



## **RadiOzark Record Collection (SP0071)**

**Collection Number:** SP0071

**Collection Title:** RadiOzark Record Collection

**Dates:** 1950s-1960s

**Creator:** RadiOzark Enterprises, Inc.

**Abstract:** The RadiOzark Record Collection contains 427 phonograph records that were produced and transcribed by RadiOzark Enterprises, Inc., located in Springfield, Missouri. Program titles include *Strangest of All* with Frank Edwards, *The Tennessee Ernie Ford Show*, *The Bill Ring Show*, *The Red Foley Show*, “*Shorty Thompson*” in *Saddle-Rockin’ Rhythm*, “*Shorty, Sue, & Sally*” *Saddle-Rockin’ Rhythm*, and *The Smiley Burnette Show*.

**Collection Size:** 10 cubic feet  
(427 audio discs)

**Language:** Collection materials are in English.

**Repository:** The State Historical Society of Missouri

**Restrictions on Access:** Collection is open for research. This collection is available at [The State Historical Society of Missouri Research Center-Springfield](https://www.shsmo.org/research-center-springfield). If you would like more information, please contact us at [springfield@shsmo.org](mailto:springfield@shsmo.org). Collections may be viewed at any research center.

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**Preferred Citation:** [Specific item; box number; folder number] *RadiOzark Record Collection* (SP0071); The State Historical Society of Missouri Research Center-Springfield [after first mention may be abbreviated to SHSMO-Springfield].

**Donor Information:** The records were donated to the State Historical Society of Missouri by Lee Anne Paris on behalf of Oklahoma Christian University on November 30, 2021. (Accession No. SPA0094).

**Related Materials:** Additional materials related to the RadiOzark Record Collection can be found in the following collections:

[KWTO \(Radio Station: Springfield, Mo.\). Newsletters](#) (R0834)

[Lester E. Cox Papers](#) (C3596)

[Missouri Broadcasters Association Radio Archives Collection](#) (CA6491)

**Processed by:** Haley Frizzle-Green and Clayton Kempf, March 22, 2022

### **Historical Note:**

RadiOzark Enterprises, Inc. was founded by Ralph D. Foster in the 1940s as a radio production company located in Springfield, Missouri. RadiOzark operated out of Springfield's KWTO ("Keep Watching the Ozarks") radio station, which was managed by Foster, and founded by Lester E. Cox and C. Arthur Johnson in 1933. Si Siman was Vice President of RadiOzark, while Cox provided financial support. RadiOzark specialized in producing fifteen-minute shows that could be leased to other stations. These discs were known as transcriptions. The prerecorded programs starred Bill Ring, Red Foley, Smiley Burnette, and Tennessee Ernie Ford, among others. Eventually, more than 1,200 United States and Canadian stations aired their programs. RadiOzark expanded Springfield's music industry through country music, and would later go on to rival Nashville, Tennessee. Today, KWTO is owned by Zimmer Radio of Mid-Missouri.

Ralph Donald Foster was born in St. Joseph, Missouri, on April 25, 1893. In 1926, Foster and his business partner, Jerry Hall, set up a small radio station called KGBX in the corner of their St. Joseph Firestone tire shop. It began as a hobby, but many local businesses sought to advertise with them. In 1932, Foster moved the station to Springfield, Missouri. In order to increase transmitting power for KGBX, the license of a radio station in Grant City, Missouri, was purchased. In 1933, C. Arthur Johnson and Lester E. Cox founded KWTO ("Keep Watching the Ozarks"), with Foster as President and General Manager. Due to regulations set by the Federal Communication Commission (FCC), KGBX was sold in 1944. Under Foster's management, KWTO became the dominant station of the Ozarks. In addition to RadiOzark, Foster, along with his colleagues Cox, Siman, and John Mahaffey, created the popular weekly television show *Ozark Jubilee* (later known as *Jubilee USA*) in 1953. The Saturday night show was first broadcast on Springfield's KYTV. The program starred Red Foley as host and featured live performances by country music artists. Ralph Foster died August 11, 1984, in Springfield, Missouri.

