

The Bantam Cowboy

US : 1928 : dir. Louis King :

Silent : 52 min

prod: : scr: Frank Howard Clark : dir.ph.: Roy Eslick

[Buzz Barton](#)

Frank Rice; Tom Lingham; Dorothy Kitchen; Bob Fleming; Bill Patton; Sam Nelson

Ref:	Pages	Sources	Stills	Words	Ω □ € Z ♀	Copy on VHS	Last Viewed
3804a	1½	1	0	730	- - - - -	No	Unseen

Speelfilm Encyclopedie review:

"The railroad is coming and will cross Tom Lingham's land. His half-brother Bob Fleming and foreman Bill Patton decide to kidnap Lingham and his daughter Dorothy Kitchen with a view to selling the land themselves. Buzz Barton - once again as Red Hepner, as he was known in the series - is able to thwart the plans of the two of them with his friend Frank Rice. Robert N Bradbury delivered the story, which was adapted by Frank Howard Clark. Roy Eslick did the camerawork. **1½"

[no listing in "Classics of the Silent Screen", "Hollywood in the Twenties", "A Pictorial History of the Silent Screen", "Silent Movies: A Picture Quiz Book", "Halliwell's Film Guide", "Leonard Maltin's Movie and Video Guide 2001", "The Critics' Film Guide", "The Good Film and Video Guide", "Movies on TV and Videocassette 1988-89", "Rating the Movies (1990)", "The Sunday Times Guide to Movies on Television", "The Time Out Film Guide", "TV Times Film & Video Guide 1995", "Variety Movie Guide 1993", "Video Movie Guide 1993" or "The Virgin Film Guide"]

The Moving Picture Boy entry:

" "THE BOY RIDER", "THE BANTAM COWBOY", "THE FIGHTIN' RED-HEAD", "THE FRECKLED RASCAL" - Buzz Barton's film titles tell it all. (His real name was Billy Lamarr.) He was the archetypal junior cowboy of the closing years of the silent cinema. If it

hadn't been silent, he'd have made a lot of noise - ridin', roarin', ropin' and fightin' till the cows came home.

He was generally the protagonist, his own boy, not a sidekick like his younger contemporary Frankie Darro. His russet hair bristled, his honest blue eyes glared defiance, he whooped exultantly. He was so completely the prairie rider that his name passed into the folk memory. Buzz Barton air rifles were sold. (And a decade or so later the Buzz-name was attached to another boy rider of the screen, Buzzy Henry.)

Barton had been raised on a ranch, and at 12 won the title of Champion Trick Rider and Fancy Rider. In 1926, performing in a show at Cheyenne, Wyoming, he was spotted by a scout from FBO, and soon afterwards was launched in "THE BOY RIDER". From the 1931 serial "THE LONE DEFENDER" onward, Buzz Barton rode, shot and fought steadily through the Thirties, but no longer a prodigy, just a cowboy among others. He didn't return to the saddle after World War Two, not in front of a camera anyway. An unrecognisable Buzz Barton is the train conductor in "IN THE HEAT OF THE NIGHT" in 1967."

No further information currently available. Without the *Speelfilm Encyclopedie* we shouldn't have any information at all on the films of this early boy matinee star. Barton was now 14, and in that year alone made "**THE FIGHTIN' REDHEAD**", "**THE LARIAT KID**", "**THE LITTLE BUCKAROO**", "**ORPHAN OF THE SAGE**", "**THE PINTO KID**", "**ROUGH RIDIN' RED**", "**WIZARD OF THE SADDLE**" and "**YOUNG WHIRLWIND**". His moment of glory was fleeting, but heavy on the saddle-leather. Louis King was his regular director, and many of the cast here showed up in other Barton epics - Lingham was the villain in "**THE FRECKLED RASCAL**" (29) for example.

Note that, in an agreeable twist to the conventions of the genre, Red Hepner (Barton) was not some boy sidekick to a **Red Ryder** or **Roy Rogers** figure, he was his own prime agent, and had an adult sidekick (Frank Rice) to handle the gunplay his producers deemed him too young for. The films seem to have been made with a firm eye on the boys in matinee audiences, and its an arguable point whether all the Buzz Barton titles should strictly be counted as children's productions. I have no idea as yet what could definitively be regarded as the first children's film, but it seems to be the case that such silent titles could be said to have been made for children to see without parental accompaniment.

See subject index under **KIDNAPPING, KIDS OUTWIT THE CROOKS, SILENT CINEMA** and **WESTERNS**.