

[Billy the Kid]

Interview

Edith Crawford 2nd

May 10, 1937

BILLY THE KID

(As Told by Francisco Trujillo, (Translation by A.L. White) 85 years old, of San Patricio, Lincoln County, New Mexico.)

I arrived at San Patricio in the year 1877. During the first days of October sheriff Brady appointed a committee to pursue some bandits whom we found at Harry Baker's ranch at Siete Rios. There we arrested them and brought them to the jail at Lincoln.

In November the people of [Ponasco?] went to take the bandits out from jail. Among the people coming from [Ponasco?], was Billy the Kid.

At about the same time Francisco Trujillo, my brother, Juan Trujillo and I went to Pajarito to hunt deer. We were at the mouth of the Pajarito Canyon skinning a deer, when we saw two persons passing. One was Frank Baker, the other was Billy Mote. One was a bandit and the other a body guard whom Marfe kept at the ranch. The last one was a thief also. When they passed my brother said "Let us get away quickly, these are bad people." So, we got our horses, saddled them and left in the direction of San Patricio. On the way we met the bandits and the people who were coming from the jail at Lincoln.

The bandits surrounded Juan, my brother. I started to get away but Billy the Kid followed me telling me to stop. I then turned around and saw that he was pointing a rifle at me so I jumped from my horse and aimed my gun at him. He then went back to where the

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people were and aimed his gun at Juan saying "If Francisco does not surrender I am going to kill you." Lucas Gallegos then shouted "Surrender, friend, otherwise they will kill my COMPADRE Juan." Billy then took my gun from where I had laid it and we returned to the place where the people were. [???

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Billy then said to me "We have exchanged guns now let us exchange saddles." I said that suited me picking up the gun when another Texan said "Hand it over you don't need it." At this point Lucas Gallegos interposed saying to my brother "Let me have the pistol, COMPADRE." Then my brother gave Lucas the pistol in its holster. Then and there we parted and left for San Patricio to recount our experiences.

In December Macky Swin and Marfe went to court about a guardianship and a decision was rendered in favor of Macky Swin. When Marfe saw that he had lost out he ordered his men to kill Macky Swin or some of his companions. Macky Swin hearing of the order that Marfe had given gathered his people in order to protect himself. Among tho'se he rounded up was Billy the Kid, Charley Barber and Macky Nane. In addition to these three men, six more got together and Macky Swin made them the same promise, to the effect that a prize of \$500 was to be awarded to each person who killed one of the Marfes. It was then and there that Billy the Kid organized his people and went out in search of Frank Baker and Billy Mote whom he apprehended on the other side of the Pecos river and brought to Lincoln where it was planned to execute them. Later when they talked it over further with the rest, it was again decided to kill them but not to bring them to Lincoln. One of the gang named McLoska said that he preferred to be shot himself rather than to have one of tho'se men killed. No sooner had he said this, when he found himself shot behind the ear. After they killed McLoska, Frank Baker and Billy Mote were promptly executed. From there Billy's gang left for San Patricio where Billy asked for Francisco Trujillo in order to deliver back to him, his gun. It was here that they hired a Mexican boy to go to Lincoln for

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provisions and to collect the reward that Macky Swin had promised for the Marfes whom they had just killed.

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A few days later Macky Nane, Frank Coe and Alex Coe were on their way to Picacho from Lincoln. When they reached the Ojo ranch they were confronted by the Marfes. They made Frank Coe prisoner and shot Alex Coe on the leg, while the Indian, Juan Armijo, ran after Macky Nane and killed him. By order of Robert Baker, Macky Nane had been the leader whom Macky Swim had had for a guard. Within a few days a complaint was sworn against the Indian, Juan Armijo, and sheriff Brady deputized Jose Chaves to arrest him. Chaves then named seven men, beside himself in order that they should go with him to look for Armijo and he in turn deputized eight Americans and eight Mexicans and altogether they left for Siete Rios where they found Juan across the Pecos river, as well as two other Texans. When Atanasio Martinez, John Scroggin, Billy the Kid and I arrived at the door of the hut, Juan Armijo spoke up and said "How are you Kiko?" "Come on out" I said to Juan. "You have killed Macky Nane"

to which he nodded in assent but adding that it was by order of Robert Baker under threat of being prosecuted himself, should he fail to carry out instructions. I then made my way to Macky Nane who had been hiding behind some tree trunks in an effort to defend himself against those who were shooting at the house, and killed him.

