

The Real McCoys

On ABC from 1957 to 1962 at 8:30PM on Thursdays

On CBS from 1962 to 1963 at 9:00PM on Sundays

Co-produced by Danny Thomas's Marterto (Marlo - Terry - Tony) Productions in association with Walter Brennan and Irving Pincus's Westgate Company.

The Real McCoys concerns the lives of a family originally from the Appalachian Mountains of West Virginia, from a fictional place named Smokey Corners. The McCoys relocated to California to live and work on a farm they inherited from their late uncle, Ben McCoy. The family consists of Grandpa Amos McCoy (Walter Brennan), his grandson Luke (Richard Crenna), Luke's new wife Kate (Kathleen Nolan), Luke's teenage sister Tallahassie* "Hassie" (Lydia Reed) and his 11-year-old brother "Little Luke" (Michael Winkelman). Pepino (Tony Martinez) was a farmworker who worked for Ben as his "foreman" on the property. In the episode broadcast on January 8, 1962, Pepino becomes an American citizen and assumes the surname "McCoy."

*Tallahassie - According to Amos McCoy, "We had a cousin one time come through and he sent us post card and we kind a liked the name."

Irving Pincus wanted Walter Brennan to play the role of Amos McCoy. Brennan was tied up on a role in another picture at the time of casting. Will Geer was considered for the role, but Pincus decided to wait until Brennan was available.

At their first meeting, Pepino asked Luke how did two brothers wind up with the same name. Luke said, "Well you see in the

excitement of having him, Ma and Pa plum forgot they already had me.”

The pilot episode was filmed just before Christmas in 1956 for a cost of \$85,000 .

Most of the filming was done on the Desilu-Culver City back lot and on sound stage 14.

When the series moved from ABC to CBS for its sixth and final season, some of the continuing characters were dropped. Kathy Nolan quit the series due to a contract dispute and was written out of the remaining scripts. Her character of Kate died. Luke’s little brother Little Luke was packed off to boarding school and was not seen again. Hassie left the show after the opening scene in episode one of season six. Walter Brennan did not appear in the final 11 episodes of the series.

Luke was a widower and many of the stories concerned Grandpa trying to find him a new wife. This nearly succeeded when Luke met Louise Howard, portrayed by Janet De Gore, a widow with a young son, Greg, played by Butch Patrick, later of CBS's series The Munsters.

In Season 6, (Episode - The Auction) Luke and Pepino walk past an auction house. Even though Luke is a widower in the story, he wants to go in and “find something for Kate’s birthday.”

Walter Brennan - was born in Swampscotch, Massachusetts in 1894. While attending college in Cambridge, Massachusetts, studying to be an engineer, Brennan became interested in theatre

and appeared in school plays. He worked some in vaudeville and also held various jobs such as a bank clerk and lumberjack. He toured with small musical comedy companies before entering the military in 1917. During the war, he became a victim of an enemy gas attack. Some say this caused his unique vocal quality. After World War I, he went to Guatemala to raise pineapples and then moved to Los Angeles, where he speculated in real estate. He entered pictures as an extra beginning in 1923, then did some work as a stuntman. One of his stunts was driving a car off a 40 foot drop on Santa Monica pier for \$75. With his wiry frame, thinning hair, lost teeth after being g kicked by a horse and weary expression, which made him look older than he really was, he eventually landed supporting roles in numerous features and short subjects between 1927 and 1938. The only actor to win three Best Supporting Actor Oscar awards. The first of his three Oscars was for his role in *Come and Get it* (1936), which was the first Best Supporting Oscar ever awarded. He would win the award again in 1938 in *Kentucky* and once again in 1940 in a particularly vivid performance as Judge Roy Bean in *The Westerner*. He was also nominated for his performance in *Sergeant York* (1941). Brennan displayed his range in dozens of roles, most effectively in Westerns. He appeared with John Wayne in *Red River* (1948) and *Río Bravo* (1959) and was the memorable Old Man Clanton in *My Darling Clementine* (1946). Among his more than 100 feature films were *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* (1938), *The Story of Vernon and Irene Castle* (1939), *Meet John Doe* (1941), *The Pride of the Yankees* (1942), *To Have and Have Not* (1944), *Bad Day at Black Rock* (1955), *How the West was Won* (1962) and *The Gnome Mobile* (1967). Brennan also starred in three TV series, including *The Real McCoys*, which ran for six seasons, *Tycoon* and *The Guns of Will Sonnett*. He

even had a hit record, the spoken/sung, "Old Rivers", which first charted on April 7, 1962, spent 11 weeks on the Billboard charts, and peaked at number 5. This led to several albums of similar material and three other top 100 singles.

During the first few episodes of the *The Real McCoys*, Grandpa Amos did not limp.

