



SILVER SCREEN BUCKAROOS OF COLORADO

Buckaroos' News

Highlands Ranch, Colorado

Spring, 1997

Colorado's Famous Faces: Kit Carson

At the age of seventeen, Christopher "Kit" Carson ran away from a saddlery apprenticeship in Missouri and joined a wagon train headed for Santa Fe, New Mexico. Along the Cimarron Cutoff of the Santa Fe Trail, the wagon train crossed what was to become the state of Colorado fifty years later. The young Kit's position was as wrangler following the animal cavvy, one of the most dangerous jobs in the caravan. His year of saddle-

making served him well on the trip, as well as in later years when he had to make his own hide and skin clothing.

Five years later, In September, 1831, after a sojourn with a trapping party to California, young Kit Carson joined a Rocky Mountain Fur Company expedition as a free trapper. Free trappers' income depended upon their individual abilities, and it is a testimony to Kit's acquired skills and knowledge that he could now assume the great risks associated with free trapping. The trappers met up with Jim Bridger's group which was camped with a band of Nez Percés Indians.

In 1832, Kit joined John Gantt's group and trapped the upper Arkansas River and tributaries of the Green River in Colorado. In January, 1833, Kit led a group of men to recover nine horses driven off by Crow Indians. Two Cheyenne Indians in Kit's group bestowed upon him the name of Vih-hiu-nis, meaning "Little Chief."

Later, Kit led a group of mountain men beaver. Suddenly, a small Indian scouting turned and galloped away. Kit and his pursuit only to find themselves amongst fifty trappers. Kit, in the lead, rode as if to charge reached the Indians, he swerved his horse leaning to the protected side of his horse. The all ran a gauntlet amid a hail of rifle fire. By trappers were doing, it was too late to galloped to safety, suffering only two most extraordinary on record, and even Kit deceived and entrapped by Indians in his life.

In 1835, Kit, Jim "Old Gabe" Bridger, of the Green River, Colorado, and the was plenty of water-diluted whiskey at five (any style, but mostly Indian), games, races, gambling, arguments, fist fights, trade goods (traps, capotes, blankets, powder, lead, flints, etc.), and Indian women. White women wouldn't appear at rendezvous until the following year and many a trapper would leave rendezvous with an Indian wife. One day, a huge, drunk and swaggering French-Canadian named Shunar, having severely beaten two trappers, announced loudly that he could lick any man in camp. Kit, probably the smallest American in camp, accepted the challenge. Kit rode up to the mounted Shunar and asked if he was the American who was about to be whipped. With their horses touching, both fired their guns at exactly the same moment. Kit's shot Shunar in the arm but Shiner's ball went whizzing beside Kit's head, "cutting my hair and the powder burning my eye." During Kit's stay in camp, they had "no more bother with this bully [of a] Frenchman."

On the way back from a trip to California in 1847, Kit proceeded through Pueblo, Colorado, a settlement on the Upper Arkansas River, some seventy-five miles from Bent's Fort, then north and northeast to the Platte River, and finally down to the Missouri frontier. Seven Kiowa Indians rode into camp one noon, and as they were eating, the chief told his men to kill all the whites "when the smoke starts around the third time." Kit, however, understood Kiowa, and said, when the pipe started

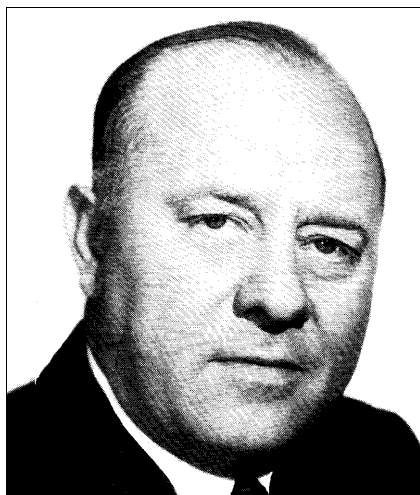


CHRISTOPHER "KIT" CARSON

over steep crags into a broad valley for party in full war regalia appeared, then companions spurred their horses in warriors who rode out to intercept the the entire war party. Just before he and threw himself forward while other trappers followed Kit's lead, and the time the Indians realized what the surround Kit's party, and the trappers wounded. Their escape was one of the admitted that he was never more utterly

and other trappers headed for the valley mountain man rendezvous where there dollars a pint. There was also dancing wrestling, foot races, shooting matches,

Coloradans In the Movies: Arthur Loft



Arthur Loft was born May 25, 1897, in Ouray, Colorado. He was cast in many non-Western movies as bankers, gangsters, lawyers, politicians, or swindlers beginning in the early 1930s. In Westerns, his usual role was as the leader of a gang. Mr. Loft died on January 1, 1947.



