

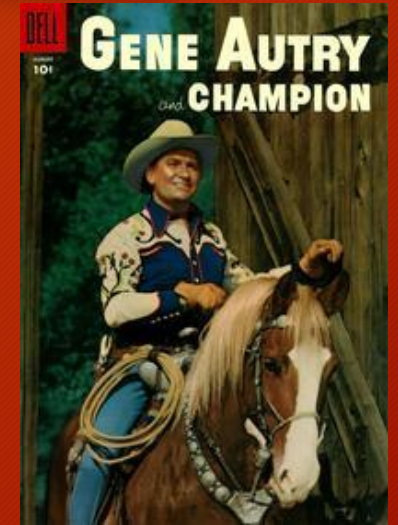
# Singing in the Saddle

Tales of Cowboy Songs and Singers

By Mary Jo Dangel (2022)

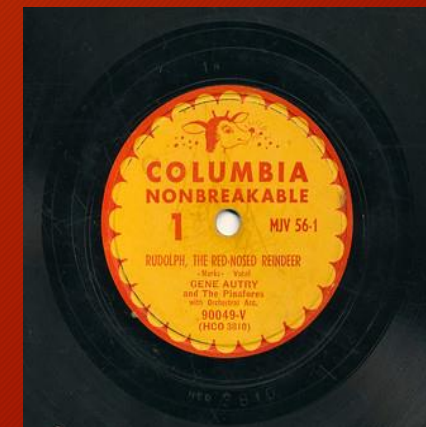
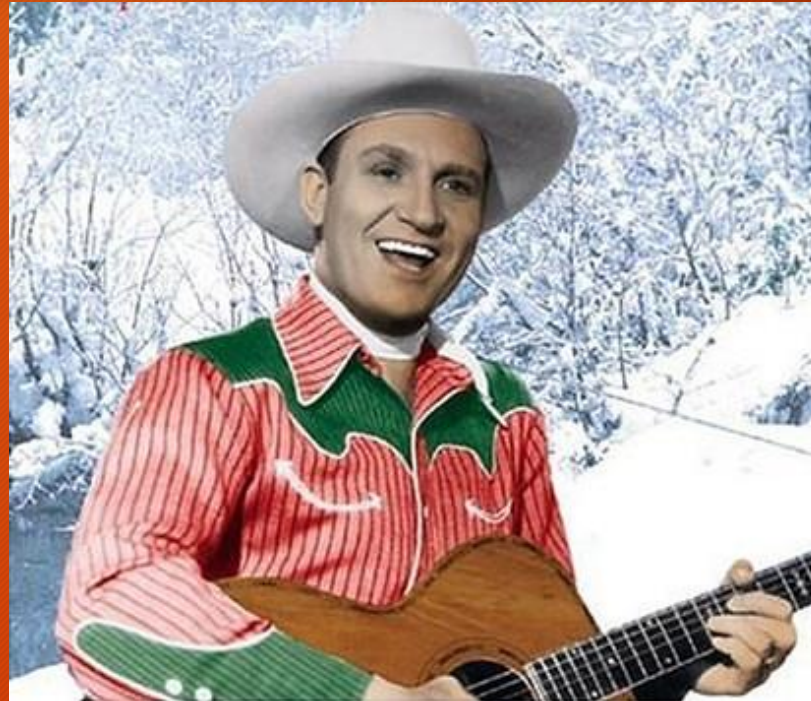
# Gene Autry

- Born Orvon Grover Autry in Tioga, Texas, in 1907.
- Died in 1998 (aged 91) in Los Angeles
- Nickname: The Singing Cowboy
- Theme song: “Back in the Saddle Again”
- Horse: Champion
- Appeared in over 90 films (1934-1953)
- Singer, songwriter, businessman
- “Gene Autry portrayed an Everyman, championing the rights of the small rangers, farmers, or townspeople against heartless business conglomerates, corrupt politicians or the injustices of ‘the system.’”  
(Doug Green)



# Gene Autry's Most Popular Recordings

- Back in the Saddle Again
- Rudolph, the Red-nosed Reindeer
- Frosty the Snowman
- Here Comes Santa Claus
- Up on the House Top



