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Richard Wright

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April 9, 2009
Chicago, Illinois

Richard Wright

1908-1960

"It has been my accidental reading of fiction and literary criticism that had evoked in me vague glimpses of life's possibilities."

— Richard Wright

Richard Wright moved to Chicago from his native Mississippi in 1927, where he obtained an opportunity to write through the Federal Writer's Project. Wright first attracted critical attention with *Uncle Tom's Children* (1938), a powerful collection of stories about racial injustice. *Native Son* (1940), about a Chicago black man, Bigger Thomas, who accidentally kills a white girl, was an enormous success and placed Wright among the major American novelists. The novel was staged as a play by Orson Welles in 1941 and made into a film in 1951, with Wright starring as Bigger Thomas.

Wright's Chicago experience also is reflected in the novella, *The Man Who Lived Underground* (1942), a haunting account of a fleeing criminal. *Black Boy* (1945), Wright's account of his early life, is one of the great American autobiographies.

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