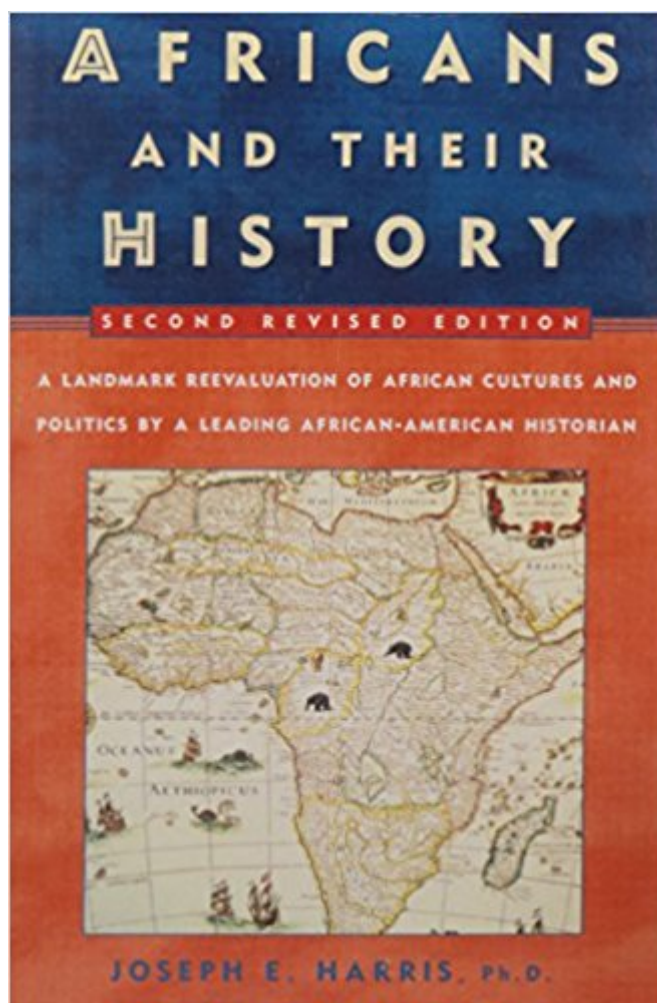


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# Africans And Their History: Second Revised Edition



## Synopsis

Africa has witnessed the birth of many important developments in history. Human evolution, including the use of fire, food production via plant cultivation and animal domestication, as well as the creation of sophisticated tools and hunting weapons from iron took place in Africa. Other historical events such as the slave trade, which played a critical role in Western economic power, the rise of Islam as one of the world's dominant religions, and colonization and struggles for independence occurred on African soil. *Africans and Their History* chronicles in fascinating detail African history from prehistoric times through the present. This concise and authoritative overview of the diverse peoples and societies of Africa now covers recent events, including the emergence of a free South Africa and its landmark enactment of a constitution that recognizes even more rights than the American constitution. The dynamic history and the relationship Africans have with the rest of the world is revealed in *Africans and Their History*, exposing and shattering ugly stereotypes that for too long have dominated Western thought. *Africans and Their History* has been updated to reflect the past decade of African events. Ever growing number of African Studies departments on college campuses insures a constant audience for this book. *Africans and Their History* has a long and steady backlist life--first published in 1972.

## Book Information

Paperback: 320 pages

Publisher: Plume; 2nd Revised edition (August 1, 1998)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0452011817

ISBN-13: 978-0452011816

Product Dimensions: 5.1 x 1 x 7.7 inches

Shipping Weight: 10.4 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.2 out of 5 stars 12 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #30,284 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #9 in [Books > Textbooks >](#)

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## Customer Reviews

Joseph E. Harris is a professor of history at Howard University. He is the author of several academic books on African history. He makes his home in Silver Spring, Maryland.