# B Movies

- Low budget
- Popular during Golden Age of Hollywood
- Less publicized second feature
- Shorter than top-billed films
- Often part of a series
- Inferior to lavishly budgeted films
- Scorned by critics; loved by fans



# Ray Whitley, Songwriter & Inventor

- Born Raymond Otis Whitley in Atlanta, Georgia, in 1901
- Died in 1979 (age 77)
- Wrote & recorded “Back in the Saddle Again”
- Developed the Gibson SJ-200 acoustic guitar
- Singer, songwriter, actor



# Back in the Saddle Again

- I'm back in the saddle again  
Out where a friend is a friend  
Where the longhorn cattle feed  
On the lowly jimson weed  
I'm back in the saddle again

Ridin' the range once more  
Totin' my old .44  
Where you sleep out every night  
And the only law is right  
Back in the saddle again

# Saddle es



# Gene Autry's Noteworthy Achievements

Wrote/co-wrote over 300 songs

Made over 600 recordings

Over a dozen gold and platinum records

5 stars on Hollywood Walk of Fame (film, TV, music, radio & live performance)

Country Music Hall of Fame

Nashville Songwriters Hall of Fame

US Army Air Corps in WWII

Owned California Angels major league baseball team (1961-1997)



# “Annie Oakley” TV series: (1954-57)



- Gene Autry produced the TV series “Annie Oakley,” starring Gail Davis, so little girls could have “a Western star of their own.” Davis had appeared with Autry in 20 films & 15 episodes of “The Gene Autry Show” on TV.

# Cowboy Sidekicks



- Smiley Burnette
- “George” Gabby Hayes
- Pat Brady
- Andy Devine
- Pat Buttram

# Pat Buttram: Sidekick With Distinctive Voice



- Born Maxwell Emmett Buttram in Addison, Alabama, in 1915.
- Died in Los Angeles in 1994 (age 78)
- Sidekick to Gene Autry
- Mr. Haney on “Green Acres”
- voice work for many Disney animated films.

# Smiley Burnette: More Than a Sidekick



- Born Lester Alvin Burnett in Summon, Illinois in 1911
- Died in 1967 in Encino, California (age 55)
- Actor, singer, songwriter, musician, inventor
- Horse: Ring Eye
- Nickname: Frog Millhouse
- Engineer Charley Pratt on “Petticoat Junction”

# Smiley Burnette, musician es



# Sons of the Pioneers

- Formed in 1934 by Leonard Slye (Roy Rogers), Bob Nolan & Tim Spencer
- Appeared in 87 films
- (1935-1984)
- Inducted into Country Music Hall of Fame & Western Performers Hall of Fame
- 1<sup>st</sup> country & Western group to sing at Carnegie Hall



# Sons of the Pioneers “Raised the Bar”



- The Sons of the Pioneers “raised the bar in terms of musicianship, harmony singing and especially songwriting, where their lyrical musical portraits virtually define the romanticized West,” writes Douglas Green in “Singing in the Saddle.”

# Cool Water es



# Jeopardy question

- Served in the US Army (1943-45) and studied medicine at Colorado College before pursuing his musical career
- Succeeded Frank Sinatra as vocalist with the Tommy Dorsey band
- Joined Sons of the Pioneers as lead singer (1949-52)



# Ken Curtis (born Curtis Wain Gates, 1916-91)

- Played singing cowboy romantic leads at Columbia Pictures
- Son-in-law of director John Ford
- Joined cast of “Gunsmoke” in 1964 as Festus Haggan.



[Ken Curtis at Home on the Range - YouTube](#)

