

## THE BLACK KNIGHT

By

John Frain

Bob Saunders: (dying)

"I want you to help make this part of the country a fit place for people to live."

Hopalong Cassidy: (solemnly)

"I'll do my best Bob."

*Hopalong Cassidy Returns* (1936)

In 1906, a twenty-three-year old Brooklyn City Hall clerk named Clarence Mulford wrote a western novel called *Bar-20* about a cattle ranch in the Southwest. An Easterner who had never been West when he wrote *Bar-20*, Mulford was a diligent researcher and eventually amassed a card file with more than 10,000 entries covering numerous aspects of Western history such as geography, language and weapons.

His first novel *Bar-20* was followed by 27 more over the next 35 years, ending in 1941. His stories involved a unique blending of detective story ingredients and

Arthurian and Darwinian motifs that remained faithful to his vision of the Old West. By the time he finished the series he was probably the most famous western writer in the first half of the twentieth century.

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From Mulford's novels, the famous Hopalong Cassidy character emerged. Although Mulford visited the West only once in his life, he drew from his research combined with a rich imagination and used continuing characters such as Cassidy, Johnny Nelson, Buck Peters, and Mesquite Jenkins who went from youth to midlife to old age in his stories.

The opening of his 1910 novel *Hopalong Cassidy* demonstrated that Mulford was an unusually gifted author intent on painting a grand setting for his novels:

"The raw and mighty West, the greatest stage in all the history of the world for so many deeds of daring which verged on the insane, was seared and cross-barred with grave-lined trails and dotted with presumptuous, mushroom towns of brief stay, whose inhabitants flung their primal passions in the face of humanity and laughed in condescending contempt at what humanity had to say about it. In many localities the real bad-man, the man of the gun, whose claims to the appellation he was ready to prove against the

rancorous doubting of all comers, made history in a terse and business-like way, and also made the first law for the locality—that of the gun.”

Mulford’s setting was not on the territory of the traditional western frontier and towns of Kansas, Oklahoma and Texas but on the rugged, still largely unexplored territory of the American Southwest desert. As Mulford writes in the opening of *Hopalong Cassidy*:

“From the gold camps of the Rockies to the shrieking towns of the coast, where wantonness stalked unchecked; from the vast stretches of the cattle ranges to the ever-advancing terminals of the persistent railroads, to the cow towns, boiling and seething in the loosed passions of men who brooked no restraint in their revels, no one section of country ever boasted of such numbers of genuine bad-men of both classes as the great, semi-arid Southwest.”

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A decade before *Bar-20* was written, a boy named William Boyd was born to Charles Boyd and Leida Boyd in Henrysburg, Ohio. Charles Boyd was a day laborer who travelled where he could find work. In 1902, work took Charles Boyd to Tulsa, Oklahoma where he worked various

jobs until he was killed in 1908 attempting to rescue fellow workers trapped in an explosion.

The death of his father forced thirteen-year-old William Boyd to quit school and find work to support the family. He worked in various jobs such as a grocery clerk and oil field worker. In 1917 he married Laura Maynard and in 1919 they moved to California where Boyd got various jobs as an auto salesman, orange picker and surveyor.

Soon, though, Boyd began getting roles in silent films in Hollywood. In 1920 working as an extra in the movie *Why Change Your Wife* starring Gloria Swanson, he came to the attention of director Cecil B. DeMille. The great deMille liked the looks of the handsome, prematurely-gray young man and signed him to a contract at the princely sum of \$30 a week.

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But his personal life was an up and down roller coaster of relationships. His first marriage was on the rocks and he divorced Laura Maynard in 1921 and married Ruth Miller. The marriage to Miller only lasted three years and in 1924 he divorced Miller. In 1926, he married Elinor Fair. He has his first child by Elinor. It was a boy. And the boy died at nine months old.

With the tragedy of his son's death and the continuing

marriages, his personal life was unsettled, going around in repeating circles, in the middle of all of this, William Boyd's Hollywood career was beginning to take off.

