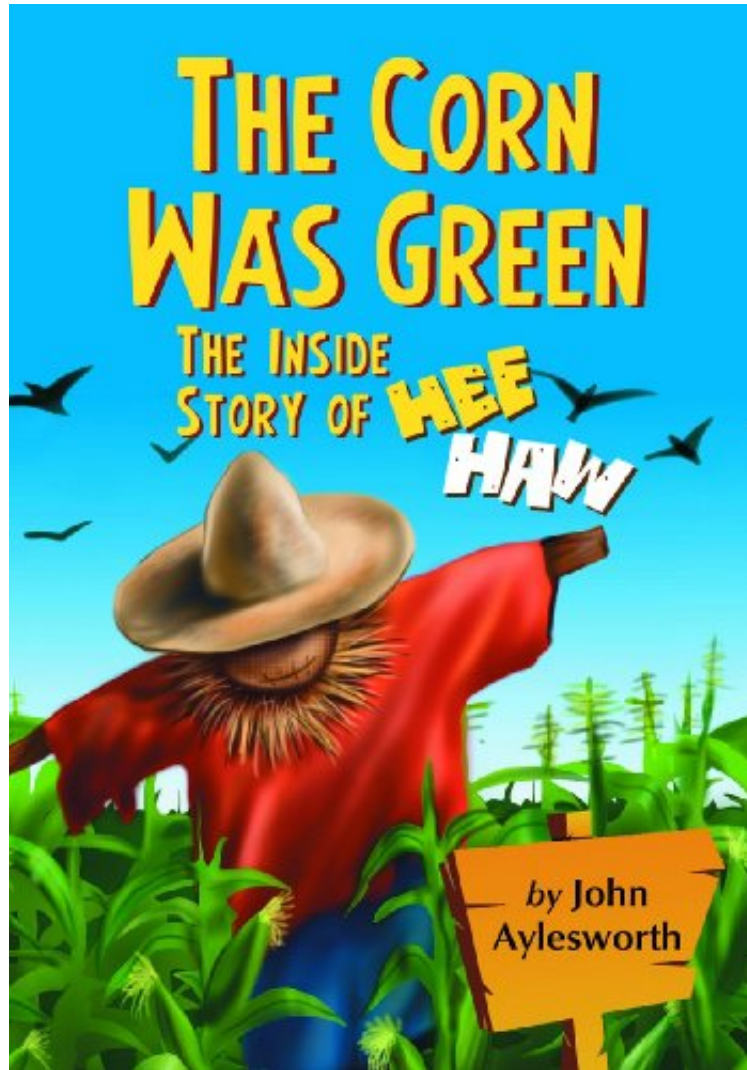


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The Corn Was Green: The Inside Story of Hee Haw

John Aylesworth

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John Aylesworth : The Corn Was Green: The Inside Story of Hee Haw before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Corn Was Green: The Inside Story of Hee Haw:

4 of 6 people found the following review helpful. It's All HereBy Beverly A. MilneI don't know if the Hee Haw fans were the silent majority, the "heartland of America," or just a lot of folks who enjoyed country music and corny comedy but I can speculate that if Hee Haw were still going strong today we'd be seeing a lot of politicians jumping up in that corn field.After achieving high audience ratings during its debut, the show was canceled by CBS executives who seemed unable to stomach the success of a show that didn't represent their vision. As a result of serious risk-taking by the show's creators, Hee Haw went into syndication to become one of the most popular and longest running

variety shows in television history, drawing an audience for more than 25 years. This story of its creation and its collection of lovable stars and contributors provides fascinating insight into how television worked and how a few people could determine what America watched. You don't have to be a Hee Haw fan to enjoy this detailed but flowing history of television in earlier days.

4 of 7 people found the following review helpful. great service
By Andrea L. Miller
This book was entertaining and full of trivia on Hee-Haw. I bought the book for my dad for Christmas. We both liked it. And, although I ordered it only a few days before Christmas, it arrived right on time! I appreciated that and enjoyed reading the behind the scenes look at Hee-Haw.

13 of 14 people found the following review helpful. Nicely Detailed but Self-Congratulatory and Filled with Errors
By Mediama
These inside stories from the man who helped create Hee Haw are interesting but flawed by his inflated ego and factual misstatements. It's a book that goes behind the scenes in some detail (with great personal photos) but is filled with errors and self-congratulatory praise, which makes it a frustrating book to read. There is much wrong with this book.

The author is a famous TV writer and producer and mentions working with other greats (Judy Garland, Doris Day, Dolly Parton, Sonny Cher, Frank Sinatra) but only gives a sentence or two about each of them. Why not devote a chapter to inside stories of his experiences with these greats? Then he includes other chapters on things that have nothing to do with Hee Haw (two chapters on failed TV shows he wrote that no one would recognize and that have nothing to do with Hee Haw). What could have been an interesting life story of a TV producer instead becomes a just-okay overview of how Hee Haw was put together.

