

The True History of Billy the Kid

Harold T. Bolieu



This is a work of fiction. Similarities to real people, places, or events are entirely coincidental.

THE TRUE HISTORY OF BILLY THE KID

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**Bk. 1. A New History and
First Story, The Land Grab**

This story by Harold T. Bolieu, is taken from notes that had been taken from actual question and answer sessions from 1909 thru 1947 with Mr. William Henry Roberts himself, who only wanted his life story to be set straight. They were saved by Harold's grandfather Lewis Bolieu and grandmother Susan Bolieu, and his great-aunt Lilly and great-uncle Jim Emsley in hopes of one day being published.

Chapter 1

“We were supposed to meet a rancher by the name of Brazil, who had written me a letter saying that although he personally had not seen Billy the Kid at Fort Sumner, he had information from others that Billy the Kid and a couple of his gang members had, off and on, been hanging around Fort Sumner. I had brought only two deputy’s with me, believing if it turned out they were not enough, I could depend on help from Mr. Brazil if needs be. We had arrived and were waiting at the dry creek bed to meet Mr. Brazil at or about 2pm, on July 13th, 1881. But afraid of being spotted out in the open by someone coming to or going from Fort Sumner, we moved our camp two miles north of that area. Upon arriving, we made our camp and settled in for the night.

“A little after daybreak on the 14th, we, once again, moved our camp a little further back in the hills to a spot where we could make a fire and not have to worry about someone coming on us suddenly. We came to a high place with a few large boulders around the top. I told my deputy’s this would make a good place to watch the area around us with the set of field glasses I had brought.

“Instead of waiting idly by all day, it occurred to me that Mr. Poe was not known by anyone here about or in the whole state for that matter, so there was little risk of him being in any danger by scouting around Fort Sumner and maybe even going over to Sunnyside, just seven miles away. A little after daylight on the 14th, we moved our camp a little further back in the hills to a spot where we could make a fire and not have to worry about being seen. We came to a high place which also had large boulders around the top. I told my deputy’s this would make a good place to watch the area around us for Billy the Kid or any of his cohorts who may be in this part of New Mexico.

“I had full confidence in Mr. Poe for I believed he would use the utmost judgment and discretion while on his mission. We agreed to meet up again after dark at a place known in Spanish as “La Punta de la Gloriette”, located four miles north of Fort Sumner. After Mr. Poe had gone, Mr. McKinney and I headed toward the Pecos Valley and made our camp under the shade of a large group of pine trees and spent the remainder of the day.

“As darkness engrossed us and having our horses already saddled, we started slowly to make our way to where we were to meet Mr. Poe. We figured to circle Fort Sumner, keeping out and away from the lamps light shining from the windows to our left as we moved. Arriving at La Punta de la Gloriette, as the almost full moon rose above the trees to the east, we made a small fire to make coffee and Mr. Poe told of his day, which we found to be uneventful. There was no indication from anyone in or around Fort Sumner of Billy the Kid or any of his gang being there for a while.

“As we approached Fort Sumner, we came upon a one-man camp; and, as it turned out and to our surprise, the man was an old friend of Mr. Poe’s. We were invited for coffee and accepted to kill an hour or so. Being so close to our objective, we unsaddled, and ground staked our horses and placed a feedbag on each of them. After we had visited with Mr. Jacobs, we thought it safe to cut through an orchard between his camp and Fort Sumner, thereby using the trees as cover but, as we cautiously picked our way along, about halfway through the orchard we heard someone speaking Spanish at a distance, but were too far to distinguish the words. The only thing we could tell was that there were two people besides us in the orchard.

“After almost thirty minutes the man rose up in full view but the only thing we could tell for sure was he wore a wide brimmed field workers hat. This man walked to the fence, jumped it then headed in the direction of Pete Maxwell’s house. I believed the man to be Billy the Kid by the way he walked.

“We again started our trek through the orchard and upon arriving at Mr. Maxwell’s house, I instructed Mr. McKinney and Mr. Poe to spread apart and keep watch while I questioned Mr. Maxwell. Mr. Poe stationed himself on the porch about thirty feet to the left of the door to Mr. Maxwell’s bedroom, while Mr. McKinney moved into the shadows of the wooden backyard fence and squatted near the gate. By this time, it was midnight or a little past and Mr. Maxwell was in bed. I moved near the head of his bed and woke him gently.

“We learned later, while this was going on in Mr. Maxwell’s bedroom, a short distance north of us, Billy the Kid had entered the house of his longtime friends Saval and Celsa Gutierrez, declaring, ‘I’m so hungry I could eat might near anything’, as he took off his boots and shirt. To which Celsa told him all she had was refried beans and tortillas from supper but there was a hind quarter of beef hanging on Mr. Maxwell’s back porch if he

wanted to go cut a couple of steaks. Slipping his shirt back on, he took the butcher knife Celsa handed him. Then sliding his gun into his waistband, he left the house in his sock feet.”

Meanwhile back at the Maxwell’s house, Pat Garrett was speaking. “As Mr. Maxwell sat up, I sat down beside him on the bed and asked him if he had seen Billy the Kid hanging around Fort Sumner the last couple of days?”

“Well yes. In fact, he has been in town a couple of times the last three, maybe four days,” he answered, then added, “But I’m not sure if he’s in town now or not.”

“Just after Pete answered my question, someone stepped quickly into the room. From his silhouette, I could tell the stranger held a gun in his right hand and what looked like a butcher knife in his left hand. He also had no hat or shoes. Glancing back out the door, he asked twice in Spanish, ‘*Quien es? Quien es?*’ Which is to ask in English, ‘Who is that? Or, who is there?’ With no reply, he came closer to the bed and bent forward putting both hands on the mattress. His right hand almost touched my knee. Then asked, ‘Who are they, Pete?’” Leaning forward himself, Pete whispered in my ear, “That is him! That is Billy the Kid.”

