

BILLY THE KID
OUTLAW GANG

OUTLAW GAZETTE

Vol. XXV - 2012

Special 25th Anniversary Issue

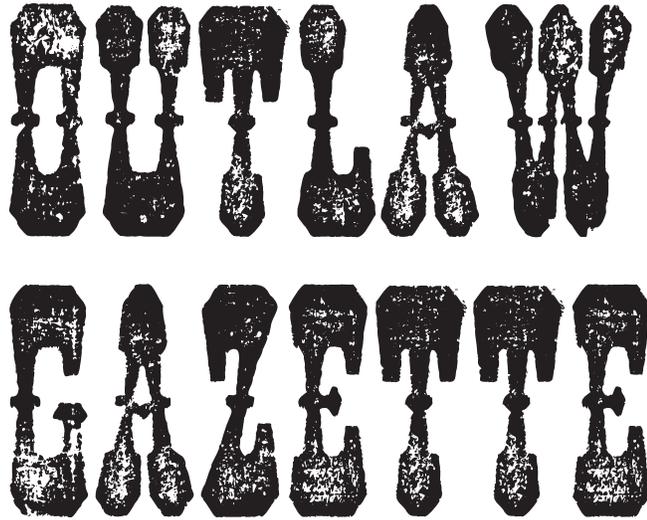
preserving, protecting, promoting



**BILLY
THE
KID**

since 1987





Vol. XXV - 2012 Special 25th Anniversary Issue

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Dedication Ron Hadley

-Lucas Speer, BTKOG Member

This year's Outlaw Gazette is lovingly dedicated to a former board member and past president of the Billy the Kid Outlaw Gang. Ron Hadley, age 75, passed away on July 9, 2012 and words can't begin to express our deep sorrow for the loss of such a great man. Ron was perhaps the most giving man a person could ever meet. In fact his generosity resulted in the creation of a special award the Gang has lovingly named the "Hadley Heroes Award", given out annually to one of our members who displays an unusual amount of generosity.



On one occasion during our annual campout, unusually heavy rainfall flooded out a family's tent and Ron gave up his warm and dry tent to the family and slept wrapped up in sleeping bags on a concrete table outside all night long just so that he could make sure that this family was comfortable. He was known for always giving of himself to bring happiness to others. Ron also, on many occasions, took the time out during campouts to teach the young children how to dance the jitterbug. Children and adults alike all sincerely loved Ron.

He was an avid reader and researcher and contributed much to the history and documentation of the life and times of Billy the Kid and the Lincoln County War. Ron and his dear friend Doc Sproull spent many years travelling to and exploring many hard to find historical sites, so that their locations could be documented and researched further. He loved the history of the American West and more importantly he loved people. Ron was truly a wonderful man and the BTKOG deeply mourns his loss, but celebrates his beautiful life. Rest in Peace, Cowboy.

Ride into the sunset and don't be afraid my friend...



Photos courtesy of Lucas and Virginia Speer

Condition of the Pat F. Garrett House Outside Roswell

—Michael E. Pitel

The Chaves County Historical Society (the precursor of Roswell's Historical Society of Southeast New Mexico) helped the New Mexico Historic Preservation Office place the Pat F. Garrett House, five miles east of downtown Roswell, on the State Cultural Properties List in 1984 and the National Register of Historic Places in 1988.

For more than 20 years, the exterior of the historic home has appeared briefly in several made-for-television documentaries, its outward appearance ageless and unchanged.

However, after attending the March 31, 2012, dedication ceremony of the Pat F. Garrett statue in Roswell, a group of nine Billy the Kid/Pat F. Garrett/Lincoln County War enthusiasts from northern and central New Mexico (among whom were two Garrett grandchildren who had been guests of honor at the dedication of the statue just three hours earlier that day), were shocked to find the house slowly falling apart.

The first floor windows flanking the front door were covered in flapping sheets of plastic. The first-floor adobe walls were bulging in spots, cracking the adobe plaster wide enough in several places to expose the original adobe bricks. Along and above the front door were exposed adobe bricks. There was a four-inch hole in the northeast wall.

The front porch floor boards were missing, and the screens and floor of the second-story sleeping porch above the door and portal were gone. Around back, the group found the ground-level entrance to the house's cellar/crawl space beneath the kitchen wing of the house exposed to the elements too.

The culprit, they soon realized, was the degradation caused by the high water table of the original Rio Hondo river channel that was worsened by the construction of the Northern/J. J. Hagerman Canal in 1890. The canal elevated the river water, which still flows behind the house.

The group also learned afterward that the Garrett home's current owner (whose name will remain unpublished for privacy/security reasons), has expressed an interest in selling the home to someone who'd be willing to save it.

They agreed that if Billy the Kid enthusiasts were willing to motorcade out to the caves at Los Portales Springs (one of the Kid's hideouts), and the foundation of the rock house at Stinking Springs, where Garrett and his posse captured Billy the Kid in Dec., 1880, there would be a steady stream of tourists who'd be willing to visit the Garrett home. They agreed that the Garrett home would provide a national platform to preserve, interpret, and articulate the life of Territorial New Mexico's greatest lawman.

Since the two-story home is registered as a New Mexico cultural property and is already on the National Register for Historic Places, it qualifies for free state and Federal monies.

They agreed that if the Garrett house wasn't purchased, stabilized, repaired, and restored, it would be lost to history. Since Chaves County and Roswell had just dedicated an outdoor statue to Garrett, the group felt that the county and the city should take the lead to save the house.

Dedicating a heroic statue to Garrett while letting his 1880 home fall apart, in other words, would send a mixed message about how the county and city really felt about Garrett.

They felt that the historic preservation enthusiasts of Chaves County and Roswell needed to gather and establish a nonprofit 501(c)3 foundation to purchase the house and save it.

These historic preservationists already have a track record of having helped establish the Roswell Downtown and Chihuahueta Historic Districts in 1984. Roswell, the wealthiest city in southeast New Mexico, has a large population base of skilled professionals who have the ability and expertise to save the Garrett home. A Roswell-based foundation would be just a short drive from the historic house to supervise the effort. Such a foundation could submit grant applications for state and Federal money, and also establish an interactive web site to generate more money through donations from people throughout the United States who want to help save this historic home.

Since Garrett was a law enforcement officer, the group felt, this foundation could

reach out for donations to his professional brethren: to city police, county sheriffs, state police, and Federal law enforcement officers, active and retired, and their fraternal organizations across the country. This foundation also could reach out for donations to members of the U. S. military, active and retired.

According to the 1988 National Register for Historic Places documents on file in the state Historic Preservation Office (some of which the group reviewed), the Garrett house was built in 1880. Thus it was from this home that Garrett ran for the office of Lincoln County Sheriff. He won that office in a landslide election in Nov., 1880. It was from that home that the quickly deputized Garrett went out in pursuit of the young outlaw William H. "Billy the Kid" Bonney, and captured him in Dec., 1880. Garrett watched as the Kid was incarcerated in the Santa Fe County Jail just five days before Garrett was to be sworn in as Lincoln County Sheriff.

It was from this home that Sheriff Garrett went after the Kid again in the Spring of 1881, finally tracking him down and killing him in Fort Sumner in July, 1881.

While living there, Garrett afterward collaborated with Roswell's postmaster and onetime newspaper reporter, Marshall Ashmun Upson, to write the book, *The Authentic Life of Billy the Kid*, in 1881-82. There Garrett and his second wife, Apolinaria, began raising the first four of their eight children, Adelaida (born in 1882), Elizabeth (in 1885), Dudley (1886), and Annie (1889).

Garrett expanded his original 160-acre homestead into an 1,800-acre farm. He oversaw the planting of an orchard of 700-800 apple and peach trees, and a grape vineyard. He watched the sowing of fields of alfalfa, and the operation of a dairy. While living there, Garrett also came up with the idea of harnessing the waters of the North Spring River, the Rio Hondo and Rio Berrendo for irrigating farms and ranches nearby and downstream.

While living in this home, Garrett, Carlsbad rancher Charles B. Eddy and Santa Fe newspaper publisher Charles Greene founded the Pecos Valley Irrigation & Investment Company in July, 1885. The company was reorganized and reincorporated as the Pecos Valley Land & Ditch Company in Sept., 1888. The company transformed the Halagueno Canal



The Pat F. Garrett House, Chaves County - 2012—Photo courtesy of Robert Ross

into the Northern Canal. It stretched southeastward some 40 miles when it was finished in 1889-90. By then, wealthy Colorado Springs businessman James J. Hagerman infused the company with a \$40,000 takeover, and changed the name of the company to the Pecos Valley Irrigation & Improvement Company.

