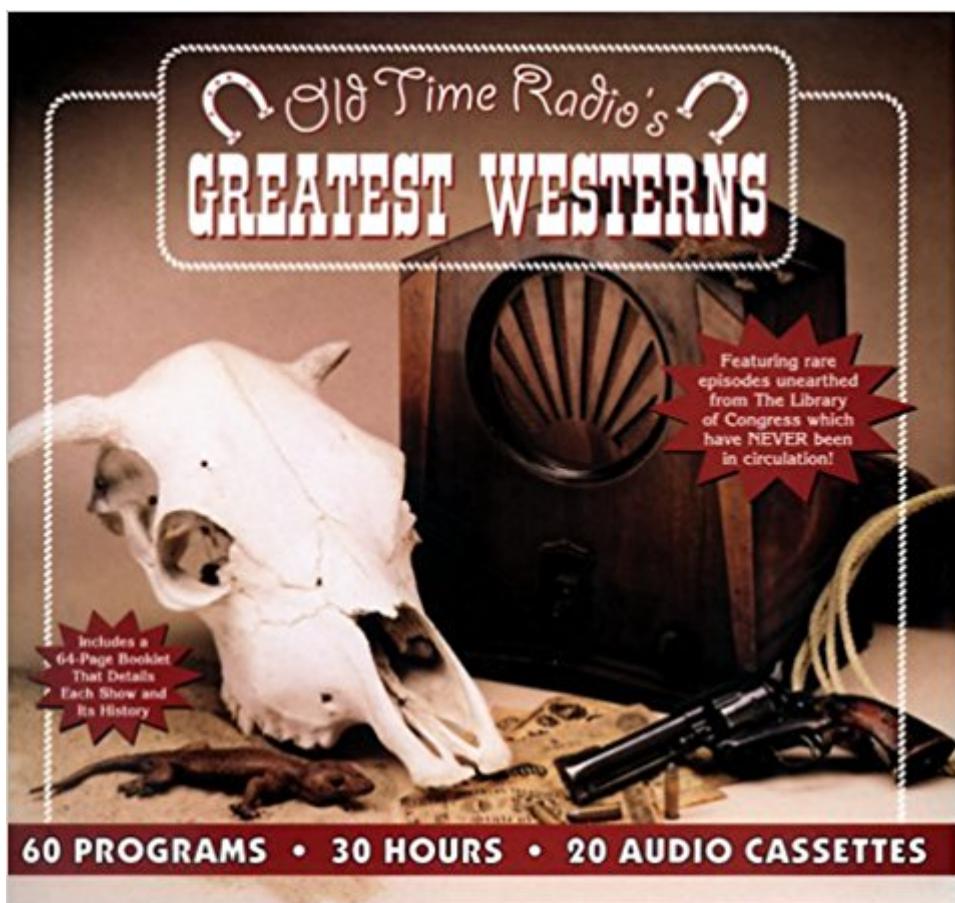


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# Old Time Radio's Greatest Westerns (Smithsonian Historical Performances)



## **Synopsis**

This thirty hour 60 episode 20 Cassette collection is the newest companion to our very successful Greatest Shows and Comedy Collection. This collection includes 60 of the Greatest Old-Time Radio Westerns along with a 64 page booklet that details each show and its history. A great collectors edition and a great gift idea that costs only \$1.00 per show!!!!

## **Book Information**

Audio Cassette

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## **Customer Reviews**

Hi there, I like something in the background when I'm doing serious, yet leisurely activities such as working on my photos, or freelance writing, or even cleaning the apartment! This collection of Great Westerns really fits the bill, and although I expected the programs to be good, it turns out they are even better than I anticipated. "Fort Laramie" is so well written, and performed (right word?) it is nearly in a class of its own--these shows were far deeper and more interesting than cowboy yarns. Also exceptional are "Dr. Sixgun" (a far more sophisticated program than its title might indicate), "Have Gun Will Travel" (great title even!), and "Gunsmoke". The rest are superb listening as well, and only the omissions of "Bobby Benson and the B-R-B Ranch," and Gene Autry make it lack 5 Stars--but I highly recommend this set to all OTR listeners.

great series of old westerns. Some may take exception to the hokiness of some episodes , but these are what I grew up on....

I purchased these cassettes for my wife. She tells me, she just loves all the old stories.