Ken Curtis sings es



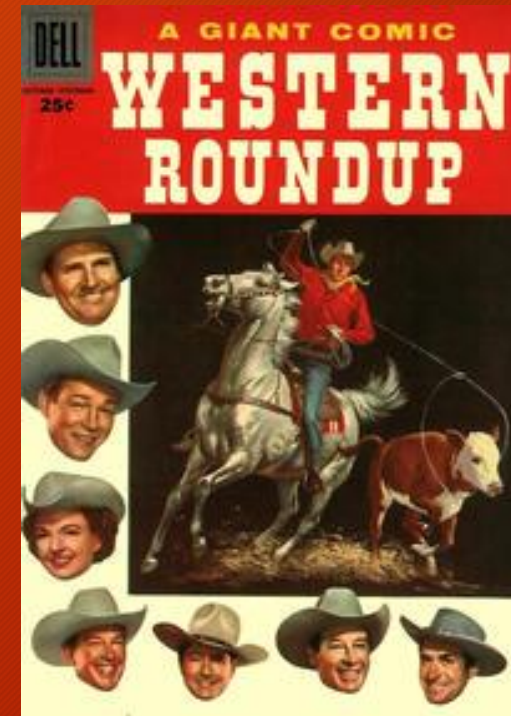
# Roy Rogers

- Born Leonard Slye in Cincinnati in 1911
- Died in Apple Valley, CA, in 1998 (age 86)
- Singer, actor
- Nickname: King of the Cowboys
- Horse: Trigger (Palomino)
- Dog: Bullet (German Shephard)
- Theme song: Happy Trails (written by Dale Evans, his wife)



# Merchandising rights

- Roy Rogers had a clause in his 1940 contract with Republic specifying his right to his likeness, voice & name for merchandising. He was second only to Walt Disney in the number of items featuring his name.



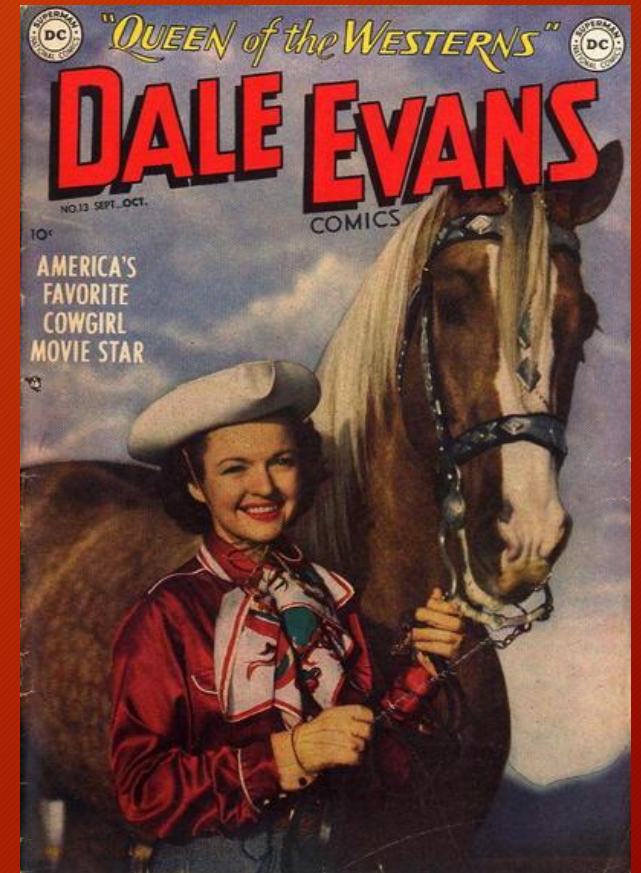
# Money Making Matinee Idols

For many years Roy Rogers & Gene Autry were in the “Motion Picture Herald’s” Top 10 Money-Making Western Stars.



# Dale Evans

- Born Frances Octavia Smith in 1912 in Uvalde, Texas
- Died in Apple Valley, California, in 2001 (age 88)
- Actress, singer, songwriter (Happy Trails, The Bible Tells Me So)
- Horse: Buttermilk
- Nickname: Queen of the West



# Roy Rogers & Dale Evans

- Married in 1947
- Appeared together in 35 movies & 3 TV series
- Recorded 400+ songs
- Active in Christian evangelism



Happy Trails es



# Songs, Songwriters & Singers: Part 2

# Patsy Montana: A Cowboy's Sweetheart

- Born Rubye Rose Blevins in Beaudry, Arkansas, in 1908
- Died in San Jacinto in 1996 (age 87)
- 1<sup>st</sup> female country performer to have a million-selling single for “I Want to Be a Cowboy’s Sweetheart,” which she wrote
- Member of the Country Music Hall of Fame



