

Wagon Train

Wagon Train aired from September 28, 1957 to June 13, 1962 on NBC and from September 19, 1962 to May 2, 1965 on ABC. There are 284 episodes in this eight year series.

The series was inspired by the 1950 film *Wagon Master* directed by John Ford and starring Ben Johnson, Harry Carey Jr. and Ward Bond. It dates back to the early wagon train epic *The Big Trail* starring John Wayne and featuring Ward Bond in his first major screen appearance playing a supporting role. Horton's buckskin outfit as the scout in the first season of the television series resembles Wayne's, who also played the wagon train's scout in the earlier film.

Wagon Train revolved around the characters traveling to California from St. Joseph, Missouri, by a caravan of covered wagons. In its first three seasons and part of the fourth, the regular cast consisted of Ward Bond as Major Seth Adams, the trailmaster, Robert Horton as Flint McCullough, the scout, Terry Wilson as Bill Hawks, the ramrod and Frank McGrath as Charlie Wooster, the cook. Ward Bond died of a heart attack on November 5, 1960 with the last seven episodes in which he appeared broadcast posthumously. An assistant scout, Duke Shannon, played by Scott Miller, was introduced two months later, in January 1961 and after another two months, a new trailmaster, Christopher Hale, played by John McIntire, took over the running of the wagon train in March 1961, replacing Major Adams.

At the end of the fifth season, in June 1962, Robert Horton left the series to pursue a career in musical theatre. In June 1963, the final episode of the sixth season introduced Michael Burns as teenager Barnaby West, who became a recurring character in the seventh season, which also introduced Robert Fuller as the new scout, Cooper Smith, joining Duke Shannon and ultimately becoming the wagon train's sole scout when Scott Miller left the series in April 1964, with the last episode of the 90 minute seventh season. McIntire, Fuller, Wilson, McGrath and Burns were in the show through its final year.

Episode for class:

The Jennifer Churchill Story - aired on October 15, 1958

Ward Bond (Major Seth Adams) - He attended the University of Southern California, where he got work as an extra through a football teammate who would become both his best friend and one of Hollywood's biggest stars, John Wayne. Director John Ford promoted Bond from extra to supporting player in the film *Salute* in 1929. They too became good friends. Bond appeared in 25 films directed by John Ford.

Once while on location, John Ford had a photo taken of himself and John Wayne standing on either side of the rear end of a horse. He sent the photo to Bond with the caption, "Thinking of you".

Among his most memorable roles are John L. Sullivan in *Gentleman Jim*, Det. Tom Polhaus in *The Maltese Falcon*, the Rev. Capt. Samuel Johnson Clayton *The Searchers* and Bert the Cop in *It's A Wonderful Life*.

During the 1950's his greatest fame was as the star of *Wagon Train*. During its production, Bond traveled to Dallas, Texas, to attend a football game and died there in his hotel room of a massive heart attack on November 5, 1960. John McIntire as Christopher Hale replaced Bond for the remainder of the series beginning in 1961.

Ward Bond was awarded a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame at 6933 Hollywood Boulevard in Hollywood, California on February 8, 1960.

He appeared in seven films of the American Film Institute's list of the 100 Greatest American Movies: *It Happened One Night*, *Bringing Up Baby*, *Gone With The Wind*, *The Grapes Of Wrath*, *The Maltese Falcon*, *It's A Wonderful Life* and *The Searchers*.

Robert Horton (Flint McCullough) - was born Meade Howard Horton Jr. He began his contract career at MGM in 1952 and adopted the acting name of Robert Horton. It was there he met young actors Robert Fuller and James Drury, who both became Horton's lifelong friends.

In his years on television, Horton was most noted for his role as the frontier scout Flint McCullough in *Wagon Train* from 1957 to 1962. He quit the series to pursue a career in musical theater.

