

Pearce's work remains an essential volume for scholars and general readers in the areas of American civilization, culture, history, and literature. It is also useful for American Indian scholars probing the nature of the Euro-American mind.

— D. C. Cole
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Ruth Pelz. *Black Heroes of the Wild West*. (Seattle: Open Hand Publishing, 1990) 55 pp., \$5.95 paper.

Ruth Pelz's book, illustrated by Leandro Della Piana, is written for elementary school children. Among the nine black heroes and heroines profiled are three women. They include the rough and tough "Stagecoach Mary Fields, the brave Bidy Mason, and the hard working Clara Brown." The men are the early explorer, Estevan; Chicago founder Jean Baptiste Point Du Sable; one of Washington State's founders, George Washington Bush; and mountain man James Beckwourth. Businessman and government leader Mifflin Gibbs and rodeo star Bill Pickett round out those featured. Some are more well-known than others, but all were important figures in the West.

Each of the short bibliographical profiles is written in a style that, while making the deeds of the person heroic, will not leave the reader simply awestruck. The child will be left with the impression that she or he might also be able to become a hero. Pelz explains how all her subjects command respect from their contemporaries and by detailing their lives, talents and struggles, shows why they should still be celebrated.

There is a need for more children's books of this type that show the presence and contributions of Afro-Americans in the West, beginning in the early 1500s (many people still believe that blacks did not arrive until about 100 years later). This work is well organized and the illustrations add dimension. For further readings on the subject, the author has included a bibliography for juveniles and one for adults.

I recommend this book for children and for those preschoolers whose parent or other relative desires to read it to them. Not only is it entertaining, but it is also inspiring.

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