

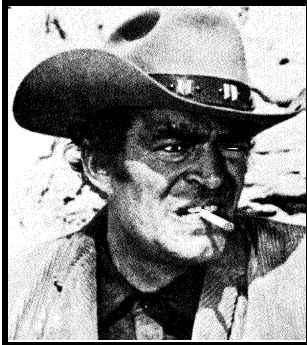


SILVER SCREEN BUCKAROOS OF COLORADO

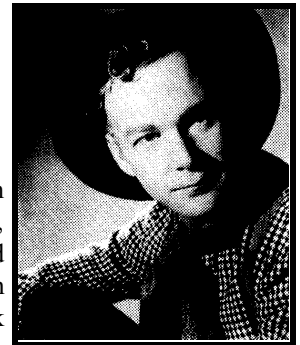
Buckaroos' News

Highlands Ranch, Colorado

Spring, 1996



Jack Elam and Harry Carey, Jr. Travel the Colorado Movie Trail



Imagine standing in the same place John Wayne and Kim Darby stood while filming the hanging scene in the classic movie, "True Grit." Or jump from the tracks to the same spot Robert Redford and Paul Newman hit the ground when they blew up the mail car in "Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid." Harry Carey, Jr. and Jack Elam did just those kinds of things recently with Director Tony Schweikle of Durango when they traveled the movie trail through southwest Colorado.

More than 40 classic and not-so-classic movies have been shot in southwest Colorado. You can visit the location between Bayfield and Vallecito Lake where Norman the calf was nearly swept away in "City Slickers," or where the wagon train crossed the Gunnison River at Delta in "How the West Was Won."

John Ford used a little ranch outside Gunnison for two of his movies. Many of the buildings still exist and are easily recognizable. One weathered building sits near the gate of the military outpost in "The Searchers," and the ranch became Fort Robinson in "Cheyenne Autumn." Today, visitors will find the buildings a little more dilapidated and all of the surrounding sets built for the movies gone.

In Ridgeway, locals remember when John Wayne was there shooting "True Grit." Scenes from around the city square, such as the hanging scene, are easily recognizable. Some of the signs painted for the picture are still on the buildings more than 25 years later. The home ranch in "True Grit," featured in the opening and closing scenes, is 15 miles from town, including the fence Wayne jumped at the end of the picture.

Thirty miles north of Gunnison, the former mining town of Crested Butte found its way into "Snowball Express." The train station in Silverton can be seen in several westerns, and the narrow gauge railway between Durango and Silverton has chugged through more than half a dozen movies such as "Viva Zapata," "Support Your Local Gunfighter," and "Ticket to Tomahawk."

A recent video hosted by Jack Elam, "Travel the Movie Trail," takes you to historic Colorado movie locations, introduces you to actors and locals involved in making these movies of the west, and gives you some behind-the-scenes anecdotes to make in-person visits even more interesting. To obtain your video of Hollywood's home away from home in southwest Colorado, a more complete list of movie locations, and a map with specific directions to the sites, send your name, address, and a check for \$12.95 (includes \$3.00 shipping and handling) to "Travel the Movie Trail," P.O. Box 543, Durango, CO 81302. Allow four to six weeks for processing.



EDITOR'S NOTE: This information was excerpted with permission from an article in the April, 1996, issue of *Colorado Country Life*, the official publication of the Colorado Rural Electric Association.



Empty Saddles

We were saddened to hear of the passing of Ben Johnson who died of heart failure. Mr. Johnson, is credited with many films, such as "Rio Grande." But he also worked in such films as "Angel and the

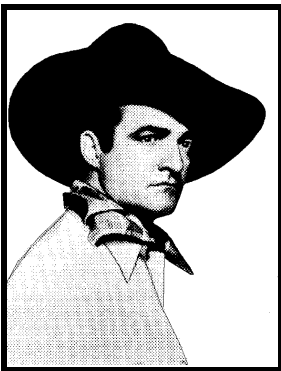
Badman," "Bordertown Gun-fighters," "California Gold Rush," "The Fabulous Texan," "Out California Way," "Riders of the Rio Grande," "Santa Fe Saddlemates," and "Wyoming" for which he received no on-screen credit.



Colorado Movie Trivia

In 1906, Tom Mix, one of the few movie cowboys "with manure on his boots," made a living breaking horses in Lamar, Colorado. That was during the day time. At night he tried to keep the saloons from having any day-old beer in stock each morning.

Colorado had a movie capital from 1910 to 1912 when the Selig Polyscope Company headquartered in Canon City. They starred a hero named Donahue and had a young cowboy extra named Tom Mix. In those days the movies featured silence.



