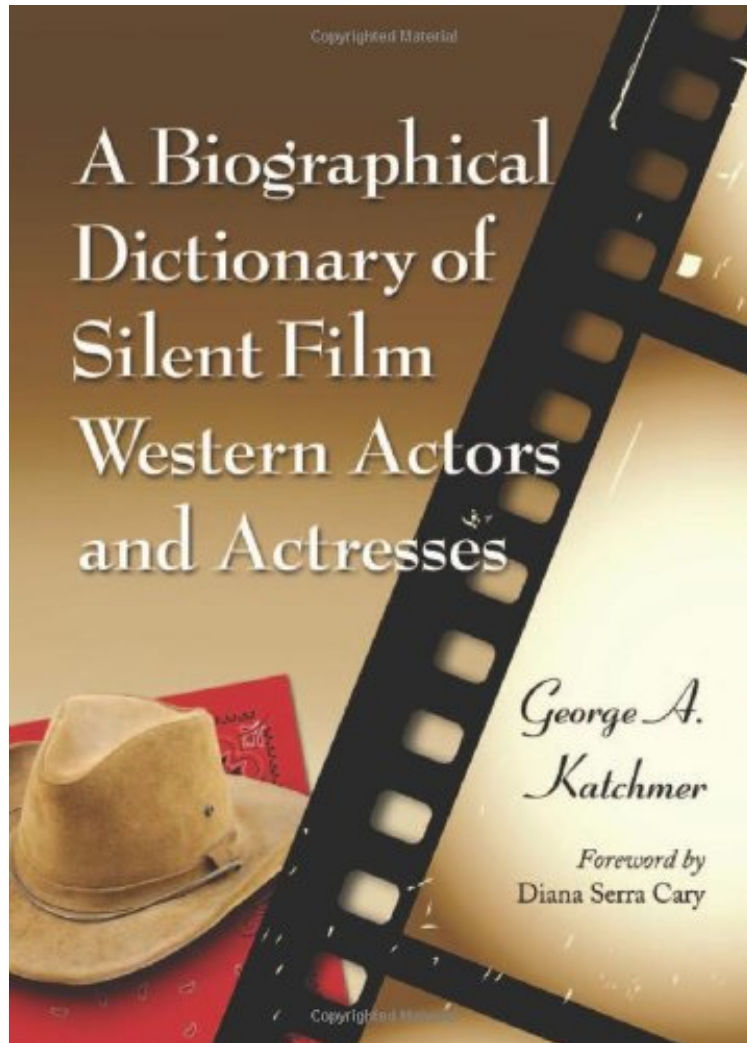


(Read and download) A Biographical Dictionary of Silent Film Western Actors and Actresses

# A Biographical Dictionary of Silent Film Western Actors and Actresses

*George A. Katchmer*

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**George A. Katchmer : A Biographical Dictionary of Silent Film Western Actors and Actresses** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised A Biographical Dictionary of Silent Film Western Actors and Actresses:

5 of 6 people found the following review helpful. Katchmerites Rejoice!By Hans J. WollsteinThe late George Katchmer of Millersville, PA, was beloved by the readers of Classic Images. And no wonder. For more than a decade Katchmer profiled the stars, villains, heroines, supporting players and even riding extras in silent westerns. Yes, SILENT westerns, a niche in film history covered by hardly anyone at all. Month after month, the reader could find

career profiles of everyone from Walter Ackerman to Chief Yowlachie. According to his legion of fans, Katchmer was meticulous to a fault. That, however, remains debatable. In this writer's opinion, George sometimes gave up a wee bit too soon. As the time, to list but one example, when he announced that "nothing could be found" concerning data on starlet Virginia Lee who, unbeknownst to Katchmer, was still alive and interviewed in the very same issue of *Classic Images*. (Blame for this faux pas, however, probably rightfully belongs to the editor of the magazine). Sadly, such caveats reappear in "A Biographical Dictionary of Silent Film Western Actors and Actresses," a complete collection of Katchmer's thumb-nail bios through the years. We learn, for example, that 2-reel cowboy star Curley Witzel "is a question mark." But in reality, Witzel has been profiled in such magazines as "Wrangler's Roost" and by this writer ... And, once again, "nothing could be found" regarding Virginia Lee, who, in fact, was interviewed for a very recent McFarland book, Boyd Magers and Michael Fitzgerald's "Ladies of the Western." Why the three stars, then, I hear you ask. Well, because this handsome book comes with literally hundreds of portraits and scene stills of the profiled actors and actresses, making identification so much easier for further research. George Katchmer, his son John and McFarland should be heartily congratulated for including this many wonderful and quite rare illustrations. In fact, George even scared up a remarkable photo of the apparently so elusive Mr. Witzel!

