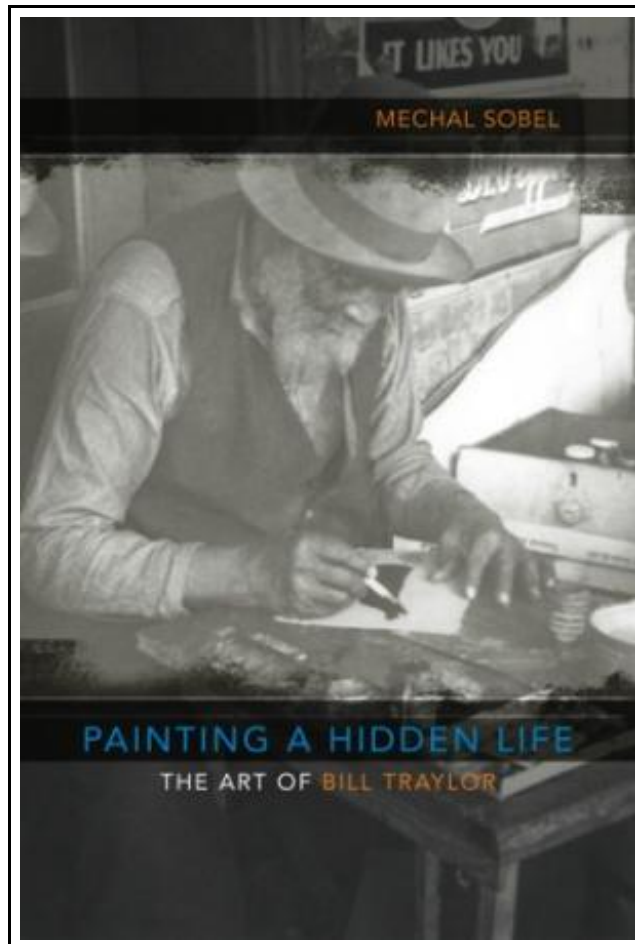


## Painting a Hidden Life: The Art of Bill Traylor (Hardback)



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Louisiana State University Press, United States, 2009. Hardback. Book Condition: New. 231 x 155 mm. Language: English . Brand New Book. Born into slavery on an Alabama plantation in 1853, Bill Traylor worked as a sharecropper for most of his life. But in 1928 he moved to Montgomery and changed his life, becoming a self-taught lyric painter of extraordinary ability and power. From 1936 to 1946, he sat on a street corner -- old, ill, and homeless -- and created well over 1,200 paintings. Collected and later promoted by Charles Shannon, a young Montgomery artist, his work received star placement in the Corcoran Gallery's 1982 exhibition *Black Folk Art in America*. From then on, the spare and powerful radical modernity of Traylor's work helped place him among the rising stars of twentieth-century American artists. Most critics and art historians who analyze Traylor's paintings emphasize his extraordinary form and evaluate the content as either simple or enigmatic narratives of black life. In *Painting a Hidden Life*, historian Mechal Sobel's trenchant analysis reveals a previously unrecognized central core of meaning in Traylor's near-hidden symbolism -- a call for retribution in response to acts of lynching and other violence toward blacks. Drawing on historical records and oral histories, Sobel carefully explores the relationship between Traylor's life and his paintings and arrives at new interpretations of his art. From an interview with Traylor's great-granddaughter, Sobel learned that Traylor believed the Birmingham policemen who killed his son in 1929 in fact lynched him -- a story that neither Traylor nor his family had previously disclosed. The trauma of this event, Sobel explains, propelled Traylor to find a way to voice his rage and spurred the creation of his powerful, mysterious visual language. Traylor's encoded paintings tell a vibrant,...

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