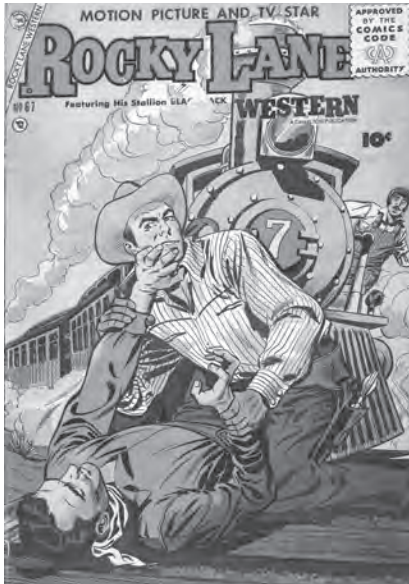




Allan “Rocky” Lane Movie Cowboy and Voice of Mr. Ed

by Peter J. De Kever, HLCCM Advisory Board



For many years, “Rocky” Lane had his own comic book series, which encouraged his young audience members’ loyalty to the movie series.



Photograph from movie ‘Big Business.’ Allan Lane played a football star returning to his hometown to promote an oil stock scheme invested in by his family. (1937)



Allan Lane is shown here as Red Ryder with his horse, Thunder. (1946)

Decades before Adam Driver became world-famous as Kilo Ren in *Star Wars: The Force Awakens*, another Mishawakan, Allan “Rocky” Lane, was known to moviegoers as one of Hollywood’s biggest Western stars.

Born in Mishawaka on September 22, 1909, Harry Leonard Albershart was the youngest child of William and Anna Albershart, who resided at 224 East Joseph Street (Mishawaka Avenue today). Harry's parents soon divorced, and the boy moved back and forth between their homes and even supported himself by working at Ball-Band when he was just 7 years old. He was living in Mishawaka until at least 1919 and later moved with his mother to Grand Rapids, Michigan.

Harry began acting on stage in 1925 and toured the country in

productions before landing an uncredited role in the 1928 silent picture, *Dream of Love*, the first of his 125 film credits. The next year he assumed the screen name Allan Lane and had small parts in several more movies before leaving briefly for Broadway. After coming back to California, Allan grew displeased with the small roles he was getting, gave up acting in 1932, and ran his own advertising agency in New York City.

Lane resumed his film career in 1936 and earned his first starring role in *The Duke Comes Back* (1937). Known as one of the most attractive men in Hollywood, Allan appeared in dramas and comedies during the late 1930s, making six or seven films a year. In mostly supporting roles, he appeared with stars such as Shirley

Temple, John Wayne, Clark Gable, Barbara Stanwyck, Ginger Rogers, Jimmy Cagney, and Lucille Ball.

The beginning of Allan Lane's career in Westerns was *King of the Royal Mounted* (1940). By 1943, Lane was finally known as a lead actor and was soon steadily doing Westerns. He took on the role of Red Ryder in *Santa Fe Uprising*, one of seven movies where Lane starred as Red Ryder in 1946-1947.

As Red Ryder rode off into the sunset, Republic Pictures created a new persona and film franchise for Lane. *The Wild Frontier* (1947) was the first of 39 films in which he played “Rocky” Lane, a lawman who upheld justice and defended the good folk of the Old West. The movies were known for gun fights,

continued...

fist fights, and horse chases featuring Rocky's trusty steed, Black Jack.

The studio felt "Allan" did not sound heroic enough, so Lane suggested "Rocky," his nickname from grade school. The "Rocky" persona soon blended with Allan's own identity, and numerous products were marketed to children bearing his name and likeness, such as comic books, pocket knives, and an iron-on shoulder patch for the "Rocky Lane Posse." The rise of television eventually brought the decline of Westerns like Lane's, and *El Paso Stampede* (1953) was his last as Rocky Lane.

In the later 1950s, Allan Lane made numerous guest appearances on TV programs, pursued business interests, and continued to buy and train horses.

The role that would become Lane's greatest Hollywood legacy began in 1961 when he provided the voice for a talking horse in *Mr. Ed*, a television sitcom starring Alan Young as the owner of a palomino who often

seemed to be human in his antics and personality.

Allan Lane's deep, gravelly voice gave humanity to the animal, and the veteran Western star and horse-lover felt he knew how a horse might react to human situations. At first, Lane was embarrassed that he was playing a horse's voice and refused to have his name in the show's credits. After *Mr. Ed* became a hit, he changed his mind, but the studio insisted that Lane's role remain anonymous in order to preserve the mystique behind the horse's human voice. *Mr. Ed* ran for five seasons and continues in reruns fifty years later.

Allan Lane retired from show business after *Mr. Ed* but maintained his interest in horses and horse racing. He died in Los Angeles on October 27, 1973, and is buried in Inglewood, California.

