

African Diaspora Archaeology Newsletter

Volume 12
Issue 2 June 2009

Article 36

6-1-2009

Africa and Archaeology: Empowering an Expatriate Life

Merrick Posnansky
University of California, Los Angeles, merrick@history.ucla.edu

Follow this and additional works at: <http://scholarworks.umass.edu/adan>

Recommended Citation

Posnansky, Merrick (2009) "Africa and Archaeology: Empowering an Expatriate Life," *African Diaspora Archaeology Newsletter*: Vol. 12 : Iss. 2 , Article 36.
Available at: <http://scholarworks.umass.edu/adan/vol12/iss2/36>

This New Books is brought to you for free and open access by ScholarWorks@UMass Amherst. It has been accepted for inclusion in African Diaspora Archaeology Newsletter by an authorized editor of ScholarWorks@UMass Amherst. For more information, please contact scholarworks@library.umass.edu.

New Book

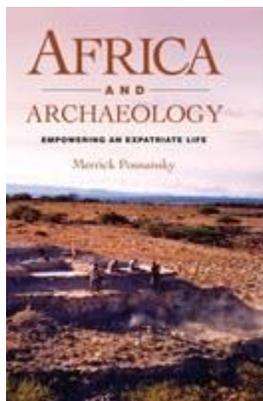
Africa and Archaeology: Empowering an Expatriate Life

By Merrick Posnansky

Radcliffe Press, Cloth, 288 pp.,

ISBN-10: 1845119940, ISBN-13: 978-1845119942, June 2009.

Description from the Publisher:



In this stimulating account of his life's experiences, renowned scholar and pioneer Africanist archaeologist Merrick Posnansky takes his readers on an unusual journey across the world, from his origins in a small Jewish community in Manchester to his adventures on archaeological sites in the villages of Africa before finally settling down to teach in Los Angeles. A Jewish British expatriate in an African social world, Posnansky struggled to establish his racial identity in the British colonial world where Jewish communities were rare. He crossed racial and religious boundaries by marrying a Christian woman from Uganda, a highly unusual step at that time.

Written in a refreshing, candid style, these memoirs provide a fascinating glimpse into the changes taking place in modern Africa. *Africa and Archaeology* is a first hand account of the racial and religious prejudices of the twentieth century.

Africa and Archaeology provides a personal memoir by an archaeologist who began his career in England in the 1950s, where he excavated (among other sites) a medieval tile kiln and a windmill in Northamptonshire that was one of the first sites in Britain to be largely dated using tobacco pipes. From 1956 until 1976 Posnansky worked in Kenya, Uganda, and Ghana, where he was responsible for initiating the first university courses in tropical Africa in archaeology, first at Makerere College in Uganda, and later at the University of Ghana. He was one of the first archaeologists in the 1950s to use the term Historical Archaeology in Africa.

From 1977 until his retirement in 1994, Posnansky was Professor of History and Anthropology at the University of California at Los Angeles (UCLA), where he taught classes in both Historical and African Archaeology. His memoirs describe both his teaching and research career and work in East and West Africa as well as in the Caribbean. His students who have carried on his work include such Diasporan archaeologists as Douglas Armstrong, Kenneth Kelly, Christopher DeCorse, Kofi Agorsah, Laurie Wilkie, Paul Farnsworth, and Cameron Monroe.

This new book provides a fascinating account of the beginnings of Diasporan archaeology,

and also describes Posnansky's life in Africa and marriage to Eunice Lubega, who was the first African woman to graduate in East Africa. Since retirement, he has returned to research in Uganda where in 2006-07, with the assistance of students from two of Uganda's universities, he excavated the late 19th century Egyptian military station of Dufile on the Nile near the Sudanese border. Posnansky's most recent paper, appearing in the 2009 issue of Backdirt (published by UCLA), is entitled "Reconciling the Past" and deals with the ethical problems of conserving Imperial sites in Africa.