While living in the home, Garrett helped found two other irrigation companies in 1887. He and Roswell businessman William L. Holloman founded the Holloman & Garrett Ditch Company, and tamed the North Spring River for irrigation purposes. Garrett and Roswell businessman Joseph C. Lea also founded Lea's Pioneer Ditch Company. Only the 1885 company lasted until Hagerman arrived and got involved.

It was also while living in this home that Garrett accompanied Lea, the acknowledged "Father of Roswell", and Carlsbad rancher Charles B. Eddy to Santa Fe, where they successfully petitioned the Territorial Legislature to establish Chaves and Eddy Counties and designate Roswell and Eddy (Carlsbad) as the county seats in Feb., 1889.

In this home, Garrett and his business partner, Roswell surveyor Marshall "Ash" Upson, also established the headquarters of the Great Northern Canal of the Pecos Valley Irrigation & Investment Company from 1889 to 1891.

While living in this home in 1890, Garrett and former Lincoln County Sheriff James S. Brent founded a Roswell hack service to Pecos, Tex.; he and Roswell businessman Stephen S. Mendenhall established Roswell's Mendenhall & Garrett Livery, Feed & Sale Stable; Garrett was named a vice president of Roswell's Grand Central Hotel; and he and Roswell architect J. A. Hill established the Garrett & Hill Construction Company, which built the Pauly Hotel. Both hotels were demolished a long time ago.

Garrett and his family left Roswell in April, 1891, and moved to Uvalde, Tex. He sold the house in 1892.

According to the 1988 National Register for Historic Places documents, local cattle baron John S. Chisum and Lea persuaded Garrett to run for the office of Lincoln County Sheriff. But Garrett, who lived in Fort Sumner, was a San Miguel County resident. They urged him to move into Lincoln County, and helped Garrett find a choice tract of public land east of present-day Roswell to homestead. Sometime after Garrett married Apolinaria Gutierrez in Jan., 1880 (but before June that same year), the newlyweds moved to the Roswell area and hired local laborers to begin building the first story of the Pat F. Garrett House.

The only apparent change to the exterior of the Pat F. Garrett House since its inclusion on the National Register of Historic Places in 1988 are the sidelights and transom light along and above the front door have been removed and replaced by adobe bricks, and the original porch light fixtures are missing. Inside the home, according to the National Register for Historic Places documents, are original, hand-carved vigas (ceiling beams) and original wood-plank flooring. The dining room was once large enough to entertain 35 people. The adobe fireplace and a stone, mantled fireplace are originals, too. The second story of the home was added in 1888. The four-columned front porch was built on or before 1924. One story above the porch, the enclosed sleeping porch was added sometime during 1937-45. The floor of the sleeping porch is gone. Beneath and in front of the four-pillared porch once stood rose bushes, and a front lawn once lush with bluegrass. The house also had a cistern. Two large, deciduous trees in the front yard that were visible in a 1984 photograph are gone, too. In the late 1980s, the house still sat on 120 of Garrett's original 160 homesteaded acres.

Tourists who've been lucky enough to visit the Pat F. Garrett House also had a chance to see Garrett's greatest idea realized: a panoramic view of the harnessing of the Rio Hondo for farming and ranching. The nine people from Santa Fe and Bernalillo Counties who spent 90 minutes at the former Garrett farmstead last March 31, knew that. That's why many of them also walked along the Northern/Hagerman Canal a quarter-mile upstream to its point of origin and back.

Preserve and Protect

—Lori Ann Goodloe, BTKOG President

August 17, 1877, in Camp Grant, Arizona, a young boy of about seventeen got into an argument with a blacksmith and a bully over a game of cards. The blacksmith called the boy a “pimp”, the boy called the blacksmith a “son-of-a-bitch” and moments later the blacksmith pinned the boy to the ground and started to beat him. The boy was able to free his hand and reach for the gun he had tucked in his trousers. He pushed the barrel of his gun into the blacksmith’s belly and fired. As the blacksmith lay dying, the boy scrambled up, stole a horse, and rode off as fast as he could.

Henry McCarty, the boy who would one day be known worldwide as “Billy the Kid”, had just killed his first man.

Billy’s time in Arizona was a short chapter in what would be a short life and there isn’t much information about him. We know he drifted to the Fort Grant, Arizona area a year or so following his mother’s death—after he was arrested for stealing shirts in Silver City. We know he tried to find jobs at the nearby ranches but was too young and too small for the grueling labor of a cowboy. We know that when honest work didn’t pan out he developed his horse-thieving skills by stealing from the soldiers at the fort. But most importantly, we know that from the day Billy arrived in Fort Grant he was bullied by a blacksmith named Frank “Windy” Cahill.

“Shorty after the Kid came to Fort Grant, Windy started abusing [Billy],” said Gus Gildea, a cowboy who had ridden in with a John Chisum herd and remained to find other work in the valley. “He would throw Billy to the floor, ruffle his hair, slap his face and humiliate him before the men in the saloon. Yes, the Kid was rather slender.... The blacksmith was a large man, with a gruff voice and blustering

manner.” (Weddle, pg. 34)

On the night of Cahill’s death Gildea recalled:

“Cahill was larger and stouter than the Kid and threw him down three times which made the Kid mad.’ Gildea also watched as Windy ‘threw the youth to the floor. Pinned his arms down with his knees and started slapping his face. ‘You are hurting me. Let me up!’ cried the Kid. ‘I want to hurt you. That’s why I got you down,’ was the reply. [Then] Billy’s right arm was free from the elbow down. He started working his hand around and finally managed to grasp his .45.... The blacksmith evidently felt the pistol against his side, for he straightened slightly. Then there was a deafening roar. Windy slumped to the side and the Kid squirmed free.” (Weddle, pg. 42-43)

The killing of Cahill may not be as exciting as the drama of the Lincoln County War, but it was an event in Billy’s life that had to have made an impact on his future. No longer was he a petty nuisance, stealing saddles and horses from the soldiers. Whether it was justified or not, Billy had killed a man—and he rode back into New

Mexico with that knowledge hanging over his head.

Frank Cahill’s death was an important moment in Billy’s life and it’s something that should be remembered. New Mexico is filled with stories of Billy the Kid; drive anywhere in the state and you’ll come across a historical marker claiming, “Billy the Kid was here and he did something noteworthy in this spot”. But in Arizona it’s a different matter; Arizona is Wyatt Earp Country—what do they care about Billy the Kid?

135 Years Later...

Armed with directions from noted historian Frederick Nolan, a camera, and a GPS unit I set out in search of Cahill’s grave. I had grand plans. I was going to photograph it, get the coordinates, and hopefully someday team up with the owner of the property to put in a marker:

HERE LIES WINDY CAHILL
HE DID BILLY THE KID WRONG AND ALL
HE GOT WAS THIS LOUSY GRAVE

But unlike the Rolling Stones, time was not on my side. It’s been fifteen years since Nolan located what he believed to be Cahill’s grave. And in fifteen years a lot can change. Fred’s instructions (complete with the caveat



*If you squint and use your imagination the inscription on this stone could possibly say “CAHILL”—
Author’s Collection*

of how much time had passed and how unlikely it was that things were still the same) said that there were fourteen graves along the dirt road which made up the old post cemetery; Cahill's was probably the twelfth in that row.

After driving all morning I easily found the present-day town of Bonita just outside of Fort Grant. I found the Bonita store. I found the location of what was once Atkins' Cantina where the killing took place. I found the cemetery. I found the headstones. I counted: one, two, three, four, five. Five? Five. Only five markers now remain in a row of fourteen graves and locating Cahill's marker is no longer possible with the clues I had available.

And so it goes—my quest to mark a historical site for future generations failed. Can I blame the previous generations for not thinking ahead and keeping better track of their dead? Sure I can. Should I? Probably not. At the time of Cahill's shooting who would have thought that the scrawny kid with the laughing blue eyes would turn into an American legend? Who would have thought obsessive people would come traipsing through their cemetery to find the grave of a blustery blacksmith? Probably not the residents of Fort Grant circa 1877.

But what about the residents of Bonita circa 1926? Walter Noble Burns' *Saga of Billy the Kid* had hit the bookshelves that year and started resurgence in Billy the Kid interest. Surely forty years after his death Cahill's grave was still easy to locate and yet no one thought it necessary to put up a plaque or more substantial marker showing people the way. Then again, if his grave was still easy to find I supposed that's why no one put up another marker: there was no reason.

So who do we point our fingers at? The oldest markers that are still visible in the cemetery today have writing scratched in them so one can presume that at some point "CAHILL" was written on his headstone. At one point he had a headstone. And now either that headstone is missing, or buried under 130 years of shifted dirt, or it's one of the markers sticking out of the ground but the writing is illegible. At some point in the past 130 years the



The Pat Garrett kill site marker placed by his son, Jarvis Garrett—Author's Collection

headstone started to crumble, or the writing started to fade, or the ground started to envelope it; at some point someone should have looked at that headstone and said, "Hey, we should really do something about that before a piece of our history is lost forever."