Story has it (Myth has it) that Boyd bought some fancy clothes and caught DeMille's eye and got the romantic lead in De Mille's silent epic *The Volga Boatman*. After his part in *Volga Boatmen*, he quickly became a matinee idol earning upwards of \$100,000 a year.

And in this year (1926) of so much vast change in his personal life and his career, an eleven-year-old girl named Grace Bradley goes to the movies in Brooklyn with her mother. Grace sees a larger-than-life image on the screen of actor William Boyd and she falls madly in love. She writes his name in her schoolbooks. She starts collecting articles about him in movie magazines. She fantasizes that someday she will marry him.

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The next years were busy ones for Boyd as his name and reputation got around Hollywood. 1927 he was in *King of Kings* and in 1928 a part in *Arabian Knights*. And in 1929 a part in *The Leatherneck*. In 1930, Boyd's personal life changed when he marries Dorothy Sebastian. 1931 he has a part in *Beyond Victory* and *The Painted Desert*.

Yet it was a period of change in Hollywood between the

silent films and the talkies. Boyd had become a star of the silent film era. But it was an era that was ending as a totally new technology overtook Hollywood for the first time. His problem was a great one. Rather than simply deciding which script he wanted, he had to decide if he wanted to compete in this entirely new medium of talking motion pictures. He fortunately had a fabulous, natural voice. The voice of the modern hero cowboy. The soothing nature of a Gene Autry or Roy Rogers. But for many young boys of the 40s and 50s, more than just a nice cowboy figure. No, a type of moral code. A standard for young boys by this Black Knight everyone would later call Hoppy.

The immediate answer to his question about moving into an entirely new medium, the medium of sound. How might he do this? There seemed a way to him but he did not know what it was at the time. By the end of the silent movies, Boyd was without a contract and couldn't find work and was going broke.

Boyd gets a reputation as a "party animal" who drank way too much and really loved the ladies. But a very odd mistake in 1931 changed his life for the worse. There was another actor named William Boyd who was older than then our Boyd. This older William Boyd was arrested on a morals charge and before the identity was confirmed, newspapermen

(because of his reputation) assumed it was the young actor William Boyd and ran his picture along with a story of the arrest. The other Boyd got the name William "Stage" Boyd because of his stage acting and later portrayed the villain in the serial *The Lost City*.

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It ruined his reputation as an actor and he drowned his sorrows by drinking even more. His career went to pot because no one would hire him.

In 1931, another interesting thing happened in a growing synchronicity in this story. A talent scout from Paramount Pictures saw Grace Bradley dancing in a New York cabaret and offered her a screen test. She is immediately signed to a contract with Paramount and moves to Hollywood with her mother. She still thinks of William Boyd, but makes no attempt to contact him after she moves to Hollywood.

Fortunately, Boyd has a good speaking voice and in 1932 Pathe Studios gives him a contract for \$2,500 a week and a star ranking. His career though sputtered along until 1935 when he was offered the role of Buck Peters, in Harry "Pop" Sherman's new movie version of Clarence Mulford's *Bar 20* adventures. Boyd accepted the offer, but he wanted to play Mulford's character, Hopalong Cassidy. He liked the name and thought kids would too. Since Boyd still had name

recognition value, Sherman agreed to let him play the part of the Bar 20 foreman.

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The character "Hop-Along" was named because of a limp caused by an earlier bullet wound. He changed the character from the original one Mulford created to make sure that Hoppy didn't smoke, drink, chew tobacco or swear. He rarely kissed a girl and always let the "bad-guy" draw first. In his movies, the good guy wore black. The first film was titled *Hopalong Cassidy Enters*.

