



# **“Silents”** at Iverson Movie Ranch



*D.W. Griffith (right), Director*

# Silent Movies

Did you know...

- The first American silent film was the western, *The Great Train Robbery* (1903)
- The first documentary story film was *Life of a Fireman* (1903)
- The last silent film created was *Legong: Dance of the Virgins* (1935)
- 75% of silent feature films produced in the U.S. have been lost

# A Brief History: Iverson Movie Ranch

- Located in Chatsworth, California (Just a few miles from downtown Hollywood).
- The first outdoor movie studio.
- Over three thousand film-television and other productions filmed there.
- Many industry “firsts” happened at the Ranch.
- The Ranch played the backdrop for scenes such as deserts, jungles, Western towns, and even other planets; from the past, present and future.



*D.W. Griffith*

# Movies at Iverson Ranch

Interesting facts...

- D.W. Griffith inspired the development of Iverson Ranch into a movie studio
- The term “Movie Ranch” was coined at Iverson Ranch
- *The Squaw Man* (1914) was the first movie Cecil B. Demille directed at the Ranch
- Many silent movie features were shot at the Ranch, such as: *The Silent Man* (1917), *The Tiger Man* (1918), *Rin Tin Tin* (1925), *Ben Hur* (1925) and *Noah’s Ark* (1928)



# The Silent Man (1917)



# The Tiger Man (1918)



# Rin Tin Tin (1925)



# Ben Hur (1925)





# Noah's Ark (1928)



## Man—Woman—Marriage

Starring  
Dorothy Phillips

**SCENE**—Showing the magnitude of one of the most tremendous productions ever presented, a drama eternal—Albert A. Kaufman's presentation of Allen Holubar's *Man—Woman—Marriage*, a picture showing the evolution of love from the Maternalist period when women ruled family and clan, through the ages of her subjugation by man, down to the present day. A tremendous presentation of *Woman and Maker Love*. Adapted by Allen Holubar from the theme by Otto Link Schull.



**ABOVE** is shown a striking scene of the mating customs in the Maternalist age, when women, rulers of the race and guardians of motherhood, chose their husbands or mates. Below is woman of today at her supreme moment, the holy hour of motherhood—and woman in a moment of mad abandon in the age of barbaric splendor, when man had enslaved the mothers of the race after the terrific battle of the Amazons. A First National production.

Write for tickets to attractions shown monthly PHOTOPLAY MAGAZINE.

# Man—Woman—Marriage

- Released: March, 1921
- Director: Allen Holubar
- Starring: Dorothy Phillips and Ramon Novarro  
(Margaret Mann, J. Barney Sherry,  
Ralph Lewis, Shannon Day)
- Distributor: First National Pictures
- Original working title, "The Amazonians"
- May be one surviving copy, but not available  
and not seen since released

**"Give Them the Sword, You Women!"**

A gigantic scene of the Amazons of the Matriarchal age preparing for battle to protect their children. One of the big, expensive sets in the making of this picture in which more than 1000 persons appeared, and so stupendous that it amazed even the film colony of Los Angeles.

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*(From Lobby card)*





### The Women Spring to Arms

Women rushing out of their walled city to battle with the men who seek to snatch their children from them. Nine hundred women appeared on horseback in this scene to fight with nearly twice that number of men. The sword clashing battle that follows is one of the most thrilling and massive scenes ever shown on the screen.

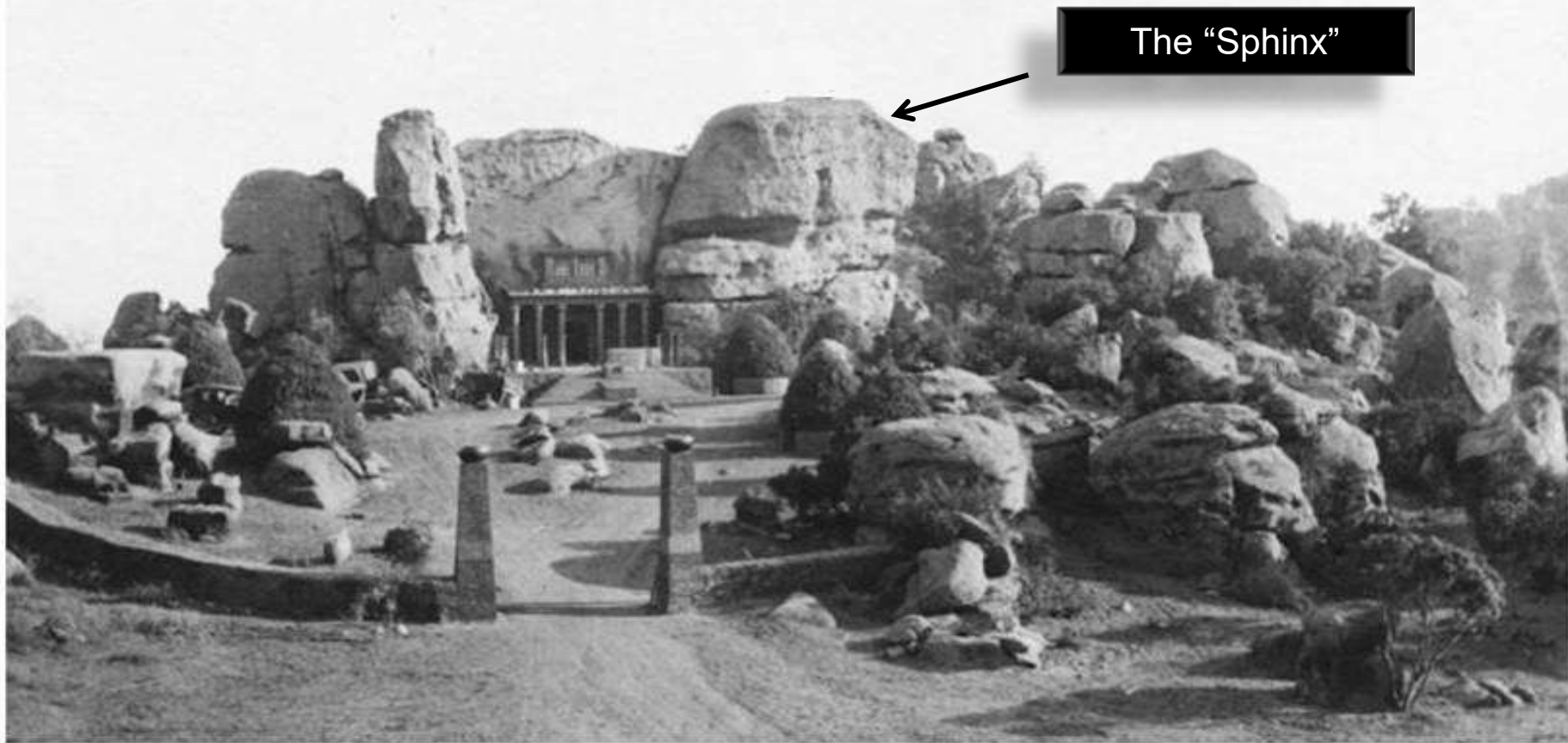
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*(From Lobby card: Jerry England Collection)*

