

“THE OUTCOME OF THAT DISCONTENT:”  
OSCAR MICHEAUX, MOTION PICTURES  
AND THE RACE FOR DIGNITY

Sarah Weiss

Introduction

At the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, as the advent of new technologies blossomed, the silent motion picture era was launched. Movies mirrored an American society that was strongly divided. In particular, one group of Americans, African Americans, were only portrayed through the eyes of the white majority, and thus left out of defining themselves in the fledgling motion picture industry. Oscar Micheaux, an African-American film pioneer, reacted to the need for a motion picture industry that served the African American community, and that would remedy the negative stereotypes of African Americans portrayed in motion pictures.<sup>1</sup> Although movies did not invent the stereotype of the American Black as irresponsible, lazy, and cowardly, the popular movies contributed greatly to reinforcing and enhancing it.<sup>2</sup>

As the cameras rolled, Chicago was truly the “Dream City.”<sup>3</sup> Before Hollywood captured the motion picture industry, Chicago, from 1907 to 1917, was the film capital of the world. Movie

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Sarah Weiss is a Senior at the Lincoln Park High School in Chicago, where she wrote this paper for Mr. Ron Smith’s Advanced Placement United States History course in the 1999/2000 academic year.

production companies such as the Selig Polyscope Company and the Essanay Film Manufacturing Company monopolized the industry.<sup>4</sup> Beginning with the invention of Edison's Kinetoscope, inventors and film producers such as William Selig, George Spoor, and Gilbert Anderson, invented equipment to project moving pictures onto large screens.<sup>5</sup>

Methods of mass communication evolved during this time period, resulting in the developing technologies of the motion picture industry. Motion pictures provided entertainment and information for the public. The power and mystery of the new technology mesmerized people; images on the screen were often assumed to be the truth, including inaccurate representations of races. In response, a group of African-American independent filmmakers, including Oscar Micheaux, tried to "uplift the race" as well as to create unity within the black community.<sup>6</sup> The rising motion picture industry's stereotypes and Micheaux's response were the beginning of a new direction inspired by technology: the movement away from a divided society. As this era unfolded, and as early movies hardened the stereotypical lines between racial groups, Micheaux used the medium of the motion picture to communicate his ideas, and to portray African Americans with dignity and respect, in contrast to the stereotypes of popular motion pictures. Micheaux did not just direct films; he directed society away from resolute divisions.

### Early Film in Chicago

It took the genius of Thomas Edison to produce a workable moving picture machine. In 1889, he developed the Kinetoscope, a peep-show cabinet that contained a continuous film passing in front of an eyepiece viewer, allowing people literally to watch "moving pictures."<sup>7</sup> The Kinetoscope inspired a Chicagoan to begin his own experiments. William N. Selig, a magician in a minstrel road show, saw his first Kinetoscope in 1895. With his show business experience, Selig perceived the enormous

financial potential of further developing motion picture technology.<sup>8</sup> Selig also realized that the real money was not in selling the projectors but in selling the tickets to the theatres. As such, he turned his attention to developing a technology that would project filmstrips onto a wall or screen. In 1896, the Selig Polyscope Company made its first motion pictures.<sup>9</sup> They were sold to vaudeville houses in Chicago.<sup>10</sup> By 1907, the Selig Polyscope studio billed itself as “the biggest motion picture plant in the country.”<sup>11</sup>

Film production prospered in Chicago. In addition to Selig Polyscope and another early film company, Essanay Film Manufacturing, there were a number of other small production companies.<sup>12</sup> Chicago seemed to be the logical location for the young film industry, since investment capital was easily available to finance new ventures. Chicago’s industrial base could support companies that produced technical as well as advertising films. Chicago’s transportation advantages also meant that studios could easily ship prints of films to any part of the country within three days.<sup>13</sup> Most films told realistic stories about urban life, and Chicago soon became the set: fires, crowds, streetcars and stores provided a backdrop.

John R. Freuler, a largely forgotten movie pioneer, established American Film Manufacturing at 6227 North Broadway in Chicago. Almost immediately, Freuler began sending production crews out West. (Chicago’s climate was not suited for year-round filming as California’s was.) Freuler’s most important accomplishment was to secure the services in 1916 of English actor Charlie Chaplin from Essanay. Chaplin was in “The Rink” and “Easy Street,” which were both filmed in southern California. D.W. Griffith also worked for Freuler during those years. Griffith, however, chose to concentrate on only one film, personally directing the 1915 release of *Birth of a Nation*.<sup>14</sup>

For the first time, a medium of mass communication existed that was both entertaining and accessible to the average person. Motion pictures could reach a much wider and more diverse audience, an audience that did not need to be educated. Prior to movies, if one wanted to be knowledgeable about the

outside world, one had to be literate. The new movies did not require much, if any, reading ability, except for the occasional title frame. They simply depended on watching. They were more entertaining, and eventually there was something for everyone to share.

From the very beginning, film offered a substitute for reality and portrayed divisions among the American black and white experience.<sup>15</sup> Many ethnic groups were stereotyped in early films. The Indian, or the “red” man, was played by a white with makeup, and was depicted as treacherous and violent. Jews were always confused and clumsy; Swedes were portrayed as obtuse; Irish passed out on front stoops. Even in the “all-white” films, there were stereotypes. Tall men were the heroes, and blondes were heroines. An authentic representation of the African-American experience was nowhere to be seen.<sup>16</sup> In early films, the black man was generally portrayed as subservient and happy-go-lucky. White actors had been imitating blacks since the first minstrel shows in 1840, and even before then in monologues and dances. For over 75 years, whites played blacks in “black face” by putting on thick black makeup. Many whites in the North saw the stereotypes of African Americans in the movies, and believed them. In early films, blacks played jungle natives, such as when Selig hired Pullman porters in Chicago to play “authentic” Africans in one of his most famous movies, *Big Game Hunting in Africa*. Many blacks also played comic buffoons or servile positions as maids and domestic help.<sup>17</sup>

In an effort to repudiate these stereotypes, African American entrepreneurs, eager to see an accurate screen reflection of their race, began to produce their own films. These pictures were known as “race movies” and were often low-budget and technically inadequate. Yet African-American moviemakers took on tough issues of the black community, including racial prejudice, poverty, light versus dark skin, and interracial relations.<sup>18</sup> African-American studios popped up around the nation, in cities such as Los Angeles, Philadelphia, and Lincoln, Nebraska, but Chicago became the center for enterprising independent black filmmakers. Popular jazz acts and vaudeville performers either lived in or

passed through Chicago, creating a diverse talent pool.<sup>19</sup> The initiation of black cinema was a tool of unification for the black community. Ossie Davis, a noted African-American film actor, stated,

