

The Great Depression Movies & Celebrities Reading: Shirley Temple

Shirley Temple

During the 1930s, a young actress named Shirley Temple delighted movie-goers throughout the nation. Why was Shirley Temple so popular? How is she remembered today?

Shirley Temple was born in 1928 and started acting almost as soon as she could walk. Her first acting roles came in 1932 when she was only three years old! By 1934, she became a leading star. The movie *Stand Up and Cheer!* brought her to national attention. That same year, the film *Bright Eyes* featured the song "On the Good Ship Lollipop", which became her signature song.



Throughout the rest of the decade, Shirley Temple became one of the biggest stars in Hollywood. She starred in twenty different films from 1934 to 1939. *The Little Colonel*, *Curly Top*, *The Littlest Rebel*, *Dimples*, *Heidi*, and *The Little Princess* were just a few of the movies that propelled her to international fame.

Most of her film roles were very similar. She was always the little girl with the bright smile who could win over the hearts of the stingiest misers and soften the most calloused of individuals. She could reunite couples or solve any other problem that came along. The movies always featured many song and dance numbers in which Shirley could showcase her talents. These heart-warming stories provided much needed inspiration for many viewers who were enduring the woes of the Great Depression.

Words to watch for:

*signature miser
calloused cherished*

Throughout the 1930s, many products were marketed featuring Shirley's likeness. From Shirley Temple dolls to mugs and cereal bowls, she was everywhere. Other items that bore her name included a line of Shirley Temple dresses, soap, sheet music, mirrors, and numerous other products.

Temple remained an active actress throughout the 1940s and 50s, appearing in a number of films and television programs. However, she would never be as successful as she was during the decade of the 1930s. She retired from acting and became an ambassador for the United States. She was ambassador to Ghana from 1974 to 1976 and then to Czechoslovakia from 1989 to 1992.

Shirley Temple died in February of 2014 at the age of 85. To this day, she remains one of the most beloved performers in the history of the motion picture industry. Her films are still cherished by millions of adoring fans, and she will continue to live on as a beloved piece of American history.