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## The Autobiography of an African Princess

Fatima Massaquoi and Edited By Vivian Seton, Konrad Tuchscherer and Arthur Abraham

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Vivian Seton is the daughter and only child of Fatima Massaquoi. She received her Abitur from the Freie Waldorf Schule in Germany, an LL.B from the University of Liberia, and an MSc from Georgetown's School of Languages and Linguistics. Seton has worked for the Voice of America and the German Broadcasting System and publishes *Lady* magazine.

Konrad Tuchscherer is a specialist in the history of written traditions in Africa, including the Vai script of Liberia, and his work has appeared in major journals and featured in reports by the BBC and NPR. He is the past recipient of Marshall and Fulbright awards. He is Associate Professor of History and Director of Africana Studies at St. John's University in New York, USA.

Arthur Abraham is one of the foremost historians of Sierra Leone who has researched/taught at universities in Europe, Africa and the United States. He has a lot of publications to his credit and is the leading authority on the Mende. Currently Professor of History and Eminent Scholar at Virginia State University, USA, he is also the chairman of the Department of History and Philosophy.

'A truly fascinating autobiography of arguably the most intriguing woman in Liberia in the first half of the twentieth century, supplying a rich mine of information on the Vai, on early Liberia, the power elite, and race relations in three countries—Germany, Switzerland, and the United States. Superbly edited by three competent hands, Fatima Massaquoi comes through as well-bred, royal, regal, and majestic. This is a book to teach students about the transformative powers of nationalism, transnationalism, and cosmopolitanism.'

—Toyin Falola, author of a *Mouth Sweeter Than Salt: An African Memoir*

#### About the book

Born to an African king in colonial Sierra Leone at the beginning of the twentieth century, Princess Fatima Massaquoi lived an extraordinary life that encapsulated the contradictions, upheavals, and unprecedented opportunities of her time. This critical edition of her memoirs makes her story available to readers for the first time. Beginning with her lovingly recounted memories of growing up in Liberia, it follows her to Hamburg, Germany, where she pursued an education and forged friendships, but also experienced the racism, terror, and nationalistic fervor that accompanied the Nazis' rise to power. In the face of these mounting dangers, Massaquoi traveled to the United States, where she furthered her studies, embracing her newfound freedom even as she observed deteriorating conditions in the segregated American South in the early years of the civil rights movement. Spanning continents and cultures, this narrative introduces us to a truly remarkable woman while offering a fascinating window into the complex history of the twentieth century.

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