



WEBFOOTER EXTRA

DECEMBER 2016



MERRY CHRISTMAS



◆ Remembering the Wild, Wild West – Randolph Scott – see page 2.

WEBFOOTERS POST CARD CLUB

PO Box 17240

Portland OR 97217-0240

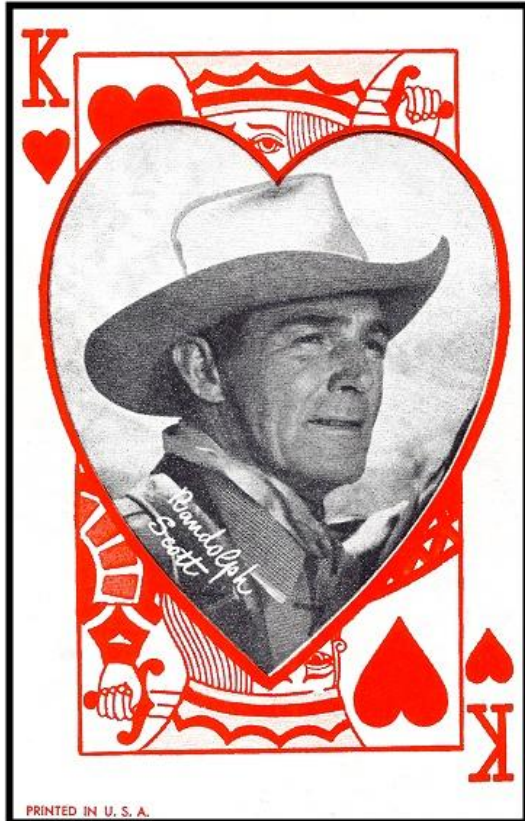


www.thewebfooters.com



Remembering the Wild, Wild West

Randolph Scott — Beloved Cowboy



Randolph Scott was the king of hearts on a series of trade cards with the “PRINTED IN U.S.A.” label.

George Randolph Scott was born January 23, 1898 and he died March 2, 1987. Scott was an American film actor whose career spanned from 1928 to 1962. As a leading man for all but the first three years of his cinematic career, Scott appeared in a variety of genres, including social dramas, crime dramas, comedies, musicals (albeit in non-singing and non-dancing roles), adventure tales, war films, and a few horror and fantasy films. However, his most enduring image is that of the tall-in-the-saddle Western hero. Out of his more than 100 film appearances over 60 were in westerns. Of all the major stars whose name was associated with the western, Scott most closely identified with it.

Scott was considered tall, (at 6 feet 2½ inches), lanky and handsome, Scott displayed an easygoing charm and courtly Southern drawl in his early films that helped offset his limitations as an actor, where he was frequently found to be stiff or "lumbering". As he matured, however, Scott's acting improved while his features became burnished and leathery, turning him into the ideal "strong, silent" type of stoic hero.

Scott was born in Orange County, Virginia, but he grew up in Charlotte, North Carolina, the second of six children born to parents of Scottish-American descent. His father was George Grant Scott, born in Franklin, Virginia, an administrative engineer in a textile firm. His mother was Lucille Crane Scott, born in Luray, Virginia, a member of a wealthy North Carolina family. The Scott children in order of birth were: Margaret, Randolph, Katherine, Virginia, Joseph and Barbara, most born in North Carolina.

Because of his family's financial status, young Randolph was able to attend private schools such as Woodberry Forest School. From an early age, Scott developed and displayed an athletic trait, excelling in football, baseball, horse racing, and swimming.

In April 1917, the United States entered World War I and shortly afterwards, Scott, then 19 years old, joined the United States Army. He served in France as an artillery observer with the 2nd Trench Mortar Battalion, 19th Field Artillery. His wartime experience gave him training that was put to use in his later film career, including horsemanship and the use of firearms.

After the Armistice brought World War I to an end, Scott stayed in France and enrolled in an artillery officers' school. Although he eventually received a commission, Scott decided to return to America and thus journeyed home around 1919.

With his military career over, Scott continued his education at Georgia Tech where he set his sights on becoming an all-American football player. However a back injury prevented him from achieving this goal. Scott then transferred to the University of North Carolina, where he majored in textile engineering and manufacturing. As with his military career, however, he eventually dropped out of college and went to work as an accountant in the textile firm where his father was employed.

