

Roy Rogers – 1953 “This is Your Life”



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- This Presentation will give a brief history of the Roy Rogers family, focusing on their contributions to Chatsworth.
- It will be concluded by a 26 minute video of the 1953 television episode “This is Your Life” honoring Roy Rogers.
- A touching moment showcasing the sincere and humble Roy Rogers that many of us knew, when he later lived in Chatsworth from 1955 to 1965.



Roy Rogers – 4 Stars on the Hollywood Walk of Fame

- Roy Rogers' career began in 1934 with a recording contract with the Sons of the Pioneers. Roy soon turned to movies, and was in the top-ten money-making western stars list from 1939 to 1954.
- He and his wife Dale Evans also appeared on the Roy Rogers Radio Show for nine years, before moving to television from 1951 through 1957.
- Roy Rogers was inducted into the Hollywood Walk of fame in 1960. He has four stars on the Hollywood Walk of Fame, in recognition of his achievements in radio, music (with the Sons of the Pioneers), film, and television.



Roy Rogers – In Chatsworth

- In 1955, Roy Rogers purchased the 129-acre Swan Paulson Homestead in Chatsworth on Andora from Max Schonfeld, General Manager of Devonshire Downs, and renamed it the Double R Bar Ranch.
- The ranch had a small house on it built in 1938, that was expanded to 6,000 square feet and still exists today.
- In a 1987 quote Dusty Rogers said, "We moved from the Hollywood Hills to Encino, then to a ranch in Chatsworth. We always moved away from the encroaching population because Dad liked his privacy. He wanted his kids raised on a ranch, where they could have horses and pigs and chickens and cows."
- Episodes of The Roy Rogers Show on NBC TV featured the Double R Bar Ranch in Chatsworth.
- In 1964, they sold most of the ranch to a subdivider, and in 1965, Roy and Dale sold the remainder and moved to Apple Valley, Ca. near Victorville.



Roy Rogers – In Chatsworth

- When Roy, Dale and family moved to Chatsworth in 1955 they were very active in the community.
- They were co-honorary mayors of Chatsworth during that time.
- Their children went to Chatsworth Park Elementary School.
- Dale played the piano for Sunday School at the Pioneer Church.
- Roy was a member of the Rotary Club.



1958 Chatsworth Parade

Roy Rogers – In Chatsworth

- Roy was also involved in the Aqua Sierra Sportsmans Club, a skeet and trap shooting range on the Hill Homestead property at the end of Devonshire that began in 1949. In 1956, the Hill homestead was purchased by Henry Berkenkamp of Oroweat Bakeries.
- By 1959, there were five skeet and trap stations, a 90 foot hi-tower, one nine-hole golf course, a driving range, and two trout lakes. In 1959 it was advertised as the Roy Rogers Sports Center.
- The center was closed in 1968/69 as Rockpointe was developed.
- In 1973 the City of Los Angeles purchased the 75-acre skeet/fishing/golf course site and it became today's Chatsworth Park South.



[Sign in 1959 Chevrolet Commercial](#)

Roy Rogers Rancho Estates

- In April 1964, a promotional photo was taken to announce Roy Rogers Rancho Estates.
- In August 1964, their 12-year-old daughter Debbie died in a tragic church bus accident.
- In 1965, Roy and Dale moved to Apple Valley



"Roping Ceremonies" signal the start of Roy Rogers Rancho Estates
left Robert Russell -- Russcor Construction, Rogers, right Councilman Tom Shepard

Roy Rogers Rancho Estates

- In 1964, 55 units were approved on 33 acres. The first homes appeared in 1964, and new homes were built over the next 25 years.
- In 1969, Eugene Kilmer purchased the undeveloped 96 acres and moved into the Roy Rogers house on Trigger Street. His son Val Kilmer became a well-known movie actor.
- Val Kilmer was a drama student at Chatsworth High School with Kevin Spacey in the late 1970's.
- Kevin Spacey's film production company is named "Trigger Street Productions"



- The remaining 91 acres of the ranch is under development in 2025 as Hidden Oaks by Toll Brothers, with 33 additional homes, and 62 acres as an open space conservation easement.

The Roy Rogers-Dale Evans Museum

- In 1967, The Roy Rogers' Museum opened across the street from Roy Rogers' Apple Valley Inn.
- In 1976 it relocated within California to Victorville, where it stayed for 27 years.
- After Roy's death in 1998, and Dale's in 2001, in 2003 the museum moved to Branson, Missouri. The museum struggled financially during an economic downturn, and the remaining family decided to close its doors on December 12, 2009.
- The majority of the collection was sold at auction in July 2010 for \$2.9 million.

