

Buzzy Rides the Range

US : 1940 : dir. Richard C Kahn : Republic : 60 min
 prod: Dick l'Estrange : scr: : dir.ph.:
Buzzy Henry
 Dave O'Brien; Claire Rochelle; George Morrell; George Eldredge; Frank Marlo; Don Kelly

Ref:	Pages	Sources	Stills	Words	Ω	8	€	M	⌘	Copy on VHS	Last Viewed
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Not a still from this film – he's clearly older than 9 – but a good character study of Henry.
 Source: indeterminate website

Speelfilm Encyclopedie review:

“Dick L'Estrange produced two Westerns for Arthur Ziehn Productions with 9-year old Buzzy Henry, of which this was the first. The philosophy behind the films was that the young Western fans would love to see a

youthful hero. Buzzy was not bad, but the kids failed to identify with him in any case. O'Brien took on the adult honours, and provided the romance [*yawn..*]. A good ten years later Republic would try once again to launch a boy star, in Michael Chapin. An attempt in 1937 to start a Bobby Nelson series

failed even before the first was shot. The example for the producers was, of course, Buzz Barton, who reaped considerable success in the late twenties. His competitor Newton House did not make it either, however, so that Barton is the only boy star known to Westerns to have had any success. * ”

The Moving Picture Boy entry on Henry:

“Robert – who soon adopted the nickname of "Buzzy", in the tradition of ridin’ boys like Buzz Barton – won a medal for trick riding at the age of two in a Colorado rodeo. A mere month or two later he was filming in a Western with Buck Jones, and had made more than a dozen such pictures by the time he was five.

Buzzy or not, he was a very untypical ridin’ boy: sensitive-looking (with soulful brown eyes), slender, almost delicate. Starting earlier than Barton, he had ten years as Boy Rider of the Silver Screen. In his late teens, he continued with hardly a let-up. There were four films in 1947: "**KING OF THE WILD HORSES**", "**LAST OF THE REDMEN**", "**LAW OF THE CANYON**" and "**ROLLING HOME**".

In 1948 he was in the Tex Granger serial, and in one or two films a year during the Fifties,

including "**THE INDIAN FIGHTER**" (55), "**JUBAL**" (56) and "**COWBOY**" (58). Between times he toured the rodeo circuits.

Buzz Henry was seen in some popular films of the Sixties, like "**SPENCER’S MOUNTAIN**" (63), "**SHENANDOAH**" and "**VON RYAN’S EXPRESS**" (65) and "**TONY ROME**" (67). But he was also in demand as a technical adviser, stunt coordinator and sequence director, and was frequently the second unit director, for instance on "**THE COWBOYS**" (72). His untimely death came at the age Of 40.”

[no listing in "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", "Radio Times Guide to Films", "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"]

No further information currently available. This title is mistakenly omitted from Holmstrom’s own filmography for Henry. The *Speelfilm Encyclopedie* has been an invaluable source for information of this kind, since there is no trace or mention of these Western boy-stars, even the pre-eminent Buzz Barton, to be found anywhere else. Republic’s second – and last – Henry vehicle was "**BUZZY AND THE PHANTOM PINTO**" (41). The only one of his pre-television TV Westerns to be seen these days is "**WILD BEAUTY**" (46), in which he played (none too persuasively) an orphaned indian boy. He also featured in two serials of 1946 – "**SON OF THE GUARDSMAN**" and "**HOP HARRIGAN**".

Hazarding a guess as to why these young boy leads failed to find favour with the matinee Western fans, I would bet – without having seen any of their vehicles – that the scripts were toned down too much for the juvenile audience (as of course they would be today) or had an insufferably patronising air about them. The kids already identified with their adult icons on the screen, and it was a poor exchange to swap Randolph Scott, Hopalong Cassidy, Roy Rogers or whoever for a nine-year old who wasn't even allowed to shoot anybody, and certainly never took a bullet in the shoulder. Boy sidekicks to adult Western stars were more acceptable, like faithful pages to chivalric knights, and most American comic book heroes – Batman, Dick Tracy, the Flash – had their indefatigable boy aides. In the Red Ryder Westerns, for example, it was "Little Beaver", his young indian soulmate, played in many titles by Bobby Blake.

See the sequel, and subject index under [WESTERNS](#) for a sub-section on the output of Western boy stars.

