

Section: Bing Crosby

Context: Crosby was born on May 3, 1903 in Tacoma, Washington, in a house his father built at 1112 North J Street. In 1906, his family moved to Spokane, and in 1913, his father built a house at 508 E. Sharp Avenue. The house sits on the campus of Gonzaga University, his alma mater. He was the fourth of seven children: brothers Larry (1895-1975), Edward (1896-1966), Ted (1900-1973), and Bob (1913-1993); and two sisters, Catherine (1904-1974) and Mary Rose (1906-1990). His parents were Harry Lillis Crosby Sr. (1870-1950), a bookkeeper, and Catherine Helen "Kate" (nee Harrigan; 1873-1964). His mother was a second generation Irish-American. His father was of English descent; an ancestor, Simon Crosby, emigrated to America in the 17th century, and one of his descendants married a descendant of Mayflower passenger William Brewster (c. 1567 - April 10, 1644). In 1910, seven-year-old Harry Crosby, Jr. was forever renamed. The Sunday edition of the Spokesman-Review published a feature called "The Bingville Bugle". Written by humorist Newton Newkirk, The Bingville Bugle was a parody of a hillbilly newsletter, filled with gossip, minstrel quips, creative spelling, and mock ads. A Crosby neighbor, 15-year-old Valentine Hobart, enjoyed reading "The Bugle", and noting Harry's laugh, took a liking to him and called him "Bingo from Bingville". Eventually, the last vowel was dropped and the nickname stuck. In 1917, Crosby took a summer job as property boy at Spokane's "Auditorium," where he witnessed some of the finest acts of the day, including Al Jolson, who held him spellbound with ad libbing and parodies of Hawaiian songs. He later described Jolson's delivery as "electric." Crosby graduated from Gonzaga High School (today's Gonzaga Prep) in 1920 and enrolled at Gonzaga University. He attended Gonzaga for three years but did not earn a degree. As a freshman, he played on the university's baseball team. The university granted him an honorary doctorate in 1937. Initial successes with Whiteman were followed by disaster when they reached New York and Whiteman considered letting them go. Bing may have been retained as Whiteman was already using him as a solo performer on record, but the prospects for Rinker were bleak. However, the addition of pianist and aspiring songwriter Harry Barris made the difference and "The Rhythm Boys" were born. The additional voice meant the boys could be heard more easily in the large New York theaters and eventually became a success. A year touring with Whiteman performing and recording with musicians Bix Beiderbecke, Jack Teagarden, Tommy Dorsey, Jimmy Dorsey, Eddie Lang and Hoagy Carmichael, provided valuable experience and began touring. Crosby then matured considerably as a performer and was in constant demand as a solo artist. Crosby soon became the star attraction of the Rhythm Boys, and in 1928 he had his first number one hit with the Whiteman orchestra, a jazz-influenced rendition of "Ol' Man River". In 1929, the Rhythm Boys appeared in the film *The King of Jazz* with Whiteman but Bing's growing dissatisfaction with Whiteman led to the Rhythm Boys leaving his organization. They joined the Gus Arnheim Orchestra performing nightly in The Coconut Grove of the Ambassador Hotel. Singing with the Arnheim Orchestra, Bing's solos began

to steal the show, while the Rhythm Boys act gradually became redundant. Harry Barris wrote several of Crosby's subsequent hits including "At Your Command", "I Surrender Dear", and "Wrap Your Troubles In Dreams". In the early months of 1931, a solo recording contract came Bing's way, Mack Sennett signed him to make film shorts and a break with the Rhythm Boys became almost inevitable. Bing had married Dixie Lee in September 1930 and after a threatened divorce in March 1931, he started to apply himself seriously to his career. His gramophone records in 1931 broke new ground as his powerful and emotional singing started to change the face of popular music forever. Their low salaries at the Cocoanut Grove of the Ambassador Hotel had led the Rhythm Boys to walk out, causing union problems for Bing. Bing's brother, Everett, interested Bill Paley of CBS in his brother and Paley beckoned Bing to come to New York. A settlement was reached with the Ambassador Hotel and Bing made his first solo national radio broadcast in September 1931 and then went on to star at the New York Paramount Theatre. In the wake of a solid decade of headlining mainly smash hit musical comedy films in the 1930s, Crosby starred with Bob Hope and Dorothy Lamour in seven Road to musical comedies between 1940 and 1962, cementing Crosby and Hope as an on-and-off duo, despite never officially declaring themselves a "team" in the sense that Laurel and Hardy or Martin and Lewis (Dean Martin and Jerry Lewis) were teams. The series consists of Road to Singapore (1940), Road to Zanzibar (1941), Road to Morocco (1942), Road to Utopia (1946), Road to Rio (1947), Road to Bali (1952), and The Road to Hong Kong (1962). When they appeared solo, Crosby and Hope frequently made note of the other in a comically insulting fashion. They performed together many times on stage, radio, film, television, and numerous brief and not so brief appearances together in movies aside from the "Road" pictures. In the 1949 Disney animated film The Adventures of Ichabod and Mr. Toad, Crosby provided the narration and song vocals for The Legend of Sleepy Hollow segment, and again in the 1977 Disney animated film The Many Adventures of Ichabod and Winnie the Pooh. In 1960, he starred in High Time, a collegiate comedy with Fabian Forte and Tuesday Weld that predicted the emerging gap between him and the new young generation of musicians and actors who had begun their careers after WWII. The following year, Crosby and Hope reunited for one more Road movie, The Road to Hong Kong, which teamed them up with the much younger Joan Collins and Peter Sellers. Collins was used in place of their longtime partner Dorothy Lamour, whom Crosby felt was getting too old for the role, though Hope refused to do the movie without her, and she instead made a cameo appearance. Shortly before his death in 1977, he had planned another Road film in which he, Hope, and Lamour search for the Fountain of Youth. He won an Academy Award for Best Actor for Going My Way in 1944 and was nominated for the 1945 sequel, The Bells of St. Mary's. He received critical acclaim for his performance as an alcoholic entertainer in The Country Girl and received his third Academy Award nomination. CANNOTANSWER

