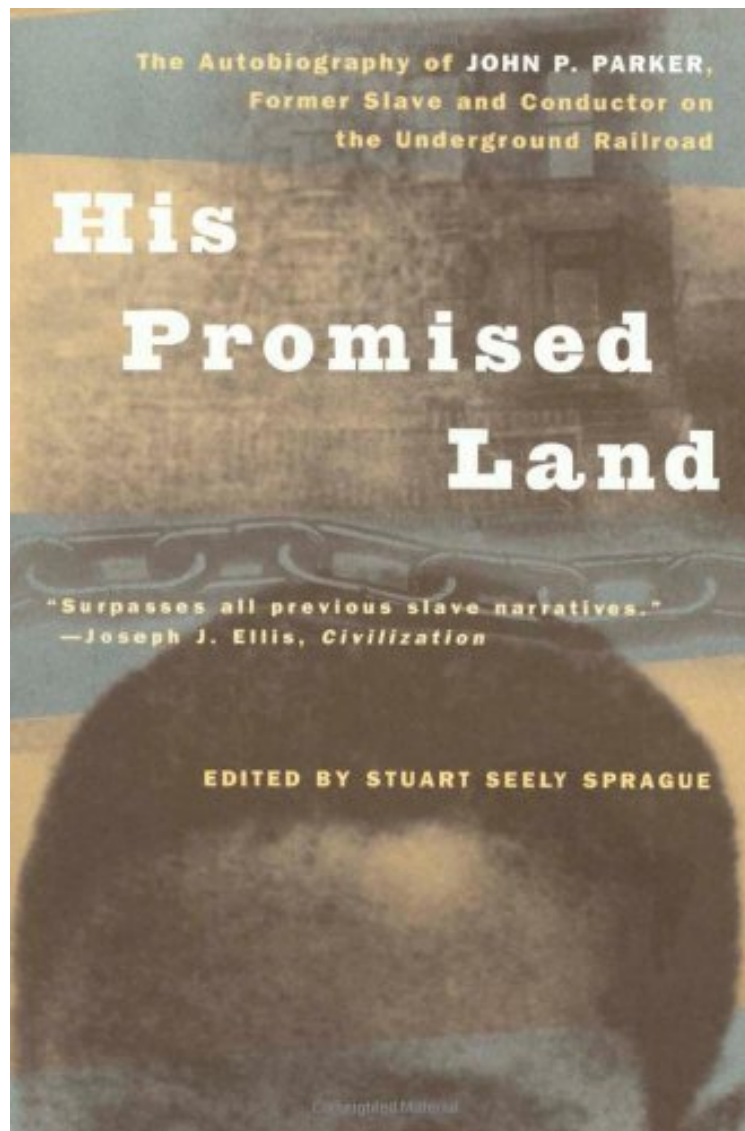


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His Promised Land: The Autobiography of John P. Parker, Former Slave and Conductor on the Underground Railroad

John P. Parker

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John P. Parker : His Promised Land: The Autobiography of John P. Parker, Former Slave and Conductor on the Underground Railroad before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised His Promised Land: The Autobiography of John P. Parker, Former Slave and Conductor on the Underground Railroad:

4 of 4 people found the following review helpful. My new favorite book of all time By candace podger mcchesney I love biographies, and non fiction finding the truth is sometimes so interesting fiction only can copy it. This is one of those books you cannot put down, even though it was written in a time when it was still excepted by educated people that whites had a superior intellect. John Parker credits his white father for that, his imagination and ability to hate. His intellect was as superior as anyone's, but his imagination and courage were in a class of its own and a credit to those like him escaping bondage. This story is so good I visualized the whole thing as I read it like I was watching a movie. It is too good for one movie, more like a mini series. In this John Parker moved to Ripley after buying his own freedom in Alabama. After living in Indiana and Cincinnati first, he is closely pursued one night with his "passengers" going into Ripley, a stranger secures the group under a bridge with seconds to spare, the stranger Thomas Collins would become his neighbor and his boatman on other runs, once hiding in coffins Collins had built. His encounters with the white conductors in Ripley prompted him to move there. He is remembered in many recollections from Ripley that didn't get told in his book about his bravery in Ohio 's historical Archives. His earlier attempts at escaping north were worthy of its own book. His later life after freedom and getting married starting a family and a prosperous business, and inventor (robbed of his first invention as a slave). He risked everything almost nightly to go into the slave state of Kentucky and bring out fellow freedom seekers , knowing how hard that was his own attempts failing, he bought his freedom for \$1,800. He took the road few UGRR operators ever did he went behind the lines. More prolific than Harriett Tubman mostly working alone, but supported by the other abolitionists in Ripley who would help those who crossed the river but wouldn't cross into there to get them out. Parker stood alone perhaps because he lived that life of a slave desperate to escape that most the others had not. He was a large, strong, distant man who never bragged was educated by proxy from the children of his master. He always armed himself and walked in the middle of the street so that he was not jumped by the many who wanted to kill him, this man would go further and take more risks than most any man alive. The UGRR was driven by the escaping Freedom seekers, the slaves themselves were often conductors who could have freed themselves but stayed to help others out first. Some of the stories are funny and others inspiring, and others far better than fiction. The White abolitionists could speak out and offer respite to the fugitives and they risked everything too, but the ones most often unnamed or overlooked in the UGRR story were the black conductors, even years after the war they faced racism and kept a low profile. John Parker never allowed himself to be photographed, it is amazing that a man this courageous and fearless had to worry his image might be used to settle an old grudge. The passion that was on both sides of the issue didn't end with the war, but the men (and women) who fought "the war before the war" as Parker called it put everything on the line for people they never met. All of their stories deserve to be heard, I am so glad Frank Gregg the original source of the story asked his former neighbor John Parker about his life, or we would never have it today. Frank Gregg couldn't sanitize the story enough for the 1880's audience to find a publisher, but Parker's own words are left so we can appreciate him today and his words are what makes it so real. It will be hard to top this! 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Historical Fiction at Its Best By Diane Well written. Good prose meets interesting history. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Five Stars By Salomesfred Great book!

