

“The Old Ranger”

by Odette Odendaal

Best known as the Old Ranger for the Western series, “Death Valley,” Stanley Andrews credited his acting success to a “good season” in Minneapolis.

From Polish descent, the actor born on August 28, 1891, in Chicago, Illinois gained the experience he needed to make it in Hollywood while performing onstage in 1916.

For 52 weeks they performed a different play each week at the Unique theater on Hennepin Avenue. “That season gave me the experience and confidence I needed to embark on a successful career,” Stanley told the Minneapolis Star in 1957.

The stint in Minneapolis turned into a lucrative one and financially set him up at a young age. “Thanks to Minneapolis I have my ranch all paid for, my wife has a mink coat, and I have a big car,” Stanley added.

The actor met and fell in love with his wife, Peg, on stage in 1921 and lived together on their ranch in Northridge in the San Fernando Valley.



Over the next three decades, he became a household name as the voice of Daddy Warbucks on the radio program “Little Orphan Annie,” which aired from 1931 until 1936. Stanley notably appeared in “Escape from Devil’s Island” in 1935 followed by “Beau Geste” in 1939.

During the 1940s Stanley starred in “North to the Klondike,” “Road to Rio,” and “Trail of Vengeance.” He also regularly appeared in various television series that included “Tales of the Texas Rangers,” “Buffalo Bill Jr.,” “The Range Rider,” “The Lone Ranger,” and “Annie Oakley.”

When Stanley got cast in “Death Valley Days” in 1952, he decided to abandon movie and theater acting and focus on his role as Old Ranger.

“All of the stories used in the program are authentic. Actual locations are used whenever possible. There are no shootings or robberies in the scripts,” Stanley said.

The series aired 452 episodes from 1952 until 1970. The show, which had its origins in radio during the 1930s, became one of the longest-running Western series of all time.

Stanley appeared in 296 of those episodes from 1952 until 1964, the most featured actor in the series by far. Apart from Stanley, next in line is co-star Robert Taylor with 78 appearances.



The actor also had a love for bowling. He sported a 145 average and bowled for The Old Ranger’s League at Van Nuys in California.

After a career with over 200 credited appearances, Stanley passed away in Los Angeles on June 23, 1969, at the age of 77. Two days later a rosary for the late actor got held at Glenhaven Mortuaries Chapel.

Similarly, actor Milburn Stone became known to fans during the same time as Stanley. Although very different actors, they both had incredibly successful careers that spanned decades. Perhaps best known for his role in “Gunsmoke,” Milburn Stone led an interesting life.