

My young friend suggested that I'm maudlin and that I glorify the past too much. Perhaps I do, but Roy and Dale, and all their contemporaries, including Amanda Blake (Miss Kitty) still take me back to more innocent, safer days. And for that reason, I still hog the television when I see Matt Dillon gunfight on the street in Dodge City; when I hear Doc Adams and Festus arguing; when I hear the Lone Ranger say, "Hi-Ho Silver," and when the Rogers sing, "Happy Trails," as the credits roll.

I've discovered that something inside me still clamors for the simple pleasures of my boyhood.



TRIGGER

Simple Pleasures

Roger Loomis

TRIGGER

The other day I mentioned Roy Rogers, Dale Evans and Trigger in casual conversation when my young friend asked, "Who's that?" I replied, "They were popular Western movie stars when I was a kid." They were on television the same time the Lone Ranger, Tonto and Silver were."

With a puzzled look, my friend said, "I don't have a clue what you're talking about." Then it hit me. The "golden age" of television has long since passed off the scene. I'm sad! Please tell me you remember Gabby Hayes, Gene Autry, Tom Mix, John Wayne, Clint Walker, Walter Brennan, John Smith, and James Arness. I could mention so many others who "rode off into the sunset" during those years -- 1940's through the mid 60's. So, if you're younger than fifty, you probably don't know to whom I'm referring.

Then, I learned that the Roy Rogers-Dale Evans Museum, originally located in the San Bernardino Valley, and later moved to Branson, Missouri in 2003, closed its doors in December, 2019. It was the end of the trail for these wonderful Western legends.



Dusty Rogers, Roy and Dale's son, said at the closing, "It is very difficult to think that it will all be gone soon. The situation is one I have not wanted to happen. The decision to close the museum has come after two years of steady decline in visitors."

THAT generation is transitioning. Those born between 1940-1960 have witnessed the death of many of the original Western movie stars.

While I understand we can't live in the past; and while I realize that traditions come and go, it's my heartfelt opinion that somehow life was simpler back then, and the innocence of television viewing was harmless and in a much different kind of way, very entertaining.

Do you remember black and white television, when most of us in this neck of the woods had three network choices? Channels 3, 5 and 8 -- NBC, CBS and ABC? Do you remember when *Gunsmoke* aired on Saturday nights? It was so clean and children were in no danger of learning bad things. OR SO I THOUGHT!

In retrospect, our dearly loved Miss Kitty was an oxymoron. She was a "you know what" dressed up in a suggestive saloon outfit and plastered with make-up. Do you remember her signature mole? She was a nice and kind "bad girl!" Certainly not a woman we want our daughters to



emulate. She owned and operated the Long Branch Saloon for 19 years in Dodge City. She not only was a saloon girl, she was their boss. She was a red-head Madam! And as far as I know, Matt Dillon never kissed her! Did I say she was a "Madam?" Yes, indeed! And nobody thought a thing about it!

I guess some things never change after all. Perhaps the difference between *Gunsmoke* and *Law and Order* is the manner in which real life was handled. In today's world, seldom is anything left for the imagination. However, the innocence of my childhood still soothes my collective yearning for less visual and moral stimuli.