



# Twenty-Two Years a Slave, Forty Years a Free Man

*Graham Hodges*

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## **Twenty-Two Years a Slave, Forty Years a Free Man** Graham Hodges

A detailed account of the extraordinary life of Austin Steward, a black man who lived in the early nineteenth century as both a slave and then later a free man. Originally published in 1861, Austin Steward's memoir has long been a staple source of first-hand evidence about activism against slavery and racism by freed blacks. Long out of print, the narrative is now available with additional biographical information and a critical introduction by historian Graham Hodges. The introduction affords an in-depth discussion of Steward's career - rising from enslavement to success as a self-made businessman in upstate New York and as leader of the ill-fated Wilberforce Colony in Ontario, Canada. Hodges also expands upon previous recognition of Steward's sizable role in free black activism in the antebellum northern states. Replete with images from Steward's life, this new edition of his classic narrative is stocked with details about the author's relationships with antislavery activists Frederick Douglass, William Wells Brown, Nathaniel Paul, and Gerrit Smith. The book offers insight into the creation of African American community life in upstate New York and into the doomed black utopia of Wilberforce.

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