

The Bandera PROPHEET

February 7, 2022

Today in Texas History

By Bandera Spirits of Texas

On this day in 1855, Charles Siringo was born in Matagorda County. Beginning in 1870, he worked as a cowboy, part of the time for Shanghai Pierce, and later helped establish the LX Ranch. While working as an LX cowboy, he met Billy the Kid and led a posse into New Mexico in pursuit of him.

In 1884, while working as a merchant in Caldwell, Kansas, Siringo began writing his first book, "A Texas Cowboy"; or "Fifteen Years on the Hurricane Deck of a Spanish Pony" (1885), which established him as the first cowboy autobiographer and became a range literature classic. In 1886 he moved to Chicago and began a 22-year career with Pinkerton's National Detective Agency. He subsequently worked all over the West and participated in such celebrated cases as the Haymarket anarchist trial and the murder trial of "Big Bill" Haywood.

After leaving Pinkerton's in 1907, Siringo retired to his ranch in Santa Fe, New Mexico. His second book (A Cowboy Detective, 1912) caused a bitter conflict with the Pinkertons, and his "Two Evil Isms, Pinkertonism and Anarchism" (1915) brought an unsuccessful libel suit from the agency. Siringo was appointed a New Mexico Ranger in 1916 and for two years saw active service against cattle rustlers.

Following his return to Santa Fe he published "A Lone Star Cowboy" (1919) and History of "Billy the Kid" (1920). In 1922 he moved to Los Angeles, where he worked as a film advisor and played bit parts in movies. His "Riata and Spurs" (1927) was a mature composite of his first two autobiographies.

Siringo met such varied celebrities as Pat Garrett, Bat Masterson, Clarence Darrow, William S. Hart and Will Rogers. He helped to

romanticize the West and to create the myth of the American cowboy.
Siringo died in California in 1928.