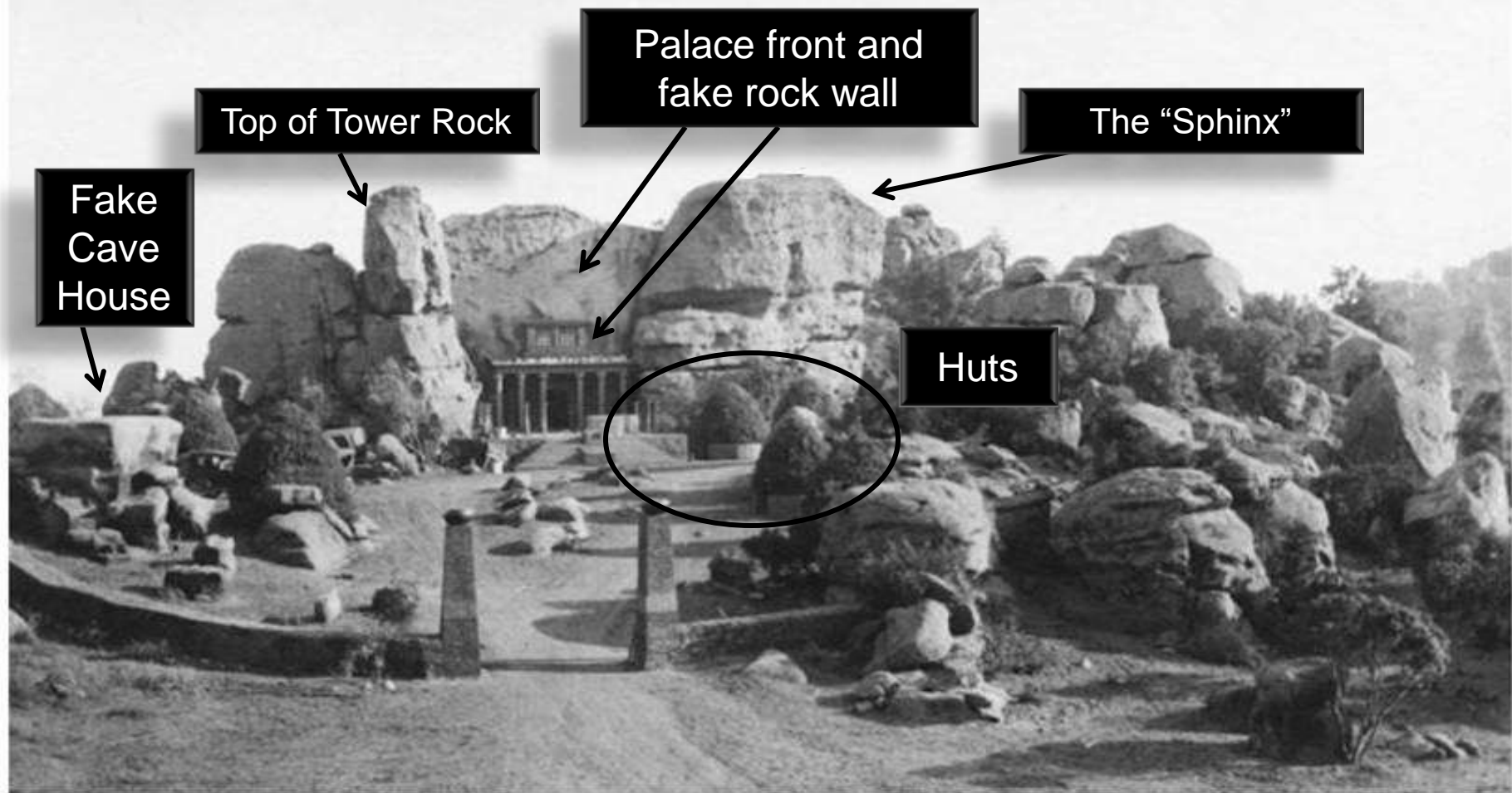




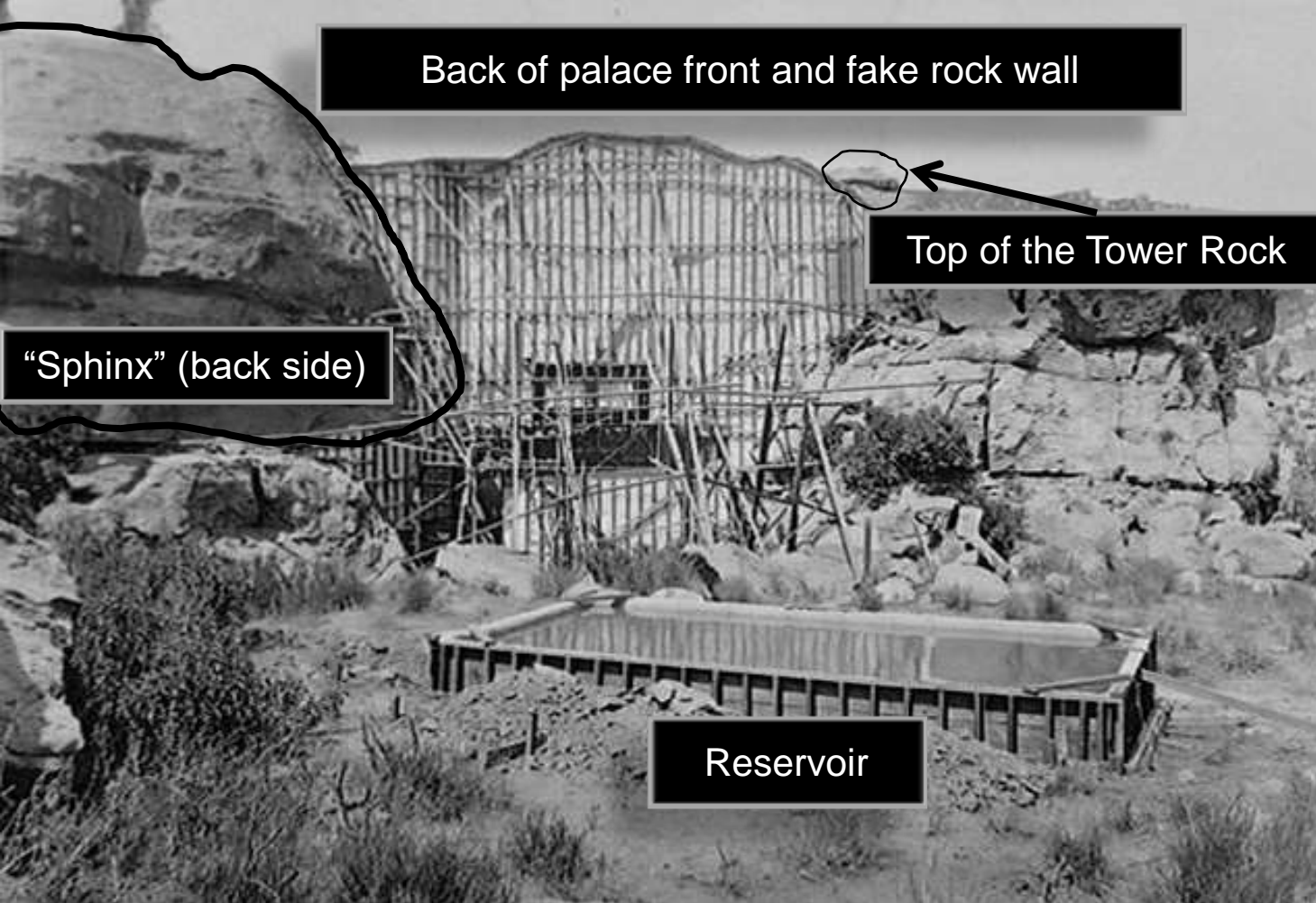


The "Sphinx"

This unique rock formation was featured in countless productions



The set of the big battle scene in "Man-Woman-Marriage" (photo taken in 1920)



Back of palace front and fake rock wall

Top of the Tower Rock

“Sphinx” (back side)

Reservoir

**Behind the  
scenes...**



Panoramic view of the great  
battle scene

Cowboys watching  
the great battle!



