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B Western Actor's Encyclopedia: Facts, Photos And Filmographies For More Than 250 Familiar Faces



Synopsis

During the course of a Western movie, the white hat could sing six songs to a beautiful girl, shoot half a dozen cattle rustlers, fight off an Indian attack and still have time to kiss his horse before he rode off into the sunset. Dashing heroes, dastardly villains, lovely ladies in distress and comical sidekicks--this was the formula for the westerns so popular through the fifties and sixties. This nostalgic reference work covers the heroes (90+ western stars), the sidekicks (60+ saddle pals), the cowgirls (60+ leading ladies), the bad guys (40+ villains), plus miscellaneous other players. A biographical sketch and career description with photographs and a filmography is given for each performer.

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Customer Reviews

Like newsreels, serials, and double features, B-Westerns (low-budget) are things of film's past. Their fans, while not legion, are exceptionally devoted. Holland provides entries on over 250 performers, divided into four categories: Heroes, Sidekicks, Cowgirls, and Bad Guys. Each entry includes a biographical sketch and a filmography cross-referenced to other entries. The writing is cliched but enthusiastic. There are some misspellings of non-Western names and the book sorely lacks a strong introduction to give the genre some definition and context, particularly for younger readers unfamiliar with Westerns except through films like Blazing Saddles. Thomas Wiener, formerly with "American Film," Washington, D.C. Copyright 1989 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

"invaluable...the book well fulfills its promise to provide encyclopedic information"--ARBA;"a well illustrated reference source...highly recommended"--Choice; "the book well fulfills its promise to provide encyclopedic information"--ARBA; "an invaluable A-Z...superbly researched"--Film Review; "over 250 performers"--Library Journal.

I am 68 years old and starting in the early fifties, I was an ardent fan of these so-called B Westerns as well as the later TV westerns. I was looking forward to this book. However, the book is a disappointment and will likely be put in the recycling bin. It is poorly organized, with pictures often not relating to adjacent text. It is inconsistent in the information provided for each star: with some it is fairly complete with others hardly anything at all. In fact, overall, it is simply incomplete. I wish this book had been the encyclopedia it claims to be, but it is not.

This is a great resource book for people who want to know what actor played in what movies, who the sidekicks are, the female actresses, the villains in a movie, etc. Everyone who enjoys westerns will enjoy reading up on the movie and the stars inside them.

First of all this book is outstanding. Growing up in a family that worked on B Western this brought back a lot of good times as a kid. My father worked with most of these actors, I would like to see his other books.

Ted Holland's B Western Actors Encyclopedia is the best book of it's kind I've read. It is full of info on actors and actresses of bygone years. A great reference book. A must have for all western fans.
John R. Tracy

absolutely a great research book for anyone who likes Old Western Movies. This is the one book that is a must.

I have not read this book; however, am completely satisfied with my choice as a gift for my husband. He really enjoys this book and has spent many hours researching facts on all the western actors that he enjoyed watching in the past.

In theory a book like this would be awesome, but when you get someone who clearly has not done much in depth research and has no idea on how to present his poorly researched data you get a

mess. The most glaring misinformation I found indicated that John Wayne played Singin' Sandy Saunders in numerous westerns. Now this wouldn't be too bad if this was the first book of any kind with info on John Wayne's B Westerns but seeing as how several other books printed well before this have the correct information it's inexcusable. The other things that irk me, is how the filmography is presented. It's very hard to read it, as it's presented as almost as more of a sentence than any type of list. For instance (Let's just make a pretend listing) Ben Cutter (1935) Thunder Riders of the Golden West, The Phantom of the Golden Spitoon, A Wronged Hero and a big fight and a last shootout, (1936) Cattlemen vs the wild cupcakes, Strawberry Shortcake takes on Strawberry Rustlers, and the no plot but at least Gabby is here. And the listings are broken up into two separate sections for those who started out as a hero then switched over to sidekick status. So it makes for a very incoherent book.

A quote from a review reprinted above characterizes this disappointing book as "superbly researched." The reviewer must not be all that familiar with B-Westerns to have come to that bizarre conclusion. In fact, B Western Actors Encyclopedia doesn't seem to have been researched at all. And not only that, author Holland could hardly have used the volumes he quotes in his bibliography and still have managed to misspell the names of important genre director Spencer Gordon Bennet and popular heroine Lucile Browne. (The latter, almost needless to say, becomes Lucille Brown). Nitpicking? I don't think so. This, after all, is a volume that calls itself an encyclopedia. As a matter of fact, most fans of the genre will find themselves in the unusual situation of knowing more about the subject matter than the author. Someone once published a book debunking a recent biography of Errol Flynn. To compile a list of errors and omissions in B WESTERN ACTORS ENCYCLOPEDIA would probably prove just as exhausting. My one star is for McFarland's handsome design and several quite wonderful stills.

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