



# HORACE goes to HOLLYWOOD

by John White

*Stark Love* (Paramount, 1927) is a movie I've known about for nearly twenty years. I've written a lot of articles about it, I've made a movie about it, I've come to know the families of the people who made *Stark Love* way back eighty-five years ago. Yet every time someone like Steve Kemp of the Great Smoky Mountains Association asks me to revisit the story, I find something brand new.

Revisiting my jumbled manila folders and scores of computer files, I stumbled across two unnoticed pieces of evidence reinforcing my long-held view that the film is largely based on *Our Southern*

*Highlanders* by Horace Kephart. Legendary for his outdoor writing, with books such as *Highlanders*, *Camping & Woodcraft*, hundreds of articles in sporting magazines, and famous for his efforts in helping create Great Smoky Mountains National Park, Kephart is less well known for his contribution to a Hollywood movie that was heralded by *The New York Times* as "one of the top ten movies of the year."

*Stark Love* was shot in the summer of 1926 in the nearby

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—historian David Shephard

Unicoi Mountains of Graham County, North Carolina around Rattler Ford (now a popular tourist campground), and on locations since covered by Santeetlah Lake. The movie is a compelling visual depiction of life in the mountains in the second decade of the last century.

Although critically acclaimed, *Stark Love* (one of the last silent films made before the ascension of "the talkies") has never been released to the public on VHS or DVD. Only a small community of film historians and enthusiasts have seen the movie, plus those lucky enough to have attended its special screenings, usually host-

ed by universities, museums, and film festivals.

The screenplay is simple yet powerful: Rob Warwick's mother is in poor health from toiling in the home and field to feed and clothe her family. Meanwhile, her husband Jason Warwick hunts, drinks whiskey, and loaf.

Rob grows fond of a young mountain girl, Barb'ry Allen, and is determined she will not suffer the same fate as his mother.

He views education at the mountain school far away in



Horace Kephart, circa 1928-1931, on Mt. Kephart. Photograph by George Masa.

the valley town as a means of escape for both Barb'ry and himself.

Rob sells his horse and travels with a circuit preacher to the school. When he arrives, he decides to use his money to pay for Barb'ry's tuition instead of his own.

As Rob travels by foot on the long way back home, his mother passes away.

Mr. Warwick hires a woman to take care of his children and home but is dissatisfied. Unaware of the affection between Rob and Barb'ry, Warwick asks his best friend Quill Allen for Barb'ry's hand in marriage—a socially accepted "wild marriage" until the preacher returns in the spring to "sanctify" it.

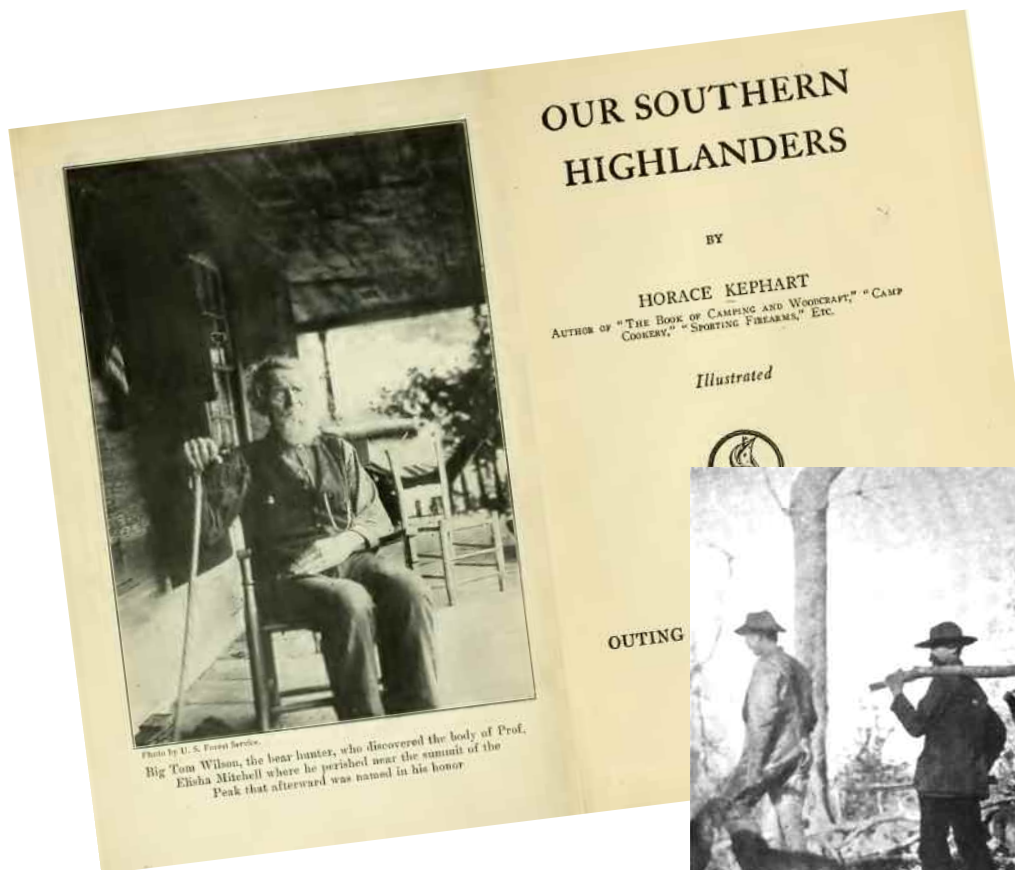
Quill Allen accepts the Warwick's proposal and forces Barb'ry to go home with him. They must hurry for the rains have come and the creek is beginning to flood.

