

Gene Wilder (1933 ? 2016)

Gene Wilder type up I can still remember the first time I saw Gene Wilder in a film. He was playing a mousey accountant by the name of Leo Bloom who, while going over the books of once-famous Broadway Producer Max Bialystock makes the casual observation that it would be possible, though dishonest, to make more money with a Broadway flop than a successful production. The film was 'The Producers,' and the rest they say is history and Gene Wilder screamed his way into being one of my favorite comedic actors as Zero Mostel stood over him while he lay on the floor in a panic screaming, 'Don't Jump on me. Don't Jump on me.'

Gene went on to star in many well-known comedies: *Blazing Saddles*, *Young Frankenstein*, *Stir Crazy*, *Silver Streak* and many others. His role as candy maker Willy Wonka in *Willy Wonka and the Chocolate Factory* will likely never be forgotten. The library owns a number of Gene Wilder's Films and books. You did know he was also a writer, didn't you? The link below will create a list of items to choose from. He will be missed.

The Films and Book of Gene Wilder

Posted by Keith C. on August 31, 2016

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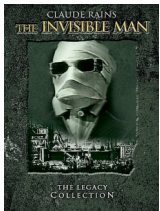
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The Invisible Man (1933)



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Claude Rains was perhaps one of the most recognizable character actors from the classic era of film. He was able to play almost any part. Among his best known roles were Captain Louis Renault in *Casablanca* and Prince John in *The Adventures of Robin Hood*. *The Invisible Man* was his first major film role. Prior to this film he had only appeared on screen in one silent film short. The rest of his early acting life had been spent on the hardwood stages. In *The Invisible Man*, Mr. Rains stars as Dr. Jack Griffin, who disappears one day while working in the lab of his friend and mentor Dr. Cranley. His mysterious disappearance from the lab has Flora, Dr. Cranley's daughter and Jack's girlfriend, worried regarding his whereabouts. Unbeknownst to the two of them Jack Griffin has done more than simply walked away from the lab and them. He has literally disappeared, becoming completely invisible. Wrapped in bandages to hide his invisibility he sets up a lab in a local Inn to work on a way to bring himself back to normalcy. Sadly the formula which made him invisible is also affecting his mind and he is becoming more unbalanced and violent as time passes. [Read more](#)

Posted by Keith C. on August 30, 2016

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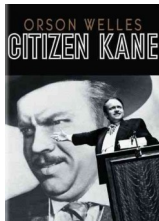
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Citizen Kane



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Citizen Kane tells the fictional story of rich newspaper publisher Charles Foster Kane, his rise to power and eventual decline as he shifts from an idealistic publisher/editor into egotist whose power has gone to his head. It was based loosely on the life of William Randolph Hurst, but not loosely enough to suit Hurst. The film pulled few punches and Hurst was not amused at being the subject, even if indirectly of such a movie. *Citizen Kane* almost completely failed at the box office when it was released and even before the production was finished the film was wrapped in controversy. Director and writer Orson Wells was accused by Hurst of the being a communist, and a homosexual, both of which were considered major issues in 1941. Interestingly he also accused Wells of being a womanizer and Socialist as well. As you can see the accusations leveled at Wells were often contradictory and usually untrue. The major newspapers, owned by Hurst refused to review the film or allow it to be advertised in their pages. In fact, no review of *Citizen Kane* appeared in any paper owned by Hurst until the mid- seventies over 30 years after its release. [Read more](#)

Posted by Keith C. on August 17, 2016

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Cheyenne Social Club



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Harley Sullivan: What kind of business you figure your brother left you?

John O'Hanlan: Well, the letter don't say - but that's just like a lawyer. They don't tell you no more than it takes to confuse you. But it's a... something called the Cheyenne Social Club.

After receiving a letter informing him of the death of his brother John O'Hanlan (James Stewart) leaves his position as a hired hand on a cattle drive to take over the Cheyenne Social Club the business his brother left him in his will. It might seem obvious to us by the name of the business and the movie just exactly what the nature of the business is, but this is a story about a more innocent time and John O'Hanlan is a more innocent man. He is joined on his trek across the country and into Cheyenne by his good friend Harley (Henry Fonda). The film which was directed by Gene Kelly moves fluidly through

the story from one situation to another. Low Key? may be the best way to describe this film about a man of high morals, and a kind heart who suddenly finds himself the owner of the most famous brothel in Wyoming. [Read more](#)

Posted by Keith C. on August 5, 2016

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The Great Race



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A while back I posted an entry about the 1965 movie *Those Magnificent Men and their Flying Machines*. In that post, I mentioned another film that came out the same year called *The Great Race*. While I am entranced by the old planes in *Those Magnificent Men in Their Flying machines*, *The Great Race* is really my favorite of the two. The film stars Tony Curtis as 'The Great Leslie,' a stereotype 1910 pure as gold hero in white and Jack Lemmon as Professor Fate, a stereotype 1910 pure villain in black and tells the story of their race around the world by automobile. Leslie and Professor Fate are not the only cars racing. The race starts with a much larger pack of automobiles; [Read more](#)

