

PICTURE BOOK BIOGRAPHIES

Molly Craig

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WHAT IS A PICTURE BOOK BIOGRAPHY?

- A biography is the story of someone's life that is written by another person.
- The sub-genre, picture book biography, is exactly what it sounds like: a short biography with pictures made mainly for children in elementary school.
- Characteristics:
 - Nonfiction
 - Short
 - Average 32-48 pages
 - Substantial amount of illustrations
 - Important and notable accomplishments and struggles of a person's life compacted

WHAT IS THE AUTHOR'S DUTY?

- An author of a picture book biography has the duty of including the most important and attention grabbing information about a person's life in a small book with lots of illustrations.
- This can be a hard task, but what is not told with words can be told with illustrations.
- The illustrator also has an important job depicting the hardships and accomplishments of a person.
- A quality picture book biography combines these two aspects together admirably.

WHO ARE SOME NOTABLE AUTHORS?

- David A. Adler
- Andrea Davis Pinkney and Brian Pinkney
- George Sullivan
- Anne Rockwell



DAVID A. ADLER

David has written almost 200 books for children. His extensive collection of “A Picture Book of...” series makes up a large amount of his picture book biographies.

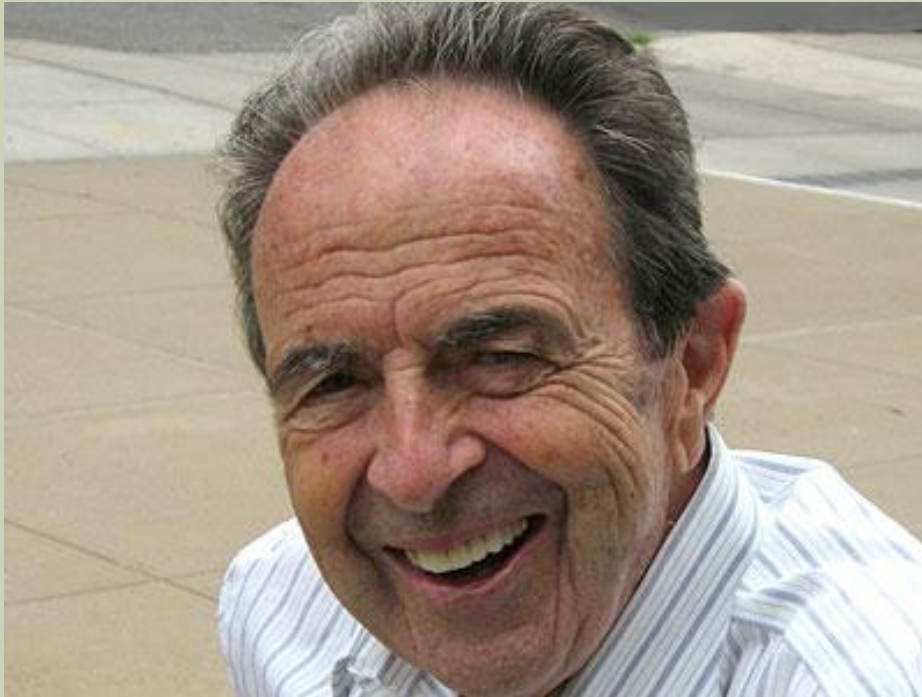
DAVID A. ADLER'S PICTURE BOOK BIOGRAPHY COLLECTION (WIKIPEDIA)