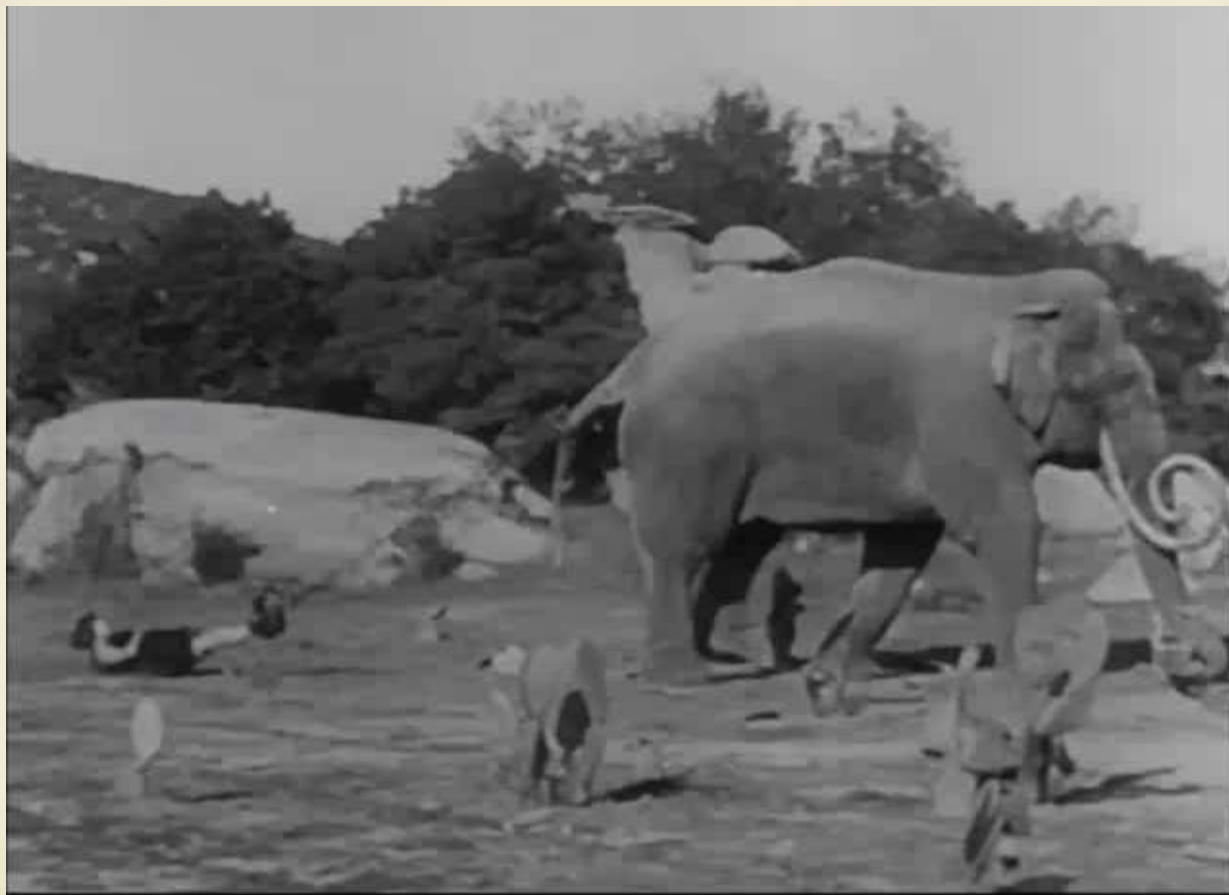


# Three Ages

- Released: September, 1923
- Director: Buster Keaton (also wrote & produced)
- Starring: Buster Keaton, Wallace Beery  
(*Margaret Leahy, Lillian Lawrence,  
Joe Roberts and Kewpie Morgan*)
- Distributor: Metro Pictures
- The film's badly decayed negative was rediscovered in 1954 and has since been restored



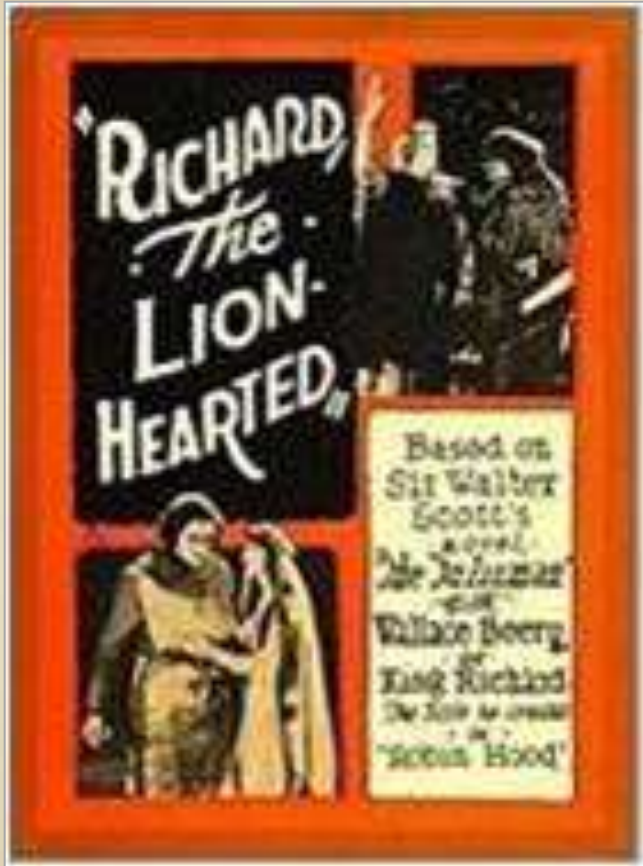
What's going on here?!



