

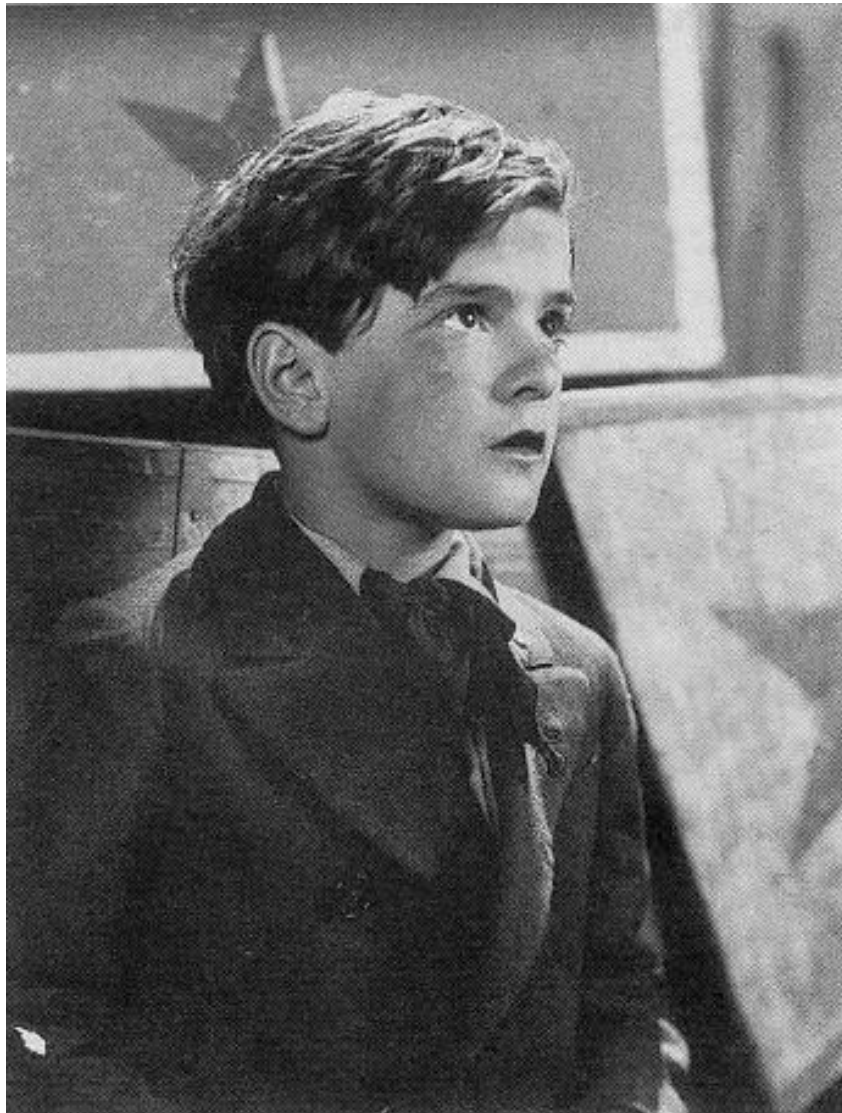
Frankie Darro

Titles: 82+ Sources: 2 Stills: 5+

Born: Frank Johnson Jr; Chicago; December 22nd 1918

Died: Huntington Beach, California; December 25th 1976

Hugely prolific silent boy actor, notably in Westerns and matinee serials. Despite appearing in more titles than Mickey Rooney, Shirley Temple and Freddie Bartholomew all put together, he never achieved comparable star status. Darro was neither decorative nor personable, a rugged mannish boy with surly looks, but he was lithe and nimble, and must at least have been a capable jobbing actor.



As **"THE CIRCUS KID"**, age 9

Source: *The Moving Picture Boy*



"Well, guests are not allowed boys in their rooms, either! Rules are rules." **"THE RAINBOW MAN"**, age 10
 Source: The Silents Majority website

Halliwell's Filmgoer's Companion entry:

"Tough-looking little American actor, a former child and teenage player; star of many second features."

The Moving Picture Boy entry:

"Frankie's real name was Johnson. His parents were vaudevillians, and with the get-up-and-go attitude typical of theatrical babies of the period he lost no time in getting into the family act in Chicago. (Frank Johnson Sr was in young Frankie's first film, **"JUDGMENT OF THE STORM"**, in which the tot performs "an acrobatic dance".) He went on to become one of the most active, as well as acrobatic, of all screen children, and in more than twenty Westerns between 1925 and 1929 he was the kid sidekick of cowboy star Tom Tyler. But he also played in very different kinds of film: in sentimental drama or, for instance, as Harry Langdon as a boy in **"LONG PANTS"**.

His work rate was prodigious - by 1930 he claimed to have been in "fifty Western pictures

and several hundred others". No wonder he sometimes had a harassed air. If Darro's claim is to be believed, even our vast list represents less than half of his output. He continued in his teens to work busily - sometimes as a jockey (using his ridin' skills), sometimes as a delinquent (with his seen-it-all look, which can't by then have needed much practice). He did fine work in **"WILD BOYS OF THE ROAD"** (33), **"NO GREATER GLORY"** (34) and **"LITTLE MEN"** (35). He was in several more serials, such as **"THE WOLF DOG"** (33), **"BURN 'EM UP BARNES"** (34), **"PHANTOM EMPIRE"** (35) and **"JUNIOR G-MEN OF THE AIR"** (42). He provided the voice of Lampwick in Disney's **"PINOCCHIO"** (40), and can still be seen in a few films of the fifties and sixties, like **"PAT AND MIKE"** (52) and **"THE CARPET-BAGGERS"** (64)."



