



# In Search of Eldorado

Link to the Eldorado Song: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VczD1olutQ8>



## Hello to Family & Friends

Today I am back to driving around to different sights and seeing different things.

Two thoughts I want to pass along:

- 1) Remember how I talked about the garbage all over in the Mecca Hills? I am happy to say that I saw virtually none in Joshua Tree NP.
- 2) I have been in California for sixteen days, and every day I see mountains. Mountains, mountains, everywhere. I love the mountains.

I am still having a problem figuring out the propane. The furnace stopped this morning, I assume due to lack of fuel. A short time later, while washing up, I still had hot water. Hmmm.

The gauge was at  $\frac{1}{4}$  so I wasn't surprised. But when I stopped to fill it up, it only took 4.5 gallons. I just can't figure this out.

Funny aside to the propane fill. I went in the gas station and asked if someone could fill propane. She asked if I was in the RV and said she's the responsible party. She then handed me a glove and said "I broke my wrist, so you're going to have to do the hard part. In five minutes you'll be a certified propane filler." She walked me through it (no big deal as I have seen it done several times now), I paid, and she told me my certificate would arrive in the mail. We both got a laugh out of that one.

On to Pioneertown!

Day 22  
Friday,  
January 24th

Back to  
Joshua Tree  
National Park

Weather  
40's to 70's and Sunny

## In Search of Eldorado

By Edgar Allan Poe

Gaily bedight,  
A gallant knight,  
In sunshine and in shadow,  
Had journeyed long,  
Singing a song,  
In search of Eldorado.

But he grew old—  
This knight so bold—  
And o'er his heart a shadow—  
Fell as he found  
No spot of ground  
That looked like Eldorado.

And, as his strength  
Failed him at length,  
He met a pilgrim shadow—  
'Shadow,' said he,  
'Where can it be—  
This land of Eldorado?'

'Over the Mountains  
Of the Moon,  
Down the Valley of the Shadow,  
Ride, boldly ride,'  
The shade replied,—  
'If you seek for Eldorado!'



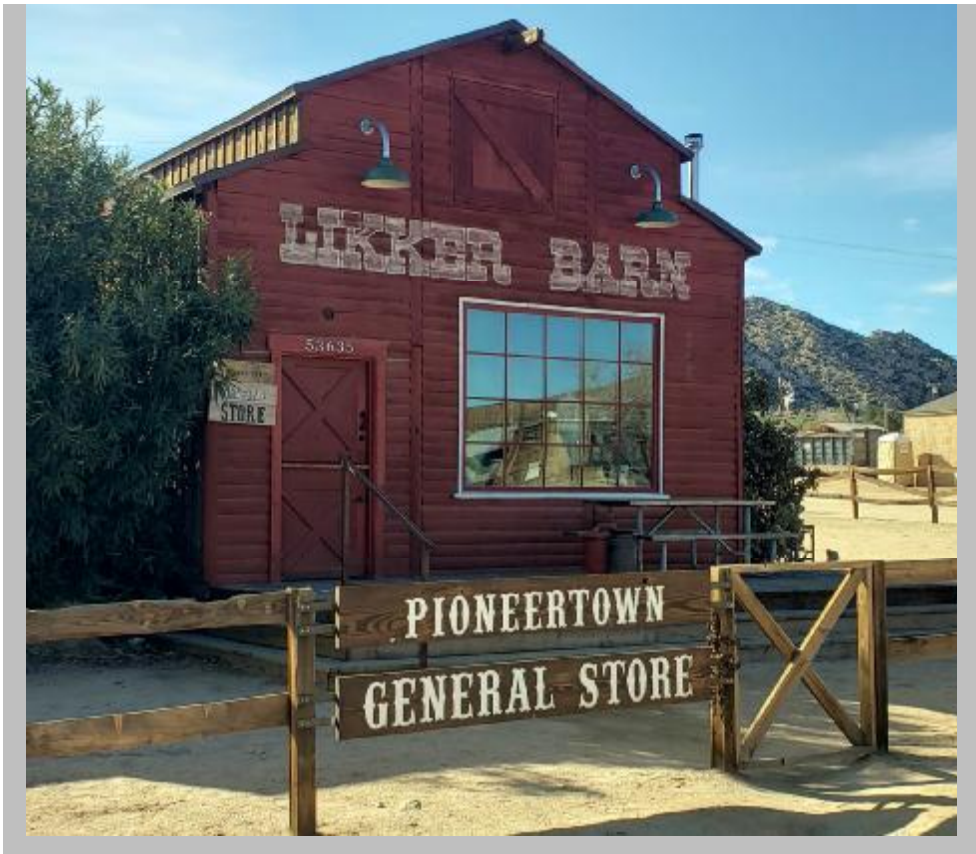
Pioneertown was established in 1946 when Dick Curtis shared his dream for a "Living Breathing Movie Set". Shortly after, seventeen investors including Curtis, Roy Rogers, Dale Evans, The Sons Of The Pioneers, Russell Hayden, Frank McDonald, Tommy Carr, Terry Frost, and Bud Abbott each invested \$500 and incorporated. The company then purchased 32,000 Acres of land which would soon be known as Pioneertown.



