

WILL ROGERS STATE HISTORIC PARK



Our Mission

The mission of the California Department of Parks and Recreation is to provide for the health, inspiration and education of the people of California by helping to preserve the state's extraordinary biological diversity, protecting its most valued natural and cultural resources, and creating opportunities for high-quality outdoor recreation.



California State Parks supports equal access. Prior to arrival, visitors with disabilities who need assistance should contact the park at the phone number below. To receive this publication in an alternate format, write to the Communications Office at the following address.

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Discover the many states of California.™

WILL ROGERS STATE HISTORIC PARK
1501 Will Rogers State Park Road
Pacific Palisades, CA 90272
(310) 454-8212



COME AND EXPERIENCE THE PARK

- A major restoration of the historic Will Rogers home was completed in March 2006. Please join us for a Ranch House Tour. Tours for the general public are available Tuesday through Sunday. Tour times are 11:00 AM, 1:00 PM and 2:00 PM. Sorry, the Ranch House is closed on Mondays, and major holidays.
- The Visitor Center is currently undergoing restoration and will re-open in late 2008
- Experience the rich history of the Rogers Ranch with a self-guided tour.
- On the weekends during polo season, you're welcome to visit the park and watch the Will Rogers Polo Club display their polo skills. Polo season is mid-April to early October. Matches are played on Saturdays from 2:00 PM to 5:00 PM and on Sundays from 10:00 AM to 1:00 PM. No matches are held on major holiday weekends.
- Accessibility is continually improving. For current accessibility details call the park or visit <http://access.parks.ca.gov>.

Welcome to Will Rogers State Historic Park

In 1944 Mrs. Rogers deeded the 186-acre ranch to the State of California for public use and enjoyment as a memorial, historical monument and public park. Located in the central Santa Monica Mountains, the park offers panoramic views of downtown Los Angeles and the Pacific Ocean.

WILL ROGERS —THE MAN AND HIS TIMES

Will Rogers was born in 1879 of Cherokee descent on an Indian Territory frontier ranch near what is now Claremore, Oklahoma. He went on to become a cowboy, an entertainer, a movie and Broadway star, a writer, a speaker, a comedian, a philosopher, a radio commentator and a world icon. He made his way in the world because of an abundance of talent and the sheer force of his personality. At the same time he managed to keep in touch with the “common man” in himself and others. As he climbed along the path to fame and glory, Will’s generosity and good will kept pace with his mounting earnings. He gave without any pretense, invariably masking his good deeds in anonymity.

Photographs and newsreels show him with presidents, statesmen, celebrities and people from all walks of life. His career in Vaudeville took him to Broadway and the Ziegfeld Follies, and then to Hollywood for movies. One of Will’s great passions was flying. After many years of flying and promoting air travel, Will, at the age of 55, died with Wiley Post in an aircraft accident near Barrow, Alaska on August 15, 1935.

Will once said, “You must judge a man’s greatness by how much he will be missed.” By his own criterion, Will Rogers was a great man.

THE RANCH

Making his home in Beverly Hills during the early twenties, Will Rogers purchased property above Sunset Boulevard, where he built a small weekend cottage. The ranch reflects his roots as a cowboy and his love of horses. As you enter the ranch, the first thing you see on the right is the polo field, the only remaining outdoor polo field in Los Angeles County.

Will, his wife Betty, and their three children, Will Jr., Mary and Jimmy, moved to the ranch in 1928, and the home was enlarged to its present size of thirty-one rooms. The south wing, with its large living room and its comfortable furniture, porch swing in the center of the room, and many Indian rugs and baskets, is most revealing of Will’s personality. The only kitchen on the premises is located in this wing along with guest bedrooms and bathrooms. The mounted calf was presented to him by friends.

The attractive patio, with an outside fireplace, was often used for dining. The north wing of the house contains the family’s bedrooms, library/music room, Betty’s favorite—the sunroom—and Will’s study with a view of the still existing golf course. The grounds and the ranch buildings are maintained as they were when the family lived here.



WILL ROGERS SPEAKS ON

Indian Heritage: “My ancestors didn’t come over on the Mayflower, but they met the boat.”

Cowboy Philosophy: “Every man has wanted to be a cowboy. Why play Wall Street and die young when you can play cowboy and never die?”

Human Rights: “We will never have true civilization until we have learned to recognize the rights of others.”

Life’s Philosophy: “You got to sorter give and take in this old world. We can get mighty rich, but if we haven’t got any friends, we will find that we are poorer than anyone.”

Human Philosophy: “...I never met a man I didn’t like..”

Politics: “Elections...are like mosquitoes, you can’t very well fight ’em off without cussing ’em.”

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PLEASE REMEMBER

- Smoking is not permitted on trails.
- Plants, animals and objects are protected and should not be disturbed.
- Dogs must be on a leash at all times. No dogs allowed on Backbone Trail.
- Parking lot closes at sunset.
- Bicycles not allowed on single-track trails (except the Backbone Trail).
- No picnicking within 100 feet of the Will Rogers home. Sports, games, tables and chairs are permitted only on the upper lawn area.

HIKING AND BIKING TIPS

- Use designated trails to avoid contact with poison oak, rattlesnakes and ticks.
- Always carry plenty of water to prevent dehydration—temperatures can reach 100 degrees.
- Don't hike or bike alone. Inform friends or family of your plans and let them know when you will return.
- In case of emergency, call 9-1-1.