# Patsy Montana es



# Bonnie Lou: American Music Pioneer

- Born Mary Joan Kath in Towanda, Illinois, in 1924
- Died in Cincinnati in 2015 (age 91)
- Known as “Mary Jo, the yodeling sweetheart”
- One of the 1<sup>st</sup> female rock & roll singers
- Member of Rockabilly Hall of Fame
- WLW-TV performer (Midwestern Hayride, Ruth Lyons Show, Paul Dixon Show)
- [BONNIE LOU sings & yodels Chime Bells & You're Nobody Till Somebody Love You 1986 Color video - YouTube](#)



# Midwestern Cowgirl es



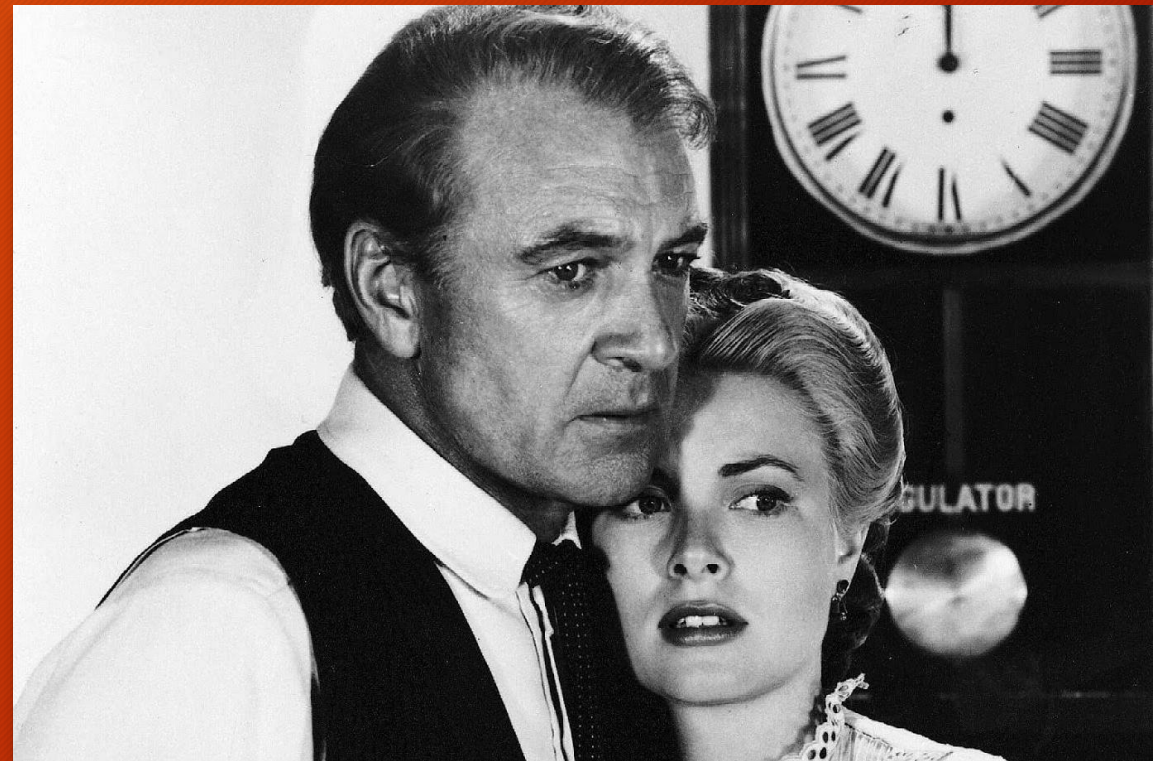
# The Ballad of High Noon (Do Not Forsake Me, Oh My Darlin')

Academy Award: best song (1952)

Music: Dimitri Tiomkin

Lyrics: Ned Washington

Performed on film by: Tex Ritter



# Tex Ritter



- Born Woodward Maurice Ritter in Muvaul, Texas, in 1905
- Died in 1974 (age 68) in Nashville
- Popular singer & actor
- Country Music Hall of Fame
- Father of actor John Ritter

