

[Child Friend of Billy the Kid]

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[Redfield Georgia ?.]

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Pioneer Story

Child Friend of Billy The Kid

Little Berta Ballard

(Given by Berta Ballard Manning)

"I was a child, age ten years, when we came from [?] Griffin Texas in 1879 with our parents, A.J. Ballard and Katherine Redding Ballard and settled in Fort Sumner New Mexico.

"The homes of all the families at the fort were built around the patio, and there was a store where liquor was sold, which contained kegs of gun-powder. One day there was a set of drunken man who proceeded to shoot up the place, because the proprietor of the store refused to sell them more whiskey. A keg of powder was lit by a shot, exploded and the store and our home were demolished.

"We then moved to Lincoln and were living there when "Billy the Kid" killed Ollinger and Bell and made his escape. However I did not see the shooting. I don't see how my mother ever stood the excitement and anxiety of tho'se wild lawless days. Of course we children

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didn't realize the danger of the outlaws shootings and escapades, that kept the old town of Lincoln in a constant turmoil. [C18 - 6/5/41 - N. Mex.?)

“Yes I remember Billy the Kid real well, He was not rough looking and was very quiet [unassuming?] and friendly.

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I never saw anything ugly about him or in his manners. I was a [‘?] special child friend [of?] Billies”, He took [me?] on his lap and petted me when he came frequently to our home.

“He was kind and could be a good friend, but I am sure we should not make a hero of Billy, for after all he was a bandit and a killer.

“Billy was killed July 14-1881 at Fort Sumner by Pat Garret- in execution of his duty as sheriff-the following year after we moved to lincoln. We had moved to [Roswell?] when Billie was killed.

“Pat Garret was a brave man, he knew it was Billies life or his, for the boy would [a] never have been taken alive. So to Pat Garrett we owe the accomplishment of freeing New Mexico of a dangerous out-law and killer.”