Great reminder of days gone by. I would highly recommend it to others and will pass along my copy when I complete it.

bought as a gift and my friend loved it. says they bring back some memories.. the tapes are long and joyful for kids and adults..

Thhought these would be on CDs not on cassettes - I wanted it on CDs - need to return if possible.

I'm no great lover of Westerns, but as a child I was a fan of many of the shows in this collection. Seeking a trip down nostalgia lane, I got the collection, and I wasn't disappointed. The shows easily divide into three types: Westerns from anthology series, "adult" Westerns, and "juvenile" Westerns. Of the three, the Westerns drawn from anthology series were uniformly the best. The anthology series represented in the collection were: "The Cavalcade of America," "Escape," "The Screen Director's Playhouse," and "Suspense." The only sour note among the anthology plays was "Paleface" from "Screen Director's Playhouse." A Bob Hope comedy was hopelessly out of place among all those Westerns. The "adult" Westerns included "Dr. Sixgun," "Fort Laramie," "Frontier Gentleman," "Gunsmoke," "Have Gun Will Travel," "Hawk Larabee," "Luke Slaughter of Tombstone," "Tales of the Texas Rangers," and "The Six Shooter." "Luke Slaughter" seems to have been a cross between the rougher elements of John Wayne and Clint Eastwood with a little Ward Bond thrown in. "Hawk Larabee" had more Western cliche's than "Blazing Saddles," and I thought it was a rather sophisticated juvenile Western, but the enclosed booklet said it was aimed at adults. The best of the lot seemed to me to be "The Six Shooter," starring Jimmy Stewart. "Have Gun Will Travel" and "Gunsmoke" had quality in keeping with their TV counterparts. "Frontier Gentleman" starring John Dehner told of the life of a British journalist traveling the wild and woolly West. I included "Fort Laramie" and "Tales of the Texas Rangers" in the adult Western category, but they actually belong in separate genres. "Fort Laramie" (starring Raymond Burr) was a very good offering in the sub-genre of Cavalry stories. Three other Cavalry stories came from anthology series: "They Died with their Boots On" ("Cavalcade"), "Command" ("Escape"), and "Fort Apache" ("Screen Director's Playhouse"). "They Died with their Boots On" gave a glamorized account of George Armstrong Custer, a seriously flawed military figure. "Command" provided a good character study of a young officer's first encounter with combat. "Fort Apache" did an excellent job of distilling the feature length movie into a 30 minute format. "Tales of the Texas Rangers" turned in stories that

were realistic, plots that were well crafted, and a hero who was both admirable and believable. But it isn't a Western. It's a true crime detective series set in mid 20th Century Texas. It fits better in "Old Time Radio's Greatest Detectives." As a matter of fact "Greatest Detectives" also contains a "Texas Rangers" cassette. "Tales of Texas Rangers," in my opinion, is radio's greatest true crime series. Better than "Dragnet," "Gangbusters," "Crime Classics," and anything else. Its closest competitor is "The Black Museum," tales about London's Scotland Yard. The fact that "Greatest Westerns" contained three "Tales of the Texas Rangers" episodes was a major contributing factor in my decision to buy the collection. The juvenile Westerns were "The Cisco Kid," "Hopalong Cassidy," "The Lone Ranger," "Red Ryder," "Roy Rogers," "Straight Arrow," and "Wild Bill Hickock." "Red Ryder" and "Roy Rogers" were, well, juvenile. "The Cisco Kid" was a little better, but not much. "The Lone Ranger" was my childhood idol, but he's overly preachy and that mask was completely unnecessary. One show in particular disturbed me. It is an account of how the Lone Ranger subverted the democratic process by stealing an election ballot box. He had good intentions, but the road to Hell is paved with good intentions. I'm not a proponent of Machiavelli's motto that the end justifies the means. "Wild Bill Hickock" (with Andy Devine as Jingles providing comic relief) was the most enjoyable of the juveniles, but the plots were a little thin. "Hopalong Cassidy" has to be the best of the juveniles. The plots were detective stories transplanted to the Old West. "Straight Arrow" edged out "Red Ryder" for the dumbest show. "Straight Arrow" is a super hero disguised as a Comanchee warrior. He seems to be able to shoot his bow with remarkable accuracy in the most remarkable situations.

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