Richard Crenna - grew up in small hotels in downtown Los Angeles. His mother was an innkeeper and his father was a pharmacist. He learned about acting through observation and mimicking other people. His acting career began at the age of eleven in radio. He was considering a move to New York for a career on the stage when *The Real McCoys* came along.

Richard Crenna was the only cast member to appear in all 225 episodes. He was just 32 years-younger than his on-screen grandfather, Walter Brennan. Many TV viewers had previously known Richard Crenna as the squeaky-voiced high school student Walter Denton on "*Our Miss Brooks* (1952)," when this series premiered they were quite surprised hearing his natural, rich, smoke-burnished voice. Richard Crenna was 18 years-older than Lydia Reed and 20 years-older than Michael Winkelman, whom both played his siblings.

In Season 6, Richard was billed as Dick Crenna.

Crenna directed 14 episodes of this series from 1961 to 1963.

Kathy Nolan (Kate McCoy) - grew up on a showboat on the Mississippi River making her acting debut at the age of thirteen months. At the age of 16, she took a bus to New York to pursue her ambitions.

During her audition for the role of Kate McCoy, Kathy felt very nervous and intimidated by Walter Brennan. After hearing her accent as "Kate", Brennan was very pleased and supportive of her.

On February 23, 1961, Kathy Nolan (Kate McCoy) was riding a horse bareback when she slid off the horse. The crew was forced to continue filming. Bushes were placed to surround Kathy as filming continued until the ambulance arrived. She then missed four months of work and was "in and out of the hospital many times" before returning to the series to perform in the episode broadcast on June 15, 1961. **Eva Norde** appeared as Helga in five episodes during Kathy Nolan's absence.

In her final film at the age of 83, she appeared (billed as Kathleen Nolan) with Burt Reynolds in *The Last Movie Star*, a story about an aging former movie star who is forced to face the reality that his glory days are behind him. On its surface, the film is a tale about faded fame. At its core, it's a universal story about growing old.

Kathleen Nolan in Broadway version on TV on March 7, 1955

With a score by Carolyn Leigh and Morris (Moose) Charlap along with Betty Comden, Adolph Green and Jule Syne for extra measure, the production was brilliantly adapted and directed by Jerome Robbins for a limited run on Broadway to be followed by a "live" broadcast on N.B.C. That evening, March 7, 1955, Peter Pan became not only a television tradition for baby boomers but also a legendary event epitomizing the best of the golden age of Broadway adapted for the golden age of television.

Tony Martinez (Pepino Garcia) - was born in Puerto Rico. He played five instruments and had his own musical group called "Tony Martinez and His Mambo" in New York City. Martinez began

his film and television career, getting small roles, when he was studying at the Pasadena Playhouse.

He was a popular band leader when Norman and Irving Pincus spotted him performing at the Crescendo night club. After his time with the *The Real McCoys*, he would go on to play the part of Sancho Panza in 2,245 performances in *Man Of La Mancha* for more than twenty years. Martinez retired from acting in 2000.

Martinez guest-starred in a few television programs, including, *The Man from U.N.C.L.E.*, *F Troop* and *My Favorite Martian*.

Lydia Reed (Tallahassee "Hassie" McCoy) - Reed's first performances were in 1952 episodes of two NBC anthology series, *Hallmark Hall of Fame* and *Robert Montgomery Presents*. She also appeared in *High Society* (1956) where she played Grace Kelly's younger sister. Her 145th and final appearance in *The Real McCoys* was in the opening scene of the first episode of season 6. Hassie left home to attend college. Her last role after Hassie McCoy was as Betsy Beecher in a horror film *The Vampire* in 1957.

She left show business for good and has been married to Mario Rodolfo Travaglini since January 16, 1967. Reed lives in the San Fernando Valley in southern California.

Michael Winkleman (Little Luke) - was most noted as a child performer appearing as 'Little Luke' on the ABC television series, "The Real McCoys" 1957 to 1963. His other TV credits included *Wagon Train*, *Studio 57*, *Lassie*, *Mike Hammer* and *The Munsters*. For films, he appeared in *The Big Knife* (1955), *Bobby Ware Is Missing* (1955), *Sincerely Yours* (1955) and *Indian*

Fighter (1955). After *The Real McCoys*, Winkelman found work in two other Danny Thomas-produced TV sitcoms, *The Danny Thomas Show* and *The Joey Bishop Show*, where he portrayed a fellow fraternity pledge along with "Rusty Williams" (Rusty Hamer) in a recurring crossover role from *The Danny Thomas Show*.

After serving in the United States Navy during the Vietnam War, he was a greens keeper at Universal Studios, California. He is also a member of the Young Hollywood Hall of Fame.

