The Life Of Pat Garret Essay, Research Paper

On June 5th, 1850 Pat Garrett is born in Chambers County, Alabama. One of seven children, he was the son of John Lumpkin Garrett and Elizabeth Ann Jarvis Garrett. In 1873, John Garrett purchased a Louisiana plantation in Claiborne Parish. Pat went to school and grew up there.

On January 25th, 1869 (after the civil war), Garrett leaves Louisiana to become a buffalo hunter in Texas. After the slaughter of buffaloes became unprofitable in 1878, Garrett settles down in Fort Sumner, New Mexico. On January 18th, 1880, he marries Apolinaria Gutierrez. The couple had 9 children.

On July 19th, 1878 the Lincoln County, New Mexico, War draws to an end following the Five Days Battle at Lincoln. Henry McCarty, alias Kid Antrim, alias William H. Bonney, alias Billy the Kid is one of many outlaws still loose and running. While Pat Garrett likely knew Billy the Kid, saying they were friends is an overstatement. Neither had much in common, except both were experts with guns. (Garrett was not in the Lincoln County War.) On November 2nd, 1880, Pat Garrett, a Democrat, is elected sheriff of Lincoln County. He vows to bring the current reign of lawlessness to an end. On December 15th, 1880, New Mexico Governor Lew Wallace, through a newspaper notice, puts a $500 bounty on the head of Billy the Kid dead or alive (the equivalent in today?s economy would be $10,000).

Pat Garrett and his posse trap Billy the Kid and others in a one-room rock house at Stinking Springs, near Fort Sumner on December 20th-21st, 1880. The posse mistakenly kills Charlie Bowdre (one of Billy’s most loyal friends). The Kid and the others surrender that afternoon. Garrett takes the shackled prisoners by buckboard into Las Vegas, where Garrett has to fight off a mob at the train station before he can move on to the state prison at Santa Fe. (The mob was after one of the prisoners, Dave Rudabaugh, who was wanted for numerous murders of that region.)

On April 15th, 1881 at Mesilla, New Mexico, a judge turns the Kid over to Sheriff Pat Garrett, after a trial, and orders that he Kid be hanged in Lincoln on May 13. While Sheriff Pat Garrett is in White Oaks, N.M., Billy the Kid escapes the Lincoln jail on April 28th, after killing both his guards, James Bell and Bob Olinger.

On July 13th or 14th, 1881, at midnight, Sheriff Pat Garrett shoots Billy the Kid dead at Fort Sumner, N.M., when the Kid walks into Pete Maxwell’s darkened bedroom. Garrett was squatting alongside the mattress talking with Maxwell as the Kid entered. The Kid saw Garrett but did not recognize him due to the darkness and the fact that Garrett was sitting or stooped down. The Kid cocked his revolver and hoarsely whispered “Quien es?” (”Who is it?”). Garrett fires twice, one bullet striking the Kid squarely in the heart. The other shot goes wild. Some believe that the Kid only carried a knife into Maxwell’s room. Others believe that Garrett shot the wrong man because of the darkness and The Kid lived to be 101 years old in Old Mexico.

In 1882, a book is published entitled “The Authentic Life of Billy the Kid, the Noted Desperado of the Southwest”. Garrett’s name is on the cover as author, but Ash Upson, a close friend, newspaperman, and notary, said he (Upson) wrote every word of it. The book sold poorly.

Garrett runs for sheriff of newly created Chavez County, N.M in 1890. He is defeated and leaves New Mexico and lives in Uvalde Co., Texas for some time. Garrett purchases a ranch in the San Andres Mountains, N.M. in 1899. His family lives there while Pat works in Las Cruces, Mesilla and Dona Ana, N.M.

On December 16th, 1901, President Theodore Roosevelt nominates Pat Garrett as United States customs collector at El Paso, Texas. He is a controversial appointment. In December 1905, President Roosevelt refuses to reappoint Pat Garrett as El Paso collector of customs on the border of Old Mexico. Garrett and his family return to their ranch in the San Andres Mountains.

In January 1908, James P. Miller, a hired assassin now claiming he is a Mexican cattle buyer, offers to purchase the Garrett ranch. However, Miller doesn’t want the goats, and Wayne Brazel, who has leased Garrett’s ranch, refuses to either move them or cancel the five-year lease.

On February 29th, 1908, Pat Garrett and Carl Adamson, a brother-in-law of Miller, Travel to Las Cruces for a conference with Miller. Wayne Brazil rides alongside on horseback. Within a few miles of town, they stop in the desert to relieve themselves. Garrett is shot and killed. Wayne Brazel confesses to the slaying, is tried for murder and acquitted.

I believe that the class should study the life of Pat Garrett because he was an extraordinary person. He is most likely responsible for hunting down and killing one of Americas most famous and favorite outlaws, Billy the Kid. Garrett was also a well-known and respected lawman. He certainly made a mark in this country?s history.