"Follow your stars in peace, old timer," Boyd says in the first of the Hoppy movies. The handsome, silver-haired cowboy holds tight to his friend who has just died in his arms after being shot in the back. Without another spoken word, the scene moves from sorrow to revenge. His tear-filled eyes turn icy as he stares out over the empty prairie. There is no doubt he will avenge the murder. The handsome cowboy is Hopalong Cassidy. The old friend is Uncle Ben. The movie was the first of the Hoppy movies *Hopalong Cassidy Enters*.

1935 was also the year that Republic Pictures was formed, and a singing cowboy named Gene Autry began his starring series at the new studio.

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Author of the Hopalong Cassidy novels Clarence Mulford was continually disappointed and often upset by the major changes made by William Boyd to his Hop-Along Cassidy character. He had always envisioned Cassidy as a rough-and-tumble, hard-drinking and combative man and once said words to the effect that if Cassidy of the movies (an upright teetotaler who always stuck to a code of chivalry at all times) had ever strayed into the novels, Cassidy's sidekicks in the novel would have shot him.

The Hoppy movies launched the formula of the "Trio Western." Boyd was 40 years old when the series started. He got a younger partner to play the romantic leads (James Ellison, the only singing cowboy in the series, Russell Hayden, Brad King, Jay Kirby, Jimmy Rogers, George "Superman" Reeves and Rand Brooks) and a second older partner for comic relief (George Hayes known as "Gabby" played Windy Holiday and Britt Wood and Andy Clyde played California Carlson) and Edgar Buchanan as Red Connors.

Hoppy reversed the traditional symbolism of the color white in westerns with the good guy always wearing white. He wore a black cowboy outfit and rode a white horse. The role seemed to change the man. From a frivolous silent-era heart-throb with 4 failed marriages) whose career seemed over before he transformed into Hoppy.

Paramount would make 34 more pictures with Bill Boyd as Hoppy and United Artists produced 31 others, also with Bill Boyd. Never in Hollywood history has one man played the same character in as many features. When audiences the world over saw the films, Bill Boyd and Hopalong Cassidy became synonymous.

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Like a Black Knight, Hoppy rode a big, beautiful white horse (outfitted with black saddle and bridle) and together they chased the villain to his doom every week And, as usual, Hoppy did all of that without getting his duds dirty or losing that big hat.

The coming Hoppy films over the next ten years were noted for their fast action and excellent outdoor photography (usually by Russell Harlan).

But while Boyd's career was taking off in the new talking westerns, his personal life was still in shambles. In 1936 Boyd divorces his fourth wife Dorothy Sebastian. Also in this year Boyd kisses Evelyn Brent on the forehead while she is dying in *Hopalong Cassidy Returns*. His fans saw this as unmanly so all future romance was left to his partners and there was a different leading lady in each picture. In the film *Hopalong Cassidy Returns* town Marshall Hopalong Cassidy investigates the murder of a gold miner

who was killed before he could file his claim. It became the highest rated of the Hoppy films.

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1937 was the magic year. Someone put William Boyd together with Grace Bradley who had been in love with Hopalong for maybe ten years now. She was now a 23-year-old Hollywood actress.

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When the actor phoned Bradley and said, "This is William Boyd," she recalled (in a 1976 interview with the Costa Mesa-based *Daily Pilot*) she thought someone who knew about her "mad crush" on Boyd was pulling her leg.

"You mean *the* William Boyd?" she asked.

He laughed – the same distinctively hearty laugh she had heard in his movies – and she was speechless.

"You couldn't miss that laugh," she recalled. "There was no other like it."

The actor invited her to a small party at his beach house in Malibu. And when he arrived at her Beverly Hills townhouse to pick her up, her mother greeted him at the door.

William Boyd was standing at the foot of the stairs when Grace walked down to meet him. He instinctively held out his arms for her, she recalled, "and I walked right into them."

On a visit to a ranch, the newly married couple found a magnificent white horse. The horse was pure white, part Arabian and part Morgan. Boyd asks his new wife to name the horse. She dubbed the horse "Topper" after the character in her favorite novel *Topper*.

