

## A TRAVELER'S DIARY

### Phony Face of Pioneertown Has Looked Out at Hoss Opera Fans From Some 200 Films

BY HORACE SUTTON

**PIONEERTOWN**—Should anyone know of a boulevard without a boulevard, the local main street is for hire at \$25 a day. This is home of the hosa opera, however, it is called Mane St. There is a big sign as you drive in from the desert hills and it says, "Please Do Not Drive on Mane St." This is a sort of one-yak town.

The reason for not driving on Mane St. is that it might be hired out that day to a movie company, for Pioneertown is in reality a movie set inhabited by people. It was established in 1946 by Dick Curtis, a heavy of the silent screen, who and 3000 citizens moved in and each agreed to build a business with a western front.

**HYPNOTIC PLACE**  
Some of Hollywood's most famous actors slept here, sometimes through their best scenes. The Cisco Kid series was made in Pioneertown, and Gene Autry lived here from 1948 to 1950 while making "Annie Oakley." For the Judge Roy Bean television series the village was altered to look like Langtry, Tex. All told, the false face of Pioneertown has appeared in some 200 films. In its salad days a 3000 visitors flooded the town on week ends, filtering in and out of the saloons and restaurants along Main St.

In spite of this prosperity Pioneertown went bust, and although grass ain't growing on its street, there are only 60 people left and that includes those who live in Rim Rock, four miles over the

Still in business is the Golden Stallion, which serves Chinese and American dishes and makes the flat statement: "No finer food in the West." It can dish out anything from a tuna fish sandwich to almond duck, and is open only from March to November.

Across the street the Town House Motel takes in paying customers at \$4 a person, \$5 for two, and parking your iron at the front desk please. If two persons use two beds it's \$6. If three sleep in the room it's \$7, if four sleep in the room it's \$8. If any more sleep in the room it's crowded.

**THE RED DOG**  
Many stars — Barbara Stanwyck, Teresa Wright, Roy Rogers, Lew Ayres, Lee Carrillo — have put their feet on the rail of the Red Dog Cafe, a saloon that comes complete with a nickelodeon that costs 10 cents to operate. The back of the bar is 100 years old and was fetched up from the old mining town of Oatman, Ariz.

The faces of characters who shot bottles off it are plastered around the walls on "wanted" signs, such as

"Notice—to Thieves, Thugs, Fakirs and Bunko Steerers: Billy the Kid, Billy Mullins, Little Jack, The Custer, Pock-Marked Kid and about Twenty others: If found within the limits of the city after 10 o'clock p.m. this night you will be invited to the Grand Necktie Party, the expense of which will be

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Up-to-date "wanted" signs are still posted in Pioneer town on the walls of its U.S. government post office. Tourists can eat and drink in the Red Dog or the Golden Stallion, have their pictures taken along Mane St. or bowl in the alleys which screech jukebox music across the valley. When I drove up the other day I saw Presley, the man for whom Mane St. was named, was competing for noise with rifle shots that crackled across the desert. Maybe somebody was filming a cowboy

To get here you have to take Twentynine Palms Highway, a strange, bumpy road that rollicks like a roller coaster over the dry, brown lands of the high desert. The turnoff to Pioneertown comes at that weird

Beyond Yuca Valley the highway leads to the Joshua Tree National Monument. Driving through Twentynine Palms, and that other metropolis, Thousand Palms, set me to wondering the other day—whatever happened to Helen Twelvetreel?

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