Tex Ritter sings High Noon theme es



# Dimitri Tiomkin, composer



- Born in Ukraine in 1894
- Died in London in 1979 (age 85)
- Won Academy Awards for High Noon, The High & the Mighty, The Old Man and the Sea
- Other songs include: Giant, Friendly Persuasion, Gunfight at the OK Corral, Rawhide

# Ned Washington, lyricist



- Born Edward Washington in 1901 in Scranton
- Died in 1976 in Los Angeles (age 75)
- Won Oscars for High Noon & When You Wish Upon a Star
- Inducted into Songwriters Hall of Fame
- Wrote words to Rawhide

# Frankie Laine

- Born Francesco Paolo LoVecchio in 1913 in Chicago.
- Died in 2007 in San Diego (age 93)
- Singer, songwriter, actor
- Sang theme songs for “3:10 to Yuma,” “Gunfight at the OK Corral,” “Blazing Saddles” and “Rawhide” (TV).

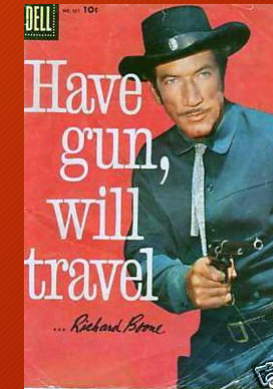
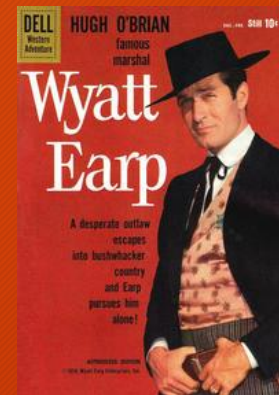


# Rawhide, Frankie Laine intro es

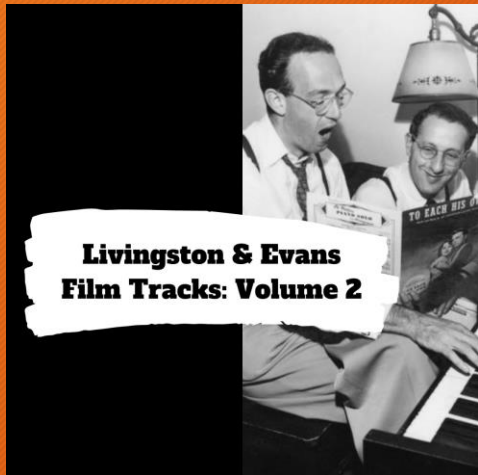


# Popular TV Western Series Theme Songs

- “Wyatt Earp” by Herman Stein & Ken Darby
- “Bonanza” by Jay Livingston & Ray Evans
- “The Ballad of Paladin” by Johnny Western, Richard Boone & Sam Rolfe
- “Maverick” by Paul Francis Webster & David Buttolph



# Jay Livingston & Ray Evans



- Raymond Bernard Evans was born in Salamanca, New York, in 1915 & died in Los Angeles in 2007 (age 92).
- They were inducted into the Songwriters Hall of Fame & they have stars on the Hollywood Walk of Fame
- Jacob Levinson was born in McDonald, Pennsylvania, in 1915 and died in Los Angeles in 2001 (age 86).

# Jay Livingston & Ray Evans: Award-winning Songwriters

Won 3 Oscars: “Buttons & Bows,”  
“Mona Lisa,” & “Que Sera, Sera,”



# “The Lone Ranger” theme (aka “William Tell overture”)



- Composed by Gioachino Rossini, premiered in 1829.
- TV series aired 1949-1957, starring Clayton Moore as the masked man & Jay Silverheels as Tonto.

# William Tell Overture es



“Gunsmoke” aired on radio (1952-61),  
TV (1955-75) es



# “Gunsmoke” aired longer than any other TV Western (1955-75, 635 episodes)



“You’re Wearing Out Your Welcome, Matt,” written by Joey Scott & David Kent, ponders lengthy relationship between Matt & Miss Kitty.



Many Westerns were filmed near Kanab, Utah

# Is Matt Wearing Out His Welcome? es



# The Gambler: Song Inspires Series es



# Jack Palance: Tough Guy



Born Volodymyr Palahniuk in Lattimer Mines, Pennsylvania, in 1919 to Ukranian immigrants.

