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Roberta's Boys: Four Pitts Brothers of Macon, GA

Ann B. Carlson
The Pitts Family Trust, Contributor
Ann Carlson Publishing (Dec 7, 2015)
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Roberta's Boys *is a wonderfully inspirational story of a family determined to succeed despite every obstacle.*

Meticulously researched by Ann B. Carlson for the Pitts Family Trust, *Roberta's Boys: Four Pitts Brothers of Macon, GA* is the true story of an African-American family determined to make its mark on the world. Those seeking inspiration would be hard-pressed not to find it here; every page is filled with the brothers' impressive achievements despite facing many hardships and prejudices.

Roberta (nicknamed "Sis") and her husband, Willis Sr., attended the renowned Tuskegee Institute. They married and had their four boys (Willis Jr., Bob, Ray, and Nathan) in the early 1900s, instilling in their sons the determination to overcome the many obstacles of the time period. Their life was comfortable at the beginning, but they soon faced harsh financial difficulty, and the brothers scattered across the country. However each finished college and graduate school, and their successes soon became too numerous to count; Sis was able to see her many dreams for her boys realized.

Not counting the prologue, epilogue, and appendixes, there are only six chapters in *Roberta's Boys*. However, most are a little too long; the brothers' chapters are especially heavy on details. For example, Willis Jr. was very involved in teaching drama, but listing every single production he directed seems excessive. As a result, the chapters feel padded, particularly Bob's chapter regarding his associations with urban housing initiatives. The book loses its momentum by including such minutia.

Some chapters are enthralling, though, particularly the one on the Pitts family history, which dates back to before the Civil War. From plantation owner Peyton Taylor Pitts to the introduction of Willis Sr., this comprehensive chapter sets the stage for the rest of the book. It's also wonderful to read the brothers' writings in their own words; Ray, especially, was a prolific writer whose words are used as much as possible in his chapter. By including his professional papers and letters, the story of his life is effectively told in the first person, providing a more meaningful context. *Roberta's Boys* also includes a huge assortment of family pictures after each chapter, and letters and poems at the end. These primary sources add a great deal to the overall effect of the book.

Roberta's Boys is a wonderfully inspirational story of a family that was determined to succeed despite every obstacle.

KELLY THUNSTROM (August 10, 2015)

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