Around 1927, Scott developed an interest in acting and decided to make his way to Los Angeles and seek a career in the motion picture industry. Fortunately, Scott's father had become acquainted with Howard Hughes and provided a letter of introduction for his son to present to the eccentric millionaire filmmaker. Hughes responded by getting Scott a small part in a George O'Brien film called *Sharp Shooters* (1928). Despite its title and the presence of O'Brien, *Sharp Shooters* is not a western, as some film historians claimed. Rather, it's a romantic comedy. A print of the film survives in the UCLA Film and Television Archive.

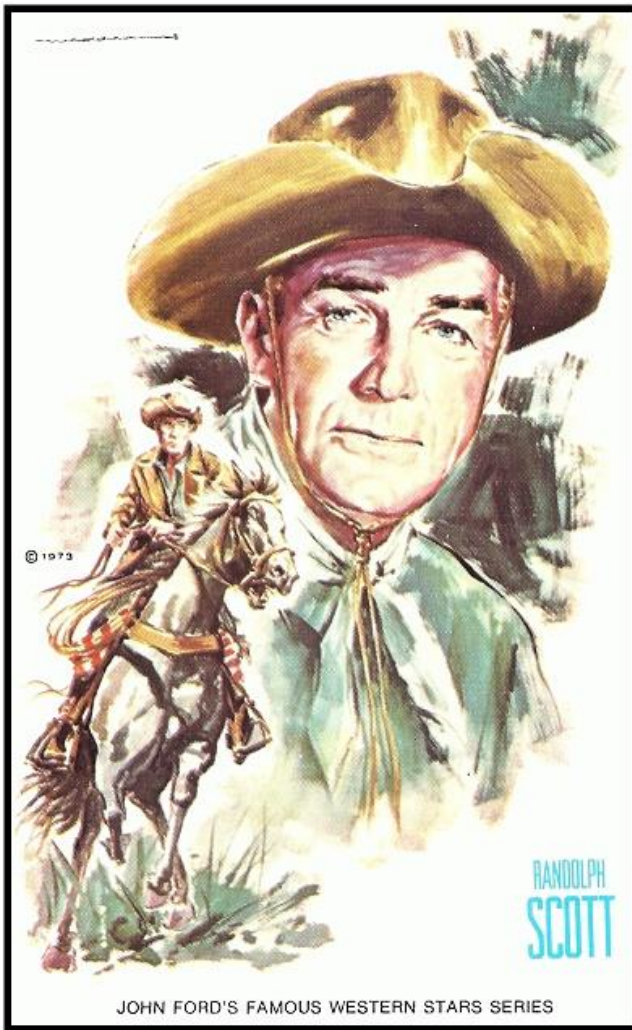
In the next few years, Scott continued working as an extra and bit player in several films, including *Weary River* (1929) with Richard Barthelmess and *The Virginian* (1929) with Gary Cooper. Reputedly, Scott also served as Cooper's dialect coach in this latter film. On the advice of director Cecil B. DeMille, Scott also gained much-needed acting experience by performing in stage plays with the Pasadena Playhouse.

In 1931 Scott played his first leading role (with Sally Blane) in *Women Men Marry*, a film, now apparently lost, that was made by a Poverty Row studio called Headline Pictures. He followed that movie with a supporting part in a Warner Bros. production starring George Arliss, *A Successful Calamity*. In 1932 Scott appeared in a play at the Vine Street Theatre in Hollywood entitled *Under a Virginia Moon*. His performance in this play resulted in several offers for screen tests by the major movie studios. Scott eventually signed a seven-year contract with Paramount Pictures at a salary of \$400 per week (adjusted for inflation, \$400 in 1932 was the equivalent of approximately \$4800 in 2006).

Scott's first role under his new Paramount contract was a small supporting part in a comedy called *Sky Bride* (1932) starring Richard Arlen and Jack Oakie. Following that, however, Paramount cast him as the lead in *Heritage of the Desert* (1932), his first significant starring role and also the one that established him as a western hero. As with *Women Men Marry*, Sally Blane was his leading lady. The film was the first of ten western films that Scott made for Paramount in a series loosely based on the novels of Zane Grey. Around the same time, Fox also remade some Zane Grey titles that they owned, with George O'Brien as their star.

Many of these Grey adaptations were remakes of earlier silent films. In an effort to save on production costs, Paramount utilized stock footage from the silent version and even hired some of the same actors to repeat their roles. For the 1933 films *The Thundering Herd* and *Man of the Forest*, Scott's hair was darkened and he sported a trim moustache so that he could easily be matched to footage of Jack Holt, the star of the silent versions.