Died in Montecito, California, in 2006 (age 87).

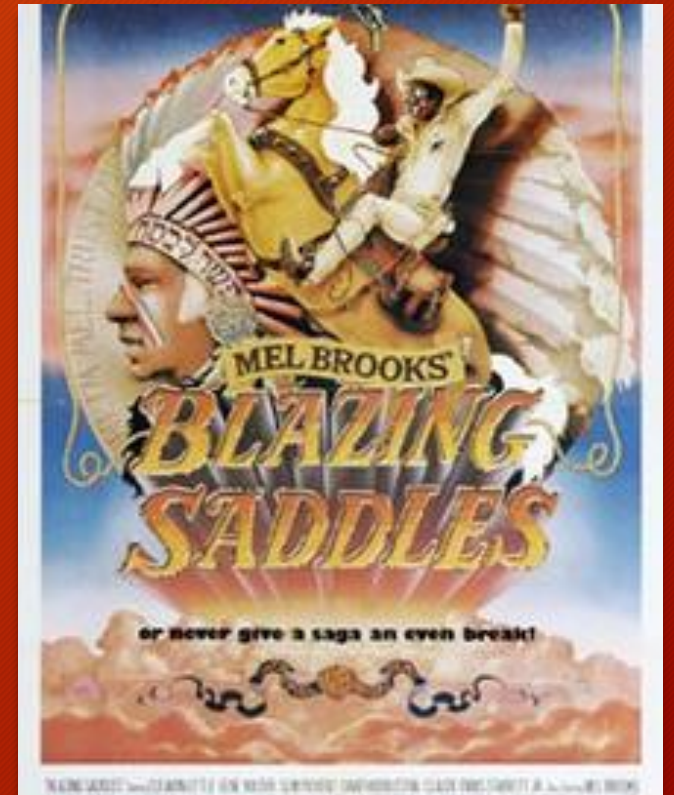
Won Oscar for “City Slickers” (best supporting actor).

Served in U.S. Army during WWII.

Jack Palance croons es



# Blazing Saddles: Windbreaking Satire



# Windbreaking scenes

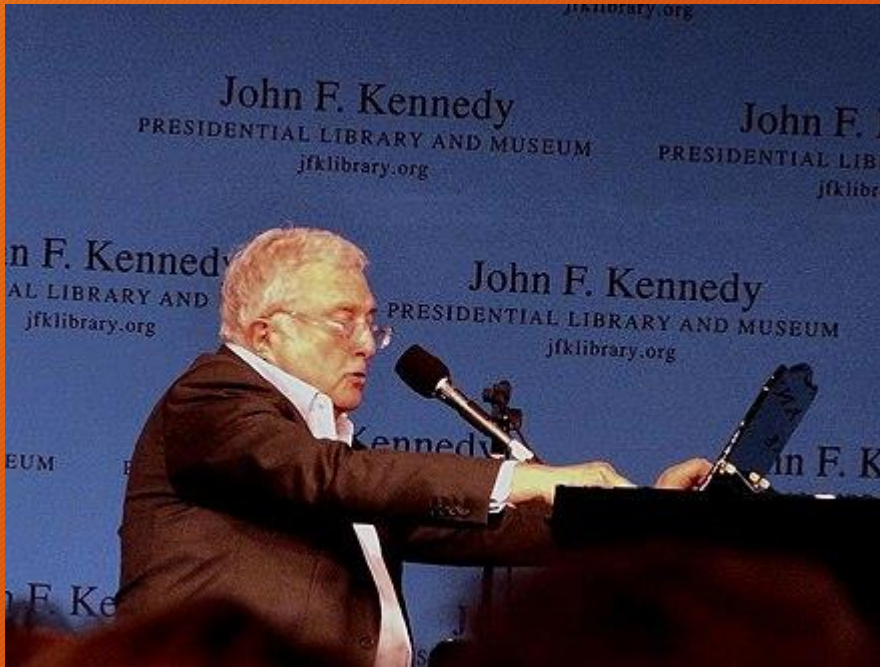


# Toy Story franchise

Toys come to life in this Pixar/Disney film series directed by John Lassiter, with music by Randy Newman.



