The History of Movies in America

Exercise 1: Fill in the table with the key events from each period of the evolution of Movies in America.

Name : Yesung Park

Student ID : 2025029761

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Period: | Key events: |
| Edison Vs the Lumiere Brothers | The history of American cinema starts with the rivalry between Thomas Edison and the Lumiere Brothers in the late 1800s. Edison made the Kinetoscope and some of the first short films like “The Kiss” and “The Great Train Robbery.” He focused on making money and getting patents. On the other hand, the Lumiere Brothers in France invented the Cinematographe and showed the first public film screenings. Their films showed real life, like “Workers Leaving the Factory.” While Edison was more about business and invention, the Lumieres were more artistic and focused on everyday moments. |
| Rise of American Films I & II | In the early 1900s to 1920s, American films became more popular worldwide. Nickelodeons, which were small theaters with cheap tickets, helped bring movies to a lot of people. Hollywood became the main place for filmmaking because of its good weather and many landscapes. Big films like D.W. Griffith’s “The Birth of a Nation” and “Intolerance” showed how powerful films could be. Also, movie stars like Charlie Chaplin, Mary Pickford, and Douglas Fairbanks became famous. Big studios like Paramount, Warner Bros., and Fox were created, making Hollywood even stronger. |
| The Studio Era | The 1930s to 1950s is called the Studio Era or Golden Age of Hollywood. Big studios like MGM, Warner Bros., and 20th Century Fox controlled everything from making to showing films. Sound came in with “The Jazz Singer,” and the Production Code set rules on what could be shown. Popular movie types were musicals, comedies, westerns, and film noir. Famous actors like Clark Gable and Bette Davis were big stars. But this time also had problems. In the late 1940s and 1950s, McCarthyism brought fear of communism. The House Un-American Activities Committee went after Hollywood people, and the Hollywood Ten were blacklisted for not testifying. This hurt creativity and made many artists lose work. |
| The 1960’s and 1970’s | The 1960s and 1970s were a time of change and new ideas. The old studio system was declining due to legal regulations and the rise of television. A group of young directors like Martin Scorsese, Francis Ford Coppola, George Lucas, and Steven Spielberg emerged. They were influenced by European films and brought fresh styles and stories. Movies like Easy Rider, Bonnie and Clyde, and The Graduate reflected the counterculture spirit and challenged old norms. These directors focused more on their own vision and made American cinema feel new.  This period was also shaped by the lingering effects of McCarthyism, which had swept through American society from the late 1940s to early 1950s. Many filmmakers were blacklisted on suspicion of communist ties, severely limiting creative freedom. Additionally, the strict moral guidelines of the Hayes Code, which had governed Hollywood film content since the 1930s, began to break down during this era. The weakening of the Hayes Code allowed filmmakers more freedom to explore controversial and socially relevant themes, contributing to the rise of more progressive and experimental films in the 1960s and 1970s. |
| The Blockbuster Era | By the late 1970s and into the 1990s, the Blockbuster Era began. Spielberg’s “Jaws” and Lucas’s “Star Wars” started the idea of big-budget films with lots of marketing and merchandise. Special effects became a big part of movies, especially with companies like Industrial Light & Magic and the use of CGI. Franchises and sequels became very popular, and summer became the top season for big releases. |
| The Independent Era | In the 1990s and 2000s, the Independent Era grew. Independent films became more successful both culturally and financially. Studios like Miramax and events like Sundance Film Festival helped indie filmmakers like Quentin Tarantino, the Coen Brothers, and Richard Linklater get noticed. Indie films often focused on characters and unique stories, different from big Hollywood blockbusters. Many indie films also became popular with both audiences and critics. |
| Great American Film Directors | Throughout American film history, many great directors have shaped the industry. Early figures like D.W. Griffith, John Ford, and Frank Capra set the stage for storytelling in movies. In the New Hollywood period, directors like Scorsese, Coppola, Spielberg, Lucas, and Brian De Palma pushed limits and created new kinds of films. More recently, directors like Quentin Tarantino, Paul Thomas Anderson, Kathryn Bigelow, Greta Gerwig, and Spike Lee have kept American movies creative and exciting around the world. |

References:

The history of film - <https://www.britannica.com/art/history-of-the-motion-picture/The-American-film-industry>

Cinema of the United States - <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cinema_of_the_United_States>