Horton made many appearances in movies and television shows between 1951 and 1989, including an episode of Ray Milland's sitcom *Meet Mr. McNutley*. Horton also appeared on *Alfred Hitchcock Presents*, *The DuPont Show with June Allyson*, *The Barbara Stanwyck Show* and *The Tennessee Ernie Ford Show*.

From 1983 to 1984, Horton performed in the soap opera *As The World Turns*.

Horton was the recipient of several lifetime achievement awards for television, including the Golden Boot in 2004 and also the Cowboy Spirit Award at the National Festival of the West. On his 90th birthday in 2014, he received the Western Legend Award.

Frank McGrath (Charlie Wooster) - appeared in 271 episodes of *Wagon Train*. He was a character actor, stunt man and a former rodeo performer. He mainly appeared in westerns as comic relief.

After *Wagon Train*, McGrath appeared as Uncle Lucius in *Tammy* with Debbie Watson. He was a guest star on *The Virginian* and *The Big Valley*. Additionally, McGrath was in *The War Wagon*, *Gunfight in Abilene* and *The Last Challenge*.

For many years, he was a stand-in and stunt double for Warner Baxter. He so resembled Baxter that they could have passed for brothers. The two men formed a friendship outside of the studios and McGrath worked in several capacities for him.

His last role was as Mr. Remington in *The Shadiest Gun in The West* which was released the year after his death in 1968.

Terry Wilson (Bill Hawks) - appeared in 267 episodes of *Wagon Train*. He was in more than 35 films and television programs between 1948 and 1981.

In his early years, Wilson was a stunt performer for John Wayne in such films as *Sands of Iwojima* and *Río Grande*. He was part

of the John Ford stock company and appeared as an uncredited extra in numerous dance scenes.

After his days on *wagon Train*, Wilson appeared in several other westerns, *Custer and Hondo*, *The Shakiest Gun In The West*, *Dirty Dingus Magee*, *The Virginian* *Support Your Local Gunfighter*, *Gunsmoke*, *Hec Ramsey* and *Buddy Ebsen's Barnaby Jones*.

Rhonda Fleming (Jennifer Churchill) - born Marilyn Louis in Los Angeles, California. She began working as an actress while going to Beverly Hills High School until she graduated in 1941. She was discovered by Hollywood agent Henry Willson, who changed her name to Rhonda Fleming. Wilson signed her to a seven year contract without a screen test.

Her first major role was in Alfred Hitchcock's thriller *Spellbound* in 1945. Fleming also appeared in another thriller *The Spiral Staircase* in 1946. The following year she got first leading role in *Adventure Island*.

Fleming auditioned for the female lead in a Bing Crosby film at Paramount in *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court*. Fleming showed off her singing ability in a duet with Crosby on "Once and For Always" and soloing with "When Is Sometime". She also played another leading role opposite Bob Hope in *The Great Lover*.

On television, her singing talent was heard on NBC's *Colgate Comedy Hour* "LIVE" on September 30, 1951 from the El Capitan Theater in Hollywood.

In May of 1957, Fleming began a nightclub act at the Tropicana Hotel in Las Vegas. In the 1960's, she branched out into other businesses and began performing regularly on stage and in Las Vegas.

During the 1950's, 1960's and 1970's, she appeared on television in guest-starring roles on *The Red Skelton Show*, *Shower Of Stars*, *The Dick Powell Show*, *Burke's Law*, *The Virginian*, *McMillan & Wife*, *Police Woman*, *Ellery Queen* and *The Love Boat*.

One of her last film appearances was in the comedy *The Nude Bomb* starring Don Adams. Fleming has a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame located at 6660 Hollywood Blvd. In 2007, a Golden Palm Star on the Palm Springs Walk of Stars was dedicated to her as well.

