

## John William Poe

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### Biography

**John William Poe** was born on October 17, 1850 and was raised on his grandfather's farm in Maysville, Mays County, Kentucky\*. By the age of 15, he had developed a yearning to go West and his travels took him to Missouri, Kansas, Texas, and eventually the New Mexico territory. He was a buffalo hunter, cattleman, stock detective for Charles Goodnight, lawman in Texas and New Mexico, and banker. John William Poe married Sophie Alberding on May 5, 1883. Their only child lived a few hours. The home of John William and Sophie Poe is located at 311 West Seventh in Roswell and is known as the Poe-Mossman house in the National Register of Historic Buildings.

While serving as Sheriff of Lincoln County, Poe became friends with Pat Garrett and John Chisum. His most famous experience occurred when he accompanied Garrett to Pete Maxwell's ranch near Fort Sumner. Garrett went inside. Waiting outside, Poe saw William Bonney (Billy the Kid) enter the ranch house, though he did not recognize him. He heard the gunfire when Billy the Kid was shot and killed by Pat Garrett. He wrote several articles for newspapers and books about the death of Billy the Kid. After retiring as a lawman, John William Poe and his wife settled in Roswell where he was one of the organizers of the Bank of Roswell. He was later President of the Citizen's Bank of Roswell. He died on July 17, 1923. Sophie Alberding Poe commemorated his life in a biography, *Buckboard Days*.

\* The city of Maysville, Kentucky is in Mason County.