Southern Exposure: The Great Smoky Mountain Film Festival

Event information:
The Historic Tennessee Theatre
604 South Gay Street
Knoxville, Tennessee, 37902

Admission:
12:00 PM – 5:00 PM (No admission fee)
6:00 PM – 9:00 PM: Ticketed event - $9.00 for adults, $7.00 for Senior Citizens and Children

Come join us for a cinematic celebration of the Great Smoky Mountains! In conjunction with the East Tennessee Historical Society's 2015 East Tennessee History Fair, the Knox County Public Library's Tennessee Archive of Moving Image and Sound and the historic Tennessee Theatre will host a day of film screenings featuring rare home movies and feature films focusing on the history of the Smoky Mountains.

Schedule of events and descriptions:

12:00 PM (Opener):
Familiar, favorite tunes performed by Dr. Bill Snyder on the Tennessee Theatre’s mighty Wurlitzer organ!

12:20 PM:
The Motion Picture Films of Jim Thompson, 1915-1950
Long revered as one of Knoxville’s preeminent commercial photographers, Jim Thompson also shot motion pictures, capturing Knoxville on celluloid as early as 1915! Included in the program are home movies, a 1930s-era UT Vols football game, and clips featuring the trailblazing members of the original Smoky Mountains Hiking Club during the 1920s.
1:30 PM:
Picturing the Smokies: Vintage Views of the Great Smoky Mountains National Park, 1920s-1960s
Heartland Series host Bill Landry takes a trip back through time with a program of historic images of the Great Smoky Mountains as seen through the lens of home moviemakers during the pre-video era.

The program consists of amateur footage shot by locals, including Jack Huff, Archie Campbell, and others. Watch out for rare glimpses of Wiley Oakley, the Walker cabin, early views of Gatlinburg, President Franklin D. Roosevelt’s 1940 dedication ceremony, the Pi Beta Phi School, and more!

2:45 PM:
From the Vaults: The Heartland Series
The Rolling Store (WBIR-TV)
We open up the vaults with a program of unique footage from the McClung Historical Collection’s WBIR-TV Heartland Series Archive, featuring uncut outtakes, interviews, and raw footage from the classic 1989 episode “The Rolling Store”.

Join Bill Landry and the Heartland television crew as they capture and document the last of a breed - a grocery store on wheels, travelling throughout the upper-East Tennessee region, dispensing groceries to customers located high within the mountainous areas of East Tennessee.

3:45 PM – 5:00 PM:
Sounds and Silents: Found Footage and Mountain Melodies
An eclectic program of forgotten footage pulled from the vaults of the Tennessee Archive of Moving Image and Sound! These unique orphaned silent films feature old time and ambient musical scores performed live onstage by local musicians.

The program includes:

Silent Town
Music accompaniment by Todd Steed
A diverse compilation of lost film clips covering moonshine busts, old downtown Knoxville, forgotten tourist attractions, and more!
Our Southern Mountaineers / In the Moonshine Country (Paramount-Bray, 1918)
Music accompaniment by Dave Ball
Filmed nearly a century ago, these short newsreels feature some of the earliest known moving images of the Appalachian people.

A Forgotten Smokey Mountain Road Trip, circa 1938
Music accompaniment by The Swill Sippers
This orphaned home movie documents a road trip through the Smokey Mountains. The unknown cameraman made stops along the way, capturing the mountain people, Native Americans, and sparkling scenery on 16mm Kodachrome film.

Intermission

7:00 PM:
Lost Masterpiece: Karl Brown’s Stark Love (2014)
Introduction by Dr. John White

Filmmaker and historian John White’s recent documentary captures the history surrounding the production of Stark Love, a 1927 Paramount release. Lost Masterpiece details White’s efforts to track down the descendants of the actors and filmmakers behind this remarkable piece of cinematic and regional history.

Stark Love (Paramount, 1927)
Introduction by Jack Neely, The Knoxville Mercury
Music accompaniment by Rex Ward on the Wurlitzer organ

Included in 2009 to the National Film Registry by the Library of Congress for being “culturally, historically or aesthetically” significant, this 1927 silent classic was lost for decades before turning up in a European archive.

Stark Love, was cast almost exclusively with amateur actors and filmed entirely in the Great Smoky Mountains, near Robbinsville, North Carolina. Helen Mundy, a Knoxville teenager discovered in a locale drugstore by Paramount talent scouts, gives a riveting performance as a free-spirited mountain girl destined to escape the confining traditions of life in the hills.
of Appalachia. The male lead in the film was Forrest James, father of Fob James, 48th governor of Alabama.

Directed by pioneering filmmaker Karl Brown, Stark Love was a critical success when released in 1927, lauded for its realism and documentary-style approach to filmmaking. The film, however, performed poorly at the box office, and promptly disappeared.

Stark Love has stood the test of time, and is now considered a classic of its era when viewed by modern audiences. Recently restored, a new 35mm motion picture preservation print of Stark Love has been provided for this screening by the Museum of Modern Art.

Southern Exposure: The Great Smoky Mountain Film Festival is produced through a partnership by the following organizations, including:

- Calvin M. McClung Historical Collection
- East Tennessee Historical Society
- Friends of the Knox County Public Library
- Historic Tennessee Theatre Foundation
- Knox County Public Library
- Museum of Modern Art
- Tennessee Archive of Moving Image and Sound
- WBIR-TV