

what Smith calls the "historical adjustments" in the opera. Although it is unlikely that Augusta and Baby Doe ever met face-to-face, Moore and Latouche placed them together in two scenes: one in the lobby of the Clarendon Hotel, and another at a ball honoring Horace at the Windsor Hotel.

Operatic license was also taken in a meeting between Augusta and Mrs. McCourt, Baby Doe's mother. And most people know that Tabor didn't die on the stage of the Tabor Grand Opera House, but that setting provides more drama than if he were accurately shown lying in a room at the Windsor Hotel with a ruptured appendix.

Anyone who knows Smith is well aware of his research into Tabor's fictitious death-bed plea to Baby Doe, included in the opera, to "always hang on to the Matchless Mine." Smith does a convincing job of explaining the comment's origin in David Karsner's book *Silver Dollar* in 1932, and its repetition in a *Denver Post* story when Baby Doe died in 1935, in a serial written in 1937 and 1938 by Sue Bonnie (a "semi-literate prostitute"), and, finally, in Carolyn Bancroft's book *Silver Queen*, in 1950.

Smith and Moriarty's book will interest Tabor fans as well as opera-goers. It's a must-read if you like both.

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James Williams. *Fugitive Slave in the Gold Rush: Life and Adventures of James Williams*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2002; introduction by Malcolm J. Rohrbough. 119 pp., 5x8 in., ind., paper, \$16.95.

Kenneth N. Owens (ed.). *Riches for All: The California Gold Rush and the World*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2002; 416 pp., cloth \$55, paper \$27.95.

After 150 years, the California gold rush is still intriguing to historians, and new data, as well as new perspectives, continue to provide authors with material. The University of

Nebraska Press recently published two very different books on this topic, one unusual individual's account, and one a panoramic view from many writers.

Fugitive Slave in the Gold Rush: Life and Adventures of James Williams by Williams, is part of Nebraska's subsidiary Bison Books' Blacks in the American West Series. In his fine introduction, Malcolm Rohrbough calls it "one of the most intriguing" of the first-person accounts by African-Americans who escaped from slavery, "an important chronicle of a freed slave making his way in the chaos and confusion of the nation's great lottery for wealth." Rohrbough summarizes the narrative and places it in the historical context of the third season of the gold rush. The cataloging information lists it as previously published in Philadelphia in 1893.

Having "Gold Rush" in the title must have been a ploy to sell the book, as more than half of the book consists of varied accounts of escapes from slavery and essays on topics such as bigamy, the Chinese in America, the press, the Catholic and Protestant churches, and spiritualism. One can assume that the writing was heavily edited, and much of the diction is stilted. The narrator intersperses accounts of violent incidents with pious admonitions and quotations from Milton, Shakespeare, and the Bible which would appeal to his readers. *Fugitive Slave* retains, nevertheless, a strong feeling of authenticity.

Born in Maryland in 1825, Williams escaped slavery at the age of thirteen, and the first section of his narrative is a chilling story of fear and vulnerability. In New York in 1851 he signed on as a seaman and, with much difficulty, made his way, via Panama, to San Francisco. In the first of several instances he was cheated of his pay, and says: "You can see what a man that has made his escape from the blood-hounds hath to undergo to reach the shores of California, where he could be free and safe from all danger of being apprehended."

He went first to Negro Hills (which he later calls Nigger Hills), and then to Kelsey's

Diggings in the northern mines region. Having little success, he returned to Sacramento, in time bought a restaurant, then after some disputes went to Mexico, where he was robbed and reduced to begging. Returning to California, he went to the southern mines (the district around what is now Mariposa, California), worked for six months, again was cheated of his pay, and had no recourse. He then went back to Sacramento, "kept a junk store," sold the store, and drove an "express wagon."

Throughout his account, Williams shows an amazing resilience and an ability to take advantage of every opportunity. He mentions casually his travels back and forth across the continent four times, to Mexico and to Canada, and his varied business enterprises. In a time when differences of opinion were frequently settled by fist fights, he either won battles or fled, but he also sustained a number of injuries and was jailed at least once, which he greatly resented.

When the "Washoe excitement broke out," Williams joined the Comstock silver rush, prospering by selling flour and dealing in real estate. In 1865 he sold two of six lots he owned in Virginia City for \$2,500, one of his grander successes. His experience with African Methodist churches in Sacramento and in San Francisco led him to this conclusion: "Reader, the worst enemies that I ever had in my life were men and women that belonged to the church. The A.M. church[s] in California preach up a great deal of religion, but practice but little."

