

Biography: Frank Capra

Director/Producer/Screenwriter: May 18, 1897 - Bisacquino, Sicily, Italy



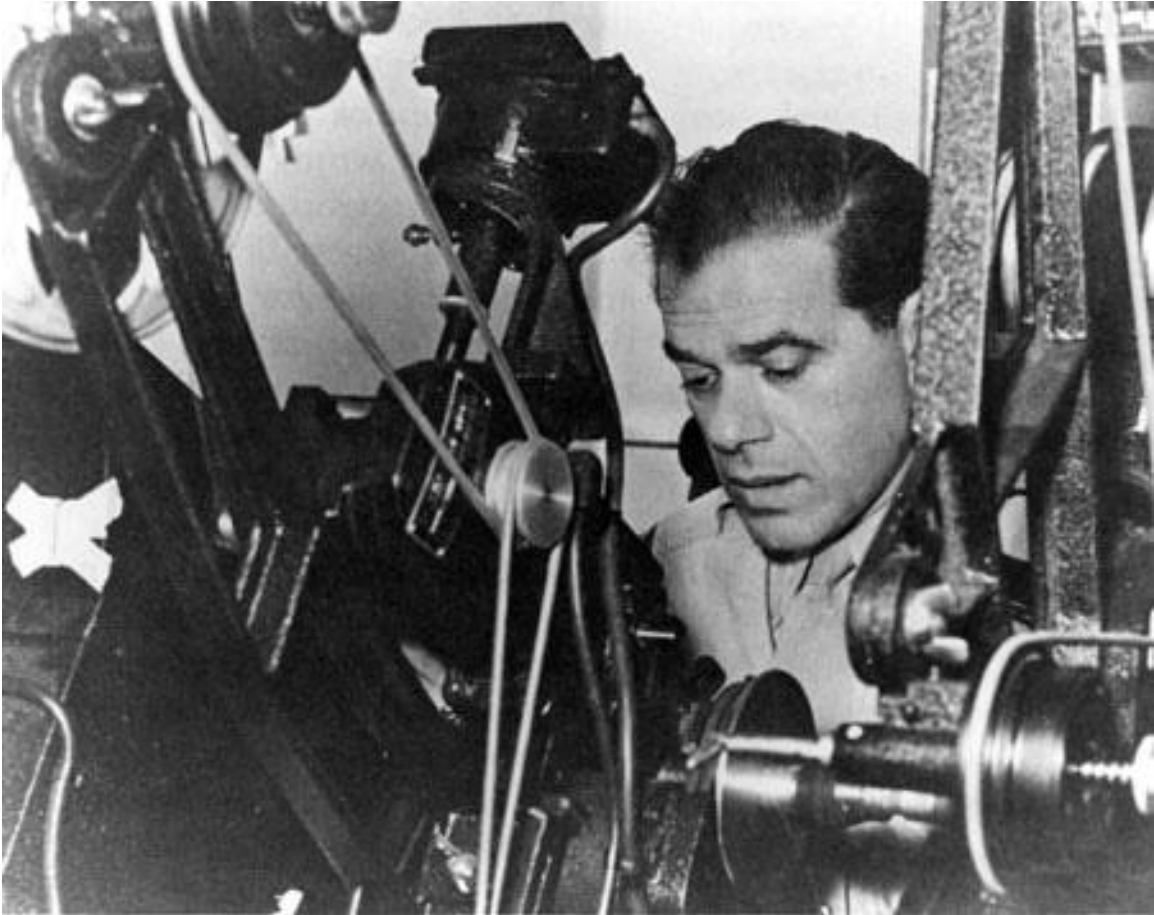
From All Movie Guide:

The most honored and well-liked director of his generation, Sicilian-born Frank Capra graduated from the California Institute of Technology as a Chemical Engineering major. Down on his luck after service during World War I, he bluffed his way into the movie business and learned films from the bottom up, from the film lab to the prop department to the editing department. He settled in as a gagman during the 1920s, and soon became a director specializing in comedy. After a stint with Mack Sennett, Capra moved to Columbia Pictures, where he came into his own as a filmmaker.