Unless someone out there has photos of the cemetery from the early days or detailed burial records we may never know where Cahill lies buried. Billy the Kid's first kill may be lost forever. But what of the historical sites and graves and homes that are still standing today? We still have a chance to preserve what's left of Billy's rich history and quite frankly we have the responsibility to save these sites.

Action vs. Apathy

Trying to save buildings and cemeteries and other historic sites that are well over one-hundred years old is no small feat. If the site is on private land it's a matter of convincing the owner that something needs to be done and if they're the type who doesn't care about history they won't be easy to sway. If it's on public land you have to deal with bureaucracy and red tape and all the joys that come with government involvement. And let's not forget funding. A preservation project could cost millions—millions that the average citizen doesn't have. But even with all of these hurdles, it's still possible to preserve these sites.

Several years ago the site in Las Cruces, New Mexico, where Pat

Garrett was killed was threatened when a developer intended to build a subdivision in the area. A road would have cut through the site if concerned citizens hadn't stepped in. An organization called Friends of Pat Garrett met with officials in Las Cruces and convinced the City to protect the site. They have plans to build a park in the area, plans that will keep the integrity of the site and the wagon road intact. Until then they're faced with the task of keeping the site safe from vandals looking to willfully destroy the marker. But they're trying.

In July of 2012, the BTKOG visited the Grzelachowski House in Puerto de Luna. Not only is this the site of Billy the Kid's last Christmas dinner, but Grzelachowski was an important figure in New Mexico's history (see the article on page 18 for more information). Unfortunately the repairs needed for his home and store are too great for the current owners to keep up with. They need help and they need it now—before a heavy snow brings down the whole front half of the house.

On the flip side you have the Abreu House in Ft. Sumner, New Mexico. Built circa 1884, the house was modeled after the Maxwell House where Billy the Kid was killed in 1881. The Maxwell House is long gone, but if you were to visit the Abreu House you could get a good sense of what it was like the night Billy died. Well, you could...if the Abreu House was accessible. Sadly, this 128-year-old house—which is still in remarkable



The Grzelachowski House—Author's Collection



The Abreu House is still standing but it won't be around forever without attention—Author's Collection



A heart-breaking sight: Billy's vandalized headstone—Photo courtesy of Tim Sweet, Owner of the Billy the Kid Museum

shape for its age—is being neglected and overrun with bats. There's so much potential in the house and good reasons for saving a piece of, not only Billy the Kid history, but Ft. Sumner and New Mexico history as well. But people don't seem to care.

And what's worse than apathy? Petty vandalism. The aforementioned Garrett kill site is facing destruction from vandals as is Billy's grave. For years after his headstone and footstone were placed, tourists came and chipped off pieces as souvenirs or even stole the markers entirely. The vandalism became so bad they had to build a cage around Billy. Ironically, the kid who was famous for his jailbreaks is now resting in peace behind bars. And even a cage didn't deter the worst of the worst. On June 16, 2012 the Old Fort Cemetery was vandalized and the museum next door was broken into. Not only did the vandals destroy many of the markers of the innocent people in the cemetery—the people who never did anybody any harm—but they went out of their way to knock over Billy's headstone, effectively smashing the concrete over Charlie Bowdre's grave in the process. It's a disgusting and cowardly act but it's a problem we face when people don't appreciate history.

Odds are pretty good that you're reading this because you love Billy the Kid; because you love the history surrounding him and the people he knew. It's up to those of us who love the history to save the history. It's up to us to petition the city to stop a developer from destroying a landmark; it's up to us to donate the time and money necessary to save a historic home. If those of us who love the history can't be bothered to help, what hope is there? What will the next generation find when they eagerly go searching for Billy the Kid's first kill? A mysterious rock and a pile of dirt or plaque reading: "Frank P. Cahill: Killed on August 17, 1877 by Billy the Kid"?

Sources:

Antrim is My Stepfather's Name: The Boyhood of Billy the Kid. Jerry Weddle, Arizona Historical Society, 1993.
www.friendsofpatgarrett.com

Fact vs. Truth in Historical Fiction

—Elizabeth Fackler, BTKOG Member

The first reference I consult when beginning a new research project is *The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language*. They had this to say: “Fact has a long history of usage in the sense ‘allegation of fact,’ as in ‘*This tract was distributed to thousands of American teachers, but the facts and the reasoning are wrong*’ This practice has led to the introduction of the phrases true facts and real facts, as in *The true facts of the case may never be known*. These usages may occasion qualms among critics who insist that facts can only be true, but the usages are often useful.”

Our word truth derives from Middle English *trewthe*, and that derives from the Old English *treowth*, meaning loyalty. Loyalty to reality. “We are seeking the truth” means we want to know all the nuances accurately and honestly. The problem with the truth regarding history is that it changes. History is told from the present, and the present changes.

One question then, when approaching the creation of a historical novel, is how your own times interpret your target time, and how that interpretation has changed in the intervening decades.

In his excellent book *Inventing Billy the Kid*, Stephen Tatum examines how the meaning of the Kid’s story related to its cultural context and attempts to understand what purposes the Kid’s story served for its creators.

The decade of the Kid’s death was a turning point in our national history when the confrontation of the opposing forces of civilization and wilderness laid the path for America’s future. Opposed within the Kid’s story were the disparate qualities of social control versus individual freedom. Explanations of the Kid between 1881 (the year he died) and 1925 (when Burns’ *Saga* was published), in Tatum’s words, “tended not to beatify but to barbeque the Kid.”

In that time of intensified

industrialization and our national need for social order following the Civil War, the Kid was portrayed as a symbol of everything opposing progress. If you read the newspapers of his time, you will gather the following facts: The newly-deceased Kid was evil, stupid, savage, and crude. The outlaw’s obituaries lauded the sheriff who rid society of his menace. No nuances of reason or virtue were hinted at in the descriptions of the Kid’s career. Without a motive for his violence beyond blood lust, and lacking the comely appearance that became discernable when one of the original tintypes was recently discovered, the early Kid was reduced to a foil against whom the creators of civilization prevailed.

In that era of dime novels, the Kid was part of a Horatio Alger success story,

The historian is a finder and a recorder. The historical novelist is a creator and an interpreter.

though he was denied the role of the hero. As in life, in the early fiction about him success was not the Kid’s fate. Largely because the authors offered no motive for his killings, the Kid failed to share in the adulation offered to Cody and Custer, true killers on a scale more massive than scrawny Bill Bonney achieved. It wasn’t until Emerson Hough’s *The Story of the Outlaw* in 1897 that the Kid and Garrett were given the status of opponents in the tug-of-war called Manifest Destiny, thereby providing them with a meaning but only relative to the Progressive era. They still were not human beings occupying their real places in history.

By 1925, when Walter Noble Burns published his romantic epic, *The Saga of Billy the Kid*, the psychic landscape of America had changed. Not only the atrocities of World War I but also the Teapot Dome Scandal, amid many others, taught Americans that their government

was not to be trusted. In the nineteenth century, people had truly believed in the benevolence of progress. The loss of that faith in the future allowed people to recognize that change does not always equal progress, and that the conflict between self and society had not been resolved. In this new political and social atmosphere, the Kid came to symbolize a quixotic, romantic idealist from a lost pastoral world.

Between the Crash of 1929 and the start of World War II, American popular fiction and cinema saw the rise of the Cult of the Outlaw. A product of the Great Depression, this story depended on the public’s knowledge of social and economic inequality. Our chameleon Kid was now represented as a champion of pre-industrial American ideals. Since in his world justice could be achieved only through extralegal means, it is now the Outlaw Kid, not the newly unfortunate Sheriff Garrett, defending society by destroying the villains who made a legal sham of justice.

After 1955, the Kid emerged in such teleplays as Gore Vidal’s *The Death of Billy the Kid* as a tragic figure caught in a fatal flow of events. His death predicts the scant chance for any autonomous person’s survival. This mirrors the focus of the 1950s: the

vain striving of an embattled individual to preserve his integrity in a corporate world. Now the idealist Kid has become opposed to the materialistic Garrett, the individual versus the organization man.

Currently the Kid is seen as a mischievous victim of an unjust society, and Garrett as a tragic tool of the powers wielding that injustice. Indeed the importance of the Lincoln County War lies in its illustration of how the American power structure responds to opposition. One writer goes so far as to say it’s a lesson in the viciousness of the American system toward its own people. Any possible hyperbole aside, this is why Billy lives, why understanding him as a scapegoat is a legitimate, even necessary perspective, and why his folk hero status remains despite the debunkers. Perhaps we need him in our era as a warning to those contemplating insurrection.

