

# Drive-in delivered Hollywood stars by starlight

I was 5 or 6 years old when my parents took me to the Campbellsville Drive-In Theater to see Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs.

While older kids had probably begun going to Campbellsville's two movie theaters – the Alhambra and Cozy theaters – that was an experience I had yet to enjoy.

Up until that day, all I knew was television. In those days, we were limited to NBC and CBS, and I was thrilled with that. Houses all up and down the street had talk wooden poles next to their house that shouldered antennas above the rooftops.

Black and white TV was all I knew, and like so many other kids, I jumped out of bed on Saturday mornings to consume four hours of cartoons and the adventures of Sky King and the Lone Ranger. It would be a few years later that I learned about ABC being available in our area. Same thing about color TVs.

And who remembers our TV stations signing off at midnight to the sound of the national anthem?

The idea of going to a drive-in theater with my parents was exciting, even though I already knew the plot and how it would end.

I must say that I was ill-

prepared to see that awful stepmother on such a huge screen ... and I remember hiding in the back seat more than a few times that night. While it would be more than several years before I went again to a drive-in theater, it provided Campbellsville new entertainment without leaving the county.



VIRGINIA GRAVES

It was in late March of 1950 when Campbellsville heard the good news that a drive-in theater soon would be erected. According to newspaper reports, men from Marion County had filed corporation papers at the Taylor County Clerk's office. The proposed drive-in would be located one-and-a-half miles from town on the Columbia highway.

George Kemp, R.H. Whitlock and B.E. Hickerson were listed as those who had filed papers under the name of Moonbeam Theater Company. The proposed site was to be on the northwest side of the highway on the George Kemp subdivision.

Sadly, the drive-in didn't happen as soon as expected. The initial permit had been refused at a hearing in the Taylor County Court. But finally, in late September, the News-Journal announced the permit authorizing the



The Campbellsville Drive-In opened in 1951 and provided entertainment for more than three decades.

erection of a drive-in theater for Campbellsville finally had been granted to Henry Whitlock, Conway Whitlock, George Kemp and B.E. Hickerson by Circuit Judge W.H. Spragens.

One week later, a News-Journal headline publicized that the drive-in would be ready for business in early spring of 1951. According to information provided by Moonbeam Theater Corporation, construction would begin in January or February and would take about six weeks for completion.

It would be styled similarly to the new Bel Vista Drive-In at Springfield and would accommodate 420 cars. Individual car speakers would be provided for patrons as well as walk-in seats for those who wished to leave their car at home and walk to the theater.

Spring of 1951 came and went. Finally, the Aug. 2 News-Journal reported that the Campbellsville Drive-In The-

ater had opened the previous Thursday, July 26, with a "full program of movies."

It was announced that shows would begin at 8 p.m. from Sunday to Friday and at 7:30 and 9 p.m. Saturdays. The theater had installed 300 in-car speakers and a concession stand. According to the owners, plans called for complete landscaping of the grounds and a playground. Children under 12 years of age would be admitted free.

From that point on, the "Campbellsville Drive-In Theater" advertised in the News-Journal next to the Alhambra and Cozy theaters, Lebanon's Arista and Drive-In theater, and occasionally the Springfield theater. Generally, Campbellsville's drive-in changed movies every other day, with "cartoons and first run news" shown before each picture.

In that the News-Journal published on Thursdays like it does today, the drive-in's first newspaper ad on Aug. 9, promoted these movies: Thursday and Friday "Panhandle" starring

Rod Cameron; Saturday, "Texan Meets Calamity Jane" starring James Ellison; Sunday and Monday was "Cover Girl" with Rita Hayworth and Gene Kelly; and Tuesday and Wednesday, "Two Weeks to Live" starring comedians Lum and Abner popular from their radio show portraying the adventures of two shopkeepers in Pine Ridge, Arkansas.

In September of 1957, J.A. Ball, owner of the Springfield theater, bought the Campbellsville Drive-In from then owners Henry Whitlock and George Kemp of Marion County and R.L. Smith and Conway Whitlock of Campbellsville.

Talk to anyone in Campbellsville who grew-up between the 1950s and '80s and everyone has a nostalgic story or two about going to the drive-in. Cars often rolled in packed with more friends than the car would seat comfortably. But then again, that wasn't the



This newspaper ad from Aug. 23, 1951, showed the varied schedule of films displayed during the early days of the local drive-in theater.

point. In the summertime, nights were comfortable. Friends could congregate. The snacks were tasty. And dare I say, romance was in abundance.

