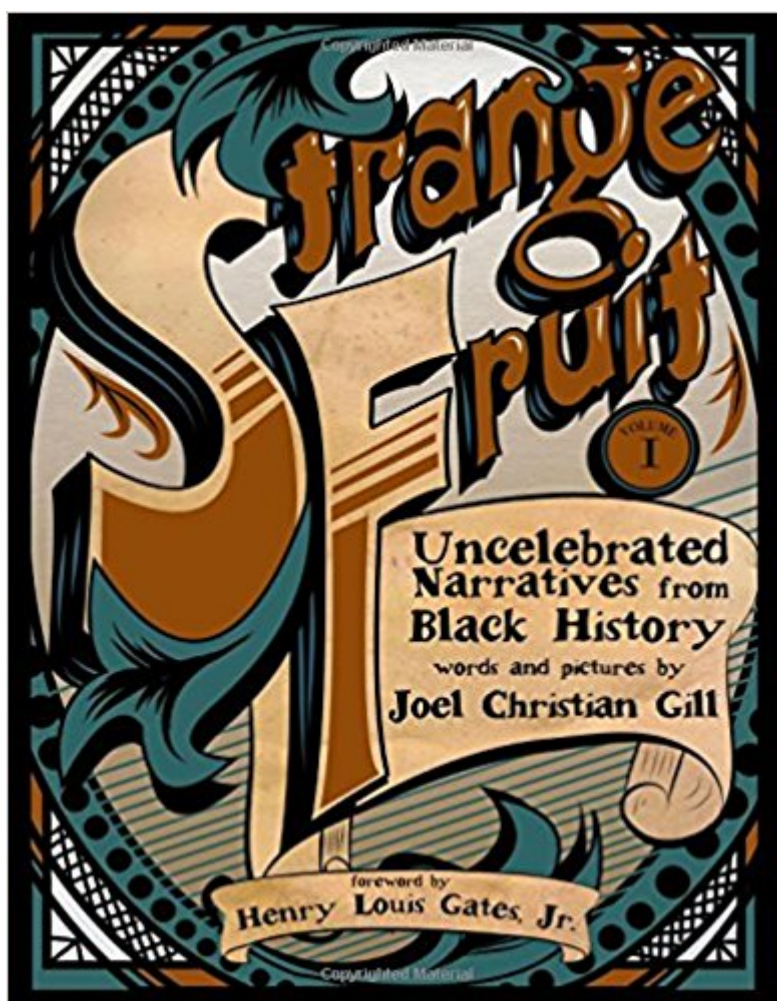


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# Strange Fruit, Volume 1: Uncelebrated Narratives From Black History



## Synopsis

Strange Fruit Volume I is a collection of stories from early African American history that represent the oddity of success in the face of great adversity. Each of the nine illustrated chapters chronicles an uncelebrated African American hero or event. From the adventures of lawman Bass Reeves, to Henry "Box" Brown's daring escape from slavery.

## Book Information

Series: Strange Fruit (Book 1)

Paperback: 176 pages

Publisher: Fulcrum Publishing (May 1, 2014)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 1938486293

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Product Dimensions: 8 x 0.5 x 10 inches

Shipping Weight: 1.2 pounds (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.4 out of 5 stars 28 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #206,686 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #14 in [Books > Teens >](#)

[Literature & Fiction > Comics & Graphic Novels > History](#) #19 in [Books > Children's Books >](#)

[Comics & Graphic Novels > History](#) #140 in [Books > Comics & Graphic Novels > Graphic](#)

[Novels > Educational & Nonfiction](#)

Age Range: 12 and up

Grade Level: 7 and up

## Customer Reviews

Still more thoughtful reflections come from Joel Christian Gill's graphic novel Strange Fruit: Uncelebrated Narratives from Black History, which unpacks its power through drawings and pointed text that chronicle the trials and triumphs of black Americans who struggled against prejudice more than a century ago. At a moment when racial inequities have ignited this nation, Mr. Gill offers direction for the road ahead from the road behind. [The New York Times](#) These offbeat stories of heretofore-obscure African-American pioneers are filled with heartbreak and triumph. Without whitewashing the realities of slavery and racism, Strange Fruit has a wry, welcoming tone [much aided by Gill's dynamic, inventive storytelling](#). After reading about such real American heroes as chess master Theophilus Thompson, bicycling champion Marshall [Major Taylor](#), and lawman Bass Reeves, I'm eager to learn more! [Major Taylor](#), and lawman Bass Reeves, I'm eager to learn more!

