer nights to confront the *Santa Fe Ring* and dance with the girls! He and Tom also have a difference of opinion with Pat Garrett over who is the best shooter. Beaver Smith sides with both factions and makes all laugh with his antics. Guns, a cannon, an explosion in Beaver's whiskey cellar, music straight from the good old days, all to delight audiences who adventure out to sit under the stars and take part in an historical event on the *Bluffs of the Llano Estacado* in Eastern New Mexico.

For the last six years an historical outdoor drama about Billy the Kid has been presented by the *New Mexico Outdoor Drama Assn., Inc.* each summer at the Caprock Amphitheatre 49 miles north of Clovis, N.M. (10 miles south of I-40 at San Jon).



Don McAlavy, a historian-playwright was in on the formation of the Billy the Kid Outlaw Gang back in 1987. He had written his *Billy the Kid* outdoor drama in November of 1986 and during the first summer of production in 1987 debated Judge Bob Hefner of Hico, Texas and his claim that old Brushy Bill Roberts was in fact the real Billy the Kid. On the stage prior to a Saturday night performance the Judge and Don presented their side of the story with Don having as an "eye-witness" none other than Chino Silva, the present Vice President of BTKOG, and grandson of Jesus Silva who was a friend of Billy and who was there when he was killed and he was there to help bury him in the military graveyard at Old Fort Sumner. Judge Hefner was out gunned! The audience voted for our side, that the Kid was in fact shot down by Sheriff Pat Garrett. Case closed. But Bob Hefner and Don debated again, once at Hico, Texas and once at Hereford, Texas. Don got to know Bob real good. He's one of the best friends you'd ever want to ride with, and he's well intentioned, but he's got the wrong Billy the Kid.

For five years the nonprofit NMODA made up of area residents produced *Billy the Kid*. (Maryln Bowlin was early on one of the supporters and served on the board of directors). Betty Philley of San Jon,

N.M. was the founder and chief pusher for the project which had its beginning in 1976. Judge Stanley Frost of Tucumcari, now a state Supreme Court Justice living in Santa Fe, was the treasurer. Don McAlavy in 1978 was asked as an historian to serve on the script committee. After much work by many people the 1,000 seat Caprock Amphitheatre was built by the state park department and completed in 1985. NMODA, with an agreement with the state park became the operator of the amphitheatre for the purpose of presenting New Mexico historical drama.

In 1986 a show called *Dream on a Blue Horse* was produced featuring the life of the cowboy, the myth and the reality. It did not sell well.

Then Don McAlavy propose that a drama about Billy the Kid be produced. Kermit Hunter, the top outdoor drama playwright was contacted and he felt obliged to write one at a reduced price, so he was contracted to write one. In two weeks he had finished and to one not versed in Billy the Kid lore, it looked on the surface as a fairly good play, but once you realized that only Billy was real in the story and all the rest was fiction, it was never produced (The fact that it would have cost \$250,000 to produced boggled the mind also.) Another director-playwright wrote one for us to look at and it too was no better than the first one. Don McAlavy had written for the village of Fort Sumner for its centennial celebration of the Kid's death in 1981 a drama about the Kid's last days in Old Fort Sumner. It was produced by the Gaslite Players of Clovis under the direction of Bob Lockwood. It was produced four times on the stage at the high school in Ft. Sumner and was considered a success. Jarvis Garrett, Pat's son now deceased, saw it and told us one thing was wrong, that Celsa Gutierrez was a blond, not the brunette we had play her. Very few people knew that and he was one of them.

After looking over Don's script and his idea for expanding it for the outdoor stage his *Billy the Kid* was accepted. The script was donated. Don played Olinger and was cheered when he was killed by the Kid as Olinger was so mean to Billy.

For five years the show was put on for 30 nights each summer. Over 4,500 saw it each year, many coming back and bringing guests with them.

In September of 1991 the board of directors voted to suspend the play for 1992 in order to devote all our time and resources in finding a full-time general manager. But as things dragged on there were those on the board who felt we couldn't suspend the show and a new effort was made to continue without a general manager and around March 1, 1992 a plan was put together by Betty Philley, Bary Floersheim and Don McAlavy to produce the play even though seven months of critical planning time had been

(continued on page 13)



A shotgun blasts finishes Olinger!



The Star Dance, a crowd pleaser!



Balladeer Larry Buchanan is great!



Pretty girls in and out of costumes!



Mrs. McSween berates Col. Dudley!



lost. Don chose to direct the play and chose to write a new script, calling the new drama *The Real Billy the Kid* and using new material about the Kid and his period that has come to light with the many new books published in the last few years.

Don reduced the number of actors and cut out Thursday night performances as the budget dictated a less expensive show, but more mature actors were cast, a better tech crew was found.

