

VOL. 1

MAR. - APR.

1947

No. 2

## LOS ANGELES CORRAL ROUNDUPS

Our February roundup was highlighted by a most interesting talk on "Billy the Kid" by Mr. E. A. Brininstool, who had his son, the Reverend M. O. Brininstool, read John Poe's own story of the death of "Billy the Kid." A more dramatic story will be hard to find. Mr. Brininstool has published many books on Western subjects and is an authority of the "Custer Battle." Some of his books are:

*Trail Dust of a Maverick* (Western Verse, 3 editions); *Sonnets of a Telephone Girl*; *A Trooper With Custer* (2 editions); *Fighting Red Cloud's Warriors*; *Major M. A. Reno Vindicated*; *Capt. Benteen's Story of the Custer Fight* (2 editions); *Campaigning With Custer & the 19th Kansas Cavalry*; *The Boseman Trail* (With Dr. Grace R. Hebard, 2 editions); *The Killing of "Billy the Kid"*; *The "Dull Knife" Outbreak at Ft. Robinson, Nebraska*; *Chief Crazy Horse—His Career and Death* (now ready for a publisher anytime. All sold out of above publications.)

After the talk there was a most interesting discussion by our members who lived in New Mexico and Arizona and still remember those days of cattle rustling and bad men of the old Southwest.

The Posse of the Los Angeles Chapter of the Westerners met in their corral on March 20 to transact a little business and listen to much good talk.

First came the order of business, that of limiting the resident membership to fifty with dues of \$6.00—Resident members are those who live in the thirteen southern countries of the state of California, all others are considered

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P. L. Bonebrake

Percy Bonebrake, our speaker at the March roundup, was born in Los Angeles in 1878—which makes him a real native son of California. His father was a prominent banker and financier of early California.

Despite repeated attempts to expose Percy to a more or less formal education, the lad persisted in living an outdoor life—following the dogies as a cowboy and cattle buyer, later serving as a Deputy U.S. Marshall, Deputy Sheriff in New Mexico, special agent for the Union Pacific Railroad and such assignments.

Percy finds time now to help preserve some of the colorful history of the Southwest and his talk before the Los Angeles Corral was more than well reviewed. Every member attending enjoyed the speaker's intimate recollections of Old Los Angeles—"the city of angels."

## FUTURE MEETINGS

Billy Dodson will talk at our June roundup on "MEN OF THE LLANO ESTACADO." Being an old-time cowman and rancher with experience from New Mexico to Montana, Billy will speak with more than just scholarly authority.

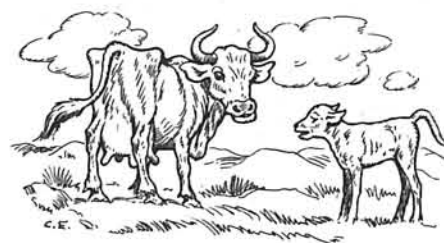
The boys are lining up some excellent papers for future meetings, with particular emphasis on new material—heretofore little researched and largely unavailable in printed form.

Among the papers in preparation are the following: *Oofy Goofy*, *The Wobblies War in Arizona*, *Colonel Kosterlitzky of the Mexican Rurales*, *Charles Lummis*, *Jeff Milton*, and others not yet titled.

Ellsworth's talk at our May meeting (May 15th) on the Sioux Indians is going to be something to hear!

## OUR WESTERN ARTISTS

We appreciate the fine spirit of cooperation that our artist members are displaying. Clarence Ellsworth has been of great help on the Brand Book and the letterhead. Hurlstone Fairchild and Nicholas S. Firfires of Santa Barbara have come up with most welcome contributions. We can use more for both the bi-monthly Brand Books and the annual Brand Book.



"Ma, can Jimmie come over for dinner?"

# BRAND BOOK

ISSUED BI-MONTHLY AS THE OFFICIAL  
PUBLICATION OF THE LOS ANGELES  
CORRAL OF THE WESTERNERS  
*Communications to the Corral:*

ROBERT J. WOODS  
Registrar of Marks and Brands  
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POSSE OF THE LOS ANGELES CORRAL  
OF THE WESTERNERS

Sheriff . . . . .	H. E. BRITZMAN
Deputy Sheriff . . . . .	JACK HARDEN
Round-up Foreman . . . . .	HOMER BOELTER
Registrar of Marks and Brands . . . . .	ROBERT J. WOODS
Representative . . . . .	ARTHUR WOODWARD
Wranglers . . . . .	{ NOAH BEERY, JR. PAUL GALLEHER

EDITOR'S NOTE . . . Percy tells me that the photo on front page is quite the vogue in the valley, being used on bathroom doors, as it is more effective than Sal-Hepatica. However, I learned that it is one of his wife's pictures of him. My appreciation to her for the use of it in the BRAND BOOK.

## LOS ANGELES CORRAL ROUNDUPS (Continued from page one)

non-resident or corresponding members, with dues set at \$3.00 per year instead of \$6.00. A third or special classification was set up, this is the privilege extended to libraries and other individuals to subscribe to the bi-monthly brand at the rate of \$3.00 per year, but does not include any right to attend the meetings or to be considered a member of the Westerners.

Now to get down to the pleasant part of the evening — Our speaker, Percy L. Bonebrake, son of a pioneer banker of Los Angeles, kept the floor for longer than usual and what is more, he kept the interest of his audience to the end with his humorous tales of early Los Angeles and the Southwest, but we will let Percy tell it in another page of this issue.

## CAN YOU MATCH THIS ONE?

Our own Ernest Sutton tells this on himself.

