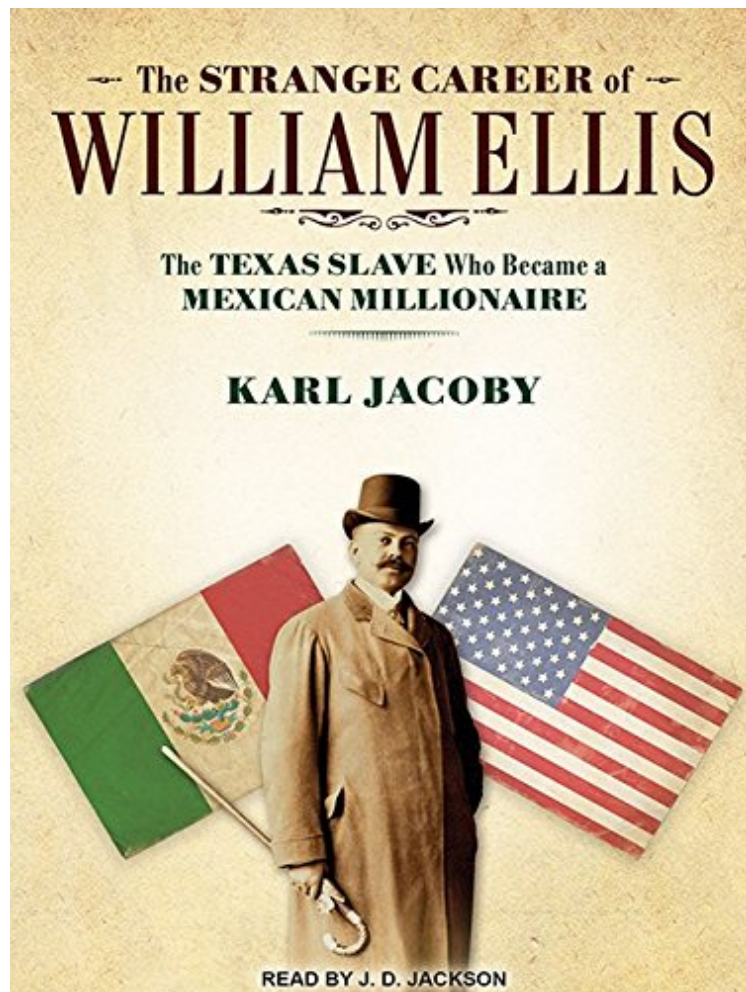


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## The Strange Career of William Ellis: The Texas Slave Who Became a Mexican Millionaire

*Karl Jacoby*

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**Karl Jacoby : The Strange Career of William Ellis: The Texas Slave Who Became a Mexican Millionaire** before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised *The Strange Career of William Ellis: The Texas Slave Who Became a Mexican Millionaire*:

5 of 5 people found the following review helpful. Good historical non-fiction that reads like a novel. By Miguel V. Reads like a novel but it actually falls under the category of historical non-fiction. The author did extensive research. It took him decades, he said, to investigate the life and times of William Ellis, a master "trickster". The reader will readily acknowledge the commendable biographical piece of historical non-fiction this book is. Get your

copy today and read on for more insights.3 of 3 people found the following review helpful. It's great book fascinating history of the US and Mexico at the time of the Civil War, told through the life of William EllisBy CustomerThis is a great read! It's a fun way to learn history and has relevant lessons for today. I'm from Texas and I learned a lot about the history of Texas and Mexico during the period right before and after the end of the Civil War. By painting a picture of those times through the life of William Ellis, the saga is personal and memorable. Issues like fluid racial lines during the era and movable cultural barriers come alive in the pages of this book. I did not understand that the Mexican constitution was written as a strong response against slavery. Ellis, born a slave, was a master at languages and cultures. His success –against all odds –was inspiring. Author Jacoby has woven the story together seamlessly and gave us a book that is a pleasure to read.0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. A great tale of crossing race and borders in the 19th ...By ELMJacoby does it again. A great tale of crossing race and borders in the 19th c. Academics and non-academics will find this book entertaining and instructive. Jacoby's engaging writing makes this a read an enjoyable and instructive romp across national and cultural boundaries.

To his contemporaries in Gilded Age Manhattan, Guillermo Eliseo was a fantastically wealthy Mexican, the proud owner of a luxury apartment overlooking Central Park, a busy Wall Street office, and scores of mines and haciendas in Mexico. But for all his obvious riches and his elegant appearance, Eliseo was also the possessor of a devastating secret: he was not, in fact, from Mexico at all. Rather, he had begun life as a slave named William Ellis, born on a cotton plantation in Texas during the waning years of King Cotton. After emancipation, Ellis, capitalizing on the Spanish he learned during his childhood along the Mexican border and his ambivalent appearance, engaged in a virtuoso act of reinvention. He crafted an alter ego, the Mexican Guillermo Eliseo, who was able to access many of the privileges denied to African Americans at the time. *The Strange Career of William Ellis* offers fresh insights on the history of the Reconstruction era, the U.S.-Mexico border, and the abiding riddle of race. At a time when the United States is deepening its connections with Latin America and recognizing that race is more than simply black or white, Ellis's story could not be more timely or important.

"Readers will gain fresh insight into life during Reconstruction as well as the riddle of racial identities." ---Library Journal Starred About the AuthorKarl Jacoby is a professor of history at Columbia University. The author of *Shadows at Dawn* and *Crimes against Nature*, he has won the Albert J. Beveridge Award and a Guggenheim fellowship, among many other honors. He lives in New York.