

Gene Creed was raised in a ranching family. She started riding horses so early that she doesn't remember learning to ride. Her brothers would come to her for help when they couldn't break a horse. Her career started at Watermelon Days in Rocky Ford, Colorado. Her brother bragged that he had a sister that could ride any horse they had in the corral, but the crowd wanted proof. He sent her two blocks to a downtown store to buy a pair of Levis and Gene changed out of her dress. A horse was picked out and Gene rode it down the race track right in front of the crowd, "with it buckin' like crazy!"



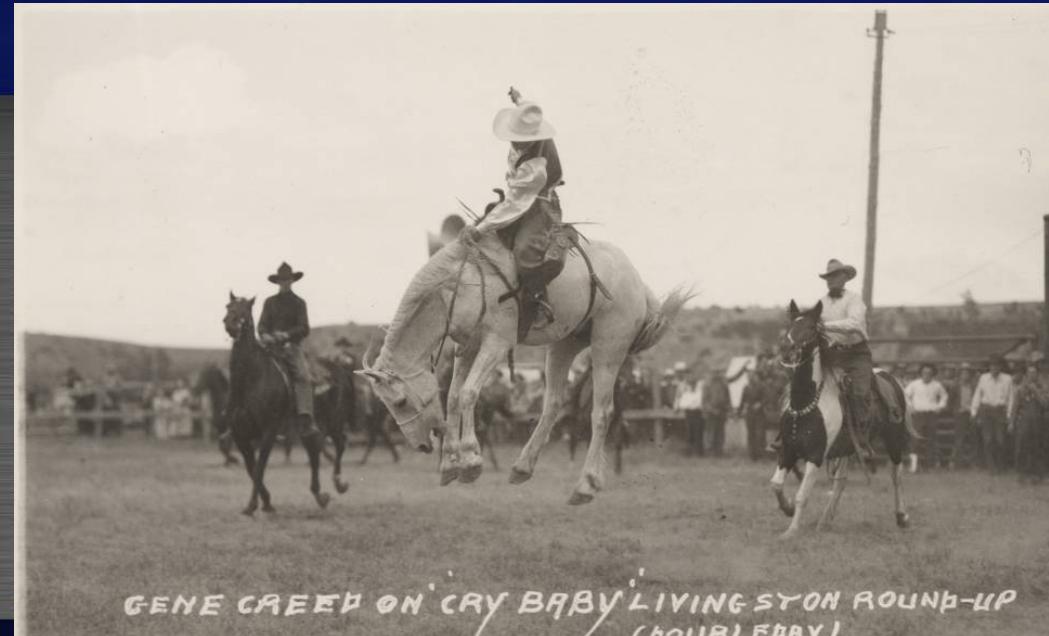
Gene Creed
1909-1993



She became a decorated rodeo cowgirl, traveling to London to perform in front of King George and Queen Elizabeth, and to Australia to compete in the first rodeo down under. Here you can see many of her (and her husband Shorty's) trophies.



At the time when Gene started riding rodeo, women typically rode with the stirrups hobbled, which made it easier for their feet to stay in the stirrups. Gene rode with her feet free, like the men, but only because she just didn't know there was any other way to ride! When she was just 16, she was sent on a train to visit her sister, who had just had a baby. While on the train, she caught a glimpse of the Denver Post advertising the Cheyenne Frontier Days. Gene impulsively decided to head up to Cheyenne instead of visiting her sister.



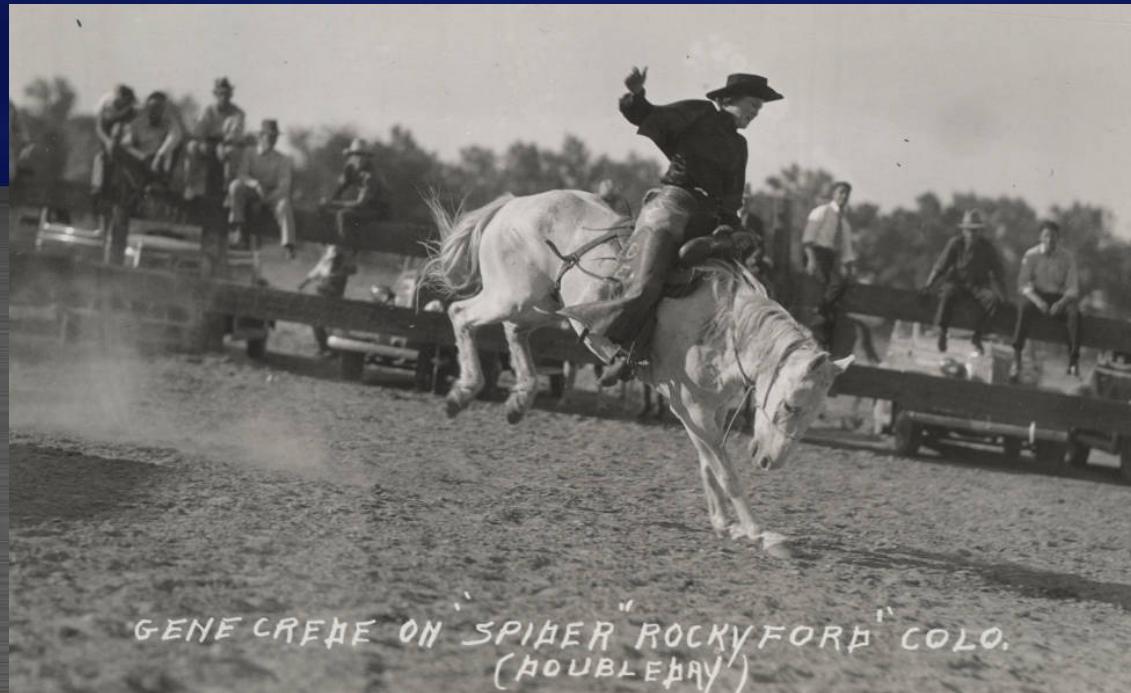
In an oral history interview from 1979, Gene described her adventures in rodeo:

