

[Charles L. Ballard]

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Redfield, Georgia B.

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CHARLES L. BALLARD

Pioneer Roswell Cowboy, 1880.

Stock and Ranch Owner 1890.

Used Eight Yoke of Oxen to Plow on

Work of Pioneer Irrigation Ditch.

Veteran of Spanish American War 1898.

Charles L. Ballard, born in Texas in 1867, came to New Mexico with his father J. L. Ballard and settled at Fort Sumner in 1878.

He was eleven years old at the time of his interesting journey across the plains in a covered wagon. He and the other older ones of his six brothers and sisters were excited over the anticipation of seeing thousands of buffalo that had roamed the plains east of the Pecos River during the years 1875-1876 when his father had been a buffalo hunter on the Llano Estacado (Staked Plains) near Roswell.

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While they did not see as large bunches as they expected, for the buffalo were fast being exterminated, they were thrilled over the sight of herds in which there were several hundreds.

The travelers suffered for lack of water during the last days of their journey across hot, sun baked, treeless plains. [???

While traveling in those days was hazardous because of hostile Indians, and many lost their teams and stock, the Ballard family was not molested. On the last night of their journey, on seeing smoke and dim forms, they thought might be Indians, around a camp fire, they were filled with dread and were afraid to stop to make camp, until Charlie Ballard and his father walking quietly 2 ahead of the wagons were delighted to find friendly Mexican people who shared their camp at what is Portales Spring, which furnished fine cold water for the teams and all the travel worn campers.

The next day, on arriving at Fort Sumner Mr. A. J. Ballard, the father , decided to establish a home at that place for his family. Here they remained a few months, until their home was demolished by an explosion caused by “a drunk” shooting into a keg of gunpowder, kept in a store, on the plaza around which the houses were built. After the loss of their home Mr. Ballard moved his family to the town of Lincoln where there was a school for his children to attend. During their residence at Fort Sumner Charlie Ballard had boarded at Anton Chico in order to attend the only school in that part of the country.

At Lincoln Charlie Ballard knew William Bonny Bonney , known as Billy the Kid, who was making history as both an admired and feared-out-law leader of the feudal battles of what was called the Lincoln county War.

Mr. Ballard remembers “The Kid” as not being an outlaw in manners. He speaks of the youthful desperado, as being “quiet, but always active and doing something interesting. He was a leader in sports and games. That is the reason for his having had more friends than

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enemies in those turbulent days.” This was the secret of the popularity of the outlaw, who was loved as well as feared, by many.

“He was small for a youth of his age, ” said Mr. Ballard, ” about nineteen he was the then . , He he weighed only about a hundred and twenty-five or thirty pounds, and was quick and active as a cat. He was a very fine rider. We often rode and raced our ponies together. He was credited with more killings than he ever 3 did. However there are plenty that could be justly counted against him. I am one of the many who appreciated his good qualities in spite of his career as a two-gunman and killer.” This is Chalie Charlie Ballard's only criticism of the once notorious outlaw he was not ashamed to call, “my friend”.

In 1880 Mr. Ballard moved to Boswell where he worked as a cowboy for Captain Joseph C. Lea. Later he launched into stock raising for himself, continuing in ranching and the cattle business for twenty years or more.

In 1881 his father moved the rest of the family from Lincoln to Boswell and Charlie Ballard assisted them in opening up a farm home, three miles out east, on East Second Street. While attending the first school, in or near Boswell, taught by Asbury C. Rogers, Charlie Ballard drove eight head of oxen to a plow, or scraper, on work of the pioneer irrigation ditch, known to the early settlers as the “Ballard Cunningham Ditch”.

In 1893, while serving as sheriff, he made a record for himself for bravery by capturing the Cook brothers who were members of the Dalton gang of murderers and desperadoes operating in the Pecos Valley.

In 1898, Governor Otero, Territorial Governor of New Mexico wired Charlie Ballard asking if he would accept a commission in the regiment to be mobilized at San Antonio, Texas to serve in the Spanish American War. On accepting Mr. Ballard was made Second Lieutenant of the Second Squadron of the famous Rough Riders with Lieutenant Colonel Theodore Roosevelt in command, under Colonel Leonard Wood, commander.

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Mr. Ballard, after hostilities were suspended, was invited with four of his military companions to visit the Roosevelt family at Oyster Bay, where they were entertained at dances, fishing parties, and dinners given in their honor. The five entertained by "Teddy" Roosevelt were John C. Greenway - whose wife, Isabelle Greenway, served as Congresswoman of Arizona two terms - David Goodrich, chairman of the board of the Goodrich Rubber Company, Hal Sayre, Robert Ferguson and Charles L. Ballard.

Mr. Ballard was one of the forty of the Rough Riders who formed the Guard of Honor at the Presidential Inauguration of Theodore Roosevelt.

Charles Ballard has been twice married and bereaved by death of both wives. Three girls and three boys, Syble, Mable, Willie, (deceased) Theodore, Jack, and Katherine are the children born to Mr. Ballard and the wife of his first marriage, to Minty (Corn) Ballard, daughter of Martin V. Corn who, with his family lived as neighbors and friend of the Ballard family during the early days of settlement of the farming section of the country near Roswell.

Mr. Ballard is the only one of the Rough Riders of the Spanish American War from around Boswell, who is known to be living at the present time.

He has many friends in Artesia where he now lives, and at Roswell his former home, who appreciate his friendship, and his important contributions to the upbuilding, progress and improvement of Boswell, and his efforts in maintaining law and order during the early days of settlement of the Pecos Valley, in New Mexico.

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Sources of Information

Charles Ballard, in personal interview, address - Artesia, N. M.

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Personal knowledge of biographer, Georgia B. Redfield, Roswell, N. M.