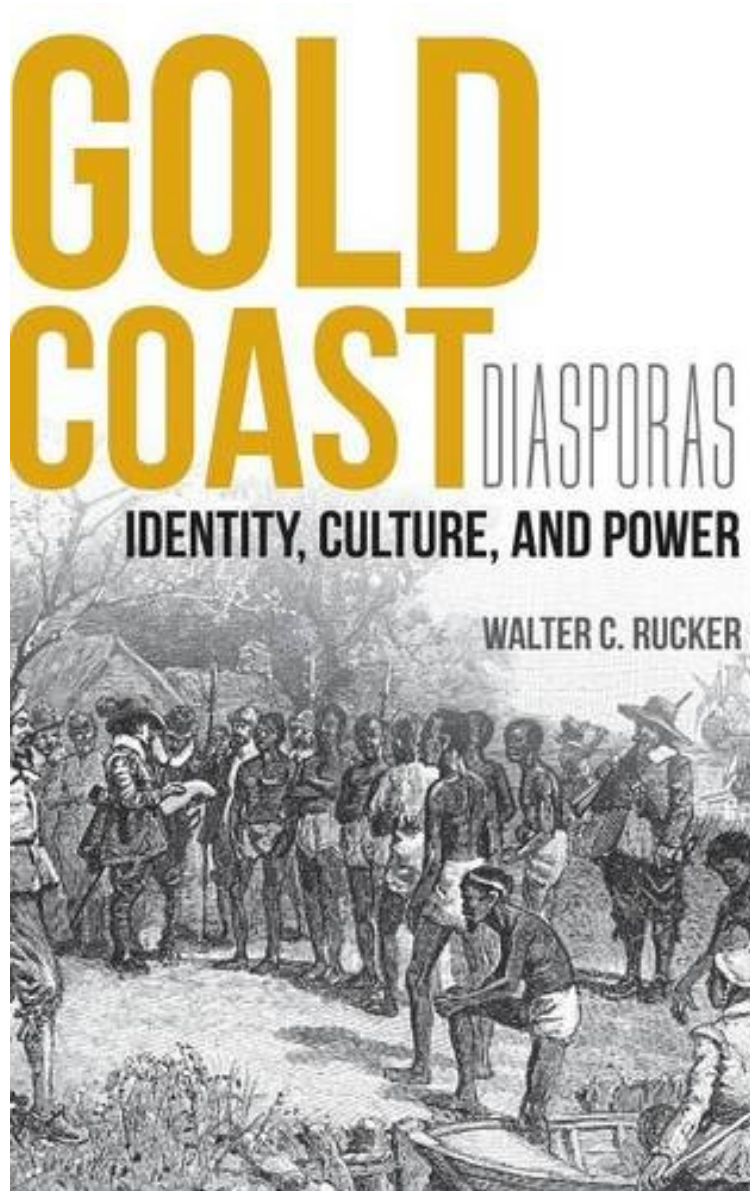


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Gold Coast Diasporas: Identity, Culture, and Power (Blacks in the Diaspora)

Walter C. Rucker

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Walter C. Rucker : Gold Coast Diasporas: Identity, Culture, and Power (Blacks in the Diaspora) before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Gold Coast Diasporas:

Identity, Culture, and Power (Blacks in the Diaspora):

Although they came from distinct polities and peoples who spoke different languages, slaves from the African Gold Coast were collectively identified by Europeans as "Coromantee" or "Mina." Why these ethnic labels were embraced and how they were utilized by enslaved Africans to develop new group identities is the subject of Walter C. Rucker's absorbing study. Rucker examines the social and political factors that contributed to the creation of New World ethnic identities and assesses the ways displaced Gold Coast Africans used familiar ideas about power as a means of understanding, defining, and resisting oppression. He explains how performing Coromantee and Mina identity involved a common set of concerns and the creation of the ideological weapons necessary to resist the slavocracy. These weapons included obeah powders, charms, and potions; the evolution of "peasant" consciousness and the ennoblement of common people; increasingly aggressive displays of masculinity; and the empowerment of women as leaders, spiritualists, and warriors, all of which marked sharp breaks or reformulations of patterns in their Gold Coast past.

Provocative and well written, *Gold Coast Diasporas* is a must-read for any scholar interested in African identity, the transatlantic slave trade, and resistance. Africanists and African diaspora specialists need to engage with this book and with the methodological contributions that Rucker presents. His comprehensive approach to African identity and his rigorous analysis have produced a highly recommended study. (American Historical Association) One of the book's greatest strengths is the ways in which Rucker painstakingly traces how ethnic labels were appropriated, recast, and ultimately employed as a means to establish community bonds and resist oppression. . . . Chapters that focus on the creation of the Gold Coast diaspora, religion, and women make for a captivating text that will be of interest to graduate students and specialist readers. Recommended. (Choice) Walter Rucker explores the origins and fates of one African regional group, known as Coromantees, in just the way that Afro-Atlantic history should be done, through careful study of the primary sources of the time in both Africa and the Americas. In so doing he has made a stellar contribution to the study of the way in which Africans and African culture was disseminated across the Atlantic. (John Thornton Boston University) A work that probes deeply into the African background of a community of people in the African diaspora and shows how particular social and political conditions in their African place of origin influenced the ways in which they coped with and creatively responded to the harsh realities of slave life in the Americas. . . . The contention that new identities constructed in the America--like Coromantee--had real meaning for those who identified with those labels is important and timely. The strength of the work is its attention to the fluid and dynamic nature of culture and identity. (Rebecca Shumway Carnegie Mellon University) An impressive monograph highlighted by a prodigious body of original research spanning three continents. *Gold Coast Diasporas* reveals a deep engagement with the most important work in the field even as it pushes the historiography forward in wonderfully innovative ways. This book is both a call to action and a model for future research. His discussion of 'commoner consciousness' and 'social resurrection' will likely guide the way we discuss cultural identity in the African diaspora for years to come. (Jason Young University of Buffalo) A profound, original study denying slavery meant social death and explaining how diverse lower class enslaved Gold Coast Africans reconstituted themselves as a coherent, unified, defiant culture group known as Coromanti and A(Mina) in the Americas. (Gwendolyn Midlo Hall Michigan State University) About the Author Walter C. Rucker, Associate Professor of African diaspora and Atlantic history at Rutgers University, is the author of *The River Flows On: Black Resistance, Culture, and Identity Formation in Early America*.