



*African Migration:
Challenging the narratives
of transatlantic migration
of African people to the
eastern seaboard*

Rhashida Hilliard & Tameka Marshall

Synopsis

This text set is designed as a counternarrative to the Middle Passage and the transatlantic slave trade as the singular origin story for Africans in what is now the United States [and the Americas.] Many Africans/people of African descent migrated to the Americas not only in chains but also as sailors or linguists on commercial ships. For those who were enslaved, their stories did not always end in slavery. The migration patterns of these individuals during the 16th century include free seamen who voyaged alongside Balboa, Dorantes de Carranza, and Jesuit missionaries to North and South America. Also of note are African leaders who lived and organized amongst indigenous Americans, and those who were not slaves, but in fact settled free communities along the eastern seaboard from New York to Florida. These text and media resources are curated to recover some of the erased history of the African diaspora and migration of people of African descent to the United States. The subsequent text set includes examples of the aforementioned narratives for use as reference material and resources for K-12 educators.

Guiding Questions

- 1. What are some of the narratives around the migration of people of African descent to the Americas, especially the eastern seaboard of the United States?**
- 2. How did the migration of people of African descent influence indigenous people, food, commercial activities, communities and culture in the United States?**

Text Set: Beginnings

Library of Congress Immigration and Relocation in US History

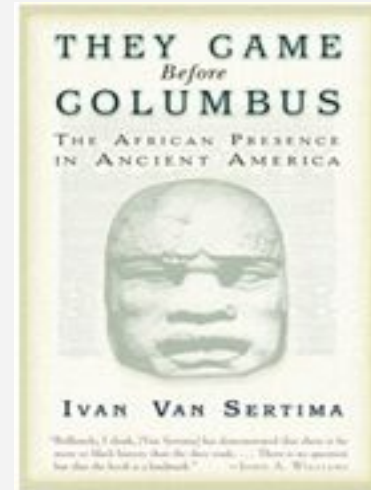
Beginnings: Explorers and Colonist

During the 16th century, African adventurers joined into the spirit of the Age of Exploration and crisscrossed the globe.



They Came Before Columbus Ivan Van Sertima

They Came Before Columbus reveals detailed documentation of the presence and legacy of Africans in ancient America. Examining navigation and shipbuilding and cultural analogies between Native Americans and Africans.

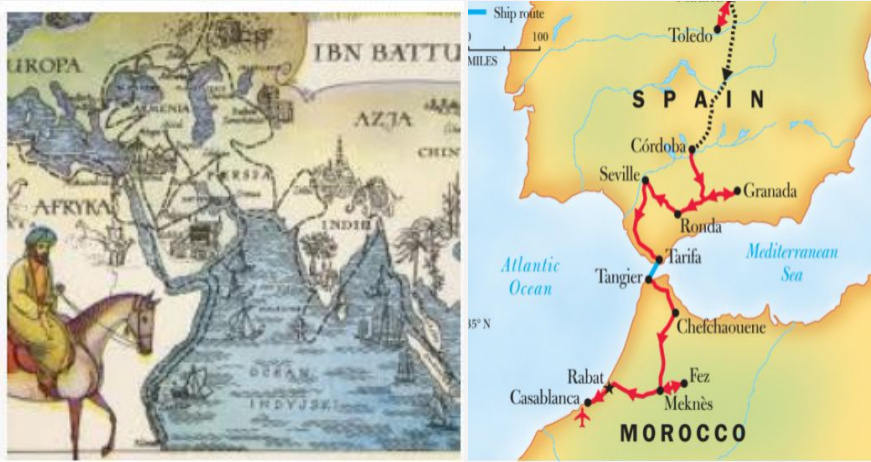


Text Set: Travel and Migration

Ibn Battuta (1303-1369)

North African Explorer

Ibn Battuta is considered the greatest medieval Muslim traveler. Hailing from Tangier, Morocco, Ibn Battuta's voyages spanned approximately 75,000 miles. He recorded his journeys in a travel book entitled *Rihlah* or *Travels*.

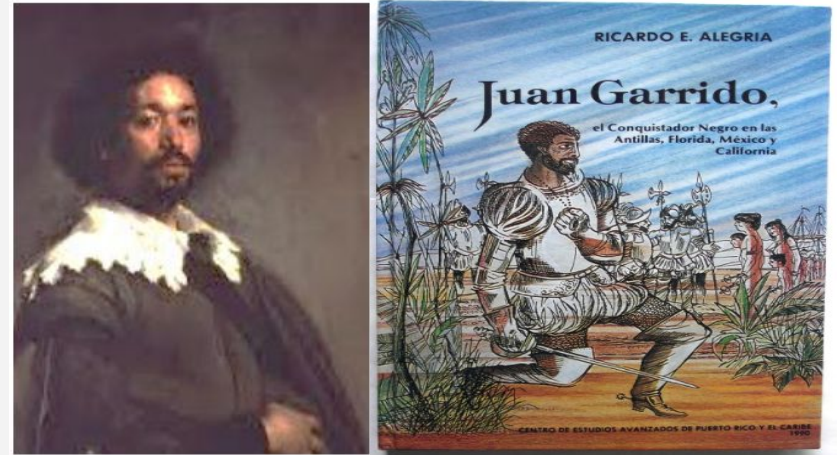


Juan Garrido (c.1480-c.1550)