## The **Fake Cave House** in "Three Ages"



# Richard the Lion-Hearted



- Released: October, 1923
- Director: Chester Withey
- Starring: Wallace Beery, Charles K. Gerrard (Kathleen Clifford, Marguerite De La Motte, and John Bowers)
- Distributor: Allied Producers
- Sequel to Robin Hood released in 1922, starring Douglas Fairbanks
- It is not positively known whether the film currently survives, although it is considered to be a lost film

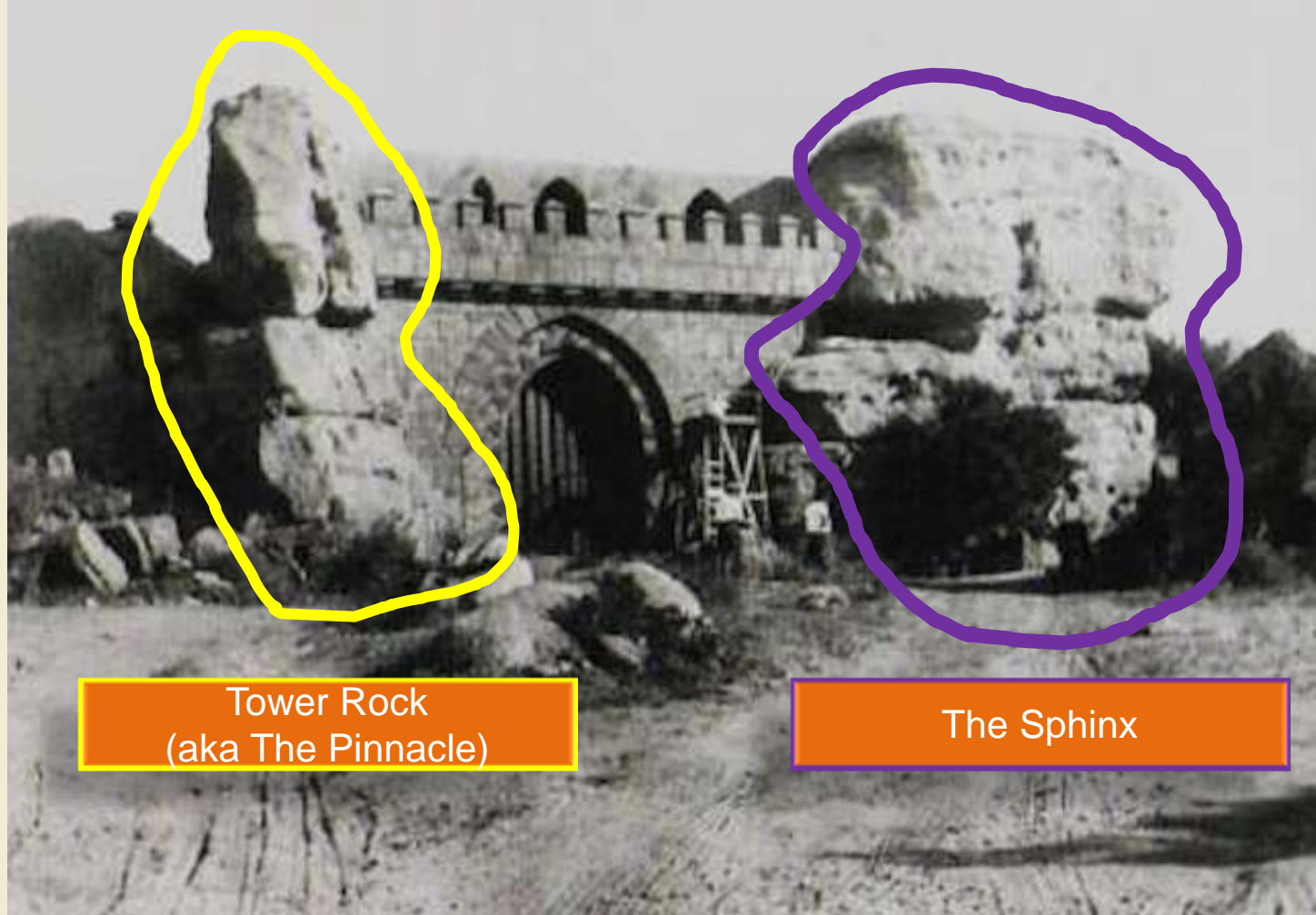


## Silent movie-era medieval castle in Garden of the Gods



"Richard the Lion-Hearted" (1923)

Fake castle  
front  
built for Richard  
the Lion-  
Hearted  
featuring the  
"Tower Rock"  
and Sphinx"



