



## THE MUSEUM OF WESTERN FILM HISTORY

### Stagecoach from the Movie *Rawhide*



The Overland Stagecoach used in the 1951, 20<sup>th</sup> Century Fox film, *Stagecoach*, has made its last stop at the Museum of Western Film History. Donated to the Museum by Beverly & Jim Rogers, the Overland Stagecoach was found by Rogers in a Death Valley farm building and brought to Lone Pine to be restored.

At the turn of the century a number of Los Angeles carriage builders were situated in the immediate area surrounding South San Pedro St., and its carriage dealers were located one mile to the north along N. Los Angeles St. Among the better known dealers was, Zenz Brothers, at 242 S. San Pedro St. at Second St.

The Zenz Brothers produced a number of interesting vehicles as well, and remain well-known for their work for early Hollywood studios. The *Rawhide* Stagecoach was built for 20<sup>th</sup> century by Senz.

Founded in 1898 by brothers Frank and John Zenz the firm produced the vehicles used in Pasadena's annual Tournament of Roses chariot races which were held between 1904 and 1915. They also supplied the chariots used in Cecil B. DeMille's 1925 epic, *Ben Hur*, and produced many of the carriages and wagons used in Hollywood's early motion pictures.

The 1915 Los Angeles Directory lists the firm principals as John Zenz, J.B. Hawks and F.A. Martin. John Zenz remained at the helm of the firm bearing his name until it withdrew from business in 1934. In the late teens Hawks established his own truck equipment company, J.B. Hawk Sales, which was located at 665 N. Broadway in Los Angeles.

Based on early design work by Concord Coaches, the curved frame of the body gave it strength, and perhaps a little extra elbow room. Perfectly formed, fitted, and balanced wheels stood up to decades of drenching mountain storms and parching desert heat. The unique feature of these coaches was the suspension. Instead of steel springs, the coach body rested on leather "thoroughbraces," made of strips of thick bullhide. This feature spared the horses from jarring and gave the stagecoach a (sometimes) gentle rocking motion, leading Mark Twain to call it, "An imposing cradle on wheels" (*Roughing It*, 1870). Concord Coaches weighed about 2,500 pounds, and cost \$1,100 each, including leather and damask cloth interior. The *Rawhide* Stagecoach, was built by Zenz Brothers.

Read about the LA "Hollywood" Coachbuilders - @  
<http://www.coachbuilt.com/bui/s/standard/standard.htm>

Article also at end of this document – Pictures only on website above

## **Rawhide (1951)**



After the elaborate wardrobe demands of two recent films, *Prince of Foxes* (1949) and *The Black Rose* (1950), Tyrone Power was elated to have a simple western costume -- and almost no costume changes -- on *Rawhide* (1951). "I didn't have to worry about the crease in my pants when I sat down because there wasn't any crease," he later said.

A trim, taut, unjustly forgotten western from Twentieth Century-Fox, *Rawhide* was written as a loose western remake of the 1935 gangster film *Show Them No Mercy!*, which starred Cesar Romero and Rochelle Hudson. In the update, Tyrone Power and Susan

Hayward are held prisoner at a way station by an escaped murderer (Hugh Marlowe) and his three henchmen (Jack Elam, George Tobias, and recent Oscar winner Dean Jagger), who plan to rob a stagecoach the next morning of \$100,000 in gold. Power runs the station, and Hayward and her infant niece are simply travelers waiting for a different stagecoach, but the villains assume she and Power are married, and to stay alive, they decide to maintain the ruse. Jack Elam, who replaced the originally cast Everett Sloane, is especially memorable here as a leering, downright evil sociopath.



As written and directed by two A-list veterans -- Dudley Nichols and Henry Hathaway, respectively -- *Rawhide* garnered strong reviews. *The Hollywood Reporter* called it "exciting sagebrush entertainment" with a "compelling screenplay that combines the best features of the suspense drama and the orthodox western... Performances are first-rate." *Variety* praised the "considerable suspense and gripping action" but thought Power wasn't used effectively: "Despite a strongly-told story,...picture isn't the proper vehicle for Power, who is wasted in part and...is never permitted a chance as a hero."

For more information see - <https://www.wellsfargo.com/about/corporate/stagecoach/>