Rob arrives soon after Jason Warwick returns with Barb'ry to his cabin. Along the way home, Rob has learned of his mother's death.

When he understands his father's intentions toward Barb'ry, Rob is horrified. He tries to reason with his father but Jason's mind is set. This leads to a mighty brawl between father and son. Rob is determined to protect Barb'ry. But, alas, he is defeated and thrown out of the cabin. He lies by the raging creek which is near the point of flooding.

When Rob is powerless to protect her, Barb'ry takes matters





—and a sharp axe—into her own hands. She escapes from the cabin in time to save Rob from the flood. Through Barb'ry's brave actions, Rob and she are able to leave the mountain for a better life. Barb'ry is the true hero of the story.

In the care of a less sensitive and skillful director, *Stark Love* would be poor melodrama. Instead, it is a stunningly beautiful vignette of early twentieth century Appalachia.



**Kephart's influence** is prevalent throughout *Stark Love*. Eighty years after the film's release, historian David Shepard, a close friend and neighbor of director Karl Brown, wrote the following:

"You are quite correct in assigning huge importance to Horace Kephart's *Our Southern Highlanders*. Even in Mr. Brown's very barren later circumstances, when he had about one linear foot of books in his room, he kept two copies of the Kephart (*sic*) book, one of which he gave to me. He regarded *Stark Love* as essentially based upon the book."

Indeed, anecdotes, even photographic plates from the 1922 edition of *Our Southern Highlanders*, come to life in *Stark Love*. Yet, surprisingly, throughout his life, especially in interviews during *Stark Love's* initial theatrical run, the film's director Karl Brown made very little mention of Kephart or his contribution to the film. Despite the fact, Brown held a

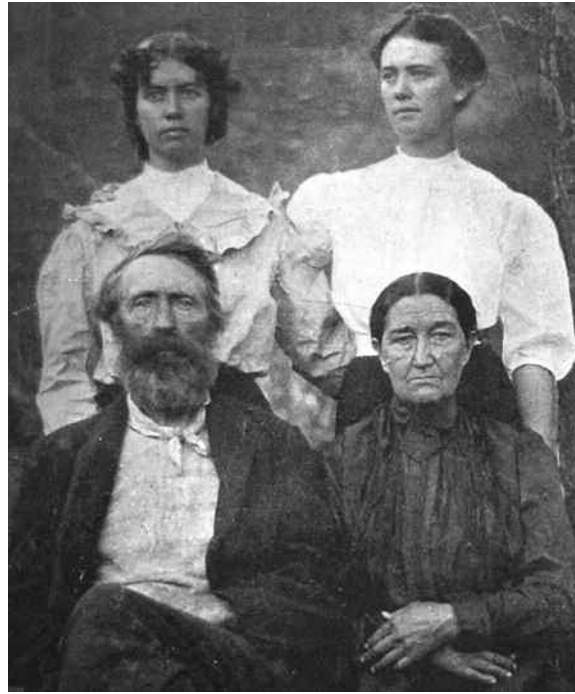
reverence for the writer until his dying day.

