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May 18, 1955

**Weekly VARIETY—
Davy Crockett—King of
the Wild Frontier—
(COLOR)**

A fair western but with an unusual headstart toward good money in many situations. There's that Crockett craze to consider.

Buena Vista release of Bill Walsh production (under the Walt Disney aegis). Stars Fess Parker and Buddy Ebsen; features Basil Ruysdael, Hans Conreid, William Bakewell, Kenneth Tobey, Pat Hogan, Nick Cravat, Mike Mazurki, Jeff Thompson. Directed by Norman Foster. Written by Tom Blackburn (adapted from the Disneyland tv shows); camera (Technicolor), Charles Boyle; editor, Chester Schaeffer; music, George Bruns; songs, "Ballad of Davy Crockett," by Tom Blackburn (words) and Bruns (music), and "Farewell," with the words which were penned by Crockett and music by Bruns. Previewed in N. Y. May 11, '55. Running time, 90 MINS.

Davy Crockett	Fess Parker
George Russell	Buddy Ebsen
Andrew Jackson	Basil Ruysdael
Thimbletwig	Hans Conreid
Tobias Norton	William Bakewell
Col. Jim Bowie	Kenneth Tobey
Chief Red Stick	Pat Hogan
Polly Crockett	Helene Stanley
Bustedluck	Nick Cravat
Col. Billy Travis	Don Megowan
Bigfoot Mason	Mike Mazurki
Charlie Two Shirts	Jeff Thompson
Swaney	Henry Byrne
Henderson	Benjamin Hornbuckle
Opponent Political Speaker	Hal Youngblood
1st Congressman	Jim Maddux
2d Congressman	Robert Booth
Billy	Eugene Brindel
Johnny	Ray Whitefree
Bruno	Campbell Brown

(Aspect ratio: 1.85-1)

By theatrical standards, and appraising the picture on its own entertainment merits, exclusively, "Davy Crockett—King of the Wild Frontier" rates as a western of moderate value for the oater outlets. But the Crockett character has recently hit the nation with such phenomenal impact via the Disneyland tv airings that the entry figures to take good revenue in a much wider market groove, middle-sized firstruns included.

The film is substantially the same as seen on the three tv segments—Crockett fighting the Indians, going to Congress and finally to the Alamo. Piecing the three together has an episodic effect which, presumably, couldn't be avoided, but is nonetheless a little disconcerting for the viewer.

Disney, of course, is pulling a switch in peddling a pic to theatres after television exposure. (Perhaps, the conventional approach to the public via theatres first might not have created such a stir.) Importantly, the theatrical ticket-buyer will have much more to behold, considering widescreen presentation and fine tinting by Technicolor. On tv, "Davy Crockett" was a poor man's road company; the production values poured into the film can be seen in full measures only by theatre audiences. And there are no interruptions for commercials.

Producer Bill Walsh provided "Crockett" with more of an elaborate mounting than is usually the case with a western of this type. It was located in Tennessee with a numerically big cast, and costumes and settings are devoid of any artificiality. The close-up action scenes, competently directed by Norman Foster, as well as all other sequences, come through in finer detail on the bigscreen.

The added visual assets plus the great penetration of the tv programs (including the "Crockett" ballad) are the key factors that promise good returns from the theatrical excursion. Gene.