Josh Neufeld, writer/illustrator of *A.D.: New Orleans After the Deluge* By the time I finished reading *Strange Fruit*, I thought, let the comic-book sellers have their mythic superheroes; through Joel Gill, we can have our own. But, instead of flying around in capes or spinning webs, the superheroes in *Strange Fruit* are extraordinary-ordinary black folks making 'a way out of no way.' The difference: they really lived. ¶ Dr. Henry Louis Gates, Jr. Alphonse Fletcher University Professor, Harvard University *Strange Fruit* is an evocative and richly illustrated tour through the shadowed corners of Black History. Gill shares these nine stories simply and with deep thoughtfulness and reverence to voices that-- the reader will quickly be convinced-- need to be heard. ¶ Andrew Aydin, author (with Rep. John Lewis) of *March: Book One* *Strange Fruit* is black history as you've never seen it before. Working with a striking palette of ruby reds, rich browns, bleached-out blues and deep piney greens, author/artist Joel Christian Gill conjures up forgotten firsts and impassioned everymen in a cartoon style that's at once cheeky and epic, naive and majestic. ¶ The Chicago Tribune If you think comics and graphic novels are the domain of ¶ superheroes and stuff ¶ and ¶ for kids, ¶ then brace yourself for an epiphany. Yes, you ¶ will find some superheroes and kids ¶ comics within these pages, but you ¶ will also find ordinary people striving for the extraordinary. ¶ Foreword Reviews The short narratives are conversational in tone and the accompanying detailed images convey tragic beauty. Gill doesn't shy away from portraying brutal scenes, but does so without sensationalism. ¶ School Library Journal Are you always on your child to READ SOMETHING, anything, except a comic book? Well, *Strange Fruit* is a graphic historic novel, and you ¶ will want him to read it. ¶ Terri "The Bookworm Sez" Schlichenmeyer What Gill has done in this first volume of his collected *Strange Fruit* mini-comics is pretty remarkable. He ¶ has infused each of these stories with a huge amount of information, humor for kid readers (¶ Slavery stinks ¶), humor for adults (when a child is born it appears to be launched out of the mother by jet propulsion, making the umbilical cord not unlike a bungee cord), and a full spectrum of comics storytelling devices. ¶ The A.V. Club Readers of the short stories in *Strange Fruit* quickly learn to appreciate the playful succinctness of Gill's iconographic language. He knows when to use humor and sight gags to advance the story. (On the experience of enslavement, Henry ¶ Box Brown remarks: ¶ This stinks. ¶) But Gill knows when more serious cultural cues are needed too, as in the two-page spread where Brown's body, shown curled inside a wooden box, silently tumbles from slavery to freedom. ¶ The Hooded Utilitarian One of the most interesting heroes in the book is Marshall ¶ Major ¶ Taylor (1878-1932), America's first black champion in any sport ¶ and in cycling, no

less, which remains one of the least diverse athletic endeavors even today. Just as the bicycle was beginning to play an important role in the emancipation of women, Taylor, known as The Black Cyclone, attained another feat of equality on two wheels as he bulldozed through the walls put up by racism to break numerous world records and win the world one-mile track cycling championship in 1899.

• Maria Popova of the blog, Brain Pickings blogSuperbly penned and illustrated, STRANGE FRUIT: Uncelebrated Narratives from Black History, Volume 1 is indubitably a work of love. Earmarked as one-of-a-kind, this graphic novel is not only an additional masterpiece to black history, but also a delightfully educational read for both young and old.

• Anita Lock of the blog, 20 Something ReadsFrom the original black pro basketball star to a magician’s greatest illusion, become more familiar with these lives which made a positive difference, despite prejudice.

• Katie Mack of the blog, YA Love Gill’s book fills a definite void in America’s painfully white history books, but on top of that, it’s just a really good read. Gill doesn’t sugarcoat; not everyone gets a happy ending; but the book is visually witty, engaging, and well researched. History truly comes to life under Gill’s skillful hand.

• Foreword ReviewsAstonishing, inspiring, and enraging true stories from American history that you should have been taught in school.

• UnshelvedThis is a must for all libraries, classrooms and homes. It is the perfect way for all of us to start exploring that shared history we have, in new and different ways.

• Nancy Joyce of the blog, What’cha ReadingI was really impressed by this book. Gill clearly did his research to get his point across, and is clearly saying there are more African American people who did cool things that aren’t being recognized. And he’s right.

• Emily Althea of the blog, Fangirls Are WeGill’s graphic novel series is a tool with which to discuss African Americans, social justice and a shared history.