Ely "Si" Siman Jr. was born in Springfield, Missouri, on January 17, 1921. As a teenager, Siman worked at Ralph Foster's KWTO radio station before joining the United States Navy. After World War II, Siman graduated from Drury College and later became vice president of RadiOzark Enterprises, Inc. He produced multiple radio shows including *Sermons in Song*, *Saddle Rockin' Rhythm*, *The Tennessee Ernie Ford Show*, *The Smiley Burnette Show*, and *The Bill Ring Show*. Siman became vice president of Crossroads TV Productions and co-producer of the *Ozark Jubilee*. In 1954, Siman convinced Red Foley to move to Springfield, Missouri, and be the host of the television program. Siman would also go on to publish major hit songs from Springfield including "Always on My Mind", which won the Country Music Association "Song of the Year" award in 1982 and 1983. The song also won multiple Grammy awards in 1983. On December 16, 1994, Siman died of cancer in Springfield, Missouri. He is buried in Hazelwood Cemetery.

### **Arrangement:**

The collection has been arranged into the following two series with seven subseries:

12-inch LP Records

“Strangest of All” with Frank Edwards

The Tennessee Ernie Ford Show

16-inch Transcription Records

The Bill Ring Show

The Red Foley Show

“Shorty Thompson” in Saddle-Rockin’ Rhythm

“Shorty, Sue, and Sally” Saddle-Rockin’ Rhythm

The Smiley Burnette Show

**Scope and Content Note:**

**12-inch LP Records**

This series contains 106, 12-inch, long playing phonograph records produced by RadiOzark Enterprises, Inc. The majority of records are two-sided and play at 33 1/3 rpm (revolutions per minute). The duration of each program is approximately 20 minutes per side. The show titles include *Strangest of All* with Frank Edwards as narrator and *The Tennessee Ernie Ford Show*. This series is arranged by show title and then chronologically by program.

**16-inch Transcription Records**

This series consists of 321, 16-inch, transcriptions records produced by RadiOzark Enterprises, Inc. The majority of records are two-sided and play at 33 1/3 rpm (revolutions per minute). The duration of each program is approximately 15 minutes per side. The show titles are as follows: *The Bill Ring Show*, *The Red Foley Show*, “Shorty Thompson” in *Saddle-Rockin’ Rhythm*, “Shorty, Sue, & Sally” *Saddle-Rockin’ Rhythm*, and *The Smiley Burnette Show*. This series is arranged by show title and then chronologically by program.

**Container List:**

a.d. 1-106	12-inch LP Records
Box 001	a.d. 1-39 <i>The Tennessee Ernie Ford Show</i>
	a.d. 1          Program 1-2
	a.d. 2          Program 3-6
	a.d. 3          Program 7-10
	a.d. 4          Program 11-14
	a.d. 5          Program 15-18
	a.d. 6          Program 19-22
	a.d. 7          Program 23-26
	a.d. 8          Program 27-30
	a.d. 9          Program 31-34
	a.d. 10        Program 35-38
	a.d. 11        Program 39-42
	a.d. 12        Program 43-46
	a.d. 13        Program 47-50
	a.d. 14        Program 51-54

Box 002

a.d. 15	Program 55-58
a.d. 16	Program 59-62
a.d. 17	Program 63-66
a.d. 18	Program 67-70
a.d. 19	Program 71-74
a.d. 20	Program 75-78
a.d. 21	Program 79-82
a.d. 22	Program 83-86
a.d. 23	Program 87-90
a.d. 24	Program 91-94
a.d. 25	Program 95-98
a.d. 26	Program 99-102
a.d. 27	Program 103-106
a.d. 28	Program 107-110
a.d. 29	Program 111-114
a.d. 30	Program 115-118
a.d. 31	Program 119-122
a.d. 32	Program 123-126
a.d. 33	Program 127-130
a.d. 34	Program 131-134
a.d. 35	Program 135-138
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a.d. 63	Program 247-250
a.d. 64	Program 251-254

	a.d. 65	Program 255-258
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	a.d. 67-106	<i>Strangest of All</i> with Frank Edwards
	a.d. 67	Program 1-5, 6-10
	a.d. 68	Program 11-15, 16-20
	a.d. 69	Program 21-25, 26-30
	a.d. 70	Program 31-35, 36-40
	a.d. 71	Program 31-35, 36-40
	a.d. 72	Program 41-45, 46-50
	a.d. 73	Program 51-55, 56-60
	a.d. 74	Program 61-65, 66-70
	a.d. 75	Program 71-75, 76-80
	a.d. 76	Program 81-85, 86-90
	a.d. 77	Program 91-95, 96-100
	a.d. 78	Program 101-105, 106-110
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	a.d. 82	Program 141-145, 146-150
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	a.d. 108	Program 3-4
	a.d. 109	Program 5-6
	a.d. 110	Program 7-8
	a.d. 111	Program 9-10

	a.d. 112	Program 11-12
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	a.d. 114	Program 15-16
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