Paul Maxey (Richard Churchill) - was born in Wheaton, Illinois. He played character roles in motion pictures from 1937. Most notably as the composer Victor Herbert in *Till The Clouds Roll By* in 1946. He acted in several television shows beginning in the 1950's. His most memorable role was Mayor John Peoples *The People's Choice*. Maxey was also seen in *M Squad*, *The Lone Ranger*, *Dennis The Menace*, *The Untouchables*, *My Little Margie*, *Perry Mason* and *Lassie*.

Andy Clyde (Fred) - Andy Clyde's movie career lasted for 45 years with nearly 400 credits to his name. In 1921, he began acting in silent films as a Mack Sennett comic in *On A Summer Day*. On television, Clyde is best remembered as Cully Wilson in

Lassie and as the neighbor George MacMichael on *The Real McCoys*. Clyde guest starred in such television westerns as *Gunsmoke*, *Fury* and *The Life and Legend of Wyatt Earp*.

When Columbia Pictures started its short subject department in 1934 and Andy Clyde was one of the first comedy stars signed by producer Jules White. He lasted longer than every comedian on the Columbia payroll except The Three Stooges.

He played the character of California Carlson in 36 Hopalong Cassidy films. He also played that same role in the Hopalong Cassidy radio program.

From 1954 to 1966, Clyde made numerous guest appearances on television programs such as *The Pepsi-Cola Playhouse*, *Studio 57*, *The People's Choice*, *Soldiers Of Fortune*, *My Little Margie*, *The Bob Cummings Show* and *Lock Up*.

On February 8, 1960, Clyde received a star on the Hollywood Walk Of Fame at 6758 Hollywood Boulevard for his contribution to the motion pictures industry.

Eddy Waller (Ned) - worked in vaudeville and the theater before entering motion pictures in 1936. Soon after, he was cast in character parts. During the 1940's he was a mainstay in westerns at Republic Pictures. Waller worked in more than 250 roles in films and television between 1929 and 1963. This included 116 westerns and six serials.

In 1955, Waller was in the short-lived television series, *Steve Donovan*, *Western Marshal*. After that, he appeared in several A-westerns and television programs and was a semi-regular in

Laramie. He is best remembered as Nugget Clark, the sidekick in films starring Allan 'Rocky' Lane between 1947 and 1953.

Henry Corden (Tex Hall) - will be remembered for, providing the voice of Fred Flintstone. Corden began occasionally doing the voice of Fred Flintstone shortly before the death of the cartoon character's original voice artist, Alan Reed. Corden took over after Reed's death in 1977.

He made his film debut as a minor heavy in *The Secret Life Of Walter Mitty* from 1947. Some of his other film and television roles include *Abbott and Costello In The Foreign Legion*, *The Asphalt Jungle*, *Viva Zapata!*, *Scaramouche*, *I Confess* and *The Ten Commandments*. On television, he could be seen on *Perry Mason*, *The Untouchables*, *My Little Margie* and *Mister Ed*. He also played Barbara Eden's genie father on *I Dream of Jeannie* and as the landlord, Mr. Babbitt on *The Monkees*.

Mauritz Hugo (Frankie Palmer) - was born in Sweden and arrived in the United States at the age of 15. He could be seen in films such as *Love Me Or Leave Me*, *Black Angel*, *The Iron Curtain*, *The Old Man and The Sea* and *When My Baby Smiles At Me*. Hugo made 141 film and television appearances from 1938 to 1972.

Ed Hinton (Sheriff) - In 1938 he made his first screen appearance in *Spring Madness* with Maureen O'Sullivan and Lew Ayres. Hinton appeared in films such as *Samson and Deliah*, *Leadville Gunslinger*, *The Hitch-Hiker*, *River Of No Return* and *The Man From Bitter Ridge*.

In 1953, he made his television debut in the television series *Boston Blackie*. Hinton could be seen in *Sky King*, *The Life and Legend of Wyatt Earp*, *Tales of Wells Fargo*, *Sugarfoot*, *The Adventures of Rin Tin Tin*, *Tombstone Territory* and *Perry Mason*.

