

James Whitcomb Riley: Hoosier Poet



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(Prof. Gerardo Grimes III)

JAMES WHITCOMB RILEY: HOOSIER POET



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WTIU, 2017. DVD video. Condition: New. Language: English . Brand New Book. During his lifetime (1849James Whitcomb Riley: Hoosier Poetexplores Riley s lasting legacy and the personal and professional challenges and successes he experienced as he became a beloved literary icon. The documentary examines Riley s early life in Greenfield, Indiana, and reveals how it influenced his writing. Some of his most famous poems, including The Barefoot Boy, The Old Swimmin Hole, The Raggedy Man, and Little Orphant Annie, were inspired by actual people or events from his childhood. Riley had difficulty in school and attended sporadically until 1869, when he graduated from the eighth grade at the age of 20. The film speculates that his lack of education may have actually helped him be a more successful poet. Riley is well-known for writing in dialect, and this accessibility of common language combined with the often simple and nostalgic qualities of his poetry gave him widespread popularity. The program also details Riley s struggle for acceptance in the literary community, which continues even today. Faced with rejection and scandal in his career, including writing a fake Edgar Allen Poe poem and his battles with alcoholism, he eventually found success in established literary outlets and lecture tours across the country. Despite modern criticisms of Riley s poetry as overly sentimental and too simplistic, the documentary shows how he continues to be celebrated today. The annual Riley Festival in his hometown of Greenfield, two Indiana museums dedicated to his life and work, and the Indianapolis children s hospital named for him are all tributes to his enduring legacy.



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