Always a showbiz guy and spinner of yarns, Brown cited Lucy Furman's *The Quare Women* as his source and inspiration for the *Stark Love* story. It was not until he penned a memoir late in life, posthumously published in *The Appalachian Journal*, that he acknowledged Kephart's influence on *Stark Love*—and, even then, the extent of the author's involvement was only partially admitted.

Brown always maintained the idea for his film sprang from a magazine article he read on location for *The Covered Wagon* (Paramount, 1923). He was the cameraman on that picture, a ruggedly realistic western (the first "epic" western) shot on the desolate prairie of Snake Valley, Nevada employing four hundred Conestoga wagons and seventeen-hundred extras, including seven hundred Native Americans—Arapahoes, Crows, Bannocks, Navajos and Shoshones imported from Wyoming and Arizona.

According to Brown, during a break in shooting the film, he read an installment of *Quare Women* in the *Atlantic Monthly*. No doubt, it was the "The Widow-Man" chapter which appeared in the November, 1922 edition and contains several essential ideas found in the storyline of *Stark Love*: Thirty-two year-old Jeems Craddock is a recent widower forced to take on the hard chores—farm and house work—formerly carried out by his deceased wife Mallie. Desperate for a replacement, he trains his eyes on an inappropriate successor, his children's 28 year-old, city-raised teacher, Amy.

The desperate widower, the suspicion of education, the



From Kephart's book *Our Southern Highlanders* (left to right): Title page from the book's first edition; a moonshine mill; a bear hunt; "Let the women do the work"; moonshine king Quill Rose and family.

slave-like toil of mountain women, and an unrealistic choice of bride, are all elements which appear in *Stark Love*. But the detail, and possibly the central conflict, of *Stark Love*—a father and son's mutual affection for a mountain girl—are found in the pages of *Our Southern Highlanders*, a book Brown happened upon while traveling South by train in 1926 to scout locations for his Appalachian movie. He was so enthralled he read the book non-stop, cover to cover.

Yet, in several interviews at the time of the picture's release, Brown failed to mention the book. In fact, even in his memoirs, he instead tells of finding his story while attempting to cast his leading lady.

Brown recalls his introduction to "a dark-haired beauty" in the mountains with whom he discussed the part of the leading female character, Barb'ry Allen. He was so impressed with the young woman, he even staged an impromptu rehearsal. He pitched a chip of wood into a nearby creek's slow current and "asked her to follow it with her eyes, wishing she could be that chip, well on its way from a lifetime of slavery."

"She exceeded all possible expectations. Hope when she saw the chip, yearning as it passed, and heartbreaking sorrow as it passed out of sight. I had never been so touched by any performance at any time..."

However, in Brown's version of the story, the young girl was in the company of her "black-bearded, stony-eyed," barrel-shaped father. When Brown offered the daughter the role, her father forcefully interceded. He told the girl to

"Git!" Then he turned on Brown to tell him to "Leave my wommern-folks be! They ain't none of 'em agoen to be no movie Jezebels for you or nobody else..."

After father and daughter departed, a mountain man told Brown, "Don't pay no mind to him. He got soured when his new woman ran off down to this Berea place with his own son [Berea College is known for providing work-for-tuition opportunities for its students]..." He further explained that the young girl had been promised to the father and the son had "put up a fight for her."

In the legend, this provided a "Eureka!" moment for Brown. The mountain man's offhanded comment had supplied the basis for his mountain story.

While this is a marvelous anecdote, regrettably for historians, Brown never let the truth get in the way of a good story. For instance, he told interviewers until the day he died that the leading man, Forrest James, was an illiterate mountain lad who disappeared into the woods with rifle and coon dog never to be seen again after filming was complete. However, he had personally recruited James and knew differently. Forrest "Fob" James was a three-sport letterman from Auburn University (then API), on a road trip to play Vanderbilt, who Brown met in the lobby of a Nashville hotel.

Embellishment is a common trait among gifted raconteurs and Brown (who had many sterling personal and professional qualities deserving of the utmost respect) some times stretched the truth.





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Robbinsville Sheriff Riley Orr, "a large, portentous man with a mustache to match," helped secure a mountain guide for the filmmakers, serve as liaison to the community, and keep them out of trouble.



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The *Stark Love* film crew included assistant director Paul Wing (third from left), director Karl Brown (center), and cinematographer James Murray (third from right).

