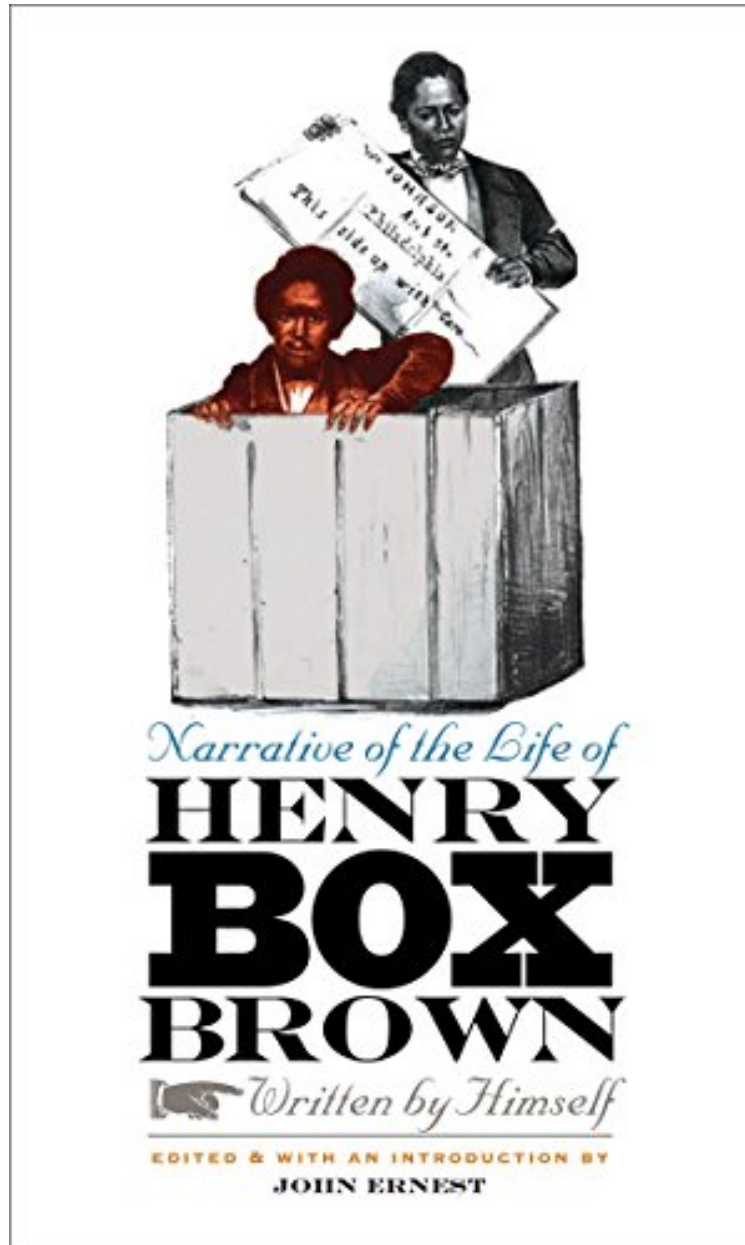


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It is the most celebrated escape in the history of American slavery. Henry Brown had himself sealed in a three-foot-by-two-foot box and shipped from Richmond, Virginia, to Philadelphia, a twenty-seven-hour journey to freedom. In *Narrative of the Life of Henry Box Brown, Written by Himself*, Brown not only tells the story of his famed escape, but also recounts his later life as a black man making his way through white American and British culture. Most important, he paints a revealing portrait of the reality of slavery, of the wife and children sold away from him, the home to which he could not return, and his rejection of the slaveholders' religion--painful episodes that fueled his desire for freedom. This edition comprises the most complete and faithful representation of Brown's life, fully annotated for the first time. John Ernest also provides an insightful introduction that places Brown's life in its historical setting and illuminates the challenges Brown faced in an often threatening world, both before and after his legendary escape.

"Superbly edited. . . . This volume will prove valuable to students and scholars alike. . . . Highly recommended." --
"Choice" I could recommend no better introduction to Henry Box Brown's narrative, life, and historical importance than this judicious and insightful edition, produced by one of the most knowledgeable scholars of pre-twentieth-century African American literature on the scene today.--William L. Andrews, editor of *North Carolina Slave Narratives: The Lives of Moses Roper, Lunsford Lane, Moses Grandy, and Thomas H. Jones*Superbly edited. . . . This volume will prove valuable to students and scholars alike. . . . Highly recommended.--ChoiceThis is a welcome addition to the growing body of scholarship on Henry Box Brown's extraordinary life. Drawing on recent biographical findings and his own archival research, Ernest re-creates Brown's dramatic escape from slavery in 1849 and examines in rich detail the important differences in Brown's multiple accounts of that event. In so doing, Ernest--like Brown--invites crucial questions about self-representation and the nature of historical narrative, while adding tremendously to the scholarship on slavery.--Henry Louis Gates Jr., Alphonse Fletcher University Professor, Harvard UniversityThis volume goes beyond other recent editions of Brown's *Narrative* by offering a richer historical and religious contextualization of both the 1849 and 1851 editions of the text. Ernest's notes are impressive and important; they speak to the meticulousness of his research and help bring this antebellum slave narrative more fully into critical and scholarly conversations.--Joycelyn K. Moody, Sue E. Denman Distinguished Chair in American Literature, University of Texas at San AntonioAbout the AuthorJohn Ernest is Eberly Family Distinguished Professor of American Literature at West Virginia University. He is the author of *Resistance and Reformation in Nineteenth-Century African-American Literature and Liberation Historiography: African American Writers and the Challenge of History, 1794-1861* (from the University of North Carolina Press).