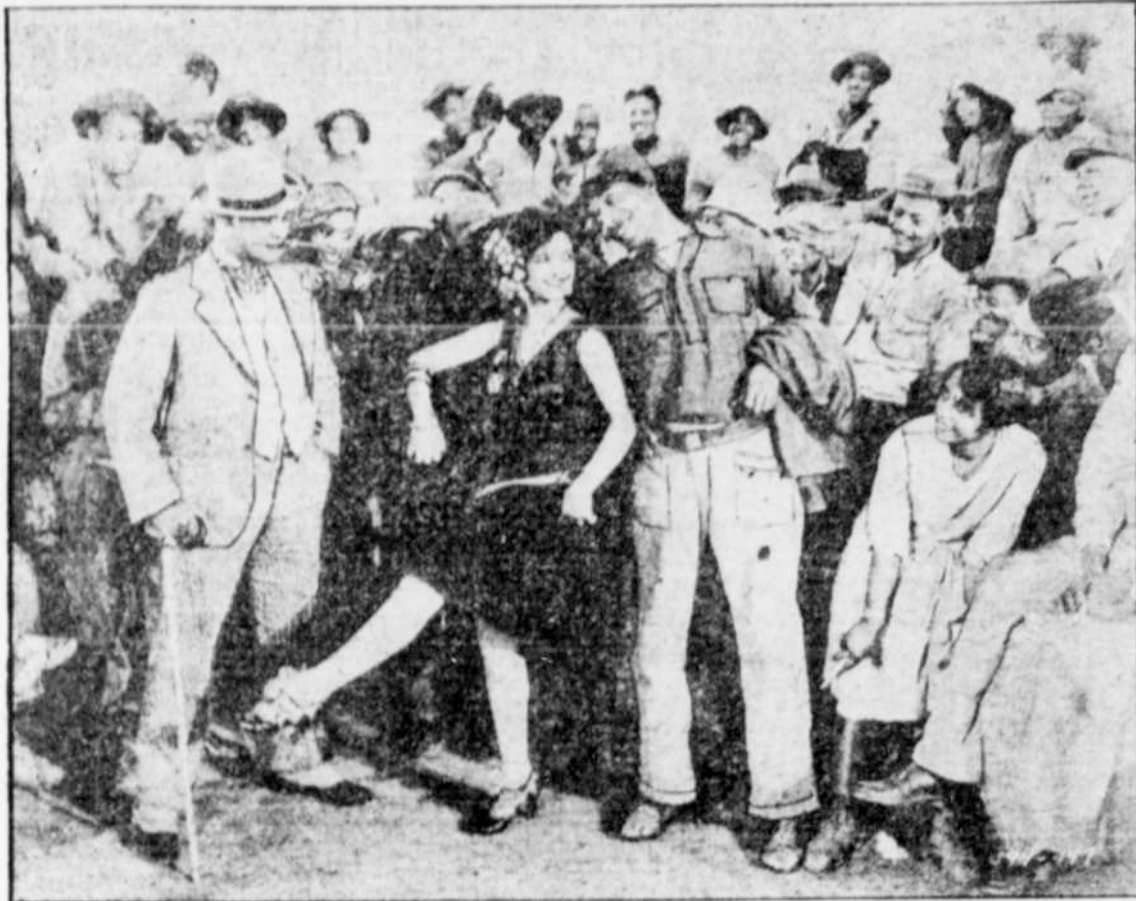


A Brief Screen Review



Nina Mae McKenney, Daniel Haynes and William Fountaine in te gambling place scene in Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer's all-Negro drama, "Hallelujah."

"HALLELUJAH" A Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer Picture

CAST OF CHARACTERS
 ZEKE Daniel L. Haynes
 CHICK Nina Mae McKinney
 HOT SHOT William Fountaine
 PARDON Harry Gray
 MAMMY Fannie Belle DeKnight
 SPUNK Everett McGarrity
 MISSY ROSE Victoria Spivey
 JOHNSON KIDS Milton Dickerson
 Robert Ough
 Walter Tait

AND DIXIE JUBILEE SINGERS
 Directed by King Vidor
 Scenario by Wanda Tuschek
 Treatment by Richard Schayer
 Dialogue by Ransom Rideout
 Photographed by Gordon Avil
 Film Editor, Hugh Wynn
HISTORY. Original story for the screen.

