Searching for Buster

By John Bengtson

The rugged landscapes situated at the historic Iverson Movie Ranch in Chatsworth, California, have appeared in countless westerns, serials, and television shows.

But for Damfino's, the ranch has the distinction of serving as the backdrop for the Stone Age scenes from Keaton's first feature film *Three Ages*.

Hardy hikers with discerning eyes may be able to spot many settings from the film, including Keaton's golf scenes, the duel at sunrise location, and the bluff where Keaton flirts with a six-foot cavewoman.

The scene described here, however, can be found easily without even leaving your car.

In the first photo we see Keaton and Wallace Berry, rival cavemen, pursuing each other across and below a rock arch. The modern-day photo shows that, although the arch remains unchanged, the chimney of a modern condominium now appears in the background!

The ranch is located 30 miles north of Los Angeles. To reach the location while heading west on Highway 118, take the Topanga Canyon Boulevard exit south, bear right on Mayan Drive.

John Bengtson, a business attorney living in Oakland, California, is writing a book about his findings. He recently escorted Eleanor Keaton on a guided tour of several of the nearly 110 film locations he has found, which include an entire residential block appearing in *Seven Chances* that remains virtually unchanged.

and turn right onto Santa Susanna Pass Road. From there turn right onto Red Mesa Drive, and right again on Sierra Pass Place, then follow the first driveway on the left to the end. The arch sits across from 11238 Sierra Pass Place. The driveway is private, so if you visit, please show respect for the residents.

Near the arch rock, west of Red Mesa Drive, sits a small open-space park featuring spectacular rock formations called "The Garden of the Gods." These rocks appear in *Three Ages*, as well as in at least two Keaton shorts, *The Paleface* and *The Balloonatic*.

Details about these films may appear in a future column.

John welcomes any Keaton trivia or location tips you may have to share. In particular, John would like help identifying the modern church appearing in *Three Ages*, and the country club appearing in *Seven Chances*. John may be contacted directly at (510) 531-4010, or care of 1842 Leimert Blvd., Suite 100, Oakland CA 94602, or by e-mail at JDBengtson@msn.com.

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