



Buffalo Bird Girl: A Hidatsa Story

S.D. Nelson

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This fascinating picture book biography tells the childhood story of Buffalo Bird Woman, a Hidatsa Indian born around 1839. Through her true story, readers will learn what it was like to be part of this Native American community that lived along the Missouri River in the Dakotas, a society that depended more on agriculture for food and survival than on hunting. Children will relate to Buffalo Bird Girl's routine of chores and playing with friends, and they will also be captivated by her lifestyle and the dangers that came with it.

Using as a resource the works of Gilbert L. Wilson, who met Buffalo Bird Woman and transcribed her life's story in the early 20th century, award-winning author-illustrator S. D. Nelson has captured the spirit of Buffalo Bird Girl and her lost way of life. The book includes a historical timeline.

Buffalo Bird Girl: A Hidatsa Story Details

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Author : S.D. Nelson

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From Reader Review Buffalo Bird Girl: A Hidatsa Story for online ebook

Emily A says

This book is a culmination of many important aspects of our classroom discussions and readings. We have discussed the importance and qualifications of texts that are appropriate representations of Native American culture. This book is extremely specific and accurate in its information and representations. It also represents that connection between historical fictions and non-fiction. The story intertwines real photographs with historical information in the story. It is a very informational book about the members of the the Hidatsa People. This book would not really work as a read aloud but more broken down into into informational chunks and discussions.

Jo Oehrlein says

Detailed information about the life of Buffalo Bird Girl when she was young (in the 1800s). Shows the life of a Plains Indian who lived in a village all but during the winter months (so, not nomadic).

Based on information from Buffalo Bird Woman when she was grown.

Olivia Aponte says

In this story we follow the Buffalo Bird Girl named Waheenee-nea, who is one of the last Hidatsa people to live off the land. In the story we find out that most of her family has died due to a chicken pox outbreak and that she is raised by her aunt and grandmother. In this story we learn about how the Hidatsa people survive by living off the land however the problem comes when the white people try to move them to a reservation. The illustrations in the story are oil painting and give it a real life like look. I would not read this book to younger children because it is a bit of a harder read.

Hannah says

We have been reading through this one over the course of a few weeks. It was a great introduction for my six year old, to the lifestyle of certain Native American tribes.

Wendy says

A look into the life of a Hidatsa girl in her village - lots of interesting information and wonderful illustrations. Back of the book includes additional information from the author regarding his life with his Lakota mother, and more details of life in the Hidatsa tribe.

Jessie says

Pretty text-heavy, but definitely a story that you can take slowly. (It's kind of slice-of-life through a year). It's very nation-specific, which I liked, and it showed different nations with similar patterns of life coming together to live together when they grew smaller.

The illustrations included both drawings and photos (both from roughly the time that Buffalo Bird Girl grew up and reconstructions).

Detailed endnotes.

Sierra Ellis says

I was fascinated by this book and how it related to diversity. I believe everyone should read this book to know about some historical information about the buffalo bird girl. Children can relate to the girl because she mentioned about playing with friends and doing chores. This was a really good book.

Laura says

An elegantly written piece that tells of Buffalo Bird Girl, Waheenee-neah, one of the last Hidatsa people to live the traditional way. It begins by informing us how Buffalo Bird Girl has lost many family members, including her mother and brother, to the small pox epidemic; therefore, her grandmother and aunts took her in and loved her like they were her own mother. The story then progresses forward to show all of the traditional ways of the Hidatsa, such as: collecting and preserving food, moving homes during different seasons, and warring with other tribes until the white man's influence started impacting their lives and forcing the Hidatsa tribe to move to a reservation.