There were black people behind the scenes, telling our black story to us as we sat in black theaters. We listened blackly, and a beautiful thing happened to us as we saw ourselves on the screen. We knew that sometimes it was awkward, that sometimes the films behaved differently than the ones we saw in the white theater. It didn't matter. It was ours, and even the mistakes were ours, the fools were ours, the villains were ours, the people who won were ours, and the losers were ours. We were comforted by that knowledge as we sat, knowing that there was something about us up there on that screen, controlled by us, created by us—our own image, as we saw ourselves...when we wanted the reality of our own experience.<sup>20</sup>

William Foster, a business representative for the Pekin Theatre as well as a writer for the *Chicago Defender*, Chicago's premier African-American newspaper, responded to the stereotypes in white films. He opened the first African American-owned and operated film production company in the United States in 1913. Named the Foster Photoplay Company, it was located in the Grand Theater at State and 31<sup>st</sup> Street in Chicago. Foster once wrote, "Nothing has done so much to awaken race consciousness of the colored man in the United States as the motion picture. It has made him hungry to see himself as he has come to be."<sup>21</sup>

In 1917, Luther J. Pollard, an African American, along with a group of white investors, founded the Ebony Film Corporation. Pollard was a strong advocate for racial pride.<sup>22</sup> "His dream was to found a company of black players for slapstick comedies that everyone, black or white, could enjoy. He did not want to limit his audiences to one race only."<sup>23</sup> Writing to an African-American filmmaker in Los Angeles, Pollard stated,

We specialize in comedy...You will find (our films) to be clean and without those situations which are usually attributed to the American Negro. We proved to the public that colored players can put over good comedy without any of that crap shooting, chicken stealing, razor display, watermelon eating stuff that the colored people generally have been a little disgusted at seeing...<sup>24</sup>

## Oscar Micheaux, Film Pioneer

One of the most influential African-American filmmakers to establish himself in this period was Oscar Micheaux. Micheaux responded to the desire for unity within the black community as well as to the stereotypes in early films. He was the first African-American man to produce a “talkie.” He was the only African American to produce films in both the silent and sound eras.<sup>25</sup> Micheaux once stated, “The appreciation my people have shown my maiden efforts convinces me that they want racial photoplays, depicting racial life, and to that task, I have consecrated my mind and efforts.”<sup>26</sup> Oscar Micheaux was born into a modest black family in 1884, in Metropolis, Illinois. He was one of thirteen children of former slaves, and most of his early life is unknown. He left Metropolis at the age of seventeen and went to work as a Pullman porter in Chicago.<sup>27</sup> Dreaming of an independent life, he was inspired by the teachings of Booker T. Washington, who urged blacks to get along with whites in order to gain economic advantage, and the pioneer philosophy of Horace Greeley, who encouraged everyone to go West and open up the country. Micheaux acquired two 160-acre tracts of land in Gregory County, South Dakota in 1905, despite no previous experience in agriculture.<sup>28</sup> His experiences as a homesteader were the basis for his first novel, *The Conquest: The Story of a Negro Pioneer* (1913).<sup>29</sup> Micheaux described this book as “a true story of a Negro who was discontented and the circumstances that were the outcome of that discontent.”<sup>30</sup> He rewrote the book into his most famous written work, *The Homesteader* (1917), which he published and distributed himself by traveling across the West, selling door-to-door to the white farmers and businessmen in small towns. The book was about what those farmers knew, being a homesteader in a hard land.<sup>31</sup>

In 1915, Micheaux lost his homestead due to financial problems resulting from a drought.<sup>32</sup> He moved to Sioux City, Iowa, where he established the Western Book and Supply Company. He continued to write novels, selling them himself, door-to-door. Meanwhile, in Lincoln, Nebraska, George and Noble

Johnson, brothers who managed another African-American-based company, the Lincoln Motion Picture Company of Los Angeles, read *The Homesteader*. They had been producing films for black audiences.<sup>33</sup> The Johnson Brothers and Micheaux considered a deal: the Lincoln Company would buy the rights to his novel.<sup>34</sup> Micheaux demanded that if a motion picture were to be made of his book, he must direct it. The Johnsons turned him down because he had no experience in filmmaking. Micheaux then reorganized the Western Book and Supply Company into the Micheaux Film and Book Company and opened up an office at 538 South Dearborn in Chicago. He began to raise money for his own film of *The Homesteader*. He went to the white farmers and small businessmen around Sioux City, Iowa where he also maintained an office, asking them to buy stock in his new company. In the end, he raised enough money to begin production in Chicago. The film turned out to be an eight-reel feature, first exhibited at Chicago's 8<sup>th</sup> Regiment Armory on Thursday, February 20, 1919.<sup>35</sup> An advertisement in the *Chicago Defender* described *The Homesteader* as "destined to mark a new epoch in the achievements of the Darker Races...every Race man and woman should cast aside their skepticism regarding the Negro's ability as a motion picture star, and go and see, not only for the absorbing interest obtaining therein, but as an appreciation of those finer arts which no race can ignore and hope to obtain a higher plane of thought and action."<sup>36</sup> It dubbed the film as "the greatest of all Race productions."<sup>37</sup> Over the next ten years, Micheaux produced over thirty films, all but two in Chicago, and became the most successful African-American film producer of the era.<sup>38</sup>

Most of the early films of the time were musicals, comedies, Westerns, light romances or gangster films. But Micheaux believed in emphasizing black themes for his black audiences. Micheaux used the new technology to deliver a message. Themes he often focused on included African Americans passing for white, intermarriage, injustice of the courts against blacks, and even the dangerous issues of lynching and the Ku Klux Klan.<sup>39</sup> The films were shown nationally at special matinee performances or midnight performances held specifically for black audiences nation-

wide.<sup>40</sup> Micheaux often used actors from the Lafayette Players in New York and cast his actors on the basis of type. All his stars were modeled after white Hollywood personalities.<sup>41</sup> Light-skinned actors usually played leads, and Micheaux was later severely criticized for this.<sup>42</sup> Micheaux's work captured the racial divisions of America. His message for African Americans was important, but his belief in educating American society was monumental.