This is the horse Hoppy would ride up to the end of his career. The two would appear together not just in movies but in parades and all the other personal appearances William Boyd made. When Topper died, Boyd said he would never ride another horse—there was only one Topper.

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As Republic Studios director William Witney once put it "She met a Prince Charming on a big white horse."

Boyd proposes to her three days after they meet and were married three weeks later on his 42<sup>nd</sup> birthday.

He would stay with Grace until he died.

By 1943, William Boyd, or Hopalong Cassidy, had made 54 films or "Hoppies" as they were called. The original producer Harry Sherman drops the series. But Hoppy produces and stars in 12 more Hoppy films. Quality of the films increased and each film was budgeted at \$10,000 and had a 90-hour shooting schedule. Most were shot near Lone Pine, California in the Owen's Valley near Mt. Whitney and a few hundred miles northeast of Los Angeles. *Variety* wrote that the budget and schedule "in no way reflected on the first rate photography, excellent locations and unusually good musical backgrounds."

Director of the Hoppy movies Harry Sherman was anxious in 1944 to make more ambitious movies and tried to cancel the Cassidy series but popular demand forced Sherman to go back into production this time for United Artist release. Sherman gave up the series once and for all but William Boyd wanted to keep it going. To do this, he gambled his entire future on Hopalong Cassidy, mortgaging virtually everything he owned to buy both the character rights from Mulford and the backlog of movies from Sherman.

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Boyd resumed production in 1946, on lower budgets, and continued to 1948 when "B" westerns in general were being phased out. Fawcett Comics published a Hopalong Cassidy

one-shot comic book in 1943 followed by an on-going series from 1946-1953.

1948 was a key year in his life. In a precedent-setting move, William Boyd buys the rights to all of his Hoppy pictures. He thus secures the rights to the name "Hopalong Cassidy" and forms a company called "Hopalong Cassidy Productions." To help raise the \$350,000 to purchase the rights, the Boyds sold their ranch home north of Malibu and moved into an apartment in Hollywood. "We were," Grace Boyd recalled (in a 1991 interview with *The LA Times*) "down to absolutely nothing."

Boyd records the syndicated radio show *Hopalong Cassidy* from 1948 - 1950. In '49 Boyd acquires his older pictures from Paramount Studios and sells them to television stations. The first TV station to show a Hoppy movie was KTLA-TV in Los Angeles. (The Adventures of Hopalong Cassidy was shown on New York television as early as 1945 but the regular TV series began in 1949 and ended in 1951.)

There were 66 feature movies and 52 half-hour television shows. Over the next few years, Boyd marketed all sorts of products and received royalties from his comic books, radio and records. Approximately 2,400 products were endorsed by Hoppy. The most valuable was probably the

Hopalong Cassidy tricycle. He also licensed merchandise like Hoppy watches, cowboy outfits and dishes (as Roy Rogers and Gene Autry did) and became quite wealthy.

His high standards caused him to refuse to license any product that he viewed as unsuitable or dangerous, and he made no personal appearances at which his "friends" (fans) would be charged admission. As America's first real television hero, the wise and tough cowboy with the friendly grin became a show business phenomenon. Boyd, as Hoppy, appears on the covers of *Life*, *Time* and *Look* magazines. During a 26-city tour, a million fans turn out to see him.

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Grace Boyd recalls in a 1976 interview that that she "made a point of being in the background." She says, "As far as the kids were concerned, Hoppy was Hoppy. He didn't have a wife or family. When the young ones would ask who I was I'd say I'm Hoppy's mommy."

In 1950, the Hopalong Cassidy image was featured on the first lunch box to bear an image, causing sales for Aladdin Industries to jump from 50,000 units to 600,000 units in just one year. The Hopalong Cassidy radio shows (recorded 1948-1950) now run on the radio between 1950-1952. *Time Magazine* in 1950 said, "Boyd made Hoppy a veritable

Galahad of the range, a soft spoken paragon who did not smoke, drink or kiss girls, who tried to capture the rustlers instead of shooting them, and who always let the villain draw first if gunplay was inevitable." Boyd himself said, "I played down the violence, tried to make Hoppy an admirable character and I insisted on grammatical English."