Arthur Loft Filmography

A partial list of Arthur Loft's Western films includes: *Back in the Saddle* (1941), *The Carson City Kid* (1940), *Colorado* (1940), *Covered Wagon Days* (1940), *Dark Command* (1940), *Days of Jesse James* (1939), *Down Mexico Way* (1941), *Frontier Badmen* (1943), *In Old Oklahoma* (1943), *Kid Courageous* (1935), *King of the Royal Mounted* (1936), *Lights of Old Santa Fe* (1944), *Man from Oklahoma* (1945), *North from the Lone Star* (1941), *Paradise Express* (1937), *Public Cowboy No. 1* (1937), *Rhythm of the Saddle* (1938), *Riders of Pasco Basin* (1940), *Sheriff of Redwood Valley* (1946), *Silver Spurs* (1943), *South of Santa Fe* (1942), *Southward, Ho!* (1939), and *Texas Terrors* (1940).

A Partial List of Arthur Loft's non-Western films includes: *The Crooked Road* (1940), *Down in "Arkansas"* (1938), *My Best Gal* (1944), *My Buddy* (1944), *One Exciting Week* (1946), *Rosie the Riveter* (1944), *A Scream in the Dark* (1943), *Smuggled Cargo* (1939), *Traffic in Crime* (1946).



Yesteryear

In 1873, Oliver F. Winchester developed the Winchester .44-40 (or Winchester '73). This gun represented a vast improvement over Winchester's 1866 model, which could fire rapidly but lacked impact and range. The new weapon featured a center-fire cartridge, which contained 40 grains of powder compared with 28 in the earlier model. This weapon became popularly known as "the gun that won the West."

On 27 June, 1874, in the Battle of Adobe Wells in the Texas Panhandle, 29 buffalo hunters held off 700 Kiowa, Comanche, Cheyenne, and Arapaho warriors with the aid of rapid-fire Sharps .50-caliber rifles. One of the defenders, William Barclay "Bat" Masterson, later became a famous peace officer in Dodge City, Kansas.

The Utes, the last Indians with a reservation in Colorado, came under increasing pressure from greedy whites in the summer of 1879. A newspaper campaign was launched under the slogan "the Utes must go." During this period, the Utes were blamed for any regional malady, including forest fires.



The Old Buckaroo

If you haven't picked up your copy of the "Cowboy Cartoon Cookbook" by Jim and Sue Willoughby (Golden West Publishers, Phoenix, AZ, 2990. \$5.95), you're missing a good'un. Their Telluride (Colorado) Teriyaki Marinade is great for steak or jerky. It uses ½ cup soy sauce, ½ cup sherry wine, 2 Tbsp sugar, 2 sliced large garlic cloves, ½ tsp diced fresh ginger, and ¾ tsp fresh ground pepper, all blended into a jar with a screw-on lid and refrigerated for at least two hours before using.



Who's got
my big
skillet?

You'll probably want Jim's "Cowboy Country Cartoons" book, too. Happy Trails, buckaroos!

Colorado



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Kit Carson

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around the third time, "This is the last smoke, is it? Now you kill us." The Indians threw off their blankets to get at their weapons, but stopped short when they found guns leveled at them. Kit verbally lashed them, shouting, "Thought you would murder us, did you? Do you know who I am. I am Little Chief—I am Kit Carson. Take a good look at me . . . You're a nice bunch of cowards. Shame on you and your tribe! Get out! Tell your chiefs you have seen Kit Carson and he gave you your lives." As the Indians sheepishly moved away, Kit yelled, "Stop! Take your bows, so you can kill rabbits. Next time you smoke the pipe of peace with a white man, don't plan to murder him."

During a hunting trip in the San Juan Mountains of Colorado, Kit was walking beside his horse on a steep slope when the animal fell, entangling Kit in the reins, and dragging him down. The fall sprained his shoulder and caused a chest injury that later developed an aneurysm.

On November 22, 1867, Kit Carson was the last man in his U.S. Army regiment to be mustered out of service. He had already moved his family from Taos, New Mexico, to Boggsville, Colorado, about two miles from Las Animas on the Purgatoire River. In January, 1868, the Indians and the government were demanding Kit's services in Washington to discuss their grievances, and although in failing health, Kit went to Washington. A treaty was concluded on March 2, settling the Ute Indians on a 15,120,000 acre reservation in western Colorado. The government promised that no one except agents, officers, and government men could "enter, reside, pass over or settle upon the confines of the reservation." As usual, white settlers immediately began to violate the agreement.