This book was required reading for a history class at UCLA many, many moons ago. My original book fell apart and I was so glad to be able to re-purchase it. Said book provides a very in-depth read on African history. This book should be required reading in every school! My disappointment was with the seller who failed to mail the book in a timely manner according to standards. When I moved to cancel the book, only then did the seller email me, in an effort to save the sale, to tell me about inclement weather, a tornado specifically, that he/she had experienced. Understanding, I opted to keep the purchase however the seller chose to send me a book that smelled like it had been stored in a (trash) land fill! The book smelled so badly that merely turning it's pages made me sick to my stomach! Even with the book closed it reeked to high heaven! Why would anybody sell anything in that condition and tout it as being-"Excellent"? Thankfully quickly remedied this negative situation. Love you !

Thank you

This was one of the most scholarly, brilliant and informative books I have ever read to date. The details provided were meticulous and thorough to the finest point. A definite must have for any student of African-World History. The author does not attempt to whitewash or fancy up the facts for palatability, however, provides concise and unadulterated truth. If one desires to comprehend the broader picture of African-World History this is the book to have, which will enable the reader to cite its contents with fluidity in any discussion or debate.

Excellent Text.

Harris' Africans and Their History is a bit uneven. The opening chapter on the myths and stereotypes of Africa and Africans is outstanding, as Harris lays out the pejorative way in which Europeans have seen and understood Africans since the days of antiquity - stereotypes and generalizations that have influenced the way the continent has been seen up to and including today: a continent whose inhabitants have been acted on by history rather than being actors of history, people who are passive players in world civilization. Naming these untruths, pointing to the antecedents of these incorrect perceptions and showing how these have shaped the way much of the world sees Africa perhaps set my expectations a bit high for the rest of the book. I wish he had revisited this thread more often (and more forcefully) throughout his narrative - it is an important point, and one which bears keeping in mind in reading any history of Africa. Harris' discussion of

Egypt, Meroe and Aksum were very good, if a bit brief. My disappointment began with his examination of the Islamic west African kingdoms of Ghana, Mali and Songhai. The scope of their political and economic influence in west Africa deserved, in my opinion, more detail than was given here. The economic and especially cultural relationship between the Islamic empires of the Maghrib and those of the Niger river certainly warrants more than 40 pages, especially considering the strong and lasting influence Islam has in this part of Africa. Similarly, I wish more detail was given in the development and growth of independence and nationalist groups in Africa in the early 20th century. The importance and role these groups (and their participants) had in shaping post-colonial Africa is tremendous; that closer attention was not given here was a disappointment. My final criticism is the organization of the book. In addressing the independence movements and pan-Africanism, Harris jumps around both geographically and in time, first talking about the origins of pan-Africanism (from the creation of Sierra Leone and Liberia through Marcus Garvey), only to return to it chapters later when discussing Nkrumah and Kenyatta as part of the establishment of independent African states and the creation of the OAS (Organization of African States) in 1963. A similar jump in time and place takes place in his discussion of the post-war decolonization of Africa. It would have been easier to follow, I think, if he had talked about one movement from beginning to end as an individual chapter, and the other as an entirely separate chapter. However, it must be kept in mind that Africa is as large as it is diverse - the continent itself is as large as Europe, the United States and China combined, with an equally large number of different cultures, languages and climactic zones. Added to it, the history of Africa is as long as the history of humankind itself, making the task more complex still. Having pointed this out, Harris does a remarkable job of touching on all of the important political and economic relationships Africa formed, in illustrating the how vital and important Africa and Africans are to world history, and especially in showing how Africans resisted being acted upon (by Muslims, Christians and Europeans) and were eventually successful in becoming self-determinative states. For a summative text, this is very good, in spite of my wishes for more detail on areas of the continent's history that are near and dear to my heart.

Terrific book for those who have little knowledge of African history or empires. A very detailed read, this book is definitely for those who desire to become scholars of Africa.

Great introduction to general African history with enough detail to serve as starting point for specific interests

good book...

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