But beyond its political implications,

what all of this proves is that objectivity is a pose, not a reality. In tracing our perceptions of the Kid from savage enemy of civilization, to worthy opponent of a conquering hero, to symbol of defeated underdogs, to embattled individual fighting for the freedom of autonomy, to a scapegoat for the sins of society, we must wonder who the true Kid was.

The poets who have written about him, most notably Ondaatje and Momaday, deny that the Kid can be captured or understood by either history or legend, and in doing so, undermine our assumptions about knowledge and truth. They say the Kid's story is beyond history because history contains no objective truth and because language creates reality rather than records it. For these poets, the Kid's life began when he died. Their Kid as a visionary seer should not be dismissed because their visions are absent from the historical record. They argue that history is not history but a construct aimed at imprisoning the past rather than releasing its energy into the present.

However fanciful that may be, the "true fact" remains that no historical narrative can duplicate reality. To say you are presenting reality or truth does not reveal reality or truth but merely your assertions about reality or truth. This is where research parts from creativity because the crux of the difference between writing history and writing historical fiction lies in the person of the narrator.

A historian is always speaking from her own mouth. She is responsible for what appears on the page and stakes her reputation on the veracity of her facts. Unfortunately she is limited by the rule that a fact must be cross-checked and verified by at least one other witness. So much is lost by this rule. Most of oral history is lost when an eyewitness lacks corroboration or the anecdote was simply never written down and therefore escaped the historical record.

In writing historical fiction, the characters speak through the author. They usually believe what is presented on the page and, if the author is any good, the world they act within is a fair representation of their times, which are not the author's times since one of the definitions of historical fiction is that the

story lies far enough in the past that the author has no direct memory of it. But in contrast with historians, fictive narrators are allowed to be deliberately deceitful or just plain wrong.

Facts, documents, and statistics offer insights into history but do not offer history. Documents, however many, however reliable, merely offer random facts about history. Since facts are assumed to be independent entities lying around like gold nuggets waiting to be found, the historian must discover these "facts" by striving to be free of the distortions that prejudiced previous visitors to the same landscape. The historical novelist also finds facts and strives to be free of the distorted perceptions, but she then interprets the facts in order to weave such tidbits into a whole. The historian is a finder and a recorder. The historical novelist is a creator and an interpreter.

For each new interpreter of history to become, in Joseph Conrad's words, "the preserver, the keeper, the expounder of human experience," the historical novelist must trust her imagination's role in recreating her chosen world. She must be willing and able to enter into the living consciousness of others through the door of her own consciousness. She must dedicate her sense of life (and of being alive) to the lives of others. This is why writing requires great blocks of solitude and a willingness to surrender to the story being told. It is a process of total immersion in all the innuendoes, including both facts and legends, of the chosen era.

Yet most professional historians exclude legends as apocrypha because they escaped the historical record's definition of facts. Pillars of our oral history, legends are crucial to any interpretation of our national past. When speaking of the Kid, one has to agree with Fulton that "his true significance lies in the legendary figure the American people have chosen to make him."

Given that, when approaching writing fiction about this "legendary figure," one must pick through not only the historical record but also the oral tradition and compose a character out of the disparate notes of that song. Here you have the Kid being serenaded in jail by the townsfolk, there you have him whistling

"Silver Strands Among the Gold" as he prowls the late-night villages. You have Paulita Maxwell saying "I would go with him anywhere, no matter what the world would be pleased to say of us," and Lily Casey saying the Kid had an aversion to work. You have the story of him stopping his horse just out of range of his enemies' guns, dismounting and doffing his hat in the dust before galloping to safety, the story of him putting his horse's shoes on backwards to trick his trackers, and the story of his cool confrontation of Dolan's henchman by backing into the street and saying, "Turn loose now. I'll give you a game." That he did that, and continues to do it, is a truth the historians fail to applaud.

Here is the crux: we all choose what to include in our renditions based on our individual values. Establishment historians, who typically diminish any symbol of uprising, perceive the Kid as an outlaw and disrupter of the social order. Outliers see him as a fighter for justice against that same establishment harboring professional historians. In our time as in his, ambitious Caucasian males see him as a freeloader while minorities appreciate his courage and women enjoy his charms. Any individual from each of these groups would portray him in a unique light.

An example of selection from my own work occurred when I was writing my historical novel on the Lincoln County War: *Billy the Kid: The Legend of El Chivato*. I began with the account of the young Kid, then called Henry, beheading a kitten in Silver City. A historian friend of mine objected vociferously. He said he had traced that bit of apocrypha to a short story published in the Silver City newspaper in the late 1880s. He said people had remembered it wrong and erroneously connected it to the Kid.

I replied, "Even so, there's a reason why that story stuck to the Kid, and that reason is a larger truth than the fact that he did not kill a kitten in response to his mother's death." My prime motive for using that story was that I loved the close of the chapter in which I say something akin to: Whenever Uncle Billy related this story, he always ended by saying the boy was born bad ... "but history doesn't record," I wrote, "what he thought of the Kid taking his name." [Cont. on 12]



Resting in Peace - Friends

1. Tom O'Folliard, Charlie Bowdre, William H. Bonney - Old Fort Cemetery, Ft. Sumner, NM (courtesy of Lori Goodloe) 2. Catherine Antrim, Billy's mother - Memorial Lane Chatanooga, TN (courtesy of Bob Wooten) 4. Yginio Salazar, friend of Billy - Lincoln Cemetery, Lincoln NM (courtesy of Nicholas Narog) 5. John H. Tunstall and Alexander Blazer's Mill - Blazer Cemetery, Mescalero, NM (courtesy of Chris Jones) 7. James J. Dolan - Fritz Family Cemetery, Lincoln, NM (courtesy of Eddie Taylor) 8. Joseph "Doc" 10. George Peppin - Lincoln Cemetery, Lincoln, NM (courtesy of Eddie Taylor) 11. William Brady and George Hindman - Lincoln, NM (courtesy of Lori Goodloe) 12. James W.



and Foes of Billy the Kid

Cemetery, Silver City, NM (courtesy of Lori Goodloe) 3. **Michael McCarty**, Civil War casualty and possible contender for Billy's father - Chatanooga National Cemetery, McSween - Lincoln, NM (courtesy of Steven Kretschmer) 6. **Dick Brewer** and **Andrew "Buckshot" Roberts**, friend and enemy of Billy—both were killed in the shootout at Blazer - Blazer Cemetery, Mescalero, NM (courtesy of Eddie Taylor) 9. **Patrick** and **Apolinaria Garrett** - Masonic Cemetery, Las Cruces, NM (courtesy of Lori Goodloe) **Bell** - Cedarvale Cemetery, White Oaks, NM (courtesy of Lori Goodloe) 13. **John W. Poe** - Southpark Cemetery, Roswell, NM (courtesy of Eddie Taylor)

I loved that, and I used the whole chapter as a prelude to that one remark. But Uncle Billy was, in fact, the source of that story, and it is equally relevant to the Kid's childhood that his stepfather would name him "born bad" as it is relevant that the nascent Kid had the ability to kill without qualms.

That ability is an undeniable essence of his identity. It is his strong sense of self-preservation that prompts him to kill his two guards in order to escape execution. Even when it gives us the shivers, we admire that scrappy will to survive, at least partly because we are biologically programmed to do so.

The complexity of the Kid, his legend and myth, is the subject of dozens of books. My point is to question on which of his identities does the historical novelist base her story? All fiction requires a creative interpretation of reality. When writing of historical people, there exists a field of data to be harvested. But one doesn't scoop up the entire pasture and dump it into your story. Leave that to biographers; they're allowed to leave unanswered questions flapping in the wind. In fiction, the work in the end has to compose a whole that makes sense. To achieve that, the writer selects a flower here, an herb there, a critter, a bug, a time of day and slant of sun, a season that began comfortably or in despair. All these selections color the portrait of the person being molded into a character. If done well, fiction leads to a truth impossible to reach by a mere recitation of facts.

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THE EXPLOITS OF BILLY THE KID

Albany, New York, Evening Journal - May 6, 1881

A telegram from Santa Fe, New Mexico, says: "Full particulars of the escape of William Bonney alias 'Billy the Kid,' on April 30 last, from the jail of Lincoln county, have reached here. The Kid was in charge of Bob Allinger and J.W. Bell, deputy sheriffs, cool and brave men. It seems, however, that by docile behavior the prisoner put them off their guard.

