

Filming Mark Twain in Oneonta, Morris

It makes sense that producer William Perry would decide on Mark Twain's works as subject matter for a series of films for public television.

After critical acceptance of *Life on the Mississippi* last year on PBS, Perry, who's based in New York City, turned his attention to Mark Twain's *The Private History of a Campaign That Failed*. It will be shown tomorrow at 8 p.m. on WSKG, Channel 46.

Perry, who fell into producing after a career as a composer and in advertising, was born in Elmira, longtime home and final resting place of Samuel L. Clemens (Mark Twain). When Perry was growing up, memories of Clemens' life in Elmira were all around him, from the author's tidy little study, now on the campus of Elmira College, to a plaque that stands in front of a shopping plaza, once the site of Clemens'



in-laws' home. Clemens is buried in an Elmira cemetery, beneath a large family tombstone.

He wrote some of his greatest works while summering at Quarry Farm in Elmira.

"I was always very fond of the Twain stories and I felt that he is perhaps the best known, and certainly among the very best American authors," said Perry in a telephone interview from his New York City office.

"When the idea came for a series that would deal with the works of a major American writer, it was natural I should think in terms of Twain."

Perry said those who know Mark Twain only from stories about "boys' rafts and picket-fence painting" don't know the depth of his work. "We also felt that Twain represented a time of America when there was pride and a sense of accomplishment in what was being done as a country. It was a time when Americans held their head high, and we haven't seen times like those recently."

The 88-minute film, *The Private History of a Campaign That Failed*, was made last August on locations in Oneonta and Morris, N.Y., and near Reading, Pa. It stars Pat Hingle, Harry Crosby and Edward Hermann. After *Campaign*, Hermann plays the same character, the Stranger, in a brief epilogue, *The War Prayer*.

Campaign tells of a group of farm boys in their first brush with the realities of war. Perry selected Morris and Oneonta for location filming because rolling countryside was needed, and not a river like the Mississippi.

"There's not a lot of water needed in *Campaign That Failed*, unlike *Life on the Mississippi*. *Campaign*'s set on the Mississippi.

"I knew from my youth that the areas around Oneonta and Morris were exactly what we needed. I've always admired the country around there. The towns and woods look a lot like the area around Missouri would have looked at the time the story took place."

Perry said the townspeople in both Morris and Oneonta were very cooperative during the filming, serving as extras and some being hired to work in the wardrobe department. One Oneonta young man, John Ross, plays one of the young volunteers in the film.

"Filming where we did made it more convenient for our own people, too, because most of them are based in New York," Perry said. "It made things less costly than to try for a Missouri location."

"It's also very good for filming around there. The scenery, lighting and countryside are all quite good and I'd like to see more location work done upstate. I should think there could be a nice little film industry there."

For the next two Mark Twain works, *Pudd'nhead Wilson* and *The Mysterious Stranger*, Perry plans co-production deals with foreign countries because those stories are set outside the United States.

12-TV—Binghamton, N.Y.—The Sunday Press, Apr. 5, 1981



This scene in *The Private History of a Campaign That Failed* was filmed in Morris.

How CBS shrank Kangaroo pouch

WASHINGTON — For years CBS has tried to find a way to move the *Captain Kangaroo* show so that it could expand its morning news program and compete with ABC's *Good Morning America* and NBC's *Today Show*. Finally, and somewhat mysteriously, the stalemate was broken late last month.

But — how? And — why? And — what did they do to get the captain to cave in? We have, with the help of our operatives, obtained official documents and transcripts, and can now reveal for the first time to a breathlessly expectant nation, the full and fulsome details of — OPERATION KANGAROO: THE SECRET NEGOTIATIONS.

We take you to a boardroom deep inside Black Rock, the CBS HQ in New York.

"Gentlemen, Gentlemen!" the CBS executive is saying. "Let's have some order here, please! I'm sure we can come to an agreement. Now, Captain, what point were you about to make?"

"Abracadabra, please and thank you," says the Captain in his chipperest chippest voice.