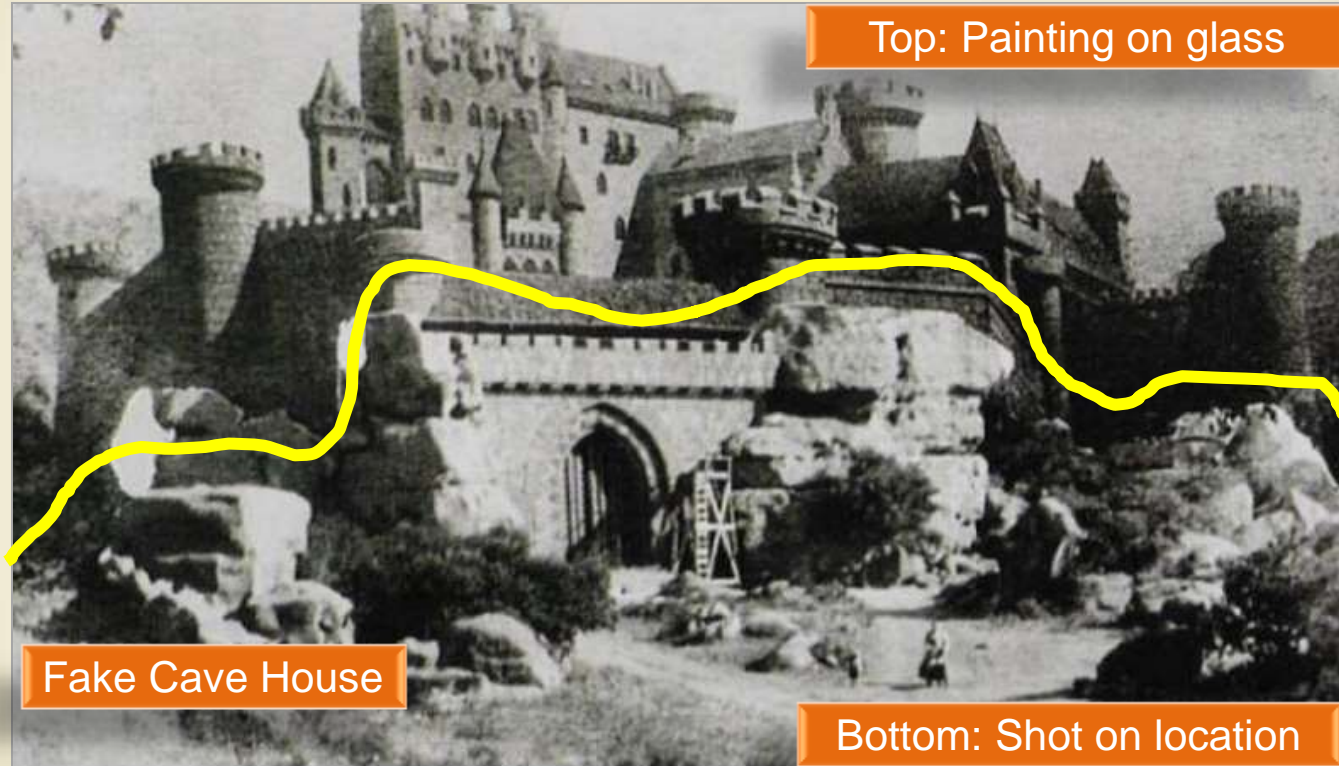
Tower Rock  
(aka The Pinnacle)

The Sphinx

Notice the distinctive group of small rocks highlighted here in 2015, on the ground below "Tower Rock"



## Silent movie-era castle in Garden of the Gods



"Richard the Lion-Hearted" (1923)





# Tell it to the Marines

- Released: December, 1926
- Director: George W. Hill
- Starring: Lon Chaney, William Haines and Eleanor Boardman
- Distributor: Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer
- It was the biggest box office success of Chaney's career and the second biggest moneymaker of 1926/1927
- Film is available in DVD format

"Tell it to the  
Marines"

**Interesting set  
features:**

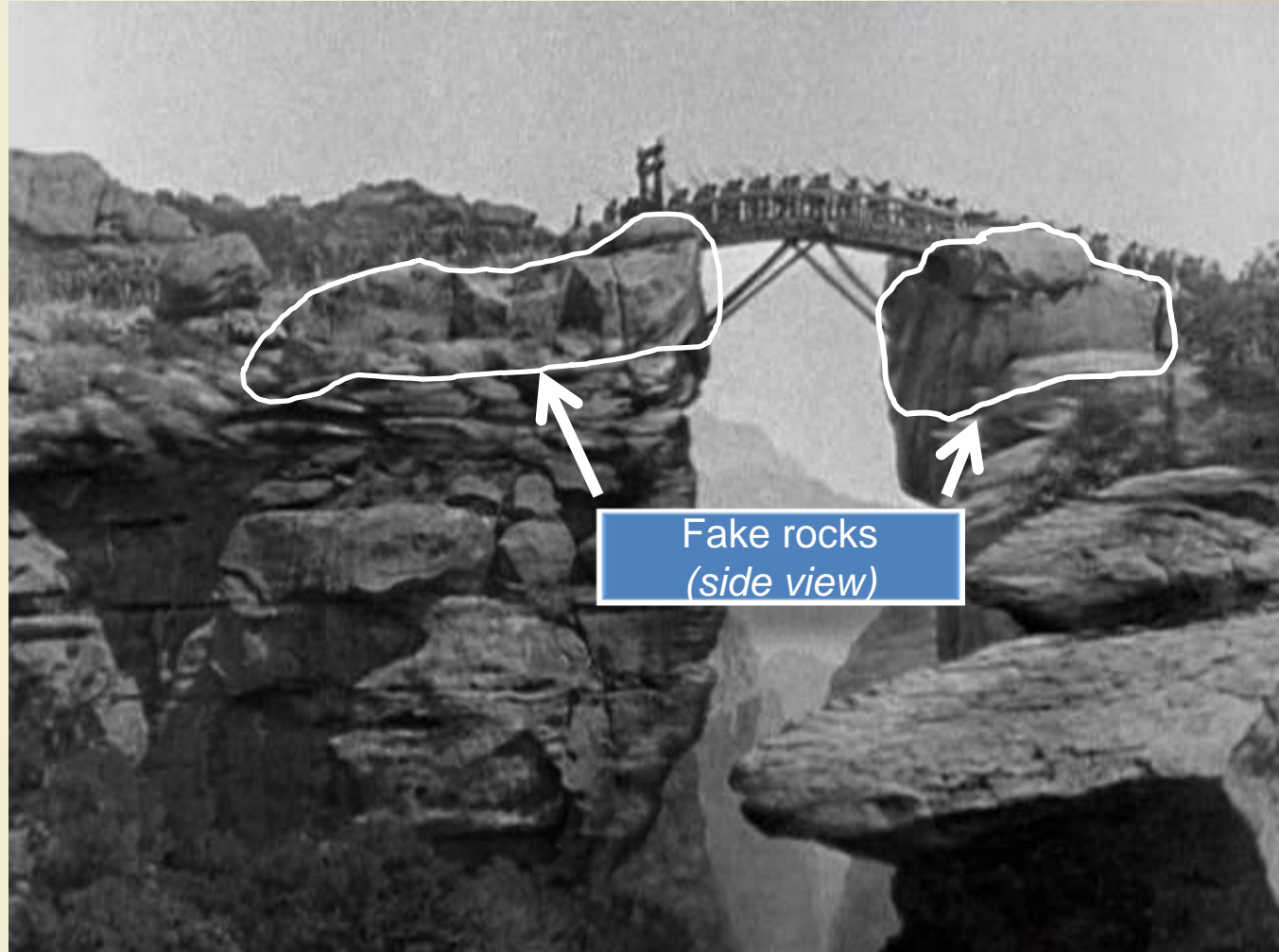
- Garden of the Gods
- Fake Cave House
- Fake Rocks
- Chinese bridge



