

# 'Dr. Sidney' and 'The Great Eads' Become Friends on Meeting

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Features

Sports

**MEDFORD MAIL TRIBUNE**

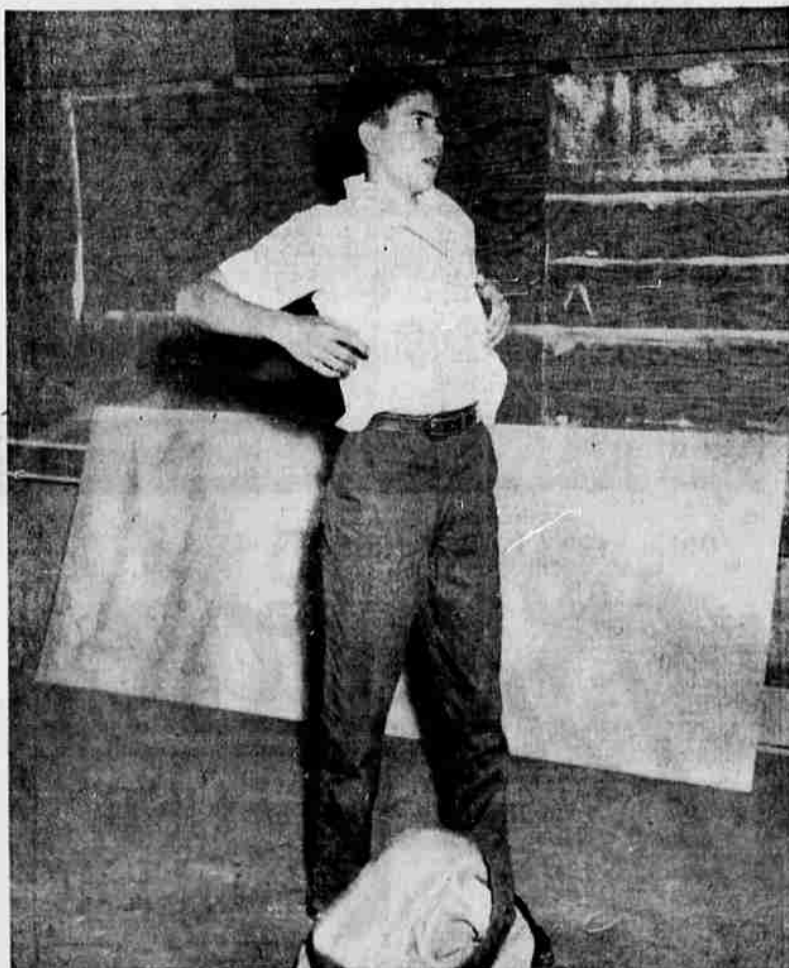
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I want to pull this one notch tighter.



If I can just get my arm over my head.



Three minutes later: Whew! That wasn't easy.

"Dr. Sidney" and "The Great Eads" met for the first time one afternoon recently.

Since both had a consuming interest in "escapes" and sleight-of-hand tricks, they hit it off well right at the start.

That one was a 14-year-old boy and the other an established Medford businessman in his 40s — and, hence, felt no sense of rivalry or competition — served only to heighten their interest in each other.

Dr. Sidney is the stage name of Ed Reeves, son of Mr. and Mrs. Wilton Hopkins, 111 Newtown St., and a student at McLoughlin Junior High School.

#### Has Magic Bug Bite

Ever since he was a third grade student in Memphis, Tenn. (the family moved to Oregon about a year ago), Ed has been suffering from the apparently incurable bite of the "magic bug."

"The Great Eads," familiar and beloved of local audiences for years, is John W. Eads, 356 S. Groveland Ave., manager of Federal Sign and Signal Company.

Eads is an old pro when it comes to prestidigitation. He's been charging audiences to watch him perform since he was a boy about Ed's age. When he was 13, he earned 65 cents by holding a "kid show" in his parent's garage. He's been at it ever since.

#### Was Given Magic Set

Young Eddie was given a magic set for a present when he was about nine years old. The kit contained a "Siberian Chain Escape Set," and after the intrigued youngster mastered that, he began to look around for other escape equipment.

When he was 10, he read a book on famous magicians, part of which was devoted to the life and exploits of the great Houdini.

Eddie found his hero in Houdini, and still considers him "one of the most intelligent men who ever lived." As he grows older, Eddie says, he would like to recreate all of Houdini's tricks and escapes for modern audiences.

At 11, Eddie began to take up magic and escapes in dead earnest. He started buying books and equipment, which his tolerant and understanding mother says now are all over the house. The youngster estimates he now has about \$400 worth of magic equipment in his repertoire.

#### Mother Goes Along

"Whatever he does is fine with me," his mother says, "I go along with him all the way."

Eddie recently put the equipment of the Medford police department to a severe test — and the officers' handcuffs and straitjacket came out a poor second.

After a pair of standard police handcuffs were fastened to his wrists by Lt. Rollie Pean, the youngster left the room and returned a scant two minutes later. Grinning broadly, he handed the cuffs back to the officer.

The department's straitjacket — admittedly oversized — couldn't hold him either. Pean strapped him in, but in full view of several policemen, Eddie wriggled out of the jacket in an astounding three minutes.

#### Fascinated by Thumbcuffs

A pair of thumbcuffs, which the fascinated Eddie said he "had never seen before," proved even less of a challenge. He left the room securely locked in the steel cuffs, but returned less than a minute later and handed them back to their owner, bewildered Detective Gene Depuy.

Eads developed an immediate interest in the youngster when they met the next afternoon. Eddie got out of Eads' specially tailored straitjacket almost as easily as he had the tent-like police jacket. The two did a few card tricks for each other and then settled down in Eads' office for a talk.

Eads told the boy that he had learned his trade from some old-time magicians, strict taskmasters who emphasized basic fundamentals and not a lot of phony "make-believe apparatus."

#### Estimated Investment

From a skimpy beginning with a 10 cent Johnson and Johnson magic catalogue, Eads has now progressed to an estimated investment of \$20,000 in his magic equipment.

The profession just isn't what it used to be, Eads complained. During the heyday of vaudeville, there were several thousand magicians who earned their bread and butter with their patter and sleight-of-hand. But since then, the number has steadily declined until now there are probably fewer than 55 professional magicians in the country.

That fact alone would have been enough, perhaps, to whet Eads' interest in Eddie.

#### Displays Interest in Magic

"If a man walks up to me after a show and says he's 'interested in tricks,' I haven't got time for him," Eads said, "but if a young fellow like Eddie here displays an interest in magic, I'll tell him everything I know."

Obviously that transfer of knowledge — representing years of experience and countless performances — couldn't take place on the spot.

But judging from the spirit of that first encounter, it probably will happen. The old master seemed eager to take the young apprentice "under his wing," and, as it were, pass the flickering "magic" torch down from one generation to the next.

Nothing would please Dr. Sidney more.

(All pictures by Kenn Knackstedt)



Back in the office: How are you at card tricks?



Hold your leg up here so I can frisk you.



Okay, now, let's get these cuffs on you.



Click! There, that ought to hold you.



Two minutes later: Here are your cuffs back.