Mane Street



Their goal was simple and unique: to create a place where they could work (and play) with friends, family and co-workers. A functioning 1880's themed town which was easily accessible from both Los Angeles & Palm Springs and would serve as a filming location, vacation destination & permanent residence for people working in the entertainment industry, ranchers and desert lovers alike.





Inside the Saddlery



A walk down the boardwalk of Pioneertown. Just like old times



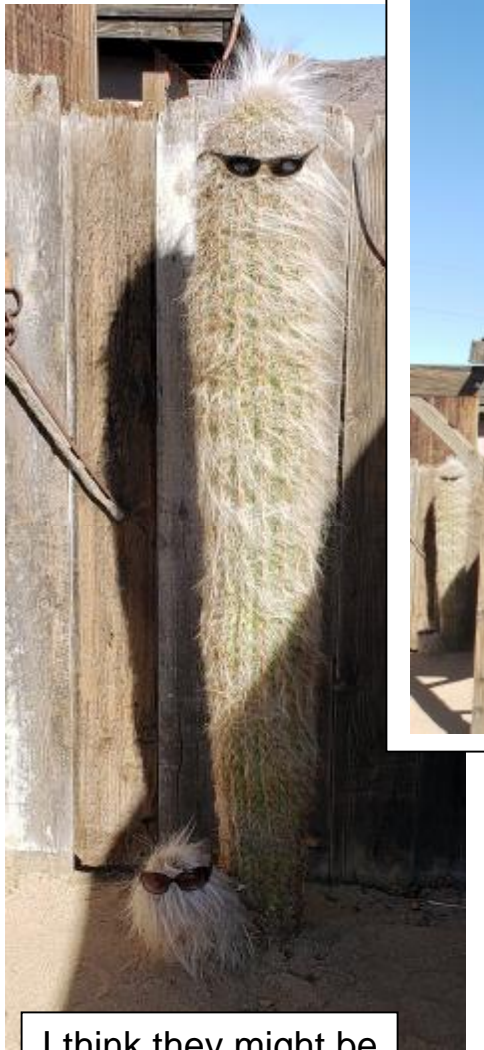


Originally they had planned to call the town "Rogersville" in honor of the Roy Rogers' singing group (and fellow investors) The Sons of The Pioneers. However, a member of the group named Tim Spenser wrote a catchy tune by the name of "Out in Pioneertown" to help promote the endeavor. They recorded the song the following year. It was that catchy tune which gave birth to the name "Pioneertown".



Eager to begin construction, they broke first ground on September 1st, 1946. The San Bernardino County Sun ran a full-page ad on March 25th, 1947 which invited people to invest in Pioneertown along with Dale Evans, Roy Rogers & The Sons Of The Pioneers.





I think they might be groupies of ZZ Top

A cool way to recycle old license plates



What possessed the artist to make Wisconsin into a dust pan, I will never know.



The first structures established were fully functional businesses which included White's Grocery, the Townhouse Motel, the Red Dog Saloon, the Golden Stallion Restaurant, Maggie's Feed Barn, Nell's Ice Cream Palace, Pioneertown Likker, the Klip 'N' Kurl Beauty Shop, Pioneer Bowl, Trigger Bill's Shooting Gallery & the Pioneertown Gazette; just to name a few.

Ranch sites with utilities available and road access already established were offered starting as low as \$900 for over an acre of land! Pioneertown became a fully functioning town with an established community and big plans for fast expansion.