Indeed, the mountain girl incident is most certainly apocryphal. It matches closely the encounter experienced by Ollie May Holland Stone, as told to Jerry Williamson in the early 1990s and recently recounted by Mrs. Stone's daughter Kay Davis. Yet, in truth, Ollie May was a college-educated young woman and her father, although expressing the sentiments of the father in Brown's story, was clean-shaven, articulate, and happily married to Ollie May's mother. The conversation was carried out on the streets of Robbinsville, not in the mountains.



**While revisiting** my notes for this article, I found two old pieces of newsprint from 1927 which shed further light on Brown's "inspiration." One was from the *New York Times*. The other was from a magazine, most possibly *Country Gentleman*, which had been pasted in an ancient scrapbook. The publication could not be determined from the ragged cut-out, but the writer, Sara Oyen, was the widow of Henry Oyen, a novelist and frequent contributor to the magazine.

When interviewed in 1927 for the *New York Times* article, Brown gave a version closer to the Stone account, which, as did Ollie May's recollection, lacked mention of a father/son rivalry.

Interestingly, Brown told yet another version of his inspiration story in 1927 when interviewed by Sara Oyen. On this occasion, he related a tale straight from the pages of *Our Southern Highlanders* and claimed it as his own. He told of

staying overnight with a mountain family in a one-room cabin. He was shocked at bedtime when everyone casually disrobed in each other's presence before retiring. Oyen wrote, "in this predicament it flashed across his mind how terrible it would be if a father and son noticed and desired the same woman."

This scene, duplicated in the film when Barb'ry "shucks her clothes" in front of her family, is, in truth, inspired (as was Brown's story) by the depiction of cabin life in the *Our Southern Highlanders* chapter entitled, "The Land of Do Without."

Kephart described the first time he enjoyed the overnight hospitality of a mountain family in a crowded cabin: "Naturally there can be no privacy and hence no delicacy, in such a home."

He explained there was no need for curtains in the house as he had spotted a shiny new percussion cap on the nipple of the muzzle-loading rifle hanging over the father's bed. Propriety, if not modesty, was enforced.

In point of fact, the real source of familial discord in *Stark Love* is more than likely the "Blood-Feud" chapter of *Our Southern Highlanders* which discusses the naturally combative spirit of mountain women: "She would despise any man who took insult or injury without showing fight."

Although the chapter primarily addresses warring families, it also covers intra-clan violence, as well. Several examples are given where the disagreement begins over a woman or is even "stirred up" by a woman. "Love of women is the primary cause, or the secondary aggravation, of many a feud."

Barb'ry Allen is the central character of the *Stark Love* story. Kephart's observation of the mountain man as "lord of

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COURTESY OF TENNESSEE ARCHIVE OF MOVING IMAGE AND SOUND

On the film set of *Stark Love*. Instead of a studio, an actual cabin with two walls removed was used for filming.



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"The Polo Field," base camp for the movie crew. Located in a cove near Rattler Ford, today the area is underwater, a portion of Santeetlah Lake. Right: Cooks for the film cast and crew.

his household" and the woman as "household drudge" and "field hand" is carried forward from the film's opening screen title:

"Deep in the North Carolina Mountains...Man is the absolute ruler—Woman is the working slave."

Indeed, as mentioned earlier, Kephart addresses the principal theme throughout his book of a woman's lowly station in highlander culture: "...There is no conscious discourtesy in such customs; but they betoken an indifference to woman's weakness, a disregard for her finer nature, a denial of her proper rank, that are real and deep-seated in the mountaineer. To him she is little more than a sort of superior domestic animal."

In the last pages of *Our Southern Highlanders*, he voices the

secondary theme of the *Stark Love* story: education, particularly for women, is a way out of a bleak, near-hopeless existence. He mentions Berea College. He says that "the future of Appalachia lies mostly in the hands of those resolute native boys and girls who win the education fitting them for such leadership."

Beyond the broad strokes of Kephart's influence are the details. Little touches are found like the name of Barb'ry Allen's father, Quill Allen. This was a nod to the King of the Mountain Moonshiners, Quill Rose, once a friend and neighbor of Kephart's. Additionally, the original 1927 English screen titles are nearly identical to passages found in the "Mountain Dialect" chapter:

"You wimmen folks skin up this hawg."



"Gimme that sack, I wouldn't have Dad and the boys see fer nuthin"

"[Barb'ry] You're different and hadn't oughter be let git wore out with work and babies. You got a right to live and be loved and respected and pleased, even if you are a woman."