• The Philadelphia TribuneWe need stories of excellence and defiance alongside stories of oppression and Gill provides that much needed complexity by helping readers explore how black people excelled despite systematic oppression, thus adding strength to their already remarkable feats.

• Teach, Think, Sweat blogI highly suggest instead that you read Joel Christian Gill’s excellent nonfiction collection of hidden Black American history by the same name, published by Fulcrum [...] You’ll be much happier, might learn about some new, real-life heroes, and will be supporting actual diversity in comics. It’s a win all around, and shows that discerning comics readers are too savvy to fall into self-congratulatory traps.

• Panel PatterVoted a Great Graphic Novel for Teens by the Young Adult Library Services Association.Chosen as a Summer 2015 Graphic Novel Pick by the Young Adult Library Services Association.Chosen as a Finalist for the Best Young Adult Graphic Novel by the Cybils Awards (Children’s and Young Adult Bloggers Literary

Awards). Voted a BEA Buzz Book by Shelf Awareness. Featured on HuffPost Live. Chosen by Publishers Weekly for their Notable African-American-Interest Titles of 2014. Chosen by the New York Times as "9 Books That Would Make Great Gifts" – #10 Best Indie Comics / Graphic Novels of 2014 by ForeWord Reviews. Featured on the Black History Month Recommended Reading List from A Room of One's Own Bookstore. Included on the Top 100 Books for Holiday Gift-Giving from The Milwaukee Journal Sentinel.

Joel Christian Gill is the chairman, CEO, president, director of development, majority and minority stock holder, manager, co-manager, regional manager, assistant to the regional manager, receptionist, senior black correspondent, and janitor of Strange Fruit Comics. In his spare time he is the Associate Dean of Student Affairs at the New Hampshire Institute of Art and member of The Boston Comics Roundtable. He received his MFA from Boston University and a BA from Roanoke College. His secret lair is behind a secret panel in the kitchen of his house (sold separately) in New Boston, New Hampshire where he lives with his wife, four children, talking dog, and two psychic cats.

I am reading this graphic novel in my one of my university courses. As such, I purchased the kindle version to be delivered to my iPad so that I would have access to it quickly. Unfortunately, the quality of the kindle version is abysmal. The resolution of the images are not print quality, and they seem to have been compressed. To get some idea of what I mean, click the "look inside" option on this graphic novel's store page. As you can see, there is significant artifacting on the preview images from where said images have been compressed. Larger pages like the foreword are legible, but actual sections contained within are actually impossible to read. Most notably, whenever smaller text has been used as an aesthetic choice the artifacts of the image make the text so blurry as to be illegible. The first time you encounter this is in the second story. A classmate has a print copy, so I was able to see what the quality of this graphic novel is meant to look like. It would appear this is a major oversight by either the publisher or . I cannot imagine the images contained in the kindle edition are the resolution they were when they were sent to print. This seems to be some sort of compressed compilation probably compiled for review by someone or other. In any case, the quality is not up to snuff for a retail copy. I must insist avoiding the kindle edition until higher resolution images are used. I'm very disappointed, as the GN itself seems to be quite good.

Bought as a gift. I have to read 1st. Filled with interesting fact about things

thathappened in MA. & NE

Strange Fruit. I've heard the song and I know the story. These hidden narratives illustrated by Joel Christian Gill bring more light to the experience, and in a method that can be understood not only by the most serious of scholars, but by the 4th and 5th grade student just learning about the history of America and the blood that cries out from her "success" story. This book is an excellent way to introduce some issues that most have to search out on their own, in a mutually beneficial way to America and to her citizens. What an awesome talent, to tell the story in this way. Looking forward to Volume II.

When the esteemed Dr. Gates is willing to write a foreword for a book, you know it's something special. And "Strange Fruit" delivers - this graphic novel uses amazing illustration and top-notch storytelling techniques to bring to life the untold tales of real-life African American heroes. Racism is shown with menacing illustrations of "Jim Crow" - readers of all ages will know just what is being conveyed, and the struggles that beset these amazing Americans. A beautiful and important first effort by an up-and-coming author!

This is an amazing book full of stories that have been all too often ignored by the history books. Strange Fruit brings to light these amazing individuals and inspires the reader to want to dig deeper and learn more.

Gill has done an amazing job crafting this book. Each story is a thought-provoking, conversation-starting journey providing valuable insights into the African-American experience. Brilliant. Educational. And vital.

Loved seeing my son read this!

Very interesting book. Glad I bought it.

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