*Within Our Gates: A Response to Birth of a Nation*

"If D.W. Griffith's *Birth of a Nation* (1915) was history 'written with lightning,' [as Woodrow Wilson put it], Oscar Micheaux's *Within Our Gates* (1919) was history written in smoke."<sup>43</sup> A stellar example of Micheaux's direct response to negative stereotypes was his film, *Within Our Gates*, one of the most controversial uses of motion picture. This film was a direct response to D.W. Griffith's *Birth of a Nation*, as African American communities throughout the country were outraged by that film's distortion of the race.<sup>44</sup> The NAACP launched a formal protest against the film, setting up boycotts and picket lines.<sup>45</sup> In response, Micheaux scrambled for money to make a new film that would showcase African Americans in a positive light as well as confront timely racial issues.<sup>46</sup>

Released just five months after the Chicago Race Riots and the "Red Summer of 1919," *Within Our Gates* contained a riot-lynching scene which reflected American race relations in the early part of the century. The film included a sequence depicting the hanging and burning of two innocent African Americans,<sup>47</sup> a woman and her husband, a black sharecropper, who was accused of murdering his employer, a white plantation owner.<sup>48</sup> The sequence was no more than a short scene in a flashback but it generated strong resistance. Many African American as well as white communities felt the film was too controversial, so the film's national distribution was limited. The same community that had welcomed Micheaux's first film, *The Homesteader* (1919), and applauded the success of the Micheaux Film and Book Company,

protested against *Within Our Gates*.<sup>49</sup> A permit to show the film was denied by the Chicago Board of Movie Censors after its first screening, but a more liberal faction agreed to a second viewing, inviting area officials and representatives of Chicago's African-American community.<sup>50</sup> Alderman Louis Anderson and Edward Wright, the Corporation Counsel for Chicago, believed that the film should be shown despite the unsettling lynching scene. Others argued that *Within Our Gates* would cause more riots. The morning the film was supposed to open, the interracial Methodist and Episcopal Ministers' Alliance appealed to Chicago's Mayor, William "Big Bill" Thompson and Chief of Police John J. Garrity, and both officials refused to censor the film.<sup>51</sup> The film opened at the Vendome Theatre at 3145 South State Street on January 12, 1920 to a packed audience.<sup>52</sup> It was advertised in the *Chicago Defender* as "the greatest preachment against race prejudice." The *Defender* also stated that "it is the claim of the author and producer that, while it is a bit radical, it is the biggest protest against Race prejudice, lynching and concubinage that was ever written or filmed and that there are more thrills and gripping, holding moments than was ever seen in any individual production...People interested in the welfare of the Race cannot afford to miss seeing this great production, and remember, it TELLS IT ALL."<sup>53</sup>

Micheaux's film presented an African-American middle-class perspective of America. "The attempt to ban screenings of Micheaux's film, then, was an attempt to silence the protest against lynching. *Within Our Gates* was thus historically linked to fear of cataclysmic social change, a linkage obfuscated by the smoke screen of 'race riot'... Micheaux's film was meant less to inspire action or race solidarity than to work a kind of moral self-affirmation...Micheaux's spectacle of lynching was rhetorically organized to encourage the feeling of righteous indignation in the Black spectator."<sup>54</sup> The lynching of the man and wife in the film is a scene that is one of the most unsettling images in the history of African-American cinema.<sup>55</sup> A triumph for Micheaux, *Within Our Gates* was a rejoinder against the prevalent racial stereotypes in movies and opened a new door of consideration for the African-American community.

## Micheaux's Film Technique, The Final Days

As prolific as Micheaux was (producing over thirty independent films as well as seven novels), he was usually troubled by financial problems.<sup>56</sup> Like other independent black filmmakers of the time, his work was cinematically rough.<sup>57</sup> Lighting and editing were usually poor, and the acting could be amateur.<sup>58</sup> On the tightest of budgets, a film was usually completed within six weeks. He worked with a small crew, hiring his cameramen for one day at a time, and scenes were made with a single take. His scenes were centered around one set, often found in one of his friends' homes.<sup>59</sup> Micheaux pioneered the technique of cross-cutting. He alternated the lynching scene in *Within Our Gates* with the attempted rape of a female character to create suspense and tension in the audience.<sup>60</sup> His films are noted for his "dream-flashback" technique, in which there are two consecutive flashbacks within a dream of a character.<sup>61</sup> This technique was later used in films of every kind. Most of his films plunged right into the storyline with little character development.<sup>62</sup> Micheaux's films presented the twenties from a black perspective. He focused on the proud, aggressive, "new Negro" whose new morality condoned retaliatory action against white racist aggression.

By the 1930s, the Micheaux Corporation, then headed by Micheaux and his brother, Swan, was the only independent black filmmaking company to survive the Great Depression, pressure from Hollywood, and the invention of sound motion pictures.<sup>63</sup> In 1931, when most black companies were shutting down, Micheaux released *The Exile* (1931), the first all-talking motion picture made by a black company. *The Betrayal* (1948) was his last triumphant film.<sup>64</sup> He went back to writing novels, his place secured in history as "The Father of Independent Black Filmmaking."<sup>65</sup>

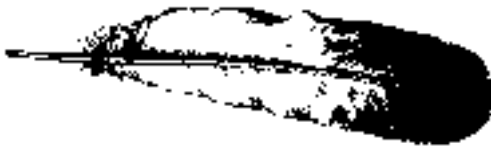
## Impact

“One of the greatest tasks of my life has been to teach that the colored man can be anything,” Micheaux once said.<sup>66</sup> Oscar Micheaux used the new technology of the motion picture to communicate his ideas and his image of American society. As a filmmaker, Micheaux was “fifty years ahead of his time.”<sup>67</sup> For the African-American society of then and now, Micheaux represented strength and courage as well as a symbol of change. His impact on American society was considerable. “He raised emotion as well as social consciousness.”<sup>68</sup> Not only did Micheaux communicate the controversial issues of the time in pursuit of unity between the black and white communities, he also created a legacy that is felt today. As an example, the First Weekend Club, an organization of 22,000 members that motivates people to see “black films” the first weekend they are in the theaters in order to create larger distribution, was created in 1997. Sandra Evers-Manly, the founder and director of the First Weekend Club states, “We had to do something to keep Hollywood from giving up on movies like those. If we want better images and more of them, we have to take action...We need to see more positive relationships, because I think film kind of dictates what a lot of people do. They go out and imitate.”<sup>69</sup>

In the mid-1980s, Micheaux was rediscovered by a new generation of moviemakers and film buffs. In 1986, the Directors Guild of America gave Micheaux a posthumous honor with a Golden Jubilee Special Directorial Award, recognizing his efforts to bring African-American stories to the screen. On February 13, 1987, Micheaux was given filmdom’s ultimate honor: his own star on the Walk of Fame on Hollywood Boulevard.<sup>70</sup> Although Micheaux is not well known today, his true impact is on the realistic representation of minorities on screen as well as in American culture and society. “He paved the way for people like Spike Lee to use film to raise serious racial issues.”<sup>71</sup> Bill Cosby’s Huxtable family, Spike Lee’s *Crooklyn* and *He Got Game*, as well as many other examples, owe their existence to Oscar Micheaux’s pioneering

work at the genesis of the new mass communication technology of film.