On the evening of the day in question, Allinger had gone to supper, leaving Bell to watch the prisoner. Bell was sitting on the floor talking, when Kid, who was heavily shackled and handcuffed, approached him pleasantly and suddenly jumped at him with the swiftness of a wildcat, hitting him on the head and fracturing his skull. He then snatched Bell's pistol and shot him in the breast. Bell ran down the steps and fell at the foot a corpse. The Kid kicked open the door, procured a hatchet and knocked off his shackles. He also broke open the door to the armory and took possession of several guns and pistols. Bob Allinger, hearing the shot left his supper and ran toward the jail. When nearing a small gate leading through the jail fence the Kid who was up stairs, shot him with a gun loaded with buckshot, killing him instantly. The town of Lincoln seemed terror-stricken, and nobody thought of opposing the Kid. He stole a horse and rode off, armed with four revolvers and a Winchester rifle. He has expressed a determination to kill Gov. Lew Wallace, who failed to pardon him, and who, by a curious coincidence, signed the Kid's death warrant at Santa Fe on the same day that he escaped at Lincoln.

—Contributed by Mark Gardner

Editor's Note: Among the various errors and misspellings contained in this article, I would like to point out that Billy escaped on April 28 (not the 30th) and the correct spelling of the deputy's name is Olinger.

Roswell Erects Garrett Statue

—Michael E. Pitel

Susannah and J. P. Garrett were rightfully proud. But noted El Paso author and longtime Billy The Kid Outlaw Gang member Leon Metz was positively ecstatic.

The occasion was the dedication of a larger-than-life heroic statue to the Garretts' grandfather and the subject of Metz's acclaimed 1973 biography, *Pat Garrett: The Story of A Western Lawman*, in downtown Roswell last March.

A crowd of 150 attended the 90-minute-long ceremony across the street from the east end of the historic Chaves County Court House and listened to Metz, one of several guest speakers, talk for almost 30 minutes about the famed Lincoln County Sheriff who is best remembered today as the law enforcement officer who went after the young outlaw Billy the Kid. After Garrett and his posse had captured the Kid in Dec., 1880, the Kid escaped jail in April, 1881. Garrett hunted for him again, finally shooting and killing him in Fort Sumner in July, 1881.

When someone reminded Metz that nearly 40 years ago, he'd written in his book that the only monument to Garrett's memory at the time was a large granite stone in the Masonic Cemetery in Las Cruces inscribed with the name GARRETT, and that "One can search across all of New Mexico, and indeed the entire Southwest and find no other monument to his memory.", Metz replied, "I put that in there for a reason."

The reason seemed eminently clear to everyone there last March. There stood Glen Rose, Tex., artist Robert Summers' impressive, 14-foot-high bronze statue of the 6' 4" Garrett, with his badge gleaming beneath his duster, sitting tall in the saddle and on the hunt, loading his single-action Colt revolver, his eyes searching in the distance for the Kid.

J. P. Garrett of Tijeras, N. M., climbed a ladder to cut a large red ribbon around Garrett's horse's neck as his sister, Susannah of Santa Fe, led the applause.

Summers began working on the project about five years ago, after the 2006 State Legislature had appropriated \$250,000 and Chaves County had sponsored the remaining \$20,000.

"Pat Garrett was a kind and loving husband and father, and an outstanding field Sheriff," Metz remembered. "But for the rest of his life he tried to become somebody he wasn't cut out to be."

Summers, who has three other outdoor bronze statues on display in Chaves County, was equally pleased.

His \$289,000 "John Chisum" is in downtown Roswell, a block west of the Garrett statue. It was dedicated in March, 2001. His \$286,000 "Sallie Chisum" and \$350,000 "The Rustler" are in downtown Artesia, 40 miles south of Roswell. They were dedicated in July, 2003, and July, 2009, respectively. Summers admitted that the crouched figure in "The Rustler" was that of the Kid.

After the Roswell ceremony, the Garrett grandchildren were taken on a short tour. They walked one block west and crossed Main Street to visit Pioneer Plaza, the long-gone

site of rancher/developer Joseph C. Lea mercantile, saloon, and hotel, and corrals. It was there that Garrett and his two deputies stocked up on ammunition in July, 1881, just before they headed north to Fort Sumner. Lea's place was razed in 1913. Dominating the site today is Summers' larger-than-life heroic statue of Chisum, the noted cattle baron. It was Lea and Chisum who'd convinced Garrett to leave Fort Sumner, in adjacent San Miguel County, and to move into Lincoln County to run for the office of sheriff. Garrett homesteaded 160 acres four miles due east of Lea's place, and won the election in Nov., 1880.

The Garrett grandchildren also stopped by the Queen Anne-style Victorian home of the late John W. Poe at 311 West 7th Street. It was built in 1895. Poe was one of the deputies who'd accompanied Garrett to Fort Sumner in July, 1881.

They also found the tiny, half-hidden adobe bungalow of Garrett's third child, their unmarried late aunt Elizabeth (1885-

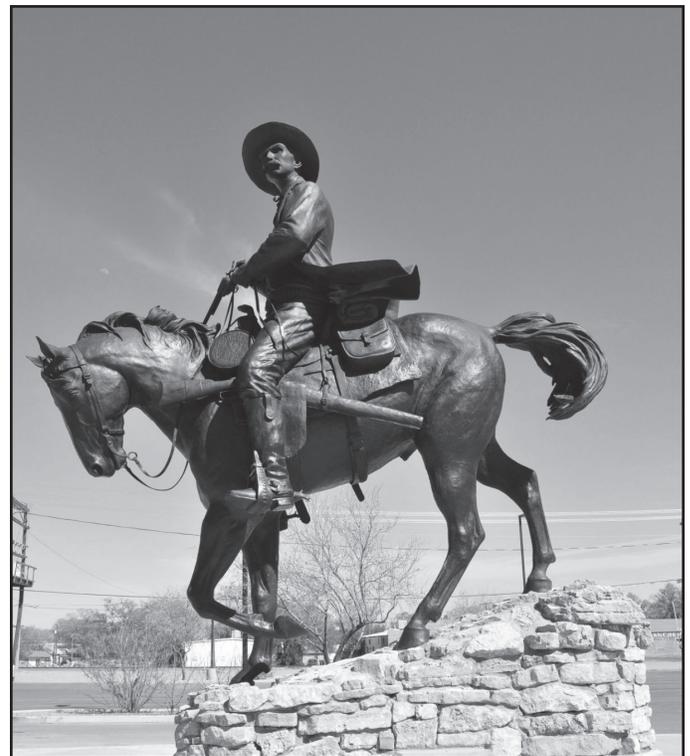
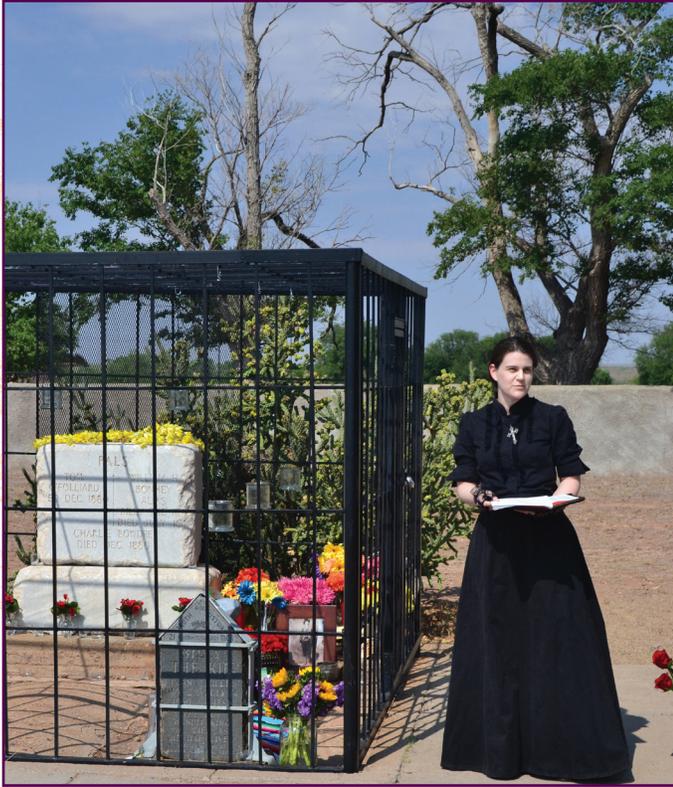


