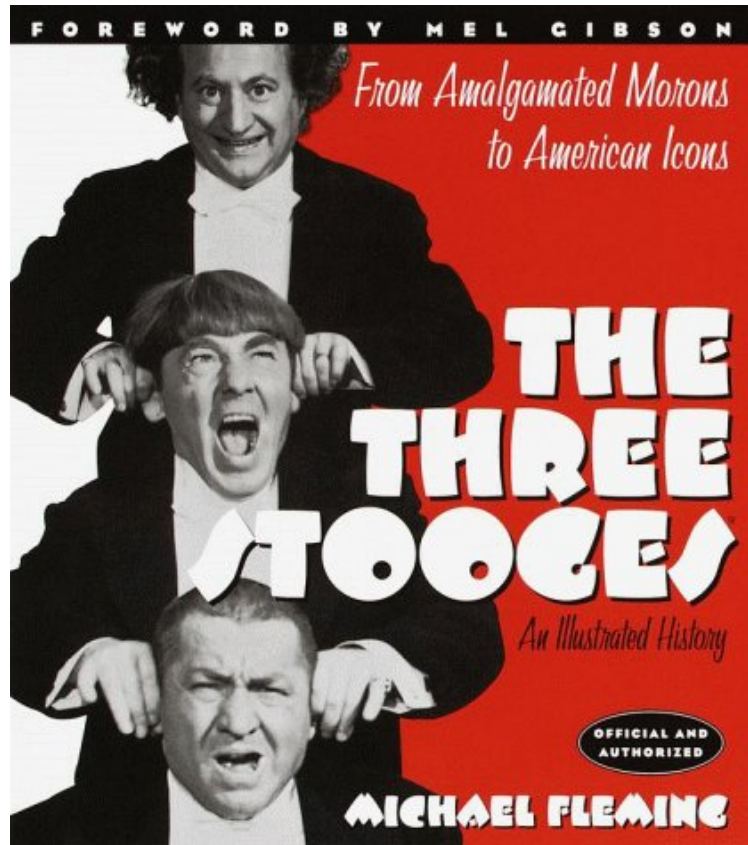


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## The Three Stooges: An Illustrated History, from Amalgamated Morons to American Icons

Michael Fleming

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**Michael Fleming : The Three Stooges: An Illustrated History, from Amalgamated Morons to American Icons** before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Three Stooges: An Illustrated History, from Amalgamated Morons to American Icons:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. I always enjoy reading about the Three Stooges. By Daniel J. Kaufmann I always enjoy reading about the Three Stooges. This book provided some good content, but not enough. Many areas are barely touched on. An example is Shemp's death. Although this is a major event in Stogie history, it's relegated to a couple paragraphs at best. Almost half the book is detail on each of the Stooges shorts. While somewhat entertaining, I would rather have more information on the Stooges lives than just their shorts. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Kings of the Movie Shorts By movie lover I haven't finished the book, only about 1/2 way through, but it is really a good read. I have loved watching the Three Stooges since I was a little kid and now I watch their movie shorts on one of our stations on Saturday night. They were the masters. I never did think all that violence was necessary but they wouldn't be who they were/are if it wasn't for the eye pokes, bashing lamps or whatever on heads, etc. They were great. I have seen their movie shorts over and over again but always crack up from them.

Reading about their lives, especially how Curly had such a sad and pretty short life, was very interesting. I felt so bad for him. He was my favorite.<sup>3</sup> of 5 people found the following review helpful. Not much here  
By Dave Schwinghammer  
Fleming's illustrated history isn't much more than a glorified magazine article. There's a factoid here and a factoid there: Moe was a Shakespearean actor on the Mississippi river boats. Larry could've been a concert violinist. Curly had four wives. Shemp was a hypochondriac. The Stooges' father, Solomon, had a bit part in one of their shorts. The truly interesting stuff--Ted Healy's murder, Curly's stroke, Shemp's sudden death--is given short shrift. The Stooges were in their thirties when they began to make the shorts. I would have liked to know more about their vaudeville careers. Moe's daughter is still alive. I don't think Fleming made full use of her as a source. Fleming spends a chapter trying to explain why men and boys love the Stooges; whereas, women seem to hate them. Guys like violence. Slapping people is funny. "The Stooges were a beacon of hope to the average underachieving male who could watch a trio of homely midgets with comical haircuts romance stunningly beautiful platinum blondes a foot taller than they, even though they were either unemployed or absolutely incompetent in menial jobs." Mel Gibson wrote the foreword for the book and Mel Brooks tries to explain Stooze appeal, as does Danny Jacobson, co-creator of MAD ABOUT YOU. The text is complete by page 138. Part three is a capsulization of the 190 shorts the Stooges made. They don't make a whole lot of sense; I don't know if that's Fleming's fault or the cobbled together plot lines. All I know is they were really hard to read. As the title indicates, this is an illustrated history; unfortunately, the illustrations are mainly professional. There is one nice one of the Horwitz brothers' parents, Jennie and Solomon (She looks like Curly, he resembles Moe), but not much else.