STUDENT: **What motion pictures did Crosby star in?**

TEACHER: → Crosby starred with Bob Hope and Dorothy Lamour in seven Road to musical comedies between 1940 and 1962,

TEACHERX: → Crosby starred with Bob Hope and Dorothy Lamour in seven Road to musical comedies between 1940 and 1962,

TEACHERX: → The Adventures of Ichabod and Mr. Toad,

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TEACHERX: → ". In 1929, the Rhythm Boys appeared in the film The King of Jazz

TEACHERX: → Crosby starred with Bob Hope and Dorothy Lamour in seven Road to musical comedies between 1940 and 1962,

STUDENT: **Who were some of his co-stars?**

TEACHER: → Dorothy Lamour, whom Crosby felt was getting too old for the role,

TEACHERX: → Bob Hope and Dorothy Lamour

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STUDENT: **What were the titles for the seven Road to musical comedies?**

TEACHER: → Road to Singapore (1940), Road to Zanzibar (1941), Road to Morocco (1942), Road to Utopia (1946), Road to Rio (1947), Road to Bali (1952), and The Road to Hong Kong

TEACHERX: → Road to Singapore (1940), Road to Zanzibar (1941), Road to Morocco (1942), Road to Utopia (1946),

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STUDENT: **What year did the Road to Hong Kong come out?**

TEACHER: ⇨ (1962).

TEACHERX: ⇨ (1962).

TEACHERX: ⇨ 1962

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TEACHERX: ⇨ (1962).

STUDENT: **What other movies did he star in?**

TEACHER: ⇨ 1949 Disney animated film The Adventures of Ichabod and Mr. Toad, Crosby provided the narration and song vocals

TEACHERX: ⇨ In the 1949 Disney animated film The Adventures of Ichabod and Mr. Toad, Crosby provided the narration and song vocals for The Legend of Sleepy Hollow segment,

TEACHERX: ⇨ The Many Adventures of Ichabod and Winnie the Pooh.

TEACHERX: ⇨ he starred in High Time, a collegiate comedy

TEACHERX: ⇨ Going My Way in 1944

TEACHERX: ⇨ 1949 Disney animated film The Adventures of Ichabod and Mr. Toad, Crosby provided the narration and song vocals

STUDENT: **Did he star in any movies besides the Adventures of Ichabod and Mr. Toad?**

TEACHER: ⇨ Yes, 1960, he starred in High Time, a collegiate comedy with Fabian Forte and Tuesday Weld

TEACHERX: ⇨ Yes, In 1960, he starred in High Time, a collegiate comedy with Fabian Forte and Tuesday Weld

TEACHERX: ⇨ Yes, The Many Adventures of Ichabod and Winnie the Pooh.

TEACHERX: ⇨ Yes, The Legend of Sleepy Hollow segment, and again in the 1977 Disney animated film The Many Adventures of Ichabod and Winnie the Pooh.

TEACHERX: ⇨ Yes, Going My Way in 1944

TEACHERX: ⇨ Yes, 1960, he starred in High Time, a collegiate comedy with Fabian Forte and Tuesday Weld

STUDENT: **How was that movie received?**

TEACHER: ↩ CANNOTANSWER

TEACHERX: ↩ CANNOTANSWER

TEACHERX: ↩ CANNOTANSWER

TEACHERX: ↩ CANNOTANSWER

STUDENT: **What was his next movie after that?**

TEACHER: ↩ He won an Academy Award for Best Actor for Going My Way in 1944 and was nominated for the 1945 sequel,

TEACHERX: ↩ Going My Way

TEACHERX: ↩ The Road to Hong Kong,

TEACHERX: ↩ Shortly before his death in 1977, he had planned another Road film in which he, Hope, and Lamour search for the Fountain of Youth.

TEACHERX: ↩ The Road to Hong Kong,

TEACHERX: ↩ He won an Academy Award for Best Actor for Going My Way in 1944 and was nominated for the 1945 sequel,

STUDENT: **Did he win any other awards?**

TEACHER: ↩ He received critical acclaim for his performance as an alcoholic entertainer in The Country Girl and received his third Academy Award nomination.

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STUDENT: **When did The Country Girl come out?**

TEACHER: ↩ CANNOTANSWER

TEACHERX: ↩ CANNOTANSWER

TEACHERX: ↩ CANNOTANSWER

TEACHERX: ↩ CANNOTANSWER

TEACHERX: ↩ CANNOTANSWER