The screen titles in our surviving copies of *Stark Love* are even closer to Kephart. The original English prints were either destroyed or lost many years ago. In 1968, British film historian Kevin Brownlow discovered a European copy of the movie in Prague.

David Shepard explains that the film version we see today is a translation from the Czech print:

"I was Film Acquisitions Manager and later Associate Archivist for the American Film Institute beginning in 1968 and had quite a bit to do with the reimportation of *Stark Love*, the making of the new English titles, and its first public exhibition at the New York Film Festival. The Paramount story and continuity files which are now in the Margaret Herrick Library were then in a basement room at the studio which was more or less cubed solid with them, so the original title lists were unavailable. The late Bill Bowser and I therefore wrote new titles based on literal translations of the Czech ones and—you guessed it—the language in Kephart's book. Incidentally, the title of the film in Czech translated back to English as *In the Glens of California*."

The film's cinematography was also inspired by the fine photographs included in the 1922 edition of *Our Southern Highlanders*. Plates from the book come to life on screen with the opening shot of a cabin in a deep valley. The scene of men carrying game home on a cut sapling, women working while men loaf nearby, the mill by the creek, the whiskey still, also are among several memorable images from the book. The Stewart cabin photograph is reproduced in an opening scene with the fiddler and banjo player – played by Uncle Grant and Dave Stewart.

The fight scene between father and son illustrates a paragraph out of the Blood-Feud chapter. "[Fights are] rough-and-tumble brawls, in which they slug, wrestle, kick, bite, strangle, until one gets the other down...[often] a club or stone will be used in a mad endeavor to knock the opponent senseless at a blow." In *Stark Love*, Rob grabs a rifle to even his odds, to no avail. Barb'ry is more successful with the axe.



**"In the middle of the night, I was awakened by bullets whizzing through my tent. You can imagine how scared I was."**

—Helen Mundy recalling a gunfight between locals



Helen Mundy as she appeared as Barb'ry in *Stark Love* (above) and in everyday life (left).

It should be noted that Kephart's intention was to document the life of the mountain people, not to ridicule or to parody them. He was a highly meticulous transcriber of first-hand observations which he impeccably penned upon pages and pages within his journal.

Kephart had been a world-class librarian before turning his back on city dwelling to seek a healthier life in the outdoors. He had risen through the ranks of Cornell and Yale to head the St. Louis Mercantile Library. Clarence Miller, an assistant to Kephart and later head librarian of the Mercantile himself remembered him as, "the most brilliant man I have known, and, almost as a matter of course, the least assuming." He was a first-rate writer and scholar. His aim in writing *Our Southern Highlanders* was not satire.

He explained in the preface to the 1922 edition of his book that "I have tried to give a true picture of life among the mountaineers... This book deals with the *mass* of the mountain people." He said his book was not concerned with the townspeople of the small villages or the "prosperous valley farmers," for the influences of a slowly encroaching outside world distinguished them from their "back-country kinsmen." *Our Southern Highlanders* is about the "real mountaineers," the "original" breed, the "ones who interest the reading public."

By the time Karl Brown sought out Kephart, he had lived in the Bryson City, North Carolina area for more than 20 years. He not only had studied the mountain folk and written about them, he had lived their way of life and had



Above: Forrest James, as Rob Warwick, and Helen Mundy as Barb'ry Allen in a scene from *Stark Love*. Right: the fight scene between characters Rob Warwick and his father.

earned the trust and respect of many. In the manuscript titled "The Making of *Stark Love*: From The Paramount Adventure," Brown provides an exaggerated and entertaining account of their first meeting:

*We stored our gear in baggage rooms [at the railway station in Bryson City] while we wandered up the street looking for someone who might give us news of Kephart. Suddenly I saw and recognized him, standing negligently before the town's one hotel . . . [He] was a small man, something below medium height, but chunky and intrinsically formidable. . . . We crossed the street and ascended some wonderfully uneven steps to land in an equally wonderful uneven office with a floor that was as wavy as a mild sea.*

*Kephart's desk was of the old rolltop kind, his typewriter, a battered old Underwood 5. The nearby table was piled high with books, papers, magazines and letters, with everything piled on top of everything else. On the floor beside the desk lay a coil of twisted galley-proofs, waiting for some kindly soul to correct them. A few old pipes, thick-cruled and rank, lay on the desk while cloth bags of Havana clippings were handy to fuel these mephitic tobacco burners.*

Another important contribution of Kephart was his recommendation of Robbinsville, North Carolina as the film location. Additionally, Kephart secured for Brown and his crew a driver and an introduction to the Robbinsville sheriff, Riley Orr. He also provided the following advice: "Do whatever you do honestly and openly, without the slightest trace of pretense. You never know what eyes are watching you from the nearest thicket." Brown could not have asked for a better advisor and consultant.