The outside

The inside



There was a DVD playing inside which stopped the action of westerns and pointed out the same buildings on film from right here in Pioneertown.



For those of you NOT in the know, Cisco is wearing the blue suit and Pancho the red shirt. I point this out so that you will keep this in mind a couple weeks from now. Don't worry, I'll remind you.

Those grand plans to expand were short lived however, as Dick Curtis stepped down from President in 1948 after the corporation decided to put community production on the back burner and focus strictly on catering to production companies. Immediately, both land sales and productions plummeted. Just when it seemed like the dream was already beginning to fade, a movie producer by the name of Philip N. Krasne who was producing the Cisco Kid series happened to travel through town. He enjoyed the place quite a lot. Well enough, in fact, to sign a 25 year lease which renewed interest & development in Pioneertown.



More than 50 films & serials were filmed in Pioneertown during the 1940's and 1950's. There have been over 200 productions in town - the total number is unknown as entertainment production records were not as well documented as they are these days. All of the Gene Autry Flying A television productions through the 1950's were shot here; the Pioneertown Bowling Alley being a favorite filming location of Autry's. Some other local titles were "Cisco Kid", "The Range Rider", "Annie Oakley", "Cody of the Pony Express", "The Adventures of Judge Roy Bean" and "Buffalo Bill Jr." As it sits on a movie set; the Pioneertown Post Office is said to be the most photographed PO in the USA!

While Pioneertown thrived; the means to expand further were simply not available. A lack of safe water, something that was unforeseeable at the time of the town's conception, would ultimately condemn all plans for a proposed 40 acre lake, a golf course, an airport and a shopping center. As the golden age of western films came to an end, so too did the abundant production work in town. Over the years businesses have dwindled and thrived, back and forth. But the die-hard community has always remained committed to keeping Pioneertown alive. And while a demand for western filming locations has died down; the town is still a fully functioning production set where movies, independent films, music videos and commercials are filmed every month.

All of the smaller font type descriptions above are from the Pioneertown website.



I didn't spend a whole lot of time in Pioneertown. The busy season is from April to October. The gunfights and stunt shows are not performed during the winter, so I just looked around and hoofed it on back towards Desert Hot Springs.

Almost all downhill through these mountains. Took my foot off the gas and let it coast.



I have no interest in sitting in a hot mineral spring, so I just wandered over to the museum below.

## *Welcome to Cabot's!*

*Discoveries await you as you explore this special place where Cabot Yerxa homesteaded in 1913. Enjoy the wide vistas of spectacular mountains and desert landscape and the unique flora and fauna. Be sure to visit our Trading Post & Gallery, pick up a visitors guide to navigate the grounds, take a guided tour or simply find a shady spot to relax.*

*Enjoy your visit!*



The guided tour starts in ten minutes, so I signed up and, as suggested above, found a shady spot to relax.



This building is phenomenal. Everything used to build it was salvaged from other buildings or abandoned items found in the desert. Thinking of Salvation Mountain which also used discards, I'll take this one-of-a-kind every time. 5000 Sq Ft. 27 rooms (something like that). Note the windows the arrow points at. Cabot found a lot of window frames in the desert, but the glass was always broken. He put the broken windows back together, but with dividers between each piece. Now they're pieces of art.



I mentioned 27 rooms? There are 45 doors, and no two are the same. The entry door to the museum, left, is the bed of a wagon. Cabot then used leftover pieces of wood to do the crosshatching, and attached it all together with nuts and bolts he found. What a great idea.

"Waokiye," meaning "Traditional Helper" in Lakota, was built in 1978 by Hungarian-born sculptor Peter "Wolf" Toth. 26<sup>th</sup> or 27<sup>th</sup> in the "Whispering Giants" series.

The sculpture is from a 45-ton sequoia and stands 37 feet tall. All work was done with just a hammer and a chisel. Check him out online. Amazing story.





