

Movie Memories -

Discussion Guide for Volume Three

Show film clips one at a time to a group. Four questions (as noted below) come onscreen at the end of each segment followed by the word "Memories" over a sunset. Pause the DVD on each question for discussion. The group leader can also refer to this Discussion Guide to trigger responses and sharing of memories stirred up by the film.

Disc #1 (49 minutes of film)

"The Pinky Lee Show" (1954, 10 min.)

Would you let your little girl play games with Pinky Lee?

Was there a local TV kids show in your city?

How much would you need to be paid to dance with Pinky and those embarrassed adults?

Which TV kid shows did your kids like?



The hyperactive kid show host Pinky Lee appeared on television from 1950 to 1965. This episode is from 1954. Does anyone remember Pinky Lee?

Local television kid shows were popular in the 1950s and 1960s in most large cities. They were broadcast live with hosts like Clancy the Cop, who showed cartoons and Our Gang shorts while interacting with the audience similar to the national **Howdy Doody Show**. Did you ever attend a local live TV show with a host?

Did you ever appear on local television?

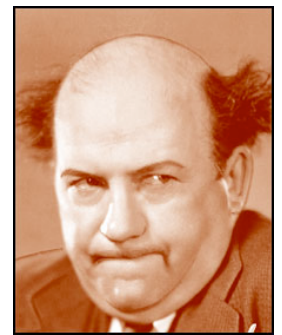
"The Other Fellow" (1940, 9 min.)

Did Edgar Kennedy look familiar? How about the Chevrolets?

It's lucky they outlawed tailgating and cutting in!

Did anyone ever take your parking spot?

What kind of hand signal did you give them?



"Slow Burn" Edgar Kennedy was a comic foil for Laurel and Hardy, Our Gang and the Marx Brothers, and he also had his own series of comedy shorts at RKO during the 1930s and 1940s.

Did you find the film fun, or too much of an ad for Chevrolet cars?

Do you remember using hand signals when turning right or left?

"Our Home Town" (1955, 12 min.)

Can you date the film exactly from the car models?

Did Levittown, PA, remind you of the town where you grew up?

How has America changed since 1950? Write a 300 word essay!

Do you wish you could go back to 1950?

We just paid a visit to Levittown, Pennsylvania in the early 1950s. Levittown looked like a typical American town of that era. Did the film remind you of the town you grew up in?

They proudly showed us each and every police car and fire truck. Do you think Levittown ever had a fire or a crime? Do you think anyone in Levittown ever had fun?

Did you ever work in a large factory actually making something?

Were you civic minded? Did you favor the home-town merchants?

That swimming pool was pretty huge. Did your neighborhood have one? Do you have any swimming pool memories?



“The Story of Betsy Wetsy” (1953, 5 min.)
Ooooo... hundreds of doll heads! Spooky, huh?
Was it fun cleaning up dolls that wet themselves?
What was your favorite doll or army soldier?
Did you ever use a Betsy Wetsy for a squirt gun?

Invented in 1934, the Betsy Wetsy doll that emits bodily fluids like a real baby gained enormous popularity in the 1950s. This promotional story isn't a normal TV commercial for the doll, but more like an early infomercial.

What dolls did you or your sisters or your children play with?

Can anyone explain why they would want a doll that wets her diaper?

Does playing with dolls make little girls into better mothers when they grow up?

Did you have a doll house or an army fort or space station toy set?

“Dancing on the Moon” (1935, 9 min.)
Moral: Don't honeymoon without the bride!
Which animals seemed to enjoy necking the most?
Did kids ever believe the stork brought babies? Seriously.
What was the worst thing your spouse ever did on a vacation?



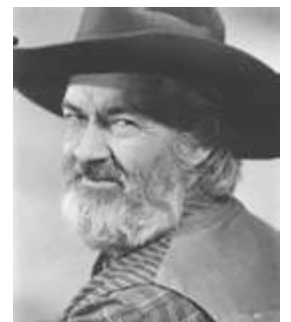
This 1935 cartoon was made by the Max Fleischer Studio that also made Popeye and Betty Boop cartoons. It is called a two-color cartoon because the colors are either blue-green or red-orange.

Necking, kissing and simply going on a honeymoon in 1935 seemed to automatically produce babies. Did kids back then really think the stork brought babies? Were they as innocent as Mr. Cat when he was surprised that he did NOT get any kittens from the stork?

If your spouse went on a honeymoon without you, what would you have done to him or her with an axe or a baseball bat?

