



Crossroads and Cosmologies: Diasporas and Ethnogenesis in the New World (Cultural Heritage Studies)

Christopher C. Fennell

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Christopher Fennell offers a fresh perspective on ways that the earliest enslaved Africans preserved vital aspects of their traditions and identities in the New World. He also explores similar developments among European immigrants and the interactions of both groups with Native Americans.

Focusing on extant artifacts left by displaced Africans, Fennell finds that material culture and religious ritual contributed to a variety of modes of survival in mainland North America as well as in the Caribbean and Brazil. Over time, new symbols of culture led to further changes in individual customs and beliefs as well as the creation of new social groups and new expressions of identity.

Presenting insights from archaeology, history, and symbolic anthropology, this book traces the dynamic legacy of the trans-Atlantic diasporas over four centuries, and it challenges existing concepts of creolization and cultural retention. In the process, it examines some of the major cultural belief systems of west and west central Africa, specific symbols of the BaKongo and Yoruba cosmologies, development of prominent African-American religious expressions in the Americas, and the Christian and non-Christian spiritual traditions of German-speaking immigrants from central Europe.

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