When we left the hut, accompanied by Juan, he said to me "Don't let them kill me Kiko!" Seeing a string of people coming from Siete Rios we ran to nearby hill and from there towards the plains and then headed for Roswell, on the other side of the Pecos river, and came out two miles below at Gurban. It was here that Billy the Kid, Jose [Chaves y?] Chaves and Stock proposed to kill the Indian, Armijo. I said to Chaves "Is it not better to take him in and let the law have its course?" Charley Bargar then came up to me and said "Come on Francisco, let us be running along."

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As I came up to Charley, I turned and saw the Indian Armijo riding 4 between them very slowly. When Charley and I had gone about fifty yards we noticed that the Indian had gotten away from his captors and was riding away as fast as he could. Billy the Kid and Jose Chaves took out after him and began to shoot at him until they got him. Several of us congregated at the place where he fell. Billy the Kid then said to me "Francisco, here are the saddle and trappings that I owe you." I then commanded [?] [Banche?] to do me the favor of bringing me the horse the Indian Armijo had been riding, in order that I might remove the saddle which was covered with blood. Noting my disgust Doke said that he would take it and clean it and let me have his in the meantime. And so, we exchanged. Our business finished we turned homeward and crossed the river at a point called "Vado de los Indios". At [?] [?], this side of the Pecos river, we slept. In the morning we arose and went to [?] to have breakfast. There we found Macky Swin at John Chisum's ranch. Breakfast being over Macky Swin told us to go into the store and take anything that we wished.

At this point it was decided to leave Captian Stock to guard over Macky Swin. Of the original eight Mexicans in the party, four were left to join the Americans, not having admitted the other four to do so. Macky Swin then asked us to meet him the following Monday at Lincoln because said he "As soon as I arrive, Brady is going to try and arrest me and you should not let him get away with it. If I am arrested I shall surely be hung and I don't want to die, while if you kill Brady you shall earn a reward."

From [?] we left for [Berendo?] where found a [FANDAWOO?] in progress. We were enjoying ourselves very tho'roughly when don Miguel came up to us and said "Better be on your way boys because presently there will arrive about fifty Marfes who are probably coming here to get you."

Esteco, our leader, agreeing with don Miguel, commanded us to saddle our horses. We 5 had not been gone half a mile when we heard shouts and gun-shots so we decided to wait for the [gant?] and have it out. Our efforts were of no avail, however, as the gang

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failed to show up. We then pursued our course toward the Captian mountains and arrived at Agua Negra at day break and there we had our lunch. At this point the party broke up, the Anglos going to Lincoln, the Mexicans to San Patricio whence they arrived on Sunday afternoon. Billy the Kid then said to Jose Chaves, "Let us draw to see who has to wait for Macky Swin tomorrow at Lincoln. The lots fell to Charley Barber, John Milton and Jim French White, whereupon the leader decided that all nine Anglos should go. Bill tho'ught that it was best for none of the Mexican boys to go and when Chaves protested saying that the Anglos were no braver than he, Bill explained that Brady was married to a Mexican and that it was a matter of policy, all Mexicans being sentimental about their own. Chaves being appeased urged the rest to go on promising to render assistance should a call come for help. A Texan name Doke said that since his family was Mexican too, he would remain with the others. Stock then gave orders to proceed. The horses were saddled and they left for Lincoln. Doke, Fernando Herrera, Jesus Sais and [Candelario?] Hidalgo left for Buidoso. The next morning dom Pancho Sanches left for Lincoln to make some purchases at the store.

Being in the store about eleven, the mail arrived and with it Macky Swin. There also arrived Brady and a Texan name George Hamilton. At this juncture Brady also arrived where he found Billy the Kid, Jim French Charley Barber and John Melton. They were in the corral from whence two of the gang shot at one, and two others at the other, where they fell.

Billy the Kid then jumped to snatch Brady's rifle and as he was leaning over someone shot at him from a house they used to call "El Chorro."

Macky Swin then reached the house where the nine Macky Swins were congregated - the 6 four who were in the corral and five who had been at the river. There they remained all day until nightfall and then proceeded to San Patricio.