- A Picture Book of Amelia Earhart (1998)
- A Picture Book of George Washington Carver
- My Writing Day (1999) (autobiography)
- A Picture Book of Sacajawea (1999)
- America's Champion Swimmer: Gertrude Ederle (2000)
- Martin Luther King, Jr. (2001)
- B. Franklin, Printer (2001)
- A Picture Book of Dwight David Eisenhower (2002)
- A Picture Book of Lewis and Clark (2003)
- A Picture Book of Harriet Beecher Stowe (2003)
- Helen Keller (2003)
- George Washington: An Illustrated Biography (2004)
- Heroes of the Revolution (2004)
- Enemies of Slavery (2004)
- President George Washington (2005)
- A Picture Book of Sam Adams (2005) (with Michael S. Adler)
- A Picture Book of John Hancock (2005) (with Michael S. Adler)
- Joe Louis: America's Fighter (2005)
- Campy, the Story of Roy Campanella (2006)
- Satchel Paige: Don't Look Back (2006)
- A Picture Book of James and Dolly Madison (2006) (with Michael S. Adler)
- A Picture Book of Thurgood Marshall (1997)
- Lou Gehrig: The Luckiest Man (1997)
- Our Golda: The Story of Golda Meir (1984)
- Martin Luther King Jr.: Free at Last (1986)
- Thomas Jefferson: Father of our Democracy
- Jackie Robinson: He Was the First (1989)
- A Picture Book of Abraham Lincoln (1989)
- A Picture Book of George Washington (1989)
- A Picture Book of Martin Luther King, Jr. (1989)
- A Picture Book of Benjamin Franklin (1990)
- A Picture Book of Thomas Jefferson (1990)
- A Picture Book of Helen Keller (1990)
- Thomas Alva Edison: Great Inventor (1990)
- Christopher Columbus: Great Explorer (1991)
- A Picture Book of Eleanor Roosevelt (1991)
- A Picture Book of Christopher Columbus (1991)
- A Picture Book of John F. Kennedy (1991)
- Benjamin Franklin: Inventor, Statesman, Printer
- A Picture Book of Harriet Tubman (1992)
- A Picture Book of Simon Bolivar (1992)
- A Picture Book of Florence Nightingale (1992)
- A Picture Book of Jesse Owens (1992)
- A Picture Book of Frederick Douglas (1993)
- A Picture Book of Rosa Parks (1993)
- A Picture Book of Sitting Bull (1993)
- A Picture Book of Robert E. Lee (1994)
- A Picture Book of Sojourner Truth (1994)
- A Picture Book of Jackie Robinson (1994)
- A Picture Book of Paul Revere (1995)
- A Picture Book of Patrick Henry (1995)
- A Picture Book of Davy Crockett (1996)
- A Picture Book of Thomas Edison (1996)
- A Picture Book of Louis Braille (1997)



**ANDREA
DAVIS
PINKNEY
AND BRIAN
PINKNEY**

This married couple is known for writing picture book biographies about important African Americans in history.



GEORGE SULLIVAN

George has written over 200 nonfiction children's books with a large amount being picture book biographies.

