

◆ Classroom Spice ◆

Volume 7, Issue 2 Dr. Jeanne Mather, Editor

February 2005

What Do You Know about Bill Pickett?

Spanglish—Not the Movie

Probably many of you are familiar with the name Bill Pickett, the famous Black cowboy. But how much of his very interesting life do you know? Did you know he was an Oklahoman? Well, he was actually born in Texas in 1870, one of thirteen children born to parents who were ex-slaves. When he was about ten years old he reportedly saw a bulldog working cattle, and noted that it bit and held a cow's lip to control it. Bill thought he could use this technique to control cattle himself. He later tried it out on a calf and found that it worked. This was the start of a long career in "bulldogging," also known as cattle wrestling, and earned him the nicknames "The Dusky Demon" and "The Bull-Dogger." He performed throughout the west and in 1905 performed in a wild-west show in front of approximately 65,000 people, on the 101 Ranch in Oklahoma. Between 1907 and 1913 Bill and his horse, Spradley, toured throughout the world with the 101 Ranch Show, from Mexico City to England.

A particularly exciting event happened in 1905. Picture Madison Square Garden set up for a Wild West Show. First you must realize that bulldogging involves a hazer whose responsibilities are to ride beside the steer and maneuver it into a straight run so the bulldogger

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With all the hype about "Spanglish", the movie, it might be interesting to look into just what Spanglish is. Depending on the expert, the definition of Spanglish varies slightly, but in general it is a broken mix of Spanish and English, frequently involving code switching, and is made up of a variety of regional dialects. Interestingly, in written form it essentially involves using English phonics to write Spanish words, or if it is an English word simply spoken with a Spanish pronunciation, then in written form it uses Spanish phonics to write the English word. Confused? You are not alone. (A side note—this means that my mother was using Spanglish long before it was fashionable, or even had a name to it. Trust me, writing Spanish with English phonics is pretty easy to do. Reading it however, if you are a native Spanish speaker, is extremely frustrating. Ask my Grandmother who received my mother's Spanglish letters. After screaming in frustration, she would demand a translation.)

All languages either grow or die. Spanish must change to meet the needs of its American speakers. And while many disapprove of the growing use of Spanglish, whether you agree with it or not, it exists. Many would say that to allow Latinos to learn Spanglish would keep them forever in poverty. Is this really true? Well, J. Lo, Ricky Martin, variety-show host Don Francisco, talk-show host Cristina, and even George P. Bush (the President's grandson) all have been known to speak Spanglish. I doubt anyone would



say they have been held back by its use. Granted learning standard English will allow for more upward mobility, but Spanglish may be an intermediate step to getting there, and allows some understanding by the English world during the transition. It has actually been around for some time. As I am introduced to Spanglish words, I often think, "I did not know that was Spanglish. I thought it was the

way to say it in Spanish, as I've heard that word since I was a little girl." Part of the development of Spanglish is a reaction to new words and situations that do not exist in the traditional Spanish vocabulary/culture. Interestingly, from 1492 to the mid-19th century, very little change of the Spanish language took place, even though the Hispanic and Anglo-Saxon cultures were in contact. Possibly this was because much of the interaction was taking place in Castillian Spanish and not English. However, the 1800s saw significant changes in the cultural interactions, and of course in 1848 with the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, Mexicans in the Southwest suddenly found themselves Americans. Political correctness is a relatively new idea, and nothing in the treaty addressed the former Mexicans' native language. While newspapers did promote that Spanish should be respected, it wasn't long before all business and diplomacy was done in English. Even today, there are states that have made English the official language of the state.

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What Time is It?

Excerpted from the Thomson Gale website. To get on their email list, and to have access to many of their multicultural materials go to <http://www.gale.com/enewsletters/>

Match the event with its year:

