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NEWS RELEASE

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SILENT FILM EXHIBIT OPENS AT OLD COUNTY COURTHOUSE

Between 1910 and 1928, Orange County might well have been called “Hollywood’s back lot,” home to the production of hundreds of films, ranging from comic shorts and newsreels to full-length silent movies.

To celebrate Orange County’s pivotal role in creating this Hollywood magic, the Orange County Archives and OC Parks presents “On Location: Silent Films in Orange County.” The exhibit runs from May 6 through Aug. 5 at the 3rd Floor Museum Gallery at the Old County Courthouse, 211 W. Santa Ana Blvd., in downtown Santa Ana.

The county’s silent film history is vast, thanks to its proximity to Hollywood, its sweeping natural vistas and pristine beaches. “The Two Brothers,” filmed in 1910 at Mission San Juan Capistrano under the direction of legend D.W. Griffith, was the first motion picture filmed in Orange County. Movie greats Harold Lloyd, Buster Keaton and native Roscoe “Fatty” Arbuckle all appeared in movies here, as well as Gilbert Roland, Mary Pickford, Douglas Fairbanks, Lon Chaney and Rudolph Valentino.

The exhibit includes photographs, artifacts, props, movie posters, and replica costumes from Theda Bara’s epic “Cleopatra” and Douglas Fairbanks’ “The Mark of Zorro.”

Exhibit hours are 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. weekdays. The courthouse and the exhibit will be open for a special Saturday open house on June 4, from 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. A special screening of Buster Keaton’s “College,” beginning at 2 p.m., will be presented with accompaniment by Bill Campbell of the Orange County Theater Organ Society.

The Orange County Clerk-Recorder Department oversees the Archives and provides a variety of other public services, including recording documents related to real property transactions, maintaining and issuing copies of birth, death and marriage certificates, issuing marriage licenses and performing civil wedding ceremonies. The department also files Fictitious Business Names and Notary Public oaths and bonds, and processes passport applications.

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