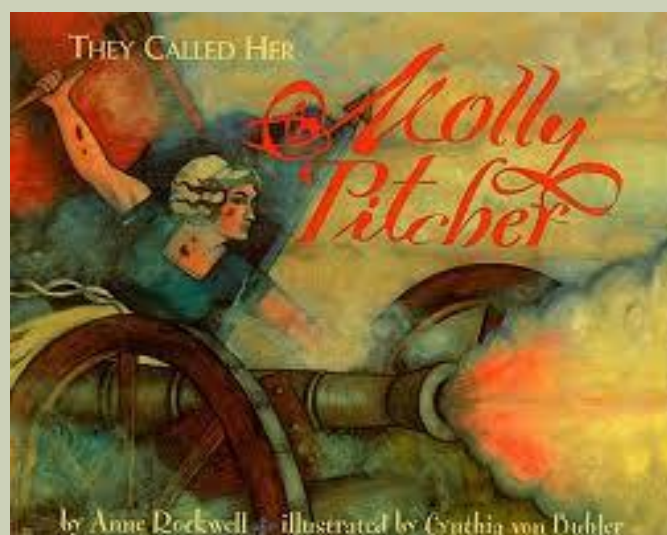
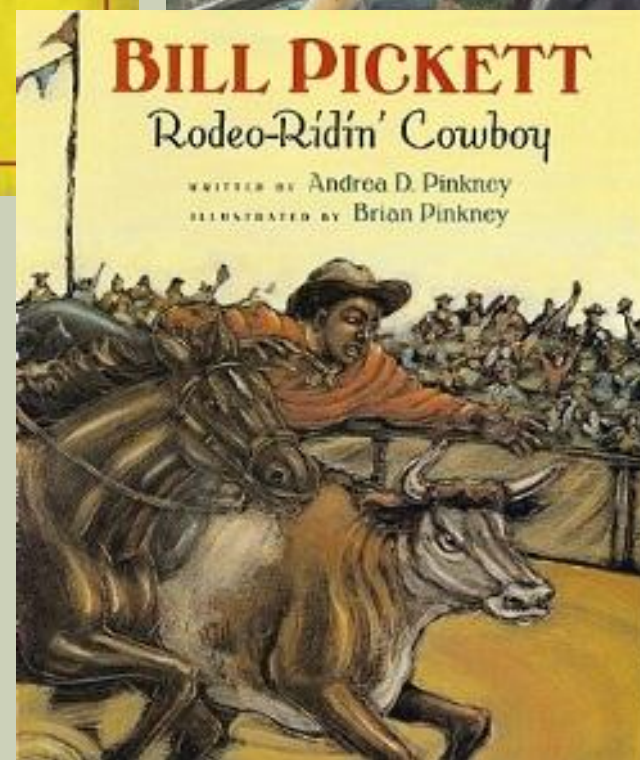
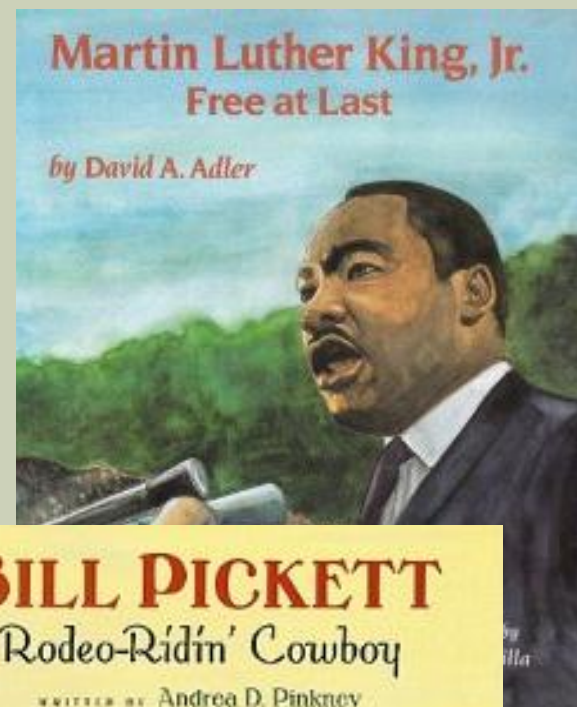
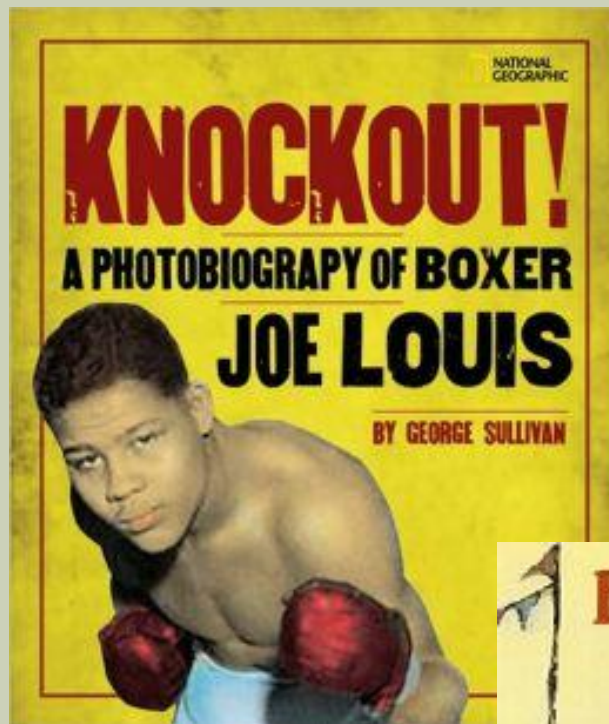
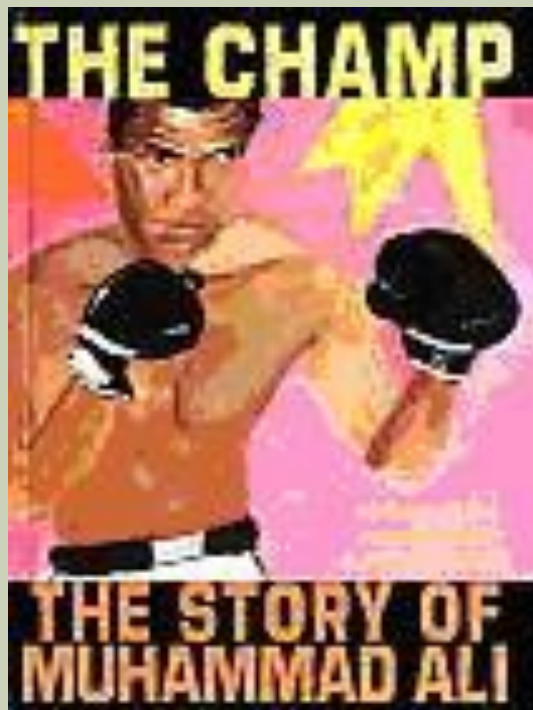