Motion pictures gave Micheaux the opportunity to show what no other filmmaker was showing. His films concentrated on real issues that affected real people. When others sought the motion picture as a medium of entertainment, Micheaux presented the most controversial issues of the time. He was the true pioneer of early African-American cinema and stands as the “exemplar of both persistence and failure in the face of unyielding barriers.”<sup>72</sup> Micheaux left an unforgettable legacy. He made movies that, although they were often technically inferior, captured a rising spirit in his time. Oscar Micheaux recognized the power of the motion picture, its power to entrance the American public. He used this power to reinforce a strong African-American community as well as firmly educate this divided public. His choice of controversial subjects and black-oriented themes are evidence of a film pioneer whose primary intent was to present positive images of African-American life. Oscar Micheaux made an impact on the African-American community of then and now, influencing the public’s view of racial identity, and helping to mold the ideas that make our American society today.



## Appendix A

Excerpt from: Martin Keenan—interview by author

E-mail Correspondence

December 27, 1998, December 29, 1998

1. How has Micheaux's legacy lived on in Chicago, in African American culture and in American society?

Micheaux made an impact because he showed blacks in positive roles on screen at a time when Hollywood portrayed blacks in negative roles. Micheaux didn't like controversy—he loved it! He was 50 years ahead of his time in using film to raise controversial race issues. He paved the way of people like Spike Lee to use film to raise serious racial issues. The earliest black feature-length film is “Within Our Gates” by Micheaux...So Micheaux was...he didn't have tons of money or the absolutely latest equipment and techniques. He was important because he was the first black man to make a feature-length film, the first black man to make a “talkie,” etc., but the films were serious films full of controversy. He showed blacks in roles as professors, doctors, heroes, etc., at a time when Hollywood portrayed blacks as negative, unintelligent people. Micheaux showed the black community how to fight back. He was an extraordinary businessman and salesman, and he absolutely delighted in controversy. I think you can show that when D.W. Griffith made “Birth of a Nation” he had state-of-the-art cameras, etc. Even though Oscar had virtually no money and lousy equipment, he used the available technology, to do a shoestring-budget response to Griffith. Oscar basically was telling Griffith: “Put this in your cornpipe and smoke it.” Also, in terms of script methodology, Oscar does flashbacks and other modern techniques, but I suspect he had lousy equipment and had to beg and borrow to get this stuff done. So the book, “The Klansman” had become a pageant, and then a film. And Oscar used the medium of film to

respond. In 1919, blacks were not even considered proper subjects of photography by whites, and the idea of a “Negro” making a feature-length film about a controversial topic was totally outlandish. Other blacks made short films or short comedies, but no black had ever made a feature-length film, let alone about a serious topic, until “The Homesteader” in 1919. As you know, this film is lost, but “Within Our Gates” was restored by the Library of Congress. Thomas Cripps, now deceased, found “Within Our Gates” in a Spanish film archive in 1979 and they switched the subtitles back to English.

The early images of blacks in films, as noted by Donald Bogle in his book “Toms, Coons, Mulattoes, Mammies & Bucks,” were degrading. I think they damaged the self-esteem of blacks tremendously to see themselves portrayed as spineless “Uncle Toms” like the “Step’nFetchit” character. He was a big star but played a totally compliant Uncle Tom figure acting like a fool. I think these images of blacks eating watermelon, rolling their eyes, drinking, and acting foolish hurt the self-esteem of blacks and reinforced these stereotypes with whites. Even today, blacks are portrayed as criminals and hookers a lot. Robert Townsend deals with this very subject. Bogle points out that the Hattie McDaniel character in “Gone with the Wind” was revolutionary, because she was assertive and talked back to Scarlet. Bogle’s book is very important.

## Appendix B

Excerpt from: Floyd Webb—interview by author

Phone and E-mail Correspondence

December 27, 1998

1. I'd like to begin by establishing your connection to Oscar Micheaux.

I really have no connection at all to Oscar Micheaux. I am an African-American independent film producer/writer and filmmaker, I was the executive producer of *Daughters of the Dust*, directed by Julia Dash.

2. What do you think Micheaux's importance was?

The participation of African Americans in American cinema was very important and it was new. I'm really interested in his homesteading and pioneering experiences. His first film was about these experiences... Micheaux was truly a "Race Man." He tried to find alternatives to the status quo. He challenged the status quo. And he was important for the "deconstruction of reconstruction." Micheaux was looking for something different, and he was an entrepreneur. His films had interesting lessons to learn. They were banned and censored, and Micheaux would cut scenes to make them more palatable to the censorship boards. He raised emotion as well as social consciousness.

3. What message do you think Micheaux communicated in his films?

He really communicated the issue of "upliftment." The "upliftment" of his race. Micheaux dealt with the internal areas of the black

community. He dealt with internal problems and issues of the black community. Micheaux wanted to challenge deterrents to unified progress.

4. How do you think Micheaux may have inspired the African-American independent filmmakers movement?

He really had no choice. It was a very dangerous and controversial time. And his book and films dealt with issues that were just as dangerous and controversial. He would go from town to town, raising money from whites. His depictions of lynchings were especially dangerous. He was daring.

5. How has this legacy impacted African-American film? African-American culture? and/or American society?

AA Film: Definitely, he has a historical legacy.

AA culture: His films were very visible. They were about and reviewed all over. There are many articles in the *Chicago Defender* about his interest in taking his films abroad and foreign distribution. He had a huge impact, and a very important impact. He had just as much an impact as Spike Lee.

