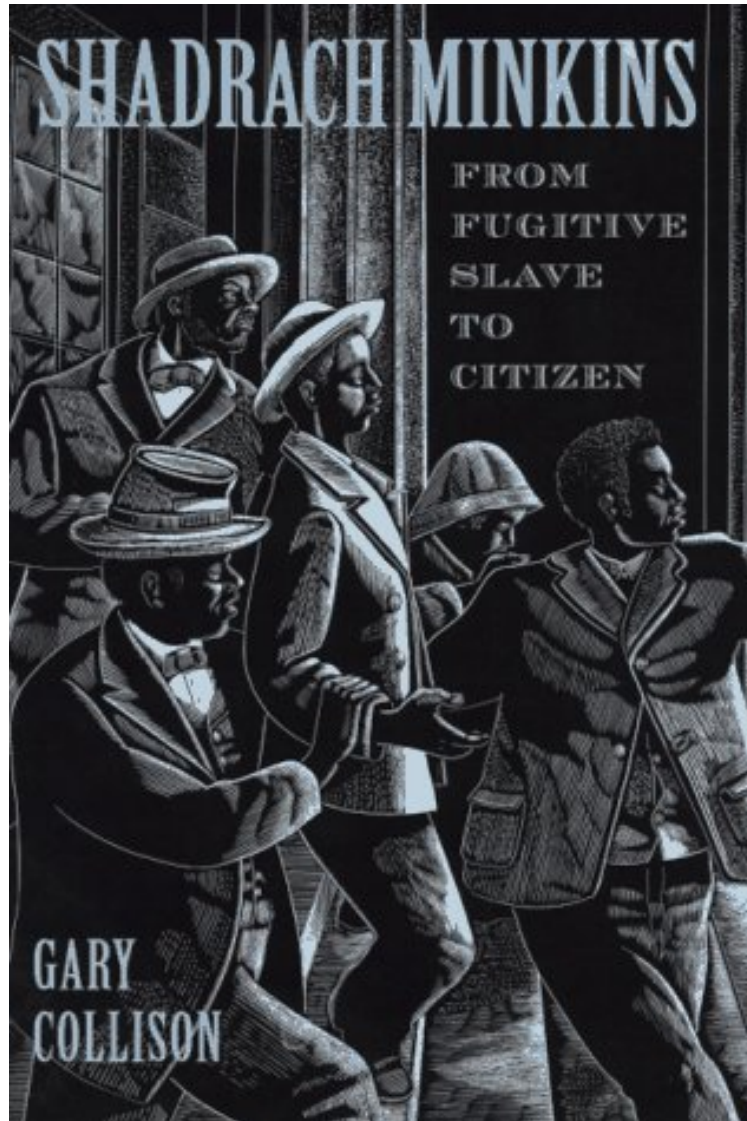


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## Shadrach Minkins: From Fugitive Slave to Citizen

*Gary L. Collison*

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**Gary L. Collison : Shadrach Minkins: From Fugitive Slave to Citizen** before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Shadrach Minkins: From Fugitive Slave to Citizen:

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Great StoryBy AvidReaderImagine going to work one day only to be arrested, chained, and dragged back to slavery. This is the nightmare that one man found himself in and the remarkable true story of people who rescued him from it. In a violent time in America's history when the country was being ripped apart over slavery this is the true story of the people who stood up for freedom. You find yourself rooting for the underdog while understanding what incredible odds they were up against. The author has done a tremendous job of

researching and documenting hard to find facts that really shed light on an interesting part of Civil War history. This book really filled in the blanks for history on Boston's abolitionists. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. A Vivid Reminder of the Desire to be Free By Daniel J. Dundon In reading about the history of slavery, one tends to forget the efforts some slaves made to be free rather than waiting for the Civil War. However, Gary Collison's book about Shadrach Minkins is a good reminder of just how difficult it was for slaves to escape the plantation and make a life for themselves in the North or in Canada. Collision does a great deal of research to illustrate not only the life of Shadrach Minkins' but also the struggles of many other slaves who wanted a better life. I was especially interested in his portrayal of how the Fugitive Slave Act worked in Boston and how many residents decided to actively resist the law and aid in the escape even at the risk of prison for themselves. It illustrated to me how some laws will be ignored when they run counter to moral principles of citizens. I was somewhat disappointed, however, that so many of the events in Minkins' life were speculated about by the author rather than being derived from records. Understandably that was not the author's fault but more attributed to the secrecy surrounding his life in the North. 8 of 8 people found the following review helpful. Excellent historical overview through one slave's history By A Customer Shadrach who?? This book provides amazing insight into the experiences of an unlikely hero whose story should be taught in grade school. A terrific amount of information condensed into a readable, enjoyable package--I can not imagine how difficult it must have been for the author to gather such little-known information. I only regret that I hadn't known the book or its main character years ago.

