



# Behind the Scenes: Or, Thirty Years a Slave, and Four Years in the White House

*Elizabeth Keckley*

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**Behind the Scenes: Or, Thirty Years a Slave, and Four Years in the White House** Elizabeth Keckley  
*Behind the Scenes: or Thirty Years a Slave and Four Years in the White House* was first published in 1868 and is considered one of the most candid and poignant slave narratives. Author Elizabeth Hobbs Keckley writes about her teenage years, working as a slave for the Rev. Robert Burwell in Hillsborough, NC. He is thought by many historians to have been Keckley's half-brother. The Burwells had twelve children and ran an academy for girls. She writes about mistreatment and violence visited upon her by Rev. and Mrs. Burwell, and the unwelcome sexual advances and eventual rape by one of the town's white citizens. After Keckley gave birth to a son, she and her baby were sent to live with Burwell's sister.

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