

Joe the slave who became an american legend overview

Literature



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Ron J. Jackson Jr. and Lee Spencer White are both authors of the book *Joe: The Slave Who Became an Alamo Legend*. Ron J. Jackson is a historian, and consultant. Jackson is also a professional journalist and author of the books *Alamo Legacy: Alamo Descendants Remember the Alamo* and *Blood Prairie: Perilous Adventures on the Oklahoma Frontier*. He has been professionally writing for 33 years. Lee Spencer White is an independent researcher, preservationist, and consultant for the History Channel. Fourth-great-grandfather died in defense during the Alamo. Lee White founded the Alamo Defender Descendants Association and has researched Alamo history across several states and Mexico. For Jackson and White to write this incredible book, they decided they needed to look through plantation records, journals, letters, and court documents to discover special details from the Alamo, like the black slave, Joe. At times Jackson and White's investigation seems to be very theoretical, but their many reliable sources give readers more of a reason to read the book, especially those interested in slavery during Texas Revolution. This investigation of Joe is a great piece of historical research. The discovery of Joe's relation to Daniel Boone increases the importance of Joe's contribution in Texas history. At the same time, Joe's relationship with Travis lends further to the idea that master and slave relationships were not modest matters.

Throughout the book Jackson and White narrate Joe's life from childhood in Missouri, to his servant life in Texas. Early in the book, the authors talk about Joe's difficulties. The best master and slave relationship is seen between Lieutenant Colonel Travis and twenty-year-old Joe. Joe was given great amounts of trust and responsibility. This is most obvious in their time

together during the Texas Revolution. Joe stood with Travis, against the Mexican army. While many historians refer to Susanna Dickinson, “Messenger of the Alamo,” as the only adult Texan to survive the battle, they forget the existence of another eyewitness, Joe, the young black slave. After Travis fell, Joe hid during the rest of the battle. He was later taken to Bexar and questioned by Santa Anna about the Texan army. Then he went to the revolutionary capitol, where he gave his personal testimony. The events after the Alamo made Joe a Texas legend. Even though he was still a slave, and stayed one even with his new fame, Joe rallied about his master’s loyal stand at the Alamo. He later escaped Travis’ family plantation located in Alabama where he lived out the remainder of his days under the name “Ben.” “Ben” eventually gained his freedom and was forever remembered as an Alamo legend.

This book, *Joe, the Slave Who Became an Alamo Legend*, recovers a true American character from obscurity and our view of events central to the emergence of Texas.