William Blakewell (Mr. Mullenbach) - began his film career as an extra in the silent movie *Fighting Blood* in 1924. He appeared in 170 films and television shows. He is best known for playing the German soldier Albert Kropp in the film *All Quiet On The Western Front* in 1930.

In 1933, Bakewell contributed to the founding of the Screen Actors Guild and was the 44th of the original 50 members. For four decades, Bakewell served on the board of Motion Picture and Television Fund.

In the 1960s, he guest starred in *Questward*, *Ho!*, *Pete and Gladys*, *Bringing Up Buddy*, *Mister Ed*, *Leave It To Beaver*, *The Jack Benny Program*, *Petticoat Junction*, *Hazel*, *Peter Gunn*, *Sea Hunt*, *The Roaring 20s* and *The Virginian*.

Bakewell's autobiography **Hollywood Be Thy Name - Random Recollections Of A Movie Veteran From Silents To Talkies To TV** was published in 1991.

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The Roy Rogers Show Notes

The Roy Rogers and Dale Evans Show aired from December 30, 1951 to June 9, 1957. There were 105 episodes filmed in this series. Many of the exterior locations were filmed at the Iverson Ranch in Chatsworth.

Episode for class:

The Treasure Of Howling Dog Canyon - aired January 27, 1952

Roy Rogers - was born Leonard Franklin Slye in Cincinnati, Ohio. He moved to California in 1930 and played in such musical groups as The Hollywood Hillbillies, Rocky Mountaineers, Texas Outlaws, and his own group, the International Cowboys. In 1934 he formed a group with Bob Nolan called Sons Of The Pioneers.

They first appeared in the western *Rhythm On The Range* in 1936. That same year, he was a bandit opposite Gene Autry in *The Old Coral*. In 1937, Rogers went solo from The Sons Of The Pioneers. He starred in his first film in 1938, *Under Western Stars*. In his career, he made close to 100 films. *The Roy Rogers Show* ran on NBC from October 1951 through 1957 and again on CBS from 1961 to September 1964.

In his autobiography, "Happy Trails: The Story of Roy Rogers and Dale Evans," the former Leonard Slye stated that his stage name of Roy Rogers was given to him by executives at Republic Pictures when he became their new singing cowboy to replace Gene Autry. The Rogers came from Will Rogers and Roy was made the first name because it is the French word for "king," as in "Roy Rogers, King of the Cowboys." Roy said he had no input at all in the renaming decision.

Rogers was elected to the Country Music Hall of Fame in 1980 as a member of the Sons Of The Pioneers and elected again in 1988 as Roy Rogers. He was awarded three stars on the Hollywood Walk of Fame for Motion Pictures at 1752 Vine Street, for Radio at 1733 Vine Street and for Television at 1620 Vine Street in Hollywood, California.

Dale Evans - was born Frances Octavia Smith in Uvalde, Texas. She moved to Memphis, Tennessee and worked in an insurance company while taking occasional radio singing jobs. She took the stage name Dale Evans from her third husband, Robert Dale Butts and actress Madge Evans. Roy Rogers was her fourth husband.

Evans signed with Fox Pictures and made a few small film appearances. She was then cast as leading lady to rising cowboy star Roy Rogers. The two hit it off well and she became his steady on-screen companion. In 1946, Rogers' wife died and Evans' marriage to Robert Butts ended about the same time. A year later she married Rogers on New Year's Eve and the two become icons of American pop culture.

Evans wrote the song, "Happy Trails", which became her and Roy Rogers' theme song.

She was awarded two Stars on the Hollywood Walk of Fame for Radio at 6638 Hollywood Boulevard and for Television at 1737 Vine Street in Hollywood, California. Evans was inducted with Roy Rogers into the Hall of Great Western Performers of the National Cowboy and Western Heritage Museum in 1976.