Displaying a good feel for drama as well as comedy, and a common touch with which ordinary viewers could resonate, Capra quickly became the star among the tiny studio's stable of directors. His pictures, starting with *American Madness*

in 1932, displayed themes that audiences regarded as important and uplifting during the worst days of the Great Depression, and Capra, despite the relatively modest budgets with which he had to work, became one of the most popular serious filmmakers of the '30s. After *It Happened One Night*, a comedy starring Claudette Colbert and Clark Gable that earned an armload of Oscars and nominations, his career was made. Some critics regarded the messages of movies such as *Mr. Deeds Goes to Town* and *Mr. Smith Goes to Washington* -- often dealing with the rights and dignity of the common man -- as corn (the phrase "Capra-corn" was an often-used derision), but the public loved them. Capra finished the '30s as one of Hollywood's most honored filmmakers, with three Best Director Oscars to his credit. With the rise of fascism, he turned more serious at the end of the decade and attempted to address this in *Lost Horizon* and his first independent production, *Meet John Doe*. He returned to pure comedy just prior to entering the army, with *Arsenic and Old Lace*, and, during his wartime service, directed the U.S. Army's *Why We Fight* series. After the war, he made the most ambitious and personal of his movies, *It's a Wonderful Life*, which originally didn't find its audience -- only during the '70s and early '80s, when it temporarily passed out of copyright protection (a situation since remedied by its owner), did the wide showings of this poignant comedy-fantasy turn the movie into a piece of definitive film-Americana.

Capra's subsequent movies, including *State of the Union* and *A Hole in the Head*, though successful, lacked the urgency and immediacy of his pre-war work, and he fell increasingly out of touch with the changing tastes and attitudes of both audiences and movie studios during the 1950s and early '60s. He made several industrial films during this period, but his career in feature films had effectively ended after the 1961 release of *Pocketful of Miracles*, a very sentimental (and big-budget widescreen) remake of his 1933 hit *Lady for a Day*. Capra died in 1991. ~ Bruce Eder, *All Movie Guide*



Frank Capra: filmography

Director/Producer/Screenwriter: May 18, 1897 - Bisacquino, Sicily, Italy

1984	George Stevens: A Filmmaker's Journey	Actor: Himself
1980	AFI Lifetime Achievement Awards: Jimmy Stewart	Actor: Himself
1961	Pocketful of Miracles	Director / Producer
1959	A Hole in the Head	Director / Producer
1958	Bell Science: The Unchained Goddess	Director / Producer
1956	Our Mister Sun	Director / Producer / Teleplay By
1951	Here Comes the Groom	Director / Producer
1950	Riding High	Director / Producer
1948	State of the Union	Director / Producer
1946	It's a Wonderful Life	Director / Producer / Screenwriter
1945	War Comes to America	Director / Producer
1944	Tunisian Victory	Director

1944	The Negro Soldier	Producer
1944	Attack! The Battle for New Britain	Producer
1944	Know Your Enemy: Japan	Director
1944	Two Down and One to Go	Director
1944	Know Your Ally: Britain	Director
1944	The Battle of China	Director / Producer
1944	Arsenic and Old Lace	Director / Producer
1943	The Nazi Strike	Director / Producer
1943	The Battle of Britain	Producer / Director
1943	The Battle of Russia	Producer / Screenwriter
1943	Divide and Conquer	Director
1942	Prelude to War	Director / Producer
1941	Meet John Doe	Director / Producer
1940	Cavalcade of Academy Awards	Supervisor/Manager
1939	Mr. Smith Goes to Washington	Director / Producer
1938	You Can't Take It with You	Director / Producer
1937	Lost Horizon	Director / Producer
1936	Mr. Deeds Goes to Town	Director / Producer
1934	It Happened One Night	Director / Producer
1934	Broadway Bill	Director
1933	Lady for a Day	Director
1933	The Bitter Tea of General Yen	Director
1932	Forbidden	Director
1932	American Madness	Director
1931	The Miracle Woman	Director
1931	Platinum Blonde	Director
1931	Dirigible	Director
1930	Rain or Shine	Director
1930	Ladies of Leisure	Director
1929	The Younger Generation	Director
1929	Flight	Director / Screenwriter
1929	The Donovan Affair	Director
1928	Submarine	Director
1928	So This Is Love?	Director
1928	The Matinee Idol	Director

1928	The Way of the Strong	Director
1928	The Power of the Press	Director
1928	The Swim Princess	Screenwriter
1928	Say It with Sables	Director
1928	That Certain Thing	Director
1927	Long Pants	Director
1927	For the Love of Mike	Director
1926	Tramp, Tramp, Tramp	Director / Screenwriter
1926	Saturday Afternoon	Screenwriter
1926	His First Flame	Screenwriter
1926	The Strong Man	Director / Screenwriter
1925	Barney Oldfield's Race for a Life / Super-Hooper-Dyn	Screenwriter
	Tunisian Victory, Vol. 2	Director