

## Bertha Kaepernick Blancett 1883- 1979

Bertha Kaepernick Blancett was born on September 4, 1883, in Cleveland, Ohio to William Carl Friedrich Kaepernick and Fredricka Barnkus. She was the youngest out of six siblings. Her family moved to a Colorado ranch, and that is where she spent most of childhood at. She begins to ride at the age of five. She would become known as the most famous women rider in the rodeo.<sup>2</sup>

Bertha Kaepernick made history in 1904, by becoming the first women to ride a bucking horse at Cheyenne Frontier Days.<sup>3</sup> She broke the gender barrier for the rodeo, when she accepted management's challenge for a lady bronc rider.<sup>2</sup> She became rodeo pickup a rider.<sup>4</sup>

While in Detroit, Michigan for a rodeo, she met her husband Aldert Blancett, they got married in 1909. He was steer wrestler in the rodeo, they continued traveling the rodeo circuit for several years together, even going to Australia for rodeos.<sup>2</sup>

Bertha won many titles, including Pendleton's Relay Race Championship in 1911, 1912, and in 1913.<sup>2</sup> She also set a record in Washington Rodeo in Walla Walla for female Roman rider.<sup>3</sup> She won Cowgirls' Relay Race at Calgary and the Cowgirls' Bucking Horse Riding. As well as ranking third in Cowgirls' Fancy Roping in 1912.<sup>2</sup>

She also performed in Pawnee Bill and 101 Ranch Wild West Shows and worked as stunt women working on some of the first Western films with Tom Mix and Hoot Gibson.<sup>3</sup> Aldert Blancett was killed in World War 1 in 1918. Her last professional ride was at Pendleton, Oregon rodeo in 1918.<sup>1</sup> She retired in 1919, she occasionally was pickup rider for the California rodeos. After retiring she became a guide for Yosemite National Park.<sup>2</sup>

Bertha Kaepernick Blancett died at the age 96 in California in 1979.<sup>3</sup>She was pioneer in Women's rodeos Competitions and a pioneer for women in the rodeo. She was an incredible bronc rider, tricker rider, roper, and relay race rider.<sup>1</sup> In 1975, Bertha was honored through National Rodeo Hall of Fame at the National Cowboys and Western Heritage Museum. In 1999, she was inducted into the National Cowgirls Museum and Hall of Fame.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> [https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/84852353/bertha\\_wf-blancett](https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/84852353/bertha_wf-blancett)

<sup>2</sup> <https://theactivehistorian.com/2024/03/18/breaking-trail-bertha-kaepernick-blancett/>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.cowgirlmagazine.com/cowgirl-iconic-bertha-kaepernick-blancett/>

<sup>4</sup> <https://nationalcowboymuseum.org/collections/awards/rodeo-hall-of-fame/inductees/5079/>