- <sup>1</sup> Arnie Bernstein, Hollywood on Lake Michigan: 100 Years of Chicago and the Movies (Chicago: Lake Claremont Press, 1998) p. 46
- <sup>2</sup> Henry T. Sampson, "Blacks in Hollywood, a Secret History" [<http://www.bkh.com/bkhtmlhtmlfolder/1kinghtmlfolder/tonybrown.html>] 1996
- <sup>3</sup> "As the Cameras Rolled, Chicago was Dream City," The Chicago Tribune (10 August 1986) p. 7
- <sup>4</sup> Ibid., p. 7
- <sup>5</sup> Bernstein, pp. 23-24
- <sup>6</sup> Within Our Gates produced by the Library of Congress and Smithsonian Video, 1993, videocassette
- <sup>7</sup> Culture: Expanding the Audience (Chicago, 1980) p. 95
- <sup>8</sup> Kalton Lahue, "Motion Picture Pioneer: The Selig Polyscope Co." (New York: A.S. Barnes and Co., 1989) pp. 11-12
- <sup>9</sup> Bernstein, p. 27
- <sup>10</sup> Culture, p. 95
- <sup>11</sup> Robert Cross, "Chicago's Great Decade in the Role of Film Capital," The Chicago Tribune (20 December 1987) p. 13
- <sup>12</sup> Culture, p. 95
- <sup>13</sup> Ibid., p. 95
- <sup>14</sup> Ibid., p. 96
- <sup>15</sup> Thomas Cripps, Slow Fade to Black: The Negro in American Film: 1900-1942 (New York: Oxford University Press, 1977) p. 4
- <sup>16</sup> William Jones, Black Cinema Treasures: Lost and Found (Denton, Texas: University of North Texas Press, 1991) p. 6
- <sup>17</sup> Bernstein, p. 46
- <sup>18</sup> Ibid., p. 46
- <sup>19</sup> Ibid., p. 47
- <sup>20</sup> Jones, p. 6
- <sup>21</sup> Bernstein, p. 47
- <sup>22</sup> Ibid., p. 53
- <sup>23</sup> William Grisham, The Chicago Tribune Magazine (7 December 1969) p. 1
- <sup>24</sup> Bernstein, p. 53
- <sup>25</sup> Sampson
- <sup>26</sup> "Going Abroad: Noted Motion Picture Producer Soon Sails for Europe," The Chicago Defender (31 January 1920) p. 11
- <sup>27</sup> The Encyclopedia of African American Culture and History (1991) p. 1772

<sup>28</sup> Bernstein, p. 56

<sup>29</sup> Encyclopedia, p. 1772

<sup>30</sup> Oscar Micheaux, The Conquest: The Story of a Negro Pioneer (Maryland: McGrath Publishing, 1969) p. vi

<sup>31</sup> Jones, p. 26

<sup>32</sup> Bernstein, p. 55

<sup>33</sup> Jones, p. 27

<sup>34</sup> Donald Bogle, Toms, Coons, Mulattoes, Mammies, and Bucks: An Interpretive History of Blacks in American Films (New York: Continuum, 1994) p. 110

<sup>35</sup> Bernstein, p. 56

<sup>36</sup> "The Homesteader," The Chicago Defender (22 February 1919) p. 13

<sup>37</sup> Bernstein, p. 56

<sup>38</sup> Jones, p. 28

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 50

<sup>40</sup> Bogle, p. 111

<sup>41</sup> Lorenzo Tucker, "Black Valentino," Ethel Moses, the "Negro Harlow," Bee Freeman "the Sepia Mae West," Slick Chester, "the Colored Cagney," Lawrence Criner, Shingzie Howard, Evelyn Preer and Paul Robeson.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 114

<sup>43</sup> Manthia Diawara, Black American Cinema (New York: American Film Institute, 1993) p. 49

<sup>44</sup> Bernstein, pp. 50-51. Two years after Birth of a Nation, Chicago's The Birth of a Race Company (1917) was formed to produce the film The Birth of a Race. It was a direct response to Birth of a Nation. More than any other movie, Griffith's Civil War epic, with its images of ape-like African Americans, sent shock waves through African-American communities in the country. Birth of a Race showed "the true story of the Negro, his life in Africa, his enslavement, his freedom, his achievements, together with his past, present and future relations with his white neighbor and to the world in which both live and labor."

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 50-51

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 50-51

<sup>47</sup> Diawara, p. 49. Micheaux himself had personally witnessed the anti-Semitic lynching of Leo Frank in Atlanta. The court convicted Frank, a Jewish white man, for the murder of a white southern Christian woman.

<sup>48</sup> Mark A. Reid, Redefining Black Film (Berkeley, California: University of California Press, 1993) p. 12

<sup>49</sup> Diawara, p. 50

<sup>50</sup> Bernstein, p. 57

<sup>51</sup> Ibid., p. 57

<sup>52</sup> Ibid., p. 58

<sup>53</sup> "Within Our Gates," The Chicago Defender (17 January 1920) p. 12

<sup>54</sup> Diawara, p. 50

<sup>55</sup> Ibid., p. 50. Although the film was lost for seventy years, a 35 mm print version of Within Our Gates, renamed La Negra, was discovered at the Spanish Film Archives in Madrid, with Spanish subtitles. In 1970, it was returned to the United States Library of Congress, restored and publicly shown.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid., p. 26

<sup>57</sup> Ibid., p. 26

<sup>58</sup> Bogle, p. 115

<sup>59</sup> Ibid., p. 114

<sup>60</sup> Diawara, p. 50

<sup>61</sup> Ibid., p. 50

<sup>62</sup> Ibid., p. 50

<sup>63</sup> Charlene Regester, "Oscar Micheaux Society Home Page" [<http://www.duke.edu/web/film/Micheaux/OMN-06.html>]

<sup>64</sup> Bogle, p. 116

<sup>65</sup> Diawara, p. 30

<sup>66</sup> Midnight Ramble: The Story of the Black Film Industry, produced by Shanackie Entertainment Corp., 1994, videocassette

<sup>67</sup> Interview with Martin Keenan, Great Bend, Kansas, 27 December 1998

<sup>68</sup> Interview with Floyd Webb, Chicago, Illinois, 27 December 1998

<sup>69</sup> Nita Lelyved, "First Weekend Club Shows Its Support for Black Films," The Chicago Tribune (1 January 1999) p. 2

<sup>70</sup> Bernstein, p. 58

<sup>71</sup> Keenan Interview

<sup>72</sup> Cripps, p. 191

Annotated Bibliography  
Primary Sources

“Dooley’s Atlas Theater,” The Chicago Defender 2 February 1920

This newspaper advertisement appeared in the Chicago Defender when Micheaux’s film, Within Our Gates, was being shown at theatres in Chicago and across the nation. The advertisement stated that the Dooley’s Atlas Theatre at 4711 State Street in Chicago would be having a four-day run of the film. This primary source provided a perspective on advertising for Micheaux’s films.

