The Nickelodeon Era

D.W. Griffith
Exhibition – The Nickelodeon

- Converted store / theater, seats 75-300
- Low admission price, 5-10 cents
- One reel subjects: topicals, westerns & melodramas
- Frequent change of program
- Films rented from distribution exchanges
EDISON, BIOGRAPH, VITAGRAPH

• 1-2 reels per week
• Shift to Fiction Film
• The Production Unit
• “Ben Hur” copyright case 1907-11
• The Screenplay
Early Production Companies

- Lubin
- Essanay
- Selig
- Kleine
- Kalem

- Pathe – Alice Guy
The Motion Picture Patents Company – 1908
“The Trust”

- Edison / Biograph / Vitagraph
- Selig / Essanay / Lubin / Kleine / Kalem
- Star (Melies) / Pathe
Independent Motion Picture Co. 1909

Carl Laemmle 1867-1939

• The Movie Star
• Florence Lawrence
• Universal Pictures
William Fox  1879-1952

• 1910 – MPPC forms the General Film Co, first nationwide distributor
• William Fox’s Greater New York Film Rental Co
• 1917  Final US Supreme Court ruling against the Trust
• 20th Century - Fox
D.W. Griffith
1875-1948

• 1875 - Born in Kentucky
• 1907 - Appeared in Edison’s RESCUED FROM AN EAGLE’S NEST
• 1908-1912 American Biograph
• 1913 Independent production
• 1915 Feb – THE BIRTH OF A NATION
• 1916 – INTOLERANCE
• 1918 HEARTS OF THE WORLD Paramount Artcraft
• 1919 United Artists
• 1919 BROKEN BLOSSOMS Para/UA
• 1921 WAY DOWN EAST UA
Griffith at Biograph

• Long shot, medium shot, close up
• Moving camera
• Griffith & actors: Pickford, Gish
• Editing for meaning
• Lighting & camera: Billy Bitzer
• Social commentary & big themes
D. W. Griffith

• 1921 ORPHANS OF THE STORM
• 1924 AMERICA
• 1924 ISN’T LIFE WONDERFUL
• 1925 SALLY OF THE SAWDUST
• 1930 ABRAHAM LINCOLM
• 1931 THE STRUGGLE – last film