

Hollywood's Rise to Fame

1891

In 1891, Thomas Edison and William Dickson created a moving picture machine called a Kinetoscope. He held the patent to this and so anyone who wanted to use it had to be in business with him or controlled by his company. He would not allow rivals to use his studios or equipment. Other people did copy his ideas but the competition was fierce; since Edison was so powerful it was difficult to start a movie company without him. His business was on the East Coast of the United States. The winters there were cold and so it was difficult to film outdoors in the cold climate. Producers who did not want to be under Edison's control were called "independents" and decided to move far away to make their own rules. Some moved to the quiet, sleepy town of Hollywood, California to set up movie companies. People believe that the movie business officially moved to Hollywood in 1911 when a group of producers rented a building at the corner of Gower Street and Sunset Boulevard and began shooting a film.

1911 -1915

In 1915, The Birth of a Nation, showed a strong support for the American effort. Because of this people began to respect the motion picture industry. Stars such as Mary Pickford, Douglas Fairbanks, and Charlie Chaplin starred in the film. The film was directed by D.W. Griffith.

1914-1918

New people in the movie business started coming to Hollywood and changing the quiet town into a big city. The Hollywood community began to accept the new people in its midst, because they saw how hard the motion picture industry worked to support the American effort during World War 1. They also thought the movie stars and producers who were famous would make their town prestigious and bring wealth.

1927

When movies with sound (talkies) came into being in 1927, soundproof studios were built, and the actual making of movies turned into a true business. Many studios signed stars to their companies who would become very famous.