

FACTS AND TRIVIA: *BROKEBACK MOUNTAIN*

The first Western was *The Great Train Robbery*, filmed in the U.S. in 1903. The classic Western is conservative and white-dominated in presenting the civilizing of the West. The hero is strong, silent, and handy with his fists and his gun.

The first mainstream movie with two men kissing was *Making Love* (1982), which failed financially.

The movie won awards from the American Film Institute in 2005 as Movie of the Year and for Best Screenplay.

In 2006, it received Academy Awards for Best Director, Original Musical Score, and Best Writing, Adapted Screenplay. It was nominated for 5 other awards.

During the filming of the Fourth of July scenes in Fort Macleod, the crew would get the extras pumped up by telling them to act like the Calgary Flames had just won the Stanley Cup.

Heath Ledger has a nude scene in which he jumps into a lake. Ang Lee intended to edit any actual frontal nudity out of the film, but a paparazzo took photos of Ledger with a digital camera. The photos appeared on the Internet and in some press publications. The scene is included in the European version of the film. It features Ledger and a stunt double for Jake Gyllenhaal jumping into a lake from a rock.

The Canadian house Buzz Image Group created 75 visual effects shots. Of these, 15 were of CGI sheep. The film called for about 2,500 sheep, but only 700 were on-set. Also created for the film were sky replacements, set additions, erasures and the hail in the hailstorm.

Sheep were a recurring problem. Apparently sheep, which drink only still water, resisted Ang's efforts to get them to drink from a stream. He had to give up on the shot. Also, American sheep carry a bacteria/virus that Canadian sheep don't possess. The scene mixing two herds of sheep had some nightmarish real-life parallels, as the Canadian government had expressly warned of dire consequences if any disease to spread to Canadian sheep.

The football game on television during Jack's Thanksgiving dinner is actually a 1970s Canadian Football League game between the Montreal Alouettes and Edmonton Eskimos.

During its first weekend of release (playing in only five US theaters), it set a record for the highest per-screen gross of any non-animated movie in history.

According to producer James Schamus, the movie cost so little to make that it recouped its cost during its first week of limited release.

China banned the film because homosexuality is considered a taboo subject there.

Over 90% of the footage was shot within 70 feet of a road

The song Jack plays on his harmonica is "He Was a Friend of Mine," the same song Willie Nelson sings during the closing credits.

Director Ang Lee gave Heath Ledger and Jake Gyllenhaal copies *Farm Boys: Lives of Gay Men from the Rural Midwest*, by Will Fellows, a book Annie Proulx and Diana Ossana mentioned as an excellent reference source, to help them understand their characters.

The artwork of Vilhelm Hammershøi (Danish painter, 1864-1916) inspired the whitewashed interior of Jack's parents' home in Lightning Flat, according to cinematographer Rodrigo Prieto. The shirts worn by the 2 actors that are so significant at the end were sold on eBay in February 2006 for \$101,100. The buyer, film historian and collector Tom Gregory, called them "the ruby slippers of our time."

The poster for the film deliberately imitated the poster for the James Cameron romance, *Titanic*.

Heath Ledger declined to go to a one month cowboy camp as he had grown up on farms in Western Australia. Jake Gyllenhaal was required to attend, however, as he needed "roughing up."

When Ang Lee won the Academy Award for Best Director, the People's Republic of China's news media ignored the fact that he was Taiwanese. He was described as being Chinese or Chinese-American. The news coverage also blocked out Ang's "Thank you, Taiwan" in his acceptance speech.

Although Anne Hathaway learned how to barrel race, the insurance company insisted that a stunt double perform on film.

Michelle Williams requested that her two male leads kiss in front of her to help her get to the right emotional place for her character, Alma. As she was involved with Ledger in real life, too, she felt that it would help with her portrayal. She had to goad both men as their first few attempts were far too half-hearted for her liking.

Universal made the rare decision to release the film on DVD when it was still playing in theaters. It was also the first film to be released as a DVD and a download on the same day.

Brooklynn Proulx, the child actress who played Jenny at age 4, is not related to E. Annie Proulx, the author.