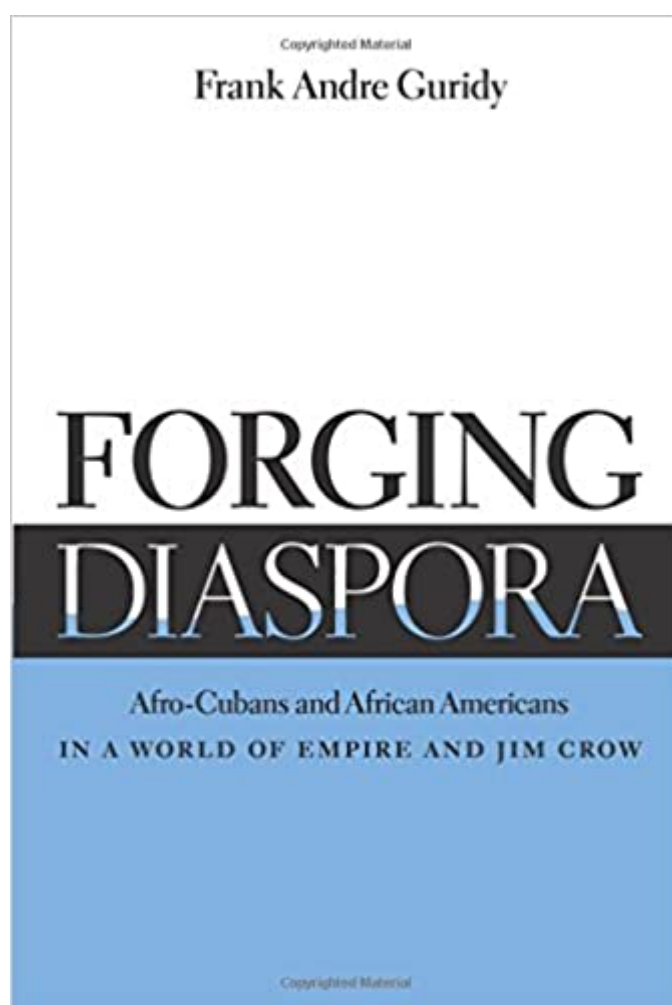


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# Forging Diaspora: Afro-Cubans And African Americans In A World Of Empire And Jim Crow (Envisioning Cuba)



## Synopsis

Cuba's geographic proximity to the United States and its centrality to U.S. imperial designs following the War of 1898 led to the creation of a unique relationship between Afro-descended populations in the two countries. In *Forging Diaspora*, Frank Andre Guridy shows that the cross-national relationships nurtured by Afro-Cubans and black Americans helped to shape the political strategies of both groups as they attempted to overcome a shared history of oppression and enslavement. Drawing on archival sources in both countries, Guridy traces four encounters between Afro-Cubans and African Americans. These hidden histories of cultural interaction--of Cuban students attending Booker T. Washington's Tuskegee Institute, the rise of Garveyism, the Havana-Harlem cultural connection during the Harlem Renaissance and Afro-Cubanism movement, and the creation of black travel networks during the Good Neighbor and early Cold War eras--illustrate the significance of cross-national linkages to the ways both Afro-descended populations negotiated the entangled processes of U.S. imperialism and racial discrimination. As a result of these relationships, argues Guridy, Afro-descended peoples in Cuba and the United States came to identify themselves as part of a transcultural African diaspora.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

This is a book that makes me respect the work of historians on the subject of African-descended populations in the Americas. . . [It] expands our understanding of relations between and among

African-descended people in the Western Hemisphere. --Journal of African American History  
fascinating study. . . . Guridy has selected four exemplary moments in U.S. and Cuban republican  
history. . . . Will encourage readers to explore more deeply by demonstrating that substantial  
understanding of any one of these topics requires a better understanding of the others.--H-Net  
Reviews  
A groundbreaking study in black transnational history. This book will be required reading for  
students concerned with the African diaspora, southern U.S. history, and black community building  
during the twentieth century.--Journal of Southern History  
While this will be a welcome text in history  
courses that emphasize black diaspora theory and research methodology, it is also certain to spark  
exciting discussions in advanced undergraduate and graduate seminars in interdisciplinary fields  
such as Africana studies and Latin American studies.--The Americas  
An impressive effort to unmask  
the long history of relations between the peoples of the United States and Cuba.--Essays In  
History  
[Guridy's] conceptualization of this African diaspora. . . [helps us to] understand how  
Afro-descendants created an identity that both inserted them into larger cultural and political  
networks, and at the same time helped them in their fights for national political rights.--Caribbean  
Studies  
A work that will have significant relevance for a number of fields. The book should be  
required reading for scholars studying the African diaspora. It is written in a clear, accessible  
style, easy for instructors to incorporate individual chapters into syllabi for undergraduate  
courses." --Journal of American History