The Campbellsville's drive-in remained in business until the mid-1980s, after which it was demolished.

Virginia Graves is coordinator of the Taylor Regional Archive Center, a non-profit organization which preserves local history and genealogy. For information, call 270-789-4343 or send an email to info@TaylorRegionalArchiveCenter.com.

## EARLY DAYS

### TEN YEARS AGO March 2016

Volunteer firefighter Rocky Edwards treated a dog that experienced smoke inhalation during a fire. Five pets were saved and three were lost in that fire.

Brooklyn Carothers, 9, of Campbellsville, died March 21, 2016, in LaRue County as a result of injuries suffered in a motor vehicle accident.

Tiffany Noel Benningfield and Jason Lee Underwood, both of Campbellsville, announced their engagement. Benningfield is the daughter of Judy Benningfield and the late Gary W. Benningfield of Finley and Underwood is the son of Bob and Ann Underwood of Campbellsville. The wedding was set for April 16 in Muldraugh Hill Baptist Church in Lebanon.

### TWENTY YEARS AGO March 2006

The Taylor County Show Choir was selected to represent Kentucky in a major 2006 national music festival in Washington, D.C., celebrating America's heritage through music.

Girl Scout Troop 2164 visited veterinarian Dr. Shannon Russell to work on their pet care badges.

Chloe Lane Anderson celebrated her second birthday March 11 at Phillips Lanes with family and friends.

### THIRTY YEARS AGO March 1996

Josh Church of Campbellsville competed in the Kentucky State Spelling Bee at the downtown Holiday Inn in Louisville.

Mackenzie Wise won the high point title of Supreme Queen in the Town & Country Mini National Competition as she competed with girls from across the United States.

### FORTY YEARS AGO March 1986

Shannon Osborne received a Good Citizenship award at the 90th annual conference of the Kentucky Society of Daughters of the American Revolution.

The children of Mr. and Mrs. Arthur Parker held a 50th wedding anniversary celebration for their parents with a reception at the Campbellsville-Taylor County Rescue Squad.

### FIFTY YEARS AGO March 1976

The Kentucky Certificate of

Need and Licensure Board approved construction of a new health department for Taylor County.

Mr. and Mrs. Phillip Corbin returned home Sunday from Bonita Springs, Florida, where they spent the winter months.

Mr. and Mrs. Leslie Minor returned home from a stay in Tice, Florida.

### SIXTY YEARS AGO March 1966

Miss Wanda Lynne Close, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Close of Campbellville, became the bride of James Gary Stone, son of Mr. and Mrs. James Stone, also of Campbellsville, in a candle-light ceremony held March 26 at Cumberland Presbyterian Church.

Mrs. Sular James England, 67, of Lowell Avenue in Campbellsville, daughter of the late Mr. Thomas C. James and Mrs. Fannie Hayes Janes, died suddenly on route to Rosary Hospital.

### SEVENTY YEARS AGO March 1956

Mrs. Alva McKinley was elected president of the Campbellsville Woman's Club.

Brent Cox and J. Paul King, mainstays of their respective schools during the past basketball season, landed berths on the Courier-Journal all-

state honorable mentions as a result of a poll of coaches and officials in the state. Both boys were named among the top six players in the region.

Verge Sapp suffered a broken leg and loss of several front teeth in a collision with a truck on Columbia Avenue.

Mr. and Mrs. Lucian Tarter celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary Sunday, March 18, at their home on Coppock Street.

### EIGHTY YEARS AGO March 1946

Dr. C.V. Hiestand marked his 50th year in medicine. He had assisted into this world more than 4,500 Taylor Countians.

H.T. Parrott stated construction of another modern building adjoining the recently modernized Parrott Service Company on Main Street. The new building, 42x130 feet, will be in line with the Parrott Service building, giving a spacious front and along the side adjoining the alley will be the ample parking space for A&P Food Market that it will house.

Shirley Wilcoxson announced last week the purchase of the Texaco station on First Street that was formerly operated by Alvin Wilkerson, who is working for the Campbellsville Cab Company.

Bobby Shaw, son of Mr. and

Mrs. Russell Shaw, was made honorary page of the 1946 session of the House of Representatives at Frankfort.