The Black Conqueror In The West Indies, Florida, Mexico and California

Ricardo Alegria

Juan Garrido is the most prominent of the small group of African freeman who traveled to the Americas to take part in the Spanish conquest of the West Indies and Mexico in the late 15th and early 16th centuries.

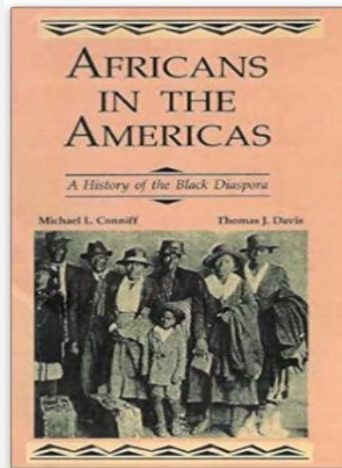


Text Set: The African Diaspora and The Age of Sail

Africans in the Americas: A History of the Black Diaspora

Michael L. Conniff

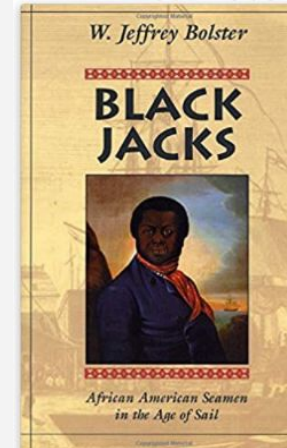
This book explores the complex relationship between Africa and the Americas from the 16th century through the end of the 20th century beginning with the relations between Africa and Europe prior to the 1500's, chronologically covering westward African exploration to the aftermath of the emancipation throughout the Americas.



Black Jacks: African American Seamen in the Age of Sail

W. Jeffrey Bolster

Few Americans recognize the degree to which early African American history is maritime history. W. Jeffrey Bolster shatters the myth that black seafaring in the age of sail was limited to the Middle Passage. Seafaring was one of the most significant occupations among both enslaved and free black men between 1740 and 1865.

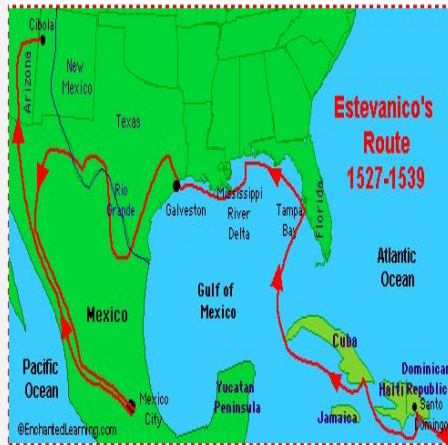
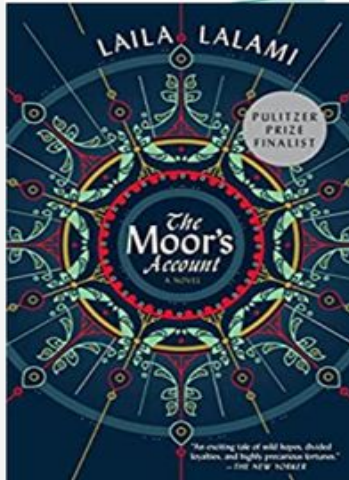


Text Set: Journey and Adventure

The Moor's Account

Laila Lalami

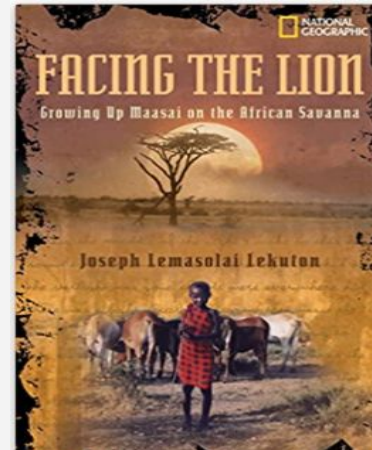
The Moor's Account is a fictional memoir of Estebanico [given Arabic name Mustafa] an indentured slave who was part of the Castilian exploration to La Florida. The book brilliantly captures Estebanico's [Estevanico's] voice and gives us an alternative narrative to early expedition to the eastern seaboard and the Gulf Coast of the United States and Central America.