Carl “Alfafa” Switzer (Clyde Stockton) - was the youngest of four children. In 1934, the Switzer family traveled to California. They visited the Hal Roach Studios while sightseeing. The brothers Carl and Harold gave an impromptu performance in the the Our Gang Café which was the studio's open to the public cafeteria. They were both offered contracts by producer Hal Roach. Carl became famous for portraying Alfalfa in the Our Gang comedies during the 1930's.

He had a difficult relationship with his co-stars as he enjoyed playing cruel jokes on them. By the time Carl was 12 years old, the production company considered him too old to keep playing a child.

Switzer initially found more work in films of the time. He was reduced to a supporting role in *Henry and Dizzy* in 1942, his first appearance in the film series about the Aldrich Family. He also had a minor role in the musical comedy *Johnny Doughboy*, again in 1942, which featured other real-life former child stars including Our Gang's George “Spanky” McFarland. In the following years, Switzer would appear in uncredited roles in films such as *Going My Way*, *Courage Of Lassie* and *It's A Wonderful Life*. Switzer had his first leading role in many years as Sammy Levine in *Gas House Kids*. The film was successful enough to have its own sequels, *Gas House Kids Go West* and *The Gas House Kids In Hollywood*.

As his film career declined, he supplemented his income by breeding and training hunting dogs. He was also a guide to hunting expeditions. His most notable clients were Roy Rogers, Dale Evans, James Stewart and Henry Fonda.

In January of 1958, Switzer was mysteriously shot in the upper right arm while sitting in his parked car, in front of a bar in Studio City, California. The bullet smashed through the car's window. The shooter was never found and no motive was ever established.

In December 1958, he was arrested for cutting trees in the Sequoia National Forest with the intention to sell them as Christmas trees.

Switzer was sentenced to pay a fine of \$225 and was also sentenced to one year's probation. This left him in financial trouble for the last month of his life.

In 1959, Switzer had agreed to train a hunting dog for Moses Samuel "Bud" Stiltz, who was a longtime friend and business partner.

While in Switzer's possession, the dog ran away. Stiltz demanded that Switzer must either return his dog or pay him the equivalent of the dog's value. Since he didn't have the money, Switzer took out ads in newspapers and put up fliers, offering a reward for the safe return of the animal. Eventually, the dog was found and brought to the bar where Switzer was working at the time. The rescuer was paid with \$35 in cash and \$15 in alcoholic beverages. The loss of his \$50 did not sit well with Switzer. While speaking with his friend, Jack Piott, the two decided that Stiltz should reimburse Switzer the finder's fee. They believed the dog was Stiltz's and not Switzer's.

The two arrived at Stiltz's home in Mission Hills, California. Switzer and Piott intended to demand money of Stiltz. Though differing accounts of the event exist, all agree that Stiltz was struck over the left side of his head with a glass clock. He later retreated to his room to retrieve a .38-caliber revolver, for which Switzer wrestled him. Their struggle caused the gun to discharge and almost shoot Tom Corrigan, Stiltz's 14-year-old stepson.

Stiltz's account of the event was one of self-defense, testifying that Switzer had banged on his front door, yelling "Let me in, or I'll kick in the door." The threat was followed by a struggle that began with one of the men, Switzer or Piott, striking Stiltz with the clock.

This prompted Stiltz to retrieve his firearm, which Switzer tried to grab. The gun discharged accidentally. Switzer then, according to Stiltz, threatened him with a knife and yelled, "I'm going to kill you!" Stiltz fired and shot Switzer in the groin, damaging an artery that caused massive internal bleeding. Switzer was dead when he arrived at the hospital.

Tom Corrigan's account differed significantly from his stepfather's. He told investigators that Stiltz shot Switzer as he and Piott were leaving. After the gun's accidental discharge, Switzer turned to Piott and said they needed to leave. The two were headed for the door when Stiltz then fired the fatal shot. Switzer never drew a knife, as Stiltz had claimed. Corrigan was never called to testify at the coroner's inquest and Stiltz testified in his favor. His testimony was taken to be truthful, despite physical evidence that contradicted his account and his past perjury conviction. Years later, Corrigan stood by what he told officers had happened that night and said his stepfather did not have to kill Switzer.

