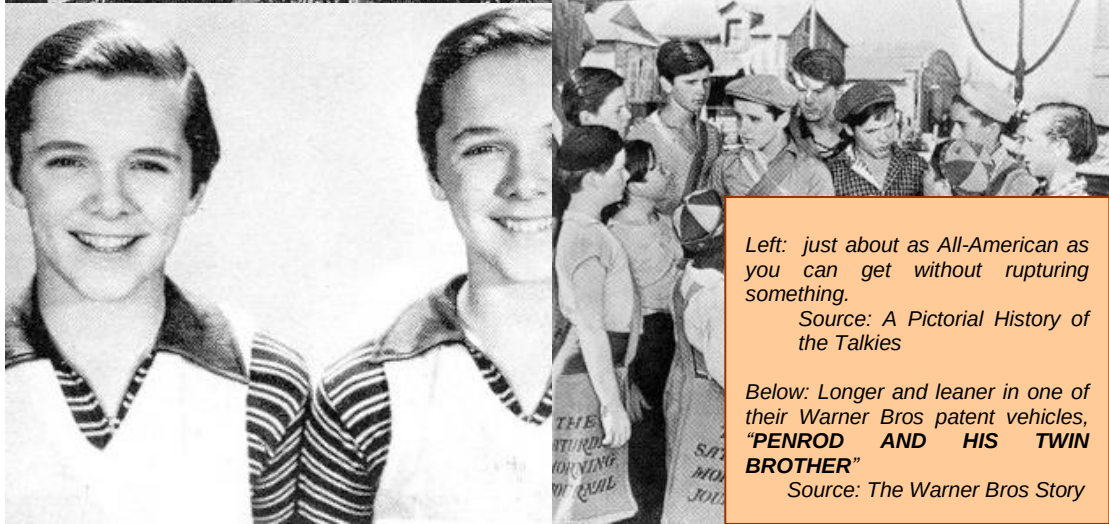


Billy & Bobby Mauch

Titles: 6 Sources: 2 Stills: 7
Pronounced: "Mawk"

Born: Peoria, Illinois; July 6th 1924

The novelty of identical twins on screen was the Mauch brothers' only real suit. Warners fished out the one relevant story from the "family adventure" canon for them, and strung together a few Booth Tarrington re-writes (updated to the 1930s) as vehicles for the twins, but in reality didn't know quite how to exploit their novelty best, and they were launched at 13, too old to establish themselves with the public before dread puberty kicked in. They were a handsome pair, not especially talented actors, and even in **"THE PRINCE AND THE PAUPER"** played decidedly second fiddle to studio eminences Errol Flynn and Claude Rains. They were neither the first nor the last twin child players in Hollywood (the silent era had The Lee Sisters, the early nineties had Ashley and Mary-Kate Olsen) but they could claim title to the most infectious giggle on screen.



Left: just about as All-American as you can get without rupturing something.

Source: A Pictorial History of the Talkies

*Below: Longer and leaner in one of their Warner Bros patent vehicles, **"PENROD AND HIS TWIN BROTHER"***

Source: The Warner Bros Story

Halliwell's Filmgoer's Companion entry:

"American twins, boy actors who appeared in several films in the mid-thirties, notably a **"PENROD"** series and the Errol Flynn version of **"THE PRINCE AND THE PAUPER"**."

The Moving Picture Boy entry:

"Of the famous Mauch twins (pronounced somewhere between Maak and Mawk), Billy was the "elder", i.e. saw daylight first. He was also the one that officially had their first movie lead – I stress "officially".

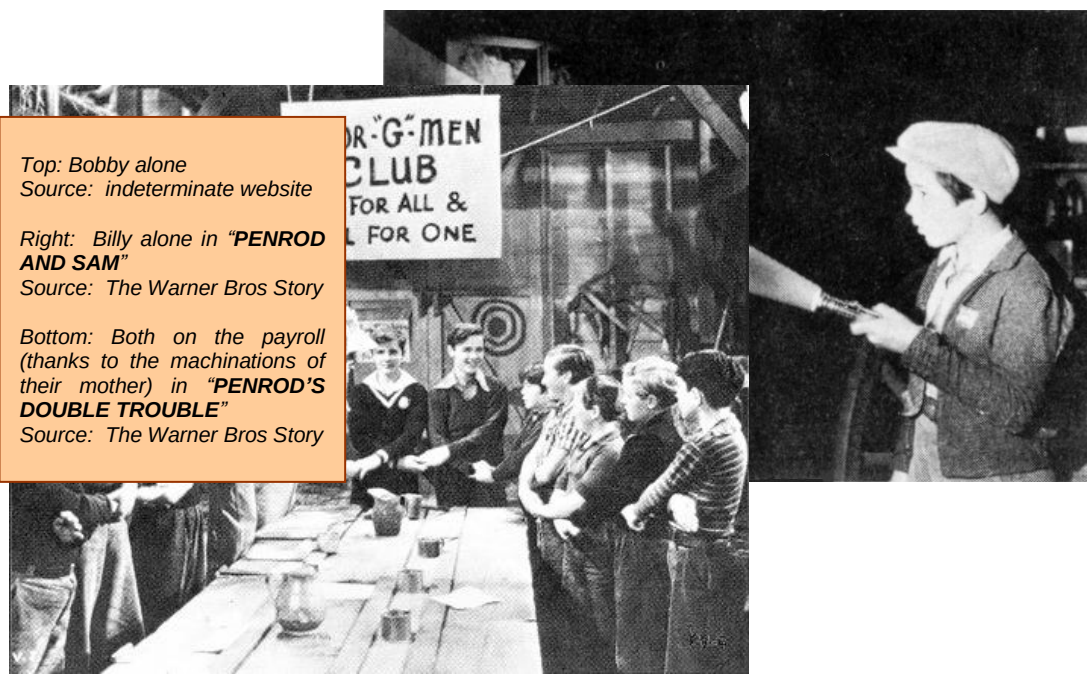
They were obviously a strong and glamorous pair, and once out of diapers began to make a name in their locality as singing and dancing identicals. In 1932 their mother got modelling work for them in New York.

