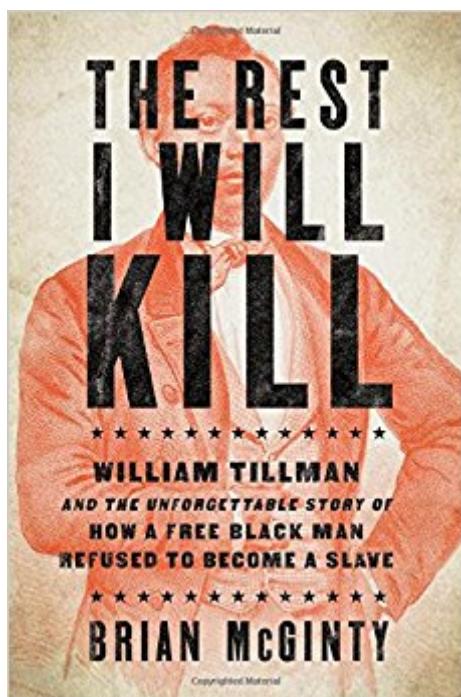


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The Rest I Will Kill: William Tillman And The Unforgettable Story Of How A Free Black Man Refused To Become A Slave



Synopsis

A surprising work of narrative history and detection that illuminates one of the most daring and long-forgotten heroes of the Civil War. Independence Day, 1861. The schooner S. J. Waring sets sail from New York on a routine voyage to South America. Seventeen days later, it limps back into New York's frenzied harbor with the ship's black steward, William Tillman, at the helm. While the story of that ill-fated voyage is one of the most harrowing tales of captivity and survival on the high seas, it has, almost unbelievably, been lost to history. Now reclaiming Tillman as the real American hero he was, historian Brian McGinty dramatically returns readers to that riotous, explosive summer of 1861, when the country was tearing apart at the seams and the Union army was in near shambles following a humiliating defeat at the First Battle of Bull Run. Desperate for good news, the North was soon riveted by reports of an incident that occurred a few hundred miles off the coast of New York, where the Waring had been overtaken by a marauding crew of Confederate privateers. While the white sailors became chummy with their Southern captors, free black man William Tillman was perfectly aware of the fate that awaited him in the ruthless, slave-filled ports south of the Mason-Dixon Line. Stealthily bidding his time until a moonlit night nine days after the capture, Tillman single-handedly killed three officers of the privateer crew, then took the wheel and pointed it home. Yet, with no experience as a navigator, only one other helper, and a war-torn Atlantic seaboard to contend with, his struggle had just begun. It took five perilous days at sea all thrillingly recounted here before the Waring returned to New York Harbor, where the story of Tillman's shipboard courage became such a tabloid sensation that he was not only put on the bill of Barnum's American Museum but also proclaimed to be the "first hero" of the Civil War. As McGinty evocatively shows, however, in the horrors of the war then engulfing the nation, memories of his heroism even of his identity were all but lost to history. As such, *The Rest I Will Kill* becomes a thrilling and historically significant work, as well as an extraordinary journey that recounts how a free black man was able to defy efforts to make him a slave and become an unlikely glimmer of hope for a disheartened Union army in the war-battered North. 8 pages of illustrations

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Customer Reviews

âœSpectacular. . . . [A] carefully researched and expertly crafted book The Rest I Will Kill should enchant a wide audience: history buffs, Civil War enthusiasts, pirate junkies, readers who love action and adventure, and those interested in the seemingly unending quest for liberty. Itâ™s difficult to imagine the person who canâ™t find something to admire in these pages. - Michael Kleber-Diggs, Minneapolis Star TribuneâœMcGinty has uncovered another compelling, little-known gem of American history. [He] impressively recounts this extraordinary story of a remarkable man, the 'first real hero of the conflict.' Race, patriotism, and personal heroism come together in this eye-opening early episode in Civil War history. - Kirkus ReviewsâœVivid writing creates an exciting read, and McGintyâ™s use of primary sources such as newspapers and government documents is exceptional. . . . McGinty dubs Tillman a hero and a patriot, one of the first during the Civil War. An important contribution to the shelf of Civil War histories, this story will transfix readers. - Patricia Ann Owens, Library Journal (Starred Review)

Brian McGinty is an attorney and writer who specializes in American history and law. His previous books include Lincoln's Greatest Case, The Body of John Merryman: Abraham Lincoln and the Suspension of Habeas Corpus, and John Brown's Trial. He lives in Scottsdale, Arizona.

I may not be a Civil War aficionado, but I have read extensively and visited nearly all the major battle fields. This book was a total surprise. I had not heard of William Tillman and his heroic escape from certain slavery. He acts as a role model for us all to never give up. I highly recommend this 'rediscovered' bit of US history.

Excellent historical perspective. Enjoyed the book immensely.

Most people reading this book will not be familiar with William Tillman, the Civil War Hero. As the Civil War begins the South prepares for war by disrupting trade along the East Coast. Tillman as a black man was seen as just another piece of property to be sold, however Tillman is just as determined to make it back North. When he sailed back to New York the Union was quick to claim him as a hero. This is a very well researched easy to read book. Anyone with an interest in the Civil War, Maritime History, and African American History will enjoy this book. I received a copy of this book from Netgalley in exchange for my honest review

I have read some of McGinty's previous books about Lincoln and the Civil War and found this one every bit as good as the others. It is an exciting story about a free black man's efforts to save himself from slavery in the earliest days of the Civil War period. William Tillman worked as a cook and steward on a merchant vessel that had been commandeered by Confederate Privateers. Unwilling to be sold into slavery in the slave markets of Charleston or Savannah, he put his own life in danger, killed the "pirate" crew, recaptured the vessel and sailed the ship back to New York. Once again, McGinty sheds much deserved light on a little known historical event. This book will appeal to those interested in Black History, piracy, the Civil War and, especially, the Civil War at Sea. The book is thoroughly researched and very well documented. I highly recommend this interesting read.

A small but important book about a forgotten Civil War hero. I had never heard of William Tillman and found this book by chance. Once I started reading it I was hooked from the first page. The story of Tillman's courage and resolve should be required reading for any American interested in how we got to be where we are today. I had not previously been familiar with Mr. McGinty's work but am now going to find and read more by him. His meticulous research and ear for dialogue made this book a joy to read. I cannot recommend this book strongly enough.

It often seems that the most exciting, engaging, and sometimes upsetting accounts are the true ones. Several times I caught myself thinking that this book could make a great movie. I was surprised that I was not familiar with the story. The author takes time to set the historical stage to give the reader an understanding of the times and delicate position of free persons of color. You cannot read this excellent writing and not know that well documented research is very important to the author. Without giving anything away, since the story is true the reader cannot anticipate the twists and turns and will be shocked along the way. I enjoyed it very much.

I follow Mr. McGinty on a regular basis. I find his style one that keeps me reading and not wanting to put a book down. This one is no exception. I wonder who has his movie rights. Astounding story about this William Tillman who was brave and seemingly intuitive enough to prevent his capture and return to safety.D.M. Swaney, Gilbert, Arizona

Should be required reading for 8th grade history. All blacks were not slaves, all whites were not free (indentured servitude), all businessmen were not greedy. This book is a small glimpse of our culture in the 1860's. The war, the laws, the people, the lifestyle of blacks, the showmanship of PT Barnum; all facts. This book highlights the bravery of William Tillman and his actions under desperate circumstances.

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