1. This was the year identified by Tuskegee as the first year in 71 years of record keeping, with “no” lynchings.
2. Harriet Tubman escaped from slavery in this year and was responsible for assisting 300 slaves reach freedom.
3. In this year Maryland became the first state to try to discourage by law, marriage between white women and black men.
4. In this year Toni Morrison became the first black American to win a Nobel Prize in Literature.
5. In this year Jackie Robinson became the first black major league baseball player.
6. In this year Henry Aaron hit his 715th home run to become the all-time leading hitter of home runs.
7. Rosa Parks refused to change seats in a bus in Montgomery, Alabama, in this year thus beginning a year long boycott of the city bus system by blacks.
8. From May 1st—October 1st was the worst summer for racial disturbances in U.S. history with over 40 riots, and 100 other disturbances.
9. In this year more than 46,000 protesters rallied to protest the flying of the Confederate flag atop the South Carolina statehouse dome.
10. In the summer of this year Jesse Owens won four gold medals at the Olympics held in Berlin.
11. In this year the Twenty-fourth Amendment was signed officially forbidding the use of poll taxes to prevent voting.
12. On January 20th of this year, the first national Martin Luther King, Jr. holiday was celebrated.
13. The first blacks, there were twenty, to be forcibly enslaved and brought to work in the North American British colonies.
14. In this year the U.S. Constitution officially initiated the counting of a male slave as three-fifths of a person in determining representation in the U.S. Congress.

Answer bank:

A—1619	B—1664	C—1787	D—1849	E—1936	F—1947	G—1952
H—1955	I—1964	J—1967	K—1974	L—1986	M—1993	N—2000

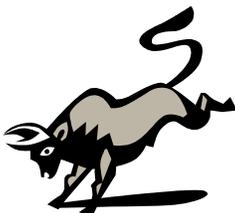
(Pickett—cont'd from page 1)

can grab its head and wrestle it. So at The Garden, you would have found Bill Pickett as the bulldogger and a young Will Rogers as his hazer. Unfortunately the demonstration didn't go quite as planned. As the steer was released it ran uncontrollably toward the arena's fence, and "over it!" People in the arena hysterically tried to escape the rampaging steer. Will was the first to reach it, on the third balcony level, and get it turned, and Bill then grabbed it and wrestled it back to the arena floor. Needless to say the demonstration was quite memorable for all those involved, and went down in Rodeo History.

Even though Bill Pickett was prohibited from participating in many rodeos because he was black (actually he was of black and Indian heritage), he was still able to become a successful cowboy and rodeo star, and was the first black cowboy movie star. Ultimately, he was the first black inducted into the National Rodeo Cowboy Hall of Fame, and later the Pro Rodeo Hall of Fame and Museum of the American Cowboy. In 1994 the Postal Service commemorated him in their "Legends of the West" series. Unfortunately they mistakenly put a picture of his brother on it, and had to recall the stamps, as many as had not been sold, and reissue a corrected stamp with Bill's picture on it.

This small man, only 5'7" and about 145 pounds, bulldogged about 5,000 steers during his lifetime. Steers who ranged from 800 to 1,100 pounds. The resulting injuries were many, from losing all his teeth to going blind for almost a year, and ultimately death in 1932. He was buried near the 101 Ranch outside of Ponca City, Oklahoma which he had called home for many years.

(Side note—while bulldogging is still a big rodeo sport, biting the animals is no longer allowed.)



The Literature Connection

A great middle school and older reference book is Pulitzer prize-winner Diane McWhorter's *A Dream of Freedom: The Civil Rights Movement from 1954 to 1968*, published by Scholastic, ISBN: 0-439-57578-4. This book of powerful photographs accompanying well-written text speaks to the reader of a time past. The author was but a sixth grader in Birmingham, Alabama in 1963, when she found herself a young White girl, witnessing what would later be recognized as a "crossroads of history." Birmingham, referred to as "Bombingham" by many local blacks at the time, served as one location of many events making up the civil rights movement. Much of the story of the civil rights movement is not pretty. It is full of violence, hatred, and pain, but it is also full of triumph. Once a reader picks up this book it is impossible to set it down. It draws you in and helps you understand the struggle fought and won, not just for freedom but for dignity and respect.



Most readers are familiar with Faith Ringgold, but have you read *Dinner at Aunt Connie's House?* Also published by Scholastic, ISBN 0-590-13713-1, this book

while written on a second grade reading level, easily would be of interest and use through upper elementary. As is true of many of Faith's books, this story is based on a story-quilt. This story based on the "Dinner Quilt" follows young Melody and her summer visit to her aunt, who is an artist. Connie's portraits of twelve African-American women: Rosa Parks, Fannie Lou Hamer, Mary McCleod Bethune, Augusta Savage, Dorothy Dandridge, Zora Neale Hurston, Maria W. Stewart, Bessie Smith, Harriet Tubman, Sojourner Truth, Marian Anderson, and Madame C. J. Walker, range from singers to activists, from educator to millionaire. It is a written and powerful children's book, useful not only for historical purposes, but for presenting African-American issues, and women's issues as well.