“Going Abroad: Noted Motion Picture Producer Soon Sails for Europe,” The Chicago Defender 31 January 1920

A primary source newspaper article, printed in The Chicago Defender, that was vital to the research. The article described Micheaux’s plans to travel with his films and show them around the world. It provided some of Micheaux’s own words and also showed that Micheaux was well known in the black community by 1920.

“Hammond’s Pickford,” The Chicago Defender 29 January 1920

This primary source advertised Micheaux’s film, Within Our Gates, in Chicago. It presented the film as vital to see and an important asset to the African-American community in Chicago at the time.

“The Homesteader,” The Chicago Defender 22 February 1919

This advertisement was printed in The Chicago Defender in 1919. It presented The Homesteader as “a powerful drama of the great American Northwest, adapted to the screen by the author from his popular new novel of the same name, featuring an ALL STAR NEGRO CAST,” a description used in later advertisements in the Defender. This source gave information on the film and when and where it was shown.

“The Homesteader,” The Chicago Defender 4 May 1919

This advertisement presented Micheaux’s film, The Homesteader as “a powerful drama of the northwest with an all star colored cast.” The film would be shown at Dooley’s Atlas Theater from May 5-6, 1919.

Micheaux, Oscar, The Conquest: The Story of a Negro Pioneer Washington, D.C.: The Woodruff Bank Note Co., 1913

The Conquest: The Story of a Negro Pioneer was written by Oscar Micheaux in 1913. It is the “true story of a Negro who was discontented and the circumstances that were the outcome of that discontent.” Dedicated to Booker T. Washington, the book was reprinted by the McGrath Publishing Company in 1969. The book contains a few pictures of crop fields, marketplaces, one of Micheaux himself. This primary source provided the best insight into Micheaux’s philosophy & life (as the book was virtually an autobiography).

Micheaux, Oscar, The Homesteader: A Novel Sioux City, Iowa: Western Book Supply Company, 1917

The Homesteader: A Novel by Oscar Micheaux, is a rewrite of The Conquest. Micheaux names himself Jean Baptiste in the book and describes his life as a pioneer in South Dakota. The book also describes his plans for the future. The Homesteader was later made into Micheaux’s first motion picture, after being rejected by the Lincoln Motion Picture Co. The book was originally printed by the Western Book Supply Company directed by Micheaux in Sioux City, Iowa and Chicago. It was printed in 1917 for the first time, and later reprinted by the First Bison Book Co. in 1994 and the University of Nebraska Press.

Micheaux, Oscar, The Masquerade: An Historical Novel New York: Book Supply Company, 1947

The Masquerade was one of Micheaux’s later novels. It was printed in New York by the Book Supply Company in 1947 and then reprinted by the AMS Press, Inc. in 1975. The book begins with a short letter from Micheaux to his readers about the story. The book is about a “free Negro” family in North Carolina shortly before the outbreak of the Civil War. The book is dedicated to “those who believe in liberty and freedom for all.”

“Report of the General Superintendent of Police to the City Council for the Fiscal Year Ending December 31, 1912,” Chicago: The Police Department of the City of Chicago, 1913

This resource presented statistics and facts from a police report in Chicago in 1913. It provided vital information and statistics on the Chicago Moving Pictures Board.

“Riot Sweeps Chicago,” The Chicago Defender 2 August 1919

The Chicago Defender’s front page headline on August 2, 1919 read “Riot Sweeps Chicago.” In the heat of the Chicago Race Riots, this front page article was a vital source. It included information about the riot, how many and the names of those that were killed, how many and the names of those that were injured, and the details of the riots.

“The Scar of Shame,” The Library of Congress and Smithsonian Video, 1993, videocassette

The Scar of Shame was one of Micheaux’s less-known films. The film encompassed the basic themes that Micheaux often used. Racial issues such as intermarriage were the focus of the film.

“Senate Drafts Bill to Halt Lynching,” The Chicago Defender 24 January 1920

This article appeared in The Chicago Defender in 1920 after the summer of the race riots. Lynchings, unfortunately, continued, and this source provided a perspective on the controversial issues surrounding them.

“States Theater,” The Chicago Defender 24 February 1920

The last opportunity to see Within Our Gates would be at the States Theater on February 24, 1920. The film would be shown without cuts and seen in entirety.

“Total Number of Reels of Film Inspected, Number Rejected,” Chicago: The Police Department of the City of Chicago, 1 March 1920

This resource provided statistics and information from the Chicago Motion Pictures Board that was given permission to censor or ban any films they felt were objectionable. The charts included here presented the number of reels of films inspected and the number rejected.

“Vendome Theater,” The Chicago Defender 12 January 1920

Within Our Gates would be shown at Hammond’s Vendome Theatre on January 12, 1920. The Vendome Theater was located at 3143-49 State Street in Chicago.

“Within Our Gates,” The Chicago Defender 10 January 1920

This advertisement was larger than most others in the Defender. It advertised Micheaux’s Within Our Gates to be shown at the Vendome Theater for one week, beginning Monday, January 12, 1920. The advertisement describes the film as “the greatest preachment against race prejudice... it will hold you spellbound...full of details that will make you grit your teeth in silent indignation...”

“Within Our Gates,” The Chicago Defender 17 January 1920

Another advertisement in The Chicago Defender for Micheaux’s Within Our Gates at the Vendome Theater in Chicago.

“Within Our Gates,” United States: The Library of Congress and Smithsonian Video, 1993, videocassette

Within Our Gates was one of the most controversial films ever made. Filmed and directed by Oscar Micheaux, this film was shown to the public in the early 1920s. However, it was soon lost and later discovered in Spain, renamed La Negra. A team of historians and interpreters changed the subtitles back to English and brought the film back to the United States to be archived in the Library of Congress. This copy of the film contains the direct images and story of Micheaux’s original film. The film was a vital primary source that presented Micheaux’s most controversial and courageous work.

### Secondary Sources

“As the Cameras Rolled, Chicago was Dream City,” The Chicago Tribune 10 August 1986

This article appeared in The Chicago Tribune in 1986, giving a history of the motion picture industry in Chicago. The article gave perspective on the early part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, and how the industry affected the lives of Chicagoans as well as all Americans. This secondary source provided information on Essanay, Selig, and other early film companies.

Bernstein, Arnie, Hollywood on Lake Michigan: 100 Years of Chicago and the Movies Chicago: Lake Claremont Press, 1998

This secondary source was vital to researching early film and Oscar Micheaux. It provided information on the developing technology of the time that gave way to the rising motion

picture industry as well as specific startups such as Selig, Essanay, Jones, Ebony, and Micheaux. The book contains a history of Micheaux's life as well as important analysis of his films.