Postcard of the Roy Rogers' Museum in Apple Valley.

Note: The Historical Society visited the Museum in March 1995.



Rogers' 1963 Pontiac Bonneville sold for the price of \$254,500. Artist Nudie Cohn, Rogers' tailor, outfitted the car with silver dollars on the dashboard, chrome-plated pistols, horseshoes, miniature horses and rifles, many of which were functional parts of the car such as door handles, switches and controls.



Roy Rogers and Dale Evans Gravesite

Sunset Hills Memorial
Park and Mortuary,
Apple Valley



A story about the Roy Rogers This is Your Life Episode

- At our January 2018 open house, Franklin Berger talked quite awhile about his remembrances of Roy Rogers. He mentioned that he had a friend who had a business with Roy Rogers, involving trading cards (like baseball cards), and that his friend was also a knife thrower.
- His friend was Larry Cisewski, who called us a few days later and told us this story:

He knew Roy in 1992 and they had a business together regarding collector cards. During that time, the “This is Your Life” episodes were being re-released on TV. He asked Roy if he had seen the episode that he was in.

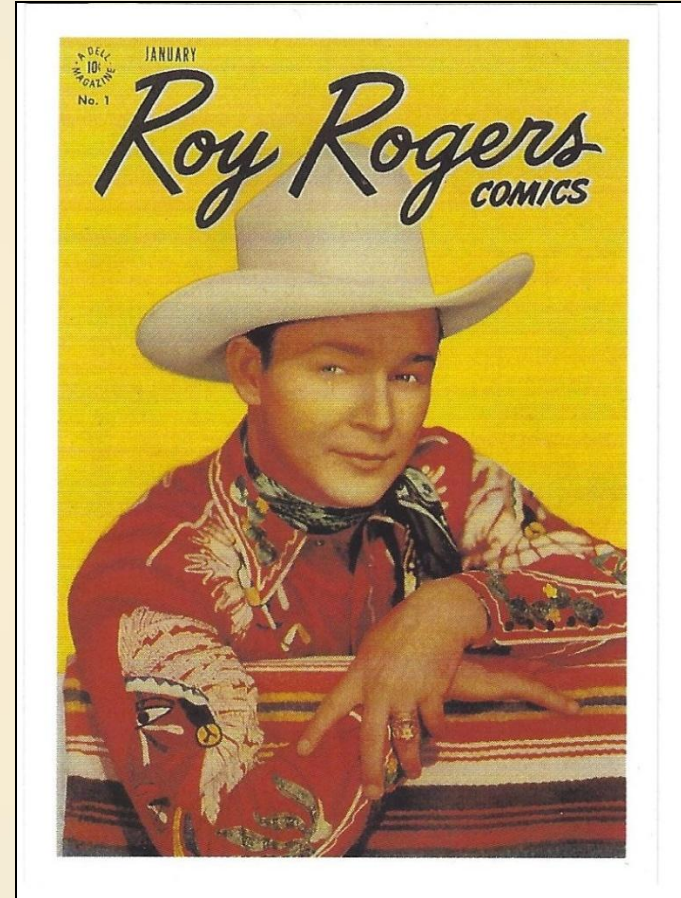
*Roy replied that **“he had seen it, but it was too hard to watch, because it had included his parents, that had both passed”***

Larry also mentioned that the episode was a complete surprise to Roy --- Roy told him that he thought we was just going to a photo shoot for a friend.