"I was simply going to make this point, gentlemen. If you teach one minute of my American institution, I'll have 5,000 mummies outside that window in 25 minutes screaming for your heads on a silver platter."

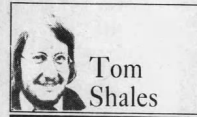
"Now now, Captain. I don't think that attitude is going to get us anywhere. Did one of you distinguished CBS News correspondents have something to say?"

"Yeah," one of them barks, jabbing his finger right in the Captain's bulbous bread basket. "Look, Kangaroo, you play ball with us or you'll wind up on a slow boat to Hali with not so much as a Nielsen point to show for it."

"Now Mike Wallace, you behave yourself," says the executive. "Please, let's have some constructive suggestions here."

"Well," says another correspondent, "how about we get the Captain drunk and let the *New York Post* discover him lying in the gutter in front of the *Four Seasons*?"

"Dan, I'm ashamed of you," the executive



says. "Captain, do you have something to add?"

"No I don't, sir, but Bunny Rabbit has something he'd like to say."

"Oh Very well. What is it, Bunny Rabbit?"

"I defer to Mr. Green Jeans," says Bunny Rabbit.

"Well I defer to Mr. Moose," says Mr. Green Jeans.

"Well I defer to Grandfather Clock," says Mr. Moose.

Just then who should walk in but Mr. William S. Paley.

"All right, who referred to me as Grandfather Clock?" he demands.

"Let's have our milk and cookies and Scotch on the rocks and I'll tell you all a little story," says the Captain. "Now, once upon a time there was a man named William Morris..."

"Captain, with all respect due a man of your rank — and age — I think we know how that one goes," says the exec. "Now here's the deal. We cut you back to half an hour a day. Then we bring in Charlie Kuralt over there at 7:30. In an effort to hang on to the kiddie tune-in, we'll call him something — 'Uncle News,' something like that."

"Now just a minute," says Kuralt. "I'm not sure."

"And we give him a \$200,000 raise."

"Wellllll, if you really think it's for the best," Kuralt says. "Hey, can one of you guys give me a ride home? I'm feeling just a tad on the tipsy side."

"Well you can share a cab with me," says Dan.

"Uh, thanks just the same, I'll walk."

"Now boys, we still have to get the nod from the Captain," says the executive. "So what'll it be, Cap — half an hour a day, plus some exposure on our new afternoon news show, or, a one-way ticket to Tootertown?"

"I don't think that would be very nice, do you?" the Captain says. "Oh my no. And think of poor old Mr. Mailman lugging all those heavy, heavy bags of protest mail up to your office every morning! Goodness gracious me! Sakes alive! Merciful heavens!"

"All right, Kangaroo, can the quaint sayings," growls Wallace. "I've got an appointment with my hairdresser and I intend to keep it. Now you sign on that dotted line or you'll never so much as see another chick-chuck, moo-moo or gobble-gobble!"

"Hmhm," says the Captain. "I wonder what Mister Rogers would do."

"Never mind that! You just sign it," says the executive, who appears to be getting testy himself. He is thinking maybe he should call in some more lawyers, although there are many, many lawyers in the room, all in their places with bright shiny Gucci buckles. And then just when everything seems hopeless, the chandelier tinkles, a strange light fills the room, a heavenly choir can be heard in the distance, and the doors swing open as if by special effects.

"Wait," says the executive. "Here's someone who can help! It's it's — Gabriel Heatter! No, it's Paul Harvey. No, it's Walter Cronkite!"

"Sign the contract, Captain," says Walter.

"I want to get back to my boat."

The Captain signs. Bunny Rabbit signs. Mr. Green Jeans signs. Mr. Moose signs. Grandfather is asleep, or else holding out for more money, but his signature isn't needed.

"There there, Captain," says Mr. Paley. "That wasn't so bad, was it? Now let me give you a lift in my limousine."

"Is Tootertown out of your way?" asks the Captain.

"No," says Mr. Paley. "No indeed."