



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

*Michael Glover Smith, Adam Selzer*

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*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.

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