

Earl's Diary - Saturday - February 1, 2014

Dear Loyal Readers from near and far;

Boy, was it cold last night! When I looked out the window this morning, the sun was shining and the wind still blowing. As I looked to the west, I found the reason for the cold. The wind was blowing right off the mountains covered with snow! The furnace in The Peanut felt mighty good!



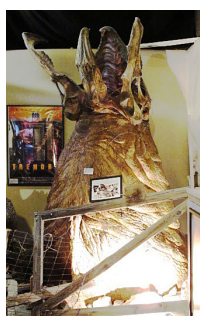
Today was another sightseeing day. My travels took me

to two sites in and around Lone Pine. The two sites are interconnected by subject matter. You are once again invited to join me as I travel in Lone Pine, California.

My first stop was at the Movie History Museum where I spent a couple hours enjoying the history of western movies - especially those filmed here in Lone Pine. I hurried through the place taking pictures. There were so many things to see that I went back after the photo taking to just enjoy looking and reading all the memorabilia. This was right up my alley. I spent my childhood watching cowboys and Indians, in old films showing on afternoon TV and in original TV shows from the early 50's on. My other interest is silent movies. This museum even covers that subject.

This interesting place has an impressively large collection of movie props from all ages of film. They've got banners and posters from the 20's, sequined cowboy jumpers and instruments used by the singing cowboys of the 30's and 40's, even the guns and costumes worn by John Wayne, Clint Eastwood and several other iconic cowboy actors. They've got props used in classic sci-fi movies; including the quite impressive giant worm head from the Tremors franchise.

There were multiple rooms covering the history of film-making in the area from 1928 to the present. It appears that nearly every Western Star that ever came out of Hollywood made a movie or TV show on location. There was Roy Rogers and Dale Evans, Gene Autry, Lash La Rue, Hopalong Cassidy, John Wayne, Randolph Scott, Cisco Kid, Gabby Hayes, Andy Devine, and the Lone Ranger. More recently, all





three Tremors movies, *Iron Man*, and the Mel Gibson *Maverick* movie had portions filmed in the Alabama Hills area just outside of town. Humphrey Bogart's *Treasure of Sierra Madre* and Cary Grant's *Gunga Din* had scenes here as well.

I was surprised at many of the films I'd seen were filmed here. That scene in *Iron Man*, where they're in Afghanistan and Tony Stark demonstrates his new weapon; in fact, not actually filmed in Afghanistan. The 1939 film *Gunga Din*, which took place in Colonial British India; not actually filmed in Colonial British India. Even the town of Perfection, Nevada where *Tremors* took place; not actually filmed in Nevada. Even quite recent films, such as *Django Unchained* was filmed right around here. Quentin Tarantino gets bonus cool points for generously donating a bunch of stuff from the movie. Also on display are cars, a couple movie stage coaches, costumes, photo's and many other artifacts of the films that had locations here. The museum has artifacts in their collection from nearly a century of film and a few from even before that.



Several old TV shows were filmed on location. Remember *The Lone Ranger*, *Bonanza*, *Hopalong Cassidy*, Gene Autry, Roy Rogers shows? In addition to *Tremors*, other sci-fi epics such as 2 Star Trek, and portions of Star Wars were filmed here.



The new and the old - all took part in movies



A stop at their gift shop offers opportunities to purchase old western films series. If you get to Lone Pine, California, be sure to stop at the Film History Museum. It's worth the \$5 you paid. You won't be disappointed!





My second stop for the day was in the Alabama Hills, just outside of Lone Pine. Remember, I noted above that the two sightseeing spots were interconnected? Movie history comes alive in the Alabama Hills in Lone Pine, California. There are incredible rock formations dotting the landscape as far as the eye can see.

For over 100 years, beginning with the early silent films, the Hollywood studios have found the Eastern Sierra Nevada and the rugged Alabama Hills the perfect place for making films within a few hours drive. The first feature film shot entirely on location at Lone Pine was *The Round-up*, a

1920 silent Western starring Fatty Arbuckle in his first feature film. The director made good use of the weirdly eroded jumbled rocks, backed by the snowcapped Sierra Nevada.

