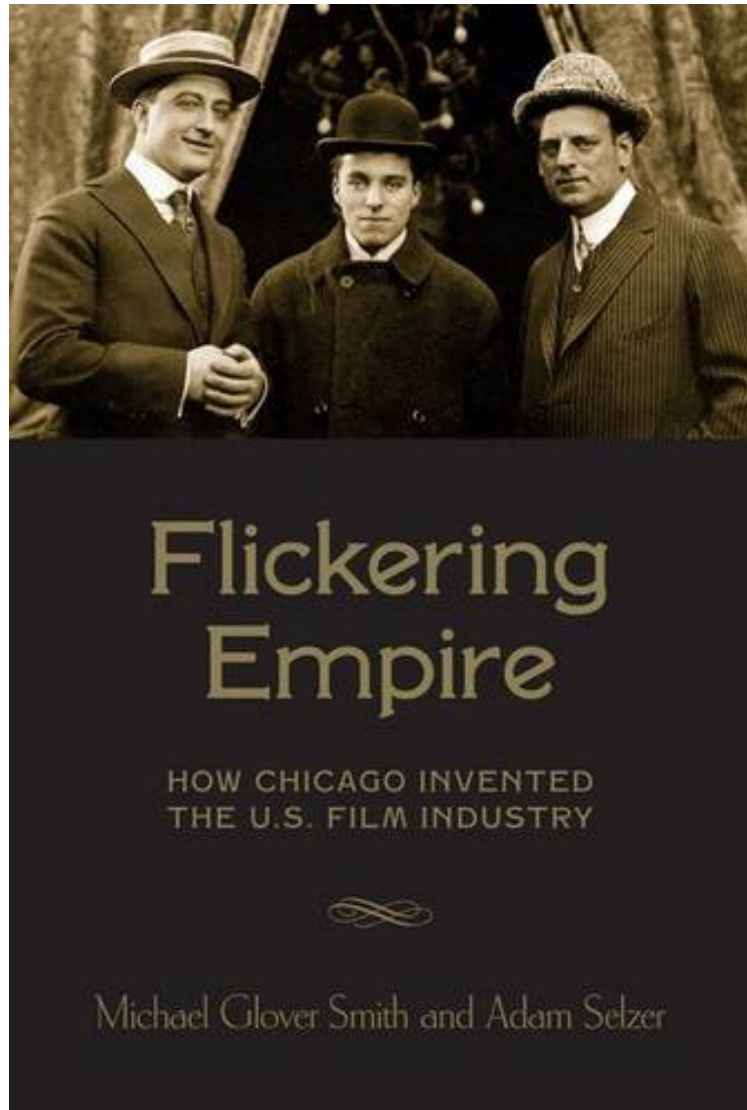


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Flickering Empire: How Chicago Invented the U.S. Film Industry

Michael Glover Smith, Adam Selzer

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3 of 3 people found the following review helpful. I was afraid that this would be written more like a reference book and luckily it's very accessibleBy Jillian MckeownI live in Chicago, know zero about film history and I was able to grasp the information because of how the authors relate the facts in a more story-telling style, as opposed to a more technical style inherent in many books on history. I was afraid that this would be written more like a reference book

and luckily it's very accessible. I am a public librarian and will definitely recommend to library patrons interested in film history and/or Chicago history. 2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. A new look at the history of film
By janice m. smith This is an excellent work, very readable to non film persons. The attention to details is superb, even to points not associated directly to the narrative. The authors make a valid case for Chicago starting the film industry, and their research is voluminous and solid. The manner in which the authors develop the main characters and their interaction with one another makes this book read like a novel. Great read and very informative. 1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Chicago was important to a number of industries in its ...
By Laura L. Enright Chicago was important to a number of industries in its early days and the film industry is no exception. This is a fascinating study of those early days when Chicago was Hollywood before Hollywood existed. Anyone interested in Chicago and the early days of film will be interested in this book.

Flickering Empire tells the fascinating yet little-known story of how Chicago served as the unlikely capital of American film production in the years before the rise of Hollywood (1907-1913). As entertaining as it is informative, Flickering Empire straddles the worlds of academic and popular nonfiction in its vivid illustration of the rise and fall of the major Chicago movie studios in the mid-silent era (principally Essanay and Selig Polyscope). Colorful, larger-than-life historical figures, including Thomas Edison, Charlie Chaplin, Oscar Micheaux, and Orson Welles, are major players in the narrative in addition to important though forgotten industry titans, such as "Colonel" William Selig, George Spoor, and Gilbert "Broncho Billy" Anderson.

Long overdue... (Chicago Tribune) An exceptional new book... that immediately joins the ranks of essential film references (Chicagoist) [Flickering Empire] is a goldmine for popular culture historians and early-film buffs.... Recommended. (Choice) A fascinating read from beginning to end. (The Midwest Book)
About the Author Michael Glover Smith is an independent filmmaker whose most recent films, At Last, Okemah! (2009) and The Catastrophe (2011), have won multiple awards at film festivals across the United States. He has taught film history and aesthetics at Oakton Community College, Triton College, Harold Washington College, and the College of Lake County, and lectures at Northwestern University and Facets Multimedia. Adam Selzer lives in Chicago and is a tour guide and the author of several books on history and folklore, including The Smart Aleck's Guide to American History.