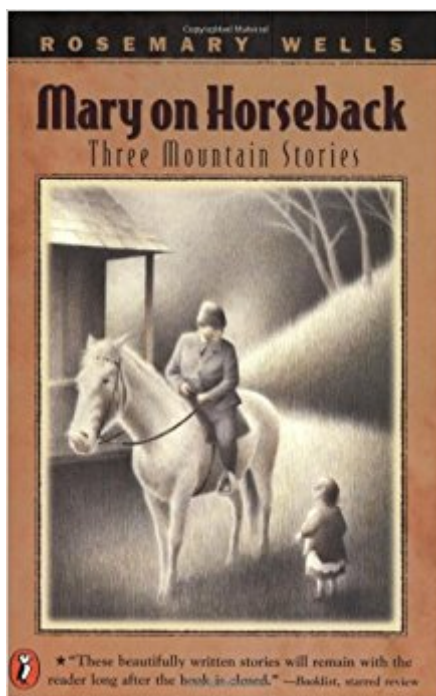


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Mary On Horseback: Three Mountain Stories



Synopsis

Master storyteller Rosemary Wells tells the incredible true story of a World War I nurse who brought medical care to the Appalachians. Mary Breckinridge, trained as a nurse during World War I, rode on horseback into the isolated mountains of Appalachia and never looked back. Instead, she spent her life fording icy streams and climbing untracked mountains to bring medical help to those in need.

More nurses on horseback joined Mary . . . and the Frontier Nursing Service was born.

Mary's story is amazing. And it is true. Wells's realistic yet poetic prose perfectly captures the dichotomy of the majestic beauty of Appalachia and the harsh realities of mountain life. . . . This one's a gem.
•School Library Journal

Book Information

Lexile Measure: 0660 (What's this?)

Paperback: 64 pages

Publisher: Puffin Books; Reprint edition (October 23, 2000)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 9780141308159

ISBN-13: 978-0141308159

ASIN: 014130815X

Product Dimensions: 5.1 x 0.2 x 7.8 inches

Shipping Weight: 3.2 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.5 out of 5 stars 25 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #59,248 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #36 in [Books > Children's Books > Biographies > United States](#) #66 in [Books > Children's Books > Growing Up & Facts of Life > Difficult Discussions > Illness](#) #92 in [Books > Children's Books > Growing Up & Facts of Life > Health > Diseases](#)

Age Range: 8 - 12 years

Grade Level: 3 - 7

Customer Reviews

Three well-honed first-person narratives add up to an outstanding biography of one remarkable woman: Mary Breckinridge, founder of the still-extant Frontier Nursing Service in the Appalachian Mountains. After being widowed twice and having lost two children, Breckenridge enrolled in nursing school, determined to help other youngsters live. Wells takes up Breckenridge's story upon her arrival in 1923 Kentucky, through the perspectives of three people whose lives were greatly affected

by her mission. John Hawkins, the young son of a "river man" injured while riding newly cut logs down the rapids, tells how Mary fortuitously arrived at their doorstep before the "horse doctor with a bone saw" came to saw his father's leg off. An 18-year-old nurse who travels from her native Scotland to work with Mary describes her battle to convince the mountain residents (who are terrified of needles) to let the nurses vaccinate them against rampant diphtheria. In the finalAand most stirringAof the accounts, Pearl refuses to talk after witnessing her mother's death from childbirth. Through drafting the girl into her cause, Mary moves Pearl to speak again. Wells's careful attention to the details and hardships of mountain living authenticates these achingly real accounts, as she spells out both the enormity of Breckenridge's challenge and the triumph of even the smallest victories. McCarty's finely crafted drawings, based on actual photographs, add to the historical accuracy and elegance of the volume. Ages 8-12. Copyright 1998 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Grade 2-5-The practice of modern medicine was practically nonexistent in the Appalachian Mountains of Kentucky in the 1920s. Diphtheria, typhoid, and small pox ravaged the mountain dwellers' lives. Mary Breckinridge, herself a widow whose children had also died, decided to change things. This pioneering nurse-midwife who founded the Frontier Nursing Service is introduced through the eyes of three fictional characters whose lives are irrevocably changed by their encounters with her. Young John nearly faints at his first sight of a needle and syringe that are used to treat his injured father. Miss Ireland, an 18-year-old nurse from Scotland, braves the mountain wilderness at night to inoculate a young child. Pearl, her mamma's "ownliest sugarplum" retreats into a world of silence upon her mother's death until she is loved out of it by Mary and her nurses. Though each story is brief, Wells's realistic yet poetic prose perfectly captures the dichotomy of the majestic beauty of Appalachia and the harsh realities of mountain life. McCarty's evocative illustrations, based on photographs taken for the Frontier Nursing Service, are an ideal complement to the text. An afterword provides a brief biography of Breckinridge and information on the Frontier Nursing Service. This one's a gem.Peggy Morgan, The Library Network, Southgate, MICopyright 1998 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

I enjoyed these stories very much myself and I enjoyed reading this book with my 5 and 3 year old boys, although, the target audience is probably a little bit older.

My kids and I are enjoying these stories. I think I expected the stories to be a little longer than they are (I didn't notice how many pages the book had before buying it). However, each story is a nice length for reading to the kids before bedtime.

Great Historical Book.

Rosemary Wells is a good writer, and at the beginning of the book she initiates interest for the reader right away. But whether the author chose to ignore important information about the "heroine" of the book or she was merely ignorant of it, there is sufficient question about the motives and morals of Mary Breckinridge that make her a questionable character to hold up to young people. It is true that Ms. Breckinridge was concerned for the health of the poor in the Appalachian Mountains. However, certain reports available online reveal that Ms. Breckinridge tended to feel that the "Aryan race" in these Kentucky hill folk were what made them deserving of care (over any other color of those created in God's image?). Her self-acclaim as the Frontier Nursing staff grew made her motives questionable: was she really in this out of compassion, or was it her "15 minutes of fame" as modern slang would have it? No, there are too many questions here to make Mary Breckinridge a worthy hero to young people today. We were greatly disappointed in this book, and it met the "circular file" quickly.

Read this book in one night. Bought it to read to my class as a way to integrate social studies and reading.

Very fascinating stories about a woman I had never heard of and a history I never knew! Great for children and adults alike!

Charming stories- just wish there had been more.

Granddaughter really enjoyed this story!

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