“The Gabby Hayes Show” (1951, 4 min.)
Do you remember Gabby Hayes with Hopalong Cassidy and Roy Rogers?
If you don't recall Gabby, then “yer prob'ly one o' them wimmin folks!”
Do you know anyone who told tall tales?
Now is your chance to tell one, ya young whippersnapper!

Gabby Hayes was the most popular western sidekick for John Wayne, Hopalong Cassidy and Roy Rogers. Gabby also had a TV show in 1950 where he told tall tales like the ones you just heard and showed B-westerns with



Buster Crabbe, Hoot Gibson and Tex Ritter.

Do you remember Gabby Hayes? Did you prefer some other western sidekick?

Pop Quiz! Name any cowboy sidekicks that you can think of!

Answers: Smiley Burnette, Andy Devine, Andy Clyde, Tonto (Jay Silverheels), Fuzzy St. John, Max Terhune, Fuzzy Knight, Pinky Lee, Syd Saylor, Sterling Holloway, Pat Buttram, Pat Brady, Roscoe Ates, Dub Taylor, Gordon Jones, Raymond Hatton, Slim Summerville, Leo Carillo.

Disc #2 (45 minutes of film)

“Universal Newsreel” (1955, 7 min.)

Did you find the dresses in the fashion show attractive?

How about the 1955 women’s hair styles?

Has Billy Graham been an inspiration in your life?

Which was your sport -- Ski Jumping or Stock Car Racing?



Can you remember when movie theaters showed newsreels?

Did these short news stories remind you of other sports, political, human interest or disaster stories from the 1950s?

Sing Along Cartoon: “Sing or Swim” (1948, 8 min.)

Did you ever visit Coney Island or a similar boardwalk?

Did you recall some of the words to the song “By the Beautiful Sea?”

Did you, or do you, enjoy singing along to song cartoons?

Do you have an all-time favorite song?



Sing-Along cartoons with words on the screen and the “Bouncing Ball” were quite popular during the 1930s and 40s. Did you ever sing out loud to one of these in a crowded movie theater?

Did you Sing Along with Mitch Miller on television?

Would the world be happier today with more group singing?



“Ain’t Misbehaving” (1942, 4 min.)

Do you recall “Soundies,” which were musical movies for juke boxes, 1941-1947?

Then you’ve got a good memory!

Do you like 1940s jazz and swing music like this?

Did you hear it live in night clubs, or mainly on radio and records?

Jazz singer and pianist Fats Waller swings a great rendition of one of his most popular hits. This short is called a “Soundie,” which were musical videos made from 1941 to 1947 that were played and shown in special juke boxes.

Do you like 1940s Dixieland jazz tunes like this one? Do you like similar music by Louis Armstrong, Cab Calloway, Ella Fitzgerald, Duke Ellington, the Mills Brothers, the Dorsey Brothers, Glenn Miller, the Andrew Sisters and Stan Kenton?

“The Santa Cruz Trail” & “The Corvair in Action” (1952-1960, 7 min.)

Did you like Travelogs at the movies? This one was a subtle car ad!

Did you ever take a car trip through Arizona? (In your Chevy?)

Chevy Corvairs, 1960-1969 -- Did you ever own or ride in one?

What car did you own in 1960?

This short takes us to the land of the giant cactus in Arizona. Chevrolet made the film and gave it to theaters to run for free. Audiences thought it was a travelog, which was a standard short subject in the 1940s, until the subtle plug for Chevrolets at the end shows it's a commercial!

The Chevrolet Corvair was sold from 1960 to 1969. This promotional short was made for the first year of release, 1960. Do you remember Corvairs? Did you like them?

“Drive-In Movies” (1950s, 9 min.)

Pop Quiz! What did you like best at Drive-In Movies:

Scary films, snack bar food, the playground or Other?

What was your favorite Drive-In snack?

Did you like scary films? Did you scream at “The Fly?”

Do you recall the best time you ever had at a Drive-In Theater?

Did you get hungry at the Drive-In. Was the food good?

Did you have a favorite Drive-in theater?

We also watched some coming attraction trailers for horror movies that probably played in drive-ins. While they don't look very scary today, how did audiences or you react in the 1950s in theaters or drive-ins? Did you scream when you saw **The Fly?**

Do you recall horror gimmicks like the wired up theater in “The Tingler?”



“Colgate Comedy Hour” With Abbott & Costello (1951, 10 min.)

Who is your favorite movie comedy team?

Can Bud fool Lou all of the time?

Did you ever perform magic tricks?

Were you good at tricks? If not, then what were you good at?