Just in case:

When rock is wet, it's raining  
When rock is white, it's snowing  
When rock is hard to see, it's foggy  
When rock is moving, it's windy or there's an earthquake  
The rock is never wrong

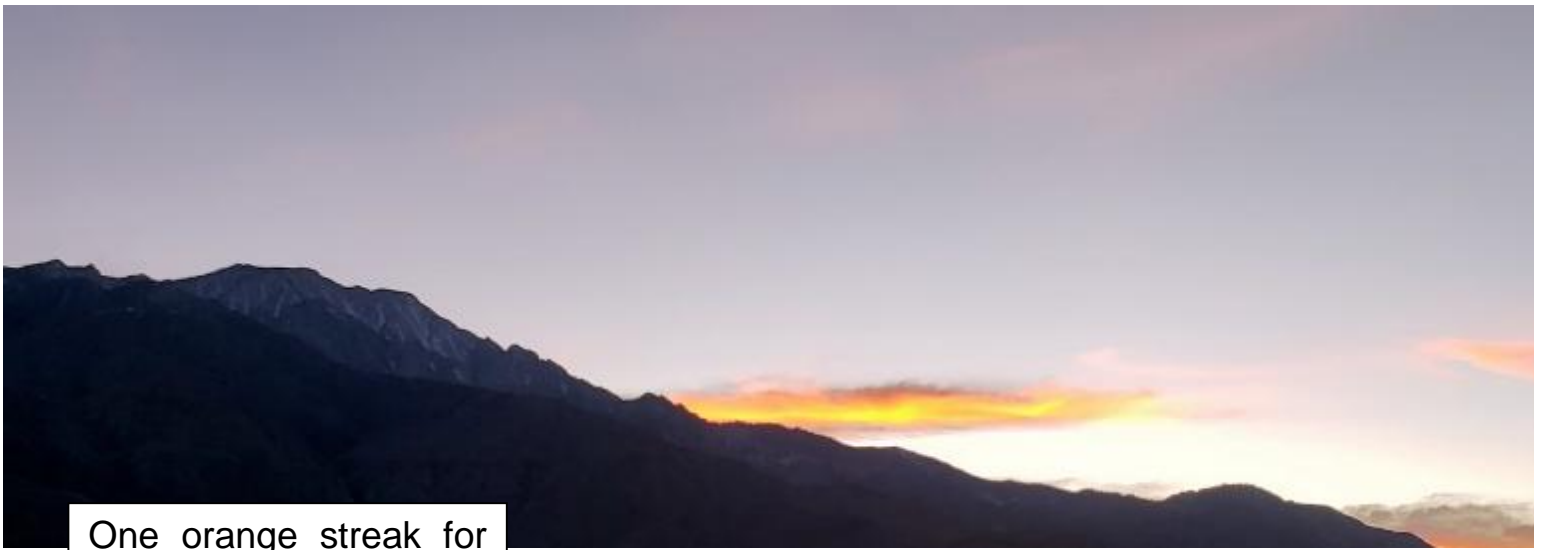
There was no photography inside the museum, so I can't show you anything I saw during the one hour tour. But it was extremely informative. I am surprised a movie has never been made about this man. Paula did a great job and the \$11 cost was worth it.



Now, you want to talk about a wasted trip. It was nine miles from the museum to the BLM office. As it says, I wanted information, maps, whatever I could get, for Santa Rosa & San Jacinto NM, and Sand to Snow NM. Whoever heard of a Bureau of Land Management office that has no maps of the land they manage? Not a one. She told me she could go do a Google search and print something off the internet for me. Our government at work.



Quite the windmill farm out here. I also saw a solar panel farm.



One orange streak for sunset



I thought the photo above was kind of cool looking.

From the BLM, my plan was to visit the Whitewater Preserve, get info, then drive to the GPS coordinates for the Sand to Snow NM for a picture, then overnight at the I-10 rest stop. But once I talked to the rangers in the visitor center, I decided to do Palm Springs over the weekend, then go back to Whitewater on...probably...Tuesday. Less crowded.

I needed diesel and found it after some searching. The station I wanted (cheapest price) had both diesel pumps out of order. Next door advertised only four cents more, but at the pump the credit price was FORTY cents more. Outrageous. Over the bridge was a Pilot for a dime more. But when I used my Good Sam card, it ended up costing four cents LESS than the first station I went to. Funny how things work out sometimes.

I am typing this at the rest stop, but I plan to eat dinner and head back towards Whitewater. I was followed down that same road by two patrol cars, and at the stop sign I got out and asked about camping overnight along that road. He said no problem.

Until next time.....