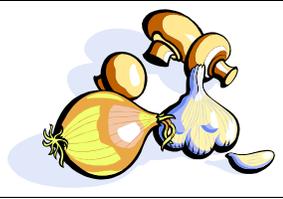
Margaret Frith has written *Frida Kahlo: The Artist Who Painted Herself*, published by Grosset & Dunlap, ISBN 0-448-42677-3. An interesting look at artist Frida Kahlo as seen from the eyes of a young girl, Frieda Fry, in a school report. It is full of information and humor, and great connections to art, social studies, and language arts. It includes examples of many of Frida's work. This is an interesting book worth checking out.

Who was Babe Didrikson Zaharias?

Babe was one of the greatest women athletes of the first half of the twentieth century. A native Texan, born of Norwegian ancestry, she was just a baby when her home town was devastated by a hurricane. The family relocated, and as she grew it was apparent to everyone that this tomboy was an exceptional athlete, but a poor student, and not a particularly popular one. She saw academics as a means to an end—staying eligible for volleyball, tennis, baseball, basketball, and swimming. She dropped out of high school at 16 to play basketball for an insurance company, where they gave her a job as a stenographer. For the next three years she was selected All-American women's basketball player, with her team

winning the national championship in 1931. She alone often scored thirty points in a game. That was when a "team score" of twenty was average. She had other interests, including softball in which she pitched and batted .400, and she also ran track. She was the recognized as the nation's premier women's track and field athlete, holding American, Olympic, and world records in five different track and field events. In 1932, at the age of eighteen, she was the "sole" member of the Golden Cyclone women's track team, and yet by herself she won the national women's "team" championship by thirty points! In that competition she won six gold medals, and broke four world records, an

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Does Spanish have fewer words than English?

Yes, and while some have suggested a ratio 1:8, the actual ratio is closer to 1:2, Spanish to English.

What is the “Jewish” Spanish Language?

Ladino is spoken by 100,000-200,000, mostly in Israel. Its origins stem from 1492 when the Jews were expelled from Spain. Originally it was written using the Hebrew alphabet, right to left, today the Latin alphabet is used.

(Babe—Cont’d from page 3)

event unparalleled in track history, for an individual, male or female. In the Olympics which followed Babe won gold medals in the javelin event and the eighty-meter hurdles and a silver in the high-jump. She also set one world’s record and shared two others. She was voted the Associated Press’s Women Athlete of the Year in 1932, 1945, 1946, 1947, 1950, and 1954. After 1932 she was pressured to give up her amateur status and become a professional athlete. As a professional women’s basketball player, making a living was difficult, so she augmented it by doing exhibits of billiards, basketball, baseball, and golf. Ultimately she married, and had a successful golf career. She died at the age of 42 from cancer. Babe was not only a phenomenal athlete but a pioneer in women’s sports.

(Spanglish—Continued from page 1)

An expert on Spanglish, Ivan Stavans, who has written, *Spanglish: The Making of A New American Language*, compares Yiddish with Spanglish and *Ebonics*. He puts forth that the first two are most similar in that they both started as intra-ethnic minority languages, which are now internationally recognized. Another author Silvana Paternostro presents the idea that Spanglish is a means for Latin-Americans to create their own identity. They often feel they completely fit neither in the White culture nor in the Hispanic culture, and that their assimilation is best served by creating a blended language.

It is not only Spanish that is changing. English also has adopted many Spanish words, and usually says them with an English accent., which I can personally attest to at times drives

Hispanics crazy (for example *pollo*, which should not be pronounced “polo,” does it to me!)

While all agree that Chinese is the most spoken language in the world, depending on your expert either Spanish or English comes in second. So where besides Spain and Latin American is Spanish spoken? Of course in the U.S. Spanish is the second most common language spoken, and is an official state language of New Mexico. Miami has the largest number of Spanish speakers in the western hemisphere, not counting Latin America. Equatorial Guinea in Africa, has both Spanish and French as official languages, and then of course Andorra, and the Philippines also speak Spanish.

In short Spanish is a language used by many, many people and will be for some time. As such Spanglish is not likely to disappear any time soon.