Above: age 7 in **"HEARTS AND SPANGLES"**, a circus yarn
 Below: as **"LITTLE MICKEY GROGAN"**, age 9

Source: *The Silents Majority* website





Bottom of the heap, in "MIKE", with Junior Coghlan and Muriel Francis Dana Source: The Silents Majority website

FILMOGRAPHY

Year	Age	Title	Role
deb 23	4	JUDGMENT OF THE STORM with dad Frank Johnson Sr	
24	5	HALF-A-DOLLAR BILL	
24		RACING FOR LIFE	
24		ROARING RAILS	
24		THE SIGNAL TOWER	
24		WOMEN AND GOLD	
25	6	CONFESSIONS OF A QUEEN	
25		THE COWBOY MUSKETEER	
25		FEARLESS LOVER	
25		FIGHTING THE FLAMES	
25		HER HUSBAND'S SECRET	
25		THE LADY with Johnny Fox Jr	
25		LET'S GO, GALLAGHER	
25		THE PEOPLE VERSUS NANCY PRESTON	
25		PHANTOM EXPRESS	
25		SO BIG	
25		WANDERING FOOTSTEPS	
25		THE WYOMING WILDCAT	
26	7	THE ARIZONA STREAK	
26		THE CARNIVAL GIRL	
26		THE COWBOY COP	

26		FLAMING WATERS	
26		HEARTS AND SPANGLES	
26		THE MASQUERADE BANDIT	
26		MIKE	
		with <i>Junior Coghlan, Muriel Francis Dana</i>	
26		OUT OF THE WEST	
26		RED HOT HOOFS	
26		THE SIGNAL TOWER	
26		THE THRILL HUNTER	
26		TOM AND HIS PALS	
26		WILD TO GO	
27	8	BORN TO BATTLE	
		with <i>Buck Black</i>	
27		CYCLONE OF THE RANGE	
27		THE DESERT PIRATE	
27		THE FLESH AND THE DEVIL	
		with <i>Philippe DeLacy, Maurice Murphy, George "Bubbles" Noisom</i>	
27		FLYING U RANCH	
27		HER FATHER SAID NO	
27		JUDGMENT OF THE HILLS	
		with <i>Dick Winslow</i>	
27		LIGHTNING LARIATS	
27		LONG PANTS	central character as a boy
		with <i>George "Bubbles" Noisom</i>	
27		MOULDERS OF MEN	
27		TOM'S GANG	
28	9	THE AVENGING RIDER	
28		THE BATTLING BUCKAROO	
28		THE CIRCUS KID	in title role
28		THE EAGLE'S TALONS	
28		HEARTS AND HOOFS	
28		LITTLE MICKEY GROGAN	in title role
28		MYSTERY VALLEY	
28		PHANTOM OF THE RANGE	
28		THE ROAD TO ELDORADO	
28		THE TERROR	
28		TERROR MOUNTAIN	
28		THE TEXAS TORNADO	
28		TYRANT OF RED GULCH	
28		WHEN THE LAW RIDES	
29	10	GUN LAW	
29		IDAHO RED	
29		THE PRIDE OF PAWNEE	
29		THE RAINBOW MAN	as Billy Ryan
29		THE RED SWORD	
29		TRAIL OF THE HORSE THIEVES	
30	11	BLAZE O' GLORY	
31	12	THE LIGHTNING WARRIOR	serial
31		THE MAD GENIUS	
31		PUBLIC ENEMY	
		with <i>Junior Coghlan</i>	
31		THE SIN OF MADELON CLAUDET	
31		THE VANISHING LEGION	serial
32	13	AMATEUR DADDY	
32		CHEYENNE CYCLONE	
32		THE DEVIL HORSE	12x serial, as "Wild Boy"
32		THREE ON A MATCH	
32		WAY BACK HOME	
33	14	THE MAYOR OF HELL	
		with <i>Allen "Farina" Hoskins</i>	
33		WILD BOYS OF THE ROAD / DANGEROUS DAYS	
33		THE WOLF DOG	serial
34	15	BROADWAY BILL	
34		BURN 'EM UP BARNES	
34		LITTLE MEN	
		with <i>Tad Alexander, Tommy Bupp, Ronnie Cosbey, David Durand, George Ernest, Junior Durkin, Dickie Jones, Dickie Moore, Silas "Buster" Phelps</i>	
34		NO GREATER GLORY	
		with <i>George Breakston, Jackie Searl, Tad Alexander, Jimmy Butler, Donald Haines, Bruce Line</i>	
35	16	THE PHANTOM EMPIRE †	12x serial
		with <i>"The Junior Thunder Riders"</i>	
35		THREE KIDS AND A QUEEN	

			with <i>Billy Burrud, Billy Benedict</i>	
36	17	CHARLIE CHAN AT THE RACETRACK		
37	18	RACING BLOOD		
37		THOROUGHBREDS DON'T CRY		
			with <i>Ronald Sinclair, Mickey Rooney, Judy Garland</i>	
38	19	THE GREAT ADVENTURES OF WILD BILL HICKOK	15x serial	
			with <i>Dickie Jones, Sammy McKim</i>	
{ † re-released in 1940 as "RADIO RANCH" }				