ANNE ROCKWELL

Anne is another author known for writing picture book biographies. She likes to write about American heroes.

WHICH BOOKS DID I READ?

- I read a book from each of these authors mentioned previously, as well as an author who is less known for writing specifically in this sub genre.
- Books I read:
 - *Martin Luther King, Jr. Free at Last*
 - By David A. Adler, Illustrated by Robert Casilla
 - *Bill Pickett: Rodeo Ridin' Cowboy*
 - By Andrea D. Pinkney, Illustrated by Brain Pinkney
 - *Knockout! A Photobiography of Boxer Joe Louis*
 - By George Sullivan
 - *The Called Her Molly Pitcher*
 - By Anne Rockwell, Illustrated by Cynthia von Buhler
 - *The Champ: The Story of Muhammad Ali*
 - By Tonya Bolden, Illustrated by R. Gregory Christie



WHY SHOULD CHILDREN READ THIS GENRE?

- Picture book biographies are great sources of history that children can view easily and understand easily.
- It is important for young kids to have the opportunity to read nonfiction picture books from their classroom library to supplement what they already learn in school.
- Lengthy biographies without pictures will not successfully grab the attention of the children trying to read them. This is where picture book biographies step in and take over.
- While reading about people's accomplishments and hardships, children have the opportunity to learn about history and be able to relate to the person they are learning about. Sometimes the struggles and positive aspects hit home for these students.
- Picture book biographies expand their knowledge about not only people from the past, but the times the people lived in as well.

WHY SHOULD CHILDREN READ THIS GENRE? (CONTINUED)

- Learning about people in history who have made a difference in our world is an important way to understand why we live the lives we do, how we can help shape the future, and what leads to individual success.
- Picture book biographies give children knowledge about the past as well as different perspectives from different kinds of people from who live or lived in different cultures.
- Learning about people who are different than them makes these students more well-rounded intellectually and socially.

HOW CAN TEACHERS USE THESE BOOKS?

