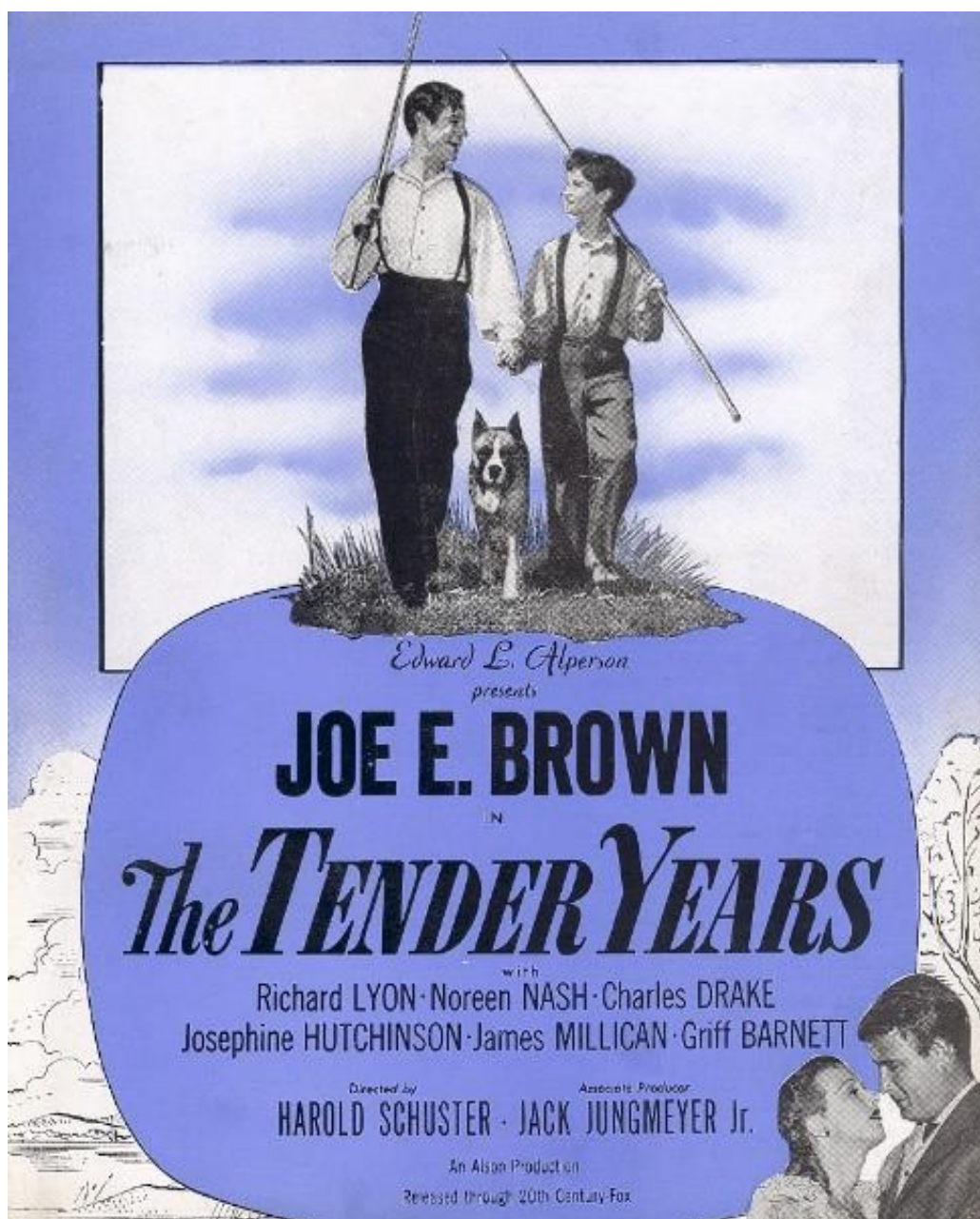


The Tender Years

US : 1947 : dir. Harold Schuster : 20th Century Fox : 81 min[†]
 prod: Edward L Alperson : scr: Jack Jungmeyer Jr & Arnold Belgard : dir.ph.: Henry Freulich
Richard Lyon; Blayney Lewis
 Joe E Brown; Noreen Nash; Charles Drake; Josephine Hutchinson; James Millican;
 Griff Barnett; Jeanne Gail; Harry V Cheshire; Jimmie Dodd

Ref:	Pages	Sources	Stills	KBytes	Ω □ € Z ♀	Copy on VHS	Last Viewed
3394a	3½	4	2	- - - -		No	Unseen

[†] the studio flyer gives the running time as 67 min



Leonard Maltin's Movie and Video Guide
1996 review:

"Warm drama of a minister trying to protect a dog his son is attached to; notable mainly for a rare dramatic performance by Brown. ** "

Speelfilm Encyclopedie review - identical to above

Video Movie Guide 1993 review:

"The fight against cruelty to animals is at the heart of this sentimental film about a small-town minister who steals the dog his son loves, to save it from being used in illicit dogfighting. **½ "

The Films of 20th Century Fox - a Pictorial History review:

"A sentimentalised attack on cruelty to animals, about a kindly minister (Joe E Brown) in a small town who comes across a barn in which the sport of dog fighting is being conducted. To save a dog to which his son (Richard Lyon) has become attached, the preacher steals it and prepares to stand trial for theft. The trial is called off, but it leads to legislation outlawing the sport. Photographed by Henry Freulich; musical score and direction by Dr Edward Kilenyi "

Studio flyer (pictured overleaf) synopsis:

"By the latter half of the 19th Century no legislation had been introduced in the United States to make dog fighting illegal. Slasher, one of the fighting dogs belonging to Kit Barton, runs away, bleeding and badly mangled and hides in the Sunday schoolroom of the Cooperville Memorial Church where he is found by Ted (Richard Lyon) son of Will Norris (Joe E Brown). Eventually, with infinite patience, Ted is able to calm the growling dog and soon they are the best of friends. He renames Slasher "Dusty".

