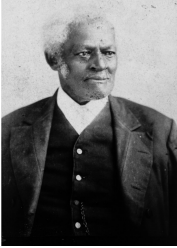




Common Reading: Credible Hulk



After the Civil War, a Rochester man named Rev. Thomas James published a book about his life. In the book he describes being enslaved in New York and his decision to escape and seek his freedom on the Erie Canal.

Adapted from *LIFE OF REV. THOMAS JAMES BY HIMSELF 1886*

I was born a slave in Canajoharie, New York, in 1804. I was the third of four children. All of us were owned by Asa Kimball. When I was eight years old, he sold my mother, my brother, and my older sister to buyers from Smithtown, a village near Amsterdam, New York.

My mother refused to go. She ran into the attic to hide. But she was chased, caught, and tied up by her hands and feet. Then, she was given to her new owner. I saw my mother for the last time as they rode away with her.

When I was seventeen, my new master sold me after only owning me for a few months. He sold me to George H. Hess, a wealthy farmer near Fort Plain. I was traded in exchange for a pair of oxen, a young horse, and some other property.

I stayed with Master Hess from March until June of that year. Then, I ran away. My master had worked me hard. Finally, he tried to hurt me. This made me decide to escape from slavery.

I got up in the night. I used the new path of the Erie Canal as my guide and traveled west. About a week later, I reached the village of Lockport. No one stopped me while I was running away. Men were working on digging the new canal in many places, but they never bothered to ask me any questions. I slept in barns at night and begged for food at farmhouses along the way.

At Lockport, a Black man showed me the way to the Canadian border. I crossed the Niagara River at Youngstown on a ferry boat. I was free!

Once I was on free land, I started looking for work. I found a job at a place called Deep Cut on the Welland Canal, which they were digging at the time. I found the workers to be a rough group, and I soon decided to leave them.

In the spring, I made my way to Rochester and found a home with Lawyer Talbert. I did the chores around his place. I did the same work for Orlando Hastings. I was nineteen years old then.

As a slave, I had never been inside a school or a church. I did not know how to read or anything about religion. But as soon as I arrived, I wanted to learn. I soon got a great chance to make that wish come true.

After the Erie Canal opened, I got a job in a warehouse. I lived with the manager, Mr. Pliny Allen Wheeler. I was taught to read by Mr. Freeman, who had opened a Sunday school for Black youth on West Main Street. However, I learned the most on my own in the warehouse. I studied during the long winter and spring months when the canal was closed and my only work was doing chores around the place.

Credible Hulk

Your task is to determine whether the document/artifact is reliable (can you trust this?). In order to do this task, answer the following:



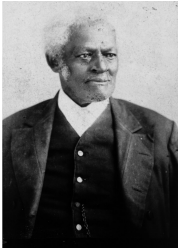
 **How did Thomas James use the Canal to seek his freedom?**

 **Who helped Thomas James escape to Canada?**

 **Is the document/artifact credible (reliable/believable)? Why or why not?**



Common Reading: Mister E



After the Civil War, a Rochester man named Rev. Thomas James published a book about his life. In the book he describes being enslaved in New York and his decision to escape and seek his freedom on the Erie Canal.

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Mister E

Your task is to solve the mystery of the purpose of this document/artifact. In order to do this task, examine the document/artifact and read it through at least once.



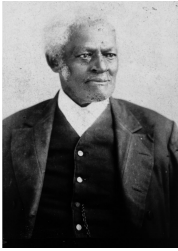
 **How did Thomas James use the Canal to seek his freedom?**

 **Who helped Thomas James escape to Canada?**

 **What was the goal/purpose for the creator/author? What or whose perspective is missing?**



Common Reading: Captain Context



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Captain Context

Your task is to determine the historical context for the document/artifact.

In order to do this task, answer the following questions:



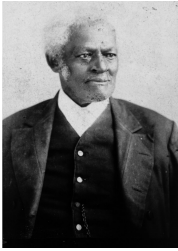
 **How did Thomas James use the Canal to seek his freedom?**

 **Who helped Thomas James escape to Canada?**

 **When and where was the artifact created/written? What do you know about this time and place?**



Common Reading: The Connector



After the Civil War, a Rochester man named Rev. Thomas James published a book about his life. In the book he describes being enslaved in New York and his decision to escape and seek his freedom on the Erie Canal.

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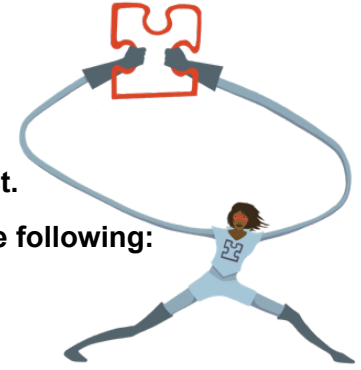
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The Connector

Your task is to determine the “gist” (main idea) of the document/artifact.

In order to do this task, read the document/artifact and then answer the following:



 How did Thomas James use the Canal to seek his freedom?

 Who helped Thomas James escape to Canada?

 Complete the following statement:

“This document says that...