The Alabama Hills appeared in over 300 movies in the 1920s-50s, mostly Westerns - although they also served a northern India, the Gobi Desert, various parts of Arabia, and even Africa in two Tarzan films.

The pace of movie-making slowed only slightly here as the Western genre became less wildly popular. Several stories



featuring the distant past or sci-fi future have found a setting here, including Star Trek V and VII, Tremors, Gladiator, and Dinosaur. The

area is also host to a myriad of commercial shoots each year featuring the latest and most powerful new autos and trucks, as well as

a dramatic background for numerous fashion commercials.

The Alabama Hills are a golden-brown wonderland of rounded hills and twisted rock formations lying between Lone Pine and the Sierra. The Alabamas, once incorrectly touted as "the earth's oldest hills," are now known to be the same age as the Sierra, both



being formed a "few million years ago" by faulting.

Identical in composition, their difference in appearance comes from different weathering processes. Up high, the freezing, expanding and thawing of rainwater and melting snow has caused the more chiseled splintering of the granite. Down in the warmer valley, the Alabamas took shape when "the climate was more moist and the rock was covered with soil," according to a recent geologist's report printed in "California's Eastern Sierra" by Sue Irwin. As the climate became drier, erosion slowly stripped away the soil mantle, exposing and shaping the piles of boulders we see today. Water and wind continue the shaping process. The beige and blacks in the mottled



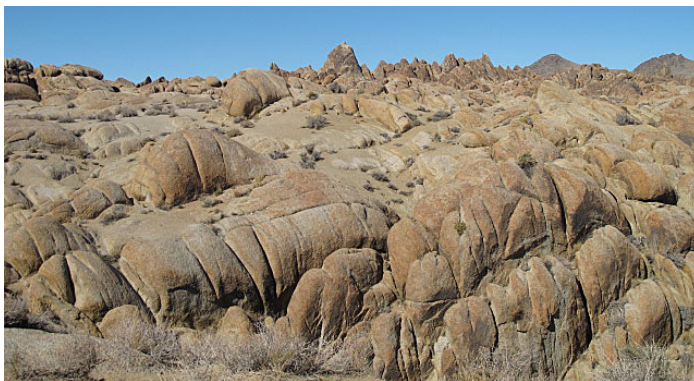
Stage coach rumbling around this bend?



Farscape



Imagine the bad guys hiding in this cave



If you get a chance, don't miss a short visit to the Alabama Hills. They are only 3 miles out of town. There are several guide books that will direct you to specific sites where films were shot. One guide book even gives hints as how to find certain camera locations.

coloring are the result of being stained for millions of years by the oxidation of the iron minerals in the rock

The unusual name Alabama Hills came about during the Civil War. In 1864 Southern sympathizers in Lone Pine discovered gold "in them thar hills." When they heard that a Confederate cruiser named the Alabama had burned, sunk or captured more than 60 Federal ships in less than two years they named their mining claims after the cruiser to celebrate. Before long the name applied to the whole area. Coincidentally, while Southerners were prospecting around Lone Pine, there were Union sympathizers 15 miles north near Independence. And when the Alabama was sunk off the coast of France by the U.S.S. Kearsarge in 1864, the Independence people struck back. They not only named their mining claims "Kearsarge" but a mountain peak, a mountain pass, and a whole town as well.



Can you picture Roy or Gene chasing baddies down this road?

