

Milestone Film & Video presents
Equal Time: The Women of Cinema

Nell Shipman's

Back to God's Country
and
Something New

Collector's Edition
Digitally Mastered from the Preserved 35mm Material



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Phone: (201) 767-3117 • Fax: (201) 767-3035 • Email: milefilms@aol.com
www.milestonefilms.com

Back to God's Country
1919. Tinted.

Running time.....72 minutes
ProductionShipman-Curwood Productions
Released by.....First National
Producer.....Ernest Shipman
Director.....David Hartford & Ernest Shipman
Scenario.....Nell Shipman with James Oliver Curwood
Based on.....“Wapi, the Walrus,” a story by James Oliver Curwood in *Good Housekeeping Magazine* (18 Dec 1918).
Photographer.....Joseph B. Walker and Dal Clawson
LocationBrunton Studios (Los Angeles), Kern River, San Francisco, and Lesser Slave Lake, Alberta (Canada)
Print (original tinted).....National Film Archives of Canada, Ottawa, from prints courtesy of American Film Institute and Mr. J. D. Cunningham
Restored byD. J. Turner and the National Archives of Canada.

Cast

Dolores LeBeau.....Nell Shipman
Baptiste LeBeau.....Roy Laidlaw
Peter Burke.....Wheeler Oakman and Ronald Byram
RydalWellington Playter
Rydal's sidekick.....Charles Murphy
Cubby, the bear.....Brownie
"Sealskin" BlakeCharles Arling
Wapi, "the Walrus".....Tresore and Rex
Murdered MountieWilliam G. Colvin

FROM THE AFI CATALOG

Forty years ago, in the Canadian wilderness where rough men are searching for gold, “Chinaman” Shan Tung travels through a blizzard with his Great Dane, Tao. At the Telegraph Trail Bar, where they stop to rest, a bully cuts off Shan Tung’s queue to amuse the crowd. Reacting to the most serious insult in his culture, Shan Tung pulls out a knife and the bully shoots him dead. Several years later, Tao’s descendant, a fierce beast known as “Wapi, the Killer,” lives in the north at the shore of the Arctic Sea, owned and abused by “Sealskin” Blake, who runs the fur trading post. Meanwhile, far to the south, Dolores LeBeau lives with her father Baptiste and the many wild creatures she has befriended. When Peter Burke, a writer and naturalist employed by the government, comes to their cabin, he is welcomed, and soon he and Dolores are in love. When Peter must make a short business trip to Ottawa, Dolores helps him pack. Intrigued by the manuscript he has been writing, she sneaks it out of his bundle and he leaves without it. Nearby, a Canadian mounted policeman pursues Capt. Rydal, the master of a trading vessel who is fleeing murder charges. When the Mountie catches and tries to arrest Rydal, the villain’s cohort, who is concealed in the woods, shoots him. Rydal switches clothes with the dead lawman and the men proceed deeper into the woods, to where Dolores is swimming naked in the water with her pet bear Cubby. Seeing Rydal’s lecherous glances, she hides under a waterfall, while Cubby scares Rydal away. Wanting “to see more of the girl,” Rydal finds the LeBeau’s cabin and, pretending to be an injured Mountie, is taken in by the kindly Baptiste. Dolores is alarmed to find Rydal and his henchman there, but takes refuge in her room to read Peter’s manuscript. Later, when Baptiste leaves the cabin to chop wood, Rydal grabs Dolores, who struggles until she is unconscious. Hearing the sounds, Baptiste tries to rescue her, but the henchman fights him. Baptiste inadvertently kills the henchman, then fights Rydal, but is knocked out. When he