Attendance for the play in the 16 night season (as opposed to 30 nights in prior years) was only 200 less than 30 night seasons had brought in! Word of mouth said the new version was definitely worth seeing.

Historical figures not seen in the prior drama are Mrs. Luz Maxwell (Pete's mother), Nasaria Yerby, Tom O'Folliard, Joe Grant and the District Attorney (owned by the Santa Fe Ring). Don also brought back Governor Lew Wallace, which he played along with Colonel Nathan Dudley.

Graeme Lowry played the carefree Billy and depicted him as a loveable reckless kid. Pat Garrett was played by a capable Bill Strong, a veteran of the Caprock stage.

Larry Buchanan, cowboy guitar player and singer came back as the balladeer and music director. Other cast members were excellent too, one being TV Haganeh of Clayton, N.M who played Beaver Smith and nearly stole the show every night. The feisty Mrs. Alexander McSween was played by Kathy McAlavy (a BTKOG member of the board) who also played Celsa Gutierrez (as a brunette in spite of Jarvis Garrett telling us she was a blond!)

The board of directors of NMODA have already scheduled this same version of Billy for next Summer's season, probably, depending on the director hired, the same time period as 1992. Call (505) 576-2455 for more information or for reservations, or write BTK, P. O. Box 337, San Jon, NM 88434)

When Don McAlavy was asked what he would like to see next year happen at the Caprock, he replied: "I'd like to see someone from the state's tourism department see for themselves what is happening at the state built amphitheatre. As far as I know NO New Mexico tourism official has ever seen the show. And one of them is a prominent, active BTKOG member. My drama and its production is professional and cannot be compared to the amateur, but older Billy the Kid drama done for three or four days at Lincoln, yet they get more attention from the state's tourism department."

You BTKOG members and Billy fans, saddle your horses and ride on over and spend an exciting evening under the stars and see Billy and the rest of the gang.

You can supper on fine B-B-Q that is available from 6:30 to 8 p.m.

Yes, Billy the Kid continues to ride through our lives.

## The Making of Pat Garrett

Leon C. Metz

The creation of a book sometimes comes about in strange and wondrous ways, and I'd like to explain a tiny segment of how *Pat Garrett: Story of a Western Lawman* (University of Oklahoma Press (1973) evolved.

As a youngster growing up in West Virginia during the War years, I remember the first paperback I ever saw or purchased. It was *The Saga of Billy the Kid*, by Walter Noble Burns. Although I was an intense reader with a broad spectrum of interests, I cannot remember another book which influenced me so profoundly.

In those days I believed that everything published (except fiction, of course) was absolutely true. I thought there were laws against lying in print. It wasn't illegal, it was at least morally reprehensible.

Furthermore, I never dreamed of becoming a writer, and never entered the business until I was in my early thirties. I worked in an oil refinery and resided in El Paso. I already had two books in print when C. L. "Doc" Sonnichsen, then a professor at UT El Paso, suggested a Pat Garrett biography.

I initially gagged on the thought. I still despised Garrett because of the treatment he had given poor old Billy in the Walter Noble Burns book. And I had not read much about Garrett other than the Kid portion of his life...and assumed there wasn't much else to say. Boy, was I wrong.

What sold me on Garrett was his death on February 29, 1908, a slaying far more mysterious and controversial than the shooting of Billy the Kid. But Garrett's story will be told by the University of New Mexico Press when it publishes a book next year detailing the 1991 Billy the Kid Symposium in Ruidoso, New Mexico.

Those matters aside, due to space limitations here I'll condense my remaining Garrett experiences down to just one tale.

In thumbing through Garrett's *Authentic Life of Billy the Kid*, I came across a whole chapter (5 pages) relating to counterfeit money in Lincoln County. Garrett mentioned how Azariah F. Wild, a U.S. Treasury agent, had visited Lincoln to investigate this crime.

That passage stunned me. I had never heard of Wild but if someone as amateurish as myself had picked up on him, then every Billy the Kid expert in the country would have previously followed through with an investigation. I searched the Billy the Kid and Lincoln County literature and found nothing...not even a whisper.

At this point, I reluctantly concluded that since the experts had not mentioned it, then the treasury agent episode had not likely happened. We all know that *The Authentic Life* had repeatedly been described as little more than a self-serving passel of lies anyway.

But I could not get Azariah out of my mind. After three months, feeling somewhat like a fool, I wrote the Treasury Department and asked if they had any letter files written by a treasury agent named Azariah Wild. Had he been assigned to Lincoln County during 1880?

