



# HAPPY TRAILS

A Pictorial Celebration of the Life and Times of ROY ROGERS and DALE EVANS

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*Chapter Seven*

## **Box-Office Star**

*“In real life, he stood taller than an icon  
and reached farther than the stars.”*

Country and western singer/songwriter Clint Black about Roy Rogers



Roy lent his services to the USO, entertaining troops and raising hundreds of thousands of dollars for war bonds.



Roy signs autographs for fans in 1940.

**O**n July 12, 1943, Roy Rogers and his trusty palomino, Trigger, appeared on the cover of *Life* magazine. The overwhelming success of Roy's movies had made him the biggest box-office draw in the country.

On average, Roy made eight pictures a year, and in between productions he traveled around the country promoting his work. He sometimes made six appearances a day at various theaters where his movies were playing. Audiences would fill the seats of the movie houses, Roy and the Sons of the Pioneers would sing a few songs, and then his film would run.

Trigger accompanied Roy on all his promotional trips. Roy had acquired Trigger in 1938 when the horse was a yearling and, with the aid of a professional trainer, he brought the animal into prominence.

Along with information about his home life, the origin of the singing cowboy's name was revealed in the *Life* article. Studio executives had given Leonard Slye, also known as Dick Weston (a name Leonard picked himself and used as his professional name for a short time), the handle of Rogers in 1937, after the famous humorist Will Rogers, and Roy, which means "king." The two stage names fit together perfectly.



Roy and Dale teamed up for the second time in the 1944 movie *The Yellow Rose of Texas*.



Roy, Dale, and Gabby Hayes outwit the bad guys in the 1945 motion picture *Bells of Rosarita*.



Roy and Trigger visit a child in the hospital in 1940.