

Hayden Ranch brings back the Old West

BY CRISTINA VALDES
Desert Sun Staff Writer

PIONEERTOWN — Sitting on a small desert knoll just west of Pioneertown, the Hayden Ranch suddenly looms before you. A sign just above the fenced driveway reads: "Out where the West begins."

The "Scarlet Lady," an old railroad passenger car once owned by a baron, lines the side of the ranch.

The one-time set for the old "Judge Roy Bean" television series, produced and directed by the ranch's namesake Russell Hayden, the ranch maintains its Western flavor to this day.

A Wells Fargo & Co. bank building, a sheriff's office and jail, rusty wagons and Western artifacts remain at the ranch as a tribute to the fictional character Judge Roy Bean and Hayden, who made more than 50 of the half-hour shows. Hayden also produced the "Twenty-six Men" series and played Hopalong Cassidy's sidekick Luckie.

"Rusty never did like acting," said Mousie Hayden of her husband, who died in 1981, just one day before his 81st birthday.

Mrs. Hayden, a one-time actress for Fox under the name of Lillian Porter, added: "He had no ego. You need to have an ego to be in the movies."

The couple met at a cocktail party in Beverly Hills in 1946 and married shortly afterward, said Mrs. Hayden, a petite woman who declined to reveal her age.

They went on tour in 1947, performing live throughout the country, she added.

The 1946 death of his only child, Sandra, from Hayden's previous marriage to actress Jan Clayton, prompted Hayden to move to Arizona where he filmed more than 120 shows of "Twenty-six Men," Mrs. Hayden said.

Twenty-one years later when "a little girl of a friend of ours lost her leg to cancer," Hayden decided to start a foundation to aid children suffering from serious health problems.

Mrs. Hayden continues the tradition of the annual fund-raiser at the ranch, the only time it is open to the public.

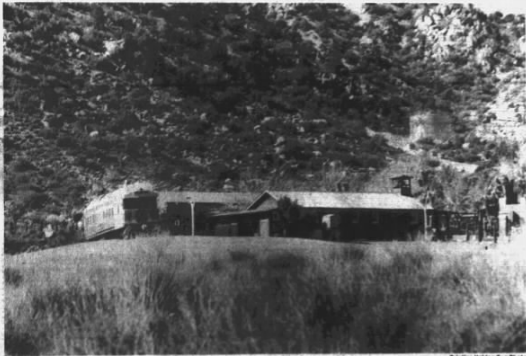
This year's extravaganza will be held July 7 and will feature barbecue steaks and plenty of entertainment, Mrs. Hayden said.

In its ninth year, the Sandra Hayden Foundation raised more than \$4,000 last year.



David Snyder Sun Photo

Russell Hayden kept a few freight-hauler type wagons around the ranch to preserve the old-time atmosphere.



Cristina Valdes Sun Photo

Former Hopalong Cassidy sidekick Russell Hayden, who played the character Luckie, also used this ranch near Pioneertown for filming the "Judge Roy Bean" series. His widow, Mousie, still lives here.



David Snyder Sun Photo

The silver-studded saddle Russell Hayden wore in so many of his shows is displayed on a specially-built rack inside a ranch building.



David Snyder Sun Photo

The Scarlet Lady is the name of an old railroad passenger car Hayden brought to the ranch. The car was once owned by a baron.



David Snyder Sun Photo

Russell Hayden's widow, Mousie, stands in front of her house, the trading post of many a television show.