

Sight & Sound

By Ernest Kreiling

HOLLYWOOD — Inside one of the popular saloons of Medicine Bow, Wyo., a group of dusty cowboys were playing poker. Outside ladies in their turn-of-the-century dresses were strolling up and down the street, stopping occasionally to chat with friends. And on the porches of the hotels and homes men were dozing in rocking chairs to seek respite from the warm summer sun. Horse-drawn buggies and wagons were circulating lazily around the town square, and now and then a solitary cowboy rode into town.

If it hadn't been for the presence of cameras and sport-shirted crews, the cry, "Quiet on the set! Rehearsal!" would have been a startling anomaly in this peaceful western town of around 1900.

But with this sharp command some 40 actors and extras sprang to life as the background of scenes in NBC's *The Virginian*, the 90-minute weekly color series to take the air in September.

BEFORE ordering a studio limousine to take me several miles across the Revue lot in Universal City to the set of *The Virginian*, Charles Marquis Warren, the series' executive producer, had been telling me about some of the opportunities and problems being posed by the most ambitious and costly program in the history of network television.

"Although we have an extra 30 minutes for the story, it's been hard for TV writers used to working on hour programs to use the extra time to the best advantage. Too many of the scripts have 'get nowhere scenes,' scenes that add little to the story or the personalities but which hinder the forward movement of the plot," he said.

OWEN WISTER'S novel, *The Virginian*, upon which the series is based, was the prototype of the American western as it's evolved since 1902. This alone raises some unique problems, according to Warren, who as a novelist has earned a reputation as a leading authority on the frontier west.

"For example, the phrase, 'Smile when you say that' came originally from this novel. Today we couldn't possibly use it or the dozens of other phrases and incidents in the book which have since become cliches."

But there's more than avoidance of cliches to set the *Virginian* apart from other westerns. The series is set near the turn of the century when the old and wild west were fading away. The Medicine Bow, Wyo., of Hollywood has gas street lights, some brick buildings, paved sidewalks and, believe it or not, as many women as men. There's a distinct aura of the approaching twentieth century, including foot pedaled sewing machines.

HISTORICALLY, according to Warren, this offers story material not possible in earlier westerns, such as one about a boy leaving to join Teddy Roosevelt's Rough Riders.

"But good stories, of whatever period, have to deal honestly with real human values," Warren observed. "We're trying to do just that. But in addition, we have an opportunity to work with the new ideas and new outlooks that were developing on the American scene in this period that's relatively unfamiliar to many people."

As the warm afternoon drew on, the huge cast of *The Virginian* continued shooting scene after scene. Although most of them were close-ups of the star, James Drury, and Doug McClure, the streets of Medicine Bow in the background for a full block were living tableaux periodically coming to life on the director's cue. Lee J. Cobb, co-starring as Judge Henry in the series, dozed quietly in a canvas-back chair awaiting his next call.

AS THE SUN slipped behind the Hollywood Hills I retreated to the studio limousine for the ride across the deserted Dis-

Report Shows No Fallout in Area

The Los Angeles County Atomic Energy Development and Radiation Protection Committee reported this week that no detectable fallout or radiation hazards are present in the county as a result of recent Pacific Ocean and Nevada tests.

K. H. Sutherland, County Health Officer, is chairman of the committee.

neyland that is the Revue Ranch. Back in the twentieth century, I stepped across the street to a plush, air-conditioned saloon for a cool beer. I drank a toast to the success of *The Virginian*, a monumental undertaking that might well make Wagon Train as obsolete as Hopalong Cassidy.

Then I had a second, a toast to Charles Marquis Warren who, until that happens, still occupies the hottest seat in Hollywood.

Registration Deadline Set At Harbor JC

Students wishing to take advantage of priority registration at Harbor College must file ap-

plications with the office of admissions by Friday, Aug. 17. Registration is scheduled for

Aug. 28 through Aug. 30 from 6 to 8 p.m.

Students who want a priority permit must file an application for admission and a permit request with the college prior to registration to be eligible for a priority date.

All new students in both evening and day divisions must take the entrance-guidance test before receiving a permit to register.

Additional information may be obtained by calling the college at TE 3-8581, or by visiting the campus, 1111 Figueroa Place.

Two Firemen Get Promoted

Two Torrance area residents have been promoted to captain in the Los Angeles City Fire Department.

They are Richard W. Berry, 1729 W. 238th St., and Francis J. Dorner of 5504 Arvada St., both engineers in the department.

Capt. Berry has been with the department 10 years. His first command assignment is at

Engine Company 44 at 929 Cypress Ave. in Los Angeles. He resides here with his wife, Martha, and two children, Ronald and Robert.

Capt. Dorner has been with the department six years. He has been assigned to Engine 69 at 15216 Sunset Blvd., Pacific Palisades. He resides here with his wife, Barbara, and two children, Lisa and Mary Beth.

Pet Show Slated at Peck Park

Aug. 17 has been set as the date for the annual Peck Park Pet Show. Festivities and judging will get under way at 1 p.m.

The show is open to all boys and girls with pets. Judging will be in five categories. Categories include dogs, cats, birds, aquatics, and miscellaneous.

Special features include a pet fashion show in which prizes will be awarded. A German Shepherd will perform as

part of the annual event. Prizes are donated by the San Pedro Optimist Club.

Sponsoring this year's show is the Los Angeles City Parks and Recreation Department.

Signals Get Board Approval

Allocation of \$12,092 for the installation of pedestrian signals at major intersections in the Carson area was approved yesterday.

"Walk - Don't Walk" signs are to be installed at Vermont

Avenue and 208th Street. Other existing signals are to be modified.

The work will be done by the County Road Department as soon as pending projects are completed.




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