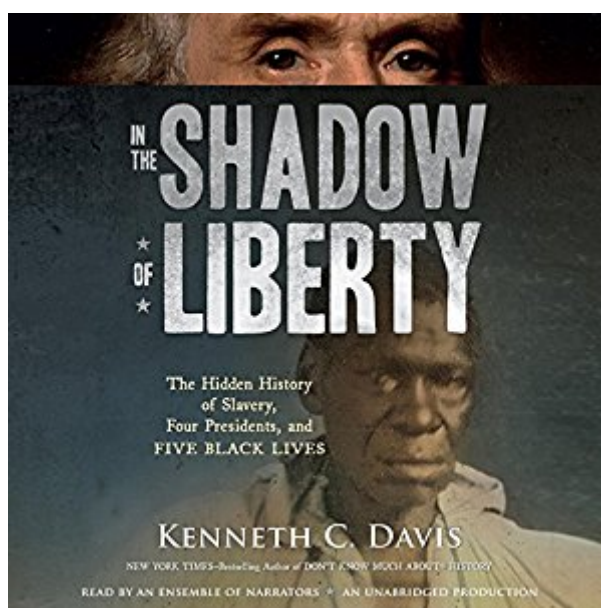


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# In The Shadow Of Liberty: The Hidden History Of Slavery, Four Presidents, And Five Black Lives



## Synopsis

Did you know that many of America's Founding Fathers - who fought for liberty and justice for all - were slave owners? Through the powerful stories of five enslaved people who were "owned" by four of our greatest presidents, this book helps set the record straight about the role slavery played in the founding of America. From Billy Lee, valet to George Washington, to Alfred Jackson, faithful servant of Andrew Jackson, these dramatic narratives explore our country's great tragedy - that a nation "conceived in liberty" was also born in shackles. These stories help us know the real people who were essential to the birth of this nation but traditionally have been left out of the history books. Their stories are true - and they should be heard. Read by Ken Davis, with Frankie Faison, Keith David, JD Jackson, Adenrele Ojo, Adam Lazarre-White, Dion Graham, and Mark Bramhall.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

We know the biographies and histories of the presidents. Or at least we think we do. But what about the men and women who serve the presidents? What about the men and women whom the presidents owned? We may not like to think of the Founding Fathers, who shaped American freedom, as slave holders, but the fact is, many of them were. Kenneth C. Davis tells the stories of some of the enslaved people owned by presidents in *In the Shadow of Liberty: The Hidden History of Slavery, Four Presidents, and Five Black Lives*. An uncomfortable fact: twelve U.S. presidents were slave owners. Many other Founding Fathers owned slaves. Davis writes, "These men fought for independence and were true believers in concepts like liberty and equality. How could such men

keep other human beings as slaves, denying their freedom and basic rights?" This is a great irony of history. On George Washington: "For a man who had fought so long and hard for freedom, it is astonishing Washington could not comprehend that an enslaved person might want the same right." On Thomas Jefferson: "Jefferson wrote about the ideals and principles of equality and even proposed some small steps toward ending American slavery. But he also owned people and was completely dependent on them for his livelihood and personal comfort until the day he died." On James Madison: "James Madison, the political leader and revolutionary, knew that slavery was wrong. But Madison the slaveholder was ruled by fear and self-interest. . . . Madison hoped for an end to slavery. But . . . he also believed that America could never be an integrated society, with whites and blacks living together under one government." Davis tells the stories of slaves who were owned by U.S. presidents, illustrating and emphasizing this irony. William Lee, Ona Judge, Isaac Granger, Paul Jennings, and Alfred Jackson's names are remembered because of their proximity to power. But millions of other slaves' names are forgotten to history because of the obscurity of their owners. While in many cases slaves of prominent individuals were well treated and faithful to their owners, this doesn't change the fact of human bondage and the injustice of the system. And even heroes of American history, like Washington and Jefferson, had enormous blind spots as they callously treated their slaves like chattel, merchandise, currency, or tools. Some of their slaves ran away. Others served faithfully throughout their lifetimes. Davis is careful not to demonize their owners, but he does not sugar coat their actions and attitudes. There is no question that our early presidents are worthy of honor for their work and inspiration in the early days of our nation. But we must not forget the costs. Davis reminds us of the inhumanity and assaults on human dignity and freedom that formed the background of the founding years. There's no getting around the fact that slavery was an ugly, terrible institution. And there's not denying its place in our history. Davis does us a service by bringing these enslaved individuals' histories to light. Thanks to NetGalley and the publisher for the complimentary electronic review copy!

This was quite an eye opener book, I could not put it down, very informative, the REAL story! Great Read

Did not like it at all. It was not what I thought . I returned it

Another reviewer felt Davis was "preachy" but I didn't read it the same way. The stories include aspects of day to day life for both slave and master.

Loved every second of it. Hard truths.

My son had to read this for school, so I decided to read it along with him. I learned so much about an untold part of our history and the fight for freedom....for all. Good book that everyone should read.

Good book. Well researched. Very easy, enjoyable reading. It is billed as middle school. It really is probably best suited for 9th and 10th graders.

This is a must read; I heard the review on Joe Madison, the Black Eagle radio show. This book is about the unsung Blacks that contributed to former Presidents during slavery time

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