Citizen Kane

Citizen Kane is considered to be one of the greatest stories told by the American cinema and while it certainly has its merits as a work of art, the ideas presented in the film speak greatly towards the human condition and about the American dream. Considering the definition of the American dream which is given in the question it becomes evident that Citizen Kane did indeed achieve the American dream. However, as with most dreams which we have or achieve there was certainly lacking in the reality which might have been present in the dream.

Kane achieved what he wanted since his business empire went from strength to strength and he certainly worked hard towards making sure that he also acquired enough material wealth to last him a lifetime and more. In fact, if achieving the American dream is understood only as the acquisition of wealth through material means then the man achieved a lot more than wealth since he also achieved fame and to some extent notoriety. Sadly however, the dream did not work for him since his happiness did not come from the process of seeking out or getting a large amount of money.

Clearly, in the case of Kane, the American dream did not fulfill his wants because he wanted a lot more than that which is said to be the American dream. He wanted happiness which he only found with the sled that he was playing with outside the family home. Even though his parents were quite poor, he was happy and even though he had no playmates or others of his age to be with, he could be content. In fact, it was this contentment and happiness which he wanted all his life and even died dreaming of the same thing.

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