Coincidentally, Switzer died the same day in 1959 as legendary director Cecil B. DeMille. Switzer's death received only minor notice in most newspapers, as DeMille's obituary dominated the columns.

Pat Brady - He began on stage at the age of four with his parents in a performance of "Mrs. Wiggs of the Cabbage Patch". Brady was discovered by Roy Rogers while playing bass guitar in a band at a Sunset Beach nightclub. He played the bass fiddle with The Sons of the Pioneers. Brady appeared in 101 episodes of *The Roy Rogers Show*. Many of his other film and television appearances, both credited and uncredited, were with The Sons Of The Pioneers.

Don C. Harvey (John Briggs) - started his career playing in tent shows, repertory companies and radio with his wife Jean Harvey. While in Hollywood, he starred on a radio show with Hedda Hopper. He then signed a contract with Columbia Pictures in 1949 and played in a several serials of the era: *Atom Man vs. Superman*, *The Adventures of Sir Galahad* and *Batman and Robin*. He also played in a few "B" pictures and a handful of science fiction films. He and his wife Jean Harvey were owners of a movie horse named Goldie who performed as Kit Carson's horse Apache in *The Adventures of Kit Carson* television series. During his 18 year career, Harvey made over 200 appearances in films and television.

Denver Pyle (Henchman Nash) - was born in Colorado to a farming family. In 1940, he moved to Los Angeles and found employment as an NBC page. He was spotted by a talent scout and trained with Maria Ouspenskaya and Michael Chekhov. Soon after, he made his film debut in *The Guilt Of Janet Ames* in 1947.

With his premature white hair, he became a familiar face on episodes of *Gunsmoke* and *Bonanza*. Pyle developed a close association with John Wayne, appearing in many of his later films, such as *The Horse Soldiers*, *The Alamo*, *The Man Who Shot Liberty Valance* and *Cahill U.S. Marshal*. Best known for his role as Uncle Jesse Duke on the television series *The Dukes of Hazzard*. Pyle also had a recurring role on *The Andy Griffith Show* as Briscoe Darling. He has a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame at 7083 Hollywood Boulevard in Hollywood, California.

Boyd "Red" Morgan (Henchman Weston) - was an outstanding athlete in high school and attended the University of Southern California on a football scholarship in 1935. Following graduation from college, Boyd was recruited by the Washington Redskins before going on to join the Pacific Coast League in 1940. He went on to play football for the Hollywood Bears and the Birmingham Generals.

After making his film debut as a football player in 1936, Boyd pursued a career as both an actor and stuntman. Among the actors for whom he doubled were Stuart Whitman, Dean Martin, Darren McGavin, Jim Davis and Peter Graves. Morgan was steady fixture in Western movies and television shows in a career that lasted from 1936 to 1987.

Dorothy Crider (Mame Briggs) - In 20 years, Dorothy Crider made only a few appearances in films and television. Some of her credits include *The Greatest Show On Earth*, *That Brennan Girl*, *The Guns Of Fort Petticoat* and *The Ten Commandments*. Crider also wrote the story "I Married A Dog" which was the basis for the film *Wild and Wonderful* starring Tony Curtis in 1964.

Chief Yowlachie (Indian Tom) - was born in Kitsap County, Washington and later lived with his family on the Yakima Indian Reservation. Yowlachie's real name was Daniel Simmons. He began his show business career as an opera singer and spent many years in that profession performing with the Los Angeles Philharmonic Orchestra from 1931 through 1939.

After working in films in the 1920's, Yowlachie resumed his film career in 1940 by making 32 Westerns and two serials through 1955. For 25 years, he played everything from Apache chiefs to comic relief sidekicks. He had a more light-hearted part in *Red River* where he traded quips with veteran Walter Brennan.

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