Facing the Lion: Growing Up Maasai on the African Savanna

Joseph Lekuton

This delightful tale follows a young Maasai cattle herder and his mischievous antics on the Kenyan Savanna. Young readers get a firsthand look at his coming of age initiation, boarding school escapades, soccer success and journey to America for college.



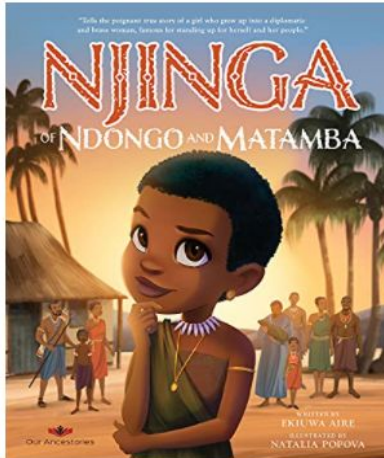
Text Set: Daily life through children's stories

Njinga of Ndongo and Matamba

Ekiuwa Aire

Queen Njinga Mbande

Njinga of Ndongo and Matamba is the true story of a girl who had a difficult birth but went on to become the Queen of two ancient African kingdoms. Revered for her wisdom, courage and strength, Njinga become a dominant political figure in Angola in the 1600's.

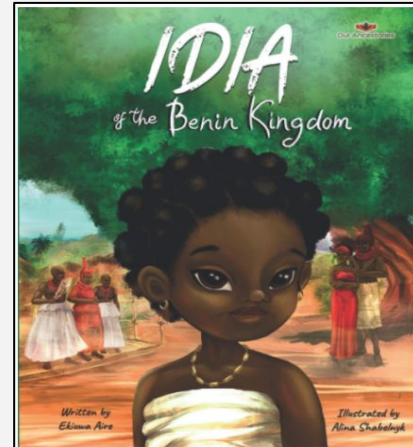


Idia of the Benin Kingdom

Ekiuwa Aire

Story Read Aloud

Idia of the Benin Kingdom is an empowering children's picture book that takes readers on a beautifully illustrated journey to the 1500's in ancient Africa. This text highlights the antiquity and the humanity of the African people through a fictional account of a young girl's life without the context of European contact.



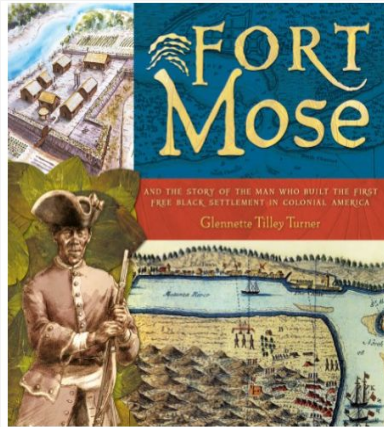
Text Set: Free Black Settlements

Fort Mose: And the Story of the Man Who Built the First Free Black Settlement in Colonial America

Glennette Tilley Turner

Fort Mose: America's First Free Black Community

This historical children's picture book tells the story of Fort Mose, founded in St. Augustine, Florida as the first free African settlement in what later became the United States. It was also the southernmost link in Underground Railroad providing safe haven for enslaved Africans in their quest for freedom.

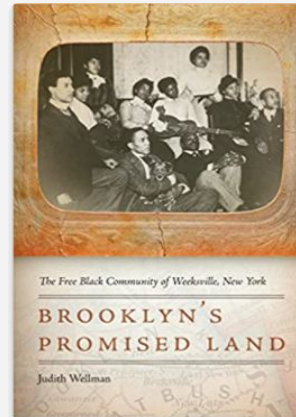


Brooklyn's Promised Land: The Free Black Community of Weeksville New York

Judith Wellman

New York City's First Free Black Communities: Weeksville

Weeksville was a free Black Settlement founded in 1838 in what is now the neighborhoods of Bedford-Stuyvesant, & Crown Heights, Brooklyn. Over time the community eroded, as the city consolidated into the 5 boroughs, the Brooklyn Bridge was constructed, and time gave way to urban renewal [redlining and zoning, etc.]. Today, the community exists as a Heritage Center.

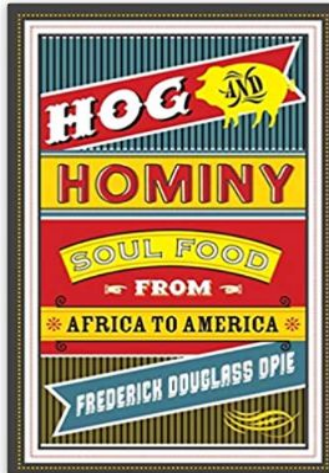


Text Set: African Food Migration

Hog and Hominy: Soul Food from Africa to America: Arts and Traditions of the Table: Perspectives on Culinary History

Frederick Opie

Frederick Opie deconstructs the foodways of people of African descent throughout the Americas and interprets the legacies of black culinary traditions. The book also reconstructs the interrelated history of the Moorish influence on the Iberian Peninsula and beyond.