Long before sound became an essential part of motion pictures, Westerns were already an established genre. The men and women who brought to life cowboys, cowgirls, villains, sidekicks, distressed damsels and outraged townspeople often continued with their film careers, finding success and fame well into the sound era--always knowing that it was in silent Westerns that their roads to film success began. Over one thousand of these once-silent Western players are featured in this encyclopedia work. The actors are listed alphabetically by last name, and each entry includes a detailed biography, covering both personal and professional milestones in the performer's life. Also included for each actor is a complete Western filmography. The biographies are preceded by a foreword by Diana Serra Cary (formerly the child star "Baby Peggy"), who performed with many of those included in this dictionary. Full indexing is included.

From Library Journal Although these two books appear to be similar, they are actually very different in both intention and execution. Slide, founder of the journal *Silent Picture* and the distinguished author of more than 30 books related to the performing arts, presents a frank and fond collection of interviews and memories of 100 silent film stars, some of whom he knew personally. The criteria for inclusion are highly subjective; those who made the cut (e.g., Lillian Gish, William Bakewell, and Mary Astor) represent the author's "personal choice of some of the best, brightest or most unusual of silent players." The result is a fascinating, entertaining, and occasionally poignant work that invites the reader into the fabulous world of art, industry, and experimentation that was Hollywood in the 1910s and 1920s. The nature of the selection process means that this volume is more useful as a complementary resource, or even as a work to be read for its own sake, than as a stand-alone reference. A formidable work complete with biographies, filmographies, and photos, Katchmer's Dictionary profiles more than 1000 actors and actresses who appeared in silent Westerns. Katchmer, a noted columnist for *Classic Images* magazine, allows his voice and opinions to come through in each entry, making this a lively and informative read. Katchmer died in 1997 just after completing the research and writing for this work, which his son, John, assembled in final form. As with *Silent Players*, Katchmer's Dictionary describes lives and careers full of incident and accident. Both books are highly recommended for public or academic libraries where there is a strong interest in silent film or early film history. Andrea Slonosky, Long Island Univ., Brooklyn, NY Copyright 2002 Reed Business Information, Inc. From Booklist People may not be aware that actors often began their careers in the Western genre only to gain their greatest successes in other forms of film. In this volume more than 1,000 entries represent a wide range of performers, including such well-known names as Wallace Beery, Walter Brennan, Boris Karloff, Mary Pickford, and Sally Rand as well as cowboy stars Hoot Gibson and Tom Mix. Each appeared in at least three silent western features "or was often seen in . . . one- and two-reel short subjects." Arrangement is alphabetical, with each entry containing a biographical summary (sometimes very sketchy, depending on available information) and a list of film highlights. For each film the author provides the type of film ("Western," "one-reel," "farce"), release date, and names of the other stars. For supporting and bit players he also supplies the name of the character ("Slim," "a deputy sheriff," "the young Indian mother"). Films that are available on tape are identified by an asterisk and bold type. Most of the film highlights end in 1930, although some extend well into the sound era. Wherever possible a photograph of the person (and at times a scene from one of the films) accompanies the entry. There are cross-references to the predominant form of name. An appendix provides access by film title. With the success of such cable stations as Turner Classic Movies (TCM) and American Movie Classics (AMC) and the continued development on the Internet of such sites as the Internet Movie Database, early film, especially silent, is more accessible than ever. This book offers an opportunity for silent film fans and researchers to find some information, even if slight, about performers who exist today only as a name in film cast lists. Public libraries and academic institutions that support film studies, especially the history of early film and its performers, will welcome this volume. RBB Copyright American Library Association. All rights reserved "An important work for western and Silent fans...[a] lasting legacy" --*Classic Images* "A formidable work...a lively and informative

read...highly recommended" --Classic Images"Welcome" --Booklist/RBB