

Buzz Barton

Titles: 18

Sources: 2

Stills: 2

Born: Billy Lamar(r); Gallatin, Texas; November 5th 1914

Died: St Louis; November 20th 1980



Gosh darn it! This warnt in my contract!

Source: The Moving Picture Boy

Forgotten silent matinee star of a series of 14 Westerns aimed at kids, and heralded by his studio as "The World's Greatest Boy Rider and Western Star". Considered too young to wield a gun, the catapult was his typical weapon. Strangely, neither Buzz nor any of his films are mentioned in any source I've encountered – even those concentrating on the silent cinema – apart from the *"Speelfilm Encyclopedie"*. He does not rate a mention in *"The BFI Companion To The Western"* or *"The Encyclopedia Of Western Movies"*, which I suppose reveals the limitations of their research. In 1938 Buzz had a small supporting role in the Columbia Western **"PHANTOM GOLD"**, and in 1940 **"WILD HORSE VALLEY"**, but effectively his film career was over at 20.

Buzz Barton hails from an era when boyhood was still a definable paradigm, with its own clearly recognisable attributes, before it was subsumed into the amorphous thing we now call "childhood". It was a paradigm that dovetailed particularly well with the qualities of the mythic Wild West – independence, rugged self-reliance, a flight from all that *civilisation* implies. It was not simply a love of handguns and horses which made generations of boys identify so readily with the Western, but its evocation of a physical, masculine world where rules and constraints evaporated on the border of town. The wide open prairie was an adventure playground for boys of all ages, and icons like Buzz Barton were given free range upon it.



*It looks as though Buzz is about to get a whipping in "THE SLINGSHOT KID" – but Milburn Morante wouldn't dare!
Source: indeterminate website*

Speelfilm Encyclopedie biographical notes:

"[**"THE BOY RIDER"** was..] The start of a series of Westerns with Buzz Barton for FBO. He made his film debut in 1926 in Jack Perrin Westerns as Billy Lamar (the name he was born under in 1914). After a dozen B-roles in Westerns his star career began here. The series of fourteen Westerns was good, all but one directed by Louis King and technically well-polished."

"...The fun aspect of the Buzz Westerns was perhaps that the hero, Buzz that is, never got the girl in the end. The screenwriters thought a boy of fourteen too young for that..."

"[during **"FLYING LARIATS"**..] Buzz had problems, and only appeared as a star again, after making a few more Westerns, in 1935 beside Rex Bell."

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."

FILMOGRAPHY

Year	Age	Title	Role
27	13	THE BOY RIDER	in title role
27		THE SLINGSHOT KID	in title role
28	14	THE BANTAM COWBOY	in title role, Red Hepner
28		THE FIGHTIN' REDHEAD	in title role, Red Hepner
28		THE LARIAT KID	
28		THE LITTLE BUCKAROO	in title role
28		ORPHAN OF THE SAGE	in title role
28		THE PINTO KID	in title role
28		THE PIONEER SCOUT	[credited as Billy Lamar]
28		ROUGH RIDIN' RED	in title role, Red Hepner
28		WIZARD OF THE SADDLE	in title role
28		YOUNG WHIRLWIND	in title role
29	15	THE FRECKLED RASCAL	in title role
29		THE LITTLE SAVAGE	in lead role
29		PALS OF THE PRAIRIE	
29		THE VAGABOND CUB	
30	16	CANYON HAWKS	
30		THE LONE DEFENDER	12x Rin Tin Tin (talkie) serial
31	17	RIDERS OF THE CACTUS	in lead role
31		FLYING LARIATS	in lead role