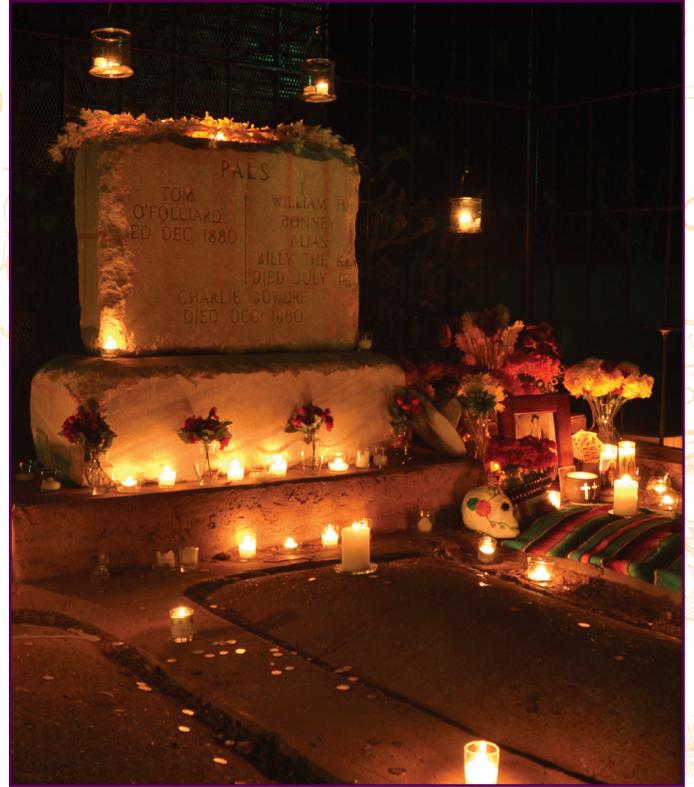
Photo courtesy of Robert Ross

1947). The five-room Pueblo Revival style home is at 102 South Lea Street and was built in 1934. Elizabeth, who is best remembered for composing the song "O Fair New Mexico," lived there the last twenty years of her life. After lunch, the grandchildren were guided five miles east of downtown Roswell to the former Pat Garrett farmstead. They spent a couple of hours there, walking around the exterior of Pat and Apolinaria Garrett's two-story adobe home, built in 1880, taking photographs, peeking into its ground-floor windows, and walking along the Hagerman Canal. The Garretts lived in the home until April, 1891, when the family packed up and moved to Uvalde, Texas.

Billy the Kid Days



Lori Goodloe eulogizing our favorite outlaw.



Members of the Outlaw Gang decorated and sat vigil with the Kid on July 14, 2012, the 131st anniversary of his death.



The Billy the Kid Outlaw Gang visits the Alexander Grzelachowski House in Puerto de Luna for our annual field trip.

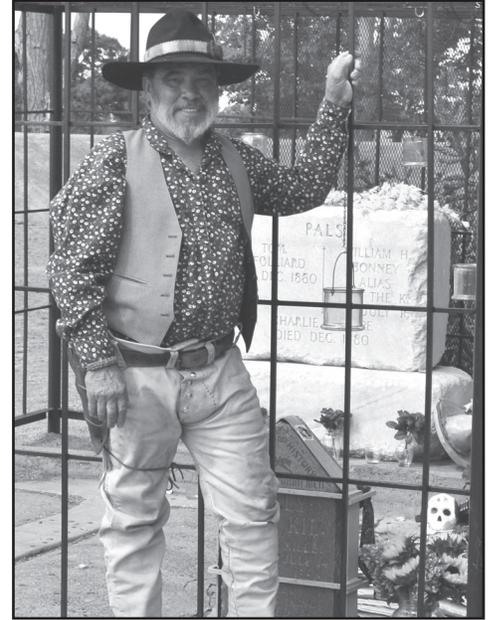
On July 14, 2012, one-hundred and thirty-one years after he was laid to rest, the Billy the Kid Outlaw Gang held a memorial service and candlelight vigil in Billy's honor. BTKOG President, Lori Goodloe, recounted the adventures of his short life and the story of his death for a crowd of Gang members and curious on-lookers. In closing she recited the story of the Kid's funeral during which a "sanctified Texan" spoke. The Texan read a passage from the Bible, Job 14:1-2, and finished by saying, "Billy cannot come back to us, but we will see him again up yonder. Amen."

Afterwards we celebrated twenty-five years of protecting, promoting, and preserving Billy the Kid's history and that evening we gathered again at the Old Fort Cemetery and sat vigil with our outlaw. To close the evening, Julian Leyba read from Psalm 23 and reminded those of us listening why we were there—why we're still fascinated with the laughing boy with the dancing blue eyes even so long after his death.

Rest in peace, Billy and here's to another twenty-five years!



Board Members: Steven Kretchmer, Robyn and Chris Jones, Lori Goodloe, Danny Vest, and Aileen and Johnny Eastwood.



Julian Leyba, our designated Padre for the evening.

Closing Prayer: The Life of Billy the Kid

--Julian Leyba, BTKOG Member

As we think and ponder the life of Billy the Kid 131 years after his death, it reminds me of when my Dad drove our family around New Mexico. We rode in a 1954 Ford station wagon, all eight of us, and one place that stood out was Lincoln County—Smokey Bear Country as some still call it. What always intrigued me most were the stories about Billy the Kid—of how he was well known because of the gun fights he was involved in and how much of the territory he covered in his young life.

As I read more about Billy and his many encounters, I realized that he was no different than you and me. He had a rough childhood like many other kids today except he became famous for it. Billy made good and bad decisions throughout his life; the good ones created strong relationships (especially with the many girls he met along the way) and the bad ones got him into trouble. Some people hated him but many loved him because they were lucky enough to see his caring and thoughtful side.

I hope people remember that 131 years ago this night, as the air chilled, Billy met his end from a single shot. I hope people can see both the good and the bad in the Kid.

Only God knows what went through Billy's mind during his last moments of life. We know Billy was well-read and I believe he probably read the Bible during dark times in his life. With that in mind, I would like to read Psalm 23 in closing tonight. It's a passage that's often recited at funerals and it seems a fitting end to our evening.

¹The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want. ² He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside the still waters. ³ He restoreth my soul: he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake. ⁴ Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me. ⁵ Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over. ⁶ Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the LORD forever.

Rest in Peace Billy.

In memory of my Dad, Ralph S. Leyba: for taking us to see New Mexico in that '54 Ford.

White Oaks

– A.G. Steyn, BTKOG Member

A shadow from the past emerged today.
A past that I was trying to forget.
Still haunted by a mem'ry I lived on
for four long years—and here it lingers yet.

I was a boy, fresh wiped behind the years.
He was a man, a young guy in his prime.
Told noone of the things he did to me.
Was hoping that the healing came with time.

He's in here, in this hideout where we lie
the posse's out there waiting for a kill
I wonder if he does remember me
Can't stand his sight, can't tell you what I feel.

The others here don't know about my past.
The Silver City past I try to shun.
Why don't I now get even with this guy?
I have a cause. I also have a gun.

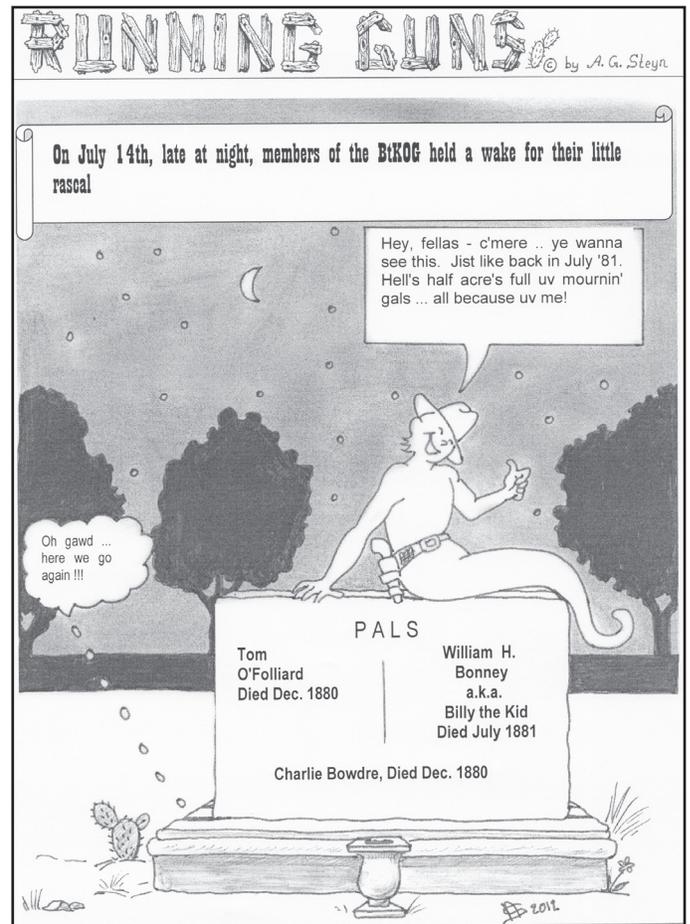
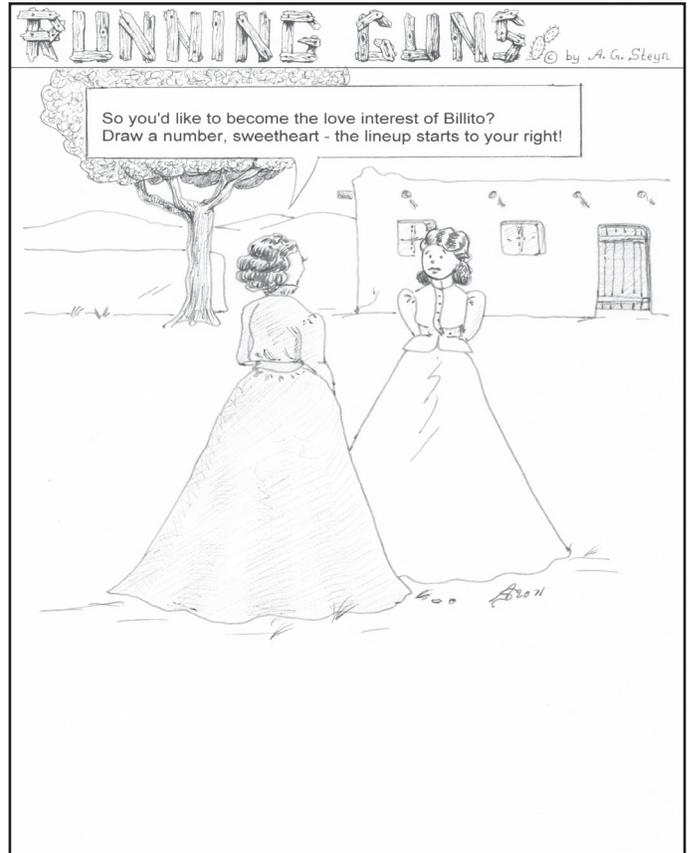
A shot rings through the cold November air.
Has Greathouse been eliminated now?
Jim Carlyle turns a white shade of pale.
A rising panic wrinkling his brow.