The Mauchs also began to broadcast – though radio seems rather a waste of twinship – and were heard by Warner Brothers. Once Warners saw what they looked like, they cast Billy to play Fredric March (pronounced March) as a boy in **"ANTHONY ADVERSE"**. It was a very good... match.

The theory was that Bobby was to act as Billy's stand-in – for unimportant, non-speaking shots, or in case of indisposition. Once the film was safely in the can, however, they revealed to its director, Mervyn Le Roy, that they had been taking turns in the lead throughout, confident that no-one would notice. (The only way you could tell them apart was by throwing a ball at one of them or asking him to sign an autograph: Billy is left-handed, Bobby right-handed. But no doubt the twins had thought of this too, and put in a lot of practice with their "wrong" hands.)



BOBBY MAUCH—Warner Bros. & Vitaphone Pictures



Top: Bobby alone
Source: indeterminate website

Right: Billy alone in **"PENROD AND SAM"**
Source: The Warner Bros Story

Bottom: Both on the payroll (thanks to the machinations of their mother) in **"PENROD'S DOUBLE TROUBLE"**
Source: The Warner Bros Story



Billy left, Bobby right, engulfed by nobility in the coronation scene of **"THE PRINCE AND THE PAUPER"** – the film's UK release adroitly timed to coincide with the coronation of George VI.
Source: The Warner Bros Story

They are said to have played the same trick throughout **"THE WHITE ANGEL"**, where Billy was cast as a drummer boy befriended in the Crimea by Florence Nightingale.

Unconvinced, Warners offered a contract to Billy alone. "But Mrs Mauch," reports Richard Lamparski after interviewing the duo many years later, "insisted that they both be signed. When Warners demurred she threatened to sign Bobby to a rival studio. They were both placed under contract at \$350 a week each, with an added \$150 a week for Mrs Mauch as their guardian." Full marks to the Mauchs.

With both twins now on the payroll, Warners decided they had better get their money's worth. Mark Twain's **"THE PRINCE AND THE PAUPER"** was an obvious subject – and they made a classy job of it, with fine music by Erich Korngold and rich costumery. Then Billy alone was cast as the hero in another version of Booth Tarkington's second **"Penrod"** book. The object of the strategy became clear when, with some violence to the Tarkington canon, Penrod was cloned into twins, producing endless scope for hilarious confusion, and jobs for both Mauchs in two more comedies. The series could have run and run, but thank goodness it didn't. The twins were nice, cheerful, personable boys. Great comics they were not.

The brothers made one more twin-exploiting feature together – **"DOUBLE TROUBLE"**

(41) before doing war service with the Air Force. There seemed unlikely to be a resurgence of twin films afterwards, so Bob Mauch turned to film and TV editing.

Billy was in a few more films. **"THAT HAGEN GIRL"** (47), **"THE STREET WITH NO NAME"** (48), **"ROSEANNA McCOY"** (49), **"BEDTIME FOR BONZO"** (51), **"PEOPLE WILL TALK"** (51). Then he too decided enough was enough and became a sound editor for his old firm, Warners."

What the Critics said:

In **"THE PRINCE AND THE PAUPER"**:

"Warners resurrected Mark Twain's old tale because they had the Mauch twins, Billy and Bobby, under contract. They play Prince Edward and the cockney ragamuffin with whom he changes places, supported by a number of heroes and heavies, including Errol Flynn..."

– **The Good Film and Video Guide**

"...The Mauch boys play their contrasting parts with earnestness if not too much skill..."

– **Variety Movie Guide 1993**

“...The two lookalikes, the beggar boy and the young heir to the English throne who exchange places, were played by the Mauch twins, Billy and Bobby, and Flynn’s role as the soldier of fortune who befriends the real prince was secondary, his participation solely to add box-office appeal...”

– **That Was Hollywood – the 1930’s**

“...Although Errol Flynn received top billing and indulged in some routine swordplay, grand larceny was committed by the Mauch twins, Billy and Bobby, playing the Prince and the Pauper who exchange identities much to the confusion of everyone around them...”

– **The Warner Bros Story**

FILMOGRAPHY

Year	Age	Title	Role
deb 36	12	ANTHONY ADVERSE  with <i>Scotty Beckett</i>	Billy only – as Anthony, age 10
36		THE WHITE ANGEL	Billy only – as Crimean drummer boy
37	13	PENROD AND SAM with <i>Harry Watson; George Billings; Phillip Hurlic; Jerry Madden; Jerry Tucker</i>	Billy only – in central role, Penrod
37		THE PRINCE AND THE PAUPER with <i>Jane Asher, John Moulder Brown</i>	In title roles – Billy as Tom Canty, Bobby as Prince Edward, both 10
38	14	PENROD AND HIS TWIN BROTHER with <i>Benny Bartlett; Phillip Hurlic; Jerry Tucker</i>	In title roles – Billy as Penrod
38		PENROD'S DOUBLE TROUBLE with <i>Benny Bartlett; Phillip Hurlic; Jerry Tucker</i>	In central roles – Billy as Penrod
41	17	DOUBLE TROUBLE	
47	23	THAT HAGEN GIRL!	Billy only

[Billy (or Bill Mauch) appeared at the very foot of the credit list of “HE WALKED BY NIGHT” (48) as a “young man”]