In 1879 a railroad was built into the Dakota Territory near where Ernest was living. With it came settlers, taking up land and breaking the virgin sod for farming. Tiring of driving a stage, he tried his hand at farming by hiring out to one of these settlers. One day he was sent out to "break" land which lay along the old stage road. He was busy lining up furrows when a rider appeared and in great agitation hollered, "Have you heard the news?" Always ready for an excuse to rest his horses, and not able to hear too clearly, he walked over to the road and asked the man to repeat what he had said. The man replied, "Some son of a —%&— killed Garfield." Ernest admits that living so far from civilization hampered him a bit and didn't know who Garfield was so had to ask "Who the h— is Garfield." The man told him that Garfield was the President of the United States. Of course this made a great impression on young Ernest and he could hardly wait till evening supper to tell the news to his boss. After everyone was seated at the table that evening, Ernest told the news he had heard. In typical settler fashion the farmer asked Ernest who had been kidding him. Ernest said that a man on horseback came down the stage road and told him this bit of news. The farmer studied a while and then said, "Ernest, your an easy mark, don't believe everything you hear and anyway, what difference does it make to us out here anyway." Ernest claims he's still wondering.

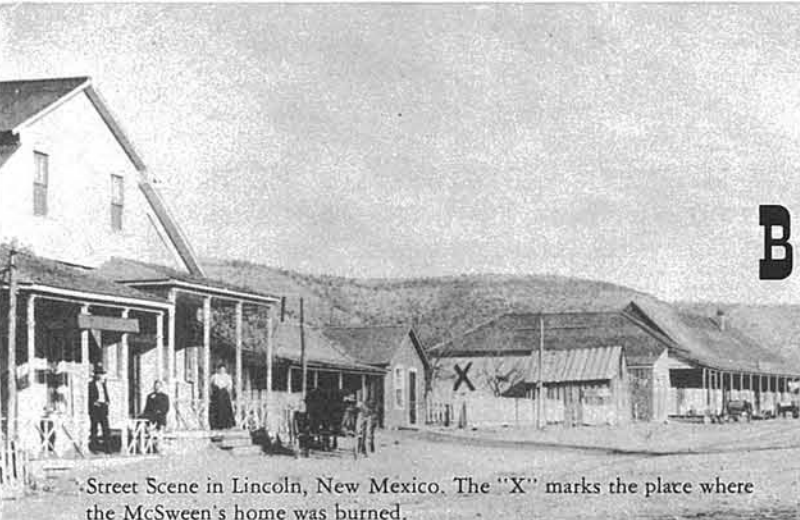
Apologies to Mr. J. Gregg Layne for the misspelling of his name in the February issue of the Brand Book. His ancestors did the same as mine—they used too many letters in their spelling. After reading his story "Gun Fights and Lynchings in early Los Angeles," we are sure the rose smells just as sweet.

## DOWN THE BOOK TRAIL By Paul Galleher

This column is attempting to inform you of western books in the making or just recently published. Any thoughts you may have to improve it will be willingly received.

QUEUE: *Pigtails and Gold Dust* by Alex McLeod will be a May publication of Caxton. The first few Chinese came to California in the goldrush days to serve as laborers in the mines, on the ranches, and in railway construction gangs. So free and prosperous did they find American life that they urged their fellow Cantonese to come, and soon the yellow men were pouring into San Francisco by the thousands. This book presents the picturesque aspects of Chinese-American life as reflected in the careers of merchant and herb doctor, house boy and slave girl, and many other Chinese types . . . ANTHOLOGY: 32 famous Southwestern authors convey their own stimulating enthusiasm and impressive knowledge of the American Southwest in an anthology called *Southwesterners Write*. The University of New Mexico Press is responsible . . . FIFTY BOOKS of the year: It is interesting to note that two California Book Club publications have been included this year. Both are from the celebrated Grabhorn Press, one termed "the most dazzling book of the show," *The Discovery of Florida*, designed by Edwin and Robert Grabhorn, the other *A Sojourn in California by the King's Orphan*; the travels and sketches of G. M. Waseurtz . . . SERRA: Agnes Repplier's *Junipero Serra* is again in print. The story of this pioneer colonist of California is a newly featured reprint title on the Doubleday list . . . CALIFORNIA: Joseph Henry Jackson has written the introduction to Stewart Edward White's *The Saga of Andy Burnett*. This volume contains, unabridged, the late author's four novels that tell the story of the winning of California: *The Long Rifle*, *Stampede*, *Ranchero*, *The Folded Hills* . . . MAVERICK TOWN: mentioned in this column before promises to rank high among the

(Continued on back page)



# BILLY THE KID

BY E. A. BRININSTOOL

I AM NOT HERE TONIGHT TO EITHER "eulogize" or "heroize" Billy the Kid, but to give you the true facts regarding the killing of this young scapegrace, with some material about

him, previous to his arrest and sudden taking-off. I do not vouch for the truth of any of this alleged history of his earlier life. It has appeared in various publications, and the public is at liberty to believe it or not. The story of his killing, however, I CAN vouch for, as John Poe, one of the three men in the posse which went after the Kid, was present, and in 1918 gave me the true account of his sudden taking-off.

The real name of "Billy the Kid" was William H. Bonney. He was born in the slums of New York City, history relates, November 29, 1859. His father died when Billy was a small boy, and his mother moved to Colorado, with Billy and a baby brother named Edward. Of this younger child, history leaves no further trace.

In Colorado, Billy's mother married a man named Antrim, and the family, soon after, set out for Santa Fe. Billy was now five years of age, and lived there three years, his mother operating a boarding-house. In 1868, the Antrims moved to Silver City, New Mexico, a silver-mining camp in its raw boom days. Billy lived four years in Silver City, where he hung around the saloons and gambling houses, displaying finally a natural and uncanny facility at cards. Under the expert teaching of the gambling fraternity he became an adept at dealing stud poker. In a short time he was master of all the stratagems of the crooked short-card gambler. This, mind you, at an age when boys of less strenuous communities played at tops and marbles.

Billy was 12 years old, we are told, when he killed his first man. This happened at Silver City. His mother was on her way home, with Billy at her side, from a shopping tour. As they passed a group of men lounging in front of a saloon, a young blacksmith, perhaps half-drunk, is said to have dropped slighting remarks of a flirtatious nature, at Mrs. Antrim. A few evenings later, in a saloon, the blacksmith engaged in a fight with a man named Moulton. He was getting the tough end of the deal, when Billy, who was lounging near by, whipped out a jackknife and buried it three times in the blacksmith's body, and he pitched headlong, dead.