Jumps through the window, rolling in the snow.
The posse shoots—I guess they think it's me.
The bullets rob ole Carlyle of his life.
All I can think, is: This is irony!

I read it in the paper just this morn'
they're blaming me—I always get the blame!
The Kid's an outlaw—bad deeds must be his.
I should by now have practice at that game.

If only folks out there would know the truth.
They'd rehabilitate me on the spot.
But I can't speak. The past still strangles me.
And turns my stomach in an iron knot.

The man lies buried now—a boothill case.
Let them all mourn for one so fine and brave.
But I am sure, as long as I will live,
that Carlyle's ghost will haunt me from the grave.





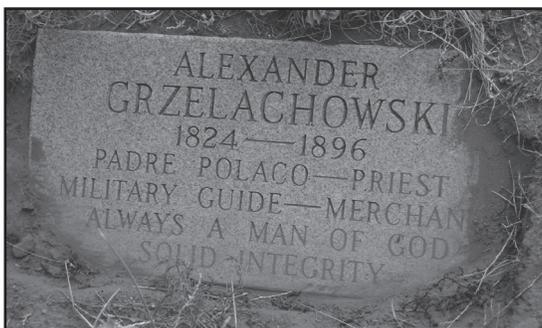
Sallie (Chisum) Robert - Southpark Cemetery, Roswell, NM (courtesy of Eddie Taylor)



Susan MacSween Barber - Cedarvale Cemetery, White Oaks, NM (courtesy of Lori Goodloe)



Sheriff Harvey Whitehill - Memorial Lane Cemetery, Silver City, NM (Lori Goodloe)



Alexander Grzelachowski - Nuestra Senora De Refugio Cemetery, Puerto de Luna, NM (Lori Goodloe)

Indian Woman, Who Loved 'Billy the Kid', Dies, Regretting Him to Last

To Deluvina Maxwell, Slayer Was 'A Good Boy' and She Grieved Over His Barren Grave.

BY FRED E. SUTTON.

Kansas City Journal-Post - September 18, 1932

April 17, in a hospital at Albuquerque, N.M., occurred the death of Deluvina Maxwell, 81 years old, and in the passing of Miss Maxwell we lose one of the last survivors of America's blood-bespattered border. She was the lifelong friend of "Billy the Kid", the greatest outlaw and scourge that the Southwest ever knew. Her home was a haven of rest at any and all times, for this noted bandit. When Pat Garrett, the celebrated officer of New Mexico killed the outlaw in the early '80s at the home of Pete Maxwell at Fort Sumner, N.M., Deluvina was the first person to look upon the face of her friend, who was killed in a darkened bedroom in the Pete Maxwell home by Pat Garrett.

His Only Photograph

In this home she lived until was sent to the hospital in late spring where she died.

The only known photograph Billy the Kid ever had taken was in the possession of Deluvina for many years. It was made by a tramp photographer at Fort Sumner in 1880. Billy posed for it standing in front of a saloon run by "Beaver" Smith. He had a Winchester rifle in his hand and the writer (who knew Billy), doesn't think it's a good picture, for he looked very stern and hard. Billy always wore a smile and looked not a bit like the desperado he really was.

When Billy was in jail at Fort Sumner after his capture at Arroyo Tivan, Deluvina called to see him and found the jail without heat and "her boy" suffering with cold. She made a hasty trip to her home and returned with a shawl, which she gave him. In return for this kindness he gave her the photograph spoken of above. He could have given her nothing that would have pleased her more. A drawing made from this photograph hangs in the governors [sic] house at Santa Fe.

Timid in Later Life

Deluvina in her later life became quite timid and suspicious and could not be hired to go after dark to the little graveyard where Billy was buried, although for years she kept a little bouquet of wild flowers on his grave. She declared she saw the ghost of a murdered Negro soldier walking in the grounds nightly, but she insisted that the spirit of "her boy" slept in peace.

Billy the Kid is buried in a dreary and almost forgotten spot called "Hel's [sic] Half Acre," which looks in the burning summer sun like a spot of land that God had forgotten. Nothing will grow there, not even a native weed or bunch of Sacatone grass. It is a yard filled with men who were killed with their boots on. Some folks at this late day will drive miles out of their way rather than pass it; they say it is haunted.

Peace be unto her faithful soul.

-Contributed by Elizabeth Fackler, BTKOG Member

Editor's Note: According to noted Billy the Kid historian, Fredrick Nolan, anything Sutton wrote should be taken with a "sizeable spoonful of salt". Keeping this in mind I selected excerpts from this obituary that were the most believable. Regardless of its accuracy, it's a nice tribute to the woman who adored and cared for Billy even long after his death.

Polish Immigrant Lives on Through Legend of the Kid

—Francis C. Kajencki (Originally published in *The Outlaw Gazette* Vol. VI, No. 1, 1993)

An upcoming Puerto de Luna celebration recalls the story of a Polish immigrant whose fate became linked to that of New Mexico's most infamous outlaw. The Oct. 2 event reenacts Billy the Kid's last Christmas dinner in the company of Alexander Grzelachowski.

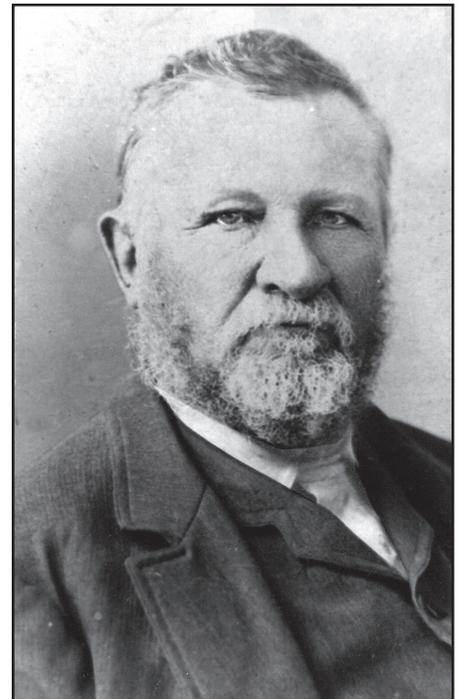
The turn-of-the-century merchant, rancher, and civic leader spearheaded efforts in 1891 to name Puerto de Luna, near Santa Rosa, as the seat of Guadalupe County. He offered the territorial government choice land for a courthouse. In appreciation, the Legislature selected Grzelachowski's town.

Respected for his education and ability, "Don Alejandro" Grzelachowski devoted nearly a half-century to the people of New Mexico.

Grzelachowski (Gre-ze-la-hóf-ski) was born in Poland in 1824 of gentry parents and came to America as a Catholic priest in 1850. The following year he accompanied the Rev. Jean Baptiste Lamy, later named the first archbishop of Santa Fe, to the Southwest.