### NINETY YEARS AGO March 1936

Fire of unknown origin at the home of I.G. Thomas on Jackson Street, caused great loss. The rear of the house and entire inside was gutted by flames. The family, awakened by the fire, had just enough time to escape.

The Rural Rehabilitation Division of the Resettlement Administration has made it possible for the farmers of Taylor County to have crushed lime. Thomas G. Allen of Mercer County has been engaged to crush the rock and has set up his equipment at the quarry on old Greensburg Road.

### HUNDRED YEARS AGO March 1926

Lee Read found on the steps of his store a young boy, which was said to be from 24 to 48 hours old. The boy was neatly tucked into a carton. Mr. Read noticed the box on the steps but thought it was one a customer had bought eggs in. He later was attracted by the cry of a baby and investigated. He notified the local authorities. Mrs. Charlie Barbee, city, is caring

for the infant.

The ladies of the Presbyterian Church gave a reception March 18 in the church auditorium for the Rev. and Mrs. N.J. Salyer who are leaving for Colorado. A number of guests from various churches of the town attended. An interesting program of music, recitations and addresses were made.

W.S. Wooley, proprietor of Wooley's restaurant, purchased a soda foundation for the business.

Joe Dulworth, who left here three weeks previously to work at the A&P Store in Shelbyville, has been promoted to manager and transferred to Hodgenville.

### HUNDRED TEN YEARS AGO March 1916

## LEGAL NOTICE

### TAYLOR COUNTY FISCAL COURT SOLICITATION OF BIDS FY 2026-2027

The Taylor County Fiscal Court is soliciting sealed bids for materials and services for Fiscal Year July 1, 2026 through June 30, 2027. Interested parties may obtain a list of materials and services and bid specifications from the office of the Taylor County Judge Executive, 203 N. Court Street, Ste # 4, Campbellsville, Ky 42718 (270) 465-7729 FAX (270) 789-3675, 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Monday through Friday. All Bids must be marked "Sealed Bid / Bid List # ?" and must be received in the office of the Judge Executive by 2:00 p.m. Monday, April 9, 2026. Bids will be opened at 4:30 p.m. at the Special Called meeting prior to the Fiscal Court meeting for review and publicly read. The Regular Meeting commencing at 5:00 p.m. on Thursday, April 9, 2026 in the Taylor County Courthouse 203 N. Court Street, Campbellsville, Ky 42718. Taylor County Fiscal Court reserves the right to reject and or all bids and may determine based on all criteria that the best bid may not always be the lowest bid.

Barry Smith, Judge Executive

NOTICE TO BIDDERS GO TO WEBSITE TO GET FORMS – WWW.TAYLORCOUNTYKY.GOV/OPEN-BIDS

#### Must be Sealed Bids

Bids will be received for the following only contracting services for one year:

- Crushed Limestone – assorted sizes
- Chip and Seal
- Blacktop Hot Mix – FOB plant also lay in place
- Road Tile – Plastic and / or Galvanized
- Petroleum ( Diesel Fuel and Gasoline )
- RS-2 ( Primer / Tack ) oil
- Pest Control – each bid should list the following area individually with a bid total for all buildings (Courthouse, Animal Shelter ( 2 Buildings ), Community Center, Veteran's Park Buildings (Bath and Concessions), Detention Center, Judicial, New Fire Dept, and County Road Barn.

Bids only contracting cleaning services for one year.

If you would like a tour, please contact the County Judge's office 270-465-7729

1. Janitorial – Old Courthouse (203 N. Court Street)
2. Janitorial - Judicial Building (300 East Main Street)

All contracted companies must supply their own workers' compensation (to include self and all employees) and limited liability insurance of (\$1,000,000.00) and list Taylor County Fiscal Court as an additional insured and give a copy to Taylor County Fiscal Court, if awarded bid. All contracted companies must be incorporated. If awarded, this will be required before July 1. (Background checks will be required)

Taylor County Fiscal Court reserves the right to reject any or all bids and to waive any irregularities in awarding a contract.

## ONLINE AUCTION ONLY

Selling on behalf of the

# Zelman Parson Estate

ONLINE BIDDING ONLY

Auction ending on March 26th at 6 p.m. EST

**1993 Clayton Mobile Home 70x14, 2 Bedroom, 2 bath, well-kept with furnishings & outbuildings, setting on lot #44 of 2319 Greensburg Rd., Campbellsville, KY**

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For more information go to [AREAAuctioneers.com](http://AREAAuctioneers.com)



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