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The next morning they proposed going to the hills should there be a war and so that it could be waged at the edge of town in order not to endanger the lives of the families living there. The same day, toward evening, six Mexicans came to arrest Macky Swin. They did not arrive at the Plaza but camped a little further down between the acequia and the river at a place where there were thick brambles. Shortly after the Mexicans arrived Macky Swin came with his people to eat supper at the house of Juan Trujillo - that being their headquarters, that also being their mess hall, having hired a negro to prepare the meals. After supper they scattered among the different houses, two or three in each house.

In one of these at the edge of town Macky Swin and an American boy whose name was Tome locked themselves in. Next day early in the morning the six Mexicans who had been looking for Macky Swin showed up. When they arrived at the house where Macky Swin was Tome came out and shot at the bunch of Mexicans and hit Julian, about forty Marfes came down to San Patricio killing horses and chickens. At this point there arrived two Marves, an American and a Mexican. The American's name was Ale Cu, and the Mexican's Lucio Montoya. When the Macky Swins became aware of them, they began to fire and killed all the horses. The two Marfes ran away to San Patricio where the rest of the Marfes were tearing down a house and taking out of the store everything that they could get hold of. From there all the Marfes went to Lincoln and for about a month nothing of interest occurred.

I don't recall exactly when Macky Swin, who was being hounded down by the Marfes, was killed but I do remember that he gathered together all his friends and went back home to Lincoln accompanied by eight Mexicans 7 and two Americans, also his wife. When the Marfes found out that he was in the house they surrounded him but seeing that they were unable to hurt him they caused to be brought over a company of soldiers and a cannon from the nearby Fort. Notwithstanding this Macky Swin instructed his people not to fire. For this reason the soldiers had to sit until it was dark. The Marfes then set fire to the house and the soldiers returned to the fort. When the first room burned down, Ginio Salazar and

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Ignacio Gonzales came out to the door but the Marfes knocked them down and left them there, dazed. When the flames reached the middle room, an American proposed to go out thro'ugh the doors of the kitchen on the north side. No sooner did he jump than the Marfes knocked him down. Francisco Samora jumped also and he too was shot. Vincente Romero was next and there the three remained in a heap. It was then proposed by Billy the Kid and Jose Chaves y Chaves to take aim at the same time and shoot, first to one side then to the other. Chaves took Max Swin by the arm and told him to go out to which Mack Swin answered by taking a chair and placing it in the corner stating that he would die right there. Billy and Jose Chaves then jumped to the middle door, one on one side, and the other on the other. Then Robert Bakers and a Texan jumped and said "Here is Macky Swin". Drawing out his revolver he shot him three times in the breast. When the last shot was fired Billy the Kid said "Here is Robert" and thrust a revolver in his mouth while Jose Chaves shot at the Texan and hit him in the eye. Billy and Chaves then went along the river headed for San Patricio where they both remained for some time.

In October the Governor accompanied by seven soldiers and other persons came to Sam Patricio camping. Having heard about the exploits of Billy the Governor expressed a desire to meet him and sent a messenger to fetch him. The interview was in the nature of a heart to heart talk wherin the Governor 8 advised Billy to give up his perilous career. At this point occurred the General Election and George Kimbrall was elected sheriff of the county.

Obeying the Governor's orders he called out the militia having commissioned Sr. Patron as Capitan and Billy the Kid as First Lieutenant. During that year - that of '79 things were comparatively quiet and Billy led a very uneventful life.

About the last part of October of the same year, the Governor issued an order that the militia should make an effort to round all bandits in Chaves county, a task which the militia was not able to accomplish hence it disbanded. Billy the Kid received an honorable discharge and would probably have gone straight from them on had it not been that at this juncture the District Court met and the Marfes swore a complaint against him and

