

## **Scott, George Randolph** <sup>[1]</sup>

### **Scott, George Randolph**

by William S. Powell, 1994

**23 Jan. 1898–2 Mar. 1987**

George Randolph Scott, motion picture actor, was born in Orange, Va., the only one of his seven brothers and sisters not born in [Charlotte](#) <sup>[2]</sup>, N.C., the family's home. He was the son of North Carolinians, Lucy Crane and George Grant Scott. (Some biographical sources refer to him as Randolph Crane and the year of his birth as 1903, but neither of these is confirmed by contemporary records.) Although Scott later said that he had had no acting ambitions as a youth, he did take part in plays produced in Charlotte under the direction of the [United Daughters of the Confederacy](#) <sup>[3]</sup>, the Junior League, and other organizations. In the early months of 1918, during [World War I](#) <sup>[4]</sup>, he served briefly with the Fourth Division.

He attended [Woodberry Forest](#) <sup>[5]</sup> preparatory school, enrolled at [Georgia Tech](#) <sup>[6]</sup> in 1919 but remained only a short time, and entered [The University of North Carolina](#) <sup>[7]</sup> in the spring quarter of 1920. As a special student in commerce, he remained for two quarters before returning home to Charlotte, where he was recorded as a member of his parents' household until 1930. He worked as an accountant in his father's accounting firm, rose to auditor, and then became office manager. In 1921 he became a charter member of the Charlotte Civitan Club. While vacationing in California with a hometown friend in 1929, he reportedly met Howard Hughes on a golf course and, without even the formality of a screen test, was offered a role as an extra in a picture, *The Far Call*, that Hughes was filming.

His friend returned to Charlotte, but Randolph Scott remained in California and enrolled in the [Pasadena Community Playhouse](#) <sup>[8]</sup>, a dramatic training school. During the next eight months he appeared in a series of plays under the direction of Gilmore Brown and won the lead in *Under a Virginia Moon* at the Hollywood Vine Street Theater. His performance resulted in an offer of a movie contract, but he declined it in favor of additional experience. Another play, *The Broken Wing*, brought him a contract with Paramount. He had minor parts in several motion pictures made in 1931, including *Sky Bride*, his first picture; *Women Men Marry*; and *The Lone Cowboy*. Two more were filmed in 1932 and three in 1933. Scott was making a name for himself in westerns, but in 1935 he began to break out of that mold. He had nonsinging parts in several musicals and then appeared in assorted roles in such films as *So Red the Rose*, *Follow the Fleet* <sup>[9]</sup>, *Go West, Young Man*, *The Last of the Mohicans* <sup>[10]</sup>, and, with Shirley Temple, *Rebecca of Sunnybrook Farm* <sup>[11]</sup>.

War films occupied him in the 1940s during [World War II](#) <sup>[12]</sup>, while in the late 1940s he made several "quickie" westerns. It was in this decade that Scott formed his own production company, Ranown, making it possible for him to determine the kind of pictures in which he would appear. As a result, in the 1950s he played in a series of westerns described as relating "violence and betrayal to moral dilemma."

*Badman's Territory*, made in 1946, was his first big box office success. During the forties and fifties some of his pictures were *Belle of the Yukon*, *Abilene Town* <sup>[13]</sup>, *Albuquerque*, *Santa Fe*, *The Bounty Hunter*, *Decision at Sundown*, and *Westbound*. His last film, *Ride the High Country* <sup>[14]</sup>, made in 1962, was accounted his best. Altogether he appeared in ninety-six motion pictures.

A modest man, Scott was never ostentatious, yet he always dressed well. He disliked publicity and he was offended by screen sex. On occasion he returned to North Carolina to visit his family and always seemed comfortable in that setting. Many people in the state long had pleasant memories of backyard picnics when he was in town. In later years his father worked in the state auditor's office in [Raleigh](#) <sup>[15]</sup> and delighted in introducing young female employees to his movie star son.

From his first appearance in Hollywood, Randolph Scott was known as a man of integrity and high principle. Recognized as a "Southern gentleman," he was said to have been the only movie actor accepted for membership in the Los Angeles Country Club. Early in his career he began investing in real estate, and in later years he was regarded as a multimillionaire and one of Hollywood's wealthiest stars.

In 1936 Scott married Mrs. Marion du Pont Somerville, an heiress of the du Pont fortune. Social and business affairs kept her in the East for long periods, however, and in 1944 they were amicably divorced. Soon afterwards he married Marie Patricia Stillman of New York, and they adopted two children: Christopher and Sandra. Scott's family belonged to St. Peter's Episcopal Church in Charlotte and at his burial in Elmwood Cemetery there, the private service was conducted by the rector and by the Reverend Billy Graham, a longtime friend of Scott's.

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### Subjects:

Biographies <sup>[30]</sup>

Performing arts <sup>[31]</sup>

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**Origin - location:**

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Charlotte <sup>[34]</sup>

Orange County <sup>[35]</sup>

Chapel Hill <sup>[36]</sup>

University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill <sup>[37]</sup>

Wake County <sup>[38]</sup>

Raleigh <sup>[39]</sup>

**From:**

Dictionary of North Carolina Biography, University of North Carolina Press. <sup>[40]</sup>

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