When actress McCue fell from her horse swimming the Arkansas River near the Royal Gorge in 1912, camera man Carter kept cranking. Then noticing that the actress was in danger, he dove in and dragged her to waist deep water. Ready to resume filming the two-reeler, she again became panic-stricken and this time both were swept down stream to death. The original Colorado Motion Picture Company never survived the damage suit.

The first film commission in the United States was established in Colorado.

Colorado Plateau citizens have learned from watching them make movies that the tough two-gun stars are mostly temperamental softies. John Wayne and Richard Boone are two big

exceptions.



Blair Street in Silverton, Colorado, was a "place of ignoble influence" in the 1880s, according to the newspaper. In the 1940s, it was the habitat of movie actors, and by the 1960s it was a tourist trap with phony cowboys and lawmen shooting blanks. Left from the movie making day, the false store fronts are authentic.

Arms out, elbows back, palms with fingers outstretched just an inch away from their guns, both men reach, draw, and the bad man drops. That's the movie version. A myth. One old Colorado pioneer said, "Boot Hill is full of men who forgot to take aim."

Colorado hills and mountains have been the location of many motion pictures and TV films. Among those filmed in part or in their entirety in Colorado are "Across the Wide Missouri," "Around the World In 80 Days," "Barquero," "Battlefield Earth," "Big House, USA," "Blood on the Mountain," "Burlesque Bull Fight," "Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid," "Canon City," "Cat Ballou," "Cheyenne Autumn," "Crash," "City Slickers," "Cliff Hanger," "Colorado Territory," "Comes a Horseman," "Continental Divide," "The Cowboys," "Denver and Rio Grande," "Devil's Doorway," "The

Duchess and the Dirtwater Fox," "Gatling Gun" ("Siege of Red River"), "Great Day In The Morning," "How the West Was Won," "Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade," "Lock, Stock and Barrel," "Lone Hand," "Lone Star," "Lone Star State," "Love of a Navajo," "Maverick Queen," "Mr. Majestyk," "Naked Spur," "Night Passage," "The Outcast," "Outcast of Poker Flat," "Panther's Moon," "Paradise Trail," "Rio Grande," "Run for Cover," "Sand," "The Sacketts," "Saddle the Wind," "Sand," "The Searchers," "Secret of Convict Lake," "Scarecrow," "Scarlett West," "The Sheep Man," "Small Town Vamp," "Snow Wonderland," "Snowball Express," "Spirits of Jupiter," "Spittin' Image," "Support Your Local Gunfighter," "Then Came Bronson," "These Thousand Hills," "Three Sisters From Seattle," "Three Young Texans," "Ticket to Tomahawk," "Tribute To A Bad Man," "True Grit," "Unsinkable Molly Brown," "Vengeance Valley," "Viva Zapata," "When the Legends Die," "White Buffalo," "Wilderness Family Robinson," and "Winter Hawk," "The Women of San Quentin." And these were just the talkies!

Other films made include "Mesa Verde" (educational), "Lassie" (two episodes of the TV series), "Cannon" (two episodes of the TV series), "Ecology vs Mining" (TV documentary), "Travel the Movie Trail" (documentary), an industrial film for the Ford Motor Company, and a TV commercial for the Association of American Railroads.

Colorado was also a haven for silent pictures. David Emrich, of Denver, is doing an extensive research project into Colorado's era of silent films, which this year has taken him overseas to film vaults in London, England.



Colorado Cowboys

High mountain country can get severely cold in the blustery winters, but the cowboy didn't seem to mind. He considers it cold only when the "thermometer is a foot below zero."

Some folks in the late 1870s held off starvation by shooting and eating a "slow elk." These were unbranded cattle issued by the government to Ute Indians. Slow elk were also the nucleus of many a big cowboy's spread in the Gunnison, Colorado, country before the government put their USID iron on their cattle.

The early Colorado mountain cowboys on the plateau claimed that the way to tell an important man was to throw him in the river. If he floated up stream, he was important!

History is full of accounts of the cut-throats, bank robbers, road-agents, and two-bit gamblers of the west. These days, television struggles to make heroes of them. Very little is ever written of the Pinkerton Detective Agency in Denver which captured most of them.

Could those old gun hands split a playing card edgewise, put six shots in the ace of spades, and hit a buzzard in the eye? Colorado old timers say, "Forget it. There never was a gun slinger who could hit anything fanning a gun, or shooting both guns at once. Shooting from the hip was done only in extreme necessity. After years of practice a good top-hand, shooting from below, could hit within a 12-inch circle at about ten feet, which was good only for a "gut shot." Most of them got their man in the back.

