

12-1-2010

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Recommended Citation

Huffman, Alan (2010) "Mississippi in Africa: The Saga of the Slaves of Prospect Hill Plantation and Their Legacy in Liberia Today," *African Diaspora Archaeology Newsletter*: Vol. 13 : Iss. 4 , Article 19.
Available at: <https://scholarworks.umass.edu/adan/vol13/iss4/19>

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New Book

Mississippi in Africa: The Saga of the Slaves of Prospect Hill Plantation and Their Legacy in Liberia Today

By Alan Huffman

University Press of Mississippi, Paperback

336 pp., ISBN-13: 978-160473753, 2010.

Description from the Publisher:

When a wealthy Mississippi cotton planter named Isaac Ross died in 1836, his will decreed that his plantation, Prospect Hill, should be liquidated and the proceeds from the sale be used to pay for his slaves' passage to the newly established colony of Liberia in western Africa. Ross's heirs contested the will for more than a decade in the state courts and legislature, prompting a deadly revolt in which a group of slaves burned Ross's mansion to the ground. But the will was ultimately upheld. The slaves then emigrated to their new home, where they battled the local tribes and built vast plantations with Greek Revival-style mansions in a region the Americo-Africans renamed "Mississippi in Africa." In the late twentieth century, the seeds of resentment sown over a century of cultural conflict between the colonists and tribal people exploded, begetting a civil war that rages in Liberia to this day. Journalist Alan Huffman tracked down Prospect Hill's living descendants, deciphered a history that has been ruled by rumor, and delivered the complete chronicle in riveting prose. Huffman has rescued a lost chapter of American history whose aftermath is far from over.