The musical-variety show “The Colgate Comedy Hour” ran on live television from 1950 to 1955. Dean Martin and Jerry Lewis hosted the show many times, as did Donald O'Connor, Jimmy Durante, Eddie Cantor, Ethel Merman, Fred Allen and Bob Hope. Bud Abbott and Lou Costello also appeared often.

Did you like seeing Bud and Lou? Would you like to see them perform their “Who's on First” baseball routine? Do you enjoy their movies?

Did anyone ever boss you around the way Bud Abbott tells Lou Costello what to do?

Do you like seeing professional magicians?

Pop Quiz! Can you name a few Magicians? (David Copperfield, Houdini, Harry Blackstone, Penn and Teller, Siegfried and Roy, David Blaine, Uri Geller, James Randi and hundreds more!)

Disc #3 (50 minutes of film)

Pepsi Commercials (1940s-1960s, 6 min.)

Did that make you thirsty? Would you like a Pepsi?

Pick your favorite drink: Coffee, Coke, Pepsi, Dr. Pepper or Beer?

Your generation was the Pepsi generation.

Do you still think young?

Raise your hand if you prefer Pepsi over Coca-Cola! Did Pepsi taste better in those large glass bottles? Did you ever sing the Pepsi song?

The woman selling Pepsi in her kitchen and at a soda fountain was Polly Bergen.

The Disneyland ad showed a few attractions that are not there anymore - the submarine and bumper flying saucers. Did anyone visit Disneyland in the 1950s? Did you have a Pepsi?

Cartoon: "Play Safe" (1936, 8 min.)

Did you ever play with something dangerous?

Did you ever have a scary dream?

Did you ever watch trains, walk the rails or count train cars?

Did you play with toy trains?

Did you live near train tracks? Were you ever tempted to hop on a train?

Did your parents warn you not to do something dangerous, but you did it anyways?

Did you ever get hurt doing something you knew you should not have done.



Bing Crosby in "I Surrender Dear" (1931, 8 min.)

Bing Crosby first starred in this Mack Sennett comedy in 1931!

Did you laugh or swoon? Way back then or today?

Do you remember Bing on radio, records, movies, stage and TV?

What was Christmas without Bing Crosby?

We just watched the first half of Bing Crosby's very first starring film -- "I Surrender Dear" from 1931. This was a Mack Sennett comedy.



Let's just talk about Bing. Did you like him or love him? Did you listen to Bing on the radio or buy his records or see his movies? Which are your favorite Bing movies? How about his TV specials in the 1950s and 60s? Who remembers Bing Crosby?

Gene Autry in "The Phantom Empire" (1935, 7 min.)

Do you remember when Gene Autry met a science-fiction world deep underground?

Did you enjoy adventure serials shown in Saturday Matinees?

Could you wait until next week to see what happened?

Did you ever think the hero got killed?

This is Gene Autry's first starring role in a movie, and was the only science-fiction western serial ever made! Do you think the robot burned Gene to death at the end of chapter ten?

Did you enjoy serials at Saturday Matinees? Did you like westerns? Do you like Gene Autry, or do you prefer some other western heroes like Hopalong Cassidy or Roy Rogers?

Laurel and Hardy: "The Flying Deuces" (1939, 21 min.)

Were Laurel and Hardy your favorite comedy team?

Did you ever have a best friend like Stanley?

What was the funniest comedy you ever saw?

Ollie came back as a horse! Do people reincarnate?

This 1939 comedy stars Stan Laurel and Oliver Hardy.

Were Laurel and Hardy your favorite comedy team? How would you compare them to Abbott and Costello or Dean Martin and Jerry Lewis? Some lesser known comedy teams were Wheeler and Woolsey and Olson and Johnson, and even the Bowery Boys.



What is the funniest movie you ever saw? Did you ever see a comedy in a theater that was so funny that you laughed until it hurt?

Did you have a good friend or know anyone who was as dumb as Stan Laurel?

The movie ends with a joke about Oliver Hardy getting killed in the airplane crash but being reincarnated as a horse. This is pretty weird for a comedy. However, it suggests an obvious question -- if you could come back to life as an animal, which animal would you like to be?

Do you think that people reincarnate, or come back to life in other bodies, after they die?

Note to moderator: Each segment ends with the word "Memories" onscreen over a sunset. This is your cue to pause the DVD player. Otherwise the next segment will begin without time for discussion. You can experiment with pausing on each question while it is fresh in the viewer's mind and right there on the screen. You can certainly run several short segments before discussing them, or run segments without any discussion.

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