While on a trip in the east, Kit

consulted specialists about his health, which had been deteriorating since his fall in 1860. Kit returned home to Boggsville, Colorado, on April 11, 1868, and soon made a trip to consult a surgeon at Fort Lyon, a few miles away. On April 23, Kit's wife died. Exactly a month later, filled with grief over his wife's death, Christopher "Kit" Carson succumbed to the aneurysm in his chest and died at 4:25 p.m., May 23, 1868.

Kit Carson Chronology

December 24, 1809. Christopher Carson born in Madison County, Kentucky, and grew up in a stockade in Mississippi.

1826. Ran away from saddlery apprenticeship and joined a wagon train headed for Santa Fe, New Mexico. On the way, crossed a few miles into the southeast corner of Colorado on the Cimarron Cutoff of the Santa Fe Trail.

1829. Joined Ewing Young's trapping party in August, traveling over Raton Pass a short distance into Colorado, then through New Mexico and Arizona to California.

1831. Joined Thomas Fitzpatrick, whom the Indians called "Broken Hand," in the fall, headed north through Colorado, and wintered on Salmon River in Idaho.

1832. Joined Captain John Gantt in North Park at the headwaters of the North Platte in Jackson County, Colorado.

1832-33. Wintered with Gantt on Arkansas River near Pueblo, Colorado. Fought Crow Indians and recovered horses near Colorado Springs, in January.

1833. Went with Gantt to Laramie River in the spring. Was detached to chase thieving deserters to the Arkansas River in Colorado. Fought off

Comanche Indians south of the Arkansas River and rejoined Gantt in South Park. Left Gantt and trapped in the Colorado mountains, then returned to Taos in October. Joined Captain Richard Bland Lee and went to Fort Uinta, Utah.

1834. Joined Jim Bridger and attended rendezvous on the Green River in Colorado.

1841. After several years of trapping, traveling, attending rendezvous, and fighting Indians, traveled to Bent's Fort on the Arkansas River in eastern Colorado.

1841-42. Hunter for Bent's Fort, September, 1841, to April, 1842. Baptized by Padre Martinez January 28, 1842, at Taos, New Mexico.

1842. Went to St. Louis, Missouri, and met John C. Frémont, "the Pathfinder," on a river steamer. June 10 to September 3, guided Frémont's first expedition.

1843. Arrived at Bent's Fort, Colorado, in January. Married Josefa Jaramillo in Taos, New Mexico, on February 6. Rejoined Frémont at Fort St. Vrain on the South Platte River in Colorado.

1843-46. Guided Frémont's second and third expeditions.

1846. Fought Indians and crisscrossed the country on various travels.

1847. Entered military duty.

1848-50. After various travels in California, and across the country delivering dispatches, returned to winter at his home in Taos.

1850-51. Went to Rayado, New Mexico, about fifty miles east of Taos, and acted as detective to apprehend a man named Fox for robbery on the Santa Fe Trail.

1852-53. Trapped in the Colorado Rockies and took trip to Los Angeles, California.

1854. In March, began duties as an Indian agent.

1856. Dictated his memoirs.

1859. Ka-ni-ache, the leading chief of

the Mouache Ute Indians, prevented an attempt on Carson's life by a lesser chief named Blanco.

1860. Injured by a fall while hunting in the San Juan Mountains of Colorado in October.

1861. Resigned as Indian agent in June. Became Colonel of New Mexico Volunteer Regiment in September.

1862. Participated in the battle of Valverde, in south-central New Mexico, in February. From Fort Stanton, southeast of Valverde, directed a fall campaign against the Mescalero Apache Indians.

1863-64. Conducted the Navajo campaign, June to January. Fought in a battle at Adobe Walls, Texas, November 25.

1865. Brevetted brigadier general of volunteers in March.

1866. Took command of Fort Garland in south-central Colorado in August and entertained General Sherman there in September.

1867. In the summer, moved from Taos, New Mexico, to Boggsville, Colorado, a settlement on the Arkansas River between Bent's Old Fort and Fort Lyons. Resigned from the army and was mustered out in November.

1868. Accompanied by his friend Major D.C. Oakes in Colorado, Kit builds his last campfire in what would later become Highlands Ranch. Appointed Superintendent of Indian Affairs

for Colorado Territory in January. Spent February and March in Washington and other eastern cities negotiating a treaty for the Ute Indians and consulting physicians about his health. Arrived home in Boggsville, Colorado, on April 11. His wife died on April 23. Christopher "Kit" Carson died one month later on May 23, 1868, at Fort Lyon, Colorado, and was buried at Boggsville, Colorado. In late spring of the following year, the remains of Carson and his wife were reinterred in a cemetery at Taos, New Mexico.



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