Appropriate for grades 5-8, the author has taken multiple components and flawlessly melded them together to tell an eloquent recount of Buffalo Bird Girl's life. There are quotes directly from Buffalo Bird Girl who shared her experiences with an anthropologist back in the early 1900's, as well as the author's own added text, based on Buffalo Bird Girl's reminiscing, of how Buffalo Bird Girl's life was as a child. Furthermore, there are authentic pictures of American Indians as they performed their traditions in the early 1900's. Finally, there are exquisite illustrations that help convey the information in the text. The author includes an extensive note and timeline at the end of the story to further provide information about Buffalo Bird Girl and the Hidatsa tribe. This is a solid text to use to enhance any social studies curriculum or unit revolving around American Indians.

Annie Do says

Genre: Biography, Juvenile Nonfiction

Story written and illustrated by S.D. Nelson (Standing Rock Sioux Tribe).

Buffalo Bird Girl, Waheenee, was one of the last Hidsata girl to live in the "old ways." The beginning of the book talked about how Waheenee lost most of her family members to the deadly smallpox disease, and therefore, she was raised by her grandmother. As the story continues, the book talked about the traditional Hidsata way of living (through a Native girl's point of view). Some of the topics mentioned in the book included hunting and gathering food, storing food, farming, migrating, and having play time.

Of all the books that I have read regarding Native Americans' ways of living, this was the first book that explained the story from a girl's point of view. I was able to gain more insight into what Native girls would do in comparison to what a Native boy would do (i.e. hunting, going to war, protecting the village). Although a clear plot was not present, the story was still very well told based on chronological events. I especially enjoyed the real-life photographs of people, plants, houses, and various other materials related to Hidsata living style; it gave the book a very authentic feel. The illustrations were colorful and unique (because the characters had non-typical human colored skins, such as blue, pink, teal). The language of the book was easy to understand, and overall, it gave a very descriptive overview of what life was like back then.

Edward Sullivan says

An insightful, poignant picture book biography. Beautifully designed and illustrated.

Courtney says

2012. Biography 5. Good during this time period in history, read aloud, or during a Native American Month or a women of history unit. Is about Buffalo Bird Girl written to seem as if it's by her. Very engaging and not many Native American stories of notable women available. There is a timeline in the back.

Air says

This book was suggested to me because of my love of the Little House series - and it did not disappoint! A very vivid retelling of Buffalo Bird Girl's accounts of her childhood, written in such a way as to honor the original story, but also remain accessible to young, unfamiliar readers. The artwork was breath taking and added an important level to the story, filling in holes that the text left.

Kretesha Cotton says

Text-to-Teaching Connection 12/06/2016

In this book you learn about living during the 1800's as a Native American. I would have pictures of Native American symbols. I would have the definition of each symbol. Students would choose their favorite symbol to write a journal entry to what this mean to Native American culture and what they like about this symbol.

Barbara says

The acrylic paint illustrations and the drawings made with black colored pencil for this book are really quite special, filled with tints and tones that celebrate the vibrancy of the Hidatsa people who once lived on the Great Plains. Relying on the childhood experiences of Buffalo Bird Girl, who was born in the 1830s and who told her stories to anthropologist Gilbert Wilson who recorded them, thus preserving vestiges of the traditional life Buffalo Bird Girl had lived, the author/illustrator describes how she spent each day, the gathering and preparation of food, times of celebration, and times of conflict, and how her people coped with the change of seasons and their forced move to a reservation. There is a poignancy about the stories but also genuine respect for the way of life being described here. The book also contains black and white photographs of Buffalo Bird Woman and the area she lived. Back matter includes a timeline and additional information about the Hidatsa people. Late elementary and middle grade readers are sure to be intrigued.

Katherine says

Buffalo Bird Girl is a great look into Hidatsa tribal history and customs and how the U.S. government affected the First Nations peoples. S.D. Nelson, himself a member of the Lakota tribe, writes the story in first person, from Buffalo Bird Girl's view. It starts off from her childhood in her fishing villages and ends with how her tribe was moved to a reservation. It handles these sensitive historical topics with care. Intermingled with illustrations, S.D. Nelson includes archival photographs which really bring Buffalo Bird Girl's book to life. This is a fantastic book about a Native American woman, her customs, and life. Back matter is extensive and offers a deeper look into both the author and the research.