Guridy makes the important argument that African Americans and Afro-Cubans fought for national  
inclusion while at the same time engaging in a diaspora network. His analysis is fresh, offering new  
readings and interpretations of Tuskegee, the Universal Negro Improvement Association, the black  
renaissances of the 1920s and 1930s, and black travel/tourist networks. This is a fabulous  
book.--Lisa Brock, coeditor of *Between Race and Empire: African-Americans and Cubans Before  
the Cuban Revolution*  
In this fundamental book, Guridy painstakingly reconstructs for the first time  
how, in a world shaped by U.S. imperial interests and racist ideologies, black activists in the United  
States and Cuba created networks of cooperation and support. This is African Diaspora history at its  
best.--Alejandro de la Fuente, University of Pittsburgh  
A masterful work of transnational history,  
Frank Guridy's bold yet carefully crafted study of black struggles in Cuba and the U.S. will compel  
all of us to rethink the history of racial politics and black nationalism in the Western  
Hemisphere.--Robin D. G. Kelley, author of *Thelonious Monk: The Life and Times of an American  
Original*

In *Forging Diaspora: Afro-Cubans and African Americans in a World of Empire and Jim Crow*, Frank Guridy portrays a world with malleable borders, much like Edward Bartlett Rugemer, in *The Problem of Emancipation*. His extensive examples of Garveyism and Langston Hughes's writing demonstrate that ideas, as well as people, could and did easily traverse borders between the U.S., Cuba, and the Caribbean. Relating Guridy's work to Rebecca Scott, the two authors speak to a larger historiography. As Guridy was Scott's student, there are certain shared research interests that cannot go unmentioned, but Guridy approaches the topic of a shared U.S./Cuba Gulf World from a different perspective. Scott worked mainly in the nineteenth century (with minor exceptions toward the end of her books) while Guridy works primarily in the twentieth century. Empire undercut diaspora by creating boundaries that privileged black Americans and cast African-descended peoples in the Gulf and Caribbean as "others" meant to be experienced rather than treated as equals. Guridy writes, "Unlike white tourists who went to Cuba to experience a culture that they perceived to be fundamentally different than their own, African Americans traveled to the island to see their own people even as their understanding of Afro-Cubans was sometimes shaped by touristic gazes." I found Guridy's discussion of gender in diaspora interesting. While various groups and individuals were reaching across national borders to establish enriching connections, the roles of men and women were closely circumscribed. Guridy writes, "Diasporization was predicated on an economy of desire that was based on the objectification of women." Langston Hughes's memoir, in particular, demonstrates a world in which "Afro-diasporic bonding was predicated on the transaction of women as objects of male desire." Guridy does find one key role in which women could reach across boundaries: education. He writes that Afro-Cuban feminists "had always placed a premium on education, which they viewed as the key to the progress and improvement of a population recently removed from slavery. They project of education was highly gendered and largely placed upon the shoulders of women whose communities celebrated them. The limitations and the ways women worked within them, particularly struck me.

Excellent source..... well-written!

A brilliantly, well-researched and written text. It was the main book I used for my Study Abroad summer school course in Cuba.

First and foremost, I would like to thank the author of this book, "Forging Diaspora," with revealing much informative information in the relationship that we, as "African Caribbean" (particularly Cuban) & African Americans, shared in the struggle for respectable citizenship, and equitable treatment of all humans rights. However, I wonder "why" much of the Honorable Marcus Mosiah Garvey campaign of "self economic, self help etc..." is not mention that some of the population of Cuba (who were of African descent), is not mentioned by other African American scholar's and activist, as a unit as part of the of inclusion in their struggle. Yes, many of African Caribbean Cubans, spoke Spanish. But that was not a fault of theirs, just as African American, speak English. It is not a fault of theirs, neither. However, as a protagonist to disambiguate our identity as a population of African descent. I am recommending, the term of "Afro Cuban or Afro this-or-that, can now be alternated as "African Caribbean." It will not deracinate from one's birth terrain. But rather, it will coalesce with others from the Caribbean (as well as from Central & South America) as 'one of African descend, no matter what European language we may speak (which also includes English).

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