Near Robbinsville, the Tallassee Power Company was building the Santeetlah dam on the Cheoah River. Toward this purpose, they had displaced an entire community near

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**—from *Our Southern Highlanders***



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the Unicoi Mountains, in the vicinity of the present-day Nantahal National Forest. The dam would not be completed before 1928 so construction would not interfere with filming. The abandoned cabins and deserted landscape presented an ideal wilderness movie set.

Sheriff Riley Orr, an ex-dry goods merchant and logger, was "a large, portentous man with a mustache to match." Kephart knew that Orr could secure a mountain guide for the filmmakers, serve as liaison to the community, and otherwise keep them out of trouble.

When the Sheriff produced an elderly guide (incredibly named Davey Crockett), Brown inquired of the fee. The Sheriff informed Brown that, "We don't hold with taking pay from friends for any little service that they may need..." but he did say that Davey and he would allow for a quart or two of whiskey should they come upon a moonshiner in the mountains. Being unacquainted with mountain custom, Brown was mildly shocked by the request; but sheriffs and





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Promotional materials for the film.



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bootleggers were on friendly terms in Graham County. In fact, Sheriffs during that time regularly would ride ahead and warn locals if a revenue agent was in the area. That's not to say that they didn't keep the law. Indeed, Riley Orr had killed a renegade named Jordan in the line of service.

Davey Crockett proved worthy of his name. He ably led Brown and cameraman Jim Murray on a trek into the mountains where they found a large meadow in a cove near Rattler Ford. They christened it "The Polo Field." This is where the movie crew's base camp was established. Today the meadow is underwater, a portion of the 3,000 acre Santeetlah Lake.

Karl Brown filmed through the summer of 1926. Thanks to the engineering and organizational skills of Jim Murray and assistant director Paul Wing, roads were built, a multitude was sheltered, fed and paid, cameras worked, lights worked, and dams burst on cue. Incidentally, Wing also played the key role of the circuit preacher in the movie.

Kevin Brownlow spoke of his conversations with Karl Brown who described the challenges faced:

"The difficulties of motion picture production in the

wilds were enormous. To reach their location, they discovered rocky outcrops which would block any sort of wagon. So they borrowed dynamite from a construction crew building a dam forty miles away and blasted their way through."

Lighting the film in a remote area was trying but Brown adapted.

"They were in mining country and miners still used acetylene lights on their helmets. So Brown's crew adapted a whole battery of acetylene lights to give an intense glow. Instead of a studio they used an actual cabin and took two walls out."

Geographic and technical difficulties were not the only obstacles. Moonshine proved to be the greatest danger to life and property.

One night a gunfight broke out. A mountaineer had stolen his brother's still. There was no bloodshed although Brown almost lost his leading lady. Helen Mundy was the only woman who slept overnight at the Polo Field. The other women associated with the shoot lived close by and came into camp every morning. For her protection, and possibly for her supervision, Helen's tent was pitched between Karl Brown's and Paul Wing's.

Helen Mundy recalled the gun battle.

"In the middle of the night, I was awakened by bullets whizzing through my tent. You can imagine how scared I was."

Robbinsville historian, Mashall McClung, tells of another whiskey-fueled incident. A series of "splash dams," similar to those used in the logging industry to float logs downstream, had been designed near the headwaters of the Little Santeetlah for the film's climactic flood scene. The idea was to knock timbers from the splash dams in a sequence to simulate a gradual, increasing tide that would flow by the Warwick cabin as the courageous Barb'ry Allen rescues the unconscious Rob Warwick from the raging waters.

Unfortunately, the Graham County men in charge of the splash dams became bored waiting for the camera set up and began drinking moonshine. By the time Paul Wing signaled for the first dam to be opened, they were so drunk they knocked loose the timbers of all the dams at once. The resulting torrent thundered down Santeetlah Creek hitting Helen and Fob with a tremendous force, washing them downstream well past their intended mark.

