

Were they the heroes of Hollywood Westerns or simply a hired hand on horseback?

Time Machine:

THE REAL COWBOY: PORTRAIT OF AN AMERICAN ICON

Hosted by Bill Kurtis

Featured interviews with Actors

Richard Farnsworth and Harry Carey, Jr.

World Premiere Saturday, June 3 at 9 pm ET/PT

Encore Presentation Saturday, June 24 at 12 pm ET/PT

New York, April 24, 2000 – The American Cowboy is perhaps our most enduring icon. It embodies the spirit and freedom of an entire nation. Clouded by myth, folklore and pure media invention, how did this common laborer become a model of rugged individualism with global appeal? The progress of the modern world has availed to him the option, or necessity, of mounting a helicopter instead of a horse to round up cattle. As the cowboy is forced to embrace change to survive, how near is he to becoming a dying breed? **The History Channel®** separates fact from fiction in their evolution on **Saturday, June 3 at 9 pm ET/PT with the 2-hour *World Premiere* presentation of *Time Machine: THE REAL COWBOY: PORTRAIT OF AN AMERICAN ICON*, hosted by Bill Kurtis.**

The vast American landscape would become a stage where the real cowboy would eventually redefine his place in the world. But there is no single type of American cowboy. The look, the skill, the gear and lifestyle...those roots are owed to many others. But, the range in ethnicity of the cowboy doesn't exist in its popular image. Not only were they Irish and English, but they were also, and still are, Spanish, Mexican, African-American, Native American and Hawaiian! Generations of their ideas in how to raise cattle on wide open spaces has shaped the uniquely American Cowboy.

The challenge of the prairie appealed to young men of the early American West giving birth to the cattle industry, cow "polk," cow-towns and cowgirls. It was an epic kind of wanderlust existence, but its reality was quite harsh. One of the greatest myths of the west was the conflict between Cowboy and Indian. Novelists and Hollywood depicted the pair as adversarial and grossly exaggerated their co-existence, taking many generations to dispel the mentality and uncover and accept true history.

Featured interviews are with famed cowboy **actors Richard Farnsworth and Harry Carey, Jr.** who spin personal yarns of making American Westerns with the likes of John Wayne and John Ford. Program host and executive producer **Bill Kurtis**, also a cattle rancher, received the prestigious 1998 Wrangler Award from the National Cowboy Hall of Fame in recognition of an outstanding television documentary bringing the history of the American West in all its colorful richness to the American public.

Throughout American history, cowboys have serviced us in our choices for dining pleasure, entertained us with their songs and astonishing rodeo shows, and gave us admirable and infamous legends to day-dream about. They leave us in awe of their endurance and mastery of both land and animal and, even more mystifying, the true happiness in their calling. We attempt expensive week-long vacations for the "real" cattle-drive experience and are forever changed by its empowerment as we are humbled by it. In return, we have immortalized them in novels, played make-believe as children, glorified them in film and continue to demand their romance in popular culture by our dress, home decor, music and advertising.

THE REAL COWBOY: PORTRAIT OF AN AMERICAN ICON is produced by Kurtis Productions. Executive Producer is Bill Kurtis. Nicole Ewing and Gary L. Foreman are producers. Executive Producer for The History Channel is Susan Werbe. Supervising Producer is Beth Dietrich Segarra.

Honored with the prestigious Governor's Award from the Academy of Television Arts & Sciences for its "Save Our History™" campaign and winner of two George Foster Peabody Awards, The History Channel® reveals the power and passion of history as an inviting place where people experience history personally and connect their own lives to the great lives and events of the past. Now enjoyed in over 63 million homes, The History Channel® is the only place "*Where the Past Comes Alive.*" Visit us on the World Wide Web at HistoryChannel.com.

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