To which Billy moved back across the room and brought up his gun and asked again, “*Quien es? Quien es?*”

“Everything happened so fast after that. In a way it all seems to kind of run together. I drew my pistol, fired, and Billy fell to the floor. I quickly jumped to the left as I fired a second time thinking I may have only wounded him. We found later that the second shot went into the wall. Billy never spoke after that and didn’t try to get up. He made a strangling, gurgling kind of sound. With the light from an almost full moon shining through the window, I saw his left foot jerk and the fingers on his right hand moved slightly as if it were trying to take hold of the gun once more; but no, his fingers just could not make the connection. His lifeless body lay motionless. Mr. Maxwell jumped from the bed and ran out onto the porch. Deputy’s McKinney and Poe brought their guns up to the ready, just in case.”

“Don’t shoot, don’t shoot,” cried Mr. Maxwell.

“It’s OK boys. I have killed Billy the kid,” I informed deputies McKinney and Poe.

“Pat, are you sure that was Billy the kid? Knowing we were looking for him, why would he come here?” inquired Deputy Poe.

“Could it be that you may have killed the wrong man?” questioned Deputy McKinney.

“I have made no mistake. I know the Kid’s voice too well to be mistaken,” I answered, so they would know I was certain of my actions.”

“Well damn, Pat, you just killed Billy the Kid,” spouted Deputy McKinney.

“Yes. Well, I guess we had better examine the body,” I said.

“As we began examining the body, I picked up the pistol he was carrying, a 41 caliber self-cocker. We found the first of my bullets had struck him just off center to the left, just above the heart.”

“How many shots did you fire, Pat?” asked Deputy Poe.

“Two. I fired two shots. You can see where my first shot hit. As for the second, it went into the wall behind him.”

“Out on the porch, we heard three shots,” said Deputy Poe. “Did he fire a shot?” asked Deputy McKinney indicating Billy the Kid.

“No. He did not fire. See,” answered Deputy Poe, as he opened the breech to show an old empty cartridge in the chamber under the hammer.

“That third shot you think you heard was probably my second round hitting the wall,” stated Pat.

“Hearing the commotion, the residents of Fort Sumner began to gather in and around Mr. Maxwell’s backyard. It was not long before the whole community heard Billy the Kid was dead. Fearing revenge, I instructed my two deputies to move back inside Pete’s bedroom where it would be safer and not offer anyone a free shot at either of us.”

“Deluvina, the Maxwell’s family servant, took Billy’s death the hardest. But then, she considered herself the Kid’s adopted mother. As she came into the room and seeing Billy’s body lying in the middle of the floor, she cried out, ‘Oh, my little boy is dead. You have killed my baby.’ Between heavy sobs and curses, she asked if she could get a couple of the men to carry her *Billito*’s body over to the carpenter shop, which they did after I gave permission.”

“Paulita Maxwell [believed by many to have been Billy’s girlfriend], and a couple of the ladies helped Deluvina clean and dress Billy’s body, preparing it for the grave. Being their custom of holding a wake, some even placed candles around his body that lay on a workbench in the shop. Chairs

were placed around the shop to allow people, who planned to stay the night, a place to sit and rest.

“Around 2:30 am, I called on Jesús Silver and Vicente Otero to build a coffin and dig a grave for Billy, which I paid them out of my pocket, figuring that as soon as the coroner’s inquest was completed, the body could be buried, and my two deputy’s and I could be on our way back home. As the early morning sun peaked over the hills to the east, I gathered six men who lived in and around Fort Sumner and put Alejandro Seguro in charge of the inquest that was held.

“The verdict given read as follows, ‘We of the jury unanimously find that William H. Bonney, known by many as either Billy the Kid, Billy Bonney or the Kid, came to his death from a bullet wound in the left breast near the region of the heart, fired from a pistol in the hand of Patrick Floyd Garrett, the duly elected Sheriff of Lincoln County, New Mexico, and our judgment is that the action of said Sheriff Pat F. Garrett was found to be Justifiable homicide, and we are united in our opinion that the gratitude of all the community is due to the said Sheriff, for his action and is worthy of being compensated.’”

That, my friends, ends, at least as far as the rest of the world was concerned, the matter of the death of Billy the Kid.

For almost a whole year, anything and everything pertaining to Billy the Kid, was quiet. I say this because until Mr. Ash Upton and Sheriff Pat F. Garret collaborated and wrote the *“Authentic Life Of Billy the Kid,”* there wasn’t hardly anyone outside Fort Sumner who knew what had really happened.”

“Oh, I’m not saying there wasn’t stories passed from one campfire to another, or from one traveler to another as they passed the time along their trips by stage. We do, however, know there were a few unscrupulous people who claimed to have either dug up or hired someone to dig up the body of Billy the Kid and cut off a finger, toe or ear.

There was one man who claimed to have Billy the Kid’s body dug up and boiled until all the meat was off the bones, then the bones were wired back together. They hung from a rack of sorts but we are assured on pages 134 and 135 of *Authentic Life*, that none of these things were done. Sheriff Garrett had the body dug up himself to prove none of these things were true.

Now, as I've said, for the past 132 years, this has been known as the complete and true story of what had really happened that hot July night in Fort Sumner, New Mexico, and many people involved with this event, who have stuck together, saying this is the truth.

I must say there are quite a few others who claim the above story is malarkey, my grandfather being one of them. My great uncle Jim and my great aunt Lilly being two more. Then, of course, there are the almost two hundred people from around New Mexico during the late 1800s, who have sworn under oath the above story is far from the truth. Their story follows.

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