

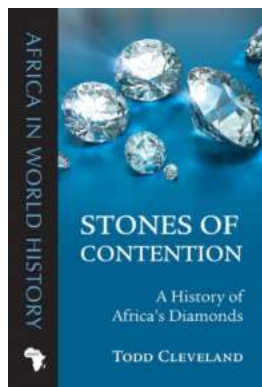
The Untold Story of Africa Diamonds: Shaping Africa in World History

From the bustling markets of ancient Egypt to the glittering crown jewels of England, diamonds have long captured the imagination of people around the world. These precious gemstones have not only been a symbol of wealth and status but have played a crucial role in shaping the history of Africa and the world.

The story of African diamonds dates back thousands of years and takes us on a remarkable journey through empires, exploration, colonization, and independence. In this article, we delve into the fascinating history of Africa diamonds and their impact on the continent and the global diamond trade.

The Birth of African Diamond Mines

Africa has been blessed with vast diamond resources, spread across several countries. The earliest evidence of diamond mining in Africa can be traced back to ancient Egypt, where diamonds were found in the early 3rd millennium BC. Egypt quickly became a hub for diamond trade, sourcing the gemstones from nearby deposits along the Nile River.



Stones of Contention: A History of Africa's Diamonds (Africa in World History)

by Martin Schneider (Kindle Edition)

★★★★☆ 4.4 out of 5

Language : English

File size : 1666 KB

Text-to-Speech : Enabled

Screen Reader : Supported

Enhanced typesetting : Enabled

Word Wise : Enabled

Print length : 240 pages



However, it was not until the 15th century that African diamonds truly began to shape world history. Drawing explorers from Europe, the rich diamond fields of India had already attracted a significant amount of attention, but rumors of even larger diamond deposits in Africa piqued the curiosity of enterprising adventurers.

The Portuguese were the first Europeans to venture into Africa's diamond heartland. They established colonies along the coast, primarily in Angola and Guinea, which served as bases for their exploration expeditions. Slave labor was heavily relied upon during this exploitation phase, with diamonds being just one of many valuable commodities being extracted from the African soil.

Africa's Diamond Rush: The 19th Century

The 19th century witnessed a diamond rush of immense proportions, with the diamond fields of South Africa proving to be a game-changer. Diamonds were discovered in the Orange River region in 1866, drawing prospectors from around the world to what would later become the world's largest diamond mine, Kimberley.

This diamond rush had a profound impact on African history, as it accelerated the colonization of South Africa by European powers. The influx of settlers led to violent conflicts with the indigenous populations, such as the Boer Wars, which ultimately resulted in British control over the diamond-rich region.

Conflict Diamonds: Fueling Civil Wars

The 20th century brought new challenges for the diamond industry in Africa. With growing demand for diamonds worldwide, coupled with political instability and

corruption, diamonds became a valuable resource for funding rebel movements and fueling civil wars.

This dark chapter in the history of Africa diamonds gave birth to the term "blood diamonds" or "conflict diamonds." Civil wars in countries like Sierra Leone, Angola, and the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) led to the exploitation of diamond mines by rebel groups, who used the proceeds to finance their military activities.

International pressure and public outcry prompted the establishment of the Kimberley Process Certification Scheme in 2003, aimed at preventing the trade of conflict diamonds. This initiative sought to ensure that diamonds on the market were ethically sourced, and revenues benefited local communities rather than fueling violence.

Africa Takes Control: The Rise of African Diamond Producers

Despite the challenges faced by the diamond industry, Africa has gradually taken control of its diamond resources. Countries like Botswana, South Africa, Namibia, and Angola have emerged as significant players in the diamond market, with a focus on ethical mining practices and revenue transparency.

Botswana, in particular, stands out as a success story. The country's partnership with the De Beers mining company has transformed it into one of the world's leading diamond producers. Through careful management, Botswana has ensured that revenues from diamond mining contribute to the country's economic development and social programs.

African Diamonds Today: Beyond Wealth and Status

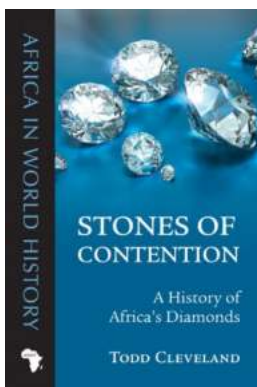
The story of Africa diamonds is far from linear. Today, diamonds continue to play a prominent role in the history and narrative of Africa. The industry has evolved to emphasize ethical sourcing, responsible mining, and fair trade practices.

Several initiatives have been launched to empower local communities and ensure that diamond mining benefits the people of Africa directly. Projects focusing on education, healthcare, and infrastructure development have helped improve living conditions in diamond mining regions.

African diamonds are no longer synonymous with conflict or exploitation. Instead, they contribute to the economic growth and development of African nations, allowing them to reclaim their rich heritage and shape their own destiny.

Diamonds have undeniably left an indelible mark on the history of Africa and the world. They have driven exploration, colonization, and wars, while also becoming a source of pride and economic prosperity for many African nations.

The story of Africa diamonds is one that transcends mere material value, showcasing the resilience and transformation of a continent. From ancient Egypt to present-day Botswana, the saga of Africa's diamonds continues to unfold, reminding us of the power and significance of these breathtaking gemstones.



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Africa supplies the majority of the world’s diamonds, yet consumers generally know little about the origins and history of these precious stones beyond sensationalized media accounts of so-called blood diamonds.

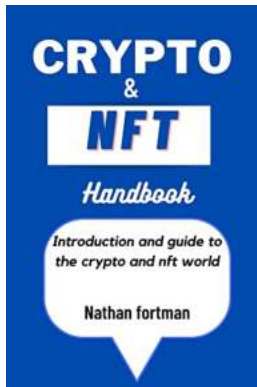
Stones of Contention explores the major developments in the remarkable history of Africa’s diamonds, from the earliest stirrings of international interest in the continent’s mineral wealth in the first millennium A.D. to the present day. In the European colonial period, the discovery of diamonds in South Africa ushered in an era of unprecedented greed during which monopolistic enterprises exploited both the mineral resources and the indigenous workforce. In the aftermath of World War II, the governments of newly independent African states, both democratic and despotic, joined industry giant De Beers and other corporations to oversee and profit from mining activity on the continent.

The book also considers the experiences of a wide array of Africans—from informal artisanal miners, company mineworkers, and indigenous authorities to armed rebels, mining executives, and premiers of mineral-rich states—and their relationships to the stones that have the power to bring both wealth and misery. With photos and maps, *Stones of Contention* illustrates the scope and complexity of the African diamond trade as well as its impact on individuals and societies.



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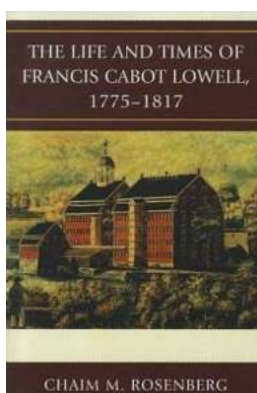
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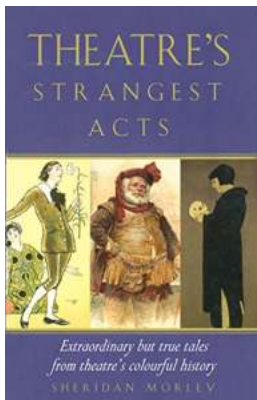
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