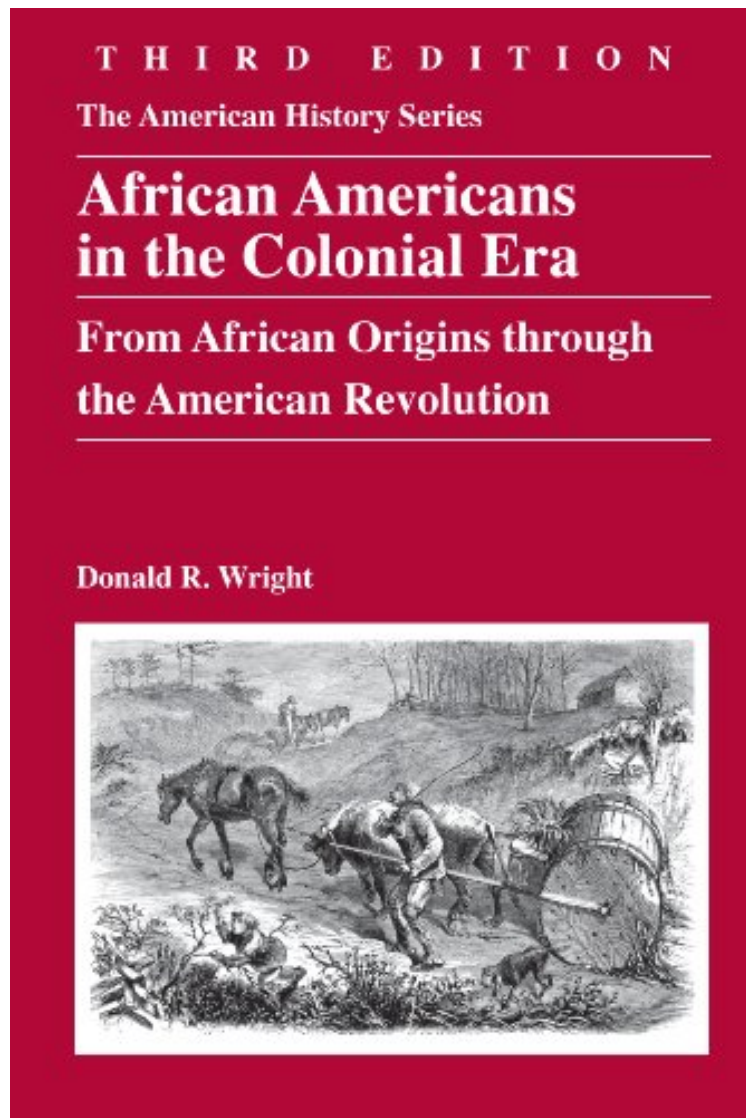


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African Americans in the Colonial Era: From African Origins through the American Revolution

Donald R. Wright

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Over recent decades few topics of American history have been subject to greater attention and more thorough revision than African Americans in colonial times. Acclaimed works by leading scholars, relying on new bodies of evidence and writing from a fresh, Atlantic perspective, have provided a broadened, more nuanced view of the topic. In this third edition of one of the most popular books in our American History Series, Donald Wright works new interpretations into a narrative that provides a clear understanding of the scope and nature of the early African-American experience. Included are discussions of African Americans African origins; the Atlantic slave trade, based on the latest data from an on-line Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade Database; the origins of slavery and race-based prejudice in the mainland colonies; the evolutionary formation of African-American culture; and the effects of the American Revolution on men and women of African descent, at the time and long thereafter. This third edition views African Americans in the British North-American mainland colonies more as their contemporaries did: as persons from one of the four continents who interacted economically, socially, and politically over a period of 180 years in a vast, vibrant, complex Atlantic world. It shows how the mainland North-American society that resulted from these interactions reflected the mix of Atlantic cultures and how the republic that a group of these people eventually constructed used European ideas to support creation of a favorable situation for those in control, persons largely of European descent. The African and African-American men and women, whose forebears had added greatly to the regions economic and cultural viability, found themselves in 1789 with the least benefit from the nation they helped bring into existence. Of special value is the books bibliographical essay, an expansion and updating of earlier versions that led the historian Ira Berlin to label Wright the historiographer of slavery in the early period.

Praise for the first edition: "This fine, brief survey...ought to be widely used. It offeres a balanced, up-to-date treatement of West African cultures, the Atlantic slave trade, the slow development of slavery in the English colonies, the rise of racism, and the changing cultures of Americans in African ancestry. ... Wright has performed a real service. ...this book is far and away the best short survey of early African-American history." (EthnoHistory, 1992)