To make matters worse, Helen had been tied to a raft for safety's sake. This alone almost drowned her when a huge wave hit the bulky, makeshift craft.

"I feel certain that the look of fear on the young lady's face was genuine," said McClung.

Any trouble the mountaineers may have caused was more than offset by their performances on screen. The acting of the amateur players far exceeded Brown's expectations. Both Forrest James and Helen Mundy were offered 5-year contracts by Paramount.

James bore a striking resemblance—both in appearance and manner—to the studio's great superstar Wallace Reid who had died tragically of morphine addiction three years earlier (a condition brought on by Paramount doctors treating an injury). Yet James, whose mother was very religious and disapproved of movies, turned his back on show business and purportedly never saw the film, even when it appeared in his hometown. He graduated from Auburn, became a teacher, a highly successful high school and amateur baseball coach, and then a prosperous and respected small town businessman. One of his three sons, Forrest James, Jr., became Governor of Alabama.

Mundy, a 16-year-old who had been "discovered" by Brown's crew in a Knoxville soda fountain, accepted the contract and proceeded to "go Hollywood." She dated big stars of the time—William Powell, Richard Dix, and Ricardo Cortez—and traveled by train with a huge entourage of feathered and furry pets. In a short time she wore out her welcome with the studio when she refused to accept supporting roles or acquiesce to the "makeover" they proposed. On a trip to Asheville to promote *Stark Love*, she met Michigan bandleader Donald Barringer and married him the next day. The union lasted until his death in 1966. When Helen died, twenty-one years later, she was survived by four children, eleven grandchildren, and twenty-four great-grandchildren.

When filming was finally completed on *Stark Love* and it came time to leave North Carolina, Horace Kephart was the last person Brown saw before he boarded the train to Asheville.

From the start, Brown held a reverence for the writer:

"...there was something so direct and honest in his bearing... I never asked him why he had hidden himself away from the world in this tangled miz-maze of mountains. If he wanted to tell me, fine. If not, it was his business, not mine..."

As the train pulled away from the platform, Brown watched Kephart's receding figure as he stood in front of the old depot:

"...the last I saw of Kephart was his waved salute as the train bore me out of the Great Smokies..."

When Karl Brown returned to his home studio, Famous Players-Lasky (later Paramount Pictures), he was met by a corporation in turmoil. The former artistic powers of the company, Vice President Jesse Lasky and General Manager Walter Wanger were being edged out of creative control by President Adolph Zukor. Lasky, already nervous about a film like no other the studio had produced—a picture shot on location with "hillbillies" and no-name actors, at the advent of talkies—decided to shelve the film.

Using all his formidable powers of persuasion, Brown talked Lasky into allowing him to premier *Stark Love* with his own money, which he did at the Cameo Theatre at 42nd Street and Broadway on February 27, 1927.

The film opened to great critical success and a four-week run. *The New York Times* proclaimed it "The most unique motion picture ever made!" Their critic, Mordaunt Hall, extolled the "ethnographic value" of the movie. *The News* called it, "An almost perfect picture!" *The Sun* implored, "See it at all costs!"

Even *Life* magazine and the National Board of Review put it on their Top 10 Films of the Year list, in the company of Cecil B. DeMille's *King of Kings*, Victor Fleming's *The Way of All Flesh*, Josef von Sternberg's *Underworld*, and William Wellman's *Wings*.

Karl Brown had defied the Paramount studio system and had won an audience for his film. But it was a small audience. For the very reasons that concerned Lasky, the movie did not enjoy a big box office success. It went back into the studio vaults, then was destroyed, and forgotten until 1968 when Kevin Brownlow discovered a European print in Czechoslovakia. It has never been released on VHS or DVD.

Happily, *Stark Love* was placed on the National Film Registry in 2009 and the Museum of Modern Art began restoration of their print, a copy of the Czech print, in 2011. Hopefully, one day the film will be accessible to the public. ♦

*John White, an Atlanta writer and filmmaker, holds a doctorate degree of education from Auburn University. His interest in Stark Love springs from his friendship with the late Cal James, Sr., son of the film's leading man. Dr. White has extensively researched Stark Love for six years and has written seven articles about the film for such publications as Film History: An International Journal, Alabama Heritage, and Kentucky Humanities. He has produced a documentary about Stark Love and continues to work toward the original movie's release on DVD.*