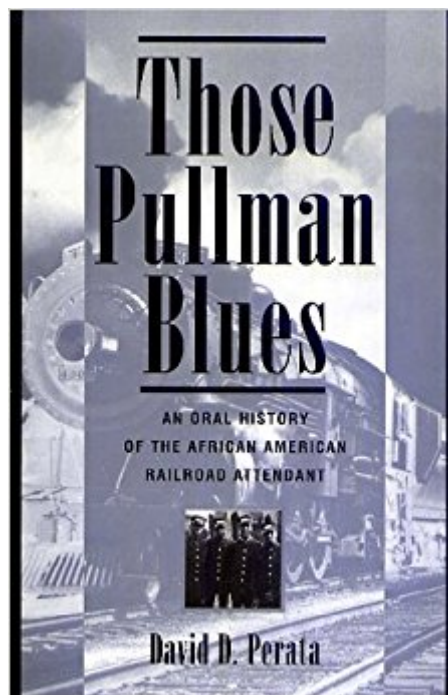




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Those Pullman Blues: An Oral History Of The African-American Railroad Attendant (Twayne's Oral History Series)



Synopsis

The first oral history centering on the unique experiences of black porters and railroad attendants during the railroad's heyday is by turns dramatic, inspiring, comic, and heartwrenching. First person accounts document both the glamour of the railroad era and the bitter realities of being a black worker on a white railroad. --This text refers to the Paperback edition.

Book Information

Series: Twayne's Oral History Series

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Average Customer Review: 4.7 out of 5 stars 9 customer reviews

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Customer Reviews

This book is in excellent condition and thank you!

This book is written about an important period in history, 2/3rd of this book has been written about my family. The Smock family has spanned 4 generations on the Pullman Railroad. It is a necessary read for anyone interested in stories told by these dignified men who served.

Received as expected. Good quality. Timely arrival.

Good Read!

This is an excellent book for the dedicated rail fan - real stories about real people, the good, the bad and the ugly stories of working as a porter or meal service person on the trains.

This is a great book to read if you want to know what it was like to work for The Pullman Co. The biggest problem with the book is that it is virtually one-sided. Mr. Perata doesn't seem to include the positive side of The Pullman Co., nor has he included the historical perspective of the times and attitudes of the general populace during the period he explores. I had two close friends who worked for Pullman. One was a black former Pullman Porter. The other was a white Pullman employee who had worked his way up the system from the entry jobs to conductor and finally a Pullman General Manager. Far from having the "plantation mentality" Mr. Perata speaks of, his concerns were that the level of service did not diminish AND that the employees were being treated fairly and with respect. The black person worked for me in an executive capacity, so he need not have been less than candid. He told me stories of both his positive and negative experiences. Of course, there was the occasional ornery Conductor or supervisor, but almost all his comments about Pullman were positive. In fact he was insistent that the traditions of The Pullman Company be carried on and used on Amtrak.

I wasn't sure what to expect when I started reading this book, but quickly became caught up in the stories and work experiences of these men. Many people don't know what train travel was like in the days before Amtrak and this will be an eye-opening book for them. For those of us who do recall Pullman travel, and the people (many of them friends) who worked the cars, this book will bring back many memories. Readers should be aware that that this collection of oral histories is not a railfan's book or a wallow in nostalgia. These men tell what it was like not only to work for the Pullman Company, but also what life was like for them away from the trains. Parts of the book are funny, and others are heartbreaking, but most work is that way. The only thing that kept the book from receiving a "10" rating was that it could have used some car diagrams (floor plans) to give the novice an idea of the interior layout of the cars described in the text.

The interviews of the men that built such a style of travel are conducted and written in such brilliance that you can almost smell the starch in their white jackets! A brilliant method of capturing the true life emotions of an almost invisible servant who afforded the rail traveler a luxury that this country will never again know. Mr. Perata has immortalized those fine men in print, a much needed documentation of a bygone mode of travel and the truth behind it. Those Pullman Blues should be on every bookshelf in America

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