Billy darted out of the door and made his way home, where he told his mother he had killed the man who had insulted her. She agreed with his plan to dodge arrest, and gave him a few dollars. Then the boy slipped out into the night. Mother and son never saw each other again.

For the ensuing four years, little is known of Billy's whereabouts, but he finally got



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into Arizona, where, through hard experience, he developed into an expert cowboy. He worked on various ranches, and for different cattle outfits, in and out of Bowie, Tucson, Benson, Douglass, Nogales, Bisbee, Gila River and other places.

At the age of 16, Billy reappears definitely on the stage, being now a well grown boy, lean, full of restless energy—a happy-go-lucky youth, and unhampered by moral scruples of any kind, capable of smiling murders; “apparently as harmless as a sucking dove, but as poisonously dangerous as a bull rattlesnake.”

While in Tucson Billy is said to have killed a man over a card game. Nothing appears to be known about who the man was, or the circumstances of the killing. “Billy killed another man,” is all the history we have about it.

Also it is alleged, he killed a negro soldier in those days. According to the story, Billy caught the negro cheating at cards. But no more is known of this murder than of the other. Some of the stories locate it at Fort Union.

Billy slipped across the border, after these affairs, into old Mexico. Here he met a young gambler, ready for any sort of an escapade. It was dead easy for the two young desperadoes to step from some dark doorway and hold up the prosperous gamblers on their way home with the day's receipts.

Later, the pair wandered through the border country, rustling cattle, taking a whirl at cards and sharing the luck of fat and lean days together.

Billy struck the Pecos valley in the fall of 1877, a few weeks before he was 18 years old. A little later he arrived at the ranch of Frank Coe on the Ruidosa, where he spent the following winter, eventually taking employment at Tunstall's ranch on the Rio Feliz, to remain, until the murder of the Englishman launched the Lincoln County War.

Later, Billy killed two former pals, Morton and Baker. This made Billy the special target of Sheriff Brady's wrath. He procured the offer of a reward for the young outlaw, dead or alive, which, according to popular interpretation, meant preferably dead. The Sheriff relied upon his deputies to carry out his design; so with Deputies Hindman and Peppin, and Circuit Court Clerk Matthews, they met in front of the Murphy store at Lincoln on the morning of April 1, 1878. They started for the courthouse near the other end of town, all armed with Winchesters and six-shooters. As they reached a point about 50 feet from the McSween store, they did not see six heads lifted slightly above the top of the adobe wall that came out flush with the street, at the east end of the McSween store. Here Billy the Kid, with five boon companions, suddenly straightened up, with cocked rifles. A volley followed, and Sheriff Brady staggered a few steps and fell dead, riddled with 8 or 10 bullets. The others took to their heels, but a bullet struck Deputy Hindman in the back, and he also dropped.

It is impossible at this time to tell of all the killings, the hatred between the various factions, and the events that led up to the entry of Sheriff Pat Garrett and Deputy John Poe into this murderous Lincoln County War. With Murphy and McSween

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both dead, their factions gradually disintegrated.

Gen. Lew Wallace, the famous author of "Ben Hur," was finally sent by President Hayes to New Mexico, to act as Governor, in August, 1878. He was determined to carry out the President's orders to end the feud. From the first, he had grave doubts as to his ability to do it. However, he determined to have a personal interview with the Kid. The Kid was apparently also anxious to end the trouble, for he met the Governor at the Ellis House, at Lincoln, rifle in hand. An interview followed, but the Kid refused to agree to the Governor's terms, even though he was promised a pardon if convicted, on trial. He said he had killed too many men, and had gone too far to turn back. "I wouldn't gamble much money on my future," the Kid grimly replied. "I may live a year or two; I may die within the next five minutes!" So Governor Wallace and Billy the Kid shook hands and "called it quits."

Two years later, in the shadow of the gallows, Billy recalled Gov. Wallace's promise of a pardon, but the pardon did not come, and his friendship turned to hate. He is said to have reiterated: "I mean to ride into the plaza at Santa Fe, hitch my horse in front of the Palace, and put a bullet through Lew Wallace." Wallace at this time was working on his famous novel, "Ben Hur," in the Governor's mansion at Santa Fe.

In the fall of 1878, the Kid made his headquarters at Fort Sumner until his death. He gathered a bunch of boon companions around him, and from that time on was an outlaw, pure and simple. However, he looted no banks, nor held up any stagecoaches or railroad trains, but confined himself to stealing stock and selling it to shady customers. His operations are said to have covered most of the present state of New Mexico.

He met Pat Garrett at Fort Sumner at intervals, and they became well acquainted; but when Pat Garrett was elected sheriff of Lincoln County, that put a different face on the matter. The Kid then knew exactly what that meant, and from that time on it was war to the death between them. Garrett took no chances with the Kid. He killed him in the only way the Kid could have been killed—by taking him off his guard for the fraction of a single second.

In making Pat Garrett sheriff of Lincoln county, he was promised his election; but his backers laid their cards on the table. The job was to carry one positive obligation—the extermination of Billy the Kid. Garrett had been a friend of Billy, but that made no difference now. This was to be a fight for New Mexico, and sentimental consideration must be laid aside, and friendships must be forgotten. The work called for a man of shrewdness, courage and determination. Garrett was that kind of a man. He accepted the proposition; was nominated and elected.

Then the toils began to tighten about the Kid. All the forces of law were marshaled to aid the new sheriff. John W. Poe, in the service of the cattle interests in the Panhandle and the Canadian River country, was also on the trail. The Kid was growing cautious. He spent his twenty-first birthday in White Oaks; but he kept under cover.

