

Historical Heroes & Villains

Roswell's first "celebrities" were cattlemen, the first of them **Charles Goodnight**, the Texas cattleman instrumental in establishing the Goodnight—Loving Trail up the Pecos River east of Roswell. The trail took Texas cattle to Union forts, Indian reservations, and mining camps, or just to stock the ranges in Northern New Mexico and Colorado. Then there was **John Chisum** who famously settled here at his South Springs Ranch. People today may best remember the figure due to John Wayne's portrayal of him in *Chisum* (1970). Though we can't say for sure whether he was a hero or a villain, Roswell was a frequent stop for **Billy the Kid**, who came here to visit the local store and worked for John Chisum during the infamous Lincoln County War. Roswell was also home to the man elected to hunt down the Kid when he went rogue, Sheriff **Patrick F. Garrett**. In addition to killing the Kid, it was Garrett's idea to irrigate the Pecos Valley, and he also had a hand in creating Chaves County in 1889. Later, Pat Garrett's blind daughter **Elizabeth Garrett** would become a famous songstress who wrote the state song, "O' Fair New Mexico." Elizabeth Garrett lived in Roswell until her death in 1947.

In the 1930s Roswell played host to men whose work would one day land us on the moon. **Robert H. Goddard**, the "Father of Modern Rocketry", helped to develop new liquid fuels for rockets. He did most of his experiments and testing north of Roswell while



Robert H. Goddard

professional golfer who was raised here where she played on the Goddard High School golf team (at the time she had to play on the boy's team as there was no team just for girls. She ended up leading the boy's team to two state titles during her time at Goddard!). Nancy Lopez



Joe Bauman

Elementary School was named after her after she went pro in the LPGA. More recently Roswell born Goddard High graduate **Gerina Piller** went pro with the LPGA in 2007. **Joe Bauman**, who played baseball for the Longhorn League in Roswell, held the record of 72 homeruns in professional baseball until it was broken by Mark McGwire—and Joe did it without steroids. Roswell is also famous for being the home to the 1956 Little League World Champions winners, the **Roswell Lions Hondo All-Stars**. Other famous athletes include **Willie Hall**, a famous boxer who befriended Muhammad Ali and came close to winning the National Golden Gloves title in 1952. And then there is the "King of the Cowboys". **Bob Crosby** a local rancher and rodeo star. who won the All Around



Bob Crosby

Cowboy World Championship three times. And lastly let us not forget our most famous animal athlete, Kentucky Derby winner **Mine That Bird!**

Historical Society For Southeast New Mexico
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LEGENDARY LOCALS OF ROSWELL



Joe Bauman



Bob Crosby



Roy Rogers in
Return of Billy the Kid



Peter Hurd



Nancy Lopez



Wanda Faye & Weldon Rogers

The Roswell area has been home not only to "local legends" but many national celebrities as well. Inside you will be surprised to learn who some of them were, but for even more information visit our museum at 200 N. Lea, Roswell, NM or pick up the book, *Legendary Locals of Roswell*. Visit our website www.RoswellNMHistory.org.

living on what was then the Mescalero Ranch, located at the east end of Mescalero Road, just past Atkinson. Visiting Goddard often in Roswell were **Harry Guggenheim** (a scientist who played a major role in the development of the atomic bomb) and **Charles Lindbergh** (famous aviator and a major celebrity of the era) who were financial supporters and friends of Goddard.



Peter Hurd

Roswell was the birthplace of famous artist **Peter Hurd**, who lived close by in San Patricio with wife **Henriette Wyeth Hurd**. Peter Hurd was famously commissioned to paint a portrait of President Lyndon B. Johnson who upon seeing it stated that it looked like a drunk and rejected it! For the record, there was nothing wrong with Hurd's portrait of Johnson. Hurd was better known for his portraits and sketches of the Hondo Valley and its residents.

A famous historical villain to frequent the area was none other than **Pretty Boy Floyd**. The noted gangster hid out in the Dexter/Hagerman area just south of Roswell during his crime spree.

Actors and Musicians

Roswell is the home to several famous actors and musicians which might surprise you. Famous singer **John Denver** was actually born here at St. Mary's Hospital on December 31, 1943, while his father was stationed at the Roswell Army Air Field. Roswell hosted many country western singers in the 1930s and 1940s,

of particular note **Roy Rogers** who married his first wife, Roswell girl Arline Wilkins. Roy was in town performing on local radio station KGFL where the two met over discussion regarding who made the best apple pies: girls of that day or women like his mom. **Lefty Frizzell** was another famous singer who wrote "If



Roy Rogers

You've Got the Money, I've Got the Time" while locked up in the Chaves County jail! He was inducted into the Country Music Hall of Fame in 1972. Many female singers of note originated out of Roswell too. **Louise Massey** and her band, "Louise Massey and the Westerners", wrote "My Adobe Hacienda" and they performed on major radio shows and radio stations all across America and in movies. Massey is one of eight local women who has been inducted into the Cowgirl Hall of Fame. **Wanda Faye Narmore** is another famous Roswell singer who performed with Minnie Pearl, Lefty Frizzell, Johnny Cash,



Wanda Faye & Weldon Rogers

Ernest Tubbs and others. She was inducted into the Western Swing Hall of Fame in 2003. More recent musicians include **Susan Graham**, world renowned opera singer; who attended school here and graduated from

Roswell High School. Roswell has also been home to several actors as well. The most famous actor to call Roswell home at one time was **Demi Moore** (*Ghost*, *Gl Jane*), who lived in Roswell up until the time she became a famous actress and left for Hollywood. Roswell was also home to "old time" movie stars such as **Guy Kibbee** (*Little Lord Fauntleroy*) and **Joel McCrea**, star of many westerns who had a ranch in the area along with his wife Frances Dee. McCrea still has relatives in Roswell to this day. Likewise, **Dan Blocker** ("Hoss" on *Bonanza*) was a school teacher in nearby Carlsbad, NM at one time. More recently, actor **Owen Wilson** (*Shanghai Noon*, *Wedding Crashers*) attended NMMI where legend has it his famous nose was broken in a fight!

Athletes & Entrepreneurs

Roswell has naturally also produced and hosted many athletes and entrepreneurs, and many of them have ties to the area thanks to the prestigious New Mexico Military Institute. Among them are **Conrad Hilton**, creator of the Hilton Hotel chain; Sam Donaldson, TV newscaster and Hondo Valley ranch owner; and Chili's creator **Norman Brinker** all attended the school. **Roger Staubach**, future quarterback for the Dallas Cowboys; played football at NMMI while improving his grades to get into the Naval Academy. Other football stars to hail from Roswell include **Tom Brookshier** and **Pete Jaquess**.

Roswell has a good track record for famous female golfers. **Nancy Lopez** is the best known



Nancy Lopez