- Teachers can use picture book biographies to further enhance themes from lessons in all subject areas. There are picture book biographies about historical figures, athletes, artists, scientists, authors, and more. Teachers can enhance the lessons with “Biography Breaks” by allowing kids to learn more about the people involved in a subject area in the past.
- Children can read about heroes from the past and apply it to their own lives by finding a hero in their life to write about. This way, they become the author of a biography themselves.
- Students can pair up with a “biography buddy” from another grade. They can interview their buddy and write a biography about them to share with their buddy’s class.
- Read Aloud! It’s important to implement nonfiction books into read aloud time along with fiction books.
- Inquiry, inquiry, inquiry!

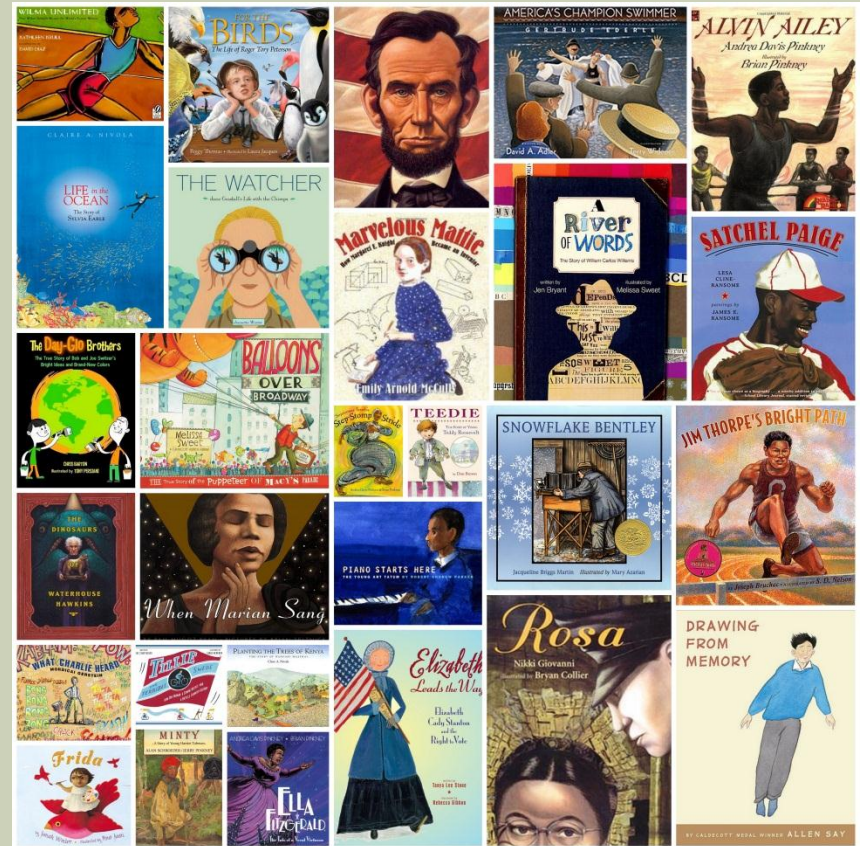
Wait a second, are there only positives that result from reading picture book biographies? That can't be right...

CAUTION!

- “It can be difficult to be sure a children’s book is culturally authentic.” –Hani Morgan
- When finding picture book biographies, it’s important to know how to point out bias.
- In order for kids to learn the right things about a person, a teacher needs to know when the author of a particular book may be biased. When searching, choose wisely.
- One way to prevent the children from learning skewed information is by using the picture book biographies to teach bias and show the students how to find bias. This way, they are learning an important aspect about inquiry that they can carry with them throughout the rest of their lives.

WRAP UP

- With stories of heroes and heroines, picture book biographies illuminate the past, provide knowledge for the present, and give young students hope for a growing future.



SOURCES

Journal Articles

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SOURCES

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- www.davidaadler.com
- Georgesullivanauthor.com
- www.annerockwell.com
- [En.wikipedia.org/wiki/Andrea_Davis_Pinkney](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Andrea_Davis_Pinkney)