From the moment that Hopalong Cassidy premiered on NBC, Bill Boyd became an international hero, for the films were telecast not only in America but all over the world as well. Boyd retained twelve of the motion picture features under the Company name North Vines and he edited them into half hour episodes. Following this move, he formed a new television production company to shoot a series of 40 new half hour episodes. The company ended up creating a total of 52 half hours for the NBC network.

The public had clamored for more Hopalong Cassidy and Boyd complied with their demands. His popularity was astounding. He received 15 thousand fan letters a week. He received endless and persistent requests from individuals and international organizations to make public appearances. He made two worldwide tours while NBC pressed him to continue production. The stress was tremendous. He was in his sixties by this time, and he personally felt that the Hoppy character could not be properly portrayed at this age.

He was also feeling the pressure of being before the cameras month after month. The year before he retired, he made 40 Hoppy episodes in as many weeks and made one more tour around the world for the Newsboys' Association.

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Completing that tour, he put his horse Topper out to pasture, hung up his guns, took off his boots, and said adios to Hopalong Cassidy, his alter ego. Boyd was reluctant to retire because of his loyal fans and the knowledge that his large production crew would be put out of work. Fortunately, CBS was about to start shooting the series *Gunsmoke* and Boyd was able to turn over his company to that network, assuring employment for his entire crew.

Capitol Records released a series of Hopalong Cassidy "record readers" featuring William Boyd and produced by Alan W. Livingston. In November 1950, *Time Magazine* in "Manners & Morals: Kiddies in the Old Coral" writes:

"The gesticulating armies of children who will jam Central Park West and Broadway this week to see Macy's famed Thanksgiving Day parade were prepared for what could only be described as a Sensational Experience. Bands, clowns, floats and gigantic, inflated rubber animals were scheduled as usual. But Macy's, in one of its super coups, had also procured the services of the

noblest drugstore cowboy of them all - none other than television's black-clad, white-haired, 55-year-old William ("Hopalong Cassidy") Boyd. When he hove into view, a gallant, smiling, if somewhat aging figure."

Clarence Mulford was finished writing Hoppy novels and wanted Louis L'Amour to take over writing them. A deal was worked out. There was not much convincing to do. As Beau L'Amour notes about his father, "They didn't have to beg dad, because along with being flattered, he was hungry. He was living in Los Angeles, subletting a room from a family who had an upper duplex in the Wilshire district."

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In the spring and summer, the legendary western writer Louis L'Amour wrote four novels about Hopalong Cassidy. He used the pen name Tex Burns because he didn't want to be associated with them. The books were *The Rustlers of West Fork*, *Trail to Seven Pines*, *Riders of High Rock* and *Trouble Shooter*. For the rest of his life he denied he had ever written them. As Beau L'Amour observes, "Seeing that C.L. Mumford chose Louis L'Amour as his successor, it is interesting to note that the man who was perhaps the most widely read author of westerns in the first half of the twentieth century passed the torch to the man who would be the most widely read author of westerns in the second half."

On May 26, 1951, an amusement park named Hoppyland opened in the Venice section of Los Angeles. This was an expansion and re-theming of Venice Lake Park (opened the previous year) as Boyd became an investor. Standing on some 80 acres it included a roller coaster, miniature railroads, pony rides, boat ride, Ferris wheel, carousel and other thrill rides along with picnic grounds and recreational facilities. Despite Boyd's regular appearances as Hoppy at the park, it was not a success and shut down in 1954.

The popular song this year "It's Beginning To Look A Lot Like Christmas" includes a reference to Hopalong boots as a holiday gift desired by children.

