

James Baldwin

By ER



James Baldwin was born in New York, New York in 1924. Even as a child James wanted to be a writer. While growing up he spent a lot of his time reading. He often slipped away from his parent's strict religious home to watch movies and plays. His family lived in poverty, and these activities gave him a chance to dream about a better life.

When he was fourteen he became a junior preacher in the Pentecostal church. The people enjoyed his preaching but he left the church because he thought that Christianity taught blacks to accept a world of inequality. James couldn't go to college because his parents had very little money and he had to get a job. He worked as a waiter, a handyman, a dishwasher and in a defense factory. But he still wanted to be a writer. So he moved to Greenwich, an area in New York known for its writers. There he started a novel and wrote articles for magazines, supporting himself with odd jobs. He met a well-known novelist Richard Wright. They became friends and he helped James put his writing in magazines. In 1953 James completed his first novel, *Go tell it on the Mountain*. In 1955 he wrote his first play, *The Amen Corner*. He completed his last major book, *The price of the Ticket* in 1985.

Even though he was born in poverty, James worked hard for a better life. James developed stomach cancer and died in 1987.