Even though it was just a country copy of Laugh-In, as the show's co-creator he certainly thinks Hee Haw was great, writing "Hee Haw was the perfect show." He uses words like "classic" and goes overboard to praise just about everyone involved. Because of that there aren't enough stories about what the actors are really like. How could he work with people for 15 years and only devote a sentence or two saying how much fun they were? Instead give us some juicy backstage stories about the people on screen!

The only negative words are saved for dimwitted network executives who don't appear to know quality (like Hee Haw) when they see it. Or the people who replaced him on projects that he loved (the author was also the announcer for Hee Haw and when he was fired from the show he writes that, "I had always given my 'Welcome to Hee Haw' a cheerful bellow, whereas the new guy sounded like he was introducing a funeral." The entire book is filled with that type of self-centeredness.

There are a number of major performers' deaths and he merely mentions them in one sentence. He also loses track of many of the people and instead of doing a serious search for them just admits he has no idea what happened to them. He also weirdly attributes the show's success to a cast member's "chanting." Lisa Todd was into New Age spirituality and when she was forced off the show, the author claims "the ratings began to plummet" without her chants. Seriously?

Some of his factual information is just plain wrong. He claims that Oprah was the receptionist for the TV station where they shot Hee Haw's first season--yet she had just turned 15 at the time and as a young high school student had just given birth to a baby a couple months before he claims she was a receptionist. She actually didn't work at the station until a couple years later. The author also claims that Hee Haw premiered at number one in the ratings and stayed that way for awhile. There is no evidence of that presented. (It was actually tied for 20th during its first regular season ratings even though the author claimed it was "rock solid in the top ten through its entire run on the network.")

The author claims they edited the first episode of Hee Haw at CBS right next to All in the Family--even though the later series didn't air until almost two years later (it did do a pilot in 1969 but for ABC and not CBS). He says they copied The Gong Show in 1969--too bad it didn't air until 1976. He said the TV show Dallas was "coming to the end of its run" in 1981--too bad it lasted until 1991. It seems like he just did a little research on related historical things and tossed them into his book ignoring reality. At one point he claims Hee Haw was "the only show on a national network" to have on Loretta Lynn, Charley Pride and Tammy Wynette as guests--but at the same time the Johnny Cash Show (also taped in Nashville) was using the exact same singers. He certainly has an inflated sense of pride in his work. He thought the show was "an excellent show that truly deserved to be a hit for what it was" and says it was better than Gilligan's Island. He thought "the music was first-rate, the production values were great." In truth the humorous show was cheaply produced (and looked it) and had quickly thrown-together musical numbers that were unimaginatively staged. He brags that they only did two quick sets of taping a year, then edited it all together--the problem is that the show looked thrown together and disjointed. Yes, it was fun to watch but this was cut-rate broadcasting. Hee Haw wasn't as bad as the critics said but it isn't the groundbreaking icon that the show's creator makes it out to be ("We're making television history! We're the Wright Brothers of the Idiot Box").

The author himself comes across as an elitist, slamming Nashville as being hick and backwards when in truth it was a thriving modern city. It's written with hooks that imply that something terrible or interesting is about to happen, then nothing really does. His memories are not that sharp and the book could have been improved with better editing or a co-writer who would have gotten more input from others involved in the series. So read it with skepticism and enjoy some of the jabs at the New York or L.A. CBS executives. It is certainly worth reading for any student of television programming who wants a somewhat detailed look at the job of producer. But don't expect insights into your favorite performers on the show.

Reviled by critics but beloved by an extraordinarily faithful audience, Hee Haw was seen in over 15 million homes a week during the height of its popularity. Many years after going off the air, Hee Haw remains the longest running

variety show of its type in television history, having aired for nearly 600 episodes during its decades-long run. This book tells the complete story of how one of America's classic television programs was created by two Canadians in Beverly Hills. Series co-creator John Aylesworth provides an intimate, behind-the-scenes look at some of Hee Haw's best--and worst--moments, from the show's shoestring beginnings in a tiny Nashville studio; to the "Great Country Massacre of 1971," which saw the cancellation of Hee Haw, The Beverly Hillbillies, Green Acres, and several other "country shows" on CBS; to its unprecedented success in syndication. Richly illustrated with dozens of the author's personal photographs and memorabilia, the book also includes one appendix providing a complete list of Hee Haw episodes from 1969 to 1992.

About the Author John Aylesworth is an award-winning television writer and producer, playwright, and author who has been associated with the entertainment industry since the 1950s. In addition to co-creating Hee Haw, Aylesworth also received a Peabody Award for Frank Sinatra, A Man and His Music and created the longest running game show on Canadian television, Front Page Challenge. He lives in Palm Desert, California.