There was to be a great ball in Fort Sumner on Christmas night. All the gay youngsters

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were to be there. Billy the Kid and his men were to ride in and give the affair its last touch of dashing gaiety. He had sent word that he would surely be there. To Garrett the welcome news was like a direct message from Billy the Kid, inviting him to keep an appointment, and setting the trysting place. Garrett gathered a posse of 15 men and set out hastily for Fort Sumner, and by hard riding, reached it on Christmas eve. But the Kid was too foxy for him. It was ascertained that the outlaws had headed in the direction of Stinking Springs, where there was an old abandoned stone house. Garrett's posse at the first glimmer of dawn reached the spot and halted under shelter of an embankment within thirty feet of the door. Here they laid siege to the inmates. To cut the story short, the outlaws were starved out. Billy the Kid surrendered, with three companions. He was taken to Mesilla for trial in March for the murder of Sheriff Brady, found guilty and sentenced to be hanged. The judge's sentence was that the Kid be taken to Lincoln, until May 13th, and "be hanged by the neck until you are dead, dead, dead."

When Billy arrived at Lincoln under heavy guard, it was found that the jail was too insecure for the young outlaw; so he was confined in an upper room of the old Murphy store. There, manacled hand and foot, and guarded by Deputies Bob Ollinger and J. W. Bell, he awaited the hour set for his death on the gallows.

There are various stories as to how the Kid managed to kill Bell, one of his guards, even while ironed hand and foot. Some stories insist that, due to his small hands and wrists, he slipped off his handcuffs, and at an opportune moment struck Bell on the head, knocking him senseless, then seizing Bell's gun and shooting him. Other accounts state that they were playing cards and the Kid purposely dropped a card on the floor, and as Bell stooped to pick it up, the Kid reached over and grabbed Bell's gun, and as Bell dashed for the stairway, the Kid shot him dead, then seized Ollinger's shotgun, hobbled to the window and shot Ollinger, as the latter came rushing across the street from the restaurant where he had gone for his noon meal.

At any event, the Kid killed them both, then compelled a helper of the building to get an axe and chop off his manacles—so history relates. He then secured a horse and scurried out of town, and for months nobody knew his whereabouts; but it was supposed that he had headed for Old Mexico. Such, however, was not the case. He was hiding out with a woman friend at Fort Sumner.

All this while, Sheriff Garrett and Deputy John W. Poe were scouring the country for any information regarding the Kid's whereabouts, but were unable to learn anything definite until Poe was given a tip by a man who had overheard a conversation between two men one night in a livery stable, to the effect that the Kid was hiding out at Fort Sumner. Poe at once contacted Sheriff Garrett, who was skeptical of the truth of the report. He finally agreed to take Poe and another deputy named McKinney, and go out to Fort Sumner and see what they could learn.

Arriving at Fort Sumner after dark on the night of the 14th of July, 1881, Garrett

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stated that if the Kid was there, he would most likely be staying at the home of a certain "lady friend" of the Kid, and proposed to his companions that they slip out into a peach orchard in the rear of the house and keep watch to see if anyone entered or left the place. This was done, but although the men remained in close watch until 11 o'clock that night, nobody came or went from the place.

Garrett thereupon concluded they were on a cold trail, and insisted that they ride out of Fort Sumner before anyone saw them. Poe, however, suggested that they first go and see one Peter Maxwell, an old-timer of Fort Sumner, to ascertain if he might possibly know of the Kid's whereabouts. Garrett, although yet protesting that it would be useless, finally decided to follow Poe's suggestion, and the three men accordingly cautiously approached the Maxwell place.

It was now about midnight, and a bright moon illuminated the heavens, making the place almost as bright as day. Reaching the Maxwell home, Garrett told Poe and McKinney to wait outside while he went into Maxwell's bedroom to have a palaver with him. Accordingly Poe and McKinney squatted down in the shade of the porch columns, and Garrett entered Maxwell's room, leaning his Winchester against the doorway, and awakened Maxwell for a talk.

Meantime as Poe and McKinney waited outside, Poe noticed a man approaching the Maxwell place, apparently in his stocking feet and minus his hat. Neither man paid him any attention, supposing it to be either some employe of Maxwell, or a friend. The man came on without noting either man until he walked directly upon them, when he pulled a six-shooter, covered both men and demanded to know who they were. As neither Poe nor McKinney had ever seen Billy the Kid, they were taken completely off their guard. The man repeated again in Spanish, "Who are you fellows?" Poe arose and walked toward him, remarking that he "needn't be afraid as they were not going to touch him." But the man kept backing toward Maxwell's room, still keeping both men covered, and several times asking "Who are you fellows?" He then backed into Maxwell's bedroom, and Poe heard him again exclaim, "Pete, who are those two fellows out there on the porch?" The next instant a shot was fired, followed by yet another, and presently Garrett rushed out, exclaiming, "That was the Kid and I'm sure I got him." Poe, however, exclaimed, "Why Pat, you must have shot the wrong man; the Kid wouldn't come here." Garrett however insisted that he was sure it was the Kid, as he recognized his voice too well to be mistaken. Finally Maxwell was induced to get a lighted candle and place it on the window sill of the room. Investigation showed a man dead on the floor, with a six-shooter at his right hand and a butcher knife at his left. Examination disclosed that Garrett was right. It was the Kid, who had at last reached the end of his rope.

Garrett stated that he had just seated himself at Maxwell's bedside, but before he could ask a question, a man backed into the room asking Maxwell, "Who are those fellows out there?" Garrett said he at once recognized him as the Kid, and before the

## **BILLY THE KID**

Kid could get accustomed to the darkness of the room, pulled his gun and fired, the bullet striking the outlaw through the heart, killing him instantly.

Thus ended the career of Billy the Kid, the worst scourge of the entire Territory of New Mexico, and from that time on, Billy's "boon companions" either dropped out of sight entirely, or else "turned good." Some of them became respectable citizens of that section.

I am indebted to John W. Poe for the facts regarding the killing of the Kid, which he gave me permission to publish, in 1919. It first appeared in the *Wide World Magazine* of London. Later, I brought it out in a little pamphlet, which was long ago all sold out. It has since been printed by a New York publisher in a small volume. The Poe account, however, is absolutely factual, far different from many false yarns which have since appeared in print.

