



Fugitive Slave in the Gold Rush: Life and Adventures of James Williams (Blacks in the American West)

By James Williams

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African American records of the Gold Rush are rare, as are underground railroad accounts from those fleeing to freedom; yet here is the account of a self-taught escaped slave and underground railroad worker who also succumbed to the lure of the California Gold Rush. James Williams was all of these things and more, a fascinating individual who in this memoir manages to cram more life into fewer pages than almost anyone has before or since – a habit of traveling light that served him well. We learn about Williams's birth and escape from the South and his travels and exciting experiences on the West Coast in the mid-nineteenth century. We become privy to his views on the many people he met, including Chinese immigrants, and his observations on notable events of his time, such as the Modoc War in California.

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Review

"The most remarkable of all Gold Rush chronicles, being the adventures of an escaped slave in the mines of California, and his later experiences. This is one to get!"—*Council Fires: The Publication for Western Americana Enthusiasts*
(*Council Fires*)

About the Author

Malcolm J. Rohrbough is a professor of history at the University of Iowa. His books include *Days of Gold: The California Gold Rush* and *The American Nation*.

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