Bogle, Donald, "Black Beginnings: From Uncle Tom's Cabin to 'The Birth of a Nation,'" Toms, Coons, Mulattoes, Mammies, and Bucks New York: Continuum Publishing Company, 1989

This article was printed in a very resourceful book that contains articles about early racism in motion pictures. Bogle's article covers early books and films that dealt with racism in direct and indirect ways. His analysis provides a vital perspective on racism in the early motion pictures.

Bogle, Donald, Blacks in American Films and Television New York: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1988

This source, also by Donald Bogle, encompasses a history of African Americans in film and television since the very earliest films. The book gives a small amount of information on Micheaux, but provides an interesting history of many other African-American filmmakers since the beginning of the century.

Bowser, Pearl, "Bits and Pieces of Oscar Micheaux" [<http://www.duke.edu/web/film/Micheaux/OMN-06.html>] October 1997

This website provided information on Micheaux, his life, and his lasting effect on the African-American community as well as American cinema in general.

"Brief History of Film, Video, and Television Technology" [<http://www.soundsite.com/history/filmhis.html>]

This website contributed technology timelines, analysis of early film, as well as information on the advent of new technologies to research.

Cripps, Thomas, Black Film as Genre Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press, 1978

This complex resource gave a very detailed analysis of African-American film in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. It discussed Micheaux, but more specifically, film technique in every aspect.

Cripps, Thomas, Making Movies Black: The Hollywood Message Movie From World War II to the Civil Rights Era New York: Oxford University Press, 1993

This book gave an analysis of later films in Hollywood. The resource did not discuss independent filmmakers, rather, the biggest film society of the time and now, Hollywood. The interpretation of Hollywood's messages was incorporated into a detailed history.

Cripps, Thomas, "'Race Movies' as Voices of the Black Bourgeoisie: The Scar of Shame," American History/American Film New York: Ungar, 1979

This resource provided information on the early race movies that gave voice to the African-American community. The discussion continues with specific examples of African American films such as Micheaux's The Scar of Shame.

Cripps, Thomas, Slow Fade to Black: The Negro in American Film: 1900-1942 New York: Oxford University Press, 1977

This book contains a great amount of information on the African American in American film during the early part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The book and author are noted for a detailed and specific analysis of a rising industry and a struggling society.

Cross, Robert, "Chicago's Great Decade in the Role of Film Capital," The Chicago Tribune 20 December 1987

This reference provided information on the establishment of Chicago as the "film capital" of the world. Chicago had the technology, the people, and the interest for the industry and was noted by Cross in the Tribune as leading the industry until it moved west to California.

Culture: Expanding the Audience Chicago: 1980

This resource provided the basic historical facts and information on the early motion picture industry and its residence in Chicago. Histories of Selig, Essanay, and Edison's Kinetoscope are given.

DeBartolo, John, "Oscar Micheaux, Micheaux Films and 'Race Films': 50 Years of Looking at the Movies," [<http://www.mdle.com/ClassicFilms/SpecialFeature/feb597.htm>] 1996-1998

This article posted on the World Wide Web provided interesting comparisons of Micheaux to the “white” motion picture industry in America. The analysis given describes differences and similarities between Micheaux and race films vs. Hollywood and other early motion pictures.

Delapa, T.R., “Movie Memorabilia Recounts Chicago’s Fabled Film History,” The Chicago Tribune 5 October 1984

This newspaper article advertises an auction that took place in Chicago in October of 1984. Movie memorabilia from the early 20<sup>th</sup> century brings up interesting discussion of the days when Chicago was a film capital.

Diawara, Manthia, Black American Cinema New York: American Film Institute, 1993

This book provided information on early film in the United States and more specifically, early African-American film. Analysis included secondary descriptions of the importance and the lasting effects of African Americans in the movie industry.

Drake, St. Clair & Horace A. Cayton, Black Metropolis: A Study of Negro Life in a Northern City Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1970

This secondary source book provides a study of race and urban life. The information is based on a project begun by the Works Progress Administration (W.P.A.) in the late 1930s and contains an account of the people of Chicago’s South Side, the urban ghetto.

Duis, Perry, Chicago: Creating New Traditions Chicago: The Chicago Historical Society, 1976

This resource contained early historical information on Chicago including the advent of new technologies, early film, and descriptions of early society.

The Encyclopedia of African American Culture and History New York: 1991

This secondary source provided a brief history of Oscar Micheaux: his life, his films, and his legacy.

“Essanay,” The Sun-Times 24 May 1978

This article from The Sun-Times in Chicago provided

important historical background about the Company and its founders.

Estep, George, "Movie-making's Back in Chicago," The Chicago Tribune 18 August 1977

This article discusses the importance of Chicago to the early motion picture industry, and how in 1977, for the first time for decades, Chicago is used as the set for a movie. This source provided an interesting perspective on the importance of Chicago then and now to the movie industry and the changes (such as the industry's move to Hollywood) that had lasting effects.

"Fifty Years Ago: 1924," Chicago History Spring–Summer 1974

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This untitled article compared the motion picture industry in Chicago to the glamour of Hollywood. The source discusses early companies that took the leading role in the industry as well as their legacies.

Grisham, William F., "Those Marvelous Men and Their Movie Machines: Chicago's Film Pioneers Delighted Audiences With One-Reelers More than 50 Years Ago and Turned Our Town Into the Country's Movie Capital," The Chicago Tribune Magazine 7 December 1969

This article gives a vivid description of Chicago when it was the film capital of the country and world. It discusses the ambition and success of early film pioneers such as Selig and Spoor and their importance in turning Chicago into the center of the industry.

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This article gives early historical information on Chicago's film companies and most specifically, on the importance and times of Charlie Chaplin, a true representative of the Chicago movie industry.

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This book gave a vivid and descriptive history and analysis of Oscar Micheaux, his films, his importance at the time, and his legacy to the African-American community and American film and society.

Kaminsky, Merle, "Lerner Newspapers Staff Writer," Lerner Newspapers 14 May 1974

This secondary source newspaper article gives a brief but interesting description of the early motion picture industry in Chicago and the legacy of what was begun in Chicago for American film.