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In 1953, Boyd and Grace entered a new phase of their life when they moved to Palm Desert and bought a home and of course painted it black and white (73-498 Joshua Tree Street in Palm Desert). Grace Boyd has by this time acquired the name "Tripalong" because being a tiny lady, she had to take at least two steps to every one of her 6' tall husband's long strides.

In his years in Palm Desert, Hoppy could easily be recognized as he drove his white Cadillac around Palm

Desert, stopping at Ed Mullin's pharmacy & fountain joining the early morning coffee crowd to solve the problems of the day. Saturday mornings, Hoppy would come to the pharmacy to greet the children and their parents and pass out wooden coins with his name and picture on them. He even participated in a ribbon-cutting ceremony when a new frontage road opened. He didn't use scissors. Rather, he shot it apart with his trusty six-shooter.

Not much in the booming Cassidy licensing business happened in 1954 other than the fact that DC Comics takes over the Hopalong Cassidy series (dropped by Fawcett in 1953) with issue #86 publishing it until issue #135, in 1959.

Boyd and Grace were living a happy life in the desert. The twilight years of the greatest film and television cowboy. The greatest of them all.

Boyd, though, was not forgotten in Hollywood. In 1956 Boyd was DeMille's first choice for Moses in *The Ten Commandments* but Boyd turned it down the role fearing the Hopalong identification would hurt the movie. 1958 Bing Crosby moves into his home in the Silver Spur area of Palm Desert. President John Kennedy was to visit the Crosby home on various occasions. Crosby becomes honorary Mayor of Palm Desert at a big bash held at Shadow Mountain in 1958 with

Edgar Bergen, William (Hopalong Cassidy) Boyd and their wives attending. Water ballets, diving and aquatics shows in the famous figure eight pool, dinner and dances, fashion shows, and on-property movies were standard fare of entertainment during this era and included such stars as Esther Williams. The Ironwood Country Club home now surrounds the Crosby home.

In 1962 Johnny Carson met Boyd on a cross-country airplane flight and asked if Boyd would like to come on the Tonight Show. Boyd had not made any public appearances in years. Boyd politely declined telling Carson that he thought it would be too much of a jolt for his kid fans (even though most of them were now adults) who had grown up seeing Hoppy as a tall, strong young cowboy hero. He didn't want them to see him as the old man he now was.

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By 1968, Boyd is refusing all interviews and photograph requests. He retreats inside and away from his fans. Boyd dies in 1972 in the beach town of Laguna Beach, California. He had come a long way from the little town in Ohio he was born in. He dies from complications from Parkinson's disease and heart failure on September 12, 1972 at the age of 77. He is interred at Forest Lawn in Glendale in the Great Mausoleum Sanctuary of the Sacred Promise.

He once said of his Hoppy character, "I've tried to make Hoppy a plain and simple man in manners and dress. Hoppy isn't a flashy character. He isn't illiterate. Nor is he smart-alecky. He doesn't use big words. After all, I felt that Hoppy might be looked up to and that children might try to pattern their lives after the man. If Hoppy said 'ain't' and 'reckon' and 'that away' all the kids might start saying the same things."

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At a loss after his death, Grace Boyd begins her more than 35 years of volunteer work at the hospital in Laguna Beach where her husband spent his final days.

But Hoppy always remained part of her life, including winning a two-decade legal battle stemming from a copyright infringement suit, and appearing at Hoppy tributes.

"Everybody I talk to is looking for a hero," she said at the Lone Pine Film Festival in 1995. "They say, 'If only we had Hoppy again,' or somebody like that. The children don't have role models. Who do we have?"

In 1988 the book *Films of Hopalong Cassidy* is published by World of Yesterday and authored by Francis M. Nev. The book is the leading piece of research on the Hoppy film days. 1991 the book *Hopalong Cassidy: The Clarence Mulford Story* is published by Scarecrow Press and authored

by Bernard Drew. 1993 the book *Bar-20: The Life of Clarence E. Mulford, Creator of Hopalong Cassidy*, published by McFarland Company and authored by Francis M. Nevins, Jr. And finally, this collection of Hoppy illustrations done by Dan Spiegle and Royal King Cole published by A.C. Comics titled *Paragon Publications Presents Clarence E. Mulford's Hopalong Cassidy and the Five Men of Evil*.

