

CHAPITRE 22

LE CINEMA AMERICAIN

In 1895 the French brothers Auguste and Louis Lumière developed the cinematograph. In the 1900s movie companies moved from the East coast to the West, California because in 1896 a man named Harvey Wilcox bought a large field he named Hollywood and laid plans for Prospect Avenue (now Hollywood Boulevard). Film makers found there was enough light during the all year-thanks to the weather- to shoot films and a lot of sceneries. They also moved because Thomas Edison owned almost all the patent relevant to motion picture projection and wanted to enforce them. Hollywood is now the movie capital of the world.

MILESTONES

- 1891: Thomas Edison patented the kinetoscope.
- 1895: French brothers Auguste and Louis Lumière developed the cinematograph.
- 1911: Nestor Company opened the first film studio.
- 1920s beginning of sound movies.
- 1950s: beginning of color movies.

First, films were silent, in black and white and lasted about 20 minutes. After World War 1 the European movie industry was disrupted so European artists decided to go to America. So Hollywood was invaded by directors like Alfred Hitchcock, Ernst Lubitsch, Jean Renoir, actors like Rudolph Valentino, Charlie Chaplin, Marlene Dietrich.

The development of sound films boosted cinema's popularity and in the 1920s Hollywood produced an average of 800 films a year.

Studios controlled the movies they made from the start, the creation, to the end, the distribution in cinemas they owned.

With the end of the silent era new stars appeared like Humphray Bogart or Shirley Temple. Famous writer started to adapt their books in films like Hemingway and Faulker.

The 1930s was the golden age of Hollywood. 400 films were shot a year and 90m Americans went to cinemas every week.

There were comedies, cartoons, western, musicals, thrillers and the most famous films of this era were *King Kong* (1933), *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* (1937) the first Disney movie.

During the Second World War the American government used the industry of cinema as a tool for patriotism. Actors and actresses also took part in the war effort by being a soldier or visiting them on the front line to boost moral.



The 1950s were shaken by the use of color in movies. Those years also saw the investigation of the House Committee on Un-American Activities (HUAC) looking for communist sympathizers in Hollywood who were blacklisted or left for Europe like Charlie Chaplin.

To fight television, the movie industry has to adapt and new technologies like Cinemascope or Cinerama were launched. Blockbuster movies (films with over \$100m in ticket sales, \$200m since 2000) appeared like *Star Wars* (1977), *Jaws* of Steven Spielberg and Coppola's *The Godfather* and became popular.

Each year the Academy of Motion Pictures Arts and Science grants its Academy Awards, popularly called Oscars, during a red-carpet ceremony televised around the world.