By 1935 Scott was firmly established as a popular movie star following the release of *Rocky Mountain Mystery* (1935). Paramount loaned Scott to other studios. Scott made four films for RKO Radio Pictures during 1935-36. Two of these were in the popular series of musicals starring Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers: *Roberta* (1935), also starring Irene Dunne, and *Follow the Fleet* (1936). In both of these films Scott played Astaire's lunk-headed but likable pal. The other two were among the best in Scott's career: *Village Tale* (1935), "a touching, still-obscure melodrama about small-town gossip and hypocrisy" directed by John Cromwell, and *She* (1935), a superb adventure-fantasy adapted from H. Rider Haggard's 1886 novel.



In 1936, Scott, on loan to independent producer Edward Small, starred in another adventure classic, *The Last of the Mohicans*, adapted from the 1826 novel by James Fenimore Cooper. A big hit in its day, the film "gave Scott his first unqualified 'A' picture success as a lead."

In 1938 Scott finished his contract with Paramount and began freelancing. Some of the roles that he took over the next few years were supporting ones, while his other roles during the same time frame had him occasionally lapse into villainy. One missed opportunity also came about around this time. Due to his Southern background, Scott was considered for the role of Ashley Wilkes in *Gone with the Wind*, but it was Leslie Howard who eventually got the part.

For 20th Century Fox Scott supported child star Shirley Temple in *Rebecca of Sunnybrook Farm* (1938) and *Susannah of the Mounties* (1939). For the same studio he played a supporting role in his first Technicolor film, *Jesse James* (1939), a lavish highly romanticized account of the famous outlaw (Tyrone Power) and his brother Frank (Henry Fonda). Shortly after making this film, Scott portrayed Wyatt Earp in *Frontier Marshal* (1939) and, for Universal, starred with Kay Francis in *When the Daltons Rode* (1940).

Scott followed this by co-starring with Errol Flynn in *Virginia City* (1940). Scott played the "other man" role in the Irene Dunne-Cary Grant romantic comedy *My Favorite Wife* (1940). In 1941 Scott returned to Zane Grey country by co-starring with Robert Young in the the Technicolor production *Western Union*. Scott played a "good bad man" in this film and gave one of his finest performances. In 1941, Scott also co-starred with a young Gene Tierney in another western, *Belle Starr*. Scott's only role as a truly evil villain was in Universal's *The Spoilers*, a rip-roaring adaptation of Rex Beach's 1905 tale of the Alaskan gold rush also starring Marlene Dietrich and John Wayne.

The movie's climax featured Scott and Wayne (and their stunt doubles) in one of the most spectacular fistfights ever filmed. The Dietrich-Scott-Wayne combination worked so well that Universal recast the trio that same year in *Pittsburgh*, a war-time action-melodrama which had Wayne and Scott slugging it out once more. Scott was billed above Wayne in both films but Wayne actually played the heroic leading man roles and enjoyed more screen time in each movie.

In 1943 Scott starred in *The Desperadoes*, Columbia Pictures' first feature in Technicolor. The film was produced by Harry Joe Brown, with whom Scott would form a business partnership several years later.

Shortly after the United States entered World War II, Scott attempted to obtain an officer's commission in the Marines, but because of a back injury years earlier, he was rejected. However, he did his part for the war effort by touring in a comedy act with Joe DeRita (who later became a member of the Three Stooges) for the Victory Committee showcases, and Scott also raised food for the government on a ranch that he owned.

In 1942 and 1943, Scott appeared in several war films, notably *To the Shores of Tripoli*, *Bombardier*, the Canadian warship drama *Corvette K-225*, *Gung Ho!* and *China Sky*.

In 1946, after playing roles that had him wandering in and out of the saddle for many years, including a role alongside Charles Laughton in the cheaply made production *Captain Kidd* (1945), Scott appeared in *Abilene Town*, a United Artists release which cast him in what would become one of his classic images, the fearless lawman cleaning up a lawless town. The film "cemented Scott's position as a cowboy hero" and from this point on all but two of his starring films would be westerns. The Scott Westerns of the late 1940s would each be budgeted around \$1 million equal to over \$12 million today.

Scott renewed his acquaintance with producer Harry Joe Brown and together they began producing many of Scott's Westerns, including several that were shot in the two-color Cinecolor process. Their collaboration produced the superior *Coroner Creek* (1948) with Scott as a vengeance-driven cowpoke, *Gunfighters* (1947) based on the Zane Grey novel *Two Sombremos*, and *The Walking Hills* (1949), a modern-day tale of gold hunters.