By far the most truthful account of the Kid's activities before the killing, is in a splendidly-written volume by Walter Noble Burns of Chicago. I urge every *Westerner* to get that book, if interested in the history of the Lincoln County War and Billy the Kid's many murders and activities. Burns told me he spent many months in New Mexico, covering the entire state, and getting interviews with many people who knew the Kid personally, or who went through the Lincoln County War as a participant on either side of the warring factions. The Burns book is entitled *The Saga of Billy the Kid*, published in 1926 by Doubleday, Page & Co. of New York.

## **THE MURDER OF PAT GARRETT**

After the killing of Billy the Kid, Pat Garrett's name was a household word, in New Mexico especially. He bought 1250 acres of land about a mile east of Roswell. Eventually he settled at Las Cruces. He had saved a little money, and acquired several other ranches and some mining property, and for a few years he prospered. But toward the close of his life, Garrett lost most of his money, being a soldier of fortune more than a business man.

In 1907 he rented one of his ranches to a young stockman named Wayne Brazell, supposedly to run cattle on. Brazell, however, ran sheep and goats on the property. Brazell sub-let the property to another rancher. This sub-letting of his land angered Garrett, he maintaining that Brazell had no business to sub-let the property, much less to run sheep and goats on it. Garrett demanded that Brazell surrender his lease. Brazell refused.

On the morning of February 28, 1908, Garrett started from one of his ranches to drive to Las Cruces in his buckboard, accompanied by one Carl Adamson. Between the little village of Organ and Las Cruces, they overtook Brazell, who was on horseback. Both Garrett and Brazell started to discuss the latter's actions of sub-letting the ranch to run sheep and goats on it. One word led to another, and finally Garrett got out of his buckboard to fix some part of the harness on his team. The two men became more



# BILLY THE KID

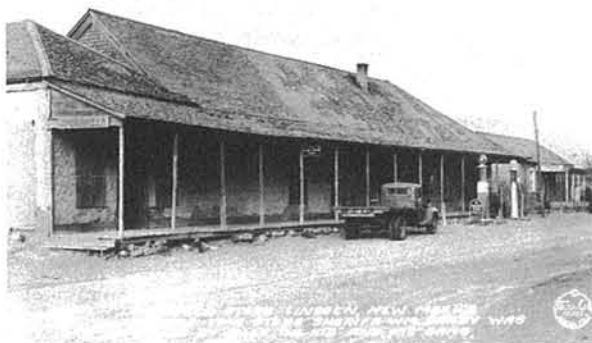
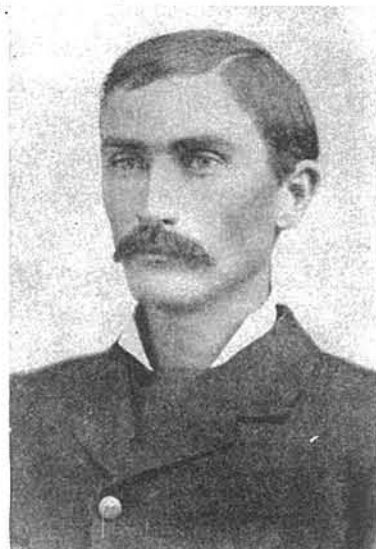
excited and angry, and suddenly Garrett grabbed a shotgun from his buckboard, remarking that if he couldn't get Brazell off his ranch in one way, he would another. Before Garrett could get into action with his weapon, Brazell jerked out his six-shooter and fired twice at Garrett, the first bullet going through Garrett's heart, and the second striking him between the eyes. Garrett dropped dead. Brazell then insisted that Adamson, who still sat in the buckboard, drive the team on into Las Cruces, and tell the authorities exactly how it happened.

Garrett's body laid in the road where he fell, for five hours, when a party of his friends from Las Cruces drove out and took the body into town. At the coroner's inquest next day, Brazell told the story, and Adamson corroborated it in every detail. Brazell was released on bonds. On May 4, 1909, Brazell was placed on trial on the charge of murder. The trial lasted only one day. The jury, within 15 minutes, returned a verdict of acquittal. From all the evidence it appeared that Brazell shot in self-defense.

JOHN W. POE, deputy, under Sheriff Pat Garrett.



SHERIFF P. F. GARRETT, who killed "Billy the Kid."



McSween Store, Lincoln, New Mexico. Behind this store Sheriff William Brady was killed by "Billy the Kid" and his gang, April 1, 1878.

THE CITIZENS NATIONAL BANK OF ROSWELL, N.M.  
OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT

Roswell, New Mexico.  
March 5th, 1923.

Mr. W. A. Brinnistool  
1426 South Norton Ave.  
Los Angeles, Cal.

Dear Mr. Brinnistool:-  
I am in receipt of your favor of the 28th ult. and note that you say relative to a statement recently made by some person to the effect that "Billy the Kid" was killed in the spring of 1902. In reply I beg to state that whoever made such statement is entirely in error and is positively mistaken as to the time of that occurrence. Inasmuch as I was present and saw positively where I speak, I believe you will readily understand that I am absolutely correct in this matter.  
The "Kid" was killed on the night of the 14th of July, 1901, and the only accurate and true account of his death and the circumstances leading up to and surrounding it is that which I have here some three years ago.  
It seems too bad that people will continue to circulate erroneous and false stories about this occurrence and I suppose it is one of the things that will have to be endured.  
You are at liberty to use this letter in any way you may see fit or show it to any one who may be interested.  
With kind regards, I remain  
Yours very truly,  
John W. Poe



Lincoln County (N.M.) Court House where "Billy the Kid" killed his two guards and escaped.



# LOS ANGELES "CITY OF ANGELS"

BY P. L. BONEBRAKE

I WAS BORN IN EAST LOS ANGELES May 18, 1878. The population of the city at that time was 10,288 people. My mother passed away when I was an infant and my

Wild vaqueros heading into the Pueblo of Los Angeles. *Drawn by F. FIRFIRES*

grandparents came and took me back to Indiana where I stayed for two or three years. Later I went to Dallas, Texas, where my grandfather was engaged in the banking business. In 1886 I returned to California.