1995

Boyd inducted into the Hall of Great Western Performers of the National Cowboy and Western Heritage Museum. By 1998 collecting Hoppy items has become a large cottage industry. Joseph Caro authors *Hopalong Cassidy Collectibles* with 1,300 color photos and item conditions.

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In 2004, the City of Palm Desert dedicates a hiking trail in honor of William Boyd or Hopalong Cassidy. The trail was dedicated to a man who never compromised his image of "The Good Guy in Black." Mrs. Boyd and members of his family attended both the dedication and an open house at the Palm Desert Historical Society to honor this American legend.

In 2007 Boyd's home in Palm Desert sold at auction for \$467,500. Fifteen miles east of Wichita, Kansas at the Prairie Rose Chuckwagon Supper was the Hopalong Cassidy

Museum. The museum was dedicated to the heroic image of Hopalong Cassidy. The museum and its contents were auctioned on August 24, 2007, owing to the failure of its parent company, Wild West World.

The book *Hopalong Cassidy: An American Legend* is published in 2008 by Gemstone Publishing and authored by Grace Bradley Boyd and Michael Cochran with a Forward by avid fans Bill Clinton and songwriter Don McLean. The book is probably the most insider view that will ever be offered on Boyd. Boyd appears with Topper on a 44¢ USA commemorative postage stamp in 2009.

In 2010, Grace Bradley Boyd dies at 97 years old. She has no survivors. A private service is held at Forest Lawn Memorial-Park, Glendale, where she is interred next to her husband. As Grace Bradley, she appeared in 35 films, including *Too Much Harmony* starring Bing Crosby *The Big Broadcast* of 1938 with W.C. Fields and Bob Hope and *Come on Marines* with Richard Arlen and Ida Lupino.

The petite, Brooklyn-born actress, who launched her show business career as a dancer, was often cast as a femme fatale or "the wrong girl" but she played a variety of characters.

Her most enduring role, however, was off-screen as the wife of William Boyd.



## Hopalong Cassidy's Creed

(Taped to the Author's bedroom wall, circa 1955)

The highest badge of honor a person can wear is honesty. Be truthful at all times.

Your parents are the best friends you have. Listen to them and obey their instructions.

If you want to be respected, you must respect others. Show good manners in every way.

Only through hard work and study can you succeed. Don't be lazy.

Your good deeds always come to light. So don't boast or be a show-off.

If you waste time or money today, you will regret it tomorrow. Practice thrift in all ways.

Many animals are good and loyal companions. Be friendly and kind to them.

A strong, healthy body is a precious gift. Be neat and clean.

Our country's laws are made for your protection. Observe them carefully.

Children in many foreign lands are less fortunate than you. Be glad and proud you are an American.

John Frain

John Frain is President of GreatHouse Marketing Strategy and GreatHouse Images in Palm Desert, California. He grew up in Los Angeles and has been coming to the desert since he was a few years old. His parents have lived in the desert since the late 60s and he has called Palm Desert a second home for most of his life.

He has a B.A. in History from UCLA and a JD from Loyola Law School and is the author of *Spirit Catcher: The Life & Art of John Coltrane*, *Battle of Symbols* and Editor of *Point Zero Bliss* as well as many articles and essays. *Spirit Catcher* received the Best Biography Award in 1997 from the Small Press Association.

He is considered a leading authority on symbols and symbolism and is a regular contributor on symbolism to *Script Magazine*, the leading online publication for screenwriters. His most recent articles have appeared in the April 2013 edition of *Desert Magazine* and the June 2013 issue of *The Desert Report*, a publication of the Sierra Club. He now lives in Ohio. But perhaps back to California some day.