He demonstrates that racial attitudes in California at that time were on the whole tolerant. In contradiction to his many accounts of bloody fights, he claims that "I have always been kind-hearted, benevolent and good-natured to all races, colors and sexes, without any prejudice whatever." He makes absolutely no mention of the Civil War, but speaks of the passage of the fifteenth amendment in 1870 when he returned to Philadelphia and walked in the celebratory procession.

The administration of justice in the min-

ing camps, as he describes it, was also racially impartial. In one telling instance at Kelsey's Diggings, "we miners constituted a law for ourselves," and when there was a trial, he says, "I was the only colored man in the crowd, and it was left for me to pass my opinion." Evidently because he was the one person who was different, he was accepted as a non-partisan judge. Later, however, he concludes: "I have seen more law in California than any other part of the world which I have traveled in, but, according to my belief, *little justice* [italics original]."

This is a fairly representative sample of Williams' narrative style:

I then [in 1855] returned to Sacramento, and came to the conclusion that I would get work on the Levee, but as no colored person had ever worked there, it was determined that I should not, and after repeated interruptions, which resulted in suits at law, and me paying fines, having my property destroyed, etc., and at length fights, I proved my determination to them, and they gave me countenance. Since which time the way, through my determination, hath been opened, and colored men can now work on the Levee, as much so as white men, and be respected in their doings.

Williams raises more questions than he answers in passages such as this one: "Thinking, with a number of my colored friends, that I would like to breathe purer air, I, with a number, emigrated to Vancouver Island, where we thought the air was more pure; but on arriving there, finding the air somewhat tainted, I returned back to Sacramento, and went back to my old business, driving an express wagon."

Rohrbough is accurate in calling this an "intriguing" story of the gold rush experience. It is also tantalizing as it both gives and neglects to give information. Something, however, is much better than nothing, and

Williams' memoir is quite possibly a unique document recounting the experiences of a fugitive slave in the gold rush.

Riches for All: The California Gold Rush and the World, at the other end of the spectrum of gold rush literature, contains fourteen essays based on lectures given in Sacramento for the sesquicentennial (1998-1999). The authors are all scholars charged with considering "the California gold rush as a world event with reference to their own area of special expertise." Some, such as Clark Spence, Malcolm Rohrbough, Elizabeth Jameson, and Jeremy Mouat, are well known. Viewpoints and styles range quite literally all over the map, and there is something here for nearly everyone. A fair amount of overlap and duplication occurs as the Marshall-Sutter legend is told and retold, but there is also a wealth of either newly-presented or newly-interpreted information. *Riches for All* contains illuminating essays on the roles of Native Americans, Mexicans, African-Americans, Chinese, and women, and the consequences of the experience for those groups.

As the book's editor Kenneth N. Owens points out in the preface, several topics are absent. Among them are environmental history, political evolution, the immigration process, transportation history, and art and literature. Owens' introductions are excellent; one reviews gold rush historiography, and the other gives the fundamental facts of the geography and history of the event itself. The pages of notes at the end of each chapter are voluminous.

In his lead essay, Owens calls attention to the seldom-recognized importance of the Mormon Battalion. Malcolm Rohrbough takes a fresh look at the variety of cultures among the gold-seekers, e.g.: Mexicans as skilled miners; Chileans, "strongly commercial," many of whom brought their wives and families; Australians, who first came as merchants, not miners. His section on the French is particularly good at showing the international economic and social impacts

of the gold rush. He quotes Karl Marx in 1849: "The dreams of gold had replaced the dreams of socialism among the proletariat of Paris."

Brian Roberts states that "forty-niner contacts with Latin Americans comprised a major part of the gold rush experience." He analyzes the reactions as "a complex matrix of revulsion and desire," and claims that this had far-reaching consequences. Martin Ridge, discussing "Disorder, Crime, and Punishment," argues that the turmoil of the early mining camps has been overly dramatized; that while there was disorder, there was also an accepted moral code and a clear understanding of legal customs, and that "the mines and the miners were never beyond the law."

Elizabeth Jameson's essay, "Where Have All the Young Men Gone? The Social Legacy of the California Gold Rush," ponders the effects of separation, and of their later return, on the mostly young, male gold-seekers and the families they left behind. Jeremy Mouat tells of the rushes following the one to California—Australia in 1851, New Zealand in 1857, and Canada in 1858—and emphasizes their continuity and sequence. "They are best seen as variations of the genus *Rush*. . . . Gold rush miners shaped a common political agenda that owed something to California, reinforcing the ways in which the first rush was a world event that reverberated around the Pacific Rim." Clark Spence discusses the development of the dredge, which transformed placer mining. Charlene Porsild tells of "The Last Great Gold Rush" to the Klondike, and the final essay in the book concentrates on the legacy of the gold rush in Sacramento itself.

These two very different books are both worthy additions to the historiography of the California gold rush.

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