You can visit artifacts that tell Allan Lane's story as part of the *World Famous Mishawakans, Part II* exhibit. This year, the exhibit features Allan

"Rocky" Lane, Wallace Dodge and Anna Rohrer. These three amazing Mishawakans contributed to the world stage in very different ways.

Wallace Dodge (1848-1894) was an entrepreneur and inventor who influenced manufacturing in lasting ways, and his business would grow to employ the second largest number of people in the city. Anna Rohrer is a name that many recognize as she graduated from Mishawaka High School in 2015 and is currently a student athlete at Notre Dame. Anna has broken numerous long distance running state and national records, securing her place as arguably the greatest athlete to ever come from Mishawaka. *World Famous Mishawakans, Part II* will be on display through the end of May. To see photographs of last year's display, which featured Rose Hartwick Thorpe, Freddie Fitzsimmons and Adam Driver, visit www.hlcm.org.



Photograph from movie 'Frisco Tornado.' The movie was an installment in the "Rocky" Lane series. Black Jack was the hero's trusty steed. (1950)



The horse Mr. Ed, voiced by Allan Lane, shown here with actor Alan Young, who played his owner, Wilbur. Mr. Ed not only talked; he could read and write.

Museum Calendar

March 31, 2015 – Ongoing

Clothing Store

After 2 years, hundreds of volunteer hours and the financial support of our Museum Artifacts and a grant from the Mishawaka Business Association, the Museum's Clothing Store Exhibit is now open. The exhibit features WWII era clothing, the history and products of Ball-Band / Uniroyal, fashion accessories for men and women through the decades and more.

October 5, 2016 – May 31, 2017

World Famous Mishawakans, Part II

This exhibit features three world famous residents from Mishawaka's past and present. This year we are highlighting the life and influence of Anna Rohrer (track and cross country athlete), Allan "Rocky" Lane (movie and television actor) and Wallace Dodge (inventor and entrepreneur). This exhibit changes annually, to see past featured World Famous Mishawakans visit HLCM's website!

October 2016 – Ongoing

Mishawaka-Penn-Harris Public Library Display

The Museum's display case in the lower level of the downtown Mishawaka library features

a rotating adventure of objects from the Museum's permanent collection. The case currently features vintage games and toys.

April 10 – May 15, 2017

From Pencils to Pixels:

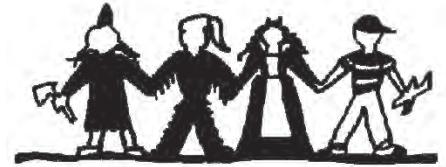
Hoosier Cartoons and Comics

Your opportunity to discover the creativity of Hoosier cartoonists with this traveling exhibit from the Indiana Historical Society. The exhibit explores the adventures of comic strip characters such as fat-cat Garfield, Brown County savant Abe Martin, and "Chic" Jackson's "Roger Bean," which featured the lives of a typical Hoosier family.

November 22 – December 20, 2016

Let it Snow, Let it Snow

The Museum becomes a winter wonderland. Over 1,000 Christmas lights and several holiday vignettes will delight visitors as you walk through the model streetscape of Mishawaka. Visitors will also enjoy a Victorian Christmas in miniature in the Guske Dollhouse.



Thank You

The Hannah Lindahl Children's Museum Endowment Fund administered by the Community Foundation of Saint Joseph County was begun with a founding donation of \$10,500 by Don and Nancy Crawford in 2000. The Endowment has since grown to more than \$225,000.

The Endowment Fund ensures the ongoing legacy of Hannah Lindahl Children's Museum in the local community. It supports our mission to provide a collection of unique artifacts that encourages families to explore, learn and enjoy the history of the Mishawaka area.

We wish to thank our
2015-2016 Donors
to the Endowment Fund

\$150 – \$200

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If you wish to make a donation to the HLCM Endowment Fund, please contact director@hlcm.org, 574-254-4540 or contact the Community Foundation of St. Joseph County at 574-232-0041.

Thank You Museum Members!

As HLCM is in its annual Membership Campaign, I wanted to take a moment to thank you. Your support through a membership donation allows us to create new exhibits, care for a unique collection of local history objects, create special programming for our community, and more! Thank you for your donation and continued support.

Lexie Schroeder Kobb
Museum Director

Reminder: If you haven't yet sent in your membership, please do so before December 20th in order to receive this year's membership premium.

Museum Advisory Board 2016–17

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Museum hours:

Tues. – Fri. 9 AM to noon & 1 PM to 4 PM,
(closed whenever school is not in session in SCM)

Admission charges: \$1.00 – Children ages 2 – 4
\$2.00 – Seniors ages 62+ & students ages 5 – 17
\$3.00 – Adults
Free Admission for Museum Members



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2016 – 2017 Artifacts

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Dr. Brian D. Eberhart
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Michiana Accounting Service
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Teachers Credit Union
Weber Electric, Inc.
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Thank you for your support!

For information about becoming a Museum Artifacts,
please contact director@hlcm.org

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