A story about the Roy Rogers This is Your Life Episode

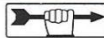
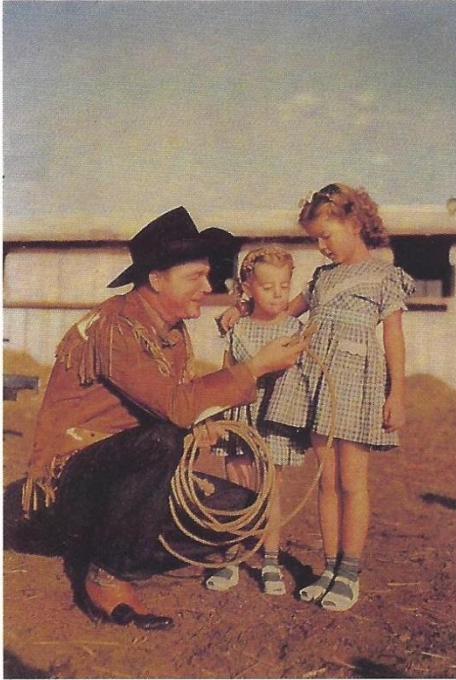
- Larry then mailed us, as a donation, a 70-card set of Roy Rogers Comic Cover Collector Cards (Series 1).
- Larry met Roy in 1981 at a Knott's Berry Farm 4-day celebration honoring Roy's 50 years as a performer (Roy was 69 at the time). Larry had a knife throwing act, and he visited with Roy backstage.
- Larry renewed the acquaintance in the early 1990's, and met with Roy for a half day once a week in Victorville for 3 years. During that time Larry produced Roy Rogers memorabilia including collector cards, lunch boxes, and other items.

Roy Rogers Collectors Set of
Comic Cover Cards
No. 1, January 1948
(the price of the Comic in 1948
was 10 cents)



More Comic Cover Cards from Larry Cisewski

#1 January 1948



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ALL RIGHTS RESERVED © 1992
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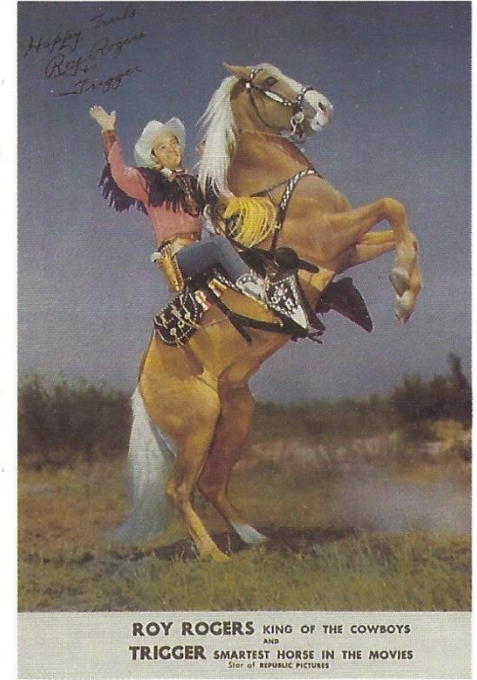
DELL
COMIC
OCTOBER
10¢

A 52 PAGE MAGAZINE

Roy Rogers

Comics

#70 October 1953



ROY ROGERS KING OF THE COWBOYS
AND
TRIGGER SMARTEST HORSE IN THE MOVIES
Star of REPUBLIC PICTURES



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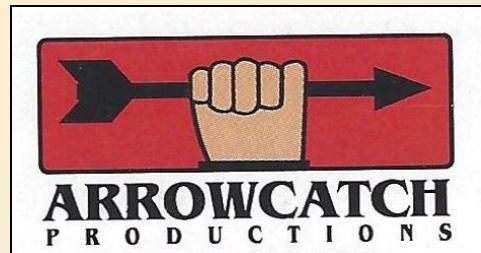
Left #1 - January 1948 back,

Middle #70 - Oct 1953 front,

Right #70 -- Oct 1953 back

Sources/Acknowledgements

- CHS Presentation: Chatsworth Hills Homesteaders Part 2
- CHS Presentation: Aqua Sierra & the Roy Rogers Sports Center
- CHS Smoke Signal July 2022 - Walter P. Lohman realtor sells 130-acre Max Schonfeld Ranch to Roy Rogers in 1955.
- This is Your Life Ultimate Collection Volume 1, 18 shows on 3 DVDs, 2005
- Personal communication with Larry Cisewski. Larry concluded his knife throwing act by catching a flaming arrow. And his company was named ARROWCATCH productions. For a 4-minute look at Larry throwing knives and catching a flaming arrow on Dick Clark LIVE visit <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JeVc3lfhrOk>



Prepared by Ann & Ray Vincent, Chatsworth Historical Society, January 2018, revised Jan 2025

To conclude this presentation, we will show a 26-minute video of the 1953 television episode “This is Your Life” honoring Roy Rogers.

It is posted on our YouTube channel,

[https://youtu.be/FH0y_jyNrOs &t=0](https://youtu.be/FH0y_jyNrOs&t=0)

It is the 2nd most popular video that we have posted, with 58,000 views.

1956 Highway patrol with Clint Eastwood in Downtown Chatsworth has over 1.2 million views...