# Randy Newman: Award-winning Songwriter

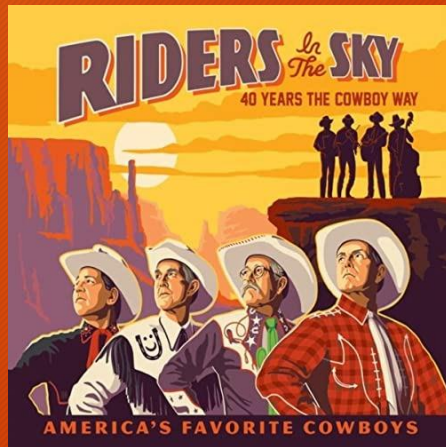


- Randall Stuart Newman was born in Los Angeles in 1943
- Singer, songwriter
- Won 2 Oscars, 3 Emmys, 7 Grammys
- Inducted into Rock & Roll Hall of Fame, Songwriters Hall of Fame, 1 star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame.

You've Got a Friend in Me es



# Riders in the Sky: Performing since 1977



- Joey Miskulin (born 1949): Joey the Cow Polka King (accordion)
- Paul Crissman (born 1949): Woody Paul (fiddle & vocals)
- Doug Green (born 1946): Ranger Doug, the idol of American Youth (guitar, vocals, yodeler)
- Fred LaBour (born 1948): Too Slim (bass, vocals)

# Top 10 Western Songs

1. Ghost Riders in the Sky
2. El Paso
3. Cool Water
4. The Streets of Laredo
5. Back in the Saddle Again
6. High Noon
7. Oh Shennandoah
8. Tumbling Tumbleweeds
9. Home on the Range
10. Red River Valley



# Ghost Riders in the Sky es



# Tumbling Tumbleweeds es



# Red River Valley es

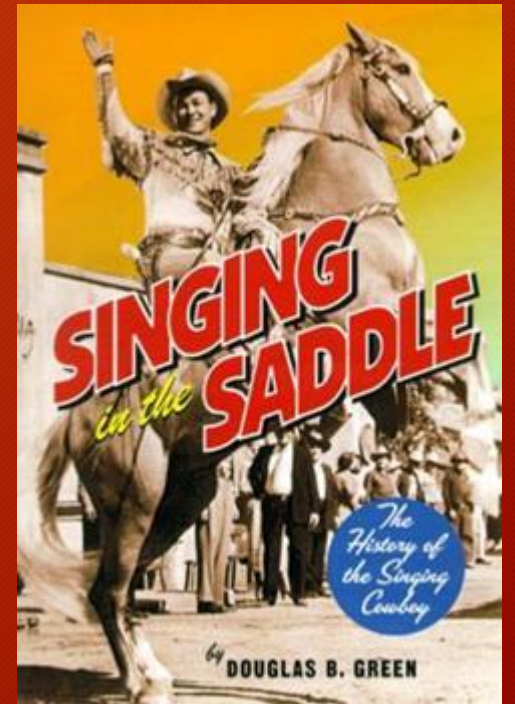


# Streets of Laredo es



# For more information:

- Singing in the Saddle: The History of the Singing Cowboy,
- by Douglas B. Green
- The National Cowboy & Western Heritage Museum. <https://nationalcowboymuseum.org/>
- Sons of the Pioneers. <https://sonsofthepioneers.org>
- Riders in the Sky. <https://www.ridersinthesky.com>



# My legacy

Mary Jo Niklas Dangel,  
Gaylord Hotel, Texas



Life should not be a journey to the grave,  
with the intention of arriving safely in an  
attractive and well-preserved body, but rather  
to skid in sideways, chocolate in one hand,  
wine in the other, body thoroughly used up,  
totally worn out and screaming,  
“Woo Hoo, what a ride!”

# The End

*Mary Jo Niklas on Mozart Avenue, @ 1950*



Happy trails to you, until we meet again.  
Happy trails to you, keep smilin' until then.  
Who cares about the clouds when we're  
together?

Just sing a song and bring the sunny  
weather.

Happy trails to you, 'till we meet again.