regains consciousness, Rydal pretends to arrest Baptiste for the murder of his accomplice, but takes the bound man to a cliff above a river and pushes him over. Dolores, who has followed, jumps in and tries to save her father from the currents, but cannot. Returning for his manuscript, Peter finds Dolores pulling her father's corpse from the water, while Rydal disappears. A year later, Dolores, now married to Peter and living in the city, yearns for the forest and its creatures. Although he must first carry out a government assignment that will take them to the Arctic Sea, Peter promises they will return afterward to the cabin. Onboard the trade ship *Flying Moon*, Peter works diligently in their sleeping room. When the captain, who claims to be ill and has not been seen by Peter or Dolores, finally sends for Dolores, she recognizes him as Rydal and realizes that she and Peter are at his mercy. Dolores decides not to reveal Rydal's identity to Peter, fearing that Rydal will kill him, but Rydal soon renders Peter helpless by having his crewmen drop a sail on him. When the ship anchors near Blake's trading post, Dolores tries to get help for the dying Peter, but Blake, who is another of Rydal's cohorts, tells her there are no other ships in the area and that the nearest doctor is at Fort Confidence, two hundred miles across the Barren Lands. Rydal then announces that the ship will dock all winter, and Eskimo women are brought onboard for the sailors. As the days pass, Dolores manages to evade Rydal's lecherous advances, sometimes by playing along until he passes out drunk. After deciding to appeal to Blake for help, Dolores walks through the snow to the bar. Seeing Blake whipping Wapi, she stands in front of the animal and protests the abuse. Her kindness, the first Wapi has ever known, inspires the animal to respond with gentleness toward Dolores. After Dolores again asks for Blake's help, he pretends to agree to provide her with two dogsled teams to transport her across the Barrens, but warns that attempting the trip in sixty below zero temperature is "almost certain death." Secretly, Blake promises Rydal to return Dolores to him, but the eavesdropping Dolores overhears him. While she prepares Peter and herself for the journey, Wapi bites through his ropes and frees himself. When Blake presents Dolores with two dog teams, she pulls out a gun and tells him that she knows of his plans. After boarding Peter's sled, she orders the Eskimo team master to leave, and when Blake tries to stop her, shoots him in the shoulder. Wapi, after which Rydal, upon learning of her escape, takes the second dog team in pursuit. Threatening the Eskimo with death if Rydal catches up, Dolores manages to keep her sled ahead, but then loses the gun, when it slips from her hands, and Rydal gets dangerously close. As her last hope, Dolores sends Wapi to attack Rydal and escapes with Peter to the fort. Wapi obediently attacks Rydal's team, but is wounded in the battle. The Mounties at the fort search for Rydal, who is killed while fighting them. Dolores is nursing the recuperating Peter, when a limping Wapi shows up. Relieved that he has survived, Dolores promises to take the heroic animal home with her. Months later, in the woodland cabin, Wapi lives contentedly with Peter, Dolores and their baby, and the friendly, native creatures.

Something New

1920. Tinted.

ProductionA Nell Shipman Production

ProducerB. F. Croghan

DirectorNell Shipman and Bert Van Tuyle

CinematographerJoseph B. Walker

ScenarioNell Shipman

Restored byD. J. Turner and the National Archives of Canada.

LocationMojave Desert, California

Running time 60 minutes

PrintUCLA Film & Television Archive/National Archives of Canada

Cast

The Writing WomanNell Shipman

BillBert Van Tuyle

Sid Bickley.....L.M. Wells
Laddie, the collie.....Laddie
Gorgez.....William McCormack
The automobile.....The 1920 Maxwell

FROM THE AFI CATALOG

A young woman writer, seeking atmosphere, arrives in Mexico, where she stays with her father's friend Sid Bickley at their gold mine, the Blue Lotus. There she meets Bill Baxter, who gives her his dog Laddy for company. Soon, however, the notorious bandit Gorgez attacks the mine, leaving Sid unconscious and taking the gold and the girl with him. Meanwhile, Bill, on his way to pay a call, encounters his dog Laddy, bearing notes on his collar which the girl wrote during the ordeal. Speeding off in his faithful car to the Mexican's hideaway in the canyon, he arrives just in time to save the girl's honor, and after a struggle they escape, taking the gold. The bandits follow them in a chase across rugged terrain, but in the end they are defeated.

Background

These two extraordinary films starring early independent producer, writer, conservationist and star Nell Shipman were shot on location in the frozen wilds of Canada and the arid Mojave Desert. Shipman, a fearless free spirit on and off screen, was ably supported by brilliant cameraman Joseph B. Walker (who went on to shoot many of Frank Capra's classic films).

In *Back to God's Country* Shipman is a beautiful young wife trapped on an ice-bound ship. The captain, a murderous fugitive, will stop at nothing to have his way with Nell. With only the help of a ferocious dog named Wapi, she must stave off his advances and escape with her severely wounded husband to safety.

Something New is a thrilling and hilarious Western where the hero comes to the rescue of the kidnapped girl — in a 1920 Maxwell sedan! Chased by bandits on horseback across rocky terrain, Shipman, boyfriend/co-star Van Tuyle and “Laddie” (her pet collie) survive some of the most amazing (and real) stunts ever attempted in a roadster. *Something New* is an offbeat and wonderful addition to film history.

FILMOGRAPHY.

Films that Nell Shipman starred, wrote, and/or directed

1. The Ball of Yarn (1910)
2. Outwitted by Billy (1913)
3. God's Country and the Woman (1915)
4. Under the Crescent (1915)
5. Barea, Son of Kazan (1917)
6. Back to God's Country (1919)
7. Something New (1920)
8. The Girl from God's Country (1921)
9. A Bear, A Boy and A Dog (1921)
10. The Grub Stake (1923)
11. The Light on Lookout (1923)
12. Trail of the North Wind (1923)
13. The Golden Yukon (1927)
14. Wings in the Dark (1934), writer

15. The Clam-Diggers's Daughter (1947), writer

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2. Armatage, Kay. *Animals in the Films of Nell Shipman* (website)
3. Armatage, Kay. *Nell Shipman: A Case of Heroic Femininity* (website)
4. Armatage, Kay. *The Silent Scream and My Talking Heart* (website)
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14. Walker, Joseph, and Juanita Walker. *The Light on her Face*. The ASC Press. 1984.

