

## About the Author



### Oscar Micheaux (1884-1951)

Oscar Micheaux (1884-1951), America's first significant African American filmmaker, produced his first film, "The Homesteader," in 1919 at age 35. Based upon his earlier novel of that name, the movie is considered by film historians to be the first all-black, full-length American film. He went on to produce approximately 45 more movies in a cinematic career that lasted for three decades. Only about a third of them have been recovered. Besides not knowing exactly how many films he made or what two-thirds of them looked like, much else about Micheaux's life remains undocumented and obscure. Most of what we know about the first quarter-century of his life derives from *The Homesteader* (1917), *The Conquest* (1913), and other novels and movies that he wrote and produced, many of which were heavily autobiographical in nature. He grew up in and near Metropolis in southern Illinois, leaving his home to work in Chicago as a Pullman porter and then to homestead in South Dakota between 1904 and 1912. He wrote three novels during the 1910's and four more during the 1940's. His first marriage to Orlean McCracken in 1910 quickly ended in divorce. In 1926, he married Alice Russell, a concert soloist from Montclair, New Jersey. She later acted in several of his films and ably assisted him as his business manager until his death in 1951.

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**Note: Information was attained from one of the South Dakota Book Bag Study Guides (a project supported with funding from the South Dakota Humanities Council).**

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