Scott also made westerns for Nat Holt. Some of these movies, *Badman's Territory*, *Trail Street*, and *Rage at Dawn* were released by RKO, while others, like *Fighting Man of the Plains*, *Canadian Pacific*, and *The Cariboo Trail* were released by Twentieth Century Fox. In the late 1940s and early 1950s, Scott's films were made mainly for Columbia or Warner Bros. His salary for the latter studio was \$100,000 per picture.

Scott's pictures from this period include *Colt .45* (1950), films *Fort Worth* (1951), *Man in the Saddle* (1951) and *Carson City* (1951), and the 1952 films *Hangman's Knot* (which Scott produced), *The Man Behind the Gun*, *The Stranger Wore a Gun* (filmed in 3-D), and *Thunder Over the Plains*. Also in 1953, Scott appeared in *Riding Shotgun*. In 1954, Scott played a laconic good guy in *The Bounty Hunter*.

Scott also made *Rage at Dawn* in 1955 for Nat Holt, which was released by RKO starring Scott and Forrest Tucker, and featuring Denver Pyle, Edgar Buchanan, and J. Carrol Naish. It purports to tell the true story of the Reno Brothers, an outlaw gang which terrorized the American Midwest, particularly Southern Indiana, soon after the American Civil War.

Also of interest is *Shootout at Medicine Bend* shot in 1955, but released in 1957, which was Scott's last movie in black and white. The movie co-stars James Garner and Angie Dickinson.

By 1956, Scott turned 58, an age where the careers of most leading men would be winding down. Scott, however, was about to enter his finest and most acclaimed period.

In 1955, screenwriter Burt Kennedy wrote a script entitled *Seven Men from Now* which was scheduled to be filmed by John Wayne's Batjac Productions with Wayne as the film's star. However, Wayne was already committed to John Ford's *The Searchers*. Wayne therefore suggested Scott as his replacement. The resulting film, released in 1956, did not make a great impact at the time but is now regarded by many as one of Scott's best, as well as the one that launched Scott and Budd Boetticher into a successful collaboration that totaled seven films. While each film is independent and there are no shared characters or settings, this set of films is often called the Ranown Cycle, for the production company run by Scott and Harry Joe Brown, which was involved in their production. Kennedy scripted four of them.

Boetticher achieved works of great beauty, formally precise in structure and visually elegant, notably for their use of the distinctive landscape of the California Sierras. As the hero of these "floating poker games", Scott tempers their innately pessimistic view with quiet, stoical humor, as he pits his wits against such charming villains as Richard Boone in *The Tall T* and Claude Akins in *Comanche Station*.

In 1962 Scott made his final film appearance in *Ride the High Country*, a film now regarded as a classic. It was directed by Sam Peckinpah and co-starred Joel McCrea, an actor who had a screen image similar to Scott's and who also from the mid-1940s on devoted his career almost exclusively to westerns.

McCrea, like Scott, retired from filmmaking after this picture, although he returned to the screen twice in later years.

Scott married twice. In 1936, he became the second husband of heiress Marion duPont, daughter of William Du Pont, Sr., and great-granddaughter of Éleuthère Irénée Du Pont de Nemours, the founder of the E.I. du Pont de Nemours and Company. Marion had previously married George Somerville, with Scott serving as best man at the wedding. The Scotts' marriage ended in divorce three years later, in 1939. The union produced no children. Though divorced, she kept his last name nearly five decades, until her death in 1983.

In 1944, Scott married the actress Patricia Stillman, who was 21 years his junior. In 1950, they adopted two children, Sandra and Christopher. Patricia Stillman Scott died in 2004. The Scotts are buried together in the Elmwood Cemetery in Charlotte NC.

Following *Ride the High Country*, Scott retired from film at the age of 64. A wealthy man, Scott had managed shrewd investments throughout his life, eventually accumulating a fortune worth a reputed \$100 million, with holdings in real estate, gas, oil wells, and securities.

He and his wife Patricia continued to live in his custom, mid-century modern, Burton A. Schutt designed home at 156 Copley Place Beverly Hills. During his retirement years he remained friends with Fred Astaire, with whom he attended Dodgers games. An avid golfer with a putting green in his yard, Scott was a member of the Bel Air Country Club, Los Angeles Country Club and Eldorado Country Clubs. Scott also became friends with the Reverend Billy Graham. Scott was described by his son Christopher as a deeply religious man. He was an Episcopalian.

Scott died of heart and lung ailments in 1987 at the age of 89 in Beverly Hills, California. He was interred at Elmwood Cemetery in Charlotte, North Carolina. He and his wife Patricia had been married for 43 years. He was survived by his wife, son Christopher, daughter Sandra Scott Tyler, and three grandchildren. Their mid-century modern home was torn down in 2008.