"There was five days and we got three horses. On the fifth day when I was to ride my horse, somebody stole my saddle. I didn't have any saddle to ride. Well, I felt bad because the saddle wasn't mine. But this fellow, he got one of the boy's saddles that they'd been riding. He fit my stirrups. Then there was another fellow from Rocky Ford by the name of Bussey, and he wanted to kind of help me out. See, these boys-they could see that I was green and I needed some help. So, anyway, he snubbed down the horse. The last horse they took out on the racetrack right in front of the grandstand. The other two I had rode just in the arena, in the center. His name was Blue Dog."

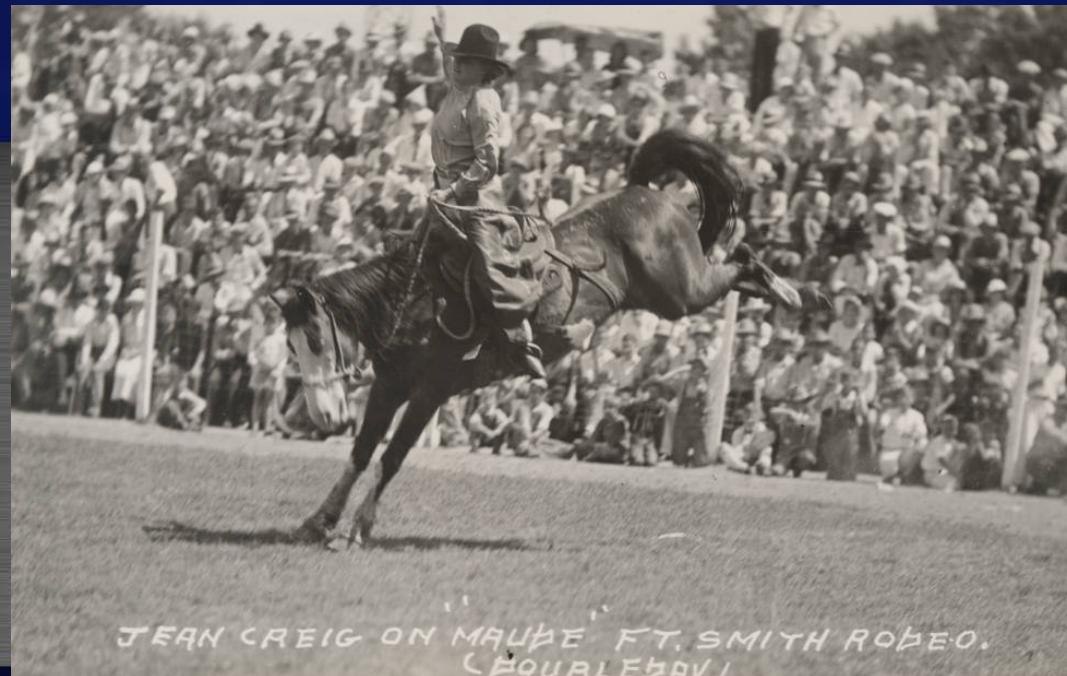


"Just as they turned this horse loose, one of the judges hollered, 'Don't turn that horse loose! That horse is one of the men's horses!' It was one of the worst horses they had. But they'd already turned it loose, and I was on it. And I rode it. Well, there wasn't nothing else they could do but give me the championship for bronc riding.

I never did know whoever stole the saddle. Never did ever find it. And I don't know who switched the horses. What I did, I rode what they call "slick." I rode like the cowboys. The other girls rode with their stirrups hobbled. That is a strap that they tie their stirrups (with) underneath their horse's stomach. They get their feet in them stirrups and turn their toes out, it's hard to buck them off. But I never even heard of a hobble. So I rode just like the cowboys did. Well, there was nothing to do, but what I won this, see?"



After this early success in bronc riding, Gene joined a rodeo company and traveled doing trick riding and barrel racing. In addition to her rodeo talent, she was known for designing and creating all her own flashy satin costumes.



She met her husband, Shorty, on the rodeo circuit. After they retired from rodeo in the 1940s, sharing 32 years combined years of rodeo and injuries, they lived on a ranch near Bellvue raising cattle, horses and their son Lonnie (who also became a rodeo star). Gene was inducted in the Cowgirl hall of Fame in 1982.



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