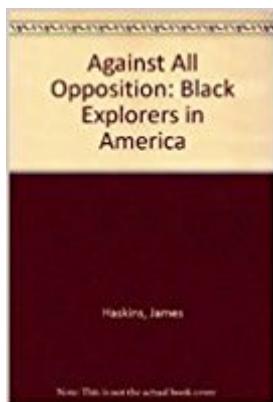


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Against All Opposition: Black Explorers In America



Synopsis

Long before 1492, African sailors and travelers, many of them slaves or servants, helped to discover new worlds. Many black adventurers have passed unsung into history, and yet they played vital roles in innumerable explorations. Renowned author Jim Haskins describes the feats of those whose imagination and courage led them to new worlds, against all opposition.

Book Information

Hardcover: 86 pages

Publisher: Walker Childrens (April 1, 1992)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0802781373

ISBN-13: 978-0802781376

Product Dimensions: 1 x 1 x 1 inches

Shipping Weight: 8.8 ounces

Average Customer Review: Be the first to review this item

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Education & Reference > History > Exploration & Discovery #371 in Books > Teens >

Biographies > Cultural Heritage

Customer Reviews

Grade 7 Up-- Haskins hits the bullseye again, producing a readable, informative collective biography of black explorers and adventurers. Students familiar with his previous work will note once more the crisp, flowing prose that incorporates telling details and cogent quotations, bringing his subjects to life and giving their toils meaning and relevance. In a non-didactic manner, he uses these people's lives to demonstrate that goals, ideals, and hard work can contribute to the expanding of the frontiers of all types of knowledge, regardless of race, gender, or nationality. Included are Estevanico, who searched for Cibola with Cabeza de Vaco; Jean Baptiste Point de Sable, founder of Chicago; York, who accompanied Lewis and Clark; mountain man James P. Beckwourth; Matthew Henson, co-discoverer of the North Pole; and astronauts Guion Stewart Bluford, Jr. and Ronald McNair. These explorers, as well as those of the present and future, says Haskins, ``. . . go forth not for glory; rather, they have a vision of the world, a vision of discovery.'' --David A. Lindsey, Lakewood Junior/Senior High School, WA

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Enlightening if vaguely documented accounts of black explorers of the American continent, the

North Pole, and space, emphasizing the barriers of race that they overcame. After quoting early Arab documents to show that the emperor of ancient Mali (an accomplished African civilization) sent a large fleet across the Atlantic in the 13th century, Haskins speculates that this led to ``negroid'' features in some Mayan sculptures, similarities between African and American languages, and rumors that helped to inspire Columbus. ``It is likely that Columbus had with him either black seamen or black slaves who had knowledge of the ocean and the lands beyond it.'' Other better-known explorers included here are Estevanico (explorer of New Mexico), Jean Point du Sable (founder of Chicago), York (a member of the Lewis and Clark expedition), James Beckwourth (a half-black mountain man), George Bush (the first American settler in Washington territory), Matthew Henson, and Guion Bluford (the first black astronaut). Most entries are exciting accounts with substantial quotations from early journals, but their power is somewhat diminished by the many extraneous details, while astronaut Ronald McNair's story seems tacked on as an afterthought. Still, the inspirational value balances any stylistic shortcomings. Bibliography; index. B&w photos not seen. (Biography. 10-14) -- Copyright ©1992, Kirkus Associates, LP. All rights reserved.

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