Back came a microfilm roll with Azariah Wild's daily reports. He was in Lincoln County for three months while Sheriff Pat Garrett's chase for Billy the Kid was just heating up. While Wild was not a crack investigator, his daily disclosures furnished new and fascinating perspectives on people and events in Lincoln County.

The moral in terms of research is, always listen to your basic instincts, your hunches. Pay attention to your leads. Recognize that even experts overlook significant clues, and that sometimes their analysis and conclusions are not only different, they are wrong.

Finally, remember that there is no such thing as an irrelevant piece of new information. Somewhere, somehow, it will fit into the whole.

## Final Moments of Bill the Kid, 1881

*Flicker of flame as it dances through  
velvet shadows,  
only death foreseen could be so silent as the  
barren streets of Summer.*

*Stray moonlight discovers the glint of a  
silver badge, unseen by all eyes  
except mine.*

*Movement, crunch of gravel, silhouette  
slipping toward  
the open gate of a still house.*

*Creak of leather, gunbelt tossed aside,  
blue eyes sparkle with vibrant confidence,  
there would be no trouble on this night.*

*Bare fee shuffle through the dust of  
the street,  
whisper of warm July breeze caresses  
the face,  
lingers through wisps of hair.*

*Wooden planks shift under pressure  
footfall,*

*outline in a doorway, a hushed voice,  
the slight  
quivering of an anxious hand held poised  
over a Colt...*

*"Quien es."*

*One moment of chaos, a lifetime  
passed away,  
a legacy begun.*

— Jennifer Durham  
Burr Oak, Michigan

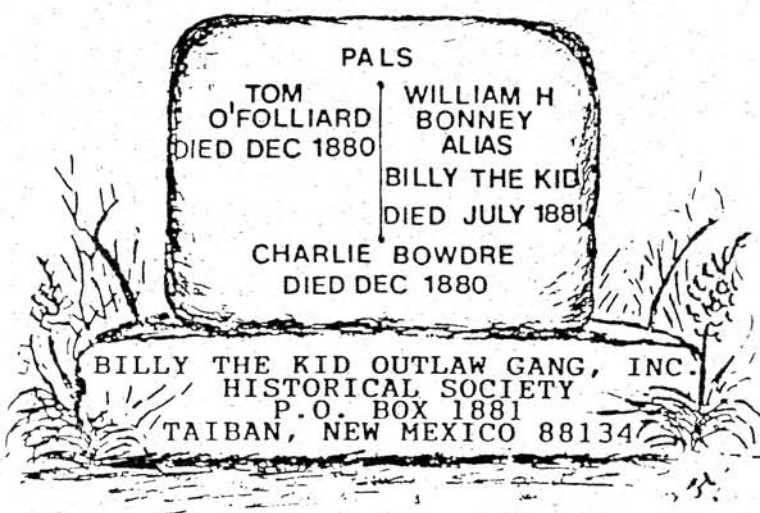
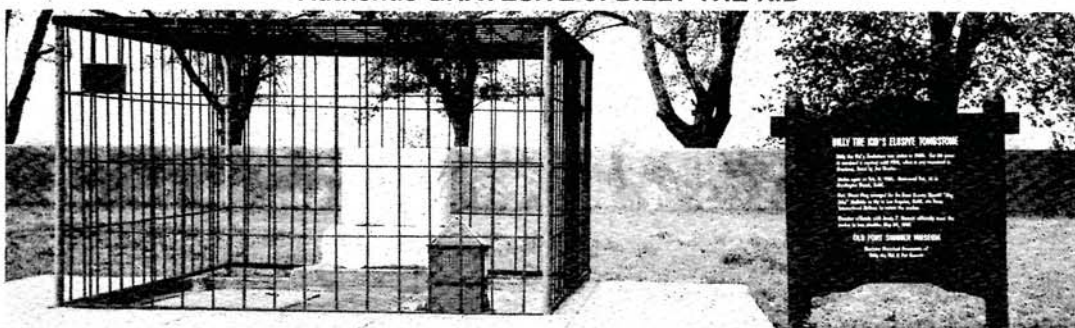
(A note from Jennifer: "I would like to take this opportunity to thank the "Gang." Its existence has meant alot to me. I may live quite far from the center of all the action, but I cannot help but feel a bond with the members. In the last newsletter, Carolyn C. Allen had written an article about her childhood fascinations with Robin Hood, King Arthur, and the Greek Gods. She told of how she became a Billy fan at a young age. I could not get over the fact that those all fit my life as well. I know that there are a great number of people in this country that I can agree with, and see eye-to-eye with. I often (daily) wish I could be wandering across the New Mexico countryside, basking in its beauty and history. Someday soon, I will. Until then...Jennifer)





## OLD FORT SUMNER, N.M. MUSEUM

Authentic GRAVESITE of BILLY THE KID



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