"Surpasses all previous slave narratives... Usually we need to invent our American heroes. With the publication of Parker's extraordinary memoir, we seem to have discovered the genuine article." ?Joseph J. Ellis, *Civilization* In the words of an African American conductor on the Underground Railroad, *His Promised Land* is the unusual and stirring account of how the war against slavery was fought?and sometimes won. John P. Parker (1827?1900) told this dramatic story to a newspaperman after the Civil War. He recounts his years of slavery, his harrowing runaway attempt, and how he finally bought his freedom. Eventually moving to Ripley, Ohio, a stronghold of the abolitionist movement, Parker became an integral part of the Underground Railroad, helping fugitive slaves cross the Ohio River from Kentucky and go north to freedom. Parker risked his life?hiding in coffins, diving off a steamboat into the river with bounty hunters on his trail?and his own freedom to fight for the freedom of his people.

.com John Parker was born a slave in Virginia but managed to buy his freedom. He hated the injustice of slavery, and so for about 20 years before the Civil War devoted his life to the dangerous work of helping other blacks escape to freedom. This is one of only a few accounts of a black American's fight against slavery in his own words. Unpublished for nearly a century, it brings to life the American frontier of the mid-18th century in as thrilling a fashion as any John Ford film or historical novel. From Publishers Weekly This previously unpublished manuscript, resurrected from the Duke University Archive, tells a remarkable story. Parker's oral history, taken down by a journalist in the 1880s, provides a lively and indelible account of a man determined to escape slavery and to help others reach freedom. Parker's vigorous vernacular has echoes of Huckleberry Finn, but his tragicomic accounting of many death-defying episodes is freighted with truth and "an eternal hatred of the institution [of slavery]." Born in 1827 in Norfolk, Va., at eight Parker was sold and marched south in chains. He soon learned self-sufficiency and abhorrence of brutality. Though his master in Mobile, Ala., was kindly, Parker's apprenticeships put him in the path of cruel racists; indomitably, he began a series of escapes, all of which failed. He finally earned his freedom by working in an iron

foundry; before moving north, he fought a white co-worker who stole an invention of his. In Ripley, Ohio, from 1845 to 1865, Parker, perpetually armed, helped smuggle slaves north. He persisted despite a \$1000 bounty on his head, heartened by the courage and sacrifice most fugitives showed. Over the years he variously owned foundry and milling businesses in Ohio. He had six children, all of whom became educated and middle class. Parker died in 1900. Sprague teaches at Morehead State University in Kentucky. Photos not seen by PW. Film option to Tri-Star. Copyright 1996 Reed Business Information, Inc. From School Library Journal YA. Parker's recently discovered manuscript is action-packed adventure from his first memories as an eight-year-old slave in chains to his defiant involvement in leading fugitive slaves to freedom via the Underground Railroad station in Ripley, Ohio. Parker's early experiences made him "designing, hateful, and determined." He became an iron molder by choice but an abolitionist by chance. This book presents the man's personal history and many of the episodes he accidentally experienced or willingly engaged in to bring other African Americans to his "Promised Land." The original document is printed with only minimal editing. Illegible writing has been guessed at; missing words have been added and placed in brackets. A necessary purchase for libraries wanting to extend their collection of African-American leaders or their coverage of the Underground Railroad during America's Civil War. Dottie Kraft, formerly at Fairfax County Public Schools, VA Copyright 1997 Reed Business Information, Inc.