

## Willcox, Arizona: Birthplace of Rex Allen

by Jane Price, PassPorter Guest Contributor

Who is Rex Allen and what is his connection to Walt Disney and the Disney theme parks? Every Disney fan knows of Rex Allen's work, if not the man himself.

Rex Allen was a singing cowboy who was billed as "The Last of the Silver Screen Cowboys." His most famous recording was "Streets of Laredo," but to Disney fans of all stripes his most famous tune was "A Great, Big, Beautiful Tomorrow." Yes, Rex was the original voice of the father/host of GE's "Carousel of Progress" at the 1964-1965 New York World's Fair.

And that's not all he did for Walt Disney. His voice can be heard in 150 Disney movies and TV shows! He narrated virtually all of Walt's "True-Life Adventures" and lent his voice to other Disney cartoons and nature shows. Perhaps his most famous narrated movie was the non-Disney, animated "Charlotte's Web."

Willcox, Arizona is the hometown of Rex Allen and a museum dedicated to his life can be found in the historic part of town. Willcox is a small town in Southeast Arizona on I-10. There are two parts of the town, which follow the changing times. The old, historic part of town, which houses the museum, is located along the Union Pacific Railroad. The newer, commercial part of town is located north of the older part along the interstate highway.

Willcox is also the gateway to beautiful, but little known, [Chiricahua National Monument](#). The Chiricahua Mountains are but one of many mountain ranges rising up from the desert floor that surround the town. This mountainous national monument, with its varying temperate zones and unusual rock formations, is a destination in its own right and only adds to the reasons you should visit the area.

The western town of Willcox is friendly and fiercely proud of its heritage, especially its native son. In the historic part of town, in addition to the [Rex Allen Museum](#), there are other attractions: a railroad museum celebrating the railroad's role in westward expansion; a [Marty Robbins museum](#) (remember the song about the guy who fell in love, got shot, and died in the west Texas town of El Paso?); a movie theater; and a small, picturesque park. The park has a statue of Rex, plaques telling you about his life, including his connection to Walt Disney, and a burial marker for his beloved horse, Koko. All of these are within a few yards of each other, with convenient, nearby, free parking.

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Along this strip are also western wear shops where you can get boots and a cowboy hat to make you feel at home in the old west. Some places to get a hearty western meal are nearby as well.

If you make your visit in the late summer or fall, there are orchards north of the town where you can get fresh peaches or apples, or freshly pressed apple cider at Apple Annie's.

Around the first weekend in October, the town goes all out to celebrate Rex Allen Days. Western-style entertainment; a big, small-town parade involving the whole town, craft vendors, a western rodeo, and a small carnival are among the offerings during Rex Allen Days. It is the best time to visit.

Remember, Arizona is so much more than the famous Grand Canyon. Every Disney fan ought to pay a visit to Willcox and the Rex Allen Museum, because of his great contribution to Walt Disney's best works.

*About The Author: Jane Price is a first-time contributor to PassPorter News. Jane lives in southeast Arizona with her husband, three granddaughters, and the family parrots. She is an Annual Passholder for Disneyland as well as a Disney Vacation Club member.*

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