Episode Viewed: **Back To West Virginnny** - aired July 27, 1961

Jane Darwell (Grandma McCoy) - Darwell was 82 years old when she made this appearance on *The Real McCoys*. She had her stage debut at the age of 33 and was nearly 34 years old in 1913 when she began her acting career in silent films. Darwell won the Best Supporting Actress Academy Award for her role as Ma Joad in *The Grapes Of Wrath*. At the express request of Walt Disney, her final appearance was in *Mary Poppins* as the Bird Woman (1964). Darwell made over 200 films throughout her career.

Pat Buttram - (Cousin Carl) - had a long and happy association with the popular "National Barn Dance" radio program. During those years Pat met Gene Autry, who took a liking to him and brought him to Hollywood to replace Smiley Burnette.

His big television break came in 1965 with the role of "Mr. Haney" in the long-running CBS comedy *Green Acres*. Throughout his career Buttram was in constant demand as a toastmaster and after-dinner speaker.

Quotes From Pat Buttram:

About Milton Berle - "You know, Milton recently switched from comedy to drama. Unfortunately, it happened while he was still doing comedy."

About Mae West - "Do you realize that she went through her life without once having a man say to her, "You remind me of my mother"?"

Henry Jones - (Jed McCoy) - had a long and varied career on Broadway, in movies and television. His roles were a wide range which included ministers, judges and janitors, usually as a dark and frightening character. His television career which began own 1950, included over 150 appearances. Some of those television programs included *Alfred Hitchcock Presents*, *Thriller*, *The Man From U.N.C.L.E.*, *Mod Squad* and *Gunsmoke*.

Episode Viewed: **The McCoy Hex** - aired April 7, 1963

Andy Clyde (George MacMichael) - was born in Scotland in 1892. He first came to the United States on tour in the Graham Moffat Players, playing the part of Bob Dewar in a vaudeville

comedy sketch depicting tenement life in Glasgow called *The Concealed Bed*.

At the invitation of his close friend James Finlayson, Clyde joined producer Mack Sennett's roster of comedians in the 1920's.

At the age of 32, Clyde mastered the "old man" characterization in his short comedies in which he starred longer than any other actor for 32 years from 1924 to 1956.

When Columbia Pictures launched its short subject department in 1934. Andy Clyde was one of the first comedy stars signed by producer Jules White. Clyde's long series of Columbia Pictures comedies continued until 1956. He outlasted every comedian on the Columbia payroll except The Three Stooges. Clyde also kept busy as a character actor in feature films. He is well remembered for his roles as a comic sidekick, usually teaming with William Boyd in the Hopalong Cassidy series, as "California Carlson".

Andy Clyde became a naturalized United States citizen on September 24, 1943.

On television, Clyde has guest starring roles on *The People's Choice*, *Soldiers of Fortune*, *My Little Margie*, *The Bob Cummings Show*, and *Lock Up*.

On February 8, 1960, Andy Clyde received a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame at 6758 Hollywood Boulevard, for his contribution to the motion pictures industry.

On an interview for a part in a film, Andy was asked "Can you ride a Brahma bull?" Clyde's response was "How do you think I got here?"

Aneta Corsaut - will always be best remembered as Helen Crump on *The Andy Griffith Show*. Before those days, she was the heroine in *The Blob* with Steve McQueen in 1958.

After her days in Mayberry, Aneta could be on such programs as *Emergency!*, *House Calls*, *Days Of Our Lives* and *Matlock* with Andy Griffith.

Theme Song: The Real McCoys Lyrics

Want you to meet the family that's known as the real McCoys /
From West Vir-gi-nee they came to stay in sunny Cal-i-for-ni-ay /
'Ole Grandpappy Amos and the girls and boys of the family known
as The Real McCoys

What a housekeeper Kate is, she's doin' what she enjoys / No gal
can beat her when it come to looks and the same can be said
'bout the way she cooks for / Grandpappy Amos and the girls and
boys of the family known as The Real McCoys

Livin' as good folks should live and happy as kids with toys / 'Ole
Grandpappy Amos is the head of the clan, he roars like a lion but
he's gentle as a lamb / His grandson Luke keeps a beamin' with
joy since he made Miss Kate Missus Luke Mccoy

Sharing each other's sorrows, enjoyin' each others joys / Like all
other families they quarrel and fuss but it ain't never serious
with / Grandpappy Amos and the girls and boys of the family
known as The Real McCoys

The episode "The Tycoon" (August 30, 1960) four years later coincidentally became the title of Brennan's next ABC sitcom, *The Tycoon*, with his co-actor Van Williams.

Barbara Stanwyck made a cameo appearance in the 1959 episode, "The McCoys Go To Hollywood", which also features Dorothy Provine and a glimpse of the Desilu Studios, where the series was filmed.

REFERENCES

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Heroes Centre website
Wikipedia
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