

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This project began with a simple series of questions: what is film's status within African American aesthetics, and how might we look to films set in Harlem, the "Mecca of the New Negro," as an indicator of the cinema's role in the construction of African American identity? What appeared to be straightforward questions soon revealed an expansive history of cinema's relationship to Harlem, one that broadened my query from film to other areas of visual culture and opened my eyes to the complex interactions of art, politics, and economics at play in the neighborhood. Over the years, my exploration of Harlem in African American photography and film, and vice versa, has taken me on a journey through archives and across different media, from microfiche copies of the *New York Age* to interactive websites promoting the "Harlem USA" development in Upper Manhattan. It has also brought me in contact with a number of people—colleagues, archivists, friends, and strangers—whose intellectual curiosity and generosity contributed to helping shape what appears in the following pages.

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During the writing of *Making a Promised Land*, my father, Arthur F. Massood, passed away. Although not a scholar in theory, his always inquisitive mind made him one in practice. His love of film opened a world to me as a young girl. This book is dedicated to his memory.

Making a Promised Land