Barton offers a big reward for the return of his valuable dog and when Will discovers who the rightful owner is he has no option but to tell the tearful Ted that he must return his pet. When Ted goes to Barton's barn with Dusty he discovers, to his horror, the use to which

Barton is putting his dogs. He returns home with Dusty explaining to his father the reason. But Ted has been recognised and Barton calls at Will's house to collect Dusty. Will is powerless to intervene.

The dog fights take place on Saturday nights and on the first Saturday after Dusty had been returned to his owner, Ted slips out at night, goes to the barn and tries to steal Dusty. His father, seeing his empty bed, has guessed his intentions and followed him. Together they manage to get the dog from his kennel and take him away, hiding him on an island nearby.

Will confesses the theft and awaits legal action trusting that public opinion will support him. Realising that his father may go to prison, Ted rows sorrowfully to the island with the object of collecting Dusty and returning him to Barton. But he is seen by Barton's son who follows him, attempting to cross the water on a raft. In mid-stream, he falls overboard and is in acute danger of drowning, but is hauled to safety by Ted and Dusty.

Now he has got the dog back, Barton drops the case. On the following Sunday, a group of townspeople call on Will with a signed petition demanding legislation against dog fighting. Just as the service is about to begin, Barton, who has learnt the truth about the brave manner in which his son had been saved from drowning, makes Ted a present of Dusty.

Screenplay by Jack Jungmeyer Jr & Arnold Belgard, from a story by Jack Jungmeyer Jr, adapted by Abem Finkel. Length: 5982 ft; running time: 1hr 7mins. Certificate "U" "

[no listing in "Halliwell's Film Guide", "The Critics' Film Guide", "The Good Film and Video Guide", "Movies on TV and Videocassette 1988-89", "Rating the Movies (1990)", "The Sunday Times Guide to Movies on Television", "The Time Out Film Guide", "TV Times Film & Video Guide 1995", "Variety Movie Guide 1993", or "The Virgin Film Guide"]

Cast and Credits

Rev. William James Norris.....Joe E. Brown
Ted Norris.....Richard Lyon
Linda Webster.....Noreen Nash
Bob Wilson.....Charles Drake
Emily Norris.....Josephine Hutchinson
Kit Barton.....James Millican
Senator Cooper.....Griff Barnett
Jeanie Cooper.....Jeanne Gail
Sheriff.....Harry V. Cheshire
Frank Barton.....Blayne Lewis
Spike.....Jimmie Dodd

Presented by Edward L. Alperson
Directed by Harold Schuster
Associate Producer.....Jack Jungmeyer Jr
Screenplay by Jack Jungmeyer Jr
Arnold Belgard

Story by Jack Jungmeyer Jr
Adapted by Abem Finkel
Director of Photography
Henry Freulich, A.S.C.

Art Direction Arthur Lonergan
Music Composed and

Conducted by ... Dr. Edward Kilenyi
Production Manager.....Louis Germonprez
Film Editor.....Richard Farrell
Set Dresser.....Robert Priestley
Dialogue Director.....Arthur Berthelet
Script Supervisor.....Marie Messinger
Makeup Artist.....Gus Norin
Hair Stylist.....Vera Peterson
Sound Recorder.....John Carter



No further information currently available. Richard Lyon, here 13, was a British orphan adopted by Hollywood emigrées Ben Lyon and Bebe Daniels. He played Lewis Leon-Owens in "**ANNA AND THE KING OF SIAM**" (46) and a Boy Scout troop-leader in the Bob Hope vehicle "**THE GREAT LOVER**" (49). Holmstrom says "**THE TENDER YEARS**" was his most substantial role, but he made smaller appearances in "**THE UNSEEN**" (44), "**THE GREEN YEARS**" (46), "**THE BOY WITH GREEN HAIR**" (48) and others. Blayney Lewis plays Frank Barton, doubtless the boy who pitches so helpfully into the river permitting Ted to affect a rescue. He is not listed in *The Moving Picture Boy*.

It's amusing to deconstruct the thought process behind that poster design. Here we have an image of father-and-son rapture, strolling hand-in-hand, fishpoles over shoulder, gazing fondly into one another's eyes, the dog which cements their bond nestled snugly between them. But wait! What's this? Clumsily tacked on at the bottom corner we have an unidentified couple in mid-spoon. Who are *they*? The synopsis makes no mention of them. They clearly have no important part in the story, but there they are, almost as a hurried afterthought, on the poster.

Sex sells movie tickets, and always has. L'amour of man, boy and dog will not fill many theatres, so the couple in the corner are a visual postscript to heterosexual fundamentalist cinemagoers (so starved, as they are, of films catering to their minority appetites): fear not! - "**THE TENDER YEARS**" has that all-important ingredient, "*love interest*", too! For an even more pathetic illustration of this rationale, see the poster designs for "**BOTTOMS UP!**" (a boys' school farce with no "*love interest*" whatsoever) attempting to pass it off as a kind of "**CARRY ON NURSE**".

See subject index under **DOGS** and, inasmuch as it is set in the late 19th century, under **WESTERNS**.