Milestone Film & Video

"Milestone Film & Video is an art-film distributor that has released some of the most distinguished new movies (along with seldom-seen vintage movie classics) of the past decade"
- Stephen Holden, New York Times

"Since its birth the Milestone Film & Video has steadily become the industry's foremost boutique distributor of classic and art films - and probably the only distributor in America whose name is actually a guarantee of some quality."
— William Arnold, Seattle Post-Intelligencer

"Milestone Film and Video [is] one of the finest of the boutique labels."
— Dave Kehr, New York Times

Milestone enters its seventeenth year of operation with a reputation for releasing classic cinema masterpieces, new foreign films, American independent features and groundbreaking documentaries. Amy Heller and Dennis Doros first started Milestone in 1990 with the goal of finding and releasing the best films of the past and the present. In 2003, Nadja Tennstedt joined the company as director of acquisitions and international sales.

Thanks to the company's rediscovery, restoration and distribution of such important films as Mikhail Kalatozov's *I am Cuba*, Marcel Ophuls' *The Sorrow and the Pity*, and Alfred Hitchcock's *Bon Voyage and Aventure Malgache*, the company has long occupied a position as one of the most influential independent distributors in the industry. Over the years, Milestone has released a wide range of classic films in sparkling restorations including Gloria Swanson and Rudolph Valentino in *Beyond the Rocks*, Henri-Georges Clouzot's *The Mystery of Picasso*, F.W. Murnau's *Tabu*, Merian C. Cooper and Ernest B. Schoedsack's *Grass and Chang*, E.A. Dupont's *Piccadilly*, Lotte Reiniger's animation masterpiece, *The Adventures of Prince Achmed*, Michael Powell's *The Edge of the World*,

and Jane Campion's *Two Friends*. Milestone has co-presented important film with such stellar contemporary filmmakers as Martin Scorsese, Francis Ford Coppola, Steven Soderbergh, Woody Allen, Thelma Schoonmaker Powell, Jonathan Demme and Dustin Hoffman.

In 1995 Milestone received a Special Archival Award from the National Society of Film Critics for its restoration and release of *I am Cuba*. L.A. Weekly chose Milestone the company as the 1999 "Indie Distributor of the Year." On January 2, 2004, the National Society of Film Critics honored Milestone Film & Video with their prestigious Film Heritage award. At the end of that year, Milestone was awarded the International Film Seminars' prestigious Leo Award as well as the New York Film Critics Circle's Special Award "in honor of 15 years of restoring classic films."

Milestone is working with the Mary Pickford Foundation on a long-term project to preserve, re-score and release the best films of the legendary silent screen star. The company has also established strong working relationships with some of the world's great film archives, including the British Film Institute, UCLA Film & Television Archive, George Eastman House, Library of Congress, Nederlands Filmmuseum and Norsk Filminstitut. In 2000, Milestone's 10th Anniversary Retrospective was shown in venues nationwide and Milestone raised and donated \$20,000 from these screenings to four archives in the United States and England

The company has also introduced US audiences to many exciting new foreign films, including Manoel de Oliveira's *I'm Going Home*, Bae Yong-kyun's *Why Has Bodhi-Dharma Left for the East?*, Hirokazu Kore-eda's *Maborosi*, Takeshi Kitano's *Fireworks (Hana-Bi)*, Tareque Masud's *The Clay Bird* and Jerzy Stuhr's *The Big Animal*.

The company has built a highly praised collection of video and DVD releases. Many of DVD titles have been released on Image Entertainment's "The Milestone Collection" label and have earned the company critical new accolades. In 2006, Milestone launched it's own video label, "The Milestone Cinematheque." With a mandate for supreme quality combined with numerous and vital bonus features, All of the Cinematheques's first five releases were chosen by various national critics for their Top Ten DVDs lists of the year, including the *Los Angeles Times* and the *New York Times*.

In 2007, Milestone plans to release to theaters, Kent Mackenzie's *The Exiles* (restored by UCLA), Margot Benacerraf's *Araya* and *Reveron* (restored by Milestone) as well as the films of Charles Burnett.

In 2005, Milestone launched a sister company, Milliarium Zero, dedicated to releasing socially important films starting with the controversial 1972 anti-war classic, *Winter Soldier*. Its DVD release won *Best Rediscovery* at the 2006 Il Cinema Ritrovato. This year, MZ plans to bring out a restoration of Lucy Massie Phenix's stirring documentary history of grassroots organizing, *You Got to Move*.

The Library of Congress has selected nine Milestone films for its prestigious National Film Registry: Charles Burnett's *Killer of Sheep*, *Tabu*, Edward S. Curtis' *In the Land of the War Canoes*, Mary Pickford's *Poor Little Rich Girl* and *Tess of the Storm Country* (1914), *The Phantom of the Opera*, Clara Bow in *It*, Winsor McCay's *Gertie the Dinosaur* and *Grass*.