On February 15, 1851, Shadrach Minkins was serving breakfast at a coffeehouse in Boston when history caught up with him. The first runaway to be arrested in New England under the 1850 Fugitive Slave Law, this illiterate black man from Virginia found himself the catalyst of one of the most dramatic episodes of rebellion and legal wrangling before the Civil War. In a remarkable effort of historical sleuthing, Gary Collison has recovered the true story of Shadrach Minkins' life and times and perilous flight. His book restores an extraordinary chapter to our collective history and at the same time offers a rare and engrossing picture of the life of an ordinary black man in nineteenth-century North America. As Minkins' journey from slavery to freedom unfolds, we see what day-to-day life was like for a slave in Norfolk, Virginia, for a fugitive in Boston, and for a free black man in Montreal. Collision recreates the drama of Minkins' arrest and his subsequent rescue by a band of black Bostonians, who spirited the fugitive to freedom in Canada. He shows us Boston's black community, moved to panic and action by the Fugitive Slave Law, and the previously unknown community established in Montreal by Minkins and other refugee blacks from the United States. And behind the scenes, orchestrating events from the disastrous Compromise of 1850 through the arrest of Minkins and the trial of his rescuers, is Daniel Webster, who through the exigencies of his dimming political career, took the role of villain. Webster is just one of the familiar figures in this tale of an ordinary man in extraordinary circumstances. Others, such as Frederick Douglass, Richard Henry Dana, Jr., Harriet Jacobs, and Harriet Beecher Stowe (who made use of Minkins' Montreal community in *Uncle Tom's Cabin*), also appear throughout the narrative. Minkins' intriguing story stands as a fascinating commentary on the nation's troubled times--on urban slavery and Boston abolitionism, on the Underground Railroad, and on one of the federal government's last desperate attempts to hold the Union together.

.com An impressive feat of detective work lies behind this portrait of Shadrach Minkins, the first black man arrested in New England under the Fugitive Slave Law of 1850. Minkins had escaped from slavery in Virginia and come to Boston, where he was arrested in February 1851. Before his case could come to trial, however, a group of black citizens invaded the courtroom and spirited Minkins away. Thereafter, except for scattered newspaper accounts and anecdotes, Minkins was lost to history. In uncovering evidence that Minkins settled in Montreal, where he helped establish a community of blacks who fled slavery, author Gary Collison restores Minkins and paints a fascinating portrait of those troubled times. From Library Journal Collision (English, Pennsylvania State Univ.) offers an interesting account of the life of a slave who ran away to Boston in search of freedom and was then entrapped by the Compromise of 1850. The author provides insight into the day-to-day life of a slave in Norfolk, Virginia, as a fugitive in Boston, and, finally, as a citizen in Montreal, Canada. While Minkins himself left no account, Collison bases his work on records relating to his subject and his movements. The author conveys the political ramifications of the Fugitive Slave Law and the reactions of the black community of Boston, the abolitionists of New England, and individual slaves to the problems of returning runaway slaves to the South. Collison's work should be required reading for anyone interested in African American history, especially during Black History month. ?W. Walter Wicker, Louisiana Technological Univ., Ruston Copyright 1997 Reed Business Information, Inc. From Booklist Who was Shadrach Minkins? The first African American to be arrested in Boston under the Fugitive Slave Law. Minkins has, until now, been a historical footnote: a runaway slave arrested in abolitionist Bean Town but rescued from the courthouse and spirited away to Canada by that city's free blacks. Collison, English professor at Pennsylvania State University, has pieced together scattered fragments of evidence to add depth to our understanding of Minkins himself and the black (and white) communities he lived in, first in Norfolk, Virginia, then Boston, and finally Montreal. Minkins' escape was

more than a challenge to the Southerner who "owned" him; it threatened leaders like presidential aspirant Daniel Webster, whose carefully constructed Compromise of 1850 held the Union together by conceding--and providing federal government support for--slaveholders' "property" rights. Shadrach Minkins is a vivid re-creation of a little-known 1851 incident that sheds light on larger issues. Mary Carroll