## I MEET GERONIMO

The trains in those days didn't have vestibules but had the old link and pin couplings with open platforms. Some place in New Mexico, I think at Lordsburg, our train took a siding in order to let the Eastbound Overland pass. On the track next to us stood a train of perhaps 10 cars—the old wooden passenger coaches. The windows and the glass on the doors in the platforms were nailed over with 2 x 4s as bars. On the platforms of each train armed soldiers were standing. The cars were full of Indians. We learned that Geronimo and his band were on that train en route to Florida. General Miles had induced Geronimo to surrender in Arizona. Geronimo and his band supposed they were to be taken back to the reservation, but when they reached the Southern Pacific Railroad, American soldiers swarmed out of every canyon and wash and at the same time this train came puffing up from the place where it had been hidden, and the troops proceeded to load the Indians on. They were then taken direct to Florida.

I suppose our trains were about 8 feet apart, and boy-like, I wanted to get an eyefull. These were the first Indians I had ever seen, and at that time and for some time previously, the papers had been full of the terrible atrocities committed by Geronimo during the summer. I don't mind telling you I was very much frightened indeed and yet at the same time very curious. They were the meanest looking people I had ever seen. The bucks had bandana handkerchiefs tied around their hair. Most of them wore shirts, some of them vests and all of them breech clouts. Their black glaring eyes, high cheek bones and big mouths were enough to frighten grown people let alone a kid. Some of the bucks could speak a little English. I think they must have learned it from Army mule skinner. I was not only greatly shocked because I had never heard such language before but I was greatly surprised at the intimate knowledge that they displayed of my ancestors. I cannot say for sure that I saw Geronimo, but I may have.

## "CITY OF ANGELS"

Our train pushed on West to Benson, Arizona, where it stopped. Near the station were 12 or 14 Apaches mounted on horses. These were supposed to be tame Indians. Boy-like, I was just as far out of the window as I could get to get a good look at them. As the train started to move away, I put my thumb to my nose and gave them the Bronx salute. One of them broke away from the rest and switched his pony with a quirk which I was certain weighed 971 pounds. He dashed up alongside the car and bashed me on the back of the neck with it. He damned near cut my head off. You may have seen a rabbit scuttle down a hole and thought it was plenty fast moving. You should have seen me get back into that car. The rest of the journey to Los Angeles I was too busy nursing a sore neck to pay much attention to the country.

## THE PRODIGAL RETURNS

When the train arrived, it pulled up at River Station. River Station was a small one-story brick building on a 50-foot lot and consisted of a small waiting room for the passengers, the station agent's office and a baggage room. It was situated just across San Fernando Road from the present Southern Pacific freight house. San Fernando Road was not paved and it had been raining for several days, with the result that it was a sea of sloppy mud.

My father met me with one of the old-fashioned hacks and we went up to the Baker block on North Main Street where he lived. This block was probably better known to you as the Good Will Block, and at that time belonged to Arcadia de Baker, who belonged to the famous Bandini family. Many of the old time families lived there, but these quarters were not known as apartments or flats, but as rooms. I cannot recall that anyone did any cooking there. We took our meals at the St. Elmo Hotel, then the finest hotel in the city. It was situated on North Main Street, almost directly opposite Commercial Street. The dining room was on the second floor and was splendidly furnished for those days. I recall the immense chandeliers with which it was lighted. They were perhaps six or eight feet tall, about six feet in diameter, and were ornamented with hundreds of glass pendants about the size of your finger that tinkled and scintillated in the light. Every chandelier had brackets for 6 or 8 kerosene lamps. Waiters were negro men. Waitresses were unknown. Indeed, women had not as yet made their appearance in the business world. The menu was very extensive and about half the entrees was some sort of game. Quail, duck, geese, snipe, venison, and occasionally bear meat were sold in the butcher shops.

In 1886 the population of the city was about 30,000 people. The retail business part of the city was practically all located between First Street and the Plaza on Main and Spring. The wholesale district was on Los Angeles Street from the Plaza to First. There may have been one or two wholesale houses between First and Second. The amount of business done in the retail section was entirely out of proportion to the population of the

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city, as all of the big ranches within 25 or 30 miles bought their merchandise here. The same thing applied to the wholesale business, for the wholesale houses supplied not only the merchants of Los Angeles but the merchants of all the outlying towns in Southern California and Arizona as well. This was due to the fact that Los Angeles wholesalers could get preferential rates on the railroad. In those days, railroads figured rates not from the standpoint of how much they could afford to handle freight for, but from the standpoint of how much the traffic could bear:—how much they could charge you without putting you completely out of business. As for instance: a wholesale house in Los Angeles could purchase a car of sugar in New Orleans, ship it to Los Angeles, haul it right through Tucson, Arizona, sell it to a merchant in Arizona, and ship it back to Tucson cheaper than the Arizona merchant could buy it in New Orleans and ship it to himself in Tucson.

There were but four banks in the city at that time. They were all within 200 feet of the corner of Commercial and Main. The Farmers and Merchants Bank occupied the stock room on the southeast corner of Main and Commercial. Mr. Hellman was president. About three doors farther west was situated the Los Angeles National Bank of which my father was the president. Two or three doors farther on was the First National Bank of which E. F. Smith was president, and the County Bank was diagonally across the street in the Temple Building.

There were a good many thousand Chinese in California at that time and their business firms were at San Francisco and Los Angeles. In addition to their personal business, they had a big trade in the Hongkong exchange buying and exporting to China Mexican dollars. The Mexican dollar contained much more silver than the American dollar and sold for 52 cents American. A good many thousands of dollars were purchased through the banks by the Chinese here and shipped home. The Chinese business was worth going after and each bank had a Chinese clerk to take care of it. I had never seen any Chinese before, and naturally was quite interested in them.