More people today can name the members of the Three Stooges than can name three justices of the Supreme Court. The Stooges are comedy icons whose enduring appeal and slapstick legacy have made them one of the most famous and beloved comedy troupes in the world. Michael Fleming's *The Three Stooges*™ is the first complete, authorized biography of the men who made pie fights part of our national cultural heritage. A juggernaut of wise guys, headlocks, and unforgettable insults, this book tells the whole history of the Stooges, starting with their origins in the golden years of vaudeville, when the boys from Brooklyn honed their craft. Moe, Curly, and Shemp Howard were born Moses, Jerome, and Samuel Horwitz--and were believed for many years to be the three least accomplished sons of their Lithuanian immigrant parents. Ultimately, of course, the Three Stooges reinvented the rules of slapstick comedy: never be caught unprepared in a pie fight, never slap one wise guy in the face if you can slap three in a row, and never underestimate the value of a good poke in the eye. Signed in 1934 by Columbia Pictures to a renewable contract that had them making at least nine short films a year, the Stooges learned firsthand about the sharks swimming through Hollywood's early waters. And after nearly a quarter century of producing the short films for which the Stooges are so well known and loved, the studio declined to renew their contract in 1954, and the pioneering pie-throwing professionals lost their jobs. Fittingly, though, Moe Co. were destined to have the last laugh: the advent of television revived their careers after the decline of vaudeville and Hollywood shorts, and a new generation of belly laughs was born. From the Stooges' humble origins to movie stardom to comedy legends, there's something here for every level of fan--from folks who watched them on television as a kid to Stooze scholars and certified "knuckleheads." Featuring over two hundred photographs, many of them rare; interviews with Stooze friends and families; and a complete filmography with every "woob-woob" and crashed society cocktail party lovingly detailed, this book will be treasured by all Stoozedom.

.com The Three Stooges are admittedly an acquired taste. To fully appreciate them, as with NASCAR racing, practical jokes, and Steely Dan, it helps to be a guy. But there's no denying the durability of the Stooges' fearless physical performances. Every eye poke, noggin crack, face slap, and nyuk-nyuk-nyuk feels as edgy today as it did in their earliest two-reelers, and it's safe to say that their routines, for better or worse, helped pave the way for the Farrelly brothers, the Zucker brothers, Adam Sandler, and Jim Carrey. Michael Fleming, a columnist for *Daily Variety*, has diligently compiled the history of the Stooges, from their vaudeville days through the height of their fame in the '30s to the '50s and beyond. What *An Illustrated History* lacks in clear organization it more than makes up for in attention to detail, about the lives of Moe Howard, Larry Fine, and Curly Howard (plus the other "third Stooges," Shemp Howard, Joe Besser, and Curly Joe DeRita); the genesis of their routines; and the heavy-handed business deals that left them, the most successful comedians of their day, with virtually no residual income. The book's best segment dissects each two-reeler and film (including *Men in Black*, the only Stooze short to be nominated for an Oscar), with a wealth of publicity photos and a tally of slaps, eye pokes, and head conks. Might Fleming make even non-Stooze fans appreciate their humor? Why, soitenly. --Anne Hurley  
From Booklist  
Love 'em or hate 'em, the Three Stooges are Hollywood icons. Fleming definitely loves 'em and presents a vital chronicle of their career. The classic Stooze lineup of Moe, Larry, and Curly dominates the book, but Shemp, producer-director Jules White, various family members (notably Moe's daughter Joan, a Stooze scholar in her own right), and the lesser Stooges of the post-Shemp era aren't neglected. Fleming sets down dates and references in a highly readable chronology that sets the Stooze saga straight and deflates such misconceptions as the myth that the Stooges never got a raise. Salaries cited in pertinent documents attest that the

Stooges, though exploited by legendary Columbia studio boss Harry Cohn, did get regular raises. Fleming summarizes all 190 Stooges shorts and tallies slaps, eye pokes, head conks, and pies thrown for each. The Stooges' Oscar nomination, their send-up of Hitler that preceded Chaplin's, and their career assist to Frank Capra are all mentioned, too. Every self-respecting movie-book collection has to have this gem. Mike Tribby

From the Inside Flap

More people today can name the members of the Three Stooges than can name three justices of the Supreme Court. The Stooges are comedy icons whose enduring appeal and slapstick legacy have made them one of the most famous and beloved comedy troupes in the world. Michael Fleming's *The Three Stooges*™ is the first complete, authorized biography of the men who made pie fights part of our national cultural heritage. A juggernaut of wise guys, headlocks, and unforgettable insults, this book tells the whole history of the Stooges, starting with their origins in the golden years of vaudeville, when the boys from Brooklyn honed their craft. Moe, Curly, and Shemp Howard were born Moses, Jerome, and Samuel Horwitz--and were believed for many years to be the three least accomplished sons of their Lithuanian immigrant parents. Ultimately, of course, the Three Stooges reinvented the rules of slapstick comedy: never be caught unprepared in a pie fight, never slap one wise guy in the face if you can slap three in a row, and never underestimate the value of a good poke in the eye. Signed in 1934 by Columbia Pictures to a renewable contract that had them making at least nine short films a year, the Stooges learned firsthand about the sharks swimming through Hollywood's early waters. And after nearly a quarter century of producing the short films for which the Stooges are so well known and loved, the studio declined to renew their contract in 1954, and the pioneering pie-throwing professionals lost their jobs. Fittingly, though, Moe Co. were destined to have the last laugh: the advent of television revived their careers after the decline of vaudeville and Hollywood shorts, and a new generation of belly laughs was born. From the Stooges' humble origins to movie stardom to comedy legends, there's something here for every level of fan--from folks who watched them on television as a kid to Stooge scholars and certified "knuckleheads." Featuring over two hundred photographs, many of them rare; interviews with Stooge friends and families; and a complete filmography with every "woob-woob" and crashed society cocktail party lovingly detailed, this book will be treasured by all Stoogedom.