Posted by Keith C. on July 21, 2016

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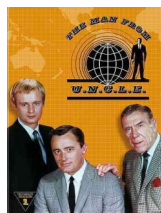
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The Man From U.N.C.L.E. (Television Series)



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The 1960's was the time of the 'Cold War' and the 'Iron Curtain' Both of these terms were indicative of our relationship with Russia during those years. We may not have been in a shooting war, but we were very much at odds with them in terms of our political philosophies and both countries were very much concerned that these differing political philosophies would spread or worse contaminate their own

people. So it is surprising that one of the most popular spy shows on television in the sixties featured an organization made up of agents from many different countries with no regard to the political affiliation or beliefs of their home countries. In fact, the organization's two top agents and their best team consisted of American agent Napoleon Solo (Robert Vaughn) and Russian agent Illya Kuryakin (David McCallum). The series was known as *The Man from U.N.C.L.E.* and it was popular enough to spawn several made-for-TV movies, a spin-off series known as *The Girl from U.N.C.L.E.*, and an attempted movie reboot in 2015. [Read more](#)

Posted by Keith C. on June 21, 2016

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Those Magnificent Men and their Flying Machines



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In 1965, there were two racing comedies released both of them set during the first 10 years of 1900's. The more popular of two was *The Great Race*, which was about an around the world automobile race; the second was *Those Magnificent Men and their Flying Machines*, about an air race between London and Paris in very early and flimsy aircraft. While I will admit there is something special about *The Great Race* and it certainly had more stars who were known in the United States, *Those Magnificent Men and their flying Machines* had something the other did not ? History.

What do I mean by history? First of all, there is the light-hearted review of man's attempts to fly featuring the comic skills of Red Skelton mixed with historic footage of some of the more outrageous of man's attempts and failures to fly before the opening credits. You are not likely to see more historical film footage of man's failed attempts to fly in another movie. But of even greater interest to someone like me is that every plane used in the film was a recreation of a historic airplane from the birth of aviation. In a few cases, they added some safety devices or a small change was made to better protect the pilots, but the planes did fly, or, at least, those that were supposed to fly did, and they were actually flown for the movie's footage. [Read more](#)

Posted by Keith C. on June 8, 2016

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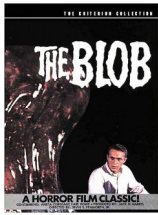
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The Blob (1958)



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If the stories I've heard are true there is a five-gallon bucket somewhere in the United States that contains a batch of red silicone still moist from the 1958 production of *The Blob*. Supposedly it is brought out and displayed at the annual Blobfest in Phoenixville PA where many of the scenes for the movie were shot. *The Blob* is one of many science fiction movies of the 1950's that told of some unknown horror coming from outer space that endangers the world. A lot of these were extremely low budget and featured extremely bad special effects even taking into account the time they were produced. [Read more](#)

Posted by Keith C. on May 23, 2016

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American President



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Not too long ago I was reminded of one of my favorite romantic movies, *The American President*. The film stars Michael Douglas as President Andrew Shepherd and Annette Bening as Sydney Ellen Wade, a lobbyist for an ecological group. President Shepherd is something unusual in the U.S. Presidency, though not in movies, a single father. Shepherd is nearing the end of his first term, up for re-election and wondering if the real reason he was elected was due to a sympathy vote after his wife died of cancer during his campaign. Now, after a little over three years of widowhood, he spots Sydney at a meeting taking place at the White House and decides he would like to ask her out. The problem, obviously, is that he is the President of the United States. His life is a fish bowl and there is a dignity that goes with the office that makes it difficult to have close friends. His oldest and best friend now refuses to call him anything other than 'Mr. President' even during their private games of pool. So just how does a President ask a woman out on a date? What happens when that date is successful and they find themselves strongly attracted to each other? [Read more](#)

Posted by Keith C. on May 11, 2016

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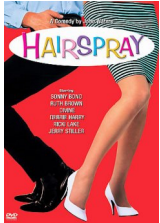
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Hairspray (1988)



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You may have seen the musical. You have most likely seen the movie starring John Travolta, Queen Latifah, and Nikki Blonsky, but have you see the movie that started it all? The original 1988 comedy *Hairspray*, directed and written by John Waters, featured Ricki Lake as Tracy Turnblad and Divine as Edna Turnblad. This movie has a grittier, earthier feel than either the musical or the 2007 movie. This is not too surprising as *Hairspray* was the first film by John Waters to receive less than an 'R' rating. Prior to this film John Waters had been justly known in Hollywood as 'The King of Bad Taste.' *Hairspray* was the first John Water's films to even attempt to appeal to the general public. [Read more](#)

Posted by Keith C. on April 26, 2016

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