# Fake rocks

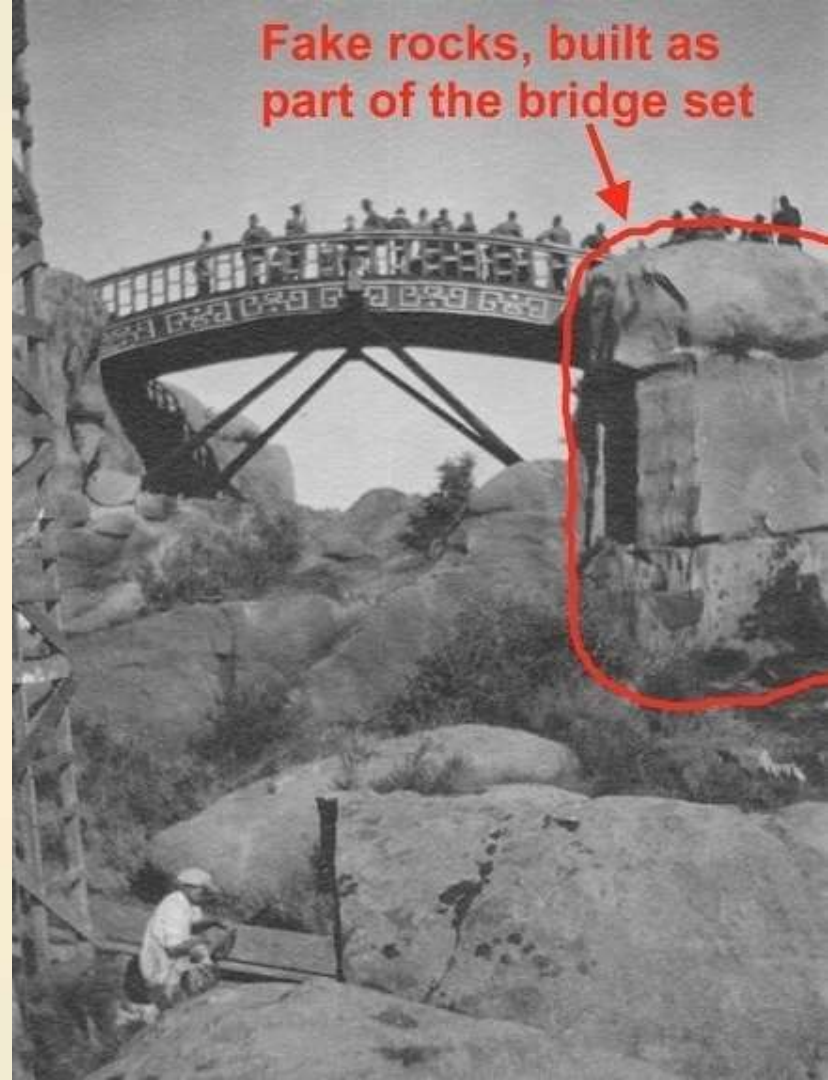


**Fake rocks were  
built at Iverson  
Ranch!**



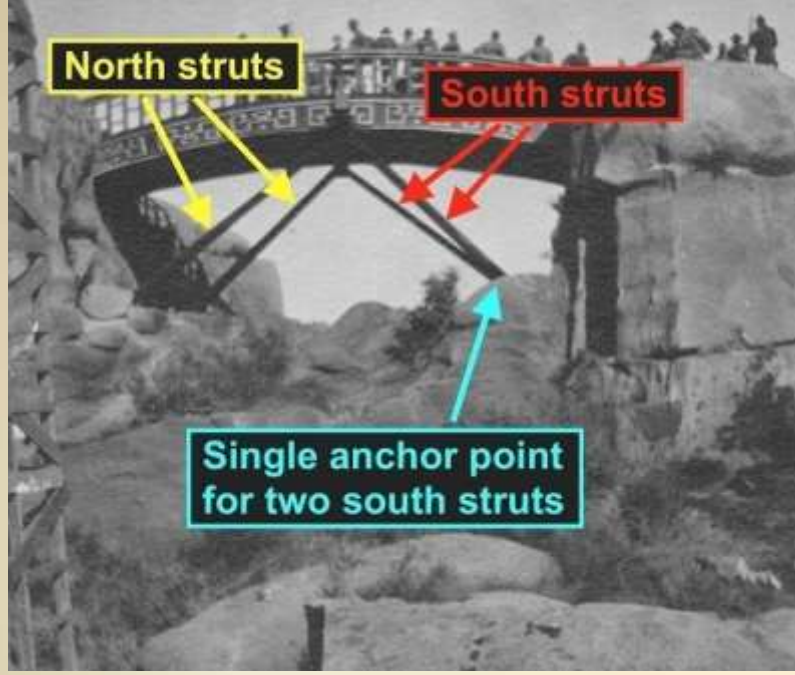


Fake rocks in the “real world”



# The Chinese bridge





Single anchor point for the two south struts  
of the Chinese bridge  
(identified as "Anchor Point G" in photo to the right)

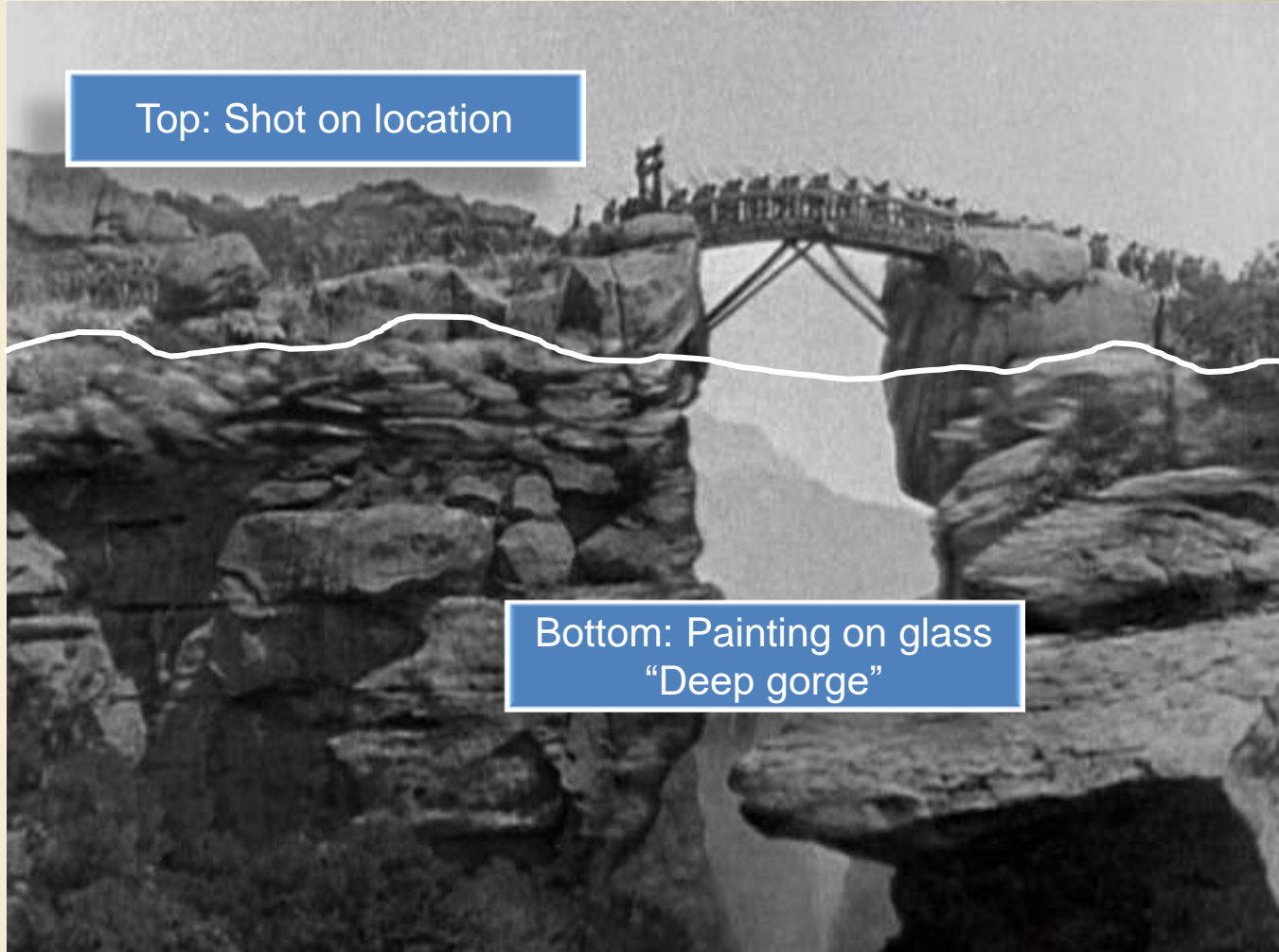


The Chinese bridge

## On location vs. painting

Top: Shot on location

Bottom: Painting on glass  
“Deep gorge”







# QUIET ON THE SET!

Motion Picture History at the  
Iverson Movie Location Ranch

by ROBERT G. SHERMAN



# **Special thanks to all contributors**

Dennis Liff, Iverson Movie Ranch Historian

*Presentation created by Charla DiCamillo, Corbridge Learning, LLC.  
in collaboration with Bob Sherman*