

'Green Grass of Wyoming' to return to Skyview for 70th anniversary

The movie *Green Grass of Wyoming*, which had its thrilling climax filmed in Lancaster at the Fairfield County Fairgrounds, will celebrate the 70th anniversary of its release in 1948.

Also opening in 1948 was the beloved Skyview Cruise-In Theater in Lancaster, which continues to be a favorite destination for local moviegoers.

So what could be better than putting the two together?

To mark this milestone, FCHA has worked with Skyview owner Walt Effinger to offer a special screening of the film on May 24, almost exactly 70 years to the day of its original Lancaster premiere. As a way to celebrate, there will be no admission charge that night.

The movie is based on the book of the same name by Mary O'Hara, which was the last in a trilogy that included *My Friend Flicka* and *Thunderhead*. The climax of the film features a horse trotting race filmed at the local fairgrounds track. Many area residents served as extras.

According to an article in the May 5, 1947 *Eagle-Gazette*, "The movie prospectors climbed Mt. Pleasant for a bird's eye view of the grounds. In the opinion of Mr. Clark, the photography director, the scenic setting of the fairgrounds has no equal in the U.S."

A world premiere for the film was held in Lancaster on May 25, 1948, at both the Broad and Palace theatres following four days of celebration. There was a parade, gala balls, and more to mark this exciting occasion. Virginia Jessup was named Premier Queen, with Barbara Holcombe and Joan Thomas selected as attendants. Stars Charles Coburn, Peggy Cummins, and Martha Stewart attended the local screenings and many other events held in conjunction with the premiere.

The movie was held over for a second week at the Broad Theater, with matinees

and evening screenings for eager guests.

The Skyview officially opened on June 3, 1948, a week after the big *Green Grass* premiere. The movie shown that first weekend at the drive-in was *Sinbad the Sailor* starring Douglas Fairbanks, Jr. and Maureen O'Hara, with screenings nightly at 8:15 p.m. and 10:15 p.m. Adults paid 50 cents for admission, kids under 12 were free.

At that time, drive-ins typically had to wait until movies had been through regular theaters before getting them, so the film wasn't available to the Skyview until 1949. They closed out their season with special showings of the film on Nov. 13 and 14 that year. Start times were 7 p.m. and 9:40 p.m. and their advertisement called the film "Lancaster's own picture." Walt has an original advertising poster from the movie in their archives.

This showing on May 24th at the Skyview is open to the public, with the movie beginning at dusk. The drive-in holds 500 vehicles and will fill up quickly.

Special thanks go to Walt Effinger for agreeing to show the film for free so new generations can enjoy it. Please visit the snack bar that evening to help cover the theater's expenses.

See you at the Skyview!

Join us for
**the 70th Anniversary of
Green Grass of Wyoming
 and the historic
 Skyview Drive-in Theatre
 in Lancaster, Ohio
 May 24
 FREE!
 OPEN TO THE PUBLIC!**

The show begins at dusk