Keenan, Martin, interview by author, December 27-29, 1998, e-mail correspondence

This secondary source interview was very important in the research for this paper. Mr. Keenan is an attorney-at-law in Great Bend, Kansas, where Micheaux is buried and most of his relatives now reside. Keenan has a growing interest in Micheaux, and has done extensive research on his life and his films. He provided important information and analysis of Micheaux's importance and legacy in the African-American community as well as interesting anecdotes on Micheaux's life. Keenan was also involved in providing pictures for the book, Hollywood on Lake Michigan: 100 Years of Chicago and the Movies, by Arnie Bernstein.

Klotman, Phyllis Rauch, Frame by Frame: A Black Filmography Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press, 1979

This secondary source book provided a historical background on African-American film in every aspect. Connections were made between the early motion picture industry and issues that surrounded the beginnings of race movies.

Lahue, Kalton C., "Motion Picture Pioneer, The Selig Polyscope, Co.," New York: A.S. Barnes and Co., 1973

This secondary source provided a detailed history of the Selig Polyscope Company, how it got its start, its success, its founders, and its legacy in American film.

Lelyved, Nita, "First Weekend Club Shows Support for Black Films," The Chicago Tribune 1 January 1999

This very recent newspaper article provided information about the First Weekend Club, an African American organization that motivates people to see "black" movies the first weekend they are out, to raise ratings for specific movies. The article described how the club functions and also included some interesting quotes from the director on the club's mission.

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The Exile was one of Micheaux's later movies. This website describes the movie's plot, historical background, and importance to the motion picture industry.

"Micheaux's Lost Epic Rediscovered," The Los Angeles Sentinel 13 August 1992

This newspaper article recounts the history behind Within Our Gates, one of Micheaux's most noted films. The article describes how and when the film was discovered in Spain and also includes a list of showings of the film across the nation.

"Midnight Ramble: The Story of the Black Film Industry," Illinois: Shanackie Entertainment Corp., 1994, videocassette

This film was vital to this research paper. The film gave a detailed history of African-American film, race movies, and the industry's pioneers, focusing on Chicago. The film also includes important information on Micheaux, and interviews with noted historians.

Nestey, James, Black Images in American Film, 1896-1954 Washington, D.C.: The University Press of America, 1982

A resource that discusses the stereotypes in early film and how these stereotypes were responded to. Nestey draws comparisons between early motion pictures and early race movies.

“Oscar Micheaux Society Home Page,” [http://www.duke.edu/web/film/Micheaux/]

This website included links to information about Micheaux’s life, specific information on any one of Micheaux’s films, other biographical information, and the legacy Micheaux left behind.

Patterson, Lindsay, Black Films and Filmmakers New York: Dodd, Mead and Co., 1975

Patterson recounts early African-American filmmakers and the films they made in response to negative stereotypes in early motion pictures.

Philpott, Thomas Lee, The Slum and the Ghetto: Immigrants, Blacks, and Reformers in Chicago, 1880-1930 California: Wadsworth Publishing Company, 1991

This secondary source provides interesting descriptions of the urban ghetto, and differentiates between African Americans and other immigrant groups during the early part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The book discusses the slum, the ghetto, constructive reform, and the neighborhood role of the settlements.

Reid, Mark A., Redefining Black Film Berkeley, California: University of California Press, 1993

This source provided vital information about early African American film and its legacy in American film today. Reid discusses early black film pioneers such as Micheaux and their importance for the African American community.

Regester, Charlene, “Oscar Micheaux Society Newsletter: The Reincarnation of Oscar Micheaux,” [http://www.duke.edu/web/film/Micheaux/OMN-06.html] 1997

This website discussed in great detail the legacy of Oscar Micheaux in the African-American community, in African American film, in American film, and in our modern American society.

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This website describes the importance of African Americans and their early and current participation in American film. Sampson touches on Micheaux and other pioneers who worked hard to make what the motion picture industry is today.

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This secondary source provides an interesting insight into the African-American film and its response to the negative stereotypes that plagued the black community in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century.

Spear, Allan H., Black Chicago: The Making of a Negro Ghetto: 1890-1920 Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1967

This sociological book explores the history of the African-American community during the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century when racism was prevalent. It touches on serious urban problems and prejudice that still exist today.

Statuette, Chris, "Oscar Micheaux, Film Pioneer," Illinois: Beacon Films, Inc., 1981, videocassette

This film provides a dramatic history of Oscar Micheaux's life. The 30-minute film entered the Columbus International Film Festival in 1982 and was a finalist at the American Film Festival also in 1982. It received the award of "First Place Documentary" in the Black Filmmakers Hall of Fame in 1981.

"Studios-Essanay," The Sunday Chicago Tribune 26 January 1947

This article gives a detailed history of the Essanay Company in Chicago and its founder, George S. Spoor.

Thomas, Pamela A., "Introduction to Oscar Micheaux," [http://www.coe.unce.edu/~ibcnhp/IBCN/intro.html]

This website provided interesting information on Micheaux's life, including biographical information and details about Micheaux's films.

Travis, Dempsey J., An Autobiography of Black Chicago Chicago, Illinois: Urban Research Institute, Inc., 1981

Dempsey Travis, a noted African-American author and historian, writes a description of his life in the context of African-American history. Travis focuses on Chicago history and the experiences of members of the black community.

Tuttle, William M., Race Riot: Chicago in the Red Summer of 1919 Urbana, Illinois: University of Illinois Press, 1970

This book gives a vivid written account and interpretation of the race riots of 1919 in Chicago. It describes the racial violence of the time, the tension in society that sparked the riots, and their lasting effects.

Webb, Floyd, interview by author, December 27, 1998, e-mail correspondence

This secondary source interview was vital to research done for this paper. Mr. Floyd Webb is an African-American independent filmmaker. He was the executive producer of Daughters of the Dust, directed by Julie Dash. Webb took special interest in Micheaux many years ago, and has been researching him since then. Webb provided information and analysis on Micheaux's legacy in African-American cinema today and how Micheaux's courage and independence created an interest in a movement of independent filmmakers such as himself.

Webb, Floyd, "On the Trail of Oscar Micheaux: The Early Days of a Pioneer Filmmaker in Gregory, South Dakota" [<http://itutu.com/oscar/ithink.html>] 1996

This website gives a brief record of Micheaux's life and a summary of each of his films.

Webb, Floyd, "Oscar Micheaux (1885-1951)" [<http://geechee.com/Micheaux.html>] 1998

This website gives a more detailed historical background of Micheaux's life and films.

"What Do These Old Films Mean?: 1902-1914" Chicago, Facets Multimedia, Inc., 1989, videocassette

This film describes the content of early motion pictures and how they affected the society they were shown to. The film touches on the earliest films of Chicago and issues and themes that most often were included in them.