## INDIANS LEND COLOR

Another thing that interested me very much were the Indians from the Colorado River standing along the curbs. These Indians were mostly Mojaves, Yumas and Cocopahs. The latter were from the Mexican side of the line. Occasionally there would be a few Apaches. One of the conditions of the railway when they secured a right of way through the reservation was that they could ride free on the trains. However, the railroads would not let them ride inside the trains because they were all "lousy," so they rode the open platforms. But about a year after my arrival here some nasty minded white man invented vestibule platforms, and that fixed Mr. Indian's free rides.

They were more numerous in the spring of the year than at any other time. In the summer they searched for mocking bird nests in the river beds; the desert region around



**"CITY OF ANGELS"** town; the canyons and up into the Arroyo Seco. When they spotted a nest with young ones, they would watch it until just before they were ready to leave, then they would catch them, put them in small cages that they had woven out of willow and bring them into the city to sell. The price was \$1.00 a bird. Almost every female had from one to half a dozen. The ladies spent a great deal of time teaching them to whistle popular tunes. If you kept a young bird in the house where he could not hear the wild birds, he would soon learn to whistle tunes that you played on the piano or the violin. Strangely enough the song that they whistled best and learned the quickest was the one named the "Mocking Bird."

Speaking of Indians, how many of you know that the Piutes and even the Utes from Colorado used to raid ranches and mission horse yards? The last big raid staged in California, the Utes got off with 3500 head of horses, most of them gentle, broken saddle horses, and got clear back to Colorado with them. The price of a horse back there was a pound of powder or a quart of whiskey.

## **"THE CITY OF ANGELS"**

Los Angeles had her sporting district, and Alameda Street north for a couple of blocks was lined with cribs in which the girls sat and exposed their charms in a very general fashion. Down Alameda ran the Southern Pacific Railroad, and it was down through the crib district that Eastern tourists got their first view of the city. For an hour before the big overland trains reached Los Angeles, the passengers would begin pestering the train crew to be sure to tell them when they reached that part of the city. The street had become so notorious that people began to complain. A city election was coming up and a group of politicians, seeing the opportunity, built their platform on the closing of Alameda Street. They made good their promise and closed it and moved them all down on Commercial Street from Main Street east, two or three blocks below Alameda. Commercial Street at that time was a street of cheap rooming houses, sort of two-bit flop houses as far down as Alameda. From there on the houses consisted more or less of 4 to 8 rooms and maybe 10, and probably rented from \$5 or \$6 a month. Sometime after the women were installed down there, it was discovered that the aforesaid politicians, among whom were several holding important offices in the City Government, had gone down, leased up these cheap rooming houses in these blocks on long-term leases and rented them out to the girls at \$18.00 a week per room. Indeed, it was discovered that the Chairman of the Police Commission owned the three largest parlor houses in the city—one of them the notorious Golden Lion house, so named because it had two life-sized lions of granite on each side of the steps.

At about this time there was a small newspaper published in the city called the *Porcupine*, owned and edited by an English remittance man whose name I have forgotten. He forced every sporting house and every saloon in the city to carry big ads in each issue

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of the paper. Quarter page ads might read as follows: "Madame Lorraine begs to announce the arrival of Fifi and Jean from Paris. Boys, come down and meet these charming girls. New orchestra with all the latest songs and dances and the finest wines and liquors served." If they didn't take an ad they might find a paragraph like this: "Who were the six well-known men about town lined up at the specialist's office last week? It was hinted that they spent a hilarious night at Madame Lorraine's house about ten days ago."

Exposition Park in Los Angeles was formerly the County fair grounds and was called Agricultural Park. Each year in the autumn a race meet was held lasting ten days or so. It was quite a society event in which not only the good people of Los Angeles participated, but also the sporting element. For two or three weeks before the opening day the madames of all the sporting houses in the city engaged the public hacks for the entire meet. Each day in the afternoon they would drive out to the track, taking with them all the girls in their houses. They would all be dressed up in their very best mutton sleeves, long black gloves and great picture hats with two or three long ostrich plumes in them. They would get out early and proceed to line up inside the track on either side of the judges' stand and facing the grandstand, so that they were just across the track from the society people in their boxes.

The girls kept the negro waiters on a high trot bringing them drinks. They did quite a good deal of betting. The old dowagers in their boxes across the track would pretend to be greatly shocked, but behind their fans were exchanging remarks about like this: "You see that good looking blond over there—the one with the white ostrich plumes? That's Judge So and So's girl friend. You see that other one—that brunette with the black hair and black eyes? She's the one they call the Spanish Beauty and she's the girl friend of such and such a merchant."

After the races were over, these old gals would hurry down to the double gates which permitted the hacks to come out from the inside track and there, under pretense of waiting until they had passed by so that they could get to their own carriages, they got a closeup of the girls.

A good many of the girls would be pretty oiled up by this time and occasionally would kid the old girls a little, very much to their consternation. They were quite likely to call out to some man they knew in the crowd: "Where have you been keeping yourself, Billy? I haven't seen you in a coon's age." Or perhaps say, "Hello, Jack. Will you be down Saturday night as usual?"

The hacks, together with many of the other vehicles belonging to the other spectators drove down to Jefferson Street. The conservative element turned off at Hoover Street, Grand Avenue, or Main Street. Figueroa from Jefferson Street to Washington Street, was, during the race meet, left to the ladies of the night. As soon as the carriages reached Figueroa, they turned all to and broke into a run—not a trot, mind you, or just a gallop, but a sure-enough run, with the drivers raising their whips on the horses every jump, and

**"CITY OF ANGELS"** the girls standing up in the box of the hacks whooping and yelling, calling each other names and making bets on which team would beat. In addition to their rigs, there would probably be as many as fifty buggies and carts filled with young men of the town racing right along with them, everybody whooping and yelling at the top of their voices and me on my saddle horse right in the big middle of it.

They were not allowed to race after reaching First and Figueroa. Mounted cops were there to stop them.

