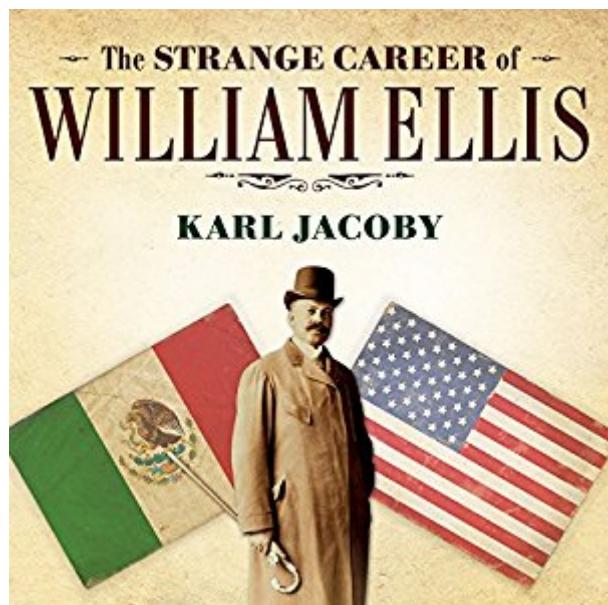


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# The Strange Career Of William Ellis: The Texas Slave Who Became A Mexican Millionaire



## Synopsis

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 ambiguous 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 US-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' story could not be more timely or important.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Interesting look at a man, William Ellis, who transcended his birth and childhood as a plantation slave in south Texas to take on a persona of an elegant, successful Mexican entrepreneur. Mr. Jacoby provides a great deal of historical background into that time period and uses it to craft an amazing story. However, at times it felt a little overwhelming in scope. Well written and well edited

(thank goodness!) this is a story that would be unbelievable if not backed up with so much historical proof.

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.

An engaging, amazing story - Ellis had an incredible life; good history, touching on social issues in the U.S. & Mexico, Mexican politics, and the complicated economic & political relationship between our neighboring countries; a healthy dose of Texana, shedding light on a social order that needs to be better understood by all residents of the Lone Star State.

Very interesting and exciting! I could enjoy the easy-reading style and intriguing story. History, race and "gangster-like" adventures put together brilliantly in an eye-popping book.

This is a very interesting and well-written history shedding light on the permeability of both black/white identity and the Mexican/American border country in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Mr. Ellis was born a slave in Texas shortly before Emancipation. He learned Spanish as a youngster. He "passed" as white in Mexico, and as a wealthy Mexican in New York City. He had an office on Wall Street in New York, as well as an apartment overlooking Central Park. Some of his family members currently live in the Los Angeles area, and some live in Mexico city. The author facilitated a reunion of the two branches of the family.

Amazing read! And very urgent for our times.

Quick service, great read

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