THE STORY

THE cotton picking is nearing its end at the little Johnson plantation. Parson Johnson, Mammy Johnson, Miss Rose, their adopted daughter, Boy, the best loved son, and the smallest boys, Sears and Roebuck, are working hard, singing jubilantly as they near the end of their last few rows. Only Zeke, the loafer, the good-for-nothing member of the family, picks cotton in haphazard fashion, distracting the rest of the family with his comedy

antics. But, even his loafing cannot long delay the harvest, and soon it is all stored and ready to be brought to the gin.

On the next day Zeke and Boy set out together to sell the cotton. Through Boy's shrewdness they get a good sum for their harvest, but on his way back from cashing the pay slip, Zeke is enticed by Chick, a sensuous little yellow girl, into a gambling hall. A fight starts, and Boy who has come to seek out his older brother, is accidentally shot dead. Zeke returns home with Boy's body in the wagon.

All night long the Johnsons keen their grief into the night. Zeke tears his breast in penitent fury, begging forgiveness. When his father forgives him, pointing out a chariot of fire in the moon-flooded sky, Zeke is "converted." He pledges himself to aid his father in the saving of souls.

A year passes. A new redeemer is coming to hold a revival ceremony at a Negro town. Chick and Slickum, her sporting-man lover, recognize the redeemed as Zeke. They taunt him as he rides, like Jesus, on an ass. Zeke jumps from his mount and crows them with his stern faith in the strength of his religion. That night at the revival meeting, Chick is the last to

be "saved," holding out stubbornly against Zeke's plea that she jump off the Black Diamond Express to Hell and settle in the town. Repentance. Finally she is converted, but when she is alone with the revivalist she tempts him, and he succumbs to her charms.

On the train, going away from the city, Zeke, who knows that Missy Rose, his foster sister, has loved him, asks her to marry him, planning to use her as a bulwark against Chick's fascination. But Chick has secreted herself on the train and again Zeke cannot resist her. They are discovered together by Mammy who lashes Chick with a whip. A little later, Chick touches the well left by Mammy's whip with pride, as she and Zeke jump off the train together.

In the pine sawmill Zeke slaves to keep Chick in luxury. Chick, however, now that she has succeeded in winning Zeke, has grown tired of him and longs to return to Slickum. When Slickum and she finally flee together, Zeke chases after their horse and buckboard on foot. The buckboard is wrecked in a cypress swamp and Chick killed. Then Zeke tracks down Slickum in the depths of the swamp and kills him in horri-

ble and primitive fashion. For this he is sentenced to the convict labor gang. A year goes by, and the levee which protects the lowlands from the fury of the river is in danger. Zeke and his gang go to work to save a threatened portion of the dyke. At night, chained together, the convicts are engulfed by the flood. Zeke is freed, and at the risk of his life returns to take his fellow prisoners from their chains.

Swimming to an island, Zeke, once more filled with faith in himself, comforts the frightened refugees with prayer. The waters cease rising.

Long and dusty is the way to home, but Zeke, banjo in hand and a song on his lips, goes home. There he rests his head on Mammy's breast, his younger brothers cluster about him, Missy Rose exchanges a smile of tender understanding with him. Parson Johnson lays a hand in blessing on his head. Zeke has come home.

Daniel Haynes is starred. He is a finished dramatic actor and possesses a clear and pleasing baritone voice. Nina Mae McKinney is co-starred. She is charming in the coquettish role of Chick. She is sincere, sparkling, and succeeds in developing the fullest possibilities of every scene. In the later serious moments of the play she is equally as natural and convincing as she is in the vivacious earlier scenes.

Everett McGarrity, though given only a small part, does as fine work as has been seen in a short bit on the screen. The scene in which he saves his brother and is accidentally shot, is an intensely dramatic one.

The members of the supporting cast are exceedingly able. The types are splendidly true to life and well acted.

The story, by Wanda Tuschek, is interesting and compelling. Southern plantation scenes give a very vivid picture of the South and King Cotton. Defects are not easily found in the direction of King Vidor, and, though he has commanded many extraordinary screen stories, "Hallelujah" will rank among his masterpieces.

The Negro spirituals, which have become so popular since the innova-

tion of the radio, are very effectively and beautifully interspersed throughout the picture.

"Hallelujah," the first all-Negro dramatic film ever made, and produced by Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer is certain to please as one of the best things ever shown on the silver screen since the inauguration of sound.

—H.B.C.



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