

Lone Pine



When you think of Hopalong Cassidy, Gene Autry, or Roy Rogers, one place comes to mind: Lone Pine, California where the majority of their movies were shot. The Lone Pine History Museum is stocked full of Cowboy movie memorabilia and well worth the stop when traveling in the Eastern Sierras up or down Hwy. 395. I have been to many Cowboy Museums, but this one is strictly 'Cowboy movies' themed. Most of the movies were shot in the Alabama Hills to the west of town. While visiting the area, one is reminded of all the shootouts from behind boulders and arroyos in the days of yesteryear. The most favorable time to visit is during the springtime or fall. Just in time to continue on to Death Valley National Park.

As my wife, Sharon and I traveled north on Hwy. 395 in the Eastern Sierras, wending our way to the Death Valley turnoff, we kept seeing rock formations to the left of the highway resembling huge pipes of a pipe organ. I had not remembered them on our trip down 395 about five years ago. We determined to pull off the main road when we saw any indication of what we were viewing. Finally, we saw a sign reading, "Red Rock State Park" so we turned off to see if we could view the rock formations close up. I'm glad we did.

I exclaimed, "Boy, this would be a great place to make Western movies!"

What I didn't know, was that quite a few movies were filmed at Red Rock State Park before it became a State Park. From the Silents to the Talkies, many shots were made of Cowboy Heroes as they rode around with the tall 'pipe organs' in the background. Also, what I did not know was that just a few miles up the road the town of Lone Pine, California had played host to Hollywood for many years. There was probably not a rock formation, canyon, coulee, or tree within a hundred mile radius that was not used in one movie or the other.

Some of the better known actors who filmed there were:

Alan Ladd	Gregory Peck	Rex Allen
Audie Murphy (WW2 Hero)	Henry Fonda	Rita Hayworth
Buck Jones (Died a hero)	Humphrey Bogart	Robert Mitchum
Cary Grant	Jack Palance	Rory Calhoun
Dan Duryea	Joel McCrea	Roy Rogers
Errol Flynn	John Wayne	Tex Ritter
Gabby Hayes	Johnny Mack Brown	Tim Holt
Gary Cooper	Ken Maynard	William Boyd
Gene Autry	Kevin Costner	William Shatner (Star Trek)
George Montgomery	Kirk Douglas	Bob Steele
Glenn Ford	Randolph Scott	And a host of others!

Relive the days of yesteryear when a man's word was good, his gun only spoke for justice, and the heroine was always beautiful, providing the casting department had a good eye!



Magical Kingdom

Through red painted cathedral rocks
Elven music whistles faintly
As desert winds blow softly through
Meant only for the most saintly!

Below the rocks, stands a small house
Lived in by the 'little people'
Only appearing to the tribe
Who live underneath the steeple!

Who built this house with toadstool roof?
Some say a kindly king of yore,
Who loved and cherished little folk,
"I'll protect you," to them he swore!

It remains there in barren land
A monument to charity
In memory of the kindly king
Who set some 'little people' free!

Frank Shortt