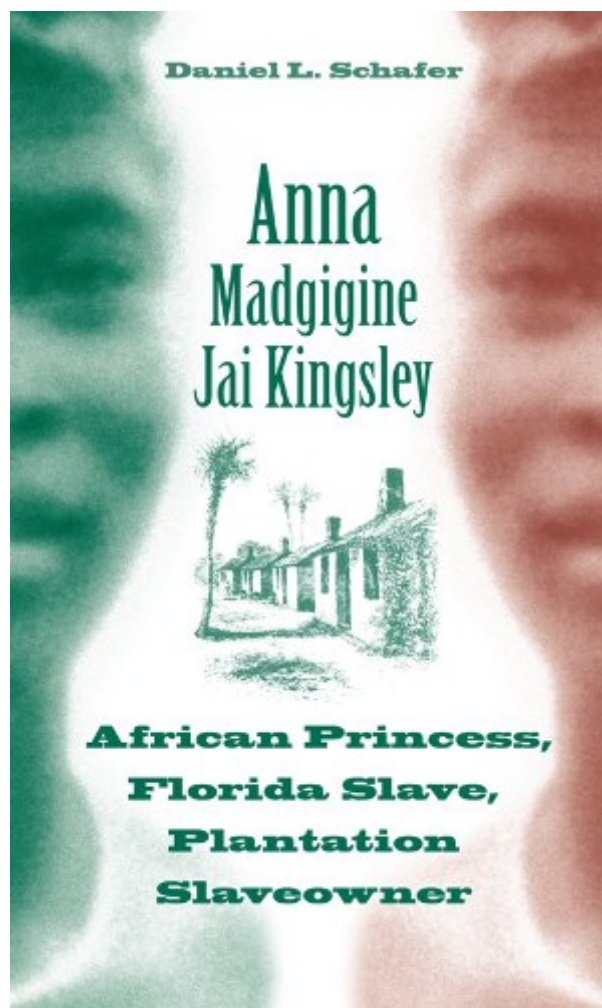


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AFRICAN PRINCESS, FLORIDA SLAVE,  
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**Daniel L. Schafer**

**Anna  
Madgigine  
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**African Princess,  
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## From Booklist

Schafer expands on previously written material about the fascinating legend of an African princess, brought to Florida as a slave, who later became a plantation and slave owner. Basing his work on extensive documentation, including interviews with African griots, Schafer traces the history of Anna Madgigine Jai from her homeland of Senegal, where she was captured at about 13 years of age in 1806 and sold to Zephaniah Kingsley, a maritime merchant, slave trader, and later an abolitionist. Kingsley eventually married Anna, made her manager of his plantation, and fathered four children with her. Anna was an independent, enterprising woman, who managed the plantation for 25 years until expanding U.S. territory threatened race relations, the family's cohesion, and inheritance rights. The family fled to Haiti, but after her husband's death Anna returned to the U.S. to answer legal challenges to his will, which left sizable portions of his estate to her and their children. This is a fascinating look at an extraordinary woman and the complexities of slavery beyond the common image of slavery in the South. Vanessa Bush

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Anna Kingsley's life story adds a dramatic chapter to histories of the South, the state of Florida, and the African diaspora. Working from surprisingly extensive records, including information and photographs from extended-family members and descendants, Daniel Shafer reconstructs and documents one slave's remarkable story.

Both an American slave and a slaveowner--and possibly an African princess--Anna was a teenager when she was captured in her homeland of Senegal in 1806 and sold into slavery. Zephaniah Kingsley, Jr., a planter and slave trader from Spanish East Florida, bought her in Havana, Cuba, and took her to his St. Johns River plantation in northeast Florida, where she soon became his household manager, his wife, and eventually the mother of four of his children. Her husband formally emancipated her in 1811, and she became the owner of her own farm and twelve slaves the following year.

For 25 years, life on her farm and at the Kingsley plantation on Fort George Island was relatively tranquil. But when Florida passed from Spanish to American control, and racism and discrimination increased in the American territories, Anna Kingsley and her children migrated to a colony in Haiti established by her husband as a refuge for free blacks. Amid the spiraling racial tensions of the antebellum period, Anna returned to north Florida, where she bought and sold land, sued white people in the courts, and became a central figure in a free black community. Such accomplishments by a woman in a patriarchal society are fascinating in themselves. To have achieved them as a woman of color is remarkable.

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#### Most helpful customer reviews

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful.

Anna Kingsley

By Josh Jacobson

Dr. Schafer brings the time period of Anna's life, and the Northeast Florida region to life through the story of Anna Kingsley in his book. Most of this book reads like a novel and his narrative style will keep the pages turning. With the riveting story, you are also given a very well researched story about the events that play out not only for Anna, but for the region and the African descendants who lived there. Though there are some blank spots left in Anna's history due to lack of documents, and the occasional stretching of what few primary documents are available, Dr. Schafer brings what feels like a full picture to the reader.

The only real issues that kept this book from getting five stars in my opinion, were the fact that some primary sources did have to be stretched in order to back up points being made. There are a few instances where it feels that some of these primary sources could be construed in other ways than just how they are presented here. This however can sometimes be necessary and the occurrences are very rare. The other issue was the pacing of the book can leave many readers struggling to finish the book. There comes a point near the end of the book where Dr. Schafer abandons his narrative style to lay out the genealogies of many of the area's residents. This chapter is sandwiched between two narrative chapters and probably could have been presented in an appendix.

Overall this book was very fascinating and Dr. Schafer's research leaves the reader with a very strong sense of being able to trust in his interpretation of the past.

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful.

Wonderful historic reading!

By nancy hurlbert

Heard the author of this book speak at a Women's History Month event and wanted to know more...the book lived-up to my expectations...and then some!

4 of 5 people found the following review helpful.

A history that informs and entertains

By Kay Day

Every now and then, a history comes along that not only offers a fascinating look at a past era, but also manages to hold the reader's interest and entertain. Books like David McCullough's *1776* urge a reader along much like a good novel will do. Daniel L. Schafer's *Anna Madgigine Jai Kingsley* has the same effect.

Schafer establishes the time period based on narratives and first hand research. Documents such as an emancipation notice for a plantation owner's slave Flora Hannahan provide an unvarnished look at the perception of African-Americans in the decades before the civil war: "On the emancipation notice, she is described as 'a mulatto-colored woman of twenty years of age, a native of Florida...about five feet high.'" (pg. 59)

These descriptives are enhanced by photographs of slave quarters as well as descendants of Anna Kingsley.

This book is a solid addition to the personal library, and it would be an excellent classroom resource for teachers of history or language arts. Author Schafer writes with an objective, even-handed approach, and accurately depicts the slave trade in all its characteristics and nuances, including the African natives who colluded with Spanish and English traders and also the elite American plantation owners who enjoyed the benefits of low-cost captive labor.

Aside from its educational value, the book is a good read for anyone interested in Southern culture or Florida history. I don't know Dr. Schafer, but I certainly admire his scholarship and his ability to tell a fascinating story.

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