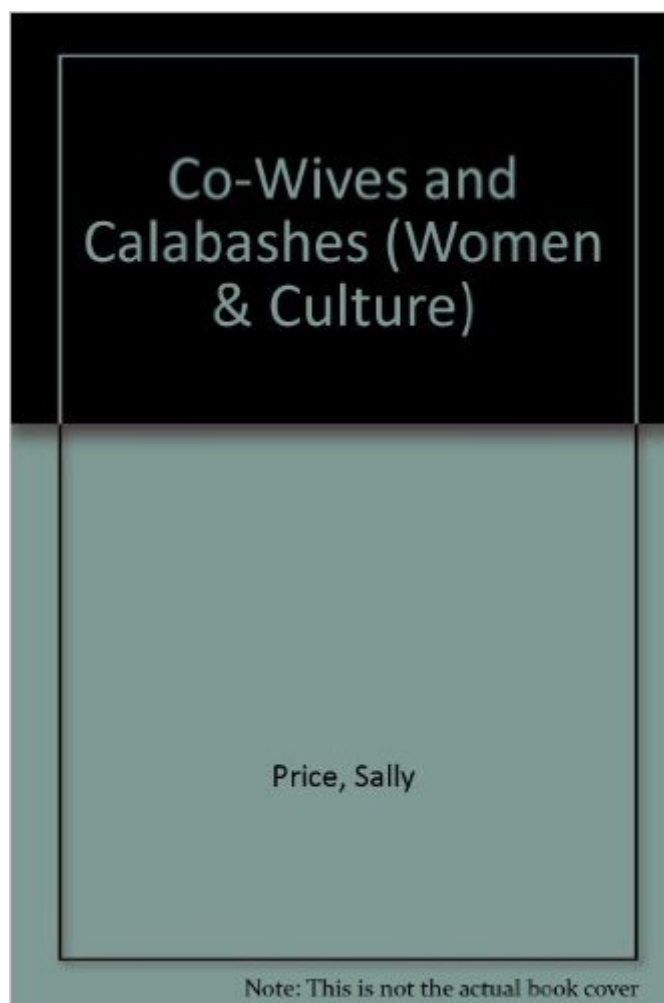


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Co-wives And Calabashes: 1st Edition (Women And Culture Series)



Synopsis

Explores the world of the Saramaka Maroons of Suriname and the status of women as reflected in social structure and art

Book Information

Series: Women and Culture Series

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Average Customer Review: 4.0 out of 5 stars [See all reviews](#) (1 customer review)

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Customer Reviews

This book is an anthropological investigation of art forms of the Saramakas of Suriname. The Saramakas are a particularly interesting group to study. They are a tribal people living in the Suriname rainforest with relatively few trappings of modern global culture. Yet, their culture, like that of the United States, Israel, or New Zealand, is a recent creation of immigrants from heterogeneous sources brought together in a new land. The Saramakas call themselves "Bush Negroes" and are descendants of slaves who mutinied and led an independent existence in the mountain region of Suriname for centuries. The original Saramakans came from many tribes across several regions of Africa. As described here, they have developed a culture (and language) that displays strong connections to African traditions, but also includes significant Portuguese, Native American, and Dutch elements. The first part of the book explains the structure of Saramakan society, the family structure, and the roles of women and men. Price turns her attention next to the patterns of exchange in the culture. She describes how the practices of giving and receiving between men and women, while reciprocal, are very unequal because of the structure of society and the unbalanced gender ratio in the Saramakan lands. Men are frequently absent for long periods of time while they work for cash on the coast. As a result, women greatly outnumber the men and as expected,

polygamy is practiced. Because of their greater access to resources, men are able to give valuable gifts to their wives which are vital for the wives' sustenance. In contrast, the gifts that women give their husbands in return are appreciated but not at all necessary for the husbands' continued existence.

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