The Migration and Importance of Okra

Gerri Augusto

Okra has been cultivated in what botanists believe is present day Ethiopia in Africa since the 12th century. This plant migrated to the West coast of Africa and beyond. Gerri Augusto, of the National Museums of Liverpool, outlines in her interview, how enslaved people used okra as a staple to supplement meager food rations.



Text Set: Black & Indigenous Ancestry and Back to Africa Migration

Abraham: Black Seminole

Abraham or Abram is described as a full-blooded Black, sometimes as Black Seminole. There are many speculations about his origin story, but what is consistent is that he was an interpreter and war leader in the Second Seminole War [1835-1842.]

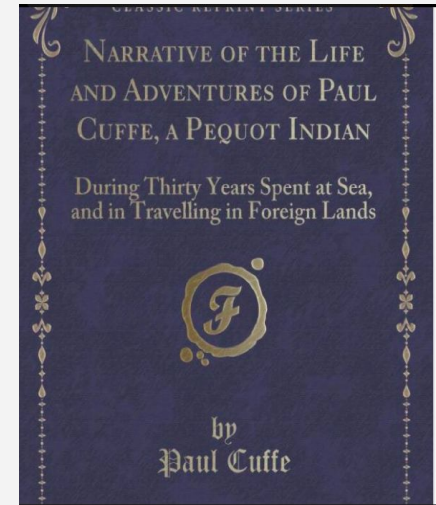
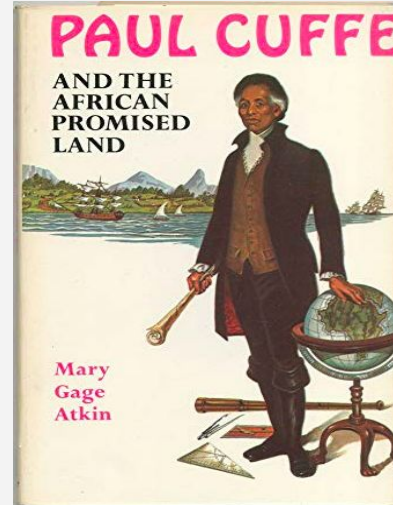
Abraham: Black Seminole Warrior



Narrative of the Life and Adventures of Paul Cuffee: A Pequot Indian

Paul Cuffee

Abolitionist, entrepreneur, sea captain and whaler, Paul Cuffee was considered one of the wealthiest men of color in the 19th century. Born to a freed formerly enslaved African father and a Wampanoag Native American mother, Paul led efforts to establish freed Black settlements in West Africa [Sierra Leone.] He wrote a memoir entitled *Memoir of Captain Cuffee*, 1811.



A Black Migration Timeline [1500s-1863]

1503

A fifteen year old West African young adult joins a convoy to Hispaniola. He adopts the name Juan Garrido. Juan Garrido is considered the first sower of wheat and the first black man to dictate his own destiny in the Americas and the USA [Florida].



1738

Fort Mose, founded in St. Augustine, Florida as the first free African settlement in what later became the United States. It was also the southernmost link in Underground Railroad providing safe haven for enslaved Africans in their quest for freedom.



1528

Estevanico aka Mustafa Azemmouri or Esteban the Moor lands in Florida as a member of the Dorantes expedition. Here is a map of his expeditions between 1527-1539.



1739

The Stono Rebellion was the largest uprising of enslaved people prior to the American Revolution. This rebellion started on the morning of September 9th in South Carolina.



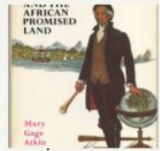
1613

Juan Rodriguez, a free sailor from Hispaniola present day Dominican Republic, is the first non-Native person of color to reside on Manhattan. He was employed by the Dutch East India company, was an interpreter for the Rockaway Natives.



1815

Abolitionist, entrepreneur, sea captain and whaler, Paul Cuffee was considered one of the wealthiest men of color in the 19th century. Paul led efforts to establish freed Black settlements in West Africa [Sierra Leone].



1619

Point Comfort is where '20 and odd African' captives were traded for food, ushering in slavery in the United States in Virginia.



1863

Emancipation Proclamation, or Proclamation 95, was an order signed by President Abraham Lincoln stating that all slaves engaged in rebellion in the Union 'shall be then, thenceforward, and forever free.'



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<https://poets.org/poet/phillis-wheatley>

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<https://www.nps.gov/people/idabwells.htm>

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