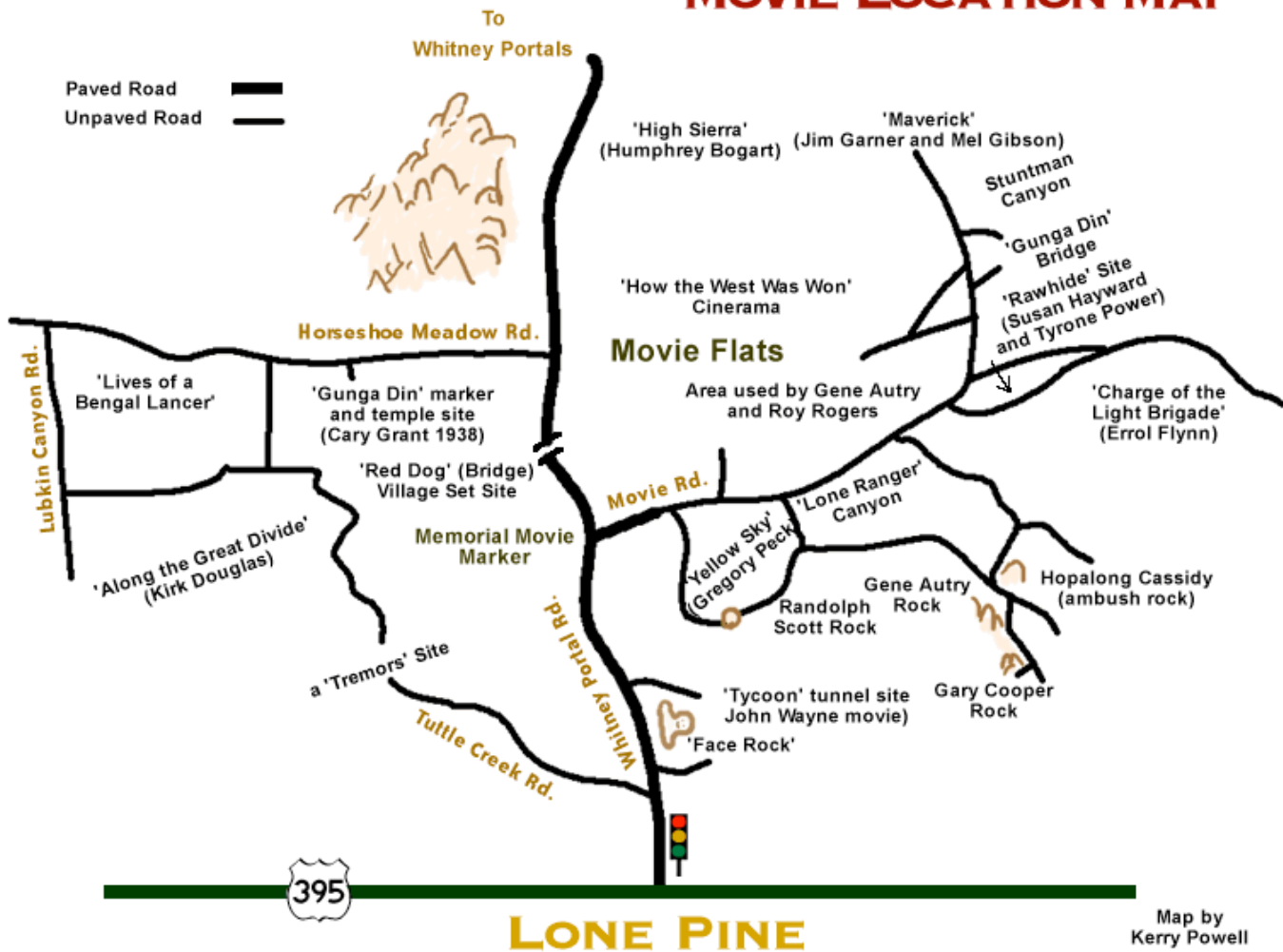


Hi-yo Silver - Away! Imagine the Lone Ranger speeding by



Looking down into Lone Pine

MOVIE LOCATION MAP



Trivia: Supposedly Roy Rogers made his first movie here in 1938.

If you are ever in Lone Pine, I can recommend Boulder Creek RV Park, a Good Sam park. The park is located three miles south of town on highway 395. It has full hookups, swimming pool and sauna, and a small well stocked camp store. Rest rooms and showers are clean. Some sites are a distance from the rest rooms and showers. Interior roads are paved. Pads are gravel and level. There are plenty of trees in the spring time.

I've had a lot of fun here in Lone Pine. However, tomorrow it's time to head south. Tomorrow I will be spending a night in Twentynine Palms. The plan is to arrive in Quartzsite Monday afternoon. I will be staying there at the "cult" gathering for one week. That's sort of being like a desert rat, isn't it?

Anyway, thanks for coming along with me today. Until next time - Bye for now - Earl