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ordered sheriff Kimbrall to arrest him. Billy stubbornly refused to accompany the sheriff and threatened to take away his life rather than to be apprehended. Again nothing was heard for a time and then Pat Garrett offered to bring in the desperado for a reward. The Governor having been made aware of the situation himself offered a reward of \$500. Immediately Pat Garrett accompanied by four other men got ready to go after Billy and found him and three other boys, whom they surrounded. One morning, during the siege, one of Billy's companions went out to fetch a pail of water whereupon Pat Garrett shot at him, as well as the others, hitting him in the neck and thereby causing him to drop the pail and to run into the house. With a piece of cloth, Billy was able to dress the wound of the injured man and at least stop the hemorrhage. He then advised the wounded man to go out and to pretend to give himself up, hiding his fire-arm but using it at the first opportune moment to kill Pat. Charley did as we was told but when he went to take aim, dropped dead. Bill and the other three companions were kept prisoners for three days but finally hunger and thirst drove them out and caused them to venture forth and to give themselves up. Billy was arrested there being no warrant for the others. Then followed the trial which resulted in a sentence to hang within thirty days. News of the execution having spread about people began to come in for miles around to be present on the fatal day but Billy was not to afford them much pleasure having escaped three days before the hanging. A deputy and jailer had been commissioned to stand guard over him. On the day of the escape at noon the jailer told the deputy to go and eat his dinner and that he would then go himself and fetch the prisoner's. It was while the jailer and Billy remained alone that the prisoner stepped to the window to fetch a paper. He had somehow gotten rid of his handcuffs and only his shackles remained. With the paper in his hand he approached the officer and before the latter knew what his charge was up to, yanked his revolver away from him and the next instant he was dead. Billy lost no time in removing his keeper's cartridge belt as well as a rifle and a "44 W.C.F." which were in the room.

When the deputy heard the shots he thought that the jailer must have shot Billy who was trying to escape and ran from the hotel to the jail on the steps of which he met Billy who

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said "hello" as he brushed past him, firing at him as he dashed by. Billy's next move was to rush to the hotel and to have Ben Eale remove his shackles. He also provided for him a horse and saddled it for Billy upon the promise that he was to leave it at San Patricio. True to his word Billy secured another horse at San Patricio from his friend Juan Trujillo promising in turn to return the same as soon as he could locate his own.

Billy now left San Patricio and headed for John Chisum's cattle ranch. Among the cowboys there was a friend of Billy Mote who had sworn to kill the Kid whenever he found him in order to avenge his friend. But Billy 10 did not give him time to carry out his plan killing him on the spot. From there Billy left for [Berendo?] where he remained a few days. Here he found his own horse and immediately sent back Juan Trujillo's. From Berendo Billy left for Puerto de Luna where he visited Juan Patron, his former captian. Patron did everything to make his and his companion's stay there as pleasant as possible. On the third evening of their stay there was to have been a dance and Billy sent his companion to make a report of what he saw and heard. While on his way there, and while he was passing in front of some abandoned shacks, Tome was fired upon by one of Pat Garrett's men and killed. No sooner had Billy heard the distressing news than he set out for the house of his friend Pedro Macky at Bosque Grande where he remained in hiding until a Texan named Charley Wilson, and who was supposed to be after Billy, arrived.

The two exchanged greetings in a friendly fashion and then the stranger asked Billy to accompany him to the saloon, which invitation Billy accepted. There were six or seven persons in the saloon when the two entered. Drinks were imbibed in a general spirit of conviviality prevailed when some one suggested that the first one to commit a murder that day was to set the others up. "In that case the drinks are on me" said Charley who commanded all to drink to their heart's content. Billy then ordered another round of drinks and by this time Charley who was felling quite reckless began to shoot at the glasses not missing a single one until he came to Billy's. This he pretended to miss, aiming his shot at Bill instead. This gave Billy time to draw out his own revolver and before Charley could take aim again, Billy had shot the other in the breast twice. When he was breathing his last

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Billy said "Do not whisper you were too eager to buy those drinks." It was Billy's turn now to treat the company.

Quiet again reigned for a few days. In the meantime Pat Garrett was still negotiating with Pedro Macky for the deliverance of Billy. When all details were arranged for, Pat left for Bosque Grande secretly. At the ranch house, Pedro hid Pat in a room close beside the one Billy was occupying. Becoming hungry during the night Billy got up and started to prepare a lunch. First he built a fire, then he took his hunting knife and was starting to cut off a hunk of meat from a large piece that hung from one of the VIGAS when he heard voices in the adjoining room. Stepping to the door he partially opened it and thrusting his head in asked Pedro who was with him. Pedro replied that it was only his wife and asked him to come in. Seeing no harm in this Billy decided to accept the invitation only to be shot in the pit of the stomach as he stood in the door. Staggering back to his own room it was not definitely known that the shot had been fatal until a cleaning woman stumbled over the dead body upon entering the room, the following morning.