It was a wonderful event in the lives of these girls and it was certainly their day to shine; nor were they slow to take advantage of it. The sporting world was a recognized institution in Los Angeles at that time and at one period in the city's history, completely dominated the town's politics. Indeed the man who dominated the Council and was a member of that body for a number of years was known as the "King of the Macs."

## **SOMETHING FOR NOTHING**

Most of the houses around Los Angeles were roofed with asphaltum, which came from the La Brea pits from which the skeletons of so many prehistoric animals have been taken. The old Spaniard who originally owned the old La Brea ranch inserted a provision in the deed when he sold it to the effect that any citizen of Los Angeles or San Pedro should always have the right to take asphalt free from these pits to repair his roof or his boat. This right still exists. Therefore, any time you Los Angeles people have a leak in the roof, don't go hire a high priced roofer, just get a tomato can and go out to the pits in your car, get some asphaltum, and patch it up yourself.

## **LOS ANGELES' FIRST BLACKOUT**

Along in the nineties, Figueroa Street from Jefferson Street to Washington was used as a race track by citizens interested in trotting horses. It got to be quite a fad, for a great many of the prominent professional and business men of the town. Many of them sent east and brought race horses from the tracks out there. They did their own driving in a little rubber-tired road wagon and indulged in a good deal of heavy betting. One year they had a free-for-all in which anybody could enter a horse. The purse for which they were to trot amounted to several thousand dollars. Out near Agricultural Park, which is now Exposition Park was a colored horse shoer called Uncle Jim. Uncle Jim had an old gray mare in his back yard which he bred to a well-known trotting stallion and got a gray colt. He broke the colt and started working him, and it looked like he had quite a horse. When the gentlemen came to check on the entries they found one by James Todd, (I believe that was his name) of a gray gelding. Nobody knew who James Todd was, and there was considerable curiosity among these gentlemen drivers as to who he and his

## LOS ANGELES

horse might be. On the day of the big race, half the town was out there, and low and behold, James Todd turned out to be Nigger Jim. As they had accepted his money and allowed the horse to enter, nothing could be done. Uncle Jim was the butt of a lot of joking and teasing; but, like Bre'er Rabbit, he "didn't say nothin'." When the race came off, his little gray horse was so far ahead that the bankers and the judges and the doctors never knew which way he went. I think it was this race that caused so many of those old timers to lose interest in trotting horses, for it wasn't long after that that they quit racing.



Drawn by F. FIRFIRE

A successful peacemaker of the old west coast.

### A LETTER WE ENJOYED

April 2, 1947

Mr. Robert J. Woods  
320 South Manhattan Place  
Los Angeles 8, California

Dear Mr. Woods:

Your letter of March 28th was received and I want to thank you for sending the 35 copies of your bi-monthly *Brand Book*. These were distributed to our members at our meeting last Thursday night. Our people were certainly delighted with them and we want to congratulate you on the fine job you have done.

We talked about the members of our group becoming corresponding members to your Posse. It was also suggested that perhaps it might be a fine policy to set up an exchange system whereby all chapters exchange *Brand Books*, furnishing enough for each of the Possemen, at a nominal fee of \$1 each. We have done this with the Chicago chapter and it has worked out very well. This is merely a suggestion but I think it would induce a greater number of memberships. Let me know what you think of the idea. We will also discuss it further with our group.

An announcement will appear shortly on our 1946 annual *Brand Book* of which you will receive a copy, and we will see that two copies of the book are reserved for you. I am wondering if it would be possible to get a list of your Possemen inasmuch as we would like to send them announcements on this annual book.

Sincerely yours,  
Signed VIRGIL V. PETERSON  
Acting Registrar of Marks and Brands

RAMON F. ADAMS (Dallas, Texas)—a corresponding member, is one of Western America's foremost authors—Cowboy Lingo, Western Words and Phrases and Chuckwagon Tales are scholarly books. Anything pertaining to the old-time range lingo and the cow-camp cook deeply interests him.

GORDON A. BOELTER (Los Angeles)—Manager of the Goodyear Synthetic Rubber Plant in Torrance. His hobbies are the raising of Begonias, Fuschias, Cacti. He has a keen interest in the West that his forebears pioneered, from Nebraska to California.

R. A. "BILLY" DODSON (Glendale)—Doesn't claim any credit for having been born on a Texas cattle ranch, but does admit being somewhat responsible for having spent the major portion of his life, both living and bedding down, in the wide open spaces and is interested in bringing old time westerners together.

EARLE R. FORREST (Washington, Pa.)—is a new corresponding member, was born in 1883 in Pennsylvania. He went west in 1902—punched cows on the CO Bar outfit in Arizona—served with the Forest Service in Deer Lodge Forest in Montana. He is an eminent historian, though a newspaper man by profession. His latest book is *Lone War Trail of Apache Kid*, published in March 1947.

MERRELL KITCHEN (Los Angeles)—was raised in North Dakota at Sentinel Butte. Took a vagabond journey around the world in 1928-29, going third class—served a hitch in the navy during the last war. Interested in the old west, overland trails, old forts, western outlaws, scouts, trappers and ranching days. Collects books dealing with the west.

FRANK A. SCHILLING (Los Angeles)—Particular hobbies are color photography of early Spanish missions; historic spots and overland trails; national parks and monuments; wildflowers and nature in general. Interest is western history; early Spanish-American history; ethno-botany; archeology and ethnology; and natural history; also journals of early pioneers and settlers.

We regret not having available at press time brief biographical notes of other new members, resident and near-resident, which will be published in the next issue of the *BRAND BOOK*.

### DOWN THE BOOK TRAIL

(Continued from page two)

books on western towns. While Tascosa was perhaps typical of western ranching towns, it had more than its share of colorful episodes. It is well written and is readable enough to achieve a popular success. The book will be of value to sociologists as well as historians and of interest to all who find fascination in America's "Ghost Towns." This story of old Tascosa you will remember is by John L. McCarty and comes from the University of Oklahoma Press.



As I sit on my ass, on the ass of my ass,  
a paradox I find.  
Two-thirds of my ass is in front of me  
and the whole of my ass is behind.

—Clarence Ellsworth.