He would eventually leave the priesthood and marry a New Mexican woman, Secundina C de Baca, but not before he performed crucial service as Civil War chaplain of the 2nd New Mexico Infantry Regiment. He rode with Maj. John Chivington, whose unit destroyed the Confederate supply train in Apache Canyon in the Battle of Glorieta Pass on March 28, 1862. When the Confederates blocked Chivington's escape, Grzelachowski, affectionately known as Padre Polaco, led the 400 soldiers on a roundabout route to the safety of the Union Army at Martin Kozlowski's Ranch.

In Puerto de Luna, Grzelachowski built an architecturally imposing house, a Territorial showplace that attracted notables like Sheriff Pat Garrett and Billy the Kid.



Alexander Grzelachowski - Photo courtesy of Daniel Flores



Interior of the Grzelachowski House—looking into the room where Billy had his last Christmas dinner—Photo courtesy of Lori Goodloe

Perhaps the Kid's most famous visit occurred when the outlaw showed up as Garrett's prisoner in 1880. The sheriff and posse arrived at Grzelachowski's house with the Kid and three cronies in chains on Christmas Day. The hospitable Pole invited the entire party to join his family for a dinner of wild turkey.

As Grzelachowski kept Billy's plate full, he joked about his eight prized horses that Billy had stolen.

The re-enactment of Billy the Kid's last Christmas dinner sparks an annual festival in Puerto de Luna, this year scheduled for October 2. Led by Joe and MaryIn Bowlin, the Billy the Kid Outlaw Gang recreated the event with Western flair.

Besides the festival, efforts are now under way to preserve the Grzelachowski home for its historical value. The current owners, Victor and Otilia Flores, have gained an ally in the New Mexico Historic Preservation Division, which has nominated the Territorial house for the National Register of Historic Places.

Perhaps the most persuasive reason for the preservation effort is the legend of Billy the Kid.

Editor's Note: The reenactment mentioned in this article refers to an event that took place when the historical roadside marker was placed in Puerto de Luna in 1993. Also in 1993, the Grzelachowski House was included on the National Register of Historic Place.

Book Reviews

Alexander Grzelachowski: Puerto de Luna's Renaissance Man—Daniel Flores

Alexander Grzelachowski may be one of the most important figures in New Mexico history. Unfortunately, odds are if you've heard of him it was probably as a footnote in the story of Billy the Kid and the Lincoln County War. However, after reading this book you will see that there was a lot more to this man's life than hosting Billy the Kid's last Christmas dinner.

Mr. Grzelachowski's story begins in Poland in 1821. The little town he was born in can't be found on modern maps so it's assumed that it is now part of Russia. Don Alejandro, as he was later known, came from a military family. His father fought for Poland in the Napoleonic War and two of his brothers served in the Tsarist armies in Russia. But Alexander chose a different path; he became ordained as a Catholic priest.

This decision led him to the United States. He went to Ohio first and not much is known about his time there. Around 1851 he was transferred to New Mexico. Padre Polaco, as the New Mexican natives referred to him, was very adept at learning languages. He spoke Russian, Polish, French, Spanish, and possibly Greek. He also picked up the languages of various Pueblo tribes and was able to communicate with them in their native tongues. It is said that Billy the Kid loved to hear him speak in the many different languages in which he was fluent.

By 1860 Alexander had begun to drift from life as a cleric. He did, however, enlist in the Union army in 1862 as a chaplain where he played a big part in the Battle of Glorieta helping the Union forces cut off the Confederate supply line resulting in a Union victory.

After his time in the Army he retired from the priesthood and returned to Las Vegas, New Mexico. There he went into business as a storekeeper and freighter. This is where he forged his friendships with fellow immigrant merchants, Charles Ilfeld and Jean Pendaries. He

was partnered with a man named Richard Dunn. He eventually moved to Puerto de Luna where he built the store in which Billy the Kid had his last Christmas dinner and where he enters our scope as Billy the Kid enthusiasts.

Grzelachowski donated several properties and buildings to the town of Puerto de Luna and the county. He ran the mercantile store, a bar, had orchards, gardens and cattle. Alexander was definitely a pillar of his community and by all accounts was well liked and respected. The Grzelachowski store in Puerto de Luna still stands. Don Alejandro passed away in 1896 after being thrown from a buggy.

He is buried in the cemetery in Puerto de Luna. His grave was originally outside the confines of the graveyard because he was not in good standing with the church. Because he had left the priesthood he was not allowed to be buried in consecrated ground. In an amusing turn of fate his grave is now inside the cemetery due to expansion of the premises.

This book gives insight into the life of a man who was truly amazing. Written by Daniel Flores, the great-grandson of Grzelachowski, it contains an abundance of personal photos, documents, and records pertaining to the life of Grzelachowski and the history of territorial New Mexico. Pick up a copy and learn about the Renaissance Man of New Mexico. You won't regret it!

—Steven Kretschmer,
BTKOG Member



Juan Patrón: A Fallen Star in the Days of Billy the Kid—Paul L. Tsompanas

“The first mass celebrated in Puerto de Luna was for the funeral of Don Juan Patrón, who was murdered by a Texan, an emissary of the Murphy-Dolan faction that figured prominently in the Lincoln County War. It was through Don Juan's generosity that the church

had been completed, and fate had it that he enter it as a corpse.”

Our Lady of Refuge Bulletin

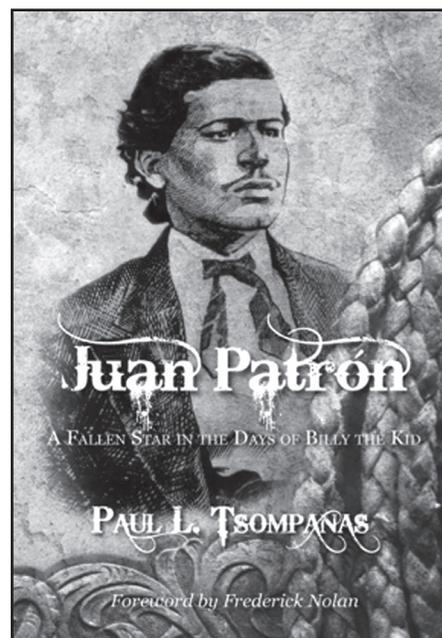
And so it has been assumed all these many long years.

Paul Tsompanas, in *Juan Patrón: A Fallen Star in the Days of Billy the Kid*, illuminates the mystery of Juan Patrón's brief and brilliant life. With an introduction by Frederick Nolan and an endorsement by Marc Simmons, this new work on the territorial history of New Mexico is an important addition to any library on the Lincoln County War. Mr. Tsompanas, a smooth and excellent writer, is also an intelligent researcher. Culminating his biography of Patrón's personal and political life, his examination of that fatal shooting in a Puerto de Luna saloon lays to rest prior speculations while raising new ones.

Though some readers may disagree with a few of his details, Tsompanas' overall portrait of this famous yet little-known leader of Hispanic New Mexicans is well done. So beloved was Patrón by his peers that they broke canonical law and buried him, a layman, in the floor of the church he helped build.

An Official Project of the New Mexico Centennial, published by Belle Isle Books, this biography is highly recommended.

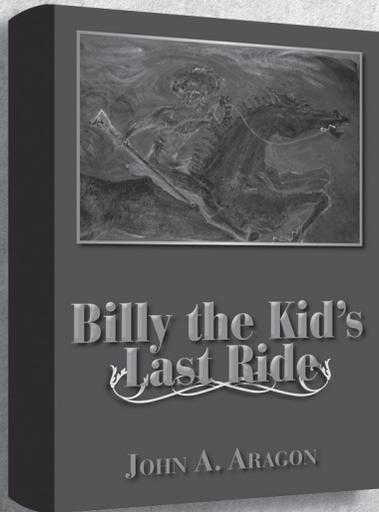
—Elizabeth Fackler,
BTKOG Member



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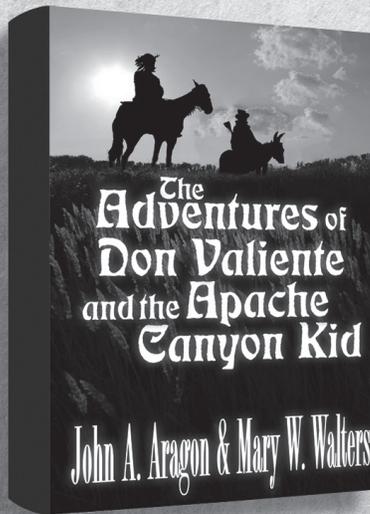
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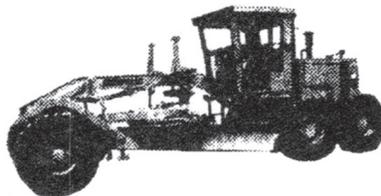
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