A Colorado cowboy will explain that a cow gets funny notions after she has learned that the horse and rider are one animal. When she sees the cowboy dismount and the animal divide itself, she immediately feels it her duty to kill one of them and straighten nature out again.



Cowboys, Gold, and the Chapter Plays

Colorado, like California, had its own gold rush. The old movie serials are replete with gold, the miners who found it and mined it, the black hats who wanted to steal it, and the white hats who wanted to get it back.

In the first Tim McCoy serial, "The Indians are Coming," in 1930, Jack Manning arrives in a Midwest town from Gold Creek. He brings with him a message from George Woods to his brother Tom and niece Mary, informing them he has struck gold and asking them to join him via wagon train.

Johnny Mack Brown, in the 1935 "Rustlers of Red Dog," finds that a wagon train has been infiltrated by a gang of rustlers who plan to rob the train of fifty-thousand dollars in gold.

In 1936, Buck Jones finds out that criminals intend to seize control of Hidden Valley Ranch to gain possession of a rich gold mine in "The Phantom Rider."

Bob Livingston, with the aid of Captain Frémont and his troops, end a plot to establish a foreign empire in America, an empire whose dictator wants to exploit the gold in Bob's rich mines. It all happens in Republic's 1936 serial, "The Vigilantes Are Coming."

In another Johnny Mack Brown serial, "Wild West Days," made in 1937, the scheming owner of *The Brimstone News*, is anxious to discover the location of Johnny's friend Larry's mine, which is rich in ore. He uses a ruse to find the mine: in his newspaper he announces a fake gold rush hoping to grab the property when the rich lode is found as thousands of gold-crazy men swarm in on horseback and in wagons.

Johnny, this time as a Pony

Express rider in "Flaming Frontiers," 1935, meets a man and his daughter who are menaced by a ruthless man who wants to obtain the daughter's brother's gold mine in California.

In 1940, it is not until Don Douglas has triumphantly fought his way into and out of dynamited gold mines that he finally unmasks the Skull in the 15th episode of "Deadwood Dick."

Out in the Panamint district of old California, Dick Foran leads vigilantes out to protect the Lost Aztec Mine, a fabulous bonanza, from the fake "protection" league in 1941's "Riders of Death Valley."

Even a deserted gold mine shaft figures in 1942 doings, when Robert Stevens as a Mountie survives a terrific dynamite blast in "Perils of the Royal Mounted."

Yep, it's a giant gold mine again, when Bill Elliott searches for his father, who disappeared while prospecting, in Columbia's 1942 chapter play "The Valley of Vanishing Men."

During the latter part of the Civil War, a gang of supposed Confederates raid all the Yankee gold shipments coming from Oro Grande, California, in "Raiders of Ghost City," but it's Wayne Decker and George Dolenz to the rescue in this 1944 Universal cliff hanger. See Chapter Plays, Page 4



Buckaroos' News

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Chapter Plays

Continued from Page 3

Clayton Moore is sure that, with a little more work, one of his mines will yield enough gold to pay off handsomely, in the 1938 serial "Adventures of Frank and Jesse James."

Columbia's 1948 chapter play "Tex Granger" saw Robert Kellard finding a young boy guarding a gold shipment which he has just rescued from a stagecoach that had been held up.

Dickie Moore and Jock O'Mahoney arrive at Nugget City and learn of outlaws intentions to attack a gold shipment in "Cody of the Pony Express," a 1950 release.

When "Don Daredevil Rides Again" in 1951, Ken Curtis is lured into an ambush but escapes to an old ore shack overhanging a cliff

Finally, Lee Roberts, an army scout, drives off Indians to save a wagon train which started out with a wagon full of gold in the 1956 chapter play "Blazing the Overland Trail."

Hope you've enjoyed reading about cowboys, gold, and the chapter plays, buckaroos. Look for more exciting adventures when the next issue of Buckaroos' News hits the newsstands in the Summer. And it's all brought to you by the friendly club members here at Silver Screen Buckaroos of Colorado.



The Old Buckaroo

Well, pardners, that's about it for us this time.

Red and I are having a great time here in "God's Country." We'd sure like to share it all with you when the crisp mountain air, cool streams, and singing pines beckon you our way.

Who knows, you may decide you like it so much you'll want to stay on and find a homestead here for yourself. A posse full have already done it and now call this beautiful state their very own.

Happy Trails, buckaroos!

Colorado



SSBC Buckaroos' News

